

## **Introduction**

Many scholars argue convincingly that the modern international system can be seen as a series of hegemonic cycles. George Modelski is among those scholars, and in his 1978 article, “The Long Cycle of Global Politics and the Nation-State” he draws conclusions that remain useful in understanding hegemony and the international system today. Modelski states that cycles of hegemony break down as the superpower begins to lose legitimate hegemonic control over the international system. Though an international order wherein no one power seems to have the advantage over the others is usually labeled multi-polarity, Modelski argues that this can almost be considered a period of anarchy. Following this time of confusion and disarray a global war for supremacy in the international system is usually fought between the major powers of the day. Modelski cites the Portuguese, the Netherlands, Britain, and the United States as the hegemonic powers that have dominated the global system since the inception of the modern, Westphalian nation-state system. He also describes the various wars that began and ended these hegemonic cycles (see Table 1 below). His basic argument is that the winner of these global conflicts, or the nation that is able to proclaim victory and appear to be the legitimate champion, will be able to shape the international order that flows from the peace-making process.

Modelski essentially utilizes a realist perspective, arguing that global leadership is most dependent on military power, or more specifically naval power. According to Modelski, British hegemony was predominantly based on superior naval power, disregarding the strength of the mercantilist and colonialist economic systems, as well as the strength Britain derived from the proliferation and influence of English culture around the globe. “Originating in extensive global conflict, ensuing world orders have tended to rest substantially upon a distribution of military power that evinced high degrees of concentration in military capacity for global reach. For the

first four global systems this meant, in essence, a preponderance of naval power and the capacity to organize and, when necessary, to interdict maritime communications” (Modelski 229). Modelski argues that the opportunity to “set the rules” comes from one state having a military advantage over all other states within the world system. He draws a comparison between the United States and the British cycles, stating that the British were able to dominate the seas, while the United States has expanded the same idea to also dominate the skies and space, as well as the oceans.

**Table 1<sup>1</sup>**

TABLE I <i>The long cycle: Basic Facts</i>				
<i>World power</i>	<i>Formative global conflict</i>	<i>Legitimizing settlement</i>	<i>Institutional innovations</i>	<i>Landmarks of descent</i>
Portugal	Italian wars (1494–1517)	Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)	Organization of exploration and discovery Global network of bases Carreira de India Antwerp entrepot	Spanish annexation (1580) Wars of Religion ‘Sovereignty’ (1576)
United Provinces of the Netherlands	Spanish wars (1579–1609) (War of Dutch Independence)	1609. Twelve-year Truce with Spain	‘Mare liberum,’ Free trade Amsterdam Bank, Bourse, Grain Exchange United East India company	Wars with England War with France (1672–78) The English Revolution
Great Britain (first)	French wars (1688–1713) (Louis XIV)	1713. Treaty of Utrecht	Command of the sea (Navy) European Balance of Power Indirect control of world trade Bank of England, National Debt	Independence of the United States Partitions of Poland French Revolution
Great Britain (second)	French wars (1792–1815)	1814–15. Paris, Vienna	Naval command: antislavery Free trade: gold standard Industrial Revolution Independence of Latin America ‘Opening’ of China and Japan	Anglo-German naval race Imperialism Russian Revolution Great Depression
United States of America	German wars (1914–18, 1939–45)	1919. Versailles 1945. Yalta, San Francisco, Potsdam	United Nations Strategic nuclear deterrence Multinational corporations Decolonization Space exploration	

There certainly are lessons and comparisons that can be drawn between past hegemonic cycles and the U.S. today, and I agree with Modelski when he says that “if we look at the politics

<sup>1</sup> (Modelski 225).

of these matters, the dominant fact would seem to be that the active focus for global organization so far has always been a world power and that the identity, values and resources of that power have shaped long stretches of modern world experience” (Modelski 218).” But I argue that the more important aspects of hegemony are the dominant identity projected by the hegemon and the values that shape the world, rather than military might or economic power.

During the transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the United States became one of the most powerful nations in the world. Following the end of WWII at mid-century, the U.S. emerged victorious and was militarily and economically dominant over every other nation on the earth. The U.S. supplanted the United Kingdom as the global hegemon, and in 1945 began to take the leading role among state actors in administering world politics, building up international institutions, and managing global governance issues. Many international relations scholars, most notably Paul Kennedy, suggest that 1945 was the beginning of a cycle in which the United States would rise as a global hegemon and shape the international system. These scholars also theorize however, that the U.S. will ultimately fall and lose its status as hegemonic ruler of the global order.

The interesting question that both Modelski and Kennedy raise, and what remains to be seen, is who will be the challenger to the United States? What nation will occupy the spot following the United States on the list in Table 1? What nation will be able to overcome the gains that the U.S. has made and obtain a legitimate position of dominance recognized by the other great powers? Numerous scholars predict China will be the next hegemon, and many books are written about “China’s Rise.” Some see Russia as a resurgent power. Still others predict that India will grow to become the world leader, while some believe that the European Union will be able to overtake the U.S. and regain much of the prestige individual European nations lost during

the twentieth century. This paper will present the argument that the U.S., like Great Britain, will be able to refresh the hegemonic cycle, and maintain its hegemony beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This research paper is divided into two sections. The first portion analyzes the probability that China or India will rise to become a hegemonic challenger and points in favor of and against each country are set out. A second portion is dedicated to an analysis of U.S. hegemony and conclusions recommending future U.S. foreign policy that focuses specifically on legitimacy in the international community and strengthening of the international order.

In this paper, I will discuss the future of U.S. hegemony and two of the challengers that potentially threaten to take over as the leading nation in a new hegemonic order. Beginning with the assumption that U.S. legitimacy is currently weakening and U.S. hegemony may ultimately come to an end because of hegemonic war, as predicted by Modelski, Kennedy, and others, I will explore the prospect that two nations within the international system, China and India, may pose a threat as challengers to the current world order.

Alternatively, I will support the argument posited by Francis Fukuyama, in his book “State-Building.” He argues that in order to strengthen the international order, developed nations — the U.S. prime among them — must focus their attention and energy on building effective states and strengthening international organizations, institutions, and law. Strengthening the international order will further cement the hold of U.S. hegemony, and perpetuate it far into the future, notwithstanding competition from hegemonic challengers that seek to draw the U.S. into wars that will disrupt the international order.

Throughout this paper, I will use a mixture of methodologies to emphasize different points. For instance, I will rely on realist arguments to explore whether India or China will challenge U.S. hegemony within the next century using military force. I will utilize a liberal

viewpoint to investigate the possibility that China or India may challenge the United States in economic terms. Finally, my most important reference will be to critical theory and constructivism. The U.S. must work to strengthen its legitimacy, and I believe that the true foundations for U.S. hegemony lie in the ideational elements that we promote and to which we adhere. U.S. culture plays an important role in the way that we perceive and interact with the world outside of the United States. The way the United States presents those cultural values in the international community is also very important, and the perceptions held by people around the world have a deep and lasting impact on U.S. hegemony.

## **China and India as Hegemonic Challengers**

This section will analyze the possibility that two potential hegemonic challengers, China or India, may rise to challenge the United States. These Asian nations are both potential challengers to U.S. hegemony because they are states that could change the very nature of the international system, rather than adopting and adapting techniques and systems of governance that have been in effect for at least the last century. They are also potential adversaries because they could make irreversible changes that may not be amenable to the interests of the traditional great powers, such as the U.S., the Western European nations, and perhaps even Russia — a prospect that threatens Western identity. Despite this negative view that puts these countries at odds with American hegemony, there are factors that would also allow them to be welcomed as the new hegemon, such as India's traditional ties to Great Britain. In this section I describe some of the advantages that India and China possess that will help them to rise as either challengers or welcome successors to U.S. hegemony. I will also explore some of the domestic and international barriers that exist to block the rise of each.

