Beyond Western Politics

Sino-Qatari Relations, Myanmar,

Power of Civilisations

Contents

Volume 14, Issue 2, June 2020

Sino-Qatari Relations after the 'Qatar Blockade' in the Context of the Regional Implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative

Radka Havlová

The article examines the development of the relations between China and Qatar since the 'Qatar blockade' 1 in June 2017. Both Qatar and China view themselves as strategic partners and their relations are developing on the diplomatic and political level as well as in the field of economy and finances regardless of the 'Qatar blockade' and Qatar's subsequent regional isolation. The article explains that since the introduction of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, the mutual relations of these two countries have been to an extent influenced by this initiative and Qatar has played an important role in Chinese BRI implementation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Nevertheless, Qatar's relations with other Gulf states and the US place some limitations on the potential for Sino-Qatari cooperation within the framework of the BRI. The article argues that despite the regional isolation following the 'Qatar blockade' in June 2017, China and Qatar maintain good relations and continue to cooperate under the BRI framework in politics, economy, energy, military and culture.

Keywords: China, Qatar, Qatar crisis, Qatar blockade, China-Qatar relations, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Introduction

The article examines the development of the relations between China and Qatar since the so-called 'Qatar crisis' in June 2017. The article first sets the relations between China and Qatar in the context of the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), focusing only briefly on BRI in general as much has been written about this concept. The second part then examines the relations between China and Qatar in the context of the BRI.

Radka Havlová

Since there are many larger and more populated countries in the region, why analyse the relations of China with Qatar? Qatar is a small state both in terms of its size (covering territory of only 11,586 sq. km) and the size of its population (about 2.74 million inhabitants). However, the position of Qatar in the region, and in international politics in general, goes far beyond what would correspond to its size or population. Since gaining its independence in 1971, mostly due to its rich natural resources, Qatar has grown into a highly developed, rich monarchy run by the Al-Thani family. Qatar is also well known for its state-of-the-art use of soft power diplomacy, such as the use of sport diplomacy or influential media (such as Al-Jazeera). Of special importance is the role of Qatar as a regional and global mediation power. Over the last decade, Qatar has carried out successful diplomatic efforts across the MENA, and its unbiased and peaceful resolution of regional conflict has gained Qatar recognition as a globally respected mediator. Qatar mediation contributed to the conclusion of the Doha Peace Agreement in Darfur (Sudan), the release of Djiboutian prisoners of war in Eretria, the release of hostages in Syria, the end of the presidential vacuum in Lebanon and the proposal of a peace plan for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The political relations of Qatar to its neighbours have nevertheless been rather tense over the last decade. On the one hand, Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and League of Arab States. Qatar has, however, always pursued an independent foreign policy of open relations, having relations with regionally controversial countries like Iran or Israel, and non-state actors frequently considered terrorist organizations such as Hamas or Hezbollah. Barakat considers this a 'carefully constructed strategy designed to help the country navigate the complex realities of international relations and protect Qatari geostrategic interests'.[2] Therefore to fully understand the position of Qatar in the region we have to take into account the regional context of the relations in the Persian Gulf. The geopolitics and geo-economics of the Gulf are very complex as we can witness several

ongoing conflicts in the region, of which the most significant is the conflict between the Sunni-led Saudi Arabia and the Shia Iran which can be traced in various regional conflicts.[3] Some authors even describe their tense relations as a proxy war, the 'new regional Cold war in the Middle East'[4] or 'Cold War in the Islamic World'.[5] There is also a fight over regional dominance within the Sunni-dominated GCC countries, also linked to the GCC countries´ relations with the US.

The Qatari pursuit of an independent open multidirectional foreign policy has led to regional conflicts between Qatar and the GCC states in recent decades, escalating into the 2017 'Qatar crisis', as many GCC countries felt threatened by the open foreign policy of Qatar (sometimes referred to as the 'enfant terrible' of the Gulf).[6] This is particularly true about Saudi Arabia as the dominant GCC country whose relations with Qatar have been rather complicated in the recent decade. Saudi Arabia is the only country with which Qatar has a land border, and it has long acted as a guardian of Qatar after its independence. However, the increased role of Qatar in regional and international politics due to its mediation efforts and the influence of al-Jazeera, has led to increased tensions between the two countries. Following the Arab Spring, Qatar was actively involved in the crises in Egypt supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and the former president Morsi, in Libya supporting the military intervention on behalf of the rebels, in Syria supporting rebel forces and providing mediation services and in Tunisia supporting populist Islamist parties. The Arab Spring can thus be seen as a turning point of unbiased Qatari foreign policy as Qatar clearly stood out supporting the rebel forces, which led Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and UAE to recall their ambassadors from Qatar in March 2014 in protest at Qatar's 'interference in their internal affairs,'[7] fearing in particular the Qatari support of Muslim Brotherhood across the region. The relations were restored in November 2014 after the Kuwaiti mediation and signing the Riyadh Supplementary Agreement.

The inter-GCC conflict escalated again in June 2017, leading to what has become known as the 'Qatar crisis', later referred to as 'Qatar blockade', when the anti-Qatar coalition ('the Anti-terror Quartet'[8]) consisting of Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and UAE cut diplomatic ties with Qatar in response to alleged violations of the Riyadh Agreement by supporting terrorism (i.e. Muslim Brotherhood through Al-Jazeera) and by maintaining relations with Iran. The countries banned Qatari airplanes and ships from entering their airspace and sea routes; Saudi

Arabia blocked the only land border of Qatar and proposed digging a 60-kilometer ocean channel through the two countries' land border, thus turning Qatar into an island.[9] The anti-Qatar coalition issued a list of 13 demands in July 2017, which called for Qatar to reduce diplomatic relations with Iran, to shut down a Turkish military base and to stop military cooperation with Turkey, to sever ties to terrorist organizations such as Muslim Brotherhood or Hezbollah, to shut down Al-Jazeera and other media outlets funded directly or indirectly by Qatar, and to end interference in sovereign countries 'internal affairs or cease contact with the political opposition in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Qatar refused to comply with these requirements and instead in August 2017 fully restored its diplomatic ties with Iran, partly because Qatar and Iran share the world's largest LNG field. Qatar thus continues to pursue an independent foreign policy, which was clearly demonstrated in December 2018 when Qatar decided to leave OPEC and focus fully on its LNG resources. As Qatari oil minister Saad al-Kaabi explained, Qatar wants to increase its LNG production from 77m to 110m tonnes each year,[10] denying simultaneously that the decision to leave OPEC would be linked to poor inter-GCC relations.

Although the position of Qatar in the MENA since the 'Qatar blockade' is rather complicated, we can claim that since the introduction of the BRI in China in 2013, Qatar represents an important part of the BRI in the region, albeit with some significant limitations which are generated by Qatar's relations with other Gulf states and the US. Although these two countries differ significantly in size, population, political systems or in economic development, both Qatar and China view themselves as strategic partners regardless of the 'Qatar blockade' and Qatar's regional isolation.

Belt and Road Initiative and the Persian Gulf

The BRI – first introduced as the 'One Belt, One Road' initiative (OBOR), later referred to as the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) – was introduced by Chinese leadership, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, in September 2013. The BRI is the most significant foreign policy initiative undertaken by China; however, many questions about it remain unanswered as the main Chinese document on the BRI called Visions and Actions does not clearly define the objectives and tools of the initiative.[11] The unclear focus of the BRI also makes it more complicated to assess the impact and outcomes of the BRI, because as van

der Putten, Seaman, Huotari, Ekman and Otero-Iglesias point out, 'no official or generally accepted definition of OBOR exists'.[12]

The BRI is generally understood as the world's largest economic corridor, encompassing 68 countries on 4 continents with an intended annual investment volume of US$150bn.[13] It focuses mostly on investments into infrastructure such as ports, bridges, highways, tunnels, roads and railroads. The BRI is composed of two main routes. The first is the Belt, also referred to as the 'Silk Road Economic Belt', stretching from China through Central Asia to Europe via land. The second is the Road, i.e. the '21st century Maritime Silk Road' connecting China and Europe through the South China Sea, Indian Ocean and Red Sea via a nautical route.

The BRI is understood as an important tool of Chinese economic diplomacy, and it continues to be the core of the Chinese foreign policy. In May 2017 Chinese President Xi Jinping addressed the Silk Road Summit for International Cooperation in Beijing and pledged additional USD 124bn for funding the BRI projects.[14] No matter how important BRI is as an economic initiative and fundamental part of Chinese economic diplomacy, some countries, including China's major rivals such as India, Japan, South Korea or the United States, view the BRI not only as an economic tool of Chinese foreign policy, but also as a tool which is likely to change the geopolitics in Asia and which may also have strategic implications.[15] It is, nevertheless, unrealistic to expect the GCC countries to reconsider their strategic relations with the US which has been a chief guarantor of security in the Gulf in light of the BRI. This understanding is also supported by the fact that China has continuously stressed its policy of non-intervention into internal affairs and the fact that it does not intend to replace the US as the chief security guarantor in the Gulf.

The countries of the Persian Gulf are of fundamental importance for the Chinese BRI due to the high reserves of oil and liquid natural gas (LNG) which are significant for Chinese energy security. As such, the region plays an important role in the broader Chinese Middle East strategy. China has invested in large infrastructural and investment projects in the Persian Gulf. China's cooperation with the countries of the region is executed both on a bilateral and multilateral basis. China's partners in the region include not only Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman, but also Iran. However, it is necessary to differentiate the different levels of 'partner-

ship' China is concluding with the Gulf counties: the highest level of comprehensive strategic partnership is enjoyed only by Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, which makes them more important partners of China in the region than other countries of the region, including Qatar, who only enjoys the level of strategic partnership with China.

Radka Havlová

China also cooperates with the countries of the Middle East on the multilateral level. The most important fora include the China-GCC Strategic Dialogue and the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF). To coordinate the complex Chinese involvement in the region, China established the National Security Commission in January 2014, which is chaired by the Chinese President Xi Jinping and which is also supposed to coordinate the Chinese multilevel involvement in the region. Chinese relations with the GCC intensified after the so-called Arab Spring. As Cheng points out, the geopolitical changes in the region led China to reconsider the position of the GCC countries not only as a source of energy resources, but to also focus on Chinese political involvement in the region as political development in the region may also have an impact on those in China. Chinese interests in the GCC region cannot therefore be reduced to energy, since they also cover geopolitical, economic, trade, security and non-traditional security interests. As Cheng points out, the GCC countries appreciate China´s growing involvement in regional affairs as the GCC countries and 'want to enhance their strategic manoeuvrability through limiting the predominant U.S. role; improving relations with China therefore becomes an attractive option'.[16] However, there has not been a direct statement by the GCC countries that would imply that GCC countries consider China a viable alternative for guarantee of security in the region – a role that has traditionally been played by the US. China is also aware of the role of the US in the region and of this delicate balance in the Middle East, and therefore the US–China Middle East Dialogue was initiated in August 2012 to try to maintain the balance between US and Chinese involvement in the region.

The China-GCC Strategic Dialogue has focused on maintaining good economic relations between the GCC member states and China since its first meeting in 2010. Three meetings took place in 2010, 2011 and 2014, focusing on mutual political and economic cooperation with the intention of China to gradually 'uplift the bilateral political relations, with establishing strategic partnership as the goal, to

deepen practical cooperation in all fields with building the free trade area (FTA) as the focal point.'[17] Even though the China-GCC FTA is still under negotiation, the GCC countries are trying to maximize the benefits from participating in the BRI by promoting the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century. As Qian and Fulton point out, the trade volume between the GCC countries and China has risen considerably since the launch of the BRI and China has become a major economic partner for the GCC.[18]

Chinese multilateral cooperation with the Middle East further includes the broader CASCF. This cooperation with the Arab League countries has been implemented since 2004 in the form of bi-annual meetings and focuses mostly on promoting cooperation in the fields of trade, energy and culture. So far eight meetings at ministerial levels have been held through 2018, the last in Beijing in July 2018, focusing on implementation of BRI projects in the participating Arab countries. In addition to the already existing cooperation within the CASCF, China launched two new initiatives in 2018 to promote even deeper cooperation with the MENA countries as a result of the 8th CASFC meeting. The strategic partnership between China and Arab states was announced in July 2018 as 'a future-oriented strategic partnership of comprehensive cooperation and common development' between China and Arab states.[19] The second project includes the 'industrial park-port interconnection, two-wheel and two-wing approach'[20] which will focus on Chinese investments in industrial parks in Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt in the field of oil and gas ('two wheels') and science, technology and finance ('two wings').

In recent years, the CASCF has significantly improved its structure and norms of cooperation, and now it works under the '1+2+3' co-operation framework: '1' focuses on the 'core' cooperation in the energy sector; '2' represents the 'wings'supporting the core, i.e. the priority cooperation in infrastructure and investment and trade facilitations; and '3' refers to 'three breakthroughs' and indicate cooperation in high-tech sectors of nuclear energy, aerospace and new energy resources. The '3' fields of cooperation should, according to the Chinese president Xi, include three centres such as the China-Arab technology transfer centre, the research and training centre for the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and a China Beidou satellite navigation system landing project in Arabia. Efforts have been made to advance the 'four action plans',

namely co-operation in four major fields of promoting stability, identifying new forms of co-operation, conducting production capacity co-operation, and deepening friendship.

The cooperation between China and the countries of the Middle East has been facilitated by the Chinese non-interventionist approach into internal affairs and regional conflicts. Unlike European countries or the United States which frequently intervene into internal affairs of the MENA countries for political and security reasons, China, as explained by Wu Bingbing of Peking University, 'focuses on economy, trade and development, which help these countries to solve domestic and regional problems on their own'.[21] This approach is also reflected by the Chinese President Xi Jinping who stressed at the last CASCF forum that 'China and Arab countries are natural partners in BRI co-operation and need to follow the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit'.[22] China has so far been able to balance its relations with countries such as Iran and Saudi Arabia who are the main regional rivals in the Middle East. However, the need of delicate balancing between the frequently contradictory interests of the individual countries of the Gulf may represent a huge challenge for the implementation of the BRI in the Gulf. Successful implementation of BRI in the Gulf could lead to the strengthening of the position of Iran, an important trade partner for China, and thus weaken the position of its main rival in the region, Saudi Arabia. So far, China has been able to remain neutral in the regional conflicts, and to maintain good relations with both Iran and Saudi Arabia and other GCC members. This is clear also in the case of the so called 'Qatar blockade', which China sees as an internal matter of the GCC. Nevertheless, a long-term blockade would harm the Chinese interests in the region as it could destabilize the regional balance of forces. China thus is trying to balance its relations with Qatar and other countries without intervening in the internal affairs of the GCC. However, should the 'regional proxy war' escalate, it may pose a big challenge for a smooth implementation of the BRI in the Gulf.

Chinese-Qatari relations under the Belt and Road Initiative

Despite the complicated position of Qatar in the region and the country's small size and relative lack of regional clout, China views Qatar as a country with significant regional diplomatic experience and as a valuable partner for the BRI. Nevertheless, due to the geo-eco-

Sino-Qatari Relations after the 'Qatar Blockade'

nomic and geopolitical dynamics of the Gulf region, cooperation is likely to remain on a relatively more muted level than that with the main regional powers, in particular Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The relations between China and Qatar are developing both at the bilateral level and within multilateral forums such as China-GCC and CASCF. China sees Qatar as an attractive economic partner that plays a crucial role in the Chinese quest for energy resources. As such, China understands Qatar as an important partner in the BRI since Qatar has been supporting and promoting the BRI in the Gulf region since the beginning of its implementation. Qatar, on the other hand, realizes that China is an emerging global power both economically and politically, whose influence in the global politics and economy is likely to rise even more in the future. China also represents an important economic market and investment target for Qatari companies. Qatar highly values the Chinese approach to mutual relations, which is based on equal treatment without acting as a hegemon. In the light of the 'Qatar blockade', Qatar also appreciates the non-interventionalist approach of China and its pragmatic foreign policy towards the Gulf region.

Diplomatic relations

The relationships between China and Qatar have been historically influenced by the internal development in both countries, by the context of the Cold War, and by the regional development in the Persian Gulf. Diplomatic relations between China and Qatar were established only on 9 July 1988, as the West-oriented Qatar did not have any major relations with Communist China, with the exception of minor trade relations dating back to the 1950s. During the 1960s and 1970s, relations between Qatar and China were also harmed by violent persecution of Muslim minorities in China during the Cultural Revolution, and the relations between Qatar and China practically did not exist in this period.

The relations in the first decade after establishing diplomatic relations focused mostly on trade. Diplomatic relations started to develop mainly after Sheikh Hamad Ibn Khalifa Al-Thani took power in Qatar in 1995. In 1999 Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani was the first Qatari head of state to officially visit China, declaring the importance of China for Qatar. Since then Qatari and Chinese officials have undertaken frequent official visits, including the 2014 official visit of Emir Tamim

bin Hamad Al-Thani to China and his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, resulting in the establishment of a strategic partnership between China and Qatar. During his visit, the Qatari head of state recognized the importance of China for Qatar, particularly since the launch of the BRI in 2013. As noted by the Qatari ambassador to China, Sultan bin Salmeen Al-Mansouri, 'the Qatar Vision 2030[23] is in line with the concept of development upheld by the Belt and Road Initiative, primarily in terms of the pursuit of economic, human, social, cultural, and environmental development'.[24] Over the last decade, China and Qatar have signed several Memorandums of Understanding and agreements on cooperation on politics, economics, culture, education, sport, travel and other matters. In 2014 Qatar and China agreed on the formation of a Strategic partnership. Qatar also opened General Consulates in Hong Kong and Guangzhou to promote mutual relations.

Radka Havlová

The diplomatic relations between China and Qatar since the 'Qatar blockade' in June 2017 have not changed substantially as China also adapted the non-interventionist approach typical for its foreign policy also to the 'Qatar blockade', stating repeatedly that the Qatar blockade should be solved within the GCC. As Li Quofu, a senior research fellow at China Institute of International Affairs, explains: 'We've proposed the BRI – a great platform, which we hope Middle Eastern countries would utilize to co-develop their economies instead of fighting each other. In this regard, I think China is already playing an active role there'.[25] In December 2018 China and Qatar held the first round of strategic dialogue in Beijing, celebrating the 30th anniversary of establishment of China-Qatar diplomatic relations, and focusing on developing a comprehensive strategic partnership in economy, security, energy, civil aviation, culture and tourism. However, unlike Saudi Arabia, Iran and United Arab Emirates, the level of partnership between China and Qatar has not yet reached the level of the comprehensive strategic partnership, which reflects the higher importance of the three aforementioned countries to China compared to Qatar.

China is, nevertheless, worried about the links of Muslim terrorist groups to its Uyghur Muslim minority of the Xinjiang province, as one of the accusations the GCC countries held against Qatar during the 'Qatar blockade' was its support of terrorism. Although there is no evidence Qatar would support the Islamist movements linked to the Uyghur minority, such as the Turkestan Islamic Party or the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), sources indicate that about

5,000 to 20,000 Uyghurs joined the Sunni Islamist movements in Iraq and Syria, which are allegedly supported by Qatar.[26] The returning Uyghur fighters are considered a security threat by the Chinese government. Their representatives met at the Interpol summit in Beijing in September 2017 and signed an agreement formalizing joint efforts between of China and Qatar to fight terrorist groups, and to coordinate their efforts against terrorism in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region. Another controversial issue in Sino-Qatari relations is the broadcasting of Al-Jazeera and its critical coverage of issues sensitive to China such as the use of prison labour, human rights conditions in China or criticism of Chinese foreign policy in Syria and Libya. However, despite some critical coverage of China-related issues, Al-Jazeera closely cooperates with China Central Television (CCTV), with whom it signed a partnership agreement in 2013.

Economic relations

The recent decade has witnessed a huge increase in the mutual relations between China and Qatar, particularly since the introduction of the BRI in 2013 as many agreements on trade, investment, aviation, transport have been signed since 2013 and the China-Qatar Investment Co-operation Committee was established to facilitate mutual trade and investments. The trade volume between China and Qatar has risen by a factor of 160 since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1988, amounting to US$8bn in 2017[27] compared to US$1.2bn in 2007.[28] The opening of the first clearing centre for Chinese yuan in the MENA, the Renminbi Clearing Centre (with capital of RMB30bn in Qatar in April 2015) was of fundamental importance for the BRI implementation in the region as it facilitated transactions in RMB, promoted trade and encouraged investments in Chinese currency. Chinese banks, such as the People´s Bank of China or the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, also opened their subsidiaries in Qatar to promote mutual economic cooperation. However, since the establishment of the Renminbi Clearing Centre in the United Arab Emirates in December 2015, the UAE has become the largest trading point for RMB in the Gulf area, with Qatar falling to the second position with respect to the trade volumes carried in the Renminbi Clearing Centers of UAE and Qatar.

