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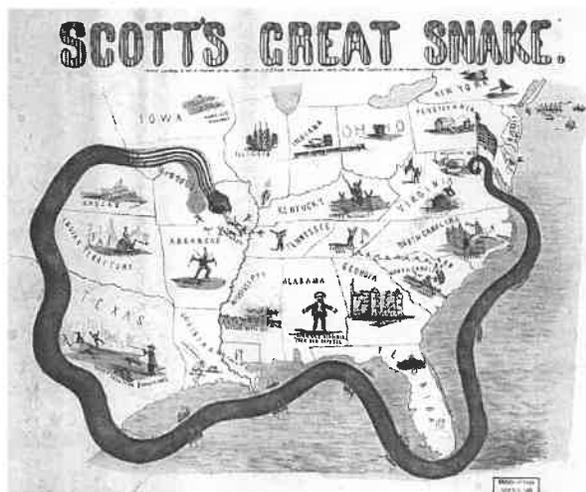
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14. ABSTRACT The first Anaconda Plan dates back to 1861. The Union, seeking to surround, strangle, and suffocate the nascent Confederacy, instituted a massive naval blockade along the eastern seaboard and Gulf coast. At the same time, it attacked up and down the Mississippi River, ultimately severing the Confederate East from the Confederate West. The Confederacy's inability to export cotton and import basic goods led to domestic turmoil and diplomatic fallout. The second Anaconda Plan has not happened yet. However, it might be exactly what the United States needs to maintain superiority in the Asia-Pacific in this era of great power competition—particularly with respect to the People's Republic of China. Imagine a Civil War map superimposed onto East Asia. A de facto blockade stretches along China's eastern seaboard down to the South China Sea. A vertical effort in the west along the China Pakistan Economic Corridor cuts off key overland supply routes of the Belt and Road Initiative. The inability to export consumer goods and import oil leads to domestic turmoil and diplomatic fallout. The first Anaconda Plan ended in our favor. Are we ready for the sequel?									
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The Anaconda Plan:
A 19th Century Strategy for the Asia-Pacific

The first Anaconda Plan dates back to 1861. The Union, seeking to surround, strangle, and suffocate the nascent Confederacy, instituted a massive naval blockade along the eastern seaboard and Gulf coast. At the same time, it attacked up and down the Mississippi River, ultimately severing the Confederate East from the Confederate West. The Confederacy's inability to export cotton and import basic goods led to domestic turmoil and diplomatic fallout.

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The first Anaconda Plan ended in our favor. Are we ready for the sequel?



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¹ <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scott-anaconda.jpg>

² Image adapted by author using snake graphic from preceding footnote. Not to scale. For illustrative purposes only.

“The Strategy That Carried the North to Victory”³

The first Anaconda Plan was the brainchild of Winfield Scott, Commanding General of the Army and the first three-star since George Washington. He served an astounding 53 years under 14 different Presidents including 47 years as a general officer.⁴ Had he returned to his native Virginia like his protégé Robert E. Lee, he surely would have had a top Confederate posting.⁵ Instead, he stayed with the Union and served as President Lincoln’s chief strategist.

The plan, like the snake for which it was named, called for constricting and suffocating the Confederacy by surrounding it on all sides.⁶ The name itself came not from General Scott but from critics who derided the plan as too slow and weak, instead preferring a quick and direct assault against the rebels.⁷ General Scott himself acknowledged that the greatest flaw with his plan was not substance but appearance: “the impatience of our patriotic and loyal Union friends [who] will urge instant and vigorous action.”⁸ President Lincoln also desired a quicker solution and replaced General Scott with General George McClellan, who Lincoln mistakenly believed would mount an aggressive campaign in the East.

³ William M. Fowler Jr., *Under Two Flags: The American Navy in the Civil War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 48.

⁴ Timothy D. Johnson, *Winfield Scott: The Quest for Military Glory* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 92, 233; Craig L. Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, The U.S. Navy, And the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 4.

⁵ Johnson, *Winfield Scott*, 226.

⁶ Barbara Brooks Tomblin, *The Civil War on the Mississippi* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 3.

⁷ James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 334; Donald Stoker, *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 38; Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 48; Paul Calore, *Naval Campaigns of the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2002), 63.

⁸ Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 39; Johnson, *Winfield Scott*, 227.

