

international veto power that the PRC does within the United Nations, the domestic efficiency of the United States rivals that of a snail climbing a greased incline. If the strong-arm political tactics and ploys continue, members of the “coalition of the willing” will turn their backs on the United States and become members of a new coalition founded by the PRC.

Russia:

In spite of the overnight collapse of the Russian political system, and widespread breakdown in basic human services, in 1992, much has been retained from the former superpower in the area of politics. Many of the power players in current Russian politics are former high-ranking officials in the communist regime. Due to this fact, study of the current political regime is akin to studying the past Communist regime. This section will focus on the Russian political regime of which the PRC has drawn many cues from—in regards to organization and practices—over the years.

Much can be derived about Russian politics if one pays careful attention to their negotiating style. Much like the United States, nepotism, corruption, and regional factionalism all seem to be inherent factors of the Russian Federation’s regime. Discounting the entities comprising the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which have developed their own nationalized sets of values and diplomatic aims since the disbandment of the Soviet Union, internal and external politics with the Russian Federation are handled in similar fashions. Since much of the current Russian leadership, such as President Vladimir Putin, was alive and active during the Communist-led Soviet Union, one can presume that while the government type has

allegedly changed, much of the negotiating and political styles have been retained through the almost overnight political regime change in 1992. However, one should not presume that the retention of Soviet-style practices, or even the return to such practices, is all-inclusive.

To understand Russian politics, one must first be acquainted with their leadership style and legislative organization structure that helped establish the initial mold from which current Chinese politics formed itself. According to Hauss' textbook, "modern" Russian politics is an intriguing hybrid of American and European methods and practices. From American-style parties ranging from the extreme-right aim of using Japan as target practice for nuclear weapons (277) to support for social welfare programs (276), aspects of Russian political life exude a distinctly American flair at times. However, the Russian electorate is a derivative of European electoral styles and practices.

The Russian Congress, the Duma, has 450 seats with representatives elected from a mix of proportional representation (274), the European derivative, and "first past the post" single member districts (274). The presidential elections are conducted similar to American elections; however, the Russian "primary" elections have the potential to produce the elected president, if a candidate wins a majority of the vote, while American counterparts have another round of voting (274). According to Hauss, as of 2000, the Russian people have only been able to participate in three Duma elections and two presidential elections (274). After 2000, Duma elections have been held once (in 2003)¹⁰, and President Putin was retained in office in 2004¹¹. Since the

¹⁰ <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/3660985/>

¹¹ <http://www.rferl.org/specials/russianelection/timeline.asp>

Russian people have only been able to participate in seven major elections since the 1992 Soviet breakup, four Duma elections and three presidential elections, one may theorize that constituent party loyalty is infantile at best. Since party loyalty has yet to firmly entrench itself within the Russian populace, one can assume that the dual voting method, with an option for a first-round knockout for an exceptional candidate, allows a fail-safe for the Russian constituency to sever the political ambitions of candidates and narrow the voting field down to the ones the voting populace so chooses.

Regardless whether an exceptional candidate captures 50%+1 of the votes in the first round, or a second round runoff is required, the Russian presidency may have been largely reduced to a figurehead position. Hauss notes “Power is far more dispersed now than it ever was during the Soviet era...it is hard to imagine the Kremlin regaining the virtually total control it had before Gorbachev came to power” (283). The power distribution model Hauss creates is distinctly grassroots with lateral communication between the presidency and the Duma (284). While Putin may be trying to recentralize authority to the Kremlin (283), the ebb and flow of democracy has swept power to the far corners of the Russian Federation and, as such, Putin’s attempts to reformulate control into a dictatorship may be largely futile. In arguing that Russia seems to be largely stationary in affecting power distribution models, Hauss notes that “...Russia today suggest[s] a country that is in more danger of stagnation than of dictatorship” (283).

The political negotiating style, both internal and external, is inherently zero-sum. In dealing with foreign relations, it is imperative to realize that most holdovers and buffer zones between the United States and Russia no longer exist. Now, if only

on paper, the two nations are effectively separate but equal entities playing zero-sum games in an attempt to secure resources and material for their populaces. David Foglesong and Gordon M. Hahn note in their article, “Ten Myths about Russia,” “A long-range view of American-Russian relations thus suggests that collisions are more likely to stem from the expansion of U.S. commercial interests and security commitments than from rampant Russian imperialism” (137). To rely solely upon this viewpoint, one could infer that the Russians can do no wrong and the Americans are the ever-encroaching evil. However, like any issue, two sides exist.

Russian President Putin is balancing on a tightrope while teetering above an economic and political abyss with a safety net akin to the size of an oil barrel. How can Putin balance all the factions of his government, retain economic and diplomatic autonomy, maintain democratic tendencies, consolidate power, and do it all while avoiding a military coup or being ousted by the voters? Dr. Janina Sleivyte states in her article “Putin's Regime and Consolidation of the State,” that there are three groups Putin has been trying to appease in his quest to maintain his presidency and some semblance of improvement of the status quo (62). The groups, Dr. Sleivyte explains, are comprised of the rich entrepreneurs—an oligarchy of individuals—political connections from Putin’s past overseeing important economic positions, and Putin’s former colleagues from his stint with the Russian secret police who wish to return to a time when they had near-impunity from the law (62). Unfortunately, as the political power games intensify, and the factions spar throughout Russian political arenas, the populace suffers the direct repercussions of a triumvirate power struggle. In this instance, to refute Foglesong and Hahn, Russian imperialism has taken an internal

approach. Instead of embarking on the 1930's route of Japanese imperialism, by snatching up territory wherever available, the Russians are acquiring factionalized political territory at breakneck speeds. This will result in an international political collision if Putin's warring political factions cannot come under the guidance of a unifying figure or agree to a political "cease-fire."

