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# Pulled Towards the Seas: Whether China Even Needs "Naval Nationalism" To Challenge US Naval Dominance in the 21st Century

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# Pulled Towards the Seas:

## Whether China Even Needs "Naval Nationalism" to Challenge US Naval Dominance in the 21st Century

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# Introduction

Mao Zedong is dead. The USSR – China's main competitor on the continent – is gone. Since 1979, China's economy has opened up to the outside and exploded. As will be explored later in this paper, China now has huge amounts of commercial exports and energy imports that must be protected, as well as strategic interests at sea like Taiwan and the South China Sea islands. In this context, some Sinologists believe that China is increasingly turning its strategic attention seaward, and considering a serious naval transformation. "We must build a powerful navy," writes current People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) commander Wu Shengli[1]. His likely successor, Hu Yanlin, is his coauthor. However, China is hardly the first rising land power to turn to the seas while a dominant naval power looks on from above. Indeed, every rising land power since the Industrial Revolution – France, Russia, Germany, and the Soviet Union – has "gone to sea". However, the naval transformations in all of these cases have ultimately ended in failure or defeat for the state[2]. So why do these rising land powers aggressively turn to the sea? What drives them to challenge the dominant naval power? Are there common threads? Will China follow the same path? In short, what lessons can history teach us about China, the US, and their future on the high seas as China continues its meteoric rise? This paper scrutinizes this phenomenon through comparative historical analysis, assessing several causal factors in the process within defined time periods for a small number of historical cases, and trying to glean the potential implications for China. In

[1] See "Building a Powerful People's Navy That Meets the Requirements of the Historical Mission for Our Army" by Wu Shengli and Hu Yanlin. *Seeking Truth* no. 14 (July 2007). Web.
[2] See "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects and the US Response" by Robert Ross, for a succinct analysis of this failure. *International Security* 34.2 (Fall 2009). Web.

addition to exploring these specific questions, this paper is part of a larger attempt to compare China to cases and to place it in comparative historical perspective. Only so much can be said about China's rise to great power status without tapping into the broader insights and perspective of history.

Much of the existing literature on China's navy lacks historical comparison or else uses very shallow comparison to draw broad conclusions[3]. Despite its limitations, *China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the US Response* by Robert Ross is one of the few exceptions that presents a compelling historical analysis. Ross claims that rising land powers can be overtaken by "naval nationalism", a suboptimal "prestige strategy" in which leaders build symbolic fleets to gain prestige abroad and support at home, but ultimately guarantee their own defeat by setting off a naval arms race or conflict with the dominant power. Briefly, Ross cites France throughout the 1800's, Russia in the 1850's, Germany pre-WWI, Japan in the 1930's, and the Soviet Union in the 1970's all as cases of powers overtaken by naval nationalism. The single case he offers of a land power surviving this phenomenon is France in the 1860's and 1880's vs. Great Britain, but he does not try to explain this variation in outcomes. Moreover, he avoids any basic process tracing, simply listing cases off to support his single-factor "naval nationalism" hypothesis.

Some scholars have pushed back against the article for being too deterministic about the nationalist nature and negative outcome of China's turn to the seas. Michael Glosny and Phillip Saunders, for example, argue that Ross ignores China's tranquility with its land neighbors and that many of the arguments for building a Chinese aircraft

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[3] For an example of a flawed and flimsy comparative analysis, see *Thinking about China's Navy* by Perry Clausen, U.S. Naval Institute, May2005, Vol. 131, Issue 5

carrier do have strategic logic given its pacified land situation[4]. One feature of Ross's article that underlines this determinism is his rushed list of cases, with none receiving more a couple sentences of analysis. Conceptually, Ross only focuses on the outcomes and the nationalism-pragmatism paradigm instead of on the process and the variety of other factors that might drive naval transformations.

One of the few, if not the only, pieces of literature to truly imbed itself in the historical case studies and do some process tracing is *China Goes To Sea: Maritime Transformation in Comparative Historical Perspective,* edited by Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle J. Goldstein, and Carnes Lord. The book utilizes cases from both ancient (Persia, Sparta, and Rome) and modern times (the Ottoman Empire, France, Germany, Russia, and the Soviet Union), each one written by a different expert on that nation's history in the relevant era. As for China, the introduction presents the debate in China today, and the second half details the evolution of Chinese naval power, China's attempts to learn from history, and the conclusion and analysis of the book. The introduction of the book presents many crucial factors in naval development, including leadership, bureaucracy, strategic culture, objectives, challenges, tradeoffs, and rival power strategies.

Despite the merits of this book, two prominent limitations might be pointed out. First, the many chapters of the book vary significantly in their style, scope, coverage of each factor, and desire to draw comparisons to China. One might criticize the book for tending to tell incomplete and incompatible "stories" as opposed to rigorous, systematic case studies. So, this paper will attempt to bring more cohesion and compatibility to the debate through a more focused research design involving fewer (more precisely chosen)

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[4] See *Response to "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the US Response,"* by Michael Glosny and Philip Saunders, *International Security* 35.2 (Fall 2010).

cases, time periods, and parameters. A related limitation in the eclectic and long volume is, in some places, its lack of relevance and its incompatibility to China. *China Goes To Sea* traces each rising power over many decades and even centuries (the entirety of their rise and fall), and as such it often suffers from a failure to identify the moments that may be compatible or instructive to China today. Likewise, with its use of case studies ranging from Sparta to the Soviet Union, it may fail to account for major differences between the ancient, modern, and contemporary eras with strong implications for naval development, including the emergence of powerful contemporary forces like nationalism, liberalism, and globalization.

In an effort to test Ross's hypothesis in China's *Naval Nationalism* and to address the two main limitations of *China Goes To Sea* – cohesion and relevance – this thesis will examine cases that parallel the Chinese case in important ways. The equal opportunity for cooperation or competition between China and the US is one of the most common memes in China scholarship in the last 20 years[5], and, as such, looking for cases with windows of cooperation or competition between rising land powers and dominant naval powers could provide useful insights. Doing so excludes cases in which peaceful relations were almost inevitable (such as the US and Great Britain after the Civil War) or when hostile relations were almost inevitable (such as the US and the Soviet Union after WWII). If friendship is assured, the rising power's naval transformation has no chance of provoking a challenge from the dominant power, erasing this from the rising power's concerns. Conversely, if

[5] See, for example, prominent scholarly literature such as *The Future of U.S.-China Relations: Is Conflict Inevitable?* by Aaron L. Friedberg, *International Security* 30.2 (Fall 2005), *Fostering Stability or Creating a Monster? The Rise of China and U.S. Policy toward East Asia* by Thomas J. Christensen, *International Security* 31.1 (Summer 2006), and *US-China Relations: engagement or talking past each other?* by June Dreyer Teufel, *Journal of Contemporary China*, Nov2008, Vol. 17 Issue 57, and numerous popular books such as *China and the United States: Cooperation and Competition and Northeast Asia* by Suisheng Zhao, Palgrave Macmillan (October 2008)

hostility is assured, the rising power has no reason to worry about the security dilemma (cycle of mutual fear leading to conflict) potentially posed by its naval expansion. Any comparison of bilateral relations without this meme to present US-China relations would not contain useful insights into the kinds of choices that American and Chinese leaders must face today. In short, one-sided situations do not have relevance to the uncertainty found in US-China relations today. Indeed, similar historical moments that contain this ambivalence give us the most natural and instructive lenses for comparison.

The cases of post-Napoleonic France vs. Britain from 1815-70 and Germany (and its predecessor states) vs. Britain from 1848-1914 were chosen because they do represent this uncertainty at various times when the naval competition was forming. As illustration, France and Britain engaged in naval competition in the 1840's, fought together as allies in the Crimean War in the mid-1850's, and again engaged in intense naval competition into the 1860's. Anglo-French relations were somewhat characterized by uncertainty in this period and varied wildly in terms of tensions and hostility. Would shared interests, such as the alliance in the Crimean War, prevail over traditional hostilities? Meanwhile, Germany and Britain maintained mostly friendly relations before the rise of Wilhelm II, the pro-naval emperor. Bismarck as late as 1890 called British sea power "the greatest force for peace in the world." David Stafford explains this uncertainty, writing that after unification in 1871, German "did not become a naval power until the end of the century, and in the intervening years Anglo-German relations were marked by ambivalence on both sides."[6] The cases of Anglo-French relations in the mid-1800's and Anglo-German relations in the late 1800's were chosen in part because of their ambivalence.

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[6] See "Review: A Moral Tale: Anglo-German Relations, 1860-1914" by David Stafford. *The International History Review* 4.2 (May 1982). Web.

In a general sense, the cases of France and Germany were chosen because they reflect naval transformations by rising land powers that remained land powers. Island nations like Japan or Great Britain or isolated nations like the US (after consolidations) have undergone naval transformations and become dominant naval powers. But they did not have to face security threats on land after they consolidated their limited territories. So, despite their prominent roles in history, these isolated nations did not face the same choices or tradeoffs as the rising land powers in this study. Any comparisons involving them would miss the kinds of choices and tradeoffs that, once again, have relevance to China. Also, both of these case selections occurred after Napoleon's armies ignited the sparks of liberalism and nationalism in Europe, and after the Industrial Revolution of the mid-18th century had begun new and rapid progress in technology and globalization. The development of liberalism is relevant to naval transformations because of the ideological conflict between rising land powers, which have usually been non-liberal, and dominant naval powers, which have been liberal, since the Industrial Revolution. This ideological conflict is an important dynamic in the bilateral relations in these cases and continues to be essential in any case study of US-China relations today. Finally, the introduction of modern nationalism that occurred in Europe in the post-Napoleonic era creates another important layer in crafting a relevant comparison with modern China, one that will be crucial to the causal factors that this paper will analyze.

Additionally, this paper will analyze a specific set of causal factors in each of the case studies, looking at both the actors and factors that caused the naval transformations. Who were the actors: was it more a top-down process led by the leadership or a bottom-up process by the public? What were the main factors: was it driven more by geostrategy,

economy, technology, prestige, or fear? Significantly, these hypothesized factors will test some of the theories in the literature. Robert Ross's analysis tends to emphasize the role of prestige (what he calls "naval nationalism") as decisive in these transformations. The distinctions between leadership and the public in the "actors" section of each case study will allow us to further test his hypothesis, by examining whether "naval nationalism" is actually led by the leadership manipulating public sentiments. As for the other variables, geostrategy is included because it seems to be the thesis of *China Goes To Sea*, the other major comparative work being examined (as Carnes Lord writes in the conclusion, "it is necessary at the outset to say something about a basic premise of much our analysis: geography matters"[7]). The inclusion of fear as a variable will bring the security dilemma into the analysis, and help test the roles of this crucial construct in naval transformations. Finally, even a quick perusal of the literature reveals that the remaining factors, economy and technology, have a prominent place in naval transformations, and once again appear in *China Goes To Sea*.

## *Methodology*

Methodologically, the paper will explore these factors by doing a literature review of secondary sources on the French and German naval transformations, as well as China's navy today, and analyzing the cases across each of the hypothesized factors. Crucially, it will study the literature on the Chinese navy closely; effective comparative analysis must be grounded in a thorough study of the primary case. In the conclusion, the paper will do

[7] Erickson, Goldstein, and Lord 2009, 431

a cross-case comparative analysis of the most salient factors in each case study and make comparative inferences about China's trajectory. Finally, it will clarify its contribution to and dialogue with the comparative literature outlined above, and will evaluate the role of the US in the process and implications for the future of US-China relations.

### *Structure*

In order to best make comparisons between cases, each of the case studies in this paper sticks to the same structure, with historical and analytical sections. The historical section describes what happened, first providing background on the state's strategic and naval development before the time period under consideration in order to provide basic context. Then, the section details the actual strategic and naval development during that time period. What happened? To what extent did the state build up its navy? What was the ultimate outcome? The analytical section explores the causes of the transformation. Why did the rising land power challenge the dominant naval power at sea? Who were the main actors: was it more a top-down process led by the leadership or a bottom-up process by the public? What were the main factors: was it driven more by geostrategy, economy, technology, prestige, or fear? Finally, the conclusion section reviews the transformation and summarizes the most salient variables in each case.

## France

## *Historical Context:*

### The Second Hundred Years' War:

The first case, France under Napoleon III, can only be fully understood in light of what historians call the Second Hundred Years' War (which lasted from roughly 1690 to 1815) and the Restoration monarchy (1815 to 1848). In the Second Hundred Years' War, England, France, and Holland fought in "a three-cornered struggle to control the sources of wealth first opened by Spain and Portugal."[8] All three utilized their navies, privateers, and colonial power in this struggle, but the roles of each differed drastically from state to state, according to historian Theodore Ropp. Ropp argues that despite initially having the most wealth, seaborne commerce, and public support for the navy, Holland lost "because her position on the continent forced her to defend herself on land and at sea."[9] In contrast, France's navy in this era had just been created in order to expand the colonial empire and enhance the prestige of the state under Louis XVI. Ropp emphasizes that the navy was "a symbol of the power of the state and of the personal ambitions of its monarch...that was of no importance to the life of the people at large or in the defense of their interests."[10] As such, the French navy was often cut in times of crisis due to its nonvital role. Meanwhile, England fell between its rivals Holland and France in wealth, population, commerce, and support for the navy. In Ropp's view, the English eventually prevailed due to one factor: superior geography.

