



75 Years of Uniting Nations: Overcoming Conflict to Achieve Common Goals

20 to 22 November 2020

Historical Cabinet Crisis Committee

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Word of Welcome

Honorable representatives of the British and Chinese governments,

Welcome to the Crisis Cabinet of BIMUN/SINUB 2020!

The crisis team has worked incredibly hard over the last months to create an experience, which will not only challenge your abilities to debate, to react to sudden events and find compromise but will also bring you a new perspective on history and how it is written.

Historic committees always bring a challenge as we do not seek to replicate events that we know have happened but we rather wish to see if we, young adults from the 21st century, can set our minds back and forget about all the turns we know history has taken. We wish to see if we will come to the same conclusion as the people who have gathered in the past or if we will come to find another solution and if history will take a different path.

Taking into account that this is not only a historic committee, but it also is a cabinet crisis there will most certainly be unexpected turns which will guarantee exciting debates. Given the interactive character of this crisis you will be able to have a direct influence on the events that will take place and the way they will affect your cabinets and your positions.

I invite you to fully embrace this experience, to dive in deep into the tides of history and to find your own positions and ideas within the frame that it provides. Your preparation will be the base for successful and interesting debates full of variety which all of us will leave with new impressions and an expanded understanding of decision-making.

The crisis team is looking forward to welcoming you to the world that we have created and to see how you will manage all of the surprises we have prepared for you.

Best wishes,

Jaqueline Wendel,

Crisis Director BIMUN/SINUB 2020

Introduction to Crisis

The simulation of a crisis committee differs from participating in a normal MUN in many ways. As the BIMUN/SINUB conference will be held online a few additional changes need to be made to ensure the smooth working of debates. This section aims to explain the most important aspects of crisis in general and the crisis at BIMUN/SINUB 2020 in particular.

The Backroom

A fundamental aspect of every crisis is the existence of a backroom. The backroom consists of a group of people, 4 for BIMUN/SINUB 2020, who create the scenario the delegates will be presented with. The backroom can be understood as the control center of the crisis who decides on the chain of events taking place during the crisis. During the debates, whatever the backroom communicates, is what is happening.

Directives

Directives are the most important way for delegates to communicate with the backroom and thus, influence the events of the crisis. Directives can be sent by individual delegates, small groups of delegates or an entire cabinet. A directive provides an action or chain of action the sender of the directive wants to implement. Once the directive is received, the backroom will decide if the directive will be put in to action and if so, to what extent. There are no formal requirements for a directive unless otherwise specified by the backroom.

Whether a directive is successful depends on several factors. First, the more precise a directive is the more likely it is to be accepted and implemented successfully. However, this does not mean that directives should be pages long. Use few but precise words covering all aspects of the action which are relevant. Second, directives will be implemented within the context of the crisis which means that sometimes several directives might overlap or contradict each other. It is up to the backroom to decide how these conflicts and overlaps will be resolved. Third, within a directive only resources available to the sender of the directive can be used. This means that generally only resources known in the time of the crisis will be available

and that different delegates or cabinets might have different resources at their disposal given their position and status. Information on available resources can be requested at the backroom.

Communication

Communication will be limited during the debates of the crisis to a few channels during the crisis to simulate the communication channels of the time.

The Postman will be the main channel for the sending of directives. A postman will regularly join each cabinet. The intervals between the appearance of the postman will be communicated in an appropriate time to the delegates. Only when the postman joins the online session of a cabinet delegates are allowed to send directives to the backroom, unless otherwise specified by the backroom. The reaction to the directives will be communicated to the delegates or cabinets afterwards through a chosen channel.

During times when the postman is not in session delegates can send a member of the backroom a private message to request information which the backroom can answer. Communication between delegates of the same cabinets can be conducted through the chat function of Gatherly.

The crisis team strongly urges all delegates to refrain from direct communication with members of the second cabinet during formal sessions to allow for a fair roll out of the crisis. As the conference is taking place online the crisis team will trust that all participants will respect our request but will take action in case of unfair communication and collusion between cabinets. If communication with a member of the other cabinet is necessary, this can be done through the backroom.

Cabinets

The Cabinets are a group of people chosen by the backroom to represent different interests within the crisis. The label cabinet needs to be understood as a loose term as not all representatives would have been present in the actual cabinets of the time. Nevertheless, all representatives have the same rights within the cabinets. Given their different positions, as mentioned before, different representatives might have

different resources and information and the goals of the different participants do not necessarily align.

The Background Guide

The Background Guide serves as a starting point for the research that is to be conducted by each delegate prior to the conference. It presents a neutral account of events, unless stated otherwise in Chapters 6 and 7. Besides the Background Guide further research into the circumstances of the time, the representatives as well as potential strategies for the crisis should be conducted. Your research should however focus on everything that happens before the 26th of June, 1858 the starting date of our crisis.

Introduction to the Conflict

Context: European Relations with Imperial China before 1839

The confrontation between Imperial China and a relatively small nation on a rainy island in the North Sea has a prehistory. On the one hand, a highly sophisticated civilization, whose cultural systems and norms had survived almost two-thousand years, and on the other hand the cradle of industrialization. How did those very different powers end up in a conflict like the second opium war?

