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China's Military Rise
and the Implications for European Security

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Chapter One

Chapter One.
How Great Powers Rise: Motives, Manifestations, Extra-regional Dynamics

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Key Takeaways

- Historically, great powers have emerged through multifaceted and multi-decade trajectories that fuel competition with other states. They are responsible for the majority of interstate conflict, both between great powers and with lower-level powers.
- Great powers pursue military expansion to augment security, maintain access to or obtain resources, to satisfy domestic interest groups, and to bolster prestige. These drivers are not always rational from the perspective of outside observers.
- Small or middle powers tend to think of security in terms of territorial defense or extended defense; in contrast, great powers, by virtue of the outsize role they play in the system, are concerned with the global balance of power.
- Great power extra-regional influence consists of projection capabilities, developing and maintaining sound infrastructure, establishing bases, fostering alliances, transferring arms to other states, or engaging in military-to-military cooperation.

Great power competition has once again become the most important consideration for Western security policy.

Great power competition has once again become the most important consideration for Western security policy. The 2015 UK National Security Strategy warned of the "resurgence of state-based threats," a 2016 German white paper underscored the "renaissance of traditional power politics," in 2017 the French government expressed concern about "the emergence of intensified military competition between major powers," and in 2018 the US National Defense Strategy left no doubt about the shift away from concern about the Middle East and Islamic extremism: "Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in US national security."[1] The behavior of a number of states are of concern for Western policymaker, including Russia. However, today the focus is on China.

Aiming to be a "world-class military" that is "ready to fight and win wars" by mid-century,[2] the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s modernization drive has borne fruit since it commenced under President Jiang Zemin in the 1990s. Transforming from a traditional, land-based power into a high-tech one able to compete in all domains, the PLA's budget has over the past decade nearly doubled military spending, from $137 to $261 billion.[3] Qualitatively, it has developed an indigenous high-tech defense industry that produces advanced systems such as hypersonic and submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missiles, domestically-developed aircraft carriers, long-range stealth bombers and modern fighter jets.[4] It has become the world's second-largest arms producer and the fifth largest exporter of military equipment.[5] This expansion is laying the foundation for China's ability to project power beyond the First and Second Island Chains and move toward developing a blue-water navy.

As of yet, there is limited understanding of the specific motivations behind this profound expansion of China's military capabilities. There is no consensus as to whether China's military rise has been propelled by concerns about the large presence of US forces in the region, a desire to safeguard access to resources and supply lines, or domestic nationalist sentiment.

By providing a comparative historical analysis of the rise of great powers, this chapter lays the groundwork for the subsequent empirical chapters. It seeks to identify broader patterns in motives and manifestations when it comes to the deployment of military power outside the home regions of great powers. Though the rise of great powers has been amply documented

1 Van Manen, H., & Sweijs. (2020). *Military Competition in Perspective: Trends in Major Powers' Postures and Perceptions* (Strategic Monitor 2019-2020), https://www.clingendael.org/pub/2019/strategic-monitor-2019-2020/military-competition-in-perspective/; 'The 2016 German White Paper: Strategic Review and Way Ahead' (German Federal Ministry of Defence, 2017), http://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Other-Documents/The-2016-German-White-Paper-Strategic-Review-and-Way-Ahead; Jon Lunn and Eleanor Scarnell, 'The 2015 UK National Security Strategy' (House of Commons Library, 14 December 2015), https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7431/; Defence and National Security: Strategic Review 2017 (Paris, France: La Délégation à l'information et à la communication de la défense, 2017); 'What Is the National Defense Strategy?' (US Department of Defense, 2018), https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/Story/Article/1656414/what-is-the-national-defense-strategy/.

2 Xinhua News Agency, "China Focus: "Be ready to win wars," China's Xi orders reshaped PLA," August 1, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/2017-08/01/c_136491455.htm

3 SIPRI, "Military Expenditure by Country, in Constant (2018)" (SIPRI, 2020), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Data%20for%20all%20countries%20from%201988%E2%80%932019%20in%20constant%20%282018%29%20USD.pdf.

4 Justin Bronk, "Russian and Chinese Combat Air Trends: Current Capabilities and Future Threat Outlook," Whitehall Reports (RUSI, October 30, 2020), https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/russian_and_chinese_combat_air_trends_whr_final_web_version.pdf; Ian Williams and Masao Dahlgren, "More Than Missiles: China Previews Its New Way of War," CSIS Series (Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2019); "What Do We Know so Far about China's Second Aircraft Carrier?," China Power, June 15, 2021, http://chinapower.csis.org/china-aircraft-carrier-type-001a/.

