

The Eight-Nation (Non-) Alliance
Emergence, Coordination, and Lasting Mark on the Chinese Imagination


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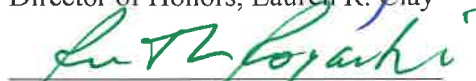
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On the basis of this thesis defended by the candidate on April 27, 2023
we, the undersigned, recommend that the candidate be awarded highest honors
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Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to evaluate the “Eight-Nation Alliance” (“八國聯軍,” or Eight-Nation Allied Forces)’s invasion of Qing China and pacification of the Boxer Uprising between 1900 and 1901 through the lens of conflict and collective memory.¹ During the allied coalition war, also known as the Boxer War, eight nations shared the goal of crushing the violent anti-Christian and anti-foreign grassroots uprising in China. What motivated this project was the discovery that while the eight foreign powers’ invasion is an indispensable part of Chinese nationalism and has long remained a significant cultural and political notion in China well into the twenty-first century, the very concept of a coordinated alliance does not exist on a comparable level of importance and historical magnitude on the side of the allies.²

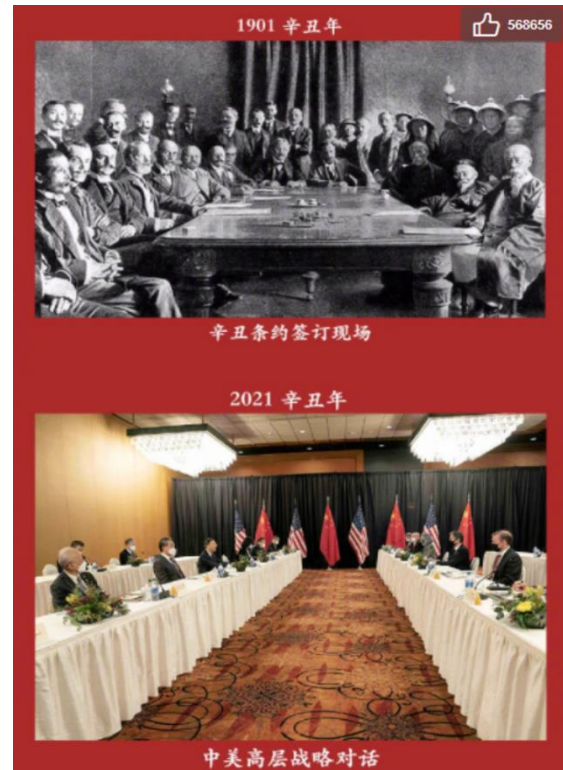


Figure 1:
 (Top) 1901, Signing of the Boxer Protocol
 (Bottom) 2021, United States–China strategy talks in Alaska

¹ The eight nations were the Empire of Japan, the Russian Empire, the British Empire, France, the United States, the German Empire, the Kingdom of Italy, and Austria-Hungary (in order of the sizes of their troops).

² For example, the Modern War Institute at West Point describes the “allied” coalition as “[f]rom the top down, this coalition little resembled joint, multinational military efforts of later conflicts. France, Germany, Great Britain, Japan, Russia, and the United States committed sizeable contingents of soldiers to land operations but all exercised independent commands that sought to act in unison through coordination and synchronization. Mitchell G. Klingenberg, “Americans and the Dragon: Coalition Warfare from the Boxer Rebellion to the Future Battlefield” (Modern War Institute at West Point, July 29, 2021), <https://mwi.usma.edu/americans-and-the-dragon-coalition-warfare-from-the-boxer-rebellion-to-the-future-battlefield/>. This paradox surrounding different historical significance exists even despite the fact that anglophone military literature celebrates the allied expedition as an unprecedented multinational military operation. This paradox exists even despite the fact that anglophone military literature celebrates the allied expedition as an unprecedented multinational military operation. Examples include Michael H. Hunt, “The Forgotten Occupation: Peking, 1900-1901,” *Pacific Historical Review* 48, no. 4 (November 1, 1979): 501–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3638698>; LeAnn Fawver, “1st International Relief Expedition” (U.S. Army Military History Institute, July 28, 2009), https://www.army.mil/article/25028/1st_international_relief_expedition; U.S. Army Center of Military History,

One recent indication of this disparity is the utilization of the allied powers' history in commentary on China's modern-day diplomatic relations with foreign states: the juxtaposition of a photo at the signing of the Boxer Protocol with representatives of the "Eight-Nation Alliance" and one of the March 2021 United States–China talks in Alaska between Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Chinese diplomat Yang Jiechi (Figure 1).³ Unlike joint statements from bilateral strategy talks today, the specific terms of the Boxer Protocol were mostly determined at meetings without a Chinese representative present. "We're finally standing on equal ground with the West," says the widely circulated social media post. This reasoning stems from the idea that the "Eight-Nation Alliance" present at the signing of the Protocol is a representation of an "united 'West'" that humiliated the Qing state, and by extension, the Chinese people. The thesis pushes against this popular Chinese perception of the "Eight-Nation Alliance" as a symbol of unified imperial subjugation of China and a yardstick against which Chinese diplomatic and military interactions with the West are measured today. Instead, this thesis asks how "allied" the member states actually were, both in terms of intention and behavior.

The conflicts between different powers during the formation of the "Alliance" and the exceptionally complicated coordination within it make up the bulk of the first two chapters. I examine the tension during two stages of the historical episode: the emergence of diplomatic connections around the so-called alliance and the negotiations after the war, specifically the making of the Boxer Protocol and the joint administration of the city of Tianjin by forces of the

"China Relief Expedition Campaigns," n.d., https://history.army.mil/html/reference/army_flag/cre.html; Katherine Reist, "China Relief Expedition," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese-American Relations*, n.d.

³ 2021 is the one-hundred-and-twenty-year anniversary of the signing of the Boxer Protocol between the allies and Qing China (1901). The two years also share the same "term" of the Chinese sexagenary cycle of the lunar calendar, which is what Figure 1 emphasizes. "“辛丑年对比”话题走红社交媒体, 网友: 中国已不是那个中国" ["Contrast of the Xinchou Year" Is Trending on Social Media, Netizens: China Is No Longer the One Before], *Guancha*, March 19, 2021, https://www.guancha.cn/internation/2021_03_19_584676.shtml.

allied foreign powers.⁴ However, instead of reiterating the details of military coordination, which have been thoroughly researched by historians of military history, this thesis will focus on the diplomatic side of this entity.⁵ This thesis also does not seek to establish a comprehensive account of the Qing government's internal decision-making process, but focuses instead on key government figures and the communication between and among imperial powers and the Qing officials. I posit that in addition to their often-overlooked tensions, the focus on the allies' disagreements and competitions during the war can also act as a lens through which we can examine the fluid global dynamics of international relations at the turn of the century. This multinational collaboration marks an important turning point for the states' histories for different reasons, ranging from strategic to economic to domestic concerns, such as projecting strength and scrambling for influence in the Pacific region. The differing goals of the allies, therefore, are a necessary component of this analysis of their collaboration.

This study is as much about illuminating the fragmented nature of global imperialism that manifested itself on Chinese soil as it is about opening a window into reconsidering Chinese nationalism as a construct vis-à-vis foreigners and foreign powers. This fragmented historical reality, I argue, left lasting yet varying marks on Chinese social memory and historical myths: how the characterization of the "Alliance" as a coordinated whole and the imagination of a well-coordinated and united foreign entity were crucial for China's later anti-imperialist mobilization

⁴ On July 14, 1900, Tianjin became the first Chinese city occupied by the Eight-Nation Alliance. Two days after the occupation, the Russian admiral Yevgeni Ivanovich Alekseyev organized a meeting with representatives with other allied states to discuss the creation of a jointly administered provisional government. The main purposes of the government (1900-1902) were to suppress Boxer activities and provide supply and transportation support allied activities.

⁵ For a detailed account of the military aspect of this expedition and its origins, please see Lanxin Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315029283>.

is used as an example of “National Humiliation” (“国耻”), even while such a clear definition of the nations’ unity does not exist on the side of the observers of the allied states.

The history of the “Eight-Nation Alliance” is situated within the larger event of the Boxer Uprising during the waning days of the Qing dynasty. As the Yale historian Mary Clabaugh Wright once wrote, “Rarely in history has a single year marked as dramatic a watershed as did 1900 in China.”⁶ According to historian Joseph Esherick, the domestic environment surrounding the Boxer Uprising, including the structure and mentality of society in the northern province of Shandong, the socioeconomic atmosphere, and local politics all illuminate that the bands of Chinese peasant youth from Shandong who stormed into Beijing to besiege the foreign legations were products of the social ecology and popular culture in West Shandong.⁷ The Boxers’ violent xenophobia stemmed, in part, from the anger towards foreign missionaries backed by imperialism that had haunted China for the past century.⁸ China’s humiliating defeats in the two Opium Wars (1840s and 1850s) gave Western powers substantial control over Chinese ports. Meanwhile foreign nationals were granted extraterritorial privileges that shielded them from prosecution from Chinese courts. Foreign missionaries, seen as agents to further foreign influence, were exempt from much of Chinese law and often invoked Western protection. Esherick painted the picture of Shandong: all these factors combined with the frustrating regional cycle of devastating floods, droughts, and banditry contributed to the expansion of the movement

⁶ Mary Clabaugh Wright, “Introduction: The Rising Tide of Change,” in *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-1913*, ed. Mary Clabaugh Wright (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), 1.

⁷ Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). Esherick’s archive-based analysis is seen by the academic community as the authoritative account of the origin of the Boxer Rebellion. Esherick also convincingly demonstrates that the Boxers were anti-Christian and anti-Western from the start and became proto-nationalistic later.

⁸ Esherick, 68–95. Esherick provides specific evidence and interpretation on missionary behaviors that agitated locals. Examples include the Catholic missionaries’ aggressive intervention in secular disputes and occupying “semi-official” positions, providing unfair advantage to Christian converts (especially in lawsuits before the local magistrate), and holding privileges protected by the extraterritoriality provisions. For more details, see his chapter “Imperialism, for Christ’s Sake.”

in Northern China, where imperial dominance was most severe. The Boxers' objective was precisely to violently remove such foreign influence over Chinese trade, politics, religion, and technology.

The Boxer chaos was concurrent with an unstable Qing regime. The instability and fragility of the Qing regime can be seen across three themes: defeat at the hands of Japan and the accumulating fiscal burden, the failed Hundred Days Reform and conservative coup of 1898, and the intensified imperial grabbing of land concessions. The First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) exposed the weakness of the Qing empire and marked the emergence of its island neighbor as an increasingly formidable world power. Holding longstanding grudges over supremacy in Korea, the two states fought on both land and sea after the Japanese viewed the Chinese military support for the Korean king to suppress rebels as a violation of the Sino-Japanese Li-Itō Convention (also known as the Tientsin Convention). Contrary to popular speculation that the more massive Qing force would score an easy victory, Japan defeated Chinese forces overwhelmingly thanks to successful modernization programs and western technologies.⁹ The loss struck a devastating blow to the Qing both politically and financially. The resulting Treaty of Shimonoseki (also known as the Treaty of Maguan) demanded that the Qing recognize Korea's independence, effectively ending China's exclusive influence on the client state; cede Taiwan, the Pescadores (Penghu) Islands, and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan; pay two hundred million taels in indemnities; and open four ports for Japanese trade.¹⁰ Recent analysis of the two economies have found that not only did China not have the financial capability to pay the indemnity without

⁹ "First Sino-Japanese War," in *Britannica Academic*, n.d., <https://academic-eb-com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/levels/collegiate/article/First-Sino-Japanese-War/67946>.

¹⁰ Karen Christensen and David Levinson, eds., "The Treaty of Shimonoseki," in *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002), 10–11, <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3403700587/GVRL?u=nash87800&sid=bookmark-GVRL&xid=3abd8a0a>.

borrowing internationally, but that domestic economic demand at the time also suffered tremendously due to the transfer.¹¹

The humiliating and crushing defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War and continuous foreign violation of Qing sovereignty led Chinese Confucian reformist scholars to propose dramatic changes to the structure of the Qing government, education system reforms, and measures to modernize the country. The young Manchu emperor Guangxu, caught up in this reformist zeal, committed to one hundred days of dramatic change based on western thinking that would have transformed the state into a constitutional monarchy by issuing official decrees. This radical attempt immediately drew backlash from the Conservatives in the Qing court and Guangxu's aunt, the Empress Dowager, Cixi. A coup took place on September 21, 1898: Cixi put the empire under her tutelage, brutally annulled the reform measures, and seized control of the government. While most supporters of the reforms were either arrested or executed, the two leaders in the movement, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao, escaped. While scholars see the Hundred Days Reform of 1898 as both a genuine attempt to reform the country and strategic effort to impress the foreign powers with hopes to slow down their encroachment on Chinese sovereignty, the radical challenge to the Qing regime was seen by Cixi as suspiciously pro-West (actually pro-Japanese) and revolutionary, fueling tension between the Qing and foreign powers and encouraging the Boxers' fanaticism.¹² Compounding political unrest in the Qing court was an intensified wave of imperial encroachment on Chinese society, especially in the form of

¹¹ For more details on the economic analysis, please see Baomin Dong and Yibei Guo, "The Impact of the First Sino-Japanese War Indemnity: Transfer Problem Reexamined," *International Review of Economics & Finance* 56 (2018): 15–26, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iref.2018.03.013>.

¹² For more details of the Hundred Days Reform, please see Paul A. Cohen, John E. Schrecker, and Harvard University, eds., *Reform in Nineteenth-Century China*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 72 (Cambridge, Mass: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University : distributed by Harvard University Press, 1976); Luke S. K. Kwong, *A Mosaic of the Hundred Days: Personalities, Politics, and Ideas of 1898*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 112 (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University : Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1984).

seizing concessions and disrupting lives of locals in those areas. Germany's occupation of Jiaozhou Bay in 1898, for example, is seen as one of the precipitating causes of the Boxer War.

Like the Qing, the allies themselves were also going through pivotal moments themselves, either domestically or in relation to their relative global standing in an uncertain world. While imperial powers like Great Britain, France, and Russia had already established considerable spheres of influence in different parts of China, newcomers entered the game at the turn of the century as well. For example, the United States had just taken over Hawaii as well as the Philippines after the Spanish-American War of 1898 and saw the valuable opportunity to ascend from a medium regional power to a major player in the Asian Pacific arena.¹³ Germany adopted the imperial diplomatic foreign policy of *Weltpolitik* ("World Politics") under Emperor Wilhelm II. Prior to the emperor's dismissal of Bismarck, German diplomatic strategies had a greater focus on maintaining the state's status in Europe; but the prestige of building the German colonial empire provoked Germany to keep up with the scramble for colonies in order to transform itself to a global imperial power.¹⁴ Having just shocked the world with its quick and overwhelming victories in the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan successfully established itself as a

¹³ The China Relief Expedition was the first opportunity since the American Revolution for the U.S. Army and Marines to work with their foreign counterparts. For more on the political considerations behind the motivation of U.S. participation in the Boxer War, see Carleton Frederick. Waite, *Some Elements of International Military Co-Operation in the Suppression of the 1900 Antiforeign Rising in China with Special Reference to the Forces of the United States*, The University of Southern California. School of Research Studies. No. 12 (Los Angeles: The University of Southern California Press, 1935); Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Xiangyun Chen, "The Crucible of Empire: The American Experience in the China Relief Expedition of 1900," *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (Ph.D., Ann Arbor, The Pennsylvania State University, 2018), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (2449490122), <http://proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/crucible-empire-american-experience-china-relief/docview/2449490122/se-2?accountid=14816>.

¹⁴ Terrell D. Gottschall, *By Order of the Kaiser: Otto Von Diederichs and the Rise of the Imperial German Navy, 1865-1902* (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2003); Annika Mombauer and Wilhelm Deist, eds., *The Kaiser: New Research on Wilhelm II's Role in Imperial Germany* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Richard Bassett, *For God and Kaiser: The Imperial Austrian Army, 1619-1918* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Susanne Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).

formidable world power with imperial designs in the region and exposed the weakness of the Qing, encouraging foreign powers to make further demands of the Chinese government.¹⁵ For all three states, a potential allied pacification was attractive for a multitude of reasons, and the most important one of all was the opportunity to work closely and attentively with their foreign counterparts.

