The Implications of the 1999 U.S. Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on Contemporary Sino-American Relations: A Theoretical Analysis

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The Implications of the 1999 U.S. Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on Contemporary Sino-American Relations: A Theoretical Analysis

Abstract
On May 7, 1999, during NATO's air war against Serbia, a U.S. bomber launched five guided missiles and destroyed a portion of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, killing three Chinese citizens and wounding 20 others, three seriously. Outraged by the incident, Chinese citizens took to the streets and attacked U.S. diplomatic buildings across China, and the Chinese government suspended cooperative endeavors with the U.S. Two decades later, the bombing's impact on contemporary Sino-American relations is alive and well. This project employs international relations theory to analyze how the bombing has positively and negatively shaped this critical bilateral relationship, focusing on the intensifying strategic rivalry, the prospects for cooperation on a range of international issues of importance to both countries, and China's determination to be treated as America's equal on the world stage.

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LAKE FOREST COLLEGE

Senior Thesis

The Implications of the 1999 U.S. Bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on Contemporary Sino-American Relations:
A Theoretical Analysis

by

Altin Kukaj

April 17, 2019

The report of the investigation undertaken as a Senior Thesis, to carry two courses of credit in the International Relations Program and the Department of History

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ABSTRACT

On May 7, 1999, during NATO's air war against Serbia, a U.S. bomber launched five guided missiles and destroyed a portion of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, killing three Chinese citizens and wounding 20 others, three seriously. Outraged by the incident, Chinese citizens took to the streets and attacked U.S. diplomatic buildings across China, and the Chinese government suspended cooperative endeavors with the U.S. Two decades later, the bombing's impact on contemporary Sino-American relations is alive and well. This project employs international relations theory to analyze how the bombing has positively and negatively shaped this critical bilateral relationship, focusing on the intensifying strategic rivalry, the prospects for cooperation on a range of international issues of importance to both countries, and China's determination to be treated as America's equal on the world stage.
DEDICATION

To my parents for their unending love.
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“Those who do not learn from history, are doomed to repeat it”
-George Santayana
I. Introduction

The topic of this thesis is the implications of the 1999 U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on contemporary Sino-American Relations. In 1999, during the U.S.-led NATO campaign in Yugoslavia, a B-2 bomber dropped five missiles on the embassy, 42 days into a campaign meant to compel the Yugoslav government to end all military operations in Kosovo. Over the last twenty years, we have seen China emerge as a regional leader that aims to compete for world power. China’s economic and military power have increased dramatically, and politically it is more influential today than at any time in modern history, such that China might rightly be considered the United States’ new rival. For the past three decades, the United States has enjoyed a position of preeminence in world affairs, and China’s rise is clearly challenging this primacy.

What does the embassy bombing suggest about Sino-American relations? How might IR theory help explain the bombing’s impact on this critical bilateral relationship? The realist paradigm of international relations offers powerful insights into the bombing’s significance and U.S.-China relations since then. The Thucydides’s Trap suggests that the rise of a revisionist power poses a challenge the interests of the established or the status quo power, which increases international tensions, competitive behavior, and the risk of conflict between them. War is not inevitable between the U.S. and China, but the bilateral relationship is bound to deteriorate. The embassy bombing is emblematic of realism’s central logic. In Chapter Two, I explore different theoretical paradigms of IR, starting with realism, and demonstrate how each one of them might account for the impact of the embassy bombing on the bilateral relationship. Again, the realist paradigm suggests that states are self-interested, power-seeking actors that complete – sometimes vigorously – for power, which intentionally or not, can result in war. For realists, states interact in a zero-
sum world, where gains in power and security for one state must come at the expense of its rival. Alternatively, Neo-Liberal Institutionalism (NLI) suggests that we live in a world where institutions facilitate international politics, which help countries to manage and overcome the effects of the security dilemma and improve their relations by creating conditions for win-win outcomes. The so-called “neo-liberal” scholars hold that states cooperate to achieve absolute gains, and that institutions facilitate the prospects for enhancing these gains by reducing the risks of defection states face when seeking to cooperate with one another. High levels of cooperation in the 1990s, especially in economic affairs characterized the Sino-American relations; the bombing did nothing to alter this trajectory. Yet, after the bombing, the relative economic gains for China signaled that the two states were indeed economic rivals, with China translating economic gains into higher and higher levels of military might. Traditional liberal international relations theory emphasizes the importance of political changes within China on the U.S.-China relationship. It expects to see a more economically open China become a more politically open and liberal China, one in which basic rights guaranteed, individual liberties are respected, and institutions enjoy public accountability and representation. This tradition does not serve as a good model for explaining the U.S.-China relationship. Even though American political leaders and scholars held out hope for a more liberal China, this turn in China’s politics and economics has not come about. The argument that a more liberal China since 1999 would mean a good relationship between China and the U.S. is a counterfactual assertion. Simply put, there is no empirical basis for liberal theory’s positive view of Sino-American relations. The Constructivist paradigm suggests that current Sino-American relations are social constructs, and history and culture greatly influence international politics. For constructivists, culture matters a lot when it comes to
international relations, because ideas and identities, which are rooted in culture, give rise to national interests and state behavior. The embassy bombing captures two competing national narratives. For the U.S., the war against Serbia is about preserving and extending liberal values and the liberal world order in the face of Serbian aggression against the Kosovar people. The embassy bombing was an honest mistake. For China, the American liberal order is problematic to say the least, and America’s propensity to use military force undermines stability and threatens China’s peaceful rise and quest for an alternative order of harmony among countries. In this view, the embassy bombing amounted to a humiliation of China and reinforced China’s thinking that America would do whatever necessary to block China’s peaceful rise. No single theoretical paradigm gets the US-China relationship since 1999 absolutely right, but realism offers powerful insights that the others, neo-liberalism especially, do not.

Chapter Three describe the events that led to the war in Kosovo and the bombing of the Chinese Embassy. A socialist federation, Yugoslavia broke up into seven independent states starting in the early 1990s. I describe how each of the republics succeeded from Yugoslavia. Due to the ethnic and religious complexity of the region, international institutions had to intervene in this region to promote peace. Peacekeeping in Bosnia failed with the massacre of Srebrenica and smaller factors, which forced NATO to intervene in Kosovo.

Chapter Four covers the Kosovo war and the bombing of the Chinese embassy. In 1998, Kosovo, a traditionally autonomous region of Serbia, which is one of seven republics of Yugoslavia, sought independence from Yugoslavia. In response to multiple massacres, culminating in the Reçak massacre, and given the lessons learnt from the massacres in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the mid-1990s, the United States, backed by its NATO allies,
decide to intervene in Kosovo against Yugoslavia. With China and Russia both opposed, the United Nations Security Council did not approve the intervention. On the 42nd day of this 78-day campaign, an American bomber dropped five missiles on the Chinese Embassy building in Belgrade. This event changed relations between the United States and China. While American reports suggest that the bombing was a mistake, some Chinese reports conclude that the attack was deliberate. The Chinese reaction was immediate. China issued four demands to United States, and although the U.S. complied with them in the months that followed, the stage for a rivalry between the two countries had been set. After describing the bombings, I evaluate the explanatory power of the three theoretical paradigms.

In Chapter Five, I analyze the immediate aftermath of the bombing, which was the freezing of the bilateral relations. The immediate aftermath saw enormous protests throughout Asia, including the destruction of U.S. diplomatic missions. Chapter Six surveys the bilateral relationship in the year 2001 during which three major events transpired: The Hainan Island incident, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and China joining the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Hainan Island incident further complicates relations between the U.S. and China, at least for a short amount of time, but the two latter developments are beneficial.

Lastly, Chapter Seven digs into the modern-day Sino-American relations. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China’s power has continued to rise and relations between the U.S. and China have taken on a competitive tone. Xi has centralized power around the People’s Republic Party and himself. He has initiated international projects and institutions that can be seen as unthreatening. China does not seem to use international institutions to help the world connect better, rather, is using them to increase its influence on smaller
states. For its part, the United States has carried out its “pivot” to Asia, which essentially means a commitment to reorient its military power from the Middle East to East Asia and to give East Asia much greater attention than it has enjoyed since the end of World War II and the Korean War.

I conclude that the Realist paradigm gives the best explanation to Sino-American relations since 1999. The bombing resulted in a “new normal” in this relationship. For the first time since the Cold War, we see the emergence of a state – China – that is willing to challenge United States. An increasingly powerful China demands respect and that has expanded its influence across the world. China’s economic, military, and political aims are largely at odds with those of the United States. A new global rivalry is underway.
II. **International Relations Theory and U.S.-China Relations**

The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999 shaped the relationship between the United States of America and People’s Republic of China. There are two core perspectives on this incident, one American and one Chinese. However, four major international relations paradigms – Realist, Neo-Liberal Institutionalist, Liberal and Constructivist – explain this incident and its implications on the contemporary Sino-American relations. I review each approach and analyze how it might explain relations between these two nations from the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade through the present day.

The Realist paradigm offers a somewhat more pessimistic view of international relations. This paradigm suggests that states are the central actors in international relations and the main subject of the levels of analysis. In Realism, states exist in an anarchic political system with no above authority. The idea of cooperation is almost inexistent, as politics is based on the zero-sum game, which suggests that the benefit of one state will be the loss of the other. Realism suggests that states will continue to fight for power. Cooperation tends to be very limited. States compete for power. The logic of the ‘Thucydides’s Trap’ captures neo-realism’s central claim that changes in the relative balance of power, and especially the rise of a peer competitor, has the effect of increasing tensions between the dominant and the rising state, and the risk of conflict between them.

Neo-liberal Institutionalism (NLI) is an IR paradigm that opposes the Realist view on cooperation. NLI suggests that cooperation among states in the international system is great, and international anarchy does not necessarily result in a competitive and war-like world because international institutions facilitate cooperation. From the NLI perspective, institutions help create win-win situations. Through this approach, countries create a form
of interdependence especially if the institutions in place promote a free trade system. NLI sees international relations as a positive sum game. In a positive sum game, the gains of a state are not relevant to the losses of the other. In the international system, it is more efficient for states to cooperate than compete, in that way both would win. Because of globalization, states are more interdependent through the exchange of goods, service and institutions, including democracy.

Liberalism offers an explanation that democracies tend to not fight one another and would generally come together in a community of nations in opposition to non-democracies. The main argument of the Liberal paradigm is the freedom of individuals, which links to elections, protection and checks and balances, and open markets.

Constructivism suggests that interactions among states in the international system are based on social constructs, which are cultural and rooted in historical experience. This theory, as described by Alexander Wendt, suggests, “the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces.”1 Constructivism rejects the proposition that material goods have any inherent meaning. Two major concepts to this theory are identity and norms. Each state has its own identity, and it takes a large event to make it shift, therefore, we see a constant relationship between certain states. Yet, these states must comply with the norms of that certain identity. This paradigm does not make a clear prediction about war and peace, but it does say that the bilateral relationship in the future depends on the intersubjective dynamic between the two countries. That means the perception of one state for the other can change over time.

a. U.S.-China Relations

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Historically, China has seen itself as the center of the world. With the rise of Western powers and Japan during the imperialism period, Chinese relative power decreased. For decades, if not centuries, China’s power diminished and it took a long time to explode. Besides current events, past events impact modern day Sino-American relations. Ever since the American power expansion in the Far East, relations with China have been rocky. Since the first expeditions of U.S. to Japan in the late 18th century until the beginning of WWII, USA paid special attention to the growth of Japan due to its amazing geographical position. During WWII, U.S. supported Chinese troops against the imperial Japanese. Although the U.S. dropped two nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the war, their relations stabilized, with the U.S. intervening in Japan and changing the political system of Japan by establishing a democratic constitution. The Chinese sentiment towards Americans was not negative until the victory of Mao Zedong and the rise of communism. The promotion of socialist ideas and the suppression of imperialist, capitalist and bourgeois elements led to the establishment of a Chinese mentality that Americans are the enemies of China. A major influence in this negative perception was the Korean War. During the beginning of 1950s, China and United States fought in opposite sides. The Americans supported the anti-communist South Korea, and the Chinese supported the communist North Korea – and the U.S. and China came to blows on the Korean peninsula. The following two decades, China and United States faced each other indirectly during the Vietnam War. Again, the Chinese supported the communist of North Vietnam, while Americans supported republican South Vietnam. In the past, the world has seen these two states collide; however, if a collision were to take place today its dimension would be immense. Relations improved with the visit of President Richard Nixon to China in 1972. During his visit, he claimed, “This was the week that changed the
world, as what we have said in that Communique is not nearly as important as what we will do in the years ahead to build a bridge across 16,000 miles and 22 years of hostilities which have divided U.S. in the past. And what we have said today is that we shall build that bridge.”

