

# Preventing China's Rise: Maintaining United States Hegemony In The Face Of A Rising China

A Monograph

by

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## ABSTRACT

Preventing China's Rise: Maintaining United States Hegemony In The Face Of A Rising China, by MAJ Matthew W. St. Pierre, US Army, 62 pages.

While the Spratly Islands are just a group of small islets, rocks, and reefs in the South China Sea, the implications of their control can have a major impact in the international environment. This monograph analyzes, through qualitative research, the impact on the hegemony of the United States if China were able to control the Spratly Islands and how the United States can mitigate those impacts. Two case studies analyze examples of how material support to a third party can gain a position of relative advantage over a competing state. These two case studies are: (1) French support of the colonists in the American Revolution; and (2) Soviet support of the North Koreans and Chinese in the Korean War. The case studies provide a model that, when viewed through the lens of John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, can be applied to potential courses of action for the United States to effectively deal with a rising China. Through the use of the case studies and analysis of states that can be used to balance China, India is suggested to provide a state that the United States can support to balance China. While there are numerous avenues that the United States can approach, through India, to balance China and limit their power projection capabilities, India remains a self-serving state in an anarchic international environment. However, the United States can use the techniques described herein to positively affect the Phase 0, shaping operations within the Pacific theater to ensure the United States can maintain a position of relative advantage in relation to China.

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## **Acronyms**

EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
FMS	Foreign Military Sales
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LAC	Line of Actual Control
NSRB	National Security Resources Board
SCS	South China Sea
UN	United Nations

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## Introduction

America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests.

— Henry Kissinger, *What's so Great about America*

The Spratly Islands are an outcropping of islets, shoals, and reefs in the South China Sea. Despite the fact that these islands cannot support human life, they have become quite contentious. Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China (China), and the Republic of China (Taiwan) make claims to some or all of the islands. The waterways adjacent to the Spratlys contain vast amounts of untapped hydrocarbons and are home to fertile fishing grounds. These resources can be of vast importance to any of these growing nations. However, for China the Spratlys can represent something more. China has pursued an aggressive strategy to control the Spratly Islands that could have detrimental effects on shipping and naval traffic through the SCS. Additionally, forward positioning of Chinese naval and air forces on the Spratlys would give China easy reach to the Pacific. China's acquisition of the aircraft carrier *Liaoning* along with their internal carrier production program shows China's determination for power projection. The Spratly Islands would serve the role for both Anti-Access/Area Denial to the SCS and the Strait of Malacca while also basing forward deployed air and naval units capable of projecting power into the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Power projection is a new realm for the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Traditionally the People's Liberation Army has focused on continental defense. While the natural resources contained around the Spratlys are of significant importance to anyone who controls the islands, the ability for China to project power is of greater consequence, especially to the United States. As the dispute over the islands continues, the United States still enjoys freedom of travel and limited threats from Chinese power projection. However, if the dispute were to be resolved wherein any state that is party to the dispute gains control of part or all of the Spratly Islands, the SCS could potentially fall into disarray. Therefore, it becomes beneficial for the United States to

ensure the dispute does not come to a resolution, particularly a resolution that favors China. Is it possible through diplomacy and military assistance, that the United States can attempt to shift China's strategy, and thus a preponderance of its defense spending back into continental defense? By shifting China's strategy, the United States could cause China to limit or even abandon its power projection desires, thus limiting China's desire to gain sovereign control of the Spratly Islands, thus maintaining US freedom of movement throughout the SCS, and enabling the United States to maintain its hegemony.

## Organization

This monograph is organized into five sections. The Introduction includes the research question and the operational and intellectual importance of research into the Spratly Islands. The Literature Review presents a further in-depth look at the importance of the Spratly Islands, why they are of strategic importance to the United States, and how they play a role in Chinese power projection. Second, the Literature Review will look at John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, as this is the lens through which control of the Spratly Islands will be viewed.

The Case Study section provides a methodology for case selection. The two case studies will focus on the application of military and economic resources to a third party to gain a relative advantage. The first case study will look at the French support of the colonists in the American Revolution to gain a position of relative advantage over Britain. The second case study will look at the Soviet Union's support of North Korea and China during the Korean War in order to gain a position of relative advantage over the United States. These case studies will analyze the strategic and operational environments in which they took place, will analyze how support was applied, what the outcome of the support was, and how this model can be applied in the current environment. The fourth section, titled "A Way Ahead," discusses a potential course of action the United States could follow in order to leverage its diplomatic and military efforts. The

Conclusion will address the feasibility of any future courses of action as well as discuss potential outcomes.

### **Literature Review**

#### The Spratly Islands Dispute: A Brief History

To understand why action is necessary in dealing with the Spratly Island dispute and the SCS as a whole, it is first necessary to understand the history of the dispute. Six countries are a party to the dispute: China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. China and Taiwan's claims to the Spratlys are the same claim and originate under the argument of who is the true China. Both China and what is now Taiwan, shared a single history until 1949 when the Kuomintang Party was driven onto the island of Taiwan. Subsequently, both China and Taiwan's historical claims will be viewed as one prior to 1949. Their claims date to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-200 A.D.). During this time, patrols were regularly made to the Spratly islands.<sup>1</sup> This constitutes China's initial discovery of the islands. Their claims became more solidified when Zhang Renjun, who was the Viceroy of Liangguang from 1907 to 1909, "sent Li Zhun . . . to the Spratly Islands. His crew erected stone markers, raised Chinese flags, and held cannon-shooting ceremonies to demonstrate China's sovereignty."<sup>2</sup> Establishing these stone markers and conducting official ceremonies serves as government regulation of the islands, one facet necessary for sovereignty.

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<sup>1</sup> Junwu Pan, "Maritime and Territorial Dispute in the South China Sea: Territorial Dispute between China and Vietnam in the South China Sea: A Lawyer's Perspective," *Journal of East Asia & International Law* (Spring, 2012):3, accessed June 25, 2014, [http://www.lexisnexis.com.library.norwich.edu/Inacui2apireresultsdocviewdocview.dodocLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T16599342799&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T16599345703&cisb=22\\_T16599345702&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=401091&docNo=2](http://www.lexisnexis.com.library.norwich.edu/Inacui2apireresultsdocviewdocview.dodocLinkInd=true&risb=21_T16599342799&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T16599345703&cisb=22_T16599345702&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=401091&docNo=2).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In 2012, the People's Republic of China organized the Spratly Islands, as well as the Paracel Islands and Macclesfield Bank, into a single province. The provincial government with forty-five legislators governs the islands and the 1,100 residents.<sup>3</sup> Both China and Taiwan currently have soldiers garrisoned within the Spratlys; China has garrisons on seven separate features and Taiwan only one feature. Taiwan's sole garrison is on Taiping (or Itu Aba) Island, which is the largest feature in the Spratly Island chain and is large enough to sustain a full runway capable of landing cargo aircraft (to include C-130s).

Vietnam's claims to the Truong Sa archipelago (as the Spratlys are referred to in Vietnam) date back to the fifteenth century. In the seventeenth century, European maps depicted the Spratlys as a Vietnamese territory. However, these maps attributing the Spratlys to Vietnam may have been an error and instead were referring to the Paracel Islands that are located northwest of the Spratly Islands and are much closer to Vietnam.<sup>4</sup> Not until the nineteenth century was documentation produced that identified both the Truong Sa archipelago (Spratly Islands) and the Hoang Sa Islands (Paracel Islands) and attributed both of these archipelagos as Vietnamese possessions.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, in 1951 during the San Francisco Conference, as the Japanese empire was being dismantled in the wake of World War II, the Vietnamese delegate to the conference stated, "we affirm our rights to the Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands, which have always belonged to Vietnam." Neither the Chinese representative at the conference, nor any other representative,

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<sup>3</sup> Jane Perlez, "China Sends Troops to Disputed Islands," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2012, accessed June 25, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/24/world/asia/china-sends-troops-to-disputed-islands.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Todd Kelly, "Vietnam Claims to the Truong Sa Archipelago," *Explorations in Southeast Asian Studies* 3 (Fall 1999), accessed June 3, 2013, <http://www.hawaii.edu/cseas/pubs/explore/todd.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

refuted Vietnam's claims.<sup>6</sup> Vietnam currently controls twenty-one features within the Spratly Islands despite their loss of the South Johnson Reef to China in a naval skirmish in 1988 that killed sixty-four Vietnamese sailors.

In 1971, the Philippine government made its first claim to the Spratly Islands, while claims by Filipinos were made as early as 1956; official government claims did not begin until 1971. Since then, the Philippines has taken control of eight islands and have organized them into its Palawan Province, Kalayaan municipality. The largest feature of the Philippines claim, Pagasa Island, has an unpaved and precarious airstrip scheduled for repair beginning in 2014.<sup>7</sup>

The final two claimants to parts of the Spratlys are Malaysia and Brunei. These two are grouped together as their arguments are similar and similarly weak. Malaysia and Brunei's claims to parts of the Spratlys are based on an interpretation of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Law of the Sea.<sup>8</sup> Parts of the Spratlys fall within Malaysia and Brunei's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and therefore each has claimed a portion of the Spratlys or the area around them. However, these claims are not congruent with the verbiage or spirit of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as "there is no provision in international law to support acquisition of territory using the principle of the continental shelf."<sup>9</sup> Despite this, Malaysia still controls three features while Brunei controls none.

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<sup>6</sup> Pan, 7.

<sup>7</sup> GMA News, "Airstrip repair on Pagasa island 'a go' despite China protest – PAF," GMA News Online, June 18, 2014, accessed June 24, 2014, <http://www.gmanetwork.com/news/story/366273/news/nation/airstrip-repair-on-pagasa-island-a-go-despite-china-protest-paf>.

<sup>8</sup> Dong Mah Nguyen, "Settlement of Disputes under the 1982 United Nations Convention On the Law of the Sea: The Case of the South China Sea Dispute," UN-Nippon Foundation Fellowship on the Law of the Sea, December 2005, accessed June 3, 2013, [http://www.un.org/depts/los/nippon/unfff\\_programme\\_home/fellows\\_pages/fellows\\_papers/ngu\\_yen\\_0506\\_vietnam.pdf](http://www.un.org/depts/los/nippon/unfff_programme_home/fellows_pages/fellows_papers/ngu_yen_0506_vietnam.pdf), 15.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

The history of the claims to the Spratlys is vital to the future of the SCS. With the exception of the failure to challenge Vietnam's claims during the San Francisco Conference, which could very easily be attributed to human error, Chinese claims to the Spratlys are quite strong. Their claims are the most historic, beating Vietnam's claims to discovery by approximately a millennium and a half. China's governmental maintenance and official claims of sovereignty over the islands trump the Philippines by almost seventy years. More recently, the steps taken by China to resolve the dispute in the form of bi-lateral negotiations have put China in an advantageous position. With the historic claims, China's refusal to conduct multi-lateral negotiations, China's refusal to submit to binding international arbitration, and China's sheer economic and military size, there exists an environment in which China could very easily, and based on historic evidence should, control the Spratly Islands and thus much of the SCS.

