

# China and America

## From Trade War to Race and Culture Confrontation

By Walter Woon

**T**he Thucydides Trap is an intellectual trap for the unwary when uncritically applied to China. China is not a rising power; it is a returning power. The psychology is different. Misapprehending the nature of the problem will exacerbate it.

First and foremost, it is essential to recognize that it is not “China” and “the Chinese” that challenge America’s dominance. America’s adversary is the People’s Republic of China (PRC) led by the Communist Party of China (CCP). The Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan has been an ally of America since World War II. The millions of people of Chinese descent abroad are not automatically aligned with the PRC. To refer unthinkingly to the “Chinese” challenge is intellectually flabby and politically misguided.

### A Devil’s Circle

The psychology of a returning power is very different from that of a rising power. Since the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the CCP has given China stability after a century of internal turmoil and foreign oppression. A revived PRC demands to be respected, not lectured to by those who exploited China in the past. Time has not erased the historical grievance of the unequal treaties forced upon China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Professor Zheng Yongnian of the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, noted that PRC nationalism is hybrid.<sup>1</sup> The older generation has a sense of historic grievance over the humiliation inflicted on China since 1842. The younger generation has a sense of national pride in the PRC’s growing prosperity and technological progress.

American President Donald Trump launched a broad-front campaign against the PRC on everything from trade to the COVID-19 outbreak in an effort to curb China’s influence. In the dying days of the Trump Administration there still appeared to be a fear that the PRC is out to displace America as hegemon to dominate the world. George Yeo, former Foreign Minister of Singapore and lately Chairman of Kerry Logistics in Hong Kong, thinks it highly unlikely. The PRC does not seek to conquer or dominate other countries.<sup>2</sup> It has enough trouble with its 1.4 billion people without wanting to absorb more aliens. Chinese people generally are not militarily inclined. World-revolution is no longer the PRC’s strategic objective. They would rather be left in peace to get rich. “To get rich is glorious,” as Deng Xiaoping is reputed to have said.

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On the PRC side there is the feeling that America wants to frustrate its goal of achieving prosperity and the respect it deserves. A large majority of PRC international relations scholars recognize that it is very unlikely that the PRC's overall power will surpass that of America in the foreseeable future.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, they see that the PRC will increase its economic strength. Interestingly, most of the scholars did not see the PRC-U.S. relationship as antagonistic over the next 10 years, at least before Trump launched his trade war. U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross's triumphalist burst of *Schadenfreude* over the economic effect of COVID-19 on the PRC<sup>4</sup> confirmed the view that the trade war is not about trade, but more about keeping the Chinese nation from progressing. It will not easily be forgotten.

China has been attacked and conquered by foreigners in the past. Since 1839 these attackers have come from the sea. It should be no surprise that the PRC is shoring up its defenses in the South and East China Seas. This does not make what they are doing right; but understanding the motivation is the key to de-escalating the situation.

Imagine how Americans would react to aircraft from the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) aircraft carrier *Liaoning*<sup>5</sup> conducting reconnaissance flights off the coast of Oahu. Imagine further the PRC stoking Hawaiian separatism, supporting African-Americans in their "Black Lives Matter" campaign and encouraging Native Americans to seek international condemnation of the genocide of their peoples. American actions that fuel similar concerns in the PRC are unhelpful, to put it mildly. A vicious circle of move and countermove based on fear and distrust may lead to unwanted conflict. The Germans have a word for such a vicious circle—*Teufelskreis*, a devil's circle.

This *Teufelskreis* is dangerous. A few months before 9/11 a United States Navy (USN) EP-3 ARIES aircraft conducting reconnaissance off Hainan

Island collided with a PLAN fighter.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese pilot died and the American aircraft crash-landed on Hainan. There were mutual recriminations but these did not get out of hand. The American pilots were eventually released and the EP-3 returned (in bits).

The USN still continues "freedom of navigation" operations in the South China Sea. If such an accident were to occur today, would a bellicose American administration treat it as another Gulf of Tonkin Incident?<sup>7</sup> Such a scenario is possible, though one hopes unlikely. Even the most rabid anti-PRC hawks in Washington would think carefully about escalating into a shooting war with such a powerful adversary. The PRC is not Cuba. Blockade will not be feasible. Any armed attack on the PRC will provoke a tempest of nationalism, even among those who do not like the CCP. The PRC does not have to cripple the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet to win; a couple of sunk destroyers may prove too much for American voters to stomach.