Sleivyte states, "...during Putin's rule, the Duma has never had an actual leverage on decision-making of the Kremlin" (63). In effect, Putin has established a rubber-stamping commune that merely defers to battle cries of the Kremlin. By creating a puppet government within his own nation, Putin has been allowed to, unfortunately, pursue an almost unmitigated campaign of genocide against his populace. By having his ways rubber-stamped and by focusing Russian propaganda on making a "...direct link between the long-standing issue of Chechen resistance and the Al Qaeda terrorist network" (Sleivyte, 69), Putin has obtained a worldwide cover story for his homicidal tendencies. "Participation in the U.S.-led coalition against terror provided Russia with the 'impunity' and justification for carrying on its misguided and failed policy in the rebel province" (69). In this instance, Foglesong and Hahn were partially correct. By virtue of the Russian participation in the "war on terror," the atrocities and outright war crimes committed in Chechnya have been largely overlooked by the American electorate and western media. Russian imperialism, and sincere desire to defeat an internal entity wishing to cede, is a threat to the world at large. However, there have been no major political collisions over the Russian actions. Regardless of the similarities that can be drawn between the Russian actions in Chechnya and Saddam Hussein's actions in Iraq, no war crimes charges have been

filed against the Russian military and President Putin, nor have economic sanctions been issued. The world at large should be mortified at the “green light” Putin has been given to commit genocide against his populace, but the real fear should be derived from the question “what next?” What lies on the other side of the equal sign? Assuming that the Russian forces achieve victory in Chechnya, which occasionally seems that nothing short of total extermination will qualify for this designation, where will the Putin political machine turn the focus of the Russian military? Will Putin engage a course of systematic invasions of former Soviet states? What happens if Russia loses in Chechnya? The loss of political capital would be immense for Putin, since he made resolving the Chechnya issue a high priority for his administration (Sleivyte, 69), during the 2000 and 2004 campaigns. Chechnya will remain an important political issue for many years to come, barring an unforeseen peace agreement or substantial shift in the military tactics of either side involved in the conflict.

As evidenced through the rubber-stamping of genocide, the Russian political system is not conducive to change. Much like China, whenever directives are introduced from the Kremlin or those affiliated with the Putin administration, their passage is almost a certainty. However, unlike China, a distinct air of too many actors permeates the Russian political arena. By providing an environment ripe for a multi-party, and inherently multi-class, political system, the Russians are completely disregarding the factor that makes the Chinese system work. In theory, allowing multiple parties also allows for multiple ideas and therefore multiple factions to manipulate the political apparatus. Russia is experiencing party overload with few

signs of slowing down. However, the benefit of the Chinese system is that while regionalized tendencies exist between elected officials, they are all of the same party. With Russia having multiple political parties, multiple mentalities exist to halt the political process at any given point along the way.

The Russian political system, as an entity, is a weak confederation of oligarchs, nepotism, bribery, and non-state actors juxtaposing themselves with legitimate political actors. The juxtaposition of non-state actors into politics has the inherent effect of delegitimizing the political process and further damaging an already catatonic, if not partially narcoleptic, political force. As such, Russian politics is nowhere near capable of presenting a realistic unified political front to the world. It seems that, in the area of foreign relations, a country should aim to sway Putin on an issue, and the Duma will follow suit with his views.

While Russia may not be the international powerhouse that it once was, one cannot dismiss the foreign policy of the struggling nation. However, due in part to the still-recovering economy, the internal genocide of Chechnya, and the internal oil production, the former superpower has made little—if any—overtures in Africa comparable to those of the United States and China.

Theoretically, the former superpower of Russia should be a political tyrant. Russia possesses a hybrid model of both the Chinese and United States systems. Russia seems to maintain a form of representational democracy, from the American system, while deferring and rubber-stamping decisions from the Kremlin, a Russian alteration of the PRC system. Unfortunately, even with a virtual blank check on executive powers granted by the Duma, the dreams and ambitions of the Russian

president are stymied by a faltering economy and aging military. Russia has neither the work force nor resources to achieve anything similar to the PRC system it seems to be half-heartedly trying to emulate. The elements for success can be copied from nation to nation, but for any chance of success to exist, their implementation must be individualized and closely attuned to the needs of the particular nation. Currently, Russia seems to be but a dying star in the international community with little hopes of regaining anything but limited power in the world arena of politics.

Politics Conclusion:

Political entities of all spectrums exist on the planet. This statement should not be surprising to even the most steadfast believer in anarchy. From representative democracy to totalitarian to democratic communism, many types of representation exist for the implementation of government. What may be derived from the Chinese, American, and Russian models? The fact that China, with a uniparty system, seems to have the best bureaucratic style on paper with the United States and Russia, respectfully, clamoring for second and third best. However, what is not accounted here is the “constituent factor,” or the *actual* ability of constituents to voice their concerns. A common factor binding all three nations together is how well their governments respond to the perpetually flowing tide in the international relations arena. China’s government is signing treaties with allies. The government is either alienating allies or merely invading nations and, either way, hemorrhaging political capital. The Russian government seems far too interested in maintaining appearances in the U.S.-led “War on Terror” in order to continue a blatant genocide campaign against a minority of the

Russian populace. In light of recent unilateralism expressed by the United States and Russia, one can safely assume that the arena of international relations is changing. The arena will rapidly erode the international and political “maneuvering abilities” of any nation not capable, or willing, to ride the flow. One may also assume that the politics of the 21st century will be orchestrated based upon how well nations coalesce, and blend their collective goals, not upon how well they can pursue individualistic goals at a unilaterally breakneck, and outright irresponsible, pace and demeanor.

The governments of all three nations have attempted to poise themselves as “movers” and “shakers” within the international arena. All three are boasting different traits. China boasts a large workforce, strong economy, and focused bureaucracy. The United States boasts democracy, strong economy, and stockpiled political capital. Russia boasts little outside of a younger, perhaps less alcoholic, president and a stabilizing economy. Speaking strictly of political power, the international community has much to gain dealing with the PRC and the United States than it does from dealing with Russia.

Perhaps Chang’s tipping point theory lies in the realm of politics? While, of the three areas addressed here, politics may be the most likely catalyst, one could examine the almost overnight transformation of the Soviet Union into the Russian Federation for clues regarding broad-spectrum regime change. According to Hauss, between 1989 and 1991, “...the state grew weaker and its society more polarized” (269). Hauss also notes that power was increasingly signed away to the entities now known as the Commonwealth of Independent states (269) and that attempts to overthrow the

government were poorly organized attempts from the top of the power chain (269, 270).

To realize Chang's tipping point theory, first the local CCP officials would have to siphon massive amounts of power away from Beijing and then, in a move not widely embraced in the Soviet Union, a proletariat-led revolt would have to occur. For such a revolt to succeed, the revolutionaries would almost certainly need to have rebellious elements within the military and vastly outnumber, or possess some form of tactical advantage, over the loyal elements of the military and population at large. Short of an unprecedented internal genocide or otherwise large-scale horror by the CCP, one could argue that a proletariat revolt is a statistical improbability at best.

The political reality of these three countries is highly akin to their economies. Both the United States and the PRC, while possessing individualized faults inherent to the chosen style of government, are superpower stars shining brightly within the international relations arena. The Russian government is, currently, a smoldering ember attempting to find the catalyst to revitalize itself.

Military Moves:

This section will focus on the military capabilities of each nation. As mentioned in the initial definition of a superpower, some form of military power is *vital* for establishing a layer of external security. The PRC is growing in the capacity to protect their interests. As such, the PRC is amassing a force both numerically and technologically comparable to the United States. Again, the United States and Russian

military capabilities are offered for comparison. The purpose of comparison to the PRC is to demonstrate that military superpowers can develop from a variety of sources.