#### Why Non-China Controlled Spratlys are Vital to US Interests

If China's historical claims to the Spratlys are the strongest out of the group and their ability to effectively govern the Spratlys have been the most prevalent, then why should China not control the Spratlys? If China can resolve the dispute with the other claimants, why should the United States get involved, especially if China has a valid claim? There are short-term and long-term components to these questions. In the short-term, maintaining open sea lines of communication through the SCS is vital to US national interests and national security. In the long-term, control of the Spratlys by China is a major step in the rise of China and severely threatens US international standing and hegemony.

Sovereignty of the Spratlys would allow for significant control over any activities in the SCS.<sup>10</sup> The Spratlys sit close to the dead center of the SCS between Vietnam and the Philippines. The EEZ of the Spratly Islands covers much of the navigable waters through the SCS. (Figure 1)

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<sup>10</sup> Nguyen, 12.

Couple this with the proposed EEZ of the Paracel Islands (another group of disputed islands in the SCS) and China's EEZs would intersect almost all of the navigable waters in the SCS. (Figure 1.)

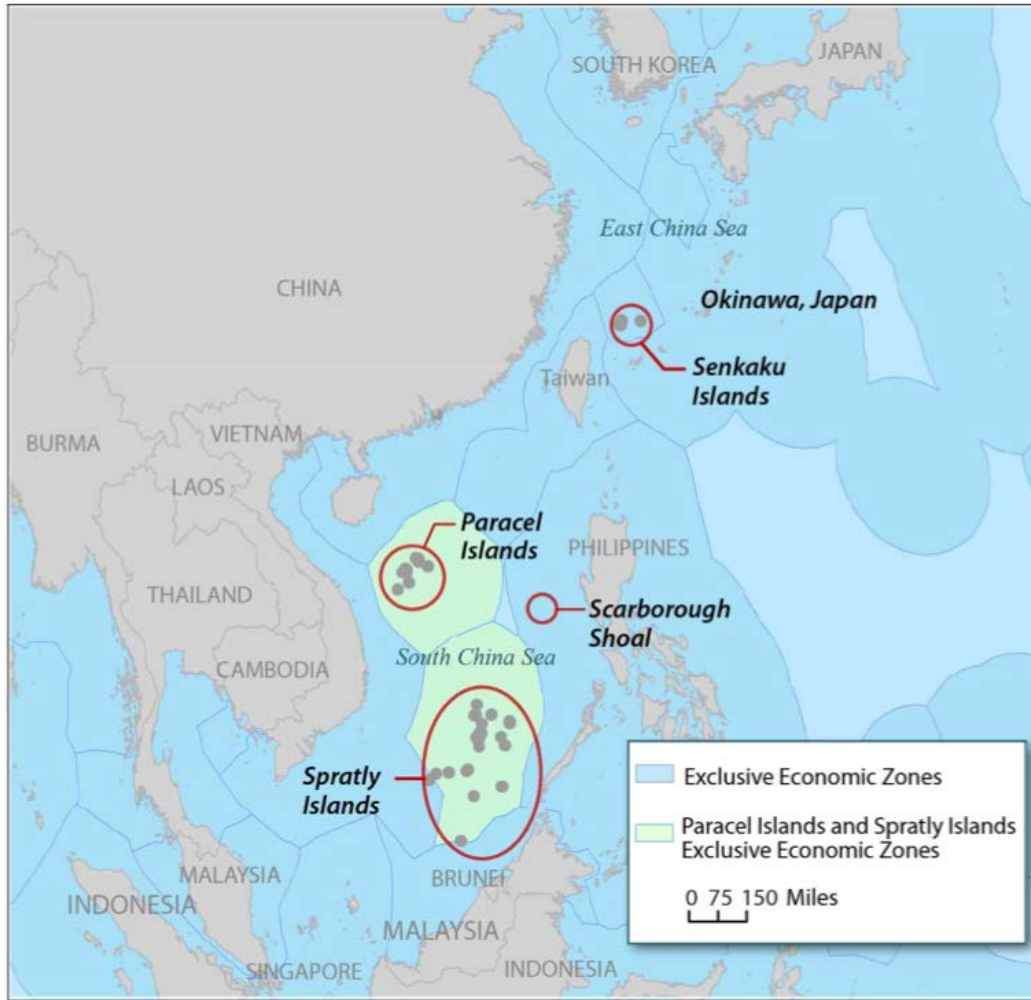


Figure 1. EEZs in the South China Sea

Source: Ronald O'Rourke, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R42784, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress*, Federation of American Scientists, August 5, 2014, accessed June 24, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42784.pdf>, 3.



More than one-fifth of all global trade passes through the SCS including all Japanese oil imported from the Middle East.<sup>11</sup> Actions taken by China to control traffic through the SCS could raise shipping costs or divert shipping to longer and more dangerous routes. Additionally, China could potentially interrupt or prevent petroleum imports to Japan. The long-standing tensions between China and Japan makes this scenario an all-too-likely possibility, and the 1960 Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan could lure the United States into direct confrontation.

The second implication to the increased EEZs would be the effect on US military operations in the region. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the predominant interpretation is that an EEZ “gives coastal states the right to regulate economic activities (such as fishing and oil exploration) within their EEZ, it does not give coastal states the right to regulate foreign military activities in the parts of their EEZ beyond their twelve-nautical-mile territorial waters.”<sup>12</sup> However, the interpretation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea by China and twenty-six other states is that coastal states are authorized to regulate both economic and foreign military activities within their EEZs.<sup>13</sup> This interpretation has significant implications for the United States. Since 2001, there have been seven incidents in the current Chinese EEZ between US military ships or aircraft.<sup>14</sup> If the Chinese EEZ was to include the Spratly EEZ, and even more

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Senese, “Chinese Acquisition of the Spratly Archipelago and its Implications for the Future,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22, no. 1 (2005): 80, accessed June 25, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07388940590915336>.

<sup>12</sup> Ronald O’Rourke, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress R42784, *Maritime Territorial and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Disputes Involving China: Issues for Congress*, Federation of American Scientists, August 5, 2014, accessed June 24, 2014, <http://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42784.pdf>, 4.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 5. The seven incidents have occurred within the current EEZ of mainland China. These incidents include: Chinese ships and aircraft harassing US naval ships in March 2001, September 2002, March 2009, and May 2009; the collision of a Chinese fighter aircraft with a US Navy EP-3 on April 1, 2001; and a Chinese naval ship intentionally blocking the path of the USS *Cowpens* forcing the *Cowpens* to adjust course to avoid a collision.

dangerously the Paracel EEZ, much of the SCS would become a high risk area for the US military to traverse.

Lastly, Chinese control of the Spratlys could threaten the United States' ability to fulfill its treaties. Forward positioned Chinese forces, primarily aircraft operating on the Spratlys, will be able to interdict any south to north approach of US naval vessels or aircraft. This becomes a serious risk in an area where the United States has defense treaties with two countries (the Philippines and Japan) and in the case of Taiwan, the Taiwan Relations Act states that "the United States will make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability."<sup>15</sup> While the Taiwan Relations Act does not establish any form of security cooperation or defense treaty with Taiwan it does imply that the United States will work to ensure that Taiwan is capable of defending itself. Forward positioned defenses on the Spratly Islands would prevent northbound traffic through the SCS. In the US Navy's case, this would include the Fifth Fleet based in Bahrain as well as Marines forward deployed to Diego Garcia. These forces would be unable to respond to enforce the defense treaties with Japan and the Philippines or respond to natural disasters in the region. Additionally, southbound naval traffic attempting to access the Indian Ocean through the SCS would be affected to include the US Seventh Fleet based in Japan or the US Third Fleet based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The long-term ramifications of a Chinese controlled Spratly Islands are even more threatening to the United States than the short-term. Control of the Spratlys would allow for a rapid rise of China in the international arena. The natural resources contained within the Spratlys would provide the fuel to China's rise and the control of the Spratlys would provide the

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<sup>15</sup> Taiwan Relations Act, Public Law 96-8, 98th Congress, American Institute in Taiwan, January 1, 1979, accessed June 25, 2014, <http://www.ait.org.tw/en/taiwan-relations-act.html>.

springboard to regional hegemony in Asia and would directly threaten the United States' international position.

China's industrial rise has had numerous effects. It is a major producer and exporter of both durable and nondurable goods. Additionally, its large population has even larger energy requirements, making China one of the top importers and producers of coal.<sup>16</sup> There are some secondary and not readily apparent ramifications to China's increase in production, and that is in China's skies. Pollution is rampant in China, and in response, twelve Chinese provinces will lower coal consumption by 655 million metric tons by 2020.<sup>17</sup> This may spur a switch to cleaner natural gas, which is estimated to be in abundance in the Spratly seabed. The United States Geological Survey estimates the Spratly Islands contain a mean of 2.5 billion barrels of oil and 25.5 trillion cubic feet of natural gas that is yet to be discovered.<sup>18</sup> In comparison, the United States proved reserves are twenty-nine billion barrels of oil and 348.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.<sup>19</sup> By being able to rely on domestically produced natural gas, China can continue its economic rise, cut its own CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and cut its dependence on foreign coal.

Strategically, control of the Spratly Islands will do something that China has not been capable of since the fifteenth century; have a blue water navy. Until recently, the People's Liberation Army Navy, has been a green water navy equipped with predominantly diesel power submarines to provide coastal defense. Their diesel fleet makes deployments of over thirty days

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<sup>16</sup> Stefan Nicola, "China Cuts in Coal Use May Mean World Emissions Peak Before 2020," Bloomberg, April 11, 2014, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-04-11/china-cuts-in-coal-use-may-mean-world-emissions-peak-before-2020.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> US Energy Information Administration, "South China Sea," US Department of Energy, February 7, 2013, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/regions-topics.cfm?fips=SCS>.

