

## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the geopolitical consequences of China's search for energy resources on the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. It provides a brief outline of the energy situation of the world as a whole, specifically how it is becoming a more globalized and singular market. This change is occurring at the same time as a pronounced shift away from the traditional measurements of 'power' towards 'softer' more subtle definitions. There is a brief section outlining the geopolitical teachings of Alfred T. Mahan, specifically how he advocated seapower primarily for the purpose of providing the stability and security necessary for trade. Chinese analysts have been embracing the teachings of Mahan, but also interpreting them in a way that justifies the naval buildup Beijing has been embarking on in recent years. The paper briefly looks at the potential sources that China could turn to meet its energy needs, but concludes that it will have to rely on oil for the foreseeable future. It then attempts to define overall Chinese interests, specifically how nearly all of these relate somehow to energy security, thus underlining the importance of this topic to leaders in Beijing. The last half of the work delves into a geopolitical analysis of the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, and how militarization in the region is creating a more multi-polar dynamic at the expense of the US hegemony that has existed since World War II. It concludes that this is largely a desirable shift, as the US has engaged in a redefinition of its interests and consequently recognized the need for increased collaboration and cooperation with regional states. China and India, the other two major actors in the area, likewise desire a more multi-polar region. While the geopolitics here are undergoing some major transformations, this paper predicts that mutual interests and the consequences of globalization will ensure that this shift is largely peaceful, though tension is to be expected.