North Korea is quite another matter. If the North Korean regime collapses suddenly (whether because of COVID-19 or some other reason), will America feel forced to move in to secure the loose nukes? Is it likely that the PRC will watch unresponsively as American-allied troops approach the Yalu again? Nor can America count on the neutrality of Russia, which shares a border with North Korea. Inept diplomacy has brought together what Nixon-Kissinger pushed asunder, viz, a Russia-PRC alignment.

Managing this confrontation would be tricky even at the best of times. Given the lack of trust on both sides now, the situation will be dangerously unstable. America's Cold War adversary the Soviet Union never fought Americans. Volunteers from the People's Liberation Army did, pushing the American-led UN forces back to the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel during the Korean War in 1950-53.<sup>8</sup> This is still remembered in the PRC, as the recent commemoration of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War graphically demonstrates.<sup>9</sup>

## Keep the Home Fires Burning

The sound and fury emanating from the Trump administration was primarily meant for a domestic audience. What better way to rally the base than by focusing attention on a foreign enemy, one of a different skin-color and culture? Trump's claim that the current COVID-19 outbreak is worse than Pearl Harbor implied that the release of the virus was deliberate, not accidental; an assertion for which there is no evidence.

Using race as an electoral weapon is a tactic as indiscriminate as carpet bombing. The electoral base on which Trump relied in his failed bid for re-election unfortunately includes many who cannot differentiate between Chinese from the PRC and those from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada, or even from the United States; or indeed between Chinese and Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese for that matter.

The domestic reaction in the United States to COVID-19 illustrates this starkly. Increasing levels of hostility are being reported, not only against ethnic Chinese but also directed at east and south-east Asians.<sup>10</sup> Korean-American actor John Cho has called attention to the tide of racism that anyone of east Asian ancestry now faces in America.<sup>11</sup> Racist flyers circulate urging people to avoid all Asian-American restaurants.<sup>12</sup> The organization Act to Change noted that, "the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked rising numbers of anti-Asian hate crimes."<sup>13</sup>

The comparison with the Pearl Harbor attack also recalls one of the most racist episodes in American history. All Japanese, even those born in America (Nisei), were rounded up and herded into detention camps.<sup>14</sup> The same was not done for German- or Italian-Americans. His ancestry did not prevent General Dwight D. Eisenhower from commanding the Allied armies in Western Europe. Nisei had to prove their loyalty by shedding blood.<sup>15</sup>



President Donald J. Trump participates in the APEC Summit | November 11, 2017." (The White House, November 11, 2017)

## Racism and Two Contradictory Impulses

First, there is a sense of superiority. In the not-so-distant past, white Americans felt that people of other races were inferior, rejecting the Japanese proposal for a racial equality clause in the Treaty of Versailles. There is still some of this today in the notion that America is a shining light for the world. The obvious failures of the American political system in coping with COVID-19 undermine America's claim to moral leadership and superiority of values. Blaming the PRC for the outbreak of COVID-19 was Trump's response, to divert voters' anger by shifting culpability to a foreign foe. Unfortunately, victim-blaming on an international level translates into indiscriminate victim-blaming at a personal level, which accounts for the rising hostility towards east Asians in America. Trump's defeat in the election will not magically end this hostility. With an eye on the next election in 2024, he and his acolytes will feed the fire to keep the pot boiling.

The second, contradictory impulse is a sense of inferiority; that Americans cannot compete against the Asian hordes. This underpinned the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.<sup>16</sup> Suspicions that Asian-American students were discriminated against by Harvard University led to legal action.<sup>17</sup> Now, the economic rise of the PRC again feeds this hysteria. The response is to accuse the "Chinese" of cheating, unfair trading, theft of intellectual property. Trump's trade war is a result of this insecurity.

Potentially damaging in the long run, investments by any Chinese enterprise become suspect. This is ironic, given the fact that most ethnic-Chinese businessmen were supporters of the Nationalists rather than the Communists in the Civil War. The Chinese diaspora is not naturally inclined to support the PRC's political actions. They are just interested in doing business. Push them away and their business will go elsewhere.

