EAST OF SUEZ: A BRITISH STRATEGY FOR THE ASIAN CENTURY

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Abstract

On Saturday, 22 October 2016, four visiting fighter aircraft and a refueling aircraft landed at Misawa Air Base, Japan for a bilateral military exercise. It was common for Japan to take part in such exercises with the US but this particular exercise was different. It was not the Americans who had landed at Misawa, but the British. It was the first-ever joint air force exercise that Japan had ever hosted with a country other than the United States (RAF, 2016). Britain was back in Asia. Two months later in December 2016, Britain announced the setting up of three British Military Staffs across the world including Singapore.

While there was much talk about the US's 'pivot to Asia', little attention has been given to Britain's own pivot to the region in recent years. This dissertation will, therefore, attempt to fill this gap and propose a comprehensive British Strategy for Asia during what is increasingly known as the 'Asian Century' (the 21st century). British strategy in Asia should have two objectives. The first should be to engage with Asia and increase Britain's influence in the region noting that Britain's prosperity, security and global influence will be increasingly tied to the region. The second should be to defend the International Liberal Order (ILO) as part of wider British grand strategy and ensure that efforts to secure the first objective are in line with this.

Introduction

On Saturday, 22 October 2016, four visiting fighter aircraft and a refueling aircraft landed at Misawa Air Base, Japan for a bilateral military exercise. It was common for Japan to take part in such exercises with the US but this particular exercise was different. It was not the Americans who had landed at Misawa, but the British. It was the first-ever joint air force exercise that Japan had ever hosted with a country other than the United States (RAF, 2016). Britain was back in Asia. Two months later in December 2016, Britain announced the setting up of three British Military Staffs across the world including Singapore.

While there was much talk about the US's 'pivot to Asia', little attention has been given to Britain's own pivot to the region in recent years. A lot has certainly been written on US strategy vis-a-vis Asia. Hugh White, for instance, suggests that the US should share power with China in Asia while others such as Jeffrey Bader and Kurt Campbell generally argue that the US should focus more on Asia and engage China while checking their assertiveness (Campbell, 2016); (Bader, 2012); (White, 2013). What has been written on British strategy vis-a-vis Asia is limited and mostly focuses on specific aspects. For example, Rana Mitter writing in the South China Morning Post argues that Britain is missing an Asia Policy but focuses on Britain's post-Brexit immigration policy (Mitter, 2017). John Bew proposes that post-Brexit Britain should strengthen the special relationship with the US, look to Asia and engage more with international security and politics. While he introduces the question of whether Britain should be involved in the political and security issues of the region, he does not answer the question himself (Bew, 2016-b). Kerry Brown although focusing specifically on Sino-British relations comes close to providing some sort of strategy but even his 2015 piece is concentrated on the economic aspects and largely ignores the security implications of China's rise (Brown, 2016).

This dissertation will, therefore, attempt to fill this gap and propose a comprehensive British Strategy for Asia during what is increasingly known as the 'Asian Century' (the 21st century). British strategy in Asia should have two objectives. The first should be to engage with Asia and increase Britain's influence in the region noting that Britain's prosperity, security and global influence will be increasingly tied to the region. The second should be to defend the International Liberal Order (ILO) as part of wider British grand strategy and ensure that efforts to secure the first objective are in line with this.

'Grand strategy' is in the opinion of the author, an over-arching long-term strategy of a nation that identifies and prioritises a state's key objectives and identifies the ways and means needed to secure them. Strategy is the link between ends and means i.e. the ways. It is more specific than grand strategy and in this case, it is focused on a particular region but it could in other contexts be focused on a theme such as economic or military strategy. Policies in the view of the author, differ from strategies in that they form the building blocks of strategies. For instance, as part of a British China strategy, it is advocated that Britain lessens Chinese involvement in the nation's critical national infrastructure (CNI).

The first section outlines the case for a British strategy in Asia which it will be argued is increasingly important to both British interests and the ILO. The ILO, its benefits and the consequent need to defend it will also be explained. The second section on China is given by far the most attention as China is presently the most important state in the region and its rise will have potentially significant implications for Britain and the ILO. These implications will be evaluated before economic engagement in the form internationalising China's currency, the Renminbi (RMB), will be looked at. It will be suggested however that Britain has not demonstrated enough firmness in its policies towards China and will need to take measures to stop isolating allies, protect its CNI and help preserve the maritime order. Although the issue of Hong Kong democracy is important to Britain who needs to provide the moral support necessary, discussion of the subject has been

omitted in order to focus more on economic engagement and Chinese threats to the maritime order where Britain has a greater capacity to make a difference. The third section is on Japan, where the case for strengthening security ties will be made before assessing the various potential areas of cooperation such as transnational issues, research and development (R&D) and capacity building. The fourth section focuses on India where Anglo-Indian relations, India's rise, India's potential as a counterbalance to China and opportunities for Anglo-Indian political, security and economic cooperation will be analysed. The last section on Malaysia and Singapore is the smallest as they are not as important to Britain as the previous three states but important, nonetheless. Here, it will be argued that Britain's commitment to the Five Powers Defence Arrangement (FPDA), should be strengthened.

The case for a British strategy in Asia

The Importance of Asia

Britain firstly needs a strategy in Asia because Asia is in the process of becoming, if it hasn't already, the most important region of the world. As a result, if Britain wants to protect its interests and remain a constructive global power, It must situate itself in a favourable and influential position in Asia, with a coherent strategy. Asia is home to most of the world's population and seven of the ten largest militaries in the world and will by 2030, according to the US's National Intelligence Council, surpass "North America and Europe combined in terms of global power, based upon GDP, population size, military spending and technological investment" (Campbell, 2016, Introduction); (Rachman, 2016, p.9). By analysing growth figures in nearly 700 global locations, Professor Quah of the LSE has been calculating the 'global economy's centre of gravity'. In 1980, this centre of gravity was located in the mid-Atlantic, and by 2008, it was situated east of Helsinki and Bucharest. He reckons that by 2050, it would be "literally between China and India" (Rachman, 2016, pp.30-31). Asia's rise provides many opportunities for Britain. For instance, rapid development and urbanisation in states like Indonesia provide valuable markets for British financial and insurance companies while British engineering firms have much to gain from developing new regional oil and gas resources. The Indo-Pacific is unquestionably of increasing significance to Britain (Nilsson-Wright, 2015).

The Challenges of Asia

Auslin, while noting the importance of Asia is much more concerned for its future. For example he believes that "uneven development, asset bubbles, malinvestment, labour issues and state control over markets" amongst other factors threaten to end Asia's economic miracle, mentioning that China's growth "has dramatically slowed" and that its stock markets collapsed in 2015 (Auslin, 2017-a, pp.1, 4-5). He also warns of Asian political instability, arguing that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) "has become ever more isolated from the citizenry and is seen as corrupt, inefficient, and often brutal", resulting in over 200 000 protests of varying sizes annually. He believes that the CCP have been able to control dissent so far due to high economic growth but unrest will likely increase when the economy slows down (Auslin, 2017-a, pp.6-7). He mentions other Asian examples such as the growth of militant Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia, repeated revolutions in Thailand, crises of political confidence in India and Japan, as well as calls for more open electoral systems in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia (Auslin, 2017-a, pp.6-8). Auslin also points to the lack of regional unity stating that there were no equivalents to NATO and the EU and that there was a risk of war due to China's rise and its increasing 19th century power politics in the East China Sea (ECS), South China Sea (SCS), leading to an Asian arms race, (Auslin, 2017-a, p.7-9).