Since then, relations improved, leading to China’s opening to the world, its accession to the United Nations Security Council, and its joining multiple other international organizations. Until the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in May 1999, U.S. did not see China as a threat, thus, it never took actions to prevent its rise. Currently, United States is in a potential trade war with China. The two countries are cooperating in a range of issues; yet each sees the other as a main competitor. The two are also eyeing each other closely in the East and South China Seas, as the U.S. projects its power into East Asia and China’s military power continues to rise.

b. Thucydides’s Trap and the Realist View of U.S.-China Relations

Over the many centuries of modern states, there were many established powers, which were threatened by the rise of an emerging power. Cases of this occurrence can be found before the new era, dating back to ancient Greece. One of the founding fathers of history, Thucydides, explains this phenomenon which today we call the Thucydides’s Trap. Graham Allison explains the phenomenon of the rise of Athens and the fear that this inspired in Sparta that made war inevitable: “Thucydides’s Trap refers to the natural, inevitable discombobulation that occurs when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power. This can happen in any sphere. But its implications are most dangerous in international affairs.”

Currently, China’s rise and its military, political and economic

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explosion is instilling a fear in the US. One consequence of this fear could be the current trade war that the two countries have going on. Nevertheless, a trade war might not be the furthest the two countries are willing to go.

After the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, we see the creation of the modern state system. Allison and other scholars from Harvard’s ‘Thucydides’s Trap Project’, using inductive reasoning, studied sixteen examples of the rise of one state that challenged another, and evaluated whether the rising power who threatened the established power resulted in war. Twelve out of sixteen examples resulted in war. It is worth mentioning that fourteen of the sixteen examples occurred before the world saw the creation of nuclear bombs. This shows a seventy-five percent chance of two major power going to war. Simultaneously, statistics show that there is a twenty-five percent chance of rivals not going to war. Ever since the development of nuclear bombs, there has been peace among the great powers. Considering that these example of states going to war existed before the development of nuclear bombs, states today are too ‘scared’ to start a war due to mutually assured destruction. A similar story is the cold war between United States and the former Soviet Union. During the Cuban Missile Crisis in the 1962, both countries came close to a hot war. Both countries had the ability to destroy one another, thus, both chose not to act as it would probably bring an end to the world. Today, relative to the United States, China is likely the same power the Soviet Union was during the Cold War. If we consider only the two examples after WWII when a rising power threatened the existing power, we can determine that the probability of war between U.S. and China is zero. However, if we follow Allison’s inductive theory the chances of China and U.S. going to war would be seventy-five percent. I choose to support the argument that neither of the two countries would initiate war. Most if not all the living creatures would be extinct, in case China and
U.S. deploy multiple, if not most of the nuclear warheads. Unless one side of the conflict develops futuristic technologies to defend against nuclear weapons, there is no reason why they would go to war, when mutual destruction is assured. I argue that nuclear weapons instill fear in other nations, however, that leads them to build defensive mechanism. Kenneth Waltz, one of the most prominent neo-realist scholars of international relations theory, suggests that if we want to prevent war, countries should obtain secure second-strike nuclear capabilities, thus ensuring deterrence. He argues, “Nuclear weapons have reduced the chances of war between the United States and the Soviet Union and between the Soviet Union and China. One may expect them to have similar effects elsewhere. Where nuclear weapons threaten to make the cost of wars immense, who will dare to start them? Nuclear weapons make it possible to approach the deterrent ideal.”

Nuclear war can only result from miscalculations or on accident, but it is difficult not to be aware of the damage and loss that nuclear weapons can bring.

The Thucydides Trap applies best to the Realist paradigm. Looking back at the Peloponnesian War, realists would argue that Athens, as an emerging power, enjoyed relative gains vis-à-vis Sparta, the dominant power. The two competed for power and territories. Allison analyses Thucydides idea that there are three primary drivers fueling this dynamic that could lead to war: interests, fear, and honor. Allison then moves on to elaborate on national interest. He argues, “The survival of the state and its sovereignty in making decisions in its domain free from coercion from others are standard fare in discussions of national security.”

powers’ fears often fuel misperceptions and exaggerate dangers, as rising powers’ self-
confidence stimulates unrealistic expectations about what is possible and encourages risk-
taking.”6 The Thucydides Trap suggests that the Athenians and Spartans were all cold
headed, they predicted the danger, urged caution, but still they went to war, which could
be the case of U.S. and China. In figure 1, we see the relationship between time and relative
power. Currently American relative power is in decline, and China’s is rising. The highest
probability of the two states going to war would be around the equilibrium point of relative
power. It would be beneficial for China to jump over that threshold and avoid a war, but at
the same time surpass U.S. in relative power.

![Figure 1: Relation between Relative Power and Time](image)

China rose to become arguably the second world power in a very short amount of
time. Its leader Xi Jinping has revolutionized China pushing for a continuation of
development in all spheres. “Xi’s vision for China is similarly iron-willed. His “China
Dream” combines prosperity and power—equal parts Theodore Roosevelt’s muscular
vision of an American century and Franklin Roosevelt’s dynamic New Deal. It captures
the intense yearning of a billion Chinese: to be rich, to be powerful, and to be respected.”7

Lee Kuan Yew explained that this idea of ‘Making China Great Again’ means returning

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6. Ibid.
the Chinese predominance in Asia, reestablishing control over the lost territories such as Hong Kong and Taiwan. Xi is preparing China for war, not only for war but for a fight that he wants to win. Chinese media reports that “President Xi Jinping has told his military commanders to ‘concentrate preparations for fighting a war’ as tensions continue to grow over the future of the South China Sea and Taiwan.” He believes in strong military and established high-ranking officers that are loyal to the party and to the commander in chief. He believes that a strong military is important to overcome the long humiliation China received in the hands of the foreign powers. In a world of nuclear bombs, I am not sure how this ideology will fit in the greater scheme of war, however. China lost the Opium War against Britain due to its weak naval force. Currently, China does not completely oversee the South and East China Seas as the United States’ Navy continuously patrols it. China lost wars due to its weak navy; therefore, building a huge naval force will give it more dominance in the seas and protection in the mainland. However, a strong navy does not guarantee a victory, as the current methods of military wars are based on nuclear power primarily, and on aerial forces secondarily. China has excelled in technological investments, and this was proven when they landed a probe on the surface of the Moon in 2013. While the disputes over the South China Sea exists since decades ago, they only have become bigger with the growth of Chinese confidence in their relative power.

It makes sense as to why China remained silent regarding the South China Sea until it made tremendous technological and military advances. Allison says, “So the Chinese will be patient in the “long game” with the US-a contest in which they steadily accrue

advantages, confident that they will outlast the Americans in the region.” The South China Sea has been a disputed territory for a long time, and China will never give up on that area, as the first map of the region presents nine lines that show the waters Chinese navy controlled. In the recent years, China has built artificial islands with military basis on them. Realists would argue that they are building attacking capabilities, while others would argue these constructions are to facilitate the economic interdependence in the region. Considering that few weeks ago there was an agreement signed between Philippines and China for the exploration of energy in the South China Sea, it seems that this Chinese “long game” is working properly. After this agreement the long-term ally of America, the Philippines claimed that these waters belong to China. In the post-agreement conference, Rodrigo Duterte, the president of Philippines claimed, “China is there,” he then told reporters, “That is a reality, and America and everybody should realise that they are there.” By making these statements Duterte is telling the world that Philippines has somewhat accepted the Chinese rulership in the South China Sea. “Since becoming a great power the United States has never tolerated peer competitors.” Therefore, in a world of offensive realism we expect U.S. to not back down, rather, we expect it to build offensive capabilities to prevent China from striking first in any form, just as China gears up to utilize its growing military power to achieve regional hegemony in East Asia.

If a war were to take place, most likely will be over the South China Sea. In the recent decades, China has established a program of building aircraft carriers, which is a

great strategic investment. Currently, China has one aircraft carrier in commission and two others under construction. Some news reports suggest that China might have up to six commissioned aircraft carriers by 2030. This would make China the second biggest aircraft carrier fleet. The risk does not only lie in the number of the carriers but also the technologies that it is using. Besides investments on military capabilities, what might help maintain peace, Allison argues, is the establishment of international institutions. China doubled the number membership in international institutions and the hope is they hold it accountable for its actions. However, China is establishing its own international institutions and initiatives such as the Asian Development Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative, and trying to get away from the liberal order established by the U.S..

John Mearsheimer, an offensive realist, also argues that China will not use force to establish hegemony in the region; rather it will use its powerful economy. Similarly, China in a decade could use its huge economy to influence the behavior of United States. It is in China’s favor to build a strong military and rise stronger if it wants to maintain domestic stability. Mearsheimer mentions the period between the First Opium War and Second World War, during which China’s sovereignty was inexistent. Mearsheimer does not believe that economic interdependence necessarily results in peace. He argues, “All of these reasons make it hard to be confident that economic interdependence can serve as a firm foundation for peace in Asia in the decades ahead. This is not to deny, however, that it might serve as a brake on war in certain circumstances.”^{12} While he argues that economic, interdependence does not necessarily lead to peace, many factors will hold countries back from fighting each other. Nuclear deterrence he argues, makes war unlikely but again that does not eliminate the risk of war. In this case, I agree with his assessment as to why China

and United States will not go to war in the future: nuclear weapons and mutually assured destruction.

c. Neo-liberal Institutionalist View on U.S.-China Relations

Neo-Liberal Institutionalism suggests that although the world anarchic that states create institutions to facilitate cooperation such as trade or arms control. These institutions then grow to become independent from the states that create them. In his book, Allison argues that China does not look to use military force in the near future, but if it is the last resort, they will do so, as would most states. The use of military force by China, he argues, will be against powers of similar or greater strength, compared to the weaker powers that will try to negotiate and get them on its side. To do so, China has joined multiple international organizations and has become a major stakeholder in them, thus, promoting confidence building. United States and other western powers after WWII implemented the Bretton Woods system to govern monetary relations among states. Since then we have seen the rise of many international organizations that facilitate bilateral or multilateral relations among states. China’s role in international politics has increased drastically since the 1970s, not only by joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Trade Organization (WTO) and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Similarly, to US-led Bretton Wood system, China has created its own international institution that facilitate bilateral and multilateral relations. China’s position as a stakeholder has increased within the ADB due to China’s economic progress. This means that ADB will use its resources for other countries since China does not need them as much, and China would be able to offer loans to developing countries. On the other hand, China helped create the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which might rival the World Bank (WB) and the IMF. While there are reports that suggest the AIIB and the BRI
have the capacity to challenge the WB, China sees them as an opportunity to help develop the world. Abdi Latif Dahir argues, “AIIB’s significance also coincides with China’s ambitious One Belt, One Road initiative, which will spend as much as $3 trillion on roads, ports, and other updates to infrastructure in more than 60 countries.”¹³ Although Realism might suggest that this increase in China’s power will be the US’s loss, China-led institutions, according to neo-liberal institutionalists, helps to make the world more interconnected and increases globalization, which has brought development to many parts of the world. Through this interconnectedness, the world will be less likely to go to war, because the losses for all would be too great. If U.S. has spread itself thin across the world, China’s successful economic expansion will help focus on domestic issue.

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye argue in their book *Power and Interdependence* book that China and United States fall under the notion of ‘complex interdependence’, which is “a world in which security and force matter less and countries are connected by multiple social and political relationships.”¹⁴ Indeed, since the death of Mao, both countries have been interconnected by multiple factors. It is important, to note that Nye does not see the US-China as one-dimensional; rather, he sees them as multidimensional. In a world of multidimensional relations, United States should not only focus in one aspect, say the hard power, when it can influence China in the other dimension to bring it closer to democratization. The argument that the two countries would not go to war due to their interdependency is not supported when discussing the bombing incident. If the incident was purposefully done it shows that United States and China see each other as competitors,

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and if the incident was a mistake, it shows that the two countries do not hold back and are able to freeze all relations.

**d. Liberal View on U.S.-China Relations**

The liberal perspective of China’s rise suggests that there will be no conflict between the two powers because of the liberal democratic peace. Further, the involvement of NGOs, state actors and international institutions will push China to integrate peacefully into the liberal world system that the United States has created. The main argument why United States and China would not go to war with each other is due to China’s liberalization and democratization. Since the death of Mao Zedong, China has become more liberalized and has installed multiple democratic elements, mainly elections. Since Mao’s death China has gone through multiple leaders. Companies have more rights, people can buy property, and globalizing forces have installed western cultural ideas on the Chinese people. The other argument is that China is moving slowly towards a capitalist and democratic society and its involvement in the region and the world would push China to become more opened and less authoritative, it would be a reverse influence, where the smaller powers would help the bigger power become more democratic.