5 SIPRI, "New SIPRI Data Reveals Scale of Chinese Arms Industry" (SIPRI, January 27, 2020), https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2020/new-sipri-data-reveals-scale-chinese-arms-industry. ; Pieter D. Wezeman, Alexandra Kuimova, and Siemon T Wezeman, "Trends in International Arms Tranfers, 2020" (SIPRI, March 2021), https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/fs_2103_at_2020_v2.pdf.

in scholarly literature,[6] this chapter goes further by theorizing how a rising power's military apparatus and the maintenance of that apparatus can be understood in light of expeditionary capabilities deployed beyond its immediate region.[7]

1.1 Great powers, competition and conflict

Definitions of great power status tend to focus on military capabilities. One study of more than 300 wars in the period 1480-1964 shows that great powers were involved in approximately seventy percent.[8] Indeed, as a whole, the scholarship on great powers suggests that shifts in global and regional distributions of power increase the odds of conflict because of competition over leadership and power (See Table 3).[9] Graham Allison's work on the so-called Thucydides Trap facing China and the United States offers a case study of this phenomenon.[10] However, when it comes to the relationship between power transition and war, there is disagreement about causality and degree. While some studies suggest that there is a one in two chance of power transitions leading to war,[11] others have found the relationship to be less direct.[12]

Author(s)	Cases of power transition followed by the outbreak of a war	Timespan	How is power measured?
Organski & Kugler (1980)	5 out of 10; Odds of major wars when power parity is accompanied by a challenger overtaking a dominant nation	1860-1980	Gross National Power (GNP)
Thompson (1983)	4 out of 9; global wars/regional global power transition	1490-1945	Naval capability
Houweling and Siccama (1988)	8 out of 17; 'overtaking' major power dyads resulted in successive outbreak of war	1816-1975	Demographic and military variables, including iron and steel production, population, size of armed forces, energy use (coal production), urbanization levels
Graham Allison (2017)	12 out of 16;	1500- present	National power metrics plus subjective assessment
Lemke and Werner (1996)	4 out of 19; contender dyads	1820-1980	The number of military personnel and military expenditures
Richard Ned Lebow; Benjamin Valentino (2009)	0; Almost all major power transitions appear to be the result of war, not a cause of it	1648 to 2000	GDP x Total Population
Doran and Parsons (1980)	26 out of 77 instances of war initiation fall in the critical period (point of inflection)	1816-1975	Relative capabilities including GNP, territory, armed forces, military spending, and population; and per capita income, urbanization, and technological sophistication

Table 3: Do power transitions lead to war?

6 See e.g., Bobbitt, P. (2003). *The shield of Achilles: War, peace, and the course of history*. Anchor; Kennedy, P. (1989). *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict 1500-2000* (1st ed.). Random House.

7 On the stopping power of water and the geographic limitations of hegemonic aspirations see Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

8 Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Jack S Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System: 1495-1975*, 1st ed. (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1983)..

9 George Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics*, 1st ed. 1987 edition (Place of publication not identified: Palgrave Macmillan, 1987); A.F.K. Organski and Jacek Kugler, *The War Ledger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

10 "Thucydides Trap," Harvard Kennedy School, https://www.belfercenter.org/thucydides-trap/case-file.

11 Organski and Kugler, *The War Ledger*; W.R. Thompson, "Succession Crises in the Global Political System: A Test of the Transition Model," in *Crisis in the World-System*, by A Bergesen, 1st ed. (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1983), 93–116; Henk Houweling and Jan G. Siccama, "Power Transitions as a Cause of War," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 32, no. 1 (1988): 87–102, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002788032001004.

12 See e.g. Doran and Wes Parsons "War and the Cycle of Relative Power," *The American Political Science Review* 74, no. 4 (1980): 947–65, https://doi.org/10.2307/1954315.; Douglas Lemke and Suzanne Werner "Power Parity, Commitment to Change, and War," *International Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (1996): 235–60, https://doi.org/10.2307/2600958.

1.1.1 Hierarchy and role conception

In the international system, hierarchy offers a meaningful substitute for the sovereign authority we are familiar with within states. At its core, international hierarchy can be defined as an order in which states share an understanding of the prevailing rules, while accepting and respecting each other's roles in the order. Whereas an international system is characterized by multiple hierarchical relationships, a stable hierarchy is based upon a series of international regimes that are underpinned by the distribution of power.[13]

Shifts in the distribution of power in a system affect the foundations of an existing hierarchy, as expanding states would like a larger role in determining the rules set by the established power.[14] This revisionist behavior vis-à-vis the norms and rules of the existing order leads to friction with the status quo power. Rising states tend to be impatient with the speed at which recognition, status and responsibilities are yielded to them. In turn, dominant states are often reluctant to share power with newcomers.[15]

The temptation to wage war can be even stronger for the declining state, which sees its military advantages progressively wane.