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[8] The Development of a Modern Navy, 1
[9] ibid
[10] ibid

Geographically isolated, England could focus its military expenditures on its navy and protect its homeland, commerce, and colonies all at the same time. England's control of the Atlantic kept the French and Dutch ships from its colonies and commerce and their troops from its homeland. For its part, France failed at both of its major naval strategies vs. England during this period: invasion and commerce warfare. Throughout the Second Hundred Years' War, France always abandoned its invasion plans due to a lack of ships, allies, and resolve, while French commerce warfare efforts always failed due to English blockades and naval power (English ships ultimately hunted down the French privateers). After Napoleon's defeat in 1815 finished the Second Hundred Years' War, however, the strategic and naval context changed in important ways. England increasingly became the economic and commercial leader of Europe, more and more "dependent on the regular flow of shipping"[11], while France lost its hegemony on the continent as well as much of its own global empire.

## The Bourbon Restoration:

Without any notable colonies or commerce, France had no reason to maintain a costly navy after its defeat in the Napoleonic Wars. The French public had little support for the navy after its failures under Napoleon, and this took another hit after a disgraceful episode in 1816 off the West African coast in which over 100 men died after desertion, drinking, looting, and fighting on a single ship. However, revival began in 1818 when the Minister of Marine, Baron Portal, told the Chambers to choose between properly funding

[11] ibid

or eliminating the navy entirely. After they voted to increase funding, he moved quickly to complete crews, build the fleet up to a respectable (though not provocative) level, and even show the flag in other states. Over the next two decades, the French navy continued to steadily expand, and held its own as a supporting actor in conflicts with Spain, Greece, and Algeria, among others.

The literature suggests that French humiliation in the Near East in 1840, however, provided the real spark for its naval revival. Egypt, a French ally, was about to topple the Ottoman Empire in 1840. However, Great Britain and other European powers intervened without French consent and bullied Egypt into a full retreat. Unable to fight the British at sea, France had to accept this distasteful outcome. The affair, which embarrassed France, helped lead to a law giving nearly $100 million francs for the navy in 1846. "France had at last realized that she must become a real naval power."[12] Francois-Ferndiand-Philippe de Orleans, the Prince de Joinville, also emerged as a key figure in this period and helped pass the naval law. Other key supporters of the navy after the Egypt crisis included prime minister Adolphe Thiers, who argued powerfully that "France must have a fleet that can make her respected."[13]

## France under Napoleon III:

If the Egypt crisis was the spark for French naval revival, Napoleon III's empire kept a roaring fire going over the next two decades. President in 1848 and then emperor in 1852, Napoleon III relied on prestige and propserity to legitimate his imperial regime.

[12] A History of the French Navy, 292
[13] The Development of the French Navy, 7

His vision required an assertive foreign policy and a strong navy as one of its primary tools. Although France found itself allied with Britain in the Crimean War (1854-1856), in which the two fought to hold off Russian expansion into the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean, the two traditional rivals remained distrustful and continued to see each other as the main threat despite their brief alliance. After some moderate naval success in the conflict with armor plating, France pursued the Program of 1857 to continue its naval transformation. The Program called for three fleets: battleships in Europe, prestige ships abroad, and transports and gunboats for colonial and amphibious operations. The French excelled in the technical aspects of the navy, with some of the best scientific training and best designs in Europe. The Naval Constructors and the Naval Artillery corps were filled with many top minds and run by leaders hand-picked by Napoleon III, such as Stanislas-Charles-Henri Dupuy de Lome (who designed the first steam ship and first ironclad ship in Europe). In contrast, the British lagged far behind technically, with no technical naval schools and stolen French designs.

However, France could not execute its superior designs as well as Britain due to industrial deficiencies leading to costly and inadequate materials. Its naval budget grew from $160 million in 1858 to $220 million in 1864, and the navy began to decline (both due to increasing costs and lagging production, and the resulting public pressure) at the end of 1860's as Britain won the "first great modern naval race."[14] The liberals began to regain influence in government due to Napoleon III's foreign policy failures and naval expenditures, and demanded lower naval spending or at least organizational reform. In the brief liberal empire (1869-1870), they achieved only a reduction in spending and the retirement of Dupuy de Lome, but not real reform. In the final analysis, the French navy

[14] The Development of a Modern Navy, 10

nearly achieved its goals: numerical equality and technical and tactical superiority, but failed to displace British dominance. The Franco-Prussian War ended the Second French Empire, and, fittingly, the navy failed one last time. The navy did not press its advantage and missed the chance to destroy the German fleet and coasts, and to land an army in the German rear. The navy only carried out an ineffective blockade of North Germany and a useless deployment in the Mediterranean Sea (it did capture some 200 German merchant ships), helplessly watching the stunning German victory on land.

## *Analytical Section:*

***Why France pursued a post-Napoleonic naval transformation?***

Most of the small amount of literature on France's naval revival from 1815-1870 tends to emphasize prestige, leadership, technology, and, to some extent, anglophobia as its primary causes. In "A History of the French Navy", which provides a more tactical, though still useful, account of French naval operations, historian E. H. Jenkins stresses the roles of prestige, leadership, and anglophobia as drivers of French naval expansion. "The Development of a Modern Navy: French Naval Policy 1871-1904" by Theodore Ropp and "Navies in Modern World History" by Lawrence Sondhaus point to prestige, leadership, and technology ("Navies in Modern World History" especially emphasizes technology) as the main causes of the build-up.

## The Actors:

According to Jenkins, Minister of Marine Baron Portal played an essential role early in the revival. "The revival of the fleet, however, starts from the next year, 1818, when Baron Portal, formerly an organizer of privateers, took over."[15] With the navy at rock bottom, after defeats in the Napoleonic Wars and the West Africa affair, the 1818 speech of the Minister of Marine and vote of the Chambers to fund the navy appears to have been necessary to avoid a full naval collapse. In addition, Baron Portal took other important steps by 1822, such as completing crews by national conscription, setting up the Admiralty Council, and starting to show the flag in other states again. These actions occurred in spite of public disdain and disinterest, serving as an example of a top-down push initiating the process of naval revival.

Another key leader in the naval revival was the Prince de Joinville, an Admiral-prince who "had made the navy his career [and] carried on a continuous agitation for the navy"[16] in the 1840's. After the French naval retreat and humiliation in the crisis of 1840, "Joinville's controversial pamphlet [*On the State of French Naval Forces]*…revived the argument that steam propulsion would be the key to overcoming Britain's superiority in sailing warships"[17]. The Prince argued that steamships were the key to naval power and that France could overtake Britain in this area with the French ships already in the water, those already under construction, and an additional investment. In the Prince's view, this would allow France to achieve dominance of the seas and even "pose a credible invasion

[15] A History of the French Navy, 283
[16] The Development of a Modern Navy, 7
[17] Navies in Modern World History, 52

threat to Britain itself"[18]. Author of *Navies in Modern World History* Lawrence Sondhaus explains Joinville's importance for the French navy:

> During the 1830's and 1840's the conservative majority of naval officers remained sceptical about, if not hostile toward, the steam revolution. Indeed, Joinville became so important as an advocate of steam because, as Louis Philippe's son, his own advancement was not contingent upon the approval of conservative admirals, and fellow officers in general were reluctant to criticize him. Despite his privileged status and extraordinary promotions, Joinville became genuinely popular within the navy, and most officers appreciated his tireless efforts to advance the cause of their service.

So the Prince not only pushed the navy to expand through his advocacy of steam warships, but also by uniting the liberal and conservative factions behind a single means of expansion and challenge to Britain. His writing and advocacy helped lead to the $100 million franc special naval law of 1846. In addition, the Admirals and the Prince de Joinville also succeeded in getting a surface fleet despite the public opinion favoring fast commerce raiders. In this sense, the Prince de Joinville in the 1840's, like the Minister of Marine in 1818, used his leadership position to push the navy forward with or without the blessing of the public.

Last but not least, Napoleon III himself tends to be emphasized in the literature as the figure most responsible for the naval build-up. As already stated, Napoleon III based his regime on prestige and prosperity, looking to regain the French prestige lost after the Napoleonic Wars. During his regime, Napoleon III pursued interests in Central America, South America, Africa, Europe, and East Asia, among other places. In brief, he needed a strong navy to support his assertive – and global – foreign policy vision[19]. Additionally,

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[18] Navies in Modern World History, 53
[19] A History of the French Navy, 294

Ropp argues that "like Tirpitz in Germany a half century later, Napoleon III considered a powerful battle fleet a diplomatic tool that could be useful against Britain even if France and Britain never actually went to war"[20]. Also, Napoleon III actually hand-picked some of the most important naval leaders of the era, such as Stanislas-Charles-Henri Dupuy de Lome (who designed the first steam ship and first ironclad ship in Europe for the French navy, as stated above). More liberal leaders might not have pursued naval expansion, or pursued naval expansion as aggressively, as Napoleon III. As such, one might argue that the rise of Napoleon III and his foreign policy were necessary for an aggressive French naval expansion and challenge to British sea power.

In contrast, public opinion appears to have played a weaker and more passive role in French naval development, constraining – though not at all determining – the decisions of the leaders. Jenkins explains the popular anti-naval rationale:

> Nor, outside the Service, was anyone interested in the navy. Few recalled the victories of the American war; to most the navy presented only a long tale of failure and of defeat. There were no colonies worth mention to protect, for France had lost almost all of them: there was no seaborne commerce to speak of; the troops could guard the coasts. Why maintain a navy!

Anti-naval public opinion early in the Restoration period was clearly an obstacle for naval development, but an obstacle that Minister of Marine Baron Portal was able to overcome through his speech and leadership. In this sense, public opinion acted only as a constraining factor for the leadership in the naval realm. In the literature, public support for the navy does not appear to have exploded until after the Near East Crisis of 1840 and the French humiliation at sea by Britain. Even at this point, however, the public opinion

[20] Navies in Modern World History, 54

favored fast commerce raiders, while the Prince de Joinville and the other Admirals were able to push the regime to build a large surface battlefleet[21].

Under Napoleon III, the Emperor trumped the legislators and public opinion did not play a major role in foreign policy formation and naval development until the end of the regime. As evidence, Napoleon III dissolved the Parliamentary Commission designed in 1848 to investigate the navy, and, by extension, quieted the liberal movement for naval reform until the end of his regime[22]. More generally, Ropp explains that "in acquiescing in the coup that made Napoleon III emperor in 1852, the French sold their liberties for properity and glory"[23]. Thus, while the French may have supported Napoleon III and his prestige system, especially at first, they did not have much of a voice in foreign policy or naval development. Only in 1869, after the failure of Napoleon III's foreign policy and France in the naval race with Britain, did the liberals "regain a share in the government after a successful campaign against the more authoritarian aspects of the empire" and naval reform and reorganization begin to materialize again[24]. In this sense, public opinion during the French naval transformation acted mainly as a constraint on leadership, and one that was often overpowered or sidelined by its leaders.

## The Factors:

*Geostrategic Context:*

[21] The Development of a Modern Navy, 7
[22] ibid
[23] ibid
[24] ibid

By the term geostrategic context, this paper means a state's physical and strategic geography, including its land and sea-based security threats. As a large European land power with a long coastline, French geography created dual opportunities but also dual vulnerabilities. In the Napoleonic era, continental dominance and open hostility with the dominant naval power, Britain, sparked naval development. As stated above, France lost most of its colonies and commerce of value after the Napoleonic Wars and much of the justification for its navy. However, after the Restoration, France did not face any direct threats to its security on land until the rise of Germany in the 1860's, allowing for other variables – such as prestige, technology, and the variety of other factors mentioned – to spur naval development. Spain to the South and the Low Countries to the north did not present serious security threats, and Austria-Hungary to the East, while a rival of France, did not present a serious security threat and was usually easily defeated or deterred when French leaders sent forces to Italy throughout the period[25]. Conversely, when France was resoundingly defeated by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, French strategic orientation naturally shifted more to the land (although not as much as expected, possibly due to a psychological denial of German land power, as Ropp hypothesizes). In any case, French geostrategy – its lack of land threats – played an extremely important passive role in encouraging naval development, but the active role, the real impetus for France to pose a challenge to British sea power, came from other factors such as prestige.

*Economy*

[25] Navies in Modern World History, 73

The economy, by shaping both capabilities and incentives for naval development, did play a role in the French naval transformation, but not nearly as much as geostrategy, technology, and, most of all, prestige. The economy, however, did play the dominant role later in stifling and eventually bringing down the naval transformation. On the motivating side, economic motives do appear to be behind the navy in the literature, though often as second fiddle to prestige. Ropp, for example, states that while economic motives existed, the "behavior of Thiers and [English prime minister Lord] Palmerston indicates that naval restoration succeeded primarily because the bourgeoisie had adopted the archaic dynastic idea of chasing after glory."[26] Furthermore, under Napoleon, "French economic interests continued to expand but the prestige character of the navy developed even faster."[27] Thus economic incentives – expanding commerce and the benefits of colonialism – existed for France, but were not fundamental causes of the challenge to Britain at sea.

As stated above, the economy did play the dominant role in the ultimate failure of the naval transformation. The French iron industry simply could not produce enough iron to keep up with Britain in ironclad construction. Additionally, the quality of the iron was poor, leading to durability and longevity problems in the ships. Accordingly, the costs of construction continued to rise drastically, while construction itself lagged behind, leading to the ultimate failure of France to stay in the "first great modern naval race"[28].

*Technology:*

[26] The Development of a Modern Navy, 7
[27] ibid
[28] ibid

Sondhaus stresses the role of technology as a cause of France's naval challenge to Britain in the mid-1800's. The French pioneered numerous powerful innovations in naval technology during this period, including steam propulsion (both the paddle steamer and the screw-propelled steamer), the explosive shell gun, and armored battleships, which all threatened to make previous ships obsolete. But were these simply the means chosen by France to challenge Britain at sea, or was the equalizing power of technology one of the fundamental causes that encouraged French leaders to mount their challenge? Soundhaus seems to believe the latter, writing that the French started to introduce the paddle steamer in 1818 because of their "faith in technology as the key to compensating for the material deficiencies of their fleet"[29]. Accordingly, they constructed several paddle steamers and a steamship construction facility over the next decade. Also, at the encouragement of army officer Henri-Joseph Paixhans, the French introduced explosive shell guns to steamers in the 1820's. However, they remained highly unreliable at first and France "lacked the means to implement such a revolution in warship construction"[30].

