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THESIS

**COMPARING RISING POWERS: THE CASE OF PRE-
WORLD WAR II JAPANESE NATIONALISM AND
CONTEMPORARY CHINESE NATIONALISM**

by

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JAPANESE NATIONALISM AND CONTEMPORARY CHINESE
NATIONALISM**

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ABSTRACT

Pre–World War II Japan, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, was a nation with a strong military force, growing economy, and unique ethnic identity. Contemporary China exhibits similar characteristics in the first part of the twenty-first century. Culture, language, geography, military force, economy, and religion, to name only a few, are frequently referred to by scholars as sources for uniting people under the banner of nationalism. Oftentimes, a mix of these aspects helps to establish national unity and identity. Were Japan’s military, economy, and culture the main drivers of Japanese nationalism before 1945, and are these same factors driving Chinese nationalism today? After comparing similarities between Japanese and Chinese nationalism and the roles the military, economy, and culture play as primary drivers for building national unity, this thesis finds that Japan’s military in the early twentieth century primarily drove national unity, with ethnic racism and economy as close supplementary factors. China’s economy, on the other hand, has been the primary factor for building national unity today. Japan’s interaction with the League of Nations and China’s One Belt, One Road initiative and interaction with regional institutions greatly influenced each state’s primary driving factor. Where Japan’s approach to nationalism failed in interaction with international institutions, China has succeeded, and a united China may very well be the next East Asian hegemon. Will Chinese nationalism result in war?

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
IFI	international financial institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LoN	League of Nations
NDB	New Development Bank
OBOR	One Belt, One Road
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCS	South China Sea

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

At the turn of the twentieth century, Japan's power and prestige in East Asia rapidly grew. Japan's military defeat of the great regional powers of the time, China and Russia, and its booming economy, contributed to unifying the Japanese people under a nationalist umbrella, resulting in a more homogenous identity. At the same time, Japanese leaders sought equal recognition by other great world powers on the international stage, such as Great Britain and the United States, especially by joining institutions like the League of Nations (LoN).

Today, China exhibits relatively similar patterns. It boasts one of the largest military forces in the world, which continues to grow and modernize. China's economy has experienced extraordinary GDP growth for the past two decades. In addition, China has set forth policy to economically unify East Asia with Eurasia and Africa and has joined multiple regional institutions in an effort to project its influence. However, while China continues to show signs of military and economic growth for the foreseeable future, its leaders struggle to promote and strengthen a coherent and unified nationalist identity. China's growth places it at the forefront of becoming a great power and potentially ousting the United States as the East Asian hegemon without going to war.

To better understand China's current foreign policy posture toward both East Asian nations and the United States, this thesis explores similarities between Japanese and Chinese nationalism and asks the following question. Were Japan's military, economy, and culture the main drivers of Japanese nationalism before 1945, and are these same factors driving Chinese nationalism today?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

For hundreds of years, China was the center of the Orient. Countries from all around the region would pay homage to the great empire.¹ Then, foreigners from the West challenged the Chinese state and its tributary system. In an instant, “gunboat diplomacy” destroyed China and its image of being the most advanced nation in the world. For nearly a century, the people of China lived under a dreary period of humiliation and degradation. They were forced to trade with Western merchants at unfair prices, and they lost territory to the Russians, Germans, French, British, and Japanese.² However, for the last twenty years, China has exhibited consistent military and economic growth, generating a renewed focus on the Asia–Pacific region by U.S. leaders and experts.³ China’s economic successes and its large military have begun to embolden its leaders to challenge the status quo, furthering its military, industrial, and diplomatic power and influence. Arguably, behind this power is the driving force of nationalism and identity and the potential will to become the regional powerhouse China once was before its “century of humiliation.”

Nationalism drives power and foreign policy and much can be learned through a historical analysis of nations that have shown similar characteristics as they rise to a position of regional hegemony. For example, Japan’s ethnic identity grew very strong from the turn of the twentieth century throughout the following four decades. Japan’s military played a leading role in engendering that nationalist identity. Possibly, Japan’s growing nationalism helped trigger the United States’ entrance into the Second World War with the

¹ William T. Rowe, *China’s Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009), 133–135. See also Joseph W. Esherick, “China and the World: From Tribute to Treaties to Popular Nationalism,” in *China’s Rise in Historical Perspective*, ed. Brantly Womack (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), 19–21.

² Esherick, “China and the World,” 30–31.

³ For example, USPACOM Commander, Admiral Harry B. Harris, stated in his 2018 Pacific Command Posture Statement to the House Armed Services Committee, “While the United States has an economic relationship with China, in my opinion, our two nations are in clear competition for influence and control of the Indo-Pacific. As the President commented in his recent State of the Union Address, China is now our ‘rival’...Beijing is using its military and economic power to coerce its neighbors and erode the free and open international order.” See Harry B. Harris, *Statement of Admiral Harry B. Harris Jr., U.S. Navy Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture* (Washington, DC: White House, February 14, 2018), <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20180214/106847/HHRG-115-AS00-Wstate-HarrisJrH-20180214.pdf>.

bombing of Pearl Harbor. If China's nationalism grows the same as Japan's grew, could we also expect a similar reaction from contemporary China? Many scholars have shown that nationalism is often an underlying principle that leads states to act a certain way or pursue certain policies abroad. Therefore, nationalist beliefs and conduct can provide indicators for aggressive behavior directed from one state to another. For the Japanese, strong and unified national identity led, ultimately, to war because of racism.

Chinese nationalism has been and continues to be a fraught issue. The ability to address many opposing domestic issues under a single political party alone invites contention and dissuades national unity. Therefore, modern Chinese leaders, such as Mao Zedong, Chiang Kai-Shek, and Xi Jinping, have sought the best ways in which to unite the vastly populated and ethnically diverse state. Understanding the power of nationalism, or national unity, in China may better help U.S. policymakers gauge whether the state is more likely to engage in aggressive behavior, like Japan, when conducting diplomacy over contentious Chinese core territorial interests, such as Taiwan, and economic interests such as the South China Sea (SCS) and the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands.

Economic needs directed leaders in the past to advance expansionist foreign policies. Raw resources found on mainland Asia were crucial for Japan to feed its people, sustain a growing economy, and modernize its military. Japan's defeat of China in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95, followed by the subsequent defeat of the powerful Russia during the Russo–Japanese War in 1905, marked a turning point for Japan and its apparent destiny for greatness.⁴ Shortly thereafter, Japan's territorial expansion to mainland Asia provided Japan free access to resources and markets it did not previously have and a newfound purpose for its mighty military. In fact, Russia's defeat may have validated the importance of institutionalizing the patriotism that was transparent in Japan's educational and religious texts. Japanese leaders capitalized on trending military successes and used this newfound military power to inspire nationalism among Japanese citizens. Japanese

⁴ Kenneth B. Pyle, *Japan Rising* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 94–97.

leaders were then able to maintain a high level of national unity for the next four decades as Japan's economy grew and territory expanded.⁵

Like Japan used, China, too, uses proof of economic growth and military power to inspire nationalism among its citizens. However, compared to Japan, economic growth has arguably been a greater driver for Chinese nationalism than has the military. Using regional institutions, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China spreads nationalism for the purposes of pursuing the central government's core interests and foreign policies. China also attempts to use these forums in order to justify Chinese expansion, especially within the SCS, and to replace the United States and its influence by becoming the regional hegemon.

Institutions have served as a channel for expanding both Japanese and Chinese nationalism. Pre-WWII Japan attempted to use international organizations, such as the LoN, to strengthen its national identity as a great power. Likewise, China uses regional security and economic institutions as a means to appease neighboring states and spread Chinese nationalism. China has also established financial institutions to support its goal of economic stability and enhance national unity.

Through meticulous comparison, this paper aims to determine whether or not contemporary Chinese nationalism parallels, in any way, drivers prevalent in Japan's rise to status of a regional power and if or how Chinese foreign policy decisions are influenced by nationalism as China itself appears to rise in power and hegemonic status. If these same factors are driving Chinese nationalism today, then leaders may be able to anticipate a greater increase in Chinese aggression. On the other hand, if these factors are less influential, non-existent, or not driving nationalist identity, then leaders might expect to find a lesser likelihood of China exerting aggressive foreign policy actions than Japan did, making relations with China less likely, because of China's nationalism, in war.

⁵ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 55.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is divided into three main sections with the first section focusing on nationalism in general and the relationship between nationalism and hegemony. Because nationalism has been defined with several variations, I will define it here as a collective feeling by a community of people to achieve a common goal that they believe is in the best of interests for the group as a whole. As a nation gains power and influence, whether through military or economic success, leaders build on that success to motivate the people with a desire to excel even more. Leaders can also inspire the people to believe they are a great and powerful nation in the world. One tool that leaders commonly employ to encourage this feeling and belief of greatness is national unity. Thus, the collective actions of a unified people contribute to nationalism and that nation becoming a hegemon. The second section explores how Japan's military, economy, and culture created national unity, which, in turn, drove nationalism and foreign policy during the first half of the twentieth century. The third section examines these same factors as potential drivers of Chinese nationalism and foreign policy. In addition, it examines how the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) and regional institutions China participates in today influence contemporary Chinese foreign policy specifically toward the United States and East Asia and what implications these might have on regional hegemony.

1. Nationalism

A growing body of literature has examined the formation of nations and of nationalism, with most scholars of the subject (Renan, Gellner, Breuilly, Hobsbawm, and Anderson) agreeing that nations are created by nationalism and are therefore a phenomena of the modern era. Most leading scholars in the field also tend to concur that the modern era followed the French Revolution. Most modernists believe that nationalism is a product of a series of political, scientific, and industrial revolutions.⁶ However, scholars disagree on what factors contribute to the formation of a national identity and ongoing nationalism.

⁶ Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac, introduction to *When is the Nation? Towards an Understanding of Theories of Nationalism*, ed. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (New York: Routledge, 2005), 4.

Major conflicting factors believed to construct national identity include ethnicity, race, language, economics, religion, geography, and military requisites.

One school of thought, “liberal nationalism,” describes nationalism as something spiritual in nature, though not necessarily religiously based, because it is established on adherence to a common set of liberal values. In his essay “What is a Nation,” Ernest Renan, one of the first influential French philosophers on nationalism, asserts that a nation is comprised of a people’s shared memories and “desire to live together.”⁷ He notes that the “essence of a nation” comprises not only of the commonalities among individuals, but also of things forgotten.⁸ For example, the conquering Germans in the fifth century lost their Germanic language as their concubines from the conquered nations bore their children.⁹ Over time, descendants from these conquering Germans would form the nation of France, though few would remember such a history. In the annals of history, violence and brutality are often forgotten.¹⁰ Renan disagrees with ethnicity having any part in the formation of a modern nation, citing multiple examples across Europe where there exists a mixture of races, languages, and ethnic populations in a given modern nation (e.g., France, Germany, Italy, Great Britain).¹¹ He likewise disagrees with the proposition that geography and natural borders are defining factors of a nation because cartographic lines can change and not all mountains and rivers divide nations from one another.¹² Rather, nationalism, as a spiritual principle, is a product of shared feelings of past sacrifice by a community and of a willingness to sacrifice together in the future.¹³ Liberal nationalists are committed to basic liberal values, such as freedom, equality, and individual rights, because these values create a shared desire, an inclusivity and shared commitment by the people and for the people.

⁷ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?,” in *Becoming National*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 52.

⁸ Renan, “What is a Nation?,” 45.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 51–52.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 53.

Another school of thought claims that nationalism forms through a complex process of social transformation. Miroslav Hroch does not entirely disagree with the modernist orthodoxy that nations are created by nationalism. However, he argues that nationalism and the spread of “national ideas” requires specific social settings and certain “objective preconditions.”¹⁴ Economic, political, religious, cultural, linguistic, geographic, and historical social settings coalesced over time with “collective consciousness” to form the nation.¹⁵ Hroch traces nation-forming evolution with social transformations through national movements. Such movements are often comprised of patriotic groups with individuals whose professions provided greater social mobility.¹⁶ Additionally, national movements included literacy and education as a means for transmitting nationalist ideas.¹⁷ Without social mobility and the ability to communicate ideas of nationalism, it would have been very difficult to recruit and motivate others to participate in the movement and cause to form a nation.

Ernest Gellner also supports the theory of nationalism forming through industrialization. In his theoretical essay, “The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class,” Gellner uses a theoretical model to argue how the role of culture and structure differs between an agro-literate society and an advanced industrial society. In an agro-literate society, social rank status is inherently far more significant than culture because “culture divides rather than unifies.”¹⁸ Furthermore, writing and literacy in this type of society is limited, dividing members who acquire information, ideas, and knowledge through working the land and by daily interaction with family, neighbors and employers, from individuals who are privileged to an education

¹⁴ Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe,” in *Becoming National*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 61.

¹⁵ Hroch, “From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation,” 61.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, “The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class,” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (New York: Verso, 1996), 104.

provided by full-time specialists.¹⁹ It is this intellectual divide that creates a cultural rift—a sort of high and low culture—that defines societal structure and hierarchy in an agro-literate society. Therefore, Gellner concludes that it is unlikely for shared culture in an agro-literate society to engender any form of a nation-state, or nationalism.