Economic relations between China and Qatar have been rising steadily in the recent years; trade volume increased by 45% annually in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the first quarter of 2017 and

like for other GCC countries, China has become the largest exporter of goods and services to Qatar, while the exports of Qatar to China increased by 60%.[29] As summarized by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani: 'China is one of our biggest trading partners. We are part of China's Belt and Road Initiative and we are a founder of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. In 2015, we raised our relationship to strategic levels'.[30]

Qatar exports LNG, minerals, oil and petroleum products and petrochemical products to China. Qatari investments in China focus mostly on Chinese banks and the stock market performed through the Qatar Investment Authority and the Qatar sovereign wealth fund.[31] Qatar acquired a 2.8% share in Agricultural Bank of China valued at USD 2.8bn[32] in 2010. Qatar sovereign wealth fund received permission to invest in Chinese capital markets in 2012 and bought a 22% share in one of the largest investments funds in China, Citic Capital Holdings.[33] In 2014, Qatar sovereign wealth fund signed a Memorandum of Understanding with China International Trust and Investment Corporation, a Chinese state-owned company, which set up a fund to invest US$10bn in healthcare, infrastructure and property in China.[34] In 2014 Qatar sovereign wealth fund further acquired a 20% share in Hong Kong Sogo department store operator Lifestyle International Holdings for HK$4.78bn.[35] Further Qatari investments in China included US$616mil in luxury retailers, US$20bn in real estate and infrastructure; a 5% stake in the largest airline in China, China Southern Airlines, in January 2019[36] and joint investments with Chinese companies in the sectors of finance, e-commerce, and the Internet, such as Alibaba or Baidu.[37]

To promote Chinese products, Qatar has organized the annual 'Made in China Exhibition' in Doha since 2015. The third exhibition took place in November 2017 demonstrating the growing cooperation and increasing trade relations between China and Qatar. On the occasion of opening the exhibition, the Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Mohammed Bin Saleh Al-Sada appreciated in particular that more than 80 Chinese companies participated in the exhibition, which 'reflects their confidence in the Qatari market despite the unfair siege imposed on Qatar by blockading countries'.[38] China exports machinery, iron, steel, aluminium and copper products, construction tools and equipment, electrical products, textiles, high-tech products and mechanical products to Qatar. As of 2018, China is Qatar´s third larg-

est trading partner after South Korea and Japan, with US$10.6bn worth of traded goods in 2017, accounting for 10.92% of the country's total trade volume.[39] In 2014 China signed agreements with Qatar in telecommunications and other infrastructure projects in Qatar worth roughly US$ 8bn.[40]

Chinese investments in Qatar focus on a wide range of projects. The Undersecretary at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Sultan bin Rashid al-Khater, stated at the Qatar-China Economic Forum in Shanghai in November 2018 that '14 fully owned Chinese companies and some 181 joint Qatari-Chinese firms are currently operating in the Qatari market covering areas such as engineering, consulting, contracting, IT, commerce and services sectors.'[41] Construction investments are executed by China State Construction Engineering Corporation and China Harbour Engineering Corporation. These investments include large infrastructural and construction projects, such as the construction of the 80,000-seater Lusail Iconic Stadium for the opening and closing ceremony of the FIFA 2022 championship constructed by a joint venture between Qatari HBK Contracting and the China Railway Construction Corporation Limited; and the Hamad Port in Doha (investment of US$7.4bn). Chinese investments also include investments into technology, as the Chinese company Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd. launched with Qatar's leading communications operator Ooredoo the fifth-generation network through the 3.5 GHz Spectrum in Qatar, being the first in the world to launch the service commercially.[42]

Even though the 'Qatar blockade' had some negative impact on country´s economy,[43] the sanctions imposed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain on Qatar failed to a large extent due to the economic involvement of China in Qatar and the Qatari investments in China, which substantially helped Qatar to overcome the impact of the sanctions. Hamad port, opened in 2017, plays an important role in this respect as it enables Qatar to increase its shipments to China by operating two new sea routes to Shanghai in China, and importing from China mostly machinery, electrical equipment and boilers to diversify the Qatari economy by supporting its own manufacturing capacities. Instead of bringing Qatar down, the 'Qatar blockade' thus led to many structural reforms of the Qatari economy being highly praised by the IMF, including a major labour reform which should simplify acquisition of permanent residency status for foreigners working in Qatar. This is of special importance to China as there are about 6,000 Chi-

nese residents in Qatar[44] (China frequently uses Chinese labour for its BRI investment projects in Qatar). Qatar and China also agreed on mutual visa exemption for Qatari and Chinese citizens in December 2018.

Energy relations

Radka Havlová

One of the most important aspects of the mutual relations between China and Qatar is energy relations. Energy is of primary importance for Chinese foreign policy and plays a crucial role in Chinese foreign policy in the MENA. Many of the Chinese projects in the MENA region under the BRI framework focus on energy, specifically oil and LNG. Even though China is trying to increase its domestic LNG production capacities, they are still far below the Chinese LNG needs. China's drive to increase the use of LNG explains why Qatari exports of LNG are vital for China's development, and why China is an important market for Qatar as one of the largest exporters of LNG. The importance of LNG for Qatar increased after Qatar left OPEC in December 2018 claiming it wants to focus on LNG. China has been importing LNG from Qatar since 1999. China and Qatar signed a memorandum promoting bilateral energy cooperation in March 2008; subsequently, Qatargas and China Natural Offshore Oil Corporation signed an agreement in 2008 according to which Qatar will supply 2 million metric tons of LNG to China annually over a 25-year period.[45]

As of now, Qatar is the second largest exporter of LNG to China after Australia. Qatari exports of LNG to China thus may also help China in its quest to reduce its dependency on traditional energy sources and acquire more energy from green sources, as LNG is considered a clean gas. As noted by the Qatari ambassador to China, Salmeen Al-Mansouri, Qatari LNG imports to China are 'vital in light of helping China cover its growing needs to diversify energy sources and shift to clean and renewable energy, thus contributing to its sustainable green development'.[46] In September 2018 the Qatari state-owned company QatarGas signed a 22-year deal with the Chinese state-owned PetroChina International Co based on which Qatar should annually supply 3.4 million tonnes of LNG to China.[47] In October 2018 Qatar Petroleum signed an agreement with the Chinese company Oriental Energy, promising to deliver 600,000 tons of LPG over five years.[48]

Qatar also invests in China to support LNG-related projects. In 2011 Qatar invested US$12.5bn in a refining complex in the Zhejiang province.[49] In 2015 the Qatari companies Hamad bin Suhaim Enter-

prises and Qatra for Investment and Development signed a deal worth US$5bn to acquire a 49% share in the Shandong Dongming Petrochemical Group, helping China in building a LNG receiving terminal with the capacity of 3 million tons per year, LNG storage facilities and 1,000 petrol stations in six Chinese provinces.[50] Chinese companies have also invested in natural resources in Qatar. In 2010 the Qatari company Qatar Petroleum signed the Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement with Shell (75% share) and the Chinese company PetroChina (25% share) to jointly explore the gas field in Ras Laffan.[51]

LNG exports significantly helped Qatar overcome the economic impacts of sanctions introduced after the outbreak of the 'Qatar blockade'. As the Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada stressed, the cooperation between Qatar and China in the field of LNG has not been harmed by the 'Qatar blockade' and evaluated that 'gas imports by China last year rose 46 per cent [in 2017]. Qatar contributed much of that extra supply. This year China will increase gas imports by another 25 per cent or so, and Qatar is ready to meet the additional demand'.[52]

Other aspects of China-Qatar relations

The relations between China and Qatar have been developing also in security, military cooperation, education, culture and tourism. Despite China's overall strategy of non-interference and non-alliance, military and security cooperation are priorities for both countries, as well as people-to-people relations. Even though China is not a major exporter of military equipment to Qatar[53] (mostly due to the questionable quality of deliveries of weapons from China), China understands Qatar as a lucrative export destination for its military equipment. In 2014 China participated in the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition to promote the sale of Chinese military equipment to Qatar. Qatar understands its deeper security relations with China as a way of diversifying its security reliance on the United States and Europe. In light of the 'Qatar blockade', Qatar appreciates the Chinese non-interventionalist approach to arms sale which was also reflected in the 2017 Chinese supply of the SY-400 Ballistic Missile System to Qatar, following the earlier establishment of a drone factory in Saudi Arabia by China in 2017. Both China and Qatar claimed that they pledge to fight international terrorism and closely cooperate in this field.

Interpersonal relations, which are an important aspect and priority area of cooperation under the BRI, are also developing in education, culture, science and research. Qatar is a popular tourist destination among Chinese tourists, and many Qataris mainly choose southern China as their vacation destination. Tourism is facilitated by the fact that Qatar Airways run daily flights between Qatar and seven major Chinese cities (Beijing, Chengdu, Hangzhou, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai)[54] and by the mutual visa exemption for Chinese and Qatari citizens implemented in 2018.

Cooperation in media is also of special importance for Chinese soft power. Although sometimes critical of its coverage of China and its critical approach to China regarding e.g. the treatment of the Uyghur Muslims, China recognizes the importance of Al-Jazeera as an influential regional and international media outlet. As a result, China seeks a degree of cooperation with Al-Jazeera in an attempt to exert at least some influence over its output and role as an international, agenda-setting media outlet. In 2013, Chinese state television signed a partnership agreement with Al-Jazeera, which allowed Al-Jazeera to set up an office in Beijing.

Cultural relations have been growing over the last decade. 2016 was designated the China-Qatar Year of Culture. Various cultural events were organized to promote cultural understanding between China and Qatar, including exhibitions of Chinese art such as the famous terracotta warriors, silk exhibition, open-air Chinese festivals, Chinese movie weeks, and educational programs.[55] Qatar organized the Pearl Jewellery Exhibition in Beijing in 2018, which exhibited 500 rare cultural relics from the Al-Thani Collection. Chinese traditional medicine enjoys special attention in Qatar as Chinese medicine clinics have opened in Qatar in the last decade.

Chinese-Qatari cooperation also thrives in education and student and academic exchanges. The Qatari-funded chair for the Qatar Middle East Studies Project and Arabic was established at Peking University in 2014. In Qatar, efforts continue to open a Confucius Institute. In 2015 the Translation and Interpreting Institute (TII) of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation, signed a Memorandum of understanding with the Chinese embassy in Qatar to promote Chinese language teaching and cultural activities.

Conclusion

Qatar and China have been growing allies over the last decades regardless of their differences. Not only have their relations have been developing at the diplomatic level, but economic, energy and lately military cooperation have also risen significantly over the last decade. Both China and Qatar also stress the importance of soft power in their mutual relations and support their cooperation in the fields of culture, education and tourism. It is evident that despite the awkward position of Qatar in the region since the 'Qatar blockade' of 2017, the mutual relations of China and Qatar have been to a large extent positively influenced by the BRI, and Qatar represents an important partner for implementation of the Chinese BRI in the region. Nevertheless, should we compare the significance of Qatar for BRI with the significance of other GCC countries such as the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, or with Iran, we can see that these countries are far more important for BRI than Qatar. This is also reflected in the comprehensive strategic partnerships with these three countries, whereas the relations between Qatar and China remain at the level of a strategic partnership.

However, as the BRI and its tools are not clearly defined, it is difficult to assess the extent of the BRI on the relations between China and Qatar. Many Chinese investment and construction projects have been initiated in Qatar since 2013, some of which have direct links to BRI such as the construction of the Hamad port, and energy cooperation has increased significantly in this period. It is thus not clear to what extent the BRI directly contributed to this increase or whether the relations between China and Qatar would have grown regardless of the introduction of BRI in 2013.

As of now, both Qatar and China see each other as strategic partners despite the 'Qatar blockade' and Qatar's regional isolation. The 'Qatar blockade' may, nevertheless, be a test of the ability of China's non-interventionist approach to manoeuvre through the conflicting regional interests in the MENA, bearing in mind the Chinese economic interests in the region and its BRI investments in the region.

~

Radka Havlová is affiliated with the CEVRO Institute, Prague, and may be reached at *radka.havlova@cevroinstitute.cz*.

Radka Havlová

Endnotes

1 In the text I refer to the current situation in Qatar as 'Qatar blockade' which started as a 'Qatar crisis' in June 2017, however due to the length of the crisis it has developed into a long-term blockade rather than a short-term crisis.

2 Barakat 2012, p. 10-11.

3 Both countries have regional ambitions and are directly or indirectly involved in regional conflicts, such as conflict in Yemen, Syria or Iraq. In particular Iran has been accused several times of supporting the Shia Hezbollah movement which is active not only in Lebanon, but which also actively supports the Assad regime in Syria. For more information see Santini (2017) or Dilip (2018).

4 Santini, Ruth Hanau (2017). A New Regional Cold War in the Middle East and North Africa: Regional Security Complex Theory Revisited, The International Spectator, 52:4, 93-111.

5 Dilip, Hiro (2018). Cold War in the Islamic World: Saudi Arabia, Iran and the Struggle for Supremacy, C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd.

6 Kamrava, Mehran (2018). Troubled Waters: Insecurity in the Persian Gulf, Cornell University Press, 2018, p. 96. This is true about Saudi Arabia as the dominant GCC country whose relations with Qatar have been rather complicated in the recent decade. Saudi Arabia is the only country with which Qatar has a land border, and it has long acted as a guardian of Qatar after its independence.

7 Black Ian (2014). Arab states withdraw ambassadors from Qatar in protest at 'interference', The Guardian, 5.3.2014, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/05/arab-states-qatar-withdraw-ambassadors-protest

8 Collins, Gabriel (2018). Anti-Qatar Embargo Grinds Toward Strategic Failure. Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy, 22.1.2018, https://scholarship.rice.edu/bitstream/handle/1911/99690/bi-brief-012218-ces-qatarembargo.pdf?sequence=1.

9 Dorsey, James M. (2018). Turning Qatar into an island: Saudi cuts off its nose to spite its face, Modern Diplomacy, 13.4.2018, https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2018/04/13/turning-qatar-into-an-island-saudi-cuts-off-its-nose-to-spite-its-face.

10 Raval, Anjli – Kerr, Simeon (2018). Qatar pulls out of Opec as relations with neighbours sour, Financial Times, 3.12.2018, https://www.ft.com/content/66cc3bee-f6c6-11e8-af46-2022a0b02a6c .

11 National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (2015). Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, 28.3.2015, http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html.

12 Van der Putten Fran-Paul - Seaman, John - Huotari, Mikko - Ekman, Alice - Otero-Iglesias, Miguel (2016). Europe and China's New Silk Roads. ETNC Report December 2016, Berlin: Mercator Institute for China Studies, p. 3.

13 The Economist (2017). The Economist Explains: What is China's Belt and Road Initiative. The Economist, 17.5.2017, pp. 55-56.

14 Cafiero, Giorgio - Wagner, Daniel (2017). What the Gulf States Think of 'One Belt, One Road,' The Diplomat, 24.5.2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/05/what-the-gulf-states-think-of-one-belt-one-road/%20%20.

15 Balding, Christopher (2018). Why Democracies Are Turning Against Belt and Road Corruption, Debt, and Backlash. Foreign Affairs, 24.10.2018 or Stanzel, Angela (2017). China's Belt-and-Road: New Name, Same Doubt. Europe Council on Foreign Relations, 19.5.2017, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_chinas_belt_and_road_new_name_same_doubts.

16 Cheng, p. 438.

17 Embassy of the People´s Republic of China in the Czech Republic. Third Round of China-Gulf Cooperation Council Strategic Dialogue Held in Beijing, January 2014, http://cz.china-embassy.org/cze/zgxw/t1121625.htm.

18 Qian, Xuming - Fulton, Jonathan David (2017). China-Gulf Economic Relationship under the 'Belt and Road' Initiative I. The Political Economy of China-GCC Relations, Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Vol. 11, No. 3, 2017.

19 China Daily (2018a). Strategic partnership heralds new chapter of China, Arab states ties: FM, China Daily, 7.10.2018, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201807/10/WS5b44d1fda3103349141e1f3b.html.

20 Fulton, Jonathan (2018). For China, the Belt and Road run through the Middle East. South China Morning Post, 14.7.2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2155258/china-belt-and-road-run-through-middle-east.

21 Fulton 2018.

22 Embassy of the People´s Republic of China in the State of Qatar (2018). China and Arab States: Drawing up a Blueprint for Belt and Road Cooperation in the New Era, 9.7.2018, http://qa.china-embassy.org/eng/zxxx/t1575243.htm.

23 The Qatar National Vision adopted by the Qatari government in 2008 defines the main objectives and visions of the Qatari policy for the next decades. The Qatari priorities include economic development (sound economic management, suitable economic diversification and responsible exploitation of oil and gas), social development (social care and protection, sound social structure, regional and international involvement of Qatar incl. cooperation with the GCC and Arab countries, sponsorship of dialogue among civilization and promoting peaceful coexistence), human development (education, healthcare, capable and motivated workforce), and environmental development. General Secretariat For Development Planning (2008). Qatar National Vision 2030, released in 2008, https://www.mdps.gov.qa/en/qnv/Documents/QNV2030_English_v2.pdf.   As such it is perfectly in line with the Chinese BRI.

24 China Today (2018b). Qatar and China: Developing a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, 8.11.2018, http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/ii/201808/t20180811_800138032.html.

25 Huang, Joyce (2017). Qatar Crisis Poses Test for China´s Belt and Road

Project. VOA News, 8.6.2017, https://www.voanews.com/a/qatar-crisis-poses-test-for-chinas-belt-and-road-project-/3891899.html.

26 The estimates vary significantly from 5,000 (reported by the Syrian government as of May 2017 to 20,000 mostly in Idlib province (reported by Dubai-based Asia Times in May 2017). Hope, Joseph (2018). Returning Uighur Fighters and China's National Security Dilemma. China Brief, Volume: 18 Issue: 13, 25.7.2018, https://jamestown.org/program/returning-uighur-fighters-and-chinas-national-security-dilemma/.

27 XinhuaNet (2017). China, Qatar celebrate 30 years of diplomatic relations, 5.7.2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/05/c_137303729.htm.

28 Saidy 2017, p. 455.

29 Iqtait, Anas (2018). China's rising interests in Qatar. Lowy Institute, 18.6.2018, https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/china-s-rising-interests-qatar.

30 Chowdhury, Debasish Roy (2018). China a pillar of strength in Qatar's fightback against Arab blockade, South China Morning Post, 9.1.2018, https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2149915/china-pillar-strength-qatars-fightback-against-arab-blockade.

31 Qatar sovereign wealth fund was established to promote Qatari investments to Europe and North America. Since 2014 it has focused on investments to emerging economies, such as China, India, Russia or ASEAN countries.

32 Iqtait 2018.

33 South China Morning Post (2017). Why Qatar matters to China, in spite of Gulf isolation, 12.6.2017, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2097206/why-qatar-matters-china-spite-gulf-isolation.

34 Iqtait 2018.

35 South China Morning Post 2017.

36 Dudley, Dominic (2019). Qatar Airways Buys Into Fast-Growing Chinese Market, With One Eye On The Future, Forbes, 3.1.2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/dominicdudley/2019/01/03/qatar-airways-buys-into-fast-growing-chinese-market-with-one-eye-on-the-future/#720670654757.

37 China Today 2018b.

38 Sachin, Kumar (2017). China Expo to Enhance Qatar Relations. The Peninsula, November 17, 2017, https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/17/11/2017/China-expo-to-enhance-Qatar-relations.

39 Gulf Times (2018). China now Qatar's third-largest trading partner, says top MCI official. 7.11.2018, https://www.gulf-times.com/story/612174/China-now-Qatar-s-third-largest-trading-partner-sa.

40 Karasik, Theodore - Cafiero, Giorgio (2017). Why China Sold Qatar the SY-400 Ballistic Missile System, Lobe Log, 21.12.2017, https://lobelog.com/why-china-sold-qatar-the-sy-400-ballistic-missile-system/.

41 Gulf Times 2018.

42 China Today 2018b.

43 The economic growth of Qatar slowed down slightly from 2.1.% in 2016 to 1.6% in 2017 (CIA (2018). The World Factbook. Qatar, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/qa.html). The predictions for 2018 nevertheless indicate a growth of 2.8% with outlook of 3% growth in 2019/2020 (The World Bank (2018). Qatar's Economic Outlook - April 2018, 16.4.2018, https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gcc/publication/economic-outlook-april-2018-qatar).

44 Rakhmat Muhammad Zulfikar (2017). China-Qatar Relations: Media, Culture, Education, and People, Huffpost, 18.5.2017, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/muhammad-zulfikar-rakhmat/chinaqatar-relations-medi_b_10006408.html.

45 Saidy 2017, p. 456.

46 China Today 2018.

47 Reuters (2018). Qatargas agrees on 22-year LNG supply deal with China, 10.9.2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-qatar-petrochina/qatargas-agrees-on-22-year-lng-supply-deal-with-china-idUSKCN1LQ0DM.

48 Parker, Selwyn (2018). Qatar's mega-trains will dominate LNG supply in 2019, LNG World Shipping, 20.12.2018, https://www.lngworldshipping.com/news/view,qatars-megatrains-will-dominate-lng-supply-in-2019_56291.htm.

49 Saidy 2017, p. 457.

50 Sergie, Mohammed Aly. Qatar companies to invest $5 billion in China for LNG projects, Bloomberg, http://www.gasprocessingnews.com/news/qatar-companies-to-invest-$5-billion-in-china-for-lng-projects.aspx.

51 Shell China (2010). Qatar Petroleum, Shell and PETROCHINA sign new Exploration and Production Sharing Agreement, 16.5.2010, https://www.shell.com.cn/en_cn/media/media-releases/2010-media-release/ep-sharing-agreement.html.

52 Chowdhury 2018.

53 Arms imports by Qatar rose by 166% between 2008–12 and 2013–17. Major imports in 2013–17 came from the United States (67%), Germany (20%), followed by Switzerland, France and UK. SIPRI (20017). Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2017, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-03/fssipri_at2017_0.pdf.

54 Qatar Airlines (2018). Qatar to China flights, 2018, http://www.qatar.to/China/Qatar-China.php.

55 China Today 2018b.

24

Pseudo Neutrality in Intra-State Conflict

Myanmar's Official Discourse on Rakhine

Kenneth Houston

Although the most recent manifestation of conflict in Rakhine can be traced to the coordinated attack on Myanmar security forces in August 2017 by Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (hereafter ARSA), it goes without saying that the problem has a longer history. For this paper a corpus of official Myanmar government sources was examined qualitatively using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) method. Within the official pronouncements of the Myanmar state since August 2017 we can discern the discursive strategies deployed to balance the competing pressures of national and international legitimation of the Myanmar government. In name and through action, Myanmar has marginalized the Rohingyas. However, beyond this obvious imperative additional and more subtle strategies have been deployed in Myanmar's official discourse, which attempts to position the Myanmar state as a neutral arbiter in a subnational dispute and one that seeks to distance itself from previous political arrangements. The paper focuses on these other discursive strategies which evince conformity to undercurrents of socio-cultural pressures from grassroots extremist Buddhist actors within Myanmar. Ultimately, there is no escaping Official Myanmar's responsibility for the status and plight of the Rohingya. The prognosis for external pressure to exert any normative influence on Myanmar will be limited. The official discourse betrays the

ongoing attempts by the new government to balance these competing pressures at the expense of genuine neutrality and its responsibilities.