1.1.2 Military power

If the emerging power feels threatened and/or perceives a closing window of opportunity to carve out its position,[16] war may come to be seen as an expedient way to protect its growing number of (overseas) interests and accelerate its ascent.[17] For example, in the first half of the twentieth century, the rising powers Germany, Italy, and Japan all attacked the dominant nation or its allies before they reached parity with them.[18]

The temptation to wage war can be even stronger for the declining state, which sees its military advantages progressively wane. A preventive attack could be viewed as the last opportunity to turn the tables.[19] As Robert Gilpin writes, "when the choice ahead has appeared to be to decline or to fight, statesmen have most generally fought."[20] Robert Jervis argues that the spiral into overt conflict usually develops over a longer period of time amidst intensifying military competition.[21] This was the case with contested colonial holdings in the period prior to World War I, which is the most apt parallel with the contemporary Sino-American rivalry.

13 Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," *International Organization* 36, no. 2 (1982): 185–205; see also Robert Owen Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence*, 3rd ed. (New York: Longman, 2001).

14 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 24, 34, 187.

15 Charles F. Doran, "Confronting the Principles of the Power Cycle: Changing Systems Structure, Expectations and War," in *Handbook of War Studies II*, by Manus I. Midlarsky, 1st ed. (The University Press of Michigan, 2000), 348, http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/pdf/doran-power-cycle.pdf.

16 T. V. Paul, "Time Pressure and War Initiation: Some Linkages," *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue Canadienne de Science Politique* 28, no. 2 (1995): 261–67.

17 Douglas Lemke, *Regions of War and Peace*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Michael David Wallace, *War and Rank Among Nations*, 1st ed. (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1973).

18 A. F. K Organski, *World Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), 371.

19 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict 1500-2000*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1989); Jack S. Levy, "Declining Power and the Preventive Motivation for War," *World Politics* 40, no. 1 (1987): 82–107, https://doi.org/10.2307/2010195; Alan J. Taylor, *The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1918*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954).

20 Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 191.

21 Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 62-76.

1.2 Motives for extra-regional great power influence

Whether states strive for power as an end in itself, as a means to achieve security, or to impose ideas and ideologies, the development of military power is instrumental.[22] Rising powers find that their accumulating economic interests need to be protected by military means. With their own region secured, their attention shifts further afield.[23]

Great powers, as Levy puts it, "think of their interests as continental or global rather than local or regional."[24] Whereas small or middle powers think of security in terms of territorial defense or extended defense, great powers, by virtue of the outsize role they play in the system, need to be concerned with the global balance of power. There are four principal motivations for great powers' development of military capabilities and engagement in extra-regional military activities: security, access to resources, domestic commercial interests, and the quest for prestige and status at home (see Table 4).

Rising powers find that their accumulating economic interests need to be protected by military means.

1.2.1 Security

For scholars in the realist school, the projection of military power beyond a state's borders and neighborhood is the ultimate way to guarantee survival of the state.[25] Great powers, however, tend to strive for regional or even extra-regional hegemony to balance against a rival hegemon and prevent it from becoming a threat.[26] Historical examples abound: in preventing Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany from achieving regional hegemony, the US projected military power outside its own region to protect its national security.

There are theoretical and empirical indications from the nuclear era that motivations to project power extra-regionally persist. Despite campaign promises to the contrary, the Trump administration continued to bear the cost of the US global forward-deployed presence, with a priority on maintaining strategic primacy in the Western Pacific.[27] Even the Biden administration, which has repudiated much of the foreign policy legacy of its predecessor, seeks "a favorable distribution of power to deter and prevent adversaries from directly threatening the United States and our allies, inhibiting access to the global commons, or dominating key regions."[28]

1.2.2 Access to resources

Beyond an immediate quest for physical security, rising great powers find themselves increasingly dependent on the importation of resources. Seeking to protect the uninterrupted

22 Azar Gat, *The Causes of War and the Spread of Peace* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

23 Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict 1500-2000*.

24 Levy, *War in the Modern Great Power System*, 16.

25 According to both classic and modern realist thinking. See, principally, Waltz (1959, p. 160).

26 Christopher Layne, "The 'Poster Child for Offensive Realism': America as a Global Hegemon," *Security Studies* 12, no. 2 (2002): 120–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/0963-640291906816; John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 1st ed. (New York: Norton, 2001), 34.

27 "U.S. Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific," USNI News, January 15, 2021, https://news.usni.org/2021/01/15/u-s-strategic-framework-for-the-indo-pacific.

28 The White House, "Interim National Security Strategic Guidance" (Washington D.C., March 3, 2021), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/03/interim-national-security-strategic-guidance/.

flow of these resources, and maintaining access to export markets, is a natural goal for rising powers. The means employed to do this – besides diplomatic goodwill – include formal alliances (to protect clients from third powers); military-to-military cooperation and military aid (such as security agreements, basing, and arms transfers); or maintaining the presence of military forces.[29]

There are many historical examples of great powers pursuing expansionist policies in order to guarantee access to resources. When the industrial revolution spurred an ever-increasing demand for rubber, steel, oil, and food products, the incentives for the great powers of Europe to establish direct control over large swaths of territory grew correspondingly. Colonial powers, including Great Britain and the Netherlands, tightened their administrative control over occupied regions after a first period of hybrid private-state endeavors. In its bid for great power status, Imperial Japan rushed to ensure access to oil, rubber, and steel to fuel its burgeoning industrial expansion. It fought China in 1894-95 and Russia in 1904-05, expanded its presence in East Asia and eventually invaded Korea, China, French Indochina, and the Dutch East Indies. This culminated in the Pacific War with the US during World War II. In the wake of World War II, the United States discarded its previous unilateralist and relatively limited geostrategic ambitions in favor of a global military presence. This strategy was designed to protect its allies, secure access to resources in the Middle East, and guarantee the free flow of trade and capital across international borders.