First, one must address the factors comprising a military superpower. I argue that the critical areas to determining military superpower status are as follows: military rosters in excess of one million, possession of nuclear weapons, technological advances employed by the military, and the ability to withstand and engage in a prolonged full-scale, multi-faceted, military operation against at least two nations.

Akin to academics, the military is often interdisciplinary. The obvious linkage between academia, the military, and reality is that economics and politics, often the politics of economics, dictate military strategy. From a commander moving units around the battlefield based on current supplies to commander-in-chief's moving units around the world to fortify positions, encircle a "problem" country, or secure new resource deposits, troop deployments are made to ensure secured supply lines and safe transport of materials. Short of an outright military or political coup, the military merely functions as an extension of the political arena with military objectives originating far outside the battlefield. However, ignoring the apparent idea of the military marionette, the deadly forces trained and housed within a nation's borders must not be discounted.

China:

Regarding China's military strength, David Shambaugh argues, "...China's assertive territorial claims...have created an intense 'security dilemma' in East Asia" (52). Shambaugh also states, "The PLA (People's Liberation Army) high command

today largely comprise elder officers in their late sixties and seventies who possess battlefield, command, and lengthy service experience” and “...the current high command no longer comprises solidier politicians, who are active in the rough-and-tumble world of Chinese elite politics...”(54). Based on this evidence, one may assume that the PLA high command is routed in tradition and therefore practically immune from political pressure. Shambaugh agrees with this assumption by stating, “The PLA today is much more prepared to resist party encroachment into military affairs, including attempts to pull the PLA into domestic politics or domestic security” (55). Having veteran commanders spending their lives furthering the cause of the PLA enables a highly focused command structure dedicated to the mission and spirit of the cause; due to this viewpoint, the PLA soldiers and commanders may perceive outside “trivialities” such as politics as futile and useless. The high commanders have real world experience that politicians and newly commissioned, and enlisted, personnel lack. Why should the seasoned command structure of the PLA, an organization not in danger of comprehensive funding cuts from the CCP, delve into the political realm of hypothetical and clandestine knifings?

Shambaugh describes a highly compartmentalized command structure for the various levels of PLA leadership. There are varying degrees of drives and ambitions within the largest standing army in the world. From soldiers with little external experience sitting at the top of the power pyramid (55), to their eventual successors on the pyramid who have “...spent time abroad, speak foreign languages, and do not evince the same insular tendencies [as those soldiers directly above them]” (56). The CIA World Factbook lists the Chinese manpower available for service at an astounding

342,956,265 men. (§ 121), however when the males fit for service is factored into the equation, the number drops to 281,240,272 (§ 122). For comparison, the Factbook page for the United States lists the total population of the United States at 295,734,134 (§ 20). 2nd grade math reveals that the available rosters of the PRC armed forces, if accurate, and the population of the United States are only separated by a differential of 14,493,862. It should be noted that the China Factbook page also states that the number of males annually reaching the minimum age for mandatory military service, 18-22 (§ 123), is 13,186,433. Even if retirements and deaths are accounted for, one can reasonably assume that within the next 5-10 years, the number of personnel fit for duty in the PRC will outnumber the entire population of the United States! Additionally, in a report prepared by the Department of Defense for the United States Congress, the estimated troop strength including active and reserve members of the People's Armed Police is in excess of 3.2 million (27). The report also states "China also has some 10 million organized militia members throughout the country" (DOD, 27). Discounting fit for service calculations, a standing army of at least 3.2 million and a reserve of approximately ten million militia members is frightening. Statistically, the chance that China's armed forces will face at least one major military engagement as the PRC's national needs rise, is an almost astronomical certainty.

Much to the chagrin of advocates of anti-ballistic missile shield technology in the United States and abroad, the PRC possesses nuclear weapons. Historical Archives from the United States Department of Energy reveal that the first test of Chinese nuclear weapons occurred on October 16, 1964¹². As of 2002, the Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that China possessed 400 nuclear weapons (Table 1, line

¹² <http://www.mbe.doe.gov/me70/manhattan/proliferation.htm#china>

2002). The site does provide a disclaimer mentioning the difficulty in tracking the PRC nuclear stockpiles and that estimates may be up to 50 percent inaccurate. In assessing the Chinese nuclear stockpile numbers, the site maintains that China's stockpiles consistently sat at a level of 400 weapons from 1995-2002. In spite of the irregular estimation continuity, Robert Norris and Hans Kristensen corroborated the stockpiled weapons estimate in an article published on the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists website. Regardless of the stockpiled amount of nuclear weapons, the PRC does not currently appear to be particularly aggressive with their military forces. However, if seriously provoked, few reliable estimates or predictions can be made about the amount of time the PRC would wait before introducing their nuclear arsenal into a theater of operations.

However, frightening the nuclear option is to any individual with an iota of intelligence, the Department of Defense report to the United States Congress shows some hope. A note below a graphic depicting the range of China's medium range missiles and ICBMs states, "China currently is capable of targeting its nuclear forces throughout the region and most of the world, including the continental United States" and that China's stated nuclear policy remains as "no first use" (28). The doctrine of second strike only is comforting unless the opponent has yet to rule out a "first-strike" option for nuclear weapons. Discounting a first-use doctrine is a concept that, regrettably, the United States, the nation most likely to challenge the PRC in the near future, has yet to declare¹³.

The report lists that the Air Force possesses in excess of 700 older-generation aircraft but notes that the PRC is continually developing and purchasing newer

¹³ See United States Military Section

generation craft (DOD, 4). For naval forces, the Congressional report suggests that the PRC holds 209 ships (DOD, 4). While technology appears to be something the Chinese are lacking, the report thoroughly concludes that the Chinese military is strongly aiming for technological upgrades and improvements at whatever cost it may obtain them. “Beijing’s approach to technology acquisition is called the ‘Three-Ways Policy’” (DOD, 23). Whether combining forces at various levels or developing their technology domestically (DOD, 23), the Chinese are currently willing to sacrifice their military secrecy to gain a technological advantage, or merely even the battlefield, over their competitors and surrounding nations.