## Economic Darwinism

Today, power does not flow from the barrel of a gun as Chairman Mao once said; it flows from economic strength. According to capitalist orthodoxy, the PRC's economic success should not have happened. Communist autocrats cannot prosper. The fact that they do is a direct challenge to Trumpian ideology, which remains a reality as the losers in the 2020 electoral battle continue their struggle against "China" in order to drum up support for an electoral rematch in 2024.

The first time a foreign power complained about China's trade imbalance there was war. In 1839-42 Britain started a war and forced opium on China to correct her trade surplus. Several ports were opened to foreigners, who were exempt from Chinese laws—the first of the unequal treaties inflicted on China.

The memory of racial injustice festers. The unequal treaties resulted in western enclaves in Chinese cities, ruled by foreigners.<sup>18</sup> Chinese were treated as inferiors in their own country. As noted above, an article on racial equality in the Treaty of Versailles, proposed by Japan, was rejected by the United States among others.<sup>19</sup>

Trying to force the PRC into a perpetually subordinate position will breed a new sense of historical injustice. Culturally, Chinese people value prosperity over power for its own sake. The PRC is capitalist in essence. Professor Kishore Mahbubani, former Singapore Permanent Representative to the United Nations, then Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, has noted that the CCP no longer is driven by Communist ideology. It is now more the "Chinese Civilisation Party."<sup>20</sup> Oppressing the PRC to brake her economic progress may impede her in the short term, but in the long term 1.4 billion people hungry for progress cannot be stopped from becoming a major economic force.

America fears losing its technological lead over the PRC. To preserve that edge it is necessary

to hobble the PRC's efforts to develop indigenous technology. This leads to actions like accusing PRC company Huawei of being a channel for espionage. When America has been eavesdropping on its allies (including German Chancellor Angela Merkel)<sup>21</sup> and reading other countries' encrypted communications via compromised encryption machines,<sup>22</sup> such a

double-standard does nothing to improve America's image in the rest of the world.

Some attribute the PRC's technological progress to theft of intellectual property. They underestimate the desire for learning that has been the hallmark of Chinese culture. Professor Wang Gungwu of the National University of Singapore has pointed out



Workers perform final testing and QA before sending drives off to customers on its 2.5-inch notebook lines at Seagate Wuxi Factory." (Robert Scoble, November 6, 2008)

the rapidity with which the PRC has learned from the outside world.<sup>23</sup> The CCP's victory in the 1945-49 Civil War<sup>24</sup> led to three lost decades when Mao Zedong rejected foreign and domestic scholarship. With his demise the PRC changed tack. Professor Wang watched this flurry of "frantic learning" when it started in the 1980's.

The PRC is not the first Asian nation to do this. Fifty years ago Japan was derided as a nation of copycats. In less than a lifetime, twenty-first century Japan has become a technological powerhouse. Those who dismiss the Chinese in a similar way forget that for most of history China was the technological leader of the world. Paranoid fear of all things Chinese leads to suspicions about the motivations of ethnic-Chinese scientists, academics, and students. This will push them back to the motherland or other countries where they feel welcome. It will be America's loss.

It is also crucial to recognize the difference between relative and absolute decline. American global dominance in the years after 1945 was an aberration; the result of Europe's self-destruction in the Second Thirty Years War from 1914-45. For most of history China has been the largest economic power in the world. If the PRC grows economically America's position will decline relatively but not necessarily in absolute terms. The only way to prevent that relative decline is to stop the PRC from progressing. This is not just infeasible but unjustifiable.

The PRC's prosperity does not come at America's expense. A property-flipper sees every transaction as zero-sum; any profit the other party makes is his loss. A property-flipper can brow-beat the other party into a bad deal, secure in the knowledge that he won't have to do business with the victim again. A trader on the other hand understands that both parties benefit from trade; force the other party into a poor bargain and that is the end of the relationship. The business will go elsewhere. Diplomacy is closer to trading than to property flipping. The PRC and America both have areas of

comparative economic advantage. A richer PRC will buy more from America if allowed to do so.

Economic de-coupling comes at a price. It is neither instantaneous nor painless. Tariffs on imports are a tax that will eventually be borne by consumers. Shareholders of companies are not motivated by politics; they want profits. Corporate managers will not put jingoistic chauvinism ahead of their share options and bonuses. Even if companies can be induced to re-shore manufacturing, jobs will not necessarily return to America; robots and computers are more likely to be used. Unemployed coal miners and steelworkers cannot be transformed into software engineers by administrative decree.

