

The Balance of Power: A Comparison of US-China Grand Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The US is always the super power in the world. However, as China rises up these days, experts start to anticipate if the rise of China will challenge the dominance of the US. This paper analyzes this topic from two perspectives: the accumulation of power and social problems.

Keywords: super power, world hegemony, regional hegemony, BRI.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, there are two forces that cannot be ignored, one is rising China, and the other is the world's hegemony, the United States. The relationship between China and the United States cannot be ignored. The US-China trade war that broke out in the past few years not only caused losses to the economies of the two countries, but also made the world worry about whether this trade war was a hot war. In recent days, the outbreak of COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the world economy. China's effective epidemic prevention in pandemic enabled China to quickly recover from the suspension, and its economy continued to grow. At the same time, in recent years, China has actively participated in international organizations and even proposed BRI, which has promoted economic development. The Trump administration blindly withdrew from the world organization. Therefore, some scholars have raised whether China will surpass the United States to become the world hegemon. The rise of China poses a threat to US stability in East Asia because, if not balanced, China might gain regional hegemony.

In this paper, our idea is that China will not become the hegemon of the world. Although the BRI strategy will promote the benign interaction between China and the developing world in the future and promote the integrated development of Asian, European, and African continents, it will also hardly help China become a regional hegemony. This paper analyzes this idea by using three comparance. It will first compare US & China grand strategy development: US has been establishing worldwide relationships for a long time, while China

missed the global trend in the past, but now BRI helps China to build up relationships among three continents. Also, compared to US & China society, China faces severe social problems, hindering China from surpassing the US.

2. THE US AS A GREAT POWER

The US has no competitive state in the American continent, representing its regional hegemony position. Manifest Destiny is the notion that God believed that the United States should extend its dominion and propagate independence and capitalism throughout the North American continent. The Manifest Destiny highlights the legacy of the US expansion-the Mexican-American war.[1] As the US gained momentum, it began to focus on opening up markets in the rest of the world in search of inexpensive jobs and so maximum economic expansion. President Monroe suggested that Europe should, first and foremost, not conquer the western hemisphere; secondly, that Europe should not meddle in autonomous US countries; and, thirdly, that the United States should not intervene in European matters.[2] Monroe Doctrine demonstrated each state to do its own job, as in this doctrine, the Europeans should not be in charge of the American affairs in South America.

The Monroe Doctrine maintained the US regional hegemon and made sure there was no powerful neighbor state, claiming that the Latin American area pertained to the sphere of US influence. When Cuba wanted to get free of the influence of Spain, which still has authority in America, the US dispatched USS Maine, which exploded in the fight against Cuba, creating a chance for the US to declare war on Spain. While it appeared like the US aided

Cuba to gain its freedom, the US did really occupy Cuba. The US army was helping the Philippines to eliminate colonial Spain during this period. Moreover, the U.S. is the sovereign state of Olney Corollary, and the fiat is a regulatory regime that limits its interpretation. Without doubt, the US was destined to be a superpower in the American continent by these corollaries, pursuing world ultimate control. The US has steadily developed its global empire, becoming a prominent global force, in numerous methods, such as purchasing territory and enabling conquered nations to become independent.

Moreover, the US has set up its indispensable position in Europe, which is a part of its grand strategy to seek world domination. After WWII, Europe was barely able to recover. People were facing food shortages and almost lost their hope: “[t]he three most important things that have happened to France since [1945] January 1st have been disillusion, devaluation, and the continued dominance of General Charles de Gaulle.” West Germany had lost 5 million houses and apartments but gained some 12 million refugees. Many lived on a diet of 1,500 calories per day. However, Truman doctrine proposed that the US would “support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”[3] But this didn’t cover the bloc of states created by Stalin at the end of the war. As a practical support for the Eastern Europe recovery and maintaining the US position, the Marshall Plan came out. In June 1947, Marshall delivered a speech that proposed a large-scale plan for the US to assist Europe. People’s lives became better because of the US assistance. However, receiving aid from the United States is not unconditional. The Marshall Plan means that the economies of the European countries receiving benefits are controlled by the United States, and they are almost certain to form an alliance with the United States. As Truman showed in proposing the Truman Doctrine that there were only two ways of life in the world -- capitalism and socialism.[4] Western European countries that enjoyed the Marshall Plan were opposed to those in Eastern Europe that did not. In 1948, Britain, France, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium joined the Treaty of Brussels, which was the rudiment of NATO. In 1949, NATO, led by the United States, was established. In response, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact. *Article 5* of the NATO Treaty states that an attack on one ally is an attack on all, but each member is free to decide what to do in such a case.[5] As a result, the US successfully and naturally became the leader of Western Europe.