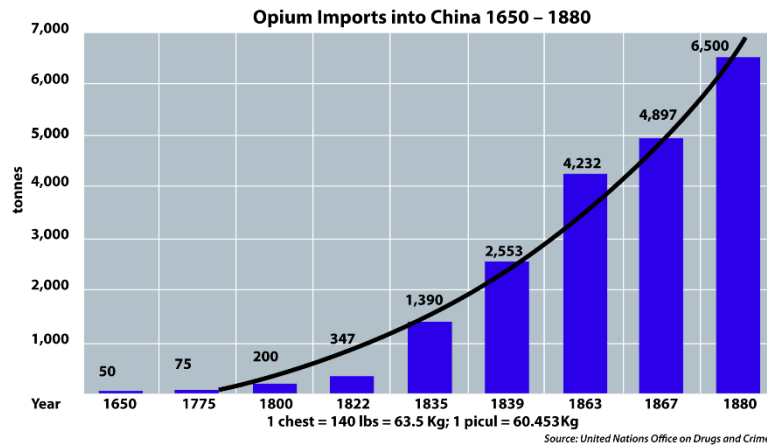
Since the Europeans were able to colonize parts of the world in the 16th century, they also tried to get access to Imperial China. Whereas the Portuguese were able to gain influence in China and obtained the port of Macao relatively early, the access to mainland China remained extremely restrictive. Despite some prominent counterexamples of Christian missionaries at the Imperial court in the 17th century, China, with its unique culture and perception, refused to treat the Europeans as equals and did not open their economy to the Europeans and regulated trade with them extremely. China was at the time the largest economy in the world and the most populous country by far, outnumbering all European states together. Whilst “relatively” open in the 16th and 17th century, the emperor restricted the trade between the Western nations and China in the 18th century to one single port, namely the port of Canton. The Chinese emperor and his bureaucracy perceived themselves as the center of the world and accepted diplomatic relations only on the basis of their own conditions including the kowtow system. The British experienced this Chinese attitude already during the Macartney Embassy in 1793 where the British envoy George Macartney travelled to Beijing in order to negotiate new trade relations with Imperial China. Although equipped with most up to date gifts, the Qianlong Emperor replied to King George III. that

“Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its borders. There is therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce.”

China demonstrated no interest in products from Europe, whereas Chinese products were extremely demanded by the counterparts. The increasing trade imbalance between the United Kingdom and Imperial China started to become costly for the British because the Chinese accepted only silver in exchange for their products. As a consequence, British politicians and industrialists started to think of political and military means to force Imperial China to open their borders.

Despite its growing appetite for Chinese products, the British society experienced a transformation which was equally shattering as the spread of opium was for China. Dating back to the second half of the 18th century, Great Britain became the engine of industrialization. Whereas today economists and historians debate why exactly Britain was the cradle of the industrial revolution and not China for example, the consequences were clear. Industrial production allowed the British to advance technologically in almost all fields of science. But the industrial revolution, which not only gave birth to capitalism and thereby industrial production levels, also allowed the British (and Europeans in general) to develop superior military logistics and armament. In the first half of the 19th century Britannia was about to rule the world.

At the same time, the China of the Qing dynasty struggled with severe problems. One of them was the dried latex obtained from the seed capsules of the opium poppy. Opium had been prohibited in China for the first time in 1729 and the respective edict had been re-issued several times. Unfortunately for the Qing dynasty all edicts were unsuccessful, and the amount of opium imported from China increased dramatically over time (12 million people were addicted in 1839 just before the First Opium War). Opium became a drug almost everywhere present in daily life. It reached all groups of society from poor farmers to the Imperial court. For the traditional Chinese society with its old and well-developed norms and traditions, the massive influx of opium caused dramatic problems. Opium which makes its users heavily addicted and extremely apathetic at the same time shattered the grounds of Chinese society.



The increasing “demand” for opium in turn increased the British interest in bringing more opium to China. The British East India Company was able to produce the opium on a quasi-industrial level and brought it (illegally) to China. The Chinese Imperial bureaucracy tried to prevent the trade and consumption of opium by threatening its own population with drastic punishments. However, as Figure 1 clearly shows all attempts remained unsuccessful.

In 1839, we see two entirely different societies. One emerging, dynamic nation that was the cradle of the most drastic economic change the world has ever seen. The other society, well established with old traditions in balance for a long time, now experiencing unrest from the interior and pressure from the exterior. Until then Imperial China was not part of the modern world. This difference coincides with a very different perception of diplomacy and international politics. China understood itself as the center of the world, diplomatic relations could only be built if the respective nation committed to the Chinese tribute system. In comparison to that the British were used to an international system established by the Westphalian peace in 1648. States were seen as competitive but in principle equal actors. This does not imply that war banned from the arsenal of political methods, but as Prussian military strategist Carl von Clausewitz put it “*The war is a mere continuation of politics by other means*”.

This distinction is crucial and together with the different political and sociological circumstances, we see two nations with contradictory prerequisites in almost all relevant categories on the eve of the conflict.

Just briefly: the First Opium War

Very soon the British desire to expand led to a first military confrontation: The First Opium War. The British demonstrated their superiority in multiple battles and the Treaty of Nanking (1842) forced the Chinese to open up more ports, pay compensation and accept jurisdiction of the European nations on foreign nationals. The treaty was a clear humiliation of the Chinese who had been beaten despite their numerical advantage and further destabilized the internal situation of the Qing dynasty.

The increasing instability coincided with additional drug consumption although opium was not legalized with the Treaty of Nanking. However, soon severe troubles occurred within Imperial China. In 1850 the Taiping rebellion started under their charismatic leader Hong Xiquang. With an extreme ideology, often characterized as a sect, the Taiping were extremely successful and brought wide areas in Southern China under their control. However, a defeat against the troops of Sengge Rinchen in 1853 blocked the way of the Taiping troops towards the capital. Suffering more defeats in the following years led to substantial relaxation for Imperial China but at the time of the Second Opium War the Taiping Rebellion remained an issue of major importance for the Qing dynasty.

The Second Opium War

Prelude at Canton

After the end of the First Opium War, Imperial China had to open various ports for international trade and not only the United Kingdom but other western nations such as France and the US had negotiated trade agreements with China. These treaties included clauses for re-negotiation after 12 years and the Western nations pressed for better trade conditions. The British in turn felt that the French and American re-negotiation was a violation of the Treaty of Nanking (1842) which granted them preferential treatment. Furthermore, British companies pushed for the legalization of opium in China.

In early 1856 the French missionary Auguste Chapdelaine was executed in Guanxi, a place in interior China where the spread of Christianity was illegal for the French. The French protested but the incident was of political value only a few months later.

In late 1856 the cargo ship "Arrow" was seized by Chinese authorities in Canton being suspected of piracy. 12 Chinese crew members were arrested. However, the „Arrow“ was sailing under British flag and, although its registration had expired, the British consul in Canton Harry Parks requested the immediate release of the ship including its personnel. The Imperial commissioner and regional governor Ye Mingchen, released nine of the crew members but refused to release the remaining three.