While the threat of nuclear war, tactical or otherwise, is frightening, the only threats with a realistic chance of infringing upon the PRC territorial assets, and survive the initial offensive blitz of the PRC army long enough to plant their nation’s flag, are India, Pakistan, and the United States. Russia might be considered a threat, but since Russian assets are increasingly being sold to the PRC¹⁴ for much-needed hard currency, one could doubt that the Russians would risk losing a large source of revenue only for territory and 1.3 billion additional individuals to indoctrinate under the Russian geopolitical umbrella. Currently, India and Pakistan are too busy pointing their nuclear weapons at each other to present a viable challenge to the PRC’s military armada or mount a prolonged incursion into the PRC. Neither nation, India nor Pakistan, is truly capable of fighting a Nazi-style, dual-front, war against two nuclear-tipped opponents. The other nations in the region with possible interests in Chinese territory are North Korea and Vietnam. Vietnam and North Korea are Communist entities and both have much more to gain from a stable China; additionally, neither

¹⁴ See Russian Military Section

nation has the means by which to withstand, realistically, a full-force Chinese military onslaught. By eliminating India, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, and Vietnam from the PRC invasion scenarios, the only remaining serious challenger to the PRC is the United States. At least some of the nuclear weapons possessed by the PRC are pointed directly at the United States or those nations designated as our protectorates. Some may believe that the only safety measure the United States currently has is to pray that a renegade PLA field commander with a short temper and a quick trigger finger decides against playing radiation target practice with Hawaii, Alaska, or Guam. However, a strength the world may rely on is the “no first use” doctrine stated in the Defense Department’s report. This stated doctrine, unlike that of the United States, essentially proves that the PRC is willing to show restraint with their nuclear weapons until otherwise provoked.

The Rand Corporation, a non-profit social policy research organization¹⁵, produced a 2005 manifesto, authored by Keith Crane, Roger Cliff, Evan Medeiros, James Mulvenon, and William Overholt, entitled “Modernizing China’s Military: Opportunities and Constraints.” In the manifesto, Rand estimated that China expended “between \$31 billion and \$38 billion in 2003,” on defense spending (243). If that number is divided among the 281,240,272 available troops—assuming that every individual is, in fact, in the armed services—the average pay only amounts to \$135.12 for every soldier! The Rand Corporation document also notes “Only the United States and Russia spend substantially more than China on their militaries” (228). Although the cost of living might be lower for Chinese than for Americans, one must assume that with the purchases of armaments, technology research and development, and the sheer

¹⁵ <http://www.rand.org/about/>

cost to maintain aging weaponry, the actual wages are lower. While this wage might be blisteringly low, one must remember that military service is also coupled with “perks” such as free housing, few bills, and free food. Therefore, the living wage is reasonable when additional benefits are factored into the equation.

However, the low wages, low technology level, and massive numbers are bolstered by the fact that China, in an intriguing show of force, recently collaborated with Russia in war games. Simon Tisdall’s article in *The Guardian* quotes Dr. Andrew Yang, “China considers it's time to increase strategic cooperation with Russia to balance the US role in the region” (¶ 6). The fact that the PRC is purchasing military hand-me-downs from the practically defunct Russian military¹⁶ is disturbing in and of itself, but coupled with the evidence of a closer Moscow-Beijing relationship to limit the United States influence and incursion into the Asian regions, the world may soon have a new multiparty and highly factionalized Cold War “conflict.” However, with two nations participating against the United States, the results may be markedly different from the previous Cold War.

While soldiers may not be paid exceptionally well, the sheer size of the PRC army must not be discounted. Coupled with the fact that the PRC holds nuclear weapons among their arsenal, the PRC presents a formidable challenge to the American and Russian militaries if ever provoked. Since Russia seems far too concerned with maintaining the supply of hard currency¹⁷ flowing from the lucrative Beijing-Moscow alliance, one could realistically hold serious doubt about the willingness of Moscow to jeopardize a major funding source. The quandary that the

¹⁶ See Russian Military Section

¹⁷ See Russian Military Section

United States must solve in the immediate future is whether they are willing to risk exponential amounts of capital, troops, and time to countering and containing the growing PRC conglomeration and sophistication of military forces.

The factors outlined by the author for military superpower status (numbers in the military rosters in excess of one million, possession of nuclear weapons, technological advances employed by the military, and the ability to withstand and engage in a prolonged full-scale, multi-pronged, military operation against multiple nations). The PRC exemplifies a large standing army by holding far in excess of one million with adequate reserves available if needed. The nation also holds nuclear weapons among its arsenal, and appears to be quite capable of engaging in a prolonged multi-front offensive. The technology aspect of the criterion for superpower status is an area in which the PRC is lacking. However, the PRC has shown an interest in developing or purchasing whatever components (DOD, 23) are needed to that the PRC is not horribly outclassed, technologically, by an aggressor state. As a nation, the PRC is a military superpower by its military rosters, ownership of nuclear weapons, willingness and ability to procure technology, and ability to withstand or engage in a multi-faceted military operation.

If Chang's tipping point theory is to be applied to the military, then one must believe that at some point the military will become so disgruntled with the government, while becoming simultaneously galvanized into a treasonous mindset, that the troops will simply point their weapons at the CCP officials. While this phenomenon is not entirely unheard of, a nation with 3.2 million military members (DOD, 27) would be hard pressed to muster enough support for a large-scale coup unless a massive

genocide campaign or some other act so abhorrent to human life was undertaken by the politicians of the CCP. Of course, the catalyst required to overthrow the government must originate within the government in order to provide a rallying cry for the revolutionary troops. By largely maintaining the status quo, the PRC is preventing any revolutionary spirits from reaching the flash point. This stability demonstrates that the military, in conjunction with the politicians, is a stable institution and therefore assists in maintaining the PRC as a superpower.

United States:

Since participating in World War II, the United States military has vaulted itself into the position of being counted among the most technologically advanced war machines in the world. In the past ten years, the armed forces of the United States have been actively engaged in a seemingly endless series of military skirmishes, only to have the tempo and frequency of conflicts, both internally and externally, increased within the past six years. Somalia, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Iraq are publicly known conflicts the United States has engaged in during the past ten years.

Over the past fifteen years, one cannot refute the technological improvements of the United States military. From the now-infamous CNN smart-bomb footage in Operation Desert Storm in early 1992 to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and “smart” bombs in the current Iraq invasion, the United States is continually reaping the benefits of an extensive research, design, and development program. Unfortunately, as our technology has grown in capacity, scope, and ability, our nuclear weapons technology has not developed an inverse relationship. In treaties signed with the

Soviet Union to slash nuclear stockpiles, most notably START I & II and SALT, the current regime in the United States has been slow to carry out the work of previous administrations. In a report prepared by Amy Woolf of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) for the United States Congress, measures to reduce nuclear proliferation and weapons have been sadly under-funded since the Bush regime took office. “The Bush Administration requested \$403 million for CTR (Cooperative Threat Reduction) programs in FY2002, a reduction of \$40 million from the amount authorized in FY2001...The Bush Administration sharply reduced the planned funding for MPC&A (Material Protection, Control and Accounting Programs) in FY2002...The Bush Administration cut funding for the NCI (Nuclear Cities Initiative) program sharply, requesting \$6.6 million for FY2002....” (Woolf, CRS-7, 10, 12). Evidentially, funding the disposal of nuclear weapons—the most critical element to actually enabling warheads to be destroyed—on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean is not a priority for the current administration of the United States.