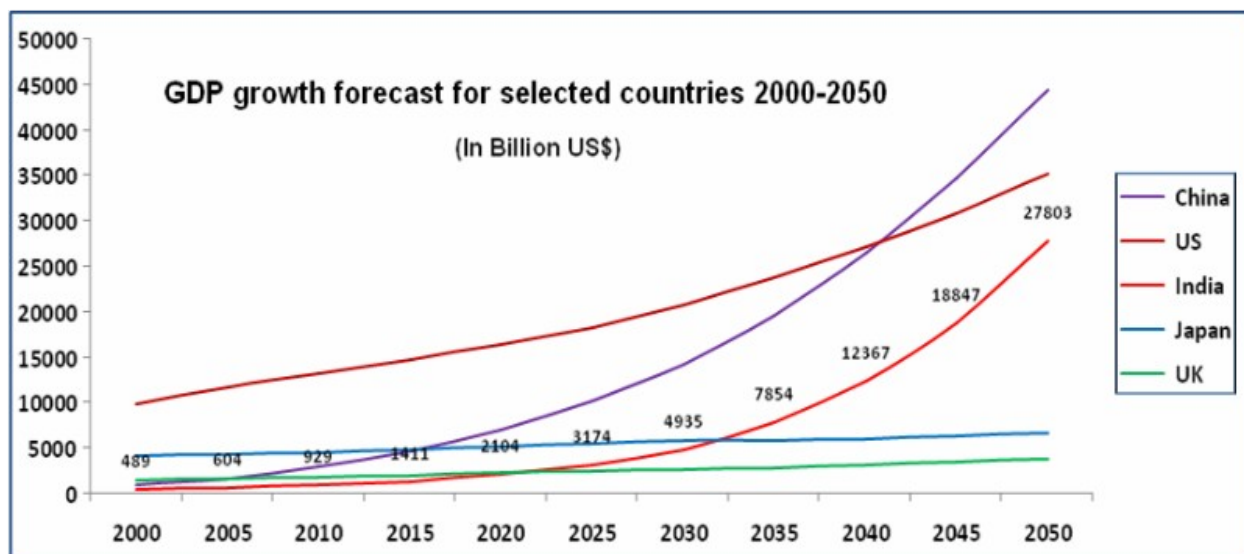
In this section I will explore the questions:

- 1) “Is China a hegemonic challenger that can compete with the United States?”
- 2) “Is India a hegemonic challenger, and why don't western scholars concerned about China's rise give the same attention/worry to the rise of India?”

In the last decade, India and China have become noteworthy because both have become economically powerful actors on the world stage. Another important point to note is that both national governments represent a very large bloc of people; one that accounts for approximately one-third of all humans living on the planet. Many scholars have been quick to note, as Roger Cohen does, that “in the 17th century, China and India accounted for more than half the world's

economic output. After a modest interlude, the pendulum is swinging back to them at a speed the West has not grasped” (Cohen, Roger, *The Baton Passes to Asia*). China, from 1978 to 2004, has seen record economic growth, achieving an average annual growth rate of 9.6 percent. India has overcome the “Hindu rate of growth” that plagued its economy between 1950 and the late 1980s and now maintains steady growth of six percent annually, with growth in recent years between nine and ten percent. They are the world’s second and third largest economies by purchasing power parity, and are the world’s fastest growing economies as well; both are projected to overtake the United States as the world’s leading economic powerhouses at some time during the next century. Many scholars, both realists and liberal theorists, argue that the economic success of these countries will soon lead to trouble for U.S. hegemony.

Figure 1<sup>2</sup>



Militarily, both China and India are growing in strength and influence within the Asian sphere, and China in particular is seen as a threat to U.S. dominance in the region. India is, on the other hand, not perceived as much of a threat to the U.S. military — indeed it seems that the

<sup>2</sup> This table is taken from information explaining it in detail on the website [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Economy\\_of\\_India/Goldman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Economy_of_India/Goldman) and is specifically located at the website <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:IndianEconomicForecast.SVG>. The author used data from the Goldman Sachs' BRICs Report at the website <http://www2.goldmansachs.com/insight/research/reports/99.pdf> to create this table.

United States has recently been seeking to make India a strategic partner to counterbalance and possibly contain Chinese military power. “India’s military capabilities are now more realistically seen for what they are: limited, but highly professional, and thus capable of significant growth. Both India and the United States keep a wary eye on China...” (Cohen, Stephen 51). The slow military buildup of Chinese forces, coupled with rising military spending as a percentage of their ever-growing GDP, has alarmed many observers in the U.S. and been the subject of much scholarly discussion. In August 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stated in a New York Times interview that “the Chinese military modernization looks outsized for its regional interests and ... that is something that has to be watched” (Blasko 263).

Another important point to stress is that China and India are also both well-known for operating outside of the dominant norms of international politics. During the Cold War, India regularly aligned itself against the capitalist western bloc, while also remaining independent from Soviet control or influence. Though this move made the U.S. and its allies unwilling to cooperate with the Indians, India gained a strong leadership role among other countries that wished to stay out of the argument between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. India’s unwillingness to abide by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is another example of its disregard for international norms that do not coincide with Indian interests or that seek to limit Indian sovereignty. China also has been a country that has shifted alliances and gone against international norms to gain advantages over perceived enemies and threats. The Sino-Soviet split, which began in 1959 and persisted more or less throughout the remainder of the Cold War, is representative of China’s unwillingness to follow the lead of another nation unless the interest of the Chinese Communist Party is preserved and the objectives of their ideology can also be met.



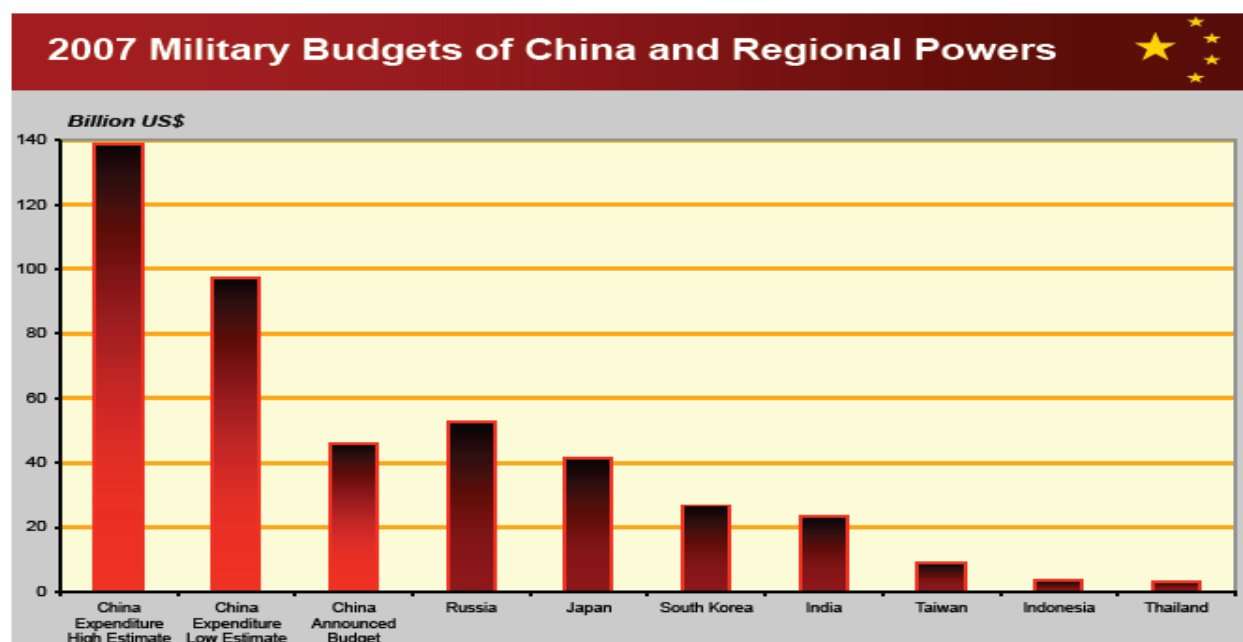
*The Case for China*

When speaking of advantages in seeking global hegemony, that China is a very powerful military force within the Asian sphere is a factor that cannot be disregarded. The People's Liberation Army battled the United States to a draw on the Korean Peninsula in the 1950s, and has maintained absolute control over a very large geographical area for the last sixty years. In seeking to monitor PLA capabilities, since the year 2000 the United States Congress has asked for annual updates from the Department of Defense on the status of China's military, and the potential threat that they pose to U.S. power in the region. The somewhat larger and more comprehensive 2006 U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review states that, "of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential to compete militarily with the United States and field disruptive military tech that could over time offset traditional US military advantages absent US counterstrategies" (Rumsfeld 29). Figures that state China's military strength also support the claim that China has the potential to challenge any other state within the Asian sphere. The United States government has also diligently tracked China's spending on military growth and development and to some analysts and top officials at the Pentagon — including the current and recently departed Secretaries of Defense — the numbers are alarming.

The 2008 Annual Report to Congress on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China states that in August 2007, President Hu JinTao "called for accelerating the modernization of weapons and equipment, enhancing personnel training, and strengthening combat skills" (Gates 2). A number of unsupported claims, distortions, and omissions within the QDR and the Annual Report to Congress however, have led some to believe that these documents are being used as tools to promote U.S. primacy under the Bush administration. For example, note the

discrepancy in Table 3 below, between the budget announced by the Chinese government, and the high and low estimates projected by the Department of Defense.

