

The Next Cold War: Are the United States and China
undergoing a power transition through proxy wars?

by

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Abstract

The thesis reviews the implications of Sino-American conflicts in the context of contemporary international relations. Since the end of the Cold War, the threat of direct conflict between major powers has declined due to the logic of mutually assured destruction, leaving a gap in the study of power transition theories: How can transitions be violent if there is no direct conflict? This thesis proposes that a new mechanism of conflict has replaced the traditional means of violent transition: proxy wars. The question this thesis seeks to answer is: *Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?* This thesis implements a *longitudinal design* to explore the changes in interventions by both actors over time. The cases that involved both actors intervening in opposition (Iraq, Syria, and Fatah-Hamas) were then presented in case studies to determine whether the intervention was best explained by *strategic balancing* or *opportunism*. While the thesis ultimately determines that it is too early to define a direct relationship between the height of rivalry and intervention, it does offer insight into the potential trajectory and what a power transition through proxy wars might look like. This research aims to predict the trajectory of the Sino-American power transition in hopes of understanding where it will unfold as a series of proxy wars, within a greater violent power transition between the two powers.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“It was the rise of Athens, and the fear that this inspired in Sparta, that made war inevitable.” —Thucydides.

More than 2,400 years ago the Athenian historian Thucydides demonstrated through his analysis of the Peloponnesian war that structural factors caused a shift in the perceived balance of power and security between a dominant and rising power that set the stage for war and, ultimately, the foundations of Power Transition Theory. Thucydides noted two key drivers in the transition relationship - the rising power expanded its military capabilities during a period in which the declining power attempted to maintain the status quo and its position and influence in the system.

Mirroring the rise of Athens in 431BC, the People’s Republic of China’s rise to power is a distinct and defining feature of contemporary international affairs and power dynamics of the 21st century. China’s growing economic and therefore military and political strength continues to reduce the asymmetry of power in the international system, particularly about US-China relations. The Asia-Pacific region has witnessed the impact of China’s rise and the increase in tensions with Washington. Graham Allison describes the pressures affecting US-China relations regarding the “Thucydides Trap”; many of his more recent publications and commentaries have warned that in the past 500 years 12 out of 16 power transitions have resulted in a “shooting war”.¹ But is this traditional perspective

¹ Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides’s Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

relevant to contemporary cases of power transitions? Or is it an outdated lens that does not fit the modern conditions of conflicts.

The main focus of this research is the relationship between rivalry and the prevalence of proxy wars. In contemporary rivalries, there is no clear way to test old-fashioned power transitionary debates, and there is nothing revolutionary about repeating the same debate since the Cold War ended; the arguments have remained the same, and irrelevant in contemporary power transitions. Traditional power transition debates are inclined to focus on the permissive conditions that make direct conflict more likely, however, they do not offer clear notions about the mechanisms in which these rivalries unfold or how the conflicts are triggered. This is especially relevant in contemporary international relations and the implications of nuclear weapons. Perhaps the biggest deterrent of direct conflict since the end of World War II has been nations' nuclear capabilities.²

Drawing lessons from history, it is difficult to truly grasp what logics plunge states into war during power transitions. Evidence which further suggests that, based on mutually assured destruction and increasing economic interdependence, a direct Sino-American conflict is not inevitable. Proxy wars, I argue, are the mechanism for rivals to compete without directly clashing but may also be an inadvertent pathway to escalate tensions that lead to conflict. Furthermore, the costs of conflicts, as outlined in chapter 2, signal that direct conflict is too costly for states, especially major powers and that proxy wars offers a cheaper alternative. Furthermore, China, as the challenger, may follow America's lead in

² Robert G. Gilpin, "The Dual Problems of Peace and National Security," *PS* 17, no. 1 (1984): 18–23, <https://doi.org/10.2307/419116>.

building use alliances to balance against Washington to avoid direct military engagement. Beijing would be able to cement its leadership over regions by replacing the United States' influence as it backs opposition sides in civil conflicts. Proxy wars, without drawing states into direct conflict, offer all the benefits of challenging a hegemon without the costs.

The research question at hand is: *Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?*

This thesis will investigate how a potential Sino-American conflict could erupt through a neglected variation of conflict in the study of power transitions – proxy wars. The logic behind these proxy wars are the main source of this thesis' investigation. By addressing various interventions since the end of the Cold War, this research aims to understand not only the increase and salience of civil wars transforming into proxy wars but whether or not these third-party interventions by the US and China are explained by balancing intervention or merely opportunism.

The problematic this thesis seeks to address is how proxy wars have become the new device of conflict – especially in power transitions. As international rivalry intervention has been quantitatively examined and addressed in the previous literature,³ my thesis will address how a Sino-American conflict has played out and will continue to play out through proxy wars.

³ John Logan Mitton, "Rivalry Intervention in Civil Conflicts: Afghanistan (India–Pakistan), Angola (USSR–USA), and Lebanon (Israel–Syria)," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 23, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 277–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2017.1348957>.

The number and salience of proxy wars are a result of the new and increasing risks of direct conflict. Hegemonic and rising powers began using new methods of fighting wars without risking their state security and resources. The numbers of civil and regional conflict interventions have increased due to increased tensions between international rivals pursuing their agendas through new mechanisms of war. These rivals influence, trigger, and support various nation-states, and interest groups (on occasion terrorist groups) in conflicts through what Findley and Teo call “balancing interventions”.⁴ Balancing intervention, simply put, is when one actor intervenes in a conflict for the purpose of rivaling the power against a rival. This is elaborated on in the literature review.

Balancing interventions have come to the forefront of international conflicts after the stagnant debates within the United Nations Security Council vis-à-vis the intervention in Libya. States’ increasing reticence about their intervention intentions has only increased the number of balancing interventions; while rivalries are not the sole drivers of intervention, international rivals worry about the consequences of inaction.

A major pitfall of intervention is that a Sino-American “Thucydides Trap” could be triggered by a third party’s actions. I hypothesise that as the Sino-American rivalry increases there will be more rivalry interventions between the United States and China.

From a foreign policy perspective, the purpose of this research is to illustrate and offer a prediction of the future of conflict as well as the pitfalls of rivalry interventions through proxy wars. Understanding proxy war is important as it addresses two issues of

⁴ Quantitative analyses of international interventions in conflicts are offered in Michael G. Findley and Tze Kwang Teo, “Rethinking Third-Party Interventions into Civil Wars: An Actor-Centric Approach,” *The Journal of Politics* 68, no. 4 (November 2006): 828–37, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00473.x>.

international relations: The first that it offers an alternative explanation on how conflict occurs; going beyond the scope of traditional international relations paradigmatic debates of “war versus peace” is essential to grasp modern permissive conditions of conflict. Understanding that war is not as black and white as some theoreticians would have readers believe is necessary for the advancement of the field. Second, this form of conflict – prevalent throughout history – mirrors a degree of colonialism. More powerful states are forcing their weaker allies to fight their wars for them for their global dominance agendas. What I find to be the new form of imperialism not only hampers the development of states but gives dominant actors an unrestricted mechanism to fight wars without the immediate consequences.

Of course, a U.S.-Chinese conflict is not entirely impossible; the central question is whether the conflict is likely to escalate to a violent interaction or war. The question scholars should be asking is not whether there will be conflict, but whether the emerging conditions that make conflict permissive are more/less capable of sustaining the peace.

The main theoretical framework of this research focuses on theories of conflicts. While some of the research focuses on the likelihood of Sino-American violent transition as it pertains to the spectrum presented by Allison, the bulk of the theory focuses on the implications of interventions. Intervention theories, by and large, could support evidence that traditional power transition is no longer relevant to contemporary international relations. The reason I focus on both interventions and proxy wars, is that if the motivation behind rivalry interventions is indeed balancing then we can draw links between the former and latter.

The current state of knowledge on the subject of power transitions excludes the consequences and implications of the third world. One of the major weaknesses, which I primarily find in Allison's "*Destined for War*", was the idea that the Cold War was not a violent conflict simply because there was no direct conflict between the USA and the USSR. But, I reject Allison's argument that the Cold War was not a war. This view, I find, is narrow reading due to the lack of consideration of conflict in the rest of the world, due to the Cold War spheres of influence. Belligerent actions to wear down an enemy to the point of collapse through loss of personnel and material resources is referred to as attrition warfare.⁵ The Sino-American relationship is defined through constant competition in various avenues to balance against the other.

This thesis aims to revise this somewhat simplistic spectrum by introducing a new framework of analysis (lens) to interpret the various positions on contemporary power transitions – in sum; traditional perspectives do not offer a sufficiently nuanced or reliable assessment of the various positions on the conflict in the post-Cold War era. A clearer understanding of the interrelationship between the influence of both mutually assured destruction (realism) and economic interdependence (liberal internationalism) represents an important contribution to predictions about the probability of conflict between the US and China. Based on the former, this thesis presents two hypotheses about the Sino-American rivalry and how it plays out in civil interventions around the world.

⁵ Yaacov Bar-Siman-Tov, *The Israeli-Egyptian War of Attrition, 1969-1970: A Case-Study of Limited Local War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980); Swami Iyer and Timothy Killingback, "Evolutionary Dynamics of a Smoothed War of Attrition Game," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 396 (May 2016): 25–41, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtbi.2016.02.014>.

H1: There will be an increase in Chinese interventions in times of heightened Sino-American rivalry.

H2: When the rivalry is more heightened, we would expect to see an increase in rivalry interventions, which are best explained by Chinese strategic balancing, rather than opportunism.

Mirroring the US-USSR relationship during much of the Cold War, for example, the more violent military crises will unfold through smaller client states and no major war between the U.S. and China. Therefore, the definitions of conflict, crisis, wars, violent interactions, disputes, etc. are important factors when assessing the parameters of the debate between pessimists and optimists. With the decline of state on state conflict and the emergence of new forms of intra-state conflict, it is necessary to be very precise about how we define peace vs war – and any grey areas between the literature.

In sum, my objective is to provide evidence in support of a synthesis of theories on intervention and power transition to breach a schism that I find exists in the field. This thesis aims to criticize the outdated optimist and pessimist ideals of the power transition spectrum and present an alternative that presents new definition of violent power transitions unfolding through proxy wars. A rivalry, when escalated will lead to an increase in actors' interventions in conflicts with the intention of the intervention being best explained by strategic balancing.

This thesis unfolds in 6 chapters. The first will review the literature as it pertains to traditional perceptions of power transitions, it then addresses the evidence presented by Graham Allison on the potential for violence between the United States and China. This chapter then unfolds into two key methods that relate to power transitions and proxy wars.

The second chapter briefly unfolds the theoretical frameworks surrounding optimist and pessimist perspectives about Sino-American conflict. However, this section takes this theoretical framework a step further by creating a linkage to intervention theory and how it can be applied to power transitions; questioning the assessments of previous power transition theories and deeming them outdated in contemporary power transition debates. This chapter will conclude by presenting theoretical evidence on rising powers; by arguing that China is following America's lead in its rise to challenge the latter, I predict this pattern – prevalent in previous power transitions – to continue as China aims to build its own world order.

The third chapter presents the methodology and data sets used throughout this thesis. The hypotheses are outlined in this chapter; what would support and undercut my propositions is illustrated in this chapter. The various variables studied and controlled are also included in this section. Subsequently, this section also justifies how this research was conducted as well as the limitations.

Chapter four presents the data found throughout this research and will present the analysis and discussion of the findings presented. This chapter primarily focuses on the statistical analysis of the number of interventions throughout the given time period. Chapter 3 primarily focuses on the first hypothesis, which addresses the increase in Chinese interventions as the rivalry becomes more heightened.

Chapter 5 is a penultimate chapter that first presents the findings in relation to hypothesis two by discussing the cases and categorizing them as either *strategic balancing* or *opportunism*. This chapter uses the findings of chapter 4 and presents them as case studies to answer the aforementioned uncertainty about China and the America's actions

in these civil conflicts. This chapter will also present some of the implications of these interventions and the potential they have on triggering more violence and further escalating the Chinese rivalry.

The final chapter will present the concluding remarks, the limitations of this research, as well as policy recommendations for foreign policymakers.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the historical answers on military tactics employed during periods of power transition. This chapter is split into four sections. The first section addresses the historical evolution of strategies undertaken by rising and dominant powers. Within this section, a subsection is introduced to present why these strategies are becoming increasingly irrelevant, especially when employed by global superpowers. The second part of this chapter will address Allison's potential answers to how a conflict could unfold between the US and China, and some of the issues that I believe need to be reevaluated. This review will then present an alternative strategy that has been historically used, but not linked to the literature on power transition – balancing intervention. The fourth section will provide another alternative insight into a competing incentive for intervention – opportunistic intervention.

In addition, this thesis plots the historical path of the literature on how hegemonic and rising powers have traditionally solidified the international order and system during a power transition. This chapter groups the key influential work according to the core research and theoretical approaches being used in this thesis. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to review the principal empirical and theoretical contributions of the literature as well as the limitations that require re-thinking and further investigation on how power transition and conflict exist in a dichotomous relationship.

The Rise to Power

Key historical events highlight the distinct tactics states have pursued to challenge the hierarchy of the international order, diminish a threat, or ensure one's survival. Historically, the state, by and large, can be compared to a firm producing and ensuring its security.⁶ By comparing them to *relational contracts*, Lake identifies how state grow through producing security in relation to another as a means of governing interactions.⁷ Security contracts explain the choices a state makes to prevent its wealth from being coerced or extorted. He argues this occurs in two forms which best describe state interaction throughout history – alliance and empire building. The former is similar to the contract between firms, or in this case states, while the latter represents integration into the dominant state's structure (Not a takeover). Lake believed that these strategies could explain the social organisation as well as the variance of structures prevalent throughout history. Simply put, security strategies were transactions to pool efforts and increase security based on the structure. This begs the question: *How do rising powers increase their security by forming and reshaping alliances and forming informal empires?*

American hegemony involves and relies on a degree of imperialism as Washington governs its relationships.⁸ One key feature of the historical literature focusing

⁶ Frederic C. Lane, *Profits from Power: Readings in Protection Rent and Violence-Controlling Enterprises*, 1st Edition edition (State University of New York Press, 1979); Douglas C. North, "Structure and Change in Economic History," *Politics & Society* 11, no. 4 (December 1, 1982): 511–12, <https://doi.org/10.1177/003232928201100416>.

⁷ David A. Lake, "Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations," *International Organization* 50, no. 1 (1996): 1–33.

⁸ Alexandros Koutsoukis, "Building an Empire or Not? Athenian Imperialism and the United States in the Twenty-First Century," *Global Discourse* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2013): 12–30, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2013.808847>.

on American hegemony is its comparison to Athens as opposed to Sparta – a more useful conceptual framework of a democratic state’s imperialism.⁹ Koutsoukis distinguishes between three categories of American imperial tendencies: *true* allies that are not subordinate to their influence (Western Europe, Canada, Japan, and Australia); *subordinate* allies where American influence reaches a degree of imperial control through dependence or interdependence (States with US-led intervention or state-building and where the US has its primary interests); and *potentially subordinate* allies (non-allies), which are states that have strategic significance to Washington to the extent that an intervention would occur if their interests are under threat.¹⁰ Koutsoukis warns against imperialist hegemony as it blinds dominant powers to their imperial style of governance. This primarily arises from Thucydides complex elaboration on the difference between *hegemonia* (legitimated leadership) and *arkhe* (control). It is clear that in many cases American self-interest takes precedence over justice diminishing the legitimate leadership it has – a perception the world and rising powers share.¹¹

Albeit mostly limited to Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union’s collapse was largely shaped by its loss of *hegemonia* within its communist empire, and despite its maintained *arkhe*, the USSR was unable to maintain its status. These actions mirror Britain’s decline at the beginning of the 20th century.¹² Similar to Athens and the USSR, American ideology

⁹ Richard Ned Lebow and Robert Kelly, “Thucydides and Hegemony: Athens and the United States,” *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 4 (October 2001): 593–609, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210501005939>.

¹⁰ Koutsoukis notes and recognises that there are more countries, however, for the purpose of studying US imperial foreign policy to dominate hegemony they focus on these categories.

¹¹ Lebow and Kelly, “Thucydides and Hegemony.”

¹² William Roger Louis, *Imperialism at Bay: The United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Aaron L. Friedberg, *The*

and the model it set out for states to emulate is what gave Washington the ability to gain *hegemonia*. By helping liberate Europe of fascism and aid in the post-WW2 rebuilding of Europe American leadership was legitimised in the eyes of its allies.¹³

Significant events in history have shaped this perception that power transitions are resolved peacefully or through wars that involve alliances and empires. This literature was given preference during the Cold War and has recently come to the forefront of literature on whether or not the United States of America and China are destined to go to war. The most prolific of scholars to recently address this topic has been Graham Allison in his book *Destined for War*.

Destined for War?

After a thorough assessment of Sino-American conflicts and violence in the past, Allison discusses the potential triggers for violent conflict to occur. Geography, culture, and history teach us that there are constant risks that threaten the peace between the two powers. Despite being on opposite sides of the globe, the US and China have both increased their naval and military bases globally so that a collision does not have to be at the borders of either of the states.¹⁴

Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

¹³ G. John Ikenberry, "Liberal Hegemony and the Future of American Postwar Order," in *International Order and the Future of World Politics*, by T. V. Paul and John A. Hall (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 123–45.

¹⁴ Here Allison discusses the various accidental risks posited by US-China presence in the Caribbean. Beijing has constantly signaled that there are risks if the US Navy continues to expand beyond their own hemisphere.

Allison's argument for future conflict is based on historical assessments of the United States' inability to win 4 of its last five wars. To the rest of the world – including China and its neighbours – the perception of an all-powerful America has declined since its losses in Vietnam and various conflicts in the MENA region. Allison argues that American military strength is in question because, despite their enormous spending, they are spread too thin.

I accept these arguments on the perception of American hegemony with evidence supported from China's belligerence in the East and the South China Sea. Beijing has continued to push against the policies put in motion by the United States and its allies in the region. China acts in its interest and is challenging – if not already overtaking – Washington's influence on its allies.

Allison presents two key points that foreign policy analysts and international relations students must look out for. Accidental collision and third-party provocation are the gasoline needed to set the conflict into a spiralling “doomsday device”.

The accidental collision at sea is presented by the risks due to the presence of American warships and aircraft within proximity of China's borders. I find it hard to fully accept this argument that a direct conflict would be allowed simply by an “accident”. First, Allison recognises that Beijing has taken steps to de-escalate the risks by pursuing diplomatic solutions to solve any issues. I find that both the US and China recognise the risks of attempting to use force to resolve situations and instead have decided to pursue, even if not cooperation, means of “saving face” and achieving their goals without direct conflict.

It is Allison's second trigger that I find presents a better risk of conflict. I find the evidence presented by Allison for conflict following a third-party provocation, due to the structures of their allies, Taiwan's independence, or the collapse of North Korea to be substantial.