An advanced industrial society, on the other hand, requires a unified, educated, and “standardized high culture”²⁰ to function. All members of this society co-operate to provide sustained economic growth, which, according to Gellner, is the “first principle of legitimacy of this kind of society.”²¹ Sustained growth requires innovation, innovation requires technical understanding and education, and technical understanding and education allow for members of this society to share a common “high” culture that is disciplined and systematized. To ensure sustained growth prevails, a nation-state is formed. As individuals self-identify with this common culture, they will actively participate in the institutions provided by the nation for that culture, strengthening and promoting their nationalist identity and nationalism.

Still, other scholars of nationalism identify with the belief that nationalism is more ethnicity-based where individuals share a common heritage, language, and culture, as opposed to some civic or political membership. Anthony D. Smith explores a variety of academic writings proffered by historians. He argues that for hundreds of years, ethnic communities, or ethnies, have been socially and culturally structured in many parts of the world, sharing common elements of nationalism that form modern nation-states.²² Ethnic nationalism creates nations based on familial lineage, or nations in which common blood determines nationality. Smith defines this ethnic nationalism as a “demotic” or “vertical” ethnie and one that is more exclusive.²³ On the other hand, nationalism that centers on political membership, or civic nationalism, tends to be “lateral” and is inclusive because

¹⁹ Gellner, “The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation,” 102–03.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

²² Anthony D. Smith, “The Origins of Nations,” in *Becoming National*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 109–10.

²³ Smith, “The Origins of Nations,” 112.

an individual belongs to a nation in which he is born.²⁴ For Smith, ethnic nationalism requires some “core networks of association and culture,” such as language, religion, or historic territory.²⁵ Failure to recognize these historically enduring, shared communal commonalities prevents us from fully comprehending the process of modern state formation.

2. Japanese Nationalism

The second section of this literature review examines military, cultural, and economic factors that drove Japanese nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century. Japanese superiority toward Americans, Europeans, and other East Asian nations affected their attitude, policy, and manner in which they fought in war. Discourses of national greatness effectively communicated nationalism as well as promoted national unity growth.²⁶

Japanese discourse on national greatness was prominent throughout the nation because of various institutions and social settings. Japan’s military was praised for its victories and territorial acquisition. Industrial expositions provided the social backdrop for communicating Japanese greatness.²⁷ The emperor himself, along with members of the imperial family, attended expositions,²⁸ suggesting high importance in recognizing Japanese progress and becoming a rising world power. In “The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan, 1890–1919,” Sandra Wilson examines various dialogues on Japanese national greatness, its limitations, and consequences that contributed to further development of Japanese nationalism. From the 1880s and forward, some Japanese intellectuals believed that Japan had already established a sense of national pride and cultural identity because of its rich history and cultural heritage.²⁹ However, others

²⁴ Smith, “The Origins of Nations,” 112.

²⁵ Ibid., 108.

²⁶ Sandra Wilson, “The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan, 1890–1919,” *Japanese Studies* 25, no. 1 (2005): 42, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10371390500067652>.

²⁷ Wilson, “The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan,” 39.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 37.

believed Japan did not achieve true nation-state status and unquestionable nationalism until after its “military victories and territorial acquisition.”³⁰ Possibly more than any other driver, Japan’s rapid imperial expansion resulted from its military successes over China in the First Sino-Japanese War, and Russia in the Russo-Japanese War.

Alongside the military driving Japanese nationalism, culture and ethnicity influenced how Japanese leaders viewed themselves in comparison with neighboring states and powerful Western nations. Cultural relationships with foreign nations are apparent in literature produced by the state and are arguably one of the most influential forms of creating national unity. In *War Without Mercy*, John Dower investigates the relationship between race and power during the war in Asia in the early 1940s. Dower’s research draws upon the political language, imagery, and propaganda that made racism a driver in the conduct of war in Asia and explains the evolving relationship between Japan and the United States. As Dower notes, “In the war in Asia—and in general—considerations of race and power are inseparable.”³¹ Japanese Soldiers were told some thousands of arrogant, white men were ruling over millions of oppressed Asian natives and it was Japan’s duty to liberate the oppressed East Asians because they were of similar blood and color.³² Nationalist propaganda led Japanese people to believe they would win the war because the Western culture was weak and selfish and their soldiers would not be willing to fight a protracted war in some far away land.³³ Racial hatred was evident through actions such as “massacres of noncombatants, maltreatment and killing of prisoners, routinized torture, forced labor, and institutional murder in the form of lethal medical experiments.”³⁴ According to Dower, Japanese racial sentiments resulted in part from American and European discriminations toward the Japanese people and in part from the ideology that Japanese

³⁰ Wilson, “The Discourse of National Greatness in Japan,” 37.

³¹ John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), xi.

³² Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 24–25.

³³ *Ibid.*, 36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

people were superior to Westerners and to other Asians.³⁵ Feelings of superiority bled into Japanese media and propaganda that influenced national unity and patriotism.

Sources say religious nationalism was very important in Japan's aggressive behavioral stance throughout the world because it is an inherent aspect of Japanese culture. D.C. Holtom states that the "highest form of the community life is the merging of personal destiny in the greater destiny of the nation and that this great personal dedication is fostered by what is neither more nor less than a vital religious belief."³⁶ In *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, Holtom thoroughly discusses the relationship between Japan's religious foundation and state, giving it the term "State Shinto." He declares that the modern Japanese state was "deliberately established on a foundation which unified government and religion."³⁷ In Shinto orthodoxy, important affairs of state, such as declarations of war, are presented to the deities at large shrines.³⁸ H. Byron Earhart validates Holtom's declaration, arguing that the emperor himself was revered by the people as a "descendant of the Sun Goddess" and was the "sacred leader of the Japanese islands,"³⁹ whose divinity is traced back through blood connections with the great kami (gods) ancestors.⁴⁰ Holtom then draws on the close ties the Japanese military has with State Shinto and how religion influences Japan's nationalism and foreign policy. Japanese people were taught undivided loyalty to the state. Take, for example, a statement made by one cabinet official:

The protection and advancement of the country are in the care of the ancestral spirits and their power resides in the Emperor. The use of that power is the work of the Imperial Throne...The central idea of the Japanese state is the belief that the spirits of the Imperial ancestors continue to rule

³⁵ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 204–05.

³⁶ D.C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1963), 3.

³⁷ Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁹ H. Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity*, 3rd ed. (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982), 16.

⁴⁰ Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 8.

through their living representatives, and from this belief springs the singular national spirit of the Japanese people.⁴¹

Accordingly, the Japanese believed the decisions made by their state leaders were guided directly by their ancestors who would not lead them or their nation astray.

Japan's economic growth through imperial expansionism on the Asian mainland contributed, furthermore, to increased Japanese nationalism. Louise Young takes a more isolated look at the relationship between Japanese nationalism and the making of its colony of Manchukuo. Specifically, Young analyzes the effects of mass media and mass-culture industries in the development of the Manchurian colony and its economy. Mass-culture industries drove the spread of war fever in the 1930s, which in turn stimulated military imperialism.⁴² The Manchurian Incident stimulated growth and sales for booksellers, movie theaters, magazines, and newspaper publishers. Themes of battle heroism, glory of sacrifice, and the crisis in the empire circulated throughout the media,⁴³ contributing to a sense of national unity and patriotism throughout Japan. Young then explores the transformation of Japan's polity where "imperial interest groups emerged to promote military expansion on the Asian mainland."⁴⁴ For many of these groups, and especially for the educated elite, Manchukuo was an opportunity to build a utopian community, one that provided better social justice and greater job prospects than could be found on the island. In addition, urban women and union members used "appeals to imperial patriotism to forge group solidarity and to press for improved social conditions for themselves."⁴⁵ The emergence of these groups would greatly influence agricultural settlement and economic development projects throughout Manchukuo.⁴⁶

Mainland expansion attracted new business, indicating a drastic change in Japan's economic imperialism. For example, in less than a decade (1931-1940) the number of

⁴¹ Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 10.

⁴² Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 16.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 417.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Japanese manufacturing companies operating outside the Kwantung Leased Territory increased from 403 to 1,853 firms.⁴⁷ This significant increase demonstrated Japan's new capability to expand beyond its traditional port trading and extract resources through dominant internal commerce and manufacturing.⁴⁸ Finally, Young examines emerging governmental institutions in Manchukuo that would strengthen and facilitate imperial expansion.

3. Chinese Nationalism

Turning to Chinese nationalism, scholars also see the importance of ideology. Chen Jian, in his book *Mao's China and the Cold War*, observes the central role ideology played during the Cold War as communism and capitalism clashed in shaping the young, modern nation-state. Chen contends that ideology was not given due credit as an "essential agent in determining the basic orientation of [the] nation's foreign policy"⁴⁹ by a majority of political scientists and diplomatic historians. Indeed, Mao's central theme to foreign policy and national security during the Cold War was his drive to overcome imperial humiliation and return China to great power status. Building on Jian's research of ideology as a factor influencing Chinese foreign policy during the Cold War era, we may be better able to recognize trends used today that continue to shape Chinese foreign policy.

From a cultural perspective, Zheng Wang argues in his book, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, the importance of understanding Chinese historical memory in order to better understand Beijing's foreign policy behavior. He disagrees with scholars who believe China's rise can be understood by military or economic growth. Conversely, he argues that thorough examination of what is taught in a country's history textbooks, both in primary and in secondary schools, informs us of how the state uses these institutions and media to guide its citizen's collective consciousness, contributing to patriotism and

⁴⁷ Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 251–52.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴⁹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 6.

national identity. History education stimulates national unity and nationalism.⁵⁰ Since China's patriotic education campaign was implemented in 1991, greater emphasis by the central government has been placed on teaching about national humiliation in order to solidify national unity, reminding Chinese people "who they are and how the world works."⁵¹ As Wang puts it, "Who we think we are defines what we think we want."⁵² Wang's personal experience as a native Chinaman, provides first-hand insight on Chinese historical memory and how it helps explain the "rapid conversion of China's popular social movements—from the internal-oriented, anti-corruption, and anti[-]dictatorship democratic movements of the 1980s to the external-oriented, anti-Western nationalism of the 1990s and 2000s."⁵³ Understanding how Chinese people self-identify can help "determine [Chinese] interests, which in turn determine[s] policy and state action."⁵⁴

Similar to Wang, Yinan He looks at the effects collective memory and state historical propaganda have on contemporary Chinese nationalism and how regional security may be impacted, especially with growing anti-Japanese sentiments. She argues that nationalist sentiments are deeply rooted in "decades of centralized school education and official propaganda in China"⁵⁵ which have embedded injurious misconceptions in Chinese national collective memory. Chinese nationalists presume Japan maintains a bellicose attitude toward China by refusing to make concessions because Japan wants to take advantage of China's economic interests.⁵⁶ Chinese nationalists also believe Japan has territorial or other strategic ambitions against China."⁵⁷ As Chinese hegemony appears to be replacing U.S. hegemony in the region, China's leaders will need to put forth a more

⁵⁰ Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 9.

⁵¹ Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*, 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁵ Yinan He, "History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict," *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 50 (March 2007): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560601026710>.

⁵⁶ He, "History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict," 10.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

concerted effort in restraining nationalist sentiments if they want to maintain regional stability and pacific relations with key economic partners such as Japan. Before Chinese history textbooks changed in the mid-1980s to reflect a more victimized China, normalization with Japan was important for Chinese economic and political interests. War atrocities caused by Japan were seen as less important at the time and therefore not depicted in great detail. However, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) ideological foundation for regime legitimacy gradually shifted from communism to patriotism.⁵⁸ Today, resentment toward Japan caused by popular nationalism in China increasingly challenges Sino-Japanese relations over three primary bilateral disputes the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, Taiwan, and maritime resource competition.⁵⁹

Scholars also consider the importance of media in diffusing nationalism. In *China: Fragile Superpower*, Susan Shirk explores how Chinese foreign policy, as well as domestic politics, have transformed as a result of “newly commercialized media and the internet.”⁶⁰ The Propaganda Department within the CCP is the lead organization responsible for political content released through the various media outlets. However, with easier access to the internet, social media, and global news, the state is faced with a growing challenge of mediating nationalism and extreme nationalist ideas which may place the CCP in a hard spot. When it comes to foreign policy, nationalists may exploit more readily accessible media resources in order to pressure Party leaders to take a harder stand for core national interests than what the Party is willing to take. Shirk points out that Party leadership recognizes it is in a responsive mode because it can “no longer control the spread of information.”⁶¹ For a government that has sought diligently to micromanage information flow to and from its people, this potentially poses a significant problem for regional stability and the rising hegemon.

⁵⁸ He, “History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict,” 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁰ Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 80–81.

⁶¹ Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower*, 103.

D. POTENTIAL EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

This thesis explores two hypotheses that may offer explanations as to whether Japan's military, economy, and culture were the main drivers of Japanese nationalism before 1945 and whether these same factors are driving Chinese nationalism today.

- (1) Hypothesis #1: Before 1945, Japan's state religion and militarized ethnic nationalism drove its foreign policy as it expanded its physical territory and attempted to establish regional hegemony.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Japan's military engagements with both China and Russia were critical turning points in consolidating and defining Japanese nationalism. Japan's strong military boosted its economy, emboldened its leaders to expand the empire's territory, and secured its position as regional hegemon. Meanwhile, Western racism toward Japanese culture and ethnicity strained foreign relations with the United States, and, therefore, increased Japanese nationalism. As the century continued, Japan's military further solidified Japanese national identity while acting as a member of the allied forces against Germany throughout the First World War.