While Realism sees the state as the main subject of the levels of analysis, Liberalism puts the individual both Chinese and American leaders want to be reelected. Going to war would decrease the support of their leader drastically. Michael Doyle argues that, “When the citizens who bear the burdens of war elect their governments, wars become impossible.”15 In United States the president has a term limit. Although, from a Western standard, China does not offer open and free elections, they had an election process to elect

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its leader. Just recently, China allowed Xi Jinping to remain in power with no limit, which questions Doyle’s argument. Since Xi, can remain in power until he wishes, does that mean war will become impossible?\textsuperscript{16} The liberal democratic peace argument are weak. Xi is reforming the country towards state socialism. Individual freedoms are being suppressed. Economic openness in China, since the late 1970s, has not been matched with greater political liberalization, as liberals predicted. Additionally, Xi has instilled authoritative state apparatus that prevents western soft power, mainly the internet and pop culture, from infiltrating China.

\textbf{e. Constructivist View on U.S.-China Relations}

Constructivist international relations theory suggests that interactions among states in the international system are based on social constructs, which are rooted in culture and history. Much of China’s development is linked to its history of considering itself the center of the world. Graham Allison argues that in John King Fairbank’s summary on classical Chinese foreign policy, there were three key tenets. He claims that China wishes for “demand for regional dominance, insistence that neighboring countries recognize China’s inherent superiority and willingness to use this dominance and superiority to orchestrate harmonious co-existence with its neighbors.”\textsuperscript{17} He then continues to explain that China always tried to establish an order in the world similar to the domestic one. A hierarchy always lived within the Chinese society, always respecting the superior. Now that China has become the second economic power in the world, and increased standard of living it is aiming to establish a foreign policy easier that it used to centuries ago.

\textsuperscript{16} I discuss Xi’s changes to the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China in chapter VII. Xi, has the People’s Congress approval to remain in power until he wishes, something that we have not seen since Mao Zedong. Xi has made additional changes to the political system of China, taking it back to a more authoritative regime.

\textsuperscript{17} Allison, 110.
To understand how China sees its domestic, regional and world politics we must understand the tradition and some specific terms used in Chinese. This approach would fall under the constructivist paradigm of international relations, which suggests that specific aspects and approaches of IR are based on history and constructed by societies and not necessarily because of the human nature or material forces. The idea of ‘tianxia’ in Chinese culture has a great meaning and is of big importance in international relations. Its meaning goes around the phrase “all under heaven,” which included the Chinese territories, people and anything material, including neighboring states that submitted to Chinese stewardship. They believed in one place under heaven and the Chinese emperor would receive the “heavenly mandate,” which meant he is the ruler of the whole world. Ever since the death of Mao Zedong, Chinese people did not really live under the “one man, one rule,” however, with the election of Xi Jinping as the president of People’s Republic of China that might have changed. He changed a lot of power distribution to make him the one supreme leader, to grant himself the “mandate of heaven,” to make him the one ruler of “all under heaven.” While this idea of ‘tianxia’ was originally cultural, not political, over the centuries it became used by many rulers and today takes on a more political meaning. Lewis and Hsieh in their essay “Tianxia and the Invention of Empire in East Asia,” claim that this idea was used in the sense that “any true ruler, including those of the present day, should unify and rule all under heaven. As in the earlier texts, this political unit should share a common set of cultural ideals.”18 Therefore, to understand the real perception of Xi Jinping and China, we must understand its culture. This theory suggests that modern China under Xi’s rule has nothing against world powers; rather its culture and history promote China’s leadership in

the region.

In multiple occasions, we see China commanding the respect of other great powers and recovering its historical sphere of influence. Whether it was after the bombing of the Chinese Embassy or the Hainan Island incident, China demanded an apology and respect from United States of America. Historically, China has seen itself as the center of the world. This ideology became less realistic when the industrial revolution hit and the Western powers became more technologically advanced which made China inferior and easy to conquer in all sense. This paradigm does not make a clear prediction about war and peace, but it does say that the bilateral relationship in the future depends on the intersubjective dynamic between the two countries. We see a new dynamic between China and US, and the slogan “Making China great again is thus not just a matter of making it rich. Xi means to make it powerful, make it proud, and make the Party, as the primary driver for the entire venture, once again the worthy vanguard of the people.”\(^\text{19}\) With the Chinese Dream, Xi hopes to rival United States if not surpassing it in all sense. If United States and perceived China as an inferior, reasonably the dynamics between the two countries have shifted. China is keep U.S. respecting the norms they have established bilaterally.

The Thucydides Trap results in a war between the rising and the established power. Whether a rise of China as a world power might increase the risk of major war with the U.S. explained by different international relations paradigms, I conclude that the realist paradigm has the closest prognoses to what could happen between China and USA. Further, the constructivist idea that China demands respect and will not back down, should it be sufficiently powerful, is also an important consideration in relation to the embassy bombing and its aftermath. Simply because culture and history suggest that China aims dominance

\(^{19}\) Allison, 119.
over the world does not mean they will avoid war with U.S. In a peaceful world, China has no reason to expand its military to almost the level of United States, if it does not aim to replace it as the world largest power. Xi is preparing China for war, it is building military capabilities, has threatened neighboring states and United States, which are clear indications of its intentions on relative power. The power that United States might have lost over the past two decades directly transfers to China. While international institutions might hold China accountable for its actions, the creation of China-led institutions makes me believe that China is avoiding responsibility. Economic interdependence will not stop these two countries from going to war. China has the whole world to export goods to, and U.S. has the whole world to import goods from. If China is victorious in this struggle for power, she will technically set the rules for the South China Sea, a treasure trade comprises of $3,000,000,000,000 annually. Economic interdependence works mostly in a democratic system, and because political liberalization has not come to China, the democratic peace argument is not relevant to Sino-American relations since 1999.
III. Breakup of Yugoslavia

a. Serbia/Slovenia, Serbia/Croatia, Serbia/BiH

Yugoslavia was founded in 1918 and originally known by the name of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The term Yugoslavia was first used in 1929, which translates from the Serbo-Croatian language to the “Southern Slavs.” As a state until Second World War, political instability overwhelmingly filled the history of Yugoslavia as a country. The Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia was created on November 29, 1945. Yugoslavia comprised of eight federal territories, with six main republics: Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Socialist Republic of Croatia, Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Socialist Republic of Montenegro, Socialist Republic of Slovenia and Socialist Republic of Serbia. The latter contained the Socialist Autonomous Province (SAP) of Kosovo and Socialist Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. For most of Yugoslavia’s existence, Marshal Josip Broz Tito was its leader. Tito died in 1980, leaving Yugoslavia in a political struggle. Tito is seen as the figure who held this federation together through his domestic and international authority, and no doubt his death contributed greatly to the separation of the republics and the breakup of Yugoslavia.20

Built on republics and divided by ethnic representation, Yugoslavia was pictured to break apart sooner rather than later. The fall of the socialist bloc in Europe was one of the reasons Yugoslavia ceased to exist. The tearing down of the Berlin Wall, democratic elections in other countries, neo-liberal institutionalism and other international factors pushed domestic forces to fight for separation and establishment of democratic regimes

separate from the Yugoslavian Federation. The rise of domestic nationalism was the key factor that pushed for division among the republics. With Slobodan Milosevic coming to power as the president of SR of Serbia, nationalism increased. Many Yugoslavs considered him as the protector of communism, however, and with a Europe moving towards democracy, communist ideas were not going to succeed. Unlike many other socialist federations, the breakup of Yugoslavia was not peaceful, and besides Macedonia, most of the republic of Yugoslavia fought wars – some bloody and drawn out, some not – to achieve independence. Separatist movements took place initially in Slovenia, followed by Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and finally Kosovo.

With Milosevic in power, SAP of Kosovo lost a lot of its autonomy that it had under the 1974 Yugoslavian constitution. Therefore, miners of Kosovo started protesting against this injustice. With no autonomy for Kosovo, the voting power of Serbia increased. When Kosovar authorities had voting rights, they opposed the majority of the proposals the Serbian side suggested. Thus, removing their autonomy and taking Kosovar voting power made it easier for the Serbian agendas to go forward. Slovenian and Croat leaders were supportive of Kosovo’s cause for separation, as Serbia was aiming to increase its voting power in the Federation, which did not suite well with the Slovenes and Croats. Thus, seeing the inevitable confrontation between Serbs and the other two ethnic groups, both Slovenes and Croats held referendums for practical independence from the Yugoslavian Federation. This did not sit well with the Serbs as they feared that the Serbian population in these countries will suffer from this separation and aimed to stop it from happening.

On December 23, 1990, Slovenia held a referendum to gain independence from Yugoslavia and a vast majority of the population voted in favor of independence. On June 25, 1991, Slovenia officially declared its independence. Two days later the Yugoslav
People’s Army (YPA)\textsuperscript{21} attacked Slovenia, thus starting the Ten-Day War. Slovenes, already prepared for war, took on the most strategic places, such as the borders with the EU countries, the international Airport of Ljubljana and military bases. While there were causalities between both groups, none of them exceeded one hundred. Yugoslavian leadership saw it unreasonable to continue fighting with a lost republic, thus, both sides signed the Brioni Accord. This accord protected Slovenia from the intervention of YPA or any form of influence over Slovenia. Negotiations followed this accord and led to the normalization of Yugoslav-Slovene relations. The separation of Slovenia from Yugoslavia practically meant separation of Croatia as well.

On May 2, 1991, the Croat leadership held an independence referendum with a huge majority casting their votes for independence. Croatia, at the same day as Slovenia, declared its independence from the Yugoslavian Federation. The reaction of the Serbian side was not the same towards Croatia as it had been toward Slovenia. The issue was more complicated in Croatia’s case, as a bigger portion of ethnic Serbs lived in the Eastern side of Croatia that they did in Slovenia. Therefore, the YPA intervened to protect the Serbian population. However, considering that the YPA at the time comprised mostly of Serbian and Montenegrin forces, they were unable to keep the ethnic Croatian part of the Federation. The withdrawal of the YPA forces did not mean the end of the war in Croatia, however, as Serbian forces in Croatia established the Republic of Serbian Krajina, a Serb republic within the borders of Croatia. The war continued until 1995, when the Croatian forces launched a successful offensive on the Republic of Serbian Krajina, thus, fully reincorporating that region into the independent country of Croatia. During the Croatian

\footnote{21. The general abbreviation used in academia for the Yugoslav People’s Army is JNA from Serbo-Croatian language \textit{Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija}, I use the English abbreviation YPA as it is easier to associate with the term Yugoslav People’s Army.}
war, there were two United Nations mission, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). The former was a peacekeeping force that aimed to establish security and peace talks among the Republic of Croatia and other self-proclaimed provinces. The latter was a peacekeeping force that aimed to integrate peacefully the region of Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia. During this war, “In Croatia, in the period from 1990 to 2002, 22,192 people were killed, forcibly taken away and missing, said Dražen Živić, a research associate of the Institute of Social Sciences ‘Ivo Pilar’. ”

While the number in Croatian side were huge, the ones from the Serbian side were no less significant. During the Croatian war of independence until 1999, there were 7,134 Serbs dead or missing. While the war in Croatia was long and caused terrible damages to both sides, in the Bosnian war that followed the causalities and damage quintupled.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina war started around the same time as the Croatian War of Independence, and the fighting went on for more than three years. The Bosnian conflict is one of the most complicated in the Balkans if not Europe and the world. Comprising of a few ethnic groups with approximately similar population and occupying similar territory sizes, the war had the potential to never end. Even under the Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into three ethnic and religious groups, and therefore three regions. Bosnia was comprised of Muslim Bosniaks, Herzegovina was comprised of Catholic Croats and Srpska was comprised of Orthodox Serbs. Each of them

during the Bosnian War had different aims and domestic civil unrest could hardly be stopped. Bosniaks fought to establish an independent republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croats fought to establish a Croatian republic in the territory of Herzegovina and loyal to the Republic of Croatia, and the Serbs, who established Republika Srpska were loyal to the Yugoslavian forces. All three groups fought against each other to make one of the bloodiest conflicts after the Second World War. Bosnia and Herzegovina held a referendum on March 1, 1992, with a turnout of just below two thirds; however, almost all the voters supported the independence of the new country from Yugoslavia. Two days later, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence but at the same time, Republika Srpska did the same, which immediately started the Bosnian War. While internationally Republika Srpska was never officially recognized, Bosnia and Herzegovina did receive recognition.