The first case of a Sino-American war revolves around the polecat collapse of North Korea; it could escalate to a similar scenario to what is being witnessed in Syria. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of civilians, would mirror the current migrant crisis in the Middle East. To protect its borders, Beijing may mobilise the Shenyang Military Region to reduce the migrant flow. Furthermore, the collapse of the North Korean government would mean the North's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would remain unprotected. The immediate concern for the United States would be to secure the ballistic-missile-launch and WMD sites. Dobbins argues that, through South Korea, the United States would work to mobilise forces north of Korean Demilitarized Zone to pre-empt a South Korean-American takeover of the country.¹⁵ Beijing would view this mobilisation as a threat to its goals of hegemony in the East Asian region if North Korean is taken over by an American led South Korean military. The potential for confrontation – accidental or otherwise – between American supported South Korean forces and Chinese forces is high to resolve the crisis in North Korea whether unification (Washington and South Korea's preferences) or continued division (Beijing's preferences).

Taiwan is also a prime example of where conflicting political goals can act as a catalyst for violent conflict between the two nations regardless of whether the goals are

¹⁵ James Dobbins, "War with China," *Survival* 54, no. 4 (September 1, 2012): 7–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2012.709384>.

peaceful or aggressive. China's deployment of theatre ballistic missiles may be to deter Taiwan from declaring independence, but that is not how it is perceived elsewhere. Beijing's goal may be to avoid the independence of the island. Whether or not they are satisfied with the status quo, they may continue to make threats towards the United States and Taiwan if they believe independence of Taiwan is inevitable. The United States and China may find themselves locked in a security dilemma when these threats involve military buildup and Washington perceives that China may achieve their goals through force. As a countermeasure to ensure deterrence would take measures to increase the perception that they are likely to intervene through military support and involvement with Taipei. The vicious cycle continues as Beijing believes this is a means of Washington supporting Taiwan's independence and it continues to intensify its military efforts further, and the cycle goes on.

There is little evidence to suggest that direct total war between the US and China is plausible. This literature, I find, gives a very vague understanding of violent power transition. Direct conflict is not the sole means of violence a nation can pursue, in fact, there are other means of destabilising a global order without total war.

Intervention Theory

A precondition for the optimists' perspective is that, regardless of China's satisfaction with the status quo, it is not a peer-competitor to the United States.¹⁶ They have

¹⁶ Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (April 2001): 5–40, <https://doi.org/10.1162/01622880151091880>.

argued that China's rise will not catch up to American military capability or size in the near future and will not pose a threat to American regional or global hegemony. Yet, most debates regarding China as a future peer competitor to the United States neglect a central issue: asymmetric conflict. T.V. Paul argues that during the Cold War both superior powers experienced "defeat or stalemate" against weaker adversaries.¹⁷ The notion China would not instigate conflict simply because of military lopsidedness is questionable. One potential answer to this is conflict interventions and proxy wars. When and how states choose to intervene in conflicts, as well as when they choose not to, can explain how rivalries are resolved. The literature review addresses balancing and opportunistic interventions as a cause for intervention; this section addresses *how and why* intervention will be used for this thesis and some of the underlying theories behind these questions. This section will then address two cases that could prove to be too costly and draw both states into direct conflict.

Intervention theories have focused primarily on the analysis of problems surrounding effective interventions in a situation for a desired outcome and the means in which states intervene. *Proxy Wars* are essentially when decision makers are under circumstances where they believe that perceived threats do not clearly justify a direct military response and they pursue indirect responses as opposed to direct intervention.¹⁸ The alluring prospect Groh and Dan argue, is the notion of "indigenous" groups operating

¹⁷ T. V. Paul, "How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 1 (2007): 203–204, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070624>.

¹⁸ Tyrone L. Groh, "War on the Cheap? Assessing the Costs and Benefits of Proxy War" (Ph.D., Georgetown University, 2010), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/193246177/abstract/451F340600204322PQ/1>.

within the region appear willing to serve as a proxy for the more powerful state's interests. Proxy wars reduce the costs and risks involved in war while reaping the benefits of achieving their security interests.

The very definition of the concept of intervention is central to presenting the following arguments – and is important later on when defining the dependent variable of this research. Intervention for the purpose of this research includes the official or unofficial supply of the following by any third-party actor in a conflict: 1) troops, 2) military equipment, 3) intelligence and logistics, 4) Aerial or naval support to any party of the conflict for the purpose of this study.¹⁹

Any assessment of intervention must first draw on the importance of where the states are intervening. Civil conflicts are of particular interest to leaders around the world because it is their instability that can heavily disrupt their foreign policies, either by posing a direct or indirect threat to their security.²⁰ However, despite the significance of civil conflicts, not all states choose to intervene. It is the interaction between domestic and international politics that drive intervention decision, but it is the realist perceptions of the threats and opportunities presented by civil conflicts in relation to international security and power struggles that offers a greater explanation for why states intervene.

As it pertains to the rivalry, intervention can offer a strategic advantage over a rival, and it increases suspicion over intentions. Rivals can perceive the interests of the others as opposition, and civil conflicts are international events where rivalries engage

¹⁹ Pelin Eralp Wolak, "Foreign Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts, 1946-2002" (Dissertation, University of Maryland, 2014), (Digital Repository at the University of Maryland).

²⁰ James N. Rosenau, "Intervention as a Scientific Concept," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 13, no. 2 (June 1969): 149–71, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200276901300201>.

together.²¹ Relationships between rivals, over time, can result in a stalemate and interventions can pose an avenue to resolve stalemates. Therefore, some intervention theories argue that superior powers are likely to intervene in opposition, in conflicts where a rival has previously intervened to balance against their influence.²² Our core question focuses on the logic behind these interventions and their implications on the rivalry. By looking at this we can better understand if these interventions are indeed proxy wars in order to answer the question of how a Sino-American violent transition may look like. However, we will first have to answer which logic of intervention best fits the proxy model.

Historically, China has not engaged in proxy wars other than the Korean War, but the United States has. Essentially, it was a series of proxy and dirty wars that prevented direct Soviet-American interaction. This emphasizes the idea that the United States would go to great lengths, as it has in the past, to maintain its role as hegemon. Proxy wars have become more common in recent history; prevalent in the Napoleonic Wars, the Cold War, and the ongoing conflict in Syria, a proxy war is looking more likely between the United States and China as an alternative to a direct conflict.

The first case of a Sino-American proxy war revolves around the collapse of North Korea; it could escalate to a similar scenario to what is being witnessed in Syria. Hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of civilians, would mirror the current migrant crisis in the Middle East. To protect its borders, Beijing may mobilize to the Shenyang Military Region to reduce the migrant flow. Furthermore, the collapse of the North Korean government

²¹ Eralp Wolak, “Foreign Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts, 1946-2002.”

²² Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, “Taking ‘Enduring’ out of Enduring Rivalry: The Rivalry Approach to War and Peace,” *International Interactions* 21, no. 3 (November 1995): 291–308, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629508434870>.

would mean the North's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) would remain unprotected. The immediate concern for the United States would be to secure the ballistic-missile-launch and WMD sites. Dobbins argues that through South Korea, the United States would work to mobilize forces north of Korean Demilitarized Zone to pre-empt a South Korean-American takeover of the country.²³ Beijing would view this mobilization as a threat to its goals of hegemony in the East Asian region if North Korea is taken over by an American led South Korean military. The potential for confrontation – accidental or otherwise – between American supported South Korean forces and Chinese forces is high to resolve the crisis in North Korea whether unification or continued division.

Direct confrontation is not impossible per se, but it remains unlikely. So long as there is an alternative to direct confrontation, states are more likely to pursue them. To this end, the following chapters will attempt to understand the nature of proxy wars and how civil conflicts will offer this transition an avenue to unfold, violently, but without direct confrontation between the United States and China.

Opportunistic Intervention

Within international relations *opportunism* is understood to be ubiquitous. Argued to be common among all actors, Williamson defined it as self-seeking behavior “with guile” or cunning.²⁴ Individual advantages are pursued whenever possible regardless; under opportunistic logic, contracts, alliances, and agreements are not honored out of obligation but rely on the structure and benefits of choices they pursue.

²³ Dobbins, J. (2012). War with China. *Survival*, 54(4), 7-24.

²⁴ Lake, “Anarchy, Hierarchy, and the Variety of International Relations.”

If we think about strategic balancing as increasing relative power and strategically intervening to balance against the United States, then a key feature of opportunism is that it can be seen through immediate national interests and the second intervener increasing their absolute power, without the pursuit of balancing being the end goal. One of the many factors that best explain this categorization is the significant economic benefits of intervening in a conflict. The literature for intervention for economic purposes stems from many interventions, being motivated by oil and other various resources.²⁵

Balancing intervention, like many theories, does not give a perfect model for why states intervene in conflicts – where all or some cases might be opportunistic. Rising powers – whether at the global or regional level – may be more interested in pursuing opportunities without engaging with any rival supported groups. Rising powers can look to where the hegemon has not engaged or has left to rebuild cementing their *hegemonia* in the region. Snyder posits that an ally may be abandoned if there is no more political or economic benefit from the obligation; the abandonment can be explained in twofold within the context of intervention.²⁶ First, when one ally withdraws it signals their lack of commitment to the conflict. Second, and of greater importance, it offers rivals the opportunity to intervene when they would not have otherwise.

²⁵ Yiyong Cai and David Newth, “Oil, Gas and Conflict: A Mathematical Model for the Resource Curse,” *PLoS ONE* 8, no. 6 (June 2013): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0066706>; Alison Frank, “The Petroleum War of 1910: Standard Oil, Austria, and the Limits of the Multinational Corporation,” *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 1 (February 1, 2009): 16–41, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.114.1.16>; Päivi Lujala, Jan Ketil Rod, and Nadja Thieme, “Fighting over Oil: Introducing a New Dataset,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 24, no. 3 (July 2007): 239–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07388940701468526>.

²⁶ Glenn H. Snyder, “The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics,” *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (1984): 461–95, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010183>.

Lake further argues that state behavior can be determined by the state's "opportunity cost". When alternative options are presented, that the state values as much as the intervention the opportunity cost is low, and vice-versa. Without attractive alternative options, the opportunity cost is high, making changing relations is extremely consequential. If this logic is accepted, we infer that a state has no reason to intervene in a conflict, if there is no economic or political gain. An opportunistic intervener, would also avoid direct engagement. Direct conflict and engagement meant conflict, and as discussed under *Cost of War* the cost of direct conflict outweighs the economic and political benefits.

Another important classification that signals opportunism is when an intervener switches sides during a conflict. States often change who they are supporting in a conflict so long as it aligns with their interests. This was prevalent in China's actions in Yemen, although not a case of rivalry intervention the Yemeni crisis is a case of Chinese opportunistic action.²⁷ China not only switched sides during the conflict, but the cost of the continued violence was affecting China's oil revenue.

To distinguish between *strategic balancing* and *opportunism* this the following categories, based on the literature, offer an explanation for a rivalry intervention to qualify as one best explained by *opportunism*:

- **O1:** Opposition failure in conflict and withdrawal or reduction of forces;
- **O2:** Relevant political and/or economic gain for second intervener;
- **O3:** Switching of sides during conflict;
- **O4:** Hesitation of direct confrontation. Is it worth going against American allies?

²⁷ Samuel Ramani, "China's Role in the Yemen Crisis," *The Diplomat*, August 11, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/chinas-role-in-the-yemen-crisis/>.

Opportunism does have requirements and pitfalls; One of the pitfalls of opportunism means that actors are often left without a concrete grand strategy – swiftly put, they intend to seize opportunities as they arise without a clear objective to the intervention.²⁸ Thus, the expectations are to seek returns through the exploitation of various situations. When theory meets the practice of opportunism, there is a crucial emphasis on being prepared and flexible enough to manoeuvre around new opportunities. It becomes a game of time and haste against the opposition, not methodical planning against the opposition.

In reference back to Lake’s article opportunism is a tool for shaping global hierarchies commonly used by superpowers. This self-seeking and costly behaviour is a common trait of all actors; the contracts created and honoured are there for individual advantages not the obligation to the hierarchy.²⁹ In both powers during the Cold War allies were integrated and almost forced into integrating their economies to secure a future against the opposing ideology – opportunism without reaching the enemy. American opportunism in Europe is perhaps subtler than the Soviet empire. Europeans were threatened by the USSR’s growth, and the US was their only suitable answer. From an economic perspective, European post-war recovery depended on the American market, trapping Europe in an alliance with America. Opportunistic decisions are usually rash

²⁸ Peter Layton, “The 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review Choices: Grand Strategy, Risk Management or Opportunism?,” *Defence Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 28–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2014.1002286>.

²⁹ Oliver E. Williamson, *The Economic Institutions of Capitalism: Firms, Markets, Relational Contracting* (New York : London: Free Press; Collier Macmillan, 1985).

decisions during the implementation. States don't truly think about the long-term goals of their actions and focus primarily on taking advantage of opportunities as they appear. Not to say they completely ignore consequences, but it's that the priority is given to taking advantage of the circumstances swiftly.

The path this literature has taken provides some positive elements that highlight the key implications on opportunistic expansion by superpowers as a means of challenging hierarchy. Although referred to at times, the literature does not adequately draw a link between power transition conflicts and opportunism as a means of solidifying a sphere of influence (or informal empire as many scholars have referred to it). A component that requires further investigation may perhaps be the global tensions that drive the pursuit of opportunistic expansion where a rival is not present.

Strategic Balancing Intervention

As stated earlier, the American World Order relied on its strategic alliances in various regions to establish its perception of security. To establish a new hierarchy, I argue, it is not enough to simply show military dominance nor is it feasible to directly engage American forces, but to contest its foothold in various regions could prove to be valuable in reducing American *hegemonia*. A tactic utilised by more powerful states to reduce casualties has been their involvement in various conflicts around the world to balance against a rival. However, before diving into the nature of balancing intervention, it is imperative to address the engagement in proxy wars as a means of intervention. Despite their prevalence throughout history, it is perhaps the Syrian conflict (2011) and others in the MENA region that have presented the best case for civil wars transforming into proxy

wars. One of the gaps presented in the previous section has been the failure to address the theme of proxy wars for strategic advantages. The Scottish Centre for War Studies at Glasgow University organised a workshop focusing on the theme of proxy wars as an emerging global phenomenon that has been understudied in the field.³⁰

Proxy war, as Cragin defines them, refer to the conflict in which countries oppose one another indirectly, through the surrogate state or non-state actors.³¹ Andrew Mumford outlines four changes in military affairs since the end of the Cold War that has forever altered conflict in favour of proxy warfare.³² They are classified as:

1. *Growing apathy among the Western public towards military engagement involving warfare along with the decline of “total war” between advanced states in general.*
2. *The rise of private military companies (PMCs) to outsource security and reduce the need for public support.*
3. *Increased use of low-risk cyberspace tactics that can stem from various proxy servers, dealing damage without the risk of losing soldiers.*
4. *The rise of China as a major superpower rival to the United States in an economy that remains in interdependent and integrated together.*

The seeming increase of interventions in both the Middle East and South-East Asia today could also primarily be a by-product of two wider changes in the international

³⁰ Alex Marshall, “From Civil War to Proxy War: Past History and Current Dilemmas,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 183–95, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1129172>.

³¹ R. Kim Cragin, “Semi-Proxy Wars and U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy,” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 38, no. 5 (May 4, 2015): 311–27, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1018024>.

³² Andrew Mumford, “Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict,” *The RUSI Journal* 158, no. 2 (April 2013): 40–46, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2013.787733>; Andrew Mumford, *Proxy Warfare, War and Conflict in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

system and global economy. One first change that has been acknowledged is the transformation of the international system from a bipolar Cold War to *polyarchic* world order.³³ The second is that, much like Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011), states have begun to “coup-proof” their domestic militaries; this structure, in the event of a collapse of central authority, offers militias and private security actors a central role in what follows.³⁴

The former addresses the nature of the international system as polyarchic – an interdependent and interactive order that remains decentralised due to the increasing number of actors.³⁵ Relationships in this system are volatile and ever-changing; it is for this reason that Brown contends there is an increase in balancing through proxy warfare rather than direct confrontation explained by the decline of a multipolar order. International relations have become decreasingly as Lake described them as single unit law firms competing and cooperating. Since there are diverse international relations and foreign policies (trade, security, technology, etc.), nations may be allies on one issue but enemies on another. Despite historical lessons from Vietnam and Iraq, the White house still suffered from “Vietnam Syndrome” – rejecting military occupation of another country to reshape a regime – during the invasion of Iraq. However, this did not occur in the Balkan crises of the 1990s where Washington did not pick a side in deciding the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina when it did not serve their strategic or security interests. Consistent with the

³³ Seyom Brown, “Purposes and Pitfalls of War by Proxy: A Systemic Analysis,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 27, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 243–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2015.1134047>.

³⁴ Geraint Alun Hughes, “Syria and the Perils of Proxy Warfare,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 3 (May 4, 2014): 522–38, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2014.913542>.

³⁵ Brown, “Purposes and Pitfalls of War by Proxy.”

proxy war model, the reality is perhaps best echoed in then-Secretary of State James Baker's quote "we don't have a dog in that fight".³⁶

In the context of Chinese interventions, for the former to be considered a balancing intervention, it must focus primarily on competition against Washington.

Washington engaged in counterterrorism strategies and proxy wars most recently after the events of the Arab Spring; states are fearing the strategic advances of their rivals intervene in civil conflicts for their agendas.³⁷ When the US led an anti-Assad intervention in Syria, President Xi agreed to send troops to fight alongside Assad.³⁸ When Mr Trump stated that Jerusalem was the capital city of Israel – despite the violence caused – Mr Xi called for an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as the capital.³⁹ Balancing interventions risks triggering conflict, whether in the region or between the two powers, yet the US and China continue to divide up regions and pick sides in conflicts to establish a foothold and control in various regions – much like the US and USSR carving up their spheres of influence. Based on this, strategic balancing involves the creation or aggregation

³⁶ George F. Will, "A Dog In That Fight?," June 11, 1995, <http://www.newsweek.com/dog-fight-183518>.

³⁷ Cragin, "Semi-Proxy Wars and U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy"; John Logan Mitton, "Rivalry Intervention in Civil Conflicts: Afghanistan (India–Pakistan), Angola (USSR–USA), and Lebanon (Israel–Syria)," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 23, no. 3 (September 2, 2017): 277–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2017.1348957>.

³⁸ "China to Deploy Troops to Fight alongside Assad in Syria," *Middle East Monitor* (blog), November 28, 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171128-china-to-deploy-troops-to-fight-alongside-assad-in-syria/>; "Syria Crisis: Where Key Countries Stand," *BBC News*, October 30, 2015, sec. Middle East, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23849587>.