Rachman however argues that even a slowdown in Chinese and Asian growth would "no longer be transformative" since the economic development needed for India and China to reach for great-

power status has already taken place, and that while Asia may have its problems, so did the West during its rise to power, citing the US Civil War as an example (Rachman, 2016, p.9). He, however, does recognise that Asia is comparatively disunited and that there is a risk of war (Rachman, 2016, pp.15-17). As Auslin states, an economic or security crisis in Asia would have potentially catastrophic implications for the world (Auslin, 2017-a, pp.7-9). For instance, the Asia-Pacific region contains "the most vital sea-lanes in the world, including the Lombok, Malacca, and Sunda Straits through which more than seventy thousand ships pass every year and almost half of all global exports" (Auslin, 2014, pp.80-81).

Britain, therefore, has a further case to be more involved in Asia because instability in the Asia-pacific and China's increasing coercion and military footprint in the East Asian maritime commons (which will be expanded on in section two), threatens not only the global maritime order but also Britain's interests. For example, London has the greatest concentration of maritime business in the world, making it one of the most important global maritime hubs. London has the "largest conglomeration of legal and financial maritime services in the world", largest ports sector in Europe and home to the International maritime Organisation and International chamber of Shipping (DFT, 2013); (DFT, 2015). With seaborne trade projected to double by 2030 and UK employment in the shipping industry already doubling from 73,000 in 2004 to 146,000 in 2011, Britain must actively try to minimise threats to the maritime order. Auslin states that the most effective way to reduce the aforementioned risks in Asia would be to "push for greater liberalism and a strengthened rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific" (Auslin, 2017-a, p.10). Such an effort, he argues, would increase regional cooperative bonds, and could make China turn away from revisionism and "realise the benefits of pursuing cooperative behaviour that upholds international norms" (Auslin, 2017-a, pp.11-12). Thus, due to Asia's growing importance, Britain should situate itself in a favourable and influential position in Asia in order to protect its interests and those of the international rules-based order.

The International Liberal Order

British strategy in Asia needs to be in line with overall British grand strategy which should be aimed at preserving the ILO. According to Ikenberry the LIO is a relatively open, rules-based and progressive order that is characterised by international institutions, open markets, collective problem resolution, cooperative security, democratic community, progressive change and human rights (Ikenberry, 2011-a, pp.2, 190). Ikenberry states that the ILO was first built by Britain in the 19th century on the back of the evolving Westphalian system, and championed free trade and freedom of the seas. Under post-war US leadership, the order evolved with the addition of institutions like the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods Institutions that fostered peaceful political and economic cooperation (Ikenberry, 2011-b, p.60). The maintenance of the ILO not only protects the interests and values of Britain but also those of the wider international community. The ILO has fostered an era of relative inter-state peace, prosperity, progress and international cooperation. Such cooperation has brought a number of successes in many areas. For instance, in 1980 after a 13-year immunisation campaign, the World Health Organisation eradicated Smallpox while the UN Children's Fund has saved over 90 million children since 1990 (Zorthian, 2015). Importantly the norms and institutions of the ILO have not only created the longest period of peace between the great powers in modern history according to Ikenberry but also "laid the foundations for the greatest economic boom in history" (Ikenberry, 2011-a, p.160).

The ILO is not perfect and arguably needs some reform. For instance, too high an emphasis is placed on free trade in regards to developing countries due to the need for 'infant industries' to mature before they can compete with established industries in other countries. Britain and the US were the most protectionist countries in the world according to Ha-Joon Chang, during their periods of Ascendancy (1720s-1850s and 1830s-1940s respectively) (Chang, 2011, p.70). Britain, for example, adopted protectionist policies to compete with the Low-countries woollen manufacturing industry which then became the main source of export earning allowing Britain to import the raw materials necessary to launch the industrial revolution (Chang, 2011, p.69). On the whole however the ILO has been very beneficial to the world. As one of the ILO's founders and a key stakeholder

in the order as a liberal democratic maritime trading nation, overall British grand strategy should be directed towards its defence and preservation. Britain's Asian interests will also be better protected through such efforts.

China

Analysing China's Rise

In order to devise a British strategy for China, it is important to first understand the Chinese mind-set, and analyse China's intentions and actions. According to Kissinger, China is characterised by cultural exceptionalism based on the pre-colonial Sino-Centric order where it saw itself as 'the Middle Kingdom' at the top of the political hierarchy, surrounded by lesser tributary states (Kissinger, 2011, pp.xiv, 3, 10). As late as 1820, China produced over 30% of global GDP - which exceeded Europe and the US combined. Kissinger believes that this traditional context must be understood in order to understand China in the 21st century (Kissinger, 2011, pp.3, 12). Under Zemin, China's National Patriotic Education Campaign pushed a nationalist narrative that detailed how colonial powers humiliated China in the 'Century of Humiliation'. Britain's role in the "unequal treaties" is included and while this is not seen as bad as Japan's actions in china, according to Brown, the nationalism resulting from the education campaign, "does impact on views of Britain in China today" (Brown, 2016, p.35). Over the past few decades, China has demonstrated a phenomenal rise to power. In 1978, China's GDP was small (ranked 17th in 1979), it "exported and imported next to nothing" and the vast majority of people were employed in Agriculture upon which the economy was centred on (Brown, 2013, pp.101, 103-104). Chinese GDP growth has averaged 10% a year since 1978 and by the early 2000s, China had in the words of Zhu Rongji, become "the factory of the world". China is now the world's 2nd largest importer and largest exporter with services and industry making up 90% of the economy in 2011 (Brown, 2013, pp.101, 105). Furthermore, China overtook Japan as the world's second largest economy in 2010, overtook the US as Africa's primary trading partner in 2009 and has also overtaken Russia "as the main economic partner of the former Soviet republics in Central Asia" (Christensen, 2014, pp.14, 18, 19).

China has undoubtedly risen to great importance although there is debate as to whether China's rise will be benign or a threat. Liberal internationalists such as Ikenberry and Slaughter believe that China like the US is a status quo power that has a strong interest in the maintenance of the international order as it benefits them (Rachman, 2016, pp.49-50). Bader writing before the Xi Jinping era, believes that whilst frictions are "bound to arise" between the US and China due to large differences in "histories, cultures, interests, and values", major conflict is unlikely since China does not have the same expansive tendencies that once characterised Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union (Bader, 2012, pp.144-145). China has also engaged multilaterally with organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (with which it enacted a free trade agreement in 2010) as well as founding the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and helping found the East Asian Summit (Christensen, 2014, pp.22-23). China, according to Christensen, has also become much more active in the UN during the last two decades, and has become the largest contributor of peacekeeping forces of all five permanent members of the security council (Christensen, 2014, p.25). Such examples show evidence that China can and will be integrated into the rules-based order although it must be noted that China in the past several years has threatened or used vetoes against "draft resolutions aimed at Sudan, Burma, Zimbabwe, and Syria". This has led Christensen to argue that whilst China has embraced multilateralism, it has not gone so far to "wholeheartedly embrace the newest multilateral efforts to create global governance by supporting active enforcement of new international concepts such as 'the responsibility to protect" (Christensen, 2014, p.25).