One key part of Japan's nationalism was fostering a false sense of identity. Japan underwent an enormous struggle with members of the LoN and in negotiating treaty terms at the Washington Conference. Japan aspired to be a regional power that could cooperate with other leading powers without confrontation. However, racism from Western powers fueled a greater racial identity and sense of national unity among the Japanese people. Also, State Shinto, as the formally decreed national faith by the Emperor of Japan, appeared to have had some nationalist influence, even crossing over into the educational and media domains following the Meiji period. These sub-factors sustained Japan's military power and nationalism for half a century. By examining Japan's military influence as a driving factor of nationalism, we can assess whether China's robust military is following in the same footsteps as Japan's did.

- (2) Hypothesis #2: Economic success and international integration has had greater influence on Chinese national unity and growth as a regional hegemon than either military or ethnic drivers have.

China has undergone a prosperous economic transformation, yielding extraordinary growth for the past two decades. China's economic growth fuels national unity and paves the way for the state to emerge as the regional hegemon. It is possible that China's economic growth has endowed it with the means to build-up, strengthen, and modernize its military; however, unlike Japan, it is more likely that China's economic growth drives national unity and national pride. If economics is the primary factor driving Chinese nationalism, then China will likely integrate with and pursue positions of authority and influence within regional institutions, such as APEC and ASEAN. Additionally, China's push to promote regional economic prosperity through the OBOR initiative and establish financial institutions to support developmental projects is a way to obtain regional economic hegemony, which furthers national unity.

Contrary evidence to this hypothesis would be that perceptions of racism from Western powers fuel nationalism in China. For example, historically, China confronted discrimination when it outlawed English opium trade and that, in turn, contributed to the Chinese uniting to prevent further harm from outside influences. Similarly, today, China may perceive racism by candid Western opposition to the OBOR initiative. To counter-balance China's integration into several regional institutions, to maintain already close ties with Asian states, and to assure continual access to national interests within the region, the United States may petition acceptance as a member of these same economic institutions. Doing so could cost China the regional economic advantage it seeks and may provoke China to fuel nationalism through the military instead. If the West continues to oppose OBOR, framing it as a ruse the CCP is using to consolidate power, then this may, in fact, unify Chinese support for OBOR.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

Using historical methods and a comparative case study approach, this thesis compares the drivers influencing Japanese nationalism before 1945 with the drivers influencing Chinese nationalism today. How Japan and China interacted with international

institutions revealed the different roles played by military, economy, and culture in driving nationalism. Comparison between these two nations can increase understanding of how economic, ethnic, and military factors might influence Chinese foreign policy toward the United States and what impact nationalism has on East Asia as China rises to regional hegemon.

This thesis uses an assortment of secondary sources such as books, scholarly journals, and news articles to compare the cases. The author researched three primary factors contributing to Japanese and Chinese nationalism—economics, military, and ethnicity—using a pool of literature from books, scholarly journals, think tank reports, and news reports.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis is divided into four chapters using the comparative case study format to systematically examine similarities existing as drivers of nationalism that have influenced Japanese and Chinese foreign policy. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II compares Japan's military-driven rise before 1945 to China's economy-driven rise today by analyzing each country's relationship to international institutions. Chapter III examines how the Japanese saw themselves and what role Japanese ethnicity and military played in determining Japan's approach to nation-building in the early twentieth century. It then examines how great powers, such as the United States, and Japan's Korean colony responded to Japan's approach to nation-building. Subsequently, Chapter III discusses China's understanding of OBOR. Chapter IV concludes the research and outlines how this thesis's findings can better inform U.S. policymakers toward East Asia, generally, and, specifically, toward China today.

II. JAPANESE AND CHINESE APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Chapter I introduced the question of what drove Japan's pre-WWII nationalism and what is driving China's current nationalism. This chapter compares Japan's military-driven rise to China's economy-driven rise by analyzing each country's relationship to international institutions. It begins by examining Japan prior to World War II. It shows that Meiji Japan, imitating Western powers in an attempt to gain recognition as an equal, established a government patterned after Western states. Japan's leaders borrowed the idea of having a constitutionally run government, and foreign affairs would structure Japan's domestic politics.⁶² Japan's leaders also perceived that, in order to become a great nation, Japan must industrialize more fully and expand its empire throughout the Asia-Pacific region. They did so by "craft[ing] their expansionist policies along Western lines, deploy[ing] the same gunboat tactics to establish domination in Korea, and appeal[ing] to the same legal justification to legitimate it."⁶³ Prior to Japan turning entirely to its military as a means of building national unity and international influence, Japan had joined international institutions, such as the League of Nations (LoN), and participated in the Washington Conference in order to establish recognized parity among great powers. Try as it might to achieve parity among Western powers, however, Japan's sword could not slice through the thick and persistent racism. After leaving the LoN, Japan promoted national unity through its rising military, a situation that continued through World War II.

The second section of the chapter examines China's current rise. Unlike pre-WWII Japan, China is currently succeeding at expanding through international institutions and unifying its people via the economy rather than the military. Whereas Japan attempted to reach out to Western nations and was not recognized as an equal global power, China has sought recognition as a global power from other Asian nations and succeeded. China's successful recognition by neighboring states as a modern, great power—and China's

⁶² Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 59.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

involvement in several multilateral regional institutions has positioned it to launch its largest effort at international influence, the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative. OBOR, a strategic approach by China to build roads, ports, rails, economic corridors, and other infrastructure development projects throughout Asia, Africa, and Eurasia, will attempt to connect China with the rest of the world, to integrate international economies more easily, and to place China at the apex of the global hegemonic order.

A. JAPAN'S RISE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Meiji Restoration of 1868 clearly marked a turning point for a modernizing Japan. Following the downfall of two centuries of Tokugawa rule over feudal Japan, Japanese leaders changed the state bureaucracy, formed a unified military institution, and established a national defense policy to mimic, to a certain degree, powerful Western nations. For the next two decades, Meiji leaders sought guidance from Western nations and carefully constructed Japan's first constitution, modeled in part after Western nations. Implementing a constitution and establishing a parliamentary institution made the imperial institution a "symbol of national identity and the Diet a means for achieving national unity."⁶⁴ Japan's transition from a feudal state to a modern state would see the government "united in a conception of national unity and defense" at both the empire's center and periphery.⁶⁵ The Imperial House would be the chief cornerstone to Japan's constitution, and, unlike that of Western constitutions, the first principle of the constitution would be "respect for the sovereign rights of the Emperor."⁶⁶ Significantly, the constitution having Emperor's Rights as a principle set the precedent for how Japan's modern military, the people as a whole, and future colonies revered the Emperor as the central unifying factor of nation and empire.

⁶⁴ Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 56.

⁶⁵ Akira Iriye, "Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status," in *The Cambridge History of Japan* Vol. 5, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 739.

⁶⁶ W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 80.

Western influence greatly shaped Japan's early transition to a modern state, including its constitutional document, the Charter Oath. As Japan modernized, the Charter Oath outlined the primary rules for Japanese citizens to abide by, five clearly written articles⁶⁷ that symbolized the beginning of an era whereby Japan would "turn to the West"⁶⁸ in order to strengthen their nation. Japan would not be viewed as an inferior people, but rather as an equal among the great Western states. Over the course of the next two decades (1870s–1880s), Japan opened its doors to foreign teachers and sent thousands of students abroad to learn from foreign institutions and Western nations. The knowledge obtained from foreign institutions and brought back to the homeland would profoundly affect Japanese national policy and Japan's eventual approach to national unity through strengthening the military.

Japan worked on its military for the entire latter half of the nineteenth century, imitating Western nations' military might. Japan did not have a national military until after the Meiji restoration. In fact, it was not until 1873 that the army organized from the former Samurai (warrior) class of Daimyo lord loyalists to a national conscript force—as was common at the time among great powers like Russia, Britain, Germany, and France.⁶⁹ Men, after they turned twenty, had to serve three years of active duty followed by an additional four years in the reserve.⁷⁰ The Japanese government employed French and German military officials to train young military commanders and soldiers. By 1894, Japan boasted a modernized fighting army of 73,000 men during peacetime operations and another 200,000 men for wartime operations,⁷¹ capable of mobilizing beyond the main islands. The navy was a far more delicate matter. Quality, modern ships needed to be purchased abroad, navy officers and seaman required "long and technical training," and

⁶⁷ For a list of the articles in the Charter Oath see Lloyd Duhaime, "1868: Charter Oath of the Five Articles," duhaime.org, last modified June 8, 2010, <http://www.duhaime.org/LawMuseum/LawArticle-1203/1868-Charter-Oath-of-the-Five-Articles.aspx>.

⁶⁸ Hirakawa Sukehiro, "Japan's Turn to the West" in *The Cambridge History of Japan* Vol. 5, ed. Marius B. Jansen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 497.

⁶⁹ Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 62–64.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 64–65.

“maritime defense was a less vital issue” for Japanese leaders at the time.⁷² Meager as it was compared to Western navies, Japan owned a fleet comprising 24 torpedo boats and 28 modern ships.⁷³ However, by the end of the nineteenth century, after proving itself a nation militarily capable of mobilizing, fighting and defeating a stronger, more seasoned force, “military service came to be accepted as the patriotic obligation of Japanese men by most recruits and their families.”⁷⁴ The growing popularity of Japan’s military laid the foundation for leaders to confidently and legitimately extend their sphere of influence through imperialism.

Despite commendable military might and also moves toward imperialism, the Western nations did not really recognize Japan as an equal. Imperialism was commonplace among modern states during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. France, Britain, the United States, Germany, and Russia all extended national spheres of influence throughout Asia. Japan perceived imperialism as an integral part of joining the family of nations, expanding into the Korean peninsula, Taiwan, and northern China. The successful defeat of the once great Chinese in the Sino–Japanese War increased Japan’s military prestige and standing among great power nations. Fully aware of Japan’s rising influence throughout the East Asian region, Britain agreed to sign an Anglo–Japanese alliance in 1902, requiring each to support the other by safeguarding their interests in both Korea and China.⁷⁵ The alliance significantly moved Japan one step closer toward officially being recognized as an equal among great powers. Japan further shocked the world when, as the military underdog, it defeated the Russian military in the Russo–Japanese war of 1904–1905. However, despite Japan’s global engagement and military might, it seemed that the nations Japan aspired to impress the most (especially the United States) barely acknowledged it as a growing power worthy of recognition. For example, Japanese immigrants to the United States, particularly California, were seen to be “the spearhead of

⁷² Ibid., 65.

⁷³ Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, 65.

⁷⁴ Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 67.

⁷⁵ “Anglo-Japanese Alliance: British-Japanese History,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed December 28, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Anglo-Japanese-Alliance>.

an expanding nation, a bridge between [Japan and the United States]...Americans rejected such expansionism and began talking of war on racial grounds.”⁷⁶ Western powers’ further deplorable treatment of Japan continued throughout Japan’s time as a member of the LoN and in its participation in the Washington Conference.

1. Japan’s Relationship with the League of Nations

Attempting to address racial inequality while joining the worldstage, Japan’s entrance to and exit from the LoN proved bittersweet. Like the other great powers represented at the creation of the LoN, Japan had an agenda. A primary stated theme for the great powers was to construct an institution comprised of nations that would ensure “peace and justice throughout the world.”⁷⁷ However, Japan came to the table more concerned with addressing and achieving three primary objectives: gaining racial equality, recovering the Pacific islands formerly occupied by Germany, and establishing economic rights over Shandong Province.⁷⁸ Japanese delegates repeatedly requested to have a clause regarding racial equality admitted as part of the League Covenant. However, Japan’s delegation failed to achieve their objective regarding race equality—perhaps the most important objective because it signified “one of the motivating goals behind the political, social, and industrial changes of the Meiji period.”⁷⁹ Japan did achieve minimal foreign recognition as a great power during the peace conference, a feat that had been lacking since Japan defeated the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War, though it was not yet considered an equal power. After months of deliberation during the armistice negotiations following World War I, Japan joined the League on 10 January 1920. Some Japanese leaders and journalists were unsatisfied with the outcome and Japan’s relationship with other members of the LoN:

⁷⁶ Iriye, “Japan’s Drive to Great-Power Status,” 778–779.

⁷⁷ Thomas W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations: Empire and World Order, 1914–1938*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008, 31–33.

⁷⁸ Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations*, 60.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

It is highly doubtful that this anomalous relationship between the Orient and the Occident will be appreciably altered by the organization of the League of Nations which refuses to accept the obviously just principle that no race in the League shall be discriminated against in any of the countries bound by its covenant. As far as Asia is concerned, the League is not likely to be the harbinger of glad tidings.⁸⁰

Despite continual and concerted effort to address race equality, Japan remained a strong advocate for and a member of the LoN until it left the institution in 1933.