Regarding stockpiled American nuclear warheads, Robert Norris, William Arkin, Hans Kristensen, and Joshua Handler all wrote an article for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. The authors estimated that the United States possessed “10,600 nuclear warheads...Almost 8,000 of these are active or operational; nearly 2,700 inactive” (Norris, et al, ¶ 2). Ten thousand six hundred warheads is a staggeringly high number, especially if one factors in that the chart created by Norris, et al, shows the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) “MX/Peacemaker” can be equipped with ten multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRV) (Norris, et al, 71). Each MX/Peacemaker missile can be equipped with a warhead yield of 300 kilotons and

launched a range in excess of 5500 kilometers (Norris, et al, 71). Norris, et al, note “...beginning October 1 [2002], they [MX/Peacemaker ICBM] will be deactivated over three years. Their withdrawal will coincide with the Trident II missile’s introduction into the Pacific-based submarine fleet” (72). Depending on the variant, the Trident II, according to the chart provided by Norris, et al, is a submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) capable of housing between six and eight MIRV’s with a yield between 100 and 475 kilotons each. For comparison, “Little Boy” and “Fat Man,” the two bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively, each contained a yield of 15 kilotons¹⁸ and 22 kilotons¹⁹, respectively. These two weapons effectively obliterated both cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and, as such, one cannot help but question the logic and sanity of building “bigger” and “more powerful” nuclear weapons.

A concept in the American military that may frighten some American citizens is the lack of declaration against the preemptive use of nuclear weapons in a military theater of operations. In a *Washington Post* article, Walter Pincus writes about the Bush Administration’s recent revision of the first-strike doctrine and, ultimately, how the new draft affords the Office of the President exponentially greater power when ordering a preemptive nuclear attack.

The Pentagon has drafted a revised doctrine for the use of nuclear weapons that envisions commanders requesting presidential approval to use them to preempt an attack by a nation or a terrorist group using weapons of mass destruction. The draft also includes the option of using nuclear arms to destroy known enemy stockpiles of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. (Pincus, ¶ 1)

¹⁸ http://www.hibbing.tec.mn.us/programs/dept/chem/abomb/page_id_85255.html

¹⁹ http://www.hibbing.tec.mn.us/programs/dept/chem/abomb/page_id_88783.html

The unfortunate reality of this new doctrine by the Defense Department, the Pentagon, and the White House is that if the United States utilizes their nuclear arsenal upon the PRC for whatever reason, no one can guarantee that the PRC nuclear weapons will remain dormant in their silos. To analyze a hypothetical, if the United States launches nuclear weapons against mainland China, the Chinese have little choice but to respond with nuclear weapons against the United States. In addition to the launch of nuclear weapons, ground, air, and naval forces on both sides of the Pacific will be set towards the largest military conflict of, at least, the 21st century. Forces collide, tempers flair, and expeditionary units will acquire territory on both sides of the island of Midway. Assuming that the world is not destroyed in the initial nuclear onslaught, and both sides agree to mutual restraint in the further launching of nuclear weapons, the Pacific will become a map akin to the political election maps of the United States. In the blink of an eye, and the push of a button, two of the largest military forces in the world have completely altered the geographic and political maps of the world by their haste to utilize nuclear weapons. The PRC acquires territories, thereby extending its buffer zone and shrinking the United States'. Assuming that Midway Island is the border of each nation's buffer zone, a massive red/blue line can be drawn down the center of the Pacific Ocean. This scenario only provides for the inevitable reprise of hostilities as Chinese military assets are positioned upon their newly acquired islands and nuclear forces are repositioned closer to the American mainland and territorial assets.

The total active-duty military population in the United States, as reported by the Department of Defense website on September 20, 2005, is 1,430,159 (Armed forces

strength table, DOD.mil). Unlike China or Russia, one can assume that since the United States does not have any militaristically aggressive neighbors in North America, American troops and forces are dispersed throughout the world. Cuba, while ideologically different from the American government, currently does not have the means to see the government of the United States overthrown. If one were to tactically analyze two opposing governments in the western hemisphere, if Cuba the United States, American troops would be appropriately redeployed to the battle zone, probably the Florida Keys or the Port of Miami, to subdue the attacking forces. The tactical analysis can be extended to other scenarios as well. If another nation launched a full-scale military operation against the United States, troops would be redeployed to the battlefield from less sensitive postings. However, if China were to commit even half of its estimated 3.2 million troops to a coastal assault on Alaska or Hawaii, the United States would be placed into a precarious situation. The situation would enable the “first strike” nuclear option to become viable and may appear necessary to protect American territorial assets. In spite of the technological prowess, nuclear and otherwise, in the United States armed forces simply do not have the current membership to withstand a direct military onslaught from another major military power. The likelihood of the United States successfully defending territory is reduced substantially when one considers the worldwide dispersal of troops.

Perhaps the most frightening part of the United States military, once one overcomes the fact that a nation with a more numerous armed force could simply overwhelm the American forces, is the adamant refusal to discount the nuclear first strike option. The nuclear weapons possessed by the United States are enough to raze

the world fifty times over so, naturally, this must be the first option utilized during any major conflict. Naturally, one can see the logic in the tactical usefulness of the first strike option, but one should also see the insanity and inhumanity of instantly slaughtering hundreds of thousands of humans instantly. The United States must be extremely careful using military forces throughout the world. Eventually, the United States may encounter a situation resembling the results of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. If the military forces of the United States continue to show expansionist tendencies, as ordered by the American Commander-in-Chief, eventually a nation will be attacked that holds several hundred-year-old treaties with nations who will be forced to declare war upon the attack upon the aggressor. In turn, American allies—at the very least the United Kingdom—will be forced to declare war upon the nations declaring war on the United States. Treaty begets obligation as war begets insanity and human suffering, with the entire world somehow drawn into the global call to arms.

Militaristically, the United States, in spite of moral posturing, only enjoys 1.5 advantages over the rest of the world. Technology, an area the PRC is rapidly attempting to develop, is a high point of the United States military. The other advantage, the nuclear option, is halved when one considers that the advantage is possessed by other nations and only is advantageous in a surprise first-strike scenario. While the PRC may not be as technologically developed as the United States, their military almost doubles that of the United States and the PRC maintains nuclear weapons in its weaponry systems. Both nations, in their right, are superpowers for holding nuclear weapons. China can bolster its claim by also including that it has such

a massive standing army over that of the United States. In spite of the 1.5 military advantages the United States claims, it still meets the defined standards for military superpower status. The United States military registers 1.4 million members (DOD strength table), holds nuclear weapons, and is technologically advanced. However, since Chang's tipping point theory for the PRC seems to be overly pessimistic, the United States will have a realistic military challenger sometime in the near future.