As the depredations of the Boxers spread across an increasingly anti-foreign Qing regime, Western military forces built up their military presence in along the Northern China coast in preparation to defend foreign interests against attacks by Boxers. While foreign states took into account their colonial and political interests in China, the escalation of killing of foreign missionaries and threat to foreign nationals' safety worked as the allies' overarching rationalization to directly intervene via invasion, commonly known as the Boxer War. Although there was no binding agreement amongst the nations, the weakness of China was laid bare by this allied expedition. The participating powers were the Empire of Japan, the Russian Empire, the British Empire, France, the United States, the German Empire, the Kingdom of Italy, and Austria-Hungary. The allies did not lack differences: they came from different parts of the world, spoke different languages, coveted different spoils, and contributed unequal amounts of effort to the victory and subsequent pillage.

The task of investigating the "Alliance" from a perspective of conflict and locating the changing meanings of this political and military entity in Chinese society touches upon several different scholarships, including Chinese diplomatic history, global imperial history in general, and the history of collective social memory. To begin, the history of the "Eight-Nation Alliance"

¹⁵ Peter Duus et al., eds., *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937*, 2. print (Princeton, N.J: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991); Edward J. Drea, *Japan's Imperial Army: Its Rise and Fall, 1853-1945*, Modern War Studies (Lawrence, Kan: University Press of Kansas, 2009).

is situated within the larger event of the Boxer Uprising during the Qing dynasty. The voluminous scholarship surrounding the Boxer Uprising devotes significant attention to the mysterious uprising itself, accompanied by less systematic evaluations of the response of the eight allied foreign nations.¹⁶ Although some scholars examines the allied invasion, since his focus is principally on the rebellion itself, he engages more with acts of revenge of the allies in China than internal diplomatic coordination of the states.¹⁷ The result is that while we now know a great deal about the grassroots causes of the Boxer Uprising, there is room for deepening the understanding of the diplomatic and military history behind the allied powers' invasion of China.

This research also joins the field of the diplomatic history of China. While there were undeniably great disparities in military strengths between the two sides of the Boxer War, that does not mean that the Qing's agency or attempts to take advantage of the foreign states' internal conflicts did not meaningfully exist. In fact, within the trend in Chinese history studies since the mid-1900s that emphasized imperialism's role in the Chinese state, scholars began to recognize that the Chinese, in fact, exercised agency to some extent, even though they were constrained within a sociopolitical framework imposed on the country.¹⁸ In this thesis, I will also explore how the Chinese side, especially diplomat and chief negotiator Li Hongzhang, attempted to turn the foreign powers against each other so that China could benefit from the conflict. Even though the impact of this calculation was very limited, the fact that the Chinese were highly conscious of

¹⁶ Examples include R. Coltman, *Beleaguered in Peking: The Boxer's War Against the Foreigner* (F.A. Davis Company, 1901), <https://books.google.com/books?id=yY0CAAAAMAAJ>; Arthur H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, 2 v. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1901), catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001258034; Frederick Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces*, 126 p. (London: C.H. Kelly, 1902), catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006530504; Stanley Peregrine Smith, *China from Within, or, the Story of the Chinese Crisis* (London: Marshall, 1901), catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100767601.

¹⁷ Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 306–13.

¹⁸ Examples of monographs who utilize this analytical approach include Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Pär Kristoffer Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan*, Oxford Studies in International History (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

and actively amplifying the mutual suspicions also carries historical significance and strengthens scholarly understanding of the fractured nature of the invasion.

Exploring the complicated aims of the members of the “Alliance” contributes to the diplomatic history of China and of global imperialism. On the Sino-U.S. diplomatic relations side, Michael H. Hunt writes about the period of the Boxer War (and more generally, the Open-Door Doctrine) with analyses of the correspondence between Chinese and American officials and the internal decision-making process of the U.S.’s joining of the international forces.¹⁹ Hunt uncovers the U.S.’s double act of cultivating China’s friendship to secure preferential treatment and discreetly following the other powers to gain Chinese concessions during negotiations, all the while tracking the other powers’ apparent acts of ambition.²⁰ Later scholars of the history of imperialism such as Robert Bickers and Odd Arne Westad are less focused on the specific historical episode of the Boxer Uprising and treat foreign powers as a whole and their presence in China through macroscopic themes.²¹ Historians who do focus on the allied expedition almost exclusively write independently about each individual nation’s diplomatic and imperial history or its relations with China, leaving room for identifying patterns in the interactions among the allies.²²

¹⁹ Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship*, 189–202.

²⁰ Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 189–202.

²¹ Examples of this more general type of work on Chinese diplomatic history include Odd Arne Westad, *Restless Empire: China and the World Since 1750* (Boulder: Basic Books, 2012); Robert A. Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 - 1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).

²² Examples include Bassett, *For God and Kaiser*; Robert Lee, *France and the Exploitation of China, 1885-1901: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Arthur J. Knoll and Hans-Martin Hinz, eds., *The German Colonial Experience: Select Documents on German Rule in Africa, China, and the Pacific 1884-1914* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010); Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*; Shirley Ann Smith, *Imperial Designs: Italians in China, 1900-1947* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012); Drea, *Japan’s Imperial Army*; Sophia Lee, “The Foreign Ministry’s Foreign Agenda for China: The Boxer Indemnity,” in *The Japanese Informal Empire in China, 1895-1937* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 272–306, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/2027/heb.01692>; John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 3d ed (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971); O. Edmund

This thesis can add to the anglophone literature on the allied members by highlighting internal rivalry driven by states' domestic and global geopolitical interests.²³ The global and comparative approach to empires, colonialism, and nation-building is becoming a new and exciting path of exploration in the field.²⁴ Scholarship on the history of imperialism has also recently gained new momentum as scholars from various fields have started to pay attention to the concept of “co-constitution,” specifically the idea in international relations that supposedly “weak” actors also play a role in shaping international order.²⁵ Indeed, the impact of the relatively localized Boxer War deserves to be revisited for the invasion of the allies came to play a *world* historical role. The mutually constitutive relationship between China and the powers indicates an inflection point at 1900; and the allies contributed to the downfall of the Qing no less than the Boxer War led to global ramifications. It is also essential to recognize that this chapter of Chinese history is not an isolated event from the late nineteenth century to the eve of WWI. Other examples of complex interactions among imperial powers include Anglo-French relations and the Arab Middle East, the Berlin Conference, and European expansion in Africa.²⁶

Clubb, *China and Russia: The “Great Game,”* Studies of the East Asian Institute, Columbia University (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

²³ On the Chinese side, a notable monograph is Li Dezheng 李德征, Su Weizhi 苏位智, and Liu Tianlu 刘天路, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi 八国联军侵华史* [History of the Eight-Nation Alliance's Invasion of China], 1st ed. (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 1990).

²⁴ Stephen Halsey, “European Imperialism and China's Response in the 19th Century,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*, n.d., <https://doi-org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.453>.

²⁵ Tarak Barkawi, “Empire and Order in International Relations and Security Studies,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*, n.d. Marcos Tourinho, “The Co-Constitution of Order,” *International Organization* 75, no. 2 (2021): 258–81, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000466>.

²⁶ William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935); John Lowe, *The Great Powers, Imperialism, and the German Problem, 1865-1925* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1994); George Lenczowski, *Russia and the West in Iran, 1918 - 1948: A Study in Big-Power Rivalry* (New York, NY: Greenwood, 1968); Jan Karl Tanenbaum, “Britian, France and the Arab Middle East, 1914-1920” 68, no. 7 (1978): 1–50, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1006273>; Bruce Waller, *Bismarck at the Crossroads: The Reorientation of German Foreign Policy After the Congress of Berlin 1878 - 1880*, 35 (London: Univ. of London, The Athlone Pr, 1974).

After the invasion of the “Eight-Nation alliance,” foreign powers jointly occupied and administered the major Chinese city of Tianjin for two years through the “Tianjin Provisional Government” (TPG). Regarding the fascinating period of multinational occupation and administration, anglophone scholars have principally focused on how the foreign administration forever transformed this Chinese city through new measures of governance.²⁷ But tension and coordination efforts among representatives of the TPG have not been a foremost focus. After seizing the city, the allies faced the problems of collectively governing a Chinese city of approximately seven hundred thousand people. As described by an early historian of the event, the occupation was “complicated by the chaos of capture, looting, and military occupation... trade in even the necessities of life had undergone a seemingly irreparable upheaval; and everywhere the poisoning presence of grim reminders of a fallen city and endangered the health of Native and Foreigner alike.”²⁸ What’s more, the unity of the powers when facing the common enemy of the Boxers was disappearing, quickly replaced by hostilities and squabbling over territorial concessions and indemnities.²⁹ My project investigates exactly this tension that arose during the occupation.

Finally, the last chapter of this thesis will contribute to the literature on collective memory in China of this tumultuous period, specifically the concept of “national humiliation.” In the field of Chinese collective memory, historians Paul Cohen and James Hevia both consider

²⁷ A substantial portion of the literature on the TPG is in French. Recent English-language literature on Tianjin during this period include Roger R. Thompson, *China’s Local Councils in the Age of Constitutional Reform, 1898-1911* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995); Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*; Lewis Bernstein, “After the Fall: Tianjin under Foreign Occupation, 1900–1902,” in *The Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 133–47; Man Bun Kwan, *The Salt Merchants of Tianjin: State-Making and Civil Society in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai’i Press, 2001); Hunt, “The Forgotten Occupation.” Hunt. One of Hunt’s primary sources, the papers of the American China Relief Expedition, includes information on the TPG. But because American commander General Chaffee took little interest in activities in Tianjin, this is only a partial glimpse.

²⁸ Otto Durham Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History* (Tientsin: Tientsin Press, 1925), 225.

²⁹ Bernstein, “After the Fall: Tianjin under Foreign Occupation, 1900–1902,” 134.

postcolonial influence of memory in their examination of this period. Cohen treats the Boxer Uprising as a case study for *narrative reconstruction* on how the past gets experienced, defined, and later mythologized and symbolized in the "New Culture" era (1915-1919), the May Fourth era (1919-1926), and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Hevia's book, *English Lessons*, treats China as the receiver of the influence of imperialism and reconsiders Cohen's China-centered approach.³⁰ But in his chapters dedicated to 1900-1901, Hevia explores how Euro-American imperial powers actively tried to fix the meaning of the Boxer Uprising and the "Eight-Nation Alliance" to occlude Western barbarism during the expedition.³¹ Specifically, this includes the memorialization of victim missionaries killed by Boxers and glorification of the "civilizing mission" of the Western powers.

To date, previous scholars have either focused primarily on how the Boxers were remembered in China (Cohen) or how the "Alliance" was remembered in the hearts of people in the West and observers around world (Esherick). I turn to the novel aspect of the image left by the powers on the hearts of the Chinese, shifting the focus but with a similar approach to Hevia and Cohen. The last chapter examines the early evolution of the Chinese term for "Eight-Nation Alliance," a phrase deeply rooted in the concept of "national humiliation" and virtually known to all in China today. The literature on Chinese anti-imperial memorialization and the political utilization of historical memory places heavy emphasis on the effective deployment of "national

³⁰ James Louis Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 13–14. Paul A. Cohen, "Discovering History in China: The Backstory," in *A Path Twice Traveled: My Journey as a Historian Of China*, 1st ed. (Harvard University Fairbank Center, 2019), 56–73. This trend of investigating social history that was very much "of the people" was picked up by anglophone historians in the eighties, while previous works were more diplomacy-oriented, less sympathetic, and of the "Great Man"- approach to history-writing. Cohen pioneered the practice of researching Chinese history *in China*, relying on local primary sources, and going to a grassroots level.

³¹ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 241. The strategies identified by Hevia include through international law, international exhibitionary culture, and ideological efforts. For more details, refer to his chapters "Desacralizing Qing Sovereignty" and "Mnemonic Devices."

humiliation” during the PRC period and takes the foreign invading states and entities as given.³² But little attention is given to how these ideas emerged in the early 1900s and how the “Eight-Nation Alliance” as a single entity relates to the modern historical consciousness in China that revolves heavily around collective shame and self-blame. I examine and complete this link in the process of memorialization by focusing on the conception of the united entity of the eight nations, as present in the oft-heard Chinese term “Baguo lianjun” (“八國聯軍”). Ironically, in contrast to popular belief in China, the evidence I examine here points to the powers, far from being a unified force of undifferentiated foreign imperialism, was actually a relatively loose military entity full of internal quarrels, conflicting interests, and constantly changing strategies.

I argue that the “Eight-Nation Alliance” in the anglophone literature merits a closer look.³³ Not only does my research shed new light on this area, but it also joins in notable trends in the scholarship as historians such as Hevia, Bickers, Westad and others are showing a trend towards re-emphasizing the role of empires in shaping China and the influence of foreign imperialism. At the same time, the project adds to the Boxer Uprising literature by evaluating the allies’ response to and narrative manipulation of the domestic movement. Lastly, by tracing

³² Examples of literature on the unique concept national humiliation include Peter Hays Gries, “A ‘Century of Humiliation,’” in *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 43–53; Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations*, Contemporary Asia in the World (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Haiyan Lee, “The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound,” in *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*, ed. Marc Andre Matten, 1st ed. (Brill, 2011), 193–232, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/vand/detail.action?docID=1010617>; Howard W. French, *Everything Under the Heavens: How the Past Helps Shape China’s Push for Global Power*, First edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017); Linh D. Vu, *Governing the Dead: Martyrs, Memorials, and Necrocitizenship in Modern China* (Ithaca [New York]: Cornell University Press, 2021).

³³ Exceptions include Waite, *Some Elements of International Military Co-Operation in the Suppression of the 1900 Antiforeign Rising in China with Special Reference to the Forces of the United States*; Xiangyun Chen, “The Crucible of Empire: The American Experience in the China Relief Expedition of 1900” (2018), <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2449490122?pq-origsite=primo>; 李, 苏, and 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*. Waite and Chen’s analyses are instructive for this project but dedicated to the American experience alone. Li, Su and Liu’s book is a very comprehensive account of the Alliance’s activities and internal tensions during the years 1900-1901, and its bibliography and structure provide valuable guidance to this project.

the formation of the term “Eight-Nation Alliance,” I hope to also expand the literature on China’s collective memory to include the origins of the memorialization, as well as the contemporary factors that shaped this memorialization. My work can act as a tie between these three fields: enriching the understanding of the impact of the Boxer Uprising through filling a gap in diplomatic history, while examining which aspects this social and diplomatic history lived on in Chinese memory. Now is high time to revisit the historical year of 1900 and the “Eight-Nation Alliance,” which is ripe for new interpretations from new perspectives.

To examine the intricacies of the competitive relationships among the allies, I will engage with both official documents and personal memoirs. However, due to linguistic limitations and the availability of primary sources, I will mainly focus on primary sources in English and the Chinese translations of documents in French, German, Japanese, and English. As classic diplomatic history research, the project requires, first and foremost, government records. The most readily available of this type of primary source from the U.S. and Great Britain includes the *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)*; *Despatches from the U.S. Consuls in Tientsin, China, 1868-1906*; *Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China, 1843-1906*; and *British and Foreign State Papers (BFSP)*.³⁴

The *FRUS* was published annually by the Department of State to present the official documentary historical record of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity. Importantly, this includes chronologically organized telegraph communications

³⁴ “Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 3, 1900” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), UW-Digitized Collection: Foreign Relations of the United States, <https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/74GICGIGP7COC8X>; “Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Tientsin, China, 1868-1906” (National Archives (United States), n.d.), Asia and the West: Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange, <https://link.gale.com/apps/collection/4ZOL/NCCO?u=nash87800&sid=bookmark-NCCO>; “Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China, 1843-1906” (National Archives (United States), n.d.), Asia and the West: Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange, <https://link.gale.com/apps/collection/4ZOP/NCCO?u=nash87800&sid=bookmark-NCCO>.

between decision-makers in Washington, D.C. and U.S. ministers and other officials abroad. But the *FRUS* is a heavily curated collection. The *Despatches from the U.S. Consuls in Tientsin*, on the other hand, consist of letters and telegraphs sent by U.S. diplomats within Consuls specifically (e.g., from the U.S. Consul in Tientsin, Sheridan P. Read, to the Assistant Secretary of State, William W. Rockhill). Few of the letters in the *Despatches* collection were selected into the *FRUS*, although they reflect on-the-ground realities more directly. The *Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China* consist, for the most part, despatches addressed to the State Department by U.S. diplomatic representatives to China. The *BFSP* during this period documents memos and telegraph correspondence between British officials in China and back home respecting the Boxer Uprising, all of which may reveal British considerations. Meanwhile, the *Collection of Documents Relating to the Boxer Uprising (Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian)* translated and compiled by Chinese historians includes two volumes of the Japanese government official documents regarding Qing China.³⁵ These two volumes of conclusive account by the Japanese government not only tell us about this country's political considerations, diplomatic negotiations, and internal disagreements, but they also indicate how Japan regarded its counterparts in the allied forces, which helps make up for the possible void in primary sources from non-English speaking nations. Extracting this information will enable me to identify patterns and phases while illuminating deviations and atypical cases.