To understand the complexity of the Bosnian Conflict, we should look at figure 2. This map was a proposed plan from the European Community to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina into ten provinces, as ethnic division was truly complicated. The red color represents the regions comprised of majority Serbian population, the green color represents the regions comprised of majority Bosniak population and the grey color represents the regions comprised of majority Croat population.
Although there were many atrocities involving the breakup of Yugoslavia, these events helped the goal of promoting liberalization. Yugoslavia was the last member of the Eastern Bloc in Europe, and its fall meant the triumph of capitalism and democracy. With the triumph of democracy and capitalism, the U.S. influence in this region expanded, and that of Russian and Chinese declined, that is why the breakup of Yugoslavia did not work well for the latter states. This could be a motive, which forced the Chinese to condemn the U.S.-led NATO campaigns in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later Kosovo.
b. NATO-Europe and the Failure of Peacekeeping/Ethnic Cleansing

The violent breakup of Yugoslavia, which began in 1991 and continued in 1999, resulted in the establishment of peacekeeping operations in that war-torn country. Slovenia declared its independence in 1991, and after a brief, ten-day war, Yugoslavia gave up the fight. Macedonia also declared its independence in 1991 but, unlike Slovenia, no violence followed. The declarations of independence by Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, were followed by protracted violence, and in both instances the Serb-dominated, central Yugoslav government, based in Belgrade, contested these declarations, and fought both to prevent the further breakup of the Federation and, later, to claim territory in these two countries by supporting local Serb militias. This latter violence resulted in the creation of peacekeeping forces in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, called the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). If United Nations peacekeepers had not been deployed, then it is quite likely that the violent conflicts there would have lasted much longer, caused more destruction, and resulted in higher casualties than what transpired between 1992 and 1995. This is not to suggest that peacekeeping operations were successful. They were not.

The UN Security Council approved UNPROFOR peacekeeping missions in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia on February 21, 1992. Comprised of approximately 39,000 personnel from 50 countries, its forces deployed soon after and continued through March of 1995. Peacekeeping in Croatia proved most difficult. Though successful in Macedonia, which did not witness much violent conflict, UNPROFOR did

not perform well at establishing and keeping the peace, settling disputes, and sustaining peace talks in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina. In March of 1995, the United Nations Security Council established a new peacekeeping mission, for Croatia, called the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO). Little different in its mission from UNPROFOR, UNCRO lasted less than a year. More importantly, perhaps, UNCRO’s military capabilities were down by half from the previous UN mission. A weaker force opened the way for the Croatian Army to defy the peacekeepers and take up arms for the purpose of reclaiming areas of the Croat republic – the Krajina province specifically – that had been occupied by rebellious Croatian Serb militias who, after Croatia’s declaration of independence, in turn declared their independence from Croatia and established the self-styled Republic of Serbian Krajina. During the Croatian Army’s offensive to reclaim territory held by Serb militia, moreover, 167 UN personnel, almost all of them soldiers, were killed, and others were kept hostage.

UNPROFOR did not perform as planned in Croatia – and it performed far worse in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The reason is the Srebrenica massacre. Between July and August of 1995, the UNPROFOR failed in its mission to protect innocent civilians – Bosniaks (Bosnia Muslims) mostly – in the town of Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the fighting among warring Croat, Bosniak, and Serb militias. UNPROFOR declared Srebrenica a Safe Area, which meant that the town was “free of armed attack or any other hostile act” and that UN peacekeepers were committed to protecting people who lived there and who might travel there seeking refuge from any harm. This declaration of

Srebrenica as a safe haven turned out to be a tragic mistake, because, confident that it was succeeding, UNPROFOR quickly transitioned the town from a “Protection of Safe Area” (Phase Three peacekeeping) to a “Monitoring of the Federation and Weapons Exclusive Zone” (Phase Four peacekeeping). This status change resulted in a reduction in the number of military forces deployed there and the cessation of airs strikes against the dominant, Bosnian Serb militia. Military action by militias in and around the town escalated. Bosnian Serb forces led by Ratko Mladic overwhelmed the peacekeepers, and although they pledged to UNPROFOR that Bosniaks would be granted safe passage from the town, Mladic orchestrated the seizure and murder of over eight thousand Bosniak men. (The official toll is 8,373, but many more men have either not been identified or are still otherwise unaccounted.)

Figure 3: The Town of Srebrenica in the back and Srebrenica Genocide Memorial in front. Source: Life Gate Magazine.  
The Srebrenica massacre marked the worst humanitarian disaster in Europe since World War II. In retrospect, it was a disaster waiting to happen. In the words of Alex Lockie and Armin Rosen, “The Srebrenica massacre was the inevitable result: an act of mass murder that conveyed the brutal message that Muslims weren’t safe anywhere inside of the country.” More importantly, they continue, it revealed “that the UN and the international community were unable or unwilling to protect” innocent civilians. A report from the Human Rights Watch claims that the number of UN soldiers protecting this zone was only in the several hundred. “[T]wo rotations of Dutch troops stationed in the enclave had been allowed to leave, but the Bosnian Serbs refused their replacements entry. As a result, the force was reduced from an already gravely insufficient force of about 400, to about 300.” The report adds that UNPROFOR was unable to protect its own military equipment and military personnel as some dozen Dutch soldiers were kept hostage from the Bosnian Serb army and many TOWs (Anti-Tank Missiles) were confiscated. The second mistake from the UNPROFOR was the decision to stop air strikes against the Bosnian-Serb army. “Bosnian Serb commander Ratko Mladic threatened to fire on the Dutch compound and the civilian population of Srebrenica and to execute Dutch peacekeeping hostages, if more air strikes were carried out.” Following NATO’s attacks on Bosnian-Serb targets, Dutch Defense Minister Joris Voorhoeve contacted Yasushi Akashi, the U.N. secretary general’s special representative to the former Yugoslavia and

chief U.N. civilian officer in the U.N. mission, and demanded that air strikes be called off immediately.”

There are two main reasons why peacekeepers failed to prevent atrocities in Bosnia Herzegovina. NATO established “Operation Deny Flight,” which created a no-fly zone above the skies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it proved unable to stop the use of helicopters by Bosnian Serbs. In addition, on many occasions the Bosnian Serb army, supported by Yugoslavian forces, attacked, and NATO was unable to properly defend UN Safe Areas. The Srebrenica genocide led to the Dayton Agreement. Not until NATO deployed 60,000 troops did the situation in Bosnia Herzegovina dramatically improve.

The lesson of Srebrenica weighed heavily on United States and Western European leaders as the security situation in Kosovo deteriorated in 1999. Yugoslav government forces prepared a major operation to crush Kosovar rebels. Considering the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians to nearby countries, the killing of many others, the massacre of Kosovars by Yugoslav forces at Reçak, and the failure of peace talks between Kosovar rebels and the Serb-dominated Yugoslav government, Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, with blessings from Washington, London, Paris, and Berlin, directed NATO troops to start a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia for the purpose of compelling Belgrade to cease its military operations in and withdrawal its forces from Kosovo.

Understanding the complexity of the Croatian and Bosnia and Herzegovina wars, the international community decided to take action during the Kosovo War and hope to not repeat the mistakes of the former peacekeeping mission. During Kosovo War, the international community got involved through NATO and UN peacekeeping missions. Considering the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Kosovo Albanians to nearby countries, the killing of many others, the massacre of Kosovars at Reçak, and the failure of the peace talks between the Kosovar rebels and the Yugoslav government, Secretary General of NATO, Javier Solana, with the go-ahead from Washington, London, Paris, Berlin, and Brussels, directed the allied troops to start the bombing campaign against Yugoslavia to compel the Serb-dominated government to cease its military operations in and withdraw its forces from Kosovo.

The Western intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be explained through both Realist and Liberal paradigm. In BiH massacres were taking place, the war was not going to end, and instability would have spread across the region if not the continent. Therefore, Liberals would argue that the U.S-led intervention was done for purposes of establishing
peace and a system where states could live in harmonious cooperation. Yet, Realists would argue that this intervention was not necessary, and U.S. was only pushing to expand its imperialistic aims and control this region. When Yugoslavia existed, China and Russia were its closest allies, therefore, now it was the chance for U.S. to take advantage of the other two powers.
IV. Kosovo War and the Bombing of the Chinese Embassy

Kosovo comprised of 90% ethnic Albanians on February 28, 1974, adopted its first constitution that considered Kosovo an autonomous region within Yugoslavia. This status gave Kosovar Albanians a hope that they would not be considered second-class citizens. Kosovo’s autonomy lased for 15 years. On March 23 1989, the assembly of Kosovo made amendments to the constitution, thus removing its autonomy and incorporating Kosovo as a region of Serbia. Considering that Kosovar Albanians would fight for two years for separation from Serbia shows that the constitutional amendments of 1989 was forced on Kosovo by the Serb Republic. Albanians in Kosovo took up arms in the 1990s to initiate a conflict through which they finally would gain separation from Serbia. The Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia did not include Kosovo’s status in their agenda. Carole Rogel a professor at Ohio State University claimed that, “The lesson the Kosovars gained from the Dayton Treaty was that pacifism led nowhere. The way was thus open to those elements who favored a more militant approach.” She argues that the pacifist movement led by Republic of Kosova president Ibrahim Rugova, was not serving the greater purpose, thus, Kosovar Albanians took a more militant agenda.

Before 1997, Albanians in Kosovo in multiple occasions attacked Yugoslav police and military personnel. However, the war officially started on March 5 1998, with the massacre at the Jashari compound, where 66 people were killed, including Adem Jashari.

36. Republic of Kosova, not to be confused with Republic of Kosovo (2008-present), was a self-proclaimed and partially recognized country. The Provincial Assembly of Kosovo declared the territory they served an independent republic in 1992 and it existed as such with its own powers until 1999. The first and only president of Republic of Kosova was Ibrahim Rugova. He is cited in multiple sources as the Gandhi of the Balkans due to his pacifist approaches on the separatism movement.
the General Commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). While the massacre at the Jashari compound started intensified attacks from both sides, I date the war in Kosovo with the KLA’s first public appearance, which happened on November 28 1997. The United States’ Congress initially ruled KLA as a terrorist group. However, it was the pressure of Rep. Joe DioGuardi that brought the issue of ethnic Albanians in the Balkans, to the attention of the U.S. Government. A report from the U.S. House of Representatives claims that, “Joe DioGuardi was the first Member of Congress to bring the issue of Albanian rights in the Balkans to the attention of the U.S. government through a Congressional Resolution that he sponsored as a new Member of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1986. He was also responsible for the first Congressional hearing on Kosova in 1987.”37 As a politician he saw the risk that the war criminals of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely, Radovan Karadzic and Slobodan Milosevic, would pose to the Albanian population in Kosovo. Then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said, “It is President Milosevic who is responsible for internationalizing this crisis – not we. The time to stop it is now, before it spreads. Otherwise, we will have to accept responsibility for the consequences to the region, to Europe, and to the values we share.”38 Similar to DioGuardi’s arguments, the government of United States wanted to protect the values it holds, those of liberties and freedom.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) started the military campaign against the Former Yugoslavia in March 24, 1999. Ethnic cleansing, destabilization of the region, and eventual genocide were the main reasons that pushed NATO to begin a campaign in Yugoslavia without the approval of the United Nation Security Council.

Both Russia and China Vetoed the proposal to intervene in Kosovo. It is worth mentioning that China and Yugoslavia, both socialist countries, had great relations until the breakup of the later. This campaign was described as a humanitarian intervention in order to compel the Serbian forces to leave the territory of Kosovo. Over 1.45 million people were displaced by the conflict by 9 June 1999, with many of them to never returning home. China and Russia, both members of the UNSC, opposed this campaign and would have vetoed any proposal; therefore, NATO took a major decision without approval of the UNSC to start Operation Allied Force. The campaign lasted for 78 days until June 10, 1999, when NATO officially ratified the agreement that the president of Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milosevic, on June 3, 1999 signed in order to bring a stop to the fighting. The Yugoslav Wars ended with the signing of this accord.