Additionally, the US utilizes Japan as a foothold to get into Asia. In the name of helping Japan establish a peaceful and stable government and restore its losses during WWII, the US has owned Japan’s extraterritorial rights, supreme military command, lease, most-favored-nation treatment, and garrison rights.[6] As the United States can station troops in Japan, due to geopolitical factors, it is convenient for the United States to attack East Asian countries. This also explains the outbreak of the Korean War during the US-USSR Cold War. At the

same time, the establishment of military bases in Japan by the United States restricted China’s military development and played a role in the balance of power. However, due to “Asian Values”, it is difficult for the U.S. to invade East and Southeast Asian countries other than Japan to become dominant.[7] The US failed to control the whole Asia, giving China chances to develop. Especially during the Trump administration, the US banned multilateralism, which offers a golden opportunity for China to expand its influence and network in Asia.[8] Nevertheless, the foothold in Japan enables the US to restrict the development of China. Although the United States has not been able to become the absolute hegemony in Asia, its dominance in the world is undeniable.

3. CHINA AS A RISING POWER

In the context of the slow recovery of the global economy, strengthening regional cooperation is an important driving force for the development of the world economy, and it has become a trend. During his visits to Central and Southeast Asian countries in September and October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the strategic concept of jointly building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which received high attention from the international community and positive response from relevant countries. The Belt and Road Initiative is a strategic conception put forward by the Chinese government in light of the profound changes in the international and regional situation as well as the new situation and new tasks facing China’s development. It has a profound historical background.[9]

The Belt and Road Initiative strategy, as an integrated national strategic thinking carried out by China in the Eurasian continent and around the ocean, has a special realistic background, among which the most essential is that China has developed from a small economy to a big economy. Therefore, the previous economic development model of small countries, whether it is coordinated regional economic development at home or mutually beneficial and win-win economic diplomacy, can no longer meet the needs of the current economic pattern and urgently needs to be restructured. BRI strategy is formed in response to this demand. At present, China’s economy is faced with internal constraints such as a slowdown in economic growth and uneven regional development. At the same time, China also needs to face the challenges of the external environment, such as the acceleration of global economic cooperation and the adjustment of international economic order. The demand for its own economic transformation and upgrading and the requirement of optimizing the economic structure urges China to forge ahead and expand new market growth space.[10] The BRI strategy is not a new mechanism, but a concept and initiative of cooperative development. It will rely on the existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms between China and relevant countries to introduce measures such as infrastructure

and transportation connectivity and trade and investment facilitation. Moreover, it relies on the economic, cultural, and trade heritage of the "Silk Road" for thousands of years, and endures it with new cooperation significance. Additionally, the BRI strategy proposed by China aims to enhance the international leadership of China's diplomacy by strengthening cooperation with Asia, the South Pacific, Europe, and East Africa in infrastructure construction, economy and trade, and other fields.

Due to the strategic needs of the Belt and Road Initiative, the Chinese government has played an important role in it. They must not only do a good job in the design of relevant plans, investment estimates and risk assessments, but also provide considerable financial support to a certain extent. At the first BRI International Cooperation Summit Forum in May 2017, the Ministry of Finance of China and the ministers or representatives of the 26 countries' finance ministries jointly approved the BRI Financing Guiding Principles. This is the first time that a guiding document has been formed on financing issues in the construction of the BRI.[11] It is conducive to mobilizing funds from multiple channels to solve the financing bottleneck problem, and at the same time to carry out cooperation between the financial departments of various countries. This positive significance is constantly showing.