Beyond the communications within a single nation, official discourse and correspondence among foreign and Chinese diplomats in bargaining for concessions in the Boxer Protocol can

³⁵ Lu Yao 路遥, ed., *Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian* 义和团运动文献汇编 [Collection of Documents Relating to the Boxer Movement], 1st ed., vol. 7, 8 vols. (Jinan: Shandong da xue chu ban she, 2012). The Japanese document volumes include translations of the "History of Incidents in Qing in Meiji Thirty-Third Year" by the Imperial Japanese Army General Staff Office and "Northern Qing Incident, Separate Volume 33, Upper Volume, Japanese Diplomatic Archives Digital Archive" by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

help us better understand the diplomatic power dynamics behind the draconian treaty. Take the U.S. as an example. The collected papers between Secretary of State John Hay and Chinese representatives (such as principal negotiator Li Hong Zhang) reveal U.S. calculations.³⁶ In parallel, the Collection of Li Hongzhang and Chinese Memorial collections provide the perspective of China's engagement with the eight.³⁷

While I will investigate the tension within the “Eight-Nation Alliance”'s emergence and organization based primarily on official documents mentioned above, the nations' coordination and tension are also exposed by personal memoirs of foreign diplomats, missionaries, and journalists. Some of them either experienced the Boxer upheaval and subsequent military pacification or followed the allied armies during and after the siege of Peking.³⁸ For instance, the British missionary Rev. Frederick Brown recorded his journey with the allies and captured moments of competition between different armies, such as when the Japanese general ordered his army to march all at once earlier than planned to prevent the Russians from arriving at Peking first and “hav[ing] all the honour that would attach to it.”³⁹ These participant memoirs fill the gaps left by official documents regarding on-the-ground details and help alleviate a sense of detachment that might result from relying entirely on government records.

My study of internal coordination after the powers' military victory focuses on their joint administration of the city of Tianjin. The TPG held regular meetings and kept minutes in

³⁶“John Hay Papers” (Washington D.C.: Library of Congress, n.d.), Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/mm78025379>.

³⁷ Li Hongzhang 李鸿章, *Lihongzhang quanji* 李鸿章全集 [The Complete Collection of Li Hongzhang], 1st ed. (Haikou: Hainan chu ban she, 1997); *The Grand Secretariat Archives, 1368–1911*, <https://newarchive-ihp-sinica-edu-tw.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/mcttp/>.

³⁸ Examples include Coltman, *Beleaguered in Peking: The Boxer's War Against the Foreigner*; Smith, *China in Convulsion*; Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces*; Ivan Korostovets, 俄国在远东 [Russia in the Far East], trans. Li Jinqiu 李金秋, Chen Chunhua 陈春华, and Wang Chaojin 王超进 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1975).

³⁹Brown, *From Tientsin to Peking with the Allied Forces*, 120.

French. The collection, *Minutes of the Meetings of the Provisional Government of Tientsin (Procès-Verbaux Des Séances du Gouvernement Provisoire de Tientsin)* has been translated into Chinese by historians in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.⁴⁰ The two volumes bring forth fascinating aspects within the establishment and operations of the two-year provisional government. For example, while Austria-Hungary was a member of the “Alliance”, its attempt to send representatives to partake in the TPG was rejected by other members based on the grounds that the Austro-Hungarian garrison troops were too few.⁴¹ Incidents like this show that member states were not equal in their status within the “Alliance,” and military strength was a significant determinant of inclusion and exclusion.

Finally, I examine contemporary newspapers in late Qing to Republican China to get a clearer sense of how the term “Eight-Nation Alliance” (“八國聯軍”) came to be and gained different meanings under different historical and political backdrops, as well as its connection to the concept of National Humiliation. I do so by sorting through local gazetteer and newspaper databases, such as the *Shanghai News (Shen Bao)*, *North-China Herald (Beihua Jiebao)*, *North-China Daily News (Zilin Xibao)*, *Eastern Miscellany (Dongfang Zazhi)*, as well as local gazetteers.⁴² Local gazetteers (地方志) written by educated locals are indicative of the ubiquitous use of the term. In my analysis, I present a map that reveal the sheer level of circulation of the

⁴⁰ Ni Ruiying倪瑞英, Zhao Keli赵克立, and Zhao Shanji赵善继, trans., *Baguolianjun zhanling shilu: Tianjin linshi zhengfu huiyi jiyao* 八国联军占领实录：天津临时政府会议纪要 [Meeting Minutes of the Provisional Government of Tientsin], 1st ed., 2 vols. (Tianjin: Tianjin she hui ke xue yuan chu ban she, 2004).

⁴¹ Ni 倪, Zhao 赵, and Zhao 赵, 3.

⁴² *Shanghai News (Shen Bao)* (Shanghai, 1872–1949), <http://shunpao.egreenapple.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/WEB/INDEX.html>; “The North-China Herald,” 1850–1951, Proquest Historical Newspapers: Chinese Newspapers Collection, <https://www.proquest.com/hnpchinesecollection?accountid=14816>; *The North-China Daily News* (Shanghai, 1850–1951), <https://www-cnbsky-com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/product/productDescription?id=20&isProduct=false>; *The Eastern Miscellany*, vol. 8 (Shanghai, 1904), <http://cpem.cp.com.cn.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/>.

term in China right after the war and explore several examples in which the idea of the “Alliance” is embedded in local history. However, numerical analysis would be of limited use when it comes to popular media. Therefore, with newspapers I focus on content and language instead of the quantification of usage. The British-founded *Shanghai News* is an independent Chinese-language periodical and is relatively more reliable than other available sources. The English-language newspaper *North-China Herald*, which later operated under the name *North-China Daily News*, was the most influential foreign daily in East Asia and encompasses the years 1850-1941. They contain coverage and political commentary on the Boxer Uprising and subsequent actions of the powers in 1900 and 1901. The Chinese Newspaper *Eastern Miscellany*, though founded after the invasion in 1904 and lasted until 1948, contains the use of the phrase “resulting in the eight nations becoming allies” (“致使八國聯軍”) in its Social and Military Commentary sections since its founding year. Just seven years later, the term “Eight-Nation Alliance” was used by its reform-minded contributors to refer precisely to the powers. Understanding this process of changing meanings shed new light on the underlying currents of social and political change in China in the twentieth century.

Little did the allies know that more than one hundred years after their invasion, the site of ruins in the Qing Summer Palace, which the allied forces looted, would be kept intact as a site of “national humiliation” for Chinese pupils to memorialize, and the memory of their expedition would play such an essential role in Chinese nationalism. Drawing on both the existing literature and my primary source research, I reconstruct the image of the “Eight-Nation Alliance” focused on the overlooked aspect of its emergence, internal coordination during the expedition, and tension during its occupation of Tianjin. By delving further into the foreign nations’ response to the larger social context of the Boxer Uprising, the diplomatic considerations behind the allies

and the Qing officials, the administration of Tianjin, and the outgrowth of this historical episode into a collective imagination, light can be shed on how this political and military entity played a crucial role in shaping Chinese society and its national story.

Chapter One

Emergence of an “Alliance”

“Our idea was this. The two Empires of China and Turkey are so weak that in all important matters they are guided by the advice of Foreign Powers.”

—— The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir N. O’Conor, January 25, 1898

While there is no conclusive answer to the question of the origins of the “Eight-Nation Alliance,” the scholarly consensus for the direct and immediate trigger of the multinational response traces back to 1897, roughly three years before the allies formally sent troops to China. On November 1, German Catholic missionaries were murdered by Boxers in the province of Shandong. Franz Nies and Richard Henle’s deaths acted as one of the most critical precipitating causes of the Boxer Uprising. Shortly after their deaths, Kaiser Wilhelm II sent his cousin, Tsar Nicholas, a telegram in which he proposed to punish the Chinese. To do so, the Kaiser informed Nicholas of his plan to seize Jiaozhou Bay of Shandong, a territory that the Kaiser’s *Weltpolitik* program had long coveted: “I trust you approve according to our conversation Peterhof my sending German squadron to Kiautschou [Jiaozhou], as it is the only port available to operate from as a base against marauders. I am under obligation to the Catholic party in Germany to show that their missions are really safe under my protectorate.”¹ Before the Tsar could react and respond formally to his Prussian cousin about the operation, Wilhelm II was resolute on taking

¹ *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914. Sammlung Der Diplomatischen Akten Des Auswärtigen Amtes, Im Auftrage Des Auswärtigen Amtes Herausgegeben Von Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Friedrich Thimme* [The Grand Policy of the European Cabinets, 1871-1914. Collection of the Diplomatic Files of the Foreign Office, Published on Behalf of the Foreign Office], vol. 14 (Deutsche verlagsgesellschaft für politik und geschichte, 1922-27, 1927), 70. Correspondence between the Kaiser and the Tsar were all in English.

full advantage of this “suitable occasion” to develop German authority in China, establish a formidable international reputation, and assert Germany’s power. The enthusiastic Kaiser had written to the foreign office before contacting the Tsar, “I am determined to give up our hypercautious policy, which is already considered weak throughout East Asia, and finally show with full rigor and if necessary with the most brutal ruthlessness towards the Chinese that the German emperor does not let himself be joked with and it is bad to have him as an enemy.”² By the end of January 1898, Jiaozhou Bay was entirely annexed by just three ships and roughly six hundred men.³

The following pages unravel how the German reaction to the death of its missionaries was followed by intense political and diplomatic reactions that had been building up both in China and abroad, eventually leading to an allied expedition. To place the emergence of the allied forces into both domestic and international context, this chapter will also provide an overview of how the Boxer Uprising unfolded with growing intensity, the concurrent global geopolitical dynamics, and the history of imperialism in China that is inseparable from this discussion. The exemplary studies on the Boxer movement by Esherick and Cohen both utilize the China-centered approach, uncovering both what more Eurocentric China studies have missed about the unique movement and how the Boxers were mythologized overtime.⁴ While these two works provide valuable domestic context for this chapter, they do not place the actions of the allies into a comparative global context. As Hevia notes in his study of Western imperial

² *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 14:67.

³ Gottschall, *By Order of the Kaiser*, 176. Germany was also able to establish its concession at the city of Qingdao and obtain commercial and mining privileges in Shandong province. The leasehold was signed to last for ninety-nine years.

⁴ Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*; Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

pedagogy in China, the unfulfilled fantasy of the partition of China should not dissuade scholars from recognizing the room for adopting a comparative and transregional framework.⁵

The states involved in the pacification of the Boxer Uprising had different priorities and standings in the global hierarchy. Russia and Japan, two industrializing and expanding empires and those in closest proximity to the Qing empire, were in competition over influence over the coveted resources in Manchuria and Korea, which meant one state's action often provoked the other state's reactions during this historical episode. Within the decade leading up to the Boxer War, Russia sped up its expansion into Manchuria through concessions and unequal treaties after the shock of the Japanese victory in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Great Britain and France's imperial presence in Qing China, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, had lasted much longer and more comprehensively than that of other members of the international forces (for example, the U.S.). Records also show that the two nations often acted simultaneously, including sending identical notes of appeals to the Zongli Yamen (the Qing's Office of Foreign Affairs). The U.S., however, took a more particular stance as another distant global power on the rise. While the U.S. agreed to be part of the "Alliance," due to its Open-Door Policy, it had to avoid being seen as part of the "Alliance" to maintain amicable relations with the Qing government, resulting in independent action whenever possible. While Germany often followed Great Britain and France when it came to official diplomatic engagement with Qing officials, it was Germany that initially used the murder of its missionaries as justification for occupying Jiaozhou Bay, making Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II a relatively proactive member.

⁵ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 11–14.

Germany, moreover, was the only state that perpetrated brutal punitive expeditions against defenseless Chinese towns, following the military victory of the powers.⁶

However, the organization of this chapter is by no means to say that the foreign diplomats did not occupy themselves with speculating about a supposedly allied state's intentions in the vast Celestial Empire. This chapter will show that great power relations at this time had long featured mutual suspicion and conflict, which stemmed primarily from the competition for spheres of influence in China. The key to understanding the leading up to the war and interactions during this stage is the idea that to the eight states, China, a populous yet declining state lacking modern military and technology, could be easily harassed, but the other powers could not.

The Start of the Start: Action, Reaction, and Differences Among the Powers

The surprise takeover by Germany was extraordinarily significant. As historian Lanxin Xiang puts it, trade and money followed the flag, and the flag followed the cross.⁷ From the perspective of anti-imperial and anti-Christian Chinese, this incident clearly confirmed their belief in the entangled nature of foreign religious penetration and imperial influence. Moreover, unlike previous nineteenth-century losses of land, usually the result of a humiliating defeat in war, this time Germany only needed a convenient excuse. Consequently, an intense sense of national crisis loomed over the northern province of Shandong, and the Boxer movement progressed.

⁶ For more on the German punitive expeditions, please see Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*; Gottschall, *By Order of the Kaiser*; Knoll and Hinz, *The German Colonial Experience*.

⁷ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 27.

The Boxers' violent xenophobia stemmed, in part, from the anger towards foreign missionaries backed by imperialism that had agitated China for the past century. Previously, China's humiliating defeats in the two Opium Wars (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) gave Western powers substantial control over several Chinese ports. Meanwhile, foreign nationals were granted extraterritorial privileges that shielded them from prosecution by Chinese courts. Foreign missionaries, seen as agents to further foreign influence, were exempt from much Chinese law and often invoked Western protection. Catholic missionaries' aggressive intervention in secular disputes and occupation of "semi-official" positions provided an unfair advantage to Chinese converts, especially in lawsuits before the local magistrate.⁸ All these factors, combined with the frustrating regional cycle of devastating floods, droughts, and banditry, contributed to the further expansion of the movement in Northern China, where disruptive and aggressive religious interference had been the most severe. The German takeover simply added fuel to the fire.

Simultaneously, the German victory and the fashion through which it was achieved marked the alarming introduction of another new imperial power in the scramble for China. The British and the French were outraged by Germany's practically unannounced occupation. During a meeting between Lord Salisbury of Great Britain and Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador, on May 11, 1899 in London, the two expressed equal distaste for Germany's action. Despite a long-standing mix of competition and collaboration between Britain and Germany, both military and economic, during the nineteenth century, the German occupation seemed to be a direct challenge of British colonial dominance as the newcomer sought to expand its global influence. Lord Salisbury was recorded to have complained that "[c]ette Puissance ne

⁸ Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, 68–95. For more details, see his chapter "Imperialism, for Christ's Sake."

vous a-t-elle pas prévenue de ses intentions, lorsqu'elle s'est emparée de Kiao-Tchéou [this Power did it not warn you of its intentions when it seized Jiaozhou]?" Cambon echoed Salisbury's frustration.⁹ In an earlier interview with the German Ambassador in London, Salisbury explained that "the *mode* in which the purpose of Germany had been attained impressed me more unfavorably than the purpose itself" (emphasis added).¹⁰ The French also believed it would be dangerous if Germany's act of brigandage were imitated by other foreign states, fearing that France would gain little from a competitive/armed scramble. At the time, France was more interested and involved in the far South, including southwestern China and Vietnam, while the U.K. was more involved in expanding its control in the Yangtze River area. "It would be dangerous to let ourselves be dominated by our experience of African conflicts," wrote Cambon. He observed that there was simply not much of value that France could grab without a fight after Germany obtained a near monopoly on the wealth of Shandong.¹¹

The coming year proved Cambon to be prescient. Tsar Nicholas's new foreign minister, Mikhail Nikolaevich Muravev, went a step further than his foreign counterparts to argue that Russia should amplify its military presence in the Far East by also snatching a base from China, despite having relatively little missionary interest in China. Tsar Nicholas enthusiastically sympathized with Muraviev.¹² Notably, Muraviev's hawkish strategies had led to considerable previous successes with the Treaty of Aigui (1858), the Treaty of Tianjin (1858), and the

⁹ *Documents Diplomatiques Français / Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Commission De Publication Des Documents Relatifs Aux Origines De La Guerre De 1914*, vol. 15 (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1914), 273.