After the Near Eastern crisis of 1840, technology again encouraged France leaders to challenge Britain at sea. The Prince de Joinville, at this time, "revived the argument that steam propulsion would be the key to overcoming Britain's superiority in sailing warships", and after the first French construction of the vastly improved screw-propelled steamer (paddle steamers could be crippled by shooting the giant paddles on each side!), "concluded that the future French battle fleet should consist of screw steamers"[31]. France continued this race to build screw ships, but could never surpass Britain, under Napoleon III: in 1853 France had 9 to Britain's 10, in 1856 France had 21 to Britain's 23, in 1858

[29] Navies in Modern World History, 50
[30] ibid
[31] ibid

they briefly pulled even at 27 but Britain had many more under construction, and in 1861, the last year they were commissioned, France had 37 to Brtain's 58.

By this time, the French had already started to challenge the British by building a new type of ship, the armored or ironclad battleship. The performance of several armored floating batteries in the Crimean War "reinforced Napoleon III's belief that future capital ships must be armoured"[32]. In 1858, the French completed the first armored battleship *La Gloire* and commissioned another 5 ships, initiating the ironclad race. Ropp asserts that "more so than [ever before], with its programme of armoured frigates France succeeded in eliminating Britain's position of superiority by redefining the capital ship altogether"[33]. France completed 16 armored frigates by 1860, and Britain responded with 16 of its own by 1868, but France soon fell behind again due to industrial failures, as its iron industry could only produce enough for one large hull per year. So, "France's industrial capability once again failed to measure up to its naval ambitions, leaving the French with [smaller and less durable ironclads than the British]", a gap which only grew wider as the British built increasingly large and complex ships throughout the 1860's. As evidenced by the views of French leaders and the construction patterns outlined above, in which each new innovation sparked optimism and rapid construction by France, technology was a crucial cause, and not just a means, of aggressive French naval expansion.

*Prestige:*

[32] Navies in Modern World History, 55
[33] ibid

As alluded to above, and stated throughout the literature, prestige and nationalism were the greatest source of France's decision to challenge Britain at sea. This nationalism and desire for prestige (interchangeable with pride, respect, status, and glory) developed from the national humiliation of the 1840 Egypt crisis, illustrating the close relationship between humiliation and prestige. This even is paramount in the literature: Ropp asserts that "the rebirth of the navy in France after the Napoleonic Wars was the direct result of France's humiliation by England [in the crisis],"[34] while Jenkins memorably declares that the Egypt crisis "provided the real spark for French naval revival."[35]

French leaders based their push for naval expansion largely on this nationalism, this desire for prestige. Adolphe Thiers, prime minister in 1840, argued that "France must have a fleet that can make her respected."[36] In the 1840's, Ropp asserts that the "behavior of Thiers and [English pime minister Lord] Palmerston indicates that naval restoration succeeded primarily because the bourgeoisie had adopted the archaic dynastic idea of chasing after glory."[37] With the creation of the Second Empire, "Napoleon III further developed these characteristics. French economic interests continued to expand but the prestige character of the navy developed even faster."[38] In addition, the flashpoints that caused the Anglo-French hostility and naval arms race were not vital strategic interests for France. The dubious strategic value of places such as Egypt, Morocco, and Tahiti (tensions were created by the latter two as well), supports the notion that prestige and nationalism – not strategic interest – played the dominant role in driving the French to

[34] The Development of a Modern Navy, 7
[35] A History of the French Navy, 292
[36] The Development of a Modern Navy, 7
[37] ibid
[38] ibid

ultimately challenge Britain at sea, supporting the Robert Ross's argument of prestige-driven naval transformations in his article, "China's Naval Nationalism."

*Fear:*

Fear was largely irrelevant and did not play a noteworthy role in the French naval transformation. None of the literary sources mention fear as a causal factor for the French decisions to challenge British sea power. This is likely because there was no real credible threat of invasion from Britain, or threat to any of France's vital strategic interests during this period. As an aside, Britain was overtaken by fear in the late 1840's and early 1850's as it observed the French steamship build-up. Specifically, Lord Palmerston in the 1840's cautioned that the French were putting in place a "steam bridge" to mount an invasion of England, sparking a temporary hysteria and the construction of the defensive Palmerston Forts on the southern coasts of England. This illustrates the ability of naval build-ups to instill fear in maritime rivals, especially those within close proximity.

## Conclusion:

In the final analysis, the post-Napoleonic French naval transformation was driven by the geostrategic lack of land threats, the equalizing power of new technology, and the mobilization of nationalism and prestige by opportunistic leaders. We would also do well to distinguish in our analysis between the earlier stages of the transformation (pre-1840) and the later stages (post-1840). Doing so allows us to see that the pre-1840 causes were

equalizing technologies and the maneuvers of the leadership, while the post-1840 causes were technology again and, especially, prestige. The French geostrategic context was the passive factor throughout the whole process that permitted the confluence of technology, leadership, and prestige to drive the naval transformation. The opportunistic leaders used each new advance in naval technology to challenge British sea power.

# Germany:

## *Historical Section:*

### Naval Law and Technology:

To understand German naval development in the latter half of the 19th century, the changes in naval law and technology at the time must be outlined. With "the explosion of worldwide trade and commerce after the Napoleonic Wars,"[39] securing that trade became of vital importance to the European powers by the mid-1800's. Efforts to ensure freedom of the seas at the time culminated in the Declaration of Paris of 1856, which outlawed privateering. However, the practicioners of commerce warfare shifted from privateers motivated by profit to navies motivated by victory. Commerce also spread around the globe to places far away from friendly ports or bases. Naval strategy responded to these

[39] German Naval Strategy, 19

changes as commerce warfare shifted from commerce seizure to commerce destruction. This cleared the path for its popularity in the late 1800's, with the strategy of unrestricted commerce warfare advocated by the famous and ruthless *Jeune Ecole*.

Technologically, wooden sail-powered warships had remained mostly the same for centuries until the 1800's, but "there was no resemblance between the warships that started the century and those that finished it."[40] The progress of naval technology in the 1800's was defined by the cycle between armor and armament. The Paixhans explosive shell gun in the 1830's "threatened to make all naval ordinance obsolete and to render the sailing ships of the world's navies a waste of wood." Armor plating was introduced as a response to the danger of these explosive shells. The introduction of ironclad ships mid-century, then iron-hulled and eventually steel-hulled ships towards the end of the 1800's allowed for ships of increasing size and durability armed with bigger weapons. After the short-lived naval scare caused by the ram, the next major challenge to armor came in the form of the torpedo, a new weapon "which threatened vessels below the waterline [and] dramatically increased the possibility of sinking the enemy's ships."[41] The self-propelled torpedo, however, did not have an effective launching system until 1880, and, even then, was still "considered as if in its infancy."[42] This progress in naval law and technology is essential to understanding Germany's naval development in the 1800's.

## The Navy and German Unification:

[40] ibid
[41] ibid
[42] ibid

"The chief motivation for the original establishment of a German sea power was trade."[43] Before 1848, Prussia's only notable action in naval affairs was its alliance with the League of Armed Neutrality in the late 1700's to protect its neutral shipping rights. But German trade continued to expand after the Napoleonic Wars – especially German whalers in the Pacific Ocean – starting in the 1820's and through the 1830's and 1840's. When the German states and Denmark fought in 1848, and the Danish naval blockades of 1848-1849 easily stymied German trade with just a few ships, the German states began to understand the vulnerability of their expanding commerce. Historian David Olivier writes that it was the "realization of this vulnerability [of commerce] to blockade that prompted the Frankfurt Parliament to create a navy…and lay behind the gradual movement of Prussia towards establishing a permanent navy for itself."

However, despite this insight and the continued growth of sea commerce after 1848, Prussia faced many obstacles to its naval development, and its ambitious dreams could not yet be realized. First of all, Prussia lacked many basic naval building blocks, like dockyards, shipbuilding, seamen, and suitable ports. Prussia began to take steps in the right direction in 1854, with the purchase of land on the North Sea that would become the future Wilhelmshaven, and its promotion of Prince Adalbert, a passionate navalist and member of the royal family, to head the navy in that year. In addition, Prussian commerce continued to increase after the economic crisis of 1857, which "spurred greatest interest [in Europe] in tapping the potential of markets around the world"[44]. This expansion led to German consideration of acquiring bases abroad (either coaling stations, individual bases, or colonial possessions), but the "colonial movement at this time was [still] a negligible

[43] ibid
[44] ibid

factor"[45]. Notably, "by 1860, the northern German states – primarily due to the Hanseatic cities – ranked third in the world in merchant vessel tonnage behind Great Britain and the United States,"[46] making commerce protection a priority.

However, German efforts to establish a navy in the 1860's were frustrated by a political stalemate and the inaction of the usually pro-naval liberals. In 1861, the Minister of War, General Albrecht von Roon, also became the Minister of the Navy, and proposed an aggressive construction plan to make Prussia a naval power. Roon's program included over 100 steamships (for a navy currently with 5) and a host of smaller ships at a cost of about 30 million thalers. However, the ambitious plan was abandoned after an 1862 army budget crisis and a lack of liberal willingness in Parliament to oppose new President Otto von Bismarck's conservative policies. The 1864 war with Denmark stressed the need for a greater naval presence, as Denmark again blockaded German ports and seized 15 ships, while Prussia was able to seize only 4. The German victory on land led to the annexation of territory and the movement of the fleet from Danzig to Kiel. In 1865, Roon introduced another fleet construction bill that included infrastructure at the ports of Wilhelmshaven and Kiel and about 35 warships, at a price tag of over 50 million thalers, but was once more defeated in Parliament. Despite these setbacks, and while little naval action took place in the 1866 war with Austria, the victory of the German states would clear a path for a stronger German presence in the international, and naval, arena[47].

While the victory over Austria greatly increased Prussian power and ended the political stalemate in the Parliament, it also introduced the real possibility of a war with France. In 1867, a brief war scare called the Luxembourg crisis led Bismarck to look into

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[45] ibid
[46] ibid
[47] ibid

possible ship purchases from the United States. More importantly for the navy, the end to the political stalemate allowed new Minister of the Navy Eduard Jachmann to pass a fleet construction plan at a cost of 10 million thalers in the same year. As the possibility of war with France loomed larger than ever, the leadership remained divided in its views on the acquisition of colonies, with Bismarck strongly against, and Adalbert and Jachmann for. As such, Bismarck prevented negotiations for the purhcase of a Caribbean base in 1868. Meanwhile, a liberal movement grew in Germany for an international ban on commerce warfare, but it found little support in the navy or from other countries.

When war with the French finally erupted in 1870, the German navy remained far inferior to the French (400 to just 34 ships) and had to retreat from its dockyards in Great Britain to the safety of Wilhelmshaven. Despite the surprising German victory on land in the battle of Sedan, the German navy had to watch as France carried out a blockade of its coasts (though it was somewhat ineffective), captured over 200 German merchant ships, and prolonged the war for months with arms and supplies shipped from Great Britain and the United States. Olivier states that "many junior officers felt despair and humiliation at the navy's dependence on the army in the events of the war, but [future Head of the Admiralty Alfred von Tirpitz's] depth of despair surpassed theirs, as did his solutions to the problem."[48] The effect of this inaction on the navy's psyche, as an aside, is essential to understanding the future of German naval thought. Even at this point, in a letter to his father in 1871, Tirpitz believes in the necessity of a German battlefleet.

In terms of real action, the navy did little: only the SMS Meteor's skirmish in the Caribbean and the SMS Augusta's seizure of three French prizes. However, lessons came even from these experiences; the uneven treatment of the SMS Meteor by neutral powers

[48] ibid

in the Atlantic reduced the navy's faith in international law, while the success of the SMS Augusta confirmed to proponents of commerce warfare that it remained the best strategy for Germany's navy into the future. The experiences of Tirpitz vs. those of SMS-Meteor-commander Eduard Knorr, and the different solutions they inspired, exemplify the rising tension between proponents of commerce warfare and proponents of command of the seas as the future of German naval strategy.

## The Stosch and Caprivi Navies, 1871-1888

After the Franco-Prussian War, Germany emerged in 1871 as a new, unified state with more power, and more responsibilities, than ever before. The new German navy had to protect all German commerce around the globe and uphold the prestige and image of a new great power. In addition, the German navy became a permanent national body under the Kaiser, led by a new Head of the Admiralty, but still had to report to the Chancellor's Office. However, as already stated, the war also became a disaster for the navy's morale, and Bismarck refused to assist the navy by accepting any French warships or colonies as a payment in the French war indemnity.

To address these problems, the leadership chose promising army officer Albrecht von Stosch, known for his organization but also abrasive personality, to lead the navy. At first, Stosch knew little of the navy, and turned to his friend, publisher and writer Gustav Freytag, for advice. Freytag advised Stosch to prioritize commerce protection with long-range cruisers, and to oppose battlefleet construction and colony acquisition because they were not politically feasible policies in the Reichstag. Indeed, Freytag advised Stosch that

"it was essential to win the support of both the deputies of the Reichstag and the public at large…[and] suggested leaving the promotional aspects of the new navy to him, [placing] at Stosch's disposal his network of newspapers."[49] Stosch heeded this advice, ignored the pro-colonial advice he received from from Prince Adalbert, and received near-unanimous support for his first Reichstag speech, in which he supported commerce protection over battlefleets and bases, and the needs of the army over those of the navy. Despite his early successes – improving relations with the Reichstag and establishing the forward-looking *Marineakademie*, a school for advanced naval education – Stosch came to be resented in the navy. This was due to his prussianization, or introduction of army drill and discipline, to the junior service, as well as his army background and abrasive personality.