In hard power terms, the strategic magnitude of the challenge facing China is to effectively co-shape Asia's eventual power distribution, which is likely to lie somewhere on a spectrum between Chinese hegemony on one end and an unsteady balance of power on the other. Despite growing support for the BRI in the developing world, various forms of uncertainty remain evident. For example, in the specific context of BRI, the number of participating countries is large, the economic scale is small, the development is unstable, the internal governance structure is weak and the political system is unstable, which are all potential crises. Central Asia, in particular, is a highly unstable region whose geopolitical complexity and the involvement of a large number of external actors make it a high-risk region for investment. Moreover, the rapid expansion of BRI was apparently accompanied by a sharp accumulation of government debt in many participating countries. Therefore, BRI is currently not enough to support China as a regional hegemony. But predictably, if the BRI strategy succeeds in the future, the biggest winners will be China and many countries on the Eurasian continent participating in the cooperation. The losers are those outside BRI, especially the US. The Trump administration led the US government's actions could undermine America's global leadership, and indirectly help China take to the road to recovery.[12] This directly increases China's chances of becoming a regional hegemon.

On the other hand, BRI has received more attention from the US strategic community. As the political and economic interests of the two governments in the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific region may collide, this will affect not only the stakeholders of the BRI but also the entire world economy. Since 2018, the debate on the

think tank research and policy of BRI in the United States has heated up significantly, and the executive and legislative branches of the United States have reached a great consensus on the checks and balances of BRI. America's strategic circles generally believe that China's continued influence not pushing the construction of "area", it not only has geopolitics on the Euro-Asia continents change the potential of economic and geopolitical balance, also in technical standards, military security, international development in various fields such posing a challenge to the United States, even destroy the United States during the second world war established the basis of global hegemony. In addition, the United States believes that the BRI strategy, as the Marshall Plan of today's world, tends to use the geo-strategic language to describe the new order in East Asia with China as the center.[13] In fact, BRI faces far more challenges than the Marshall Plan. After the second world war, the US had become the global hegemon, and its Marshall Plan met with little European opposition. On the other hand, the many shared values and beliefs between the United States and its European Allies also make it easier to implement. Today, China is still a rising major developing country and faces many challenges in the world, especially the mistrust of China by Western countries led by the United States.[14] All this means that even with its best intentions, China will face huge political challenges and will not be able to challenge America as the world's dominant power.

4. COMPARE US-CHINA SIGNIFICANTLY

Though the United States has been a robust dominant power in the whole world, as is known to all, from the middle of the 20th century, China has rapidly developed for a long time, and it made a massive contribution to world development. This section will lay out the comparison between the United States and China in society in economics.

China economic achievement

China has kept a medium-high economic growth speed for many years. In 2010, China became the second-largest economic country in the world. China succeeded in adopting the new poverty line used by the Chinese government in 2010, more than 700 million Chinese living in the rural area have been away from poverty since the early 1980s.[15] China's economy grew 2.3% in 2020, although the Covid-19 caused a slump in Chinese in early 2020, China was the only major country to have expanded in 2020.[16]

4.1 China engineering technology achievement in transportation

Chinese engineering technology has made massive progress, particularly in transportation. Nowadays, China is famous for its brand of "Made in China," and it is easy to see this brand everywhere, no matter in Asia, America, or Europe. We know that country development cannot live without rich transit. The Chinese transit system is

especially famous for its high-speed railways. Although the Chinese high-speed railway development time is not as long as developed countries, its high-speed railway development is fast and high-quality.