2. Japan and the Washington Conference

Prior to Japan leaving the LoN, tensions between Japan and international institutions emerged and were resolved only by signing multiple treaties at the Washington Conference of 1921–1922, starting with the Four-Power Treaty. The Four-Power Treaty resolved to mitigate political and military concerns not fully closed at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles. Japan, the United States, France, and Britain agreed to mutually respect each other's rights and territorial possessions in East Asia, particularly in China, and, should crisis of any sort occur in the region, to consult each other prior to taking any retaliatory actions.⁸¹ Effectively terminating the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902 set to expire in 1923, the Four-Power Treaty prevented signatory powers from entering into agreements with each other or other powers. The treaty was seen as a diplomatic success for the United States because, where the Americans saw Japan's rising military as a potential threat to U.S. colonial possessions in Asia, the Japanese could have used the Anglo-Japanese Treaty to force the British to fight Americans—though this was highly unlikely—in the event America should go to war with Japan.⁸²

⁸⁰ Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations*, 102–103.

⁸¹ Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers 1890–1990* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 62. For a well-written and very descriptive text on the formulating of the Four Power Treaty, see Chapter IX of Thomas H. Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference, 1921–1922* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1970).

⁸² Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference*, 143.

Next, the Nine-Power Treaty⁸³ addressed tensions concerning China's independence and territorial integrity. This multilateral treaty marked the "internationalization of the U.S. Open Door Policy in China."⁸⁴ Japan's footprint on the Korean peninsula and occupation of Manchuria would remain in effect while the sovereignty of Shandong would be given back to China.⁸⁵ The Nine-Power Treaty was designed to allow China the opportunity to re-establish a stable government without interference by, unequal influence from, or unequal trade opportunities for contracting powers. In addition to the Four-Power Treaty signatories above, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, and China also deliberated and signed the Nine-Power Treaty.⁸⁶

Finally, the Five-Power Treaty aimed to resolve another major source of tension, Western attempts to restrict the growth of the Japanese Navy. The Five-Power Treaty, signed by the United States, Britain, Japan, Italy, and France, highlighted the most important reason for convening the Washington Conference talks. It outlined an agreement whereby each signatory would limit its capital ship tonnage and, therefore, limit their capacity to attack each other. Initially, Japan was hesitant to sign such an agreement because it would significantly limit its expanding military and empire aspirations. However, in exchange for Japan's agreement to the proposed naval tonnage limit, Western powers would be prohibited from building naval bases in the Philippines and Hong Kong and from fortifying Pacific islands,⁸⁷ giving Japan a better sense of security in their own sphere of influence. The Five Power Treaty, also known as the Washington Naval Treaty stopped rumors about Japan and America going to war.⁸⁸

⁸³ "United States Treaties and International Agreements: 1776–1949," Library of Congress, last modified April 18, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/m-ust000002-0375.pdf>.

⁸⁴ "The Washington Naval Conference, 1921–1922," U.S. Department of State Archive, accessed January 10, 2018, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/id/88313.htm>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers 1890–1990*, 62.

⁸⁷ The tonnage limit was set at a ratio of 5:5:3:1.75:1.75 or 500,000:500,000:300,000:175,000:175,000 tons for the United States, Britain, Japan, Italy, and France respectively. See Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference*, 55; See also Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers 1890–1990*, 62–63; Kenneth Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 161.

⁸⁸ Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference*, 89.

Some leaders, however, felt the treaty was unfair, and peace was short-lived. Japan withdrew from the LoN in 1933, and, by the end of 1939, Japan ranked second in producing the world's amount of gross tonnage in shipbuilding.⁸⁹ Despite signing the treaties at the Washington Conference, many Japanese leaders "regarded them as designed to contain Japan's security goals."⁹⁰ Katō Kanji, chief aide to Japan's Naval Minister present at the Washington Conference, viewed the naval treaty as "another humiliating unequal treaty" and went so far as to declare, "As far as I am concerned, war with America starts now. We'll take revenge on her. We will!"⁹¹ Moreover, following the conclusion of the conference, Japan never received full recognition as an equal great power among powerful nations. However, the naval limitation arrangements agreed upon per the treaties legally ceded "military supremacy in the northwestern Pacific" to Japan.⁹²

Another major factor that led to Japan's withdrawal from the LoN was the Manchurian Incident. In 1931, the Japanese Guandong Army, responding to an explosion on the South Manchurian Railway supposedly caused by the Chinese, but most likely set off by the Guandong Army, fought Chinese troops in Manchuria.⁹³ The Guandong Army then proceeded to invade northern China, contrary to orders from the General Staff in Tokyo. The League sent a commission of inquiry headed by British Lord Victor Bulwer-Lytton to investigate the incident surrounding the alleged explosion on the South Manchurian Railway.⁹⁴ In the meantime, the Guandong Army created the "independent state of Manchukuo."⁹⁵ The League Secretariat, Council, and Assembly, three separate bodies within the League itself composed of both diplomats and impartial laypersons reviewed the Lytton report.⁹⁶ Despite many favorable findings for Japan by the Lytton

⁸⁹ Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers 1890–1990*, 115–16.

⁹⁰ Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 144.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 179.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹³ Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations*, 166–167.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 168–69.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹⁶ For a brief synopsis of the purpose behind each body, see Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations*, 111–119.

investigation, a Committee of Nineteen convened. The committee came to similar conclusions as the Lytton Report yet determined the “military operations of Japanese troops” in self-defense to be illegitimate.⁹⁷ The verdict caused Matsuoka Yōsuka, the Japanese emissary at the Assembly, to declare the unforgettable words,

The Japanese Government now finds itself compelled to conclude that Japan and the other Members of the League entertain different views on the manner of achieving peace in the Far East, and the Japanese Government is obliged to feel that it has now reached the limit of its endeavors to cooperate with the League of Nations in regard to the Sino-Japanese differences.⁹⁸

Japan officially withdrew from the institutions that it viewed as perhaps its best opportunity to be on apparent equal footing with the great powers of the West.⁹⁹ Then, it instead focused on expanding its sphere of influence through territorial expansion into China and the islands of Southeast Asia while also promoting nationalism by building up its military might once again.

B. CHINA’S APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

This section first examines a few primary international institutions within which China is currently involved. Then, it details OBOR in order to establish a foundation for how institutions encourage or discourage Chinese national unity. Arguably, Japan’s economic and institutional failures in the early twentieth century may have served as a guide from which China has learned not to repeat at the expense of unifying the nation. China has taken a very different approach to the international order than pre-World War II Japan. China has moved toward a more cooperative relations policy with international institutions, exerting greater economic development, national security influence in East Asia, and financial stability, paving the way forward for the OBOR initiative.

China’s approach to regional economic and security cooperation has gradually shifted since the mid-1990s. Before this shift, Beijing preferred cooperation through bilateral leader engagements, agreements, and cultural exchanges. Today, China has

⁹⁷ Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations*, 170.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

undertaken a more concerted effort to become a member of many multilateral regional institutions such as ASEAN + 1 and ASEAN + 3, APEC, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Six-Party Talks, and the ARF,¹⁰⁰ seeking to portray a more regionally aligned, cooperative, and mutually beneficial nation. More recently, President and CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping announced China would embark on the OBOR initiative, marking a drastic leap forward in international Chinese foreign policy. For a long time, China viewed multilateralism as a threat to its state sovereignty. Now, China seems to be embracing multilateralism and institution-building with open arms, indicating a willingness to work inclusively and in a variety of multinational forums. What were China's relationships to the institutions previously mentioned before the announcement of the OBOR initiative? What exactly is the OBOR initiative, and what institutions is China establishing to augment and accomplish its proposed plan? China's membership to multiple regional institutions serves as a means to discuss and coordinate political, security, and economic issues.

1. International Institutions Emphasizing Economic Cooperation

China has come to recognize the value of economic cooperation with states on its periphery. The most effective way for China to engage with its neighbors without appearing to be a threat to them is by participating in institutions that bring many nations together for the purpose of economic improvement. ASEAN and APEC are only two among many such institutions that China has eagerly joined. When China is accepted into these institutional dialogues, China is allowed to have a voice in how its neighbors interact in regional economic affairs. Without a doubt, China's geographic and population size provide incredible leverage and influence over its neighbors and the decisions each state makes individually concerning its economic interests.

¹⁰⁰ Suisheng Zhao, "China's Approaches toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia: Motivations and Calculations," in *China and East Asian Regionalism: Economic and Security Cooperation and Institution-Building* ed. Suisheng Zhao (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

a. *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) + 1 and ASEAN + 3*

Participation in ASEAN and resulting strengthening relationships have been key for both China's economic foreign policy drive and to gain regional hegemony. ASEAN officially formed August 8, 1967, and comprised of five nations, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines. Since then, ASEAN has expanded to include Brunei, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Myanmar. The primary objective for establishing an institution comprised of Southeast Asian nations was to "establish economic cooperation, politics, social and culture" and to protect mutual interests by "creating regional solidarity as well as promoting regional peace and stability."¹⁰¹ When Deng Xiaoping instituted an economic reformation in the 1980s, China opened its doors to Southeast Asian nations, encouraging them to invest in China and establish bilateral economic growth. Since then, China has taken the opportunity to utilize ASEAN + 1 and ASEAN + 3 (Japan, China, and South Korea) forums to discuss tensions between China and ASEAN members concerning fishing, sea-lanes, maritime resources, and trans-border crimes in the southeast maritime frontiers, fighting "terrorism, cross-border crimes, and transnational disease" in the southwest frontiers,¹⁰² and promoting mutual economic growth.

b. *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)*

China has explicitly built regional unity through economically-focused APEC. APEC is a trans-regional, trans-Pacific economic institution with members in both North and South America as well as Asia. Its primary purpose is to facilitate trade and economic integration, but it is often perceived as "little more than a talking-shop."¹⁰³ At the 2014 APEC forum meeting held in Beijing, President Xi Jinping boldly declared to an audience of more than 1500 business people that "the development prospect of [the Asia-Pacific] region hinges on the decisions and actions we take today. We are duty-bound to create and

¹⁰¹ Mohd Ajis, Mohamad Keling, Mohamad Saludin, Md Shuib, and Hishamudin Som, "The Development of ASEAN from Historical Approach," in *Asian Social Science* 7, no. 7 (July 2011): 172.

¹⁰² Zhao, "China's Approaches Toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia," 4.

¹⁰³ Tom Miller, *China's Asian Dream* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 2017), 24.

fulfill an Asia-Pacific dream for our people.”¹⁰⁴ In the same meeting, Xi Jinping encouraged redoubling efforts to “forge a partnership of mutual trust, inclusiveness and win-win cooperation and jointly build an open economy.”¹⁰⁵ While APEC remains an institution meant to discuss primarily topics of economic importance, China did not hesitate to include rhetoric surrounding security concerns even though there exist many forums specifically for that purpose.

2. International Institutions Emphasizing Security Cooperation

a. Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

In the last twenty years, China has increased its presence with the SCO, which has helped China drive economic development while ensuring security against terrorism. In 1996, Beijing set up the Shanghai Five Forum as a regional security association, comprised of “China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.”¹⁰⁶ Five years later, it was renamed the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and added Uzbekistan as a member.¹⁰⁷ The purpose of the SCO is primarily security focused through which chartered members “combat the ‘three evils’ of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism, but,” Miller adds, “China also views it as a vehicle for economic cooperation.”¹⁰⁸ Ethnic nationalism, which the Chinese government labels as separatism and as the “most crucially important issue involving [the] nation’s fate, development, and stability,”¹⁰⁹ has also been a central unifying theme for China and the other members of the SCO. As of 2015, the SCO expanded its membership to include both Pakistan and India.¹¹⁰ The SCO has also served as a forum for China to discuss resource management, environmental issues, and ongoing

¹⁰⁴ “Chinese President Proposed Asia-Pacific Dream,” ChinaDaily.com.cn, November 9, 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2014-11/09/content_18889698.htm.

¹⁰⁵ ChinaDaily.com.cn, “Chinese President Proposed Asia-Pacific Dream.”

¹⁰⁶ Miller, *China’s Asian Dream*, 58.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. See also Zhao, “China’s Approaches Toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia,” 10.

¹⁰⁹ Zhao, “China’s Approaches Toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia,” 4.

¹¹⁰ Pakistan and India were officially accepted and recognized as Shanghai Cooperation Organization members at the annual SCO summit in June, 2017. See “Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),” GlobalSecurity.org, August 6, 2017, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/int/sco.htm>.

instability of the Korean peninsula in the northeast frontier.¹¹¹ Unlike prewar Japan, by building relationships with neighboring nations, China is successfully increasing both economics and security, thereby bringing their country closer together.

b. Six-Party Talks

China uses international institutions to address security concerns against not only non-state actor threats, but also state actors influencing regional affairs. China's continued participation in the Six-Party Talks increases its regional influence. In August 2003, China hosted the first Six-Party Talks, comprised of China, Japan, Russia, the United States, North Korea, and South Korea. The institution was established to address the "second North Korean nuclear crisis" when North Korean First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Sok-Ju admitted to U.S. officials that they had a "highly enriched uranium programme," which violated the 1994 Agreed Framework pact signed by both Pyongyang and Washington.¹¹² China's initial participation and mediation in the institution reflected that of an observer rather than active participant. However, since the Six-Party Talks in 2005, China has participated more actively, using the forum as an opportunity for its leaders to "shape a new security architecture in East Asia," thus partially satisfying their security-related goals.¹¹³ Today, both Beijing and Washington view this institution as the "best venue to deal with North Korea's behavior."¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the Six-Party Talks, as a security institution for Northeast Asia, has served as a forum to greatly improve relations between Japan, China, and South Korea. Maintaining a stable security environment is a primary step in permitting China the ability to focus on economic growth that OBOR is expected to achieve, and providing Chinese citizens with rising standards of living.