After a year of evaluation, Stosch saw that the navy consistently fell behind in its production schedule while overspending its budget. In line with his belief in the needs of the army over the navy and his Reichstag speech, he created a scaled-down version of the 1867 plan as his new fleet construction proposal in 1873. The plan proposed pursuing the following goals, in order: commerce protection, coastal defense, and offensive power. Its reasons for a global naval presence were threefold: the increases in German commerce, in expatriots demanding their rights, and in rivalries with other maritime states. Overall, the plan aided the navy, vaulting it briefly to the rank of third worldwide, and creating native dockyards and an independent naval-industrial complex. In the ensuing years, commerce also continued to expand beyond even the expected levels. Its drawbacks, however, were its complete avoidance of bases, fleet-level training or offensive power.

Despite the achievements of the 1873 plan, growing tensions with the Chancellor began to reduce Stosch's effectiveness. The major point of conflict between the men was

[49] ibid

the control of naval officers abroad. The most contentious example of this came in 1873 when Spanish royalist rebels seized several ships and began shelling their own coastline. Popular naval officer Reinhold Werner captured the rebel ships and returned them to the Spanish government, to the approval of the Spanish and German people. This infuriated Bismarck, who was always careful to avoid provoking other powers overseas, and when Stosch defended Werner, Bismarck redirected his anger at Stosch. This was not the only example of this tension: aggressive actions by naval officers in Haiti in 1872 and Tonga in 1876, among others, fuelled the conflict between Stosch and Bismarck. Other factors added to the conflict, including differences over the jurisdiction of the merchant marine, colonial policy, and Bismarck seeing in Stosch his eventual replacement.

Despite the tension, the two maintained a working relationship up until an 1877 explosive Reichstag episode and especially the Grober Kurfurst tragedy of 1878, which derailed Stosch's career. In his pursuit of Reichstag support, Stosch in 1876 accidentally supported a request by a deputy for a reduction in naval expenditures that he had refused to Bismarck for months. When Bismarck realized this during the 1877 budget debate, he made a harshly critical speech of Stosch (and several other leaders) in the Reichstag and made the feud between the men public knowledge. Though Wilhelm refused requests by both men to resign, the intensity of their conflict grew. "To Bismarck, Stosch's survival at the Admiralty was a daily reminder of the limitations of his own power."[50] While the tension partially died down as Bismarck retreated from politics for the next year, it rose again in the Grober Kufurst disaster, in which a collision during a simple drill cost 276 men their lives in the English Channel.

[50] ibid

Disgruntled officers Reinhold Werner, still angry over perceived mistreatment after the Spain affair of 1873, and Jachmann, who had been passed over for the position of Head of the Admiralty, used the opportunity to criticize Stosch's system. They railed against his rushed mobilization, army drills, and unwillingness listen to his officers, all valid criticisms. The whole affair derailed Stosch's career, as he "suffered an irreparable breach in relations with his officers and, worse still, lost the respect of a large segment of the Reichstag [and] naval expenditures fell by nearly one-third during the final five years of his tenure."[51] In the final evaluation, Stosch established a native shipbuilding industry, the successful Marineakademie and Torpedo Experiment Commission, and was the first leader to outline the navy's wartime tasks, but ultimately failed due to personal conflicts with Bismarck, his officers, and others.

Into this void stepped another army officer appointed to lead the navy, General Leo von Caprivi, just as another revolution in naval strategy swept across Europe. The *Jeune Ecole*, or "young school", emerged by this time in France, endorsing unrestricted commerce destruction to bring about victory through public fear and economic damage, including exploding insurance rates. To do so, they advocated using the next weapon in naval technology, the deadly torpedo boat. The strategy appealed to many politicians as cheap and easy to implement, creating a period of uncertainty in naval construction and another challenge to the battleship. Like his predecessor, Caprivi received a letter from an old officer when he entered officer. This time it was Jachmann, who urged Caprivi to pursue a colonial strategy relying on torpedo boats, cruisers, and bases.

Unlike Stosch, Caprivi actually solicited advice from his fellow officers, calling a meeting of the Admiralty Council in 1884 to determine the details and draw up plans for

[51] ibid

commerce warfare (also called cruiser warfare). The Council obliged, considering each of the likely wars Germany might fight. Against Russia, the German navy would pursue the command of the seas in the Baltic. Against France, the navy would defend the coasts and then engage in cruiser warfare to bring about a decision after German land victories; the Council clearly remembered the Franco-Prussian War. Against Britain, the Council saw German cruiser warfare as potentially decisive due to British reliance on sea commerce, but also very dangerous due to the security dilemma problem of challenging the world's strongest navy. Overall, the Council remained optimistic about the potential for German commerce warfare, but only as a practical adjunt to traditional land warfare. Caprivi ended up ignoring the Council's advice in his 1884 memorandum, placing Europe over colonies, battleships over cruisers, and relying on only limited torpedo boats for use as blockade-breakers. However, his plans were undone because of Germany's drive for empire in 1884, which changed the navy's vision and its resources.

Bismarck's flip-flop on colonies created the change, and a schism with Caprivi, who tried to keep the focus on Europe. Germany established then expanded colonies in West Africa and East Asia in 1884, placing many demands on the German navy. Naval forces were used as artillery support, landing parties, and even anti-insurgency forces in German colonial ventures. This strained the navy's resources – 1.5 million marks were spent on naval colonial action in under two years. In addition to the increased demands, the lack of overseas bases, and the non-strategic method of choosing colonies increased resentment in the navy. At this time, Caprivi developed the "Flying Squadron", a group of warships on constant patrol between Asia and Africa, as a cost-effective method of maintaining a global naval presence.

As the 1880's unfolded, Caprivi's constant expectation of a two-front war against France and Russia led him to push for consolidation, not expansion of the navy, and turn to the cost-efficiency of the torpedo boat. In his 1883 memorandum, Caprivi emphasizes the cost of supplies and the value of torpedo boats, as well as a need for bases. The 1884 record naval expenditure of 60 million marks, not matched for another decade, reinforced Caprivi's appetite for cost-cutting. Despite receiving a *carte blanche* from Bismarck, his 1886 memorandum praised cruisers due to the cost and difficulty of gaining command of the seas, and also backed more aggressive coastal defense. Ironically, Caprivi's planning became more offensive as his construction became more defensive. His 1887 operations plan included a quick strike against the French, a step forward in naval strategic thought for Germany. But the emperor Wilhelm I died in 1888, and Wilhelm II became emperor, quickly reorganizing the navy to marginalize Caprivi, who resigned soon after. Although he failed to continue naval expansion, it must be remembered that there was no political capital for large-scale fleet construction during his tenure, and he did develop the navy's strategy. "The failure of Caprivi's construction policy for capital ships must be balanced against his success in torpedo-boat construction and development of operations planning and battle tactics…construction of capital ships needed a period of relative technological stability, a Reichstag willing to vote in favour of the expense of shipbuilding, and a *raison d'etre* for such construction."[52]

## The Tirpitz Plan Through WWI, 1888-1918

[52] ibid

According to historian Lawrence Sondhaus, the German navy "grew considerably but to no coherent grand design…only slowly developing a self-sufficient naval industrial complex"[53] before Tirpitz's First Navy Law in 1898. The rise of a "pro-navy emperor, Wilhelm II, brought an increase in battleship construction, and in the early 1890's Krupp became the world leader in armour production, yet throughout the first decade of the new reign naval expansion followed no particular plan."[54] Sondhaus points to the work of US naval officer A. T. Mahan in 1890, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1763*, as having a profound effect on German naval thought and development. Mahan's famous work helped pave the way for Tirpitz and Wilhelm to turn to the battleship in the 1890's, leading to the development of Tirpitz's 'risk theory' and his First and Second Naval Laws in 1898 and 1900, respectively. "The 1895 German translation of Mahan's first book was its first non-English edition, and Tirpitz had thousands of copies distributed to support his arguments for the First Navy Law"[55].

Tirpitz and Wilhelm both saw Britain as the primary threat to Germany, and the expansion of the fleet as necessary despite the hostile relations it might entail. The First Navy Law of 1898 created a fleet approaching 30 battleships, 40 cruisers, and numerous torpedo boats to be built by 1905. International events in the ensuing years, such as the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 and the German deaths in the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900) supported Tirpitz and his goal of naval expansion. In this context, the Reichstag passed Tirpitz's Second Navy Law of 1900, which increased the fleet to approximately 40 battleships and 50 cruisers. The crucial automatic replacement clause prevented the

[53] Navies in Modern World History, 172
[54] ibid
[55] ibid

growing liberal dissent from undoing Tirpitz's plan, while also allowing him to replace small old ships with big ones at his whim.

During the first year of Admiral Sir John Fisher's time in office, Britain remained unalarmed by the German naval expansion, focused on building battle cruisers to combat its traditional allies, France and Russia. However, the 1904 *Entente Cordiale* with France and the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, which decimated the Russian navy, along with a new German supplementary naval law, made Germany the main threat to Britain. Due to the German threat, the British shifted their focus to building dreadnoughts – new battleships whose "size, speed, and firepower…rendered all other battleships obsolete [and] became the new model capital ship…for the rest of the world's navies"[56]. However, Tirpitz took readily to the 'dreadnought revolution', upgrading all ships under construction to match the dreadnoughts and increasing his number of battle cruisers. This construction enabled Germany to pull roughly even with Britain in 1909 – with Germany's 10 to Britain's 12 new capital ships – and on pace for future parity.

However, Germany's challenge did not go according to (the Tirpitz) plan. The British responded by building a staggering 10 ships in a single year, "demonstrating a resolve to make whatever financial sacrifices were necessary to stay ahead"[57]. Seeing Britain's resolve to outbuild Germany, Tirpitz became more amenable to arms control negotiations in 1910, but Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg's insistence on political concessions left them dead in the water. The arms race resumed and by 1912 Germany had built 8 more ships and Britain 10, for a total of 21 German vs. 32 British dreadnoughts. But with the war in sight, the German army finally reasserted itself and

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[56] ibid
[57] ibid

naval expenditures dropped, giving Germany only 27 to Britain's 42 on the eve of the war in 1914. The British soon captured several enemy dreadnoughts, and one German dreadnought ended up blockaded in Turkey, giving the British a 45 to 26 advantage and the ability to blockade German ports at will. As such, Tirpitz and Germany increasingly pursued unrestricted submarine warfare as the war unfolded, ultimately drawing the US into the conflict and ensuring Germany's defeat.

## *Analytical Section*

### The Actors:

Overall, German leaders – the Emperor, Chancellor, and Head of the Admiralty – were the dominant actors in the development of the navy, although they were not able to override economic and geostrategic considerations by themselves. While the Ministers of the Navy before 1870 supported naval expansion, they were unable to overcome a lack of resources and political support. From 1871 to 1888, army-centric Heads of the Admiralty limited naval expansion. Finally, after 1888 with the rise of Wilhelm II, and especially in 1898 with the rise of Tirpitz, pro-naval leaders proved to be the driving force behind the challenge to British naval superiority. However, these leaders did not act in isolation, but used the public as a key actor as well.

Prior to 1870, pro-naval leaders existed in Prince Adalbert and General Roon, but they could not overcome shortages of resources and political support. Even in the 1850's,

Adalbert's support for naval expansion is apparent in his writings, in which he pushes for a "three-step process of coastal defense, offensive defense and commerce protection, and eventually the rise to independent naval power"[58] (eerily similar to China's Liu Huaqing, and his three-step naval vision, as we will see) Olivier writes that "Adalbert thought on a grander scale for the *Reichsflotte*; even at this early juncture, he was convinced of the importance of stationing vessels overseas"[59] to show the flag. However, these ambitious dreams could not yet be realized under Adalbert: the "same political considerations that had worked against the creation of such a fleet for the previous several hundred years"[60] were only just beginning to change. Roon's ambitious naval construction plans, outlined in the previous section, also illustrate his support for naval expansion in this early period. However, his plans went unfulfilled as well, due to the 1862-1866 army budget crisis and the lack of support among the liberals. These unfulfilled ambitions illustrate the difficulty of overcoming economic shortcomings.

From 1871 to 1888, army-first Heads of the Admiralty Stosch and Caprivi limited naval expansion, though more aggressively pro-naval leaders might have failed too under Bismarck's system. On the whole, Stosch accomplished more than his successor, such as improved Reichstag relations, the 1873 construction plan, a native shipbuilding industry, and the successful Marineakademie and Torpedo Experiment Commission. However, the abrasive Stosch saw the navy as subordinate to the army and failed to advocate for bases, battlefleets, or prepare his fleet properly, as evidenced in the Grober Kurfurst catastrophe. Caprivi, fearing a two-front land war with France and Russia, saw the navy as even more subordinate to the army. He moved towards torpedo boats in lieu of larger ships as cheap

[58] German Naval Strategy, 44
[59] ibid
[60] ibid

solutions and a way to futher support the army, and he failed to take advantage of a *carte blanche* offered to him by Bismarck. But Bismarck himself probably offered the greatest obstacle to naval development in the period, through his continuous support of the army over the navy and anti-colonial rigidity.