Corporations eager to gain access to natural resources, low-cost labor, or (a monopoly on) export and investment markets can put pressure on their governments to establish direct or indirect control.

1.2.3 Domestic pressure groups

Corporations eager to gain access to natural resources, low-cost labor, or (a monopoly on) export and investment markets can put pressure on their governments to establish direct or indirect control. While the logic of imperial expansion was first emphasized by Marxist scholars, other theorists have recognized the importance of domestic pressure groups.[30]

During the first modern phase of globalization in the late 19th century, for instance, London City's financial elites played a significant role in promoting British imperial expansionism in Africa and Asia.[31] Scholars have highlighted the influence of domestic pressure groups, including arms manufacturers, in modern US foreign policy.[32]

Domestic influence is not limited to business elites. In Japan during the 1930s, the highly bureaucratized and fragmented state apparatus struggled to control the leadership of its armed forces, exemplified by the latter's decision to occupy Manchuria in 1931 without official approval.[33] Absent a firmly centralized authority, the military expanded "in all directions, exhausting Japan's limited resources and creating enemies everywhere."[34]

29 Rosemary A. Kelanic, "The Petroleum Paradox: Oil, Coercive Vulnerability, and Great Power Behavior," *Security Studies* 25, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 181–213, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2016.1171966.

30 Jan Hogendorn and Anthony Brewer, "Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (1982): 554, https://doi.org/10.2307/218184; Jack L. Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition*, 2nd ed., Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994).

31 P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: 1688-2015*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015); E.H.H. Green, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Economic Policy, 1880-1914: The Debate Over Bimetallism and Protectionism," in *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire* (Routledge, 1999), 44–67.

32 Shana Marshall, "The Defense Industry's Role in Militarizing US Foreign Policy," MERIP, June 15, 2020, https://merip.org/2020/06/the-defense-industrys-role-in-militarizing-us-foreign-policy/.

33 See e.g., Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1991).

34 James Fulcher, "The Bureaucratization of the State and the Rise of Japan," *The British Journal of Sociology* 39, no. 2 (1988): 239–40, https://doi.org/10.2307/590782.

1.2.4 Status and prestige

Finally, according to role theory, it is not just material power and interests that shape state behavior; another important factor is a state's conception of its role in the international arena.[35] For rising powers, accruing status and prestige through expansionist policies can bolster domestic support. Support can be increased by developing capabilities that policymakers can portray as befitting the status of a great power.[36] Naval nationalism is a good example of this phenomenon.[37] This includes France under Louis-Napoléon in the 1850s and 1860s, the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II in the early 1900s.[38] These policies can be viewed, at least in part, as having served the domestic political interests of policymakers.

For rising powers, accruing status and prestige through expansionist policies can bolster domestic support.

The pursuit of prestige has also prompted aspiring great powers to expand territorially. French elites' quest for prestige fueled the conquest of Algiers in 1830. This impulse was intensified following France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, in 1871.[39] France's imperial policy in West-Africa focused on the expansion of territory, not expanding access to resources or profiting commercially.[40] Similarly, Germany's colonization of Africa was spurred by a desire to secure its own "place in the sun," viewing such holdings as the key to obtaining great power status.[41]

Motivations	Description	(Historical) Example
Security	As great powers find their national security threatened, they invest in extra-regional military capabilities to prevent peer competitors from projecting extra-regional power	The US vis-à-vis Imperial Japan & Nazi Germany (1940s) and the Soviet Union (1945-1991)
Resources	(Extra-regional) power projection capabilities ensure that great powers can meet an ever-growing demand for resources (spurred by economic, demographic, and technological developments)	Imperial Japan (the late 19th and first half of 20th century); Germany (1930s and 1940s); the US in the Middle East (since the post Second World War era)
Domestic pressure groups	Pressured by domestic groups concerned with commercial or financial profits, states develop and deploy military power to exert control over foreign markets, labor, or resources	Britain's industrialists pushed for more aggressive expansion in Africa and Asia (late 1800s)
Status & Prestige	A drive for prestige has prompted aspiring great powers to develop military capabilities, both as a symbol of power and as a tool to expand territorially	France's "prestige fleet" (second half of the 19th century); Germany's quest for colonies in Africa (late 1800s)

Table 4: Sources of military expansion.