Darwinism applies in business as much as in nature. Uncompetitive enterprises cannot survive indefinitely even if propped up by government handouts. Diverting trade flows by subsidies and tariffs is like building a sandcastle in the way of a stream. The water will find its way around, undermining the blockage until it collapses eventually.

## Clash of the Elephants

A confrontation between the United States and China will be played out in third countries, as America attempts to curb the PRC's influence. It is not a foregone conclusion that America will win this struggle for hearts and minds.

### *Asian Attitudes Towards the PRC are Ambivalent*

On one hand there is fear of PRC assertiveness. The PRC is its own worst enemy. Middle Kingdom arrogance, clumsily pushed by wolf-warrior diplomats, provokes push-back. Aggressive actions in surrounding seas alienate potential friends. Unscrupulous practices by unethical businessmen make consumers suspicious of all PRC-made products. As long as the CCP is in charge, the PRC's soft-power attractiveness will be limited.

On the other hand, Asians take pride in the achievements of a non-Caucasian power. When the PRC put its first taikonaut in space the ASEAN<sup>25</sup> ambassadors in Brussels congratulated the PRC ambassador. This was not just a matter of diplomatic niceties. The same is true of the Chang-e missions to the moon. Even Asians who are not fond of the PRC view these developments with satisfaction, quietly celebrating that the Caucasian technological monopoly has been broken.

ASEAN countries are not naturally pro-PRC. But American bullying is pushing otherwise positive attitudes towards negativity. Last year the ISEAS-Yusuf Ishak Institute in Singapore conducted a poll asking respondents which of the two strategic rivals ASEAN should align itself with if forced to choose between the PRC and America.<sup>26</sup> The vast majority preferred not to have to choose, but if pressed a majority of people in seven of the ten ASEAN countries would pick China. Just a few years ago this would have been unthinkable.

The PRC has not tried to export revolution for decades. It does not seek to change other countries in its own image. America does this constantly, preaching the superiority of its value system; a claim which rings increasingly hollow given America's poisonous contemporary political environment. The state of America today is hardly an advertisement for the superiority of its value-system.

Strident anti-PRC propaganda does not improve America's image abroad. Trumpian trumpeting appears all the more hypocritical when America is mired in a political and societal morass. Blaming the PRC for the spread of COVID-19 and cutting links with the World Health Organization was a dubious strategy in the middle of the biggest challenge faced by the world in several lifetimes. It is a tragedy of epic proportions that Donald Trump was President at a time when global cooperation to fight the pandemic was required, not partisan party-political point-scoring. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo

has claimed that there is "enormous evidence" to show that COVID-19 originated in a Wuhan laboratory, without releasing any of it.<sup>27</sup> Given the Trump Administration's well-documented penchant for alternative facts, any evidence presented will be treated with great reserve.

America's stock was higher in the past. On 14 September 2001 over 200,000 Germans gathered under the Brandenburg Gate in solidarity with America after the atrocity of 9/11. The Germans expedited the presentation of credentials for Ambassador Dan Coats<sup>28</sup> just so he could be there. Many remembered the "Raisin Bombers" which were the lifeline of West Berlin during the Berlin Blockade. Generosity is what made America great, not "America first."

That reservoir of goodwill has been drained in the last four years. In March 2020 it was reported in the German press, based on official sources, that President Trump had tried to secure exclusive access to any vaccine developed by German company CureVac. The company and the Americans issued a denial, which was met with skepticism.<sup>29</sup> In early June 2020 the newspaper *Die Welt* reported the establishment of a European "vaccine alliance" against American attempts to gain priority in vaccine supply, leaving nothing for others.<sup>30</sup> The fact that a mainstream German newspaper could run such stories is a sad indication of how little faith is now placed in the essential goodness of America.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center and the Berlin-based Körber Stiftung revealed that Germans now see both their relationship with China and their relationship with America as equally important.<sup>31</sup> America cannot take the support of even her friends for granted in her confrontation with the PRC.

## Quo Vadis?

The world's interests are best served by a PRC intent on creating wealth rather than one that is truculent

and resentful of attempts to frustrate her push to prosperity. The strategy of containment and ensuring that the PRC never becomes powerful enough to challenge American predominance, is unworkable in the long term. “America-first” policies alienate friends and neutrals. Other countries do not want to be sucked into the maelstrom just to make America great again.