¹¹¹ Zhao, "China's Approaches Toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia," 4.

¹¹² Ramon P. Pardo, "China and Northeast Asia's Regional Security Architecture: The Six-Party Talks as a Case of Chinese Regime-Building?" in *East Asia* (2012), 341.

¹¹³ Pardo, "China and Northeast Asia's Regional Security Architecture," 338.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 342.

c. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)

In addition to the Six-Party Talks, China also participates in the ARF to address regional security, which is a larger forum comprised of ten additional countries. From a realist perspective, ASEAN established the ARF in 1994 in order to “create the conditions for a stable balance of power.”¹¹⁵ However, constructivists view the ARF from a norm-oriented framework whereby “participants seek regional peace and cooperation.”¹¹⁶ The ARF provides an avenue for regional states to “pursue a security dialogue without assuming any friend-enemy relation”¹¹⁷ and remains a forum for “an informal approach toward regional security consultation for its member states to exchange information through dialogue, build confidence, signal concerns, and issue public statements of agreement on their lowest common objectives.”¹¹⁸ China’s participation in this second regional security forum demonstrates its intent to truly seek cooperative relationships in the region so as to deter security threats in order to pursue greater economic growth opportunities.

¹¹⁵ Hiro Katsumata, “Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum: Constructing a ‘Talking Shop’ or a ‘Norm Brewery’?,” in *The Pacific Review* 19, no. 2 (2006): 184, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512740500473197>.

¹¹⁶ Katsumata, “Establishment of the ASEAN Regional Forum,” 195.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

¹¹⁸ Zhao, “China’s Approaches Toward Regional Cooperation in East Asia,” 14-15.

3. One Belt, One Road Initiative

The plan for OBOR mirrors the old Silk Road (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. One Belt, One Road¹¹⁹

China's concerted efforts to demonstrate its willingness to cooperate through multiple multi-national institutions prepared the way for the announcement of the OBOR initiative with minimum pushback or objection from regional Asian states. The OBOR initiative emphasizes a strategic transformation in China's economic development model, forcing China to work closely with other countries, particularly those along its periphery, and "forge a 'community of shared destiny' in Asia."¹²⁰ Speaking at the February 2010 Munich Security Conference, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi stated:

A more developed China will undertake more international responsibilities and will never pursue self interests at the expense of the interests of others. We know full well that in this interdependent world, China's future is

¹¹⁹ Source: "One Belt One Road (OBOR)," digital image, Colón de Carvajal Spain Grandall Law Firm, last modified March 23, 2017, <https://colondecarvajal.com/en/one-belt-one-road-obor>.

¹²⁰ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 11.

closely linked to that of the world. Our own interests and those of others are best served when we work together to expand common interests, share responsibilities and seek win-win outcomes. That is why while focusing on its own development, China is undertaking more and more international responsibilities commensurate with its strength and status.¹²¹

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping's ascension to the highest political position within the CCP, China's foreign policy approach shifted from former President Deng Xiaoping's "maintain a 'low profile' abroad" strategy to Xi's new "going out" strategy.¹²²

The OBOR initiative was first highlighted as two separate projects. In September and October of 2013, while visiting Central and Southeast Asia, President Xi announced China's "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" initiatives as propositions to promote joint economic prosperity and regional economic cooperation, to "strengthen exchanges and mutual learning between different civilizations," and to "promote world peace and development."¹²³ Collectively, the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st-Century Maritime Silk Road" have been interchangeably referred to as the OBOR initiative as well as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As China's plans for the twin projects developed, Beijing opted to simplify, labeling them under a single moniker, "One Belt, One Road" (yidai yilu).¹²⁴

The "Silk Road Economic Belt" is comparable to the historic Silk Road trade routes that linked together Asia, Europe, and Africa more than two millennia ago. It aims to establish a series of three new land-based transport infrastructures and industrial corridors that span Central Asia, Europe, and the Middle East: the China-Central Asia-West Asia,

¹²¹ Yang Jiechi, "A Changing China in a Changing World," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, February 5, 2010, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t656781.shtml.

¹²² Christopher K. Johnson, *President Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road" Initiative: A Practical Assessment of the Chinese Communist Party's Roadmap for China's Global Resurgence* (Washington, DC: CSIS, March 2016), https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/160328_Johnson_PresidentXiJinping_Web.pdf.

¹²³ "Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative," The State Council: The People's Republic of China, March 30, 2015, http://english.gov.cn/archive/publications/2015/03/30/content_281475080249035.htm.

¹²⁴ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 30.

China-Mongolia-Russia, and China-Indochina Peninsula economic corridors.¹²⁵ While the “Silk Road Economic Belt” is expected to connect China with the nations of Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and potentially Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, and Syria, China claims the OBOR initiative will eventually bridge at least sixty-seven nations.¹²⁶

The “21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” concentrates on establishing two economic trade corridors by sea, the “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” and the “Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor.”¹²⁷ In a speech given to the Indonesian Parliament on October 2, 2013, Xi Jinping announced his desire to strengthen China-ASEAN cooperation through a joint effort of building the “Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century...for the benefit of common development and prosperity.”¹²⁸ If China succeeds in connecting these nations, then the world could expect to see another Sino-centric pan-Asia region similar to what existed centuries ago. At the very least, OBOR should strengthen Chinese national unity as these trade routes encourage cultural exchanges, economic business, and strengthen Chinese soft power.

The greater purpose that Beijing put forth was for all nations involved with the OBOR initiative to “move toward the objectives of mutual benefit and common security.”¹²⁹ In addition to goals of mutual benefit and common security, China claims

¹²⁵ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 12; The State Council: The People's Republic of China, “Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative.” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China summarized President Xi Jinping's speech, titled “Promote People-to-People Friendship and Create a Better Future,” that he gave at Kazakhstan's Nazarbayev University on September 7, 2013, and where Xi first referenced building the Silk Road Economic Belt project. See “President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, September 7, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpfwzysiesgjtfhshzzfh_665686/t1076334.shtml.

¹²⁶ The State Council: The People's Republic of China, “Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative.” See also Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 31. Miller highlights a rough sketch of the “Belt and Road” on page 22.

¹²⁷ The State Council: The People's Republic of China, “Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative.”

¹²⁸ “Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Indonesian Parliament,” ASEAN-China Centre, October 3, 2013, http://www.asean-china-center.org/english/201310/03/c_133062675.htm.

¹²⁹ The State Council: The People's Republic of China, “Full Text: Action Plan on the Belt and Road Initiative.”

OBOR is designed to improve equality, inclusivity, mutual learning, and cooperation.¹³⁰ In anticipation of the many complexities and requirements necessary to achieve the OBOR initiative, China has engaged international institutions more frequently and initiated the organization of additional institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa (BRICS) New Development Bank (NDB).

4. Financial Institutions Supporting OBOR

a. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

Two primary banks support OBOR: the AIIB and BRICS NDB. AIIB provides China with an additional avenue for international cooperation and influence. In October 2014, representatives from twenty-one nations signed a memorandum of understanding, officially creating the AIIB with Beijing being the natural choice to headquarter the financial institution.¹³¹ The intent behind creating the AIIB is to provide an international financial institution that funds development and infrastructure projects across Asia, especially those projects aimed at connecting China's OBOR. Apart from financing OBOR, the AIIB is also expected to "benefit developing Asian countries that lack infrastructure funds."¹³² According to Xiao, the establishment of AIIB resulted from China's economic foreign policy shift in three areas: "changes in trade and investment relations are taking place from previously absorbing foreign direct investment and exporting manufactured goods to investing more overseas today," "China's private capital and domestic industries are being prompted...to 'go out' further together," and "throughout the implementation of the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative, the coastal industries, supported by the AIIB and the Silk Road Fund, are increasingly shifting to China's middle and western regions and looking for markets in Central Asia and the Middle East."¹³³ While

¹³⁰ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 30–31.

¹³¹ Ren Xiao, "China as an Institution-Builder: The Case of the AIIB," in *The Pacific Review* 29, no. 3 (2016): 437, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2016.1154678>.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Xiao, "China as an Institution-Builder," 440.

AIIB is intended to be a mutually beneficial institution, China may benefit more because the AIIB could act as a forum for internationalizing the Chinese Renminbi (RMB)¹³⁴ much like the Euro and the U.S. dollar. As the AIIB takes root and grows, it is likely that China's influence will further expand internationally through lending financial support for underdeveloped projects outside the scope of OBOR.

b. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) New Development Bank (NDB)

As an international financial institution (IFI), the BRICS NDB provides China with an alternative source to AIIB for financing the many projects for OBOR. The BRICS NDB emerged in 2015 as a “commitment towards greater institutionalisation [sic]” and “convergence towards shared interest.”¹³⁵ At the BRICS New Delhi Summit in 2012, participating countries were concerned with the lagging response of Western-led IFIs, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, to the Eurozone crisis, a faltering global economic recovery, and “mounting concerns about sustainable development and climate change.”¹³⁶ They declared at the Delhi Summit:

We therefore call for a more representative international financial architecture with an increase in the voice and representation of developing countries and the establishment and improvement of a just international monetary system that can serve the interests of all countries and support the development of emerging and developing economies.¹³⁷

The NDB was, thereafter, conceived and subsequently established as an international banking institution “geared towards responding to a deficient international monetary system.”¹³⁸ China's association with the BRICS NDB will strengthen its ability to reach out and influence other developing countries and emerging economies while at the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 441.

¹³⁵ Mzukisi Qobo and Mills Soko, “The Rise of Emerging Powers in the Global Development Finance Architecture: The Case of the BRICS and the New Development Bank,” in *South African Journal of International Affairs* 22, no. 3 (2015): 279, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2015.1089785>.

¹³⁶ Qobo and Soko, “The Rise of Emerging Powers,” 279–280.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 280.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 281.

same time reinforcing multilateral cooperation through infrastructure development. Additionally, the establishment of these two IFIs has led to China's Yuan to officially be recognized as an internationally exchanged currency.

C. CONCLUSION

In an attempt to be acknowledged a member of great power nations, early modern Japan adapted the Western imperialist model and immediately focused on building a modern military. Japan wanted to show Western nations that it, too, was a great power because of its territorial expansion and defeat of superior militaries. However, rather than receive praise for its accomplishments, Japan was treated with scorn. Integration with the LoN and participation in the Washington Conference sparked resentment between Japan and Western nations because the latter appeared hypocritical in their actions toward the former and tried to contain Japanese imperialism. Integration with international institutions failed to strengthen Japanese nationalism. This, in turn, resulted in Japan turning its back on international institutions and following ethnic and racial paths to nationalism, bringing their people together but internationally isolating. Japan turned to an isolationist approach to boost national unity while its growing military served as the chief cornerstone for unifying the nation. Thus, they entered WWII with feelings of racial scorn, a strong military and untied populace, and a sense of international isolation.

China's approach to strengthening national unity, on the other hand, has occurred through an entirely different manner than Japan's. While both China and Japan engaged international institutions as a means for building or expanding national identity, Japan failed to engage with neighboring nations in a cooperative way as it extended national influence throughout Asia. China, however, is well on its way to project greater influence not only within the Asia-Pacific region, but also in reaching out as far as the Middle East, the Baltic States, and into Africa through its OBOR initiative. Since the 1980s, China has progressively married up with multilateral institutions. It has exhibited a greater willingness to position itself in relations that are more cooperative and exert greater economic development and national security influence in East Asia. China's influence extends beyond economic cooperation as it anticipates providing improved and alternative

financial stability for developing countries. Whereas Japan withdrew from international institutions and turned to an independent, autarkic development of national unity, considering themselves racially superior to all other races, China has continued to draw closer to its neighbors through cooperation, positioning themselves as a unifying people with a strong military, strong economy, and international cooperation.

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III. JAPANESE AND CHINESE APPROACHES TO NATION-BUILDING

Chapter II compared Japan's rise and ties to the military to China's rise and its ties to the economy by analyzing each country's relationship with international institutions. This chapter examines how the Japanese saw themselves and what role Japan's culture and military played in determining Japan's approach to nation-building in the early twentieth century. Drawing from various international responses to Japanese and Chinese national policies, this chapter, then, examines how great powers, such as the United States and Japan's colonies, particularly Korea, responded to Japan's approach to nation-building. Subsequently, this chapter discusses China's understanding of the One Belt, One Road (OBOR). Contemporary Chinese nationalism is following the same path as Japan's militaristic expansionist ethno-nationalism, only, instead of a militaristic expansionist path, China has chosen path of economic expansionist ethno-nationalism. Apparently, China sees OBOR as promoting regional security and economic cooperation, mutual trust, mutual tolerance, and stimulating nationalism. Some countries support OBOR because they see OBOR as a step in the right direction for promoting regional trade, financial growth, and regional economic development. Other countries are less supportive because China's plans for OBOR remain somewhat opaque and because some expected infrastructure routes may ignite current tensions where sovereignty and territorial integrity is in dispute.