35 Marijke Breuning, "Role Theory in Politics and International Relations," *The Oxford Handbook of Behavioral Political Science*, 2019, 23; K. J. Holsti, 'National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy', *International Studies Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1 September 1970): 233–309; Naomi Bailin Wish, 'Foreign Policy Makers and Their National Role Conceptions', *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 4 (1 December 1980): 532–54.

36 Lilach Gilady, *The Price of Prestige: Conspicuous Waste in International Relations*, 1st ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018), https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226433349.001.0001.

37 Robert S Ross, "Nationalism, Geopolitics, and Naval Expansionism from the Nineteenth Century to the Rise of China," *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 4 (2018): 10–44.

38 Ross, 12.

39 José de Sousa and Julie Lochard, "Trade and Colonial Status," *Journal of African Economies* 21, no. 3 (2012): 409–39, https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejs001.

40 Daniel Oto-Peralías and Diego Romero-Ávila, *Colonial Theories of Institutional Development: Towards a Model of Styles of Imperialism*, Contributions to Economics (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54127-3.

41 Hugues Canuel, "From a Prestige Fleet to Jeune École: French Naval Policy and Strategy under the Second Empire and the Early Third Republic (1852–1914)," *Naval War College Review* 71, no. 1 (2018): 93–118.

1.3 Military manifestations of extra-regional great power influence

There are six aspects of the military dimension of extra-regional influence: the development of extra-regional power projection capabilities, the maintenance of sound infrastructure, the establishment of overseas and overland bases, the conclusion of formal and informal alliance relationships with other states within multilateral or bilateral frameworks, the transfer of arms and other military equipment, and the extension of military aid through various forms of military-to-military cooperation (see Table 5). These criteria have been developed based on an extensive review of the academic and policy literature related to the study of empires, military power, alliances, and interstate influence.

1.3.1 Extra-regional power projection capabilities

Expeditionary military power can be defined as the "proven ability to deploy limited capabilities at strategic range."

Extra-regional military power falls into two categories. Expeditionary military power can be defined as the "proven ability to deploy limited capabilities at strategic range." Today, this applies to France, the UK, China, and Russia.[42]

In contrast, global military power refers to the ability to deploy capabilities at strategic range for extended periods of time. Historically, Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands led the way in developing extra-regional naval capabilities, but they were overtaken after 1715 by the major expeditionary forces developed by Great Britain and, to a lesser extent, France.[43]

Today, only the US is considered a global military power, with its "ability to plan, deploy, sustain and fight at distance – and at scale – from the homeland across the land, sea, air and space domains and in the electromagnetic spectrum."[44] US command of the maritime commons based upon its military preponderance is a cornerstone of its extra-regional influence.[45] The US long demanded its military be able to fight a protracted war in two theaters at the same time. However, in response to the shifting geopolitical landscape – especially China's military rise and the resurgence of Russia's military – the United States began to rethink this principle in 2010.[46]

1.3.2 Infrastructure

Sound infrastructure is crucial for the effective deployment of extra-regional military capabilities. For overland power projection, railways, pipelines, inland waterways, and ground supply routes, including bridges, constitute a military's Lines of Communication (LOC). LOCs can be defined as "all the land, water, and air routes that connect an operating military force with one or more bases of operations, and along which supplies and reinforcements move".[47]

42 Bastian Giegerich, Nick Childs, and James Hackett, "Military Capability and International Status," IISS, July 4, 2018, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2018/07/military-capability-and-international-status.

43 William Hardy McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power: Technology, Armed Force, and Society Since A.D. 1000*, 1st ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 149.

44 Childs, "Military Capability and International Status."

45 Barry R. Posen, "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony," *International Security* 28, no. 1 (2003): 5–46, https://doi.org/10.1162/016228803322427965.

46 Robert Farley, "Can the U.S. Military Still Fight a Two Front War and Win?," The National Interest, January 22, 2021, https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/can-us-military-still-fight-two-front-war-and-win-176799.

47 NATO, "AJP-3, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations," February 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/797323/doctrine_nato_conduct_of_ops_ajp_3.pdf.

Without secure LOCs, timely repositioning, resupply, and reinforcement of military forces becomes challenging.

Maintaining sound infrastructure also helps great powers safeguard their economic interests. The British Empire's ambitious railroad plan in India, for instance, promoted economic interests and the transmission of culture.[48] In the 19th century, Russia and the United States constructed railroads to exert control over their newly acquired lands.[49] Recent efforts to increase military mobility by NATO and the EU have highlighted the importance of LOCs.[50] Whereas sea lines of communication (SLOCs) connect overseas military assets, space and cyberinfrastructure, including satellites and ground-based space infrastructure, have increasingly become central in the conduct of extra-regional operations.[51]

1.3.3 Overseas and overland bases

In an age when distances are shortened by longer-range weapons and communication technologies, geography – and hence overseas and overland bases – still matters.[52] Forward-based military personnel and equipment allow for swifter responses to crises; secure trade, investment, and access to resources; and a reaffirmation of alliance commitments.[53] A great power's security commitment to a distant ally is not always evident, both to the state that needs to be deterred and the ally that may serve an important role in return for a security guarantee. Stationing troops on an ally's territory serves as a "tripwire," making it more likely that the great power will come to the aid of its ally. Indeed, the stationing of US troops in Europe during the Cold War made it much more credible, both to the USSR and Western European allies, that the US would stick to its collective defense promise.[54] Bases also serve as a way to increase control over allies' foreign and security policies. For example, if military bases are used to launch attacks, as was the case with Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War of 1990-1991, the host country is automatically involved in the conflict.