<sup>19</sup> US Energy Information Administration, "US Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Natural Gas Liquids Proved Reserves," US Department of Energy, April 10, 2014, accessed August 28, 2014, <http://www.eia.gov/naturalgas/crudeoilreserves/>.

virtually impossible and also limits the submerged time of these submarines. However, China has already begun its transition to a more ambitious maritime policy focused on power projection and centered around the aircraft carrier.<sup>20</sup> The Spratlys become an integral part of this new maritime policy. Whereas previously, Chinese submarines would patrol the SCS to protect the Chinese coast and conduct reconnaissance, land-based aircraft, surface ships, anti-ship ballistic missiles, and radar stations positioned on the Spratlys can now replace this function. This allows for China's newer nuclear powered submarines to join as part of larger carrier groups, decreases the budget required to maintain a large submarine fleet, and allows China to shift its defense strategy from coastal defense to power projection. "A senior [Chinese] scholar says that it is 'humiliating' that the navies of not only the United States but also of India and Japan can sail the SCS, while China's navy still lacks such a capability."<sup>21</sup> Control of the Spratlys frees China from its traditional coastal defense mission to not only sail the SCS but to break out into the deeper waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Power projection serves as both hard power and soft power for China. China's lack of power projection has hindered its ability to respond to regional crises. In the wake of the 2004 tsunami "China's naval nationalists were embarrassed by the contrast between the Australian and US leadership role . . . and China's peripheral role."<sup>22</sup> Power projection becomes a vital step in regional hegemony. By being able to provide humanitarian and disaster relief within the region China can display itself as a regional power and potentially a regional hegemon.

Additionally, as China's investment in Africa grows, it becomes necessary to protect its interests abroad. In the Gulf of Aden, China has played a peripheral role in preventing piracy.

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Ross, "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the US Response," *International Security* 34, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

While pirate attacks have decreased dramatically since the high profile rescue of the crew of the *Maserk Alabama* by US Navy SEALs, piracy still exists. Chinese power projection will allow investment in Africa to increase and imports from Africa to flow unimpeded.

The hard power implications of Chinese power projection are all too apparent. While the purchase of the Soviet built aircraft carrier *Liaoning*<sup>23</sup> may seem as an almost laughable step, akin to buying a thirty-year-old car to race in the Daytona 500, it represents an ambitious foray into the realm of naval power projection. In just seven years, the *Varyag* was converted from a rusty Soviet-era floating scrap heap to the functional aircraft carrier *Liaoning* with initial flight tests originating from her deck in 2012. While the *Liaoning* is a far cry from a successful carrier fleet as it only serves as a testing and training aircraft carrier, it is an important step towards power projection.<sup>24</sup> The tests and reverse engineering of the *Liaoning* will provide the foundation for additional carriers to be built; Chinese naval officers suggest four to six indigenously produced carriers may be built.<sup>25</sup> As recently as 2013, Chinese naval officers have rebuffed claims that an indigenously produced carrier was under construction, but this must be taken with a grain of salt as the *Varyag* was purchased merely to be a floating casino in Macau.<sup>26</sup>

While the Spratly Islands dispute represents a major problem for the six Southeast Asian states involved in the dispute, they are not a threat to the national security of the United States. Their control by any state that is a party to the dispute becomes more of an issue. As much of the

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<sup>23</sup> The *Liaoning* was originally commissioned as the *Riga* by the Soviet Union. After the Soviet Union dissolved the *Riga* was transferred to the Ukraine renamed the *Varyag*. When it was commissioned by China it was given its new name the *Liaoning*.

<sup>24</sup> Greg Waldron, "Chinese officer hints at country's big aircraft carrier plans," Flightglobal, April 24, 2013, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.flightglobal.com/news/articles/chinese-officer-hints-at-countrys-big-aircraft-carrier-385065/>.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Fisher, *China's Military Modernization: Building for Regional and Global Reach* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 3.

<sup>26</sup> Waldron.

evidence points to Chinese sovereignty over at least part, if not all of the islands, sovereign control of the Spratlys would serve as a catalyst for China to increase its ability to project power. In the case of Chinese control, China would be capable of using the Spratlys as a forward position to conduct coastal defense, thus diverting defense-spending resources towards power projection. If another state were to control the Spratlys, China could in turn, build up their own power projection platforms to reinforce their claims to the islands. However, this is rather unlikely as China refuses to conduct multilateral negotiations or submit to binding arbitration.

The current status quo of limited skirmishes and posturing within the Spratlys is one of the better courses of action in regards to the national security of the United States. An unclaimed Spratly Island chain equates to open sea lines of communication through the SCS. Control by any state could hinder navigation through the SCS and control by China would render US Navy navigation through the SCS highly risky, if not virtually impossible. It becomes in the best interest of the United States to ensure that the Spratly Islands dispute continues and no one controls the Spratlys, thus limiting China's ability to project power, allowing the United States to retain the ability to project power through the SCS and, retaining a US hegemony for the foreseeable future.

#### Offensive Realism as a Lens and a Methodology

Using John Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism as a lens to understand China's actions, we can also use it as a methodology to form a way ahead for the United States in reaction. Mearsheimer's theory can be used both descriptively and prescriptively as it lays out why states act the way they do, but it also describes what their goals are. Through this lens we can correlate China's actions to the theory and then prescribe how the United States can act in order to thwart the described Chinese actions.

Offensive realism is based upon five assumptions; an anarchic international system, great powers possessing a military capability, uncertainty about other states' intentions, survival is a

state's primary goal, and that great powers are rational actors.<sup>27</sup> To some varying degree, these five assumptions do well to explain the attributes of the great powers. These assumptions act as a framework to judge the rationale for state's actions.

These assumptions pertain mostly to great powers. The main reason for this emphasis is that the aim of offensive realism is that the goal of states is to maximize their share of world power with the ultimate aim of hegemony.<sup>28</sup> While all states can gain power relative to other states in an anarchic international system, it is only the great powers that can achieve hegemony. This achievement of hegemony serves as the ultimate aim of any of the great powers. It is an attribute that the United States currently possesses, and with it comes special privileges. If the international community is truly anarchic, if there is no supranational body that is able to police the states, then the hegemon is able to do as it wishes while every other state is subject to interference by the hegemon. While there is an argument that the UN is a supranational organization that organizes and oversees international activities, it can be countered that the United Nations has rarely been successful in countering the activities of the United States. The 2003 invasion of Iraq being an example; UN Security Council Resolution 1441 stated that Iraq would face "serious consequences" if it refused to comply with disarmament obligations but never defined what those serious consequences were.<sup>29</sup> The United States took Iraq's failure to comply as justification for an invasion without a subsequent UN Security Council Resolution to authorize the war. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has even stated that the United

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<sup>27</sup> John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), location 694-713, Kindle.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, location 250.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Security Council, Press Release SC/7564, "Security Council Holds Iraq In Material Breach Of Disarmament Obligations, Offers Final Chance To Comply, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1441 (2002)," United Nations, August 11, 2002, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SC7564.doc.htm>.

States invaded Iraq without UN approval and that the invasion was therefore illegal.<sup>30</sup> Despite this, no punishment, sanctions, or other actions have been taken by the UN against the United States. Among others, this example shows the special privilege the hegemon has as well as the efficacy of the UN, or any other supranational organization, in dealing with a hegemon.

So if states, primarily the great powers, look to gain power in order to achieve hegemony, then what exactly is power? Mearsheimer organizes a state's power into potential and actual power. Potential power is based on a state's population and wealth, while actual power is based on military power.<sup>31</sup> Population and wealth is something China has in excess. From 2002 to 2012 the Chinese Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased from USD\$1.454 trillion to USD\$8.227 trillion, representing a 465 percent increase in GDP; alternatively the United States' GDP has increased over the same time period from USD\$10.59 trillion to USD\$15.68 trillion, representing a forty-eight percent increase.<sup>32</sup> China's GDP growth has far outweighed that of the United States annually since 2002, and has significantly risen over the decade. Additionally, the Chinese population is vastly larger than that of the United States with the US population standing at approximately 314 million and China at approximately 1.35 billion. With the rapidly increasing Chinese GDP, and the largest population in the world, China has a fair amount of potential power. Mearsheimer notes that "great powers tend to fear states with large populations and rapidly expanding economies, even if these states have not yet translated their wealth into military might."<sup>33</sup> The United States has a true reason for being fearful of China; they have both a

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<sup>30</sup> BBC News, "Excerpts: Annan interview," British Broadcasting Corporation, last updated September 16, 2004, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/3661640.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3661640.stm).

<sup>31</sup> Mearsheimer, location 910-914.

<sup>32</sup> The World Bank, "GDP growth (annual %)," The World Bank Group, accessed August 28, 2014, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>.

<sup>33</sup> Mearsheimer, location 949.



rapidly expanding economy and a large population and have already started to translate this wealth into military might.

Actual power is defined by Mearsheimer as military power. In his definition, military power is truly defined by ground forces and the air and naval forces that support them. According to the 2013 Annual Report to Congress, the active ground force strength of the People's Liberation Army was 1.25 million,<sup>34</sup> compare that to the United States with an active duty that is shrinking to 490,000 and possibly lower, and China has a vast advantage in the number of ground forces.

Herein lies a point where Mearsheimer's theory is a bit muddled. He acknowledges the fact that land forces seize territory and wars cannot be won without seizing territory. However, he groups in all supporting functions of all the other arms of combat power into land forces. By his theory, transport aircraft that can move soldiers into a theater of operations are part of the land forces, transport ships and amphibious landing craft are part of land forces, and the fighter aircraft that support the land forces with close air support are part of the land forces. Mearsheimer states "The principal impediment to world domination is the difficulty of projecting power across the world's oceans onto the territory of a rival great power."<sup>35</sup> If this is the case, then there needs to be dual sources of power, the land forces and then the capability to project them globally. Mearsheimer argues that a global hegemon will never exist because no state will ever have the ability to project power across the entire globe. Instead only regional hegemons can exist that can project ground force power across land within their region and then support them with the other military arms. While this argument is novel, it completely negates the purpose of power

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<sup>34</sup> Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013*, Department of Defense, FY 2012-2013, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2013\\_china\\_report\\_final.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/pubs/2013_china_report_final.pdf), 75.

<sup>35</sup> Mearsheimer, location 869.

projection platforms. The entire purpose of large transport aircraft, troop transport ships, and aircraft carriers, is to project power across the global commons. Nuclear powered naval vessels are in service solely so they can operate without the need for refueling stations, they can navigate to any part of the globe and project power. While it may be more complicated to project land power to any part of the world, the United States has been more than capable in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, to bridge the gap in Mearsheimer's argument we can assume that the first step in hegemony is regional and that once a state becomes a regional hegemon it can then seek out aspirations of global hegemony. Whether that global hegemony is truly reached is beyond the scope of this writing, but we can safely assume for this writing that the United States has successfully become a regional hegemon and is somewhere in the process of becoming a global hegemon.

