**In the Dreadnought’sShadow**

***Comparing China’s Rise with the Anglo-German Naval Arms Race***

"Then there awoke in me the wish to build ships of my own like these someday, and when I was grown up to possess as fine a navy as the English." **Kaiser Wilhelm II**, June 1904 [[1]](#footnote--1)

"Today it is our turn to speak and their turn to listen." **Chinese Diplomat Ling Qing**, 1985 [[2]](#footnote-0)

 “I christen you *Dreadnought*.” With that declaration and a shattered bottle of Australian wine, King Edward of Britain let slip the last dry dock mooring of a magnificent new vessel.[[3]](#footnote-1) The 18,000-ton, 527 foot, steam turbine-powered, all-big-gun battleship then slid down the ramp and into the waters of Portsmouth harbour, her hulking lines already the pride of the Royal Navy. The *Dreadnought* was a marvel of engineering, so revolutionary in design that she immediately consigned all of her contemporaries to obsolescence. The ship also served as a symbol. She was built as the consequence of an intense rivalry, one that had broken out between two nations who seemed destined more towards friendship than enmity. Indeed, longstanding historical, economic, and political ties could have been expected to keep Britain and Germany as allies. Their Royal houses, for example, were tied by common blood; Kaiser Wilhelm II was one of Queen Victoria’s many grandchildren. Yet as the 20th century progressed, tensions between the two nations rose sharply. Germany’s leap from also-ran to fully-industrialized *Weltmacht*, or great power, deeply unhinged the state of European strategic affairs. Many Germans chaffed under Britain’s privileged international position, feeling Germany’s place in the world order poorly befitted her newfound economic stature. Meanwhile in Britain, few viewed fast-rising Germany as a welcome peer; many more saw it as a menacing challenger.

Although the Great War of 1914-18 had many causes, the crescendo of Anglo-German antagonism—reflected in the naval arms race of which the *Dreadnought* was a crucial salvo—played a significant part.[[4]](#footnote-2) This fact is worrisome for some observers of the modern-day rise of China, for they fear that history is repeating itself. Robert Kagan, for example, worries that the growth and behavior of China closely mirrors that of Wilhelmine Germany.[[5]](#footnote-3) Much as Germany sought to challenge Britain’s hegemonic position in the years leading up to World War I, China aims “in the near term to replace the United States as the dominant power in East Asia and in the long term to challenge America’s position as the dominant power in the world.”[[6]](#footnote-4) It is certainly an interesting analogy, and in many ways seems apt. Like Germany and Britain, the United States and China have good reason to be friends. They enjoy close trading ties, a common enthusiasm for basketball and capitalism, and even fought alongside one another in the Second World War. And yet again like Germany and Britain, such goodwill has been deeply undermined by the revival of old suspicions and the arousal of new ambitions. Perhaps, then, we are re-living the lead-up to 1914. What follows is an exploration of whether or not this is the case.

*China’s Tumultuous Rise*

 The most dominant political economy trend of the past two decades has been the reconvergence of wealth between East and West. After two centuries spent languishing in deep poverty, China has roared back to the front rank of world economies.[[7]](#footnote-5) Beginning with the cautious reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, markets have been freed, property rights have been promulgated, and profit has once again been made legal. With the vibrancy of capitalism unleashed, Chinese productivity has soared and entrepreneurialism flourished. Combined with a large, disciplined, and low-cost workforce, China has become extremely attractive to overseas investors. Even more, the country’s high rate of domestic saving has led to unprecedented capital accumulation. Indeed, at over $2 trillion, China has already built up the world’s largest financial reserves.[[8]](#footnote-6) The product of these economic forces has been profound. Hundreds of millions of Chinese have been lifted out of poverty, the result of China's transformation from agrarian backwater to ‘workshop of the world.’[[9]](#footnote-7) From Shanghai to Shenzen, endless rows of gleaming new skyscrapers have gone up seemingly overnight, transforming the skylines of cities once trapped in the drab penury of Maoism.[[10]](#footnote-8) In short, China now boasts the most impressive economic catch-up of all time.

1.0 **Divergence & Reconvergence: Shares of World GDP, 1700-2003**.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | 1700 | 1820 | 1952 | 1978 | 2003 |
| China | 22.3 | 32.9 | 5.2 | 4.9 | 15.1 |
| India | 24.4 | 16 | 4 | 3.3 | 5.5 |
| Japan | 4.1 | 3 | 3.4 | 7.6 | 6.6 |
| Europe | 24.9 | 26.6 | 29.3 | 27.8 | 21.1 |
| United States | 0.1 | 1.8 | 27.5 | 21.6 | 20.6 |

\*Source: Maddison 2007a, p44. See also data set at [www.ggdc.net/Maddison](http://www.ggdc.net/Maddison).