A comparative historical analysis of rising hegemon can show whether nationalism drives power and foreign policy, and, if so, what results. For example, Japan's ethnic nationalism strengthened from the turn of the twentieth century and throughout the following four decades. Japan's military played a leading role in engendering that nationalist identity. Japan's growing nationalism ultimately led to confrontation with Western nations because of racism and ill-understood ethnic differences. Like Sandra Wilson, I believe Japan pursued nation-building more aggressively through its military. As a relatively new modern state, Japan was following the example of prominent and powerful Western states. Because Western powers had acquired territories throughout Asia, Japan saw it as perfectly normal to do the same, and, therefore, built up its military. As Japan's

military grew and was checked by two major wars against superior foes, Japan was able to unify its people. Japan's nation-building expanded further as it acquired land on the mainland Asia, specifically the Korean peninsula and Manchuria.

China, on the other hand, has relied less on its military for expanding national-unity. Instead, China is using soft power to drive its nationalist goals. China's goals for OBOR are far-reaching and include placing greater emphasis on mutual cooperation between China and many of its neighboring states, as well as addressing regional and national security threats. Regional institutions like ASEAN, and countries, such as Russia and Pakistan, have largely praised OBOR and its purpose. At the same time, however, countries like Germany, Uzbekistan, and India have shown mixed and even opposing reactions.

A. JAPAN AMONG MODERN NATIONS

Western nations greatly influenced Japan's transition to becoming a modern state. Perhaps one of the greatest influences the West had on Japan was the change that occurred through its governing power and military. However, change is often difficult to cope with and for many Japanese it was not accepted. The fall of the old Shogunate order and rise of the new Meiji order convinced Daimyō leaders to "voluntarily surrender their lands back to the emperor."¹³⁹ Surrendering their lands to the emperor abrogated former obeisance of the land workers to the Daimyō leaders, dictating from that point forward that all people and land had become subject to the emperor's rule.¹⁴⁰ Without the Daimyō leadership structure, Japan organized a new national way to preserve and defend its people and culture from the threat "posed by the encircling Western powers," creating a "modern, legal state of its own."¹⁴¹ In other words, fear of Western nation-states motivated Japan to modernize in a way that would establish national unity. Kido Takayoshi, an early leader of the Meiji Restoration, explains well the need for a modern Japanese state when he declared:

¹³⁹ Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan*, 63.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Tetsuo Najita, "Japanese Revolt Against the West: Political and Cultural Criticism in the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6, The Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter Duus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 716.

There is an urgent need for Japan to become strong enough militarily to take a stand against the Western powers. As long as our country is lacking in military power, the law of nations is not to be trusted. When dealing with those who are weak, the strong nations often invoke public law but really calculate their own gain. Thus, it seems to me that the law of nations is merely a tool for the conquest of the weak.¹⁴²

As can be expected during times of great governmental change, not everyone supported the new Meiji constitution. Kita Ikki believed only through violent confrontation would Japan be able to cleanse the bureaucratic leadership to rid the nation from “Western political institutions and economic practices,” thus enabling the “people’s emperor” to truly lead a state of communalism and eradicate the “darkness spread over Asia by the Versailles Treaty.”¹⁴³ Not only would confrontation be required to change domestic politics, but it would also be imminent in addressing the foreign threat of Western encroachment in Asia. Prophetically, Kita believed it would take a “conclusive naval confrontation” between Japan and the West to force the West out of Asia and secure Japan’s sphere of influence.¹⁴⁴ The fact that many Japanese felt enslaved to the “corrosive influence of the West” is evidenced by several attempted political assassinations and coups in the early 1930s.¹⁴⁵

Japan’s nationalist expansionism strongly incorporated the country’s militaristic education curriculum to align with its foreign policy. During the Russo-Japanese War, for example, school subjects such as science, math, ethics, and Japanese language stressed patriotism and the war. Classes were required to discuss topics such as “the meaning of the imperial edict declaring war, the imperial edict on the course of the war, the exploits of valiant Japan and our valiant military men, the special behavior expected of children during the war, and the duty of military service,” “the imperial edicts related to war, articles about the war situation, letters to and from soldiers at the front,” “calculations about military matters,” and “general information about searchlights, wireless communication, land mines, and torpedoes, submarines, military dirigibles, Shimose explosives, military carrier

¹⁴² Masao Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 143.

¹⁴³ Najita, “Japanese Revolt Against the West,” 717–22.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 721.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 716.

pigeons, heavy cannon, mortars, machine guns, the Arisaka cannon, and military sanitation.”¹⁴⁶ Not only did military matters inundate the classrooms, but also military physical training was instituted as part of the core curriculum.¹⁴⁷ While these subjects implanted intellectually painted masterpieces in the minds of schoolchildren, military songs sung by the populace provided an emotional glue that would bind the people together when confronted with conflict over the next four decades.

Japan’s military was central to its nationalism. After leaving the League of Nations in the early 1930s, Japan entered a period of international isolation. Politicians turned to the military for solving peripheral problems, such as repressing the rising Chinese nationalism in Manchuria. Additionally, the Manchurian Incident initiated a “rapid military build-up” and led to an imperial “war fever” in which popular culture promoted militarization.¹⁴⁸ Media and news outlets voluntarily produced material for military and government propagandists, thus gaining public support for the military occupation in Northeast China.¹⁴⁹ Media, combined with racism against Chinese during and after the Sino-Japanese War,¹⁵⁰ and the success and sacrifice of men in two significant wars spanning a decade aided in unifying the people and placing militarism at the center of Japanese nationalism.¹⁵¹ An attitude of Asian superiority prevailed throughout the nation and extended out to the colonies.

Civilian writers like Ikezaki Tadakata reinforced military leaders’ thought and expansionist ideology. In 1929, Ikezaki wrote, “It is well known that Japan’s overpopulation grows more serious every year. Where should we find an outlet for these millions?...[T]he only remaining area is the Asian mainland. Moreover, Japan’s claim to the region is written in the blood and treasure of two wars.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ Saburo Ienaga, *The Pacific War, 1931–1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 23–24.

¹⁴⁷ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 27–28.

¹⁴⁸ Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 55.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁵⁰ Ienaga, *The Pacific War*, 6–7.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

1. Centrality of Ethnicity to National Understanding

The Japanese traditionally regarded themselves to be a superior race to foreigners. From the institution of the Meiji government and constitution through the expanding empire of the 1930s and 1940s, Japanese leaders made it a point to incorporate racial doctrines of superiority. This ideology is first reflected in Shinto orthodoxy and Japan's leaders "believed that Shinto rituals and symbols could be useful tools for...uniting the people with a common creed."¹⁵³ The emperor was also believed to be a direct blood descendant of Shinto gods. Thus, there existed "an unbroken lineage reaching back to the very beginning of the foundation of the [nation]."¹⁵⁴ Then, as Japan acquired the colonies of Korea and Taiwan, the Japanese "attempted to force racial assimilation [upon the natives] through coercive diffusion of Japanese language, Japanese names, and shrine Shinto."¹⁵⁵ A classified report consisting of nearly four thousand pages, entitled "An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Race as Nucleus," and produced by the Population and Race Section of the Research Bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, depicted in great detail the "rationale behind policies that were actually adopted toward other races and nationalities."¹⁵⁶ According to the classified report, Japan intended to "establish permanent dominance over all other races and peoples in Asia—in accordance with their needs, and as befitted their destiny as a superior race."¹⁵⁷ Ethnic and racial superiority, therefore, initially drove modern Japan's approach to nation-building and national unity. It was the military and militarism, however, which enforced the policy that would strengthen Japanese unity and nationalism among the people.

Coinciding with Japanese militarism and expansionism, the Japanese government propagated the importance of colonizing. In an effort to promote racial expansionism, the emigration movement "became the latest imperative in an already multifaceted colonial

¹⁵³ Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 67.

¹⁵⁴ Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 8.

¹⁵⁵ Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 365.

¹⁵⁶ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 263.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 264.

mission that embraced Taiwan, Korea, the Pacific Islands, and China.”¹⁵⁸ Ministers of colonization inspired the Japanese people to “Go! Go and colonize the continent! For the development of the Yamato race, to build the new order in Asia!”¹⁵⁹ Hence, there was no shame emigrating to the colonies in the name of patriotism. Instead, those who did so would be viewed as “soldiers of the hoe” destined to seed the empire with the racial spirit of the Yamato people.”¹⁶⁰

2. Korea’s Perception of Japan

As could be expected from any non-native colony, Japan’s attempt to forcefully assimilate Koreans was not well received by many Koreans. Koreans defied Japanese colonial rule through both overt and covert actions. In late 1939, the Japanese government issued the Name Order whereby Koreans were forced to change their names to a Japanese one.¹⁶¹ Names that were changed, however, secretly held relevance to identity such as where Koreans lived or what their heritage was.¹⁶² Koreans were forced to conduct daily worship at Japanese Shinto shrines.¹⁶³ Some would go to the Shinto shrines, but not bow. Following the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, Koreans quickly burned many of the shrines.¹⁶⁴ To avoid being mobilized as “comfort women,” or sex slaves serving Japanese Imperial troops, many young female Koreans would get married, hide with their families, or simply run away.¹⁶⁵ Some Koreans organized underground church meetings, would pretend to be compliant with Japanese orders, but do shoddy work, while others would work at a slower and inefficient pace. Still, other Koreans covertly hid national flags.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁸ Young, *Japan’s Total Empire*, 364.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Michael Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 74.

¹⁶² Hildi Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella: Voices from Colonial Korea, 1910–1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 117–122.

¹⁶³ Kang, *Under the Black Umbrella*, 111–115.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 147.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 130–35.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 147.

Japan's attempt to spread Japanese nationalism and unify the Korean colony through forced assimilation failed miserably in the end. Following the defeat of Japan in WWII, both North and South Korea banned Japanese films, videos, and books.¹⁶⁷ Rather than achieve Japanese national unity on the Korean peninsula, with each act of opposition to Japanese rule, Koreans fomented a sense of their own nationalism that carried them through the thirty-five years of oppressive foreign colonialism.

3. Western Perception of the Japanese

Many people found the Japanese people and their culture difficult to understand. By several Western accounts, Japan was a unique nation. According to American anthropologist, John Embree, "Japan and the Japanese are different from other nations, or rather, as Japanese nationalists phrase it, they are 'unique among the peoples and cultures of the world.'"¹⁶⁸ English officer Compton Pakenham described Japan as "an absolutely unique nation...utterly different from any other in the world."¹⁶⁹ U.S. military officers describe the Japanese as "strange, inscrutable, and peculiar," and who "neither look, think, nor act like other people on earth."¹⁷⁰ WWII journalist Ernie Pyle reported "the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman and repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches and mice."¹⁷¹ Not fully understanding the Japanese people and their culture naturally intimidated Western powers because they were different and because Westerners seemed to be uncertain of what Japanese people's true intentions were when they would interact with them.

Until the 1930s, Western powers dictated Japanese diplomacy in an effort to contain Japan. American leaders regarded Japanese immigration to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century as an extension of Japanese imperialism. Therefore, lawmakers instituted the California Alien Land Law of 1913, "limiting leases of agricultural lands to

¹⁶⁷ Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea*, 79.

¹⁶⁸ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 95.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 78.

maximum terms of three years and barring further land purchases by Japanese aliens.”¹⁷² In addition, American President Woodrow Wilson opposed Japanese territorial claims in China and his Fourteen Points proclamation at Versailles about self-determination seemed to apply “only to Japan’s wartime acquisition of Shandong.”¹⁷³ Great powers allowed Japan to enter the League of Nations (LoN), but used the LoN as a means to constrain Japan from “overt aggression and militaristic expansion in China.”¹⁷⁴

Because some American leaders viewed Japan as a competitor in the Far East, Washington also convened the Washington Conference where Japan agreed to sign naval treaties that were designed to eliminate any form of a “naval race in capital ships that could threaten American interests in the Pacific.”¹⁷⁵ Some Western historians credit Japanese foreign policy in the 1930s as “a search for freedom of action in East Asia from an international order dominated by the United States and Britain.”¹⁷⁶ At the same time, other military and professional observers believed Japan and its military to be “no better than a class-C nation.”¹⁷⁷

Japan approached nation-building with a vigor and determination to quickly gain equality with Western powers. To achieve this parity, Japan focused a vast amount of energy in building up its military. It embedded a militaristic nationalist ideology within its educational system and incorporated Shinto ideas of racial superiority with government policy. Japan’s obsession to be recognized as a first-class nation and equal among great powers, along with its goal of hegemony in East Asia, threatened Western power and influence in the region and drove them to take actions that would check Japanese imperialism.

¹⁷² Pyle, *Japan Rising*, 133.

¹⁷³ Elise K. Tipton, *Modern Japan: A Social and Political History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 120.

¹⁷⁴ Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 119.

¹⁷⁵ Buckley, *The United States and the Washington Conference*, 185.

¹⁷⁶ Tipton, *Modern Japan*, 123.

¹⁷⁷ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 98.