The British and French had found their "casus belli", they desired to re-negotiate their agreements with Imperial China using military means. The British sent a warship to bombard Canton and Ye Mingchen in return issued a reward for each British head. Despite some smaller military actions by the British including the partial destruction of the city walls of Canton and continued talks between the both parties, no solution was reached, and the conflict remained unresolved. Already that stage of the war showed that the Chinese military technology was inferior to the British demonstrated by the attempt of 23 junks that attacked the British resulting in the destruction of every single one of them. But with limited resources at hand the British retreated to Hong Kong waiting for military support.

British delay and Battle of Canton

Major problems now prevented the British from increasing their war efforts quickly and caused a delay of almost 12 months. First of all, British attempts of forming a major coalition failed, since only France joined the British whereas Imperial Russia and the United States of America refrained from doing so. Furthermore, the British government lost a vote in the House of Commons in early 1857. Substantive actions were only taken after the next parliamentary elections which increased the parliamentary majority of Prime minister Palmerston. The most severe reason for the British delay was the Indian mutiny in 1857. Dissatisfied with the increasing British influence and the tactics the British's used to increase their respective influence, a substantial rebellion broke out in India. Troops designated to be shipped to Hong-Kong had to fight in India and the British arrived in China with a significant delay.

After the delay in December 1857 the French-British expeditionary corps arrived in Canton and bombarded the city. In the three-day lasting battle, the Europeans won easily with a low number of casualties whereas Canton was severely damaged. After the Europeans took Canton and captured Ye Mingchen and brought him to Calcutta as a prisoner, the Chinese wanted to avoid an allied march towards Beijing, so that they agreed to enter negotiations which ended with the Treaty of Tientsin....

Historical Background: the First Opium War

The first maritime trade relations between Imperial China and European Powers began in the 16th century with the establishment of Macao as a trading post of the Portuguese Empire in 1557. Since the beginning, Imperial China was restrictive with its trade and upheld many rules for contact with foreigners, going as far as banning all maritime trade frequently. Still the European influence on trade in Asia grew continually, as Chinese goods like silk, tea and porcelain were exchanged for silver, the only currency accepted by the Chinese. To regulate the trade with the Europeans Imperial China introduced the Canton System in 1757 with the goal of centralizing all contact with western Powers. The Canton System meant that all foreign merchants were only allowed to purchase Chinese goods in the City of Canton. In Canton, all trade was overseen by a guild of Chinese merchants called “Cohong”. The Cohong were the link between the government of the Chinese Quing Dynasty and western merchants. They were responsible for deciding with whom to trade, what worth the exchanged goods had in the Harbors of Canton and what taxes and tariffs had to be paid by Foreigners.

The trade relations between the British and the Chinese were conducted by the East India Company. Founded in the year 1600, the East India Company was a semi-private Organization originally chartered to strengthen the influence of British merchants in the Indies. During its existence, it gained territorial control over many parts of India and was in control of 260.000 private soldiers in the year 1803. Since the demand of the British Empire for Chinese goods, especially tea, grew during the 18th and 19th century, the British Empire exported more and more silver to China, creating a huge trade deficit. This deficit arose because of the refusal of the Chinese to buy European goods and the acceptance of only silver. Given the major European conflicts before the year 1800, mainly the seven years’ war and the following war of independence of the newly found United States of America, the British financial situation was unstable and silver, mostly imported from South America, was harder to obtain. To stabilize their financial situation through trade and to reduce the trade deficit with the Chinese, the British wanted the Canton System gone. They tried to

do so by sending Earl George Macartney as an ambassador in 1792 with the goal of lifting trade restrictions, which proved to be unsuccessful and said restrictions continued to exist. The British needed to find another way, to even out the deficit and they did so, by successfully selling a new product to the Chinese, Opium.

Opium was known to the Chinese society for many centuries, though pure Opium was hard to get as it was not grown in China itself and had to be imported, mostly blended with tobacco. This mixture called Madak was restricted in its use by 1729. From the late 18th to the early 19th century, the British realized the demand for opium in China and became its biggest supplier. The opium was grown in India and then sold by British merchants through the East India Company. Though the Company did not grow the Opium itself it laid down all regulations concerning its quality and shipment. The opium was then bought by merchants in Calcutta and sailed to China where it again was sold to Chinese merchants in return for silver.

Opium influenced every social class in China. Out of Canton its use spread all throughout the Empire and the number of users rapidly grew with time. As a reaction Imperial China banned its use in 1796 and forbade any trade of it in 1799. This in turn led to many ways of smuggling the narcotic into China. The smuggling was done by sea and land. Most of the opium was sold to Chinese smugglers in Calcutta or at open sea near the Pearl River. The situation further escalated because of two main reasons. First, the United States of America joined the trade of opium which they bought from the Ottoman Empire. Because of the new competition the price for opium lowered and its sales grew further. Second, the idea of free trade and economic liberalism was on the rise in Europe in the 18th century. As a consequence, the British government decided to end the monopoly of the East Indian Company on the trade in the east, therefore making it possible to trade in Asia without any restrictions set in place by the Company. Given the high supply and high demand for Opium in China most attempts of enforcing the restrictions established by Imperial China failed due to the number of smugglers and the corruption found in the participants of the Canton system. By 1838 this had accumulated to 1.400 Pounds of Opium being sold to the Chinese each year.

Change came in the form of Lin Zexu, an Imperial officer assigned by the Emperor to stop the influx of opium into China. He formulated a letter directed to Queen Victoria

of Great Britain in which he questioned the British position on the opium trade, as they directly profited from what was known to be a harmful drug. It is unlikely that this letter was ever received by the Queen. Lin enforced the prohibition of Opium and arrested hundreds of Chinese drug traffickers. Under his supervision thousands of addicts were put into rehabilitation programs. First tensions with the British arose when Lin closed the Pearl River Channel and demanded the handover of all British opium stored in British warehouses and ships. This led to the besiegement of the foreign quarter of Canton by the Chinese and imperial soldiers boarding British ships in the Pearl river to destroy the opium onboard. British Superintendent of Trade in China, Charles Elliot, wanting to deescalate the situation, ordered the cooperation of the British merchants with the Chinese with the promise of compensation from the British government. This promise was however not backed by the other British officials and led to unrest after what the British saw as an unjustified seizure of British goods. After the seizure and destruction of 20.283 chests and 200 sacks of opium, Lin restarted trade relations with foreigners. He changed the way the Cohong would trade with foreigners, making them guarantee that no opium would be traded under the penalty of death.