The NATO campaign was all air-to-ground based as the United States’ government ruled out any use of land troops. On March 25, 1999, FRY broke ties with the West. A major event took place on April 1, when three U.S. soldiers were captured in the border of Macedonia, which became an issue in negotiation between FRY and USA. The first bomb to strike Belgrade was launched on April 3, which showed NATO is willing to end this campaign very quickly by striking the center of the Federation. The first NATO mishap


40. “Yugoslavia” is a term that describes different entities over time. In this case, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia refers to the confederation of Montenegro and Serbia with its disputed territories (Kosovo territory). This Confederate structure lasted from 1992-2006, which ended with Montenegro splitting from Serbia and officially bringing an end to Yugoslavia. In other instances, the term Yugoslavia refers to ‘Kingdom of Yugoslavia’ which was a monarchical state formed in 1918 and dismantled in 1941 by the Fascist forces of Germany, or ‘Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’ which was a socialist federation that existed during the period of 1945-1992 and comprised of what today are seven Balkan states (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia). “Timeline: Break-up of Yugoslavia.” BBC News, last modified May 22, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4997380.stm.

occurred on April 6, when a jet struck civilians in a residential neighborhood. A few days after, the President of the Russian Duma, Gennadi Seleznev, claimed that Russia could be involved in the war if NATO deploys ground troops in Serbia. April 10 was the day when NATO deployed 8000 troops in Albania for humanitarian aid with the refugees. NATO’s second mishap took place on April 14, when a NATO aircraft attacked a caravan of Albanian refugees and killing more than 70 civilians. The second half of April comprised of successful airstrikes by NATO. On April 22, NATO celebrated its 50 anniversary and held a summit in Washington, during which, President Yeltsin of Russia contacted Clinton to talk about Kosovo. It is valuable to mention that the Republican-led Congress was not supportive of Clinton and his policies in the Balkans, therefore, on April 28 they voted on a resolution in opposition to the air war. The day after, the FRY filed suit against NATO at the International Court of Justice. On May 1, NATO made another mishap by bombing a civilian bus near Pristina, Kosovo. Although another accidental attack took place near Sofia, Bulgaria in April, on May 4 the Bulgarian government granted its permission for NATO to use its airspace. In the coming weeks, NATO’s mishaps continued, with more civilians killed on both the Kosovar and Serbian sides.\footnote{All the information in this paragraph are taken from the same source, which offers a timeline of the Kosovo war. This timeline includes political information, important meetings, and actions taken from both the Serbian and Kosovar side, as well as the NATO campaign. For my purposes, I chose only the NATO campaign timeline to help understand the accidental attack on the Chinese Embassy on May 7, 1999. \textit{Frontline}, “A Kosovo Chronology,” \textit{PBS}, accessed April 10, 2019, \url{https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/etc/cron.html.}}

On Friday, May 7, 1999 at 11:45 PM, American bombers, as part of the NATO campaign against Yugoslavia, launched missiles that struck the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, Serbia. It was the 44\textsuperscript{th} day of the 78-day campaign. The bombs destroyed the south-end of the building of the embassy. The basement level of the south-end side of the building appears to have contained gas and other flammable materials, which caused a
bigger explosion in addition to the bombs. While all the reports suggest that three people were killed from the bombing, one report on May 8, 1999, from the China Central Television, claimed that four people were killed and more than 20 were injured. Striking at night was meant to cause few civilian casualties due to non-residential buildings being vacated. However, the Chinese Embassy attack does not support this theory, as there were a few casualties and many other injuries.

This specific attack, and many others during the campaign, were carried by the Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit Bomber, which is a strategic bomber believed to be “invisible” or “stealthy” to the radar of other militaries. The qualities of this bomber made it the best option in the war against Yugoslavia, considering that the Yugoslav People's Army possessed technologies that were able to detect and potentially shoot down enemy aircraft. The B-2 Spirit Bomber was first introduced on January 1, 1997, just two years before the bombing of the Chinese Embassy took place, but was first used in battle in 1999 during the Kosovo War. In a report from the New York Times on May 9, 1999, two missiles hit the Embassy, destroying a large part of this new building. The B-2 Spirit Bomber carried the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) system, which converts


unguided bombs into guided bombs. (The modern technology that B-2 Spirit bomber operates with, leads me to believe that chances of these missiles missing the actual target and hit the Chinese Embassy were very slim. However, the authenticity of the attack is to be discussed at another time).

![Figure 5: The Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit in air. Source: Google Images.](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

The American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) claims that the attack itself was due to misinterpretations of the maps. Most of the maps used by NATO in their campaign date prior to 1997. In a statement to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Director of the Central Intelligence (DCI) George Tenet claimed that location of the Federal Directorate for Supply and Procurement of Yugoslavia (FDSP), which was the actual target, was not updated. He said, “[T]wo local commercial maps from 1989 and 1996, and one U.S. government map produced in 1997 [were used].” In the Chinese Embassy Bombing report he further claimed that the maps did not accurately identify the Chinese embassy but at the same time did not reference the FDSP building.

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The buildings were about 300 meters (~1000 feet) apart, however, both of them were bigger structures which could have played a role in pinpointing the actual target. The real coordinates of the Embassy building were 44° 49’ 30” N, 20° 25’ 8.4” E (Google Maps) compared to the actual target which lies in the coordinates of 44°49’17.9”N 20°24’57.0” (Google Maps). While the B-2 Spirit Bomber uses GPS coordinates from satellites in space to guide bombs, the officers on board were using older maps, which led to them applying mathematical logarithms to determine the actual location, completed the guidance.

On June 17, 1999, Thomas Pickering, the Under Secretary of State, presented an oral statement to the Chinese Government on the bombing of the P.R.C Embassy in Belgrade. This oral report represented the sympathy the U.S. government felt, and the official report on the accidental attack. In his introduction, Pickering claimed: “The attack was a mistake. Our examination explains how a series of errors and omissions led to that mistake. Let me emphasize: no one targeted the Chinese Embassy. No one, at any stage in the process, realized that our bombs were aimed at the Chinese Embassy.”48. He brought with him to the Chinese Government a group of high-level diplomats who had been involved in the investigation and the preparation of this report. This report found that the technique used to location the actual target was flawed, the location of the Chinese Embassy was never correct in the military database; therefore, the staff could not have detected the mistake. Pickering presented the actual maps used in the targeting and, poiting to them in his speech, stated: “As you can see, the 1997 U.S. Government city map shows the Embassy in Old Belgrade and depicts an unidentified building at the actual Embassy site in New Belgrade. The 1996 commercial map made no reference to the Embassy at

either location. The 1989 map predated the Embassy's move."49. Therefore, using these maps to determine the location of the FDSP building was a huge mistake, which is accepted by the U.S. officials. Furthermore, this report presents the U.S. intention on improving the Sino-American relations and how this tragic event would negatively impact the relations if it were completed purposely. During this time, Pickering offered compensation to the families impacted by the attack: “In view of these circumstances, and recognizing the special status of the diplomatic personnel who were affected, the United States wishes to offer immediate ex gratia payments to those individuals who were injured in the bombing and to the families of those killed, based on current experience internationally for the scale of such payments.”50 He chose not to talk about the payments for the damage of the Embassy, as it is more complex, and ask to continue negotiations because the U.S. Embassy in China had suffered damage as well.

Figure 6: The Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, point A, in comparison to the actual target FDSP building, point B. Source: Google Maps. Edits: Author.

49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
A recent Chinese report reveals interesting details regarding the incident of the Embassy. This information was not known to the Western public, and it was hidden from the Chinese public until 2018. The professional journal of the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China, named *Educational Intelligence Reference* (情报参考) on October 12, 2018 shared a “heavy declassification” on the bombing of Embassy on May 7, 1999. In this declassified report, a member of Chinese intelligence who worked in the Lanzhou facilities, a base for the Chinese Nuclear Forces, explain why the incident happened. On March 27 1999, one of the most technologically advanced stealth aircraft of the United States Air Force was shot down by the Yugoslavian forces. Yugoslav forces shut down the F-117 Nighthawk using Chinese radar technology. The report says, “The most important thing is that China also assisted Yugoslavia radar and many military items, and the [Yugoslav Army] used the Chinese radar to lay down a U.S. F-117. The wreckage of F-117 was sent to the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia, and took [intelligence spies] off from Lanzhou Airport that night.”

The report claims that 18 technicians, 11 service personnel and 3 pilots flew in to Belgrade to inspect the wreckage. Furthermore, they sent the wreckage to the Chinese Embassy and placed it in one of the basement levels of the building. The Yugoslavian Army was not aware of the GPS devices located in the aircraft until the Chinese technicians shut them off. Based on this report, the Pentagon decided to bomb the Chinese Embassy to prevent the theft of technology by the Chinese intelligence. The five JDAM missiles launched by the B-2 Bomber struck the Embassy, and one of them

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did not explode. The explosion killed 16 Chinese technicians, and three journalists. The remaining technicians took the unexploded missile and sent it to Lanzhou together with some exterior pieces of the aircraft. This report suggests that the Chinese stealth technology advanced by 10-20 years just by conducting research on the American technology. The authenticity of this report is not clear. The purpose of this report is not explained, and if the report is truthful chances of it being published under an authoritative regime are slim due to the upheaval would create in the China and United States. Whether this report is false or correct, the idea that it presents plays a big role on the US-China relations today. The struggle for technological superiority, the trust and competitiveness of the two countries is clearly portrayed in the report. Similar patterns of pure competition and rivalry can be identified in events to follow until today.

Immediately after the attack, protests took place in mainland China, Hong Kong SAR and other South-East Asian countries. Many Chinese people considered it a “barbaric act” which “It fully revealed the extreme hypocrisy of the United States’ so called ‘protection of human rights.’ It is an act of hegemonism and the Chinese people will never tolerate such an act”\(^\text{52}\). This language suggests that Chinese citizens were overly discontent with the bombing of the Chinese Embassy by United States, especially since China did not legitimize or approve the NATO campaign in Kosovo. During these protests, the building of the American Embassy in China was attacked and the diplomatic mission of the United States was forced to leave the area. Later a diplomatic response would take place against the United States, as the Chinese government ended the negotiations that were taking place during that time. The immediate response by the United States officials was a letter of

apology to the Chinese Government, claiming that his act was a mistake due to human errors. The CIA took actions against many officers who were part of the operation.

Since the NATO campaign against Serbia started on March 24, 1999, this was the first occasion when a foreign building was hit by the NATO missiles\textsuperscript{53}. While this might be the first occasion in which a foreign building was attacked, as described in the timeline above, this is not the first occasion in which NATO forces missed their target. On April 14, 1999, NATO bombed a caravan of Albanian refugees moving out of Kosovo and leaving more than seventy people killed and more than thirty others injured. Less than two weeks later, NATO mistakenly bombed the Kosovo Liberation Army posts in which they killed sixty-seven soldiers\textsuperscript{54}. While the Chinese authorities condemn NATO’s attack on its Embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, one must take into consideration that in such a massive military campaign errors are inevitable. During the Kosovo war it was not only Serbian or Chinese civilians being killed, it was also Albanian civilians who died. In terms of war the human casualties could be seen as a sacrifice for a better cause. If Operation Allied Force did not take place, a second Srebrenica would have occurred. The scale of this incident became international, when even the Russian Foreign Minister cancelled his three day visit to Britain in protest to NATO’s campaign in Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{a. Analysis}

The United States, without the approval of the UN Security Council, led the NATO campaign in Kosovo. This region desperately needed humanitarian aid. Liberalism would describe the U.S. intervention as a campaign to promote freedom for the people who were

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
forcibly being removed from their homes, and they had no rights. Following the breakup of Yugoslavia and the independence of Kosovo, we see a region comprised of seven republics that practice democracy. Cooperation has been progressing slowly, and even the more conservative country, Serbia, has been involved with international cooperation, free elections, freedom of speech and has become a member of multiple international institutions, through which she gains a lot of help to recover from the wars, just like other Balkan countries do. Liberals would argue that it was for the benefit of everyone to have this region restore peace. However, Realists would argue that United States took advantage of the breakup of Yugoslavia to its imperialist aims and expand its power in Europe. Especially with Bosnia and Herzegovina’s case, from a realist approach it can be argued that Europe and U.S. had no reason to intervene in a civil war if they did not have any benefits. Meaning, what China and Russia lost in the Balkans, become U.S.’s win. Similarly, Kosovo was part of Serbia, therefore, they would argue, this war was not America’s business. If the bombing of the Chinese Embassy was deliberate, then U.S. and China would have escalated the conflict. Yet, even if it was a mistake, this event changes China’s view towards United States, and vice versa. As we will see, they will be very careful with how they approach their bilateral relations moving onwards. Constructivism, would use the historical relations between Yugoslavia and China, and China-U.S. to describe this event. China, a historically ally of Yugoslavia had the rights to be present in the country. On the other hand, U.S.’s presence on the Balkans was a war on socialism. Because United States wanted to establish new allies in the Balkans, China mirrored their actions.
V. Immediate Aftermath of the Bombing and the U.S.-China Relations in 1999

The bombing of the Chinese Embassy on May 7, 1999 changed the relationship between United States and China. The new millennium started with a ‘new normal’. The relationship that these two world powers had before this incident, which saw China take a back seat to American primacy on the world stage, no longer applied. The incident not only killed three journalists and injured more than twenty other Embassy staff members, but it led to the suspension of negotiations on multiple affairs and it took months to reestablish a new relationship. After the bombing took place, China suspended all the bilateral exchanges on formal discussions on human rights, nonproliferation, military exchanges, but arguably the most important one of them all, the negotiations for China’s accession to the World Trade Organization. President Bill Clinton called the bombing of the Chinese embassy the worst political setback of the conflict. The relations stabilized by November 1999, after United States fulfilled the four requests by China regarding the bombing.

