THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CHINA

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**Introduction**

Relations between the U.S and China have evolved since the 18th Century, conceptualized through positive and highly negative relations. Both the U.S and China have a complex relationship with each other particularly based on economic cooperation, hegemonic rivalry within the Pacific Ocean, and mutual suspicion about the intentions of each other. Rivalry, increased economic interactions, and intensified diplomacy are factors that have affected the U.S. and China relationship (Allison and Dufeld, 2018). Policies in the U.S., especially on Technology and Privacy, affect China and its industries. Understanding the nature of the relationship existent between these two nations is difficult, it can be subdivided into various categories. The purpose of this essay is to explore why China and U.S. remain in a mixture of intertwined and unstable relationships despite their interactions in over 30 years, which has its effects on the economy, and politics of either nation. The paper is organized into five parts, commencing with the introduction as the first part. The introduction is followed by an analysis of the Geographical and Historical facts about both China and the U.S till date. This section is followed by the application of Michael Mann’s four sources of social power in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of either nation. Afterwards, the research will analyze potential ways Joe Biden might alter Policies implemented by Donald Trump since 2017 towards China. Finally, the research will conclude with a summary of the most important points noted within the whole paper.

**Geography and History**

**Geographical Perspectives and relations with other countries**

***United States***

Geographically, the United States spans about 3.6 square miles, equivalent to about 9.5 square kilometres in size, with a population of about 329 million. According to Jisi, and Ran, (2019, p.7), the United States was declared independent in July 1776, with its constitution being developed in June 1788. Additionally, their political system has embraced a Federal two-party presidential constitution, which has much difference from that of China. About 0.67% of the total US population has remained in Military service, with a very high human development index.

The United States has maintained a democratic relationship with most nations across the globe. The nation has established proper relations with the UN and EU countries over time, directed by Title 22 of the United States Code in their constitution. Through this policy, the United States has established proper relations with other parts of the globe, and especially with superpowers across the world. Their relations are further improved with the interest in safeguarding commercial interactions and American businesses.

***China***

China spans a total of 3.7 square miles, equivalent to about 9.596 square kilometres in size, hosting about 1.4 billion as part of its population. The nation’s first constitution was presented in December 1982, focusing on the Unitary one-party socialist republic governance. According to Medeiros, (2019, p.102), China has a slightly lower human development index than that of the U.S., but with higher military personnel than the U.S because of their high population.

The People’s Republic of China has developed guidelines on how the country must relate with other foreign nations based on their economies and politics. Arguably, China is one of the emerging superpowers, whose foreign policy must embrace foreign nations in their process of remaining sustainable. According to studies by Lawrence, (2012, p.100), China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity has contributed to their modernization and thus creating a favourable environment for foreign relations. The nation remains a member of multiple international organizations which has helped it in improving its connection with foreign countries. For instance, the country is part of the UN, and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, which has assisted them in having alliances with other countries.

**Historical Perspectives**

The tension between the U.S and China has evolved, creating a state of uncertainty. An excellent example is during the Korean War in 1950 when China retaliated against the United States as they backed the Korean Troops against China (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Five years later, in 1955, the U.S threatened China with nuclear attacks when China sent troops into the Quemoy and Matsu islands. The tension between the two nations further developed when the Tibetan Uprising by China led to massive deaths of people, leading the United States to condemn Beijing for abusing the people's rights in 1959

One of the recent tensions between these nations is based on technological grounds. U.S. and Huawei are in a technology lawsuit, and the Chinese government is involved such that 5G technology from Chinese companies are not accepted in the U.S. since they create the potential for China to spy on other people (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Additionally, the Coronavirus Pandemic has further tarnished the U.S and China relations. Officials from both Chin and the U.S had engaged in debatable blames on the other side for the pandemic. President Trump referred to the virus as “*Chinese Virus,*” while Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman claimed that the virus entered China through the U.S military (Hass, 2020, p.20). Such instances are an indication that both countries have a controversial relationship.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the U.S and China**

The United States and China are relatively similar in their general strengths but vary in most of their weaknesses. Understanding how the two countries differ based on these metrics, the ideologies presented by Michael Mann are of importance. Analysing each country through Michael Mann’s ideologies on social power is important in explaining how the two nations vary from each other and in understanding their strengths and weaknesses.

**Economy**

The Economy is of the factors contributing to the success or failure of most nations. A proper economic system is crucial in guiding the operations of the country, and they assist in meeting the needs of the people. Michael Mann attributes the concept of economic power as a form of human approach to transform, extract, distribute and consume products of nature in improving social power. According to Medeiros, (2019, p.103), this is particularly appreciated when economic relations combine the mobilization of labour with capital, production chains, trade, and authoritative power over these activities. As a result, economic perspectives can help in determining the strengths and weaknesses of either the United States or China.