³⁹ Haaretz, "China Calls for Independent Palestinian State Based on '67 Borders With Capital East Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, December 14, 2017, <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/asia-and-australia/1.829009>; Donald Trump, "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem," The White House, December 6, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/>.

of power through alliances, as well as involve the pursuit of territory vital to the interests of the intervener. Furthermore, by looking at trends in intervention and during the Cold War, strategic balancing requires military targeting and the threat of war as a legitimate statecraft.

The literature adequately highlights the issues of proxy wars and their salience in contemporary world politics, however, a shortcoming of this has been the study of proxy conflicts during periods of power transition. Studying rivalry interventions and how they pertain to the transformation of civil conflicts into proxy conflicts is imperative to understand contemporary and future periods of a power transition at regional and global levels. By looking at the nature of strategic balancing we can infer that when a case involves strategic balancing, the interveners are settling their rivalry through the proxies they are supporting.

Based on the literature I infer that the following categories offer an explanation for a rivalry intervention to qualify as one best explained by *strategic balancing*:

- **SB1:** Creation/aggregation of military power through forging alliances to prevent or deter enemy;
- **SB2:** To gain or prevent loss of territory that is vital to interests;
- **SB3:** Exists when states target one another militarily, not just an arms race;
- **SB4:** The projection of power and use of war as a legitimate statecraft.

By addressing the implications of rivalry intervention in power transition, my thesis will challenge how power transition is understood. Since the Cold War was primarily a series of proxy wars and defined as a non-violent transition, this thesis will challenge the notion that proxy wars do not constitute a peaceful transition.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework on Sino-American Transition

This section assesses various theoretical lenses that focus on the Sino-American Rivalry at different levels. The first section focuses on the preexisting theories and expectations of power transition: Violent (pessimist) and peaceful (optimist). While the first section focuses on the theories of power transition, the second section presents the implications of conflict and applying them to the Sino-American rivalry. The final section, broken into 4 subsections, inquires into whether power transition is still relevant in the field of international relations, in lieu of intervention theories.

Can the United States and China avoid the Thucydides Trap?

The PRC is putting the United States in what Howard calls the most dangerous of all moods: “that of a great power which sees itself declining to the second rank.”⁴⁰ The challenge to American hegemony has sparked the potential for a Thucydides Trap; all it needs is a trigger. In essence, Washington and Beijing had all but triggered the Thucydides Trap in East Asia. Prevalent in the Hapsburgs v. Sweden power transition, the notion of supporting an ally, even under false pretences, can cause either party to declare war for the purpose of maintaining or changing the balance of power.⁴¹ To a degree, modern Taiwan mirrors the Germanic states between (1630-1648). China, Christensen argues, poses a problem to American security interests due to threats and weaponry posed at Taiwan’s

⁴⁰ Michael Howard, “Chapter 1: The Antagonists,” in *The Franco-Prussian War: The German Invasion of France, 1870-1871* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2001), 40.

⁴¹ Allison, *Destined for War*.

borders.⁴² What is prevailing in the region and among many scholars is that if China does use force against Taiwan's independence, the United States will be pressured into defending its democratic ally against an authoritarian China – especially if U.S. service personnel are at risk.

Optimists have argued that China's transition to democracy will prevent a conflict according to the Democratic Peace Theory.⁴³ This thesis, however, echoed the arguments of Mansfield with regards to how a state transitioning to democracy is more war-prone than a stable autocracy.⁴⁴ Citing the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) France had undergone a series of violent revolutions with hopes of reform, yet just as Mansfield hypothesizes, Napoleon I used hyper-nationalist rhetoric to gain the support of the French people to justify a war. Furthermore, a more democratic China will merely be a more assertive and nationalistic China. Violent conflict is a tool for scapegoating problems and justifying a government's role as a dominant power. Wang and Deng have argued that a democratic Beijing will pursue the prestige of being called a "world-class power" and be willing to take belligerent actions to act against and challenge American hegemony. Another instance where a violent power transition due to scapegoating took place was through Germany's unification; China might pursue and force the United States to be the aggressor in a conflict to reduce claims of Taiwanese independence.

Liberal optimists have also presented the case that American hegemony is by nature designed to foster peace and prevent war. Ikenberry argues that American hegemony is

⁴² Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up."

⁴³ Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 5–38.

⁴⁴ Mansfield and Snyder.

“reluctant, open, and highly institutionalized”;⁴⁵ the creation and integration of all states in these institutions have fostered peace since the end of the Cold War has increased the returns of participation in these mutually acceptable institutions. If one accepts the liberal perspective on American hegemony fostering and ensuring peace (and I do not), an optimistic conclusion on Sino-American power transition is more reasonable.

On March 6th, 2017, President Donald Trump, under his “America First” propaganda asserted Washington’s shifting focus to bilateral negotiations as opposed to WTO sanctioned multilateral agreements.⁴⁶ Furthermore, as of January 23rd, 2017, the United States is no longer a member of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. This pursuit of unilateral trade agendas risks putting to the test the “New Economic Order” Ikenberry has presented. Furthermore, on March 1st, 2017, the Trump administration suggested bypassing WTO rules if they infringe on American sovereignty.⁴⁷ What was previously a mutually acceptable institution may evolve into American hardline hegemony and asymmetrical trade relations.

Beijing’s increasing military growth, despite not being at the level of then United States, has sparked fears in Washington and its allies, that the former is unsatisfied with the status quo. From a realist pessimist perspective, China’s global orientation is becoming

⁴⁵ G. John Ikenberry, “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order,” *International Security* 23, no. 3 (January 1999): 43–78, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.23.3.43>.

⁴⁶ Shawn Donnan and Demetri Sevastopulo, “Trump Team Looks to Bypass WTO Dispute System,” *Financial Times*, February 27, 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/7bb991e4-fc38-11e6-96f8-3700c5664d30>.

⁴⁷ Damian Paletta and Ana Swanson, “Trump Suggests Ignoring World Trade Organization in Major Policy Shift,” *The Washington Post*, March 1, 2017, sec. Wonkblog.

clearer: Surpassing and displacing the United States.⁴⁸ Following the trends of power transition through history China's rise, despite criticism, has surpassed that of any state other than the United States. The mainland does not have the capability to attack American soil directly, yet it still poses threats to American security interests through other mechanisms. In the build-up to World War I, Germany sought to balance the power with Britain by increasing its naval power and pursuing the goal of being a colonial power. China's military rise has been similar to that of Germany's, but while the latter pursued colonies, the former is pursuing replacing American hegemony and legitimate leadership in various regions. A militarily weak China could, as Christensen argues, could work to sever the United States from the allies that Beijing believes are the source of American hegemony.⁴⁹

Provided China cannot sever these ties; it may pursue invading Taiwan if it believes, just as many zero-sum scholars have argued, that the United States is disinterested in East Asia. Zero-sum pessimists have argued that Washington's failed containment of China's rise may result in a conflict.⁵⁰ Prevalent in World War II, Britain and France's reluctance to intervene in Germany's rise allowed them to prevent triggering the Thucydides Trap. The zero-sum perspective speculates that an increase in China's power poses a threat to American long-term economic and national security. They perceive that China's rise has come at the expense of the power of the one country that had the capability

⁴⁸ Joseph Grieco, "China and America in the New World Polity," in *The Rise of China in Asia: Security Implications*, by Carolyn W Pumphrey (Carlisle Barracks PA: U.S. Army War College, 2002).

⁴⁹ Christensen, "Posing Problems Without Catching Up."

⁵⁰ Robert Kagan, "The Illusion of 'Managing' China," May 15, 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/13/AR2005051301405.html>.

of managing it, and therefore as Kagan argues, Washington has created an illusion they can manage the PRC's rise.⁵¹

From a positive-sum perspective, the American policy in East Asia may have prevented the sentiments echoed in the previous paragraph. Their policies surrounding the development and stabilization of economic and political relationships have created a stable and peaceful China.⁵² One of the factors that led to conflict erupting in World War II was the failure of institutions, a factor prevalent in post-Cold War East Asia era. The formulation of these deep economic ties with China at the core has given rise to optimism for peaceful transitions. To avoid a Thucydides Trap, that drew the Axis and Allies into World War II, Washington has not imposed as harsh and sanctions on Beijing even after gross human rights infringements that made Nazi Germany more assertive and belligerent.

Sino-American relations have followed the trend that has been prevalent throughout history – the trap has been set it is merely a matter of being triggered. The difference in this transition, however, is the number of constraints that have postponed it for so long. This is a credit to the optimist perspective in the sense that violent conflict has been avoided for so long between the United States and China. Yet from a more pessimistic perspective, because of all these factors have only postponed the inevitable. The risk here, of course, is that this conflict may be the most violent of all power transitions experienced, not only because of the increasing numbers and advancements in weaponry, but the fact of the matter is this conflict has been brewing and features all the prerequisites of previous power

⁵¹ Kagan.

⁵² Aaron L. Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia," *International Security* 18, no. 3 (1993): 5–33, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539204>.

transitions compiled into one. Which begs the question: Are the U.S. and China destined to go to war? While this is elaborated on more in the literature review, the simplest answer to present the rest of this chapter is: it is unlikely. I reject the premise that violent power transition requires direct confrontation between both the dominant and rising power and argue that the theoretical frameworks and standards that define power transition are outdated.

War, what is it good for?

In its simplest form, the cost of war is understood in economic and financial costs. Barring ethical, environmental, and human costs, the manufacturing of arms, wages of soldiers, the transport of soldiers, and the sustainability of wars are very costly. In the Cold War, Washington spent 5.5 trillion US dollars on nuclear weapons and weapons-related programs between 1940 and 1996 and averaged around 2 billion USD per year by 1986.⁵³⁵⁴ The US invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, between the years of 2001 and 2011, cost Washington three times more than the official estimates; after the inclusion of the formal defense budget, the actual wars, medical costs of veterans, Homeland Security, and

⁵³ Robert Higgs, “U.S. Military Spending in the Cold War Era: Opportunity Costs, Foreign Crises, and Domestic Constraints, Cato Policy Analysis | Military Budget Of The United States | Cold War” (Cato Institute, November 30, 1988), <https://www.scribd.com/document/31267772/U-S-Military-Spending-in-the-Cold-War-Era-Opportunity-Costs-Foreign-Crises-and-Domestic-Constraints-Cato-Policy-Analysis>; Stephen Schwartz, “Cold War’s Heavy Cost,” *The New York Times*, May 20, 1999, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/20/opinion/1-cold-war-s-heavy-cost-770728.html>.

⁵⁴ Statistics on the USSR’s spending is difficult to find and was not included in the SIPRI Extended Military Expenditure Database (2015).

State Department aid projects cost 3.2 to 4 trillion US dollars, which is three times the official estimate.⁵⁵

The main reason we address the costs of war, is that theories surrounding this subject show the decline of direct confrontation. If there is evidence that states are more likely to avoid direct conflict, then it could further why states choose to challenge one another through intervention. If we want to understand the logic behind intervention, then part of the answer must focus on why states choose interventions against rivals.

The costs of war are presented in commercial peace theories, that ascribe to the notions that globalization and the spread of economic interdependence lead to peace. Increasing levels of internal and external peace facilitate the integration of a country into the economic, political, and social processes of globalization and vice versa.⁵⁶ The debate on whether interstate conflicts are influenced by trade are still prominent; conflicts a byproduct of states (or other actors) having different interests and they cannot resolve them – trade is one of the many prominent interests. Trade can act to promote and foster peace when the expected commercial losses of conflict outweigh the cost of fighting;⁵⁷ at the same time extradyadic asymmetric dependencies can escalate tensions and trigger international conflict. In contingency with this claim, I argue that understanding the

⁵⁵ Joseph Masco, “Auditing the War on Terror: The Watson Institute’s Costs of War Project: Public Anthropology,” *American Anthropologist* 115, no. 2 (June 2013): 312–13, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aman.12012>.

⁵⁶ Christos Kollias and Suzanna-Maria Paleologou, “The Globalization and Peace Nexus: Findings Using Two Composite Indices,” *Social Indicators Research* 131, no. 3 (April 1, 2017): 871–85, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1293-6>.

⁵⁷ Erik Gartzke and Oliver Westerwinter, “The Complex Structure of Commercial Peace Contrasting Trade Interdependence, Asymmetry, and Multipolarity,” *Journal of Peace Research* 53, no. 3 (May 2016): 325–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343316637895>.

typology and degrees of trade and economic interdependence is necessary to understand militarized conflicts.

Interstate wars are also politically very costly, especially for a democratic government.⁵⁸ Democratic leaders suffer from interstate conflicts in the sense that political costs of reelection are increased with interstate war mobilization, due to its attribution to military spending.⁵⁹ On the other hand, however, higher war casualties increase voter turnout and political engagement at both the aggregate and individual levels of analysis.⁶⁰ It is no surprise then that parties, candidates, and activists use war as a rallying point for their political agendas and offer a focal point for organizational structures for movements to end the conflict.⁶¹

The cost of war is not based solely on the political and economic aspects of war. One of the biggest atrocities of war is the victimization of civilians. Whether it has immediate or long-term effects on civilians, war has created a myriad of problems for civilian casualties. The focus on civilian casualties of has been bleak; traditionally, the success and public support of a war were determined, and subsequently studied, in terms of military casualties.⁶² Civilian victimization strategies had long been considered

⁵⁸ Jeff Carter, “The Political Cost of War Mobilization in Democracies and Dictatorships,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 8 (September 2017): 1768–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715620469>.

⁵⁹ Jeff Carter and Glenn Palmer, “Keeping the Schools Open While the Troops Are Away: Regime Type, Interstate War, and Government Spending,” *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (March 2015): 145–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12160>.

⁶⁰ Michael T. Koch and Stephen P. Nicholson, “Death and Turnout: The Human Costs of War and Voter Participation in Democracies: DEATH AND TURNOUT,” *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 4 (October 2016): 932–46, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12230>.

⁶¹ Charles Tilly, *Social Movements, 1768-2004* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2004).

⁶² Adam J. Berinsky, “Assuming the Costs of War: Events, Elites, and American Public Support for Military Conflict,” *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 4 (November 2007): 975–97,

acceptable military tactics,⁶³ and while this is no longer accepted among some states, it is still employed by non-state actors wishing to undermine the power of the state.⁶⁴

The costs on civilians and military personnel go beyond direct injuries of those affected – wars have long-lasting side effects. Seventy-two years after the dropping of the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ‘hibakusha’ (Japanese term for atomic bomb survivors) descendants are faced with transgenerational genetic side-effects of radiation.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the risk of cancer and physical scarring has made it “impossible for ‘hibakusha’ and their descendants to find full-time jobs and develop relationships. Medical researchers have also discovered that cardiovascular disease was a “hidden side-effect” of survivors of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶⁶ It becomes evident then, that even if the economic costs were not accounted for, the human cost of war has mitigated the likelihood of direct conflict.

Direct conflict between states may have declined, but it does not necessarily mean that the world has become more peaceful. Do the increasing costs of conflict undermine

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2007.00602.x>; Jennifer L. Merolla, “Paying the Human Costs of War: American Public Opinion and Casualties in Military Conflicts. By Christopher Gelpi, Peter D. Feaver, and Jason Reifler. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009. 280p. \$65.00 Cloth, \$26.95 Paper.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 03 (September 2010): 954–56, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001714>; John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents, and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley, 1973).

⁶³ Alexander B. Downes, “Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War,” *International Security* 30, no. 4 (May 8, 2006): 152–95.

⁶⁴ Alan M Dershowitz, *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=3421125>.

⁶⁵ Suvendrini Kakuchi, “Japan-Health: On Hiroshima Day, Relatives of a-Bomb Victims Still Struggling,” *Global Information Network; New York*, August 11, 2012, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1033203196/abstract/119F5AC80D7A42C7PQ/1>.

⁶⁶ Allen J. Taylor, “Cardiovascular Disease: Another Hidden Cost of War?,” *Circulation* 132, no. 22 (December 1, 2015): 2106–7, <https://doi.org/10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.115.019327>.

power transition theory? or even render it obsolete? Major and regional powers partake in diverse methods of competition with each other to establish power in the international order. And for this purpose, it is necessary also to address how future power transitions may play out through indirect competition that we have seen in the past and will continue to see.

I refer to the conflict as the “Colder War” between the United States and China; I refer to it in the sense that it entails the same factors that occurred between the former and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. While direct conflict did not occur during the Cold War, the casualties and tensions between the states and their spheres of influence were still prominent, and the Washington and Moscow had employed every “traditional instrument of warfare short of bombs and bullets”.⁶⁷ But, I reject Allison’s argument that the Cold War was not a war.

Instead of reciting theoreticians’ rhetoric on the Cold War, I will instead address the implications of contemporary means of conflict as they pertain to a violent Sino-American power transition based on the cases addressed in this research.

Failed states that erupt into civil conflicts offer the greatest challenge to global security – but offer the best venue for international rivalries to play out. Washington engaged in counterterrorism strategies and semi-proxy wars most recently after the events of the Arab Spring; states are fearing the strategic advances of their rivals intervene in civil conflicts for their own agendas.⁶⁸ If we want to answer the question of rivalry interventions,

⁶⁷ Allison, *Destined for War*.

⁶⁸ Cragin, “Semi-Proxy Wars and U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy”; Mitton, “Rivalry Intervention in Civil Conflicts,” September 2, 2017.

then the logic behind why the United States and China have not engaged then understanding the conditions that make violent power transitions no longer permissive are important. To do this we need to understand the relationship between the Thucydides Trap in the context of contemporary international relations that has traditional mechanisms of conflict obsolete; then the logic behind traditional power transitions becomes less convincing. Our core concern here is that without understanding the decline of the permissive conditions that made conflict more likely, then there will be one answer to questions of power transitions, as they will almost always satisfy the optimist point of view without direct engagement.

Is Power Transition Dead?

Traditionally the debate has been defined with two ideals: Direct warfare (Pessimists) and peaceful transition (Optimists). If this is the spectrum we are discussing, then this thesis argues that Sino-American relations are closer to the optimistic point of view; the liberal and realist optimists are right in arguing that direct conflict is almost impossible. As discussed earlier, pessimists on this spectrum do not consider the geopolitical position of the United States and the risks of war on Washington and Beijing. In any conflict in East Asia, despite the vast number of American bases in East Asia, Washington would be incapable of offering an immediate and significant response.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ N Jun, “The Global Times (Huanqiu Shibao 环球时报) in Retrospect | The China Story,” September 24, 1999, <https://www.thechinastory.org/yearbooks/yearbook-2013/forum-spoken-and-unsspoken/the-global-times-huanqiu-shibao-%e7%8e%af%e7%90%83%e6%97%b6%e6%8a%a5-in-retrospect/>.

Furthermore, this side of the spectrum overemphasizes Washington's post-Cold War policy on the need to prevail in more than one simultaneous war in two different regions.