Nevertheless, Scott's Anaconda Plan ended up becoming the official Union strategy even if not explicitly adopted at the time.⁹ On 19 April 1861, six days after Fort Sumter, President Lincoln issued a proclamation to blockade the 3500-mile-long Confederate coastline (initially from South Carolina to Texas, and later to include North Carolina and Virginia) in order to prevent exports of cotton and imports of war materiel.¹⁰ As for the West, the Union focused its efforts along the Mississippi River, from its delta in Louisiana up north to its junction with the Ohio River, in order to cut the Confederacy in two: Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana on one half; the deep South on the other.¹¹

The strategy immediately ran into legal problems. The blockade had the incidental effect of recognizing the Confederacy as a legitimate belligerent nation as opposed to a mere insurrection.¹² A country by definition cannot blockade itself. Fortunately, the Supreme Court squared the circle by declaring that "the United States was legally engaged in a war against an enemy that did not legally exist."¹³ The other immediate problem was material. Although the Union was more maritime-oriented than the Confederacy, it still only had twelve ships in port at the start of the war and had just lost its large shipyard at Norfolk.¹⁴ Thus began a massive effort to acquire and convert civilian vessels and man them with civilian mariners who were conveniently now out of work due to the shutdown of north-south maritime trade.¹⁵

⁹ Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 38.

¹⁰ Kevin Dougherty, *Strangling the Confederacy: Coastal Operations in the American Civil War* (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2010), 31; Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 36; Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 47.

¹¹ Jack D. Coombe, *Gunfire Around the Gulf: The Last Major Naval Campaigns of the Civil War* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999), 199.

¹² Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, 40; Ivan Musicant, *Divided Waters: The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 51. Interestingly, it was for this exact reason that President Kennedy labeled the American response to the Cuban Missile Crisis as a "quarantine" one century later.

¹³ Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, 47.

¹⁴ William Whyte, "The Brooklyn Navy Yard: The Heart of the Union Anaconda," 22 *The Northern Mariner* 4, 398 (2012); Calore, *Naval Campaigns of the Civil War*, 64; Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, 49.

¹⁵ Whyte, "The Brooklyn Navy Yard: The Heart of the Union Anaconda," 400; Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 51.

Historians still debate the overall effectiveness of the Anaconda Plan. On the one hand, the blockade of 500 ships and 100,000 sailors was predictably porous: “a naval sieve.”¹⁶ Confederate blockade runners going to and from neutral Caribbean islands managed to evade the blockading squadrons a whopping 85% of the time, prompting the Assistant Secretary of the Navy to call it “a Bull Run to the Navy,” referencing the embarrassing Union Army defeat earlier in the war.¹⁷ On the other hand, the deterrent effect was immense. Many ships opted not to make the trip at all.¹⁸ Those that did make it through were small, fast, and unable or unwilling to carry large amounts of cargo.¹⁹ Meanwhile, actions along the Mississippi do not get the same historical credit as Antietam or Gettysburg, but they too were influential. The Navy-Army tag team of Admiral David Farragut and General Ulysses Grant conquered New Orleans (the largest city in the Confederacy by far) and Vicksburg (the impenetrable fortress on the bluffs upriver) in 1862 and 1863, respectively.²⁰

General Scott was vindicated. But how exactly did the Anaconda Plan succeed? And how is it relevant to great power competition with China? One may look to the following four factors:

Factor #1: Economic Isolation

The primary benefit of the Civil War’s Anaconda Plan was economic isolation. In the national division of labor, the southern United States largely handled agriculture while the northern United States largely handled manufacturing. In times of peace, the arrangement

¹⁶ Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, 38.

¹⁷ Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 248; David G. Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority and the Economics of the American Civil War* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 4.

¹⁸ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 3; Symonds, *Lincoln and His Admirals*, 48; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 381–82.

¹⁹ Frank E. Vandiver, *Confederate Blockade Running Through Bermuda 1861-1865* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), xv; Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 90.

²⁰ Dougherty, *Strangling the Confederacy*, 118; William L. Shea and Terrence J. Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 178.

worked well, with the South importing nearly \$30 million worth of goods annually.²¹ In times of war, however, the South became dependent on outside suppliers for arms, munitions, niter, iron plating for ships, ship engines, rail iron, rail cars, uniforms, blankets, and medicines.²² The blockade in the East prevented many of those goods from reaching Confederate shores, crippling supply when demand was at its highest.²³ Although the Confederacy eventually created its own domestic manufacturing industry, it was still reliant on the small trickle provided by the blockade runners: 60% of its rifles, 33% of its lead, and 66% of its saltpeter came from overseas.²⁴

Just as devastating as the inability to import war materiel was its inability to export cotton, the Confederacy's primary source of revenue. In times of peace, the Confederacy supplied 75% of the world's cotton, reaping the financial benefits of having a near-monopoly on an internationally-desirable commodity that brought in roughly \$210 million per year.²⁵ Once the blockade started, however, North America supplied less than 25% of the world's cotton (much more of it from the Northern states than before), with the Confederacy only pulling in around \$80 million per year.²⁶ Unable to sell cotton in the quantities it was used to, the Confederacy lacked the revenue with which to purchase war-making materials. Through this economic isolation in both imports and exports, the blockade won "a victory that was surely as devastating as any particular battlefield defeat."²⁷ One officer who appears to have paid close attention to the influence of sea power and "systematic commerce destruction through blockade" upon history

²¹ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 92.

²² Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 1, 33.

²³ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 381.

²⁴ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 5.

²⁵ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 111, 154.

²⁶ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 143, 158.

²⁷ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 162.

was a young Lieutenant named Alfred Thayer Mahan, then assigned to the *USS Pocahontas* of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.²⁸

In modern times, China, like the Confederacy, is also highly dependent on maritime imports.²⁹ Despite its vast domestic resources, China's 1.4 billion people are "increasingly reliant on seaborne shipments of oil, gas, and other commodities" with more than 85% of its trade coming and going by sea.³⁰ At the same time, China is also highly dependent on its ability to export its "Made in China" products to the rest of the world.³¹ Without the cash from consumer goods, China might not be able to purchase everything else that it needs. China is therefore both a posterchild of and hostage to globalization, to a far greater extent than a mature economy like the United States. A modern-day Anaconda Plan along China's eastern seaboard might not come through a literal blockade of ships like in the Civil War—the 11,000 mile coastline is far too long for that.³² However, a de facto blockade can be achieved through the floating guard towers that are the US-friendly countries of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. That "Great Wall in reverse" (to borrow a term from James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara) is what China fears the most, hence its effort to break out of the first island chain, second island chain, and beyond with dubious initiatives like the "nine-dash line" in the South China Sea.³³

²⁸ Nicholas A. Lambert, "What Is a Navy For?," *Proceedings*, April 2021, 48; Joseph Thomas, *Leadership Embodied: The Secrets to Success of the Most Effective Navy* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 52; Toshi Yoshihara and James Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 9.

²⁹ Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 42.

³⁰ Yoshihara and Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific*, 17–18; Robert Haddick, *Fire on the Water: China, America, and the Future of the Pacific* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2014), 10, 12; Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea*, 26, 45.

³¹ Yoshihara and Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific*, 14; Haddick, *Fire on the Water*, 10.

³² Edward Tse, *The China Strategy: Harnessing the Power of the World's Fastest Growing Economy* (New York: Perseus Books, 2010), 10.

³³ Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate* (New York: Random House, 2013), 214; Robert D. Kaplan, *Monsoon: The Indian Ocean and the Future of American Power* (New York: Random House, 2011), 282–84; Yoshihara and Holmes, *Red Star Over the Pacific*, 21, 51.

Factor #2: Divide and Conquer

The western half of the Anaconda Plan played just as essential of a role in securing the Confederacy's ultimate defeat. The Mississippi River was then something of a "continental aorta."³⁴ There were no railroads linking Texas and Arkansas to the other Confederate states meaning that trade flowed up and down the Mississippi River or not at all.³⁵ When severed, the consequences for the Confederacy were disastrous. The loss of cattle ranches in Texas and Arkansas (together supplying 39% of Confederate beef) along with the loss of food production facilities in Louisiana severely hampered Confederate foodstuffs and were a major reason why Lee's armies in Virginia went hungry towards the end of the war.³⁶ The traditional alternative to rivers and railroads—horses—were also cut off because they were largely sourced, ironically, from Texas and Arkansas.³⁷ Adding insult to injury, the reduction in salt imports from overseas further reduced the Confederacy's ability to both preserve its already-limited supplies of meat and to keep its remaining horses in the East healthy.³⁸ Finally, the loss of the West also meant the loss of the neutral Mexican port of Matamoras on the illegal-to-blockade side of the Rio Grande, which had long served as a side door for goods into and out of the Confederacy.³⁹ The western half of the Anaconda Plan was without question "an economic as well as a military disaster for the Confederacy."⁴⁰

³⁴ Musicant, *Divided Waters*, 179.

³⁵ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 38; Coombe, *Gunfire Around the Gulf*, 6.

³⁶ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 19, 72; Calore, *Naval Campaigns of the Civil War*, 67; Musicant, *Divided Waters*, 292; Andrew F. Smith, *Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), 16, 20, 115.

³⁷ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 40.

³⁸ Smith, *Starving the South*, 23.