¹⁰ *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, vol. 1 (New York (State): H. M. Stationery Off, 1926-1938. Johnson Reprint, 1967, 1967), 4.

¹¹ *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 1914, 15:275–76. Cambon explained that northern regions were not of French interest, valuable southern areas were within the British sphere of influence, and what remained were mainly infertile and mountainous parts of China that had an anti-foreign population. He wrote, "A quelle sphere d'influence pouvons-nous en effet prétendre en Chine [What sphere of influence can we indeed claim in China]?"

¹² David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun: Russian Ideologies of Empire and the Path to War with Japan* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 154.

establishment of Russian power in Manchuria while he served as Governor-General of the Far East. However, the finance minister, Count Serge Witte, along with the ministers of war and the navy, firmly opposed their colleague's proposal on the grounds that such a groundless copycat seizure would threaten Russia's "special" relationship with its long-standing neighbor.¹³ Ultimately, the sovereign sided with the foreign minister and ignored the majority's suggestion. The Tsar sent troops to Port Arthur, an ideal natural harbor located north of Jiaozhou Bay and on the southern tip of the Liaodong Peninsula.

The German acquisitions and the Russian acceleration ignited a series of chain reactions between 1898 and 1899. To expand their spheres of influence and not fall behind, Great Britain pressured the Qing for leases for areas around existing British colonies, and the French managed to demand a naval station in Guangzhou Bay for ninety-nine years. Similar privileges were desired by ministers representing the Netherlands, the United States, and Italy.¹⁴ As the Chinese adage goes, "China was being sliced up like a melon."

Not all foreign observers fully realized that the compounding incursions and occupation frenzy forced upon the Middle Kingdom meant dire long-term consequences: an eruption of anti-foreign rage in a fragile regime. With hindsight, in his memoir, Count Witte reflected, "...the seizure of Port Arthur was a fateful step... It marked the beginning of the process of carving up China, by powers that used our seizure of Port Arthur and the rest of Kwangtung [Guandong] Territory as a pretext for their actions. This process of partition in turn led to the Boxer

¹³ Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, 154–56.

¹⁴ The Dutch and the American plans were turned down by officials back home, while the Italian demand was humiliatingly rejected by the Qing, making Italy the only imperial power that was not able to secure colonial privileges in China. Giuseppe Salvago Raggi, *The Only Man Dressing for Dinner*, 1900.

Rebellion.”¹⁵ Anti-foreign rage knew no nationality, and riots were no longer reactions to specific events.

On the Boxers and the Qing: Attitudes and Aims of the Powers

By the end of 1898, the anti-Christian riots quickly spread from German controlled areas to impact French missionaries. Similarly, Russian interests in Manchuria also began to suffer from anti-foreign attacks from the Chinese, even though the Russian Orthodox Church barely contributed to anti-Christian riots.¹⁶ Even though multiple powers were experiencing anti-foreign violence, each of the nations viewed the growing Boxer chaos and its implications from radically different standpoints.

British officials in China, who initially treated the Boxer riots as more of a German concern, shifted their attitude almost entirely after the murder of the Protestant and British missionary, Rev. S. M. Brooks. Brooks was killed on December 31, 1899, in Feicheng village of Shandong, despite having been warned by both his own colleagues and the local Chinese authorities not to make a trip to the area.¹⁷ In light of the first British casualty in the backdrop of the Boxer riots, the British diplomat Sir Claude MacDonald displayed an abrupt turn in his attitude toward the Boxer situation and what Great Britain ought to do about it. In a telegram back home, MacDonald argued that the wrongful death of Brooks was caused solely by Boxers targeting foreigners. More importantly, MacDonald framed his petition to the Zongli Yamen as part of repeated and united action by foreign representatives.¹⁸ MacDonald hinted that outrage

¹⁵ Vitte, S. IŪ. (Sergeĭ IŪl'evich) and Sidney Harcave, *The Memoirs of Count Witte* (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 1990), 282–83.

¹⁶ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 121–22.

¹⁷ Xiang, 141.

¹⁸ “China: No. 3 (1900). Correspondence Respecting the Insurrectionary Movement in China” (U.K. Parliament, 1900), 1–2, 19th Century House of Commons Sessional Papers.

had long been shared and simultaneously expressed by his French, German, and American colleagues to the Chinese. But records indicate otherwise, especially on the part of the Americans. Like Germany, the U.S. at the time was also an emerging global power. To understand the U.S. response to the Boxer Uprising, it is paramount to first place it within the context of the Open Door Policy. After the Spanish-American War of 1898, the U.S. acquired Spain's former colony of the Philippine Islands and increased its presence in the Far East. However, as a power that is just beginning to construct its sphere of influence, the U.S. saw the rolling scramble for commercial and political gains in China by other forces as a threat to its own commercial and strategic interests. To avoid the carving of China, the Secretary of State, John Hay, asked the major powers in China to uphold Chinese territorial integrity and allow all nations to enjoy equal access to the Chinese market in 1899.¹⁹

It was under such a policy setting that Hay and Edwin Conger, the U.S. Minister to China, maintained a series of telegraph communications. From November and December of 1898 through the beginning of 1900, Conger continuously reported to Hay the anti-foreign incidents affecting foreign missionaries in the province of Shandong. Some of these early alarms from Conger proved to be false and affected Hay's judgment in the face of later turmoil in Shandong.²⁰ In January of 1900, Conger and the British, French, and German ministers sent *identical* notes of demand to the Zongli Yamen, urging the prosecution and punishment of two Chinese ringleaders and suppression of Boxer activities in strong terms.²¹ In the communication between Hay and Conger, there are apparent considerations on the U.S. side that demonstrate a rather cunning and two-faced strategy.

¹⁹ For more details on the considerations behind the Open Door Policy, please see Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship*; Chen, "The Crucible of Empire: The American Experience in the China Relief Expedition of 1900."

²⁰ Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship*, 195.

²¹ Mr. Conger to the *Tsungli Yamen*, January 18, 1900, "FRUS," n.d., 94-95.

In the March 22, 1900 telegram, Hay expressed that while the Department of State found no issue with the terms that Conger and his colleagues from the three other powers brought forth regarding the worsening situation of the Boxers, it would have been better if Conger had pursued *separate action*, “without the cooperation of other powers” in the future.²² This instance demonstrates a clear and deliberate effort on the part of the U.S. to distinguish itself from the other powers, hoping to maintain a unique and relatively amicable relationship with China under the Open Door Policy. Great Britain, France, and Germany had left their imperial footprints on Chinese soil before the U.S. began to seek territorial control on a level similar to its European counterparts. In contrast, the U.S.’s interest and impact lay primarily in trade and missionary activity in China.²³ Therefore, it was in the interest of the U.S. to demonstrate its status as a comparatively “honorable” state to preserve American opportunity. Furthermore, Hay stressed that Conger should take every possible opportunity to emphasize to the Zongli Yamen that it was the U.S. that had obtained assurances from the other great powers “not to interfere with the integrity of the Chinese Empire” under the Open Door Policy.²⁴ The Department of State even suspected the missionaries as jumpy and doubted the alarms of missionary killings reported by Conger because they “had not been sufficiently inquired into to establish beyond all doubt the rights and wrongs in these cases.”²⁵ It is evident that the McKinley administration first treated the crisis in China doubtfully and was reluctant to cooperate with other powers for fear of being seen as part of an alliance. Conger had to follow orders from home.

²² Mr. Hay to Mr. Conger, March 22, 1900, “FRUS,” 111.

²³ The train of thought of American exceptionalism under the context of imperialism in Qing China has been identified by historians. The exception lies in the absence of U.S. concession establishments, the Open Door Policy, and long-standing American missionary enterprises in China, dating to the early nineteenth century. Hevia, *English Lessons*, 8.

²⁴ Mr. Hay to Mr. Conger, March 22, 1900, “FRUS,” n.d., 111. In reality, the Open Door Policy had no legal standing or enforcement mechanism, so the great powers only accepted it superficially.

²⁵ Mr. Hay to Mr. Conger, March 22, 1900, “FRUS,” 111.

British diplomat MacDonald's fury and disdain for the Qing authorities were not entirely shared by states besides the U.S. either. While MacDonald had been able to convince the diplomats of France, Germany, the U.S., and Italy to jointly urge the Qing in a Legation note to publish a banning decree on the Boxers, their reaction to the Qing's refusal to take this action varied significantly.²⁶ MacDonald was so carried away in his dissatisfaction with the situation that he proposed a joint naval demonstration, a suggestion that even his superiors back home found impetuous. Only Conger was personally enthusiastic about the idea. Conger advised Hay that the Chinese government would respond to nothing but power, and "an earnest exhibition of it always promptly moves them."²⁷ Frustrated by the Chinese's dilatoriness in publicly denouncing the Boxers, Conger suggested that the U.S. warships appear along the Chinese coast with British, French, and German ones to display military might, emphasize demands, and "frighten the Chinese into compliance with them."²⁸ Given the Philippines' sizeable American garrison and proximity to China, Conger proposed that the U.S. Navy send forces from Manila. Hay was not convinced of the necessity of a joint show of strength and did not respond to this suggestion in his May 22 telegram. Historian Michael Hunt argues that Hay's reluctance also came from fear of creating unwanted complications among the powers in China. According to Hunt, consultation on the use of force would "give umbrage to the [U.S.] administration's anglophobe critics" who would "pounce on anything that looked like a foreign alliance."²⁹ All other European powers involved in the Legation note refused to act first as well.³⁰ Contrary to

²⁶ The Qing government insisted on publishing the banning decree internally, instead of publicly, likely because releasing such an official notice due to foreign pressure would further damage the Qing's image in the minds of the Chinese public. The banning decrees were a set of regulations that the Qing government designed to curb the Boxers' violent activities and to restore order.

²⁷ Mr. Conger to Mr. Hay, January 29, 1900, "FRUS," n.d., 94.

²⁸ Mr. Conger to Mr. Hay, January 29, 1900, "FRUS," 94.

²⁹ Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship*, 175–83.

³⁰ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 163–65.

Chinese popular belief of a well-coordinated alliance and contemporary praise back home for the allies, the creation of an alliance was, in fact, difficult and required the right circumstances.

On the other side of the spectrum were two powers with barely any serious missionary involvement, let alone Boxer-caused casualties in China: Russia and Japan. However, given their geographical proximity and existing presence to China, the two states were both observant of what the other foreign states and each other were up to, hoping for an opportunity to establish supremacy. To avoid further damage to relations with the Qing and to reestablish favorable status, Russia was reluctant to participate in any sort of cooperative action with the allies regarding the Boxers. Russian ambassador Mikhail Nikolayevich de Giers actively tried to disassociate himself from representatives who continuously bombarded the Qing with ultimatums.³¹ What mattered more to Gier was to secure Russia's railroad interest in Manchuria and ensure that the other powers' activities in China did not encroach upon Russia's sphere of influence in the northeast.³² For Japan, Germany's earlier occupation that had set the Boxer Uprising into motion was ill-advised. The British Minister to Japan, E. Satow, reported from Tokyo to Lord Salisbury that the Japanese Vice-Minister "expressed to me a good deal of apprehension as to the ultimate outcome of the steps taken by Germany." Satow observed that the general opinion in Japan had been one close to a veiled threat, that "a prolonged or possibly permanent occupation of such an important strategic point by a Western Power would imperil the peace of the Far East."³³

However, Russia was more of a concern for Japan than any other country. If a complete upheaval were to take place in China due to the Boxer riots, the potential of a subsequent foreign

³¹ "China: No. 3 (1900). Correspondence Respecting the Insurrectionary Movement in China," 27.

³² Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun*, 162–63.

³³ *British Documents on the Origins of the War, 1898-1914*, 1:4.

intervention would be dangerous precisely because Japan's competitor could easily send troops through its concessions in Manchuria. The First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) had demonstrated to the world the weakness of the Qing regime and the emergence of Japan, a formidable neighbor and new global power. The harsh terms brought forth by the Japanese after its victory, including the demand that China cede both Taiwan and the Liaodong Peninsula, resulted in direct intervention from Russia, Great Britain, and France, also known as the Triple Intervention. What added to Japan's frustration over its lost spoils of war was Russia's immediate occupation of the Peninsula and fortification of Port Arthur. As a result of Japan's focus on the allies' spheres of influence, the determination to expand its own, and its own foreign relations, there is little indication that Japan voiced reactions to the killing of missionaries or issued protests to the Qing government.³⁴

On a Military Threat of Force: To Invade or Not to Invade?

The states besides Russia and Japan eventually rushed to decide to act according to suggestions by their officials on the ground about the urgent need for a naval demonstration. In a telegram sent on April 12, 1900, Conger reported that two British armed warships, one French ship, and two Italian ships appeared near the Dagu Forts area, alongside an American one.³⁵ The Japanese observed the united act of warning. Viscount Aoki Shūzō instructed his colleague in Beijing, Nishi Tokujirō, to monitor the behaviors of the other representatives and make sure not to miss the opportunity to act in unison with the Western allies.³⁶

³⁴ Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 158.

³⁵ "FRUS," n.d., 114. There were also two German warships involved, but they were stationed near the German controlled Jiaozhou Bay. The Dagu Forts area were directly connected to Tianjin, where several foreign ministries were stationed. To reach the capital, the allied troops had to advance from Tianjin to Beijing.

³⁶ Lu 路, *Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 7:209.

However, such valuable opportunity for military collaboration did not come easily. Nishi recorded disagreements amongst the powers on whether legation guards should be deployed at once.³⁷ At a meeting on May 25, the French minister argued that the state of affairs was already extremely urgent and legation guards should be mustered on the ground of self-defense. But the German and Italian ministers believed such a step would be premature, and small groups of legation guards would hardly make a difference to the situation. Despite not participating in previous discussions, the Russian officials, too, looked at the worsening situation with unease. Even Giers, who had devoted his energies to abstaining from sending Russian troops to China, confessed to his colleagues that the riots had become blindly anti-foreign in nature and Russians would not be exempt from the impact.³⁸ The Russian and British ministers sided with their German counterparts in the meeting, while the American minister agreed with the French proposition.³⁹ The countries were split.

Due to the disagreement on what action to take, the diplomats decided to postpone action for a day and convey the foreign states' demands to the Zongli Yamen one last time. This time, the Manchu Prince Ching of the First Rank ultimately made a verbal confirmation to the foreign representatives that the Zongli Yamen would move forward to officially denounce the Boxers in a public decree and call on local authorities to strictly enforce the order. The ministers felt that they finally achieved an almost satisfactory result and suspended the employment of guards for the time being.⁴⁰

³⁷ Legation guards were foreign troops stationed in foreign embassies with the purpose of protecting the foreign legations of respective states. They initially comprised of a small number of marines and sailors stationed in Beijing, but the allies demanded after the war that additionally troops be permanently stationed in the capital.

³⁸ Korostovets, *Russia in the Far East*, 23.

³⁹ Lu 路, *Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 7:209. Lu 路, 7:211–12.

⁴⁰ Lu 路, *Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 7:211–12.

But the fruit of negotiations was soon proven futile and overdue. A day later, on May 28, it came to everyone's surprise that Boxers burned down multiple train stations and bridges around the capital. Several foreigners, including a French architect, were wounded by rioters, and railroads near Beijing were burned and cut off, threatening the passage between Beijing and Tianjin. Despite the Qing's promise less than a day earlier, the drastic change of events and endless distress about their safety as the threat of Boxers only seemed to grow enraged all representatives to the point of no return.⁴¹ They decided to wait no more.