Other academics are much more pessimistic. Graham Allison warns of a 'Thucydides trap' arguing that "rising powers have gone to war with established powers on twelve out of sixteen occasions since 1500" while Mearsheimer believes that China would build "a mighty military machine" and seek regional hegemony (Rachman, 2016, p.37); (Jones et al, 2013, p.43). Jones, Khoo and Smith point out that economic interdependence seems to have had little effect on China during times of nationalistic fervour when nationalistic and political factors provide a better explanation for Chinese foreign policy, mentioning the Taiwan Straits Crisis of 1995-96 when the US 7th Fleet had to intervene to deescalate a dispute despite economic interdependence between China and Taiwan.

Zheng Bijian argues that China wishes for a peaceful rise and that it wants to focus on economic development in order to become a modern nation rather than violently pursue hegemony (Bijian, 2005). Chinese strategy is said to be based on Deng's 24-character strategy - "remain cool-headed to observe; be ready to react; stand firmly; hide your capabilities and bide your time; never try to take the lead; and be able to accomplish something" (Brown, 2013, p.167). It is unclear if this suggests that China wants to rise peacefully or if China wants to eventually strive for hegemony once it is strong enough.

An increasingly confident and assertive China under Xi Jinping arguably suggests the latter. This was for instance seen in Jinping's choice for State Councillor (China's top foreign policy role), Yang Jiechi who unlike his predecessor, Dao Bingo did not endorse theories of peaceful rise advocated by those such as Wang Jisi, and was seen to be more aggressive. For instance, at a summit in Vietnam for Asia-Pacific nations, when talking about territorial disputes, he stated, "China is a big country. And you are all small countries. And that is a fact" (Rachman, 2016, pp.50-51). Just a month after Xi Jinping took over, in December 2012 Chinese aircraft entered Japanese airspace for the first time since 1958. Then in November 2013, China declared an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over most of the ECS that overlapped with South Korea's and Japan's ADIZs. (Rachman p51) As Christensen argues, a growingly more militarily and economically more powerful China combined with rising nationalism puts pressure on political elites to be more assertive and aggressive internationally (Christensen, 2014 pp.29, 258, 260). China's growing economy offers many opportunities for engagement to Britain but on the other hand, China's increasingly aggressive actions are a cause for concern since they harm both the interests of Britain and those of the rules-based order. Britain must, therefore, adopt a strategy of measured engagement with China that could show firmness when needed.

Sino-British Economic Engagement

One of the most potent areas of engagement and opportunity for Sino-British cooperation and prosperity is in the internationalisation of the RMB. The RMB was previously a non-convertible currency which could not easily be used to settle invoices overseas or traded against other currencies in global currency markets. According to Brown, the RMB had to be bought in the country itself and Chinese exporters, in theory, had to exchange their foreign currency for RMB via the central bank (although in practice may offshore their currency through Hong Kong etc.) (Brown, 2013, pp.125-126). Such capital controls resulted in the undervaluing of the RMB (making Chinese exports cheaper) and the accumulation of large foreign exchange reserves that China then invested in US treasury bonds. This served to keep the excess money out of the

Chinese economy. This ensured that inflation was kept low despite an undervalued RMB. Cheap Chinese exports combined with money flowing back to the US allowed more Chinese goods to be purchased and high export-led growth for China (Seth, 2017).

These capital controls have attracted a lot of criticism, particularly from the US, whose former Treasury Secretary has accused China of being a "currency manipulator" (Jones et al, 2013, p.27). Since 2009, however, China has been attempting to make the RMB an international reserve currency by promoting its use in international trade and creating an offshore market in international financial centres for RMB-denominated assets, consequently creating increased circulation and liquidity in international markets (Subacchi and Oxenford, 2017, p.3) Such actions may lead to the RMB appreciating in value and thus more expensive exports but it would also help Xi Jinping create a Chinese financial sector centred in Shanghai, and lead to greater Chinese purchasing power helping China transition to a more service sector economy as desired (Brown, 2016, p.56). It will also help China finance its One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative which is a series of investment commitments that aim to connect China to Europe "via land links along the ancient Silk Road through Eurasia" and, South and Southeast Asia "via improved port and maritime facilities" (Dongmin et al, 2017, p.16); (Subacchi and Oxenford, 2017, p.3).

Britain currently has a great opportunity to make London the most important international financial hub for the RMB. Although between 2013 and 2014 the RMB rose from the 13th to the 5th most traded currency in the world, it still only constitutes 4.4% of global payments (Brown, 2016, p.55). London offers many great advantages to China and can further help internationalise the RMB. London is "the largest, most liquid and most international market outside the US", has a huge catchment area in Europe and is also less political than markets in the US (Brown, 2017). Additionally, it has a vast and sophisticated financial centre that offers high capital volumes, deep liquidity, strong regulation, a large and diverse pool of international investors, and offers conformity with international accounting and reporting standards (Brown, 2016, p.56); (Subacchi and Oxenford, 2017, p.2). Furthermore, London is "almost perfectly placed between the close of China's market and the opening of those in the US", giving it a time-zone advantage (Brown, 2016, p.56). London is therefore arguably the best financial centre for the task of internationalising the RMB.

This opportunity is important to Britain as it helps strengthen and preserve the UK's financial services industry. Since Brexit may result in decreased European demand for British financial services, it is increasingly important for Britain to seek other markets such as China (Dongmin et al, 2017, p.15). Brown believes that if Britain succeeds in its efforts, it will secure "a major strategic role" with China and "a key point of leverage". In his view, this could lead to successes of other more "politically-charged" areas such as "the environment, security and political dialogue". He also believes that it could create new partnership opportunities with European states with strong financial markets as well as the US (Brown, 2016, pp.66-67). It is no surprise therefore that between 2011 and 2014, foreign exchange trading in RMB in London increased 20-fold, and that London has surpassed Singapore as the second largest city for payments handling 6.3% of all RMB-denominated payments (Brown, 2016, pp.54-55); (Subacchi and Oxenford, 2017, p.7). London, however, lags behind Hong Kong, which accounts for 73% of payments. Furthermore, London is behind Hong Kong, Taipei, and Singapore when it comes to liquidity (Subacchi and Oxenford, 2017, p.7).

There are several things that Britain can do to make London the leading RMB trading centre. Since Britain is very experienced in project financing, the government working with the financial and legal services could develop a market for RMB project finance in London to promote OBOR. This could be very successful since OBOR could help reduce a huge infrastructure investment gap in Asia which is estimated by the Asian Development Bank to be around $730 billion by 2020 (Dongmin et al, 2017, p.13, p16). London could also issue Chinese local government bonds, promoting the RMB as an international reserve currency and increase London's RMB asset pool (Dongmin et al, 2017, p.18). Britain must, however, be careful, in the risk it takes to internationalise the RMB, for instance in 2014, Britain agreed to "establish a

sovereign offshore bond in RMB to finance UK reserves" (Brown, 2016, p.55). Such a move entails a degree of currency risk. Since Britain's currency floats freely against the RMB, a fall in Sterling against the RMB would mean a higher Sterling-denominated debt repayment for a bond denominated in RMB.