From 1888 to WWI, the rise of aggressively pro-naval leadership – the emperor Wilhelm II and, a decade later, the Head of the Admiralty Tirpitz – proved to be one of the most crucial causes of Germany's challenge of British sea power. Even as a youth, the Crown Prince Wilhelm II was an avid navalist, always knowledgeable about naval matters[61]. As the new emperor, Wilhelm II increased battleship construction in his first decade, and "eagerly endorsed"[62] Tirpitz's Naval Laws. However, Tirpitz remained the driving force behind the expansion; his aggressive commitment to naval expansion and the battlefleet, crystalized in the war against France, was on display as he absorbed the ideas of Mahan, formulated his 'risk theory', defended naval build-up in the Reichstag, and oversaw the naval race. Writes one scholar, "German should have had a great navy by 1895, but William was not capable of marshaling his forces. It was Tirpitz, who, by skillful manipulation of navophile organizations as well as patriotic fear and pride, succeeded in passage of the First Naval Act."[63] A less committed or skilled man would have probably failed; Tirpitz's political maneuvres, such as the automatic replacement clause and public relations, were necessary to prevent the formidable socialist opposition from interference with his overarching plan.

Public support played a major role in either obstructing or enabling German naval expansion up until WWI. Low public support naturally presented major challenges to the

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[61] German Naval Strategy, 175
[62] Navies in Modern World History, 174
[63] The Wasted Ten Years 1888-1898, 1

navy's leaders, but the public could also be mobilized as a tool for naval expansion. After the Franco-Prussian War, low public support proved to be a major obstacle for Stosch as the new navy's leader. Olivier states that "the war had taken its toll on the navy's morale; and there was little support for it as an independent body from either the Reichstag or the general public, primarily due to [its] inability to contribute to the victory over France."[64] Low public support at the end of Stosch's career, after the Grober Kurfurst disaster, also inhibited naval development as the country's "naval expenditures fell by nearly one-third during the final five years of his tenure."[65]

However, public opinion also functioned as a tool mobilized for naval expansion by Stosch and, to a greater extent, Tirpitz. As "the greatest weakness of the navy was the lack of support for it thoughout the nation, especially evident in the attitude of members of the Reichstag…it would take all Stosch's political acumen and charm – and Freytag's journalistic skills – to garner support for [the 1873 fleet construction plan]." Stosch was therefore able to mobilize public support behind his cause of naval expansion. Similarly, Tirpitz mobilized public support for the navy through the aforementioned distribution of Mahanian ideas, and his navalist speeches, naval journals, and naval organizations. The manipulation of public opinion proved to be a key pathway for the leadership to achieve their two greatest eras of success under Stosch and Tirpitz.

## The Factors:

*Geostrategic Context*

[64] German Navy Strategy, 79
[65] ibid

Germany's physical and strategic geography were unfavorable to naval build-up, and while it to some extent escaped from its physical geography, its strategic geography continued to constrain its naval development until WWI. With a long central-European land border and limited coasts, Prussia's "natural leanings towards events in continental Europe, coupled with the central position held in government, court and society by the army, made expansion of the Prussian navy a painfully slow process"[66]. However, the purchase of the future Wilhelmshaven on the North Sea in 1854 and the acquisition of Kiel after the war with Denmark in 1864 changed German geography and allowed for more development of a naval presence. In addition, German acquisition of the island of Heligoland in 1890 continued this shift, as the island turned into a major naval base and battle scene during both World Wars. Despite the improvement of German geography, the continued existence of security threats on land – France and Russia – from 1871 to 1914 obstructed naval development, illustrating once again the effect of insecurity on a state's land borders for naval development. In particular, Caprivi became consumed by the prospect of such a two-front war, causing him to search for cheap solutions for the navy and defer to army needs. Also, the impending prospect of WWI in 1913 caused a sharp drop in naval expenditures. The fact that the all-time high in naval spending as a fraction of the total military budget was only 35% means that over 65% of the military budget went to the army annually, suggesting that continentalism remained paramount throughout the naval build-up due to the threat of land war.

*Economy*

[66] ibid

The economy – in particular the escalating level of German commerce worldwide – was a crucial driver of German naval development, especially salient in the early stages of development, in the pre-Tirpitz era. As mentioned earlier, "the chief motivation for the original establishment of a German sea power was trade."[67] The increasing levels of trade beginning in the 1820's and the realization of its vulnerability to the Danish blockades of 1848-1849 created the need for a navy. "By 1860, the northern German states – primarily due to the Hanseatic cities – ranked third in the world in merchant vessel tonnage behind Great Britain and the United States,"[68] and the Danish blockade of 1864, plus the French blockade and seizure of 200 merchant ships in 1870, pushed German to expand its naval presence. In essence, German commerce was expanding rapidly, but lesser powers were able to shut it down over and over. Germany's victory increased the need for commerce protection, as the new German navy had to protect all German commerce worldwide. In the 1873 fleet construction plan by Stosch, we can also see the dominance of commerce protection as a reason for the navy – the plan's goals were commerce protection, coastal defense, and then offensive power, in that order. The primary rationale for a global naval presence in the document was the increase in commerce as well. While economic growth remained important as a rationale for naval expansion under Wilhelm and Tirpitz, it was overtaken by other factors such as prestige and nationalism.

*Technology*

[67] ibid
[68] ibid

Technology was not a signficant factor in spurring Germany's naval development (though the torpedo boat did help Germany temporarily cope with its budget issues). The literature makes no mention of technology as a reason for Germany's naval development, and Germany was not an innovator of naval technologies the way France was in its naval transformation earlier in the decade. If anything, Germany missed an opportunity to seize one of the revolutionary technologies in its early days, such as the ironclad, and become a naval power in one fell swoop. The Roon plans in the 1860's represented somewhat of an effort to do this. Germany did, however, utilize the torpedo boat in the Stosch and Caprivi eras in an attempt to cut costs, and maintain dominance on land. The torpedo boat, then, a cutting-edge technology in the 1880's, did help Germany keep its naval presence afloat in the pre-Tirpitz era. Under Tirpitz, the dreadnought represented a revolution in technology on the high seas, but was pioneered by the dominant power.

*Prestige*

Nationalism and prestige played an especially important role in Germany's naval development, especially in the later stages of development under Tirpitz. Anger over the humiliating Danish blockades does appear in the writings of Adalbert, and we know that the French ability to control the seas and prolong the Franco-Prussian War was a national humiliation, but these failures were tied to vital strategic interests, such as the protection of commerce or victory in a particular war. Moreover, any resultant sense of nationalism or desire for international prestige could hardly be expressed with the limited capabilities

for naval build-up in the pre-Tirpitz era. The roles of prestige and nationalism do appear to have grown after Germany's unification, as David Olivier implies. The German navy now had to uphold the honor and prestige of a great power. This budding nationalism is reflected in the increasing group of expatriates demanding protection under the German flag and their rejection of British protection in the Far East.

However, German prestige and nationalism played second fiddle to commerce as a motivation for naval development until the emergence of Tirpitz around the turn of the century. Tirpitz framed Germany's bid for naval power in very nationalist terms (as a bid for great power status) and mobilized public support using this as his basis. He cultivated these feelings through his public speeches, naval journals, and other propaganda methods. Tirpitz lacked clear strategic objectives, simply seeking naval power as much as possible, as evidenced by his unnecessary addition of battle cruisers simply it allowed him to build more battleships. Tirpitz benefited enormously from this political success, becoming the most prominent politican in Germany and receiving the rank of nobility from the Kaiser. In this sense, he fits the thesis of Ross's "naval nationalism" well, in that he manipulated nationalism and built a powerful navy to his personal benefit.

*Fear*

Tirpitz also framed Germany's bid for naval power in terms of fear and mobilized the public out of fear as well, though not as much as nationalism and prestige. He framed Britain as the main security threat facing Germany, the main obstacle standing in its way, and German naval development as a matter of national survival. According to Sondhaus,

"Tirpitz used ominous Darwinian language in characterizing the expansion of the fleet as a 'question of survival' for Germany."[69] "It was von Tirpitz who, by skillful manipulation of navophile organizations, as well as patriotic fear and pride, succeeded in passage of the First Naval Act."[70] Accordingly, fear and prestige were both major factors manipulated by Tirpitz in the German challenge of British dominance at sea.

### Conclusion:

In sum, Germany's naval transformation was led chiefly by expanding commerce in in its early stages and the mobilization of nationalist prestige and fear in its later stages by pro-naval leadership, particularly Tirpitz. Germany's geostrategy actually inhibited its move towards the seas because of the continued dangers posed by France and Russia, two major security threats on its East and West land borders. The fact that the Germany naval expenditure never topped 35% speaks to the dominance of a nation's geostrategic context in determining its strategic focus. Conversely, the incredible ability of Germany to nearly overcome these geostrategic limitations with expanding commerce and naval nationalism is equally telling, revealing the crucial influence that leadership and nationalism can exert on a nation's strategic focus and national development as well.

## ***China:***

[69] Sondhaus 2004, 174
[70] The Wasted Ten Years 1888-1898: The Kaiser Finds an Admiral

## *Historical Section:*

### China's Continentalist Culture:

Imperial China developed a continentalist strategic culture because its strategic and economic focus remained on land for over two thousand years. Strategically, China focused on land power due to "nearly constant continental threats and concerns about internal rebellion,"[71] while practically nothing threatened China from the sea other than the nuisance of piracy before the 1800's. Mainly, it was the latent fear of invasion from the north, which ended several dynasties, that forced China's strategic focus to remain on the continent. Economically, the large self-sufficient Chinese market, "accessible through China's great navigable river systems,"[72] meant that the commercial focal point remained mainly on the continent as well.

### Victimization from the Sea:

Foreign powers victimized the Qing Dynasty, mainly by sea, throughout the 19th century until its downfall in 1911. In the First Opium War, British sea power threatened to shut down Chinese internal commerce, causing the regime to submit in 1842 and cede the British the territory of Hong Kong. The French destroyed China's fleet in the 1880's, marking the end of Chinese influence in Indochina. Chinese naval forces were decimated

[71] Erickson, Goldstein, and Lord 2009
[72] ibid

once again in the humiliating Sino-Japanese War of 1895, after which China had to cede Taiwan to Japan. Growing popular unrest over these concessions to Western imperialism ignited the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, but that only led to more occupation and humiliation for the Qing Dynasty. The combined pressure of these failures eventually led to the fall of the Qing in 1911 and an era of internal instability[73]. During this time of Civil War, local warlords fought against the KMT, CCP, and the Japanese in a power struggle until the Communist victory and reunification of China in 1949. While this period of victimization from 1840 to 1949, commonly known as the Century of National Humiliation, taught Chinese elites that they could "no longer turn [their] back on [their] seaward frontier"[74], continentalism remained dominant under the new communist People's Republic of China (PRC) for a variety of reasons.

## Continentalism under the PRC:

Continentalism persisted in PRC elites for a variety of reasons, first and foremost because the Civil War had been fought and won on land. While Mao wanted to use sea power early on – he called for an invasion of Taiwan in 1951 – the PRC did not have the capabilities. Over the next decade, the Korean War in 1950-1953 and the war with India in 1962 reinforced PRC continentalism, and any progress in the navy came from Soviet aid. However, mounting tension between China and the Soviet Union in the 1960's led to border skirmishes in 1969 (and nearly a larger war) and continued troop presence on both sides of the border thereafter. This only added to the continentalist culture. Moreover, the

[73] ibid
[74] ibid

poor state of the economy, domestic unrest caused by Mao Zedong's radical policies, withdrawal of Soviet assistance, and humiliation of Chinese ground forces in Vietnam all fuelled the continentalism as well. Both economically and strategically, the PRC thus remained primarily focused on the continent until 1989[75] (though in the mid-1980's this would began to shift as Liu Huaqing nudged China's strategic focus further and further out of its territorial waters).

However, continentalism really began to erode in 1989 with the collapse of the USSR and removal of China's top source of continental insecurity. Territorial disputes over islands, such as the 1974 clash over the Spratly islands with Vietnam, came to the fore. So did security concerns with the US, a pro-democracy superpower intervening in international affairs; Taiwan's increasing independence and continued backing from the US despite derecognition in 1979 began to make the prospect of a clash with US naval power in local waters more likely than ever. Finally, China's amazing economic growth placed a modern navy within its capabilities, while its expanding commerce and energy shipments increased the need for one[76].

## China and the Sea, the Debate Today:

Having outlined the historical development of China's continentalism, we now turn towards understanding the debate about China and the sea that is raging in Chinese society today. *China Goes To Sea* does an excellent job of outlining the ongoing debate between the three factions: the continental faction, which wants to focus on developing

[75] ibid
[76] ibid

Chinese land power, the maritime faction, which wants to focus on developing Chinese sea power, and the maritime-continental faction, which wants to develop Chinese power both on the land and at sea. This section summarizes that debate, and updates the debate in *China Goes To Sea* with new material.

*Maritime Faction:*

Key elements in Chinese society argue that China has a need to develop its naval power, chief among these PLAN leaders and certain leading scholars. PLAN commander Wu Shengli and political commissar Hu Yanlin, for instance, stated in the official journal of the CCP Central Committee in July 2007 that "only when the navy is strong can the maritime rights rise, which will bring the rise of the nation," and that "we must build a powerful navy."[77] In 2001, Admiral Zheng Ming "stressed that the PLA must speed up the modernization of its naval forces so that China can transform from a large oceanic country into a strong ocean power at an early date." Also, Zhang Wenmu, a prominent scholar at the Center for Strategic Studies at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, states that "if a nation lacks sea power, its development has no future"[78].