The U.S. observed and followed what the other powers were doing. In his telegraph to Hay on May 26, three days before the ordering of guards, Conger asked Hay whether he should arrange American legation guards with Admiral Louis Kempff "if other powers bring them to Beijing."⁴² After receiving an affirmative response from home, the U.S. joined France, Great Britain, Russia, and Germany to formally have their troops land in China and head for the capital. Ambassador Nishi notified the captain of the Japanese cruiser *Atago* to try to arrive before the allies' forces and send as many navy members as possible.⁴³ "Now that troops are dispatched, what country would not have the ambition to exploit the situation for its advantage?" Nishi wrote in a summary to Viscount Aoki, "your humble servant will make sure no country monopolizes the benefit."⁴⁴ Within the next few days, the legations in the capital were under total siege, and the powers together started to prepare for a presumed joint relief expedition for Beijing. At this point, there were the beginning of some affiliations, but this was not an "Eight-

⁴¹ Lu 路, 7:212.

⁴² Mr. Conger to Mr. Hay, May 26, 1900, William McKinley, "William McKinley Papers: Series 1, General Correspondence and Related Items, -1902; 1900, Apr. 20-July 5. 1900." (n.d.).

⁴³ Lu 路, *Yihetuan yundong wenxian ziliao huibian*, 7:210.

⁴⁴ Lu 路, 7:212.

Nation Alliance” yet. Instead, a complicated multinational operation of various interconnected but uncoordinated schemes began to unfold on the ground.

It was not until after the contingent commanders from the eight nations arrived at the Dagu Forts that records show a “coming-together” of an alliance-like entity. During a conference on the British warship *Centurion* on June 5, the commanders representing the eight foreign powers gathered to formulate a common ground based on principles. Given the likelihood of a military expedition, the powers agreed on a set of essentially unenforceable points about the purpose of their upcoming actions:

1. protecting the diplomatic missions;
2. the fact that their governments were not at war with China;
3. that they would act only out of necessity;
4. that any action must be performed in unison.⁴⁵

The set of principles determined at the conference constitute an important step towards forming a partnership of concerted military action based on the common threat of the Boxers in China. In the primary sources examined in this thesis, the term “allies” is used consistently by participating member states in “us vs. the Boxers” and later “us vs. the Qing” contexts.

However, not only do the developments of the war prove these principles insubstantial in its enforcement power, but the action of the foreign powers also calls into question the very idea of an “alliance.”

Conclusion: Setting Each Other In Motion and the Cost of Standing Alone

⁴⁵ Recorded by Korostovets, quoted in Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 239.

It seems evident that an allied military intervention in China was not something any one of the powers had wanted. Germany did not anticipate that the situation would spiral out of control when it rashly forced its own territorial concession upon the Qing. Great Britain and France initially assumed that the issues of missionary killing pertained to the German sphere of influence alone and wanted to avoid any harm that a partition of China may cause to their established interests. The United States' official policy primarily emphasized establishing a special relationship with the Qing and distinguishing itself from its western imperial counterparts. More than any state, Russia tried to preserve a long-standing alliance with the Qing that no other state enjoyed. Japan, originally apathetic to the disorder, apparently could not accept the possibility of being left out of the prospect of a joint operation in the end. Nevertheless, the powers were all willing to engage in crisis management and exploitation—despite in risk.

This chapter highlights how different foreign states paid close attention to, judged, misjudged, and followed the action of their competitors in a historical moment of both danger and opportunities. It is also clear that not every decision and the resulting military move was based on a unanimous judgment of each state. Foreign officials based in China dealt not only with colleagues from different countries but also with the directions from their home governments, with which they often disagreed. Problems with communication, differences in aims and priorities, and the fear of missing out on a share of the riches and opportunities in the Middle Kingdom together led the mutually suspicious powers into a volatile mission in the long, hot summer of 1900.

Chapter Two

A Look inside the Boxer Protocol and the Tianjin Provisional Government

What Does Focusing on Conflict Tell Us?

“International rivalries and jealousies frequently broke out in hostilities, ending in bloodshed, ... These incidents do not, of course, belong to the glorious annals of warfare, and do not, accordingly, appear in regimental histories and other eulogies. Upon this precedent they may safely be omitted from this outline.”

— O.D. Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History* (1925)¹

The complicated coalition war was unstoppable once it began. While some historians have written extensive volumes on the many specific developments of the Boxer War, the conflict is generally seen to have had three phases.² The first phase of the war began in April to May of 1900, as the Boxers cut off the telegraph lines during an attack on the railway embarkment close to Beijing. In response, naval forces converged around the coast by the Dagu forts and the eight nations’ contingents arrived in support of their legation troops. The second phase was the assault on the Dagu forts on June 17, 1900. This provocation took place without an official declaration of war from the powers. Importantly, the U.S., represented by Rear Admiral Louis Kempff, refused to participate in the shelling, for the Chinese government had not

¹ Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History*, 115–16.

² For more details on the specific battles and progress of the war, please refer to monographs on the Boxer War itself, including Chester C. Tan, *The Boxer Catastrophe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955); William J. Duiker, *Cultures in Collision: The Boxer Rebellion* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio Press, 1978); Diana Preston and Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion: The Dramatic Story of China’s War on Foreigners That Shook the World in the Summer of 1900* (New York: Walker, 2000); Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*; David Silbey, *The Boxer Rebellion and the Great Game in China*, 1st ed (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012). Xiang, in particular, adopts a multinational approach.

committed any acts of aggression towards the powers.³ Regardless, the attack on the Dagu forts escalated the situation in Tianjin, Beijing, and legation quarters.

The final phase of the conflict was the negotiations between the interventionist powers and the Qing. The foreign powers were quick to push for punishment even before the fighting of great inequality of power concluded. But the powers' legacy was both immediate and long-lasting. On the one hand, the foreign powers directed the negotiation process for the exact monetary and political damages that the Qing would pay after its surrender. At the same time, the city of Tianjin was left in the allies' hands to govern, paving the way for a unique political environment of "semi-colonialism" in just one locale of the Middle Kingdom.⁴ This chapter continues to emphasize and deepen scholarly understanding of the allies' internal conflict within these two significant aspects of the Boxer War.

The Boxer Protocol, signed on September 7, 1901, is one of the most politically and culturally humiliating agreements of Chinese modern history. As Chinese historians would define it, the Boxer War and the subsequent settlement marked the final stage of China's downfall to a semi-feudal and semi-colonial state. The scholarship on the details and implications of the agreement is mature.⁵ The colossal indemnity that was four times the Qing government's annual revenue (4 billion dollars today, roughly 335 million dollars from the exchange rates at the time), the punishment and execution of anti-foreign governors and officials, and the prohibition of arms importation were in some ways the tip of the iceberg of punitive

³ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, 19.

⁴ The term "semi-colonialism" is used both in Chinese and anglophone literature to describe the political state of the Qing. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., "Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis," in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* ([London]: London; Boston: German Historical Institute; Allen & Unwin, 1986), 290–314.

⁵ Examples include Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*; Cohen, *History in Three Keys*.

terms.⁶ This agreement was the product of months of negotiations among the allies and the Qing authority on subjects including who got to represent the Qing, when negotiations would happen, and deliberations on specific language and figures. Much of the scholarship emphasizes the grossly punitive nature of the Protocol and the impact it had on the Qing. Instead, chapter focuses on the choice of negotiators and the indemnity negotiations as illustrations of conflicts among the powers, highlighting essential considerations put forth by the foreign states and placing them in the context of their particular political, commercial, and colonial maneuvers.

The more “tangible” impact of the war was the two-year occupation and administration of the northern port city of Tianjin. During the Boxer Rebellion, because many of the southern governors refused to support the pro-Boxer cause, it was sufficient for foreign military contingents to concentrate the forces mostly near Tianjin and the capital. The treaty port city was the first Chinese town occupied by the allies on July 14, 1900. The occupation achieved many goals, such as suppressing Boxer activities in the areas close to the capital and providing supply and transportation support for allied activities. As more navy ships joined off the coastline of Tianjin, they also served the purpose of preventing naval reinforcements from the Chinese side.⁷ This chapter will evaluate in detail the complexities and power politics in the jointly administered provisional government, which was proposed two days after the occupation by the Russian admiral Yevgeni Ivanovich Alekseyev. During the span of two years, the initial unity of the powers when facing the common enemy of the Boxers was disappearing, quickly replaced by hostility over territorial concessions and representation and voice in executive meetings. I argue that this different form of tension compared to what arose during the invasion

⁶ “The Boxer Protocol,” n.d., <https://china.usc.edu/boxer-protocol-1901>. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, “Boxer Protocol,” in *Encyclopedia of Chinese-American Relations*, 2009.

⁷ Katherine Reist, “China Relief Expedition.”

reveals how the allies' varying motivations manifested differently—indicative of the larger global context of shifting power dynamics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Allied Tension behind the Boxer Protocol

Li Hongzhang's Role and the Powers' Reactions

After the Qing government fled the capital city and hid in the Western province of Shanxi, it quickly sought a truce. The allies were naturally pleased with such a quick sign of surrender. However, one of the first points of tension among the foreign powers was what role Li Hongzhang, principal regional governor-general for the Qing empire and a diplomat with a pro-Russia history, should play in the potential negotiations. After the fall of Tianjin city on July 14, 1900, the Qing government placed much of its hope on Li by appointing him as chief negotiator on August 7.⁸ This decision was primarily based on his decades of experience in pacifying domestic unrest and currying favor with foreign states. Li was not only the first high-ranking Chinese official to visit a European country (the Russian Empire); he was also familiar with the Qing's bitter struggles dealing with foreign powers. For the waning regime, the Qing did not have the military capability to protect itself. Li, therefore, helped the state eke out its existence by sacrificing its sovereignty and territorial integrity in treaties with foreign colonial powers.⁹ In Cixi's eyes, Li was unreplaceable and the natural agent at the negotiation table.

The Qing's choice sparked diverse responses from the allies. The Russians were reasonably delighted by the decision. Li would doubtlessly bring absolute advantage given his

⁸ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 285. Memorandum handed Acting Secretary Hill by the Chinese Minister, Mr. Wu, September 11, 1900, "FRUS," n.d., 291.

⁹ Unequal treaties in which Li Hongzhang played a major role (negotiated and signed on behalf of the Qing regime) include the Cheefoo Convention (1876), Treaty of Tientsin (1885), Treaty of Maguan/ Shimonoseki (1895), and the Sino-Russian Secret Treaty (1896).

history of being relatively pro-Russia. One clear example of such favorable treatment is the Russians' right to the lucrative concession of constructing the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria achieved through the Sino-Russian Secret Treaty (1896), also known as the Li–Lobanov Treaty. Weeks before Li's appointment, the Russians were already hoping for talks with him. In a secret telegram from the Russian foreign relations office to Rear Admiral Alekseyev, he was instructed that "if Li arrives in Tianjin, [we] hope that you negotiate with him. There is no doubt that Li is an outstanding government official and has a profound reputation and influence in China. He holds a good opinion of Russia, and Russian kindness would be of direct benefit to him, too... Therefore, [we] hope that, in addition to formal talks with him that other allied officers hold, you shall simultaneously try to set up a secret talk with him."¹⁰ The appointment of Li, however, attracted immediate disapproval from some other members. Disagreeing powers with navies stationed in Dagu, which had been preparing for a march on the capital, went so far as to announce that if Li were to come to Dagu, he should not be allowed to communicate with people ashore or seek instructions from the Qing authorities.¹¹ As a result, Russia's plan to first negotiate separately and covertly was made impossible. After receiving information on the allied fleets' admiral's resolution to interdict Li's communications, the Russians communicated to the allied states' government through its embassies that the resolution was "inexplicable," for "all of the Powers had recognized the utility of admitting the services of Earl Li Hung-Chang [Li Hongzhang] in the eventual negotiations for peace, and that it would be impossible for the latter to fulfill his mission... if he were denied communication with the officials of his Government."¹²

¹⁰ Quoted in Korostovets, *Russia in the Far East*, 80.

¹¹ Alekseyev to the Foreign Secretary, July 20, 1900, Korostovets, 81.

¹² Mr. Choate to the Marquess of Salisbury, August 27, 1900, *British and Foreign State Papers, 1812-1960*, vol. 94 (London: London, H. S. M. O., n.d.), 1221–22, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000543381>.

In addition to Russia, France and the U.S. followed to react positively to Li's new role. Like Russia, France held a favorable impression of the diplomat because of its concessional gains from the Treaty of Tientsin (1885) signed by Li and diplomat Jules Patenôtre. Furthermore, the French were often intimately responsive and supportive of Russia's China policies since the Boxer chaos began, because of their Dual Alliance (1893-1917).¹³ The U.S. maintained its Open-Door stance, emphasizing equal access to the vast Chinese market could not be achieved without a speedy negotiation for peace. The U.S. communicated its reaction to Li being envoy plenipotentiary on the part of China in a memorandum to the Chinese Minister in the U.S., Mr. Wu Ting-Fang: "[t]he Government of the United States learns with satisfaction of the appointment of Earl Li Hung-Chang [Li Hongzhang] as Envoy Plenipotentiary to conduct negotiations with the powers... We are ready to enter into an agreement between the Powers and the Chinese Government for a cessation of hostile demonstrations..."¹⁴ The U.S. Rear Admiral George Collier Remy also voiced his disagreement towards his European counterparts' hinderance to Li's arrival in Dagu and communication with the Qing government.¹⁵ As stated by Secretary David Hill, "... but [the U.S.] hopes it will transpire that [Li's] credentials are full and authoritative, not only for negotiation, but to enable him without further delay to give assurance that the life and property of Americans will henceforth be respected throughout the Chinese empire."¹⁶

¹³ The acts of accordance to Russian policies from the French side was confirmed by its Foreign Minister Théophile Delcassé in a meeting with British Ambassador to France, Sir Edmund Monson, regarding France's reaction to Russia's proposed fundamental principles of allied actions, which emphasized agreement among the allies and maintenance of the existing system of government in China. According to Monson, "[h]is excellency replied that, from the outset of the trouble in China, France and Russia had gone hand in hand, and that it was hardly necessary, therefore, for him to add that France approved the declaration of policy made by Russia, and adopted it as far as it was applicable to French interests." Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Salisbury, August 31, 1900, *BFSP*, 94:1244.

¹⁴ Mr. Choate to the Marquess of Salisbury, August 13, 1900, *BFSP*, 94:1198-99.

¹⁵ Cited in Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 288.

¹⁶ Memorandum handed to the Chinese Minister, Mr. Wu, by Acting Secretary Hill, September 11, 1900, "FRUS," n.d., 291.

Other members of the international forces were either indifferent or straightforwardly against Li's authority. The Japanese saw Russia's ambition in Manchuria as the driving force behind its call for talks and opposed the appointment of a statesman with a pro-Russian history.¹⁷ The British and the Germans were more dissatisfied. The former was notably influenced by its other global engagement and was inclined to delay the process of negotiations until after what is now known as the Second Boer War (1899-1902). Because most of the troops fighting on behalf of the British Army in South Africa came directly from Great Britain, to proceed with talks with the Qing led by a pro-Russian diplomat before more British forces could be deployed would be unwise. The British did not declare their disapproval of Li but pushed for delays and insistence of the march of its existing troops to Beijing simultaneously.¹⁸ "To delay negotiations would not, in my opinion, entail any loss upon us, seeing that it will not be possible for some time to come to arrive at a general settlement," wrote Sir MacDonald after recognizing the Russian Minister de Giers' active push for negotiations.¹⁹

To amplify Great Britain's relatively reserved dissent, the British urged Germany to maintain a much firmer attitude against the matter surrounding Li. Compared to some other members' attitude about when and how negotiations take place, Germany had much more to lose if an allied raid of the capital were avoided. Like other members, Germany did not trust its counterparts nor play a straightforward game. In the eyes of Wilhelm II, the war against the Boxers was an almost unprecedented opportunity for Germany to claim. International cooperation against a common enemy and the "yellow peril" could demonstrate Germany's

¹⁷ Cited in Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 291.

¹⁸ Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Salisbury, August 11, 1900, *BFSP*, 94:1201.