The optimist ideal, however, is also an unsatisfying one. If the liberals are right, and institutions are all that matter, then their hypothesis has failed. President Trump's backing away from WTO policies and withdrawing from the TPP present nothing more than pessimism from the liberal camp. If they invoke the Democratic Peace Theory, arguing that China is nearing a democratic transition, then historically states in transition or newly democratic countries are more violent than authoritarian regimes.⁷⁰ The optimist realists have argued that Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) has deterred conflict in the Cold War and maintained the peace between nuclear states.⁷¹ The lesson learned from this perspective is that both countries do not trust each other enough to comply with nuclear nonproliferation programs and that there will not be a direct conflict between them. I accept this, but it does not satisfy any concerns regarding different forms of conflict.

If scholars and policy analysts only focus on direct conflict and peaceful transition as the ideals of the theory, then power transition is indeed dead. This traditional viewpoint of power transition as an explanation of international relations and power, as a theoretical perspective, no longer offers any pedagogical purposes.

The new spectrum this thesis presents expands on the previous research to acknowledge different forms power transition can take place. Traditionally optimists and

⁷⁰ Mansfield and Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War."

⁷¹ A consistent argument by many realists has been that the significance of "Nuclear Peace" and the balance of power created by nuclear weapons. For thorough presentation of these arguments see, Waltz, K. (2012). Why Iran Should Get the Bomb: Nuclear Balancing Would Mean Stability. *Foreign Affairs*, 91(4), 2-5. And Kahl, C., & Waltz, K. (2012). Iran and the Bomb: Would a Nuclear Iran Make the Middle East More Secure? *Foreign Affairs*, 91(5), 157-162.

pessimists have perceived the debates as more of a two-sided coin than a spectrum. This thesis rejects the notion that this debate should be approached as a two-sided coin. In fact, it is proposing a new spectrum; This thesis aims to expand on previous literature to acknowledge different forms of conflict, considering the implications of Mutually Assured Destruction meaning that direct conflict is almost impossible, but at the same time considers the emerging variants of violent power transition.

This spectrum maintains the optimist perspective on peaceful transition as an ideal on the spectrum. The difference is prevalent on the other side of the argument; the alternative ideal of the spectrum is indirect conflict. I reject the notion of direct conflict between the United States and China; total direct warfare implies the use of nuclear weapons. Great powers have had the capability to use them, but have chosen not to because of the implications of MAD. The new spectrum this thesis presents, in summary, is Peaceful transition (Optimists) and indirect conflict (Pessimists); if this is the spectrum, then this thesis argues that Sino-American relations lay closer to the pessimist perspective.

Although scholars acknowledge their significance in the post-Cold War study of international relations, different forms of violent conflict have been ignored in the study of power transition. Scholars have often defined conflict without direct interaction between actors as a peaceful transition. By that definition the Cold War was peaceful, and the conflicts that occurred in the Middle East and North African region in World War II had no relation to the power transition, different forms of violent conflict are prevalent in history – they are not a new phenomenon.

Following America's Lead

Mearsheimer is correct in predicting that China will act the same way the United States has throughout its history. The belief is that China will attempt to dominate the East Asian region just as the United States has Western society after the end of the Second World War. To maximize its security, China must increase the gap between it and any members of the region that can threaten its rise and power such as Japan, India, and Russia.⁷² He presents the argument that China does not wish to pursue military superiority and attempt to conquer other powerful states in the region, but Beijing will maintain a position of strength.

Scholars have predicted that to reduce the likelihood of conflict between the more powerful nations is that China may pursue the goal of creating its own “Monroe Doctrine” to ensure a degree of strategic dominance. This thesis predicts that after its rise China will pursue the strategic institutions presented in Ikenberry to ensure its dominance just as the United States has.⁷³

Just as the United States has militarily weak Canadian and Mexican neighbours, China will pursue these policies with Japan and potentially Russia. Beijing would not – like any other power – want powerful nations in its backyard. Even if their strength is reliant on American support, why would China feel safe with American forces in Japan, Taiwan, or the South China Sea?

⁷² J. J. Mearsheimer, “The Gathering Storm: China’s Challenge to US Power in Asia,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 1, 2010): 381–96, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cjip/poq016>.

⁷³ Ikenberry, “Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Order.”

Mearsheimer argues that America's response to China trying to replace it in East Asia will be what it has been over the course of the 20th century. America does not tolerate peer competitors, it is determined to remain the World's regional hegemon, and therefore the United States is likely to act as it did towards the Soviet Union.

Based on this logic, I assume that China's rise will mirror its predecessor in the sense that it seeks to cement its own global order through increasing its foothold on various regions. Beijing will begin intervening in conflicts to balance against American leadership and reduce its *hegemonia* (legitimate leadership) and *arkhe* (control). As outlined in the literature review, by destabilizing these two factors, Washington was able to reduce Moscow's grip on many of their allies. If Beijing can manage to balance against Washington's leadership and control, the United States' order, which relies on these global footholds, will be disrupted.

Nevertheless, I do not acknowledge this will result in direct conflict between the two powers but will occur through a series of proxy wars and to grasp this concept, we must first understand the logic behind theories of intervention.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the research for this thesis was conducted. The chapter first outlines the hypothesis testing model. The section will illustrate what would signify support from my hypothesis, as well as what demonstrates my hypothesis being undercut. This chapter then illustrates the methodology implemented throughout the research of this study. The second section presents the datasets used, how data was collected and the coding procedures. The third section operationalizes the dependent and independent variables used in this research.

Hypothesis Testing

The research questions at hand were: *Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?*

H1: There will be an increase in Chinese interventions in times of heightened Sino-American rivalry as outlined in table 1.

I will know that **H1** is supported if the pattern I find across the cases shows that the years in which the rivalry between the Sino-American rivalry is heightened; after the Arab Spring we will see an increase in the number of conflicts with balancing rivalry interventions. **Null-hypothesis1:** The core hypothesis is undercut if the pattern I find across the cases does not show a relationship between the Sino-American rivalry and which side China intervenes on the side of.

H2: When the rivalry is more heightened, we would expect to see an increase in rivalry interventions, which are best explained by Chinese strategic balancing, rather than opportunism.

If **H2** is supported, the pattern I would expect is that as the level of rivalry increases a conflict the intervention would show variables that define balancing (as outlined in the literature review). For a case to be considered it would entail the following:

- **SB1:** Creation/aggregation of military power through forging alliances to prevent or deter enemy;
- **SB2:** To gain or prevent loss of territory that is vital to interests;
- **SB3:** Exists when states target one another militarily, not just an arms race;
- **SB4:** The projection of power and use of war as a legitimate statecraft.

While H1 addresses the increase in interventions over time and across regions, the latter is attempting to explore Sino-American rivalry interventions from a strategic balancing versus opportunistic outlook. Truly grasping motivation may be difficult, but the logic and literature reviewed in Chapter 1 allows us to make inferences about state behavior and, more importantly, how this behavior has changed. Echoing the points made in Chapter 3, even one case of balancing offers valuable insight into how Sino-American rivalry is currently unfolding or could unfold in the future.

This hypothesis will be tested through a case study of the 3 cases when there was rivalry intervention. Even one case that shows an increase in strategic balancing is important, even if the hypothesis is undercut. The importance is twofold: First, if that is the

single case when this happens, why is this case so important to both the U.S. and China and what are the implications of both of them intervening and risking conflict.

Null-hypothesis2: If my hypothesis is undercut, the pattern I would expect to see is that there is no relationship between the level of rivalry and the logic behind China's intervention. If the motivation behind China's intervention in civil conflicts is not explained by balancing interventions, but Chinese opportunism (as outlined in the literature review). The following categories would be present:

- **O1:** Opposition failure in conflict and withdrawal or reduction of forces;
- **O2:** Relevant political and/or economic gain for second intervener;
- **O3:** Switching of sides during conflict;
- **O4:** Hesitation of direct confrontation. Is it worth going against American allies?

The pattern I'm curious about across past and present cases is the relationship between major power rivalries and how contemporary conflict plays out. Since many leading scholars and theoreticians fail to grasp that the Cold War was indeed a violent attempt at a power transition, I present arguments that the nature of conflict is shifting due to the risks of direct conflict. This is explained in further detail in chapter 5, which focuses on answering **H2**.

Methodology

To answer whether or not Sino-American conflict interventions can be explained by balancing interventions or opportunism this thesis implements a *longitudinal design* to explore the changes in interventions by both actors over time. Upon presenting the number

of interventions, each state has intervened in on a yearly basis this research attempts to analyse the trends found over the period studied.

The rationale for this method, simply put, is that longitudinal studies offer insight into dynamics of change by giving perspective and values to trends over time.⁷⁴ Since this research is focusing on various time intervals, this data, when presented in a line graph can show a gradual increase or decrease in the number of conflicts each actor has been involved in overtime; presenting a visual representation of data collected since the end of the Cold War. The patterns will be elaborated on in the hypothesis testing section of this chapter.

The next step employed is a comparative case study of 3 out of the 6 cases where the intervention by the PRC was in opposition to American forces. The rationale behind studying these 3 cases was to better understand the motivation behind Chinese intervention – balancing or opportunistic. These 3 cases were:

1. The Iraqi Insurgency;
2. The Hamas-Israel Conflict;
3. The Syrian Civil War.

Dataset

The dataset used in this research includes conflicts, as they were defined in the Uppsala Conflict Data Program. The definition of *armed conflict* is outlined in the dataset as “a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results

⁷⁴ Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, Second edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017).

in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year.”⁷⁵ The scope of the research includes conflicts after the collapse of the USSR, that included intervention by either the United States of America and the People’s Republic of China. There was a total of 38 conflicts in this study and 6 of which involved intervention of both the USA and the PRC at the same time. Conflict was drawn from the UCDP under the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in Uppsala Universitet.⁷⁶ The intervener-conflict dyads are studied in two steps. The first is that they are studied from a chronological order to illustrate when each state intervened in the conflict on a yearly basis. The second presentation is a regional one; this offers insight into whether or not conflict-intervention zones are overlapping between the US and China. Addressing where intervention can help answer whether or not the US and China are attempting to balance against one another or if there are alternative explanations. This is explained further in the independent variable section of this chapter.

The UCDP organized violence dataset has recorded data from 1989-2017 recorded by region, country, and types of violence. The database is the oldest ongoing data collection program on civil war. The data is continuously updated and regularly cited in various journals such as the Journal of Peace Research since 1993, in the SIPRI Yearbook since 1988, in the Human Security Reports since 2005, and in the report series States in Armed Conflict (1987-2012). The data is downloadable in various formats and can be accessed through the dataset’s website.

⁷⁵ “Definitions - Department of Peace and Conflict Research - Uppsala University, Sweden,” accessed October 14, 2018, <http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/>.

⁷⁶ Michael Stohl, Mark Irving Lichbach, and Peter N Grabosky, *States and Peoples in Conflict: Transformations of Conflict Studies*, 2017.

It is important to note that there were conflicts that were not complete in the dataset. These conflicts are ongoing and still included in this research. However, external sources and grey literature were used to determine if there was intervention. While this may present itself to be a limitation of the study, this is something the researcher was aware of upon deciding to study conflicts that involve proxies. It is part of the reality of modern-day intrastate conflict, and intervention was clearly outlined in the onset of the study to determine when it occurs.

Dependent Variables

Since this thesis is examining which factors influence an external state's decision to intervene and whose side it chooses to intervene along with militarily there are two dyadic dependent variables. The dependent variable is more behavioural and focuses on the actions of one or both the United States and China. We measure the dependent variable by looking at the intervention, as defined below. The *first* is the initial *intervention* by *both* the United States of America or the People's Republic of China.⁷⁷ If both states are involved in the conflict then the conflict will be coded with a value of 1, however, if only one actor intervenes in the conflict, then it will be coded with a value of 0.

The *second* relationship will be reliant on the first. If a conflict received a value of 1 in the first category a second step is undertaken depending on which side the second intervener is involved in the conflict to attempt to code whether the second rival is intervening in opposition to the primary intervener. This will be defined as the *intervention*

⁷⁷ This will be referred to as Step 1 in the later parts of this thesis.

side. One recurring term used in this research is the term *potential balancing intervener*. This variable refers to the state (whether the US or China) in opposition to the actor already involved in a conflict. If the secondary intervener joins the conflict on the opposing side of the primary intervener, the conflict will be given a value of 1 to signify a *potential balancing intervention*. If the secondary intervention is on the same side of the conflict, it will be given a value of 0, signalling no direct attempt at *rivalry intervention*.⁷⁸ The determination of who intervened first was all collected by the UCDP data set, with dates, resources, actors, and degree of violence.

Intervention is defined as a measure of whether or not state B intervenes military in a conflict where state A is present. The intervention will be defined as military aid and/or the use of military force by a third party. It will also include military intervention which includes the supply of 1) troops, 2) military equipment, 3) intelligence and logistics, 4) Aerial or naval support to any party of the conflict for the purpose of this study.⁷⁹ To maintain consistency with the rest of this research, this data was collected by the UCDP dataset referenced earlier and cited by various research papers; A more detailed explanation of these factors and why they are considered interventions can be found under the definitions section of the UCDP dataset and Wolak's work on civil conflict intervention.⁸⁰ This thesis does not aim to answer what constitutes intervention, however, these are encompassing factors for what was included for the purpose of this study. *Intervention Side*

⁷⁸ This will be referred to as step 2 in the later parts of this thesis.

⁷⁹ Eralp Wolak, "Foreign Military Interventions in Civil Conflicts, 1946-2002."

⁸⁰ Eralp Wolak.

is a variable only coded for after a third party that intervenes after step one is satisfied. If military intervention (as defined above), is given to a particular group.

Independent Variables

The main independent variable in this thesis is the Sino-American rivalry. The secondary independent variables are the time of intervention, the region of the intervention, and the discovery of petroleum. The independent variables of this study are explained in the following subsections.

Sino-American Rivalry

The core independent variable in this thesis is addressing is the rivalry between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China. Measuring the rivalry outlined in Chapter 3 requires a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis, which is not a clear-cut task due to the ambiguity surrounding the concept of "rivalry." The level of rivalry will be accounted for in this chapter in table 1 below. as well as literature outlined by scholars and their work on the economic, political, and military rivalry between the U.S. and China.

To back up the assessment, this thesis will associate the value of the intensity of the rivalry in three categories: low, medium, and high. Chapter 3 outlines that in terms of a direct military standpoint, China has not caught up to the United States military in terms of military spending and capabilities, but as Christensen argues, China does not need to

catch up.⁸¹ The threat China poses in other fields without direct confrontation being the topic of discussion.

This thesis presents 3 key pivotal events when separating the time periods addressed: Firstly, the Post-Cold War but pre-9/11 (1992-2001) period as it outlines American policy change to focus on international terrorism.⁸² The second pivotal period is the Post-9/11 and pre-Arab Spring (2001-2011) as a period between two key events. The motivation behind studying this period was brought to my attention as some scholars studied “interwar years”.⁸³ The interwar years were studied primarily as the time period between World War 1 and World War 2, studying the events between two defining moments gave light to origins of conflicts and tensions between rivals that lead to the start of the Second World War. For the purpose of this research, we look at the period within key events that tipped the Sino-American rivalry. At some point between 2008 and 2010, China became Washington’s biggest problem.⁸⁴ Finally, the Post-Arab Spring (2011-Ongoing) as it unravelled the old order in the region. As the revolutions and wars erupted

⁸¹ Christensen, “Posing Problems Without Catching Up.”

⁸² Jon Finer and Robert Malley, “The Long Shadow of 9/11: How Counterterrorism Warps U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, U.S. Foreign Policy Program, July 1, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/article/long-shadow-911-how-counterterrorism-warps-us-foreign-policy>; Stephanie Thomson, “15 Years after 9/11, This Is How the US Has Changed,” *World Economic Forum*, September 9, 2016, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/09/15-years-after-9-11-how-has-the-us-changed/>.

⁸³ Agnes Cornell, Jørgen Møller, and Svend-Erik Skaaning, “The Real Lessons of the Interwar Years,” *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 3 (July 6, 2017): 14–28, <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2017.0040>.

⁸⁴ Daniel Shane, “China Is America’s Biggest Foreign Creditor. Could It Turn off the Tap?,” *CNN Money*, January 11, 2018, <https://money.cnn.com/2018/01/11/investing/china-us-treasury-purchases/index.html>; Doug Palmer, “U.S. Backs off in Currency Dispute with China,” *whitehouse.gov*, January 25, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/25/remarks-president-barack-obama-state-union-address-prepared-delivery>.

in the region, new policies and alliances began to form in the region.⁸⁵ These events will also be the way in which this thesis outlines the height of the rivalry between the United States and China. It is important to note that this thesis is not studying the conflicts themselves, but the motivation behind American and Chinese interventions, therefore it does not matter whether or not a conflict spans over multiple time periods; what is worth studying (for the purpose of this thesis) is which period the intervention occurs by the *secondary* actor occurs.

The following table illustrates the height of rivalry between Washington and Beijing across the three periods in question. The characterization of the level of rivalry is disputable and while many scholars may disagree with it, this is merely a modest assessment by the author. The concept of interstate rivalry is difficult to conceptualize, best described by Dreyer as a “you know it when you see it” concept.⁸⁶ Based on his minimal-maximum approach to assessing a concept, Deyer found there was a lot of disagreement on the definition of interstate rivalry. In a study by Colaresi et al. consensus on whether a dispute could be considered a rivalry was only reached on 23 out of a possible 355 cases.⁸⁷ This thesis draws primarily from a temporal dependence, issue competition, and identification of the rival to offer this assessment of the rivalry; the elusiveness of this concept makes it difficult to truly establish what it would look like, for this purpose this

⁸⁵ Mark N. Katz, “The International Relations of the Arab Spring,” *Middle East Policy* 21, no. 2 (June 1, 2014): 76–84, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12072>.

⁸⁶ David R Dreyer, “Unifying Conceptualizations of Interstate Rivalry: A Min–Max Approach,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 49, no. 4 (December 2014): 501–18, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836713519980>.

⁸⁷ Michael P. Colaresi, Karen A. Rasler, and William R. Thompson, *Strategic Rivalries in World Politics: Position, Space and Conflict Escalation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

thesis draws on the aforementioned variables that best define levels of rivalry. *Temporal dependence* relies on the long-term incompatibility of goals between the two states. This does not imply that short rivalries are not included, merely that past events affect present behaviour.⁸⁸ The level of rivalry would be considered high if the goals between the Washington and Beijing are conflicting during a period of time. The second – and more relevant to this thesis – is the idea of *issue competition*; within this concept is the idea that two actors have a competitive relationship over an issue that is of high salience to both actors.⁸⁹ The level of rivalry would be considered high if the competition over a particular issue, in this case a particular conflict, is of high salience to both Washington and Beijing. Simply put, the higher the salience of the conflict, the higher the level of rivalry. The final category relies on the recognition of the other state as a rival – *identification of a rival*.