The highlight of the aftermath of the bombing of the Chinese Embassy is the protests that took place in multiple cities in China, starting with Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong etc. Freedom of speech, and the right to assembly or demonstration is allowed under the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, however, it is not common to have protests and demonstrate, especially, without the approval of the Party organs. The protests of 1999 were the largest since the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989. An article from the German newspaper Deutsche Presse-Agentur based on the Guangdong television states that there were, “Tens of thousands of people in Guangzhou, provincial capital of the southern Chinese province Guangdong, demonstrated Saturday against the

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bombed of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade.” This southern province had not seen demonstrations like this in a long time. Besides Guangdong, Deutsche Presse-Agentur reported thousands of students gathered in Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai etc. The masses mostly comprised of students who were unhappy with the way United States has been playing its international politics, and many believed that the US-led NATO intervention in Kosovo was just another way to show off the hegemony that U.S. is trying to achieve. As expected protests took place in major Chinese cities, however, there were big protests in other countries as well. About 400 Chinese nationals living in Cambodia demonstrated in front of the U.S. Embassy demanding an apology, an investigation and punishment for those responsible for the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. Besides Cambodia, there were also protests in Japan’s capital. About 100 Chinese students staged a demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, calling the NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade a violation of Chinese sovereignty and dignity. These protests contained many anti-American slogans. The slogan in figure 7, says “The monster that eats people,” with a swastika symbol in the forefront of Clinton, to compare him to the Nazi leader, Adolph Hitler. Similar slogans were seen across the protests. The protests lasted for days, however, the number of people protesting decreased with the advance of the dialogue and betterment of the relations between the two countries, especially, with the apology offered by both, President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright. To this point,

it was the media that was influencing the protesters since the leadership was more cautious with their comments. Wu Baiyi explains that “Beginning on May 11, the Chinese media began to disclose the written and personal apologies by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and President Clinton during May 8-May 10.” The protests became smaller, therefore, the pressure on the Chinese Government decreased, which they used to their advantage. Following the Cold War, unlike United States, China focused their international diplomacy based on domestic influence. China’s domestic influence was not as strong by the time Americans apologized for the incident; this caused less from for the Chinese government, which, was able to accommodate the explanation provided by United States and help solve the issue of the incident.

The second important element of the aftermath of the bombing was the requests of the Chinese authorities to United States in order to reestablish their relations. China was not a big fan of the US-led NATO intervention in Kosovo. Serbia and China are long-time allies, but that is not the main reason why the latter vetoed NATO’s intervention. The US’s hegemonic aims were what China feared most, something reflected clearly during the massive protests after the bombing. This was clearly visible during the protests in Belgrade.

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where students held signs against “hegemony” and “imperialism.” The part that made the betterment of the relations not happen, was because initially the U.S. authorities claimed that this was only a mistake and they express only regret, which clearly was not enough for the Chinese leadership and its people. Therefore, the high officials of People’s Republic of China met multiple times, with no member absent, make a decision to push for four major points:

- An open and official apology to China and victims’ relatives
- A thorough investigation
- A prompt disclosure of the results of the investigation
- To punish severely those responsible for the attack

While all four points were met by the United States, it was not until the year 2000 when the relations between United States and China were stabilized. The four points were met at different times, however. The first step, which was the formal apology by President Clinton, led to the improvement of the relations, and stabilization of domestic uprising in China. Officially, Clinton apologized to Jiang Zemin on May 14, 1999. In the phone conversation, Clinton apologized and said afterwards, “I was sure [Zemin] didn’t believe I would knowingly attack his embassy.” 62 In his personal biography, the former president claimed that Jiang knew Clinton would not do that [knowingly attack his embassy], but he believed there were people in the CIA and the Pentagon who did not favor Clinton’s


The article from New York Times explains in detail the conversation between Chinese Foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan and Ambassador James Sasser. The latter after hearing the Chinese demands, he complained that the Chinese News Media was not sharing the formal apology President Clinton expressed to the Chinese people. Eckholm claims that he had the Chinese government “choreographed” the protests, as after official intervened, the number of protesters drastically declined.

outreach to China. In a report for Associated Press, Clinton said, “I have already expressed our apology and our condolences to President Jiang (Zemin) and to the Chinese people. And, I have reaffirmed my commitment to strengthen our relationship with China.”

This shows that the American side was ready to fix the mistake of the incident.

The second point to be completed by the Americans was a thorough investigation. Over the second half of May 1999, the CIA investigated the incident. The conclusions of the investigation were presented to Chinese authorities in June 1999. Although the investigation ended early, the Chinese were not receptive to any U.S. special envoys. Finally, they agreed to have Thomas Pickering, the Under Secretary of State, present the investigation in Beijing, on June 17, 1999. There, he offered his apology and explained the incident as a mistake based on old maps and misinterpretation by the officers on board. He said there were multiple errors in series that led to the bombing of the Embassy; however, no one knew that the building attacked was the official offices of the diplomatic mission of PRC in Yugoslavia. The main issue was with maps, as U.S. military was using maps from 1997, and the embassy building being relatively new, was never updated as an official building of a diplomatic mission. The conclusion that Pickering offered was not well accepted by Chinese authorities. The media, probably with the aim to influence domestic opinion, claimed that this was an overused rhetoric. “For instance, on 27 May 1999, using long-forgotten rhetoric, the PDO warned against the U.S. attempt to ‘launch a new Cold War against socialist countries and the Third World’ because ‘The United States dislikes China’s adherence to the socialist road and is unwilling to see China develop into a

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powerful country’. However, this was not necessarily an act of the government to influence the masses, as Ambassador Sasser claimed on the matter of the protests. The Chinese leaders themselves claimed that there is no need to mobilize the public. “When the Chinese Ambassador to Washington, Li Zhaoxing, replied to a question asked by a U.S. journalist on 17 May 1999 as to whether the Chinese government was mobilizing the public, he said in his characteristically blunt manner…’[D]o you think the Chinese people still need the government to mobilize the demonstrators? It is the barbaric behaviour itself that has instigated the demonstrations’.” This comment shows that China is entering a new era, the times when the government would manipulate and push the masses to the streets was over. Here we see a new approach on domestic level, again, a ‘new normal’: a standard that is applied in domestic level first and international level second. With the prompt closure of the investigation by Thomas Pickering, the U.S. was soon going to complete China’s fourth request. United States punished the responsible people for the incident. The American side held the part of the deal and after detailed investigation; the CIA in 2000 fired few officers and punished those directly involved.

After the bombing took place, China stopped all the military exchanged with the United States, and even prohibited it from using some of the strategical locations. The “Chinese officials suspended all Sino-American military exchanges and stopped authorizing U.S. Navy warships to call at Chinese ports, including the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong, which had been accessible to the U.S. Seventh Fleet

65. Ibid.
Besides prohibiting the U.S. from using the Chinese ports for its warships, China made a new arms deal with Russia in the summer of 1999, “in particular, they soon announced that China would purchase seventy-two Su-30 fighter-bombers, the most advanced Russian weapons system ever provided to China’s People’s Liberation Army. The following year, China received additional advanced conventional weapons, including Sovremenny-class destroyers equipped with SS-N-22 Sunburn anti-ship missiles and improved Kilo-class diesel attack submarines.”67 After suspending the bilateral exchanged regarding military spending, China had to find a new partner, and Russia and old ally came to help better than no one. China feared that United States would intervene in Taiwan, or other disputed regions of China, therefore, they were building their defensive capabilities. U.S.’s seventh Fleet, which is the largest U.S. fleet, operates in the waters of East Asia and the Pacific, and it is considered as a stabilizer in the region.

An unexpected turn of events took place about one week after the Embassy incident where Chinese naval ships entered the Japanese Exclusive Economic Zone. Simon Shen quotes “As Asiaweek reported, from 14 to 16 May 1999 twelve Chinese naval warships suddenly entered Japan’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) near the Diaoyutai Islands to reassert China’s controversial claim to the island-chain and the surrounding waters.”68 These islands in the future would cause more problems due to its complexity. The East and South China Seas are areas with great amount of resources and multiple countries claiming ownership. The Hainan Island incident would demonstrate the complexity of this region.

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67. Ibid, 334.
and raise the tensions between United States and China.

a. Analysis

By the end of the year, with all four requests having been fulfilled, China was ready to take on a new perspective with the U.S. By fulfilling the four requests, China understood that the U.S. shows some form of respect and does not ignore her concerns. If we look back in history China was always taken advantage off, and now it was time when justice would be brought up to the eyes of the Chinese people. It is reasonable to claim that China is seeking its role as a world power in the eyes of the world. Through the Realist approach we could argue, the international institutions are not helping the world, rather, they are bringing more conflicts due to their intervention. If it didn’t see itself threatened – after the bombing incident – China, would not have purchased great amounts of military capability, and made such strong demands to United States. Everything seemed a preparation for war. Simultaneously, United States saw the Chinese reaction in realist lenses. By prohibiting U.S. from entering the Chinese ports, and willing to make them lose power for even a short amount of time, China showed itself as a competitor. The relations between the two nations were bilateral, no institution were involved in the betterment of the relations, meaning no facilitation occurred, which opposes the neo-liberalism argument. The two nations froze their bilateral relations, something that would not happen in a perfect liberal world. Their interdependency did not stop China from making demands and cutting ties with United States.
VI. 2001 the Year of Ups and Downs

It took United States and China almost one year to stabilize their relationship after the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, on May 7, 1999. Certainly, the year 1999 was not a good one for the U.S.-China relations. The following year was not as eventful as 1999, however. On October 10, 2000 ‘The U.S.–China Relations Act of 2000’ was passed. Bill Clinton signed this act before leaving office; this was a stepping-stone for China and its goal of joining the World Trade Organization. China joined the WTO on December 11, 2001. Apart from the changes in trade relations, United States and China faced another incident that did not take as big of a scale as the bombing of the Embassy, the Hainan Island Incident. On April 1, an American spy plane collided mid-air with a Chinese fighter jet. The jet crashed into the South China Seas, killing the pilot. The American plane made an emergency landing on Hainan Island, where 24 crewmembers were detained and imprisoned for 11 days. It was an unfortunate event for United States, which led to the betterment of the U.S.-China Relations in 2001, the September 11 terrorist attacks, in which two Chinese citizens died. Both United States and China took a stance against terrorist groups in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

a. The Hainan Island Incident

The Hainan Island Incident was not a silly act; rather its occurrence could be explained by the conflict on the South China Sea, which United States as a world power is indirectly involved in. Disputes over the South China Sea date back to 1940s. Eight countries have laid claim to these waters: Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, 

Indonesia, Singapore, Vietnam and People’s Republic of China. All of them have territorial claims and have signed the act of United Nation’s Law of the Sea, which sets a 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone in which each country can navigate, without reaching international waters. The problem in this region is that the territorial seas issue unsettled due to the large number of smaller islands owned by different countries. The United States has traversed the international waters in the South China Sea since the end of WWII. On April 1, 2000, an American plane was flying over what it deemed international waters when it crashed with the Chinese fighter jet, thus, leading to the crash of the latter and the death of a Chinese pilot. Without permission, the American airplane safely landed on Hainan Island where the crewmembers were arrested by Chinese authorities, and the vehicle was returned to United States in pieces.

The waters in South China Sea have been disputed since 1947, when the first Chinese map was presented to other neighboring countries. China’s territorial claim is inconsistent with the UNCLOS 200 (The International Agreement on non-international waters). Figure 8 shows a map containing the Nine-dash Line, which China still uses today. The dashes highlighted below show the borders where China operates, and clearly, that area expands further than 12 nautical miles and the 200-mile EEZ standard.
Clearly, China will navigate the waters, which she claims, and on the other hand, the United States as a world power will navigate these waters to maintain stability in the region, due to South China Sea being very rich in natural gas and oil, which could lead to further territorial disputes. If this region were not so delicate, the Hainan Island Incident
probably would not have happened.

On April 1, 2001, at 9:07am., 104 km south-east of Hainan Island, the U.S. plane suddenly turned towards the Chinese Jet, resulting in its bumping into and damaging one of the jets\(^{71}\). The incident happened in the international airspace, deep into the Exclusive Economic Zone. The American plane was a military surveillance type known as Lockhead EP3, while the Chinese aircraft was Shenyang J-8, fighter jet. Both sides argued that the mistake was by the opposite side. However, the EP3 was damaged in one of its wings and engines; thus, it issued a “Mayday” call and landed without permission at a Chinese military base in Hainan Island, while the Chinese J-8 crashed into the water and the pilot was considered missing and later declared dead.\(^{72}\) The Chinese side argued that EP3 turned unexpectedly towards the J8, while the American crew argue that the pilot of J-8 was not careful and hit their aircraft. All the evidence that was on board was destroyed by the crewmembers, based on the procedures of the U.S. military in case of an emergency to avoid the other side from obtaining any sensitive information or pertaining the operations of this technologically advanced vehicle. As soon as the American crew landed in Hainan, Chinese authorities met and held them for eleven days until there was an agreement with the government of United States.