¹⁹ Sir C. MacDonald to the Marquess of Salisbury, August 28, 1900, *BFSP*, 94:1226.

growing importance on the world stage.²⁰ News of Li's appointment came right after the kaiser strategically rushed von Waldersee to serve as commander in chief of the allied forces. To let Russia-led diplomacy take over military action, negotiate without displaying Germany's might, and miss out on fully utilizing the death of its envoy Clemens von Ketteler (attributed to Boxers at the time) to expand the German sphere of influence in China all seemed irrational.²¹ On August 22, the Prince of Wales and British Ambassador in Germany, Sir Frank Lascelles, conversed with the kaiser himself on the developments and condemned the Russian effort to "achieve a sloppy peace at all costs, while not respecting the legitimate interests of the other powers."²² The parties agreed that Russia, fixated on Manchuria, could not care less about whether members of the other states would be killed. "We have rendered great and altruistic services to Russia in China... But it cannot be reasonably demanded that we make an early, rotten peace... For this, however, we must be all the more careful to put obstacles in the way of

²⁰ For more detail on the kaiser's role in the imperial army and his political aspirations under the context of the Boxer Uprising, see Chapter 4: Wilhelm, Waldersee, and the Boxer Rebellion in Mombauer and Deist, *The Kaiser: New Research on Wilhelm II's Role in Imperial Germany*. Mombauer also argues that a similar motivation can be seen in Germany's policy in the First Moroccan Crisis. The "yellow peril" is a cultural and political concept of xenophobia that describes the existential challenge barbarous "yellow" people was believed to have posed to the European continent or the white race in general. The term was used to stir up fear and discrimination against Chinese, Japanese, and non-white Asian groups broadly. For more context on the phobia's significance in Europe since the 1890s, please refer to Michael Odijie, "The Fear of 'Yellow Peril' and the Emergence of European Federalist Movement," *The International History Review* 40, no. 2 (March 15, 2018): 358–75, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2017.1329751>.

²¹ According to the reports of German Minister Baron Kettler's "Dragoman" Secretary, Cordes, Kettler made the personal decision to march to the Zongli Yamen at the allies' meeting on June 20, 1900, ignoring warnings from the Chinese officials and his own colleagues of dangers in the streets. But after accusing his counterparts of being cowards, he took independent action in sedan chairs and "hooded in scarlet and green to show their official status." His secretart was the only identifiable eyewitness and attributed the assassination to a Chinese Bannerman. However, Xiang revisits this "closed case" and challenges Cordes' self-contradictory testimony. Xiang argues that the killing was not "deliberately planned, premeditated murder" as Cordes claimed. Given the state of alert around the Qing court and imminent declaration of war, the death of Kettler could have been the result of a return fire in response to Kettler's preemptive shot. Xiang, *The Origins of the Boxer War: A Multinational Study*, 331–48.

²² Kaiser Wilhelm II., e.g., in Wilhelmsöhle, to the Federal Foreign Office, August 22, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914. Sammlung Der Diplomatischen Akten Des Auswärtigen Amtes, Im Auftrage Des Auswärtigen Amtes Herausgegeben Von Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Friedrich Thimme* [The Grand Policy of the European Cabinets, 1871-1914. Collection of the Diplomatic Files of the Foreign Office, Published on Behalf of the Foreign Office], vol. 16 (Deutsche veragsgesellschaft für politik und geschichte, 1922-27, 1927), 97–98.

the continuous Russian peace wagons in order to slow down its journey,” Wilhelm wrote.²³ To do so, the kaiser even proposed to his foreign relations office that the German forces must go out of their way to kidnap Li Hongzhang and hold him as a “valuable hostage.”²⁴

Although Germany later backed down in its opposition to any talks with Li once von Waldersee arrived in China, the troubles surrounding Li induced and exposed a vital shift in German attitude, from being close to its Russian ally to strengthening ties with Great Britain. Interestingly, the German plan for coercion against Chinese officials before negotiations was not unprecedented. During the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the British had also held a Chinese official / representative hostage with the intention to dominate the scramble for post-war settlements when the Chinese refused to cooperate. The Governor of Guangdong Province, Ye Mingchen, had turned down multiple demands of direct negotiation, occupation of the province’s territories, and payment of an indemnity from the British and the French. After the city of Guangzhou had fallen and been taken over by Western authority, Ye was captured and held by the British. He lodged in India till his death a year later.²⁵ Neither was this early sign of German violence inconsistent with its later standing and actions in China. With the opportunity of nominally leading “the first multinational intervention force in military history,” von Waldersee did not hold complete authority of allied troops once he arrived. As Kuss puts it, the nature of his task involved conduct of “a war that had largely been concluded.” Unsatisfied, von Waldersee later organized several series of punitive expeditions not only with the desire to

²³ Kaiser Wilhelm II., e.g., in Wilhelmshöle, to the Federal Foreign Office, August 22, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 16:98.

²⁴ Kaiser Wilhelm II., e.g., in Wilhelmshöle, to the Federal Foreign Office, August 21, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 16:95–96.

²⁵ Tu Lien-che, *YE Mingchen* (Berkshire Publishing Group, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780190088019.013.0811>.

punish but also for enrichment and personal glory.²⁶ The German troop's plundering and violence during these expeditions received objection and condemnation from its allied counterparts. Historian Susanne Kuss observes that the British raised objections to the expeditions because of its counterproductive nature and threat to British controlled Chinese villages. In contrast, the American commander, Adna Chaffee, condemned the conduct of the German military and opened several investigations into the extreme German prosecution.²⁷

Li was perceptive of how the allies received him differently, and Russia's defense of his legitimacy as chief negotiator drew Li's reciprocity. In a conversation with Russian diplomat Korostovets, Li Hongzhang asked whether Rear Admiral Alekseyev was going to participate in peace talks, a role normally assigned to the Russian envoy, de Giers. "The Rear Admiral's participation in negotiations, whether from the perspective of Chinese or Russian interests, would be the most appropriate... Because [Alekseyev] is observant of the situation and advocates for moderate policies, and he would also be able to balance out Commander Waldersee," Li confessed.²⁸ Despite Korostovets' advice not to put forth such a request, for it could be perceived as a challenge and criticism to de Giers's capabilities, the Chinese sent a telegram to the Chinese minister in St. Petersburg, urging a private meeting with the Russian Foreign Secretary to include Alekseyev at the negotiation table. In Korostovets's journal, he wrote, "I do not want to comment on what the cunning Chinese statesman had schemed and if he indeed believed that Alekseyev's participation would precipitate a peace treaty and counterbalance Waldersee. It is very likely that he simply hoped that we would argue with the

²⁶ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, 23. Von Waldersee's justification for the expedition was that after seeing the devastation of the countryside, he feared the fighting had "created more Boxers than were killed in battle" and a hunt for remaining Boxers was necessary. Preston and Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion*, 306.

²⁷ Kuss, *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence*, 30–34.

²⁸ Quoted in Korostovets, *Russia in the Far East*, 125.

Germans, that the Rear Admiral would argue with de Giers, therefore benefitting the Chinese in Manchuria.”²⁹ However, Li’s attempt to stir up discord within the “Alliance” and exercise some Qing agency was very limited in its effects. Li was more of a political puppet who had attached much of Qing’s diplomatic fate to Russia. Although Russia helped secure Li’s legitimacy as the chief negotiator by convincing other powers, it did so with the hope of more leverage and a favorable impression from the Empress Dowager so that when later negotiations ensued, Russia’s exclusive hold of Manchuria could become a reality.³⁰

Li was disappointed very soon. While he stayed in Tianjin under Russian protection in September, Li attempted to speak with von Waldersee himself to prevent the punitive expedition that German forces seemed to already be planning. Waldersee refused to meet with him. Through Korostovets, Li discovered that Waldersee condescendingly presented two ways to deal with him: if it was the case that Li served as Governor General and a commander of the Qing army, then he should be arrested immediately since the war was not over yet; if Li came to negotiate, then he should wait to discuss with Ambassador Alfons Mumm von Schwarzenstein (who had not yet arrived in China to succeed Ketteler).³¹ Li was powerlessly outraged. Mumm himself had refused to negotiate with Li back in Shanghai without von Waldersee’s instructions, and von Waldersee passed the buck back to Mumm. Moreover, Li found it inconceivable that the foreign powers seemed to have willingly accepted Germany’s leadership in the expedition. “Of course, [Li Hongzhang] understands that the generals challenged the Commander in Chief; that is why he probably wants to sow discord between them. But these are his standard tactics.

²⁹ Korostovets, 126.

³⁰ Holding the borderland of Manchuria would have given Russia several advantages, including access to the Pacific Ocean, natural resources and fertile land, railway routes, and a valuable geopolitical zone to counter Japan’s expansion in the Far East. For more details on Russia’s long-standing interest in Manchuria, please see Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Toward the Rising Sun*; John W. Steinberg and David Wolff, *The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective: World War Zero*, History of Warfare, v. 29, 40 (Leiden ; Brill, 2005).

³¹ Korostovets, *Russia in the Far East*, 135.

Till this day, he is still counting on the allies to fight amongst themselves,” Korostovets ridiculed.³²

Ultimately, the powers seemed to have paid more attention to what the appointment of Li meant for their competitor/collaborators than how the Qing itself would actually act. Each state’s action not only reflected their immediate interest in the war effort, but it also clearly embodied long-term ambitions in the greater Asia-Pacific.

Internal Conflict in the Year-Long Negotiation

Negotiations for a ceasefire began in October 1900 and lasted until September of the following year. However, unlike bilateral discussions for a truce that usually happen between the two sides of a conflict, the negotiations that led to the signing of the Boxer Protocol mainly consisted of meetings without a Chinese representative present.³³ The Qing had too little leverage to object to the coerced order and peace at an unprecedentedly high cost. Once again, the Russians were the first to facilitate the beginning of negotiations indirectly through their ally, France. Russia and France both agreed to several terms to be included in the agreement. These harsh and disgracing terms were in clear violation of the country’s sovereignty, including a complete ban on the import of arms into China, the constitution of permanent and expanded foreign legation guards in Beijing, the destruction of the forts in Dagu, and establishing points along the railway between Tianjin and Beijing to be “protected” by foreign troops.³⁴

³² Korostovets, 136–37.

³³ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 394.

³⁴ Minister Delcassé, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Mr. De Montebello, Ambassador of France in Saint-Petersburg, September 13, 1900, *Documents Diplomatiques Français / Ministère Des Affaires Étrangères, Commission De Publication Des Documents Relatifs Aux Origines De La Guerre De 1914*, vol. 16 (Paris: Impr. nationale, 1914), 435–36.

The allies agreed to France's proposal and list of guidelines and began sitting at the discussion table in occupied Beijing.³⁵ In the case of the U.S., it maintained its strategy of following the footsteps of the allies. In response to the French proposal, the U.S. ambassador in France exaggeratingly expressed that "from the beginning of the China affairs, France, Russia, and the U.S. had walked in perfect accord." But this harmony soon received a reality check on the matter of indemnities due to conflicting interests on both the amount and the urgency of payment.

The Open Door Policy's ethos of equal commercial access and "respect for Chinese Sovereignty" guided the U.S.'s stance on the financial punishment on the Qing. Rather than forging the U.S. empire through formal colonies like Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Samoa, U.S. imperialism turned to emphasizing trade in countries farther from its military dominance in Latin America. While the Open Door and its rhetoric did spur up "collaboration" between colonizers to some extent, with the side effect of avoiding "the carving up of China like a melon," the principle was motivated by an active shift of U.S. foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific into what scholars call "new imperialism".³⁶

Under the framework of the policy, the U.S. had to restrain both itself and others on the matter on war reparations, a matter that provoked the most debate among the allies at the time. If the Qing became saddled with a wage of war so colossal that the Chinese economy collapsed, the U.S. would have missed out on commercial interests in a vast market it only quite recently

³⁵ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 395–96.

³⁶ An example of the imperial collaboration is the Anglo-German Yangtze Agreement (1900), which established that the states agree not to carve up the Qing empire. This agreement served German interest because Germany based on *Weltpolitik* was a relatively late contestant for spheres of influence compared to Great Britain, and carving up China would greatly limit German interests. More on the effects of this Agreement are included later in this thesis as part of the discussion on the Open Door Policy. For more information on the fluid Anglo-German relationship at the time, a representative monograph is Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (London ; Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1980).

entered. Another potential consequence of high indemnity claims from the allies would be the monopolization of economic gains from the more established empires like Great Britain, France, and Russia. Therefore, the U.S. self-righteously “threw the weight of its influence on the side of moderation and the prevention of further bloodshed.”

The Government of the United States advocated that the sum total of these indemnities should not exceed a reasonable amount, well within the power of China to pay. After careful inquiry you reached the conclusion that with her present resources and liabilities, China could not pay as indemnities to the powers more than two hundred millions of dollars, and that the exaction of any larger amount would not only entail permanent financial embarrassment on the country, but might possibly result in either international financial control or even loss of territory.³⁷

The U.S. also recommended that the amount of debt be “asked of China by the powers jointly, without detail or explanation, and afterwards divided among them, according to their losses and disbursements.”³⁸ This suggestion received support from Great Britain and Japan, who also worried that to extort too much indemnity from China would either eventually harm their interests or not be necessary since they both had more mature trade relations with the Qing already.³⁹ Great Britain, for instance, had the biggest commercial interest in China and developed the bulk of Chinese trade at the time. To pursue a punitive policy on the matter of indemnities would not only impair Britain’s influence in China, but it would also potentially drive the relatively “lenient” U.S. and Japan into cooperation with Russia.⁴⁰ Evidently, the

³⁷ Message From the President of the United States, transmitting Report of William W. Rockhill, Late Commissioner to China, With Accompanying Documents., Affairs in China Appendix, December 11, 1901, “Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, with the Annual Message of the President Transmitted to Congress December 3, 1901” (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, n.d.), 5, UW-Digitized Collection: Foreign Relations of the United States.

³⁸ Message From the President of the United States, transmitting Report of William W. Rockhill, Late Commissioner to China, With Accompanying Documents., Affairs in China Appendix, December 11, 1901, “FRUS,” 5–6.

³⁹ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 410–11.

⁴⁰ H. C. (Harry Craufuird) Thomson, “Indemnities to Be Paid by China,” in *China and the Powers [Electronic Resource]: A Narrative of the Outbreak of 1900* (London; Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902), 159–60.

members of the “Alliance” who reached the consensus of not exploiting financial interests in the short term were those hoping that a working Chinese economy would bring long-term benefits.

However, Germany, France, and Russia all opposed this principle. Germany, a rising global power like the U.S., needed the compensation for immediate developments of its navy. Von Waldersee, voicing his disagreement on the U.S.’s proposal of moderation, was even recorded to complain that the U.S. “seemed to desire that nobody shall get anything out of China.”⁴¹ Russia was not facing a deficit in its national treasury but also wanted to accelerate the construction of its railway in Siberia.

Knowing that the Chinese economy could not survive a lumpsum payment, each suggested that the indemnities for each state be achieved through bonds. The sum in gold was subject to an interest rate of four per cent and was to be reimbursed by the Qing within thirty-nine years.⁴² The unforgiving penalty of the indemnity essentially mortgaged the Qing’s future to the powers. Similarly crushing indemnity imposed on Haiti by France in exchange for France recognizing Haiti’s independence invites a transnational comparison. Like the Boxer indemnity, the burden imposed on Haiti also had a self-defeating economic effect. The first installment of the indemnity, for example, was paid means of loans of twenty-four million francs, issued at Paris at the rate of 80 per cent and bearing an interest rate of six per cent—also known as the “Double French Debt.”⁴³ In contrast, however, the terms for the Boxer Protocol involved heated

⁴¹ Cited in Peter Fleming, *The Siege at Peking* (New York: Harper, 1959), 250.

⁴² Bond for Payment of Indemnity Demanded of China by the Powers, Mr. Conger to Mr. Hay, October 14, 1901, “FRUS,” n.d., 129–30. Three pieces that shed light on more details behind the complicated financial considerations behind the funds are Frank H. H. King, “The Boxer Indemnity: ‘Nothing but Bad,’” *Modern Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 (2006): 663–89; Lee, “The Foreign Ministry’s Foreign Agenda for China: The Boxer Indemnity”; Thomson, “Indemnities to Be Paid by China.”