It has already been announced that there is no race termed Rohingya in Myanmar. The Bengalis in Rakhine State are not Myanmar nationals but immigrants.

Senior General Min Aung Hlaing
Armed Forces Day Speech, 2017 (Appendix 1: 24)

Myanmar's transformation from closed and autocratic society to transitional state to international pariah status relative to its treatment of the Rohingya minority has been swift.[1] This article focuses on how Myanmar presents itself both domestically and internationally in relation to the political situation in Rakhine state.[2] The problem in that context is reflective of wider issues with respect to the political legitimacy of the post-colonial order in Myanmar (formerly Burma).[3] The Rohingya, as a minority category in Myanmar, have suffered structural marginalization from the outset of independence. Recently they have become the targets of specific aggression by Myanmar's security forces. Since August 2017 in particular there has been a dramatic deterioration in the plight of the Rohingya resulting in significant displacement of the population within Rakhine, both internally and beyond Myanmar. Just shy of one million Rohingya are now refugees inside Bangladesh.[4] Estimates of the death toll among Rohingya alone since August 2017 range from seven to just under ten thousand and upward, including hundreds of children.[5] International condemnation has been loud but has proven thus far to be ineffectual in mitigating the plight of the Rohingya. This is not surprising given the history of failure on the part of international opinion to change Myanmar's politics.[6] International pressure has only barely managed to improve acute difficulties the Rohingya refugees are experiencing with respect to displacement to Bangladesh.[7] A necessary component of any international response is that of determining the perspective of the Myanmar state apparatus

as a decisional unit. While it is inevitable that any nation state actor is composed of factions and discreet interests, we also need to examine what the constructed consensus worldview is of the incumbent state actor, in this case the Myanmar government, with respect to this political issue.

This empirical analysis draws on a corpus of official pronouncements and statements produced by various organs of the Myanmar state from August 2017. These organs include the executive branch of government, specifically the office of the state counsellor, the foreign ministry and various representatives of the Myanmar state abroad, such as its diplomatic presence at the UN Security Council, General Assembly and Human Rights Council. Also included are statements by the Chief of Staff of Myanmar's military (the Tadmadaw). As Crouch notes, the infusion of the military into all branches of government supports the contention that it be included within the ambit of Myanmar's political authority while remaining autonomous to act unilaterally.[8] We refer to this aggregation of specific components of government as 'official' Myanmar (hereafter Official Myanmar), insofar as it represents the considered and formal institutions and perspectives of the government of Myanmar as publicly declared by its internationally recognised and domestically legitimised leadership. It is distinguished, therefore, from domestic non-state voices within Myanmar. This data consists of statements and declarations in the international arena from the period mid-2017 to mid-2018 and also includes Aung San Suu Kyi's recent statement to the International Criminal Court in December of 2019.

The article examines how Official Myanmar views the Rakhine crisis and focuses on the conscious message conveyed and the tensions, contradictions, and obfuscations evident within the data. The core argument presented is that Official Myanmar attempts to adopt an unsustainable position of state neutrality with respect to the ethno-religious divides in Myanmar generally, and with respect to the treatment of its Rohingya minority specifically. Ultimately, its efforts to do so are unsuccessful given the ethno-religious make-up of Myanmar and the predominance of one ethno-religious category on the machinery of government.[9] This ethno-confessionalist national identity is inevitably exclusivist and xenophobic towards minorities within the state jurisdiction, but the most acute and obvious dimension to this is the Rohingya crisis. The current government of Myanmar must navigate

Kenneth Houston

between international criticism and scrutiny on the one hand and the predominant confessional-nationalist constituency within Myanmar on the other. These require distinctive and ultimately incompatible discursive strategies, as evinced through the public statements examined. Myanmar's 'pseudo-neutrality', with its efforts to construct itself as an arbiter in inter-confessional tensions, is evidence that it is unable to come to terms with its own ethnocentrism.

This article also endeavours to elucidate the self-understanding of the Myanmar state relative to the Rohingya issue and the crisis in Rakhine state. How the Myanmar state has articulated its position internationally is an important dimension for understanding the situation in Rakhine, Official Myanmar's response to it, and also to gauge Naypidaw's willingness and capacity to resolve it in a way that is aligned with international norms. Essentially, we ask the question: how does the official state apparatus of Myanmar represent the crisis in Rakhine state to world opinion, and (supplementary to that) what are the implications of this for how the world should engage with Myanmar?

Methodology

The article utilizes a broadly qualitative-interpretive methodology to unpack the implicit and taken-for-granted assumptions at the core of Official Myanmar's self-understanding.[10] Very often, while consciously conveying information and ideology to the outside world, organizational or institutional discourse often reveals more of the worldview of an actor than the statements intend. The analytical focus on Official Myanmar's overt political statements draws on the work of Burton and Carlen in their study of 'official discourse'.[11] According to Burton and Carlen, official discourse is 'a system of intellectual collusion', which performs a number of key functions and embodies several specific characteristics.

1. Assumes the existence of a collective and coherent 'self' – a decisional unit, an actor (in this case a state actor composed of discrete institutions)
2. Assumes the existence of a knowing 'other'
3. Attempts to undergird the political legitimacy of the collective self as state actor
4. Addresses silent accusations of a legitimacy crisis
5. Assumes a public nature to discourse (in that the statements are consciously conveyed to multiple audiences simultaneously and usually available in a public mode)

Official discourse endeavours to pursue several synchronic objectives. First, it actively 'incorporates' the elements of the state apparatus into a singularity, bringing the body politic together in the eyes of internal and external observers. Such discourse, in a real sense, 'creates' or incorporates the state as an actor. Second (and closely related), it establishes (and constantly re-establishes and reinforces) the political and social *legitimacy* of the state in the eyes of both its domestic constituency and international actors. Third, official discourse, through its public nature specifically, establishes (and constantly re-establishes) confidence in the political system and the ruling leadership.[12] Implicitly, what is distinctive about official discourse is its analytical difference from what Weldes refers to as 'low data'.[13] 'Low' data refers to the beliefs and assumptions as conceivably expressed through *non*-official sources within the wider Myanmar population, such as popular discourse and media and entertainment sources reflective of general attitudes in the population.[14] Official statements, pronouncements, speeches and other publicly released documents constitute (in Weldes terminology) 'high data'.[15] These data are a rich source for the analysis of a state's rationale and intentions because it brings to the surface how its officials and politicians have agreed to organize 'facts' into a narrative. The story that Myanmar's leadership tells to itself and (simultaneously) the external world – publicly – is a crucial dimension in how the rest of the world understands its own capacity to influence the situation on the ground.

The data used has been drawn from publicly available documents released by official role holders and organs of the Myanmar state or from remarks or speeches delivered by key role holders within the Myanmar government (see Appendix 1). In particular, the data corpus consists of relevant statements/documents released by Myanmar's representatives to the United Nations and its ancillary bodies, as well as speeches by the state counsellor (Aung San Suu Kyi), along with statements released by key ministries. In total, twenty-five documents have been subject to analysis for this study. The public availability of these documents is a crucial component of their official nature. By preparing and releasing these documents for public and international consumption, following agreed intra-political consensus around a narrative within the state leadership, we can glean important insights into the structures of thinking of 'Myanmar' as a political actor. It is not merely that these documents set out to persuade the reader, whether domestic or

international, of their efficacy and truth. It is also the case that they set out to articulate, determine the parameters of 'truth', and affirm and convince the various components of the state apparatus itself of this truth. What they also do is give us as observers crucial insight into their underlying rationale, their taken-for-granted assumptions and their worldview.

Within this broader interpretive approach, we need a methodological augmentation to this critical appraisal of how the political apparatus within the Myanmar state articulates and presents its position to itself, its people and the wider political community (regionally and internationally). As our focus is on the discursive representation of reality vis-à-vis the vantage point of the Myanmar government relative to a minority population, our analytical approach needs to systemize the research of the data corpus, therefore grounding it more firmly in a particular method. Beyond the broad interpretive approach and within the focus on official discourse, we also need to set out how we examine this data by applying a critical strategy orientated towards the study of power, ideology and identity.

Augmenting this broader approach, Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) concerns the utility of language as a method of exerting social power and, by extension, social control.[16] In this case, we are examining the efforts by the organs of the Myanmar government to achieve discursive hegemony over the interpretation of, and Official Myanmar's response to, the crisis in Rakhine. CDA allows analysts to examine a range of strategy options and concentrates on the following:

1. The creation and shaping of meaning through the deployment of language
2. Lexical choices, foregrounding and backgrounding of information
3. The creation of dichotomies and structural oppositions
4. The representation of people and constructions of identity
5. The representation of agency and action
6. The representation of processes
7. The use of rhetoric and metaphor
8. The articulation of commitment or evasion[17]

In the present study the focus on Myanmar's official discourse allows us to concentrate on how the political leadership conceives the problems in Rakhine and what their situated reasoning permits them to accept and reject in terms of possible solutions.

CDA is a particularly useful analytical tool in uncovering the sedimented meaning making strategies of consequential actors in socio-political analysis and exploring the strategies that those actors use to shape and influence how 'reality' is interpreted. CDA incorporates within it the broad insight of interpretive methodology that language is not reflective of reality. Facts are shaped and constituted through the language used to articulate them. Given that the analysis here is specifically concerned with the state's meaning making strategies relative to a vulnerable minority category, the question of power and emancipation from oppression become important critical concerns. CDA is explicitly concerned with such asymmetric relations. In what follows, we categorize the analytical findings of the textual analysis undertaken into several key categories.

Kenneth Houston

Official Myanmar's discursive strategy - alterity

Analysis of the data points to a multi-faceted and interlocking strategy of alterity, or 'othering', with three main objectives uppermost in the imperatives of Official Myanmar. First, there is the pursuit of political legitimacy and an explicit distancing by Official Myanmar from the political arrangements prior to the transition to democracy (i.e., from military rule), which we consider underway from 2011.[18] For Official Myanmar, as a result of the Rakhine crisis, the legitimacy objective is split into two fundamental – and partly incompatible – sub-objectives along the lines of Putnam's 'two-level games'[19] (see Figure 1 below), which offers a useful guide. One sub objective is the imperative to pursue political credibility and legitimacy in the international arena insofar as Myanmar, as a state actor (and one in a transitional phase in receipt of both international support and international scrutiny), must be seen to embody minimally accepted international norms with respect to its domestic behaviour. Myanmar is subject to external scrutiny by not only the 'international community' as embodied by the UN and its ancillary organs, but also by the combined normative scrutiny of both human rights and development NGOs more broadly but also by the international media (see Figure 1).

A second sub objective is orientated towards the satisfaction of domestic level demands and revolves around the need for Official Myanmar, as a democratically elected government, to conform to and be reflective of domestic expectations and ideologies, as well as embodying and representing the aggregate preferences of the majority of

its political constituency. This includes not only Myanmar's various internal factions, which are mobilizations of specific ideological positions vis-à-vis Muslims (such as the 969 movement and MaBaTa, etc)[20] but also the wider electorate as political elites understand these. In the context of Myanmar, the military (Tadmadaw) occupies a singular position within the political apparatus. It is simultaneously outside the confines of the executive branch but retains a portion of parliamentary seats and (as Crouch 2018 points out) has infused many layers of formal political power. In addition, it has extensive corporate interests which allow it to sustain military operations outside of conventional democratic oversight.[21] As it is the formally constituted military force of the Myanmar state it is included within the ambit of Official Myanmar. The figurative representation below, however, is intended to demonstrate that it remains relatively autonomous as an entity within the Myanmar state.

Figure 1. Official Myanmar's Two-Level Game
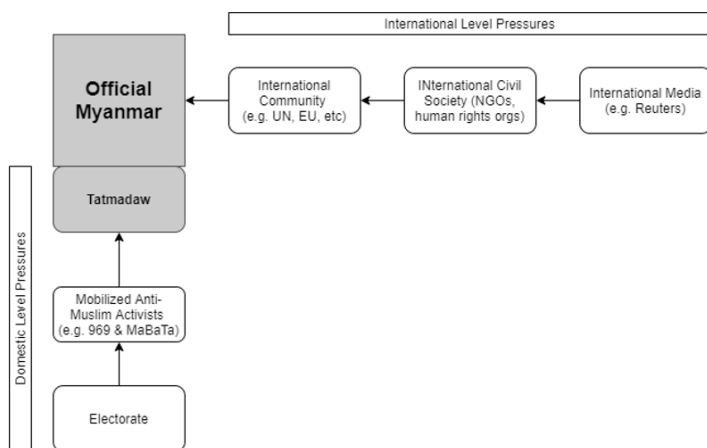
A second major objective, one closely related to the bifurcated legitimacy question, is the need for Official Myanmar to distance itself explicitly from implication or culpability in actions or processes that are specific to the spatially distinct and politically problematic 'Rakhine issue'. Through a range of discursive tactics Official Myanmar must demonstrate, or at least assert with plausibility, the veracity of its own version of reality and (simultaneously) discredit contrary accounts. This, as Burton and Carlen note, is a core function of official discourse.

As the State Counsellor points out:

> I understand that many of our friends throughout the world are concerned by reports of villages being burnt and of hordes of refugees fleeing [...] We too are concerned. We want to find out what the real problems are. There have been allegations and counter-allegations and we have to listen to all of them. And we have to make sure that these allegations are based on solid evidence before we take action (Appendix 1:8; see also Appendix 1:13).

Myanmar's representative to the Human Rights Council asserts:

> The government has been making every possible effort to promote development and communal harmony between all communities in Rakhine state (Appendix 1:11).

Rakhine must be 'othered', created and constructed as a distal (as opposed to proximal) space and political issue. It must be portrayed as an aberration, one that is out of sync with the rest of the progressively transitional state, its circumstances and acute problems being peculiar and abnormal. A third and final major objective, one with specific regard to the core issue within Rakhine, is that the state must demonstrate its status as a neutral arbiter between competing substate entities and actors, particularly in regard to confessional or ethno-religious distinctions within the population. It is cultivating inter faith dialogue.[22] It is pursuing a peace process to bring about an end to factional conflict.[23] The construction and cultivation of Official Myanmar's externalized and superordinate position above the fray of ethno-confessional cleavages is an essential underpinning of any claim to a republican system of government.

This broad strategy is reflected in the official discourse of Myanmar and its attempts to realize these strategic goals through more specific tactics. These include the cultivation of vagueness (for example, 'the situation in the country is so complex that it is beyond the apprehension of of many outsiders', Appendix 1:23), the elision of state culpability and agency through nominalization, deflection, backgrounding or omission of key facts, details or actors and (conversely) the foregrounding of other elements that support the government's narrative. In addition, there is also the dilution or mitigation of information or accounts with regard to Rakhine through aggregation of problems in Rakhine with problems throughout the whole of Myanmar. We shall examine each of these strategic objectives in turn below and examine

how Official Myanmar sought to realize these in more detail. Unsurprisingly, Official Myanmar's strategy of alterity, its efforts to distance itself in terms of responsibility for key facets of the Rohingya issue, result in a range of unsustainable contradictions.

Legitimacy & credibility

Despite its repeated mention throughout its public pronouncements regarding its willingness to facilitate day trips for external observers to affected areas (Appendix 1:8), it is clear that the incumbent Myanmar government is in a decidedly uncomfortable position. Official Myanmar needs to retain credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of two distinct entities that place different – and incompatible – normative demands on the state actor. On the one hand there is the international community, the United Nations and its ancillary agencies, along with international civil society such as humanitarian and human rights NGOs and media organizations who are demanding that Official Myanmar, with a mandate for democratic reform, uphold international standards with respect to the treatment of minorities generally and the Rohingya in particular. Myanmar is in receipt of significant international support, not least in terms of practical and financial aid, being currently the seventh highest recipient of international aid.[24] On the other hand, there is the perceived domestic demand that the government of Myanmar defends what is considered the authentic identity of the Myanmar state, with its majority confessional adherents (to Buddhism) notwithstanding its overt commitment to pluralism.[25] Mobilised around such sentiments, grassroots organizations such as the 969 Movement and the MaBaTa are powerful domestic forces that the new National League for Democracy (NLD) government cannot ignore. That said, while there is a compelling argument for Official Myanmar's defiance of both of these forces given the significant popular mandate NLD received in the most recent election, there is considerable anti-Muslim sentiment within the broader population that – despite Official Myanmar's protests to the contrary – appear not to be confined to Rohingya.[26]

One of the most persistent themes running through the data gathered has been Official Myanmar's discursive utility of the country's transitional status and the proximity of recent dramatic political change as a mitigating factor in offsetting its direct responsibility for the magnitude of the crisis in Rakhine state. Official Myanmar, in a range of communicative statements and contexts, frequently points

out that it is in government for less than eighteen months (Appendix 1:8; Appendix 1:10), or two years (Appendix 1:21), depending on when the statement is released. As such it cannot possibly be expected to resolve the Rakhine issue in such a short timeframe. There is no way that a 'young and fragile' (Appendix 1:9) democracy can undertake a quick fix solution. It is a problem that it 'inherited' (Appendix 1:8) from the previous regime. It also consistently characterizes the Rakhine issue as 'complex' (Appendix 1:9; Appendix 1:25), sometimes to the point of defying the understanding of external observers (specifically international human rights NGOs and international governmental organizations [IGOs], such as UN representatives and, doubtless, international media) (see Appendix 1:21: Appendix 1:18). The 'complexity' theme is augmented through Official Myanmar's invocation of wider problems within Myanmar. The international community is urged to examine Myanmar 'as a whole' (Appendix 1:8; Appendix 1:10) and not merely focus on one group (Appendix 1:18).

Kenneth Houston

By far the most high-profile tactic is the persistent invocation of the issue of chronic underdevelopment in Rakhine and, by extension, throughout Myanmar. Development, investment in infrastructure, the creation of jobs, education and service provision, all of these are foregrounded and collocated with the pursuit of 'peace, security and development' in the various statements (Appendices 1:8, 1:9, 1:10, 1:18, 1:21, 1:25). These are portrayed as being decisive variables in terms of explaining current problems. By extension the resolution of these issues requires nothing more or less than substantial economic investment – implicitly from external sources (Appendix 1:13). For Official Myanmar, this represents the best strategy for resolving the tension in Rakhine state. The problems in Rakhine, in short, are less structural and cultural issues, rather they are material and economic. It's not Myanmar's fault, and certainly not the fault of the new incumbent government. It is the result of years of economic isolation. Of note, previous military rule, while mentioned occasionally, is never targeted for overt criticism. Instead, Rakhine's problems are deliberately linked to underdevelopment throughout Myanmar generally, diluting and mitigating the specific issues in Rakhine with respect to the Rohingya. It is highlighted on several occasions, however, that while similar structural conditions exist elsewhere within Myanmar, only Rakhine appears to have a security issue and only Rakhine has undergone an exodus of population. Herein lies a contradiction: if it were purely a material and

economic issue, then the rest of Myanmar should suffer the same fate as Rakhine. But Official Myanmar is at pains to point out the success it is having in resolving conflicts elsewhere within the Union.

Another component of Official Myanmar's strategy is the theme of 'restoring' or 'restoration' (Appendix 1: 9; Appendix 1:10), implicitly meaning the resolution of the Rakhine issue to a point that represents the *status quo ante*. Official Myanmar now wishes to return the situation in Rakhine to one of 'normalcy' (Appendix 1:8) and 'peace and harmony' (Appendix 1:2; Appendix 1:6), following the 'disruption' to life there as a result of unrest (Appendix 1:15). Nowhere is it admitted that this previous situation was characterized by significant structural discrimination against Rohingya. The *status quo ante* and the ideal future state of Rakhine are depicted as a condition of 'peace and stability' and contrasted sharply with the nominalized 'turmoil' (Appendix 1:8; 1:10) of the present. Returning things to normal, and restoring 'tranquillity' (Appendix 1:15), is the primary consequence of action by the new government in pursuit of resolution. This state-led objective is in explicit and direct contrast to the actions of ARSA, which is ascribed sole responsibility for 'igniting' or 'triggering' the crisis (Appendices 1:6, 1:18). This strategy is a contradictory one given that the official discourse elsewhere also highlights the deep historical roots of differences between communities, which is a clear recognition of problems that antedate the August attacks.

Threading through the statements of Official Myanmar is the fundamental tension between recognizing the importance of international credibility on the one hand and the defence of national sovereignty on the other. On several occasions, Official Myanmar consciously asserts itself as the primary actor with respect to the crisis, asserts the principle of non-interference (Appendix 1:10) and implicitly demands that those interested in helping must render assistance to the government, 'help[ing] Myanmar by joining hands', 'join[ing] us in finding a lasting solution' (Appendix 1:8, 1:10, 1:18). China and Russia are thanked explicitly for recognizing and defending Myanmar's sovereignty and the principle of non-interference (Appendix 1:14). The international community's engagement with Myanmar (and the Rakhine issue) must be 'constructive', 'sustainable', 'meaningful' and 'lasting' (Appendices 1:8, 1:18, 1:22), which is implicitly contrasted with destructive (or unhelpful), superficial, tokenistic and short-term respectively.

The remoteness of Rakhine

The common thread that runs through the commentaries is the allusion that 'something is rotten in the state of Rakhine' (Appendix 1:10).

<div style="text-align: right">

Statement by H.E. U Thaung Tun
United Nations Security Council

</div>

Closely connected to Official Myanmar's assertion of state hegemony, international credibility and domestic political legitimacy is the necessity of constructing the Rakhine crisis as a remote aberration from the wider stability of the remainder of Myanmar. The addition of two more signatory groups to the national peace conference, the minimization of tensions between Burmese and other ethno-religious groups (including non-Rohingya Muslims) along with the reference to press statements released by Muslim associations supporting the government and condemning terrorism, all serve to construct a socio-political landscape wherein Rakhine is an outlier, ignominiously distinguished by its security issues for which Official Myanmar bears no responsibility (Appendix 1:8, 1:25). As Official Myanmar makes clear to international interlocutors: 'the new government in Myanmar inherited a challenging situation in Rakhine' (Appendix 1:10). This statement captures the essence of the government's discursive strategy: the state's abrogation of responsibility as an agent by virtue of the fact that the roots of the crisis pre-dated the government's formation. The situation commanding the attention of the new government was the imperative to 'resolve the longstanding problems of *that* State' (Appendix 1:8, emphasis added). The spatial distance of Rakhine from the political centre of Myanmar is stressed. The situation is challenging insofar as it is a problem to be resolved through benevolent state intervention as a neutral third (and distant) party and not, by implication, one that requires structural reform and cultural adjustment across the body politic of Myanmar in the sense of admitting the Rohingya – *qua* Rohingya – into a national conversation as equal citizens.