Figure 2<sup>3</sup>



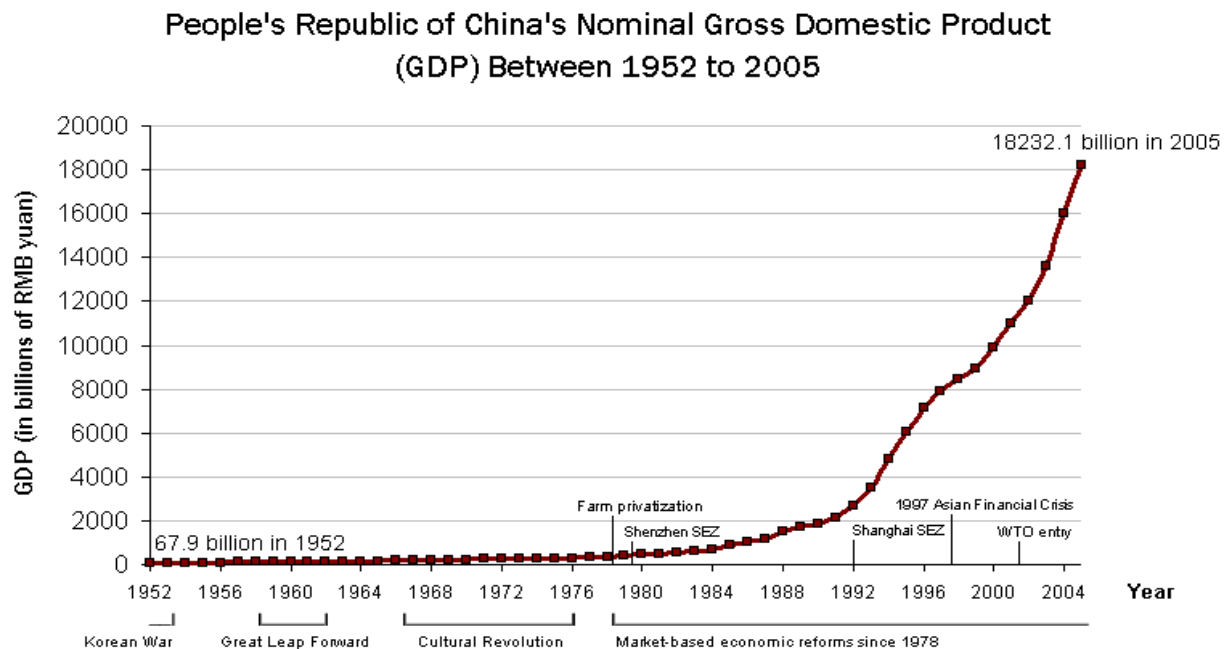
Regardless of these incongruities, even China's official statement shows a larger expenditure than that of any other Asian nation other than Russia. For this reason, and when comparing the sheer size and capabilities of China's military with that of other "major and emerging powers," it is obvious that with 1.25 million personnel, 6,700 tanks, and 2,250 jet fighters and attack/bomber aircraft, the Chinese military is a formidable force.

One of the great strengths of the Chinese military, and of the Chinese nation in general, has always been its huge population. Since the earliest accounts written by travelers of the Silk Road and into the present day, Westerners have almost always identified China with teeming masses of humanity laboring to scrape a living out from their terraced lands. In the twentieth century, China was able to utilize a gigantic population to fulfill the needs of the global economy

<sup>3</sup> Annual Report to Congress: Military Power of the People's Republic of China, 2008. Page 33.  
<http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/china.html>.

by supplying cheap labor to the multinational corporations of the world. Throughout the late 1990s international businessmen spoke of the “China price” as the unbeatably low cost of producing goods in Chinese factories because of the overabundance of labor and the willingness of manual laborers to work for extraordinarily low wages. These trends have driven China’s growth for the past thirty years (see table below) and continue to serve as a source of China’s success in the international economic system now.

Figure 3<sup>4</sup>



Another advantage of China’s very large population that has contributed to the increasing dominance of Chinese businesses is the existence of a large Chinese Diaspora. Whether they choose to become citizens of a new country or to remain Chinese citizens, many people of Chinese descent live overseas. These large groups include those in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, the United States, and Europe. The Chinese Diaspora has long

<sup>4</sup> Scatter graph of PRC GDP between 1952 and 2005, based on publicly available nominal GDP data published by the People's Republic of China and compiled by Hitotsubashi University (Japan) and confirmed by economic indicator statistics from the World Bank. Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Prc1952-2005gdp.gif>.

been a group of well-educated and well-trained people, some of the best that China has to offer, and traditionally have been very financially successful when compared with the vast majority of those in China. Many overseas Chinese, especially those living in other Asian nations and Taiwan, maintain strong ties to their native homes and extended families still living in China. As the Chinese economy has grown, and as the Communist Party has opened China to foreign trade and investment, these groups have often been the first and most dedicated foreign investors, utilizing their social networks and familiarity with China as an advantage in seeking the best business opportunities available. As seen in the table below, steady growth has been accomplished through market reforms that have allowed outside investors, most of whom were, at least in the initial years, people of Chinese descent living overseas.

Despite China's comparative advantage in low wage labor, and large sources of foreign direct investment, many Chinese companies are beginning to understand that competition on the international level requires that China not just produce goods, but that Chinese companies also produce services and brands that will allow their economic power to extend over the long term. "It is less the goods than the brand names that do the work, for they convey life-style images that alter perception and challenge behavior (Barber, Jihad Vs. McWorld). Chinese businesses are dynamic and flexible, and as business continues to boom, leaders are shifting their focus away from labor-intensive work. Chinese business owners already conceive of the next phase in their growth as one where they are able to market global brand names that are internationally renowned and recognized.

A final economic advantage that China maintains that will allow it to compete at the international level in the next fifty years, and that may pose a threat to U.S. hegemony, is the tight control that the Communist Party holds over information and media within the country. As

Benjamin Barber explains, the opening of markets and the rise of capitalism in China has not necessarily meant that an open society has been allowed to flourish. The Chinese recognize that:

“In all this high-tech commercial world there is nothing that looks particularly democratic. It lends itself to surveillance as well as liberty, to new forms of manipulation and covert control as well as new kinds of participation, to skewed, unjust market outcomes as well as greater productivity. The consumer society and the open society are not quite synonymous. Capitalism and democracy have a relationship, but it is something less than a marriage” (Barber, *Jihad Vs. McWorld*).

Whether or not the Chinese Communist Party will allow society to become more open, and potentially democratic, remains to be seen, but at present it appears that China is certainly capable of maintaining tight control over information within its borders while also allowing capitalism and a relatively free market economy to flourish.

### *The Case against China*

When considering the rise of China we must be careful not to overstate the importance of economics because “it is deceptive to measure success purely in terms of economic growth rates, especially as it is doubtful whether they can be projected more than a few years into the future” (Amin 26). Much of China’s potential success in the future, as seen in the advantages listed above, relies heavily on the economic success that it has experienced over the last two decades. Extrapolating that China will certainly achieve the status of international hegemon by 2030 because it has enjoyed economic success since 1980 is similar to the erroneous argument — much lauded throughout the 1980s — that Japan would soon rise to hegemonic status. Therefore,

rather than herald the reign of a new hegemon too early, we must also consider the barriers that exist to block China from achieving its goal and rising to preeminent status on the world stage.

I agree with Samir Amin, author of “Beyond U.S. Hegemony,” who states that “the legacy of the Chinese Revolution will continue to carry considerable positive weight,” in the future of Chinese society and politics (Amin 41). Where we differ however, is that Mr. Amin is referring to the Communist revolution in 1919. I refer instead to the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 that established a democratic political system and the basic freedoms known in the West. The politically oppressive Chinese Communist Party, on the other hand, will remain a burden to Chinese society for the foreseeable future. And while the CCP has been able to provide exceptional levels of balanced economic growth and massive and generally successful urbanization (200 million new city residents), it is not long before the new middle class of Chinese citizens begins to clamor for those basic human rights guaranteed by the 1911 revolution to be restored. In a telegram from Egypt to his Home Secretary Herbert Morrison, Winston Churchill once wrote that “the power of the Executive to cast a man in prison without formulating any charge known to the law, and particularly to deny him the judgment of his peers is in the highest degree odious and is the foundation of all totalitarian government, whether Nazi or Communist.” Churchill’s statement begs the question, just how long can the Chinese Communists keep the social cauldron — that grows hotter with resentment and dissent every day — from ultimately boiling over?