Another form of economic engagement that the UK government has been particularly keen on especially during the Osbourne-Cameron 'Kowtow to China' saga in 2015, is attracting Chinese investment in the British economy. China is expected to be a net exporter of capital by 2020 and Britain due to its consistent legal and regulatory systems, talent and capital markets is an attractive place to invest (Brown, 2016, p.59). Furthermore, unlike the US Committee on Foreign Investment and the Australian Foreign Investment Review Board, the UK does not have similar powerful, bodies of scrutiny for foreign investment. Investment simply needs to be in line with local financial laws (Brown, 2016, p.58). Several deals have been made with the Chinese such as investing in a British nuclear power station (Hinkley Point C - £2.6 billion) which is claimed to create 25 000 jobs and a joint venture between Alexander Dennis and BYD (£2 billion) expected to safeguard 2100 jobs (Nelson, 2015); (Brown, 2016, p.62).

The Need for Firmness in Sino-British Relations

The nature of British engagement of China under Cameron and Osborne, however, has been heavily (and justifiably) criticised. For instance, despite the fact that the British steel industry was at risk, the UK according to the European Steel Association led the blocking attempts to impose tariffs like the US has done on Chinese steel, which were being dumped on Europe via China's controversial steel export tax rebate (Kollewe, 2016); (Perraudin, 2016). Such a state of affairs also does not help the government's perception of London-centricity. Additionally, China has been criticised for displaying a lack of a "level playing field" when it comes to foreign investment. Michael Clauss, the German ambassador to China, for instance, has criticised a series of Chinese measures discriminating against foreign companies like the tendering process in the high-speed railway sector which actively discriminates against foreign companies. The ambassador has claimed that instead of progress in market access, there are further restrictions being implemented like the planned requirement of all food products to have import certificates even though international standards only require it for high-risk food (Wu, 2016).

Moreover, there have been several security concerns about Chinese investment into Britain's CNI. Huawei's involvement in Britain's telecommunications is one such concern. Although Huawei is a non-state company, the Chinese state is heavily involved in telecommunications and as such, many are suspicious of Huawei (Brown, 2016, p.21). Moreover, a British Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) report noted that 20% of detected cyber attacks against British interest demonstrate levels of sophistication that can only be attributed to state-sponsored attacks. China is suspected to be one of the main perpetrators of such attacks (Parliament, 2013). Huawei attempted to bid for large contracts in the US, the US House Intelligence Committee accused it of "cyber-espionage" and labelled it a "security threat". Similarly, the Australian government prevented it from tendering for the construction of the national Broadband Network. Despite these fears, and despite the fact that British intelligence officers in 2009 labelled the company a serious threat, Huawei has been able to operate more easily in the UK (Brown, 2016, p.21). A 2013 ISC report was however deeply critical of Huawei and the government's handling of the case, arguing that putting national security at risk in such a way was "unacceptable", that ministers were being "unsighted on an issue of national importance" and that immediate action had to be taken to prevent something like that ever happening again (Parliament, 2013, p.20). Given the reservations of the ISC, allied governments and the British intelligence community, it is highly perplexing and deeply unsettling that the government decided to risk Britain's CNI in order to please the Chinese.

Another case of concern is the previously mentioned Hinkley Point deal and potential future Chinese involvement in Britain's nuclear energy industry. By controversially allowing the Chinese to first invest in Hinkley Point C and then potentially allowing further reactors that would be designed and built by the Chinese, Britain would be putting the CNI at risk. One must also note that

the Chinese are not known for their expertise in the nuclear energy industry (West, 2016). China's increasing hold over the energy sector concerned Lord West. He was also anxious about Huawei, and the fact that the Chinese have taken over the largest data centre in the UK and the largest CCTV and security organisation in Europe, and the threat this poses to Britain given that 4 PLA (People's Liberation Army) have been actively conducting cyber attacks against British, American and European firms (West, 2016). Britain must, therefore, take a more hardened stance against Chinese involvement in the CNI.

Importantly, Britain's soft attitude towards China threatens to isolate Britain's allies particularly the US and Japan. One Obama administration official reportedly told the Financial Times that they are "wary about a trend toward constant accommodation of China". The US was particularly troubled by the fact that Britain decided to join the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which is seen as a Chinese-controlled competitor to the World Bank (Nelson, 2015). In Britain's defence, however, the AIIB offered an opportunity to integrate China into the international order and encourage it to play a constructive role in development. Britain would wield more influence over China and Asia within the AIIB than out of the AIIB (Brown, 2016, p.45).

There is no assurance that Britain's soft attitude towards China would be worth the risks taken such as those to the CNI and relationship with allies and the sacrifices made, for example in the abandoning of the British steel industry. There is no guarantee that the RMB would establish itself as a major reserve currency and that the market would be centred in London. Furthermore, according to Wheatley and Subacchi, "China generally respects those who display firmness not weakness" (Wheatley and Subacchi, 2015). If Britain is to be respected and have any influence over China, it must show firmness. Theresa May, however, has arguably shown more of this much-needed firmness and seems to have taken a more appropriate and measured policy towards China. According to a Cabinet Office official, the current administration has a more "hard-headed view on how we work with countries like China" and has been reassessing the role of foreign government in our CNI (Cabinet Office Official, 2016). The fact that the government reviewed plans for Hinkley Point C shows that May is more cautious about China (Bew, 2016-a).

China and the International Maritime order

Item 1: The Nine-Dash Line

Britain needs to be more firm in the SCS. In recent years, China has been undertaking actions that threaten the international maritime order and regional stability, particularly in the SCS. China for instance unrealistically claims a vast proportion of the SCS based on an ancient map that apparently marks out Chinese territory in the SCS along a Nine-Dash line [Item 1]; (Phillips et al, 2016). This was further affirmed by the Philippines vs China case at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague in July 2016 which ruled overwhelmingly in favour of the Philippines and effectively refuted China's 9-dash line claims (Phillips et al, 2016); (Christensen, 2014, p.257). Furthermore, China under Xi Jinping has been trying to strengthen such claims through a large-scale island-building programme of land reclamation and dredging that aimed to turn sea-shoals into small islands (Rachman, 2016, p.54). China has also been militarising many of the islands in the SCS especially the Spratly and Paracel islands with fighter planes, anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-missile defences and other equipment and facilities (Panda, 2016-b); (Sherwell, 2016); (Phillips et al, 2016). Additionally, in July 2012 China provocatively formed a new government administration - 'Sansha City' under Hainan Province which claims jurisdiction over large parts of the SCS including the Paracel Islands, Spratly Islands and Macclesfield Bank (Christensen, 2014, p.262). China has also undertaken more direct forms of provocative actions such as blocking the mouth of Scarborough Shoal's Lagoon, preventing all access to Filipino ships after the Filipino navy arrested Chinese fishermen allegedly hunting an endangered species of clams in disputed waters (Christensen, 2014, p.260).