The *Temporal Dependence* category is a constant in this issue. The long-term incompatibility between the U.S. and the P.R.C has been constant and prevalent between throughout history. Chinese dissatisfaction with the current global order is evidence of this. While not entirely dismissing the possibility of the U.S. capability of taming China, Grieco firmly asserts that there are increasing risks of a military exchange because of Chinese power due to the ambition towards shifting the balance of global power.⁹⁰ This in conjunction with Washington’s continued desire to remain the dominant power allows for an establishment of temporal dependence throughout all three time periods.

⁸⁸ Colaresi, Rasler, and Thompson; Dreyer, “Unifying Conceptualizations of Interstate Rivalry.”

⁸⁹ John A. Vasquez, *The War Puzzle Revisited*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 110 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁹⁰ Grieco, “China and America in the New World Polity.”

The *Identification of the Rival* can be embodied by how Beijing and Washington view the threat. In the Pre-9/11 era there was recognition in Washington of China's threat; for Friedberg, American policy towards China has allowed for the development of stable economic and political relationships.⁹¹ From this perspective, the continued presence of the United States as a provider of common security was a solution to resolving regional rivalries and mistrust. The U.S. maintenance in Japan and South Korea allowed what Friedberg calls "interregional economic integration", providing China with the means of improving political relations with key regional actors. China quickly became the core of economic integration in East Asia. Trade agreements, since 1993, were based on the Asian state's cooperation to produce goods for third markets, primarily the United States. Paradoxically, today, more than half of regional exports are to other regional actors; while China, not the United States is the biggest trade partner of many regional actors.⁹² This rivalry would carry on into both periods, hence the continued focus on Sino-American relations and the risk of conflict. Chapter 2 of this thesis outlines the identification of this rivalry in more detail, however, for the purpose of this section, I note that there was acceptance from both parties of the identification of the rivalry.

The arguments surrounding *Issue Competition*, are more oriented to various issues of what each state determines its global priority. The main focus of American foreign policy before 9/11 was establishing this new liberal world order without after the collapse

⁹¹ Friedberg, "Ripe for Rivalry."

⁹² Takashi Inoguchi, "Reinventing the Alliance: U.S.-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change," *New York: Palgrave Macmillan*, 2003, 141-62.

of the USSR; anti-Soviet discourse on Sino-American relations had been exhausted.⁹³ From a Chinese perspective, there was an acceptance in the post-Cold War era of “yi-chao-duo-qiang” (one super-power and several big powers). Beijing, after the Cold War, became more accommodative of America interests.⁹⁴ There were no major issue competitions between the U.S. and China before 9/11, nor after 9/11 for that matter. The events of September 11 led to a degree of improvement in Sino-American relations; Economic, political, social, and cultural differences diminished throughout this period.⁹⁵ In the aftermath of the events, the U.S. continuously pursued Chinese support – as a veto-wielding Security Council member – in the United Nations.⁹⁶ In return Washington subdued claims against Beijing’s human rights infringements.⁹⁷ The Arab Spring became a focal point in Sino-American competition. After the wave of revolutions in the Middle East, China became an “uncomfortable thorn” in Washington’s pursuit of spreading

⁹³ Jialin Zhang, “U.S.-China Relations in the Post-Cold War Period: A Chinese Perspective,” *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies* 14, no. 2 (June 1, 1995): 47–61, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03023433>; Jin Canrong, “The US Global Strategy in the Post-Cold War Era and Its Implications for China-United States Relations: A Chinese Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 27 (May 2001): 309–15, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560125619>; Yeh-chung Lu, “From Confrontation to Accommodation: China’s Policy toward the U.S. in the Post-Cold War Era” (Dissertation, The George Washington University, 2009).

⁹⁴ Lu, “From Confrontation to Accommodation: China’s Policy toward the U.S. in the Post-Cold War Era.”

⁹⁵ Jia Qingguo, “Impact of 9.11 on Sino-U.S. Relations: A Preliminary Assessment,” *Brookings*, Working Papers By CEAP Visiting Fellows, July 1, 2002.

⁹⁶ Jacques deLisle, “9/11 and U.S.-China Relations,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, E-Notes, September 2011; Malcolm Scott and Cedric Sam, “Here’s How Fast China’s Economy Is Catching Up to the U.S.,” *Bloomberg.Com*, May 24, 2018, <http://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2016-us-vs-china-economy/>.

⁹⁷ “George W. Bush: The President’s News Conference With President Jiang Zemin of China in Crawford, Texas,” accessed October 20, 2018, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=18>.

democracy after the fall of many dictatorial regimes (even ones that were once their allies).⁹⁸ This is best reprised in persistent Chinese objections to American attempts to pass Security Council resolutions on intervention in Syria.

Answer the question of rivalry and intervention is not an easy task, to avoid any circularity problem of “which came first: the rivalry or the interventions?” this thesis presents the height of the Sino-American rivalry as perceived from a structural perspective. To define this rivalry we must look at the power relationship and shift of the balance of power from the West to the East. Key to defining this relationship is also knowing what event (or series of events) decisively defined the shift.

The *identification of rival* framework brings points to one of the key turning points in the rivalry: China becoming America’s peer-competitor. The debate surrounding China as a peer competitor has been at the frontline of the Sino-American debate. While the gap in military capabilities remains in favour of the United States, Beijing can still shift the balance of power without reducing this gap.⁹⁹ The relative military power, experts would suggest, may still be in favour of the United States it is on a decline, but what caused the turning point in this rivalry that pushed China to, not necessarily close the gap, but be able to pose those problems? The financial crisis’ weight on America (which has yet to fully run its course) has various implications on the Sino-American rivalry. The main focus being that China was able to recover and sustain that recovery from the financial crisis

⁹⁸ Mohammad Salman, Moritz Pieper, and Gustaaf Geeraerts, “Hedging in the Middle East and China-U.S. Competition ¹: Hedging in the Middle East and China-U.S. Competition,” *Asian Politics & Policy* 7, no. 4 (October 2015): 575–96, <https://doi.org/10.1111/aspp.12225>; Baogang He, “Working with China to Promote Democracy,” *The Washington Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (February 2013): 37–53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2013.751649>.

⁹⁹ Christensen, “Posing Problems Without Catching Up.”

better than the United States.¹⁰⁰ Plagued by the decline and growing rejection of the “Washington consensus”, the United States found itself suffering strategic consequences, the most significant of this being the loss of its global soft power to China.

Friedberg’s predictions, in 2010, were that the main caveat was that this was only the beginning – a prediction that was not entirely false. China’s economic strength and its ability to spread to vast global markets has equipped it with tools to increase its influence over others.¹⁰¹ Influence that Beijing can use over other countries and change the dynamic of the global order.¹⁰² China’s global ambitions were the turning point in the rivalry, as Beijing uses its economic agenda to dominate global trade, it has challenged Washington’s global dominance since the fall of the Berlin Wall.¹⁰³ The 2008 financial crisis marked the turning point in the height of the rivalry.

¹⁰⁰ Aaron L. Friedberg, “Implications of the Financial Crisis for the US–China Rivalry,” *Survival* 52, no. 4 (September 1, 2010): 31–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2010.506817>.

¹⁰¹ Michael Beckley, “China’s Century? Why America’s Edge Will Endure,” *International Security* 36, no. 3 (December 28, 2011): 41–78, https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC_a_00066.

¹⁰² “Is China the World’s Top Trader?,” *ChinaPower Project* (blog), January 25, 2016, <https://chinapower.csis.org/trade-partner/>.

¹⁰³ Michael Schuman, “China’s Global Ambitions Could Split the World Economy,” October 3, 2017, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-10-26/china-s-global-ambition-could-split-the-world-economy>; Sam Ellis, “China’s Trillion-Dollar Plan to Dominate Global Trade,” *Vox*, April 6, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/2018/4/6/17206230/china-trade-belt-road-economy>.

Pivotal Event	Temporal Dependence	Issue Competition	Identification of Rival	Height of Rivalry
Post-Cold War & Pre-9/11	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
Post-9/11 & Pre-Arab Spring	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
Post-Arab Spring	Yes	Yes	Yes	High

Table 1 Height of Rivalry by Time Period

Time of intervention

The timing of third-party interventions can play a key component in understanding hierarchies and power dynamics. In this study, time is simply presented in chronological order of when states intervened. The motive behind studying the timing of intervention is because I am looking at testing potential balancing interventions. Therefore, I look at when rival B intervenes in a conflict that rival A is already involved in. This independent variable is presented in a single metric of intervention based on year. *Time of intervention* is when the actor intervenes in a conflict, not the onset of a conflict. For the cases where there is no intervention, they will not be included in the data set, as I am looking at civil conflicts with interventions by either the United States or China. If the data finds that the China intervened, as defined earlier in this chapter, when the U.S. has already intervened in a conflict that tells us that the former may have intervened in response to the latter – and vice versa.

Timing is critical in intervention, even the absence of intervention can tell a tale of state interests. When an actor chooses to intervene, withdraw, or refuse to act, it can be a representation of state weakness or strength – timing can give us the way of intervention just as much as it does when it occurred. The right timing of intervention can also determine the duration of the conflict. Conflict termination and settlement can be hindered by a third party’s failure to recognise when is the correct time to intervene.¹⁰⁴ This notion that the policy community fails to the implications of the models of intervention. Scholars, Regan argues, need to study various models of interventions and pay attention to the conditions of a conflict to timely intervention.¹⁰⁵ Third party intervention, depending on the side they intervene on, affects the various factions and their strengths.¹⁰⁶ The last reason I present is important for studying timing. Intervention is regularly studied with responsibility to protect as the standard,¹⁰⁷ however without looking at the timing of when states discover this “responsibility”, the perception becomes extremely naïve. Another purpose of this is to criticize many R2P justifications for conflict intervention.

Power transition scholars are encouraged to study the implications of timed interventions to address whether states are involving themselves in conflicts as a means of

¹⁰⁴ Patrick M. Regan, “Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2006, 736–756.

¹⁰⁵ William Zartman, “‘Ripeness’: The Importance of Timing in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution,” *E-International Relations* (blog), December 20, 2008, <http://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>.

¹⁰⁶ Yang-Ming Chang, Zijun Luo, and Yongjing Zhang, “The Timing of Third-Party Intervention in Social Conflict,” *Defence and Peace Economics* 29, no. 2 (February 23, 2018): 91–110, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10242694.2015.1126918>.

¹⁰⁷ Gareth Evans, “Ethnopolitical Conflict: When Is It Right to Intervene?,” *Ethnopolitics* 10, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 115–123, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.552354>.

balancing against a rival. These potential balancing interventions could exacerbate conflicts, make them last longer, or even draw major powers into a Thucydides trap.

Region of conflict

A key component in studying regional intervention is to address whether or not China and the US are intervening in conflicts in a specific geographic location based on the United Nations and World Trade Organization categories. From a strategic point of view, no power wants to be undermined by a lack of security in its backyard; even more so, no regional hegemon wants a rival solving its problems from abroad. The first reason this study addresses region is to attempt to grasp whether or not China is going where the US has been historically present in comparison to where Beijing has chosen to intervene historically. The second reason is to offer an alternative explanation of where China and the US have chosen not to go, and why. Inaction offers an explanation just as much as the action does.

Furthermore, scholars have readily disregarded geopolitical examinations of intervention in traditional intervention literature. Decision-makers often put into consideration the proximity of conflict – from a cost-benefit perspective – when addressing the willingness to join and picking a side in a conflict.¹⁰⁸ A proximal conflict means costs are reduced, but the risks of not intervening are also extremely high. States are more inclined to intervene in proximal conflicts than those that are at a great distance due to the benefits of aiding or exploiting conflicts in their region. However, despite the logic

¹⁰⁸ Kyle A Joyce and Alex Braithwaite, “Geographic Proximity and Third-Party Joiners in Militarized Interstate Disputes,” *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 5 (2013): 595–608.

presented by Joyce and Braithwaite, large powers tend to intervene in conflicts that are far from home soil – which could be said about both the U.S. and China.¹⁰⁹ Pearson’s analysis also points towards the notion of power dynamics playing a role in intervention. Regional power balances, ideological interests, and economic interests play a role in the decision to intervene.

Discovery of Petroleum

Despite the former comprising the two key independent variables addressed in this thesis, there is a third, which I find could play a role in explaining why major powers intervene – petroleum. Although a controversial opinion, the discovery of petroleum and other natural resources, has been one of the many causes for why states intervene in conflicts around the world.

This variable offers an explanation which could give an alternative reason for why states intervene. Since opportunism is part of the research, it cannot be ruled out that intervention could be explained by economic opportunism. This variable in the charts indicates whether petroleum depots were discovered in the conflict state before the intervention.

The dataset used for this study is Petroleum Dataset v.1.2.¹¹⁰ This research presents that there is incomplete work done on the relationship between petroleum resources and civil conflict. This dataset offers data on 890 onshore, and 383 offshore locations and the first oil/gas discover alongside the production year. This data will be

¹⁰⁹ Frederic S. Pearson, “Geographic Proximity and Foreign Military Intervention,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 18, no. 3 (1974): 432–60.

¹¹⁰ Lujala, Ketil Rod, and Thieme, “Fighting over Oil.”

collected accordingly: If petroleum deposits are present before intervention in the conflict zone, the conflict will be given a value of 1. If there were no petroleum deposits discovered before the intervention the conflict will be given a value of 0.

Control Variables

This research outlines two control variables outlined in this subsection. The first is that this thesis controls for Cold War conflicts. And the second is UN-sanctioned joint missions.

The first control variable is that this research excludes *Cold War conflicts* despite intervention by the US or China. This research controls for conflicts ongoing between the USSR and the United States by addressing interventions after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The reason for this is to maintain a degree of internal validity in the causal relationship between the increasing rivalry and the observed effect.

The latter variable this research controls for is United Nations-sanctioned missions. The reason for this being that UN missions, although require no veto from both the US and China, are do not address when states act unilaterally as a means of balancing interventions, opportunism, or support. Further research may be done on votes and vetoes in the United Nations Security Council to discuss rivalry in institutions, but it is not within the scope of this research.

Chapter 5: Empirical Findings and Results

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section elaborates on the results of the raw data from the entire dataset. The second section will report statistical analyses of the trends over time, and the third will present an analysis of regional interventions by the United States and China. The fourth section will present the data on potential balancing interventions and the cases where it has and has not occurred. The fourth section will be a discussion of the results and limitations presented in this research.

It is important to note, that findings are presented with regards to the hypotheses presented in chapter 1 and 3.

Observation of Raw Data

Based on *table 1*, we are seeing a rise in interventions beyond the Arab Spring; it may not be significant, but it is still worth addressing as a potential turning point and explain what we can expect to see in the future. According to the UCDP shows that 8 of China's interventions, between 1992 and 1997, were in Myanmar in various different civil conflicts, either combatting or supporting various factions. Therefore, it is imperative to take this into consideration when critically assessing the data.

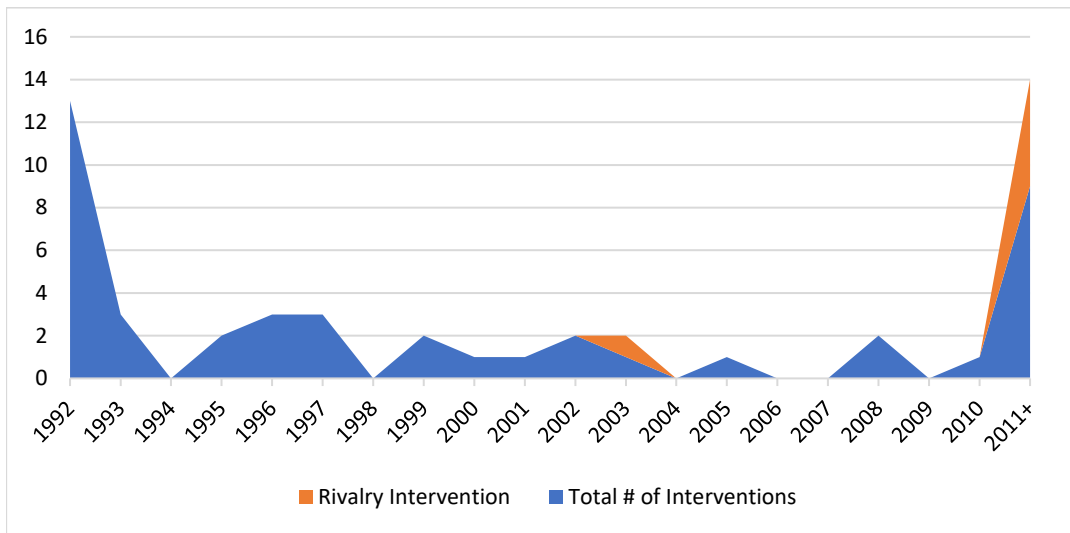


Figure 1 Number of interventions and rivalry interventions by year

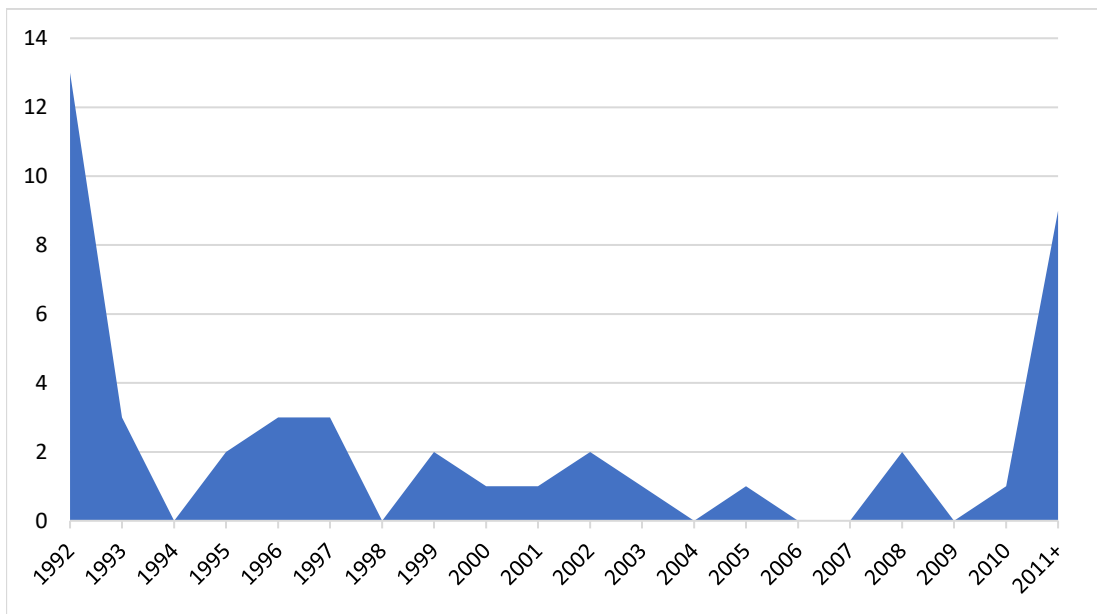


Figure 2 Number of Interventions by Year

Table 2 shows that there were 6 cases, all occurring after 2002, that passed **step 1** (both the U.S.A. and the P.R.C. being involved in the conflict): Iraqi insurgency (2003); War in North-West Pakistan (2008); Fatah-Hamas conflict (2010); Yemeni Crisis (2011); Syrian Civil War (2011); and Northern Mali conflict (2012). It is important to note that in all of these cases the United States intervened in the conflict first. Based on the logic of rivalry intervention. 3 of the 6 cases involved rivalry intervention: Iraqi Insurgency (2003); Fatah-Hamas conflict (2010); and the Syrian Civil War (2011). This is out of a total of 38 of the civil conflicts in the study, an assessment of this data will be twofold.