One indicator of the peril that the CCP faces is that the “number of ‘collective incidents’ — a euphemism for popular protests — has jumped tenfold in the past dozen years, from 8,706 in 1993 to 87,000 in 2005...” (Li 250). Ironically, this rise in social unrest can be directly attributed to China’s success. As Chinese citizens have grown more prosperous and gained more

education, they have also sought access to information outside of the state-run and state-approved media. Chinese citizens are growing more aware of the widening gap between different classes of people — rich vs. poor, city vs. rural, coastal vs. interior, Party member vs. non-Party member — as well as the discrimination suffered by those who are unwilling to toe the Communist Party line. For example:

“The constitution grants Chinese citizens freedom of assembly, of procession, and of demonstration. These freedoms, however, exist almost exclusively on paper. The 1989 Law on Assembly, Procession, and Demonstration requires that all demonstrators obtain police approval in advance. But the police rarely grant such a permit. A group of petitioners from Hunan, for instance, applied to the Beijing City Public Security Bureau in 2003 to hold a peaceful demonstration in Tiananmen Square. The application, in the words of a cosigner, was ‘like a clay ox entering the sea’ — never to be heard from again. The petitioners went ahead with the demonstration, only to be rounded up immediately by the police as soon as they knelt down in front of the Monument to the People’s Heroes” (Li 251).

Another example of this state of unrest and the potential for disaster that exists is the Tibetan riots that occurred in spring 2008. Accusations of “cultural genocide” from the Dalai Lama and other Tibetans within China are just the beginning of a long list of claims by minority groups that could upset the Communist Party order in Chinese society. The Party is all too wary of such groups: the Falun Gong, Muslim Uighur separatists from XinJiang, Tibetan separatists, underground Christian churches, supporters of Taiwan independence, supporters of democracy and greater autonomy in Hong Kong — all of these groups pose a threat to China’s internal

stability, and a challenge for the Communist Party to maintain its legitimacy and control over the state apparatus, the government, and society.

Political and social repression is a problem that is inextricably tied to weak democratic institutions within China. China's Communist Party recognizes the threats that dissenting voices pose to it, but another important factor that Party members are aware of is that a relatively closed society contributes to the frustration of groups. The CCP maintains a repressive society characterized by low levels of participation in democratic institutions, high levels of repressed speech, a highly censored press, and permits people to assemble and worship only with a license from the government. Democratic institutions could offer Chinese citizens the opportunity to express their ideas about governance as voters and candidates within the system. Debate and discussion surrounding democratic elections and other functions of a democratic system could also contribute to the ability of citizens to release their frustration and express their legitimate ideas about society, the government, and the state.

Frustration arises when groups are particularly ambivalent toward the Communist government and sometimes only wish to engage in dialogue and have their voice heard. But when the government perceives a larger threat than actually exists in reality and officials overreact and repress groups according to those misperceptions, groups begin to strive even harder to ensure that their voices are heard and to oppose the regime. The Party is not without social acumen however — they have maintained power for the last 70 years, after all — and top officials are beginning to call for the social reforms and political reforms that are necessary to ensure the Party's continued rule. The need for internal political stability is vital to the ability of a hegemon to project military power, exercise economic power, and to produce cultural values and ideas that will have a significant influence on the international order. Until these reforms are



actually implemented and take hold, China will remain too internally unstable to challenge U.S. hegemony.

Weak adherence to the rule of law within China also presents a major obstacle to success in challenging the United States. Within the country as well as within international organizations to which China belongs, adherence to the rule of law and greater respect for standards and norms must increase. An example of this is widespread corruption among party members and government officials at all levels. Corruption, as an indicator of weak observance of the rule of law, shows that China's ability to pursue hegemony is limited, as graft problems remain prevalent. Mistrust or lack of faith in the rule of law is also tied, albeit much more loosely, to the lack of democratic institutions and accountability of government officials in China. Party leaders have focused almost entirely on economic reforms and on the transition to a market economy for the last twenty years. As a result Chinese businesses have grown rich and, with no oversight from voters and other democratic groups that hold officials to account, government officials have grown used to accepting bribes and peddling influence to enlarge their bank accounts. As economic success has attracted new wealth, new ideas about money, and new values to Chinese culture, the CCP will have to adapt and allow social reforms to take place over the course of the next two or three decades. The Chinese government will have to implement stronger enforcement of the rule of law, while also allowing wider exercise of political freedoms to ensure that Chinese society and politics become as strong as the Chinese economy. Simply rooting out corruption overnight is not possible and as long as the rule of law remains weak and social inequality remains high, China will have difficulty pursuing a strategy that leads to hegemony.

While all of the examples cited above describe political and social obstacles impeding China's path to hegemony, an aging population that is set to grow quickly over the course of the

next twenty years will have a negative effect on economic growth as well. China may not be able to maintain the economic strength that has allowed such rapid progress over the last twenty years because of the large number of people who will grow old and need support in the coming years. “China has benefited from strong raw labor growth from the late 1970s until now, but the future demographic outlook suggests that the growth of the labor force will slow and ultimately decline after 2030” (Qiao 47). Goldman Sachs provides two reasons why these changes are likely to occur. First, increased longevity, as a result of greater access to healthier foods, better healthcare, and increased education about diet and exercise, is raising the number of elderly. Second, the one-child policy has significantly slowed the growth rate, creating a severe shortage of young people.

The repercussions of an aging population for China’s workforce growth, and its ability to remain competitive in the international economic sector, are immediate and significant. When more workers reach retirement age and growth of the young adult population begins to slow, the dependent-per-worker ratio will increase and earnings that Chinese laborers have been able to save in recent years will be spent caring for the elderly. As a result, analysts predict that China will become a developed country no later than 2030, but that it will still be poorer than either the U.S. or Japan. “Data suggests that by the time China becomes an aged society in 2027, it will probably be considered a developed country.... [but] projections suggest China’s per capita GDP will be just \$11,000 in 2030, when the dependency ratio will approach 50%” (Qiao 47). China’s ability to maintain a strong economic position, as stated above, is vital to its ability to build military power and wield influence throughout Asia and the rest of the world. An aging population thus becomes a potential roadblock to Chinese hegemony if it hinders economic growth.

*The Case for India*

Making a case for Indian hegemony is similar to making the case for China because it is also a country far removed from Europe, and a nation that has always maintained a very large population. India, like China, has gained recognition as an economic powerhouse in recent years, and appears equipped to leverage those economic gains into social, political, and military advantages that will allow it to exercise greater power during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Indeed, in terms of size alone, geography, population, military capability, and potential for economic growth, “India is the only country that can match China. In fact, its far better demographics mean that the population is likely to be bigger than China’s by 2030” (Lanzeni). The advantages that India possesses in seeking hegemony are similar to those of China; “[India] is currently less urbanised than China, at slightly less than 30%. If its urban population share were to reach 50% over the next 20 years, then that would result in an additional 200mn people or more in cities,” however India has already overcome many of the problems of democratization that China has yet to experience (Poddar).

Democratic institutions independent from colonial rule have characterized the political system of India for the past sixty years. By virtue of British rule over the Indian subcontinent, the political system is largely stable, and democracy and democratic values are relatively well-entrenched. The handover of power after general elections held every five years is as peaceful as can be expected in a modern democracy and domestic confidence in the stability of the system is high. As a result, leading nations around the world also have confidence in the Indian state, which oversees the administration of the most populous democracy on the planet. Both British and American scholars point to India as one of the great successes of the democratic revolution that began with the American and French revolutions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and which continues to

some extent in the present day. India enjoys the respect and confidence of Western nations because of the reliability of its democratic institutions.

Another factor that could help India in a bid to become hegemon is a relatively free and open society with values similar to those promoted in the West. Free speech, a free press, and the freedom to assemble peaceably for demonstrations and protests, are rights that Indians enjoy and exercise. One of the best examples to contrast Indian freedom with Chinese repression is that of the Tibetan Buddhist leader, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. When the Dalai Lama fled Tibet in 1959 to escape the Communist Party in China he sought refuge in India, where he remains to this day. In fact, many Tibetans live freely in India, just across the border from their homeland in Tibet, and protest the actions of the Chinese government while simultaneously seeking reforms that will allow them to return on their terms.

Westerners feel a deep respect and empathy for the non-violence practiced by both the Dalai Lama and India's most celebrated hero, Mahatma Gandhi. Indian culture and values, by virtue of their spread through an open society, appeal to Westerners. Western culture holds Gandhi up as an example of the best way to protest injustice and to seek change. Indeed, one of India's greatest strengths is the legacy of the sage Gandhi, and more importantly the values he exemplified and for which he stood. These values are also expressed through a strong appreciation for the rule of law. "India ranks above its peers in rule of law due to a relatively well-functioning judiciary," and historical experience with the rule of law that has flourished since the end of colonialism (Poddar). The rule of law, democratic institutions, and similar values all contribute to India's ability to identify with and understand the West.