B. CHINA'S RISE IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Unlike Japan's militaristic approach to national unity and nation building, China is spreading nationalism mainly through economic expansionism. Since becoming President of the CCP in 2012, Xi Jinping has placed an enormous amount of focus on elevating China's status so that it may once again take its place among great powers. This means building up its military might and ensuring nationalism amongst a population made up of more than fifty ethnic groups. In turn, China therefore needs to develop its economy because a "powerful economy will pay for the strong military required for self-defense."¹⁷⁸ Recently, developing China's economy has become synonymous with Xi's national vision to realize the "China Dream."¹⁷⁹ China's OBOR initiative is perhaps the most ambitious strategy and tool being used for spreading nationalism. In the end, the "China Dream," if successful, will create a network of roads, rails, and sea lanes uniting the people of China together and connecting surrounding and distant nations with "all roads literally leading back to China."¹⁸⁰

1. China's One Belt, One Road Plan

Beijing appears transparent regarding OBOR's purpose. On October 2, 2013, President Xi Jinping, addressing the Indonesian Parliament, declared that the mission behind OBOR, then referred to collectively as the "Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century"¹⁸¹ and the "Silk Road Economic Belt,"¹⁸² was five-fold: to "build trust and develop good-neighborliness," "work for win-win cooperation," "stand together and assist each other," "enhance mutual understanding and friendship," and to "stick to openness and inclusiveness."¹⁸³ The OBOR initiative will help promote "national

¹⁷⁸ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ Johnson, *President Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road" Initiative*, V.

¹⁸⁰ Miller, *China's Asian Dream*, 18.

¹⁸¹ ASEAN-China Centre, "Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Indonesian Parliament."

¹⁸² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech."

¹⁸³ ASEAN-China Centre, "Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Indonesian Parliament."

rejuvenation...cementing the country's place as a leading world power"¹⁸⁴ as China overcomes economic and national challenges. President Xi later articulated that OBOR will "gradually form overall regional cooperation," creating a region where neighboring nations will "share peace and development as long as they persist in unity and mutual trust, equality and mutual benefit, mutual tolerance and learning from each other, as well as cooperation and win-win outcomes."¹⁸⁵ Chinese Vice Premier, Zhang Gaoli, reiterated Xi's OBOR vision at the 2017 Media Cooperation Forum, attended by media personnel representing 126 nations, and the positive role media could play in "promoting [OBOR's] essence and spirit."¹⁸⁶ OBOR will enhance trade flow across Asia, Europe, and Africa, stimulating regional economic growth and development. At the same time, OBOR will "upgrad[e] Chinese industry while exporting Chinese standards."¹⁸⁷

Beijing claims building OBOR will help minimize national security threats and bring more stability to poverty-stricken regions across China.¹⁸⁸ For example, in Xinjiang province, radical Islamism continues to spread and is the primary source of terrorism in China,¹⁸⁹ making it more difficult to ensure the safety of workers building OBOR infrastructure. However, Lu Shuling, former Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, asserted that the "construction of the Port of Gwadar is economically vital for landlocked Xinjiang" because it will "significantly reduce the transport costs for the province" and "tackl[e] the

¹⁸⁴ Johnson, *President Xi Jinping's "Belt and Road" Initiative*, V.

¹⁸⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech."

¹⁸⁶ "China Appreciates Pakistan's Support Promoting BRI: Chinese Vice Premier," Pakistan Today, September 22, 2017, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/22/china-appreciates-pakistans-support-promoting-bri-chinese-vice-premier>.

¹⁸⁷ Peter Cai, "Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative" (Sydney, Australia: Lowy Institute for International Policy, March 2017), <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/understanding-belt-and-road-initiative>.

¹⁸⁸ According to Isaac Kfir, "China is affected by economic inequality, as 5.6% of its rural population (around 70 million people) lives in extreme poverty (China's official poverty line is about US\$1 a day) and minimum wages in many Chinese cities are insufficient to meet basic living expenses." See Isaac Kfir, *Understanding the BRI in Africa and the Middle East* (Australia: ASPI Strategic Insights, February 2018), <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2018-02/SI125%20Understanding%20the%20BRI%20in%20Africa%20and%20Middle%20East13-2.pdf?maRcYxXnVOeHSfGUdS12r71QRjx6hbjk>.

¹⁸⁹ Cai, *Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative*.

incubator of terrorism, namely poverty.”¹⁹⁰ If OBOR helps decrease threats to national security caused by terrorism, then the Chinese in those poverty-stricken regions will more likely support further OBOR developmental projects in forthcoming years that unite China and its people.

China claims that the OBOR initiative is not a ploy to gain regional hegemony. In fact, China denies seeking hegemony, which it views as a “colonialist enterprise pursued only by devilish foreigners.”¹⁹¹ On September 3, 2015, in his address given at the Commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, President Xi stated that “no matter how much stronger it may become, China will never seek hegemony or expansion.”¹⁹² China’s actions, however, seem to contradict Xi’s words. Billions of dollars have been invested in economic infrastructure construction projects throughout South and Southeast Asia, such as in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Indonesia.¹⁹³ Additionally, China recently built its “first ever overseas military base in Djibouti” and conducted “live-fire drills in the surrounding sands under the banner of peacekeeping missions.”¹⁹⁴ Building infrastructure, especially ports, in key foreign nations in Africa and South and Southeast Asia will provide China with greater regional maritime control and security.

Apart from building national unity, some people and organizations see investing in OBOR wise while other do not. For foreign businesses, OBOR is expected to be a lucrative golden opportunity. For example, Siemens “won a US\$1 billion order from China’s Shandong Electric Power Construction 3rd Company (SEPCOIII) for the construction of a

¹⁹⁰ Cai, *Understanding China’s Belt and Road Initiative*.

¹⁹¹ Miller, *China’s Asian Dream*, 19.

¹⁹² “Full Text: Xi’s Speech at Commemoration of 70th Anniversary of War Victory,” China Daily, September 3, 2015, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2015victoryanniv/2015-09/03/content_21783362.htm.

¹⁹³ “China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Regional Outlooks for 2018,” Global Risk Insights, January 31, 2018, <https://globalriskinsights.com/2018/01/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-regional-outlooks-for-2018>.

¹⁹⁴ Global Risk Insights, “China’s Belt and Road Initiative.”

combined cycle power plant at the Ras Al-Khair Plant in Saudi Arabia.”¹⁹⁵ Researchers Yeroen van der Leer and Joshua Yau assert that another reason for investing in OBOR is because China is seeking official recognition by the IMF of the Renminbi as a global reserve currency.¹⁹⁶ President Xi has indicated that US\$50 billion would be “directed at encouraging financial institutions to expand their overseas [R]enminbi fund businesses.”¹⁹⁷ If this is true, then OBOR most definitely has opened the door for realizing official recognition of the Renminbi as a global reserve currency. While OBOR is perceived as an enormous infrastructure development program, another possibility is that OBOR is more realistically being used as a vehicle for driving Chinese “economic leverage abroad and exporting its strong infrastructure development capabilities to other regions.”¹⁹⁸ Still, others believe OBOR is the means to an end for strengthening China’s military. Despite Xi’s announcement to reduce military forces by 300,000,¹⁹⁹ China continues to build manmade islands in the SCS containing Air Defense structures and military force projection capabilities.

2. Response of International Actors to OBOR

China has received enormous international support for developing land and sea routes connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. The majority of ASEAN members encourage supporting OBOR. Members of ASEAN see OBOR as a means to strengthening the relationship between ASEAN and China. OBOR will also complement ASEAN’s Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) initiative to promote trade and investment, build infrastructure projects, as well as “remove trade barriers and create job

¹⁹⁵ Yeroen van der Leer and Joshua Yau, “China’s New Silk Road,” PwC’s Growth Market Centre, February, 2016, <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/growth-markets-center/assets/pdf/china-new-silk-route.pdf>.

¹⁹⁶ van der Leer and Yau, “China’s New Silk Route.”

¹⁹⁷ Hdeel Abdelhady, “How China’s One Belt One Road Will Open Trade Routes and Raise Barriers to U.S. Law,” MassPoint PLLC, May 14 2017, <http://masspointpllc.com/china-one-belt-one-road-us-legal-dominance>.

¹⁹⁸ van der Leer and Yau, “China’s New Silk Route.”

¹⁹⁹ China Daily, “Full Text: Xi’s Speech at Commemoration of 70th Anniversary of War Victory.”

opportunities.”²⁰⁰ Even though OBOR is expected to make China a greater regional and global power, ASEAN anticipates support for OBOR will “enable China to get connected and gain access into ASEAN markets, and vice-versa,”²⁰¹ thereby enhancing regional economic growth and development.

Along the sea route for OBOR, the island state of Sri Lanka plays a strategically important role. Thousands of merchant ships and oil tankers have used Sri Lankan ports for centuries as a stopping point when traveling to and from Arabia and East Asia. Because Sri Lanka’s foreign policy revolves around the motto “friends with all, enemies with none,”²⁰² Sri Lankan foreign minister Ravi Karunanayake proudly supports the OBOR initiative. That support may also have much to do with the fact that Sri Lanka needs foreign direct investment and China is more than willing to provide it. China’s investment to build up the port at Hambantota should bring the Sri Lankan government a profitable tax revenue.²⁰³ Subsequently, Hambantota will become a “major source of employment” and “drive enormous growth in trade volumes” because of lowered prices and improved supply chains.²⁰⁴

Following the trade route back up to the subcontinent, Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, speaking at the World Economic Forum on January 24, 2018, expressed how OBOR is “much more than just an infrastructure partnership.”²⁰⁵ For Pakistan, OBOR will provide “financial stability and lessening of environmental impact

²⁰⁰ Premalatha Jayaraman, “OBOR Initiative to Complement RCEP,” *The ASEAN Post*, last updated August 24, 2017, <https://theaseanpost.com/article/obor-initiative-complement-rcep>.

²⁰¹ Premalatha Jayaraman, “OBOR Initiative to Complement RCEP.”

²⁰² Elizabeth Roche, “Sri Lanka Defends Decision to Join China’s One Belt One Road Project,” *Livemint*, last modified June 8, 2017, <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/lZg4QfnterSduhYaIbP9sJ/Sri-Lanka-defends-decision-to-join-Chinas-Obor-project.html>.

²⁰³ Peter Fuhman, “China-Owned Port in Sri Lanka Could Alter Trade Routes,” *China First Capital* in *Financial Times*, last updated September 25, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/f0d88070-9f99-11e7-9a86-4d5a475ba4c5>.

²⁰⁴ Peter Fuhman, “China-Owned Port in Sri Lanka.”

²⁰⁵ “Belt and Road Initiative Much More Than Infra Partnership with China: Pakistan PM,” *Moneycontrol.com*, January 25, 2018, <http://www.moneycontrol.com/news/world/belt-and-road-initiative-much-more-than-infra-partnership-with-china-pakistan-pm-2490313.html>.

and Pakistan being a more responsible global citizen.”²⁰⁶ At a one-day seminar conference held in Kathmandu earlier this year, Dr Rajesh Kazi Shrestha, President of Nepal China Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stated that “[Nepal is] eager to welcome investment under the Belt and Road Initiative in various possible sectors like hydropower, agriculture, trade-related infrastructure, tourism, herbs and herbal products, natural resources and service sectors.”²⁰⁷ China has also managed to take on major port and fast-train rail projects in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

China’s economic outreach stretches along its northern and western borders as well. Despite OBOR projects appearing to remain limited primarily to Russia’s southern periphery, Moscow, and St. Petersburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly advocated his belief in Beijing’s economic initiative. Following a nationally televised appearance mid-2017, Putin told reporters he hoped that “[OBOR] has paved the way for a new stage of cooperation in Eurasia,” and that Russia and China will “work together... [to] benefit both the Chinese and Russian peoples.”²⁰⁸ Russian and Chinese mutually reinforced economic ties through OBOR projects, and Putin’s hope for greater co-prosperity, follow the establishment of the “Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), a 2-year-old, Kremlin-conceived economic grouping of five former Soviet countries (Russia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan).”²⁰⁹

In addition, China has gained support for OBOR from prominent European nations. Lord Mayor of the City of London, Charles Bowman, spoke favorably of the OBOR initiative earlier this year. At a China-UK Economic and Trade Forum address held by the China Chamber of Commerce in the UK, Bowman stated that “the City of London is the natural Western end to the Belt and Road Initiative, and London can contribute greatly to

²⁰⁶ Moneycontrol, “Belt and Road Initiative.”

²⁰⁷ ANI, “Belt and Road Initiative Will Pave New Opportunities for Nepal,” last updated February 13, 2018. <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/belt-and-road-initiative-will-pave-new-opportunities-for-nepal201802131156190001/>.

²⁰⁸ Pete Baumgartner, “China’s Massive ‘One Road’ Project Largely Bypasses Russia, but Moscow Still On Board,” RadioFrerope RadioLiberty, last modified June 26, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-china-one-belt-one-road-project-putin-xi/28579849.html>.

²⁰⁹ Pete Baumgartner, “China’s Massive ‘One Road’ Project.”

this initiative” and that “Britain’s commitment to the success of the Belt and Road Initiative was reaffirmed just a few weeks ago at the 9th UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue.”²¹⁰

Some countries that are connected already to the OBOR initiative have exhibited mixed reactions to supporting OBOR. For example, in Kazakhstan, which shares a “1,700-plus-kilometer common border [and] more than 2,000 years of exchanges and broad common interests,”²¹¹ President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan referred to OBOR as having become “a new paradigm of regional and global development, a new scheme for co-operation.”²¹² However, in 2016, street protests erupted because the Kazakh government proposed to “change land-ownership laws, which were widely interpreted as being a prelude to enabling large-scale Chinese investment in agriculture and loss of livelihood for Kazakh farmers.”²¹³

Somewhat more reserved than the UK about OBOR, German leaders have yet to back China’s economic dream. Speaking at the Silk Road summit held in Beijing last year, German Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries indicated, “Germany... would not sign a joint trade statement at China’s Belt and Road Forum unless they received more guarantees from Beijing on free trade, environmental protection and working conditions.”²¹⁴ As much as Germany would like to support OBOR, lack of project transparency related to OBOR is holding German businesses back.