In fact, the securitization of the Rakhine crisis forms an overriding imperative with Official Myanmar's statements and these are a core element of the wider strategy of alterity. Six months after the August attacks by ARSA, and while admitting that no attacks had been report-

ed since September 5^(th), Official Myanmar continued to play up the threat of terrorism and security issues (Appendix 1:22). While recognizing (or perhaps conceding) the historical dimension to the Rakhine issue, Official Myanmar is also at pains to undertake a process of de-historicization, which amounts to focusing on recent events and suppressing or ignoring the historical conditions that gave rise to these (Appendix 1:23). This is particularly true of the securitization discourse strategy. Terrorism constitutes a major threat to international security (Appendix 1:23). Official Myanmar, for example, asserts a direct causal link between the displacement of (mostly) Rohingya refugees and the 'recent' attacks (or 'recent violence') by ARSA in August 2017. The latest escalation of violence, Official Myanmar asserts, was 'ignited by the acts of terrorism committed by the extremist group, ARSA' (Appendix 1:7). The coordinated attacks that coincided with the work of the Advisory Commission are foregrounded as being profoundly consequential with respect to the status and plight of the Rohingya while, conversely, the historical and structural conditions endured by the Rohingya are ignored and backgrounded, the actions of the Tatmadaw and the consequences of its 'clearance operations' are reduced to 'collateral damage' (Appendix 1:9).

The alterity strategy is further reinforced by Official Myanmar through its profession of ignorance with regard to the motivations and imperatives of the Rohingya in leaving Rakhine for Bangladesh. As Official Myanmar notes: 'we are concerned by reports that the numbers of Muslims crossing into Bangladesh remain unabated. We would need to find out the reason for this exodus' (Appendix 1:9). The armed attacks (by ARSA), asserts Official Myanmar, 'completely changed' the scenario in Rakhine state. State agency – and therefore responsibility – is underplayed when, for example, Official Myanmar claims that: 'attacks ignited fresh violence in the region, *resulting in significant loss of life*' (Appendix 1:9, emphasis added). 'Security forces have no choice by to suppress terrorism and to restore law and order and protect the innocents' (Appendix 1:23). Whose lives are lost and who took those lives is left undefined. The fact that the majority of lives lost appear to be overwhelmingly Rohingya begs the question as to who is responsible for that.

'Turmoil […] has recently befallen Myanmar's Rakhine', but externally derived reports and accounts of this 'turmoil' are discredited as 'emotional' and amounts to 'malicious and unsubstantiated chatter'

(Appendix 1:10). Such information is contrasted with the more credible 'on the ground' – and by implication - *correct* perspective of the Myanmar government. This despite contradictory contentions elsewhere that the Myanmar authorities are unclear about (and very keen to understand) the imperatives behind the recent exodus of Rohingya to Bangladesh. These discursive tactics within Official Myanmar's wider strategy evince a deliberate cultivation of vagueness and unknowability about the Rakhine crisis.

Kenneth Houston

> We cannot ignore the fact that there are different narratives on what transpired in northern Rakhine state. We must winnow the wheat from the chaff (Appendix 1:13).

The effort by Official Myanmar to control the narrative is telling, given that – by its own admission – it is not in a position to determine the veracity of accounts from 'on the ground'. Combined with persistent deflections with respect to other aspects of Myanmar's transition, such as either problems or positive developments elsewhere, this tactic of unknowability serves to neutralize international criticism. We might refer to this as cultivated ambiguity. Similarly, there is a clear difference in how Official Myanmar represents the reality of the crisis in terms of numbers. The security personnel who lost their lives during the ARSA attacks are numbered and categorized specifically and the loss to their families mentioned (Appendix 1:3). The repatriation of refugees from Bangladesh had, by February 2018, advanced to the point where the government of Myanmar had provided a list of 1,200 people verified for return. By contrast, the multiple casualties among the wider population during the Tatmadaw's efforts to quell unrest and undertake clearance operations is, like the descriptions of these operations, left wholly undefined. Agency and responsibility are nominalized through the use of metonymy, as for example when: 'counter insurgency operations killed hundreds of people'. It is not troops of the Tatmadaw or specific units of the security forces, but the *process* of counter insurgency (COIN) operations. By late September, when already hundreds of thousands of Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh, Official Myanmar alluded vaguely to the fact that 'thousands of people' (Appendix 1:10) had fled.

Rakhine is simultaneously compartmentalized and claimed as part of the wider transitional Myanmar, depending on the specific tactical objective within the wider discourse strategy. It is both exceptional and typical. It suffers from similar conditions to other parts of the nation

and yet there are differences, 'deep rooted' divides (Appendix 1:8, Appendix 1:25) – and yet it is still a question of underdevelopment. It is a part of Myanmar open to day trips but still complex, unknowable and remote – but Official Myanmar knows that international accounts are inaccurate.

The neutral state?

At the core of the Rakhine issue is the failure of the Myanmar state, historically, to render equality and protection to all of its people.[27] In the case of the Rakhine state, this relates specifically to the status of the Rohingya, which in light of the denial of their citizenship amounts to imposed statelessness. In spite of this, Official Myanmar presents itself as the guarantor of the state's political neutrality to ethnic and religious (or ethno-religious) differences within its border. It seeks, in its own words 'the well-being of all communities in Rakhine' (Appendix 1:11). Its task, enunciated throughout multiple statements, is to resolve issues 'between the two communities' in Rakhine, to 'promote religious harmony', to 'build trust between the two communities', to 'change mindsets' (Appendices 1:6, 1:8, 1:10, 1:18, 1:22). Official Myanmar articulates a revisionist process, discursively extricating itself from the internecine tensions in Rakhine and positioning itself not as a causal factor in the perpetuation of persecution against Rohingya but as a distant and benevolent third party pursuing a mediating role in a localized (and remote) dispute. Statements from Official Myanmar throughout this time bracket are replete with this construction of the government as peacemaker, dialogue facilitator and arbiter (Appendix 1:8). Humanitarian aid is being delivered to all displaced people 'without discrimination' (Appendix 1:8, 1:10) and 'peace, security and development' or 'peace and harmony' or 'peace and stability' are all consistently collocated and envisaged as a dividend for 'all communities in Rakhine state' (Appendices 1:6, 1:8, 1:9, 1:10, 1:11). Official Myanmar wishes to foster the 'peaceful coexistence of the communities' (Appendix 1:21). The government is at pains to stress that Myanmar is home to 135 distinct officially recognized ethnic groups and much is made of their diversity, their unique distinctiveness and the fact that they have been 'living in harmony throughout history' (Appendix 1:25).

Despite several repeated claims that the issue in Rakhine is not a case of religious discrimination or conflict between two different faiths, Official Myanmar has been 'engaging interfaith groups' and promoting 'religious harmony' with respect to 'communal tensions in

Rakhine state' (Appendices 1:8, 1:10, 1:13). Reconciliation is invoked in numerous statements, but not between the state and minority groups, but rather between already divided communities in northern Rakhine. This incongruity of denying the ethno-religious/confessional basis of conflict in Rakhine and simultaneously acknowledging the need to engage in interfaith dialogue as a precursor to reconciliation, in addition to the acknowledgment of the ethno-religious roots of the crisis, is comparable with other instances of contradictory discourse. It is very overtly pursuing an ethno-religious reconciliation at ameliorating 'deep mistrust' (Appendix 1:9). But as Myanmar's representative to the Human Rights Council is keen to point out:

> Despite many daunting challenges in ethnic discord and conflicts of the country, the world is focusing most on the situation in Rakhine. One of the reasons is due to the incessant media campaign portraying it as a religious issue. *In fact, the Rakhine issue is not a religious one but a political and economic challenge involving migration, competition over limited resources, poverty and rule of law* (Appendix 1:23, emphasis added).

In essence, the 'problem' of Rakhine, as Official Myanmar frequently characterizes it, is that of a discordant inter-communal conflict, a portrayal that serves to minimize (or even absolve) Official Myanmar of direct responsibility for the state of ethno-religious relations. As the State Counsellor made clear in her statement to the International Court of Justice in December 2019:

> Even before the events of 2016-2017, Muslim, Buddhist and other communities in Rakhine faced what the Kofi Annan advisory Commission described as complex challenges of low development and poverty *rooted in enduring social conflict between the communities* (Appendix 1:25, emphasis added)

Even though pushed to acknowledge the ethno-confessional basis of Rakhine's divisions, alterity is again emphasized, this time between the putatively neutral central government and its ethno-confessionally blind state apparatus on one side in contrast to the more distal and arguably primordial ethno-religious 'communities' of Rakhine. The violence is constructed as an aberration within an otherwise harmonious and functional (if underdeveloped) nation state, despite the need for a peace process. There is much that is positive about Myanmar, and the international community should not focus on this (Appendices 1:8, 1:9, 1:10). Official Myanmar is constructing and positioning itself as

a restorative agent in pursuit of an idealized *status quo ante*, while also seeking to engage in overseeing relationship-building with communal entities that were already divided. It is a contradictory self-refuting discourse, claiming that it is trying to resolve what it does not accept exists and claiming a distance and remoteness that does not accord with its persistent claims of national territorial sovereignty.

What is also significant about this rendering of the Rakhine issue is not so much about what is communicated overtly, but what is marginalized, downplayed or even absent from the version of the Rakhine crisis articulated by Official Myanmar. The most overt instance of this, obviously, is the absence of the term Rohingya from any of the statements issued by Official Myanmar examined here. There is one telling exception: General Hlaing's specific reference to the term 'Rohingya' wherein he asserts that there is no such thing, only Bengali migrants (Appendix 1:24). This singular denial of the term, and the overt assertion by the head of the Tatmadaw, is never defied by the civilian government. There is, in short, a Rohingya shaped hole at the centre of Official Myanmar's public statements. It is a policy of omission that even commanded the compliance of the Advisory Commission led by the late Kofi Annan.[28] But the lacuna and outright suppression of elements of reality in this official discourse goes far beyond the policy around the term 'Rohingya' and the refusal to use it. Official Myanmar alludes to previous arrangements with Bangladesh regarding repatriation (Appendix 1:9). This implicitly acknowledges that, despite the overt efforts at de-historicization by implicating the ARSA attacks of August 2017, there are in fact considerable historical dimensions to this.

When Official Myanmar alluded to the fact that, in Rakhine, 'deep mistrust developed over decades' (Appendix 1:9) the assertion elides over the fact that this 'mistrust' was fostered not only by the military but by the dominant ethnic group within the Myanmar state. Other groups, those also affected by the upheaval in Rakhine, are explicitly mentioned on several occasions (Appendices 1:6, 1:8, 1:9, 1:10). These groups are foregrounded as victims of a comparable magnitude on a par with the unnamed Rohingya and the international community (and international media) is subtly berated for its failure to equivocate the two. The numbers of those killed by ARSA attacks are enumerated, the ethno-religious victims identified. The number of victims of Tatmadaw clearance operations is never given, still less the half to one million Rohingya displaced.

Conclusion

Fundamentally, Myanmar is a transitional state with a profoundly fragile hold on political legitimacy, and one that is ultimately unable to establish genuine distance from the previous military regime. This is not least because the Tatmadaw has effectively set the tone and parameters for what the NLD can say and do. Given electoral and popular sentiment towards the Rohingya it is highly unlikely that the NLD (or any incumbent government) will defy the military. Official Myanmar's strategy of alterity from the past fails because ultimately the past, in the form of the military, continues to intrude on the present. This legitimacy crisis is true of both its international credibility and its domestic constituency legitimacy. From within the traditionally enfranchised population there may well be a sentiment about the loss of established privilege and access to political decision-making. Beyond that category there are others who do not yet see the realization of promised enfranchisement or indeed other strains of self-determination not aligned with the concept of 'Myanmar'. The evident absence of the Rohingya as an explicitly mentioned category within the ambit of the Rakhine issue demonstrates a continued repressive tendency by the transitional government. This defiance of external categorization practices indicates an unwillingness to concede ground on the fundamental nature of the problem in Rakhine and Myanmar as a whole. Official Myanmar faces several key dilemmas simultaneously. First, there is it's need to garner international support, to demonstrate its credentials with respect to transitional progress to the outside world and its conformity to international norms. It is faced with mounting calls to alter the political status quo in relation to a specific minority category, which may be resisted by other centres of power within Myanmar beyond the body politic. But the body politic has admitted these domestic elements into the centre of the nation's political calculus. The efforts to frame the issue in Rakhine as simultaneously a security and development issue – as distinct from a constitutional and cultural one – belies efforts to mould the narrative into a more superficial form. The compartmentalization of Rakhine state, the construction of remoteness from the political centre and the efforts to present the state as an honest broker and neutral arbiter reveal an attempt to distance the state actor from responsibility for the crisis.

It is fair to conclude, therefore, that efforts by the international community to persuade Myanmar to undertake necessary structural

Kenneth Houston

reform to alleviate the plight of the Rohingya has been unsuccessful. In the absence of a frank admission by political leaders in Myanmar of the true nature of the problem, this influence will continue to be compromised. There is no evidence in the data of any recognition that the Rohingya should be accorded the full protection of the Myanmar state and included as citizens with a legitimate political franchise. The fleeting reference to the citizenship issue by the State Counsellor (Appendix 1:8), a minimalist response given the attention it receives in the report of the Advisory Commission, is not replicated elsewhere in the available official statements examined here. Citizenship for the Rohingya has been firmly backgrounded by Official Myanmar. The Rakhine 'problem', as narratively constructed by Official Myanmar, is one of 'extremist terrorists' running amok, inter-communal conflict and lack of development in a remote corner of the union. There is no acceptance of the historical or contemporaneous role of Myanmar's political elites in allowing political disenfranchisement to persist, underpinning popular anti-Rohingya sentiment, creating the conditions of possibility for ARSA, or of justifying wider popular malcontent towards their non-Buddhist minorities.

Through the failure to undertake historic state building that was civic and therefore inclusive of Myanmar's diverse population, early and subsequent statecraft conceded a central pillar of modern democratic government: political legitimacy. The absence of a core civic republican concept and the entrenchment of hegemonic primordial ethno-confessional national identity laid the ground for chauvinistic nationalism and the persecution of Rohingya and other groups. The flawed separation of powers, the absence of civilian control of the military, constitute the Achilles heel of the transitional government. The result is discursive acrobatics on the part of Official Myanmar to balance competing and divergent imperatives of credibility and legitimacy. The consequences for Myanmar's development and its status globally have been significant. The declining political capital of the democracy movement, and that of its figure head in Aung San Suu Kyi, reflects the limited scope within domestic Myanmar politics to orientate the transitional state towards a fully republican reform process. The basis of intra-state conflict with non-Burmese and the deterioration in the treatment of Rohingya are co-extensive with this ethno-confessional dominance. The prognosis for the future, in the absence of an emerging civic understanding of Myanmarese identity, is bleak. It is

necessary for the international community, the UN organization and its ancillary bodies, along with international NGO's and human rights groups to keep the pressure on Official Myanmar. But it must be recognised too that popular and cultural attitudes, along with the residual power of the military, may well ensure that the transformation of Myanmar to a fully inclusive society where its citizens are protected equally will be a lengthy one.

∿

KENNETH HOUSTON is affiliated with Webster University Thailand, Cha-am and Bangkok, and can be reached at *houstonkb@webster.ac.th* or *kenneth.brhouston@gmail.com*.

Appendix 1 – Primary Data

N°	Date	Source
1	Aug 11 2017	Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, 'Press Release on the Situation in Maungdaw' http://www.informationcommittee.gov.mm/en/information-committee-news/government-republic-union-myanmar-ministry-office-state-counsellor-press
2	Aug 25 2017	The Republic of the Union of Myanmar Anti-terrorism Central Committee, Order No 1/2017, Declaring as Terrorist Group https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/968
3	Aug 25 2017	Statement by the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on today' s attacks in Rakhine State https://www.mmtimes.com/news/statement-state-counsellor-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-todays-attacks-rakhine-state.html

4	Aug 26 2017	State leaders take charge after violent attacks in Rakhine State, The Global New Light of Myanmar https://www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com/state-leaders-take-charge-after-violent-attacks-in-rakhine-state/ https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/SC-take-charge.pdf
5	Sept 6 2017	Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Presidential Palace, Statement on Peace, Stability and Rule of Law https://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=briefing-room/statements-and-releases/2017/09/07/id-7662
6	Sept 11 2017	The Situation in Rakhine State https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/mofa-PR-11-sep-2017.pdf
7	Sept 12 2017	Statement by Ambassador H.E. Mr Htin Lynn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Myanmar During the General Debate of the oral update of the High Commission of Human Rights at the 36th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva http://www.myanmarembassydhaka.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/statement-by-UHL-at-36-HRC-12-9-2017-oral-version_3.pdf
8	Sept 19 2017	Speech delivered by her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Government's efforts with regard to National Reconciliation and Peace, NayPyiDaw https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1028

9	Sept 20 2017	Statement by H.E. U Henry Van Thio, Vice President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly https://www.president-office.gov.mm/en/?q=briefing-room/news/2017/09/21/id-7713
10	Sept 28 2017	Statement by H.E. Thaung Tun, National Security Advisor to the Union Government of Myanmar at the meeting on the situation in Myanmar in the United Nations Security Council https://www.moi.gov.mm/moi:eng/?q=news/14/11/2018/id-11648
11	Sept 29 2017	Statement by Mr Hau Khan Sum, Ambassador / Charge d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Myanmar at the 36th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Geneva https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Statment-DPR-29-sep-2017.pdf
12	Oct 9 2017	USDP: Rakhine needs support, Myanmar Times https://www.mmtimes.com/news/usdp-rakhine-needs-support.html
13	Oct 13 2017	Statement by H.E. U Thaung Tun, National Security Advisor to the Union Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the ARRIA Formula Meeting of the Security Council on the Situation in Myanmar (Co-hosted by France and the United Kingdom) https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1091

14	Oct 18 2017	Senior General thanks China for Rakhine Support, Myanmar Times https://www.mmtimes.com/news/senior-general-thanks-china-rakhine-support.html
15	Oct 27 2017	Peace, stability restored in northern Rakhine, some troops withdrawn, Myanmar Times https://www.mmtimes.com/news/peace-stability-restored-northern-rakhine-some-troops-withdrawn.html
16	Nov 6 2017	Press Statement by the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor on UN Security Council Presidential Statement https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1241
17	Nov 23 2017	The Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the People' s Republic of Bangladesh signed the Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State. https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1371
18	Dec 5 2017	Statement by Ambassador H.E. Mr Htin Lynn, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Myanmar at the 27th Special Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Consideration and Action on A/HRC/S-27/L.1, Geneva https://www.statecounsellor.gov.mm/en/node/1439
19	Jan 25 2018	Statement by H.E. U Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations Office in Geneva at the 70th Anniversary of Independence Day https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/STATEMENT-BY-PR-for-Independence-Day-25-january-2018.pdf

20	Feb 13 2018	Myanmar Permanent Representative to the United Nations delivered a statement at Security Council on Governments Efforts in Rakhine State https://www.mofa.gov.mm/myanmar-permanent-representative-to-the-united-nations-delivered-a-statement-at-security-council-on-governments-efforts-in-rakhine-state/
21	Feb 27 2018	Statement by H.E. U Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the High Level Segment of the 37th Session of Human Rights Council, Geneva https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Statement-UKT-27-Feb-HRC.pdf See also: https://www.president-office.gov.mm/ en/?q=issues/rakhine-state-affairs/id-8530
22	Mar 12 2018	Statement by H.E. Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative of Myanmar at the Interactive Dialogue on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Statement-by-PR-at-ID-with-SR-and-FFM-12-March-2018.pdf
23	Mar 23 2018	Statement by H.E. Mr Htin Lynn, Permanent Representative of Myanmar at the consideration of the draft resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar https://www.myanmargeneva.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/PR-Statement-EOV-before-Vote-23-March-2018.pdf

Pseudo Neutrality in Intra-State Conflict

24	Mar 26 2018	Snr Gen Min Aung Hlaing' s Armed Forces Day Speeches, Reuters https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/ snr-gen-min-aung-hlaings-armed-forces-day-speeches.html
25	Dec 11 2019	Statement by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar as Agent before the International Court of Justice The Hague https://www.mofa.gov.mm/statement-by-h-e-daw-aung-san-suu-kyi-state-counsellor-and-union-minister-for-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-the-union-of-myanmar-as-agent-before-the-international-court-of-justice-the-hague-1/

Endnotes

1 See the Human Rights Council report, the General Assembly Report. Human Rights Council (2017) 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar' (A/HRC/34/67). Also, General Assembly (2017) 'Situation of human rights in Myanmar: note by the Secretary-General' (A/72/82). See also Muhammad Abdul Bari (2018) *The Rohingya Crisis: A people facing extinction*, Leicestershire: Kube Publishing. Azeem Ibrahim (2016) *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's hidden genocide*, London: Hurst & Company.

2 An insightful discussion of this specific question is explored by Kazi Fahmida Farzana (2017) *Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees: Contested identity and belonging*, London: Palgrave Macmillan (especially Chapter 3).

3 For an overview, see Matthew J Walton and Susan Hayward (2014) *Contesting Buddhist Narratives: Democratization, Nationalism, and Communal Violence in Myanmar*, Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies. Also, David I Steinberg (2010) *Burma/Myanmar: What everyone needs to know*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. N. Ganesan and Kyaw Yin Hlaing (2007) *Myanmar: State, society and ethnicity*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

4 Medicins Sans Frontier (2018) 'No one was left' – Death and Violence Against the Rohingya in Rakhine State, Myanmar. International Crisis

Group (2016) 'Myanmar: A New Muslim Insurgency in Rakhine State,' Asia Report No 283, Brussels: International Crisis Group.