India also benefits from early contact with the West and from British colonial rule because the Indian nation speaks English, the dominant language of the last three hegemonic

cycles. Both British cycles of hegemony, and the current cycle of American hegemony, have propagated the spread of English as a language used by many people around the world who would not otherwise use it. India, though it maintains a society that speaks hundreds of different languages within the confines of its borders, recognizes English as the official language of its government, and many businesspeople and academicians speak it as well.

Familiarity with the English language, as well as with Western culture in general, benefits India in its ability to interact with and understand the West. As a result, the U.S. and other Western powers are increasingly willing to cooperate with India in many fields. This serves India especially well in terms of military relations and their rising ability to project military power. As noted previously, the U.S. is skeptical of China's benevolent intentions in developing military power, but in the case of India the U.S. seems prepared to accept them as a strategic partner that can help to patrol the Asian sphere, increase security in the region, and possibly provide a counterweight to China.

“The Indian Navy (and Coast Guard) are now seen, and see themselves, as a natural partner to the United States and other American allies in a whole range of maritime-related activities.... For the first time the United States is seen as a source of quality ships and advanced naval technologies, and the recent sale of a landing craft is likely to be only the first of many significant transfers. Washington missed the opportunity of providing India with a carrier; an alert Pentagon should not miss such an opportunity again” (Cohen, Stephen 52).

In the spring of 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates visited India in order to deepen the relationship between New Delhi and Washington. The Secretary was also attempting to persuade India to “buy American.” “His arrival comes as New Delhi

decides whether the U.S. firms Lockheed Martin and Boeing, or Russian and European rivals, will win a contract to supply the Indian air force with 126 combat aircraft in a £5 billion deal” (Bedi). Since the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union, India has drifted away from its former strategic ally, Russia, and gravitated to a new partnership with America. Naturally, the United States wishes to ensure that India relies on American products and companies in order to strengthen U.S.-India relations and perpetuate the relationship over the long term.

Growing military cooperation between the U.S. and India has also meant an upward trend in business interactions. “India’s economic growth spurt has attracted strong American corporate interest, and American companies now comprise a significant India lobby in Washington” (Cohen, Stephen 51). India’s ability to deepen economic ties with Washington will surely impact its ability to pursue hegemonic status during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Analysts project that if India is able to maintain recent growth rates of eight percent, and become more closely linked to the U.S. economy, “India will thus become the fastest growing economy out of 34 developed and emerging markets... and the world’s third largest economy by 2020. Moreover, its GDP per capita will double, from roughly USD 2,500 today (at purchasing power parity) to almost USD 5,000 in 2020” (Lanzeni).

Although India suffers from infrastructural and other development problems, discussed below, the Indian economic forecast for the next thirty years looks very good, especially within computer and other advanced technology sectors. “Connectivity and PC penetration is expanding rapidly. India is the world’s fastest-growing market for mobile phones, now adding some 20mn subscriptions a year” (Poddar). In addition, it must be remembered that India has long suffered from problems with infrastructure and deep poverty, and yet growth has continued apace during

the last decade. “India’s current growth rates of around 8% have been achieved without large increases in domestic capital accumulation or foreign direct investment, raising the possibility that increases in investment could boost growth further” (Poddar). Therefore, it seems that regardless of whether India becomes the new Asian hegemon, economic growth will continue to increase Indian standards of living, and allow the Indian government to pursue social reforms and military expansion that strengthen bilateral ties with the United States.

### *The Case against India*

When Westerners think of India, most automatically think of it as a dirty place, usually seen on film and in print. “India is virtually synonymous with poverty in the Western mind, and poverty will remain both a moral and a practical problem and a political embarrassment to any Indian government. More than half of the world’s poorest people live in India...” (Cohen, Stephen, *India Rising*). Understandably, the case against India’s rise as hegemon is a strong one due in large part to the need for infrastructural improvements, the huge population of poor, and a need for basic development assistance in many areas of the country. Winston Churchill once said that he could see “very little glory in an Empire which can rule the waves but is unable to flush its own sewers.” Of course, Mr. Churchill was speaking of the British Empire, but his words are useful in considering India’s rise and the possibility for Indian hegemony in the face of the deep problems India faces. “‘Infrastructure has really been the Achilles’ heel of trying to develop a more robust manufacturing sector in India,’ says Rick Rossow, director of operations for the US-India Business Council” (Schneider).

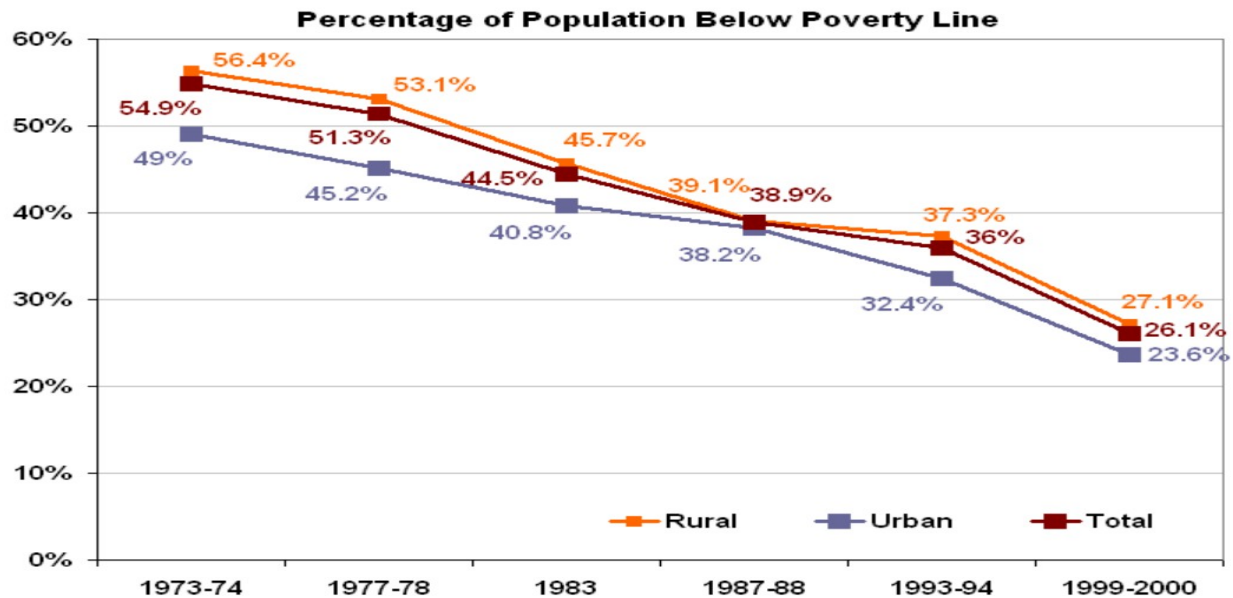
Analysts and observers as well as Indian government officials are aware of the dire need to construct roads, highways, electrical lines, sewers and other basic plumbing, and garbage disposal facilities. “Electricity supply, highways, ports, airports and railroads all suffer from

years of neglect, insufficient investment and political and bureaucratic constraints on development.... China's large direct investment in these spheres is a major reason why it, and not India, has emerged as a manufacturing and exporting giant" (Schneider). The economic gains that India has made will contribute to investment in public goods such as roads and railways, but obtaining private sector financing and attracting foreign direct investment will also be important if India intends to truly catch up with and surpass China and the United States.

In order to become a hegemon, India will also have to overcome a slow, lethargic bureaucracy that strangles many good development proposals and that is slow to implement crucial programs. Politicians in India, perhaps more than in any other democracy in the world, pass legislation that dedicates money to projects, only to see time and money run out on those projects before they are ever effectively implemented. Since the era of British colonial rule, Indian bureaucracy has been notorious for its sluggishness and complexity, and some argue that the entangling web of government bureaucracy had much more to do with the "Hindu rate of growth" than Hinduism or any other ideology. Indeed, one of the major differences between Indian democracy and Chinese dictatorship has been the ability of the Chinese to force progress through the bureaucratic system.

"China's... Communist dictatorship can enact vast infrastructure and other projects with scant regard to the objections or concerns of citizens. In India's federalist, parliamentary democracy, however, governments ignore the electorate and local business interests at their peril....While Beijing has regularly launched massive infrastructure or industrial development projects that force countless rural residents off their land, such an approach would be political suicide in India" (Schneider).