Bases have long served great power interests. From the late sixteenth century onwards, bases became crucial in the Spanish, Portuguese, British, French, and Dutch overseas empire-building endeavors. Garrisons not only served British direct rule over India, but also enabled expeditions beyond India's borders. The Falkland Islands were vital for naval trade with South America; Hong Kong served as a base for the Royal Navy's China Station; and Egypt, Aden, Cape Town, Ceylon, and Singapore all formed critical nodes in Britain's naval routes.[55]

48 Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, 1st ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 182.

49 David B. Abernethy, *The Dynamics of Global Dominance: European Overseas Empires, 1415-1980*, 1st ed. (Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000).

50 Curtis M. Scaparrotti and Colleen B. Bell, "Moving Out: A Comprehensive Assessment of European Military Mobility" (Atlantic Council, April 22, 2020), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/moving-out-a-comprehensive-assessment-of-european-military-mobility/; European Commission, "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: On the Action Plan on Military Mobility" (European Commission, March 28, 2018), https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/2018-military_mobility_action_plan.pdf.

51 Linda Dawson, *War in Space: The Science and Technology Behind Our Next Theater of Conflict*, 1st ed. (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2019).

52 Patrick Porter, *The Global Village Myth: Distance, War, and the Limits of Power* (Georgetown University Press, 2015); Paul van Hooft, "All-In or All-Out: Why Insularity Pushes and Pulls American Grand Strategy to Extremes," *Security Studies* 29, no. 4 (August 7, 2020): 701–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2020.1811461.

53 Stacie L. Pettyjohn, *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783/2011*, 1st ed. (Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2012).

54 Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963*, vol. 79 (Princeton University Press, 1999), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10qqzmh.

55 Avner Offer, "The British Empire, 1870-1914: A Waste of Money?," *The Economic History Review* 46, no. 2 (1993): 215–38, https://doi.org/10.2307/2598015.

Access to bases became arguably even more crucial as steam-powered vessels replaced sailing ships. They provided fuel and supplies to the enlarged navy supporting the merchant fleet and guaranteed open lines of communication between the United States and new markets.

1.3.4 **Alliances**

Alliances are typically defined as formal, written agreements between recognized states that delineate each party's obligations for a specified period of time.[56] Great powers have sought alliances to enhance security by counterbalancing dangerous shifts in power capabilities, competing against other states, boosting their status and prestige, or securing the position of domestic elites.[57] They serve to contain potentially revisionist states outside the alliance, as well as within.[58] Military alliances are either formed in response to a particular threat, or based on a shared sense of history or common values.[59] While focused on security, military alliances are often linked to economic agreements and hence play a role in bolstering the economic influence of great powers.[60]

While focused on security, military alliances are often linked to economic agreements and hence play a role in bolstering the economic influence of great powers.

In the earliest days of empire-building, European powers sought alliances with local elites in the periphery to safeguard trade relations and compete against other great powers. In the late sixteenth century, for instance, the Dutch shipped guns to the coastal areas of the Gold Coast in Africa and sought alliances in an attempt to break the Portuguese monopoly. Access to trade or resources constitutes a powerful rationale for great powers to engage in military alliances, as demonstrated by the US-Saudi Alliance. This alliance was first formed in 1945 when Saudi Arabia guaranteed a steady supply of oil to world markets in exchange for long-term security guarantees.

1.3.5 **Arms transfers**

Less costly than overseas bases, the transfer of arms is an alternative means to enhance the military capabilities of other states, tilting local or regional balances of power in favor of the recipient state while avoiding the risk of entrapment that come with an overseas presence or formal alliances.[61] At the same time, arms transfers can also enhance interoperability in joint military operations. Arms transfers also create dependencies between the exporting and importing state.[62] This gives great powers additional influence over a recipient state's foreign

56 J. David Singer and Melvin Small, "Formal Alliances, 1815—1939: A Quantitative Description," *Journal of Peace Research* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 1966): 1–31, https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336600300101.

57 Jack S. Levy, "Alliance Formation and War Behavior: An Analysis of the Great Powers, 1495-1975," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 25, no. 4 (1981): 581–613; Edward V. Gulick, *Europe's Classical Balance of Power: A Case History of Theory and Practice of One of the Great Concepts of European Statecraft*, 1st ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955); Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliance*, 1st ed. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1987), https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt32b5fc.