Tensions further grew in 1839 after a drunk group of British sailors killed the Chinese villager Lin Weixi. Superintendent Elliot ordered the arrest of said sailors and paid compensation to the remaining family of Lin Weixi. Given the situation the Chinese Administrators ordered the turnover of the sailors to trial them under Chinese law, an order which Elliot denied. Instead he offered to trial the sailors on his ship with the Chinese authorities as observers. The Chinese declined and were angered by what they saw as a violation of China's sovereignty. In response Lin Zexu ordered to stop all food deliveries to the British and spread rumors of the British freshwater-sources being poisoned. He also ordered the city of Macao to send away British ships. All this led to the British fleeing of the Chinese coast with no supply left. On the fourth of September 1839, Elliot ordered two ships to sail to the mainland and buy urgently needed supplies. The Chinese authorities however had forbidden any trading with the British. This made Elliot issue an ultimatum after which the British ships would attack, if the Chinese would not give in. At 3 pm the deadline passed, and the fighting started, leading to the retreat of Chinese junks and enabling the British to buy supplies from local villagers.

After this, trade in general was forbidden by either party and the British blocked the Pearl River channel. Still on November 3rd the Quaker-owned “Royal Saxon” tried to reach Canton. The Cantonese tried supporting the ship with several junks. Fights broke out with the Chinese being outmatched by the British ships.

In reaction to this the British parliament decided to muster troops to attack several locations in China with the goal of gaining compensation for the destroyed opium, gaining territory for a British port and opening up Chinese ports for trade. On the 5th of July 1840, the British captured the island of Zhousan near Shanghai without much resistance after which the new representative of the Emperor, Quishan met with Charles Elliot. However, this meeting was unsuccessful since the British claim for territory was not negotiable for Qhuishan.

In the following months the British divided their forces sending one half to the Pearl river and the other to the yellow sea. They secured the maritime control of Macao and, though the Portuguese Empire stayed neutral, support for British troops and ships in Macao was granted. On January 7th, 1841 the British opened fire at the island of Chuanpee near Canton with the “Nemesis”, the new iron warship of the British navy, outclassing all Chinese resistance. They destroyed 11 Junks and conquered one of the four fortifications on land without any losses on British side compared to around 600 Chinese soldiers being killed. Again, negotiations between Quishan and Elliot started. They both agreed on opening official diplomatic relations as equals, exchanging the captured island of Zhousan for the Island of Hong Kong. The Chinese would pay 6 million pounds in compensation for the Opium and most trade regulations would be abolished. Still neither the British nor the Chinese Government agreed to these terms, as Elliot’s superior in Britain, Lord Palmerston pushed for the legalization of Opium. On the other side the Chinese Emperor was not willing to give up any territory to the British.

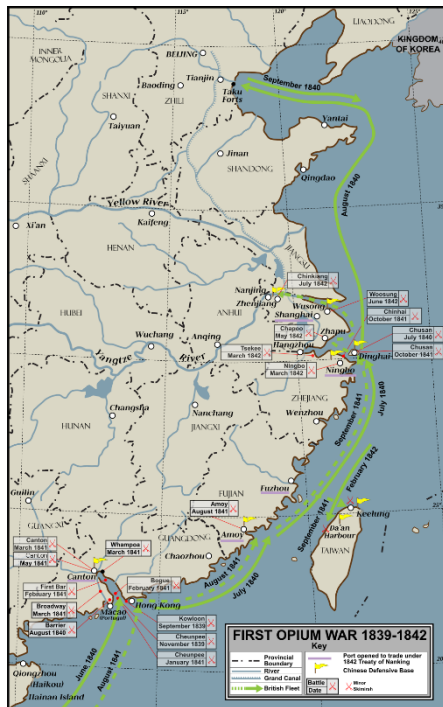


Figure 1 Conflict Overview First Opium War (Philg88 2014)

Afterwards fighting continued and the British managed to secure parts of the Canton Harbor in which they reopened trade. On the night of May 21st, 1841 the Chinese tried to destroy the British fleet in Canton Harbor with several fire ships without any success. The British then started to retaliate and took the whole city of Canton. Elliot signed a truce with the Chinese under which the Chinese would pay for the withdrawal of British troops to Hong Kong. The situation changed after Elliot was informed that he had been replaced as superintendent by Henry Pottinger. After a conflict that was continuing with truces being agreed to on a regular basis, Pottinger supported the conquering of several Chinese cities.

In the following offensive the British conquered several ports at the Chinese coast and pressed further into the country. They started the Yangtze river campaign, through which they tried to gain control of China's most important river as it was the main route for trade inside the Empire. Beginning in June 1842, with the conquering of Shanghai and Zhenjiang, the British threatened to take Nanking. Due to its strategic position at the river, the fall of Nanking would severely hinder the supply of grain all throughout China. As the Chinese were aware of that threat peace talks started.

In the end it was clear that China was in no position to refuse any demands of the British, as they used far superior technology both on land and sea and had the upper hand due to the conquering they made in the last year. On the 29th of August 1842 the first opium war ended with the Chinese having to pay 21 million pounds in compensation, the opening of several new ports for trade, the end of the Cohong monopoly and the island of Hong Kong now belonging to the British. Still opium was not legalized in Imperial China.

Imperial China and the Opium Wars

China in the 1st half of the 19th century

Imperial China flourished under the Qing dynasty (1644-1912) in the 1700s, reaching its highest surface in history (13,150,000 km² in 1760). However, the population grew even more rapidly due to the introduction of the 'New World crops' such as peanuts and white and sweet potatoes, which yielded more weight than rice. The population rose from approximately 56 million to 400 million in the years between 1700 and 1830¹, with all available farmland being used, which caused the Qianlong Emperor (the 6th in the Qing dynasty) to famously lament that *"the population continues to grow, but the land does not"*.²

Agricultural conditions were excellent, and owning a piece of land was the greatest aspiration for the average Chinese man, and vastly preferred over learning a trade and becoming an artisan, whereas in Europe it would be the opposite.³ Some provinces lacked food but instead of cultivating more, they cultivated tea, cotton, and tobacco which they could sell to other provinces in exchange for rice. These products would then be traded with other nations. Porcelain and silk were also coveted outside Chinese borders, but China in turn had little interest in foreign products except for two: silver and opium (the latter was sold illegally).