This incident came at a very sensitive time, in less than a year since the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. Besides, the new Bush administration was preparing


\(^{72}\) The pilot of the J-8 which crashed into water was never found, therefore, pronounced dead. Chinese officials never issued a search for the pilot.
to have a large weapons trade with Taiwan, which China strongly opposed. Considering the demonstrations of May 1999 against the building of American diplomatic missions in China and elsewhere, the U.S. officials were afraid that this event would escalate again, and the story would repeat itself, therefore, they took action faster than before. Immediately after the landing, U.S. ambassador to China, Joseph Prueher, demanded access to the crew. President George W. Bush saw China as a trade partner and a military competitor, which made the incident more controversial. Neither side admitted that the incident was its mistake and therefore did not accept responsibility.

Journalists and academics paid close attention to the language used in the negotiations between the two countries regarding this incident. On April 2, Bush claimed that he was “troubled” by Chinese government passivity to make the relations better. The following day, Prueher claimed China had wrongly detained the crewmembers and was researching US’s top-secret plane. On April 4, the Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan berated the United States for “arrogance” and “repeated errors,” while Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed his regrets the loss of the Chinese pilot, which is seen as the first step to making the situation better. Over the next few days, China demanded that United States offers an apology. However, the American side claims there is no reason to apologize, and that China’s demands might worsen relations between the two countries. The United States never offered an apology to China, however, it shared a letter with the Chinese public in which it expressed that Americans are “very sorry” for the loss of the

Chinese pilot. On April 12, the crewmembers were released.75

Simply by analyzing the decision-making process of U.S. officials with the Hainan Island incident compared to the bombing of the Embassy, we are able to determine a different approach. The United States handled the Hainan Island incident faster and paid close attention to the way China reacted to it. This could be contributed to the lessons learnt from the bombing incident two years prior. The United States no longer saw China as inferior, rather, a powerful state that was willing to take actions to protect its legitimacy. This incident shows that China had already established a ‘new normal’ with United States, and that can be explored not only in the decision making of the US, but also the language that Chinese officials use in multiple reports, which is more aggressive than in the past. After the last letter telling the Chinese people the relations went back to normal, however, China was seeking a better place in the world, and was hoping to establish itself in the world stage as an economic and military power.

b. 9/11

The first step where China wanted to show its military capabilities is seen in 2001, after the terrorist attack in United States that count for the death of 3,000 Americans. On September 11, 2001, two planes hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists crashed into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City. Among those thousands of dead were two Chinese citizens. The Bush administration declared a war on terrorism, invaded Afghanistan, where the al-Qaeda terrorists were based, and drove al-Qaeda out of its base and toppled the Taliban regime. The Chinese government openly supported the American campaign against terrorism in the Middle East and Afghanistan. This event changed and

brought a new era to the world, especially to international politics.

On September 11, 2001, two out of four hijacked planes crashed in the World Trade Center Towers. From 8:46am when the first plane hit the North Tower (World Trade Center 1) until its fall at 10:28am United States was in a panic. The South Tower (World Trade Center 2) was hit second; however, it fell before the North Tower. Two other hijacked planes, one that crashed in the Pentagon building, in Alexandria, Virginia, and the other airplane, which crashed in Pennsylvania in an empty field, took the lives of all the people on board. In total from these four attacks, 2,996 people died (including 9 hijackers) and thousands others were injured.76 Members of the Al-Qaeda organization committed these four terrorist attacks and others prior to it. This is a militant organization created in 1988 by Osama Bin Laden to help the war of Afghanistan against the Soviet Union77. The motives of these attacks were multiple including that of international policies of United States towards Muslim population in different countries of the world. While the majority of people killed in these attacks were American citizens, two Chinese citizens died.

This incident occurred at a time when United States was dealing with different international issues. Just a little over two years had passed since a United States B-2 Bomber dropped a few bombs on the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. In May of 2001, an American spy plane crashed a Chinese military jet. Also during this time, the new Bush administration was aiming to deploy advanced military capabilities in Europe and Taiwan, against the Russian Federation and People’s Republic of China respectively. Besides the

direct intervention in certain regions of the world, the United States was involved in the Middle-East crisis. In 2001, the crisis between Palestine and Israel worsened, as the peace talks failed to reach a compromise for both parties, thus, the conflict escalated. With the 9/11 events, the United States’ international projects took a different turn, with a focus on the Middle East and soon after, President Bush announced the invasion Afghanistan in the war against terrorism. In September 18, 2001, Bush signed a resolution, which read, “To authorize the use of United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States”78. Similarly, in an official speech of 2003, Bush claimed, “Our cause is just, the security of the nations we serve and the peace of the world. And our mission is clear, to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, to end Saddam Hussein's support for terrorism, and to free the Iraqi people”79. The emphasis of this mission is to end the support for terrorism, which in itself was a new mission for the United States. After 9/11 China, one of the countries that historically had accused United States of abusing its hegemonic power, finally agreed with the American intervention in Afghanistan and by November 13, 2001 it joined 11 out of 12 international conventions against terrorism80. In a meeting prior to that of November 13, the Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan claimed, “A proper [political] solution to the Afghan issue will go a long way towards strengthening the international struggle against terrorism”81. This

78. To see the full text of the resolution and the act which gives full power to the president of the United States to use military force against any nation, organization or persons to prevent any future act of terrorism against United States follow the link: “Joint Resolution,” 107th Congress Public Law 40, Government Publishing Office, Sep. 18, 2001. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-107publ40/html/PLAW-107publ40.htm
81. Ibid.
shows China’s support for the international intervention in Afghanistan, and can be the first sign in which her power is being shown to the world. Although this agreement means China’s support for American intervention in other countries, it must be considered that China’s internal factors shape its foreign policies, and clearly, she does not want terrorism from within. But with United States having a new enemy, China’s path to rising as a global power was cleared.

c. China Joins World Trade Organization

China, a world economic power by 2000, had worked to open its economy and accept free market economic policies since the death of Mao Zedong. The 1980s and early 1990s were not successful in China’s journey to joining world economic organizations. However, the first major step in China’s open market economy was the application to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which helped elevate trade barriers among nations part of this agreement. GATT was in effect until April 14, 1994, when the World Trade Organization (WTO) replaced it. After GATT, China applied to become a member of the WTO on December 7, 1995. It took six years until China was approved as a full member of the WTO on December 11, 2001.82 The biggest struggle in China’s process to become a full member of the WTO was its government intervention market policies, something that went against the agreements of free trade and lifting of barriers. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations supported China’s application, as long as they practiced a free market economy. For the two countries were each other’s largest importers and exports. In his state of the union address on January 19, 1999, President Clinton claimed, “I would also like to say again to the American people, it is important not to isolate

China. The more we bring China into the world, the more the world will bring change and freedom to China.\textsuperscript{83} Clinton went as far as signing the US-China Relations Act of 2000, which authorized extension of nondiscriminatory treatment to the People’s Republic of China, and the establishment of a framework for relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.\textsuperscript{84} This act helped stabilize the relations of the two countries, and a path to a better and freer world market economy. Truly, China’s accession to the WTO changed the world economy. Since then, global economy has drastically grown. The economies of the U.S. and China have grown since then, that is, in relative terms China is being better off than United States.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure10.png}
\caption{Comparative Graph of World Economy and United States and China. Data Source: World Bank Data}
\end{figure}

In figure 10, we see three trend lines representing data on world and of individual

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{83} Bill Clinton. State of the Union Address, (January 19, 1999),
\end{itemize}
countries’ economies. The black line represents the World, the red represents the Chinese, and the blue represents U.S. economy. In all lines, I have highlighted the year 2002, the first year China officially become a member of the WTO. Since, then we see an exponential increase in world economy due to China’s open market policies, simultaneously, we see an exponential growth for the Chinese economy before it levels starts to level off. On the other hand, the U.S. economy has been increasing but not in the same rate as the world or Chinese economy, thus, relatively decreasing American economic power.

![Graph](image_url)

*Figure 11: Comparative Graph of United States and China’s Economies as Percentage of World GDP Using Data from the World Bank Reports*

Figure 11, explains the relations between the U.S. and Chinese economies expressed as percentage of the world GDP. Clearly, United States (represented in blue) still holds the highest percentage of the world GDP, however, we see China (represented in red) exponential increase as a shareholder of the world’s GDP. Year 2002 is the first year in
which the American share of the World’s GDP starts decreasing without turning until 2009 and then 2013; on the other hand, China’s share of the world’s GDP has only kept increasing since 2002. No doubt, the accession to the WTO has increased China’s power in the world; however, that has not played well for United States. Yet it has served well the purpose of establishing better relations between the two countries. The hope was that after China joined the WTO globalization forces would make it more liberalized, instead of the two countries being competitors, they would become somewhat allies. This was not the case, as we see China took advantage of economic liberalization while preventing political liberalization. China instead of opening up the economy applied a new perspective. The Moganshan meeting of 1984 changed China’s economy forever. A group of 180 young economists met in Moganshan Mountain, Zhejiang Province to discuss the reforms through which China needed to go through. Two of the main goals they derived from this meeting were establishing an economy where the authorities would lift control on some commodities’ prices, and second, where factories should meet state quotas but sell anything extra they made at any price they chose. Through this transformation, China has achieved to become a world power and second largest economy in the world, while maintain authoritative rulership based on the party and one leader. In realist terms we see overall relative gains for China.

An American spy plane supposedly flying over Chinese territories, a Chinese fighter jet supposedly flying over the international war to decrease American presence, both scenarios, no matter their validity, suggest that the two states were playing games with

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one another. While the U.S. plane might have been ensuring the free movement of goods and services in this region, and the Chinese jet was protecting its territory, none of the sides saw the other’s actions friendly. The importance of this event is not in who was right or wrong, rather, how do these two states see each other! I would argue that the great amount of cooperation between the two states are simply for their own benefits, and that would not stop the two countries from eventually going to war. Although Constructivism does not suggest whether states would go to war with one another, recently, it has become a norm for China and U.S. to see each other as hostile places. If cooperation offers advantages then they are willing to cooperate, therefore, if no advantages are projected in this cooperation they might distance themselves. Additionally, both, Americans and Chinese have great pride in themselves. Due to history, they tend to be very nationalistic, which sometimes prevents them from entering full cooperation. Liberals would argue that China joining the WTO was helpful for the whole world, and such a neo-liberal institution is facilitating the relations between two hostile places. Common goals such as the war against terrorism can be seen in a positive light, however, China supported U.S.’s involvement in the Middle-East because they feared domestic terrorism. Clearly, is a North Korean spy plane flew close to United States’ coast, Americans would shut it down while considering it as a threat. The same analogy can be applied to the Hainan Island Incident. Both countries saw each other as competition, and feared that one might take advantage of the other in these disputed waters. China joining the WTO has helped the world economy, she has gained more power in the world. By becoming the largest exporter in the world, China has pass United States. China’s GDP is growing and one day it will surpass that of the U.S. Therefore, one should ask, was 2001 a year of ups or downs? I argue that in realist terms, 2002 was a year of downs, because United States lost more power while China gained.
Fast-forward 11 years since China’s accession to the World Trade Organization, and we see a power that is fast on the rise economically and politically and, in the region, military. While two decades ago United States and China faced a few major confrontations, today both countries remain stable in the bilateral relations. Since the Hainan Island Incident, there were no major confrontations between the two countries. Initially, during Bush’s administration the relations between the two states improved. It was not until Obama’s administration that we see the emergence of China as a competitor. Then, the election of Xi Jinping in 2012, and that of Donald J. Trump in 2016, leads the two countries towards a potential trade war. Today, many scholars argue that China and United States see each other as rivals, rather than allies. Unlike the US-Soviet relations, today China and United States are greatly depended on each other, and the war for world dominance only gets more complicated.