³⁹ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 176; Bern Anderson, *By Sea and By River: The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 34, 229; Smith, *Starving the South*, 89.

⁴⁰ Shea and Winschel, *Vicksburg is the Key*, 205; Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 221, 229; Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 6.

China today does not have a major north-south maritime highway like the Confederacy had in the Mississippi. Most of its major rivers like the Yangtze, Yellow, and Pearl run east-west. However, China still has the same dependence on east-west supply routes as the Confederacy did and is therefore similarly vulnerable to a Mississippi-style north-south axis of attack. The Belt and Road Initiative (a.k.a. One Belt One Road), for example, is China's attempt to build extensive overland highways and railways across Central Asia all the way to Eastern Europe so as to provide an alternative to the Strait of Malacca should that route become unavailable.⁴¹ Consumer goods and excess raw materials go one way, while cash and oil flow the other.⁴² This initiative runs largely east-west but it is intended to have one main north-south thoroughfare: the China Pakistan Economic Corridor, running from China's far western region of Xinjiang southwards along the Karakorum Highway to the Pakistani port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea.⁴³ In this analogy, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor is the Mississippi and Gwadar is New Orleans: "the pulsing hub of a new silk route, both land and maritime . . . a mega-project and gateway to landlocked, hydrocarbon-rich Central Asia."⁴⁴ China benefits when east and west stay connected, while the United States benefits when it has the ability to divide and conquer if necessary. The competition between the US and China to gain and maintain influence in Pakistan is real, even if it does not reach the same kinetic levels of a Grant-led or Farragut-led campaign. As Robert Kaplan writes, "military deployments are ephemeral: roads, rail links, and pipelines can be virtually forever."⁴⁵

⁴¹ Elizabeth C. Economy, *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 190; Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 289.

⁴² Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 191.

⁴³ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 196; Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 206; Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 290.

⁴⁴ Kaplan, *Monsoon*, 71.

⁴⁵ Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 205.

Factor #3: Domestic Turmoil

A third key to the success of the Anaconda Plan was the domestic turmoil that it created within the Confederacy. The reduction in imports and exports proved frustrating for such an agrarian economy. Cash crops but no cash. Confederate civilians struggled to get basic necessities like food and clothing, hurting morale on the home front and the morale of those on the front lines reading letters from back home.⁴⁶ Making matters even worse, blockade runners were very successful in bringing in luxury goods like cigars, brandy, silks, jewelry, and fine china because those items were generally less bulky.⁴⁷ Being able to purchase fancy liquor at the market, but not bread or tea or shoes, was demoralizing to middle and lower class Confederate citizens who already resented the wealthy landowning class for sidestepping the draft via the Twenty Slave Law.⁴⁸ Food riots cropped up in cities across the South at a time when domestic unity was essential.⁴⁹

China today faces a similar question: whether the Chinese Communist Party can continue to appease its citizenry including the millions of marginalized ethnic minorities.⁵⁰ It is “propelled abroad by the need to secure energy, metals, and strategic minerals in order to support the rising living standard of roughly a fifth of humanity.”⁵¹ When the rising tide is able to lift all 1.4 billion boats, that massive population is an engine for tremendous economic and political power. When

⁴⁶ Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 6, 183.

⁴⁷ Vandiver, *Confederate Blockade Running Through Bermuda 1861-1865*, xxix; Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 12, 95; Anderson, *By Sea and By River*, 219; Coombe, *Gunfire Around the Gulf*, 43; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 380; Smith, *Starving the South*, 14.

⁴⁸ Mark Thornton, “Blockade, Union Naval,” 73 *Social Science Quarterly* 72 (January 1992); Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 97; Anderson, *By Sea and By River*, 231; Calore, *Naval Campaigns of the Civil War*, 67; Smith, *Starving the South*, 26.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Starving the South*, 65.

⁵⁰ Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 195; Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015), 145.

⁵¹ Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 199.

the tide stops rising, those 1.4 billion people are a potent force that cannot possibly be kept down.⁵² China has faced the “specter of social unrest” in the past (Falun Gong, Tiananmen Square), in the present (Hong Kong, labor protests), and will continue to face it in the future (Xinjiang, Tibet) as its increasingly Internet-savvy citizens chafe at the constraints of authoritarianism.⁵³ Thus, just as the Civil War’s Anaconda Plan badly damaged Confederate morale, an Anaconda Plan in Asia might accelerate a “Jasmine Revolution” already rumbling beneath the surface.⁵⁴