 The reverberations of China’s tremendous economic expansion have been felt in many fields, but perhaps nowhere are the implications more profound than in the matter of national power. Realists have long contended that economic strength underlays military capability.[[11]](#footnote-9) This notion finds agreement within Chinese strategic culture, where the expression “prosperous army and strong country” is commonly espoused.[[12]](#footnote-10) Indeed, Chinese defence spending has been buoyed by the country’s dramatic economic growth. Noteworthy developments include the digging of 5,000km worth of tunnels. Dubbed by state media as the “Underground Great Wall,” their task is to keep China’s strategic missile squadron safe for a counterstrike in the event of a nuclear attack.[[13]](#footnote-11) New fighters, ships, and missiles have also been purchased, to say nothing of dramatic improvements in basic kit and troop training. Even more remarkable is that research in ‘stealth’ technology has proceeded far enough to put a prototype airplane into the air, stunning many Western observers,[[14]](#footnote-12) and that one or more aircraft carriers have been put on order by a navy ever more willing to travel further afield.[[15]](#footnote-13) Moreover, as China’s economy continues to grow, so too will military spending.[[16]](#footnote-14) The Pentagon estimates that by 2025, the Chinese defence budget will be as high as $200 billion US per annum.[[17]](#footnote-15) Some analysts are even more bullish. Vaclav Smil cites a senior Chinese strategic advisor who contends that China’s high economic growth will, by 2020, enable military spending equal to that of the United States today.[[18]](#footnote-16)

 It is possible that such observations are overly dramatic. True, the country will develop new and more sophisticated military capabilities—as rising powers are wont to do—but these need not upset China’s ‘Big Switzerland’ policy of conducting their affairs while “hiding their light under a bushel.”[[19]](#footnote-17) Chinese scholar and Communist Party theorist Zheng Bijian has asserted that China would “not follow the path of Germany leading up to World War I or those of Germany and Japan leading up to World War II.” Instead, it will “transcend the traditional ways for great powers to emerge” and instead “strive for peace, development, and cooperation with all countries of the world.”[[20]](#footnote-18) Such a pacific strategy is eminently plausible, given that “China is stronger today and its borders are more secure than at any other time in the last 150 years.”[[21]](#footnote-19) Yet what if this assumption does not hold true? What if, like prewar Germany, China took little comfort in its growing power and instead felt ever-greater worry from new threats and past injustices?

 We need not travel far to uncover such sentiment. It is, for example, deeply discomfiting to the Communist Party leadership that so much of the Chinese economy depends on inputs from abroad. Never before has China had to worry about foreign energy supplies keeping the lights on and the factories humming.[[22]](#footnote-20) So too does Beijing remember that in the early 1800s China’s role as regional hegemon was upset in dramatic fashion. China found itself brutally “thrown out to the margins” of a suddenly Eurocentric world.[[23]](#footnote-21) A “century of humiliation” ensued, a wrenching memory that still lingers, ever feeding the conviction that the nation’s ‘Middle Kingdom’ status must one day be restored.[[24]](#footnote-22) In the mid-1990s Chinese nationalists marched under the banner of “China Can Say No,”[[25]](#footnote-23) and today nationalist websites seethe with rage at every perceived slight from the West. Common is the perception that the United States is “not just arrogant,” but actively seeking “to prevent China from prospering and gaining its rightful place at the top of the world system.”[[26]](#footnote-24) Even China’s Premier, Wen Jiabo, has openly accused the United States as “trying to preserve its status as the world’s sole superpower, and [denying] any country the chance to pose a challenge to it.”[[27]](#footnote-25) As such, the Chinese leadership generally assumes that strategic rivalry with America will only “increase with the ascension of Chinese power.”[[28]](#footnote-26) Perhaps this is the reason why a country whose borders appear so secure spends nearly as much on its defence as the members of the European Union combined.[[29]](#footnote-27)

 Already the rivalry between China and America has grown heated. The recent squabble over currency valuation is a case in point. While American leaders argue Beijing needs to let the Yuan appreciate, China views the collapse of the dollar as a tactic used to unfairly undercut Chinese exports.[[30]](#footnote-28) These complaints are not idle grousing, for Beijing has warned that it considers itself better placed to survive a tariff war than the United States.[[31]](#footnote-29) At sea, disputes have been even more brusque. Recent years have seen a half dozen incidents where US naval surveillance vessels in the South China and Yellow Seas have been harassed by Chinese forces. Events like 2001’s forced-landing of an American E-2C Hawkeye and 2009’s altercation involving the USS *Impeccable*—to say nothing of the full-scale naval alert and aircraft carrier deployments during the 1995-96’s Taiwan Straits crisis—suggest that China’s rise has indeed been tumultuous.[[32]](#footnote-30) To gain a proper perspective of these events, we look now to the most obvious historical comparison: the Anglo-German arms race of 1897-1914.