58 Philip Pomper, "The History and Theory of Empires," *History and Theory* 44, no. 4 (2005): 1–27, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2005.00340.x; George Liska, *Nations in Alliance: The Limits of Interdependence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopinks Press, 1968).

59 Jeremy Ghez, "Alliances in the 21st Century: Implications for the US-European Partnership," Occasional Papers (RAND Corporation, 2011), https://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP340.html.

60 Jonathan D Moyer et al., "Appendix to: Interdependence and Power in a Globalized World" (Denver: Josef Korbel School of International Studies, 2017).

61 Keren Yarhi-Milo, Alexander Lanoszka, and Zack Cooper, "To Arm or to Ally? The Patron's Dilemma and the Strategic Logic of Arms Transfers and Alliances," *International Security* 41, no. 2 (2016): 90–139, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00250; Tongfi Kim, "Why Alliances Entangle but Seldom Entrap States," *Security Studies* 20, no. 3 (2011): 350–77, https://doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2011.599201.

62 Moyer et al., "Appendix to: Interdependence and Power in a Globalized World"; T. V. Paul, "Influence Through Arms Transfers: Lessons from the U.S.-Pakistani Relationship," *Asian Survey* 32, no. 12 (1992): 1078–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/2645039.

policy, though some have argued that this dependency works in both directions.[63] In addition to these strategic calculations, motivations for great powers to engage in arms transfers include commercial interests, domestic political pressures, or a combination of the various motives.[64] Finally, arms transfers can be status-related, as they signal a great power's level of technological sophistication and military strength.[65]

Arms transfers have long served the interests of rising great powers. For instance, during the Eighty Years War (1568-1648) the arms trade boosted the economic rise of the Netherlands; the arms trade accounted for an estimated five percent of Dutch GDP during the seventeenth century.[66] However, arms transfers only reached their heyday during the period of expansion in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, spurred by great power competition and the industrial revolution.[67] Another historical example of a rising great power spreading its influence via arms transfers is the Soviet Union's sales to the Middle East during the Cold War.[68]

1.3.6 Operational experience; military cooperation and assistance

Operational experience; military cooperation and assistance arrangements vary considerably in nature and include joint military exercises, education and training, the transfer of knowledge and intelligence sharing, senior-level meetings, defense industry cooperation, arms control efforts, and the provision of military equipment and financial aid to buy arms.[69] Military cooperation serves to establish and maintain spheres of influence, can be aimed at deterring or counterbalancing adversaries, strengthens alliances, and forges dependencies. After the Cold War, military cooperation has also been used to engage with potential adversaries, to promote liberal democracy and good governance – for instance, through security sector reform (SSR) – and to contribute to peacekeeping operations.[70]

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63 David Kinsella, "Arms Transfer Dependence and Foreign Policy Conflict," *Journal of Peace Research* 35, no. 1 (January 1998): 7–23, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343398035001002; Christian Catrina, *Arms Transfers and Dependence* (UNIDIR, 1988); Patricia L. Sullivan, Brock F. Tessman, and Xiaojun Li, "US Military Aid and Recipient State Cooperation: US Military Aid and Recipient State Cooperation," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, no. 3 (2011): 275–94, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2011.00138.x.

64 Lawrence Freedman, "British Foreign Policy to 1985. IV: Britain and the Arms Trade," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 54, no. 3 (1978): 377–92, https://doi.org/10.2307/2616147; Robert H. Trice, *Interest Groups and the Foreign Policy Process: U.S. Policy in the Middle East* (Sage Publications, 1976); Edward A. Kolodziej, "France and the Arms Trade," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 56, no. 1 (1980): 54–72, https://doi.org/10.2307/2615719.

65 Jennifer L. Erickson, *Dangerous Trade: Arms Exports, Human Rights, and International Reputation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.7312/eric17096.

66 Hans Vogel, "Arms Production and Exports in the Dutch Republic, 1600-1650," in *Exercise of Arms: Warfare in the Netherlands, 1568-1648*, ed. Marco van der Hoeven (BRILL, 1997).

67 Keith Krause, "The Political Economy of the International Arms Transfer System: The Diffusion of Military Technique Via Arms Transfers," *International Journal* 45, no. 3 (1990): 687–722, https://doi.org/10.2307/40202695.

68 Alexander J. Bennett, "Arms Transfer as an Instrument of Soviet Policy in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal* 39, no. 4 (1985): 747.

69 Lech Drab, "Defence Diplomacy – an Important Tool for the Implementation of Foreign Policy and Security of the State," *Security and Defence Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (2018): 57–71, https://doi.org/doi:10.5604/01.3001.0012.5152.; Kenneth Allen, Phillip C Saunders, and John Chen, "Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003–2016: Trends and Implications," China Strategic Perspectives (Institute for National Strategic Studies, November 2014), https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/stratperspective/china/ChinaPerspectives-11.pdf.

