

GPS THESIS REVIEW

Name:	WILL RODD					
Thesis title:	GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT OF CHINA'S SEARCH FOR ENERGY ON THE INDIAN OCEAN AND SOUTH CHINA SEA					
Review:	MA ADVISOR					
Scale: 5 - excellent, 4 - good, 3 - satisfactory, 2 - poor, 1 - very poor						
	5	4	3	2	1	
ARGUMENT:						
Clearly defined research question	X					No clearly defined research question
Answers research question		X				Does not answer research question
Well structured	X					Badly structured
Shows theoretical awareness	X					Shows no theoretical awareness
Conceptual clarity		X				Conceptual confusion
Empirically appropriate & robust		X				Full of empirical errors
Logical and coherent		X				Illogical and incoherent
Analytical		X				Descriptive
Critical		X				Uncritical
Shows independent thought		X				Does not show independent thought
SOURCES & USAGE:						
Evidence of reading/research	X					No evidence of reading/research
Effective use of sources/data		X				Ineffective use of sources/data
WRITING STYLE:						
Clear	X					Obscure
Good punctuation	X					Poor punctuation
Grammatically correct	X					Grammatically incorrect
PRESENTATION:						
Appropriate length	X					Too long/short
Good referencing	X					Poor/inconsistent referencing
Good spelling	X					Poor spelling
Good bibliography	X					Poor bibliography

Part classical geopolitics and part energy security Will Rodd's thesis explored the impact of China's growing energy needs on the Indian Ocean region and variabilities that arise out from this dependency. Rodd goes on to claim that the impact of China's energy ascendancy will largely be played out in a realistic manner taking into account the omnipresence of the US navy across the high seas and the geographic benefits that India derives from its location.

To support these claims, Ross utilizes the nascent geopolitical theoretical work of Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan and his work on the "command of the seas" to explain Beijing's forays into the Indian Ocean to guarantee the security of its energy supply. The irony of the fact that Mahan, a US Navy Admiral in the 19th century, serves as a chief ideological source for Beijing's strategists is not lost on Rodd, as he explains how the Chinese have adapted his ideas to their predicament. Rodd, continues further and adds to his theoretical base by explaining how the current reality driven face of neo-liberal geopolitics can be used to explain China's current energy security and the need to develop a blue-water navy to ensure that its high-growth economy continues to ascend.

The introduction of the thesis brings the argument to the forefront and clearly explains how the author will develop his claims. The theoretical background and framework is presented in a concise and coherent way, showing the author's knowledge and familiarity with the topic and history. Rodd follows this part of his work with a look at the variables that shape Chinese energy security policy and a clear geopolitical analysis of the impact of Chinese growth on the Indian Ocean Region.

Overall, Rodd has written a very interesting paper that is consummate with the requirements of a Masters thesis in Geopolitical Studies and I remain by impressed by his commitment to the topic and his greater global understanding of the overall situation. My criticisms of his work if any stem from a difference of opinion rather than a lack of facts and exploratory analysis. My review therefore is short and the questions longer.

QUESTIONS

1. Where does the debate on renewable energy come into this? What if China is able to develop a renewable energy base, that is strong enough to push growth – what scenarios are we looking at over 2050? I know you mention this, but I would like more details, it could it detract from your conclusion that Chinese ascendancy in the Indian Ocean is energy sufficiency and economic driven, and showcase the realist security perspective.

2. Your focus on the IOR while valid and a clear of reflection of Chinese policy forgets the potential of pipelines and China's vast borders with Energy sufficient states across Central Asia, how much do you see this as an alleviating factor in terms of Chinese dependency on SLOCs?
3. Why Mahan only? If you had to find a comparative classical theoretical base who else would you have considered, surely there are other as relevant theorists out there leaving Chinese theorists aside?
4. Your treatment of the India variable leaves slightly more to be desired. What impact does a country like Burma have on this relationship, both as a vital coastal region in the IOR and a politically transitioning state?
5. You talk about how Kaplan predicts a future of smaller sub-rivalries within the IOR, but we already see this happening in the South China Sea, with the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia being major transgressors, can you elaborate on this angle and play out the various scenarios for intra-state cooperation amongst these smaller states and the use of the US as a balancer.
6. Finally, a comment I would believe is in due order, given your extensive use of people like Kaplan and Khanna on the impact of the local Chinese minorities on the decisions that these smaller South East Asian nations will have to take vis-a-vis China and China's ability to leverage them in situations of need.
(minorities and migrants = geopolitics of the human – an angle we tend to forget)

FINAL GRADE

1, Excellent



PhDr. Hrishabh Sandilya