The maritime backers offers a host of reasons to develop sea power, especially highlighting Taiwan, commerce protection, energy security, and maritime sovereignty. Wu and Hu, for example, argue that "a powerful navy is a key force that can shock the 'Taiwan independence' separatists, and defend the unification of our nation"[79], but also point to more economic motivations for naval power. Ni Lexiong, director of Shanghai

[77] Wu Shengli and Hu Yanlin, 2007
[78] Zhang Wenmu, 2003
[79] ibid

Normal University's War and Culture Institute, contends that "in the last decade or so, overseas trade has become more critical within our economic structure. The 'maritime lifeline' has become increasingly important. It has become necessary to establish a powerful naval force."[80] Two Logistics Command Academy specialists agree, stating that China's "Navy is a necessary investment for a nation to safeguard and develop its overseas trade."[81] Maritime proponents also point to energy security as a use for naval power, asserting that "we must build up our navy as quickly as possible…we must be prepared as early as possible. Otherwise, China may lose everything it has gathered in normal international economic activities, including its energy interest, in a military defeat"[82]. Finally, maritime sovereignty is mentioned as a major rationale for naval power, with supporters in the Academy of Military Science and the Naval Command College calling for defense of China's roughly 7,000 islands. Other more secondary reasons include maritime anti-terrorism, and the defense of Chinese fishing, oceanic resources, and scientific exploration.

Maritime proponents also usually hold a sea-based interpretation of history that supports their arguments for naval expansion. In the same paper, Wu and Hu write that China's lack of naval power left it vulnerable to the "strong vessels and sharp cannons" of the West during its Century of National Humiliation. Zhang Wenmu, meanwhile, provides a more detailed explanation:

> In military history, command of the sea as at one point an important factor behind the rise and fall of nations. Today, in the 21st century, command of the sea based on the mastery of satellite

[80] Chiang Hsun, 2006
[81] Lang Danyang and Liu Fenliang, 2007
[82] Zhang Wenmu, 2003

> communications technology, guided missile long-range attacks, and precision intercepting technology is still a decisive factor in determining a nation's rise and fall[83].

Two PLAN officers also perceive sea powers as economically and militarily superior to land powers[84]. In addition, PLAN senior captain Xu Qi observes that "historically, great powers struggling for supremacy have invariably focused their attention on the ocean and spared no efforts in pursuing their maritime geostrategic rivalries."[85]

*Continental Faction:*

In contrast, the continental group, led by Beijing University international relations scholar Ye Zicheng, wants to keep the focus on developing China's land power and holds a different interpretation of history and of geography. Ye highlights the security dilemma issue with the US, pointing out that focusing on land power will "lower the possibility of a head-on clash"[86] between the two great powers. Ye questions the value of a "blue water navy" for China, including the construction of an aircraft carrier. Much of Ye's argument is based on an interpretation of Chinese history and the primacy of geography. Ye argues that "the histories of Russia, Japan, and the US tell us that mankind can to a certain extent overcome the constraints formed by the natural situation, but there is a limit here, and one will encounter defeat by going beyond the limit."[87] Thus, Ye says that "China was a great land power for a long time in the past and in the future it can only have the basic strategic

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[83] ibid
[84] Hao Tingbing and Yang Zhirong, 2005
[85] Xu Qi, 2004
[86] Ye Zicheng 2007
[87] ibid

orientation of being a great land power."[88] Ye views the Century of National Humiliation as created on land: "the reason why China suffered aggression and bullying from western countries at the time – although the backwardness of sea power was an important factor – was first of all caused by the relative decline of China's land power, which meant that the western powers could win battles not only at sea but also on land".[89] Lastly, he points out that the late Qing period illustrates that a country with serious internal problems cannot become a naval power just by developing its naval forces.[90]

*Maritime-Continental Faction:*

The maritime-continental faction believes in developing both land and sea power extensively in China. Li Yihu, another Beijing University professor, is one of the leading thinkers in the group. Li points to China's extensive borders on land and sea and resulting "dual identity as both a land and sea power" as reasons to foster an "all-round mentality of overall sea and land planning."[91] Li Yihu and some of the other thinkers in this group, such as Lt. Gen. Mi Zhenyu, acknowledge a temporary need to concentrate on sea power to offset the traditional lack of focus in that area. Li does perceive this duality as part of an historical problem for dual powers and their dual security dilemmas: "giving priority to developing land power will cause other powers such as Russia and India to feel insecure; giving priority to developing sea power will arouse suspicion among maritime countries such as the United States and Japan (a similar problem has in the past [faced

[88] ibid
[89] ibid
[90] ibid
[91] Li Yihu 2007

dual great powers such as] France, Germany, and the Soviet Union."[92] These historical parallels support Li's arguments about the need for China to maintain balance between developing its land and its sea power.

*Official Rhetoric, the Party Line:*

Rhetoric from CCP leaders conveys the importance of the sea, while CCP official documents increasingly hint at the development of stronger naval power. President Jiang Zemin in a 1995 speech said that "developing and using the sea will have more and more signficance to China's long-term development. We certainly need to…increase the entire nation's sea consciousness."[93] Echoing another statement by Jiang, President and CMC Chairman Hu Jintao, in 2006, "stressed, since our nation is a great maritime power, our navy plays an important role in defending our national sovereignty and security, as well as safeguarding our maritime rights and interests, and hence is undertaking an honorable mission."[94] However, maybe the most telling shift can be seen in Chinese white papers: while China's 2000 and 2002 Defense White Papers only vaguely allude to the PLAN's role in defending China's "maritime rights and interests", more recent white papers have increasingly expanded the PLAN's area of operations. The 2004 version stated that "the Navy has expanded the space and extended the depth for offshore defensive operations," the 2006 version called for "gradual extension of strategic depth for offshore defensive operations and enhancing its capabilities in integrated maritime operations and nuclear counterattacks," and the 2008 iteration underscored that "the Navy has been striving to

[92] ibid
[93] Jiao Yongke, 1999
[94] Yubao, Yike, and Genshan, 2006

improve in an all-round way its capabilities of integrated offshore operations, strategic deterrence and strategic counterattacks, and to gradually develop its capabilities of conducting cooperation in *distant* waters"[95] (emphasis added).

## The PLAN Going Forward, China's Navy Today and Tomorrow:

To compare Chinese naval development to that of the other case studies, one must first understand where China's navy is today. A leaked report on the PLAN from the US Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in August 2009 provides insight into the capabilities, strategy, and leadership of the service. Overall, it states that "over the past decade, the PRC has carried out an impressive military modernization effort, providing the PLAN with considerable technological capabilities" and that "while much work remains, trends in recent years indicate the PLAN is beginning to operationalize its modern force, taking on new and more challenging missions."[96] The most progress has come in Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW), with the world's first and only anti-ship ballistic missile, naval air defense, with radar similar to the US Aegis system, and force projection, with better replenishment (and the expected addition of aircraft carriers soon). Operationally, the main change has been the protection of oil tankers in the Gulf of Aden, the first PLAN deployment outside of local waters.

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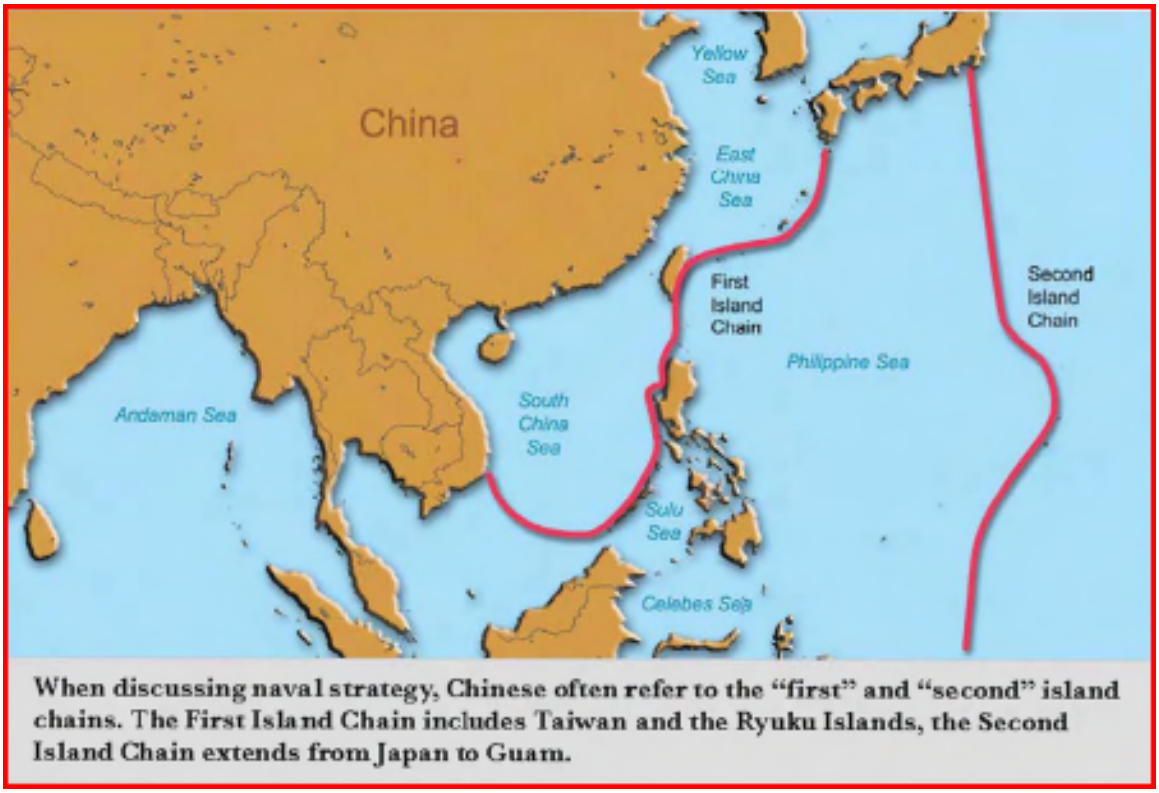
[95] Chinese Defense White Papers, available at http://merlin.ndu.edu/whitepapers.html
[96] US ONI 2009




*[Figure 1: Reproduced from "A Modern Navy with Chinese Characteristics," ONI 2009]*

The report first outlines PLAN strategy, and its strategic evolution from coastal defense to offshore defense and finally distant sea defense. For the variety of reasons already outlined in this paper, the PLAN remained focused on *coastal defense* under the PRC. However, Admiral Liu Huaqing in the mid-1980's pioneered the development of a new strategy, *offshore defense*. This regional strategy extended China's focus to interests within its 200 mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the "First Island Chain", which connects Japan, Taiwan, and the Ryuku Islands. Since then, the international context has shifted dramatically; the fall of the USSR, rise of US interventionism around the world, 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis, and modernization of the Japanese and South Korean navies have further encouraged Chinese maritime development. Now, many Chinese scholars

promote *distant sea defense*, a global strategy defined by China's maritime needs. This strategy also places more emphasis on prestige and status. One of the primary strategic maritime interests is the protection of what analysts call SLOC's or Strategic Lines of Communication. China's SLOC's – especially the Malacca Strait – convey 90% of its foreign trade and the vast majority of its rapidly increasing consumption of foreign oil. These strategic interests, Taiwan and the protection of SLOC's, have become the main drivers of Chinese naval strategy.

As stated above, the PLAN has made real progress in upgrading its capabilities and becoming a more modern force in recent years. "The PLAN surface force is one of the largest in the world, and its capabilities are growing at a remarkable rate", notes the report. This surface force consists of roughly 25 destroyers, 50 frigates, 80 small missile-armed patrol craft, and numerous other support craft. The most notable recent upgrade to the surface force has been made in air defense, long considered an area of weakness for PLAN ships, with advanced missiles and air-surveillance systems added to destroyers and frigates. This upgrade is essential because "it allows PLAN combatants to operate outside of shore-based air defense more confidently", supporting China's new distant sea defense strategy. Closer to home, the surface force has been boosted by the addition of over 50 small and fast missile-armed patrol craft in recent years, which also "allows the PLAN's larger combatants to focus on offshore defense and out-of-area missions without leaving a security gap along China's coastline." Other components such as amphibious ships and support craft have been upgraded as well.