The U.S. has significantly less economic power compared to China. China has better centres of production and authoritatively manufacture more products. This means that China is better positioned to utilize human labour along with its capital to be more productive and intensive in its distribution operations (Hass, 2020, p.20). China adopts technologies to perpetuate their developments, thus having unique penetration to most markets. Similarly, they help to compete with labour forces, resulting in decreased cost of labour that facilitates improved profitability within the region. These activities contribute to higher economic value and power for the Chinese government. As a result, their combination of intensive and extensive power, through their use of technology, gives them the competitive edge over the United States in most of the production-based operations, which improve their economic power.

Economic resources owned by private investors in China are many compared to the U.S. Companies rely on Chinese production centres for their resources. According to Lawrence, (2012, p.100), the high number of production centres helps to raise capital for China, and increase their general trading activities, which contribute to the nation’s economic power. The more companies that invest in Chinese governments, the better their economic value improves. This is especially true when large firms such as Samsung invest in having most of their operations carried out within China. Labour cost in China is cheaper, which is crucial for having more economic power and leads to an increased rate of production. This is an advantage for the country over the United States, where labour costs are slightly higher. Therefore, China’s economic perspectives are much better and can outweigh the United State’s economic values in many ways.

**Military**

The lethal violence that the U.S. can cause to most nations through their military is speculatively higher than that of China. In comparison, the United States spent about $716 billion as military expenditure to support its military activities in 2019 (Hass, 2020, p.20). China’s military expenditure within the same year amounted to $224 billion, with about 0.23% of the 3.2 million population being in the military. (Politi, 2020) Coupled with 0.67% of its 2.2 million population being military personnel, it is evident that the United States has an advantage over China’s military personnel. Evidence suggests that the U.S. has more reserves, 845,600 persons, in military personnel, compared to that of China, 510,000 persons. This shows that the U.S is more prepared in terms of lethal violence they can cause through their military forces.

China’s military forces and associated technology lags compared to that of the United States. The Chinese have continued to invest in the modernization of their nuclear forces. According to Lawrence, (2012, p.100), the nation perceives that their Military forces are vulnerable to American Capabilities, which means they are at risk of losing battles, especially when involving American missiles. Arguably, the lags in technology when comparing the Military services of both the U.S and China is a direct threat to the latter, which is directly left behind. As a result, the comparison of the two nations reveals that the United States has a competitive edge compared to China.

However, evidence suggests that China understates their Military Budget, and attempts to maintain their status to reduce the potential risk of other nations understanding their military worth. This is advantageous to China because they can focus on improving their Military Services and outmatch other nations. Similarly, unlike the United States, which states their actual Military Budget, China’s budget is enclosed and thus it is impossible to predict their military technology in future. Therefore, the U.S military is far much better than that of China based on the military expenditure, and availability of reserve personnel in the military base. This shows the U.S has more military social power than China.

**Politics**

The concept of political perspectives is imperative when examining how different countries relate. The aspect is important because it stipulates important aspects of the country and how it affects the general aspects of the management of the people. Examining these aspects is important in understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the countries. Michael Mann asserts that the concept of political power is based on territorial regulation of social life. This means the government has the mandate to provision order to its people and the whole nation. This means that nations with a proper form of governance and integration with the community have an added advantage with their social power. However, countries with impaired governance may have derailed provision of order to their people, which limits their abilities to control the nation. The exploration of Politics within both countries is a detrimental factor in illustrating ways each of the nations differs from each other.

Governance in the U.S. is more stable and democratic, which assures the public. The two-state party governance embraced in the United States has favoured the democrats and implemented the democratic leadership system across the nation. This is advantageous in the United States because it assures the public that their views are involved in the outcomes of the country’s plans. Similarly, the focus of the government is backed by the citizens, which is advantageous to the United States since they have more power over policies they develop and understand that such measures will be backed by the public. Examining these aspects is integral since it illustrates important aspects of the government in the United States.

The Chinese government embodies concepts of infrastructural power and does not have the proper distinction in the leadership regime (Rachman, 2020). China’s one-party system allows them to embrace a socialist democracy system that is less stable compared to the United State’s system. The infrastructural power system within China’s government has varying forms of leadership, which contribute to its lack of sustainability in implementing the socialist democracy system. Through this exploration, the Chinese Government is different from that of the United States, despite both sharing elements of democracy among them.