*The Anglo-German Template?*

 Like China today, Imperial Germany’s rise up the ranks of world powers was predicated on torrid industrialization. The German states that united at Versailles in 1871 had gone from rustic agriculturalists to an industrial colossus in just over a generation. The region, for example, boasted just 500km of railway track in 1840. Yet 30 years later network had expanded expanded to almost 20,000km.[[33]](#footnote-31) Heavy industry progressed as well, propelled in part by the discovery of synthetic fertilizers and innovations in the production of manufactured dyes. These laid the foundation for large-scale chemical industries. Similar expansion was witnessed in the metals, shipping, machine tools, electrical, optical, banking, and insurance sectors. By 1870, large firms like Hoechst, Hapag, Siemens, Bayer, Man, Henschel, and Krupp loomed large in the international marketplace.[[34]](#footnote-32) Once there, they continued to erode the market share of foreign competitors. That year Germany produced 169,000 tonnes of steel against England’s 286,000. But German industrial expansion did not stop there. In 1910, the hierarchy had been reversed, with Germany dramatically out-producing England in steel by 13,698,000 tonnes to 6,374,000.[[35]](#footnote-33) Table 2.0 illustrates how the British economy was squeezed by growing German industrial prowess. This reversal of economic power caused great consternation in Britain, reflected in alarmist tracts such as E.E. Williams’ *Made in Germany*. Published in 1896, the widely-read book argued that “On all hands England’s industrial supremacy is tottering to its fall, and this result is largely German work.”[[36]](#footnote-34) While the conclusion overstates the degree of Britain's economic decline,[[37]](#footnote-35) its encapsulation of the prevailing sentiment in Britain certainly does not.

2.0 **Indicators of Relative British and German Industrial Strength** (1880 and 1913).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1880 | 1913 |
| Britain | Germany | Britain | Germany |
| Relative share of world manufacturing (%) | 22.9 | 8.5 | 13.6 | 14.8 |
| Total industrial potential (Britain in 1900 = 100) | 73.3 | 27.4 | 127.2 | 137.7 |
| Per capita industrialization (Britain in 1900 = 100) | 87.0 | 25.0 | 115.0 | 85.0 |

\*Source: Ferguson, *Pity*, p35.

 Alongside growth in German economic power came new strength in armaments. Combined with gifted generalship, railways and Krupp guns proved particularly useful to Prussia’s empire-building. Indeed, with Napoleon III’s capture at Sedan in 1870 the mantle of continental supremacy transferred to Germany.[[38]](#footnote-36) Such astounding military success lead defeated rivals like France and Austria-Hungary to copy the Prussian General Staff model.[[39]](#footnote-37) It also meant that Berlin started looking further afield. Benjamin Disraeli, leader of the British Opposition and later Prime Minister, immediately recognized that the fall of France would lead Germany and Britain into conflict.[[40]](#footnote-38) The Kaiser certainly did his best to bring such premonitions to fruition, advocating that Germany not only add to the few colonies Bismarck had reluctantly acquired in the mid-1880s, but also to build a navy of the first rank to go with them. In 1896, Korvettenkapitän Georg von Müller summarized this *Weltpolitik* strategy as attaining the maritime capability needed to break “Britain’s domination of the world and thus make available the necessary colonial property for the central European states which need to expand.”[[41]](#footnote-39) Moreover, absent a strong maritime deterrent, the Royal Navy could simply shut off German access to the North Sea, thereby ending its maritime access to world markets.[[42]](#footnote-40) Poverty and perhaps starvation would then loom. For all these reasons the Kaiser was convinced that “our future lies upon the water.”[[43]](#footnote-41)

