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#ret

Prompt

Essay 1: Kennedy and Mann on Ming Decline

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

A strong essay will clearly describe Kennedy's argument and link it to specific pieces of supporting or

Additional sources: In addition to Kennedy and Mann, you may OPTIONALLY use and cite from any of the pr

Citations: Direct quotations as well as paraphrasing from any of the sources should be cited with a simp

Length: 350-750 words

Format: 12 pt font, double spaced, double-sided if possible, with name on at least the first page.

Wang Xijue, Ming dynasty court official, report to the emperor, 1593.

The venerable elders of my home district explain that the reason grain is cheap despite poor harvests is

Huang Zongxi, late Ming dynasty scholar who fought against eunuch rule of the court and the Manchu inva

The origin of misrule under the Ming lay in the abolition of the prime ministership by [Ming founder] G

I believe that those with the actual power of prime ministers today are the palace menials . Final auth

Zhang Han (1510-1593), was a Ming official who writes Songchuang Meng Yu () during his retirement. T

As to the foreign trade on the northwestern frontier and the foreign sea trade in the southeast, if we c

Foreigners are recalcitrant and their greed knows no bounds. I do not think our present trade with th

As to the foreigners in the southeast, their goods are useful to us just as ours are to them. To use wha

The Salt and Iron Debates from 81 AD documented Confucian scholars' critique of the government's trade m

The Confucian learned men: The purpose of merchants is circulation and the purpose of artisans is making

At present the government ignores what people have and exacts what they lack. The common people then must

The government officers busy themselves with gaining control of the market and cornering commodities. W

Also in the Google Drive:

Cook_ZhengHe.pdf goes into a bit more detail about Zheng He's journeys

Brook_Zhang Han article.pdf is a few pages from an article about Zhang Han's document that discusses va

Ropp_Ming.pdf has more historical detail about the Ming dynasty

Ropp_Qing.pdf has Qing dynasty events if you want to use it to contrast with Ming

Zhang Han-Ming Trade.pdf is a fuller primary source with his critique of Ming trade policies

Getting started:

Lay out Kennedy's argument, and decide which aspects you agree with, disagree with, or want to complica

Kennedy's argument is _____, and he is wrong in _____, _____, and _____

Kennedy's argument is _____, and can be supported by _____, _____, _____

Kennedy's argument is _____, and while he is right in _____, he is wrong in _____ and can be more n

Outline

Kennedy's Argument

There was, to be sure, a plausible strategical reason for this decision. The northern frontiers of the empire were again under some pressure from the Mongols, and it may have seemed prudent to concentrate military resources in this more vulnerable area. Under such circumstances a large navy was an expensive luxury, and in any case, the attempted Chinese expansion southward into Annam (Vietnam) was proving fruitless and costly. Yet this quite valid reasoning does not appear to have been reconsidered when the disadvantages of naval retrenchment later became clear: within a century or so, the Chinese coastline and even cities on the Yangtze were being attacked by Japanese pirates, but there was no serious rebuilding of an imperial navy. Even the repeated appearance of Portuguese vessels off the China coast did not force a reassessment. Defense on land was all that was required, the mandarins reasoned, for had not all maritime trade by Chinese subjects been forbidden in any case? Apart from the costs and other disincentives involved, therefore, a key element in China's retreat was the sheer conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy—a conservatism heightened in the Ming period by resentment at the changes earlier forced upon them by the Mongols. In this "Restoration" atmosphere, the all-important officialdom concerned to preserve and recapture the past, not to create a brighter future based upon overseas expansion and commerce. According to the Confucian code, warfare itself was a deplorable activity and armed forces were made necessary only by the fear of barbarian attacks or internal revolts. The mandarins' dislike of the army (and the navy) was accompanied by a suspicion of the trader. The accumulation of private capital, the practice of buying cheap and selling dear, the ostentation of the nouveau riche merchant, all offended the elite, scholarly bureaucrats—almost as much as they aroused the resentments of the toiling masses. While not wishing to bring the entire market economy to a halt, the mandarins often intervened against individual merchants by confiscating their property or banning their business. Foreign trade by

Chinese subjects must have seemed even more dubious to mandarin eyes, simply because it was less under their control.

- Wrong
 - “a key element in China’s retreat was the sheer conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy”
- Nuance
 - “The accumulation of private capital, the practice of buying cheap and selling dear, the ostentation of the nouveau riche merchant, all offended the elite”
 - “Foreign trade by Chinese subjects must have seemed even more dubious to mandarin eyes, simply because it was less under their control.”
- Right?
 - “warfare itself was a deplorable activity and armed forces were made necessary only by the fear of barbarian attacks or internal revolts.””

Meet Sushu

- needs more nuance: accumulation of private capital —> Mann doesn’t see foreign trade as dubious - disagree: conservative confucianism - agree: govt doesn’t want to fight - conservatism = not wanting to contact the outside world, but primary source Zhang Han shows that trade is good - true that govt doesn’t want accumulation of private capital From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:35 PM)
 - not correct: government did want to trade with foreigners
 - what about Mann’s thing about trade ban, smugglers, etc? government wanted tributary trade relationships to better control trade, didn’t want commoners to trade From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:37 PM) —> government wanting to control/centralize trade —> isn’t that confucian conservatism? - confucian conservatism isn’t about ending overseas trade, it’s about controlling overseas trade???? 80% agree with Kennedy? From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:41 PM)
 - disagree: “ming china is less vigorous/enterprising” and general notion of decline - disagree with cultural characterization From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:43 PM)
 - Kennedy is mostly right re: conservative confucian forces in the govt, but it’s about centralization and control, and not some inherent lack of vigor or innovation From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:44 PM)
 - the merchant pirates were quite vigorous in their pursuit of trade. they were being stopped by the govt but still adamant for trade - Brook - central bureaucracy vs. local merchants/trade From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:46 PM) Kennedy is mostly right re: conservative confucian forces in the govt, but they banned trade not because they wanted to turn away from the world (Zhang Han), but because they wanted to control trade (Mann) From Sushu Xia to Everyone: (3:48 PM)
- 1) Kennedy is mostly right re: conservative confucian (govt didn’t want commoners to trade) 2) it’s not cultural vigor stuff or turning away from the world (Zhang Han, smuggling) 3) it’s because desire to control trade (Mann, brook, salt iron debates)

Thesis