4.2 An economic achievement—Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is also the shrinking point of China. It is an achievement of the Pearl River Delta Initiative, which concentrated on the Chinese mainland.[17] In the people's livelihood, a high-quality living circle is suitable for working, living, and traveling is building, and the ecological environment of the Greater Bay Area is more comfortable. A report² said, in 2020, days with a good air percentage in the Pearl River Delta would reach 92.9%. Besides, the total economic volume of the Greater Bay Area in 2020 would reach 11.5 trillion yuan, an increase of 1.4 trillion yuan compared to 2017[18]

China's rapid development in recent years is evident, however, because of its fast developing speed, China has many weaknesses to solve.

4.3 China economic dilemma—GDP and equality

Although China has made tremendous progress in its economic development, it still has a long distance to walk to the United States. Directly, we can compare the United States and China's financial situation by using two countries' GDP and GDP per capita as evidence. The IMF issued that China's 2020 GDP(PPP) reached 73rd and its GDP(nominal) reached 59th, both related to a per capita income basis[19]. Besides, the Chinese 2020 GDP remarkably got to \$15.66 trillion.[20] The overall trend between rich and poor in China is rising year by year, expanding 0.465. It got 0.491 in 2004 and 0.491 in 2008. By 2018, compared with 2008, China's Gini coefficient had shown a negative trend, but it was still at a relatively high level, which was also higher than the 0.24-0.36 levels of developed countries.[21] The huge urban-rural development gap has become a headache for the Chinese government because of resource distribution imbalance. According to a famous report that households lows than 25% just own about 1% of the property, while households rank the top 1% can own about 33% of the country's property. (China Minsheng Development Report, 2015)

4.4 China educational weakness

The considerable difference between the US and China appears in the economy, and education is a prominent aspect. To some extent, educational equality decides a country's direction in the future. In particular, university access inequality is a primary concern for China. Prashant Loyalka and other authors analyzed China's college access inequality research. They found that by analyzing and researching the figure in a region of China, which related to about 300,000 students. The

results indicate that it is the most crucial unfair in university entrance at the first post-compulsory milestone along the road to the university. Most importantly, in developing countries, students' percentage of passing the high school access exam is just about 60%, compared to the developed countries of almost 100% students. Last but not least, developing countries students study in elite high school and academic high school less than the developed countries students[22] The urban students and rural students in China also enjoy unequal educational resources, and the rural students have less chance to enter university.

4.5 China's medical treatment

Medical treatment is vital to show a country's people's living level. The Chinese government has paid great attention to medical treatment reform to improve Chinese people's living standards. Because the reform started later than many developed countries, Chinese medical development has many problems. Resource limitation makes the rural people hardly enjoy the same healthy welfare as the urban residents. Thus, more and more rural residents move to urban areas to earn their living. It makes the urban population grow more rapidly than rural. The Chinese government has to invest more in the urban areas and prioritize urban health care than the rural. Although the urban medical system will be more excellent, the duty to the rustic will expand the treatment gap between urban and rural, it will lead to China seeming to be much harder to alleviate relative poverty.[23]

4.6 China as the biggest entity of carbon emission

Achieving a carbon-neutral green economy has become a hot global topic in recent years. A country's potential development power can appear in the economy and society and environmental protection because it refers to technology, government administration efficiency, etc. President Xi Jinping announced that China would achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. China ensures its target to cut greenhouse gases and invest higher funds on green technologies in the next five years. A major promise in the fight against climate change by the planet's worst polluter[24] Nevertheless, China's environmental pollution seems to be serious because of rapid development speed. Over the last several decades, China thought highly of the economy. Also, the urbanization process gets faster, and city pollution is higher than before. China's abundant primary energy is a vital support for its economic development. However, these valuable resources mostly stay in developing regions in China. These poor regions' energy efficiency is less developed than other modern provinces because of outdated management and technologies[25] The extensive economic style led China to gain economic growth. Nevertheless, it consumes too many natural resources. China became the biggest creator of carbon

emissions in 2012, which mostly came from fuel. In 2012, China made about 8.50 Gt CO₂ in carbon emissions, and its carbon emissions accounted for about 25% of total global carbon emissions that year. Besides, from 1950 to 2012, China has brought about 130 Gt CO₂ carbon emissions by cement production and fossil fuel burning.[26]