China hoarded silver to increase its trading power and strengthen its own currency, as silver was not mined in China. A high demand for Chinese products (porcelain and silk were highly valued by Europe's upper classes, and Chinese tea was consumed in great quantities by Great Britain) meant that European merchants used up their silver bullion or ran deficits in order to continue trading with Imperial China. However, China heavily restricted foreign trade.

Europeans and Americans alike, running short on silver to trade with, tried to find a way to reverse the scales, and opium came up as the obvious solution.⁴

¹ Cf. Deng (2015).

² Cf. World Heritage Encyclopedia (n.d.).

³ Cf. Allen et al (2009).

⁴ Cf. Guotu (1993).

Opium had begun to take hold in China in the 1700s, when Dutch merchants brought it from India and introduced the practice of smoking it in a tobacco pipe. The Yongzheng Emperor (Qianlong's father) issued an edict in 1729 banning its sale and use, except for medicinal purposes. However, imports multiplied by year and British merchants would buy tea on credit in Canton and then settle up their debts through the sales of opium chests. By 1793, the East India Company had seized the monopoly of Indian opium and Great Britain was using this commodity to offset the deficits of the silver trade. The Americans were also selling Turkish opium, although in smaller quantities. Opium was easily smuggled into the southern provinces of China, and the Qing administration, far away in their Beijing palaces in the north of a vast country, could do nothing to stop it. Little attention was paid when opium was banned completely by the Jiaqing Emperor (Qianlong's son) in 1799.

It was but a few years later that the imperial government also resorted to buying opium, as they needed quick profits to repress the White Lotus rebellion (1796–1804). The White Lotus was a religious cult based on Buddhist teachings, but also a political movement with the aim to destabilize the Qing government. The conditions of famine, overcrowding, increased taxation and harassment by government officials (corruption run rampant at this stage, as the Qing dynasty's administrative capabilities had not grown to adapt to the population spur) led to an organized uprising that took years to suppress.⁵

The Qing dynasty debated upon allowing opium use and taxing it or further cracking down on its use, and the Daoguang Emperor opted for the second option, asking the Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu to confiscate and destroy all opium found in British possession at Canton. Thus, the (first) Opium War began in the spring of 1839.

The (first) Opium War as lived by Imperial China

Opium is extracted from poppies, and it's highly addictive. The user builds up tolerance and requires more frequent or higher doses to experience the same effects. It is the most effective drug for pain management, and it induces sleep and a feeling of well-being. However, opium addiction can cause severe effects such as

⁵ Cf. Britannica (n.d.b).

confusion, memory loss, weight loss, fatigue, drowsiness and inability to breathe properly. Individuals who became addicted to opium became lost in their addiction and unable to function in society. As the drug became more widespread in China, it wreaked havoc in all social strata, even those closest to the Emperor.

After rising tensions in 1839, the British Parliament debated about going to war with China, and the vote narrowly decided in favor of war, which started in 1840. Chinese boats were more primitive and easier to sink and presented no match for the British Navy. China was humiliated and forced to sign the Treaty of Nanking in 1842 (also known as the 'Unequal Treaty', or the first of many such treaties). The treaty stipulated that China would pay back for the lost opium of Canton, that the island of Hong Kong would become British, and that British representatives or legations would be allowed to set residence in Beijing. Opium remained illegal in China, while the British still wanted to profit from its sales, so it was simply never mentioned in the treaty.

The years leading up to the present day: the Taiping Rebellions

Hong Xiuquan was an ordinary Chinese peasant, only he was anything but ordinary. He was very intelligent, and his whole village sponsored him so he could study and take the civil service examinations. Hong Xiuquan failed them several times and became delirious after his third failure. When he awoke, he proclaimed himself a sort of new Messiah, the second son of God, brother to Jesus, appointed to bring down the evil Manchu (Qing) dynasty and establish the Taiping Tianguo (the 'Heavenly Kingdom of Great Harmony'). He considered himself a Christian, and began to preach and gain followers, creating the "God Worshippers' Society". Working conditions for farmers had become increasingly worse as the population grew, and there was a strong sentiment against the reigning Qing dynasty.

The Taiping rebellion broke out in 1850 and is still active now in 1858. What started as a small group of poor people and outcasts grew rapidly into a highly disciplined army of more than a million. They captured Central China and turned Nanjing into their capital, renaming it Tianjing ('Heavenly Capital'). They also tried unsuccessfully to conquer Beijing. Thousands upon thousands died fighting them.

Despite internal struggles, and Hong ordering the execution of two of his closest advisors when they grew unruly, the Taiping movement is still active and constitutes a big threat in 1858.⁶

Unequal Treaties

During the course of the set of conflicts that would later be known as the Opium Wars, China was forced to sign a number of treaties with the Western powers involved, namely the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and Russia. These treaties highly favored these Western powers and could only really be imposed on China because of their defeat in the first opium war, and their relative political, military and diplomatic weakness to counter them. The first of these treaties, the treaty of Nanking, signed after the end of the first opium war, did not only make China pay for any war reparations, but also gave the Western countries enough power to essentially trade any amount of opium from China from a number of ports that were decided upon by them. Many further treaties would be signed, and it is important to note that China was not used to this style of diplomacy and international law⁷.

The period starting with the signing of the treaty of Nanking, continuing into the early 20th century, would later be known in China as the 'century of humiliation'. This shows China's feelings towards how they were treated by the Western powers, and how they later felt they were forced to agree with anything these powers decided.

On China and International Law

It is important to note in the series of conflicts and all treaties subsequently signed, that China in this time was transitioning in their views on international relations, diplomacy, and law. In previous times, Imperial China had had a worldview which can be described as a form of Social Darwinism; survival of the fittest, in this case applied to nations and peoples of the world. Countries that were strongest politically, in brute military strength, or through natural resources, were bound to

⁶ Cf. History.com (2018).

⁷ Cf. Wang (2003).

survive while those that were weaker were doomed to fail. This can partly be used to explain China ultimately choosing to sign treaties that would only later be viewed as unequal. It also further explains China's unwillingness to participate in international trade, for in their way of looking at different countries and their interactions, trade both as a means of income and international relations had a very limited role.