Significantly, China has a different interpretation of a number of provisions under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), with which only a few states agree. For instance China has a more restrictive view on what activity is permissible in a state's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and maintains that the 'freedom of navigation' (FON) and 'right of innocent passage' through a state's territorial sea does not extend to military vessels (Ku et al, 2016); (Jones et al, 2013, p.29). Chinese actions, therefore, challenge the established international maritime order and increases regional instability.

The US in response have been leading FON operations which contest China's assertiveness in the SCS and aims to protect the right of innocent passage (Ku et al, 2016). The US's efforts would be strengthened if more nations joined these efforts. In December 2016, the British ambassador to the US hinted that due to FON concerns, Britain may join FON operations in the future and will deploy the carriers to the Pacific once operational in the 2020s (Brunnstrom, 2016). Britain should do so. As established, the SCS is of great importance to Britain given the amount of British and

international trade that passes through the area. Patalano believes that China's building of artificial islands and increase in military footprint in the SCS poses a problem for a lot of regional states as well as Britain due to the importance of the SCS to world shipping. In his view, it "creates an implicit political lever for Beijing to be used with subtle moves, coercion [and] threats" which challenges the maritime order (Patalano, 2016). Peter Roberts goes further and argues that if FON is closed down in the SCS, British trade in the SCS would be "subject to laws, boarding, potentially tariffs from China, that sit outside the international system" that would "break with every part of the international relations model for trade" that currently exists, setting a dangerous precedent for intervention in ungoverned spaces which would harm British trade, security and prosperity. He, therefore, believes that Britain should join FON, arguing further that Britain as an upholder of Liberal Democratic values must undertake actions that demonstrate these beliefs rather than simply talking about it (Roberts, 2016). Lord West believes that China would not impose tariffs on international shipping but would eventually claim the entirety of the SCS as its EEZ, causing tensions with neighbours and potentially disallowing the right of innocent passage. West too strongly advocates Britain exercising the right of innocent passage in the SCS (West, 2016).

It could be argued that a more firm posture from Britain in regards to Chinese actions in the SCS could lead to Chinese reprisals, potentially damaging trade relations. The US's decision to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Air Defence (THAAD) system to South Korea, has resulted in China directing local travel agencies to stop selling packages to South Korea, affecting the South Korean tourist industry (Lee and Kim, 2017). In the grand scheme of things, however, these penalties were not significant given how dependent the South Korean economy is on China. Similarly, when the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, a Chinese dissident, Beijing only subjected Norway to symbolic sanctions (Baker, 2016). Chinese penalties (if any) on British firmness are unlikely to be severe and only symbolic. Indeed when China imposed a symbolic diplomatic freeze on Britain after Cameron met with the Dalai Lama, China continued to trade with Britain and invested in Thames Water and Heathrow Airport during the freeze (Brown, 2016, p.60). As Lord West argues, it is "crucially important" that states stand up for the values that they believe in such as international law, freedom of the commons, freedom of speech etc and "whilst there's always a bit of a balance in Realpolitik, when push comes to shove, those things are more important than a trade deal" (West, 2016).

Japan

The Case for Cooperation

If Britain wants to increase its viability and influence in Asia while seeking to defend the rules-based order, then one of the best places to start is through increasing its security ties and cooperation with Japan. As Patalano argues, Japan represents, "a very important democratic outpost" that provides Britain with a means to "magnify" its influence and impact in the region and on a global scale, especially given that "international politics is swinging towards the Asia-Pacific" (Patalano, 2016). Furthermore, as Nilsson-Wright of Chatham House mentions, Abe's government have adopted a more active foreign policy that aims to advance its security interests and constructively contribute to regional affairs, offering a window of opportunity to "develop a more active and higher-profile security partnership" (Nilsson-Wright, 2015). An official from the Japanese Ministry of Defence stated that Japan currently wants to diversify its alliances and is looking to countries like Australia and Britain (Japanese Defence Official, 2016). Britain should take full advantage of this opportunity.

There is a large degree of similarity and a natural affinity between the nations. Both are island nations and thus according to Patalano, their security interests "tend to be connected to global affairs and the uninterrupted access to foreign markets and resources". Their economic lifelines are at sea and thus disruption to the maritime transportation system are "a fundamental strategic vulnerability" to such nations who tend to have a maritime-informed defence posture (Patalano, 2012-a, pp.232-233). Both nations also have shared liberal values and a firm commitment to the

rules-based international order. A high-ranking official at the Japanese embassy, for instance, stressed that both nations are "defenders of the international liberal order" that prosper from a stable and liberal world and would lose out if the world is "protectionist and dictated just by sheer power" (Japanese Embassy Official, 2017). Thus Britain and Japan could work together to push and defend their ideals. Moreover, Roberts says that the political establishments, public, militaries and industries in both nations are predictable and thus the economic and security models of both countries are also "highly predictable and stable". These observations have led him to conclude that, "there isn't almost a natural ally intellectually, philosophically, economically and industrially in Europe" (Roberts, 2016). Both countries also have the added benefit of being close allies of the US. Patalano suggests that "the enhancement of strategic ties between two of its closest partners would fill potential leadership and political gaps" (Patalano, 2012-a, p.236). It is thus no surprise that the UK is deepening its security ties with a country that it calls its "closest security partner in Asia" (FCO, 2016-b). The UK supports Japan by playing a more proactive role in global peace and security and Japan is keen on Britain engaging with the Asia-Pacific region (FCO, 2016-b); (FCO, 2017-c). There are a number of ways through which Britain and Japan can increase their security ties.

Transnational Cooperation

One such way is through cooperation on transnational security issues. As Admiral Koda points out, challenges to security, internationally, are "increasingly transnational" in nature such as natural disasters, competition for natural resources, the proliferation of WMDs and transnational crime (Koda, 2012, p.209). The embassy official wanted Britain and Japan to coordinate assessment and actions in view of geopolitical and geo-economic developments globally, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. He, for instance, advocated for diplomatic coordination to defend the rule of law and the maritime order in the SCS as well as to tackle the North Korean nuclear programme. Beyond the Indo-Pacific, he believes that Britain and Japan need to take concerted action on issues ranging from Russia, the Middle East and failing states in Africa in order to help maintain global stability and prosperity (Japanese Embassy Official, 2017).

Koda similarly proposes transnational cooperation in protecting maritime trade and commerce given its "life-or-death type importance" to Britain and Japan. He calls for joint action to address international security issues in crucial hot-spots in areas such as Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa, and more opportunities for British and Japanese expeditionary operations (Koda, 2012, pp.213-215). The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) and Royal Navy have worked together in such areas before. In 1991, the Royal Navy provided the JMSDF mine-countermeasure force off Kuwait with magnetic field calibration, without which the operation would have ended in failure. According to the Cabinet Office official, the JMSDF could take pressure off the Royal Navy in transnational operations. She also states that JMSDF expertise and experience in operating in the SCS and ECS could aid the Royal Navy which has less recent experience in operating in these areas (Cabinet Office Official, 2016). Japan has an overseas base in Djibouti, in the same region as the British base in Bahrain and has already been taking part in counter-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia with Combined Task Force 151 which it commanded at one point (Japanese Defence Official, 2016); (FCO, 2016-b). The outbreak of piracy in the Sulu Sea near the Philippines provides another opportunity where Britain and Japan could work together (Ananthalakshmi et al, 2017).