4.7 US Economic Development

GDP and GDP per capita is the essential indicator to measure a country's economic development. According to Figure 1 below, the US's GDP is \$20807.269 in 2020, in the 1st place, globally. GDP per capita is \$63051 in 2020, ranking at the 5th place globally. The world's average GDP in 2020 is \$83,844.988 and GDP per capita is 10,954. In this case, both GDP and GDP per capita in the US is above the world's average.

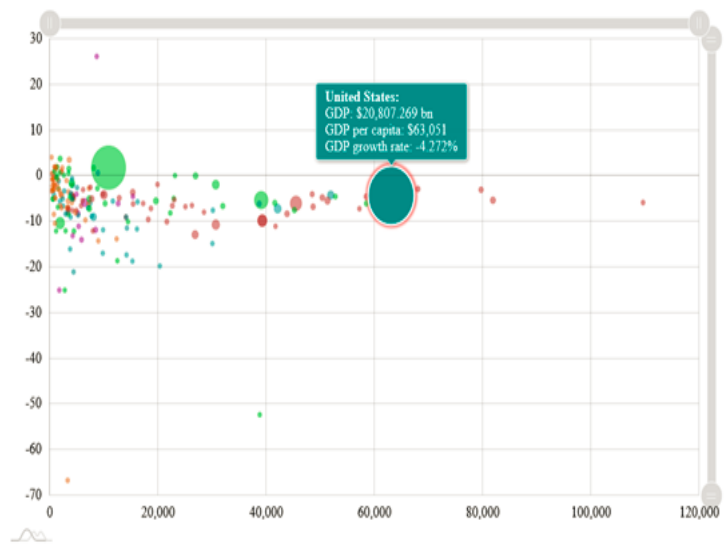


Figure1: US GDP per capita

4.8 US Education Enrollment Rate

Enrollment rate is one of the most significant indexes to display a country's education development and the effectiveness of educational policies. As the Figure 2 showing below, for the United States, the enrollment is continuously greater than in China. In the US, up to 1999, more than ¼ of the US population, 72 million people, enrolled in the school; currently more non- white students can attend school, leading to an increase in the enrollment rate.[27] According to the predictions, the birthrate of Hispanics and Asian- Americans will explode.[28] In this

regard, the demand for education and competition across different districts will grow rapidly in the near future. In addition, international students' enrollment rate is another indicator to show the education progress since students pursue well educational- resources. In this case, if a country has high- quality and sufficient educational resources, students will be attracted to study abroad. According to the statistical data from 2002- 2009, compared to other countries, including the UK, Canada, and Australia, the international student enrollment rate is the highest in the US, meaning that the US has the best educational resources.[29]

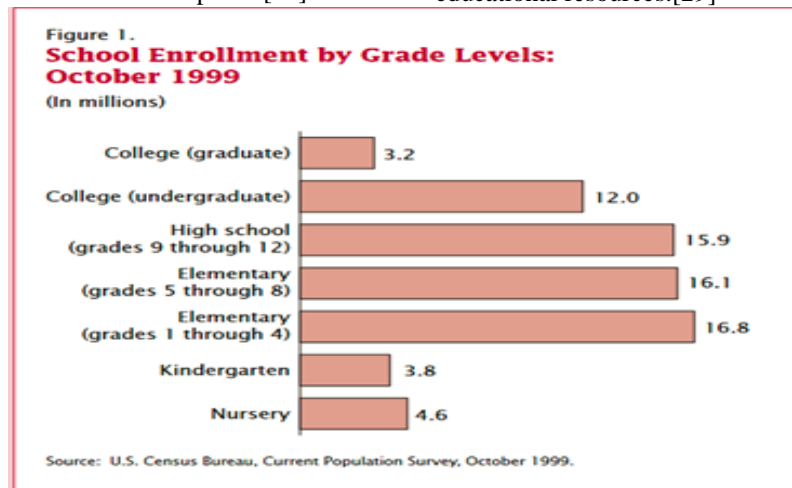


Table A.
**Summary Measures of School Enrollment for Nursery, Kindergarten,
Elementary, and High School: October 1999**
(Numbers in thousands)