What puts the United States in this separate category above the role of a regional hegemon is its ability to project power across the global commons. The US Navy currently has ten active aircraft carriers and an additional two under construction.<sup>36</sup> This far outweighs any other country in the world, especially China with its lone training aircraft carrier. However, the previous paragraphs have shown how much potential power China has in comparison to the United States. China's annual GDP growth is approximately 2.8 times larger than that of the United States with a population that is 4.31 times larger. Based on these numbers, if China is able to mobilize these resources into military power, China would be able to produce military resources at a rate of 3.5 times that of the United States. Based on that figure, in the seven years it will take for the US Navy to take possession of the USS *Gerald R. Ford*, a carrier to be delivered in

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<sup>36</sup> US Navy, "The Carriers, The List," Official Website of the US Navy, accessed June 25, 2014, <http://www.navy.mil/navydata/ships/carriers/cv-list.asp>.

2016,<sup>37</sup> China would have completed three-and-a-half carriers, or one every two years. Based on that figure, it would only take China twenty years to reach the carrier fleet similar in size to that of the United States.

If a large land force and the ability to project those land forces across the global commons are the necessary attributes for a great power to threaten an already existing hegemon, a state can employ measures to counter these challenges. According to Mearsheimer, the goal of offensive realism is to maximize power by gaining power at the expense of other states.<sup>38</sup> However, in addition to this, primarily hegemon states can merely prevent another state from gaining power in order to maintain its position of relative power. Mearsheimer even discusses the potential for diminishing returns in regards to building-up military forces.<sup>39</sup> However, this argument is based solely on a balance of power theory, which is if the United States was to build another aircraft carrier then China could do the same and the balance of power would not be altered. Adding additional carriers or other power projection platforms to the equation, would not put the United States in a position of relative advantage anymore than the current power projection fleet it already possesses. The United States is better off maintaining its level of power, and instead working to diminish China's ability to gain power. If Mearsheimer's theory is displayed as a ladder where the United States is on the highest rung, then China would be displayed as slowly climbing the rungs behind the United States trying to get higher on the ladder. According to Mearsheimer's theory, every time China gains power and climbs a rung, the United States should look to gain power and climb a rung itself. Instead, using this model, the

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<sup>37</sup> "Photo Release -- 21st Century Aircraft Carrier Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Takes First Voyage," Huntington Ingalls Industries, November 19, 2013, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://newsroom.huntingtoningalls.com/News-Releases/Photo-Release-21st-Century-Aircraft-Carrier-Gerald-R-Ford-CVN-78-Takes-First-Voyage-36e.aspx>.

<sup>38</sup> Mearsheimer, location 250.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, location 1365.

United States would be better off staying where it is on the ladder and focusing its energy on making it harder for China to climb higher. This model even allows the United States to step down a few rungs, which may be a likely scenario with the US defense budget being cut, as long as China is forced to step down a few rungs itself.

### **Case Studies**

In looking at this theory of diminishing competitor's capability in order to maintain one's own position of relative advantage, this monograph analyzes two case studies with a similar technique. In each case, whether it was intentional or not, one state was able to diminish its competitor's capability normally through a third party. The case studies will look at how the French government was able to support the American Revolution in order to attempt to gain a position of relative advantage over Britain, and how the Soviet Union was able to support the North Koreans in the Korean War to attempt to gain a position of relative advantage over the United States.

There are other case studies that could have been selected in addition to these two. The first would be that of the US support of the Mujahedeen during the Soviet-Afghan War. This case will be briefly touched on in this monograph. However, due to the limited research material as much of it is still classified by both the United States and the Russian governments this case's usefulness would be greatly diminished. However, the basic knowledge of the case study is of extreme value to this writing and that is why the case is visited in its simplest form.

Additionally, the case of the Soviet Union's support of North Vietnam during the Vietnam War could have been used. This case study was not used, as there are too many variables to be adjusted. Soviet support of North Vietnam was not on the scale that it was in the example of Soviet support of China and North Korea in the Korean War. Additionally, a deep critique of the actions of the US military during the Vietnam War could detract from the efficacy of the case study.

This study employs the case studies of the French support of the American rebels in the American Revolution, and the Soviet support of China and North Korea in the Korean War for several reasons. First, the American Revolution case study was selected because it was directly expressed by France that their goal was to reduce the British capability so that France could gain a position of relative advantage. This case study directly addresses the hypothesis presented in this writing. The main variable that cannot be corrected for is that France was not a hegemon trying to slow the rise of a potential challenger. Instead, France was looking to diminish the capability of a hegemon in order to make it easier for France to challenge British hegemony. While this variable cannot be corrected for; the ends, ways, and means used by France meet the criteria being presented herein.

The primary reason for selecting the Korean War case study, is that it shows a more modern example of a state supporting a second state to gain advantage over a third state. Additionally, it shows an example where a state is trying to gain a relative advantage over the United States; in this example, the United States has the potential of becoming the victim. The main variable that cannot be corrected for in this case study, is that it is not expressly stated that the Soviet Union is attempting to gain a position of relative advantage over the United States. In this case, the ways and means support the hypothesis, it just cannot be determined if the Soviet ends meet the hypothesis. It must be noted that the United States did, in fact, assume that the Soviet Union was supporting the Chinese and the North Koreans in order to gain a position of relative advantage over the United States, it just cannot be confirmed that this was the Soviet goal, as documents indicating such are either not declassified or do not exist. Even if gaining a position of relative advantage over the United States was not the expressed goal of the Soviet Union, it can be safely assumed that it would be an outcome of their support of China and North Korea, and therefore it meets our criteria. Additionally, both the Soviet Union and the United States were considered regional hegemons, and therefore it does become a case where a hegemon

is challenging another hegemon. While this still does not meet the criteria of a hegemon maintaining a position of advantage over a challenger, it does come closer than a challenger trying to gain a position of advantage over a hegemon.

The information derived from these case studies will be qualitative in nature. A larger, quantitative study of the information would go far beyond the scope of this writing and would not provide the necessary concepts introduced in this writing. Additionally, the number of variables produced through each instance of third-party support would be exponential and the ability to correct for these variables would be overly complex. The qualitative research done through these case studies allows the reader to understand the general concept presented and see examples where it has been performed with some degree of success in the past.

#### Case Study 1: France and the American Revolution

The Seven Years' War and the Treaty of Paris that ended it were very costly to France. Not only did France lose all of its territory in North America but it was deeply in debt. France was already 1.2 billion livres in debt from the War of Austrian Succession, and the Seven Years War pushed that total to 2.34 billion livres, 7.3 times France's annual revenue.<sup>40</sup> France understood it would be a long road to recovery, and knew the British would continue to threaten them while they recovered. To France's advantage, the British taxed their own colonists to pay British debt from the war. The anger that ensued gave France a potential seam to exploit.

Immediately after the end of the Seven Years' War, France sought to regain its rightful position in Europe. Louis XV ordered Prime Minister Etienne Francois duc de Choiseul to avenge

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<sup>40</sup> Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 65.

the French defeat and attempt to reclaim some of the lost territories.<sup>41</sup> By 1765, French agents were in North America gauging colonist dissatisfaction and determining if “French arms and money might help incite rebellion and weaken the British enough to permit France to reclaim Canada without a costly war with England.”<sup>42</sup> Immediately after the Seven Years’ War, France understood that it was in no position to fight another costly war itself. However, it also understood that it could instead, through a third party, diminish British power so France could more easily regain its power.

When Louis XVI took the throne in France, Charles Gravier, Comte de Vergennes became the French foreign minister. Vergennes shared Louis XV’s sentiment “with a desire to restore France to its status as preeminent European power by reducing English power . . . he sought to aid the Americans clandestinely until French military and naval strength could be restored, and the king could be convinced to undertake a formal war against England.”<sup>43</sup> In a statement to King Louis XVI, Vergennes “proposed indirect intervention in the American Revolution as a relatively low-cost opportunity to exact revenge against England for the humiliation of the Seven Years’ War and to restore French hegemony on the North American continent without firing a shot.”<sup>44</sup> Vergennes understood that the French military was not in a position to directly attack or even defend against England, however secret aid to the Americans would produce two outcomes, both advantageous for France. First, England would spend the time attempting to crush the rebellion in its colonies. The longer the rebellion lasted, the longer France

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<sup>41</sup> Harlow Unger, *Improbable Patriot: The Secret History of Monsieur de Beaumarchais, the French Playwright Who Saved the American Revolution* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2011), 15.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Crout, “Vergennes, Charles Cravier, Comte De,” in *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution: Library of Military History*, ed. Harold E. Selesky (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2006), 1193-1194.

<sup>44</sup> Unger, 107.

would have to rebuild its military capacity. Even if England were successful in restoring its rule over the colonies in America, France would have been able to restore much of its military. “Convinced that war with England was coming, Vergennes sought to delay it until the French navy was prepared. The longer the Americans held out, the longer France had to rebuild her Navy. Vergennes advocacy of secret aid to the Americans was intended to buy the time needed to build up naval strength. Despite the rhetoric about military strength being the best guarantee of peace, he was not building the French navy to preserve the peace but to win a war.”<sup>45</sup> Second, fighting in America would wear on English military resources, finances, and public will. There remained a potential for casualties to pile up, equipment to be destroyed, English coffers emptied, and the public resisting another war aimed at France immediately after ending hostilities in the colonies. Secret aid to the Americans bought time for France to build its own capabilities while simultaneously degrading English capabilities in order for France to gain a position of relative advantage over England.

Enter Pierre-Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais. Beaumarchais would become the agent for France in supplying the colonists with the money and war materials that would aid them in their struggle against the British. A French playwright, amongst numerous other professions, Beaumarchais would write such famous plays as *The Barber of Seville*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *The Guilty Mother*. One of the greatest plays he would write and star in himself would be that of aiding the colonists in victory over England, thus allowing France to attempt to return to its rightful position as a hegemon in Europe.

In a letter to Vergennes, Beaumarchais wrote, “The Americans will triumph, but they must be assisted in their struggle. We must . . . send secret assistance in a prudent manner to the

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<sup>45</sup> Orville Murphy, “The View from Versailles: Charles Gravier Comte de Vergennes’ Perceptions of the American Revolution,” in *Diplomacy and Revolution: The France-American Alliance of 1778*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter Albert (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1981), 118.