Russia:

During the Cold War, the Russians brought the world to a veritable stalemate with the threat of their nuclear weapons. This threat critically boiled during the Cuban missile crisis of 1961. Premier Khrushchev attempted to place nuclear weapons, and the requisite support personnel, in Cuba to maintain a defensive presence in the western hemisphere and attempt to reduce the buffer zone between the United States and Russia. Thankfully, President Kennedy and Premier Khrushchev were able to defuse the situation before silos emptied. This situation was the last *major* event in the Russian military history. While Chechnya and the Russian involvement in Afghanistan in the 1980's should be considered important, and ongoing in the case of Chechnya, fights for the Russian military, the Cuban missile crisis was truly the last known military mobilization that captivated the world and forced the international spotlight on a country stagnating in other areas.

Unfortunately, the stagnation does not abate a universal desire for currency. In an effort to either feed their families, or earn a little extra currency on the side of their meager paychecks, Russian arms dealers, current and former army personnel, or supervisors of arms warehouses have been thrust into an international tug of war

between nations. Political Science professor Thomas Zarzecki states in the article “Arming China or arming India: Future Russian dilemmas,” “As both India and China attempt to build their military power using Russian arms, it becomes increasingly likely that one might attempt to use the leverage derived from its status...” (261). Russia’s aging military serves little purpose outside of nationalistic efforts. Aside from the internal conflict in Chechnya, the Russian military is not currently engaged in any major offensive actions. Therefore, Russia faces three options for its perpetually aging armed forces. The first option, as illustrated, is to sell parts and equipment to the highest bidder. The second option is to retain most of the equipment and technology while continually shunting desperately needed hard currency towards the maintenance of antiquated technology. The second option, for the moment, appears far more feasible than the third option. Option three, otherwise known as the kamikaze option, entails the Russian military randomly invading nations, perhaps under the popular guise that the invaded nations contain weapons of mass destruction, in an attempt to secure new resources and technology for the Russian Federation.

Due to the lunacy of option three, and the economic irresponsibility afforded to option two, one cannot help but logically assume that Russians will gravitate towards the first option of arms sales. Although, according to Zarzecki, “From the Soviet height of almost \$25 billion in 1987, the total value of Russian global arms sales had plunged to as low as \$2 to \$3 billion annually by the late 1990s” (262). Zarzecki explains that almost any weapon not bolted down is eligible for sale to the Chinese. Zarzecki notes Air force fighter jets, navy submarines, army helicopters, and weapons of mass destruction are either verified items transferred from Russia to China or, in the

case of the weapons of mass destruction, merely rumors of sale between the former superpower to the new member of the superpower club.

However, in Hauss' textbook, he succinctly analyzes the status of the Russian armed forces as "...in a country whose past influence was largely a function of its military might, which has disappeared virtually over night" (Hauss, 283). In spite of the ties between Russian industry and Russian military, Zarzecki argues that, "Russia's defense sector is undoubtedly still in trouble. But exports to...China provide vital life support to help keep it alive, if still in critical condition" (Zarzecki, 267). At this point, Russia simply cannot afford a loss of such substantial funding for its aging military forces. The CIA Factbook estimates that there are currently 21,049,651 Russian men ages 18-49 fit for military service (CIA, ¶ 111) with 1,286,069 men becoming fit for service annually (CIA, ¶ 113). Even with the most brazenly suicidal Commander-in-Chief, Russia simply does not have the funds or troops to engage in a unilateral military conflict and, as such, is not in a position to attack China or the United States and survive the all-but guaranteed retaliatory counterattack. To sacrifice personnel, equipment, and funding on a tactically unsound, if not largely insane, endeavor to incite war during a largely peaceful time throughout the world is ridiculous and an exceptionally risky move for a country retaining exponentially fewer soldiers each year especially when coupled with antiquating military technology.

Figure 1.5, created with data obtained from the University of Maryland, illustrates that the overall trend, in the eight-year period after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the Russian armed forces is to seek positions within the civilian sector. This decline is directly correlative and proportional to the economic turmoil illustrated in