Figure 4<sup>5</sup>

Finally, one of the most important factors dragging down the prospect of Indian hegemony is the huge number of Indians living in poverty and the caste system that persists in many parts of the country, hampering social interaction and social mobility. According to United Nations estimates, and as shown in the table above, “while poverty rates in South Asia have decreased in recent years, more than 400 million people remain under the poverty line and account for nearly 40 percent of the world’s poor” (Wax). Additionally, according to the U.N. agency for children, UNICEF, Indian children suffer from under-nutrition at almost double the rate of children in Sub-Saharan Africa. If India is ever to become a superpower, let alone hegemonic challenger to the United States, its citizens must at least have access to the food they require to work and live.

An example of the degree to which the caste system plays a role in Indian life is that of a man who, “incensed that a six-year-old girl chose to walk through a path reserved for upper caste

<sup>5</sup> This chart was found at the website [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:BPL\\_Data\\_GOI\\_.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:BPL_Data_GOI_.png), and it cites the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India. Central Statistical Organization ([http://mospi.nic.in/mospi\\_cso\\_rept\\_pubn.htm](http://mospi.nic.in/mospi_cso_rept_pubn.htm)) as the original source for this data.

villagers, pushed her into burning embers... [causing her to be] seriously burned” (Girl Thrown on Fire for Being ‘Low Class’). Despite the fact that the Indian constitution has outlawed caste-based discrimination, and barriers have mostly been broken down in the cities, prejudice persists in rural areas across the country, and many in the lower castes find it difficult to find work in the service or technology sectors. “Although India’s soaring economy has generated service-sector jobs, most of the workforce is still made up of men who lay bricks, sell fruit, or are hired as day laborers” (Wax). And though some within the lowest caste, the Dalit, are beginning to find jobs in spheres traditionally unavailable to them such as acting and politics, India still has a long road ahead before equality becomes a reality.

Perhaps the only issue of greater concern to Indian stability than the sheer size of the poor population is that the potential for greater social equality does exist, but as India has grown richer during the last decade or more, wealth is very unevenly spread. “In India, thirty-six people reportedly are collectively worth \$191 billion, while according the Asian Development Bank more than 800 million people earn less than two dollars per day” (Bajoria). Frustration at growing social inequality could quickly lead to destabilizing social unrest in a country where riots and other forms of protest already occur on a regular basis. India must, therefore, strive to achieve a balance between the desire for domestic development, economic growth, and political considerations. Though attention to these factors will likely lead to stable and consistent growth over the long term and may ultimately lead to a stronger Indian state in the future, they may also have the effect of hampering growth in the short term and preventing India’s rise to hegemonic status for quite some time.

*The Prospect of an Asian Hegemon*

Though China has consistently outpaced India in terms of economic growth for the last twenty years and does have a slightly larger population, the two countries are quite evenly matched relative to one another. Thus, it seems odd that the perceived threat of Chinese hegemony is so high and the threat of an Indian hegemony is disregarded. Is it that India is not a threat? Or is it that neither country is a threat but Western perceptions and identity have created an enemy where none actually exists?

I remain deeply skeptical that either India or China has the ability to reach the status of hegemon during the next century. It is my opinion that I will continue to live in a world run on the auspices of United States hegemony for the rest of my life — unless I live to be 125; which modern technology may soon place within the realm of possibility, but by the time I am that old, all bets are off. Neither India nor China will challenge U.S. hegemony within the next century for a few key reasons. U.S. military power is clearly too far advanced in terms of technology and funding for any nation to challenge U.S. might in a conventional war. It would take an incredible disaster to wipe out the military power of the United States and thus depose the current hegemon. From a realist perspective, the U.S. will be able to maintain a grip on hegemony well into the future based on the strength of its military power.

An alternative viewpoint argues that it may be possible for China or India to challenge the United States in economic terms because a U.S. financial crisis could potentially destroy the might of the United States economy. This argument should not be overstated however, because of the issues regarding both the Chinese and Indian economy discussed above. But, although China or India may begin to have a higher GDP than the U.S. within the next twenty to thirty years, the global economy is so reliant on the success of the U.S. economy, and the U.S.

economy is so deeply intertwined within the international system, that it would be very difficult to replace. The U.S. economy is very diverse; broad-based in such a way that completely dislodging the U.S. from its role as the world's leading economic power would actually take many decades to accomplish.

Finally, returning to a constructivist point of view, it will be very difficult for China to unseat the United States as hegemon because of Western identities and ideologies that are entrenched within the international system established during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and expanded by U.S. hegemony. The West, particularly the United States, sees China as a remaining bastion of Communism that cannot be trusted. Many Americans still see China as a far away and exotic land, the quintessential “other,” juxtaposed to the Western “us.”

I am similarly skeptical that India will be able to challenge the United States, but I am inclined to give India the benefit of the doubt over China for two reasons that relate directly to issues of identity. First, India has a strong connection with the United Kingdom — the current “grandfather hegemon.” The cold marble halls of the Communist Party Congress in Beijing have never been impressive to Westerners, and Western democracies are more likely to be enamored of India's democratic institutions — languid and bloated as they may be — when compared to the Chinese Communist Party and their tiresome portrait of Chairman Mao overlooking Tiananmen Square.

Second, because India is a democratic nation and nominally an English speaking country, she will be more able to adapt to the standards of international leadership developed under the UK and the U.S. while still providing a change in world leadership. Americans and other citizens of democratic nations largely admire India's strength as the world's most populous democracy. This means that if India were able to rise up and become a hegemonic challenger, most of the

world, both democratic and non-democratic nations, will perceive Indian hegemony as the legitimate successor to the international norms established over the past three hundred years by British and American hegemony. Furthermore, India has courted the former Third World countries, with at least as much success as China, and should be able to use their alignment with, and previously successful leadership within, the Third World as a political advantage.

Despite India's advantages over China and the steady growth of both nations, perceptions remain important and the view in the West that India and China remain inferior to the more-civilized Western countries that once dominated the Asian region will have to change before either can truly become a strong world power. "Whether or not India and China join the ranks of major powers... the United States will need to gain a deeper understanding of Asia. That will require relinquishing a number of stereotypes that have long governed the American view" (Cohen, Stephen, *India Rising*). Values, ideas, and the perceptions and identity that go along with them remain the most important barriers to growth in many parts of the world, especially Asia, and as stated by Roger Cohen of the *International Herald Tribune*, "in the end, transformation is not about numbers. It's about the mind."

## **U.S. Hegemony**

This section discusses current challenges to U.S. hegemony, particularly threats resulting from perceptions that U.S. legitimacy is weak, and avenues that the U.S. must pursue in order to maintain legitimate authority as hegemon. The United States must seek renewed legitimacy through one of two methods. The U.S. might seek to strengthen legitimacy by working harder to engage the international community, abide by multilateral agreements, and participate in institutions established under the guidance of U.S. hegemony in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the U.N. and NATO. Alternatively, if the U.S. perceives that conditions have changed and the established world order is incapable of adapting to and dealing with new threats, the U.S. should seek to establish new international institutions and organizations, built around a new international paradigm. Implementation of this plan would also include simultaneous strategic withdrawals from treaties, organizations, and institutions that may limit enhanced perceptions of legitimacy gained from involvement in the new order.

Which technique the U.S. chooses to implement is not important, rather the point of either of these techniques is to refresh the cycle of hegemony without the necessity for a hegemonic war, conceivably with China or India. In either case, the U.S. must consolidate efforts to combat terrorism, seek agreement among strategic allies on divisive topics such as global warming and nuclear proliferation, and solve problems that have afflicted the current global order for decades. The United States should take steps to strengthen its legitimacy and perpetuate U.S. hegemony into the future notwithstanding competition from hegemonic challengers that seek to draw the U.S. into wars that will disrupt the current international order.

As stated above, my most important reference will be to critical theory and constructivism. The need exists for the U.S. to strengthen its legitimacy because the true

foundations for U.S. hegemony lie in the ideational elements that we promote and to which we adhere. The most important reason that the U.S. has been able to rise as a hegemon is the message of values embodied in the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights. These values and ideas have grown from the ideas espoused by scholars of the Enlightenment and the Reformation, to become guiding principles in world affairs. U.S. culture has deeply affected the rest of the world by exporting ideas about freedom of speech and the press, gender and race equality, and principles of democracy. U.S. culture plays an important role in the way that we perceive and interact with the world outside of the United States. The way the United States presents those cultural values in the international community is also very important, and the perceptions held by people around the world have a deep and lasting impact on U.S. hegemony.