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 and him taking office in 2009 was seen as a big step in the relation between the two countries. Obama’s administration worked closely with the Chinese authorities to ensure the signing of multiple agreements on climate change and economic development. President Obama and President Hu Jintao after the 2008 economic crisis, sought to promote a healthier economic system. Although the two administrations worked closely together, they saw each other as competitors still. In Obama’s second State of the Union Address (SOTU) in 2010, we see that competition spirit expressed. While talking about infrastructure, Obama claimed, “There’s no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains, or the new factories that manufacture clean energy
products.”87 In addition, when talking about economy, he stated, “Meanwhile, China is not waiting to revamp its economy. Germany is not waiting. India is not waiting. These nations -- they're not standing still. These nations aren't playing for second place.”88 Even the more liberal president, Obama, saw that China’s development was not necessarily friendly. It hurts American economy, infrastructure and decreases American power in the world. He was well aware that newly industrialized countries, especially China, were not playing for the second place. The language used by President Obama during the next few years changed. In 2015 SOTU, Obama expressed that he understands China’s motives and said, “as we speak, China wants to write the rules for the world’s fastest-growing region. That would put our workers and our businesses at a disadvantage. Why would we let that happen? We should write those rules. We should level the playing field.”89 Over the years, we see an increase in American negative sentiment towards China’s rise. In 2016, United States signed a trade agreement with Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The importance of this agreement lay in the expansion of the American power in both sides of the Pacific Ocean. During the 2016 SOTU Obama asked the Republicans and Democrats together to approve this agreement as it would establish a new strength of U.S. in this new century “With TPP, China does not set the rules in that region; we do. You want to show our strength in this new century. Approve this

88. Ibid.
agreement.” Although Obama in multiple occasions expressed the good relations between the two nations, with time we see a stronger language used to describe those relations. In 2010, the American leader expressed the desire to see his country do better than others, however, in 2016, we see a language where he pushes for an agenda which somewhat brings an end to the expansion ideas of the Chinese power. A factor that could have led to the change in language used is the rise of Xi Jinping as China’s leader. Hu Jintao was a strong leader, however, he did not push very authoritative agendas. Once Xi came to power, he started to establish a cult of personality and centralize power around him.

On Thursday, November 15 2012, Xi Jinping was sworn in as China’s President and took the reins of the Chinese Communist Party. Since then, China’s power has increased as he pushed for, anti-corruption campaigns and centralization of power. Although, the economic growth has slowed down, it remains one of the highest in the world. Besides, slower economic growth does not mean a decrease, as it could promote a more sustainable economic development. One of the primary ideas that Xi proposed was the creation of a modern-day Silk Road. The ancient Silk Road was a networking route that connected the East with the West. This road connected multiple territories that mostly traded silk from today’s Hangzhou, China to as far as today’s Germany and France. In a speech in on September 7 2013, Xi proposed “to join hands building a Silk Road economic belt with innovative cooperation mode and to make it a grand cause benefiting people in regional countries along the route.” This initiative would incorporate multiple countries.

%E2%80%93-prepared-delivery-state-union-address.

including China. Through this project China will be building infrastructure, ports, railways and highways to support the economic sector. Already, there have been implemented several projects with the Chinese help, such as the Belgrade-Budapest railroad, the highway that connects Pakistan and China etc.

Figure 12 shows the ancient Silk Road that included both, land and sea trade routes. Currently, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) brought up be Xi expands in a similar pattern and reaches multiple countries in Western Europe.

![Figure 12: A map of the ancient Silk Road that connected Asia, Africa and Europe. Source: Wikipedia.](image)

Figure 13 shows the modern-day Silk Road that China has started to implement. It connects many of the capitals or major cities of the Eastern Hemisphere. Through this initiative, China is expanding its power in three continents. While the BRI is not an official international organization, rather, a consensus among nations, all the agreements between China and other countries are bilateral, which does not go against any of the regulation of
other international organizations such as the European Union. Although the BRI is only six years old, it seems very feasible that it will be built as an international institution in the coming decade. This is not the first example where China has aimed to extend its power through its own international organizations, and it only shows, that she is ready to take on a role as a global leader, let alone regional.

China’s rise challenges the global hegemony of United States. A powerful China quite surely means a decrease in relative American power. United States’ attempts to keep China’s power weak have lasted for years, and many scholars would argue that the bombing of the Embassy in Belgrade was one of the first occasions where U.S. tried to keep China down. David Shambaugh argues that (to many commentators) the bombing of the Embassy in Belgrade “appeared to be just a new chapter in the U.S. effort to keep China

Figure 13: Belt and Road Initiative Map. Source: Herbert Smith Freehills.

92. The author worked on the Belt and Road Initiative project as a researcher for the Zhejiang University Academy of International Strategy and Law, a major Chinese university that received endorsement by the government to research the effects of the Belt and Road Initiative.
weak and distracted.” I would agree with Shambaugh in this case, as we see U.S. testing the patience and the extent of intervention by the Chinese government. The lessons learnt from this incident would be used in the coming years to respond to any issues arising between the two states.

Aaron Friedberg of Princeton University see a belligerent and ambitious China, one that wants to “establish itself as Asia’s dominant power by eroding the credibility of America’s security guarantees, hollowing out its alliances and eventually easing it out of the region.” I would agree with Friedberg that China wants to erode US’s credibility. While it may seem that China wants to lure other countries to join their plans, not necessarily destroy America’s plans, signing new alliances with the South East Asian countries is a form of destroying US’s credibility. They are building a fleet to defend themselves, and by showing it to the world they show security. From an international relations theory, China is not building fleets to attack U.S. and weaken them, rather, strengthen itself. Shambaugh argues that “Charges that China has been provocative or confrontational are interpreted as part of a conspiracy to damage China’s reputation and constrain it.”

The example of the Chinese intelligence to “steal” American technology from the F-117 crashed airplane, shows that China wanted to be provocative. Additionally, if China is willing to build defensive mechanisms, I see it unreasonable to build new islands that will serve as military bases in disputed waters. Indeed, U.S. has navigated these waters since WWII, however, they never had territorial claims in them.

United States of America is still ahead of China in terms of economy, military, and


94. Ibid, 50.

95. Ibid, 51.
political power, however, the strongest weapon they possess is the soft power. U.S. more than any country in the world has the ability to influence without using threat. Having some of the top universities in the world, a very luring economy, democratic leadership with skilled diplomats, institutions that operate internationally, non-governmental organization and maybe most importantly the culture allows U.S. to influence almost every country without having to use its large military. The Hollywood movies, pop-songs, and the ideals they present are the strongest factor why developing countries especially, have good relations with United States. While using its booming economy China has tried to expand its soft power, however, in comparative terms it still stays behind. China currently ranks the 27 country by soft power, while United States ranks the 4 in the world.\textsuperscript{96} The United States, in 2016, ranked first in the world for its soft power, however, the election of Donald Trump as the president and his agenda of “America first” has led to its decrease. Clearly, nationalistic rhetoric goes in opposition to soft power, which is why many countries see Donald Trump’s election as the turning point for institutional liberalism that has ruled the world for decades.

Donald Trump was elected in 2016, and his agenda was to make America first priority. In terms of international relations, this could be considered both, good and bad. Good because it focuses on the development of the country and increase in its domestic focus, but it could be bad because the international power the U.S. held might decrease and no other country would benefit more than China. Since his election, we see a decrease in support for international institutions, mainly the EU and NATO, and we have seen U.S. withdraw from the climate change accords. It seems that United States and China are

headed to a trade war, if there is no agreement on tariffs and quotas on certain products. The American side believes that the manufacturing industry has decreased to the point that the country is not able to sustain itself. Therefore, pushing for a trade war, would bring jobs in the country and increase the exporting prices for the other countries, mainly China. The Trump administration claims the U.S. relies too much on other countries for its metals, and that it could not make enough weapons or vehicles using its own industry if a war broke out.\(^{97}\) While Trump might foresee a war between United States and China, his Chinese counterpart, Xi, is pushing his country towards more socialist ideals. In a recently released report, in 2013 Xi claimed that socialism would eventually trump capitalism. In his report, he claimed, “the eventual demise of capitalism and the ultimate victory of socialism must be a long historical process.”\(^{98}\) The quote in itself suggests that the Chinese regime foresees a completely socialist China if not a socialist world. Additionally, in the most recent People’s Congress, Xi established himself as the sole leader of the country and implemented his thought in the Chinese Constitution. *The Guardian* quotes “China’s legislature has unanimously approved the reappointment of Xi Jinping as president with no limit on the number of terms he can serve.”\(^{99}\) This in itself should be a red flag for the United States, since the main idea of liberalism is being challenged. With the new radical changes, China is moving towards a Maoist era, something that United States has fought for decades since WWII. With Trump’s ideology of ‘America First’, and the decrease in support for Neo-Liberal Institutions, some questions rise: Is United States willing to

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maintain its global order anymore? If so, is it willing to go to war with the new competitor
– China – or, what is it willing to do to protect its hegemony in the world?
VIII. Conclusion

In this work, I have chronologically outlined some of the most important contemporary issues between United States of America and People’s Republic of China: The bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and its aftermath, the Hainan Island Incident, 9/11 Terrorist attacks, China’s accession to the World Trade Organization, and the changes in politics of both countries in most recent years, mainly, the rise of Xi Jinping and the decline of Neo-Liberal Institutionalism due to Donald Trump’s “America First” policies. I used four different international relations paradigms, to get different interpretations of the embassy bombing’s significance on Sino-American relations. Although, I initially wanted to use the bombing incident to explain the contemporary Sino-American Relations, it seemed more reasonable to pursue a critical approach, in which I would use international relations theory paradigms to explain the events after the bombing. No single theoretical paradigm gets the US-China relationship since 1999 absolutely right, but realism offers powerful insights that the others, neo-liberalism especially, do not.

The case for a Realist interpretation of the U.S.-China bilateral relationship after the Embassy bombing is strong. For multiple reasons, Realism describes best their relationship after the bombing. I argue that United States should see China’s rise menacing, because none of the major events that happened since the bombing of embassy in 1999, suggests major cooperation and great friendship. In case the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade happened due to a mishap, realism still offers a strong explanation. The consequences of this event led to China standing its ground, increasing their military capabilities, demanding United States to take actions against the perpetrator and even stopped the U.S. Navy from using China’s ports. Clearly, allies would not take such actions against each other. If the bombing of the embassy was deliberate, it shows that United
States feared that China would steal their technology; therefore, it wanted to send a strong message to the Chinese government. On the other hand, if China stole American technology, it is because they want to compete in the world stage and advance their own interest. The Hainan Island incident is one that clearly shows the competitive spirit between the two. First, the role of the international institutions diminished in the South China Sea, because neither China, nor United States followed the guidelines of the international waters. While it is impossible to prove which side was wrong in this case, it shows an immense rivalry over these territories. United States feared that China is building military capabilities and taking advantage of this rich economic region, and China tried to stop United States from entering their territory. In addition to the event itself, the aftermath shows how important it was to maintain stability and contain any escalation. China’s accession to the World Trade Organization has benefited the world, but it was decreased the American influence. China has established itself as a world power by rising to become the second largest economy, and it aims to continue. In addition to Trump’s ideology of ‘America First’ and the decrease in the neo-liberal order, the rise of Xi Jinping states that China is truly rivaling United States. From creating new international institutions, to establishing trillion dollar projects, to reversing the democratic policies, Xi has made China a competitor of the United States in most sense. The two countries are in a mist of a trade war, with the hope that it does not escalate further.

In a Liberal or Neo-Liberal world, states would not attack each other rather advance their cooperation. However, this argument is rather weak in the post 1999 Sino-American relations. These paradigms can give a great explanation of the bombing incident, China’s establishment of its own international institutions and China’s accession to the WTO, however, they fail to provide a valid explanation to the rise of Xi Jinping, and the Hainan
Island incident. Additionally, China’s new international institutions can be seen as rivals of those established by the West. Mainly, these two paradigms are based on cooperation and promotion of democracy, however, with a China that is moving towards communism, and building military capabilities is hard to believe that such a theory explains best this relationship.

Constructivism offers a great explanation of the Sino-American relation since 1999, however, some events lack the proper explanation. Constructivism suggests that due to both China’s and United States’ interests in the Balkans the bombing incident took place. The strong point of the constructivist explanation is the aftermath of this event, which suggests that China demanded respect, and ever since 1999 it has established an agenda to get back what once used to be – tianxia -. Historically China was the overseer of the Far East, under its banner system many of the territories in South East Asia were subordinates of China, and the current Chinese emergence is merely cultural, including her expansion in the South China Sea. The reestablishment of the one-ruler-one-party system in China is also explained by ‘tianxia’ through which, Xi Jinping receives the mandate of heaven to rule the middle kingdom and anything under heaving, meaning the world.

Indeed constructivism offers a good explanation of the Sino-American relations since the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999; however, realism offers the most powerful insight. Liberalism and Neo-liberalism do explain some major events, however, it depth is limited. When I started this project, many of the other theoretical traditions played a major role in the contemporary relations of United States and China; however, the most recent events in Chinese politics support the realist interpretation that China has risen to become a rival, if not threat of United States. The People’s Congress announced that Xi Jinping will have the right to stay in power with no term limits, put his
though in the constitution and has centralized authority around himself, thus becoming the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong. Although, the relations between China and United States are stable, after the bombing incident they have established a ‘new normal’, where China has become a competitor if not rival of U.S. in the world.
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