⁴³ King Charles, “The Indemnity: French Royal Ordinance of 1825” (Duke University Press, 2020), 68, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1220qc0.22>. Kaiama L. Glover et al., eds., *The Haiti Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, The Latin America Readers (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 189–90.

discussions among multiple states with varying interests.⁴⁴ Although the determination of specific percentages involved some disagreements, at the end of the day, the amount was to be paid by the Qing regime.⁴⁵ The powers initially agreed in mid-March of 1901 that demand for indemnity amount should only be based on the damages and military costs directly associated with the anti-foreign conflict the year prior.⁴⁶ However, there was no way to ensure that the powers would follow this principle. For example, Germany included the cost of its punitive expeditions in its demand and Russia added the “cost” of its annexation of Manchuria.

Intriguingly, the Protocol did not force the Qing to give up land in addition to the indemnities—an embarrassment that often accompanied preceding unequal treaties. This is where the unexpected result of the Open Door Policy might have come in. The scramble for land in Africa did not repeat in China during the chaos of the Boxer War because the notion of “equal access” first proposed by the U.S. stimulated other allies to utilize this idea to limit the development of their imperial competitors in China. Although the Yangtze Agreement emphasized on paper Great Britain and Germany’s respect for each other’s access to the Chinese market, it was mutually advantageous primarily due to its restrictive value. The British witnessed Russia backing Li Hongzhang’s appointment and more Russian troops flooding in to dominate the construction of the railway between Tianjin and the capital—all indicative of Russia’s preparation to seize the valuable Manchuria as soon as possible.⁴⁷ Therefore, Germany’s new tendency to join forces with the British against Russia on affairs in China, such as the matter of the Chinese negotiator, signaled a valuable opportunity: an agreement could

⁴⁴ Frank H. H. King, “The Boxer Indemnity: ‘Nothing but Bad,’” 668–69.

⁴⁵ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lianjun qinhuashi*, 416.

⁴⁶ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, 413.

⁴⁷ Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, 313–14.

indirectly yet substantially suppress Russian progress and benefit Germany at the same time, despite the cost for the British to let Germany gain access to the Chinese market.

After exchanging drafts of the agreement, the two sides found that a main point of contention existed regarding the first clause. While they assented to the “joint and permanent international interest” of trade, they disagreed on which areas such promise of equal access covered. The Germans used the words “the Yangtze, its tributaries and its river area” (as translated by the British), while the British proposed the agreement be applied to a much larger scale, i.e., “the ports on the rivers on littorals of China.” Ambassador Hatzfeldt recognized that adjusting the specification to be so far-reaching could only be explained by the British intention to cause Russia discomfort. Lord Salisbury was firm on using the British version, despite his clarification that Britain meant no harm to Russian interest in leased territories in Manchuria.⁴⁸

Other powers, except Russia, soon jumped on board. The U.S. was especially elated to see an agreement supposedly in accordance with its Open Door Policy. Amusingly, the Germans anticipated that the U.S. would take some credit for this result. The Deputy State Secretary of the German Federal Foreign Office, Baron von Richthofen, wrote to the state secretary before the formal release of the agreement that “it is also to be feared that the Americans will preempt us with a request for recognition of the Open Door.”⁴⁹ Russia very vaguely responded to the Agreement, but altered the wording of the first principle. Instead of acknowledging that all ports on China’s coasts be free and open to all nations, Russia added that this should hold only “wherever two Governments exert their influence” and thus left out the singular Russian sphere

⁴⁸ The Ambassador to London Count von Hatzfeldt to the Federal Foreign Office, September 25, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 1927, 16:224–25.

⁴⁹ The Deputy State Secretary of the German Federal Foreign Office, Baron von Richthofen to the State Secretary Counts von Bülow, September 29, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 16:228–29.

of influence in Manchuria.⁵⁰ In effect, the principles first established by the Open Door policy and diplomatic products under its influence demonstrably prevented the carving up of Chinese land into smaller colonies in the twentieth century. But at its core, this “silver lining” result would not have been possible without the internal fluidity of the multinational coalition, as old bonds broke and new relationships formed.

Tianjin and The Tianjin Provisional Government: A Case Study

Tianjin as a city holds special significance in modern Chinese history and colonial history, and one cannot discuss Tianjin in the context of the Boxer War without first tracing its history and place in the Chinese Treaty Port system. Before the first treaty ports were opened as a result of the British victory in the First Opium War (1839-1842), the Qing empire did not establish a set of protocols or system for foreign relations and foreign trade, and the line between the two processes was quite blurred. The old Canton System of trade only allowed Westerners to trade with Qing government-designated firms in Canton. It was replaced by a system of transactions among private agents in the first decade of the nineteenth century.⁵¹ However, the major treaty signed after the First Opium War, the “Treaty of Nanjing,” abolished the Canton System and forced open new ports. Though the commercial treaties did not lead to the opening of the vast Chinese market altogether, the situation changed after the Qing’s defeat in the Second Opium War (1856-1860).

It was under this pretext that Tianjin became a treaty port through the resulting Treaty of Peking. Eventually, the British first proposed that the treaty port include its own foreign

⁵⁰ The Managing Director in Petersburg Count von Pückler to the Federal Foreign Office, October 25, 1900, *Die Grosse Politik Der Europäischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*, 16:253.

⁵¹ Pär Cassel, “Treaty Ports and the Foreign Community in Modern China,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*, n.d., <https://doi-org.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.159>.

settlement. As other colonial powers followed suit, Tianjin, at its height, had nine foreign concessions during the Boxer War.⁵² However, not all foreign residents of Tianjin lived in concessions from the start. In fact, it was not until anti-foreign attacks such as the Tianjin Massacre of 1870 happened that foreigners began to move into concessions. With the blooming of trade and development of foreign concessions, the important Chinese city became an international metropolis of cultural, diplomatic, and commercial significance.

The city's proximity to Beijing also gave it military significance. After the allies seized Tianjin, Alekseyev proposed the establishment of a Tianjin provisional government (TPG) since the Chinese authority had fled. Russia was the member of the "Eight-Nation Alliance" that had the strongest and largest number of troops in Tianjin at the time. In the first meeting after the allies' victory, Alekseyev suggested that the provisional government's committee should consist of one representative from each allied state. But, more importantly, this committee would only have the right of speech, while a separate executive branch led by a governor-general would oversee governmental affairs and efforts. This proposal was immediately rejected by Great Britain, Germany, and Japan due to their suspicion that Russia would aim to monopolize executive power. The final structure of the TPG required back and forth bargaining among the allies, resulting in a considerable balance of power and each participating state roughly having equal and substantial political and military standing: "[t]he Council, being the creation of all the Powers, shall enjoy, within the territory entrusted to it, absolute independence."⁵³

The control that the TPG executed over the Tianjin community was fascinatingly comprehensive and almost unchallengeable. According to their bylaws, the provisional

⁵² In nine concessions were established by Great Britain, the U.S., France, Germany, Japan, Russia, Italy, Belgium, and Austria-Hungary. The total area of the nine concessions were eight times the size of the old Tianjin city.

⁵³ Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History*, 221–22.

government had the right to “dispose, as the necessity arises, of all moveable property belonging to the Government, excepting that which belongs to the military administration, and to proceed to the sale of all property, moveable or immovable, confiscated from the Native inhabitants.”

The TPG also had the right to “supreme police control,” which allowed it to “inflict punishment of Natives, confiscate their goods, and, in case of necessity, punish them with banishment and death.” In contrast, the treatment of foreigners who infringed the “Regulations” was the immediate drawing up of evidence and handing over to the authorities or their proper Consuls within 24 hours, a privilege guaranteed through the system of extraterritoriality.⁵⁴ Post-siege looting were not taken seriously by the powers. As the Tianjin chronicler O.D. Rasmussen puts it, “[t]hey come under the category of ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,’ and the general definition of war.”⁵⁵

Shown in the TPG’s meeting minutes, the allies often reached unanimity on the jurisdiction over “natives,” and their brutality during the early stage of the occupation has been well established in the historical literature.⁵⁶ However, when the administrative issue at hand involved another member of the Allied forces, the fractured character of foreign imperialism became manifest. The Committee of the TPG initially had three representatives, each from Russia, Japan, and Great Britain, because of the three states’ frequent military actions and

⁵⁴ Rasmussen, 222. The system of extraterritoriality is commonly defined as the immunities enjoyed by foreign states and their official representatives from the jurisdiction of the country in which they are present. In other words, nationals from states with extraterritorial privileges were subject to law from their homeland instead of the Qing law. Extraterritorial privileges of foreign states were achieved mainly through unequal treaties during the Qing period. For more on the legal status of foreigners in Qing China and issues surrounding it, please see Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment*; Li Chen, *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes: Sovereignty, Justice, & Transcultural Politics*, Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016); Pär Cassel, “Treaty Ports and the Foreign Community in Modern China,” May 24, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.159>.

⁵⁵ Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History*, 115.

⁵⁶ For more information on instances of assault perpetrated by the allies on Tianjin Natives, please refer to “The Conquerors’ Violence”, Li 李, Su 苏, and Liu 刘, *Baguo lian jun qin huashi*, 156–60; Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity*, 170–71.

contributions up until that point. Other allies' officials took on roles within specific departments.⁵⁷ But not all allied states necessarily “earned” a spot in the TPG. Austria-Hungary was the only state within the “Eight-Nation Alliance” that did not later have a seat in the TPG. This was because the other powers rejected the Austrian-Hungarian representative's proposition to join due to the state's lack of military presence and influence in China.⁵⁸ Austria-Hungary also only contributed fewer than three hundred men to the war effort. Not all members in the TPG joined at once, either. Besides the original makeup of the three, other states, with fear of missing out on the opportunity, later joined the TPG (specifically determined at the 3rd, 53rd, 68th, and 73rd meetings).⁵⁹

After the TPG's establishment, however, France was the first to argue that it should be added to the Committee, the center of administrative and political power of the TPG. This suggestion naturally received Russian support, for the addition of its ally would surely undermine Japan and Great Britain to some extent.⁶⁰ Tasked with convincing the British and Japanese representative, Korostovets presented Alekseyev's proposal: to have France's Consular General act as a representative of both the Consular Bodies and the states not included in the Committee. Britain and Japan rejected this proposal.⁶¹

However, the triad could no longer maintain its relative independence and concentration of power once von Waldersee arrived with more German troops. He used his status as Commander in Chief to bring up the issue of restructuring the TPG Committee and received

⁵⁷ The departments included 1. General Secretary, 2. Police, 3. Board of Health, 4. Treasurer, 5. Administration of Property belonging to the Government and Private Individuals who have fled, 6. Military, 7. Judicial, 8. Public Food Supply. Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History*, 222–23.

⁵⁸ Ni 倪, Zhao 赵, and Zhao 赵, *Baguolianjun zhanling shilu: Tianjin linshi zhengfu huiyi jiyao*, 147.

⁵⁹ 倪, 赵, and 赵, 5, 55, 81–82, 95–96.

⁶⁰ Korostovets, *Russia in the Far East*, 181.

⁶¹ Korostovets, 181–82.

support from the states excluded from the small group. The result was a new committee of seven, as Germany, France, and the U.S. benefitted from von Waldersee's assertion gained their seats at the table. All of a sudden, "the sphere of influence that Russia had established in Tianjin and the entire concession had turned into smithereens," Korostovets wrote, "while the Germans completely replaced us."⁶²

Sources complementing the meeting minutes of the TPG also confirm and add another layer to the challenges of a joint administration under competing forces. According to Rasmussen, several episodes of violent hostilities broke out among the international forces:

[T]he most severe fracas resulting in 20 French Alsatian soldiers killed and wounded and 2 Royal Welsh Fusiliers wounded. A British Indian (Pathan) also ran amuck, as the result of the gibes and insults of German soldiers, entering the German camp and shooting at night. Three Germans were killed outright and two others died of wounds. The Pathan was shot. It is also related that foreign women were in constant danger of molestation and British bluejackets were frequently called upon to escort ladies when upon necessary errands through the streets.⁶³

Beyond individual cases, the powers were also in frequent disagreements about their concessions. In March of 1901, the British authorities wanted to build a railway side line in an area of Tianjin already privately purchased by a British person. The Russian forces blocked the construction and declared that the Sino-Russian agreement on Russian Concessions in Tianjin (1900) signed a few months prior stipulated that the area actually fall within the Russian controlled space. It was not until German commander Alfred von Waldersee was pressured by the British authorities to step in given his position did the two powers reach a decision to not proceed with the construction until ownership of the concession was determined.

⁶² Korostovets, 183.

⁶³ Rasmussen, *Tientsin: An Illustrated Outline History*, 114.

Chapter Three

Les Lieux de Mémoire (Realms of Memory): Evolution of the Idea of Alliance

“[T]his episode of to-day is not meaningless—it is the prelude to a century of change and the keynote of the future history of the Far East: China of the year 2000 will be very different from the China of 1900!”

——British Diplomat and Official Sir Robert Hart¹

History is not what you thought. It is what you can remember.

—— W.C. Stellar and R.J. Yeatsman, *1066 and All That*

Introduction

French historian Pierre Nora coined the term “lieu de mémoire” to refer to an object, space, concept, or even expression stemming from that past that carries historical significance in popular collective memory.² Praised as a one of the most profound inquiries on French history and culture, Nora’s framework holds intriguing cross-cultural applicability, especially under the context of modern Chinese history. Events like the Opium Wars, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, and the Boxer War all carry specific connotations in the Chinese social psyche; as do concepts. The Chinese term for the “Eight-Nation Alliance” (八國聯軍) is a memorable phrase deeply rooted in the concept of “national humiliation” and virtually known to all in China today. More than one hundred and twenty years after the Boxer War, the “Alliance” is still utilized in a

¹ Cited in Preston and Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion*, 346–47.

² Pierre Nora, ed., *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

variety of ways in popular culture to evoke nationalistic emotions and highlight the country's rise to political independence.

This chapter traces the approximate creation and, more importantly, early evolution of the Chinese term for “Eight Nation Alliance.” It contributes to the literature on Chinese collective memory and opens a window into reconsidering anti-foreign sentiments in Chinese nationalism as a construct vis-à-vis foreigners and foreign powers. Instead of attempting to identify the “smoking gun” of the very first use of the term in the colossal volumes of Qing official documents, I focus primarily on the appearance and frequency of appearance of the term in newspapers, popular literature, and local histories in China during the twentieth century, paying particular attention to how the “contemporary” interacts with the residue of the “past.” Moreover, this chapter sheds light on the changing meanings and function of the “Alliance” as an idea during different historical periods.

The chapter visits, dissects, and interprets three particular functions of the “Alliance” as a lieu de mémoire: commemoration, information, and representation.³ The primary sources used include Chinese literature, local gazetteers, official government records, and newspapers. Specifically, this chapter covers both an official and a more popular usage of the term from the late Qing to the Republican era. For the former, I rely on the one hundred and sixteen appearances of the term in national and local gazetteers (“地方志”); and for the latter, I refer to the widespread periodicals in China, especially *Shanghai News* (*Shen Bao*, “申报”), *North-*

³ These functions are three of the taxonomy of eight functions proposed by Peter Catterall, “Changing Attitudes to the Past: Lieux de Mémoire and Contested Histories,” *The Political Quarterly* 88, no. 4 (October 2017): 631–39, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-923X.12346>. The article deals more with the functions of physical lieux de mémoire of historic England but offers a relevant discussion on the idea of national heritage and historical memory.

China Herald (*Beihua Jiebao*, “北华捷报”), *North-China Daily News* (*Zilin Xibao*, “字林西报”), and *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang Zazhi*, “東方雜誌”).

Certainly, it is no news to historians and China scholars that Chinese anti-imperial memorialization and the later political utilization of historical memory place heavy emphasis on the effective maneuvering of “national humiliation” and takes the foreign invading states and entities as given.⁴ This chapter takes a step back, however, and explores the meanings that the foreign powers took on, the historical contexts in which they existed, and how they relate to the concept of “national humiliation” in the first place.

The Characterization in Local Gazetteers

“Local gazetteers are one of the strong footnotes in the studies of social history,” a Chinese historian writes.⁵ Of the more than five thousand and six hundred local gazetteers compiled during the Qing, most are of individual counties.⁶ Composed by local literati, elites, and retired gentry, gazetteers reflected the socio-historical background and cultural atmosphere of the locale. In this thesis, local gazetteers are especially relevant and useful due to its coverage across large geographic areas in China. Any similarities in the characterization of a national event or phenomenon would illuminate the existence of a shared memory that could contribute to the construction of a national identity.