5   Mohshin Habib, Christine Jubb, Salahuddin Ahmad, Masudur Rahman and Henri Pallard (2018) **Forced migration of Rohingya: the untold experience**, Ontario International Development Agency, Canada.

6   Andrew Selth (2008) 'Burma's 'saffron revolution' and the limits of international influence,' *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 62 (3), pp281-297.

7   Syeda Naushin Parini (2013) 'The Crisis of the Rohingya as a Muslim Minority in Myanmar and Bilateral Relations with Bangladesh,' *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 33 (2), pp281-297.

8   See Melissa Crouch (2018) 'Dictators, democrats, and constitutional dialogue: Myanmar's constitutional tribunal', *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 16, p421-446.

9   On this issue, see Melissa Crouch (2015) 'Constructing Religion by Law in Myanmar,' *The Review of Faith in International Affairs*, 13 (4), p1-11

10 On qualitative-interpretive methodology see Cecelia Lynch (2014) *Interpreting International Politics*, London: Routledge. See also, Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.) (2006) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, London: ME Sharpe.

11 Frank Burton and Pat Carlen (1977) 'Official Discourse,' *Economy & Society* 6 (3), pp377-407. Frank Burton and Pat Carlen (1979) *Official Discourse: On discourse analysis, government publications, ideology and the state*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

12 Burton and Carlen (1979) Chapter 1.

13 Weldes, J., 2006. 'High Politics and Low Data: Globalization Discourses and Popular Culture.' *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn.* New York: M E Sharpe, pp. 176-186.

14   A good example of this, and indeed its importance to the current debate, is the recent Reuters special investigation into Facebook hate commentary on the Rohingya by Myanmar citizens. https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/myanmar-facebook-hate/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook.

15 Weldes, J., 2006. 'High Politics and Low Data: Globalization Discourses and Popular Culture.'.

16 For an overview and application of CDA see Norman Fairclough (2010) *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language (2nd Edition)*, London: Routledge. Also, Norman Fairclough (2003) *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, London: Routledge.

17 See David Machin and Andrea Mayr (2012) **How to do Critical Discourse Analysis: A multimodal introduction**, London: Sage.

18 Marco Bunte and Clara Portella (2012) 'Myanmar: the beginning of reforms and the end of sanctions,' **GIGA Focus International Edition 3**, Hamburg: German Institute of Global and Areas Studies. Mary Callahan (2012) The Opening of Burma: the generals loosen their grip,' **Journal of Democracy** 23(4), 120-131. Susan Hayward & Iselin Frydenlund (2019) 'Religion, Secularism, and the Pursuit of Peace in Myanmar,' **The Review of Faith & International Affairs**, 17:4, 1-11.

19 Robert Putnam (1988) 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games', *International Organization*, 42 (3), pp427-460.

Kenneth Houston

20 BBC News (October 2015) 'Myanmar's Ma Ba Tha Monks flex their political muscle' Jonah Fisher. Available at https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34463455.

21 On this see 'The economic interests of the Myanmar military', United Nations Human Rights Council Report A/HRC/42/CRP.3. Available at https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/MyanmarFFM/Pages/EconomicInterestsMyanmarMilitary.aspx.

22 See 'Myanmar state counsellor stresses promoting interfaith dialogue to gain lasting peace' Mizzima http://mizzima.com/article/myanmar-state-counsellor-stresses-promoting-interfaith-dialogue-gain-lasting-peace.

23 Under the State Counsellor's office a National Reconciliation and Peace Center has been established. See http://www.nrpc.gov.mm/en/.

24 On this, see the extensive study published by the Asia Foundation. Thomas Carr (2018) **Supporting the Transition: understanding aid to Myanmar since 2011**, Asia Foundation, San Francisco CA.

25 See International Crisis Group (2016).

26 See Reuters report.

27 Azeem Ibrahim (2016) *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's hidden genocide*.

28 Commission (2017) *Towards a Peaceful, Fair and Prosperous Future for the People of Rakhine*, Advisory Commission on Rakhine State.

S. P. Huntington's Civilizations Twenty-Five Years On

Jan Slavíček

The study is based on the concept of Huntington's civilizations. They were used as a methodological basis for an analysis of the changes in their geopolitical power between 1995–2020 with the following conclusions: 1) The large population growth of 1995-2020 has been driven primarily by African, Islamic and Hindu civilizations, 2) Economically, the unquestionable superiority of Western civilization has remained, although its share has declined. A large economic growth has been mainly seen in the Confucian and Hindu civilizations, 3) Of the core countries, the USA, Russia, and China match the status of superpowers, while for India it seems to be only a matter of time, 4) Most of the civilizations are economically highly compact and their compactness has increased over the last 25 years (except of African civilization) and 5) The Western, Hindu and Latin-American civilizations are politically highly compact. Conversely, the African, Islamic, Orthodox and Confucian civilizations show low cohesion. The Muslim civilization is the least compact – politically as well as economically. 6. The superpowers (United States, China, Russia and India) will remain or become the most important players in the multipolar world of the 21st century. However, it is a question whether the most important issue will be the relations of the Western and non-Western world or the mutual relations among the other three (actual or rising) superpowers.

In 2018, 25 years have passed from the moment when Samuel P. Huntington published his famous article in *Foreign Affairs*[1]. His study has aroused the greatest debates and has become the most frequently cited since the publication of the 'long telegram'[2] at the very beginning of the Cold War. Huntington elaborated his opinions in his still more famous monograph *The Clash of Civilizations*.[3] In this book he presented his relatively compact theory of the division of the world after the end of the Cold War.

Samuel P. Huntington divided the world into altogether 9 civilizations in his work.[4] Their core (i.e. what primarily connects and defines them) were religions. These civilizations were: Western, Slavic-Orthodox, Confucian (= Sinic = Chinese), Hindu, Buddhist[5], African, Islamic (= Muslim), Latin-American and Japanese. With the last two mentioned, Huntington admitted a certain confusion. Latin America has the same religion as Western civilization and its countries have been relatively close to it even in terms of values. Despite that, Huntington distinguished it as a specific civilization. Furthermore, Japanese civilization comprises only one country. It could therefore also be a 'lone state', thus a country not belonging to any civilization[6], but considering its economic importance Huntington took it as an independent civilization[7]. The author has decided to respect these conclusions by Huntington and has proceeded in accord with them.

Huntington's concept has become the target of strong criticism. Most critics addressed his paradigm of civilizational conflicts as a growing problem of international relations in the 21st century.[8] However, civilizational conflicts are not the focus of this paper. On the other hand, regarding to this study the following three objections are important: 1) Huntington's theory is not accurate, it is simplifying and generalizing, for example the boundaries between civilizations cannot be defined that rigid; 2) It disregards such phenomena as interdependency in international relations or cultural exchange; 3) Most importantly, the cohesion of particular civilizations is very low and a lot of countries have often better relations with states from another civilization than with members of their own. For example, Saudi Arabia is hostile to Iran while it is the ally of the USA. The relations between

China and several members of Confucian civilization are quite poor as well (Taiwan, Vietnam). The same can be stated about Russia and its several neighbors, to mention only three examples. What is even more important, the cohesion of several civilizations has not strengthened in the last decades – on the contrary, it has weakened to such an extent that it starts calling Huntington's whole theory into question.[9] All three points are correct, at least partially. Regarding the first one, Huntington himself admitted that being a model, his theory is (and must be) simplifying[10]. Second, interdependency and cultural exchange are closely related to globalization, which is one of his important points. Globalization can bring the people (and nations) 'closer' to each other. On the other hand, it can also strengthen the perception of distinctions and differences. The third argument is probably the most valid and must be considered seriously - Huntington's division can be accepted as a basis for a quantitative analysis of geopolitical power despite the fact that this division is not exact. Furthermore, the last part of the article analyzes a part of this problem (the compactness of Huntington's civilizations).

Jan Slavíček

Besides all the mentioned objections, it is clearly visible that Huntington's concept is not purely geopolitical. Its world's division is based on religions and cultures, while geopolitics is based on geography. The 'classical' recent work of the latter is *Geopolitics* by Saul Bernard Cohen[11]. In this book, the world after the end of the Cold War is divided into three geostrategic realms: the maritime realm, the Eurasian continental realm and the East Asia realm. Each of them includes several geopolitical regions. They are North and Central America, South America, maritime Europe and the Maghreb, and the Asia-Pacific Rim for the maritime realm; heartlandic Russia, Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus for the continental realm; and mainland China and Indochina for the East Asia realm. Besides these, an independent South Asia region exists. Under the leadership of India, it can evolve into the fourth realm in the future. The Cohen's division of world involves also two shatterbelts (regions with great internal instability, which is furthermore multiplied by imperial politics of the great powers) – The Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa.[12]

Nevertheless, regarding the division of the world, if we compare Huntington's and Cohen's books, there are significant resemblances between these two theories. The biggest difference is that in Cohen's division, the Islamic civilization of Huntington is split into sever-

al regions: The Asia Pacific Rim (esp. Indonesia), the maritime Europe and the Maghreb, and the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa shatterbelts. The Buddhist civilization is a part of East-Asia realm (without Mongolia) and Japan belongs to the Asia-Pacific Rim. While Huntington's division of American continent is North America vs. Central and South America, in Cohen's book Central America is a part of the North American region. Besides that, the other boundaries are approximately the same: The Maritime realm corresponds to the Western, Latin-American and Japanese civilizations, and the Eurasian continental realm to the Orthodox civilization. The East-Asia realm is roughly the same as the Sinic civilization of Huntington, while the South Asia region matches the Hindu and the Sub-Saharan Africa shatterbelt corresponds to the African civilization.[13]

I am fully aware of the mentioned flaws of the *Clash of Civilizations*. On the other hand, I simultaneously believe, there are still useful lessons that can be taken from Huntington's work – his critics do believe this as well.[14] However, the aim of this article is not an analysis of Huntington's theory itself. In the same way, the article does not intend to further develop Huntington's theory. I have adopted his division of the world and, based on that, I have conducted my own statistical analysis and quantitative research based particularly on the official data of various databases, such as those of International Monetary Fund (IMF), Military Balance, Globalfirepower (GFP), SIPRI or Uppsala University.

The article analyzes the transformations undergone by the geopolitical power of the individual civilizations defined by Huntington in 1995–2020[15]. The analysis focuses on a comparison of the basic indicators of geopolitical power. In the first part, it deals with the populations and economy (GDP[16]) of the individual civilizations, as well as their shares of the global numbers. The military factors on the level of civilizations have not been dealt with, because the estimates of military power of a number of countries are difficult to obtain (in some cases practically inaccessible), hard to verify and created by different methodologies.

The second part of the article is devoted to the geopolitical power of the 'core' or 'leading' countries of the individual civilizations. Their area in combination with the population, performance of the economy (GDPn and GDPp) and military force is analyzed here. The deductions have been driven from various statistics publicly accessible databases.[17] The focus is primarily on 1) conventional military power, 2) the num-

ber of nuclear warheads and 3) Global Firepower Index. Based on this data, the countries are then categorized into first order states (superpower), second order states (power) or third order states (regional power) according to key criteria that have been arbitrarily set in advance.[18]

The last part of the article focuses on the compactness of the individual civilizations, both economic (the differences between the richest and poorest countries) and political (the relations between the countries within the civilizations).

The fundamental questions which the study has broached are: What have been the main geopolitical developmental trends of Huntington's civilizations over the last 25 years? Which civilizations have strengthened, and which have visibly weakened – and what have been the reasons for these changes? Although simplified, it has been possible to capture at least some developmental trends of world geopolitics using Huntington's model as a basis.

Definition of the civilizations

Huntington operates with several crucial categories of countries. Primarily, it is the core or leading state which is the most important country, or the leader (hegemon) of the given civilization. For some civilizations, it is indisputable (for example, India in the case of Hindu civilization); with others, there are more aspirants (in Western civilization, the USA, and possibly the EU if we took it as a whole). Finally, for some civilizations, there is no leading country (for example, in Buddhist civilization).[19]

Another term used is 'cleft country'. It is a state through whose territory a border of two or more civilizations runs and various parts of the population fall to diverse civilizations. In the past, it was a state such as Yugoslavia (Western, Orthodox and Muslim civilizations), today, for instance Ukraine (its western and central parts belong to Western civilization, while its east to the Orthodox). These states have tended to have a fundamental problem with internal stability and Huntington anticipated their huge problems or even collapse in the future[20] – and for example the developments in Sudan have proved him essentially correct.

The last term is a 'torn country'. This country belongs historically and culturally to one civilization, but its elites have tried to change this in the long term and to become a member of another civilization. Turkey or Mexico have been presented as examples, which have tried

to become parts of Western civilization. According to Huntington, a change of civilization membership is practically impossible and condemned to failure.[21]

The precondition for analyzing the geopolitical power of civilizations is their enumeration. However, in many cases, it is quite complicated to categorize individual countries in a civilization. In principle, I have respected the original concept of Samuel Huntington, although the boundaries between civilizations have shifted to a certain extent (this is mainly related to shifting the borders of the Islamic civilization in Africa further to the south). For example, Suriname and Guyana are considered cleft countries split between the African and Hindu civilizations, even though they have a significant Muslim population and are also members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Perhaps the only change from the original Huntington concept is the inclusion of Israel into Western civilization.

In 2019, the UNO had 193 member countries, 2 countries with observer status (the Vatican and Palestine), several dozen dependent territories and several states whose sovereignty is to a greater or lesser degree in question. The well-known cases are Taiwan, Northern Cyprus, Western Sahara, Kosovo, or the separatist regions of the neighbors of the Russian Federation. In terms of methodology, the study counts countries that are members of the IMF or send data to the organization (namely, Taiwan, Puerto Rico, Kosovo and autonomous regions of the PRC – Macao and Hong Kong). On the contrary, the dependent territories, as well as some European microstates (Andorra, Lichtenstein, Monaco) and further the Vatican and Palestine have not been included into the individual civilizations. North Korea and Cuba have been omitted as well.[22]

The presented data cannot be taken with absolute precision, the actual situation can differ in terms of details. On the other hand, they can show relatively precisely the overall power of the individual civilizations (as defined by Samuel Huntington), particularly in the comparative perspective. The world civilizations were divided in this way:

1. African: 33 countries, predominantly of Sub-Saharan Africa, some adjacent island states, as well as two South American states (Guyana and Suriname). Some countries have been placed in the category of 'cleft'.[23]
2. Buddhist: 7 countries of East Asia.[24]
3. Hindu: 4 countries, of which two (in South America) are cleft.[25]

4. Japanese: the only civilization comprised of a lone country, namely Japan.
5. Sinic (Confucian): 6 countries in East Asia (of which one is cleft) and 2 autonomous regions as well.[26]
6. Latin-American: 22 countries from both American continents, of which one is cleft.[27]
7. Islamic: 52 states, predominantly from North Africa, the Near/Middle East and Southeast Asia. Some countries are cleft.[28]
8. Orthodox: 15 countries of the Eurasia, including two cleft countries.[29]
9. Western: 43 countries mainly from the Euro-Atlantic and Pacific areas. Three of these countries were classified as cleft.[30]

Jan Slavíček

Apart from the above-mentioned civilizations, there is a number of 'lone'states and countries that are difficult to classify.[31]

Development of the population and economic power of civilizations in 1995–2020[32]

To compare the transformations of the geopolitical power of the individual civilizations over the last 25 years, the article analyses their shares in the world economy and population. An overview of the development of the population is provided in the following table 1.

Table 1. Populations of the individual civilizations (in mil. of people and percentual change) between 1995 and 2020[33]

Civilization	Year		Change 1995 → 2020	
	1995	2020	abs.	%
AFR	343,23	685,40	+342,17	+99,69%
BDH	95,42	171,50	+76,09	+79,74%
CNF	1 357,73	1 587,77	+230,04	+16,94%
HIN	958,98	1 400,55	+441,57	+46,05%
ISL	1 014,12	1 680,78	+666,67	+65,74%
JAP	125,44	125,75	+0,31	+0,25%
LAT	455,33	616,45	+161,11	+35,38%
ORT	255,61	252,57	-3,03	-1,19%
WST	841,49	989,36	+147,87	+17,57%
World	5 751,47	7 795,48	+2 044,01	+35,54%

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019); United Nations (2017) 'World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision. United Nations, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,' <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> (accessed on 12 August 2018)

A quick glance at the table reveals fundamental differences in the relative speed of population increase. The overall growth of the world population in 1995–2020 is estimated at more than two billion people, thus by more than a third. However, it is very unevenly distributed among the individual civilizations. Among those growing faster than the average are the Hindu but especially the Islamic (with a growth of almost 66 percent) and the Buddhist civilizations (almost 80 percent of growth). African civilization then completely stands out where an almost doubling of the population is expected over only a 25-year period of time.[34] The growth of the population of Latin America is expected to be equally as quick as of the world. The rest of the world, on the contrary, should grow more slowly and its share in the world population should thus decline. This is the case of the Western and Confucian civilization, the population growth of which is anticipated to slow very rapidly. Actual stagnation is evident with Japanese civilization and a decline of the population has affected the Orthodox civilization.[35] The trends described above are confirmed also by Table 2. It indicates a relatively rapid decline of the shares of the Confucian, Japanese, Orthodox and Western civilizations. The share of the Latin American civilization remains relatively stable. On the contrary, the shares of the African and Islamic civilizations have risen swiftly, and the Hindu and Buddhist civilizations more slowly (by the Buddhist civilization the reason is its marginal share of world population despite its rapid growth).

Table 2. Development of the shares of the civilizations in the world population in 1995–2020

Year	Share of the civilization in the world population (percentage)									
	AFR	BDH	CNF	HIN	ISL	JAP	LAT	ORT	**WST**	**TOT**
1995	5,97%	1,66%	23,61%	16,67%	17,63%	2,18%	7,92%	4,44%	14,63%	94,71%
2000	6,39%	2,40%	23,16%	17,15%	18,24%	2,06%	8,03%	4,24%	14,15%	95,83%
2005	6,94%	2,35%	22,48%	17,46%	19,67%	1,95%	8,05%	3,90%	13,76%	96,57%
2010	7,45%	2,30%	21,71%	17,65%	20,43%	1,83%	8,05%	3,65%	13,40%	96,47%
2015	8,15%	2,25%	21,02%	17,77%	20,83%	1,72%	8,01%	3,43%	13,01%	96,18%
2020	8,79%	2,20%	20,37%	17,97%	21,56%	1,61%	7,91%	3,24%	12,69%	96,34%

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019); United Nations (2017)

The comparison of changes in the nominal gross domestic product of individual civilizations is different from that of the population (Table 3 below). In the quarter century between 1995 and 2020, the share

of Western civilization in global GDPn has declined by ten percent. However, its position as the leader of the global economy remains indisputable and it is expected to generate still more than half of the world's economic production in 2020. Japan's share has fallen sharply (from approximately 17.5 percent in 1995 to ca 6 percent in 2020).[36] On the other hand, Confucian civilization has experienced rapid growth (from not quite 6 percent in 1995 to more than 20 percent estimated for 2020). The share of the Hindu civilization has grown quite rapidly, but it must be taken into account that growth started from a very low base, and that the share of global GDPn is also estimated to be relatively low for 2020 (roughly 3.5 percent). The other civilizations have grown more slowly or their share has stagnated (Latin American civilization).

Table 3. Development of the shares of the civilizations in global GDPn in 1995–2020

Year	Share of the civilization in the global GDPn (percentage)									
	AFR	BDH	CNF	HIN	ISL	JAP	LAT	ORT	**WST**	**TOT**
1995	1,13%	0,62%	5,75%	1,20%	4,97%	17,58%	6,10%	1,89%	60,66%	99,89%
2000	0,92%	0,48%	6,97%	1,43%	5,86%	14,44%	6,50%	1,60%	61,67%	99,88%
2005	1,22%	0,51%	8,20%	1,78%	6,11%	10,00%	5,69%	2,95%	63,41%	99,87%
2010	1,49%	0,70%	12,26%	2,62%	8,10%	8,63%	7,65%	3,85%	54,55%	99,84%
2015	1,48%	0,79%	18,52%	2,85%	8,31%	5,88%	7,02%	2,93%	52,04%	99,82%
2020	1,41%	0,84%	20,35%	3,57%	7,83%	5,95%	6,02%	2,93%	50,57%	99,48%

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019)

The comparison of the nominal GDP of the individual civilizations turns out relatively clear-cut. However, if we compare the GDPp (Table 4 below), we obtain a rather different picture. First, this parameter allows us to identify the advanced civilizations – i.e. those in which the GDPp is only a little higher or similar (Confucian and Latin American civilizations) or even lower than the GDPn (Western but mainly the Japanese civilization). Their counterparts are poorer civilizations, essentially made up of developing countries. In those, GDPp is substantially higher than GDPn (Buddhist, Orthodox, African, but predominantly Islamic and Hindu civilizations). In other words – the actual economic productivity of these civilizations is higher than it would seem based on the nominal calculation.

Second, the overall development trends of some civilizations differ considerably when both parameters are used. Confucian, Islamic,

and Hindu civilizations have been growing more slowly than the GD-Pn-based method suggested but the decline of the share of Japanese civilization is also slower (simultaneously, its weight in the world is also significantly lower than by GDPn). On the contrary, the reduction of the share of the Western civilization seems to be faster. The development of the Latin American and Orthodox civilizations is interesting. With the nominal parameter they have either stagnated (the first mentioned) or grown slowly (the latter mentioned). When the recalculation to purchasing power parity is used, both have recorded a drop of their share; this trend is even more obvious in the Latin American civilization.