Americans.”<sup>46</sup> Vergennes realized that “Beaumarchais was offering the king nothing less than a scheme to restore French power over her ancient English enemy.”<sup>47</sup> At the cautious behest of Vergennes and Louis XVI, Beaumarchais would establish Roderique Hortalez & Company. This fictitious shipping company would be established prior to the American declaration of independence in May of 1776 and would supply much of the American arms in the early part of the Revolution.<sup>48</sup> It would be an act of war if French ships were to deliver war materials to the Americans, so instead Beaumarchais would ship the goods via Hortalez & Co. Beaumarchais’ plan was truly a win for everyone involved, especially the French. Loans would be made by the French government to Beaumarchais to buy the necessary items for the Americans. Beaumarchais was only allowed to purchase weapons from French armories so the money that was loaned to Beaumarchais by the French government would end up right back in French coffers. Most of the weapons that Beaumarchais purchased were considered obsolete by European standards, but were well suited for conflict in America. Hortalez & Company would then contract private ships to move the weapons to America and trade them for American tobacco, indigo, and cotton. The ships would then return to France and Hortalez & Company where the American goods were sold. Beaumarchais would then use the profits to pay off the loans to the French government (which could be considered a double-dip since the money that was loaned to Beaumarchais went right back to the French government to purchase the arms).<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Unger, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Bud Hannings, *Chronology of the American Revolution: Military and Political Actions Day by Day* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, 2008), 102.

<sup>49</sup> Unger, 108.

While a fair amount of the early supplies for the American Revolution came through ports throughout Europe and the West Indies, most of these came from third-party private shipping, while Hortalez & Company represented a covertly French sanctioned method of supplying the Americans.<sup>50</sup> While the American Secret Committee scoured ports and connections across Europe and the West Indies for supplies, the American Committee of Secret Correspondence, initially led by Silas Deane, and later joined by Benjamin Franklin, petitioned the French government for additional support. Prior to Deane's arrival in France, Beaumarchais had already been loaned money from both the Bourbon kingdoms of France and Spain, and in the fall of 1776, ammunition had already been procured for the Americans and would be sent from Holland in the name of M. Hortalez.<sup>51</sup> In December 1776, on liberal credit with the promise of American goods, Deane was able to dispatch the *Amphitrite* from France carrying 200 brass cannons, thirty mortars, 30,000 fusils, 200 tons of gunpowder, 4,000 tents, and enough clothing for 30,000 soldiers along with the *Mercury* carrying arms, powder, flints, and woolens.<sup>52</sup> The *Mercury* would land in Portsmouth, NH in April of 1777, followed a month later by the *Amphitrite*.<sup>53</sup> Many of these supplies would arm the Continental troops for their 1777 campaign which culminated in the Battle of Saratoga. It was at Saratoga that English General Burgoyne surrendered to American General Horatio Gates. It is additionally worth noting that October of 1777 saw the largest number of Continental soldiers fielded for all of 1777 more than likely due

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<sup>50</sup> Erna Risch, *Supplying Washington's Army* (Washington, D.C.: United States Army Center of Military History, 1981), 336.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> Hannings, 171, 179.

to the additional French supplies brought in earlier that year.<sup>54</sup> French support of the Americans had resulted in a decisive victory and turned the tide of the war. Two months after the American victory at Saratoga, France would officially recognize American independence and enter into an open treaty of commerce and alliance with the United States of America.<sup>55</sup>

The American Revolution continued on until September 1781, with the Siege of Yorktown ending the hostilities. Ultimately, the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783 and formally ended the conflict. Thus, the French formal entry into the war is as far as this case study will follow. The question that has to be asked from this information is, did French support of the American Revolution, prior to open French hostility, put France in a position of advantage over England? What results is a two-fold answer, yes and no. Without French support, French arms, cannons, uniforms, and related supplies there was little chance of a victory at Saratoga. One important figure to note is that uniforms for 30,000 were shipped from France on the *Amphitrite* and the total for the combined forces under Generals Washington and Gates was just over 39,000.<sup>56</sup> While supplies were coming in from Europe and the West Indies due to the hard work of the Secret Committee, Americans were still relying on domestically produced goods. The supplies that came in on the *Amphitrite* and the *Mercury* were sufficient to rapidly arm enough soldiers to effectively face a large English force at Saratoga.

Secondly, the French support of the Americans allowed a significant build up of French military forces while England was busy policing its colonies. French support had multiple effects on American resistance. Besides the obvious material benefits of French support, the persistent potential for recognition of American independence and the possibility of an alliance, was a

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 219; Charles Lesser, ed., *The Sinews of Independence* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), 50.

<sup>55</sup> Hannings, 231.

<sup>56</sup> Lesser, 50.

driving factor for continued American resistance to a cessation of hostilities with England. If the Continental Congress had no support whatsoever, there would have been little hope for the war to continue for an extended period of time. At the first offer of home rule for the colonies, or even just a cessation of hostilities, the Continental Congress may have accepted, recognizing that there was little chance for them to continue the conflict alone. By stringing the Americans along with the hope of aid and the potential for recognition and an alliance, France was able to give the Americans hope that they could succeed. The victory at Saratoga let the Americans know they could succeed, and also let the French know that their support was a driving factor. The timing of the American victory at Saratoga was also in France's best interest. France had identified prior to the outbreak of hostilities in America that it would take approximately two years for them to build up their own military capacity. The American victory at Saratoga came at a point approximately a year-and-a-half after the outbreak of hostilities. France would officially declare war on England on July 10, 1778, two years and four days after the American Colonies declared their independence from England, and just over two years and two months from when Beaumarchais established Hortalez & Company.<sup>57</sup> France had been able to use this two-year period to rebuild its own military, revamp its arsenal, and was able to return to a position of advantage over England which was now caught in a two-front war in the Atlantic Ocean and America.

Despite France's ability to gain a position of relative advantage over England after the American victory at Saratoga and then later in Yorktown, Bourbon France would ultimately be destroyed, in part, due to its efforts. Already in severe debt after the Seven Years' War, the financing of the American Revolution only exacerbated the problem. Inflation skyrocketed after the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The inability of the French monarchy to repay its debts nearly bankrupt France. The period of financial instability would ultimately end with the French

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<sup>57</sup> Hannings, 102, 282.

Revolution, the collapse of the French monarchy, and the death of Louis XVI by guillotine, and the rise of Napoleon.

The demise of the Bourbon monarchy in France brings up an important point in this case study, the need for a stable economy when supporting another state in their military build-up. In the case of France, its economy was in trouble prior to the American Revolution. While supporting the Americans in their independence did give France a position of relative advantage over England, it was not able to keep it. In the long run, England would be more capable of gaining the position of relative advantage over France because its economy was more stable due to lower debt. This becomes an important caveat in this type of endeavor; if a state is going to finance a military build-up, it needs to ensure its own finances are in order first.

#### Case Study 2: The Soviet Union and the Korean War

Soviet involvement in the Korean War is far less clear-cut than that of the French involvement in the American Revolution. Even though the Korean War took place over sixty years ago and the Soviet Union has since dissolved, much of the internal reasoning behind Soviet involvement and internal communications still remains classified. Despite this, the case can be analyzed by making some reasonable assumptions based on evidence. The outcomes of the conflict will still fit neatly within the case study parameters and some important conclusions can be drawn from the entire case.

The main assumption that has to be made is that, to some extent, Joseph Stalin wanted the Korean War to continue in order to gain a position of advantage over the United States, particularly in Europe. This assumption is not overly zealous and can be backed by evidence. First off, in the wake of World War II, the Soviet Union did not desire to unify the two Koreas, but did see war between the two inevitable. Stalin understood that there needed to be a balance of power on the Korean peninsula and only sought to retain a government friendly to the Soviets in

the north, mainly to prevent a threat from Japan.<sup>58</sup> Whether Stalin did or did not order the war between the Koreans is of little consequence for this analysis. Much as France did not instigate the conflict between England and the colonies in America, Stalin was merely able to capitalize for his own benefit on a pre-existing conflict. Prior to their official entry in the war, as much as it was able, France provided support for the Americans, and French officers were commissioned in the Continental Army to provide expertise; the same can be seen in the Korean War. Stalin refrained from committing Soviet forces in direct conflict with US forces; instead many of the forward deployed Soviet aircraft were disguised as Chinese or North Korean aircraft, and Soviet aircraft would remain guarding rear areas. The hope for Stalin would be that US forces would be defeated to the point that European allies would lose faith in the United States, the conflict would reduce United States' defense capabilities, and the Soviet Union would be able to capitalize by focusing its defense spending on increasing capabilities and thus would surpass the United States as a hegemon.

In light of the assumption that Stalin did not instigate the Korean conflict, that is not to say he did not support it. After numerous appeals from Kim il-Sung to reunify the two Koreas, Stalin agreed with both Soviet and North Korean assumptions that the United States would not enter the war.<sup>59</sup> This, in itself, raises some interesting questions. If the aims of Stalin had been to maintain a buffer between the Soviet Union and Japan, then why would he support Kim il-Sung's attempts to unify the Korean Peninsula? It could be assumed that Stalin had eventually tired of Kim il-Sung's pleas for unification, however if that were the case, North Korea could have

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<sup>58</sup> Kathryn Weathersby, The Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 8, "Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives," Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, November 1993, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/ACFB76.pdf>, 23.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

invaded without Soviet support. The Soviet Union poured large amounts of equipment and assistance into North Korea to set it on a path to success in invading South Korea. For example, North Korea had a 1:6.5 ratio of South Korean to North Korean tanks, a 1:2 ratio for soldiers, and a 1:6 ratio for planes. North Korea maintained, thanks to the Soviet Union, a numerical position of advantage in all material, personnel, and advisory categories.<sup>60</sup> The only logical reasoning behind this was that if Kim il-Sung was going to invade South Korea, Stalin was going to ensure that it was an overwhelming success. With the assurances that the United States would not intervene, Stalin could exemplify the power of the Soviet Union and its satellite states.

This thinking takes us to the first instance of how the Soviet Union could gain a position of relative advantage over the United States by supporting the conflict. A destruction of the US supported South Korea and a unification of the Korean Peninsula, would have shown the inability of the United States to protect states that did not fall in line with the Soviet Union. Joseph Stalin did not want the United States to intervene. Non-intervention on the part of the United States would have exemplified a return to isolationism for the United States. Stalin was reluctant on approving the invasion of South Korea, but with Soviet support, if Kim il-Sung could easily take South Korea from a disorganized government led by the US installed Syngman Rhee, this could prove to be writing on the wall for eastern Europe. “Germans were acutely aware of the implications the developments in Korea held for their own future.”<sup>61</sup> A rapid Soviet supported invasion of South Korea by North Korea could potentially foretell the future for West Germany.

In light of the immediate US response to the North Korean invasion, Stalin’s hopes for US non-involvement were dashed. However, Stalin did not walk away from the conflict, and

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<sup>60</sup> Weathersby, 30.