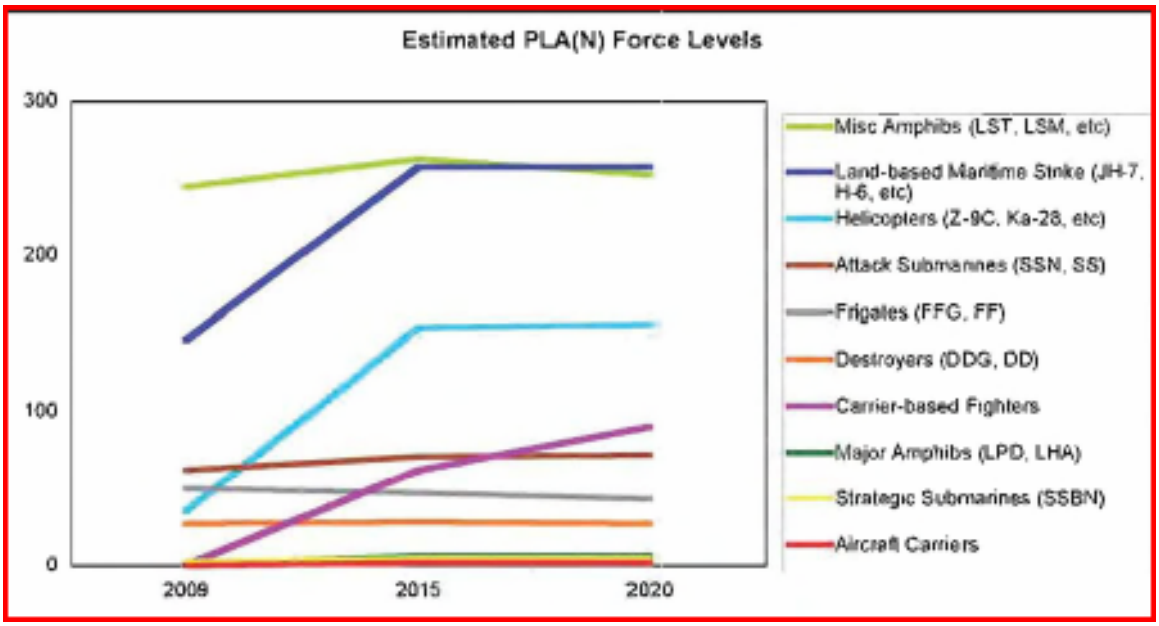
The PLAN has also continued to increase and enhance its submarine force, which is now one of the strongest in the world. The force currently consists of about 10 nuclear

and 50 conventional submarines, and is expected to increase in size to approximately 75 submarines over the next decade or so. While the force size increase may be temporary, the individual units continue to increase markedly in capabilities. PLAN submarines have become increasingly quiet, or difficult to detect, and this trend will only continue with the introduction of air independent power (AIP) submarines, which can stay submerged for weeks at a time. Lyle Goldstein, an expert on the Chinese navy, makes a compelling case that China's submarine force could mount a serious threat to the US Navy around Taiwan in the near future. He argues that, given China's recent submarine build-up, the difficulty of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and weakness of the US Navy in that area, and the local advantages the Chinese would have in knowledge of the terrain and proximity to home, the PLAN submarine force could impose an undersea blockade of Taiwan in the near term. Chinese submarines, he argues, could pose a real threat to US Carrier Battle Groups (CBG's) in the shallow waters of a Taiwan scenario, a threat often downplayed by scholars of China and its naval power.

In addition, the PLAN has improved in other areas, such as air power, missiles, and mines. The People's Liberation Army Navy Air Force (PLANAF) has acquired or constructed many new advanced aircraft since 2000, including the purchase of two dozen maritime strike aircraft in 2004. The PLANAF now employs aircraft for a host of modern roles, such as "maritime patrol, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), maritime strike, logistical support, and even airborne early warning." The service now also boasts several classes of advanced helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). The PLAN has also upgraded its missile forces, most notably by developing the world's first Anti-Ship Ballistic Missile (ASBM), a direct threat to US carriers, plus improved Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles (ASCM)

for other large surface ships. Finally, the PLAN has developed its naval mines "from an obsolete mine inventory…to a robust and modern inventory" which "can be a relatively low-cost, high-value force multiplier." The ONI report declares that mines "remain an extremely effective operational form of warfare that can cause difficulties for even the most advanced navies."

Finally, the PLAN has made serious strides in two other areas needed to develop an effective modern navy: informatization and personnel recruitment and training. Some of the upgrades already detailed, such as advanced air-surveillance on surface ships, and airborne early warning (AEW) using naval aircraft, reflect this informationization effort. But the effort to step up Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaisance (C4ISR) across the entire military encompasses many other items – such as satellite surveillance and over-the-horizon (OTH) targeting – that have enhanced naval power, and will continue to do so in the future. "New capabilities, such as…advanced surveillance systems, and datalink communication capabilities, will serve as significant force multipliers over the next 10-15 years."



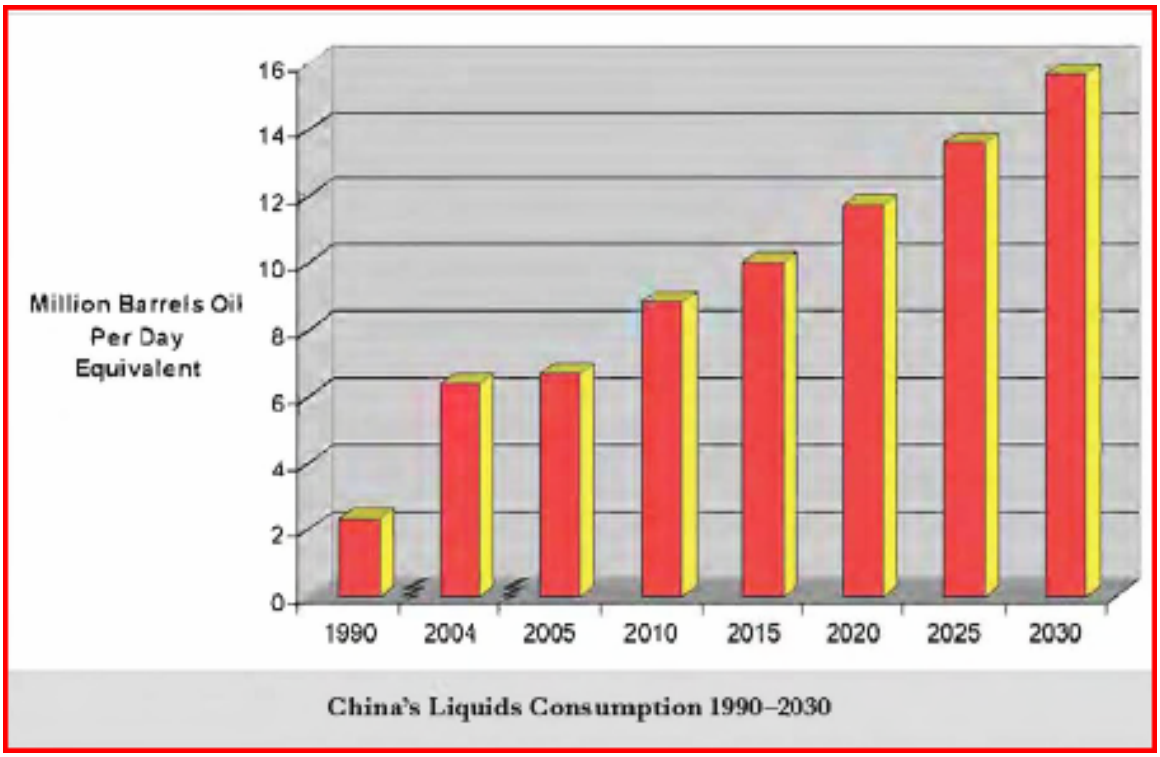
*[Figure 2: Reproduced from "A Modern Navy with Chinese Characteristics," ONI 2009]*

Recruitment and training have also been stressed under new PLAN commander Admiral Wu Shengli. The PLAN has drastically raised salaries and benefits in order to attract and retain talent, and instituted western-style non-commissioned officer (NCO) and reserve officer training corps (ROTC) programs to further improve the quality and retention of personnel. Training has advanced, too, to emphasize larger, more realistic, and more complex excercises and joint operations – several large-scale joint (and even cross-national) "campaign excercises" have been held since 2000. Overall, these areas, informationization and training, will continued to grow and improve into the future. In sum, the report concludes that "China's military modernization program has brought a range of new capabilites to the PLAN [and] while the pace of modernization may slow, China remains committed to continued development of naval capabilities to support its growing maritime interests."

One more area that merits additional attention regarding China's turn to the seas is the PLAN's current and future activity in the Indian Ocean. In order to support China's aforementioned expanding commerce and foreign oil consumption, which both transit the Indian Ocean and the Malacca Strait, China has increased its activity in the Indian Ocean, including its naval patrols, basing, and diplomacy. James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara provide an excellent overview of this trend in the 2008 article, "China's Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean." They maintain that China will neither focus exclusively on Taiwan or all-out naval competition with the US in the near future, but increasingly on the Indian

Ocean. China will try to use soft power to compete with a rising India until the resolution of the Taiwan crisis, they claim.

First, they outline Chinese strategic interests and increasing activity in the Indian Ocean to date. Chinese energy use has doubled over the past 20 years, and is expected to double again over the next 20. Foreign oil now equals 30% of total oil consumption, and is expected to reach 75% of oil consumption by 2020. As a result, China has a strong and growing interest in securing its energy imports from the region. Moreover, China remains fearful and skeptical of Indian naval amibition in its backyard as well as the ability of the US to interdict this vital resource. Chinese analysts also note the "Malacca predicament", in that so much of the oil passes through this single SLOC.




*[Figure 2: Reproduced from "A Modern Navy with Chinese Characteristics," ONI 2009]*

Accordingly, China has increased its diplomatic activity in the region and pursued a series of basing rights in the Indian Ocean that analysts call the "string of pearls". China has touted, above all, Zheng He and its maritime tradition in its effort to convince powers in the region from Australia to Pakistan of its benign maritime intentions. China feels that the Zheng He image represents China's proud naval traditon, its peaceful and commercial nature, and a marked contrast with Western imperialism and exploitation of the area since the 1800's. "The implied message: Chinese mastery of the seas is preferable to that of the United States, the self-appointed guarantor of the Asian sea routes." Still, the scholars acknowledge that the effect of this diplomacy is difficult, if not impossible, to measure. What is measureable, though, is the constant efforts of China to negotiate basing rights. China already has two bases – mostly notably its port facility in Gwadar, Pakistan – and sees them as important hedges for its oil and commerce imports from the Indian Ocean. However, Holmes and Yoshihara also point out the limitations of such a base, including US interception of oil before reaching Gwadar, the difficulty of defending the exposed base, and Pakistan potentially defecting to support the US.

Next, they establish their three factors that will determine Chinese naval power in the Indian Ocean – Taiwan, soft power vs. India, and hard power vs. India – and find that China is not as yet capable of such power projection. First, they maintain that China must resolve the Taiwan problem before any pursuit of aggressive power projection outside of local waters, due to limited resouces and strategic focus. The status of the Taiwan issue is thus one factor that will decide whether China can expand into the Indian Ocean. Second, China's soft power rivalry with India, which is also touting its tradition and increasing its presence in the region, will be important in determining which power wins over the local

states to its side. Holmes and Yoshihara assert that an unfavorable outcome to the Taiwan issue might hurt Chinese soft power in the region. Third, China's hard power rivalry with India, which is also building up its naval forces, will be important in determining whether China can control events in the region. Holmes and Yoshihara maintain that India could create what Barry Posen calls a "contested zone" with China in the Indian Ocean just as China has created one with the US in the western Pacific. In the end, the authors are not optimistic about China's potential for projection in the near future. They note that many forces, such as short-range aircraft, missiles, and patrol craft, may be useful in a Taiwan conflict, but would not be in the deep and distant Indian Ocean. The PLAN would need, they maintain, a higher quantity of advanced surface ships, more offshore air power, and more support and logistical ships to project in the region.

## *Analytical Section:*

### The Actors:

Mao Zedong undoubtedly prioritized the army and the "grand infantry" concept and set back China's navy (and air force) in several ways. First of all, his radical policies – such as the Hundred Flowers Movement, Great Leap Forward, and Cultural Revolution – created an environment of unrest and crisis not conducive to naval development. They also created such high instability that the army needed to be prioritized in order to regain control of society in certain cases, especially the Cultural Revolution. Finally, throughout

Mao's leadership, but especially during these revolutionary Communist periods, the state generally retarded military development by prioritizing Communist loyalty over technical skill. According to US Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, "many 'forward thinkers' were purged during the Cultural Revolution, when it was better to be "Red" than a technical expert. Navies are inherently technical services and, consequently, suffered inordinately in this environment. Many of today's PLAN senior officers survived in this environment--which should raise questions about their professional foundations."[97]

Mao's death cleared the way for PRC civilian leaders who have supported naval development more and more. Former PLAN political commissar Yang Huaiqing states that "Comrade Deng Xiaoping unequivocally pointed out that seas and oceans are not a moat and China must face the world and go beyond seas and oceans in order to become prosperous and strong. Comrade Jiang Zemin has taken a further step and put forward a new outlook on seas and oceans that combines the outlook on territorial waters, outlook on marine economy and outlook on maritime security."[98] President Hu Jintao "appears to conceptualize China as a growing sea power"[99] too: reportedly saying in 2006 that "since our nation is a great maritime power, our Navy plays an important role in defending our national sovereignty and security, as well as safeguarding our marine rights and interests, and hence is undertaking an honorable mission."[100] Thus, China's top civilian leadership appears to increasingly recognize China's growing maritime interests.

Mao's death also cleared the way for military leadership to push for more naval development, specifically Liu Huaqing. As already stated, Liu was essential in forming

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[97] McDevitt 2001 (2)
[98] Yang Huaiqing 2000 (26)
[99] Erickson, Goldstein, and Lord 2009 (XXVIII)
[100] Xinhua News Agency, 27 May 1999

China's expanded maritime vision of "offshore defense". Liu trained in Soviet military schools, first becoming an army officer, then serving as PLAN commander from 1982 until 1988, and CMC vice chairman from 1989 until 1997. Liu envisioned a three-step process: control within the "First Island Chain" extending through Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia by 2000, control within the "Second Island Chain" extending through Japan, the Bonins and further Indonesia by 2020, and the ability to project power through the rest of the Pacific by 2050. Liu's vision, which has guided Chinese naval development since its creation, could "have occurred only in the post-Mao era, when the strategy of 'people's war' could be reinterpreted."[101]

While PLAN commanders since Liu have not made headlines, they have made progress in carrying out Liu's vision. These commanders have not only supported naval expansion, but have mostly been career naval officers instead of army transfers. Admiral Shi Yunsheng, appointed in 1996, oversaw a key period of development but was relieved of duty after a tragic submarine failure in 2003. His replacement, Admiral Zhang Dingfa, continued the process of naval modernization, and is noteworthy for his status as the first submariner to rise to commander.[102] Probably the most vocal and successful proponent of naval development, however, has been current PLAN commander Wu Shengli[103], a career surface force officer. As stated earlier, Wu is on record as a proponent of a powerful navy performing a variety of international roles. So is Hu Yanlin, another career surface officer and the likely successor to Wu. Hu's likely future as the commander points to a continued push for modernization from within.