70 Andrew Cottey and Anthony Forster, *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*, 1st ed., Adelphi Paper 365 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Despite controversy concerning its effects, military cooperation and assistance offered by great powers have been eagerly sought by other states.[71] In 2019 alone, the US offered foreign military training in 137 countries and provided security assistance to 147.[72] Although these relationships are usually between a powerful and a less powerful country, Russian-Chinese military cooperation has made headlines in the past half-decade.[73] European imperial powers also used military cooperation, both in relations among each other and vis-à-vis their colonies. Defense attachés were dispatched, local officers invited to attend military academies, foreign troops enlisted, and military equipment shared. In China, the British Army took command of the Ever Victorious Army, trained Chinese troops in Tianjin, Shanghai, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Guangzhou in the 1860s, and deployed technicians to arsenals and shipyards in modernization programs. While important to protect British commercial interests, military assistance also gave the British government leverage over Chinese affairs.[74]

Manifestations	Description	Historical Examples
Extra-regional power projection capabilities	Capabilities that allow for power projection beyond territorial and regional defense, e.g., blue water navy, long range air or sea transport	US command of the maritime commons (since 1945 on a global scale); Britain and France (present); Netherlands (until 1949)
Infrastructure	LOCs including railways, pipelines, inland waterways, and ground supply routes, as well as SLOCs and space and cyberspace infrastructure	Japan's construction of the Burma Railway (1941-1944)
Overseas and overland bases	Bases, troops, and military equipment on the territory outside the home country	The British Royal Navy's command of maritime bases along key SLOCs and chokepoints including Scapa Flow, Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Suez, Simon's Town (Cape of Good Hope), Aden, Diego Garcia, Singapore (during the heyday of the British Empire)
Alliances, (formal & informal)	Formalized security relationships with allies, in the form of a defense-pact, a non-aggression pact, or an entente	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (1949-present); Franco-Russian Alliance prior to and during World War I
Arms transfers	Weapon exports to other states (allies, friendly states, and sometimes also rivals and enemies)	The Soviet Union's military equipment trade (mid-1950s to late 1980s)
Military cooperation and assistance	Joint military exercises; education and training; the transfer of knowledge and intelligence sharing; senior-level meetings; defense industry cooperation; arms control efforts; assistance in buying weapons	US Army's School of the Americas (SOA) training Latin American militaries (1940-1980s)

Table 5: Manifestations of military power projection.

71 Johnathan Helton, "Military Aid: Financing Foreign Conflict," The Strategy Bridge, August 19, 2019, https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2019/8/19/military-aid-financing-foreign-conflict.

72 Center for International Policy, "Security Assistance Monitor: Security Assistance Database," Center for International Policy, 2019, https://securityassistance.org/security-sector-assistance/; Center for International Policy, "Security Assistance Monitor: Foreign Military Training," Center for International Policy, 2019, https://securityassistance.org/foreign-military-training/.

73 See for instance Michael Kofman, 'The Emperors League: Understanding Sino-Russian Defense Cooperation', War on the Rocks, 6 August 2020, http://warontherocks.com/2020/08/the-emperors-league-understanding-sino-russian-defense-cooperation/.

74 Britten Dean, "British Informal Empire: The Case of China," *The Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 14, no. 1 (March 1976): 64–81, https://doi.org/10.1080/14662047608447250.

1.4 Lessons from the past, insights for the future

Great powers do not rise overnight, but through multifaceted and multi-decade trajectories that fuel competition between states. This process can, in turn, generate conflict. Two sets of lessons can be drawn from the historical review in this chapter.

Great powers do not rise overnight, but through multifaceted and multi-decade trajectories that fuel competition between states.

First, rising great powers are incentivized by multiple, sometimes overlapping motivations to develop military capabilities to project power both within and outside of their region. The most important among these drivers are security, resources, domestic pressure groups, and status and prestige. Extra-regional power projection capabilities and activities help protect national security to deter peer competitors from outside interference. It also ensures supply of an ever-growing demand for the resources required for uninterrupted growth. Domestic interest groups, encouraged by a rising power's growth, may pressure the state to develop and deploy military power to ensure access to and exert control over foreign markets, labor, and resources. Finally, the accumulation of power may spur the desire for status and offer a way to solve the perceived disjunction between accumulated power and international recognition.

Second, the rise of great powers manifests itself along multiple dimensions outside of their own region. These include extra-regional power projection capabilities, infrastructure, overseas and overland bases, alliance relationships, arms transfers, and various forms of military-to-military cooperation. Importantly, this investment in extra-regional power projection fuels competition and conflict, both among great powers and among smaller powers, and occurs both at high and low intensity. The nineteenth century competition of European empires for military bases; great powers' arms sales to regional and smaller powers; and the arms races that follow investments in extra-regional military capabilities are illustrative of this phenomenon.

The taxonomy developed in this chapter offers a first step toward assessing, in a dispassionate manner, the political and strategic implications of China's rise. The taxonomy of motivations can serve as a framework for examining the various perspectives in domestic Chinese foreign and security policy discourses, as the following chapter will do.