<sup>61</sup> Department of State, “Far East, Invasion of the Republic of Korea,” Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, June 28, 1950, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-06-28&documentid=ki-3-1&pagenumber=1](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-06-28&documentid=ki-3-1&pagenumber=1).

instead continued to support the conflict and even widened it with support to China in their entry into the war. While the Chinese entry into the war was a bit of posturing to build up their own military forces with Russian produced weapons, a fair amount of the cards were still in Stalin's hands. He continued to support both China and North Korea while refraining from committing Soviet forces. By continuing the war by encouraging non-Soviet forces with Soviet equipment to fight in large numbers, the Soviet Union was able to prevent the degradation of their own capabilities, while significantly degrading the capabilities of the United States.

A memorandum delivered in July 1950 to the National Security Council by the National Security Resources Board (NSRB) evidences this. The memorandum lays out numerous points as to how the actions on the Korean Peninsula could ultimately give the Soviet Union a position of relative advantage over the United States. The NSRB notes that the combined forces of the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea would not be able to be dealt with in a short period of time and that any additional outbreaks that the United States may have to respond to would "force us [The United States] into further attrition of our own forces."<sup>62</sup> Secondly, the NSRB realizes that just to handle the conflict without the introduction of Soviet and Chinese forces, the United States is already taxing the standing US military and that increases in requirements for forces would seriously degrade the ability of the United States to defend itself.<sup>63</sup> Third, the NSRB identified that the transportation assets to support the US efforts in Korea were already taxing the United States' ability to react to other global crises. If the Soviet Union were to attempt another Berlin type blockade "there are not enough airplanes available to handle simultaneously another Berlin Airlift, the Korean campaign, and the absolute minimum airlift for the military defense of the

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<sup>62</sup> Department of State, "Far East, Invasion of the Republic of Korea."

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.



United States.”<sup>64</sup> US military resources were stretched thin, this put not only national security at risk, but the ability of the United States to prevent the spread of communism elsewhere.

The NSRB’s assessment was a stark one, but within the model used throughout these case studies and monograph, it should not come as a surprise. The NSRB reported to the National Security Council “When they believe they are ready, the Soviet Union plans to attack the United States, because it is their often reiterated intention to rule the world.”<sup>65</sup> The NSRB summed up their report by saying “Our national survival is now paramount over all other considerations.”<sup>66</sup> It has to be noted, the NSRB would, by its own biases, submit apocalyptic reports as to why the United States needs to increase its national security resources. However, it is important to note that the need to revamp the military was not triggered by the Korean conflict. President Truman had requested a military-civilian plan in 1945. In 1950, when the Soviet threat had fully materialized, no plan existed. The NSRB realized that a new, comprehensive approach to military spending was necessary to the very survival of the United States as a hegemon.

While somewhat of a forgotten war for the United States, the Korean War had an enormous cost, in both dollars and people. The Korean War was the fifth costliest war for the United States. Adjusting for a FY 2008 constant, the Congressional Research Service puts the cost of the Korean War at \$320 billion.<sup>67</sup> Alternatively, through the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance between China and the Soviet Union, the Soviets would finance

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Department of State, “Far East, Invasion of the Republic of Korea.”

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Stephen Daggett, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress RS22926, *Costs of Major US Wars*, U.S Department of State, July 24, 2008, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/108054.pdf>.

the Chinese actions in the war via loans normally with high interest rates.<sup>68</sup> Much as the French would provide loans to the Americans to purchase French arms, the Soviets would provide loans to the Chinese to purchase Soviet weapons while fighting to diminish the capabilities of the Soviet's enemy. The Korean War also ranks fifth in battle deaths with 33,739 US service members killed in battle; another 103,284 would be wounded.<sup>69</sup> Alternatively, the Soviet Union lost a mere 299 killed in the Korean War.<sup>70</sup> This equates to a 112:1 ratio of US to Soviet killed during the conflict.

The Korean War had twofold implications for the Soviet Union. Initially, when the Soviets believed that the United States would not participate, the authorization of a North Korean campaign across the 38th Parallel made sense. South Korea was stood up by the United States in the wake of World War II. The collapse of a democratic state associated with the United States at the hands of a communist state associated with the Soviet Union, would have implications in eastern Europe, Germany, Greece, and Iran to name a few. If South Korea fell, it would weaken the view of the United States' ability to establish an international environment where democracy can survive in the face of spreading communism.

After the United States and the UN had committed to the Korean War, the Soviet Union was presented with a new opportunity. China, who was trying to modernize its military equipment, was willing to enter the war to protect its border, but at the urging of Stalin. In doing so, China would attempt to extract as much modern military equipment from the Soviets as

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<sup>68</sup> Odd Arne Westad, "Fighting for Friendship: Mao, Staling, and the Sino- Soviet Treaty of 1950," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin8-9\\_p4.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/CWIHPBulletin8-9_p4.pdf), 236.

<sup>69</sup> Department of Veteran Affairs, Office of Public Affairs, "America's Wars," US Department of Veteran's Affairs, May 2013, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs\\_americas\\_wars.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf).

<sup>70</sup> G. F. Krivosheev, *Soviet Casualties and Combat Losses in the Twentieth Century* (London: Greenhill Books, 1997), 281.

possible. To the Soviet's benefit, the modernization program fell under the auspices of the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance and would come in the form of loans to China so China could purchase Soviet equipment. The Soviet Union was able to both occupy the Americans on the Korean Peninsula, and produce overwhelming American casualties (as compared to Soviet casualties), while financing its military-industrial complex by way of China.

Unfortunately, the Korean War did not prove as advantageous as the Soviet Union might have hoped. Soviet involvement in the Korean War spurred the United States to enact National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68), which would bring about an increase in economic output, military preparedness, and foreign cooperation to prevent the spread of communism, while significantly hampering the Soviet Union.<sup>71</sup> NSC-68 would lead the United States to support the enemies of communism worldwide throughout the Cold War. This involvement would have hard-hitting implications for both the Soviet Union and the United States. The containment policy for the United States would result in the United States entering into the Vietnam War which would end up costing the United States USD\$686 billion (adjusted to FY 2008),<sup>72</sup> and 47,434 battle deaths,<sup>73</sup> making it the fourth most costly and third most deadly US war. For the Soviet Union, containment would take its toll in Afghanistan. Soviet involvement in spreading communism to Afghanistan was severely hampered by US support of the Mujahedeen fighters. Ultimately, the

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<sup>71</sup> The Executive Secretary on United States Objectives and Programs for National Security, *A Report to the National Security Council – NSC 68*, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, April 14, 1950, accessed August 29, 2014, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/documents/pdf/10-1.pdf).

<sup>72</sup> Daggett.

<sup>73</sup> Department of Veteran Affairs, Public Affairs, Office, "America's Wars."

Soviet Union would disengage from Afghanistan after ten years of fighting and spending an estimated twenty billion Rubles,<sup>74</sup> and losing 13,310 soldiers<sup>75</sup> in the process.

The strategy put into place by the United States, in accordance with NSC-68, would eventually lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Soviet actions during the Korean War directly resulted in the implementation of NSC-68. The actions of the Soviet Union in the Korean War were not able to give the Soviet Union a position of relative advantage over the United States. While it can be argued that the Soviet Union did close the gap between the two as a result of the Korean War, a position of advantage was never gained. Instead, Soviet actions during the Korean War forced the United States to implement NSC-68, which maintained the US position of advantage over the Soviet Union, a position that would last through the collapse of the Soviet Union and continues today.

#### Case Study Analysis

Both of these case studies attempt to address the outcome when a state (State A) supports a second state (State B) in a conflict with a third state (State C) so State A can gain a position of relative advantage over State C. There have been numerous other examples besides these two case studies; one that deserves a brief highlight is that of the United States support of the Mujahedeen in the Soviet-Afghan War. This case study would have better supported the overall argument, however access to declassified materials was limited and would have hindered the overall analysis. However, from a common knowledge point of view we can see that there was an overwhelming success by the Mujahedeen over the Soviets. The support of the United States,

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<sup>74</sup> Directorate of Intelligence, *The Costs of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan*, Central Intelligence Agency, February 1987, accessed August 29, 2014, [http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document\\_conversions/89801/DOC\\_0000499320.pdf](http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/89801/DOC_0000499320.pdf), iii.

<sup>75</sup> Philip Taubman, "Soviet Lists Afghan War Toll: 13,310 Dead, 35,478 Wounded," *The New York Times*, May 26, 1988, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/05/26/world/soviet-lists-afghan-war-toll-13310-dead-35478-wounded.html>.

especially in the way of Stinger surface-to-air missiles, was devastating to Soviet efforts in Afghanistan. The ten year war in Afghanistan cost the Soviets heavily in both soldiers and Rubles, but also in control. The Soviet war in Afghanistan would ultimately contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union. This represents a major position of advantage for the United States. By supporting a third party, coupled with other foreign policy initiatives, the United States was able to bring about the collapse of a state and secure itself as a sole hegemon.

What the example of United States support of the Mujahedeen has over the case studies of the French support during the American Revolution, and the Soviet support during the Korean War, is a hegemon providing the support. However, even in this example, the international environment could be considered multipolar with the Soviet Union at one pole and the United States at the other limiting US hegemony. However, in the two case studies analyzed in this writing, neither supporting state was a hegemon. This point becomes vital in the outcomes, as right now the United States is a hegemon; however, as China continues to rise this might not remain the case. If the United States is going to act, in accordance with the examples presented in the case studies, it can be seen through the presented case studies that a state that is not a hegemon may not be successful. If it is assumed that the United States was a hegemon, at least a regional hegemon, during the Soviet-Afghan War, we can assume a higher preponderance of success by a hegemon.

A second point of analysis is national politics. During the American Revolution, the French were extremely successful in gaining a position of relative advantage over the English. The Bourdon kings were able to cut off England from its colonies from which it imported much of its raw materials. France was able to gain a trading partner in the colonies. France was able to deal a significant blow to the English navy and the treaty to end the American Revolution was even signed in Paris. However, the gains made by France would not last, primarily due to the exorbitant national debt. The debt accumulated through the Seven Years' War, coupled with

financing the American Revolution, caused an untenable economic situation in France, which ultimately led to the French Revolution. Similarities can be drawn between the high levels of French debt as a result of the Seven Years' War and the high levels of US debt due to, among other things, financing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It clearly became impossible for the French to manage paying their previous debts, newly accumulated debts from the support of the American Revolution, and rebuilding the French military. While there are much better checks and balances in place in the United States today as opposed to eighteenth century France, the United States should pay special attention to its financial stability before financing another state's military.