The first being from assorted time periods to give context to the interventions. The interventions are split into 3 sections:

1. Before the terrorist attacks on US soil on the 11th of September 2001;
2. Between 9/11 and the Arab Spring;
3. Post-Arab Spring.

Empirical Findings over time

	NO. OF INTERVENTIONS	NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS BEFORE 9/11	NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS BETWEEN 9/11 AND ARAB SPRING	NUMBER OF INTERVENTIONS POST ARAB SPRING
USA	26	15	7	4
CHINA	20	12	1	7

Table 2 Number of Interventions by Country

Conflict Number	Conflict Name	Start Date	Year of American Intervention	Year of Chinese Intervention
1	Myanmar - Karen	1949		1992
2	Myanmar - Kachin	1961		1992
3	Colombia - FARC	1964	1992	
4	Philippines - CPP	1969	1992	
5	Angola - Unita	1975	1993	
6	Afghanistan - Mujahideen Group	1978	2001	
7	Sudan - SPLM/A	1983		1992
8	Sri Lanka - LTTE	1984	1999	
9	Turkey - PKK	1984	1992	
10	Israel - Hezbollah	1990	1992	
11	Myanmar - CPB	1990		1992
12	Algeria - GIA, MIA	1991	2002	
13	Myanmar - Arakan	1991		1992
14	Croatia - Serbian Rep. of Krajina	1992	1995	
15	India - NSCN	1992		2000
16	Indonesia - East Timor	1992	1992	
17	Myanmar - Karenni	1992		1992
18	Senegal - MFDC	1992	1992	
19	Egypt - Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiyya	1993	1993	
20	Myanmar - Shan	1993		1992
21	Philippines - Mindanao	1993	1993	
22	Burundi - Palipehutu	1994	1995	
23	Uganda - UDCA/LRA	1994	1996	
24	Iraq - KDP	1995	1996	
25	Myanmar - Mon	1996		1996
26	Nepal - CPN-M	1996	2002	
27	Niger - FDR	1996		1997
28	Myanmar - Wa	1997		1997
29	Niger - UFRA	1997		1997
30	Yugoslavia - UCK (Kosovo)	1998	1999	
31	War in Darfur: SRF - Gov't of Sudan	2003	2004	2005
32	Iraqi Insurgency	2003	2003	2008
33	War in North-West Pakistan	2004	2008	2018
34	Paraguayan Civil War: Paraguay - EPP	2005	2005	
35	Fatah-Hamas Conflict	2006	2010	2014
36	Yemeni Crisis	2011	2011	2011
37	Syrian Civil War	2011	2011	2016
38	Northern Mali Conflict	2012	2012	2018

Table 3 List of Conflict Interventions by Year

Interventions before 2008	
Interventions after 2008	

The data collected showed that Washington intervened in 15 out of 26 conflicts before 9/11. Between the other two time periods combined, the US intervened in 11 civil conflicts. This could be explained by the USA cementing their hegemony or post-Cold War interventions. The U.S. led interventions and actions after the events of 9/11 increase again before 2011. The United States of America has shown a decline in the number of conflicts it has intervened since the end of the Cold War. While it may have renewed forces in regions, the number of interventions in new civil conflicts has significantly declined since the end of the Cold War.

The People’s Republic of China, however, intervened in 12 out of the 20 conflicts. 7 of those were various conflicts within Myanmar. For the purpose of this subsection, we focus primarily on China’s increased number of interventions in civil conflicts, primarily after 2011 in comparison to American interventions. As evident in *figure 3*, there is a gradual increase in the number of conflicts China has intervened in, in comparison to the United States

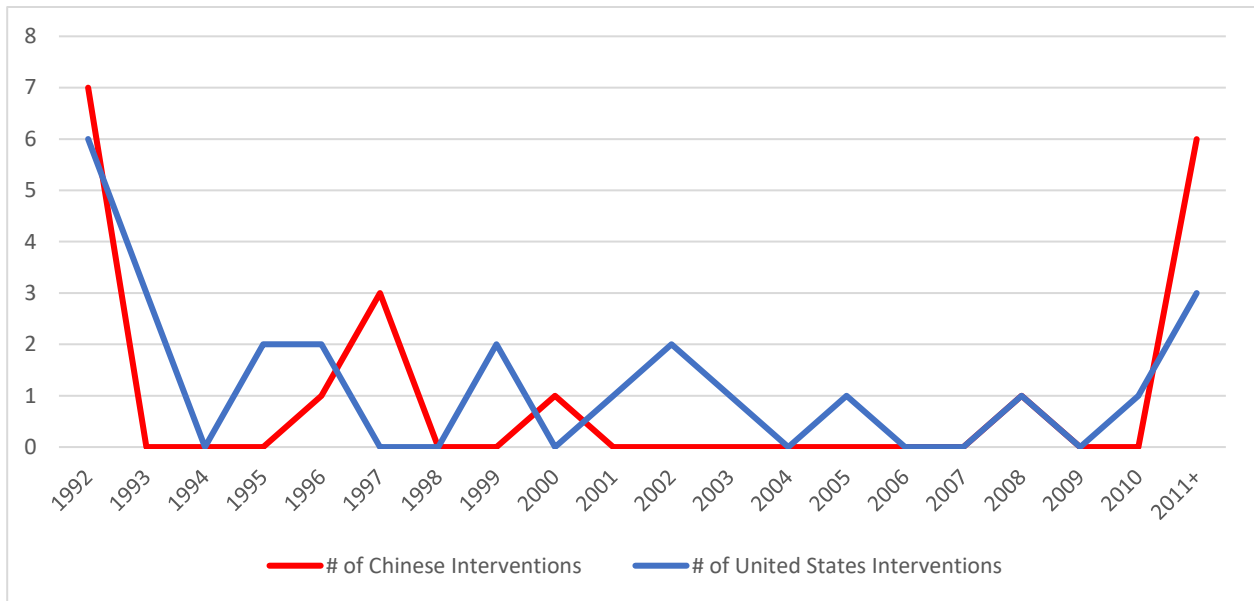


Figure 3 Number of Interventions by Country

Empirical findings by region

Based on the data collected, *table 5* shows that China has indeed intervened in regions where the US is already present apart from Europe and Asia. The three sets of states that stand out are those in the Arab States, Europe, and Latin America. In the Arab States, the number of interventions is 7 (Egypt, Iraq, Sudan, Algeria, Yemen, Libya, and twice in Syria) for the US to 6 for China (Twice in Sudan and Syria, Yemen, and Libya). The latter two sets show an absence of Chinese interventions. As presented earlier, one of the key implications of regional interventions is inaction and why states choose not to intervene.

Most of China’s interventions were in the Asia and Pacific region. However, this is predominantly because of the various conflicts erupting solely out of Myanmar. Most of the US interventions were in both the Asia and Pacific as well as Arab regions, predominantly after the September 11 attacks in US soil; most of Washington’s third-party interventions in civil conflicts were part of their war on terror.

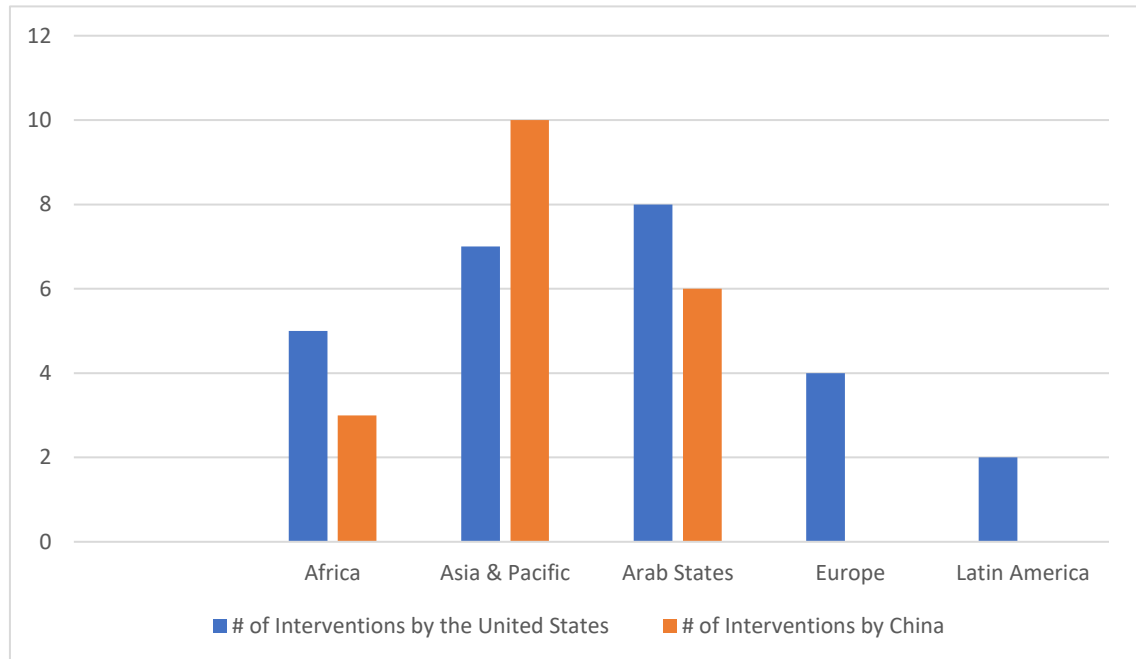


Figure 4 Number of Interventions in Each Region

Chinese involvement in various Middle Eastern conflicts is also another important take-away from this regional analysis and when these interventions occurred. China’s intervention in the Middle East spiked after the Arab Spring, a time when most of the World’s conflicts were in that region.¹¹¹ Historically, the United States maintained tight alliances and order in the Middle East but as the revolutions occurred and removed the old guard, a power vacuum presented itself for China.

¹¹¹ Thomas Dine, “U.S. Policy and Peacemaking Efforts in the Middle East: Historical Perspectives,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 2 (2010): 117–25.

Empirical Findings on Potential Balancing Interventions

The data in *table 5* shows that before 9/11 that out of 27 conflicts, none of them involved both the United States of America and China. After 9/11 there were a total of 7 interventions, 3 of which involved the US and China. 2 of these 3 civil conflicts involved the US and China intervening on opposition sides. In the Iraqi Insurgency (2003-2013) and the Fatah-Hamas conflict (2006 – ongoing), both involved the United States and China intervening on opposite sides of a conflict.

The third row shows that out of a total of 5 conflict interventions 3 of which involved the United States and China. 1 of the 4 conflicts, the Syrian Civil War (2011 – ongoing), indicated that China intervened in conflicts in opposition to American supported groups. *Appendix 5* does show that there was a discovery of oil in this specific case, but as stated in the previous section, this does not explain which side the US and China intervened on. There may have been other means of extracting the resources without balancing against the rival.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF CONFLICT INTERVENTIONS	STEP 1: INTERVENTION BY BOTH SIDES	STEP 2: RIVALRY INTERVENTION
BEFORE 9/11	27	0	N/A
POST-9/11	7	3	1
POST-ARAB SPRING	5	3	2

Table 4 Potential Balancing Interventions within Each Time Period

Hypothesis Testing

H1: There will be an increase in Chinese interventions in times of heightened Sino-American rivalry.

Based on the evidence comprised in *tables 1 and 2*, there has been an increase in Chinese interventions after 2008, the turning point in the rivalry. Our hypothesis here is supported based simply on raw data of an increase in Chinese interventions. Our first hypothesis is, therefore, accepted based on the increase in Chinese military intervention, as it is defined within the confines of this research.

Table 2 also illustrates an increase in rivalry interventions after the Arab Spring. Prior to the Arab Spring there was only case of rivalry intervention (The Iraqi Insurgency of 2003) and none in the pre-9/11 time period. This is further evident in *table 6*, which illustrates intervention by region – but not in all case studies. Based on *table 6* and the regional findings this hypothesis was only supported in Africa and the Arab States. However, this does not offer a full explanation of Chinese foreign policy. There was a lack

of Chinese intervention in any civil conflicts in Europe and Latin America. The absence of Chinese interventions in any European or Latin American civil conflicts – where the US is involved – presents that there may be no relationship between China's rise and *where* they intervene.

While China did increase their interventions in other regions, mainly the Middle East after the Arab Spring; I infer that China does intervene in conflicts where the US is present but with a degree of caution. This could be explained due to their incapability to intervene in distant regions, or their fear of American response. This particular finding may support the argument that the motivations behind Chinese interventions are not to balance against American hegemony.

Chapter 6: Addressing Sino-American Interventions

This chapter takes the findings from chapter 4 and presents them into a qualitative case study analysis. The 3 conflicts (Iraqi Insurgency, Fatah-Hamas, Syrian Civil War), defined as potential balancing interventions, are analyzed in this section to determine whether Chinese intervention was motivated by balancing or opportunism. This section employs the categories outlined in the literature review for each of the conflicts to explore the second hypothesis this research presented:

H2: When the rivalry is more heightened, we would expect to see an increase in rivalry interventions, which are best explained by Chinese strategic balancing, rather than opportunism.

While H1 addresses the increase in interventions over time and across regions, the latter is attempting to explore Sino-American rivalry interventions from a strategic balancing versus opportunistic outlook. Truly grasping motivation may be difficult, but the logic and literature reviewed in Chapter 1 allows us to make inferences about state behavior and, more importantly, how this behavior has changed. Echoing the points made in Chapter 3, even one case of balancing offers valuable insight into how Sino-American rivalry is currently unfolding or could unfold in the future.

To recap, the research questions at hand were: *Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?*

Presented individually, the data does not offer an elaborate explanation of how the US and China's rivalry is reflected in their interventions in various global conflicts. Based

on the findings in figure 1 in the previous chapter, there was an increase in rivalry interventions after the Arab Spring – a period of heightened rivalry. Furthermore, table 3 shows that there was only 1 case of rivalry intervention between 9/11 and the Arab Spring, and 6 rivalry interventions after the Arab Spring. The next step is to explain each conflict separately to address whether or not the intervention can be best explained by strategic balancing or opportunism.

There does appear to be a growing synthesis of intellectual debates on how, when, and why states intervene in various conflicts. It is to this end that this research highlights on potential – balancing interventions. This alternative to direct warfare does offer a short-term solution to major powers during periods of transition. Scrutinizing these policies does offer a chance of reducing these conflicts, and the following chapter will explain why academics and policy-makers must do this. But it is inherently ignorance that increases these conflicts. The ubiquity of major powers abusing their dependents is profoundly ignored in the study of whether or not power transitions are peaceful or violent. This research attempts to take apart this perception and argue that power transitions can be violent even without direct conflict. Understanding this conception can offer increased attention towards these conflicts, their origins and longevity, and hopefully, resolve them.

This consideration could offer answers to questions of the lifelines of conflicts and solutions. If applied in practice, this point of view of studying power transitions should be used to prevent dominant actors from intervening in conflicts without *casus belli*, forcing some reticence on interventions.

Based on the findings presented and the research implications presented in the earlier chapters, this penultimate chapter brings the information together in an attempt to

better understand Washington and Beijing's decisions to intervene in conflicts, present the implications for future power transitions and how some of the cases are a clear and present danger for future Sino-American relations.

After addressing the implications of the rivalry, this section explains the cases that incurred rivalry interventions. It will conclude by addressing alternative methods of violence used in power transitions and what the implications are for global violence as a result of this growing rivalry.

Rivalry Implications

Based on the results presented in combination with the literature, this thesis can surmise that the rivalry between the U.S. and the P.R.C. has reached its greatest heights in the post-Arab Spring years. The previous chapters have suggested that there is an increasing rivalry between the America and China. One of the implications of this rivalry is the rise of civil conflict interventions by the latter during periods of heightened rivalry, as presented in *Table 2*. The findings also present that there is an increase in the number of potential balancing interventions when the rivalry is heightened in the post-Arab spring time period.

This pattern, however, is not present when the intensity of the rivalry after the attacks of 9/11 but there was still an increase in rivalry interventions. What this could mean is that this could present itself to be the turning point of the rivalry, or even both parties cooperating to deceive the other – strategies many game theoreticians have already addressed. Briefly put, from a Prisoner's Dilemma perspective, there is an increased positive from cooperation than in defecting, and this could explain why Chinese

cooperation during these years¹¹², however, the cooperation levels are indistinguishable, and for this reason, deception can't be ignored considering Chinese deception tactics used in the past.¹¹³ These tactics aren't unique to Beijing's policies; it's strategic significance has been thoroughly addressed in variations of game theory in international relations.

The introduction to this thesis sets out to answer the questions of Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?

The former is addressed in earlier sections, and it can be said that at times of heightened rivalry, Beijing has increased the number of civil conflicts it has intervened in. However, the factors that offer a better causal explanation for Chinese interventions have not been fully interpreted. This section addresses the 3 case studies (out of a potential 6) which involved rivalry intervention, in an attempt to answer the question of whether it was strategic balancing intervention or just opportunism that best explains Beijing's choices.

Chinese Rivalry Intervention: Balancing or Opportunism?

The preceding sections presented the 3 cases that we are going to use to test the balancing versus opportunism question; recognizing that there may be more than one

¹¹² Esther Hauk and Rosemarie Nagel, "Choice of Partners in Multiple Two-Person Prisoner's Dilemma Games: An Experimental Study," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 45, no. 6 (2001): 770–93.

¹¹³ Christopher Cotton and Chang Liu, "100 Horsemen and the Empty City: A Game Theoretic Examination of Deception in Chinese Military Legend," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 2 (2011): 217–23.

answer for each case study, this research is looking for which category *best* defines each of the *potential balancing intervention* cases.

The literature review outlines and explains what patterns best explain each category and summarizes them. For intervention to be best explained by *strategic balancing* we would need to see patterns of:

- **SB1:** Creation/aggregation of military power through forging alliances to prevent or deter enemy;
- **SB2:** To gain or prevent loss of territory that is vital to interests;
- **SB3:** Exists when states target one another militarily, not just an arms race;
- **SB4:** The projection of power and use of war as a legitimate statecraft.

For an intervention to be considered *opportunism* we would need to see patterns of:

- **O1:** Opposition failure in conflict and withdrawal or reduction of forces;
- **O2:** Relevant political and/or economic gain for second intervener;
- **O3:** Switching of sides during conflict;
- **O4:** Hesitation of direct confrontation. Is it worth going against American allies?