Table 4. Development of the shares of the civilizations in global GDPp in 1995–2020

Year	Share of the civilization in the global GDPp (percentage)									
	AFR	BDH	CNF	HIN	ISL	JAP	LAT	ORT	**WST**	**TOT**
1995	1,83%	1,28%	9,01%	3,80%	12,77%	7,77%	9,56%	5,40%	48,38%	99,80%
2000	1,85%	1,25%	10,77%	4,23%	12,70%	6,82%	9,17%	4,97%	48,03%	99,78%
2005	1,97%	1,39%	13,30%	4,84%	13,67%	5,98%	8,60%	5,54%	44,48%	99,77%
2010	2,13%	1,47%	17,57%	6,00%	14,36%	5,02%	8,62%	5,46%	39,13%	99,75%
2015	2,23%	1,53%	20,74%	7,01%	14,66%	4,44%	8,15%	4,96%	36,01%	99,72%
2020	2,11%	1,59%	23,36%	8,45%	14,71%	3,93%	7,04%	4,63%	33,73%	99,56%

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019)

To sum up the development of the shares of the individual civilizations on the global economy in 1995–2020: First, the shares of Western and Japanese civilizations have been declining at a relatively fast pace. Second, a sharp increase in the share has been achieved in the Confucian civilization category (primarily but not only thanks to the spectacular economic development of the PRC). Third, the African, Buddhist, Latin American and Orthodox civilizations are among those stagnating or only gradually increasing their share. Fourth, the Islamic and Hindu civilizations'shares have grown somewhat more quickly but it is necessary to take into account that they started from a relatively low base. However, particularly in the case of the Hindu civilization, a lot of economists agree, that it has signs of becoming the economic leader (or co-leader) of the world in the future.[37]

The trends indicated above are also essentially confirmed by Table 5. It shows the changes of the GDP of the individual civilizations between 1995 and 2020. Whereas the GDPn of the entire world has

Table 5. GDPn and GDPp of the individual civilization civilizations 1995–2020

Civilization	GDPn (USD bn.)				GDPp (CID bn.)			
	Year		Change 1995→ 2020		Year		Change 1995→ 2020	
	1995	2020	abs.	percent	1995	2020	abs.	percent
AFR	350	1 301	+951	+271,29%	702	3 169	+2 467	+351,14%
BDH	193	778	+585	+303,26%	490	2 389	+1 899	+387,78%
CNF	1 782	18 789	+17 007	+954,56%	3 455	35 077	+31 622	+915,27%
HIN	372	3 295	+2 923	+785,10%	1 456	12 695	+11 239	+771,67%
ISL	1 540	7 227	+5 687	+369,38%	4 896	22 086	+17 190	+351,12%
JAP	5 449	5 495	+46	+0,85%	2 979	5 896	+2 917	+97,91%
LAT	1 891	5 559	+3 668	+193,99%	3 666	10 579	+6 913	+188,58%
ORT	587	2 706	+2 120	+361,28%	2 071	6 959	+4 887	+235,95%
WST	18 807	46 682	+27 875	+148,22%	18 550	50 657	+32 107	+173,09%
World	31 003	92 310	+61 307	+197,74%	38 343	150 169	+111 826	+291,64%

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019)

approximately tripled, there are clear and profound differences among the individual civilizations. Hindu (+ 785 percent) and Confucian (+ 955 percent) civilizations have experienced an enormous boom. African, Buddhist, Islamic and Orthodox civilizations have grown rather more slowly, yet significantly faster than the world as a whole. The growth of the Latin American civilization (+ 194 percent) has been average. Overall, 6 of Huntington's 9 civilizations have grown economically faster than the world average. On the other hand, this has been compensated by the slower growth of Western civilization (+ 148 percent) and, above all, the fall of the Japanese economy (according to the estimates, its nominal GDP in 2020 should be only 1 percent higher than in 1995!).

A more plastic image is rendered when GDPp is used. First of all, world economic growth has been noticeably faster (+ 292 percent vs. + 198 percent). It confirms the strong lead in the development of the Confucian and Hindu civilizations (+ 915 percent and + 772 percent). Then there is a group of civilizations that remain above the world average, but their growth rate has been approximately 2 – 3 times slower than the previous two. They are the African (+ 351 percent), Buddhist (+ 388 percent) and Islamic (+ 351 percent) civilizations. The Orthodox (+ 236 percent), Latin American (+ 189 percent) and Western (+ 173 percent) civilizations have achieved lower-than-average GDP growth

rates. The slowest development has been experienced by Japanese civilization (+ 98 percent). However, there is not a decline as with nominal GDP.

Geopolitical power of core countries

As was already mentioned, an important principle of Huntington's division of the world is the concept of so-called leading or core countries. This country is a hegemon of the civilization, i.e. the other member-states are to a greater or lesser degree dependent on it, or must in essence take into account its interests. The concept of leading states became Huntington's groundwork on a proposal for a reform of the UN Security Council.[38] From the point of view of geopolitical power, the following civilizations have a clear hegemon: Japanese (Japan, of course, could be seen as a 'lone country' as stated above), Confucian (People's Republic of China), Hindu (India) and Orthodox (Russian Federation). The situation is rather more complicated in the remaining five civilizations. In the case of Western civilization, the undoubtable hegemon in terms of military strength is the Unites States of America, but in terms of economics it shares this position with the EU (considering the EU as a geopolitical whole as Huntington himself did). For the purposes of this study, only the US is counted as the hegemon of Western civilization.

The problem of the concept of a leading state arises clearly with the remaining four civilizations. In the case of Buddhist civilization, all of the countries are geopolitically relatively weak and thus they do not meet the criteria to play the role of a hegemon. I have decided, within a simplification, to designate the country with the most economic strength as the leading country of this civilization – Thailand.[39]

In the three remaining civilizations, there is a problem of determining a hegemon at all. Therefore, more countries from each civilization have been included, because either their position of hegemon is disputed (e.g. Brazil) or they are alternative candidates for this position (e.g. Argentina). In African civilization, two strongest countries have been chosen – South Africa and Nigeria.[40] In the case of Latin America, Brazil would be the natural candidate, but it is the only Lusophone country of this civilization, which is a significant barrier to its leadership. On the contrary, the two Hispanophone candidates (Mexico and Argentina) are substantially weaker geopolitically and Mexico, according to Huntington, is moreover an example of a torn country.

This problem is even more intense in the Muslim civilization. Indonesia would be the natural candidate here (the country with the largest population and economy), but it lacks the ambition. In contrast, there are three countries in the Middle East with that ambition – Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran.[41] Their ambitions rely on different bases. Saudi Arabia is the cradle of Islam, one of the wealthiest countries and the world's largest producer of oil. Turkey is one of the most modern and most secularized (and thus closest to the West) countries of the civilization. Iran has a large population and also economic potential. The problem is that the relations among these countries are very tense to hostile in the long term. Saudi Arabia is religiously very conservative and Sunnite, whereas Turkey is modernized and secular and Iran is a Shiite country. Pakistan, which has one of the largest armies of the Muslim civilization and the only one with its own nuclear weapons, also cannot be forgotten when we mention aspirations to lead the civilization.

Some categories must be set out to assess the strength of the individual leading countries. These are the superpower, power and regional power categories, similar to Cohen's first, second and third order states.[42] The membership of each country in the relevant group has then been judged according to four chosen and measurable criteria[43]:

1. Geopolitical position: It is based on the sum of the area[44] and population expressed by the ratio to the size of the whole world. It starts from the fact that extensive territory and a large population are indispensable for a strong country and they are the base of the other parameters (military might, economy).[45]

2. Economy: It is measured by the share of world GDP (both in nominal and in terms of purchasing power parity). The country must achieve a higher fixed stake in one of these categories and a lower fixed stake in the second category at the same time.[46]

3. Number of nuclear warheads: The ownership of nuclear weapons makes a country in every case important or at least a non-ignorable player in international relations.[47]

4. Conventional military force[48]: It consists of a combination of military personnel[49], the number of combat aircraft[50], armored combat vehicles[51], naval power[52] and Global Firepower Index (GFPI).

Table 6. Parameters for inclusion of the countries in the categories of geopolitical power

Indicator	Superpower	Power	Regional power
Geopolitical position	> 10 %	> 3.33 %	≤ 3.33 %
Economic productivity	> 15 % and > 5 %	> 5 % and > 1.67 %	≤ 5 % and ≤ 1.67 %
Number of nuclear warheads	> 1,000	> 0	0
Military personnel	> 2,000,000 people	> 666 000 people	≤ 666,000 people
Military aircraft	> 1 200	> 400	≤ 400
Armoured combat vehicles	> 15,000	> 5,000	≤ 5000
Aircraft carriers + submarines	> 2	> 0	0
GFPI	< 0,1	< 0,3	≥ 0,3

The core countries (incl. the potential and disputed) are in table 7. Moreover, all of the world superpowers and powers are included.[53] The ***underlined bold italic parameters*** fulfill the criteria of superpower, the ***bold italic*** are the criteria of the power and the **bold** parameters are close to match the criteria of power (min. 90 percent achieved).

What could be expected subconsciously clearly arises from the table. The superpowers in the combination of area and population are China, India, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. While Australia, Canada, Brazil and Indonesia are among the powers, their chances for a quick move to a higher category are relatively low. Economically, the superpowers are the PRC and the USA. Japan and India can be counted among the powers. Germany is close to 'power'status (but according to decreasing share of Western civilization in the world economy, it is unlikely that Germany would become a power in this parameter). The nuclear superpowers are the USA and Russia, whereas the powers are the remaining countries with nuclear capability: United Kingdom, France, India, Pakistan, PRC, Israel and North Korea.[56]

In conventional weapons, PRC, Russia and the USA have a full superpower status, and India is close to it. India is also the only fully-fledged power, i.e. meeting all the necessary criteria in conventional weapons. The countries close to this position (matching or getting close to four of the five parameters) can also be included into powers –

Table 7. Geopolitical power of leading countries[54] of the individual civilizations in 2015[55]

Country	Geopolitical position		Economy		NW	Conventional military power				
	AR (%)	POP (%)	GDPn (%)	GDPp (%)		MP	CA	ACV	ACS	GFPI (2019)
ARG	1,84	0,58	0,86	0,77	0	106	146	1 135	0	0,6274
AUS	*5,16*	*0,32*	1,65	1,00	0	80	130	1 743	0	**0,3277**
BRA	*5,61*	*2,76*	2,41	2,79	0	*2 054*	205	1 555	*1*	**0,2487**
CAN	*6,11*	*0,48*	2,08	1,42	0	101	210	1 393	0	0,3941
DPRK	0,08	0,34	0,02	0,03	*> 0*	*1 979*	*663*	*6 560*	0	**0,3274**
EGY	0,67	1,21	0,44	0,93	0	*1 315*	*504*	*8 650*	0	**0,2283**
FR	0,43	0,87	3,27	2,32	*300*	346	*591*	4 168	*5*	**0,1584**
GER	0,23	1,11	**4,53**	**3,36**	0	227	*388*	2 515	0	**0,2097**
GRC	0,09	0,15	0,26	0,25	0	366	287	4 126	0	0,4955
IDN	*1.22*	*3,46*	1,15	2,47	0	*1 077*	88	1 282	0	**0,2804**
IND	*2.00*	*17,38*	**2,82**	**6,94**	*100-120*	*3 905*	*1 598*	*5 765*	*2*	**0,1065**
IRN	1.03	1,08	0,50	1,18	0	*913*	*374*	2 993	0	**0,2606**
ISR	0,01	0,11	0,40	0,25	*80*	650	*724*	*7 525*	0	**0,2964**
ITA	0,20	0,82	2,45	1,90	0	378	*429*	1 488	*2*	**0,2277**
JPN	0.24	1,72	**5,88**	**4,44**	0	316	*640*	1 546	*2*	**0,1707**
MEX	1.31	**1,64**	1,57	1,97	0	413	73	735	0	0,5574
NGA	**0,61**	**2,42**	0,66	0,95	0	162	31	996	0	0,7007
PAK	0.52	**2,57**	0,36	0,81	*110-130*	948	*596*	4 236	0	**0,2798**
PRC	*6,26*	*18,62*	*15,03*	*17,07*	*260*	*3 503*	*2 505*	*16 569*	*5*	*0,0673*
ROC (TW)	0,02	0,32	0,70	0,96	0	*1 964*	*585*	2 905	0	0,3956
ROK	0,07	0,69	1,85	1,61	0	*5 160*	*777*	*6 210*	0	**0,1761**
RSA	0.82	0,74	0,43	0,63	0	77	41	701	0	0,5405
RUS	*11.00*	*1,95*	1,83	3,31	*7 290*	*3 260*	*1 881*	*51 549*	*13*	*0,0639*
SAU	0,82	0,42	0,88	1,48	0	252	346	*5 394*	0	0,4286
THA	0,34	0,91	0,54	0,97	0	*654*	163	1 955	*1*	0,4302
TUR	0.52	1,07	1,08	1,65	0	*992*	*462*	*9 657*	0	**0,2089**
UK	0,16	0,88	3,88	2,37	*215*	266	*486*	3 019	*4*	**0,1797**
UKR	0,39	0,58	0,12	0,30	0	*1 122*	317	4 145	0	0,5082
USA	*6.14*	*4,35*	*24,39*	*15,74*	*7 000*	*2 302*	*5 476*	*52 063*	*25*	*0,0615*
VNM	0,21	1,24	0,26	0,48	0	*5 522*	139	3 615	0	0,3988

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019); United Nations (2017); Globalfirepower (2019), Sipri Yearbook (2016), p. 610; CIA (2019); The Military Balance (2015); Worldometers (2019)

Egypt, Israel, North Korea, South Korea and Turkey (all lacking naval power). Relatively close to this status (failing in two parameters of conventional military power) are Brazil, France, Iran, Italy, Japan, Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

If we look at this table differently, only one of the countries surveyed – the USA – has the status of superpower in all the monitored criteria (geopolitical position, economy, nuclear arsenal, conventional military power). Another two countries fulfill three out of four criteria (China lacks a more extensive nuclear arsenal, Russia economic productivity[57]). India met one of the criteria (the sum of the area and population), in one it was close to this boundary (conventional military force) and in the two others it ranked among the powers.[58] If we include among the superpowers those countries that match at least two of the four criteria and simultaneously match at least one of the remaining criteria on the level of a power, then the PRC, USA and Russia would be superpowers (and India would be very close to). Using the similar pattern to include countries into the group of powers (matching two of the four criteria and at least one of the remaining must be close), then only India belongs there. Pakistan is relatively close to this, assuming it would increase either its conventional military power or its population (i.e. geopolitical position). It seems unlikely that any other country would achieve the status of power soon if we do not anticipate the possibility of obtaining nuclear weapons.

Still another look at table 7 partly corresponds to the conclusions of the former chapter – above all the dominant position of the Western and weak positions of the Buddhist and African civilizations. Of the 17 identified countries matching at least one of the criteria of a power (geopolitical position, economy, nuclear military power, conventional military power[59]), 6 belong to the Western civilization – Australia, Canada, UK, France, Israel and USA. Four of them fall into the Islamic (Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey) and three of them into the Confucian civilization (PRC, South Korea and North Korea). In four other civilizations, only one country fulfills at least one of the four criteria to belong among the superpowers or powers (Brazil, India, Japan and Russia). No country from Buddhist of African civilization belongs to powers. Nigeria and Mexico are approaching power classification in the combination of area and population, while Germany is close to that in economy. While the four strongest countries (India, PRC, Russia and USA) belong each to different civilization, among the powers, there

is a clear dominance of Western world (almost one-third of all those states). Moreover, some of the leaders (or aspirants to that) of particular civilizations do not belong into the category of power even in one parameter (Argentina, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Thailand) – making the geopolitical inequality even more visible.

Compactness of the civilizations

The following section of the study analyses the compactness of particular civilizations, i.e. the part of Huntington's work that has become the subject of much criticism. The study uses two criteria to measure this. The first of them are the differences between the wealthiest and poorest countries of the given civilization measured through GDPp per capita. When the difference is smaller, the civilization is more compact in this way. In addition, this criterion can be easily measured.[60] The differences between extreme values, that could greatly distort the overall picture, should be reduced (at least partially). Therefore, the 20 percent of both the richest and poorest countries of the given civilization[61] are included and their average GDPp per capita is considered.[62] The resulting numbers are presented in the following tables. [63]

Table 8. GDPp per capita (ICD) of the wealthiest and poorest countries of the individual civilizations in 1995 and 2020

	1995			2020		
Civilization	Wealthy	Poor	Ratio	Wealthy	Poor	Ratio
African	6 757	574	1: 11,8	16 192	1 157	1: 14,0
Buddhist	6 934	796	1: 8,7	21 610	4 985	1: 4,3
Confucian	28 018	1 668	1: 16,8	117 763	14 883	1: 7,9
Hindu	6 377	981	1: 6,5	16 054	3 342	1: 4,8
Islamic	39 784	942	1: 42,2	70 228	2 090	1: 33,6
Latin-American	12 614	2 818	1: 4,5	31 104	6 951	1: 4,5
Orthodox	15 003	1 862	1: 8,1	35 768	10 001	1: 3,6
Western	30 830	4 641	1: 6,6	71 226	13 559	1: 5,3

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019)

The data in Table 8 reveal the differences between the richest and the poorest countries of individual civilizations. Three essential insights can be pointed out. First, between 1995 and 2020, the economic

cohesion has dramatically increased in most civilizations, including the Muslim one that is very uneven in terms of property. It is the best visible in the Orthodox civilization, where the ratio between the wealthiest and poorest countries was reduced by more than 50 percent. Conversely, there is an increase in this ratio with the African civilization, i.e. its economic cohesion has decreased. Second, this form of cohesion is clearly not linked to economic development and overall wealth. It is true that cohesive civilizations are among those rather poorer; on the other hand, the poorest – African – belongs to the least compact. The generally wealthiest and most developed civilization (Western) is highly compact (while generally standing somewhere in the middle of all the civilizations).

Third, there are significant differences among civilizations in this sense. It is possible to divide them into three groups[64]. The first of them comprises civilizations with a relatively high economic compactness (the ratio between the poorest and richest countries is at most 1 : 8), the second with medium compactness (the ratio reaches 1 : 24), and the last group includes civilizations of low compactness (the ratio is higher than 1 : 24). Membership in these groups is summarized in Table 9. Large changes have occurred in the compactness of civilizations between 1995 and 2020. While in 1995 the most represented group was the one of medium compactness, 25 years later most civilizations have a high economic compactness (75 percent), including the two with the biggest populations. The civilization with the lowest consistency (and the only one in the low compactness group) is clearly the Muslim one in both years. Marked contrasts exist within this civilization. In 1995, the ratio was approximately 2,5 as high as that of the second least compact civilization and in 2020 it is still more than 2 times as high. The ratio between the most compact (Latin-American in 1995 and Orthodox in 2020) and the least com-

Table 9. Economic compactness of the individual civilizations

Compactness	1995	2020
High (to 8:1)	LAT, HIN, WST	ORT, BDH, LAT, HIN, WST, CNF
Medium (to 24:1)	ORT, BDH, AFR, CNF	AFR
Low (over 24:1)	ISL	ISL

Source: International Monetary Fund (2019)

pact (Muslim) civilizations has remained approximately the same (roughly 1:9) in both years.

Political compactness is used as the second criterion. This is assessed on the basis of an analysis of relations between members of the individual civilizations. It was not possible to study the foreign policy and diplomatic relations of each country because of the limitations of the space of this paper. It is necessary to proceed to a certain degree of simplification, even with the knowledge that some conclusions may not be quite accurate. Therefore, I have decided to rely on two measurable criteria of mutual relations. These are armed conflicts and official diplomatic relations between individual countries.

In the analysis of conflicts, the study is based on the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset, created in a joint project of Uppsala University and the Oslo Research Institute of Peace Studies. It is the largest publicly available database of armed conflicts, currently covering 1946–2018.[65] The Uppsala database defines the military conflict in the following way: There are at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. Depending on the intensity of the combat, it distinguishes between type 1 with low intensity (25–999 battle-related deaths in one calendar year) and type 2 with high intensity (1000 and more battle-related deaths in one calendar year). Depending on the type, there are four categories of conflicts:

1. Extra-systemic between the state and a non-governmental group not on its territory.
2. The interstate one, whose participants are both states, respectively their governments.
3. Internal, where the first participant is the state or its government and the other is an internal opposition, without the intervention of other states.
4. Internationalized internal conflict, between the state (possibly with the support of other states) and the internal opposition supported militarily by other states or their governments.[66]

Only the conflicts with at least two countries of one civilization – whether as a direct participant or a state that supported one of the parties with armed units – were selected. It means that only interstate (2) or internationalized internal (4) conflicts were selected. The analysis does not include frozen conflicts, in which are less than 25 battle-related deaths a year. In the same way, the list does not include conflicts between countries from different civilizations. (The condition is, that there is at

least one state from the same civilization on both sides of the conflict). The conflicts that have emerged unambiguously from the outside, and in which states of the same civilization played a marginal role are excluded also. 11 such conflicts took place in the world in 1995–2018 in a total of 25 calendar years (table 10). Three of them were localized in Islamic civilization (with a total of 7 conflict years), 4 in African civilization (10 calendar

Table 10. Armed conflicts in the individual civilizations in 1995–2018[67]

CFL	Year	Side A	Side B	Type	INT	CIV
CNW	1995	Ecuador	Peru	2	1	LAT
BKC	1996	Cameroon	Nigeria	2	1	AFR
1CW	1996	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	2	AFR
1CW	1997	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	2	AFR
2CW	1998	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	2	AFR
2CW	1999	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	2	AFR
2CW	2000	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	2	AFR
2CW	2001	DR Congo (Zaire)	Rwanda, Angola, Uganda	4	1	AFR
CCW	1997	Congo	Angola, Chad	4	2	AFR
SLW	1997	Sierra Leone	Guinea, Nigeria	4	1	ISL
SLW	1998	Sierra Leone	Guinea, Nigeria	4	2	ISL
DEC	2008	Djibouti	Eritrea	2	1	ISL
RGW	2008	Georgia	Russia	4	1	ORT
CTD	2011	Cambodia	Thailand	2	1	BDH
M23	2012	DR Congo	Rwanda, Uganda	4	1	AFR
M23	2013	DR Congo	Rwanda, Uganda	4	2	AFR
WDB	2014	Ukraine	Russia	4	2	ORT
WDB	2015	Ukraine	Russia	4	2	ORT
WDB	2016	Ukraine	Russia	4	1	ORT
WDB	2017	Ukraine	Russia	4	1	ORT
WDB	2018	Ukraine	Russia	4	1	ORT
YCW	2015	Yemen	Coalition	4	2	ISL
YCW	2016	Yemen	Coalition	4	2	ISL
YCW	2017	Yemen	Coalition	4	2	ISL
YCW	2018	Yemen	Coalition	4	2	ISL

Source: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2019)

years), 2 in Orthodox civilization (6 conflict years) and one each for the Latin American and Buddhist civilizations (in both cases 1 year of battles).