Other areas of potential transnational cooperation include cyber security, counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing and space technology. Patalano thinks that Britain and Japan should cooperate on space technology development and assess how such technologies could effect future operations in order to increase combat effectiveness (Patalano, 2016). Nilsson-Wright argues that events such as the Amenas attack which included British and Japanese nationals are indiscriminate in terms of nationality. He, therefore, proposes joint training of Japanese and British military and political personnel in counterterrorism, and "regularised programme of training" by the British army and special forces for their Japanese equivalents (Nilsson-Wright, 2015). Britain and Japan are already collaborating in helping developing countries improve their security and defence.

They have agreed to help improve border control capabilities of a Tunisian airport, and to jointly provide training to the Indonesians to help them counter violent extremism (MOFA, 2016-a); (FCO, 2017-c). The Japanese Ministry of Defence Official wanted intelligence sharing as well as counterterrorism and cyber cooperation with Britain. He stated that the UK had very advanced knowledge in this area and organisations such as GCHQ can cooperate with Japan to improve their own capabilities (Japanese Defence Official, 2016). Some progress has been made in the aforementioned areas through the Japan-UK Counter-Terrorism Consultations and high-level bilateral consultations on cyberspace in Spring 2016 (MOFA, 2016-a). There have also been "developments in information sharing and analysis" via the Information Security Agreement (FCO, 2016-b).

A final area of cooperation would be in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations. Not only would it improve the effectiveness of Japan's "technically advanced but relatively combat-inexperienced forces" but it would also aid Japan's UK-backed desire to obtain a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (Nilsson-Wright, 2015). Such cooperation has already begun. Since August 2016, Britain supported Japan in clearing 700 000 square miles of mines in Angola (British Embassy Luanda, 2017). The Defence Logistics Treaty of January 2017 through enabling the sharing of equipment, supplies and services will allow Britain and Japan to carry out joint operations in such areas with greater ease, setting the foundation for further cooperation in the future (FCO, 2017-b).

Capacity Building

Another key area of strengthening ties would be through British capacity building measures that improve the capability of the Japanese armed forces and security services, and their ability to work with their British equivalents. As Aoi outlines, Japan's armed forces while materially advanced lacks crucial 'software' capabilities in their expeditionary operations in terms of operational framework, doctrine, experience and advanced education (Aoi, 2012, p.133). This was seen in Japan's two-year deployment in Iraq where shortcomings were identified in the ground forces' "command structure, organisation, and logistics" (Patalano, 2012-a, p.225). Britain on the other hand according to Patalano has "vast experience in conducting joint operations" and can, therefore, help Japan improve its training, ability to deal with complex security issues, operational doctrine and, command and control etc. The growing number of exchanges and joint training exercises between the British and Japanese militaries facilitate this. Such joint exercises ranging from minesweeping in the Gulf to improving amphibious and counter-IED capability also have the added benefit of increasing UK-Japan interoperability (FCO, 2016-b).

Roberts believes that Britain has "a huge role" in getting the Japanese to embrace jointry (interoperability between the various services of the military) and interoperability "outside of strictly US-Japan interoperability". He believes that this is a huge gap where the US is not encouraging Japan to close in the same way Britain would (Roberts, 2016).

Another area which Britain could help improve is crisis management. Nilsson-Wright advocates strengthening crisis management coordination between both nations' National Security Councils (NSCs) beyond the already established NSC-to-NSC crisis hotline. He also believes that Britain should use its experience in crisis management, particularly in counterterrorism scenarios to enhance Japan's respective capabilities (Nilsson-Wright, 2015). This view is shared by the Cabinet Office official who believes that Britain could use its experience of the London Olympics to help with the Tokyo Olympics and mentions that crisis management workshops have already been provided to the Japanese (Cabinet Office Official, 2016).

Reinforcing Anglo-Japanese security ties also provides unique benefits that cannot be provided to either nation by their American allies. This is because as medium sized island nations they have particular requirements and ambitions. Island nations like Britain and Japan have asymmetric military structures with comparatively large navies and air forces but comparatively small armies (Patalano, 2012-a, p.234). According to Patalano, both countries have global interests and

ambitions but not to the same degree as the US. They also do not have the same resources as the US and therefore having an effective but cost-efficient military is particularly important (Patalano, 2016). As a result, in Patalano's view, both nations offer each other a suitable and unique reference model in building "the future balance of their armed forces". He insists that there are solutions in terms of the organisation of expeditionary/strike forces and force structure that are more relevant to each other than solutions pursued by the US (Patalano, 2016).

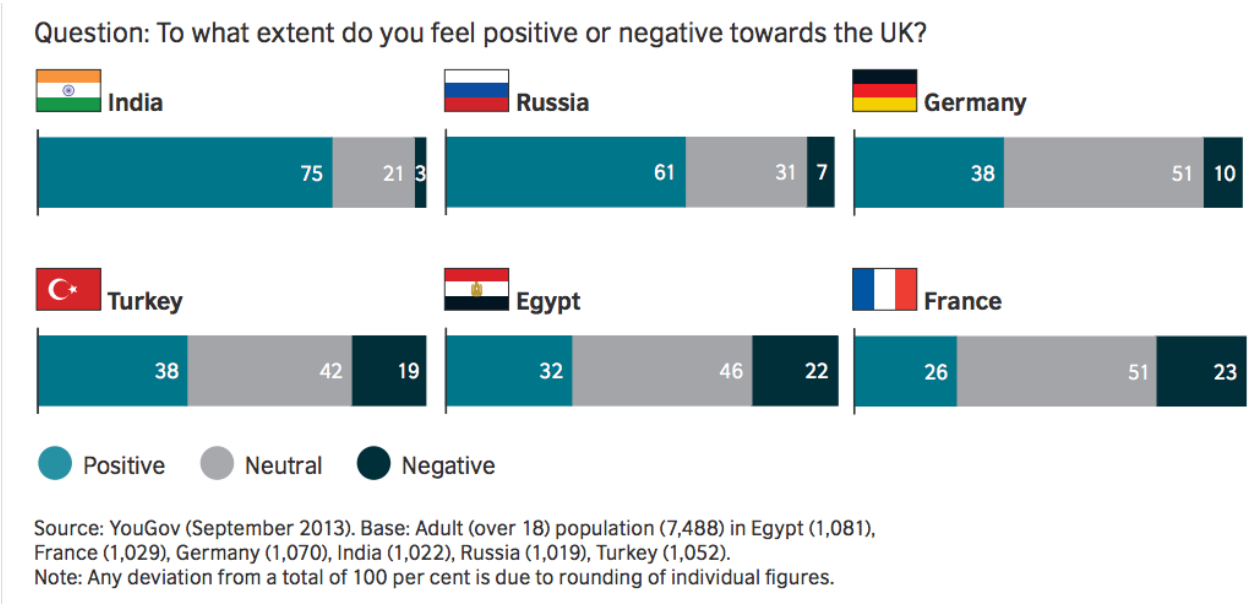
R&D Cooperation

Such similarities in requirements along with advanced industrial economies and state-of-the-art militaries provide another area of cooperation - R&D. Given that the defence industry is becoming very expensive, R&D collaboration in defence provide a means for advanced nations with sophisticated militaries to main their technological edge (Patalano, 2016). Japan's loosening of defence export controls under Abe provide an opportunity for Anglo-Japanese collaboration (Cabinet Office Official, 2016). Such cooperation has already gotten onto a promising start. Japanese seeker technologies, for instance, have been successfully integrated into British Meteor Air-to-Air missiles, and the two nations are currently developing a new air-to-air missile together (Allison, 2017). In March 2017 it was announced that Britain and Japan will look at jointly developing a new 5th-generation fighter. Even if an Anglo-Japanese fighter is not created in the end, Britain's BAE Systems is likely to be interested in assisting Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Perrett and Osborne, 2017). Given that Britain's Challenger 2 tanks will be out of service by 2035, Britain and Japan could look at jointly developing a new tank together (MOD, 2016-b).