It was towards the fulfillment of this ambition that the Germans used their tremendous wealth to build an impressive new fleet. From the first Navy Law of 1898 and the three others that followed, the German *Kaiserliche Marine* jumped from the world’s sixth largest to its second. Germany’s naval construction budget ballooned from £3.2mil in 1900 to a peak of £13.1mil in 1911.[[44]](#footnote-42) By the eve of war, the High Seas Fleet consisted of thirteen dreadnought-type battleships, sixteen older ones, and five battlecruisers.[[45]](#footnote-43) Although still numerically inferior— Germany’s access to the North Sea was blocked by 20 British dreadnoughts and six battlecruisers—the German ships were technically as good if not better than the Royal Navy’s.[[46]](#footnote-44) More importantly, so powerful was this new fleet that the Admiralty had to withdraw virtually all of its capital ships from overseas stations to Britain’s home waters.[[47]](#footnote-45)

The British responded to the German naval challenge with more than just the redeployment of forces. The Royal Navy identified Germany as Britain’s foremost potential enemy almost as soon as construction of the High Seas Fleet began. By 1902 the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Selborne, had become so unsettled by Tirpitz’s building that he was “convinced that the new German Navy is being built up from the point of view of a war with us.”[[48]](#footnote-46) Even if the intent was falsely appreciated, the potential danger certainly was not. As Sir Edward Grey noted to King Edward VII in July 1908, “If the German fleet ever becomes superior to ours, the German army can conquer the country.” On the other hand, “There is no similar risk of this kind for Germany; for however superior our fleet was, no naval victory could bring us any nearer to Berlin.”[[49]](#footnote-47) In this way the British were convinced that the German challenge was needlessly reckless, asymmetrical in its effect, and something that had to be forcefully dealt with. In 1906 Britain launched the HMS *Dreadnought* in response, a ship whose revolutionary design turned naval architecture on its head. Germany’s rejoinder was to build its own version, but this only incensed the British even more. “We want eight and we won’t wait,” became the popular slogan in circles both political and public.[[50]](#footnote-48) To these calls the government was decidedly amenable: by 1909, no fewer than eight of these new battleships could be found on the stocks *simultaneously*.[[51]](#footnote-49)

3.0 **The ratio of Anglo to German warship tonnage** (1880-1914).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1880 | 1890 | 1900 | 1910 | 1914 |
| 7.4 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 2.1 |

\*Source: Ferguson, *Pity*, p84.

*Conclusions*

 Both cases have shown how economic growth and its concomitant ambitions cause tremendous tension between established and aspirant powers. The stresses become particularly acute as burgeoning wealth is translated into military power. Such congruence between the cases gives reason for caution. Given how tragically the pressures of the Anglo-German arms race were resolved, the great fear is that a repeat with America and China is in the offing. There are two chief reasons, however, to consider the current path different than that which led to calamity in 1914.

 The first is that while the Anglo-German and Sino-American cases display many of the same hyper-nationalist tendencies, the respective *revanchism* is separated by a difference in kind. No doubt the hard-liners who riot against Japanese footballers[[52]](#footnote-50) and clamour for a military solution for ‘rebellious’ Taiwan would find common cause with the prewar Pan-German league.[[53]](#footnote-51) But China’s foreign relations do not yet match the “neurotic climate of suspicion and insecurity”[[54]](#footnote-52) that characterized prewar Europe. Unlike today, there existed “a widespread belief that war was not only inevitable but desirable.”[[55]](#footnote-53) Echoing a common sentiment, the Prussian general and military historian von Bernhardi claimed that “War is a biological necessity of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with…But it is not only a biological law but a moral obligation, and, as such, an indispensable factor in civilization.”[[56]](#footnote-54) That such commitment would invariably entail sacrifice was taken as an article of faith, if not often eagerly embraced. An anonymous German author professed in January 1913 that “It will be more beautiful and wonderful to live for ever among the heroes on war memorials in a church than to die an empty death in bed, nameless…Let that be heaven for young Germany. Thus we wish to knock at our God’s door.”[[57]](#footnote-55) Modern nationalist Chinese websites like Anti-CNN.com, which focus on refuting “untrue reports” of Beijing’s heavy-handedness by the Western media rather than exhorting sacrificial violence, seem remarkably tame in comparison.[[58]](#footnote-56)

 The second asymmetry is that while America has not—at least at present—perceived China’s rise as a direct threat to its national survival, Britain saw the German challenge in a very different light. Almost immediately, London perceived a threat to the strategic lines of communication that kept Britain fed and dominant in international trade.[[59]](#footnote-57) Such a danger could not be taken idly, for the Empire was considered “an essential element in British life and British prosperity.” As Sir Eyre Crowe noted in a memorandum in 1907, “A German maritime supremacy must be acknowledged to be incompatible with the existence of the British Empire.”[[60]](#footnote-58) Indeed, the belief was that the empire’s “preservation was literally a matter of life and death.”[[61]](#footnote-59) How prepared Britain was to fight for it was made eminently clear with the warning issued by David Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the man viewed as the least belligerent member of the British cabinet, during the height of the second Morocco crisis:[[62]](#footnote-60)