²¹⁰ Yurou, “City of London Eager to be Involved in Belt and Road: Lord Mayor,” XINHUANET, last modified January 19, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/19/c_136906485.htm.

²¹¹ ASEAN-China Centre, “Speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to Indonesian Parliament.”

²¹² Peter Frankopan, “King of the Road,” *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, last modified January 20, 2018, <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/life/weekend-australian-magazine/chinas-new-silk-road-is-it-a-one-way-street/news-story/501af0f1f70c66d2896b3f5b3bfb1545?nk=a7bf861ac41a042f048fd80654403a38-1516407894>.

²¹³ Peter Frankopan, “King of the Road.”

²¹⁴ “Germany Wants More Guarantees from China over ‘Silk Road’ Trade Plan,” *Deutsche Welle*, May 14, 2017, <http://www.dw.com/en/germany-wants-more-guarantees-from-china-over-silk-road-trade-plan/a-38833936>.

While more than sixty nations have expressed they favor the China-led OBOR initiative, a few major actors remain skeptical and even outright opposed to OBOR. The Indian government, for example, has expressed strong opposition against China's ambitious project that aims to expand economic links between Africa, Asia, and Europe. Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, former Secretary (Economic Relations) in the External Affairs Ministry, argued "connectivity projects should be consultative and consequent with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity."²¹⁵ OBOR, however, "violates [India's] sovereignty given that one strand of it—the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor—passes through Pakistan-administered part of disputed Kashmir."²¹⁶ Within Australia, banks, law firms, and various enterprises are optimistic and view OBOR as an economic opportunity.²¹⁷ However, earlier this year, Australian Senator and Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells "accused Beijing of funding useless infrastructure projects in the Pacific."²¹⁸ In October, 2017, U.S. Secretary of Defense, James Mattis stated that "the U.S. is no more keen on Beijing's expansive plans—nor on the language emphasising [sic] China's leadership role. In a globalised [sic] world, there are many belts and roads, and no one nation should put itself into a position of dictating 'one belt, one road.'"²¹⁹ Further opposition to OBOR may be expected because of China's recent imposition over disputed islands and reefs in the East and South China Seas.

²¹⁵ News Desk, "India Reiterates Opposition to China's Belt, Road Initiative," Eleven, last modified January 19, 2018, <http://www.elevenmyanmar.com/world-news/13202>.

²¹⁶ Elizabeth Roche, "Sushma Swaraj Voices Concern over OBOR, Terror," livemint, last modified January 18, 2018, <http://www.livemint.com/Politics/688iHVEUK7M4DDNZUHPRwN/Sushma-Swaraj-voices-concern-over-Obor-terror.html>.

²¹⁷ Geoff Wade, "China's 'One Belt, One Road' Initiative," Parliament of Australia, accessed February 23, 2018, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BriefingBook45p/ChinasRoad.

²¹⁸ Peter Frankopan, "King of the Road."

²¹⁹ Ibid.

C. CONCLUSION

Japan modernized and grew its military because it feared its relatively weak status compared to encroaching Western nations. Some Japanese leaders believed Western imperialism and influence could only be stopped by confrontation. Japanese nationalism and militarism was also deeply embedded in the nation's education curriculum. Japan's military, media, and renowned writers propagated racial superiority. Shinto orthodoxy inspired the same racial greatness and government officials incorporated the same arrogance into foreign policy decision making. Japanese leaders then encouraged citizens to spread the Yamato race throughout Asia. However, like most nations that have forced their own national influence on foreign populations, Japan was met with obvious opposition. Koreans both defied Japanese colonial rule and the foisting of Japanese nationalism upon the colonized nation. Westerners saw the Japanese people and culture as difficult and incomprehensible.

Turning to China and the "Asia Dream," President Xi asserts that nations connected to OBOR will build mutual trust, cooperation, equality, learning, and benefit, and that OBOR will help to stabilize national security threats in the region. China's leaders claim they are not seeking regional hegemony. Foreign businesses are taking advantage of OBOR and the gainful financial prospect it provides. Regional institutions, too, are embracing the OBOR initiative because it promotes economic prosperity. Many peripheral states, such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal, are optimistic about OBOR and the industrial and financial boost expected to result. Support for OBOR extends beyond China's periphery and into Western Europe. Other nations and their businesses remain hesitant to support OBOR, or even oppose it, because of the lack of transparency and infringements on contested sovereign territories.

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IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Will a strong and unified national identity lead the Chinese to go to war against the United States? Based on the analysis conducted in this thesis, I conclude that China is not likely to go to war with the United States because of their nationalism. My main research was to determine what the main drivers of nationalism were in pre-WWII Japan and whether there are similar nationalist impulses in today's China in order to suss out the likelihood that same pattern might lead to war. Both of my hypotheses proved true. I concluded that, while Japan's nationalism was driven by military might, China's is driven by economic stability. Additionally, while Japan's goal in participating international institutions was to be recognized as an equally great power, and they failed due to encountering racism, China's goal in participating in international institutions is to gain support for economic stability. China faces less potential for racism because they are working with their neighbors. Therefore, unless the United States antagonizes China in a way that demeans or destroys their goal for economic stability, China's nationalism is unlikely to lead to war. However, considering other factors outside the scope of this thesis, like Taiwan and China's understandable angst over its "century of humiliation," the United States would be wise to tread lightly when addressing anything that impacts China's economic stability, including OBOR. We do not want to shun China's goal of economic stability as Western racism did for Japan's goal, unless China oversteps certain boundaries or threatens U.S. national interests.

In sum, this thesis compared Japan's rise to power before WWII with China's current rise. Chapter II analyzed how Japanese containment through treaties and its souring relationship with the League of Nations ultimately led to a change in Japanese foreign policy. Pre-WWII Japan adapted the model of Western imperialism and immediately focused on modernizing its military forces. Japan attempted to show Western powers that it, too, was a great power because of successful territorial expansion and defeat of superior military forces. However, instead of receiving the desired recognition, Japan was unjustly treated as if it was a third-rate nation. Japan sought racial equality through the League of Nations, but was unsuccessful. Instead, the Washington naval treaties restrained Japanese

imperialism and restricted Japan's military growth. Japanese leaders resented the treaties signed at the Washington Conference, considering them to be unequal treaties. Furthermore, the Washington Conference treaties, combined with Western racism and the Committee of Nineteen's verdict of illegitimate Japanese military operations for the Manchurian Incident, led Japan to withdraw from the LoN. Japan then isolated itself from international institutions, turning instead to once again building a mighty military and pursuing rising nationalism. Seven years later, WWII found Japan allied with Germany.

China, on the other hand, has been successfully engaging international institutions. It has shifted its economic and security policy from making bilateral agreements to more multilateral agreements and joined regional institutions in an effort to appeal to nations on its periphery. By participating in ASEAN, APEC, the SCO, Six Party Talks, and ARF, China is minimizing traditional perceptions by neighboring states that see it as an economic threat. In addition, China is building regional unity through economic and security institutions. China's OBOR policy is meant to increase trade and cooperation across East Asia, Eurasia, and Africa while simultaneously uniting the Chinese people through economic prosperity and stability. OBOR will encourage cultural exchanges, increase economic business, and strengthen Chinese soft power. China is using the AIIB and BRICS NDB to support OBOR and expects to internationalize the renminbi as a global reserve currency. Doing so will challenge the U.S. dollar and could weaken the United States' economic position in Asian markets.

Chapter III then compared Japanese and Chinese approaches to nation building as well as a sample of international responses. Japan rebuilt its government, adapting the model of Westerners but placing a greater emphasis on modernizing its military due to a palpable fear of Western influence and military strength. This, in turn, led some Japanese leaders to assume that a conflict with Western imperialism was inevitable. Japan's national education system, media, and widely read authors condoned militarism and facilitated widespread nationalism on the premise of their own racial superiority. Facing racism from the West, they asserted superiority. The same vanity was practiced through Shintoism and integrated into foreign policy decision making. Additionally, Japan's growing regional

influence received some resistance. Both Westerners and colonized Koreans detested Japanese imperialism and its growing ethno-militaristic threat to the region.

Turning to China, Chapter III showed that leaders are generating nationalist sentiments and regional dialogue because of OBOR. President Xi claims the OBOR initiative is not the result of hegemonic desire, but rather, so that all nations can prosper, be more secure from global threats, and share and learn from one another. OBOR development projects are enticing businesses across the globe as well as regional institutions. While many states on China's periphery are optimistic about the great many changes that OBOR will provide, other states remain skeptical because of perceived ambiguity between China's rhetoric and its actions.

Overall, the thesis found that using international institutions did not work out for Japan the way they wanted it to, but that it did help tighten its national unity. Their nationalism as a driving force failed in the sense that Japan wanted to be recognized at the international level as a great power, but that failure ultimately led to Japan succeeding in fomenting a stronger national identity. Japan's military, economy, and ethnicity all drove Japanese nationalism. Although the establishment of Manchukuo "ushered in what was called a golden age for Japanese industry,"²²⁰ Japan's military stood out above the other two as the primary driver uniting the Japanese people. Japanese culture and ethnicity, on the other hand, may be better viewed as supporting drivers to nationalism. Western efforts to contain Japan, as noted by the Washington Conference treaties and Japan's relationship with the LoN, eventually steered Japan away from global institutional cooperation and more toward an autarkic and militaristic foreign policy.

Conversely, China's economic growth may be perceived as its primary nationalist driver, as it works through political institutions and the OBOR initiative, with China's military and culture acting as supportive drivers to nationalism. China is apparently more interested in achieving regional hegemony using soft power. At this point in time, China has prioritized gaining the trust of regional states through economic development projects (like OBOR) and through institutional participation over turning to hard power to

²²⁰ Young, *Japan's Total Empire*, 255.

accomplish policy objectives. That being said, however, China continues to strengthen and modernize its military, which threatens the U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region and could also be used to challenge or replace U.S. hegemony.

OBOR can be regarded as a major driver of China's contemporary national unity. As China's development projects come to fruition, spanning the length of the nation, its people can expect to see an increase in wealth and improved wellness. OBOR provides a clear opportunity for China's less developed regions, most of which are situated inland, to connect with the more economically advanced region on China's east coast.²²¹ OBOR is also another way for China to reach out to the ethnic Chinese diaspora around the world. Given the size and scope of the OBOR initiative, its success would undoubtedly strengthen China's economy, international position as a world leader, and military strength for the foreseeable future. International responses to OBOR are largely welcoming. Countries on China's periphery are especially supportive of the buildup of transport infrastructure that is expected to facilitate more efficient cross-border trade and commerce, both by land and by sea. For countries with lower wage incomes, OBOR provides the option to export finished products directly to Europe and neighboring Asian markets without going through China, or to export through China as many supply chains currently do.

China's proactive approach to promoting economic prosperity, regional economic cooperation, world peace and development carries with it a weight of greater responsibility that China may or may not be ready to bear. As President Xi's "China Dream" or "Asia-Pacific Dream" of the OBOR initiative connects more than sixty-eight nations spanning three continents, it is possible China's greatest challenge will lie with handling the complex dynamics of security and economic cooperation both within its own borders and with multiple nations. Specific challenges China faces within its own borders include cooperating with indigenous ethnic groups, such as the predominantly Muslim Uighur of central and western China who are believed to be harboring violent separatists. Additionally, on top of having an aging population that will reduce China's available workforce considerably in the near future, China is also plagued with an extreme case of

²²¹ van der Leer and Yau, "China's New Silk Road."

land, water, and air pollution that will have a negative domino effect on the health of its citizens. Externally, China continues to face maritime disputes with nations claiming parts of the South and East China Seas, as well as border disputes with India.

China's OBOR initiative could seriously impact U.S. influence in the Asia-Pacific region. As OBOR deep-water port projects develop in places like Sri Lanka and Pakistan, China will be able to increase its military strength and projection capabilities. China's expanding naval presence will boost its naval influence in the region and will likely challenge U.S. freedom of navigation and maritime security in the South China Sea. In addition, U.S. partnerships and alliances will be tested. Some states that support the OBOR initiative, but have built strong relations with the United States over the past few decades, may face pressure, especially from within international institutions, to side with China's growing economic ambitions. On the other hand, U.S. relations with current allies, such as Japan, India, and Australia, may strengthen as ways to balance OBOR are discovered.

In response to Japan's rise in the early twentieth century, the United States failed to calculate Japan's response to Western containment and racism. To avoid a similar response by the Chinese, the United States and China should collaborate to strengthen regional stability rather than view each other as competitors. OBOR may be the ideal catalyst for reinforcing and building international civil and military cooperation in order to prevent unnecessary conflict where more than half the world's population resides.

Students interested in future research might investigate the progress of OBOR and whether OBOR's development projects have shifted relations from current U.S. partners in the Asia-Pacific to China. Further research may also consider the implications for internationalizing the Chinese Renminbi as an alternative reserve currency to the U.S. dollar. Someone else might take a closer look at what drives U.S. nationalism. It seems to me that nationalism driven by brute force once contributed to world devastation. If we resist using our hard and soft power as blunt objects, instead cooperating in building, OBOR may help us, too.

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