However, the actual absence of conflicts between individual countries of a given civilization does not necessarily reflect the reality of mutual relations. For example, there was no conflict between the two Korean countries according to the database, but their relations are certainly not friendly. As mentioned above, the mutual relationships between countries have been taken into account. Two criteria have been analyzed: 1) whether they recognized each other diplomatically and 2) whether there was peace between them or not. Based on these criteria, the compactness of individual civilizations can be distinguished as follows[68]:

- High compactness meets all the following conditions:
    1. among the members of the civilization there was a maximum of one level 1 conflict in a calendar year per 15 members of the civilization,
    2. there was no conflict at level 2,
    3. no states were in a state of war and
    4. there were no more than 1 case of mutual diplomatic non-recognition per 15 members of the civilization.
- Medium compactness fulfills all the following conditions:
    1. among the members of the civilization there were 2–5 conflicts of level 1 in a calendar year per fifteen members of the civilization,
    2. among the members of the civilization there was at most one 1 conflict of level 2 in a calendar year per fifteen members of the civilization,
    3. at most two states per fifteen members of the civilization were in a state of war and
    4. there were 1–3 cases of mutual diplomatic non-recognition per fifteen members of the civilization.
- Low compactness is characterized by civilizations which do not meet at least one of the four conditions for inclusion in high or medium compactness.

Based on the criteria above, Huntington's civilizations can be divided according to political compactness as follows (since only one of the four conditions was sufficient to include in the lower category of political compactness, only the most obvious one has been mentioned):

- Low political compactness has been typical for the following civilizations: African (33 members, 7 conflict years of intensity 2), Confucian (6 members, both Korean states are formally at war and do not recognize one another diplomatically, as well as the PRC and Taiwan), Islamic (52 members, 5 conflict years of intensity 2) and Orthodox (15 members, 2 conflict years of intensity 2).
- The Buddhist civilization had medium political compactness (7 members, one conflict year of intensity 1).
- The Hindu, Western, Latin American (22 members, one conflict year of intensity 1) and the Japanese civilization have been highly politically compact.

Conclusions

The world has changed significantly in the 25 years since Huntington's analysis – and it will undoubtedly continue to change. The study dealt with these questions: What is the current distribution of power was in the world after a quarter century? What are the main trends of geopolitical development? It is possible to summarize the following conclusions based on the analysis conducted:

1. In terms of the power of the population, the largest civilizations remain the Confucian, Hindu and Islamic (between 18 percent and 22 percent of the global population), the smallest the Japanese, Buddhist and Orthodox (between 1.5 percent and 3.5 percent of the global numbers). There are exceptionally large differences in the dynamics of the change. The African civilization has grown at an enormous pace (more than 340 million -it almost doubled in size, which is clearly unsustainable in the long run). The growth of the Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu civilizations has been slower but still at an above-average speed. The share of these civilizations in the world's population has increased proportionally. The other civilizations have grown at a rate around or below the average and their share in the world's population has therefore declined. Japan's population has stagnated for the last 25 years and the population of the Orthodox civilization has even declined. In Russia (which is a core country), the problem of declining population is moreover multiplied by the inequality of the growth of ethnic Russian and Caucasian Muslim populations.

2. From the perspective of economic productivity measured by nominal GDP, the Western civilization remains clearly domi-

nant, despite a relatively large reduction (from around 60 percent of the global economy in 1995 to an estimated 50 percent in 2020). The productivity of the economy of the Confucian civilization has increased, which was reflected also in the great increase of its share in the global economy (from 6 percent to more than 20 percent between 1995 and 2020). Similarly, Hindu civilization has experienced rapid growth, but the exceptionally low starting base must be taken into account. On the contrary, the share of the Japanese economy has slumped sharply. If we use the same comparison based on GDP recalculated to purchasing price parity, the growth of the share of the Confucian and Hindu civilizations flattens. The decrease of the share of the Japanese civilization is analogically not so big (that confirms the conclusion that the sharp drop of the Japanese GDPn was to a certain extent created by the fall of the exchange rate of its currency). On the contrary, the development of the GDPp of the Western, Latin American and Orthodox civilizations seem to be much more unfavorable than of the GDPn.

Jan Slavíček

3. One of the crucial parts of Huntington's theory is the role of core countries, i.e. hegemons of civilizations. The core countries do not exist at all in some of them (Islamic, Buddhist, African, Latin American), or there are more candidates (these countries were considered in the study). Logically, there are vast differences in the strength of the core countries. The analysis has confirmed the geopolitical superiority of the USA. It is the only country to meet all the four parameters set by the methodology of this study for the category of superpower (the combination of area and population, economic productivity, the number of nuclear weapons and the conventional military power). However, with the combination of area and population, this position is very tight, and it is possible that the USA would lose it in a few decades (as a consequence of a decline of the share in the world population). Three of these parameters are met by Russia (lacking the necessary economic productivity) and the People's Republic of China (lacking the necessary number of nuclear weapons). Therefore, the chances of China to develop into a full superpower are much higher than those of Russia. India is close to fulfilling two categories (it matches the criterion of combination of population and area and is relatively close to in conventional

military power). For India, it is also only a matter of time (a few decades) to become an economic superpower and could undoubtedly expand the number of its nuclear weapons relatively quickly. In other words, its struggle to reach the status of a superpower could be successful much more easily and quickly than it might seem initially.

4. From the other core countries (or candidates for this position) only Pakistan is approaching the status of a power. The other countries are only regional powers and it seems unlikely they could achieve the higher level without a nuclear arsenal. While the four superpowers (China, India, Russia, USA) are divided among the same number of civilizations, the distribution of strong regional powers (i.e. matching at least one of the four criteria of a power) is unequal. The Western civilization remains the strongest (6 countries incl. the superpower of USA), followed by the Muslim (4 countries, but without any superpower or full-scale power) and Confucian (3 countries, including the superpower of PRC). For the four other civilizations, only one country belongs to this group. But in the cases of Orthodox and Hindu, these countries are a superpower and full-scale power – Russia and India. Finally, Buddhist and African civilizations do not have any country in this group. This corresponds to the fact that some of the core countries (or candidates) do not meet the status of the power even in one criterion.

5. The economic compactness of the civilizations was measured by the differences in the GDP per capita. Significant changes have occurred in 25 years between 1995 and 2020. Economic cohesion has increased in 6 of the 9 civilizations. It remained approximately the same in the other two (Latin American and, of course, the Japanese), while only in one case it has decreased (African civilization). The Islamic civilization has been the least compact with enormous differences – 1:42,2 in 1995 and 1:33,6 in 2020. For comparison – in Western civilization (so often criticized for its large differences in property) these ratios were 1:6,6 and 1:5,3.

6. Political compactness was measured by the number of armed conflicts (whether interstate or internationalized internal) as well as the existence of peace or a state of war between the members of the individual civilizations and then mutual diplomatic recognition in 1995–2020. Based on these parameters, the

Japanese (automatically, because it comprises a single country), Western, Hindu and – somewhat surprisingly – also the Latin American civilizations are highly politically compact. The medium cohesive category comprises Buddhist civilization (in consequence of the armed conflict between Cambodia and Thailand in 2011). Low political compactness is shown by the Confucian and Orthodox civilizations but mainly the Islamic and African (in relation to the number of armed conflicts).

To sum up: The post-Cold War world has changed dramatically in the last quarter of a century. As expected by Huntington, the Western world is slowly losing its economic and military superiority. Presumably, this trend is going to continue, but (again, as Huntington predicted) the West will hold its position for the following decades. On the other hand, the non-Western world is not united or cohesive. The other Huntington civilizations (or Cohen's geopolitical realms or regions) differ greatly from each other. This article highlights the great geopolitical power and potential of Sinic and Hindu civilizations (Cohen's East Asia realm and South Asia region). They can – and probably will, if the development further follows the same pattern – become especially important in international relations, being led by full-scale superpowers. Presumably, Russia will hold its position as the world's second most powerful army (considering its nuclear arsenal). Otherwise, the Orthodox world is going to face numerous demographic and economic challenges, as well as problematic relations between Russia and its neighbors. The predictions of stability for the Muslim and African civilizations (nearly mirroring Cohen's two shatterbelts) seem unlikely because of many conflicts and huge population overcrowding (especially in Africa). The three final civilizations will probably not play particularly important roles and their geopolitical power will be descending (Japanese and Latin-American) or growing only marginally (Buddhist civilization). If the multipolarity (like the 'Concert of Europe' in the 19th century) is going to fully return to the international relations (in this case, however, as 'Concert of the World'), it will be shaped probably by China, India and Russia, and of course by the Western world (which may or may not continue to form two cores of USA and EU). Simultaneously, the most important issue of international relations may soon be not the relations between Western and non-Western world but the mutual relations of the other three superpowers, as soon as their interests start to clash.

Jan Slavíček is affiliated to The Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences and may be reached at *slavicek@hiu.cas.cz*.

Endnotes

1   Samuel P. Huntington (1993), 'Clash of Civilizations?,' *Foreign Affairs*; Summer 1993, Vol. 72. No. 3. pp. 22–49.
2   George C. Kennan (1947), 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct,' *Foreign Affairs*; Juillet 1947, Vol. 25. No. 4. pp. 566–582.
3   Samuel P. Huntington (1997), *The Clash of Civilizations*: *The struggle of cultures and the transformation of the world,* New York: Touchstone.
4   The idea of dividing of the World into culture-based groups is not new. Interestingly, one of the first such theories was formulated in Russia in 1870s and 1880s by Nikolay Danilevsky, whose division included 13 civilizations. However, its concept could have been inspired by older works from abroad. See Jaroslav Kurfürst (2018), *Příběh ruské geopolitiky. Jak se ruská myšlenka zmocnila více než šestiny světa* [The Story of Russian Geopolitics. How the Russian Idea Overwhelmed more than a Sixth of the World], Praha: Univerzita Karlova, Nakladatelství Karolinum, pp. 115-116.
5   Buddhist civilization is mentioned only a few times and it remains questionable, whether it is a civilization in Huntington's paradigmatic sense. In this study, I have decided to accept it as a civilization, according to maps in Huntington (1997).
6   Huntington explicitly mentions e.g. Ethiopia or Haiti as such lone countries. Huntington (1997), p. 136.
7   Huntington (1997), pp. 45–48.
8   For an extensive overview of this criticism and for a very conclusive quantitative analysis see Jonathan Fox (2005), 'Paradigm Lost: Huntington's Unfulfilled Clash of Civilizations Prediction into the 21st Century,' *International Politics,* Vol. 42, pp. 428-457. His paper rejects (or, at least proves as inconclusive) five Huntington's hypotheses about the growing rate of civilizational conflicts in post-cold-war era, as well as the bigger brutality of conflicts involving the Muslim civilization.
9   Seth Cropsey and Harry Halem (2018), 'Clash of Civilizations or Clash Within Civilizations?,' *The American Interest*, Vol. 14, No. 2, available at <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/08/31/clash-of-civilizations-or-clash-within-civilizations/> (accessed on 18 August 2019).
10 Huntington (1997), pp. 13–14.

11 Saul Bernard Cohen (2015), *Geopolitics: The Geography of International Relations*, Third edition, Lanham: Rowman & Littkefield.

12 Cohen (2015), p. 44.

13 Cohen (2015), p. 45; Huntington (1997).

14 For example, Cropsey and Halem state: „Certain broad insights – in particular, the endurance of value differences between the West and non-West and how it would shape politics going forward – were accurate. Moreover, several of his discrete predictions, such as, for example, the shifting military balance toward non-Western civilizations and the dynamics of fault-line conflicts, have enjoyed resounding vindication over the past two decades.' Cropsey and Halem (2018).

Jan Slavíček

15 The year 2020 was selected so that the timeframe of the study takes 25 years since 1995. For 2019 and 2020, qualified International Monetary Fund estimates were available of geopolitical strength in non-military parameters. In some countries, final data for years 2018 and 2017 (or even some years before) were not available yet, therefore the numbers are estimations either. For particular cases see International Monetary Fund (2019) 'World Economic Outlook Database, April 2019,' <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/index.aspx> (accessed on 07 July 2019).

16 The two methods of the measurement of GDP used in this study are nominal (GDPn) and based on purchasing power parity (GDPp). GDPn is given in a simple conversion to the USD according to the conversion rate valid for the given year. It shows the strength of the economy of the given country (or group of countries) in international trade. In contrast, GDPp indicates the performance of the economy with respect to the price level in a given country (it is possible to purchase an entirely different amount of goods for instance in the USA and in Angola for USD 100). The currency is 'current international dollar' (CID). This expression better reflects the real power of the economy of the given country over its own population.

17 International Monetary Fund (2019); *The Military Balance 2015* (2015), London: Routledge; *Sipri Yearbook 2016: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (2016), Oxford: Oxford University Press; Globalfirepower (2019) '2019 Military Strength Rating,' <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp> (accessed on 08 September 2019).

18 The division of countries regarding to their geopolitical power into several levels is one of the major topics of geopolitics. For one of the possible models, see • Cohen (2015), pp. 3–4.

19 Huntington (1997), pp. 135–136.

20 Huntington (1997), pp. 137–138.

21 Huntington (1997), pp. 139–154.

22 It is almost impossible to get qualified estimations of GDP and population of Cuba and North Korea in 1995 – 2020, esp. for the latter. See endnote 34.

23 he members of African civilizations are the following countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland (Eswatini), Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. These cleft countries also belong here: Kenya, Nigeria,

Tanzania (all between the African and Islamic civilizations), Guyana and Suriname (both between the African and Hindu civilizations).

24 Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar (Burma), Sri Lanka and Thailand.

25 Hindu civilization comprises India and Nepal and further the cleft countries of Guyana and Suriname (both among the African and Hindu civilizations).

26 It includes the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea), People's Republic of China (PRC), Republic of China (Taiwan), Republic of Korea (South Korea), Vietnam and Singapore (the last being cleft between the Confucian and Islamic civilizations) as well as the autonomous regions of Macao and Hong Kong (both parts of the PRC).

27 The Latin American civilization consists of Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, as well as Puerto Rico (split between Western and Latin American civilizations).

28 Islamic civilization consists of Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Burkina Faso, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kosovo, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen. It also includes the cleft countries of Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania (all between the African and Islamic civilizations), Bosnia and Herzegovina (between the Islamic and Orthodox civilizations), Singapore (between the Sinic and Islamic civilizations) and the Philippines (between the Islamic and Western civilizations).

29 The Orthodox civilization includes: Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia (Macedonia, FYR), Romania, Russia, Serbia, and two cleft countries, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina (between the Islamic and Orthodox civilizations) and Ukraine (between the Orthodox and Western civilizations).

30 Western civilization is comprised of Aruba, Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, East Timor (Timor-Leste), Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and USA. The cleft countries were the Philippines (between the Islamic and Western civilizations), Puerto Rico (between Western and Latin American civilizations) and Ukraine (between the Orthodox and Western civilizations).

31 This group includes: Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Ethiopia, Fiji, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

32 The following charts and analysis are my calculations based on the sources of International Monetary Fund and United Nations. However, for two countries, it was impossible to get qualified estimations for all the analyzed

years. For Cuba and esp. North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), the exact data about development 1995–2020 are not available. Some estimations were done, they are however very contradictory to each other and always just for a couple of years. Therefore, I decided not to involve North Korea and Cuba into these statistics. Their estimated population and GDPp are for Cuba ca. 11,12 mil. people (2018) and ca. 137 bn. ICD (2017) and for North Korea ca. 25,38 mil. inhabitants (2018) and ca. 40 bn. ICD (2015). Given that, the difference in statistics is clearly minimal. See CIA (2019) 'The World Factbook,' <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (accessed on 28 July 2019); Worldometers (2019) 'World population,' <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population> (accessed on 28 July 2019).

33 The abbreviations refer to the following civilizations: AFR = African, BDH = Buddhist, CNF = Confucian (Sinic), HIN = Hindu, ISL = Islamic (Muslim), JAP = Japanese, LAT = Latin-American, ORT = Orthodox, WST = Western.

34 The key role in the enormous growth of the African played two factors that can be judged largely positively in terms of civilizational progress: decreasing child mortality (as well as unnatural mortality overall) and reducing the number and intensity of armed conflicts. On the other hand, it is clear that this advancement simultaneously brought fundamental problems to the African continent, because it lacks sufficient resources for such large population growth (which affected for instance employment but also the mere production of foodstuffs). Should this phenomenon not be given enough attention, it could be a very dangerous development, esp. when we consider, that another big challenge for Africa is the expansion of uninhabitable areas (as a result of climate change).

35 The reduction of the population by more than one percent while the world population was growing at an unprecedented rate is not a good sign for the Orthodox Civilization, especially with regard to its large territorial area (and therefore very low average population density). In addition, especially in the case of the Russian Federation, the Muslim community has been growing very fast, thus compensating for the decline of the ethnically Russian population.

36 The huge fall in Japan's share of the economy over the past 25 years can to some degree be attributed to the economic policy of Prime Minister Abe (so-called Abenomics), characterized by a sharp rise in government debt and a loss of value for the currency. This thesis can be supported by the fact, that according to GDPp the Japanese economy has actually been growing. Nevertheless, this growth has been very slow and its share of world GDP has logically quickly and unambiguously decreased. At the same time, assuming its population, it is still the second most productive civilization after the Western. Japan's current position in the global economy seems to be more in line with its capabilities, while its almost 18 % of the GDPn at 2 % of the population in 1995 was a fluctuation reflecting the extraordinary successes of the Japanese economy during the Cold War. For analysis of Abenomics see David Chiavacci and Sébastien Lechevalier (eds.) (2018), *Japanese Political Economy Revisited: Abenomics and Institutional Change*, London: Routledge.

37 For example Carl J. Dahlman states, that „India has many strengths, particularly a young and growing population, experience and institutions of a market economy, a critical mass of entrepreneurs and highly skilled

professionals, and a large public research infrastructure. It has the potential to leverage its strengths to improve its competitiveness and welfare.' At the same time however it „faces many internal challenges as well as a much more demanding and competitive international environment.' Carl J. Dahlman (2007), 'India's Knowledge Economy in the Global Context,' in: Sujai J. Shivakumar and Charles W. Wessner (eds.) India's Changing Innovation System: Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities for Cooperation: Report of a Symposium. National Academy Press, p. 161, available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/11924/chapter/11#164> (accessed on 08 September 2019). Similarly, Saul Bernard Cohen concludes, that despite its strength, India „cannot currently be classed as a major power' for a variety of reasons – from its political fragmentation and corruption to poor industrial infrastructure. However, it has a „potential to correct these deficits,' which could „eventually raise India to the level of China as one of the great trading nations of the world.' Cohen (2015), p. 372.

38 Huntington proposed to allocate one permanent seat in the UN SC (associated with the right of veto) to each civilization, respectively its leading country. For Western civilization, he proposed two seats, for the US and the European Union. He himself was conscious of the significant shortcomings of his proposal – apart from EU issues, its biggest difficulty was identifying a leading state in some civilizations (see text below). He also did not foresee a seat for the Buddhist civilization. Huntington (1997), pp. 317–318.

39 Thailand is the strongest economy of the Buddhist civilization, but it is a question whether its position would not be threatened in a few decades by the growth of Myanmar (Burma).

40 Nigeria is the strongest economy and has the biggest population. On the other hand, it is a cleft country (between the African and Muslim civilizations). South Africa as an alternative leader, but its acceptance by other African countries can be a problem, because its economic dominance draws largely from its apartheid heritage.

41 Alternatively, Egypt could be a candidate because of its population and economic strength, but I have decided to leave it out.

42 Cohen (2015), p. 3.

43 It is obvious, that the parameters used below for categorizing countries into individual categories are entirely arbitrary.

44 The area is intended only for the land. Taking the sea surface into account would make the overview unnecessarily complicated.

45 This is, of course, a simplification, because the size of the territory and the population are different factors, but this simplification is applicable for the purposes of this study.

46 The reason is the elimination of extreme cases of countries where GDPn and GDPp would be diametrically different.

47 Proof of this is the very cautious US approach to the DPRK, whose geopolitical significance is otherwise substantially negligible. For the dilemmas about using nuclear weapons and problems of their deterrence power see e.g. Steve Fetter and Jon Wolfsthal (2018), 'No First Use and Credible Deterrence,' *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 102-114, DOI: 10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257> (accessed on 08 September 2019)

48 The analysis of conventional military power is based on quantitative criteria. Of course, the quality of military power is an entirely different issue. For example, the Abrams tank is barely comparable to WWII-era Shermans (still in stores of several countries) and the T-90 tank is far more modern than the T-55, whose roots date back to late 1940s. North Korea' s army, although ca three times bigger than the of South Korea, is assessed as „qualitatively inferior to South Korea's modern forces'. See *The Military Balance* (2015), p. 226. Many more such examples could be found. Therefore, the Globalfirepower Index has been included, because it values qualitative criteria as well. It is measured by Globalfirepower.com. It is based on an analysis of 55 factors influencing the military strength of a country. The lower the index, the higher the combat capability - the ideal index would be 0. See Globalfirepower (2019). As with the IMF data, it is not important to what extent this analytical tool is accurate, but rather to the fact that it is created by a consistent methodology and can therefore serve as a relevant source for comparison.