Factor #4: Diplomatic Fallout

The fourth major consequence of the Anaconda Plan was that it was instrumental in securing a major diplomatic coup.⁵⁵ The Confederacy, with its near-monopoly on the world cotton supply, believed that the European powers would have no choice but to intervene on their side in order to keep the bales flowing.⁵⁶ They badly miscalculated. “King Cotton” might have kept the European powers neutral, but it did not go so far as to force the Europeans to join the Confederate side.⁵⁷ The Europeans were hedging their bets and certainly did not like being extorted to intervene.⁵⁸ The Union blockade had turned the Confederacy’s strategy on its head, using the lack of cotton exports to convince the Europeans that joining the Confederate side was not economically viable: “no European power was ready to run that risk [of war with the North]

⁵² Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 95; Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography*, 207; Dinny McMahon, *China’s Great Wall of Debt: Shadow Banks, Ghost Cities, Massive Loans, and the End of the Chinese Miracle* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 202.

⁵³ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 9, 109.

⁵⁴ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 69.

⁵⁵ Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 29; Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 276, 305; Smith, *Starving the South*, 70.

⁵⁶ Musicant, *Divided Waters*, 22; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 383; Smith, *Starving the South*, 12.

⁵⁷ Coombe, *Gunfire Around the Gulf*, 14.

⁵⁸ Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 29; Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority*, 113; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 384.

for the questionable benefits of southern friendship.”⁵⁹ Queen Victoria, for example, despite traditionally being a staunch supporter of free trade on the world’s oceans, recognized the legality of the Union blockade and forbade her subjects from attempting to breach it.⁶⁰ The British textile industry suffered for a while but was soon able to find some new suppliers in Egypt, Brazil, and India.⁶¹ Without any major allies on the international stage, the Confederacy failed to ever gain international legitimacy.

China today is in a similar struggle for diplomatic recognition. Since WWII, the United States has dominated international institutions and set the international rules of the road. Other Asian countries have looked to the United States for legitimacy and protection. However, with America’s focus on the Global War on Terror in the 2000s and the “America First” pullback in the late 2010s, China has stepped into the leadership vacuum. For example, in 2020, the China-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) free trade agreement usurped the US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as the dominant rule setting regime in the region.⁶² Similarly, the Beijing-headquartered Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has risen as a powerful alternative to the US-headquartered World Bank or the US-aligned Asian Development Bank.⁶³ These Asian countries felt safe in “defecting” to these China-led agreements because of China’s massive economic and security umbrella (along with a healthy dose of debt trap diplomacy).⁶⁴ However, if the Chinese economy were to sputter as a result of a new Anaconda Plan along its eastern seaboard and east-west supply lines, that economic umbrella would appear

⁵⁹ Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 305.

⁶⁰ Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 50; Calore, *Naval Campaigns of the Civil War*, 62; Musicant, *Divided Waters*, 52.

⁶¹ Stoker, *The Grand Design*, 30; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 386.

⁶² Haddick, *Fire on the Water*; Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 199.

⁶³ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 198.

⁶⁴ Economy, *The Third Revolution*, 194, 206.

much less comforting. The result might mean a diplomatic realignment back to the United States, just as it did in the Civil War.

The Rhymes of History

The Confederacy was outplayed diplomatically, militarily, and economically. They thought “King Cotton” would save them but the Union’s Anaconda Plan turned that strategy on its head. As a symbol of just how far cotton had fallen, the Confederacy at times even resorted to “cotton-clads”: warships lined with un-exportable surplus bales of cotton because better forms of protective shielding could not be imported from overseas.⁶⁵ Likewise, in today’s era of great power competition, China believes that the diplomatic, military, and economic power of “Made in China” will save them. Could the same serpent strategy that stifled southern state secession someday stem Sino-American superpower succession?

This analogy is not intended to be prescriptive. We are not at war with China and a literal blockade would not be appropriate or advisable. The Chinese coastline is three times longer than the Confederate coastline and no naval force could effectively blockade it. The Chinese economy is also many times more robust and diversified so it could likely weather a blockade far better than the Confederacy did. Finally, blockades can cause conflict just as they can stifle them. American efforts in the 1930s to stop the flow of oil to Imperial Japan, for example, contributed largely to Japan’s misguided calculation that a preemptive strike on Pearl Harbor was the only way to survive.⁶⁶ That war ended in our favor, but only after half a million American lives lost.

⁶⁵ Fowler, *Under Two Flags*, 227.

⁶⁶ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Free Press, 2020), 75.

Still, there remain strong parallels between these two Anaconda Plans, one real and one theoretical. As Mark Twain eloquently said, history does not repeat itself but it often rhymes.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "History Rhymes: The German Precedent for Chinese Seapower," 54 *Orbis* 1, 14 (2010).