**Ideological**

The concept of ideological power is described by Michael Mann as a form achieving meaning in life through meeting human needs. Mann argues that finding the meaning of life must involve the sharing of norms and values through the participation of ritual practices with other people. This asserts that people are intertwined by their cultural practices and share similar values to have ideological social power. Through the aspect of ideological power, evidence can suggest which among the U.S and Chinese social constructs provides a better ideological view and achievement of the human needs.

The examination of the United States and China and their social power based on ideological perspectives presents interesting findings. Both the U.S. and Chinese entities embody ideological power in a more similar approach. In the United States, the primary strength piloting the Ideological power is the American dream. According to Medeiros, (2019, p.104), the American dream, purposed to ensure the success of people as they find the meaning to life, has contributed to increased collaboration, sharing of norms, and participation in various practices. Through the American Dream, most of the people in the United States have found purpose in their life. The ideology is driven by the government, and leaders have continually used it as a motivational aspect among the population.

Among the Chinese, norms and values are shared based on the cultural practices of the communities. According to De Graaff, and Van Apeldoorn, (2018, p.120), some of the people embrace forms of fighting, delicacies, clothing as a way of meeting the human needs and having the meaning of life. Such aspects are integral as they contribute to the sharing of ideas, and the participation of people in aesthetics with each other, thus informing their ideological power. Comparing this aspect to that of the United States, it is clear that, despite their differences, these elements motivate the people in respective countries. Therefore, both the U.S and China’s Ideological perspectives are interesting and assist their people in achieving their human needs.

**Joe Biden and Policies towards China**

Donald Trump’s reign as the US president was conceptualized by increased complexity in the China-U.S. relations. The President’s tenure led to increased conflicts against China, but also prepared the United States for better collaboration with the foreign nation. The incoming Joe Biden as president must determine the best course of action towards the policies implemented towards China, and whether it is best to uphold, or change some of these policies. The directions taken by Joe Biden will determine if the China-U. S relations can improve or not.

Joe Biden may need to uphold Donald Trump's policies on China to improve their focus on economic developments. President Trump feared that the Republic of China had a high rate of development, coupled with their sophisticated technologies, and would be a direct superpower competitor to the U.S. According to Lawrence, (2012, p.100), the high rate of development for the Chinese regime increases the potential risk of the nation becoming more superpower than the United States. This means that Joe Biden might uphold the policies that Donald Trump had previously set up within the United States. It will help suppress the Chinese power in the market and allow for improved profitability of the U.S. It will slow down China's development to become a superpower, which would compete with the U.S. directly. Such aspects are crucial and can help in guiding the U.S strategies in the future.

The rate of technological advancement is relatively high and has continued to affect most countries. The introduction of 5G networks is more stable and provides better standards of communication. However, since China, and companies such as Huawei, are responsible for such technologies, it becomes difficult for Joe Biden to accept their integration within the United States. Historically, evidence suggests that China attempts to identify allies that can help bring down the United States (Hass, 2020, p.20). As a result, Joe Biden, and the senate in the United States, are in fear of the Chinese motives with such technologies.

However, there is the chance that the United States allowing the 5G technologies might have more control over China and their operations. The U.S will have more oversight about how the technology is implemented, it's functioning, and the ways it operates. As a result, Joe Biden may need to reconsider policies against 5G technology, allowing Huawei Equipment to be used in building the network interfaces. It would allow the U.S. to have more control over the Chinese company and its data. U.S. will dictate the privacy matters and directly influence the 5G network management. Such control can help the U.S in suppressing the Chinese power and general growth, thus limiting their chances of becoming a superpower.

**Conclusion**

U.S. and China relations have faced significant challenges over time, which interfere with their future developments. Tension has continually affected the operations of both countries since the 1950s, creating a state of complex understanding in both countries. Geographically, both countries share few similarities but with multiple differences in terms of size, population, and expenditure. The United State spends more on its military expenditure than China, which satisfies the reasons why their military services are more lethal than the latter. Similarly, the United States has maintained a professional collaboration with many other countries across the globe, and this has limited China’s plots to topple the United States as one of the superpowers. However, China still holds important positions in international organizations, and thus has a solid collaboration with other nations. Comparison of both nations shows that the United States has more strengths than China-based on Mann’s Social Power perspectives. Such aspects are important in the nation since they have allowed the U.S to have some contention against China, especially when considering Trump’s reign and the policies presented on the same. Joe Biden might have to uphold most of the policies implemented before his Presidential State and adjust others to maintain a healthy relationship with China. Both nations have an opportunity to converge their policies to be fairer to each other and have better relations. Current and future presidents will need to have better collaborative strategies for the nations to have improved relationships.

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