Characteristics	Total	Male	Female	Race and Hispanic origin				
				White		Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Hispanic (of any race)
				Total	Non-Hispanic			
All Students	57,191	29,300	27,892	44,578	36,474	9,285	2,580	8,629
Nursery	4,578	2,311	2,267	3,590	3,044	729	205	585
Full day	2,293	1,169	1,124	1,621	1,713	525	109	271
Part day	2,285	1,142	1,144	1,968	1,332	204	96	314
Kindergarten	3,824	1,958	1,867	2,956	2,307	632	195	666
Elementary	32,873	16,867	16,006	25,616	20,779	5,388	1,461	5,088
High School	15,916	8,164	7,752	12,416	10,344	2,536	719	2,290
Students in Public School	49,339	25,258	24,079	37,919	30,259	8,556	2,253	8,081
Nursery	2,269	1,128	1,141	1,571	1,146	569	96	458
Full day	1,072	567	504	745	624	380	56	217
Part day	1,198	561	637	826	522	189	40	241
Kindergarten	3,167	1,609	1,557	2,422	1,839	558	148	594
Elementary	29,264	14,979	14,284	22,552	17,960	5,002	1,343	4,829
High School	14,638	7,542	7,097	11,374	9,314	2,427	666	2,200
Population, 15 to 17 Years Old								
Percent below modal grade	30.8	36.2	25.1	30.0	28.9	34.8	25.6	36.5
Students, 10th to 12th Grade								
Annual dropout rate	4.7	4.3	5.1	4.4	3.8	6.0	4.8	7.1
Population, 18 to 24 Years Old	26,042	12,906	13,136	20,865	17,080	3,827	1,130	3,954
Dropouts	3,413	1,818	1,594	2,680	1,404	613	58	1,340
High school graduates	21,127	10,201	10,926	16,755	14,812	2,907	1,019	2,325
Enrolled in college	9,259	4,396	4,863	7,151	6,735	1,142	626	740

Note: The number of students in the three race groups shown here do not sum to the total because data for American Indians and Alaska Natives are not shown.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, October 1999.

Figure 2: US domestic enrollment rate and International students' enrollment rate

4.9 US Medical treatment under Pandemic

Health care is another important aspect when measuring a country's effectiveness of its policies. In the US, annual health care spending has increased by \$933.5 billion from \$1.2 trillion to \$2.1 trillion between 1996 and 2013. More specifically, the increasing spending includes inpatient, ambulatory, retail pharmaceutical, and many other aspects due to the increasing population growth and aging.[30] Demand for a thorough, effective health care system has become citizens' basic need. These previous data show that the US government highly attaches importance to its health care system development and perfection. In recent years, the US has been paying more attention to developing virtual interactions and clinical care. This development can positively change the way that people go to hospital, especially during COVID- 19, while people are staying at home. Virtual caring systems can effectively boost the health care system's working capacity, reduce virus transmission and expand human and technical resources.[31]

4.9.1 US Environmental Control

As a developed country, the US' CO2 commission takes a large proportion globally to develop its industries. Therefore, the government decides to encourage people to consume new energy automobiles, reduce the usage of plastic bags when shopping and make public- interest advertisements.

5. CONCLUSION

In general, the US is undoubtedly far better than China, whether it is the accumulated foundation of international relations, the solution of social problems, and the military strength. However, Asian values give China more advantages in Asia than the United States, as China is more able to adapt to the particularities of Asia. As a result, the unipolar pattern of the United States as the world hegemon will not change. China cannot become a regional hegemon to balance power with the US in a short time, but this situation can change as China rises in the long term.

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