Lastly, the adage, "if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself," has to be considered. During the Korean War, Stalin was very careful in contributing Soviet forces to directly engage the United States. While this may have been done not to provoke a larger attack on the weaker Soviet Union, North Korean troops were clearly not able to handle a combined U.S.-South Korean force later in the war. The Chinese were more successful than the North Koreans, but the rift caused by the Chinese doing much of the heavy lifting for the Soviet Union would not be repairable and there would remain conflict between the two for the remainder of the existence of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could have had a much greater effect had they entered the Korean War and directly engaged the United States. While this may have brought the possibility of nuclear war to the forefront, Soviet aims had a better chance of being met had the Soviets entered the war in a larger capacity. Additionally, by not entering in a larger capacity, the Soviets ultimately lost two allies in both North Korea and China, with China becoming the communist parent state for North Korea.

The lack of success in the two case studies presented shows that it is not impossible to gain or maintain a position of relative advantage over another state by supporting a third state. More importantly, if we include the example of the United States support of the Mujahedeen in

the Soviet-Afghan War, it can be highly successful for a hegemon to gain or increase a position of relative advantage. There were inherent faults in both of these case studies that prevented their success, namely poor national economic strategies and non-democratic rule of law. The demise of both states in the case studies happened amid internal uprising, not external defeat. While external defeat may have represented a contributor to the internal uprising, both states collapsed from within. Both of these actions described in the case studies were successful in gaining a position of military advantage with the French becoming superior to the English and the Soviets narrowing the margin between them and the United States. While these gains would not last, they faltered due to poor national strategy but were successful, to a degree, in gaining a position of advantage.

### **A Way Ahead**

Looking at a way ahead for the United States with a rising China, it becomes necessary to understand how China can threaten the United States. The most likely threat that China poses to the United States is in limiting its global influence. This is why the Spratly Islands dispute becomes so vital for the United States. An unresolved Spratly dispute maintains access to the global commons and allows the United States to maintain global influence. Secondly, an unresolved Spratly dispute ensures there is not interruption of the global supply chain, which would have negative, rippling effects on the US and global economy. So it becomes necessary to ask, how can the United States ensure that the dispute goes unresolved?

As China increases its ability to project power, the Spratly Islands become an integral part in the new strategy. Forward positioning on the Spratlys allows China to control the SCS with land-based assets while increasing its Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile range outside of the SCS. As naval and air assets are freed from their missions patrolling the SCS they can break out into the blue waters of the Pacific and Indian Ocean. This, in turn, allows China to increase its global influence and ensure there is no interruption to its supply chain. Without the Spratlys as a linchpin, China's hopes of power projection become extremely limited. However, it is also

apparent that China cannot control the Spratlys without power projection. China needs a strong navy to access the Spratlys and power projection assets, such as an aircraft carrier, to initially control the islands. Therefore, if the United States were able to limit the Chinese ability to project power, it would also limit the ability for China to control the Spratly Islands. By shifting cooperation from island or archipelago states to continental Asian states, the United States can not only balance Chinese land based military assets, but also force China to increase defense spending to balance-in-kind. By forcing China to adjust its defense strategy and spending on continental defense as opposed to power projection, the United States can potentially prolong the Spratly dispute until it becomes more advantageous for it to be resolved.

When comparing what states would be possible suitors for the United States to support in order to maintain its position of advantage over China, we can take our evidence from the case studies and begin to formulate some possibilities. To begin with, all states that are possibilities must have some pre-existing conflict with China; this fact will be mandatory selection criteria. The variables considered are: population, GDP, land accessibility, and ability to influence. The higher the value of each of these variables, the more desirable it is to support that state.

The variables were selected based on the following criteria. China's large population equates to large latent military power. China has a large population from which to draw military power, and a competing state must have a large population that can come close to countering China's latent military power. China's GDP is the second largest in the world, behind the United States. If a state is going to have the chance to compete with China's ability to build up military power, it must also have a large GDP. Second, whereas the United States is looking to sell military equipment through Foreign Military Sales (FMS), as opposed to supplying equipment free of charge, a larger national GDP will increase the number of weapons that a state can purchase. The criterion for land accessibility is meant to limit Chinese power projection balancing. A state that has no natural borders with China requires power projection to threaten



China, and vice-versa. Where the goal of support is to limit Chinese power projection, the need for power projection would make a candidate less desirable. Lastly, the ability of the United States to influence is a vital factor. Whereas the concept of support is to influence a state to increase military capability and capacity in a land based system aimed at China and its proxies, if the United States is unable to effectively influence the state, it will become less desirable to support them.

The states selected for analysis are: Japan, India, and Vietnam. Each of these states has a historical conflict with China and meets the initial screening criteria. The analysis will be graphically depicted. Each state will be analyzed based on each of the criteria with a value awarded from zero to three, with three meaning that state ranks highest based on the particular criteria and one meaning it ranks worst with zero meaning that value is non-existent for that state. This will allow the three states to be rank in order with the state receiving the highest total value as most desirable and the state receiving the lowest overall value as the least desirable.

Table 1. Supported State Desirability Comparison

	Population	GDP	Land Accessibility	Ability to Influence	Total
Japan	2	3	0	3	8
India	3	2	2	2	9
Vietnam	1	1	2	1	5

*Source:* Created by author.

Of the three states, India receives the highest value, with Japan being a close second. However, it is worthy to note that none of these values are weighted. Japan scored a zero for land accessibility due to the lack of a land border between the two. Additionally, India and Vietnam both scored two on land accessibility. While India shares a long land border with China, the

infrastructure that allows for accessibility along that border is limited. Secondly, the border between China and Vietnam is much smaller than that of the border between China and India but the infrastructure along that short border exists to allow for better accessibility. Ultimately, the even score between India and China in land accessibility are due to the fact that accessibility is even between both states for vastly different reasons.

A second factor affected by weighting would have been GDP. Japan's GDP is the third largest in the world, while India's GDP is the tenth largest, and there is a difference of almost USD\$8 trillion between the two. The last major disparity between Japan and India would be in population, with India's population being almost one billion larger than that of Japan. While weighting may have produced different totals, ultimately with India's larger land border and larger population, the outcome would have been identical in the final rank order of India being the most desirable, followed by Japan and Vietnam being the least desirable. From this, we can begin to analyze how India could be successful in balancing China.

#### India Balancing China

In their 2011 article titled "India's Increasing Troop May Go Nowhere,"*[sic]* authors He Zude and Fang Wei commented, "the United States needs to rely on India to restrict China. India needs to show its value to the United States by flexing its muscle toward China so that it could gain US military support and help raise its international status."<sup>76</sup> The authors' comments just slightly missed the mark. The international status of India is inconsequential to the United States, however their statement about India restricting China are spot on. Of all China's continental neighbors (save Russia), India is the only state remotely capable of balancing China. India's near-functioning democracy, GDP, population, and military, make it a likely candidate for balancing

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<sup>76</sup> He Zude and Fang Wei, "India's increasing troop may go nowhere," People's Daily Online, November 15, 2011, accessed July 1, 2014, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7644825.html>.

China. Couple these factors with longstanding continental disputes with China, and India becomes a perfect candidate to restrict Chinese growth, primarily in the arena of power projection, and allow the United States to maintain its hegemony.

In order to restrict China's growth by way of India, the United States must maintain three lines of effort: increase Indian ground forces and their capabilities, minimizing nuclear proliferation, and minimizing naval proliferation. By following these three lines of effort the United States can shape China's defense strategy and spending, limit competing nuclear proliferation, and most importantly, limit Chinese power projection capabilities. Each of these lines of effort follows a cause and effect model where an event by India will be appropriately countered by China. By the United States affecting each Indian event, it can shape the Chinese effect (or corresponding event).

Before delving into a potential course of action for the United States in regards to India, it is necessary to consider why India; why not another state? Japan and China share a significant historical conflict, Japan is a rising economic power that has just eased constitutional restrictions on its military, additionally the United States has a defense treaty with Japan, it would make sense for the United States to work with Japan in restricting Chinese growth. Or perhaps the Philippines; the United States also has a mutual defense treaty with the Philippines, it is a growing economy, the Philippines is affected by the current Spratly Island dispute, and has been extremely vocal in resolving the dispute. Vietnam is another option, military cooperation between Vietnam and the United States is on the rise, Vietnam is a significant party to all the disputes in the SCS, and they are more than willing to exact retribution for the South Johnson Reef skirmish, among other direct military confrontations within the SCS. The reason for India is simple; the United States needs to limit Chinese power projection. US support of Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, or even Taiwan (if that was a realistic option), would cause China to build up its ability to project power over the ocean to counter the threat. India's contested land

border with China is the furthest from Chinese ports; it would require a major shift in military resources to counter Indian force build-up. Second, current Chinese security cooperation with Pakistan provides another exploitable avenue. If the United States increases its support to India, it can be assumed that China would increase its support to Pakistan, converting Chinese military production into land based resources or economic flows into Pakistan. Ultimately, the answer for why India, is that it provides the United States the best chance at countering Chinese power projection. Chinese continental defense is nowhere near the threat to the United States that Chinese power projection is.

When considering India for military and diplomatic cooperation, it becomes necessary to first look at the desired endstate. The United States should not want to incite a conflict between India and any of its neighbors, if this should happen it may allow for the United States to leverage its diplomatic resources to end the conflict, but this should not be the aim. The endstate should be an environment where China has committed vast resources to counter India on land. Albeit, this concept can include in the air as well, the bottom line is that the United States should not seek for China to counter India in the water. Recent Chinese actions have built the foundation for this course of action to have success; the United States, by way of India, now must exploit Chinese actions.

Despite the rise in the potential conflict between India and China at sea, the 2011 “A Consideration of Sino-Indian Conflict” produced by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, an independent Indian think tank, states that a conflict on land, primarily along the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) is more likely.<sup>77</sup> The LAC is a 400-kilometer remnant of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, and is still a contested border between India and China. Additionally,

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<sup>77</sup> Ishaan Tharoor, “China and India at War: Study Contemplates Conflict Between Asian Giants,” *Time*, October 28, 2011, accessed July 6, 2014, <http://world.time.com/2011/10/28/china-and-india-at-war-study-contemplates-conflict-between-asian-giants/>. “A Consideration of Sino-Indian Conflict” is analyzed in this article.

on the Chinese side of the LAC, China has been building up its infrastructure to allow for rapid deployment of forces into the conflict area. This area is sparsely inhabited and the increases in infrastructure would serve little purpose besides military deployment. Alternatively, India has not been as quick to build up infrastructure to the region.<sup>78</sup>

A second hindrance to India being able to balance China along the LAC is India's aging military. India continues to use the MiG-21s it received from the Soviet Union in the 1960s. India has chosen to upgrade its fighter fleet, purchasing 126 French Rafale's after only a mere eleven years of deliberations.<sup>79</sup> The painfully slow pace of Indian procurement due to past incidences of graft, has led to a severe technological gap between India and China, and even Pakistan for that matter. Despite the slow procurement process, India is still planning on spending upwards of USD\$100 billion over the next decade on defense procurement.<sup>80</sup> While the road may be slow, India's desire to upgrade its aging military equipment provides a dual opportunity for the United States.