Russian Armed Forces
Figure 1.5

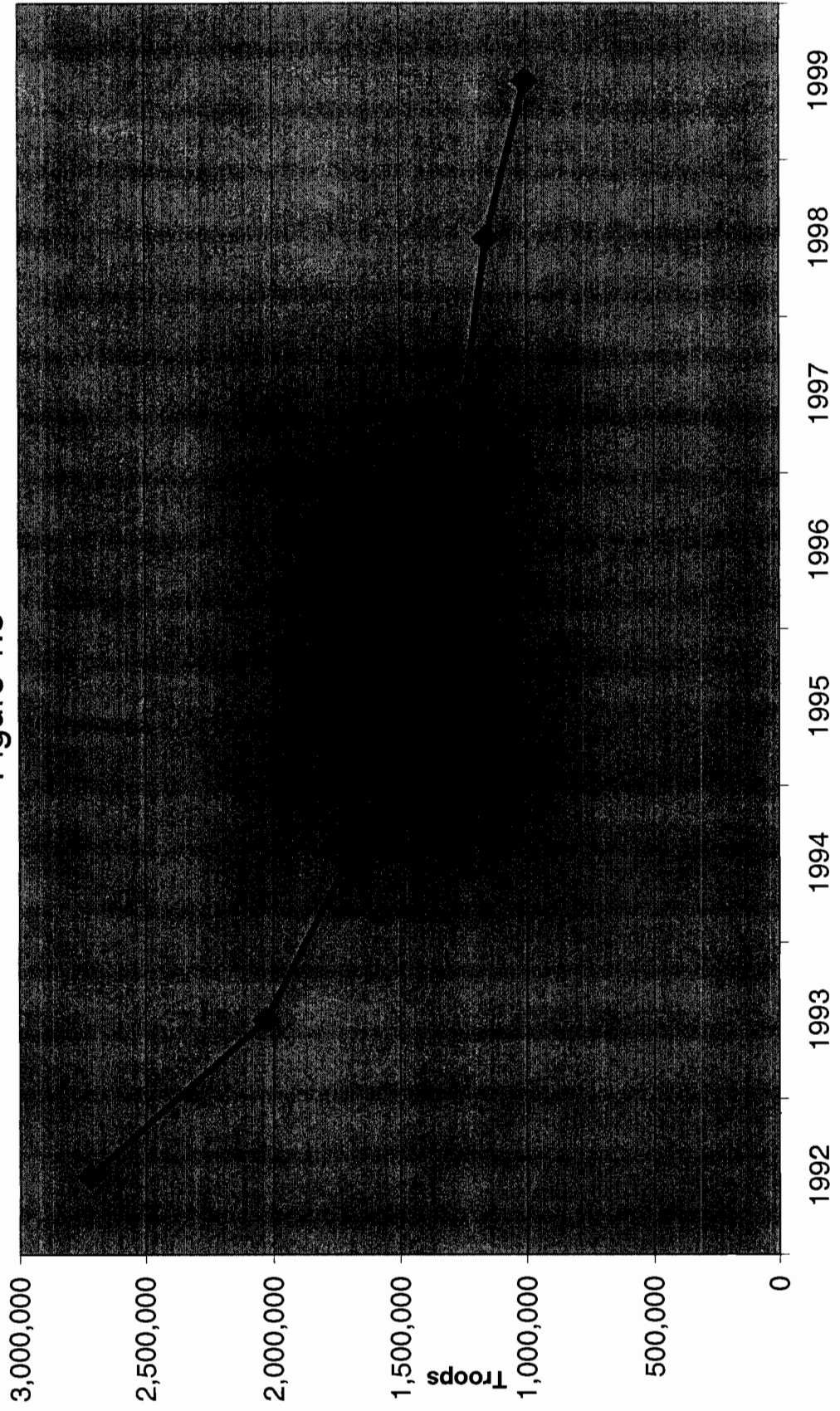


Figure 1.21. While Figure 1.5 does not illustrate the GDP improvement of approximately 2000-present, as illustrated in Figure 1.21, one can reasonably assume that at the very least, enrollment in the Russian military has not skyrocketed back to the pre-collapse levels.

With the 2004 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership of some members of the CIS²⁰, the West is expanding directly through the former Soviet Union buffer zones and has practically come within a snowball's throw Moscow and the heart of Russia. Russia has been placed into a position akin to the United States if Canada had been a signatory to the, now defunct²¹, Warsaw Pact. If the Russian Federation truly wishes to reclaim lost territory, a prospect as frightening as it is unlikely, it would need to invade NATO countries. The significance of this detail is that the United States is a signatory to the NATO treaty and, in a blaze of unilateralism, attempt to "go it alone" and supersede NATO jurisdiction by establishing a coalition of the willing to defend the recently invaded states and provide security during the rebuilding process. However, with the current expansionistic tendencies in Washington D.C., one could doubt whether the United States would actually allow the Russian Federation to maintain sovereignty after the initial invasion had been repelled.

Robert Norris and Hans Kristensen prepared a report for the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists on the status of Russian nuclear weapons. Norris and Kristensen estimate, "...in 1991, the Soviet Union may have had as many as 35,000 nuclear weapons... We estimate that the total current (2005) arsenal of intact warheads is around 16,000. Of those, we consider some 7,200 active and operational; the balance occupy [sic] an

²⁰ <http://www.nato.int/icons/map/b-map.jpg>

²¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1543000.stm
(Para 1991)

indeterminate status” (70). In their article, Norris and Kristensen quote President Putin, ““We will continue . . . to build up the armed forces in general and its nuclear component...”(70). While Putin’s comments are a long-standing relic of the Cold War, his statements are largely unintelligent. Russia has no place it can randomly invade lacking provocation without drawing the ire, criticism, and force of the rest of the world *or* sacrificing the financial lifelines it so heavily depends upon to maintain the aging military forces and equipment in the military ranks.

For example of the Russian deadlock and overall futility of any military action, consider where Russia is located geographically. To the West is the United States-influenced NATO coalition, to the East is PRC, to the North is the open waters of the Arctic Ocean, and to the South is an eclectic combination of CIS nations, Russian friends such as Iran, and the United States-occupied Afghanistan are all examples of where Putin should not order the Russian military. After exhausting the cardinal directions, no other options remain for attack. A simple tactical analysis yields that the Russian military, excluding the use of nuclear weapons, is in a hopeless situation if a major prolonged conflict develops between any nations remotely affiliated with the United States or if a conflict develops with the PRC.

The safest, and perhaps most lucrative, option for the Russian military is to wait and slowly regain power and prestige until, if at all, the time is right to be deployed. Russia simply cannot afford to be engaged in a struggle using conventional or nuclear forces. With China and the United States establishing new geographic buffer zones, the Russian forces are simply landlocked between two potentially explosive superpowers. Geographically, Russia has no military options. It has neither the

resources, military or otherwise, to launch a successful and lasting offensive in any direction. Unfortunately, while other areas of the Russian life have improved, such as GDP, economy, and government structure, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the military has suffered a series of personnel losses, funding losses, and further technological setbacks.

The Russian military is hemorrhaging personnel and practically donating hardware and training to the Chinese military in exchange for improved diplomatic relations and hard currency. In spite of the massive hemorrhage of personnel, Russia does meet two of the defined criteria for superpower status; the nation does count approximately 1 million members in its military ranks (Figure 1.5) and it possesses nuclear weapons. However, unlike the other two superpowers, Russia probably could not survive any form of prolonged conflict with an external force, let alone multiple external forces. Russia's military, once feared during the height of the Cold War, is in shambles and one could cast serious doubt on the overall control of its nuclear weapons. In the military arena, Russia is not a superpower any longer and does not appear to be actively engaged in rebuilding the psychological control it once possessed over the world.

Military Conclusion:

The militaries of the three nations examined are varied in regards to the numbers contained within their rosters. The PRC with roughly 3.2 million in their military rosters (DOD, 27) contains the most troops of the three nations followed by the United States with 1,430,159 (DOD website) troops and the Russian Federation

with roughly more than 1 million troops (Figure 1.5). All three nations possess, with varying degrees of certainty about their security, nuclear weapons. The PRC and the United States are engaged in a self-initiated technological race while the Soviet Union willingly sells aging technology to the PRC. The final, defined, point for military superpower status is the ability to withstand and engage in a full-scale multi-nation military operation. The PRC and the United States, by virtue of numbers and technology, respectively, are quite capable of engaging in such an encounter. However, if planned properly, and the attacker did not repeat the mistakes of Napoleon and Hitler, the Russian Federation would not be able to withstand a prolonged, concentrated military incursion by an external force.

Chang's tipping point theory simply does not apply to the military. Simply stating, "The tipping point will come in this decade, sometime before 2011. The Communist Party will be gone, replaced by a new system" (Thacker, ¶ . 5) does not mean that it will happen. Chang's wishful thinking will not replace the legitimately recognized government of 1.3 billion (CIA factbook, ¶ 20) if the elements needed are not present. The military is not in any danger of spontaneously initiating a coup d'état and irrevocably altering the social or political structures in the PRC, nor is it likely to happen in the United States or the Russian Federation.