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[101] McDevitt 2001 (3)
[102] Goldstein and Murray 2003, 168
[103] US ONI 2009, 13

The public, under Mao, did not have a strong voice in foreign policy formation, but public pressure may be more relevant today. Events like the accidental bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade by the US and China's resulting hostility towards the US illustrate the growing influence of nationalism in the foreign policy arena, according to many China analysts. In addition, support for naval development is widespread among sectors of the public, especially for the construction of China's first aircraft carrier. On top of this, statements by then-President Jiang Zemin and others on the need to develop "sea consciousness" in the public may signal a larger role in the future[104]. However, the fact remains that the leadership, both civilian and military, has been the important actor behind China's recent military, and naval, modernization efforts.

## The Factors:

*Geostrategic Context:*

As already stated, geostrategy and the orientation of security threats has had a profound effect on Chinese naval development. Before 1840, China faced mostly land-based security threats, notably repeated invasions from the north, and only the nuisance of piracy from the sea. From 1840 to 1949, China was victimized by Western states led by their naval power, as they increasingly carved up the Chinese nation in what is now known as the Century of National Humiliation. China's attempts to meet this challenge and cultivate sea power also ended in disastrous defeat, such as the Sino-Japanese War.

[104] Jiang Zemin 2005

The victimization from the sea persisted throughout the Civil War period of 1911-1949 with Japanese imperialism and invasions. As stated earlier, the PRC from 1949 to 1989 retained a continentalist focus due to repeated land threats and wars, such as wars with Korea, India, the USSR, and Vietnam by 1980 (plus the aforementioned role of Mao's continentalism and destabilizing domestic policies). Although continentalism began to erode in the mid-1980's under Liu Huaqing, the crucial push toward the seas came only after the collapse of the USSR in 1989.

Since 1989, the removal of the top source of inland insecurity has shifted China's focus seaward more than ever before. In particular, the emergence of US hegemony and willingness to intervene in non-democracies abroad, Taiwan's increasing moves toward independence with US support, and the modernization of the Japanese and South Korean navies have all encouraged Chinese naval development. China now finds itself in a new environment, competing with maritime powers such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the US, and with more security than ever before on its interior borders. However, China still faces potential sources of inland insecurity, such as nationalism in the autonomous border regions of Tibet and Xinjiang (especially after recent violence in Tibet in 2008), an unstable North Korean along its northern border, and the specter of domestic unrest caused by inequality, corruption, environmental, or health issues. While all these fronts remain relatively calm now, a nationalist uprising in Tibet or Xinjiang or even protest in Beijing could constrict China's naval build-up. Similarly, the rise of a serious strategic rivalry with Russia or India could even reverse its course and require Chinese strategic focus to remain much more continental. However, the fact remains for now that China's geostrategic context is directing its focus more than ever towards the seas.

*Economy:*

Along with Mao Zedong's death and the collapse of the USSR, economic growth has played the one of the largest roles in China's turn toward the seas. Economic growth encourages rising powers to turn toward the seas in two crucial ways: by increasing their capabilities and giving them the means to build a powerful navy, and by increasing their incentives and giving them the reasons to build a powerful navy. The first point is fairly obvious – prolonged economic growth increases the national budget and ability to build and maintain a coostly navy, while economic crisis logically does the opposite. China's unprecedented economic growth since 1979 has given the government the cash to spend on its naval modernization. Second, China's rapid economic growth has, like other great powers in the past, increased the rationales for naval expansion. China's "opening to the outside" has created a huge increase in global commerce and shipping, while its hungry domestic market has also increased its dependence on foreign oil. Both of these need to be protected with naval power, and both will continue to grow into the future. In short, China's economy – specifically its expanding commerce and foreign oil dependency – has aligned with its geostrategic context and is pulling China's strategic focus towards the seas as well.

*Technology:*

Access to cutting-edge technology helps China's naval development but does not fundamentally cause that development, as in the French case. As outlined already, China has pursued a host of new technologies for the PLAN, such as advanced-air surveillance, satellite surveillance, airborne early warning, over the horizon targeting, air independent propulsion, and anti-ship ballistic missiles, to name a few. However, none of these items represent revolutions in naval technology, such as the explosive shell, the steamship, the ironclad, or the torpedo boat, that could erase established technological leads. Unlike the France case, then, the PRC is playing technological catch up, not technological leap frog. Also, nowhere in the writings of Chinese officials, scholars, or analysts does technology appear to be causal to China's naval modernization.

*Prestige*

Prestige and nationalism have to some extent motivated China's naval orientation, especially regarding Taiwan, but overall these variables play second fiddle to geostrategic and economic concerns. China's Century of National Humiliation is undoubtedly a driver of a vague sense of nationalist resurgence today, but that does not mean that China's turn to the seas comes from humiliation and the desire for prestige. China still faces security threats from the sea today in the US and Japan, so the Century of National Humiliation's lesson for maritime proponents – ensuring national defense by sea – still hold significant strategic merit. This means that it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle the effects of the Century of National Humiliation and the strategic environment today. Invoking the Century of National Humiliation thus cannot be discredited as simply nationalist and non-

strategic. Finally, China's naval development appears to be grounded in real strategic and economic objectives such as national defense, Taiwan (which is driven by nationalism, though not Ross's "naval nationalism") and expanding commerce and energy. China's naval strategy and procurement appear to be tied to these strategic objectives.

However, most scholars argue that China's focus on the Taiwan issue is mainly due to nationalist pride as opposed to strategic interest. The ONI report maintains that: "Chinese leadership came to see an increasingly independent Taiwan as a threat to their pride and authority."[105] Later, the ONI presents more of a mixed bag of motives, stating: "the PRC continues to view reunification with Taiwan as an unalterable long-term goal for reasons involving historic claims, national pride, domestic stability, and geostrategic posture."[106] While the literature points to nationalism and prestige as the primary reasons for China's continued focus on Taiwan (as does logic: nationalism should be behind the desire for national reunification of China), the other factors cannot be ignored either. In any case, it is unfair and incorrect to associate this desire for national reunification with the Ross's undesirable "naval nationalism", because Taiwan is a specific objective, not some vague desire for prestige drummed up and manipulated by the leadership.

Additionally, other scholars caution that China's recent attempts to build its first aircraft carrier indicate the increasing influence of prestige and status. According to the ONI report, "Beijing recognizes the role a modern navy plays in a nation's international status." China "is the only permanent U.N. Security Council member without an aircraft carrier, while other nations such as India, Thailand, and Brazil operate carriers" and was notoriously unable to help in humanitarian assistance efforts during the 2004 tsunami in

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[105] US ONI 2009
[106] US ONI 2009

Indonesia[107]. Chinese officials, however, point to "protecting China's maritime territorial integrity" and "increasing security demands" as reasons for carrier acquisition. Among China scholars, Robert Ross argues forcefully in "China's Naval Nationalism" that the reason for China's carrier program is prestige, while other scholars have responded and stated that China does have strategic interests in acquiring an aircraft carrier.

*Fear*

Fear of other naval powers, especially the US, has been a growing motive for naval development since 1989. As already stated, China has watched apprehensively as the US has intervened in and crushed non-democratic regimes like Iraq and Afghanistan in the post-9/11 era. Surrounded by US treaty allies and Taiwan, a key flashpoint, some Chinese analysts worry about about US intentions in the region: fearing that the US and its allies could encircle China[108] or blockade its coasts[109]. These analysts also see some in the US trumpeting a "China threat" theory, causing more Chinese anxiety about the US. However, many Chinese recognize this security dilemma, in which a cycle of mutual fear can lead to arms races and hostility.

## Cross-Case Comparison:

[107] US ONI 2009
[108] Qing Tong '2002: Focus on Guam', Kuang Chiao Ching, 16 Oct. 2002
[109] Dan Jie and Ju Lang, 'Russian Strategic Bomber to Fly to China', Jiandai Wuqi, 1 March 2005

Overall, a closer examination of parallel historical cases supports the argument of Robert Ross in "China's Naval Nationalism": that nationalism and prestige, mobilized by leaders like Napoleon III and Tirpitz, were the chief factors that ultimately pushed France and Germany over the edge towards all-out naval competition and arms racing with Great Britain, and must be prevented from controlling China's naval strategy. Other factors also contributed significantly, such as the equalizing power of naval technology in the France case, and the mobilization of nationalist fear in the German case.

However (and this is the big however), it is at this point necessary to delineate between the two distinct, though interrelated, periods of naval development in each of these historical cases: the "push" that sends the rising power hurtling off the cliff towards a naval arms race, and what gets the rising power all the way up the cliff in the first place. In other words, what triggered the actual naval competition vs. what caused the growth or revival of the navy before such an intense competition could become possible? As China has not yet been overtaken by intense naval nationalism (if it will ever be), this will allow us to compare the earlier periods in the case studies to China's current trajectory.

We must now turn to what gets France and Germany up the cliff in the first place. For France, the key factor that led the naval revival after the Napoleonic Wars but before the 1840 Egypt crisis was geostrategy: with the rise of Germany and Italy still decades in the distance, France faced no serious continental threats to its security, freeing up more and more resources for naval development. For Germany, economic motivations drove naval development from 1848 until the Tirpitz era: increasing economic growth, led by global shipping and commerce, pulled Germany towards the seas. This occurred in spite of land threats like a revanchist France and an expansionist Russia. However, it is crucial

to remember that France and Germany in these pre-nationalism periods never reached the level of a first-class navy, with Germany briefly becoming the world's third largest navy in the 1870's (though, as will be argued, China's case may unfold differently).

When we compare the German and Chinese cases, then, we see China being pulled much more forcefully towards the seas than Germany was.throughout its pre-Tirpitz stage. We see both cases as rising land powers undergoing similar patterns of economic growth, led by global shipping and commerce. But China is not only being pulled toward the seas by its massive economic and commercial growth (plus energy security issues not felt by Germany), but also by geostrategic factors and its national reunification. Specifically, the shift from a bipolar world with a threatening USSR on China's interior, to a unipolar world with a threatening US (plus Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea) in the western Pacific. In this sense, China's economic and geostrategic incentives have thus aligned in the post-Cold-War era, forming a greater set of drivers for naval development than any of the historical cases.

| Phase | Factor | France | Germany | China | Outlook |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Early Stages "The Climb" | Geostrategy | High | [Negative] | High | China being more forcefully pulled towards the sea than either France or Germany in pre-naval-nationalism phase |
| | Economy | Mid | High | High | |
| | Technology | High | -- | -- | |
| | Prestige | -- | Mid | (Taiwan) | |
| | Fear | -- | -- | Mid? | |
| Arms Race "The Push" | Geostrategy | High | [Negative] | ?? | If Chinese geostrategy stays sea-based, and Taiwan stays unresolved, does China even need naval nationalism? |
| | Economy | Mid | High | ?? | |
| | Technology | High | -- | ?? | |
| | Prestige | High | High | ?? | |
| | Fear | -- | High | ?? | |
| | Outcome | FAILURE | FAILURE | ?? | |

While some might rightfully point out that China has been adhering to a grand strategy of peaceful development, it must be remembered that Germany too practiced

such a strategy under Bismarck. Bismarck avoided provocation towards Great Britain, then the dominant power, at all costs, including abstaining for years from the colonial race to carve up the Caribbean, Africa, and East Asia. Additionally, some believe that economic interdependence between the US and China will prevent any major conflict, even competition, from erupting. However, it is worth noting that while Germany and Britain never boasted the level of interdependence between China and the US, British imports reached central Europe through German ports and German commerce abroad, especially in East Asia, was protected by British sea power for decades in an essential quid pro quo. Bismarck himself even said British sea power was "the greatest force for world peace" as late as 1890. Therefore peaceful development strategies and economic interdependence alone cannot guarantee good relations between maritime powers. The fact still remains that China is being pulled towards the seas far more powerfully than Germany was in the pre-Tirpitz era (or France in the pre-Napoleon III era).

If current trends continue, does China even need "naval nationalism" to push it over the cliff? Perhaps not. Perhaps a lack of "naval nationalism" does not preclude an arms race or armed conflict on the high seas with the US. China's strong economic and geostrategic motivations may be enough to slowly but steadily drive it over the cliff by themselves. If so, if this pessimistic view is correct, it means that both Robert Ross and Glosny and Saunders may be partially correct and partially incorrect. Ross's argument that "naval nationalism" is a potential pitfall for China is correct, but his implicit assumption that it is the only major pathway to Sinoamerican naval competition may be dangerously incorrect. Glosny and Saunders' argument that China's desire for an aircraft carrier is strategically justifiable (not necessary, but justifiable) is correct, but their

implicit assumption that this means everything is "OK" and Chinese strategic objectives will not lead towards a clash with the US may be dangerously incorrect.

Finally, in light of this possibility, it is all the more essential to control any potentially explosive factors that we can control, including Chinese nationalism and US alarmism. Specifically, Chinese leaders must avoid triggering a naval arms race out of a desire for great power prestige (succumbing to "naval nationalism"), just as US leaders must avoid triggering one out of fear as China's navy continues its growth. Barring an unforeseen event (which have made many a prediction look foolish in international politics), the PLAN will continue to grow and develop, according to Liu Huaqing's vision, into a western Pacific force by 2020 and a pan-Pacific force by 2050. The US must avoid alarmism and overreaction, which could trigger a security dilemma by reinforcing the very security threat that is causing the build-up. Those in the US must understand that China's naval expansion is defensive in nature, driven largely by how much it perceives the US and its allies to be a threat to its geostrategic and economic interests at sea.

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