The first recommendation to increase India's ability to balance against a rising China, would be to increase FMS to India to improve their land based capability, with the key factor here being improving their land based capability. According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency's website, since 2008 the requested FMS to India have included fifty-three UGM-84L Harpoon anti-ship missiles, 145 M777 155-millimeter lightweight towed howitzers, twenty-two AH-64D Apache helicopters, ten C-17 Globemaster III aircraft, thirty-two MK-54 torpedoes, 510

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<sup>78</sup> Shastri Ramachandaran, "Will China attack India again? And are we ready?" DNA India, November 15, 2011, accessed July 6, 2014, <http://www.dnaindia.com/analysis/comment-will-china-attack-india-again-and-are-we-ready-1612618>.

<sup>79</sup> Frank Daniel, "Analysis" India's military build up may be too little too late?" Reuters,(February 3, 2012, accessed July 6, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/03/us-india-defence-idUSTRE8120LH20120203>.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

CBU-105 Sensor Fuzed Weapons (sensor fuzed cluster bombs), and six C-130J aircraft.<sup>81</sup> These sales represent a modest increase in India's land based capabilities, however this should be the focus of US FMS. The last notification to Congress by the Defense Security Cooperation Agency in regards to FMS for India, was for twelve UGM-84L Harpoon anti-ship missiles. This shows that India is still focusing on defending itself on the water and the United States is willing to oblige this defense strategy. If the United States wants to counter China, it needs to steer India's defense policy on land-based assets.

Much of India's ground vehicles are Soviet/Russian produced, or indigenously produced variants. India currently possesses a fairly modern tank force that numbers close to 2,000, with Russian built T-90s and T-72s, as well as Indian produced Arjun Mk-1s.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, the Indian Armored Personnel Carriers and Infantry Fighting Vehicles are Soviet designs similarly produced in Russia or India; these include the BTR and the BMP-2. Both of these vehicles were initially produced in the 1980s. As the US Army analyzes its vehicle performance in Afghanistan, it has already awarded a contract to General Dynamics to improve the performance of the Stryker vehicles in mountainous terrain.<sup>83</sup> These vehicles would be a drastic improvement over the current Indian vehicles and would perform much better in the mountainous terrain of the LAC.

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<sup>81</sup> Defense Security Cooperation Agency, "India," The Official Home of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, June 28, 1950, accessed July 6, 2014, <http://www.dsca.mil/tags/india>. DSCA records request notifications to Congress. The figures reported by DSCA are the figures that Congress is notified not if the sales were made or if an item was requested multiple times before approval for sale.

<sup>82</sup> IHS Janes, "India, Armed Forces," IHS Inc., accessed July 25, 2014, <https://janes.ihs.com.lumen.cgscarl.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?ShowProductLink=true&DocType=Reference&ItemId=+++1304832&Pubabbrev=SAS>.

<sup>83</sup> Defense Industry Daily Staff, "Future Stryker: US Army to Address Mobility, Piecemeal Upgrade Issues," Defense Industry Daily, December 21, 2009, accessed August 29, 2014, <http://www.defenseindustrydaily.com/More-Powerful-Strykers-to-Address-Afghanistan-Mobility-Problems-06039/>.

Additionally, the use of Anti-Tank Guided Missiles would prove tactically advantageous in the rugged terrain along the LAC. The Indian military fields the French Milan Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, a myriad of Soviet designed Anti-Tank Guided Missiles, and has introduced, but not fielded, an indigenously produced Nag missile.<sup>84</sup> Introduction of the US produced Javelin missile would be a vast improvement to the current Indian complement of anti-tank weapons. The Javelin is man-portable and has an improved range over most of the anti-tank weapons in service in India. More importantly, the current anti-tank weapons that India has in service are all wire guided, while the Javelin is not. The severing of the wire of wire guided missile, cuts the connection between the tracking unit and the missile, causing the missile to fly on whatever course it wants, normally nowhere near where the firer intended it to go. In the LAC, the rugged terrain would almost guarantee that any of the Indian anti-tank weapons (with the exception of the Nag missile, which is not wire guided) would have its wire severed. The Javelin's parabolic flight path and fire-and-forget technology make it well suited to the terrain along the LAC.

While the purchase of the M777 towed howitzer and the AH-64D represent major upgrades to the Indian military capability, they are merely a step in the right direction. One hundred forty-five M777s and twenty-two AH-64D Apache helicopters are not nearly enough to provide a threatening offensive capability against China. An increase in sales is necessary, particularly ones that would give a marked advantage to India. While the AH-64D Apache does that, twenty-two is not enough. Increasing the number of ground based capabilities in the region, particularly ones that give India an edge in capability, would result in two possibilities, both raising the cost for China. The first possibility being that China has to develop a new capability to counter Indian capability. This will give India the edge in capability until a new Chinese capability can be brought to bear in the LAC. Where China will have to spend the time

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<sup>84</sup> IHS Jane's.

conducting research and development, production, and fielding; India, through FMS by way of the United States, will be able to skip all the steps of the process and go straight to fielding. The second possibility is that China would just increase the number of forces in the region. By gaining a numerical advantage, China can overcome the technological disadvantage. Both of these outcomes are advantageous to the United States. Either scenario is costly to China. Both scenarios cause China to shift economic resources, material resources, and manpower away from developing power projection capabilities and into border defense.

Additionally, an increase in training exercises under the United States Army Pacific Theater Security Cooperation Plan can increase the capabilities of the Indian land based forces. The annual Yudh Abhyas exercise does focus on land-based training and exercises, however it only consists of one Indian and one US battalion.<sup>85</sup> While this exercise is a step in the right direction, training one battalion at a time will not be sufficient in increasing the capability of the Indian Army, and more importantly, will not garner the necessary attention from the Chinese. Further assisting India in their defense preparation and training will be beneficial, as it will force China to take a greater interest. Increasing India's attendance to US Army Professional Military Education and increasing US Army advisors and observer/controllers to Indian military exercises will increase the overall capability of the Indian military, and can force China to balance with their own capabilities.

Understanding that the goal of support to India is to force China to balance-in-kind, there are some areas that the United States should refrain from supporting as well. As the purpose of support to India is as a continental power to balance China, it would be detrimental to the situation to provide India with naval support or training. This is not to say that India's navy is not

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<sup>85</sup> SGT Michael MacLeod, "Annual Yudh Abhyas training with Indian Army kicks off at Bragg this year," The Official Homepage of the United States Army, May 10, 2013, accessed July 23, 2014, [http://www.army.mil/article/103117/Annual\\_\\_Yudh\\_Abhyas\\_\\_training\\_with\\_Indian\\_Army\\_kicks\\_off\\_at\\_Bragg\\_this\\_year/](http://www.army.mil/article/103117/Annual__Yudh_Abhyas__training_with_Indian_Army_kicks_off_at_Bragg_this_year/).



an important part of India's defense. Following the same logic of providing support to the Indian ground forces to force China to balance-in-kind, by providing naval support to the Indian navy, the People's Liberation Army Navy would balance there as well. By building up the capacity and capability of the Indian navy, the United States would actually be encouraging the People's Liberation Army Navy to build up its ability to project power.

A second area that could pose an inherent risk in US-India cooperation would be widespread nuclear support for India. In 2008, the US Congress gave final approval to a US-India nuclear treaty. This treaty, while increasing the number of safeguards on India's civilian nuclear power program, would also provide India dual-use nuclear fuel that can be used for civilian power or nuclear weapons.<sup>86</sup> While this treaty has improved relations between the United States and India, it also sets a dangerous precedent in Asia. This could signal a nuclear arms race involving China, India's traditional nuclear nemesis Pakistan, or both. With China's newly implemented assistance program to Pakistan, it is conceivable that China could strike similar deals with Pakistan. As India and Pakistan have experienced nuclear stand-offs before, and China is a nuclear armed state, increasing India's access to nuclear material, whether meant for peaceful power production or not, only increases the risk factor. Additional nuclear material of any kind introduced into India will only run the risk of China conducting similar activities. Whether this is domestic, or in Pakistan, an increased nuclear threat in the area will not be beneficial for anyone.

### **Conclusion**

While India represents the best potential partner for US support to balance China, it still does not make it a viable partner. Despite India's large land border with China, their pre-existing conflict over the LAC, their population, their democratic form of government, their desire to

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<sup>86</sup> Jayshree Bajoria and Esther Pan, "The US-India Nuclear Deal," Council on Foreign Relations, November 5, 2010, accessed July 25, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/india/us-india-nuclear-deal/p9663#p1>.

increase their defense spending, and their open dialogue with the United States, the bottom line is that India would not likely accept their role as a balancer for China. India's independence, especially their military independence is evidenced in their staunch desire to produce their own weapons. Additionally, India's military path in the twenty-first century is one that heavily relies on the ocean. India understands that power projection is the key to regional hegemony, and would rather make its own run at regional hegemony, as opposed to simply preventing China from becoming a regional hegemon at the behest of the United States.

This is not to say that India does not still represent a worthy partner in Southeast Asia. All the factors discussed in this monograph make India an ideal partner in Southeast Asia, however it must be remembered that India will act in India's best interest. India will follow Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism and it will look to gain power at the expense of other states, whether it is China or the United States. If the United States chooses to attempt to balance against China's rise, India will be merely one part of a comprehensive plan that encompasses multiple Southeast Asian states. While it may be possible to support one state to maintain a position of relative advantage over another, in the case of the United States attempting to maintain its position of advantage over China, India will not be the single state that achieves that goal.

As China continues to rise, the United States will be put in a position where it must react to that rise. With China's continued growth economically, military, geographically, and influentially, it will become a serious threat to US global influence and hegemony. Chinese power projection will serve as a direct threat to US hegemony, and the Spratly Islands serve as the catalyst for the efficacy of Chinese power projection. As the Spratly Island dispute continues, the United States is best served by ensuring that the status quo in the SCS remains. By ensuring that no state fully controls the Spratly Islands, the United States is assured of its access to the global commons, and its ability to project both power and influence globally. By containing Chinese

increases in power projection capabilities, the United States can ensure access to the SCS and maintain its global influence and hegemony.

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