In retrospect, in the beginning of the 1840s, when the first 'unequal' treaties between China and western powers were signed, mainly the Treaty of Nanking, these treaties could truly be considered 'unequal'. The Western powers involved did not grant China the same privileges as would have been required in the system of international law they themselves brought to China. The treaty did not take Chinese law into account and when the Chinese version was analyzed later, it would turn out that 1840s Chinese language simply did not contain all necessary vocabulary yet in order to describe all concepts and terms needed in international law⁸.

⁸Cf. Svaverud (2011).

The British Outlook in the Victorian Age⁹

At the beginning of the 1830s the British Empire was one of the greatest powers in the world, at the center of global politics, economics and finance. Victory in war, industrialism and its skills, invention, trade and financial innovation had made her the world's richest nation and greatest trader. The 19th century was marked by the Pax Britannica, an era contrasting preceding and subsequent periods, by being comparatively free of military conflict between major powers. In foreign policy, the chief principle naturally remained the European balance of power. It was European powers which had threatened England's security, from the Spanish armada to Napoleon, just as it had been European diplomacy and alliances which contained or removed these threats. Almost all of England's overseas interests, whether of strategy or trade, were influenced, if not governed, by the activities of other European powers. From North America to India, England's eighteenth-century wars with France had largely been about trade and wealth as a means to power in Europe.

As soon as Waterloo was done, therefore, and Napoleon Bonaparte had been safely exiled to the island of St Helena, London took a lead in transforming the anti-French alliance into a Concert of Europe, to manage the essentials of global power. At its core was the idea that, whatever other differences there might be, maintaining the Concert was an essential interest for everyone. Naval supremacy and its virtual immunity from foreign invasion enabled Great Britain to perform this function, which made the European balance of power both flexible and stable. The English self-understanding of being the hegemon having to maintain a balance of power led to England seeing itself as the acknowledged champion of liberalism in Europe and beyond. In Italy and Germany, especially, liberal nationalists – in an era when these nationalist ideas meant unity, freedom, popular assertion, progress – strongly admired and sought to imitate English liberal and representative institutions.

Domestic Policy and the Rise of Opium

Britain was in the midst of uncertainty, change and social unrest. Issues like religion or Ireland needed urgent attention. The growing towns produced great social

⁹ Cf. Britannica (n.d.c) and Lovell (2012).

problems. So did new inventions, industrialism and general population growth. Industrial growth had, of course, been stimulated by England's hugely successful and economically profitable wars and concentrated on supplying wartime demands: textiles for uniforms, metal-working, coal and machinery for weapons and munitions, and shipbuilding. By 1815 England had by far the largest and most powerful navy and merchant fleet in the world.

By the 1820s and 1830s Adam Smith's free trade ideas were spreading and were supported by highly practical needs. The war had created large, machine-based industries that needed lower costs and larger markets, which would necessarily have to be overseas. Demobilization brought a flood of cheap manpower for industrial and trading efforts. Moreover, by the 1820s Britain could no longer feed all her people, and freer trade would stimulate the exports needed to buy food. All of which would encourage an international division of labor, benefit everyone, and strengthen England's role as the 'Workshop of the World'. It was clear that trade, so largely responsible for England's power and prosperity, had to be protected and promoted, obstacles to it had to be removed. Since human nature was everywhere essentially the same, trade and capitalism would spread uplift, progress and enterprise around the World.

It was Britain, the leading Western trading power, that followed others and sent the first major Western embassy to China in 1793 to try to expand Sino-British trading opportunities and establish official links. This ended in failure, due to an unwillingness of the Chinese regime to open for trade due to cultural aspects, a low demand for British goods and the British diplomat's inability to fully acquiesce to Chinese customs. The low demand for British exports meant that imports had to be paid for in gold and silver, which made the English trade deficit grow to unsustainable levels. But there were some things the Chinese did want to buy, notably raw cotton and, especially, opium. The British East India Company was, of course, aware that opium trading was illegal in China. But there were also the country (private) traders, British and others, who had the obvious advantage of not operating under the Company's authority. By 1833 smoking opium was becoming a feature of life in China.

The First Opium War

As the Chinese government commenced to more and more enforce already existing bans of Opium and tensions between the two nations, British traders became increasingly resentful due to not being able to trade and wanted to give in to Chinese demands. This, however, was met with the British officials strictly prohibiting their traders to do so and establishing a naval blockade, barring traders from entry. In an attempt to pass the blockade and sign a bond demanded by the Chinese a British merchant ship received a warning shot at by a British naval vessel. When the Chinese navy in response wanted to ensure protection of the British merchant ship and allow it to land the first hostilities ensued and four Chinese ships were sunk. The British government decided in early 1840 to send an expeditionary force to China, which arrived at Hong Kong in June. The British fleet proceeded up the Pearl River estuary to Canton, and, after months of negotiations there, attacked and occupied the city in May 1841. Subsequent British campaigns over the next year were likewise successful against the inferior Qing forces, despite a determined counterattack by Chinese troops in the spring of 1842. The British held against that offensive, however, and captured Nanjing in late August, which put an end to the fighting.

The Interwar Period

The Nanjing Treaty was the first treaty China had concluded with any foreign state for over one hundred and fifty years. It has been argued that until 1839 it was the Chinese who set the tone and terms for their dealings with other countries. From 1842 that framework began, slowly, to change. The most remarkable aspect of that 1842 treaty, though, is what it did not do. Given that China had suffered a complete and unmitigated defeat the terms imposed were remarkably moderate and limited. Four trading ports, Xiamen, Ningbo, Fuzhou and Shanghai were opened, in addition to Canton. China also agreed to accept foreign 'superintendents or consular officers' at each of them. Moreover, British and Chinese officials of corresponding rank would in future be treated as equals.

The British took some time to understand all that, for once the Treaty of Nanjing was signed, China again fell below London's political horizon. For the rest of the

decade, British politics focused on domestic issues of the first importance, like church affairs or social problems. Probably the most urgent of all was the question of food supplies and agricultural protection, highlighted by potato and corn blights which led, among other things, to large-scale starvation in Ireland. The government managed to repeal the Corn Laws, and so dismantle a critical barrier to food imports. By 1851 one-quarter of Britain's bread was made with foreign grain and flour. The country was transformed into the world's leading free market economy, with the gospel of work one of the main principles of public affairs.