#### *The Foundations of U.S. Hegemony*

After World War II the United States established and managed its position by relying on traditional allies to establish treaties and agreements that cemented its hegemony. As John Ikenberry states, the U.S. adopted a series of agreements from 1945 until 1947-48 that aligned most of the democratic nations of the world with one another, and drew a line between the capitalist and communist countries. Numerous agreements were reached to achieve different policy goals. For instance, there were economic treaties to secure the liberal capitalist economic order, there were agreements that locked in military and security relationships, and there were agreements that tied together specific regions (namely Asia and Europe), all of which included the cooperation and participation of the newly crowned hegemon, the United States.

Melvyn P. Leffler states that the U.S. and the allies were even initially willing and eager to work with the U.S.S.R., but it seems that after Roosevelt's death and the economic struggles

in Europe following WWII, the U.S. pushed to carve out a dominant position that put us at odds with the Soviets. The problem was political and most importantly, as argued by David Halberstam in “The Best and the Brightest,” the insiders who advised politicians saw an adversary that could be defined and described in terms that made the U.S.S.R. the ultimate bad guy, which gave them the power to be the good guy domestically and on the international level (Halberstam 6). Living in the post-Cold War era, it is important to notice the parallels to this situation that exist in the rhetoric surrounding the current Global War on Terror announced by the Bush Administration.

Institutionally the United States helped to set up numerous organizations that have influenced the world order over the past fifty years. The Bretton Woods agreement established the capitalist economic order and allowed the United States to maintain a powerhouse economy. As Ikenberry argues, the North Atlantic Treaty helped to lock the United States into a more permanent relationship with Europe, and persuaded the rest of Europe to integrate Germany into their system in order to check resurgent German nationalism. NATO in Europe and the “San Francisco System,” a set of treaties that laid down U.S. security relations with Japan, provided the United States with a platform for a global military presence on land, sea, and in the air. According to Leffler the particular world order that the United States established was set up because it was the most extensive and efficient use of U.S. power that could be achieved at that time. The United States and the rest of the West adopted this particular system in order to block the Soviet Union’s ascendancy and ensure that the U.S. could maintain hegemonic superiority for the foreseeable future.

This order has evolved in tremendous ways in the past sixty years. The Soviet Union broke apart and the Russian government has at least notionally adopted democratic and liberal



capitalist principles. The threat of global communism has largely faded and the United States, at least in the early 1990s, seemed in danger of becoming a less relevant force in the world system. Leffler argues that during the Cold War, U.S. policy tended to focus on military superiority and realist theory, and yet it was American values and culture that allowed the United States to maintain a powerful position and triumph. For all the attention given to hard power issues, it was the skillful use of soft power that won the Cold War, and it seems that the international order has evolved and will continue to evolve to reflect that fact. The United States is one of the most physically dominant and powerful nations that history has ever known. Indeed, “not since Rome has one nation loomed so large above the others” (Nye 1). Yet, despite those marked advantages it is the ideals and values espoused by the U.S. that dictate the current international order will be dominated by nations that are able to persuade others through the use of legitimate and authoritative soft power.

### *International Organizations*

International organizations such as the U.N. must be utilized in order for the U.S. to refresh the hegemonic cycle in its favor. Indeed, the presence of the U.S. as hegemon is vital to the continued existence of these organizations. Kofi Annan’s farewell address at the Truman Library provides strong support for this argument. He provides a list of reasons why the U.N. is important to the legitimacy of U.S. hegemony. Annan states that the U.N. is important because it can help to provide global security, increase global prosperity, protect human rights, and maintain government accountability. Finally he states that the U.N. can do all of these things as a multilateral institution that welcomes diverse perspectives which enhance global understanding (Annan). These statements indicate that U.S. participation and active involvement in the U.N. is

vital to the ability of the U.S. to successfully accomplish these global objectives through a broker that is viewed, even by U.S. adversaries, as a legitimate authority.

In order to maintain hegemony the U.S. must play a more active role in ensuring the success of the U.N. and rely more heavily on diplomatic and economic resources to maintain a dominant position in the world. Annan implied, through his quotation of Truman, that the foundations of our political system provide a basis for the United States to “prove by our acts conclusively that Right Has Might.” As Annan states, our “lead can only be maintained if America remains true to its principles.... When it appears to abandon its own ideals and objectives, its friends abroad are naturally troubled and confused.” The U.N. provides a means for the U.S. to work through legitimate institutions and diplomatic channels to convince world leaders that they must act responsibly within the framework of U.S. hegemony.

One problem with the use of military force in Iraq is that the United States has risked doing as Truman said, that “if we should pay merely lip service to inspiring ideals, and later do violence to simple justice, we would draw down upon us the bitter wrath of generations yet unborn.” Through the use of blunt military force, the United States has lost the moral legitimacy that is the basis for international leadership within the very global order that the United States established. Through disregard for the Declaration of Independence, and by flouting the restraints imposed on the federal government by the Constitution, the United States has unintentionally undermined its own legitimacy and authority around the globe. The United States can withdraw from Iraq and from other foreign military commitments around the globe, while maintaining superpower status and hegemony. In order to rebuild an image of legitimate moral authority and leadership, the United States must cooperate within the framework of the

international system, i.e. through the U.N., other international organizations, and according to international law.

### *The Importance of Culture*

U.S. culture has had a tremendous impact on societies in the rest of the world. Since well before the end of WWII and the dawn of American hegemony, people from around the globe have appreciated American life, and attempted to imitate it. Even now, America is a destination that many wish to experience. “America remains by far the most attractive destination for students, taking 30 percent of the total number of foreign students globally. These advantages will not be easily erased... and while China and India are creating new institutions, it is not that easy to create a world-class university out of whole cloth in a few decades” (Zakaria).

All of the cultural products produced by the U.S. and consumed by other nations have had the effect of promoting U.S. culture and increasing the influence of the American system, but in some cases they have also led to an erosion of the values held by other cultures. As Benjamin Barber points out in “Jihad vs. McWorld,” for instance, in some societies the strength of U.S. culture has spawned an enormous backlash, especially in the Muslim world where many people remain especially sensitive to perceived attacks upon their conservative moral values. In such societies this has also caused incredible frustration because there is no one to blame directly.

The inability of certain societies to control information that flows into their country and influences their people, and the seeming ease with which the U.S. is able to produce information, is very frustrating for leaders, and is one explanation for the acts of terrorism that occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Undoubtedly, culture can be just as dangerous as military power when employed against subjugated or weaker societies. It is interesting to note that a quote from

Haunani-Kay Trask, a Hawai'ian professor, could be similarly applied to numerous cultures around the world that have suffered — or have at least perceived some grievance — under the oppression of stronger cultures. Of American cultural imperialism he wrote:

In our subjugation to American control, we have suffered what other displaced, dislocated people, such as the Palestinians and the Irish of Northern Ireland, have suffered: We have been occupied by a colonial power whose every law, policy, cultural institution, and collective behavior entrench foreign ways of life in our land and on our people. From the banning of our language and the theft of our sovereignty to forcible territorial incorporation in 1959 as a state of the United States, we have lived as a subordinated Native people in our ancestral home” (Trask 23).

### *Combating Terrorism*

It is easy to see the link between perceptions of both grievance and cultural domination, and the desire to lash out at the perceived oppressor. Richard Betts, an expert on American foreign policy, has written about the connection between U.S. campaigns overseas and possible attacks on the United States with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons: “American activism to guarantee international stability is, paradoxically, the prime source of American vulnerability.” Elaborating, he notes that, “today, as the only nation acting to police areas outside its own region, the United States makes itself a target for states or groups whose aspirations are frustrated by U.S. power” (Betts).

Modern terrorism poses a serious threat to the world hegemonic order. If terrorists are able to undermine the legitimacy of the hegemonic order (and the foundational perceptions that underwrite that legitimacy), then they will be able to overthrow governments and possibly the

entire world order. Granted, it would take a long time, a lot of effort, and would cost more to completely disrupt the entire hegemonic order than terrorists can afford to pay. However, the possibility remains for disruption, and possible collapse of the world order.

The theory of a global hegemonic challenger is also important to consider here, not because terrorist organizations present a threat as hegemonic challengers, but because a hegemon that is drawn into a global war against terrorists may find its legitimacy questioned on the world stage. Sudden economic problems, or some other such crisis, might lead to further reductions in hegemonic power and finally, a third-party hegemonic challenger may see an opportunity to strengthen its influence and take control of global affairs. This is a very simplistic scenario, but parallels exist in comparison with the current U.S. “Global War on Terror,” flagging U.S. legitimacy as a hegemon according to world opinion polls, and perceived threats from hegemonic challengers such as China.