Jan Slavíček

49 Military personnel include active military manpower (incl. paramilitary) plus reserves (without paramilitary).

50 Anti-submarine warfare and attack aircrafts and helicopters, fighter and fighter ground attack aircrafts, bombers and multi-role helicopters.

51 Main battle tanks, light tanks, armored infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers and ambitious assault vehicles (all incl. stored reserves).

52 Aircraft carriers, nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines and submarines with nuclear ballistic missiles. The aircraft carrier is to a large extent a matter of prestige, but on the other hand, it undoubtedly allows the shift of combat area to the territory of almost the whole world. For the aircraft carrier, only fully-fledged aircraft carriers are counted i.e. not e.g. Japanese helicopter ships. See *The Military Balance* (2015). For submarines, the review is limited to only the most serious categories, i.e. submarines capable of a large nuclear strike.

53 The country must fulfill the criteria of power of at least two indicators of conventional military power to be included in table 7.

54 For USA, only the 50 states + DC are counted, i.e. overseas territories are omitted. For the North Korea, the statistics of CIA (2019), Worldometers (2019) and The Military Balance (2015) were used.

55 Legend: ARG = Argentina, AUS = Australia, BRA = Brazil, CAN = Canada, DPRK = North Korea, EGY = Egypt, FRA = France, GER = Germany, IDN = Indonesia, IND = India, IRN = Iran, ISR = Israel, ITA = Italy, JPN = Japan, MEX = Mexico, NIG = Nigeria, PAK = Pakistan, PRC = People's Republic of China, ROC = Republic of China (Taiwan), ROK = South Korea, RUS = Russia, RSA = South Africa, SAU = Saudi Arabia, THA = Thailand, TUR = Turkey; UK = United Kingdom, USA = United States of America, VNM = Vietnam; AR = share of world's land mass, POP = share of world's population, GDPn = share of world's GDPn, GDPp = share of world's GDPp, NW = number of nuclear warheads (including reserve and decommissioned), MP = military personnel (thousands of persons), CA = number of combat aircraft, ACV = number of armored combat vehicles; ACS number of aircraft carriers + submarines with ballistic nuclear missiles, GFPI = Global Firepower Index.

56 Democratic People's Republic of Korea has conducted several nuclear tests since 2006 and undoubtedly possesses nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it is believed, that it doesn't have nuclear warheads small and light

enough to be delivered through missile or aircraft (however, it is only the matter of time).

57 It is clear that for the PRC the achievement of a comprehensive status of a superpower (the expansion of nuclear arsenal) would have been much easier. Russia, on the other hand, has virtually no chance of quintupling its share of the global economy, as its economy faces protracted structural problems (dependence on the export of raw materials), and dozens of years of planned reform are still largely not in sight. Indeed, the table also shows, that while the PRC is in the category of a power for its nuclear arsenal, Russia is not in that category because of its economy.

58 Like in the case of China, India can assume (if maintaining the current trends) the achievement of full superpower status in approximately one to two decades. According to estimates of International Monetary Fund, India's share of world GDPn between 2015 and 2020 would rise from 2.82 % to 3.53 % and the one of GDPp from 6.94 % to 8.38 %. Even if this pace is to slow, it can be assumed that around 2030 it will reach about 15% in GDPp and about 8% in GDPn. Such a strong economy would undoubtedly (like the Chinese) manage to increase its nuclear arsenal in a relatively short period of time, if necessary. International Monetary Fund (2019).

59 All the countries matching at least 4 of the 5 parameters of conventional military power are included into powers (see above).

60 However, when using GDP per capita, it can never be forgotten that it does not reflect the real wealth of the population. It is merely a mathematical operation. However, the aim of this study is not to address the welfare of the population, but the power of individual civilizations, which is why this parameter can be used – of course, with full awareness of the above.

61 For the African civilization (33 members), the 7 (= rounded 20 %) richest and poorest countries are taken into account. For the other civilizations, the numbers are following: Buddhist 1, Hindu 1, Sinic 2, Latin-American 4, Islamic 10, Orthodox 3, Western 9.

62 The average GDP was calculated by the simple arithmetic average of the GDP of the countries surveyed. It did not take into account the population of the given country. The reason was the same as in the endnote 62 – it is a comparison of countries rather than the average welfare of the population.

63 Of course, Japanese civilization is specific. Because it is made up of a single country, it automatically has full compactness according to this methodology. Using e.g. the Gini Index Japan ranked in 2011 to countries with medium inequalities (its Gini index was 37.9, the average of the 156 countries surveyed was 39.0 and the median 37.9). However, this study focuses on differences between states, so the Japanese civilization is ranked among the compact. See CIA (2019).

64 In this case as well, the criteria were arbitrarily determined by the author.

65 Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2019) 'UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset version 19.1.,' <https://ucdp.uu.se/downloads/#d3> (accessed on 06 September 2019). For an inspiring analysis of similar databases and their use, see Lenka Kursová (2017), *Možnosti výzkumu aktérů ozbrojených konfliktů* [The possibilities of research of the actors of armed conflicts], Diplomová práce Západočeské univerzity v Plzni [Thesis for the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen].

66 Uppsala Conflict Data Program (2019).

67 Legend: CFL = Conflict; CNW = Cenepa War, January–February 1995), BKC = Bakassi Border Conflict, May 1996, 1CW = First Congo War, 1996–1997, 2CW = Second Congo War, 1998–2003, CCW = Republic of the Congo Civil War, 1997–1999, SLW = Civil War in Sierra Leone, 1991–2002, DEC = Djiboutian-Eritrean Border Conflict, June 2008, RGW = Russo-Georgian War, August 2008, CTD = Cambodian-Thai Border Dispute, 2008–2001, M23 = M23 Rebellion, 2012–2013, WDB = War in Donbass, 2014–present, YCW = Yemeni Civil War, 2015–present); Year = calendar year in which there were at least 25 direct victims (thus, it may not have covered all the years of the conflict, and on the contrary, the conflict may have lasted even a single day); Side A/B – two sides of the fighting, included only states, respectively their official governments. The countries marked in cursive were sending military support to direct participants; Type 2 = inter-state conflict, type 4 = internationalized internal conflict; INT = intensity of the conflict; 1 = low intensity (25–999 direct victims), 2 = high intensity (1,000 or more direct victims). CIV = civilization, abbreviations of the civilizations, see the endnote 35; Coalition (supporting the rebels) = Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates.

68 The criteria were again arbitrarily determined by the author.

Intelligence in an Insecure World

Reviewed by Nikolozi Abzhandadze

In a world which is increasingly becoming more reliant on technology and interconnectedness, we must ask ourselves, what dangers may this rapid advancement in technology and communications could potentially pose? With these advancements comes further growth of intelligence agencies and their powers but we do not hear much about them, or even have any dedicated information on how they operate and what their true purpose is. Are intelligence agencies a 'be or and end all' organization? Do they operate without boundaries and oversight? It is largely known that literature regarding the subject of intelligence and intelligence studies is very scarce or in fact, outdated. This book should act as a guide, a reference point designed to explain what intelligence is, to provide a definitive definition (this is because there are various definitions available which cover various aspects of intelligence) including what it is and what it is supposed to do, and how the whole process of intelligence works.

The book begins by detailing various definitions of intelligence and formulating a more concrete and complete definition of intelligence as well as explaining various factors of intelligence such as extensive web of interactions when it comes to gathering of intelligence. After laying out the core parts, the book delves deeper into detailed analyses of spe-

cific factors in intelligence gathering such as how to produce valuable knowledge and the importance of secrecy in intelligence gathering.

The book goes on to explain the various actors in intelligence, who is gathering intelligence of what kind. A typical example would be the state level of intelligence gathering, which includes domestic security intelligence, foreign intelligence, military intelligence and how the intelligence operates in corporate secrecy involving private individuals. The process of how the intelligence is gathered is also detailed. Notable methods include: open source intelligence, human intelligence, (includes a discussion on rendition and torture methods and their effectiveness in gathering of intelligence) and signals intelligence (involving a discussion collection of intelligence using telemetry and mobile data, also the importance and impact of Edward Snowden's revelations and the debates it has sparked).

The logical next step after outlining actors and methodology of intelligence is how the gathered information is turned into valuable intelligence. The middle chapters explain the process of dissemination of intelligence and an argument between security and sharing regarding intelligence in the process of what intelligence is produced and when and outline various actions that may follow the intelligence gathering and dissemination. These actions include ramping up surveillance for further monitoring, taking military action, use of covert action, assassination of valuable targets and finally increased use of military drones (it is important to note that this has become an increasingly controversial subject as various intelligence agencies in the USA have obtained the ability to use direct strikes against their targets, which many would see as them overstepping their boundaries as their main objective is intelligence gathering rather than carrying out direct strikes, which is the competency of the military).

After detailed analysis and explanation of various stages of intelligence, in the later chapter the book starts to outline the issues and failures of the intelligence process. The book analyses the limits of intelligence and identifies probable causes of intelligence failure. The book demonstrates the failures of intelligence on real-life case studies including Vietnam, Iran, Iraq WMD (weapons of mass destruction) and the 9/11 bombings as well as recent cases of rising insurgency and increase in terrorist attacks around Europe. Further, the book outlines the relationship between intelligence and politics and argues how the latter became highly politicized in recent years (a notable example

would be recent intelligence inquiries in the US election meddling) and whether such politicization could be due to the failure or success of intelligence.

In one of the final chapters of the book, there is a discussion on the democratization of intelligence in the way of control and oversight. The book outlines legal and ethical bases for democratic control and oversight of intelligence agencies in order to maintain accountability. It goes back to the discussion of the Snowden revelations and its impact on government oversight of intelligence agencies. The book ends with the challenges of controlling and overseeing intelligence networks in this ever-connected world.

Overall, *Intelligence in an insecure world* is a must-read piece of literature to gain detailed conceptual knowledge about the field of intelligence and intelligence studies and acts as a gateway to further research into the field.

CORR, Anders. *Great Powers, Grand Strategies: The New Game in the South China Sea*. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2018.

Great Powers, Grand Strategies: The New Game in the South China Sea

Reviewed by Imane Hmiddou

China is accused of not respecting International Law by illegally taking islands in the South China Sea. This implies that the country profits from all the goods in the area and consequently, neighbour states are directly affected by this act. PRC is legitimizing its acts by historical narratives which are not accepted by neither the neighbouring countries nor the international community. The international reactions toward China's acts in South China Sea are following the diverse strategies conducted in the region. Global powers not directly affected by the expansion are also involved in the conflict.

Great Powers, Grand Strategies: the new game in the South China Sea was published by Naval Institute Press in 2018, a collaborative book produced by a number of specialists and edited by Anders Corr. The editor is a specialist in international politics and he is known for multiple works regarding the South China Sea. The aim of this book is to analyse the global states' economic, military and diplomatic strategies in the South China Sea and how they are related, in order to come up with a macro vision of the conflict and observe how these strategies affect or influence the conflict.

The book is presented in ten chapters, with each chapter produced by a different author. It is rather a collage of articles which their authors do not often adopt the same opinions. Although it is true that different approaches and perspectives enrich the reader' s knowledge, it creates a disconnection between the book' s ideas, and sometimes they lead to contradictions within the book.

The first chapter explains the reasons why China is expanding in South China Sea, and how this idea has been transformed from an abstract claim to concrete assets. In the sense of Bill Hayton, these islands are, explicitly, a matter of territorial integrity for China. It is a national priority for the PRC to ensure its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights. China is also deeply worrying about the large presence and assertiveness of Japan and the US in the area. Therefore, the country claims sovereignty on the Islands in the South China Sea and uses historical narratives as an argument to legitimize it, in order to maintain its power in the region.

The second chapter discusses the evolution of China' s grand strategy in the South China Sea. China' s strategy has been changing in correlation with its military, political and economic developments. The rise of China' s power at the regional level changed its position regarding the South China Sea from considering it a "lost territory" to the state's" core interest" in 2010.

The third chapter is about China' s maritime sovereignty campaign. In 2004, China' s presidential discourse revealed China' s new foreign policy based on wiping off the 'Chinese shame' due to historical foreign occupations. The country worked on strengthening its maritime sovereignty - its ambitions aren't only economic related, but also strategic and military.

These three chapters bring a global view of China' s strategy in the South China Sea, however I think that the authors point of views are, as a whole, influenced by the Western perspective, especially when it comes to drawing a diabolic image of China and an innocent icon of the West (US and EU). The authors described in detail China' s bad behaviours in the region while only briefly mentioning its economic wealth and its positive acts there.

The conflict over the South China Sea is also negotiated at the international scale, many countries and regional institutions are involved. The US, Russia, india, the ASEAN countries and the EU have reacted differently to China' s expansion in South China Sea. The fourth chap-

ter recalls the way the conflict is perceived, discussed and managed in the ASEAN region, where directly involved countries are represented: Brunei, Taiwan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines. At the ASEAN level, the main problem is the different strategies that the major powers, the US and Japan, are adopting in the South China Sea adding to China's escapement of ASEAN regulation proposals.

I think that the US influence is making the consensus inside the ASEAN hard to achieve and consequently delaying the diplomatic negotiations and thus possible solutions. I believe that the neutral countries, which are not economically dependent on China, are enough to create a balance inside ASEAN, and the US position merely complicates the conflict resolution.

The fifth and sixth chapters are about the strategies adopted by the US in the region and how the state calculates its actions in the area. The US has adopted five different strategies in the South China Sea that differ according to the political situation in the region. In addition, the US bases its diplomatic realm on different factors related to China's behavior in the regional institutions from one side. From the other side, the US calculates the profit from using enforcement tools on China in order to allineate its foreign policies with international law. Moreover, the US has been working on the diplomatic, economic and military rebalancing in the region in order to maintain its power there.

In my perspective, the authors discussed US involvement excessively and talked about all these US strategies in the region without even questioning its legitimacy. The authors criminalise China's acts, while discussing the US role as an innocent one, even if the country is militarising China's neighbouring countries and indirectly encouraging a possible war in the region. If China is becoming a military power, and the neighboring countries involved in the conflict are also become militarized, this will create a security dilemma in the region. Consequently, it will raise the degree of militarization on both sides of the conflict, increase power and decrease the security aspect. As Bremer argued in his paper "Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War", if the state invests more in militarization, it implies that the country is aiming to do war, so its enemy states will feel less secured. The image drawn of US as "the" country that will solve the issue is totally wrong because it is rather leading to an escalation of war. The neighbouring countries are asking the US to help them in achiev-

ing a diplomatic resolution of the conflict, nevertheless the United States is using this situation to triumph its power and to implement and mediate the international law concept that it had created.

The seventh chapter is about the position of Japan regarding China' s expansion in South China Sea. Japan is highly interested in the South China Sea; the country considers China as a threat and it keeps building relations with ASEAN member states in order to maintain its diplomatic power at the regional level. Japan adopts three main dynamics in the South China Sea conflict. It is always on the US side and it will never raise the pressure on China just because of this conflict in order to keep its sovereignty on the East China Sea. Finally, Japan will maintain its bilateral relations with China and generate profit from its development .

The last three chapters are about three international actors not directly affected by the issue and their different reactions based on their diverse positions. India is reacting to China' s expansion by adopting diplomatic means. India' s trade is mainly based on sea trade, so it could lose access to South China Sea if China decided to do so. Russia is a powerless country in the region - the member states of ASEAN do not consider it as an actor that can balance the powers in Asia and compete with China. The country lacks strong tools to achieve its target regarding ensuring security in Asia.

For me, ASEAN doesn't even need another position. In the fourth chapter, the author mentioned that one of the obstructions of the conflict negotiations is the diverse positions into ASEAN. Adding a Russian perspective will even further complicate the situation. It will not help in achieving a balance of power, because ASEAN will come up with 4 different positions: the US, China, Russia and neutral. This is one of the contradictions present in the book due to a lack of coordination between the authors' ideas.

The EU is the third international actor. From one side, the EU doesn't have any security issues with China, which gives it the ability to criticise China' s behaviour freely. It can also adopt strategies in the area and implement sanctions collaborating with the US. However the European Union seeks neutrality and relies more on the international law argument when it comes to judging China' s expansion in the South China Sea for three reasons: 1) preserving the economic benefit generated from China' s trade, 2) lack of enforcement means and 3) the absence of one common threat to mobilize all its member states .

My question is: why should the EU intervene? The international intervention will just make the conflict a cold one without resolving it; it is better to let the directly affected countries manage the conflict and negotiate it without any external intervention. As Luttwak argued in "Give War a Chance", it is more efficient to let the concerned states solve the problem on their own, either diplomatically or by violence, because the international intervention only delays the process . Each global power is just serving its own interests and generating economic benefits when it has the opportunity to do so rather than helping in solving the problem, therefore the international intervention is not efficient.

TOFT, Monica D. *Securing the Peace: The Durable Settlement of Civil Wars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement

Reviewed by Alina Shymanska

Despite this book not being a recent publication, the various issues that it brings to the table are still relevant topics for debates within academia. *Globalization and Social Movements: Islamism, Feminism, and the Global Justice Movement* by Valentine M. Moghadam examines three cases of three transnational social movements emerging as a response to liberalism and the globalization-from-above, which is defined by the author as 'the latest stage of capitalism on a world scale' (p.27). Conceptually the book establishes connections between 'globalization-from-above and globalization-from-below', while 'politically it seeks to build a bridge between globalization studies and progressive global movements' (p. 29).

Current transnational social movements are exceedingly diverse and touch upon a vast number of global issues, including the supremacy of the West, which is viewed as a core problem in Islamism, gender inequality and human rights violation as a main obstacle as defined by feminism, and the capitalistic neoliberalism which is affecting econ-

omies in developing countries according to the Global Justice Movement. For this reason, Valentine M. Moghadam does not limit her theoretical framework only to the social movement theory but also makes references to the world-systems theory, polity theory, and the feminist theory in order to analyze the roots of the social movements´ evolution. With this in mind, the author calls her theoretical approach to an integrated framework drawing

The book begins with Valentine M. Moghadam elaborating on the changes in the global political economy which have provoked the emergence of these social movements. These conditions include the markets becoming more integrated and less regulated as well as the relocation of sites from the first world to third world countries, which leads to the involvement of women and migrants in low-paid labor jobs. According to the author, these are the main causes of the feminization of poverty. While referring to Paul Streeten, Jeffrey Sachs, and Joseph Stiglitz, Moghadam draws on the idea that in an economic sense, globalization is 'Janus-faced' rather than positive, since it favors developed nations, men, and professionals. At the same time, it negatively affects poor countries, women, children, and uneducated workers. The author also brings the feminist concept of hyper-masculinity, dividing the global society into masculine winners and vulnerable losers, and interpreting Samuel Huntington's clash of civilizations as a clash of hyper masculinities, using the example of the United States and violent jihadist. This feministic tone is carried throughout the entirety of the book.

In the case study which is dedicated to Islamism, the author presents it as a transnational social movement against globalization. Moghadam notes that blaming globalization and the spread of Western values for the emergence of *jahiliyyah* is the main idea of Islamism, and both the moderate and violent Islamists are the antagonists of globalization with the only difference being that the moderate wing strives for a peaceful regime change through parliamentary means. The author defines the two categories of Islamism, which are the militant Salafi Islamists (or Salafi jihad) that share conservative world views, and individuals and collective groups who cling to the ideas of Liberal Islam, which includes the new religious intellectuals from Iran and Malaysia's Sisters in Islam (SIS).

Moghadam continues to elaborate on the emergence and role of the feminist transnational movement and also touches upon Muslim

feminists specifically. Moghadam underlines the peacefulness of the movement, which favors medium such as research, advocacy, and lobbying. The author also emphasizes the capacity to acknowledge the democratic practices as a strength of feminism. For instance, Malaysia's Sisters in Islam (SIS) is a Muslim feminist organization that describes their agenda of fighting the marginalization of women through the means of liberalism. The organization mainly consists of highly educated women-specialists from upper-middle-class families. Here we can make a distinction between the liberal upper middle-class Muslim feminist intellectuals and militant Islamists who mostly come from lower-middle-class families.

Finally, the author provides an analysis based on a case study concerning the Global Justice Movement. This movement consists of various subdivisions concentrating on a vast number of issues, including anti-poverty, anti-corporate governance, the labor market, environmental policies, and feminism. Having started with research and seminars, the antipoverty, debt relief, and free trade movements tried to gain attention with anti-government protests around the world. For example, from 1976 to 1992 the Anti-Structural Adjustment protests took place in 38 countries all over the globe. Given the number of networks included, the author calls the Global Justice Movement 'the movement of movements' (p. 201). Here the author also puts emphasis on the importance of the internet in transnational movement emergence, makes some suggestions, and looks for the prospects of transnational social movements. Ironically, the digitalization of society, which is a byproduct of globalization, has propelled various anti-globalization movements because it has provided affordable tools capable of mass communication, which includes the use of social media.

This book is a valuable piece of literature as it shows the reader different perspectives on the variety of effects that globalization can produce. The main argument that the author makes is that the current neoliberal globalization-from-above is the last stage of capitalism, and thus it evokes the response from below in the form of transnational social movements. Moghadam was able to support her argument with logical explanations based on the previously discussed cases studies of Islamism, feminism, and the Global Justice Movement. While she distinguishes the differences of each social movement's evolvement and political views of the people involved, the author proves that their grievances, despite not being monolithic, are all somehow connected

to the process of globalization, especially in regards to its economic means. The author also suggests that globalization justifies great powers' involvement in peacekeeping operations in the Middle East.

According to Moghadam, the Muslim nations are affected by the results of globalization even more so than other countries. In this regard, Moghadam provides a very detailed explanation on the emergence of the Islamism movement as an opposition to the globalization-from-above, noting that the economic problems and lack of secure perspectives among the university educated youth who found themselves either unemployed or stuck in low-paying jobs had a big influence as well. Yet, the author not only blames the West, but she also points out that the violent authoritarian government in the Middle East, which oppressed freedom of speech and eliminated all the institutions that could create a dialogue between the government and the people also played a significant role in the development of this problematic situation. This culminated in both smart and talented, but desperate and unheard young people having nothing to do but look for answers in *sharia* and dream of the utopian Islamic State.