India

Britain and India

India likewise offers further opportunities for Britain to increase its standing in Asia, help defend the LIO and increase its own prosperity. India, the world's largest democracy, is emerging as what Mohan describes as "the swing state in the global balance of power" that will have the opportunity "to shape outcomes on the most critical issues of the twenty-first century". He suggests that India could become "the engine of economic integration in the Indian Ocean region" the same way China has been spurring growth in East Asia (Mohan, 2006, pp.12, 22). This had led to many such as Lynes to argue that strengthening ties with India is a matter of priority for Britain (Lynes, 2017). China faces an ageing population and rising wages, and will begin to lose manufacturing jobs. On the other hand, 65% of India's population is under the age of 30 (Rachman, 2016, pp.116-117). The country is projected to surpass China's population around 2022, surpass China's economy by 2050 according to some economists, at which point it would also have a larger working-age population than the US and China combined (p117 Easternisation Rachman); (Coyle et al, 2015, p.3).



Source: YouGov (September 2013). Base: Adult (over 18) population (7,488) in Egypt (1,081), France (1,029), Germany (1,070), India (1,022), Russia (1,019), Turkey (1,052).
Note: Any deviation from a total of 100 per cent is due to rounding of individual figures.

Item 2: Perceptions of the UK

According to the British Council, shared history, language, culture and values between Britain and India, gives Britain, "a huge potential advantage over other countries when it comes to assisting in and benefiting from India's rise" (Coyle et al, 2015, p.3). Shared history has not only seen 100 000s of Indians volunteering, fighting and dying alongside British troops in the world wars but also a flow of immigrants from India to the UK resulting in an estimated 1.5 million people of Indian descent living in the UK (Coyle et al, 2015, pp.11-12). Indians thus have a favourable view of Britain. A survey conducted for the British Council found that 75% of Indians had a positive opinion of Britain while only 3% had a negative opinion [Item 2]; (Coyle et al, 2015, p.11). At times however the colonial legacy can be a barrier since there is "a growing sense of frustration" amongst Indians who believe that a colonial mindset amongst some Britons causing them to not treat or preserve India as an equal (Coyle et al, 2015, p.12). More opportunities for cultural and educational exchanges could help break down this barrier. Britain and India nonetheless enjoy close and friendly relations. The bilateral relationship was actually "upgraded to a strategic partnership" in 2004 and further strengthened in recent years (MEA, 2016-b).

India - a Counterbalance to China

India, a liberal democracy like Britain supports the preservation of the rules-based order. India, for instance, welcomed the Philippines vs China verdict and released a statement supporting freedom of navigation and overflight, the upholding of international law and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. India also urged respect for UNCLOS and stated that the sea lines of communication passing through the SCS were, "critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development" (MEA, 2016-a). With 55% of India's trade passing through the SCS and the Indian Navy lately prioritising sea-lane protection and energy security, Britain and India share a common interest on which they could cooperate (Malik, 2016). As those such as Stuenkel and Roberts argue, India is potentially an important balance to China in the Indo-Pacific (Roberts, 2016); (Stuenkel, 2012, p.34).

India has territorial disputes with China which for instance claims most of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Importantly, according to Rachman, Delhi believes that China has been bolstering Pakistan in order to preoccupy and contain India. After all, Pakistan's nuclear programme received "crucial technical assistance" from China (Rachman, 2016, p.118). This perception is not helped by fact that China is the largest arms supplier to India's neighbours and China's blocking of both the banning of the terrorist, Masood Azhar and India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group. India is also wary of China's power projection in the Indian Ocean (Malik, 2016). According to Malik, India perceives China to be an "irredentist and expansionist power", and has thus begun military and diplomatic coordination with Asian nations that likewise feel threatened (Malik, 2016). Rachman

believes that Chinese troop incursions during Xi Jinping's visit to India "helped to tilt Indian foreign policy towards the West" (Rachman, 2016, p.127). India has indeed moved closer to Japan and the US. During Mod's 2014 Tokyo visit he stated, "Everywhere around us, we see an eighteenth-century expansionist mindset, encroaching in other countries, intruding in others' waters, invading other countries and capturing territory" (Rachman, 2016, p.129). Who he was referring to was obvious.

Anglo-Indian Cooperation on R&D and Transnational Issues

Like in the Anglo-Japanese case, there are plenty of opportunities for Anglo-Indian collaboration in transnational issues and R&D. Mohan argues that India is well positioned to help stabilise the Indian Ocean region due to the strength of its armed forces. India can, therefore, in his view, aid in counter-terrorism, democracy promotion, countering Islamism and protecting the sea-lanes. He states that the Indian Navy, in particular, has shown its utility for regional engagement in the 2004 Tsunami when it was able to deploy very quickly to disaster-hit areas (Mohan, 2006, p.23). One opportunity for cooperation is thus found in the maritime domain. Britain and India have already announced on multiple occasions that they would work together "to promote and uphold freedom of navigation and overflight" in accordance with UNCLOS (PMO, 2016); (FCO, 2015). Both nations have also agreed to strengthen naval cooperation in the Indian Ocean, coordinate closely in anti-piracy operations off Somalia and to work together in building the capabilities of littoral states in maritime constabulary (FCO, 2015); (FCO, 2015).

Roberts who was very keen on increasing Anglo-Indian security ties suggested doing so on the basis of "mutual exercises, intellectual understanding and greater interaction between people, particularly between senior commanders" (Roberts, 2016). Such efforts are already taking place with both nations agreeing to implement stronger military-to-military engagement including joint exercises, training, lecture exchanges, doctrine improvement, dialogue between defence ministers and service chiefs, and establishing a number of 'capability partnerships' in areas ranging from counter-terrorism to peacekeeping (MOD, 2017-b); (FCO, 2015). Britain and India have announced collaboration on a number of transnational issues from jointly disrupting terrorist financial and tactical support to collaborating on improving cyber security training. An intensification of the Anglo-Indian biennial military exercises has also been announced with military exercises for all 3 services planned for 2017. Such positive engagement must continue and be deepened (FCO, 2015). Britain, for instance, could consider training Indian Air Force pilots the same way Britain trains a lot of Saudi pilots (Merrick, 2016).