It behooves the United States to take a measured approach to fighting terrorists, but certainly does not call for us to stop fighting. “Adopting a restrained foreign policy has nothing to do with appeasing terrorists. Terrorist acts are morally outrageous and we should punish terrorists whenever possible... [but] promiscuous military intervention by the United States—which can result in lost lives, high financial costs, and open-ended commitments—is not necessary” (Gholz). The U.S. response to terrorism during the Bush administration — which has set the tone for how other nations respond — has exaggerated the nature of the threat and relied inordinately on the use of force as the preferred means to defeat terrorism. What many have failed to realize is that power derived from conventional military forces does not increase a country’s ability to combat terrorism. Focusing on military power is insufficient. This is a struggle best defined and battled through the use of constructivist arguments about legitimacy,

because the basic purpose of terrorism is to undermine the legitimate authority of governing bodies. The key then, to a U.S. victory in fighting against terrorism is likewise based on undermining the legitimacy of the terrorists and influencing perceptions about their ideology. U.S. victory has less to do with military might or economic momentum, and much to do with world perceptions about U.S. leadership. I agree with Philip Gordon, who states that:

“Victory will come not when foreign leaders accept certain terms but when political changes erode and ultimately undermine support for the ideology and strategy of those determined to destroy the United States. It will come not when Washington and its allies kill or capture all terrorists or potential terrorists but when the ideology the terrorists espouse is discredited, when their tactics are seen to have failed, and when they come to find more promising paths to the dignity, respect, and opportunities they crave... At that point, even the terrorists will realize their violence is futile.”

Although the threat from terrorism is currently overblown and the Bush administration played right into the hands of al-Qaeda, future administrations will have the opportunity to adjust course and correct mistakes that were made immediately following September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The Bush administration chose to adopt policies that strengthened U.S. power in the short term but that have already begun to erode U.S. legitimacy, authority, and power, in the long term. A future president must work harder to engage Congress, guarantee civil liberties to U.S. citizens, and ensure that U.S. values of tolerance and liberty, as described by Tony Blair, are exported abroad more readily than U.S. troops or weapons.

*The Future of U.S. Hegemony*

The war in Iraq presents a situation where the United States has flexed its muscle and shown that it has a strong military force. This show of force increased the legitimacy of U.S. hard power immediately following September 11<sup>th</sup>, however our engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan have already begun to limit our ability to project power. The U.S. military is suffering the brunt of the burden in the Global War on Terror, and the U.S. public is beginning to see that the fruit of their effort is not worth the lives that have been damaged and lost. The U.S. must abandon the use of military expeditions abroad as the preferred method for resolving international crises, because “if keeping soldiers alive is the top goal that could be achieved simply by staying at home” (Ricks 281). While our engagement in Iraq has led to a gradual decline in U.S. military power over the past decade, this particular war will not have such far-reaching effects that U.S. power will be hindered over the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, provided that we take the right steps to disengage from the conflict.

Ending the war in Iraq gives the U.S. the opportunity to consolidate the military and overcome setbacks brought on by the war. The article “Hobbled Hegemon” from the Economist, argues that there are numerous “examples of American military forces spread thin and beyond capacity.” The future of U.S. hegemony lies in the ability of the U.S. to consolidate military power, overcome the current economic troubles plaguing the U.S. economy, and regain legitimacy within the framework of established American hegemony.

In addition to shrinking the military, the U.S. must simultaneously increase the presence of “soft power” forces around the globe. U.S. interests would be better served by an increase in diplomacy, which requires an increase in the size and importance of the State Department. One very important point is the need to increase the exposure and the importance of the State Department and State Department officials. “In true American fashion, we must build a

diplomatic-industrial complex. Europe and China all but personify business-government collusion, so let State raise money from Wall Street as it puts together regional aid and investment packages. American foreign policy must be substantially more than what the U.S. government directs” (Khanna). But in order to allow the Defense Department to stop sending soldiers to do jobs that State should be doing, barriers that exist at the Department of State must be taken down. A new emphasis must be placed on the Peace Corps and USAID, with greater accessibility to low-level jobs in those organizations. Students in high school that will graduate soon should not be heading for the Marine or Army recruiting station, but rather the local office of the State Department recruiter. Positions must be created to allow recent high school graduates who want to do their part to serve their country the option of choosing to be an aid worker overseas or a member of an emergency relief team that deploys to disaster zones, rather than a soldier, sailor, or marine in the United States military.

In order to ensure that the U.S. hegemonic order regains strength to endure well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, the U.S. must seek to engage in resolving issues that the international system was designed to handle. For instance, the United States should seek to resolve the Korean War once and for all; to reunite North and South Korea, and withdraw American troops from the Korean Peninsula. “South Korea’s economy is about 30 times that of the North and no longer needs a U.S. security guarantee. With the Soviet Union long relegated to the trash bin of history, no longer must the United States subsidize European defense through retaining the outdated NATO alliance and stationing U.S. forces in Europe” (Eland). The U.S. should also seek to engage in diplomatic discussions with the ruling Chinese Communist Party and the Taiwanese government to arbitrate a settlement between these two belligerents. Still another example is that of Israel and Palestine, where the United States must stop providing preferential treatment to



Israel and make serious attempts to broker a lasting peace that is acceptable to all sides. Token attempts by U.S. presidents to broker a peace in their second term — usually during the “lame duck” stage — no longer provide legitimacy to U.S. efforts in resolving this issue.

This paper recommends that the best means for the United States to refresh the hegemonic cycle and ensure continued hegemony, is by “a return to American traditions — for the U.S. military to heed its values and history, for the American people to remember their roots, for the executive branch to be more inclusive in going to war, and especially for Congress to exercise the oversight function designed for it by our founding fathers” (Ricks 451). The U.S., in order to ensure that the current hegemonic order maintains legitimacy during the next century, must consolidate military power by disengaging from costly foreign expeditions. “The Iraq war is now a painful failure for the United States, [but] the Iraq debacle creates an opportunity to reassess longstanding policies. The best way to increase our security and the stability of the international order is, paradoxically, to drastically reduce our military presence around the world” (Gholz). But above all, to maintain legitimacy despite a smaller global military presence, the U.S. must utilize the international political and economic structures that were originally designed to embody and promote U.S. values and ideals. Renewed, even heightened engagement in multilateral organizations and utilization of international institutions will ensure that the entrenchment of U.S. hegemony runs even deeper throughout the world in the next century.

## **Conclusion**

The widely held view that China is rising and the United States is on the decline is largely a figment of our identity and perceptions about the world around us, rather than a substantive fact based on logic, reason, or reality. Perceptions shape reality, but it is not important that “the U.S.... contain China, and it doesn’t need to fight China either. Nor does it need to prepare to gracefully let China replace the United States as the world’s leading power” (Mead). During the 21st century, the challenge for U.S. foreign policy will be to manage our role by strengthening perceptions that U.S. hegemony is legitimate. China’s rise to the status of a great power is, after all, only one piece of the puzzle in Asia — India is also marching along rapidly, with many smaller countries in the region also doing very well.

“China is rising, but so is India. So are Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and Korea.... Japan will remain a powerful economic, military and technological force for the foreseeable future. Taiwan is not sinking into the sea; Australia is prospering as never before. Bangladesh is beginning to industrialize; even Myanmar, or Burma, may possibly follow the road to prosperity through global economic integration that has made East and South Asia growth rates the envy of the world” (Mead).

The rise of the European Union as a global superpower must not be overlooked either, and though some scholars believe that there is a necessity for the United States to attempt to contain or control China, this is a mistake. India and China, Japan and Korea, are all powerful enough to counterbalance one another without U.S. interference. The important role for the United States is to continue to set a calm and assertive tone that maintains a peaceful and stable

world. “With the U.S.... prepared to defend the balance of power in Asia, it seems unlikely that China, or any other nation, will waste time and money in the effort to overturn it” (Mead).

The role of American hegemony in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, if it is to continue, must be to maintain strong democratic traditions, uphold the values of freedom, justice, and equality and to promote those values in our interactions with other nations. We must accomplish this through adherence to the founding principles of the republic, which will help the U.S. to maintain legitimacy at home and abroad. In managing and promoting American hegemony, we must make use of international organizations that are transparent, inclusive, and effective in managing situations that involve both peace and war. The U.S. must persuade other countries to engage with the international system and convince nations of the success that can be achieved by implementing the principles of the democratic revolution. In doing so, all nations will come to understand that the interests of their own people — as well as the interests of all mankind — are best served as they willingly participate in regional and international organizations. They will begin or continue to make the transition to a free, open and global society and we will be able to create a more prosperous, healthy, well-educated, and glorious world.

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