Abroad, London continued to want stability and the status quo. That still meant preserving the European balance, containing French ambitions, Russian expansion, and propping up the Ottoman Empire. There was also the Europe-wide revolutionary upsurge of 1848, the problem of Poland and of governments in Spain and Portugal. In the 1850s there were several wars in quick succession.

In the two decades after Nanjing, Britain's China policies remained much the same: equality, diplomacy, security and trade, in a general context of morality and justice. That also came to mean trying to maintain the unity and integrity of Imperial China, which was not an easy matter when its borders were, at best, vague and uncertain and when France and Russia were advancing in those border regions. But right, justice and morality also meant Britain's own treaty rights, including China's duty to protect British people on her soil. With monotonous regularity London went on demanding diplomatic equality and resisting China's claims to superiority in language or behavior. Beyond that, however, the British remained interested in commerce, not territory or governance. Despite the ambivalence that the conflict had generated before and during the Opium War, the fact of victory convinced many that Britain had been right: that the war had performed a necessary and relatively bloodless service to world civilization by opening China. And once expectations had been inflated by the Treaty of Nanjing, merchants, missionaries and diplomats set about maneuvering for yet more concessions and advantages – and if necessary, for a second war to achieve them.

The Buildup to the Second Opium War

The cause of the trouble lay in one of the Opium War's many failures of communication. Despite the precautions taken to avoid diplomatic trickery over the

final Treaty, a discrepancy between the Chinese and English versions of the agreement somehow remained. Article II in the English version promised permanent residency to the British and their families in the new treaty ports; the Chinese version allowed foreigners into the cities only 'temporarily' – for the duration of the trading season. Over the following decade and a half, this slip would sour into a *casus belli*. In many parts of south China, civil war was already in progress, with ethnic minorities fighting the opening engagements of the Taiping Rebellion.

However loudly England's politicians and merchants bellowed about the civilizing mission of Free Trade, the fact remained that into the 1850s and beyond, opium sales in China underwrote much of the British empire: they funded the Raj, they generated the silver for Britain to trade along the Indian Ocean, and in China they bought tea and silk.

Renewed tensions with Imperial China brought the prospect of another war with China which, however, was not widely received in parliament and led to a passing vote of no confidence in the government. Nonetheless, in the following election in spring 1857 the pro-war party backed by the commercial and protestant communities would be reelected and validated in their policies.

Since September 1856, the British had been in negotiations with potential allies. By 27 November, the principles of cooperation with the French had been established. By early February 1857 the Cabinet had already sent instructions east. Its representatives in India were to dispatch forces to China to coerce the country into revising the old treaty. China's hinterland (not just its treaty ports) was to be opened to British enterprise; an extra dispatch ordered that opium was to be legalized.

The situation of other Global Powers

To discuss the situations of parties in the second Opium War we have to look at which parties had interests in China that could be relevant. We also must differentiate between European and Asian Powers.

To begin with Europe, one has to look at the developments of the recent decades up until the end of the Napoleonic wars. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars it was decided at the congress of Vienna to establish a new system of power in Europe. The idea was to have several superpowers in Europe whose different interest and fear of war with each other would create some sort of balance and secure peace. However, this balance of power became less stable after the Russian Empire lost the Crimean war in 1856 to the Ottomans who were allied with France and Great Britain. This meant a change European politics away from passive Alliances that would secure non-aggression. Instead alliances could now be used to prepare wars and secure own interests rather than peace and nationalistic movements could use this uncertainty to establish new countries. As mentioned, the Russian Empire lost the Crimean war which showed the other European powers how far Russia was lacking behind in many areas. To change this the new Tsar Alexander II decided to push for reforms in society and military, though this would still take many years to take effect. Concerning Imperial China, the Russian interests often clashed with the interests of China as the Russian Empire wanted to expand further in the east. This led to the contract of Aigun in May 1858 in which Russia gained control over many parts of Manchuria in the north-east of China. In general, the Russian Empire still feels humiliated and politically isolated after the Crimean war. In comparison to China though they know about their superiority concerning military technology and would not decline more territory in Manchuria.

The French were in a position of power after winning the Crimean war, after which the French Emperor Napoleon III became protector of the Christians in the Ottoman Empire, a position formerly held by Tsar Nicholas. After the Napoleonic wars, many other powers feared another rise of France in Europe, especially since Napoleon III declared himself Emperor. Still its participation in the Crimean war, allied with the British, restored its position in the European community of superpowers.

Concerning Imperial China, the French sided with Great Britain early on under the pretext of a French missionary being executed in China. However, they also show an interest in expanding their sphere of influence in China and in gaining access to Chinese trading ports.

The United States of America early on, in 1856, declared themselves neutral in the ongoing conflict between the British and Chinese, even though an American ship got attacked by Chinese canons in said year. Still the USA has an interest in increasing their trade and influence in China. In 1858, the United States are currently pursuing their expansion to the west of the American continent with several conflicts, mostly with native Americans arising. Furthermore, the issue of slavery is becoming increasingly important for the public as the newly founded Republican Party urges to abolish it. Especially in the south the fear of a possible Republican president grows, and rumors have it that some states want to secede from the Union all together.

Another European power with interest in China is the Portuguese Empire. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in China by sea in 1513 and had the land of Macao leased to them by the Chinese since 1554. Macao became more influential through time and the main port to harbor before sailing to Canton before the first Opium War. After the war, the Portuguese used China's weakness to gain full control over Macao and stopped all payments to the Chinese for leasing the land. However, Macao drastically lost significance as a major port since the establishment of Hong Kong by the British. Internally the Portuguese Empire lost much of its former power as Brazil, its biggest colony, gained independence in 1822. In 1858 Portugal mostly focusses on expanding its colonies in Africa.