“If a situation were to be forced upon us where peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interest were vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.”[[63]](#footnote-61)

Such hostility did not sit well with Germany, particularly as the British drifted towards alliance with the French in 1904 and, to a lesser degree, with Russia in 1907.[[64]](#footnote-62) Berlin interpreted these moves as a steadily tightening noose around Germany. Chancellor von Bülow spoke of these fears in the Reichstag on November 14, 1906:

“A policy aiming at the encirclement of Germany and seeking to form a ring of Powers in order to isolate and paralyze it would be disastrous to the peace of Europe. The forming of such a ring would not be possible without exerting some pressure. Pressure provokes counter-pressure. And out of pressure and counter-pressure finally explosions may arise.”[[65]](#footnote-63)

In effect, Germany began to fear for its own survival as well.[[66]](#footnote-64) As Chief of Staff Von Moltke (the Younger) remarked to Freiherr von Freytag-Loringhoven, “You may believe me, many dogs spell the death of the hare.”[[67]](#footnote-65)

 It is to our good fortune that such talk does not colour discussions regarding China’s rise today. Despite the country’s clear territorial ambitions, including boisterous claims to Taiwan and the Spratleys, no reasonable leader suggests that China threatens the survival of the United States in the same manner as Germany’s navy did prewar Britain. The absence of popular calls in the vein of ‘we want eight and won’t wait’ in budget debates over the F-22 and F-35 fighter programs is evidence of this fact. Nor is the opposite true. No fear of foreign invasion has swept Beijing like the panic that gripped Berlin in 1904-5, where rumours swirled of a pre-emptive British assault on the German capital.[[68]](#footnote-66) Meanwhile, neither Chinese nor American newspapers echo the extremist sentiment of the *Daily Mail*, which warned in 1909 that “Germany is deliberately preparing to destroy the British Empire…All of Germany is to be Teutonised. We are all to be drilled and schooled and uniformed and taxed by Prussian officials, and the Emperor William II is to rule us with a rod of iron.”[[69]](#footnote-67) True, China’s growing power and subsequent claims for greater prestige and prominence have brought considerable tension to the international system; yet neither China nor America eye each other with the same fear that Germany and Britain did during the naval arms race. Given what transpired in the fateful summer of 1914, any prudent policymaker will work to ensure that does not change.