There is no doubt that the PRC behaves badly in many ways but confronting it directly will not improve matters. There will be a nationalist backlash, fueled by the memory of historical oppression and racial prejudice. Containment may slow PRC’s progress but cannot stop it. How many generations can such a strategy be sustained?

Bullying the PRC to preserve ephemeral economic advantages—a new unequal treaty—will create resentment. Historical resentments get passed down through the generations. French resentment at their defeat by Germany in the Franco-German War of 1870-71 (which France started out of pride)<sup>32</sup> led to the First World War and the vengeful provisions of the Treaty of Versailles designed to keep Germany down. German resentment at the unfairness of the Versailles Treaty resulted in the Second World War. A resentful PRC can foment trouble, consuming resources that would be better utilized in making the lives of Americans better. America needs all the resources it can muster after the devastation inflicted by COVID-19.

America cannot stop the PRC’s misdeeds alone; friends are vital for this purpose. “Face” makes the PRC sensitive to her image in non-Western countries. Non-Western countries should be cultivated by generosity of spirit to stand up to the PRC, but only where necessary. Strident propaganda is unconvincing given America’s own sins. Double standards breed cynicism and scepticism. It is a mistake to assume that there is a binary choice between America and the PRC. Do not push countries to choose sides; most countries want to be friends with both.

Despite the fact that Trump and his coterie have lost the election, relations will not return to anything like normality unless America steps back from confrontation. Yet President Biden cannot afford to be seen as being soft on China, lest he be accused of appeasement. But continuing onward on the same trajectory could lead to disaster. Things have to change.

The following are recommendations for consideration by the newly-elected President- and the incoming administration.

- Stop playing the race card which just widens the confrontation to affect people who have nothing to do with America’s problems. Ethnic Chinese living outside the PRC and other East Asians do not automatically align themselves with the CCP’s policies. Don’t force them to do so as a consequence of American bullying.
- Step back from angry rhetoric. The sound and fury emanating from the Trump administration is reminiscent of propaganda put out by autocratic states. This does not help America win friends and influence people.
- Deeds matter more than boastful words. America’s image as benevolent hegemon has been replaced by that of a selfish giant. Generosity is what made America great.
- Do not force countries to choose sides. America is *primus inter pares*, not *imperator*. America may not like the result of pressing others to choose.
- Accept that America’s relative dominance will decline as other countries progress. Trying to stop others from developing is not just infeasible, it is wrong; one might even say un-American.

There are too many challenges facing the world that require cooperation rather than confrontation. COVID-19 is the most immediate; climate change remains an existential threat. Humanity’s survival is at stake if countries do not cooperate.



Confrontation between America and the PRC will hurt everyone. There is an Indonesian saying that when elephants clash the mousedeer in the middle dies. The mousedeer of the world can only hope that the elephants see sense. **PRISM**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>“Can China arrest a free fall in ties with the US?,” *Straits Times* 26 May 2020, pA14.

<sup>2</sup>“On Chopsticks People, Paper Technology and the Rise of China,” *Straits Times*, Singapore, 28 July 2019.

<sup>3</sup>Feng Huiyun, He Kai and Li Xiaojun, *How China Sees the World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), p31 et seq.

<sup>4</sup>“Wilbur Ross says Coronavirus could boost US jobs,” *BBC* 31 January 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-51276323>.

<sup>5</sup>The choice of name for the PRC’s first operational aircraft carrier has historical overtones. In southern Liaoning, Port Arthur (now part of the city of Dalian) was occupied first by the Russians and then by the Japanese from 1898 to 1945: *Britannica online* <https://www.britannica.com/place/Dalian>.

<sup>6</sup>“Diary of the Dispute,” *BBC* 24 May 2001 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/1270365.stm>.

<sup>7</sup>This was the purported basis for escalating American involvement in the Vietnam War. The Americans alleged that USS Maddox had been attacked twice by North Vietnamese torpedo-boats. There is doubt over whether a second attack actually happened. *Britannica Online* <https://www.britannica.com/event/Gulf-of-Tonkin-incident>.

<sup>8</sup>*Britannica online* <https://www.britannica.com/event/Korean-War/Back-to-the-38th-parallel#ref1126315>.