Conflict		Balancing Intervention		
	SB1	SB2	SB3	SB4
Iraqi Insurgency	Chinese cooperation with anti-American forces in Iraq.	No	No	No
Fatah-Hamas	Chinese weapons found with members of Hamas.	No	Hamas has used Chinese rockets to target Israeli forces.	Chinese refusal to deem Hamas a terrorist group.
Syrian Civil War	In support of Assad and his forces against "terrorism" in 2015.	Access to Mediterranean without passing through Turkey (NATO ally).	Targeting of Turkish groups or groups within Turkey, as well as groups allegedly supported by the U.S.A.	No. China has maintained a low profile to avoid direct confrontation.

Table 5 Balancing V. Opportunistic Interventions

Conflict		Opportunism			Verdict
	01	02	03	04	
Iraqi Insurgency	Obama administration reduced forces in Iraq.	Officials in Iraq request Chinese Oil companies to replace US ones.	No	Hesitation towards direct conflict with American or American allied forces in Iraq.	Opportunism
Fatah-Hamas	Washington remains in support of Israel, but withdrew aid from Palestinian Authority.	Economic: China is Israel's second largest trade partner Political: China increases influence in MENA.	No	No hesitation towards U.S. ally (Israel).	Balancing
Syrian Civil War	Only rhetoric of withdrawal by President Trump.	No relevant economic gain.	No	China has avoided direct confrontation with any American forces but has not restrained against U.S. allies.	Balancing

The Iraqi Insurgency (2003-2013)

The local conflict was between the Iraqi government and various Sunni and Shi'a insurgent factions. The United States' direct invasion occurred in 2003 with the main goal being the removal of former President Saddam Hussein, which eventually resulted in a power vacuum within Iraq. The People's Republic of China's intervention occurred in 2008 through economic expansion into the region and trade of intelligence and technologies with the Iraqi government.¹¹⁴ Beijing's intervention in the Iraq conflict, coincides with the turning point in the rivalry.

From the onset of the American-led invasion of Iraq, Beijing was against the war. However, they avoided direct intervention. It was not until 2008 that Beijing intervened in the conflict, but not publicly.¹¹⁵ Chinese weapons continuously "fell" into the hands of insurgents attacking American soldiers and allies. This is not surprising considering China's constant backing of anti-American sentiments of the 2003 war.¹¹⁶ Beijing has continuously – but cautiously – criticized the decision to intervene in Iraq. Tensions were reduced when Washington defined the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) a terrorist group, a defining moment in the Sino-American counterterrorist efforts.¹¹⁷ It was

¹¹⁴ Sputnik, "Iraq War: How China Outpaced the US in the Struggle for Iraqi Oil," accessed December 2, 2018, <https://sputniknews.com/analysis/201803211062749719-iraq-china-us-oil/>; Matt Schiavenza, "Who Won the Iraq War? China - The Atlantic," March 22, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/china/archive/2013/03/who-won-the-iraq-war-china/274267/>.

¹¹⁵ Gordon Rayner, "WikiLeaks: Chinese Weapons Fall into Hands of Insurgents," February 3, 2011, sec. World, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/wikileaks/8299388/WikiLeaks-Chinese-weapons-fall-into-hands-of-insurgents.html>.

¹¹⁶ Anonymous, "China Backs Calls against Iraq War," *Far Eastern Economic Review; Hong Kong* 166, no. 7 (February 20, 2003): 24.

¹¹⁷ Jabin T. Jacob, "China's Position on Iraq Vis-à-Vis UNSCR 1441", *China Report* 39, no. 3 (August 1, 2003): 407–15, <https://doi.org/10.1177/000944550303900321>.

the pursuit of regime change and anti-Islamic sentiment that changed China's position due to the risk of increased violence from Islamic groups in China. Along with a with the fear that if the U.S. would be able to increase its foothold in Asia if the Iraq war was resolved, that made Beijing fearful of American-led proxy containments against their own strategic interests.¹¹⁸

The timing of Chinese intervention is what helps answer the question of whether Beijing's interventions are defined by opportunism. The first categorization of this being the American withdrawal of forces from Iraq. The perception was that it was the Obama administration's decision to withdraw troops in 2011, which is not entirely true. Often overlooked in contemporary discussion, but it was the Status of Forces agreement signed by George W. Bush in 2008 that laid out the framework for the withdrawal of American forces from Iraqi cities starting on June 30, 2009 and complete withdrawal by December 31, 2011.¹¹⁹ What this means is that U.S. withdrawal from Iraq was – to an extent – predetermined and Beijing may have acted accordingly.

Iraq presents clear relevant economic and political gain to China. The intervention was preceded by Iraqi officials' request for Chinese to replace American oil companies.¹²⁰ As a part of Beijing's "going-out" policy, Iraq's politically fragile nature makes it a prime target for China's policies. In terms of oil investment and bidding, the "biggest winner" of

¹¹⁸ Angela Pagano and James Conachy, "Bush's Pay-off to China over Iraq: Uighur Group Declared 'Terrorist,'" accessed July 30, 2018, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2002/09/uigh-s20.html>.

¹¹⁹ Sahar Issa, Jenan Hussein, and Hussein Kadhim, trans., "Unofficial Translation of U.S.-Iraq Troop Agreement from the Arabic Text," *McClatchy Newspapers*, November 18, 2008, <https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24511081.html>.

¹²⁰ Sahar Issa, Jenan Hussein, and Hussein Kadhim, trans., "Unofficial Translation of U.S.-Iraq Troop Agreement from the Arabic Text," *McClatchy Newspapers*, November 18, 2008, <https://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/article24511081.html>.

post-war Iraq was China as long as it remained fragile enough that Washington could not contain them, and China was able to replace them.¹²¹ The decision to prioritize economic gains despite Beijing's non-intervention policies further favors the arguments that Chinese intervention in Iraq was driven by opportunism.

Fatah-Hamas Conflict

The local conflict was between Fatah and Hamas factions within Palestine, within the larger Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United States' intervention through support of Israel but for the purpose of this thesis the support of the Palestinian Authority, which occurred in 2010 is the main talking point. The main goal being the continued support and power of the Israeli state in the region. The People's Republic of China's intervention occurred in 2014 through the alleged supply of weapons to Hamas forces in opposition to American peace agreements.

Chinese opposition to Washington's position in the conflict in Palestine is a complex one. It is, however, present with Fatah and Hamas' officials being invited to Beijing and their recognition of the state.¹²² In their pursuit of peace in the Middle East and North Africa, the Palestinian Authority has defined Beijing as their "best friend" in oil and peace talks throughout the region.¹²³ The conflict is more complex than just positions on

¹²¹ Liu Dong, "China's Resource Demand and Market Opportunities in the Middle East: Policies and Operations in Iran and Iraq," *Perspectives on Global Development & Technology* 13, no. 5/6 (September 2014): 564–87, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15691497-12341318>.

¹²² Roe Nahmias, "China Invites Hamas to Beijing," Ynetnews, April 4, 2006, <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3236254,00.html>.

¹²³ Sarah Irving, "What Does China's Ascendance Mean for Palestine?," Text, The Electronic Intifada, October 23, 2009, <https://electronicintifada.net/content/what-does-chinas-ascendance-mean-palestine/8506>.

the Palestinian Authority and Israel; the complexity of the dynamic stems mostly from the Fatah-Hamas conflict.

The findings of the Israeli-led lawsuit against China for supporting Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad has angered officials in Washington.¹²⁴ This almost fifty-year alliance has shown that China is – allegedly – supporting groups that the U.S. has deemed terrorist groups in an attempt to disrupt the balance of power in the Middle East. Furthermore, the alliance came to fruition when the Palestinian Authority voiced their support for China’s actions in the South China Sea.¹²⁵ Evidence from the case suggests increasing collaboration between China and various groups within Palestine. China’s informal and formal alliances in the Palestinian region satisfies the first category of balancing interventions, despite the Gaza strip not providing vital territory to Chinese interests.

This classic asymmetric conflict between the Israeli military, Palestinian authority, and various armed groups within Hamas is burdened by asymmetric casualties, as well. Over the course of the conflict, it was inevitable that Hamas would upgrade their homemade arsenal since the start of the conflict, nor were they still using Soviet weapons made in Iran. Hamas fired 60 Chinese WS-1E 122mm rockets, “employed by the People’s Republic of China Army and were widely exported to third world countries,” the Israeli

¹²⁴ Mimi Li, “Chinese Bank Helped Fund Hamas, Suit Says,” *Www.Theepochtimes.Com*, October 1, 2015, https://www.theepochtimes.com/chinese-bank-helped-fund-hamas-suit-says_1495999.html.

¹²⁵ Samuel Ramani, “Why Palestine Supports China on the South China Sea,” *The Diplomat*, July 26, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/07/why-palestine-supports-china-on-the-south-china-sea/>.

military reported in 2008.¹²⁶ Beijing was supposedly using alliances in Syria and North Korea, to send these weapons to Hamas through secret arms deals.¹²⁷ During the Cold War, this tactic was employed by the Soviets funneling weapons through Iran to various groups of their informal alliances.¹²⁸

China's intervention in this conflict is best described by balancing intervention. The P.R.C.'s actions in the Fatah-Hamas conflict coincide with their policies in Iraq as actions to prevent Islamic uprisings from its neighbours and within its borders. This intervention does coincide with theories on balancing intervention.¹²⁹ The policies are not beneficial to China from an economic standpoint nor do they ignore morality for any gains. Simply, China is more focused on confronting America's allies rather than pursuing opportunities as they arise. There is to a certain extent a grander strategy that Beijing is pursuing – a contrast to opportunistic literature.

The Fatah-Hamas conflict although a complex one to grasp is an intervention defined by balancing intervention. Despite Washington cutting off aid to Palestinian authority, they are still involved in the conflict via their alliance with Israel. Furthermore, Chinese intervention posits no significant economic or political to the former.

¹²⁶ Noah Shachtman, "Hamas Fires Long-Range Chinese Rockets at Israel (Updated)," *Wired*, December 31, 2008, <https://www.wired.com/2008/12/hamas-chinese-a/>.

¹²⁷ Shachtman; Con Coughlin, "Hamas and North Korea in Secret Arms Deal," July 26, 2014, sec. World, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/palestinianauthority/10992921/Hamas-and-North-Korea-in-secret-arms-deal.html>.

¹²⁸ David R. Stone, "Soviet Arms Exports in the 1920s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 48, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 57–77, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009412461820>.

¹²⁹ Roie Yellinek, "Chinese-Palestinian Relations: What's Really Going On?," Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, February 6, 2018, <https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/chinese-palestinian-relations/>.

Syrian Civil War

Perhaps the most complicated contemporary conflict is the case of the Syrian Civil War. For simplicity's sake the sides shall be referred to as the Pro-Assad and anti-Assad factions. The United States' intervention in opposition to Assad forces occurred in 2011 with the main goal being the removal of the Assad government.¹³⁰ The People's Republic of China's intervention occurring around 2016, involved the flow of weapons through Iran and financial support to the Assad regime, without a clear goal apparent, other than rivaling American policy.

China's role in the ongoing Syrian civil war has primarily been one of interference with American policy. By standing against Western intervention in Syria, China posed a problem for the West's goals in Syria. Originally not interfering, Beijing kept a safe distance from intervening in the conflict while managing to hinder American efforts in the United Nations Security Council. First, China vetoed 6 resolutions that pursued intervention in Syria, followed by increased support for Assad, and finally, by praising Russia's actions as "counter-terrorism" interventions for the safety of the state.¹³¹ Their non-intervention policies did change in 2017 with the troops sent to support Assad in the conflict.¹³² There is ambiguity about the extent of China's commitment to aid Assad, nonetheless, the Chinese ambassador to Syria made it clear that the Chinese military is

¹³⁰ Fouad Ajami, "America's Syria Abdication," *Wall Street Journal*, 2012.

¹³¹ Laura Zhou, "China's Role in Syria's Endless Civil War | South China Morning Post," *South China Morning Post*, April 7, 2017, Diplomacy and Defence edition, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2085779/backgrounder-chinas-role-syrias-endless-civil-war>.

¹³² "China to Deploy Troops to Fight alongside Assad in Syria."

willing to commit “in some way”.¹³³ This shift signalled a clear aggregation of pursuit of military power and power projection in the region through their alliance with Assad’s Syrian regime.

China also has much to gain through a Syrian foothold; access to the Mediterranean Sea without having to pass through Turkey is vital to China’s interests in the MENA, and Syria offers just that as illustrated in figure 2. Bounding Europe and Africa, the Mediterranean Sea has been of vital interest to global powers throughout history. Considered the birthplace of maritime history, the Mediterranean has been plagued with a continuous and persistent struggle for power over strategic control of the region; From ancient Egyptian and Phoenician competition of its costs to Anglo-French empire formation from the 19th century to World War II, great powers have consistently competed over the Mediterranean.¹³⁴ To China, Mediterranean presence enhances overall Chinese maritime presence. Moreover, it means increased cooperation with Southern European and North African states, access to new avenues of transport, energy, and telecommunications, and finally, the ability to conduct military and naval missions and exercises.¹³⁵ A Mediterranean presence signals Beijing’s preparation and strategies in the face of U.S. presence, that Ekman states, the former finds illegitimate. Strategies that in turn may restructure the balance of power in the region, with China taking a leading role with respect

¹³³ Logan Pauley and Jesse Marks, “Is China Increasing Its Military Presence in Syria?,” *The Diplomat*, August 20, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/is-china-increasing-its-military-presence-in-syria/>.

¹³⁴ Mahmoud M. Talha, “The Strategic Importance of the Mediterranean:” (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Technical Information Center, March 26, 1990), <https://doi.org/10.21236/ADA223276>.

¹³⁵ Alice Ekman, “China in the Mediterranean: An Emerging Presence,” *Institut Français Des Relations Internationales*, Centre for Asian Studies, no. Policy Publications (February 2018): 6–20.

to crises in the region (Syria, Yemen, and fighting Daesh across the region). China's national priorities are playing out in the region, and Syria's access to the vital sea is crucial, and worries Washington and their allies – as it should.¹³⁶ Washington and their allies combined with their investments in the region, the Mediterranean will generate a significant geopolitical impact beyond the region.¹³⁷

Beijing's position on Syria slightly shifted again and pursued aid to support the people of Syria and minority groups. China pledged US\$1million in aid through the World Health Organization to help in the rebuilding of Syria. This untimely change of policy is Beijing attempting to change its perception to the World and to the Middle East. China's Syrian policies are the pursuit of political gain at the expense of humanitarian actions. This region, but there is more to the story than that. China's humanitarian support could be



Figure 5 Geopolitical Map of Mediterranean

¹³⁶ Anna Ahronheim, “Naval Experts Concerned over China’s Increasing Presence in Mediterranean - Israel News - Jerusalem Post,” *The Jerusalem Post*, August 23, 2018, sec. Israel News, <https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Navel-experts-concerned-over-Chinas-increasing-presence-in-Mediterranean-565625>.

¹³⁷ One example of this is Chinese support for Mediterranean states, could generate support for China’s position in other regions.

primarily a by-product of their continued pursuit of undermining Washington in the region. By downplaying America's actions and presenting them as an enemy to peace and their own institutions, Beijing's policies signify that they are more concerned with increasing their foothold on the Middle East, rather than rebuilding Syria.

While there are glimpses of opportunistic policies Syria does not really present many of the prerequisites to define the intervention as the former. American withdrawal, as of yet, is only rhetoric by the Trump administration and there is no relevant economic gain for China to benefit from. It is difficult to define Chinese intervention as an opportunistic one; elements of strategic balancing are more prevalent in this case, primarily because of the strategic implications of gaining access to a foothold in Syria. The significant economic and/or relevant political gains are trumped by the strategic implications of Syria to Beijing, as they pertain to challenging American superiority in the region. By increasing its military power (SB1), gaining access to the military (SB2), and the legitimate threat of war due to attacks on American allies (SB4). Furthermore, the ability to replace Washington in the Mediterranean signals Beijing's commitment to undermine American leadership in the region is echoed by Beijing's continued opposition to Western interventions to replace the Assad regime. The pattern seen across China's intervention in Syria is a clear case of strategic balancing against American dominance in the region, without concern of Washington's violent backlash. As per the aforementioned reasoning, these policies can only be described by Zhou's logic that China's policies are about interfering with American policy.

Chinese Rivalry Interventions

The results show evidence in support of the second hypothesis. First, there was an increase of rivalry interventions from 0 prior to 9/11, to 1 before the Arab Spring, and 2 rivalry interventions after the Arab Spring; satisfying the first part of **H2**, the next step was to understand the perceived logic behind Chinese rivalry interventions in opposition to American forces. The underlying logic for 2 of those 3 cases (Fatah-Hamas and Syrian Civil War,) was that the logic behind Chinese interventions is based on strategic balancing against American interests rather than Chinese opportunism.

In all three cases there was a creation, or aggregation, of military power in a region of conflict through the forging of alliances with various factions in each conflict. Beijing opposed American forces in every conflict, even if there was no direct conflict between Chinese and American forces. The pattern of increasing rivalry interventions is present, and the deduction is that Beijing wishes to remove Washington's influence in the MENA region through its interventions.

The fact that all 3 rivalry interventions occurred in the Middle East could have implications for the future. The main assumption being that, if there is a further increase in proxy wars between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China, it is likely to unfold in the Middle East due to the fragile nature of the region and alliances undergoing realignment.¹³⁸ It becomes further problematic if we accept the literature in Chapters 1 and 2 that posits that intervention and competition over power in a state prolong

¹³⁸ James Dorsey, "Fragility of Middle East Alliances Becomes Ever More Apparent," *The Daily Star*, September 30, 2018, <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/global-affairs/news/fragility-middle-east-alliances-becomes-ever-more-apparent-1640428>.

conflict, reducing the likelihood of resolving the conflict. Regan's study on civil conflicts, found that third-party interventions reduced the probability of a conflict ending to 0.¹³⁹ Furthermore, interventions, be it economic or military, are not an effective tool of conflict management. It is at times, more practical to let belligerents fight it out.¹⁴⁰ They particularly impacts the quality of life of civilians; without U.N. support in the intervention, Kim found, that the quality of life declined in postwar development.¹⁴¹ One concern becomes that Chinese and American balancing interventions moving forward may prolong the conflicts in Syria and Gaza, more than they already have. Foreign support for groups means they are able to sustain the conflict longer than they would on their own; it does not appear that either the United States or China would be willing to fully back out of the conflict and let the other attain a foothold that they have lost.

The ambiguity of results means it is too early to make a satisfactory answer about whether or not to accept H2. The evidence is unsatisfactory and ambiguous to allow us to accept the hypothesis that as the rivalry becomes more heightened we would see more rivalry interventions best explained by balancing interventions. Yes, two of the three cases were best explained by the logic of balancing intervention, but that was out of a total of 38 interventions. The results, however, can give us cases to look at for the future of which cases to pay close attention for a potential turning point in the transition.

