

Source: [KBhHIST201KennedyStillHoldsUp](#)

1 | Essay 1: how does Kennedy Hold Up?

General Information

Due Date	Topic	Important Documents
Wednesday by 11:59pm	Does Paul Kennedy's Argument Still Hold Up?	Kennedy, chapter1, duh. Mann's Ming Trade argument.

Prompt

In Chapter 1 of *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Paul Kennedy sketches out an explanation of why the Ming Dynasty was, on the one hand powerful and prosperous, but ultimately was “a country which had turned in on itself” and subject to “steady relative decline.” Mann, in his chapter on the Ming trade, gives the reader a lot more detail on the nuances of Ming history in this period. Putting Kennedy and Mann into dialogue, does Kennedy's argument still hold up? In your essay, argue for or against Kennedy's argument using the details of Ming history analyzed by Mann.

[KBhHIST201ChinasDeclineWRTZhengHe](#) China's Decline w.r.t. Zheng He

A Unique Claim Synthesis

China had decided to turn its back on the world after the expedition of 1433... There was ... a plausible strategical reason for this decision. The northern frontiers of the empire were again under some pressure from the Mongols ... Yet this ... does not appear to have been reconsidered when the disadvantages ... became clear: within a century or so, the Chinese coastline and even cities on the Yangtze were being attacked by Japanese pirates... Therefore, a key element in China's retreat was the sheer conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy ... In the Ming's “Restoration” atmosphere, the all-important officialdom was concerned to preserve and recapture the past, not to create a brighter future.

Things that need to be true

1. Japanese pirate's attack could be resolved by opening overseas trade
2. Pressure from the Mongols not enough to completely divert resource
3. The past means complete shutdown and against reopening

To prove that Kennedy is stupid, we need to prove...

1. Reopening trade, especially with Zheng He ships, does not actually stop coastal rebels
2. Mongols (and perhaps others?) are actually really bad to warrant a full, permanent, diversion of resources
3. Trade and maritime trade happening in the past w/ Confucian government.

Well then, let's do it.

Reopening trade does not stop coastal rebels

- China actually tried this! @ [KBhHIST201MannMing](#)
- Can't really control rebels from the coast, as Kennedy admitted

- Coastal commissioner of Fu Jian threw in the towel after trying everything he could think of
- Wrote home (Beijing) to trade again, leading to a reliance to Silver

[KBhHIST201ChinasDeclineWRTReopening](#) China's Decline w.r.t Reopening

The government reversed course not only because it recognized its inability to stop smuggling, or because it had begun to appreciate how much Fujian's populace depended on trade. Beijing had come to realize that the nation desperately needed the merchants' most important good: silver.

- After some kurluffle with local currency surrounding [KBhHIST201ChinasDeclineWRTCurrency](#) China's Decline w.r.t. Currency, became reliant on silver
 - Official currency too unstable due to hyperinflation
 - Relied on in-kind and silver payment as stable income store
- As trade is happening, we got a little thing called [KBhHIST201ProblemsWithSilver](#) Problems with Silver
 - Large silver store found in the Americas @ [KBhHIST201HomogenosceneLN](#)
 - Causing a larger devaluing of the thing

Testing phase – Why and So-What

- CLAIM
 - Why DOES THE CLAIM ANSWER THE PROMPT?
 - So what (global), THING THAT ATTACKS THE BROADER IMPACT OF THE CLAIM
- CLAIM
 - Repeat...

Defluffifying

CHOSEN THESIS CLAIM

- Point a
- Point b
- Point c

So what? SO WHAT

Now, defluffify by re-writing the three points + so what in as little words as possible.

RESTATED CLAIM

Outline

- Claim 1: *claim*
 - How
 - HOW IS CLAIM TRUE?
 - Evidence -> HOW IS YOUR REASONING TRUE?
 - So What
 - WHY DO I CARE?

- Claim 2: *claim*
 - How
 - HOW IS CLAIM TRUE?
 - Evidence -> HOW IS YOUR REASONING TRUE?
 - So What
 - WHY DO I CARE?
 - Claim 3: *claim*
 - How
 - HOW IS CLAIM TRUE?
 - Evidence -> HOW IS YOUR REASONING TRUE?
 - So What
 - WHY DO I CARE?
-

There is always UCLA Writing Lab