Contemporary Issues to the Opium War

8th October 1856 – the Arrow Incident



Following the first opium war, British politicians did not feel like their goals were truly met, and a new Casus Belli was needed to further British ambitions in China. This stemmed mostly from the new Treaty ports dotted

around China, where British-Flag Chinese vessels were to be under British protection in these ports, to enable further trade around them. On one such occasion, the Chinese apparently boarded one ship in Canton, The *Arrow*, and detained its crew, reportedly tearing down the Union Jack in the process. Though highly disputed, the tearing down of the flag sent shockwaves in the British Public, and Prime Minister Palmerston was on the warpath against the Chinese for this. Whilst nine of the crew members were released after a call from the British Consul in Canton, three remained in detention. From this point, a Special Mission to China was created, with the purpose of settling the matter, and allowing for tighter communication between the Chinese and British. Nevertheless, some skirmishes did occur, with notable barrier forts destroyed in October. 3 died and 12 were wounded. Minor incidents continued until January, when the British halted their offensive and returned to Hong Kong, with messages sent to London to continue hostilities proper.

Despite this call for action, Parliament though, had other ideas, and blocked the first vote on hostilities on the 3rd of March 1857. Owing to this, the Whig Palmerston called a snap election in April, gaining 53 seats and an overall majority, at the spry age of 72. Following this, in May 1857 Hostilities were renewed with China. During the Spring, a 5000 strong expeditionary force was sent to China, along with a Special

High Commissioner and notable Plenipotentiaries Extraordinary from Russia, France, and America. However, before those troops could set sail, news arrived from India, their place of origin.

10th May 1857 – The Indian Mutiny

In March 1857 Mangal Pandey of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry declared an intent to rebel against his commanders, with one of the key reasons being the introduction of cow and pig fat into rifle cartridges. Under native religion, Cows are sacred and eating them is forbidden. After a failed attempt to incite his unit to rebel, Pandey was hung two days later. Following further violence, the regiment was disbanded, and harsh punishments dealt. Ex-sepoys then went home and began to foster new dissent. In April the first major cities began to feel the unrest, with Agra, Allahabad, and Ambala being set on fire, barracks targeted and European houses lit. Meerut and Delhi featured some of the worst violence, with massacres of officers and of sepoy by troops sent there to quell the rebellion.

The British were slow to respond to the taking over of Delhi and other major cities. Cawnpore (Kanpur), Lucknow, and many other cities across India rose up in revolt. Even other cities outside of the main rebelling regions, such as in Burma, featured protests. Overall, the Mutiny led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Indian civilians by British troops, as well as massacres of British women and children at the hand of the mutineers. This also simply led to the ceasing of hostilities in China, as much of the troops the British were to use came from the Indian Subcontinent. Not that the feeling of rebellion was at an end yet.

28th December 1857 – The Battle of Canton

Following the end of the main part of the Indian Mutiny, the British were keen to begin an assault on the Chinese mainland. To this end, the focus was on Canton (modern day Guangzhou) to both allow for a base on the mainland, and to capture Ye Mingchen, the Chinese official who had been the most resistant to British attempts to influence affairs in Canton. In early December, Harry Parkes, the British Consul in Canton, sent an ultimatum to Ye Mingchen, threatening bombardment on Canton if the remaining men of the Arrow were not released, plus further terms. The

men were released, however with no apologies, and not to the liking of the British. Lord Elgin, the most senior British diplomat in the area ordered British Admiral Michael Seymour, Charles van Straubenzee, and French admiral Charles Rigault de Genouilly, to take Canton.

The total Franco-British Contingent consisted of roughly less than 6'000 troops, with the Chinese at Canton possessing roughly 30'000 troops, in the city of 1'000'000 overall. However, the allies also had strong ship support and could, and did, bombard the city often.

The battle itself did not last long. After a full day of bombardment on the 28th of December, troops landed by the south-east of the city on the 29th, climbing the walls from the east entrance. The walls were then occupied, with troops stationing themselves there for a week longer. Following the scaling however, the troops began their way into the city, capturing the rest of the city by the 31st of December. The British and French left with minimal losses, while the Chinese suffered several hundred. The Commissioner Ye Minchen was taken to India where he killed himself through a forced hunger strike. Overall, the battle was a complete humiliation for the Chinese, with a strong city taken almost effortlessly by the French and British. Following this, the Chinese sued for peace, and negotiations began on the Treaty of Tientsin.

26th June 1858 – The Treaty of Tientsin



SIGNING OF THE TREATY OF TIENTSIN

Several treaties were signed at Tientsin, reflecting the four powers involved, Britain, Russia, America, and France. These treaties in effect supplemented earlier treaties in 1842 under the First Opium War and sought to bind China further to what the allies wanted. Whilst the full treaty is already read out somewhere else, let us look at some of the main points of these treaties.

Most-Favored Nation clauses, already established for the British and French, were a key part of this and previous concessionary treaties. The idea behind it was to keep all foreign powers, or at least the allies, open to the same level of concessionary trade. Closely linked to this were the treaty ports. Treaty Ports were to be specific areas of trading into China, whilst Canton was one of the major ones opened by the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing, several other cities across the Chinese coast were to be added. Next religious practices were to be protected, mostly involving those of the four powers, Russian Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism. Previously there had been attempts to suppress the teaching and practice of these religions on mainland China.

The issue of extraterritoriality was to be added to citizens of the four countries. Whilst in existence it was to be strengthened in Tientsin, where citizens had the right to travel throughout the Qing Empire if they had a valid passport. Previously this was extended to merely having the legal right of their own country on foreign soil, but now they were able to travel too. Furthermore, permanent diplomatic embassies were to be allowed into Peking (Beijing), where they had not before. This was one of the requirements of the British before the start of the conflict. For trade, China had often created national monopolies over its domestic trade, ousting foreign competition. This was one of the key items the allies wished to make forbidden.

Lastly, the Chinese were to owe the allies money, with 6 million Taels, each an ounce of silver, being split into three between France, the UK, and British Merchants. Overall in pure silver cost this would be around \$120 million today, with a very wide berth for purchasing power consideration.

However, the Treaties have not been signed, merely negotiated. The date is the 26th of June 1858, the Treaties have been put at the feet of the ratifiers of the United Kingdom and the Qing Empire. How will these great powers lay the scene for the conflict to come?

Avenues of Further Research

During your research, it is important to look far back into some of the key parts of Chinese and British history to understand where the ideals and wishes of the nations came from. Below are some sources you can look at to investigate further.

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