¹³⁹ Regan, "Diplomacy and Other Forms of Intervention in Civil Wars."

¹⁴⁰ "Give War a Chance?," *Foreign Policy*, no. 146 (2005): 15–15; Brian Glyn Williams, "Let Them Fight It Out: Obama's Solution to the Syrian Conflict," *Huffington Post* (blog), August 30, 2013, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/brian-glyn-williams/let-them-fight-it-out-oba_b_3845755.html.

¹⁴¹ Sang Ki Kim, "Third-Party Intervention in Civil Wars and the Prospects for Postwar Development," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61, no. 3 (March 1, 2017): 615–42, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715590873>.

Using the Middle East as their personal war field may be beneficial for both states but it does not bode well for states in the region. If the Cold War taught us one lesson is that proxy wars tend to prolong the conflicts. The Cold War still lingers in Afghanistan, 17 years later, with various factions still fighting for control with Washington still hesitant to fully withdraw from the war.¹⁴² The Cold War still resonates with the failures in Cuba's economy; while it appeared that Castro's anti-Western sentiments were making good progress, the complete rejection of Western policies, due to the dynamics of the Cold War, has stalled.¹⁴³ After the collapse of the USSR, there was no attempt on behalf of Washington or Cuba to cooperate with the other, any recovery of Cuba was hindered because of Cuba's loyalty during the Cold War. A repeat of Cuba may unfold in Syria; Assad may be put in the same position as Castro. If the conflict were to ever be resolved, and Assad remains in power, he may have to make the same decision of opting out of cooperating with the international community because of the American international order or cooperate and risk losing allies formed during the civil war.

In principal, stronger mediators in conflicts should reduce the likelihood of future violence in conflict.¹⁴⁴ Skilled third-party peacekeeping interventions should be able to subdue violence in civil conflicts – but that is if the intention is peacebuilding. While

¹⁴² Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan After the War," *The New Republic*, March 28, 2013, <https://newrepublic.com/article/112680/afghanistan-after-war>; Lucia Binding, "US Soldier Killed in 'insider Attack' in Afghanistan," Sky News, November 3, 2018, <https://news.sky.com/story/us-soldier-killed-in-insider-attack-in-afghanistan-11543759>.

¹⁴³ Hamish McRae, "Fidel Castro's Cuba Failed Economically – but He Had Little Choice in the Matter," *The Independent*, November 26, 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/fidel-castro-economy-death-cuba-economics-communism-a7441066.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Barrett Osborn, "Peacekeeping and Peace Kept: Third Party Interventions and Recurrences of Civil War," *Theses and Dissertations--Political Science*, January 1, 2013, https://uknowledge.uky.edu/polysci_etds/7.

outlining the theoretical frameworks, I argue that the concept of violent power transition is outdated in the context of contemporary power transitions. The spectrum I proposed is one that includes various mechanisms of hybrid forms of warfare within the framework of violent power transition; while direct conflict is not impossible it is improbable in the cases of Syria, Iraq, and Palestine.

On Course to Collide?

While attending the 2018 *Halifax International Security Forum* I had the chance to listen to Admiral Philip Davidson of the United States Navy discuss the importance of the Indo-Pacific security challenges. One takeaway from this was his emphasis on increasing the role of the free and fair economy in the region that could prove vital to the future of the global economy. The United States, the admiral noted, is “an enduring pacific power. [and] that will not change”.¹⁴⁵ A free and open Indo-Pacific he points out is challenged by one major actor’s debt-trap diplomacy, or predatory economics, by loaning weaker countries and gaining leverage in the region. Admiral Davidson further notes that the Indo-Pacific’s security remains at threat due to the “P.R.C.’s militarization of features in a sustained campaign to intimidate other nations in the East and South China Seas.” These sentiments were further echoed by Vice-President Mike Pence’s attendance of the Pacific Summit, stating that “the United States offers better options [than China]”. The retaliation from President Xi would also raise a few flags, calling out the United States for

¹⁴⁵ Philip Davidson, “Introduction to Indo-Pacific Security Challenges & Plenary 3,” *Halifax International Security Forum* (Halifax, NS, November 17, 2018).

bending the rules “as they see fit”.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps the most alarming point was President Xi’s concluding remarks:

“Mankind has once again reached a crossroads. Which direction should we choose? Cooperation or confrontation? Openness or closing doors. Win-win progress or a zero-sum game?”

It is therefore evident that China remains a threat to Washington’s interests in the Asia-Pacific region, begging the question: Are the U.S. and China on a collision course?

By continuously treating China as the adversary, Washington may be pushing their luck with Beijing. Vice President Mike Pence’s attack on the Chinese government in October was compared to Churchill’s 1946 “Iron Curtain” speech that launched the Cold War.¹⁴⁷ But unlike the Cold War, the P.R.C. and the U.S. have a more interdependent relationship than the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Some of the strongest arguments from the optimist liberal perspectives argue that Sino-American economic cooperation, that has lasted 25 years, is the main claim for why the peace has also lasted this long.¹⁴⁸ These claims were put to the test in the most recent APEC sessions after the claims of leadership on both sides. The mirroring of Pence and Davidson’s assertions, within the same 24 hours, signals that it may be a direct decision from Washington; claims that portray China as an

¹⁴⁶ Jim Gomez and Stephen Wright, “Pence, Xi Trade Barbs in Speeches at Pacific Summit,” *Washington Post*, November 17, 2018, Asia & Pacific edition, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/china-us-trade-barbs-in-speeches-at-pacific-summit/2018/11/16/3e17d1d6-ea14-11e8-8449-1ff263609a31_story.html.

¹⁴⁷ Zachary Karabell, “A Cold War Is Coming, and It Isn’t China’s Fault,” *Foreign Policy* (blog), October 31, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/31/a-cold-war-is-coming-and-it-isnt-chinas-fault/>.

¹⁴⁸ Masco, “Auditing the War on Terror”; Gartzke and Westerwinter, “The Complex Structure of Commercial Peace Contrasting Trade Interdependence, Asymmetry, and Multipolarity.”

aggressive and revisionist state.¹⁴⁹ Locking Washington and Beijing into the perception that the other is competition for their own geopolitical power. The irony of course being that the institutions the U.S. built to maintain their role as a regional power, may spark more Chinese revisionist policies. On the other side of this, China sees the United States as the biggest obstacle to its role as a dominant actor; their military modernization efforts (Examples: debilitating kinetic or cyber-attacks) are indirectly targeting U.S. forces, but also designed to target the American homeland.¹⁵⁰

While the rivalry may have been increasing since the end of the Cold War, it is Xi and Trump, combined with the option of using their allies, that may be the turning point. In an assessment of both presidents, Allison argues that no actors could embody the protagonists that escalate tensions than Xi and Trump within their respective governments.¹⁵¹ Driven by the aspiration of making their countries great again, the former and latter's pretentious character similarities may lead them to follow in the tragic footsteps of Athens and Sparta. Furthermore, these rivalry interventions – regardless if they are driven by opportunism or balancing – risk increasing further heightening the rivalry, locking both the states in a vicious cycle of intervening because of the rivalry, while the rivalry increases because of the interventions.

¹⁴⁹ Nick Bisley, "After APEC, US-China Tensions Leave 'cooperation' in the Cold," *The Conversation*, November 18, 2018, <http://theconversation.com/after-apec-us-china-tensions-leave-cooperation-in-the-cold-106448>.

¹⁵⁰ Dean Cheng, "Problem: In a War With China, the U.S. Could Lose," Security, *The National Interest* (blog), November 19, 2018, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/problem-war-china-us-could-lose-36482>.

¹⁵¹ Graham Allison, "War between China and the United States Isn't Inevitable, but It's Likely: An Excerpt from Graham Allison's *Destined for War* | National Post," March 5, 2018, <https://nationalpost.com/opinion/war-between-china-and-the-united-states-isnt-inevitable-but-its-likely-an-excerpt-from-graham-allisons-destined-for-war>.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis illustrates the need to understand the need to study how power transitions can be violent without direct confrontation as well as address the literature on how conflict can play out. The literature review shows there is a gap in the literature on violent power transitions and state interventions. It represents how opportunism can offer an alternative explanation to state intervention, this perspective on power transitions can be explain state interventions in civil conflicts and the increase in violence during periods of heightened tensions.

The thesis presents two theoretical frameworks that define the Sino-American rivalry, showing that the risk of conflict is not avoidable but the problem lies in how direct warfare is unlikely. It is to this end that this thesis argues that there is a need for scholarship to address how power transitions can seem peaceful on the surface but increase violence in other regions. Using a longitudinal design this research found that there was a gradual increase in Chinese interventions in civil conflicts after the collapse of the USSR, furthermore Beijing has intervened in various regions where the U.S. is involved, except in Latin America and Europe. Finally, while the research found that the interventions would be best explained by balancing interventions, the research found that there is more evidence to suggest opportunism best explains Chinese interventions.

The thesis set out to answer the question: *Has the heightened Sino-American rivalry increased the number of conflicts Beijing has intervened in? If so, which factors best explain the logic behind Chinese intervention? Balancing intervention or opportunism?*

Simply put, yes. As the Sino-American rivalry has become more heightened there has been a marginal increase in the number of interventions by both states, and more importantly an increase in rivalry interventions. Even one case of rivalry intervention plays could signal a shift in the trajectory of the conflict. I find the logic of just an increased number of rivalry interventions unsatisfying, to this extent I focus more on the dynamics of the conflicts. For 2 reasons: 1. The research does not explain “why” the intervention occurred. 2. Without looking at why, there is no significant assessment of the trajectory of the conflict by simply stating they are intervening in opposition to one another. By assessing the three cases (Iraq, Syria, and Palestine) the research found that the latter 2 cases are best explained by strategic balancing interventions.

There is evidence that suggests that the number of of Chinese and American interventions is low, and because they occur at different times, which could support the opportunistic trend. While I concede, that it is too early in these cases to make a definite call on the implications of these interventions and the trajectory of the Sino-American power transition, I am not fully satisfied that this means we can accept the optimist perspective.

The fact that only 3 of the 38 cases resulted in rivalry interventions makes it difficult to accept the pessimist perspective, but we should not fully disregard it either. It’s too early to make a call either way, but I accept that there may be some evidence that supports the pessimist perspective that these balancing interventions could be more dangerous than first perceived. The literature argues that even one proxy war could be catastrophic as it could set in motion events that force a Sino-American war or even spill-over to other conflicts.

Originally this thesis set out to study and shift the perspective of power transition from the traditional point of view by looking at contemporary mechanisms of conflict that could trigger direct conflict. However, upon further studying current civil conflicts, the research found that there may already be sparks of violence unfolding in various conflicts in the region.

Studying the Sino-American power transition will not extract an absolute answer to the future of how it will unfold. However, we can make inferences about the trajectory. If we look at the history of power transitions, most transitions were resolved by violence – the Sino-American one will be no different. The violence is inevitable, if not unfolding already in the Middle East – just not in traditional way scholars have predicted.

I concur: The Sino-American rivalry does not appear to be declining, nor do I predict it to. If Beijing decided to balance against American forces before, then the future looks bleak. If we accept the notion that they are indeed on a road to collide and look at the trend of their interventions, then a Sino-American conflict may unfold in a series of proxy conflicts in regions that they can compete for power in.

Restrictions and Limitations

Due to resource and time limitations, this research could not directly address historical power transitions and instead focused on how the Sino-American transition could play out. This research's limitations include, inter alia, issues with data collection. Due to the nature of the transition being a contemporary issue, there is often an absence of data being collected and events are unfolding as the writing process was being conducted. Some of the conflicts, such as Syria or Libya, remain unsolved and it is difficult to grasp the myriad of events as they unfold. One recommendation this thesis does recommend is doing

a survival analysis of the conflicts in which the US and China are involved in, and comparing the trends over time or looking at comparing the trends to the trends of historical power transitions. This assessment could present an improved analysis of the significance of the results collected.

Despite the limitations, this research does show a schism between theories on power transitions and intervention. There is a contribution to the exclusion of proxy wars during power transitions in the vague assessment of whether or not they are peaceful or violent. The research presented that there is an increase in Chinese interventions, although not always evident why this thesis does associate it with Chinese rise. Of course, one explanation could be that over 50% of interventions after 9/11 had cases where the intervention was a rivalry intervention. This research, even if minimally, exposes problems in recently published literature and arguments on power transition.

If they achieve anything, these results implore readers to approach studying major power politics more critically and focus on when, why, and how states intervene in conflicts, regardless of how they justify it. Based on the evidence presented above, this thesis provides an interpretation that suggests that there is an increase in Chinese interventions in conflicts. From a critical dialectic, these findings suggest that there is a new norm of conflict during power transitions.

Appendix 1 Sino-American Interventions by year

Conflict Number	Conflict Name	Start Date	End Date	Year of American Intervention	Year of Chinese Intervention
1	Afghanistan - Mujahideen Group	1978	2001	2001	
2	Angola - Unita	1975	2002	1993	
3	Algeria - GIA, MIA	1991	2002	2002	
4	Burundi - Palipehutu	1994	2002	1995	
5	Colombia - FARC	1964	2002	1992	
6	Croatia - Serbian Rep. of Krajina	1992	1995	1995	
7	Egypt - Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiyya	1993	1998	1993	
8	India - NSCN	1992	2000		2000
9	Indonesia - East Timor	1992	1998	1992	
10	Iraq - KDP	1995	1996	1996	
11	Israel - Hezbollah	1990	1999	1992	
12	Myanmar - CPB	1990	1994		1992
13	Myanmar - Arakan	1991	1994		1992
14	Myanmar - Karen	1949	1992		1992
15	Myanmar - Mon	1996	1996		1996
16	Myanmar - Kachin	1961	1992		1992
17	Myanmar - Karenni	1992	1992		1992
18	Myanmar - Shan	1993	2002		1992
19	Myanmar - Wa	1997	1997		1997
20	Nepal - CPN-M	1996	2002	2002	
21	Niger - UFRA	1997	1997		1997
22	Niger - FDR	1996	1997		1997
23	Philippines - CPP	1969	2002	1992	
24	Philippines - Mindanao	1993	2002	1993	
25	Senegal - MFDC	1992	2001	1992	
26	Sudan - SPLM/A	1983	2002		1992
27	Sri Lanka - LTTE	1984	2001	1999	
28	Turkey - PKK	1984	2002	1992	
29	Uganda - UDCA/LRA	1994	2002	1996	
30	Yugoslavia - UCK (Kosovo)	1998	1999	1999	

31	Iraqi Insurgency	2003	2013	2003	2008 ¹⁵²
32	War in North-West Pakistan	2004	Ongoing	2008	2018
33	Paraguayan Civil War: Paraguay - EPP	2005	Ongoing	2005 ¹⁵³	
34	Fatah-Hamas Conflict	2006	Ongoing	2010	2014
35	Sudanese Conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile	2011	Ongoing		2011
36	Yemeni Crisis	2011	Ongoing	2011 ¹⁵⁴	2011 ¹⁵⁵
37	Syrian Civil War	2011	Ongoing	2011	2016 ¹⁵⁶
38	Northern Mali Conflict	2012	Ongoing	2012	2018 ¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Rayner, “WikiLeaks”; John Tkacik, “The Arsenal of the Iraq Insurgency: It’s Made in China.” The Heritage Foundation, August 7, 2007, /defense/commentary/the-arsenal-the-iraq-insurgency-its-made-china.

¹⁵³ Ryann Bresnahan and Andres Mantilla, “U.S. Intervention in Paraguay Continues,” NACLA, August 24, 2007, /news/us-intervention-paraguay-continues.

¹⁵⁴ “The Percolating Proxy War in Yemen,” *Strategic Comments* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): iv–vi, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13567888.2017.1291569>; “A New Confrontation; Iran and America,” *The Economist*; London, February 25, 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Ramani, “China’s Role in the Yemen Crisis”; Jennifer Chang, “China and Yemen’s Forgotten War,” United States Institute of Peace, January 16, 2018, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/01/china-and-yemens-forgotten-war>; “China Writes off over \$100 Million of Yemen Debt,” *Middle East Monitor* (blog), October 19, 2017, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171019-china-writes-off-over-100-million-of-yemen-debt/>.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Jansen, “China Enters Fray in Syria on Bashar Al-Assad’s Side,” *The Irish Times*, August 23, 2016, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/middle-east/china-enters-fray-in-syria-on-bashar-al-assad-s-side-1.2764979>; Courtney J. Fung, “Global South Solidarity? China, Regional Organisations and Intervention in the Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars,” *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 33–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2015.1078230>.

¹⁵⁷ David Shinn, “China’s Response to the Islamist Threat in Mali - CHINA US Focus,” June 21, 2013, <https://www.chinausfocus.com/peace-security/chinas-response-to-the-islamist-threat-in-mali>.

Appendix 2 Conflicts and Intervention Side

Conflict Number	Conflict Name	Intervention by both actors	Potential Balancing Intervention
1	Afghanistan - Mujahideen Group	0	N/A
2	Angola - Unita	0	N/A
3	Algeria - GIA, MIA	0	N/A
4	Burundi - Palipehutu	0	N/A
5	Colombia - FARC	0	N/A
6	Croatia - Serbian Rep. of Krajina	0	N/A
7	Egypt - Al-Gamaa Al-Islamiyya	0	N/A
8	India - NSCN	0	N/A
9	Indonesia - East Timor	0	N/A
10	Iraq - KDP	0	N/A
11	Israel - Hezbollah	0	N/A
12	Myanmar - CPB	0	N/A
13	Myanmar - Arakan	0	N/A
14	Myanmar - Karen	0	N/A
15	Myanmar - Mon	0	N/A
16	Myanmar - Kachin	0	N/A
17	Myanmar - Karenni	0	N/A
18	Myanmar - Shan	0	N/A
19	Myanmar - Wa	0	N/A
20	Nepal - CPN-M	0	N/A
21	Niger - UFRA	0	N/A
22	Niger - FDR	0	N/A
23	Philippines - CPP	0	N/A
24	Philippines - Mindanao	0	N/A
25	Senegal - MFDC	0	N/A
26	Sudan - SPLM/A	0	N/A
27	Sri Lanka - LTTE	0	N/A
28	Turkey - PKK	0	N/A
29	Uganda - UDCA/LRA	0	N/A
30	Yugoslavia - UCK (Kosovo)	0	N/A
31	Iraqi Insurgency	1	1

32	War in North-West Pakistan	1	0
33	Paraguayan Civil War: Paraguay - EPP	0	N/A
34	Fatah-Hamas Conflict	1	1
35	Sudanese Conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile	0	N/A
36	Yemeni Crisis	1	1
37	Syrian Civil War	1	1
38	Northern Mali Conflict	1	0

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