

In Chapter 1 of Rise and Fall of the Great Powers, Paul Kennedy sketches out an explanation of why the

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- Kennedy's argument is that the downfall of the Ming Dynasty was caused by the "conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy"
 - Several key actions
 - * Banned Seafaring
 - Loss of opportunity
 - * Backwards thinking
 - Looked towards the past
 - * Distrust towards merchants
 - Hurt the economy
 - Result
 - * Lack of investment (domestic) into development, rather into land
 - * Merchants suffered due to no backing from government (who controlled economy)
- Some of Kennedy's arguments can be supported by Mann
 - Zheng's explorations were very lucrative for Ming because it allowed them to show their presence in areas that they had little physical contact
 - * Sri Lanka, Sumatra, etc
 - * Banning of it and other expeditions was troubling because it meant that the Ming would fall behind in its *projection of power*
 - The banning of foreign trade encouraged piracy, eventually leading to pirate-controlled enclaves
 - * Weakened government control
 - * Tribute payments were still allowed, but only applied to the government
 - Used as a front for the government to trade with foreign nations
 - "A front for international commerce" (Mann, 127)
 - Introduction of fiat currency led to inflation, which in turn led to the decline of the economy