<sup>9</sup>“China, and Xi, Commemorate the Korean War as victor over the US,” *Washington Post* 23 October 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-and-xi-commemorate-the-korean-war-as-a-victory-over-america/2020/10/23/122a403e-144e-11eb-a258-614acf2b906d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-and-xi-commemorate-the-korean-war-as-a-victory-over-america/2020/10/23/122a403e-144e-11eb-a258-614acf2b906d_story.html).

<sup>10</sup>“Coronavirus: What attacks on Asians reveal about American identity,” *BBC online*, 27 May 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52714804>.

<sup>11</sup>“Coronavirus reminds Asian-Americans like me that our belonging is conditional,” 22 April 2020. John Cho is Korean-America, not ethnically Chinese.

<sup>12</sup>“Coronavirus: Fake flyers in Los Angeles target Panda Express,” *BBC* 14 February 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51506732>.

<sup>13</sup><https://acttochange.org/2nd-annual-aapi-day-against-bullying/>.

<sup>14</sup><https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nisei>.

<sup>15</sup>The 100/442d Regimental Combat Team, consisting almost entirely of Nisei, was the most decorated unit in American military history, earning over 18,000 individual decorations: Kathryn Shenkle, Historian, Arlington National Cemetery ‘Japanese Americans in World War II’ <https://web.archive.org/web/20130623035411/http://www.history.army.mil/html/topics/apam/patriots.html>.

<sup>16</sup>Formally, the Immigration Act 1882. *Britannica online*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chinese-Exclusion-Act>.

<sup>17</sup>A judge ruled against the plaintiffs: “Judge rules in favor of Harvard in affirmative action case” *NBC News*, 2 October 2019 <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/judge-rules-favor-harvard-affirmative-action-case-n1060921>. The case may be headed to the Supreme Court.

<sup>18</sup>“Foreign Privileges in China,” *Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Western-colonialism/The-Opium-Wars>. The first British Foreign Jurisdiction Act came into force on 24 August 1843, a year after the Treaty of Nanking ended the First Opium War.

<sup>19</sup>“The New Balance in East Asia,” *Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/20th-century-international-relations-2085155/The-new-balance-in-East-Asia>.

<sup>20</sup>Kishore Mahbubani, *Has China Won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy*, Public Affairs, March 2020.

<sup>21</sup>“Outrage over NSA eavesdropping,” *Deutsche Welle online*, 24 October 2013, <https://www.dw.com/en/press-review-outrage-over-nsa-eavesdropping/a-17180842>.

<sup>22</sup>“The intelligence coup of the century,” *Washington Post*, 11 February 2020 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/national-security/cia-crypto-encryption-machines-espionage/>.

<sup>23</sup>“China Learning, Unlearning, Relearning” *Straits Times*, Singapore 28 September 2019.

<sup>24</sup>“Chinese Civil War,” *Britannica Online*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>.

<sup>25</sup>The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, comprising Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

<sup>26</sup>*The State of Southeast Asia Survey Report 2020*, p26 (ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore) 16 January 2020. “China and the US in Southeast Asian eyes,” *Straits Times*, Singapore, 8 February 2020, pA26.

<sup>27</sup>“Trump promises ‘conclusive’ US report on virus’s China origins,” Bloomberg News 3 May 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-03/pompeo-says-enormous-evidence-links-virus-to-wuhan-laboratory>.

<sup>28</sup>Mr. Coats was removed by Donald Trump as Director of National Intelligence on 15 August 2019 after repeatedly taking positions that conflicted with Trump’s public statements. ‘Dan Coats to step down as intelligence chief; Trump picks loyalist for job’ New York Times 28 July 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/28/us/politics/dan-coats-intelligence-chief-out.html>.

<sup>29</sup>“Was bei CureVac nach Trumps Avancen passierte, wirft Fragen auf,” Die Welt, 17 March 2020 <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article206620503/CureVac-Ungereimtheiten-um-Hersteller-von-Corona-Impfstoff.html>.

<sup>30</sup>“Europa stellt sich mit Impfstoffallianz gegen die USA,” Die Welt, 7 June 2020 <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article209070935/Corona-Impfstoff-Europa-bildet-Allianz-gegen-die-USA.html>.

<sup>31</sup>“Amid Coronavirus, Americans and Germans see changing world in different ways,” Pew Research Center 18 May 2020 <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/05/18/amid-coronavirus-crisis-americans-and-germans-see-changing-world-in-different-ways/>.

<sup>32</sup>“Franco-German War,” Britannica Online, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Franco-German-War>