1. Kaiser Wilhelm attributed his desire to build a powerful navy to his childhood, where “I was allowed to visit Portsmouth and Plymouth hand in hand with kind aunts and friendly admirals.” See Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), p151. Queen Victoria was, after all, his grandmother. [↑](#footnote-ref--1)
2. Cited in Peter Hays Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p51. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
3. Philipp Blom, *The Vertigo Years: Change and Culture in the West, 1900-1914*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2008), p155. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
4. See, for example, Paul Kennedy, *The Rise of Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980); Rolf Hobson, *Imperialism at Sea: Naval Strategic Thought, the Ideology of Sea Power, and the Tirpitz Plan* (2002); E.L. Woodward, *Great Britain and the German Navy*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935); Peter Padfield, *The Great Naval Race: The Anglo-German Naval Rivalry, 1900-1914*, (New York: D. McKay, 1974); Massie, *Dreadnought*; and Ivo N. Lambi, *The Navy in German Power Politics, 1862-1914*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
5. “Like all rising powers throughout history, like the United States, Japan, and Germany at the end of the nineteenth century, they [the Chinese leadership] fear the rest of the world may conspire against them.” Furthermore, “If East Asia today resembles late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century Europe, then Taiwan could be the Sarajevo of the Sino-American confrontation.” Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), p36. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
6. Robert Kagan, “What China Knows and We Don’t,” *The Weekly Standard*, (January 20, 1997). Others of this view include William Kristol. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
7. For surveys of this growth, along with a consideration of the implications, see Michael Swaine and Ashley Tellis, *Interpreting China’s Grand Strategy: Past, Present, and Future*, (Santa Monica: RAND, 2000); William H. Overholt, *The Rise of China: How Economic Reform is Creating a New Superpower*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994); David Shambaugh (ed), *Greater China: The Next Superpower?*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Geoffrey Murray, *China: The Next Superpower: Dilemmas in Change and Continuity*, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998); Lawrence J. Brahm, *China’s Century: The Awakening of the Next Economic Powerhouse*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2001); and Ted Fishman, *China, Inc: How the Rise of the Next Superpower Challenges America and the World*, (New York: Scribner, 2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
8. Almost half of this is held in US government-backed debt. Anthony Faiola, “China Worried About U.S. Debt,” *Washington Post*, (March 14, 2009), A01. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
9. As illustration, China now produces more than 90% of Wal-Mart’s merchandise. US Bureau of the Census, *U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services: Annual Revision for 2005*. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
10. In the former, so many have been built in such a short span of time the city is actually sinking from the weight. Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, “Skyscrapers ‘sinking’ Shanghai”, *BBC News*, (September 13, 2003). Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3105948.stm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
11. The classic encapsulation that wealth and power are two sides of the same coin comes from Jacob Viner, “Power Versus Plenty as Objectives of Foreign Policy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *World Politics* (1948). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
12. See Gries, *New Nationalism*, p105. Gries observes that “The dream of a ‘prosperous country and a strong army’ (*fuguo qiangbing*) still inspires Chinese over a century after it was first promoted by late-Qing-dynasty reformers.” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
13. *The Chosn Ilbo* (English Edition), “China Builds Underground ‘Great Wall’ Against Nuke Attack,” (December 14, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
14. Richard Norton-Taylor, “Experts surprised by quick development of Chinese stealth fighter jet,” *The Guardian*, (January 11, 2011). Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/11/development-china-stealth-fighter-jet>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
15. Richard D. Fisher, Jr., “China Has Plans For Five Carriers,” *Aviation Week*, (January 5, 2011). Available at <http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story_generic.jsp?channel=dti&id=news/dti/2011/01/01/DT_01_01_2011_p71-272520.xml>. In 2008 China put ships off the Gulf of Aden as part of international anti-piracy efforts. It was China’s first operational deployment outside East Asia in the PLA’s history. In 2011 the Chinese grew even bolder, sending a guided missile frigate to deal with the rapidly deteriorating crisis in Libya. Banyan, “Setting Sail for Libya,” *The Economist*, (May 1, 2011). Available at <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/03/chinas_foreign_policy>. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
16. The *Liberation Army Daily* is certainly convinced of this: “As China’s comprehensive strength is incrementally mounting and her status keeps on going up in international affairs, it is a matter of great importance to strive to construct a military force that is commensurate with China’s status and up to the job of defending the interests of China's development, so as to entrench China’s international status.” Quoted in U.S. Department of Defense annual report to Congress, “Military Power of the People’s Republic of China 2007,” (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense 2007), p7. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
17. US Department of Defense, *Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, (Washington, 2004). In comparison, SIPRI estimates that the figure is $114 billion US now, or about 2.2% of the country’s GDP. See their database at <http://milexdata.sipri.org/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
18. Cited from Vaclav Smil, *Global Catastrophes and Trends: The Next Fifty Years*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), p132. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
19. *The Economist*, “The trillion-dollar club,” April 17, 2010, p. 66. For North American readers, the idiom would be ‘barrel’, not ‘bushel.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
20. Zheng Bijian, “China’s ‘Peaceful Rise’ to Great Power Status,” *Foreign Affairs*, 84. No. 5 (September/October 2005), p22. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
21. Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China’s Search for Security*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998), p226. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
22. Saudi Arabia already exports more oil to China than the United States, now over a million barrels a day. Jad Mouawad, “China’s Growth Shifts the Geopolitics of Oil,” *New York Times*, (March 19, 2010). Saudi now accounts for 25% of all Chinese oil imports. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
23. Chen Zemin, “Nationalism, Internationalism and Chinese Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14, no. 42 (February 2005), p36-37. See also Kagan, *Dreams*, p27. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
24. The conviction that China should be East Asia’s preeminent power “remains relatively strong among both elites and ordinary Chinese citizens.” Swaine and Tellis, *Interpreting*, p15. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
25. Kagan, *Dreams*, p30. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
26. Gries, *New Nationalism*, p142-43. See also Kagan, *Dreams*, p32-33. This includes America’s unwillingness to permit the reclamation of China’s ‘lost territory’, Taiwan. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
27. Andrew J. Nathan and Bruce Gilley, *China’s New Rulers: The Secret Files*, (New York, 2002), p208. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
28. Rosalie Chen, “China Perceives America: Perspectives of International Relations Experts,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12, no. 35 (May 2003), p290. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
29. For the latter observation, see Kagan, *Dreams*, p29. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
30. A spokesman for the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, on November 16, 2009, complained that “We don’t think that it’s good for the world economic recovery, and it is also unfair, that you ask others to appreciate while you depreciate your own currency.” Meanwhile, the day before, Liu Mingkang, China’s chief banking regulator, accused Washington of encouraging a dollar carry trade and global asset-price bubbles through low interest rates and a falling dollar. *The Economist*, “A yuan-sided argument,” (November 18, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
31. As Chen Deming, China’s commerce minister warned, “If some congressmen insist on labeling China as a currency manipulator and slap punitive tariffs on Chinese products, then the [Chinese] government will find it impossible not to react….If the United States uses the exchange rate to start a new trade war, China will be hurt. But the American people and U.S. companies will be hurt even more.” Indeed, “We’re a nation of 1.3 billion people. We graduate 7 million university students a year. We’ll either make it ourselves or buy it from somewhere else.” Invoking an old Chinese proverb favoured by Mao, Chen added “just because the butcher is dead, doesn’t mean we won’t be able to eat pork.” John Pomfret, “China’s commerce minister: U.S. has the most to lose in a trade war,” *The Washington Post*, (March 22, 2010). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
32. *Economist*, “Naked aggression,” (March 14, 2009), p45. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
33. Hermann Kinder and Werner Hilgemann, *Penguin Atlas of World History: Vol 2*, (London: Penguin, 1978), p60. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
34. Kinder and Hilgemann, *Atlas* p60-1. See also Alan Milward and S.B. Saul, *The Economic Development of Continental Europe, 1780-1870*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), chpt 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
35. Joachim Remak, *The Origins of World War I*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), p77. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
36. Quoted in W.L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902*, (New York: Knopf, 1951), p245. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
37. For a useful discussion of Britain’s enduring financial power, see Ferguson, Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I*, (New York: Basic Books, 1998), p35-38; and E.J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, (New York: Viking, 1990), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
38. On the eve of catastrophe at Sedan, French General August Ducrot observed “*Nous sommes dans un pot de chambre, et nous y serons emmerdés*” (‘We are in a chamber-pot, and we are going to be shat on.’). August 31, 1870; cited in Michael Howard, *The Franco-Prussian War*, (London: Routledge, 2008 [1961]), p208. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
39. See Col. Trevor N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1977), p113-14. So too did German military spending continue to grow. As the German economy went from strength to strength, per capita expenditures jumped from $1.28 in 1870 to $8.19 in 1914, by far the greatest increase of any of the great powers. Great Britain, in contrast, rose only from $3.54 to $8.23 over the same period of time. Remak, *Origins*, p87. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
40. “This war represents the German Revolution, a greater political event than the French Revolution of the last century…What has really come to pass in Europe? The balance of power has been entirely destroyed, and the country which suffers most, and feels the effects of the is great change most, is England.” Dated February 9 1871, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol. 204, Cols 81 ff. Nor was Disraeli alone in his worry. Odo Russell, the British ambassador in Berlin, feared in 1873 that “Germany is in reality a great camp ready to break up for any war at a week’s notice with a million of men.” Cited in Lord Newton, *Lord Lyons*, Vol. 2 (1913), p41. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
41. Cited in Fritz Fischer, “Foreign Policy of Imperial Germany and the Outbreak of the First World War,” in Schöllgen (ed), *Escape into War? The Foreign Policy of Imperial Germany*, (Oxford: 1990), p21. As Chancellor von Bülow declared, “The question is not whether we want to colonize or not, but that we *must* colonize, whether we want it or not.” Cited in Kennedy, *Rise*, p211. The Kaiser himself insisted Germany “had great tasks to accomplish outside the narrow boundaries of old Europe,” a strict departure from Bismarck’s repeated insistence that Germany was a “satiated” power. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
42. The British were aware of this as well. Admiral Fisher summed up the German geographical predicament to King George V ably: “with the great harbour of Scapa Flow in the North and the narrow straits of Dover in the south, there is no doubt, Sir, that we are God’s chosen people.” Cited in John Keegan, *The First World War*, (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1998), p266. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