Conclusion:

What components aggregate into an international superpower? Is a superpower comprised of multiple parts, or does one panacea exist as a prerequisite for superpower

status? Does an inherent western-led monopoly exist on the term “superpower” with no countries outside of the United States and Russia ever holding this title? Perhaps the critical question to consider as the lynchpin to all others should be one of, “is the title of superpower even needed?”

Should one believe that economics dictates superpower status, one must realize that the PRC has emerged as a formidable superpower. Discounting, for a moment, the BBC assertion of Lester Brown, “‘China is no longer just a developing country,’ he [Lester Brown] said, ‘It is an emerging economic superpower, one that is writing economic history’” (§ 14). Of single nations, it is an economic powerhouse with the second largest GDP in the world (CIA). If GDP is not the needed economic factor to superpower status, perhaps oil is the statistic to make a superpower. The PRC has an incredibly high bbl/d demand, both current and projected, for a country so recently in the grips of social “experiments.”

Perhaps population is the crucial ingredient to making a superpower? The PRC, with an estimated population of 1.3 billion (CIA, China page, § 20), contains slightly more than 20 percent of the Earth’s population. Russia and the United States contain populations of roughly 143.4 million (CIA, Russia page, § 20) and 295.8 million (CIA, United States, § 20), respectively, for a combined population of 439.2 million individuals or .068 percent of the world’s population. Even if population estimates for the PRC are inaccurate by as much as sixty-five percent, the population still exceeds the combined total for the United States and Russia.

If economics and population are not the answer to defining a superpower, could politics and bureaucracy be the key to securing China’s place among the leaders of the

world? With the exception of the “presidential” elections, the PRC’s political life is multi-faceted, much like the United States and Russia. While bickering does exist, probably at times akin to the extent of the United States and Russia, the electorate seems innately afraid of losing face and tradition to the outside world. The political process is comparably complex, if not more so, to the counterparts in the United States and Russia. The PRC has branched out and secured partnerships with other governments both regional and abroad, much like the United States and Russia. However, Russia’s infantile democracy has yet to discover fondness for a party lacking strong historic ties to the hard-line KGB and GRU membership from the former Soviet Union. Conversely, America’s bureaucracy is so adamantly interested in pork barrel projects and candidates focused on beating the political machine by conforming to a narrowly defined dataset in order to fool the hearts and minds of the American electorate, which bureaucracy cannot help but proliferate along with narrow-minded xenophobic nationalism.

Perhaps the military is the means to gaining superpower status? The United States and Russia each contain an abundance of nuclear weapons. Various treaties, such as SALT I, SALT II, START I, START II, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, have been signed between the two countries in an, often seemingly futile, attempt to discard and destroy weapons remaining from another era. However, the PRC also possesses nuclear weapons. If standing armies and technological prowess are the key indicators of superpower status, then the PRC wins on one aspect only to lose on the other. China has signaled an interest in acquiring technology by whatever means necessary through the “... ‘Three-Ways Policy’” (DOD, 23) even at the expense

of national security. In spite of the accelerated technology acquisition, outside of nuclear weapons, the PRC has yet to purchase or discover a military equalizer to counterbalance an invasion by a technologically superior force such as the United States. However, the PRC has no serious contenders in the immediate area. As such, this allows the PRC to focus all of the military's attention upon any singular target the PLA leadership, in conjunction with the CCP high command, chooses to attack. No secret exists about the massive numbers within the military ranks of the PRC, but with the PRC receiving hand-me-downs from the Russian military, one cannot help but wonder if any innovation or retrofitting is occurring on the Chinese side of the line. However, speculation aside, the PRC is a numerically superior force with minimal technological advantages, currently, over foes, aggressors, or any nation interested in acquiring PRC territory through force.

The United States and Russia are numerically inferior to the PRC in terms of population and military rosters. Technologically, the United States trumps the PRC. Because China is largely inheriting Russian military hand-me-downs, among acquisitions from other nations, one may presume that China is slightly higher than Russia in terms of technology. Economically, China has far surpassed Russia and is approaching the level of the United States in terms of GDP. Politically, all three nations have various façades of democracy, but the United States and Russia are highly factionalized. As opposed to the faction fighting of the Democrats and Republicans in the United States, and the multiple parties in Russia, the PRC is rooted in democratic centralism and ensures that, as the CIA Factbook notes for political parties, "...eight registered small parties under control of the CCP..." (§ 50) and "no substantial political

opposition groups exist” (§ 51). Political control equals quick action, but unfortunately tends to breed human rights violations. In spite of tight political controls, and a weak technological base in the military, China has exceeded the benchmarks of superpower status. China possesses nuclear weapons and the capability to utilize them. China’s GDP is skyrocketing and is among the highest in the world. China’s military contains more personnel than both superpowers, the United States and Russia, combined. China’s population, even with a deviation in excess of sixty percent, surpasses the sum population of both superpowers. The PRC has established lucrative intraglobal trade routes, alliances, practices, and diplomatic relations. The PRC has effectively secured supply lines and gained an advantage in the increasingly dangerous, and potentially explosive, game of resource chess. During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union largely controlled—directly or via proxy, the known major resources on the planet. Now, the balance has been slightly altered. With the implosion of the Soviet Union, many resources worldwide became “up for grabs.” However, the PRC has replaced the Soviet Union as the entity countering the United States’ resource control.

Chang’s theory of a popular revolt similar to the French revolution during de Tocqueville’s time is not a sound idea. Unlike the French revolts, which resulted in massive regime change, the populace of China is not completely oppressed by their government. While information is censored, knowledge of—and communication with—other nations is possible and plausible. Professor Dalpino, with her theory that the United States exists as the only global superpower, simply does not realize the full magnitude of the PRC’s growth and standing within the international community. The ideas clutched by Chang and Dalpino are foolish at best, and intrinsically dangerous at

worst. If Americans, perhaps exemplified by Chang and Dalpino, cannot accept the reinstatement of a superpower sharing the world stage with the United States, much like Russia did during the height of the Cold War, the world is destined for a dark place. Tactically, any analysis of the situation eventually supports the PRC's position. To regulate a nation to second or third class status when the nation in question possesses superior numbers, both population and militaristically, an incredibly strong economy, and nuclear weapons is inherently unintelligent and realistically unwise on the part of the defining entity. Chang's theory of the downfall of the CCP and PRC, while prolific enough to sell books and earn commissions on the lecture circuit, simply does not have the merits or logic to survive any level of analytical examination. Dalpino's remark, "As the world's only global superpower, Washington's attention is often diverted from Southeast Asia to crises in other regions" (Dalpino testimony, security ¶ 9) is also grossly incorrect. The United States is not the only international superpower. The world must realize that the United States is no longer alone in the international arena. The superpower slot opposite the United States, vacated by the Soviet Union, has been filled by another nation. The time is now for the world to realize that the People's Republic of China is an international superpower, and will not be fading into the distance anytime soon.

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