Compared to the Anglo-Japanese case, Anglo-Indian R&D collaboration is still in its infancy although both nations do want to improve R&D cooperation, R&D training and technology partnerships, and pursue Anglo-Indian defence manufacturing under the 'Make in India' framework. So far Bharat Dynamics Ltd and Thales UK have looked at opportunities for transferring technology on missiles while BAE Systems and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd are jointly developing an advanced Hawk training aircraft (MOD, 2017-b). Such developments are promising and more opportunities should be pursued although Britain should, of course, ensure that British and Anglo-Indian technology do not fall into Russian hands due to a pre-existing history of Indo-Russian collaboration (Simha, 2016).

Anglo-Indian Economic and Cultural Engagement

There are also plenty of opportunities for Anglo-Indian economic engagement. India is the second largest international job creator in Britain, employing over 110 000 Britons, and the third largest international investor, investing more in Britain than the rest of the EU combined (PMO, 2016); (Coyle et al, 2015, p.12). The UK is meanwhile the largest G20 investor in India accounting for 30% of all foreign direct investment, British banks lend more to India than any other country and British companies "account for 1 in 20 Indian jobs in the organised private sector" (PMO, 2016); (British High Commission New Delhi, 2016); (Coyle et al, 2015, p.12). Additionally, London is the

leading centre for offshore Rupee finance and Anglo-Indian trade has tripled between 2000 and 2015 (PMO, 2016); (Banga, 2016, p.1). Things are however changing, for instance, while Britain was India's fourth most important source of imports in 1999, in 2015 it was just 24th (Coyle et al, 2015, p.12). Britain must therefore actively ensure that Anglo-Indian trade remains comparatively strong, in order to increase both its prosperity and its influence in Asia. One way to do this as Lynes argues is through investing in a number of ambitious Indian state programmes such as "Digital India, Skill India, Make in India, and Smart Cities" (Lynes, 2017). Britain has already announced that it will partner with India in order to develop 'Smart Cities' such as Indore, Pune and Amravati (MEA, 2016-b).

According to Banga in a Commonwealth study, Britain has a huge post-Brexit opportunity to establish an Anglo-Indian free trade agreement (FTA) which is projected to increase Anglo-Indian trade by 26% per annum and increase British exports to India by 33% per annum (Banga, 2016, p.1). India will probably ask Britain to relax visa requirements for Indians in return as they are particularly frustrated over Britain's self-defeating kerbing of Indian student visas resulting in a 50% decrease in Indian enrolment in Britain's universities. Britain should fight populist anti-immigration tendencies and do so. Education is an important export for Britain and in a post-Brexit and an increasingly Asian-influenced world, such an FTA is a golden opportunity.

As the British council argues, stronger educational and cultural connections are important in establishing successful and long-lasting Anglo-Indian relations, especially given that research undertaken by the British council showed that there was a "growing disconnect" between Indians and Britons particularly in education (Coyle et al, 2015, p.3). The huge growth in India's English-speaking middle class offers Britain to "become partner of choice for trade, diplomacy, culture and education before India's next generation turns its attentions elsewhere". Britain needs to build on existing cultural connections like the large Indian-heritage population of the UK and increase cultural understanding of India and the amount of Indian students in the UK (Britishcouncil.org, 2015).

Malaysia and Singapore

British security engagement with Malaysia and Singapore is done mainly via the FPDA. The FPDA is one of Britain's longest military partnerships, created in 1971 served to closen defence ties among the 5 nations of Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. In the event of an attack on Malaysia or Singapore, ministers of all five nations are mandated to consult each other and decide on a course of action although they are not committed to intervening and there is no mention of EEZs in the FPDA making them an issue for the individual state (Tossini, 2017). As part of the FPDA, the 5 states carry out an annual exercise called "Bersama Lima" that aims to strengthen integration and interoperability, and show a collective commitment to the relationship (FCO, 2016-a). FPDA also provides integrated air defence for the Malaysian peninsula and Singapore (Tossini, 2017). Lord West believes that the FPDA arrangement is important as it keeps a European power firmly involved in the region on a defence basis, helping Malaysia and Singapore improve their capabilities and providing reassurance to Australia and New Zealand. Indeed Tossini argues that the FPDA provides military cooperation that is credible, deters threats against Malaysia and Singapore, fosters closer cooperation and mutual trust, and provides opportunities to play a greater role in regional defence (Tossini, 2017).

Britain as part of FPDA maintains a permanent naval presence in Singapore via Naval Party 1022 that runs a support facility at Sembawang Wharf allowing naval repair and logistics for the Royal Navy's ships. Defence secretary Fallon announced in June 2016 that the FPDA was "more necessary than ever" and that Britain will increase the number of military assets across the Asia-Pacific region including the deployment of one of the two new carriers to the Asia-Pacific (Chow, 2016). This is certainly the right course of action. Britain should increase its commitment to FPDA and should seek to maintain a permanent deployment of naval vessels in Singapore - which need only be a single surface combatant to start off with and could be increased as resources increase.

The increase in the size of the Royal Navy and projected repeated yearly real increase in the British defence budget would help facilitate this (BBC News, 2015-b). Doing so would increase Britain's visibility and influence in regional affairs, and bring Britain closer to the FPDA states. This could, in turn, help build bilateral and multilateral ties with nations like India and Japan that seek close relations with Indo—Pacific states such as Australia.

It will also allow a greater ability to increase defence engagement with the region and make it easier for the Royal Navy to carry out more regular FON operations. This again would help regional standing amongst the many nations of the Indo-Pacific that support it from India as established to Australia who seem to have carried out their own FON operations in the past (BBC News, 2015-a). Britain could also coordinate with France who in June 2016 called on EU navies to undertake "regular and visible" in the SCS (Panda, 2016-a).

Conclusion

As the Japanese embassy official stated, if Britain wanted to "be taken seriously" in Asia and remain a global force then it cannot be just an economic force in the region. Britain must be serious about, "shaping the security environment in the region, against the background of assertive voice which belittles the rule-based international order" (Japanese Embassy Official, 2017). Britain has the choice of either remaining a prosperous and influential global player that has some ability to shape the global order, by playing a constructive role in Asia or it can accept a loss of influence and be shaped by the international order itself. Engaging with Asia economically, politically and militarily would secure Britain's interests and help protect the ILO. The rise of Asia provides exciting opportunities for economic engagement and Britain should pursue, for example, an FTA with India and help China internationalise the RMB. Asia's rise also poses challenges, particularly from China. While the UK should engage with China, it must be measured and firm. Britain, as argued, should work together with like-minded nations such as India and Japan in order to protect the rules-based order, encouraging China to become a responsible stakeholder in the ILO rather than a revisionist power. By deepening security ties with India and Japan, Britain and the aforementioned nations could jointly tackle transnational issues, while improving the quality of their armed forces. As briefly touched upon, the FPDA is another mechanism through which Britain can play a positive role in Asia. Further research on British strategy in Asia should focus on how Britain could reinforce its ties with Indonesia and the FPDA states, particularly Australia - an important Commonwealth actor in the Asia-pacific with which Britain enjoys strong connections.

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