43. June 1901. Cited in C. Gauss, *The Kaiser as Shown in his Public Utterances*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), p18. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
44. David Stevenson, *Armaments and the Coming of War: Europe 1904-1914*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p8. Meanwhile Britain’s rose from £11.2mil to £18.9mil over the same time period. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
45. Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, (New York: Random House, 1987), p212. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
46. Ropp, *War*, p213. The German ships tended to be superior to their British counterparts in things like internal construction, shells, optical equipment, and gunnery control. Kennedy, *Rise and Fall*, p212. This discrepancy became apparent during the Battle of Jutland, where as series of catastrophic explosions on British battlecruisers led Admiral Sir David Beatty to remark that “Chatfield, there seems to be something wrong our bloody ships today.” Cited in Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, (1927), chpt 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
47. This is an interesting aspect of the Anglo-German arms race, for while Britain’s vigorous response to Germany’s naval construction challenge meant the Germans—including Tirpitz himself—conceded they could not match [see Ferguson, *Pity*, p84-7; and Stevenson, *Armaments*, p170, 175], it did result in a net *loss* of Britain’s international maritime position. The consequence of this was to push the ‘splendidly isolationist’ Britain into the arms of two longtime rivals, France and Russia. For these latter developments see James Joll, *The Origins of the First World War*, (London: Longman, 1989 [1984]), p41-46, p150. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
48. Cited in Ferguson, *Pity*, p83. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
49. Cited in Joll, *Origins*, p64-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
50. Coined by George Wyndham in March 1909. Cited in M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations*, (London: Cassell, 2004), p704. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
51. In Churchill’s telling, “The Admiralty had demanded six ships: the economists offered four: and we finally compromised on eight.” Cited in John C. Lambelet, “The Anglo-German Dreadnought Race, 1905-1914,” *Peace Science Society (International)*, Vol. 22 (1974), p1. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
52. During an anti-Japanese riot in 2005 “protesters used slogans that echoed anti-Japanese campaigns of a century ago, denouncing ‘little Japan,’ calling Japanese dogs, urging China to ‘stand up,’ and calling for a boycott of Japanese products.” Howard F. French, “China Allows More Protests in Shanghai Against Japan,” *New York Times*, (April 17, 2005). Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/17/international/asia/17china.html>. A year earlier at the Asian Cup final in Beijing, Chinese protesters burned Japanese flags and forced Japan's small contingent of fans had to be bussed to safety. BBC News, “Chinese riot after Japan victory,” (August 7, 2004). Available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/3541380.stm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
53. Pan-German extremists were a recognized minority, though the largest membership ever claimed was under 25,000. Nor did they have as much influence in Berlin’s foreign policy circles as the Pan-Slavs in Russia. Still, in 1901 they managed to put 32 deputies in the Reichstag and the Kaiser and his ministers did little to disassociate themselves from the group. Remak, *Origins*, p73. This despite the fact that, as Remak notes, “no responsible German statesman before 1914 thought in terms of Napoleonic visions.” (p72). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
54. Keegan, *First World* War, p420. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
55. Joll, *Origins*, p186; p171-96 provides a good account of the mood of Europe in 1914. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
56. Friedrich von Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War*, (Longmans, Green, 1912), chpt 1. Chapter 2 was entitled “World Power or Decline.” [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
57. Cited in Martin Kitchen, *The German Officer Corps, 1890-1914*, (Clarendon Press, 1968), p139-41. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
58. See Jill Drew, “Protests May Only Harden Chinese Line,” *Washington Post*, (March 24, 2008). Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/23/AR2008032301595.html>. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
59. In March 1903 the Admiralty decided to create a North Sea fleet and to construct a base for it at Rosyth with this very much in mind. Joll, *Origins*, p42. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
60. *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1928), III, Appendix A. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
61. Joll, *Origins*, p154. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
62. Cohen and Major, *Quotations*, p705. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
63. July 21, 1911. Cited in Bentley B. Gilbert, *David Lloyd George*, (B.T. Batsford, 1987), p450. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
64. By the Moroccan Crisis of 1905-6 the War Office had begun actively planning the landing of a British Expeditionary force on the continent, the first time it had done so in decades. Joll, *Origins*, p64. See also Paul Kennedy (ed), *The War Plans of the Great Powers: 1880-1914*, (London, 1979); and David French, *British Economic and Strategic Planning: 1905-1915*, (London, 1982). [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
65. Cited in Immanuel Geiss, *German Foreign Policy, 1871-1914*, (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1976), p121. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
66. It did not help that the Germans than their army prepared for war with France and Russia while the navy planned for war with England, and that never did the two services coordinate their strategic planning. Joll, *Origins*, p61. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
67. Cited in Gerhard Ritter, *The Sword and the Scepter*, p116. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
68. See Ferguson, *Pity*, p84. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
69. Cited in Remak, *Origins*, p84. Reading these articles the Kaiser responded “They are all mad in England, and people seem to think that I am standing here with my battle axe behind my back ready to fall upon them at a moment.” (p85). It should be noted that the *Daily Mail* was, in 1914, Britain’s second largest-circulating newspaper. Data from Ferguson, *Pity*, p243. See also John M. McEwen, “The National Press during the First World War: Ownership and Circulation,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, (1983). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)