⁴ Examples include Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation*; Haiyan Lee, “The Ruins of Yuanmingyuan: Or, How to Enjoy a National Wound”; Vu, *Governing the Dead*; French, *Everything Under the Heavens*.

⁵ Hongwei Xie, “Text and Power: A Study on Local Gazetteers of Wanzai County of Jiangxi Province from the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China,” *Frontiers of History in China* 4, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 426–27, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11462-009-0017-8>.

⁶ Endymion Porter Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual*, Enlarged sixth edition, Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 127–128 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Asia Center, 2022), 1573–74.

Within the existing database of Qing to Republican era local gazetteers (published until 1949), the use of the Chinese term for “Eight-Nation Alliance” is ubiquitous to say the least. The one hundred and two appearances this chapter examines spans across eighty-eight volumes of historical texts, of which eighty are local gazetteer collections from different counties in different regions. Within the local gazetteers, the term appears in several contexts but shares very similar characterization of the Boxer War.

I identify all one hundred and two appearances of the Chinese term for “Eight-Nation Alliance” and tabulate these occurrences below. With exceptions like Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet, the use of the term is recorded in most provinces just based on local gazetteers alone. I then input these locations into a map generator to clearly demonstrate the wide spread of this distribution.

County	County in English	Province (if applicable)	#appearances	County	County in English	Province (if applicable)	#appearances
冠县	Guan County	Shandong	2	涿县	Zhuo	Hebei	1
/	/	Anhui	3	天津	/	/	2
来宾县	Laibin County	Guangxi	1	枣强县	Zaoqiang	Hebei	2
信阳县	Xinyang County	Henan	4	灵宝县	Lingbao	Henan	1
临沂县	Linyi County	Shandong	1	慈利县	Cili	Hunan	1
太和县	Taihe County	Anhui	1	/	/	Heilongjiang	1
建水县	Jianshui County	Yunnan	1	青县	Qing	Hebei	1
武安县	Wuan County	Hebei	1	望都县	Wangdu	Hebei	1
安阳县	Anyang County	Henan	1	昌乐县	Changle	Shandong	1
新河县	Xinhe	Hebei	2	井陘县	Jingxing	Hebei	2
临榆县	Linyu	Hebei	1	元氏县	Yuanshi	Hebei	1
无极县	Wuji	Hebei	1	绥中县	Suizhong	Liaoning	2
定县	Ding	Hebei	1	曲沃县	Quwo	Shanxi	1
涡阳县	Guoyang	Anhui	1	上海市	Shanghai	Shanghai	1
西宁府	Xining	Jiangxi	1	蓬溪县	Pengxi	Sichuan	1
通县	Tong	Hebei	1	宜春县	Yichun	Jiangxi	1
怀安县	Huaian	Hebei	3	永定县	Yongding	Fujian	2
通化县	Tonghua	Jilin	1	乾县	Qian	Shaanxi	1
岳阳县	Yueyang	Hunan	1	巩县	Gong	Henan	1
海康县	Haikang	Guangdong	1	北川县	Beichuan	Sichuan	1
方山县	Fangshan	Shanxi	1	青城县	Qingcheng	Shandong	1
呼兰县	Hulan	Heilongjiang	1	安泽县	Anze	Shanxi	1
庄河县	Zhuanghe	Liaoning	1	灌县	Guan	Sichuan	1
徐水县	Xushui	Hebei	1	清镇县	Qingzhen	Guiyang	1
丰顺县	Fengshun	Guangdong	2	恩平县	Enping	Guangdong	1
临汾县	Linfen	Shanxi	1	同官县	Tongguan	Shaanxi	1
阳原县	Yangyuan	Hebei	1	滦县	Luan	Hebei	2
南川县	Nanchuan	Chongqing	2	/	/	Liaoning (奉天府)	1
/	/	Yunnan	1	邢台县	Xingtai	Hebei	1
昭通县	Zhaotong	Yunnan	1	沧县	Cang	Hebei	4
济阳县	Jiyang	Shandong	2	上杭县	Shanghang	Fujian	1
遂安县	Suian	Zhejiang	1	荣河县	Ronghe	Shanxi	1
霞浦县	Xiapu	Fujian	2	胶县	Jiao	Shandong	2
凌云县	Lingyun	Guangxi	1	永春县	Yongchun	Fujian	1
陕县	Shan	Henan	1	遵义府	Zunyi	Guizhou	2
西华县	Xihua	Henan	1	朝阳县	Chaoyang	Liaoning	1
富顺县	Fushun	Sichuan	1	宁乡县	Ningxiang	Hunan	2
雄县	Xiong	Hebei	1	阳信县	Yangxin	Shandong	1
/	/	Shaanxi	1				
						Total	102

Figure 2

List of Local Gazetteers that included the use of the Chinese term for “Eight-Nation Alliance”
(Table provided by the author)

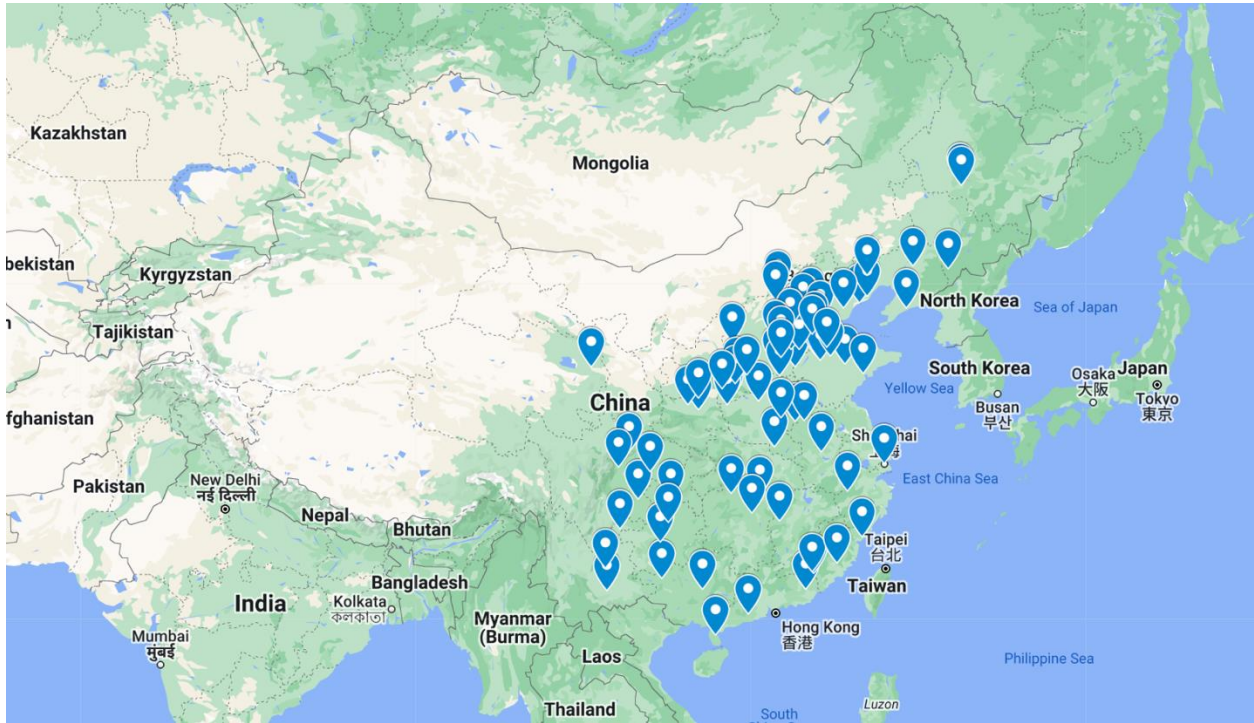


Figure 3
Location of Counties and Provinces of Interest
(Map generated by the author using Google Map)

Firstly, the invasion of Beijing and Tianjin is referred to consistently as attack (“攻”, “攻入”, “侵犯”), aggression (“犯”, “舉兵犯關”), capture (“陷”, “攻陷”, “占据”), and defeat (“破”) committed by the “Eight-Nation Alliance” in response to the Boxer Uprising. For example, the gazetteer of Anhui Province records that “The Eight-Nation Alliance” used the Boxer chaos as a reason to initiate military aggression (八國聯軍以拳匪亂故以舉兵犯關).⁷ In another contemporary collection, the tumultuous summer of 1900 is summarized as follows:

In the twenty-sixth year of the Qing Emperor Guangxu, Boxers were hostile towards missionaries (this may also refer to the faiths in general) [which] provoked the Eight-Nation Alliance to destroy the Dagu Forts and capture Tianjin and Beijing (清室至光緒二十六年，拳匪仇教，惹起八國聯軍，毀大沽礮台，陷津京。).⁸

⁷ *Anhui General Gazetteer*, vol. 157 (Anhui, 1934), 6411.

⁸ *Huaian General Gazetteer*, vol. 9 (Huaian, 1934), 1102.

Some discussions of the invasion explicitly name the eight members of the allied forces as well.⁹

Local gazetteers also go beyond recording the event from a national perspective and record specifically the impact that the invasion had on the area. One gazetteer of Heilongjiang, one of the three provinces in Manchuria during the Qing dynasty, documents encroachment on Chinese land perpetrated by Russians who crossed the border before and after the military invasion took place.

... Russian civilians still crossed the border into the Buding villages and other ones without authorization. In the twenty-sixth year [of Guangxu], the chaos of the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists ensued... The Eight-Nation Alliance invaded Beijing and the Russians seized the opportunity to occupy our three provinces (而俄民仍自越境侵占補丁屯等處二十六年義和團亂起八國聯軍內犯陷京師俄人遂乘機據我三省地).¹⁰

Fascinatingly, the “Eight-Nation Alliance” also emerges in the documentation of individual lives in the county, especially those directly involved in the military conflict. In the gazetteer of Qing County, one can find in the section dedicated to important individuals a local figure named Han Zhaohui. Han managed to become a candidate in the highest imperial examination and later a Qing official, but

[During] the Eight-Nation Alliance’s invasion of Beijing, [Han Zhaohui] died of a just cause at the Ministry of Justice. There was a market strike that day. There was no place to buy a coffin. When the [eight] states slightly loosened their control, with the help of family and friends, a coffin was prepared for his burial. The body had not rotted. The issue was settled. The Ministry presented a memorial and granted a posthumous recognition (八國聯軍破北京之役。殉難於刑部衛署。是日商場罷市。購棺無所。迨各國戒備稍弛。得親友傾助。備棺往殮。屍尚未腐。事平。刑部具奏事實。追贈道員。).¹¹

In addition to the common use of the term to describe the allied forces as a united and cohesive foreign entity, contemporary gazetteers also directly associate the invasion and the

⁹ An example is *Haikang General Gazetteer*, vol. 21 (Haikang, 1934), 1147.

¹⁰ *Heilongjiang Gazetteer*, vol. 35 (Heilongjiang, 1933), 3193. The gazetteer goes on to document the Hailanpao Massacure, also known as the 1900 Amur anti-Chinese pogroms.

¹¹ *Qing County Gazetteer*, vol. 21 (Qing County, 1931), 394–95.

resulting Boxer Protocol with the notion of national shame. In Zunyi Prefecture's gazetteer, the signing of the Boxer Protocol is specifically recorded as a matter of immense humiliation and fiscal burden on China and its provinces:

The Eight-Nation Alliance invaded Beijing during the Boxer War. [The nation] was so disgraced in its own capital and [demanded to pay] such a large indemnity that it was unprecedented throughout Chinese history (庚子之役八國聯軍入京受盟城下恥辱之甚賠款之多為中國亙古所未聞).¹²

It was initially decided that individual provinces would split on paying the indemnity. Guizhou as one province (to which Zunyi Prefecture belonged) had to contribute two hundred thousand [Haikuan] taels [of pure silver] annually for thirty-nine years. Because of the hardship of the time, not all provinces were able to deliver the funds according to schedule. Therefore, foreigners directly took the funds from the Maritime Customs revenues. Any leftovers were then returned to China (初拟由各省摊赔贵州一省每年摊解二十万两以三十九年为止后因时势多艰各省未克一律按期滙解径由外人派员在海关上监收扣提此项赔款有馀仍还中国).¹³

Importantly, this particular excerpt goes on to describe the allies' treatment of the indemnities. As established in chapters one and two, the U.S. under the Open Door Policy took an initiative to separate itself from the rest of the "Alliance" by independently contacting the Qing official, delaying military involvement, and remitting a portion of its share of the indemnity for other uses. It turns out that this effort was not in vain, at least at the time. Zunyi Prefecture, belonging to the mountainous border province of Guizhou in the far south of China, explicitly chronicled that "only one state, the United States of America, deposited the payment towards the tuition cost of Chinese overseas students in the U.S. (惟美利堅一國提存此款以作中國學生留美學費)."¹⁴

The fact that the Chinese were aware of the difference in the allies' actions and distinguished members of the "Eight-Nation Alliance" in its their records adds another dimension to the investigation of how unified the eight states were remembered to be. While the

¹² *Zunyi Prefecture Gazetteer*, vol. 9 (Zunyi Prefecture, 1936), 1537.

¹³ *Zunyi Prefecture Gazetteer*, 9:1537–38.

¹⁴ *Zunyi Prefecture Gazetteer*, 9:1538.

use of the term “Eight-Nation Alliance” appears all-encompassing in the examples, the notion of an allied foreign invasion served more so to commemorate specific losses and represent the humiliation of foreign subjugation, as opposed to solely inform. The byproduct of such use is the reduction of complexity that many selected gazetteers show. The relatively monolithic interpretation of the Boxer War as it pertains to the impact on local histories clearly does not include the level of detail that underline conflicts among the allies.

More importantly, the discovery of unvaried characterization in gazetteers across China illuminates that there was a “memory” before there was a “nation.” Considering how the Boxer War took place before China had a unified national government with state-directed media outside big cities—something that only took place after the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949—one can see that a collective memory was in the making through literate networks of communities of writers and their readership. The *local* illuminates the national. And even in an era prior to nationwide mass media, a national identity for being the powerless victim state of the allied invasion was already being formed.

In Popular Media: Characterization in Newspapers and Periodicals

The perception and memorization of the Western colonization in China was not static. For the Chinese, the assessment of the impact of foreign imperialism evolved over time, despite being a constituent element of Chinese culture. In the early years of the twentieth century, the country was in the awkward position of denouncing foreign aggression while taking in new military technologies and modern systems of science that seemed like the key to Western wealth and power. It was not until the 1920s that both nationalists and communists agreed that semi-colonialism had brought about significant hardship to the Chinese people and the country as a

whole, an idea interlinked with the country's nationalistic awakening.¹⁵ This section focuses on the interplay between concurrent events and the use of the term for the "Alliance" in popular media.

The newspapers and gazetteers examined in this section range from ones written and edited by the Chinese during the Republican era to those founded by foreigners and published in English. The English language weekly *North-China Herald* (*Beihua Jiebao*, "北华捷报") was founded in Shanghai in 1850 by British national and auctioneer Henry Shearman and was the most important and largest British-founded press agency in Shanghai in the 1800s.¹⁶ Its daily edition, named *North-China Daily News* (*Zilin Xibao*, "字林西报") launched publication in 1864 with less of a political focus than its weekly counterpart. The Chinese language newspaper, *Shanghai News* (*Shen Bao*, "申报"), came later. Also first established by a British businessman but staffed by Chinese reporters and editors, *Shen Bao* was unparalleled in the early twentieth century for its wide circulation and reflection of Chinese public opinion. Historian of print culture, Joan Judge, argues that *Shen Bao* "at most echoed, rather than produced, revolutionary or national feelings. Instead of making revolutions, it was made by them."¹⁷ Regarding the Republican years, China's first modern publishing house, the Commercial Press, created *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang Zazhi*, "東方雜誌") in 1904, right after the Boxer War. Due to the background of drastic social and political transitions, the publication chronicles the years leading up to and covering the entire Republican era (1912-1948). Article and opinion

¹⁵ Hevia, *English Lessons*, 8.

¹⁶ Frank H. H. King and Prescott Clarke, *A Research Guide to China-Coast Newspapers, 1822–1911* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Harvard University Asia Center, 2020), 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9781684171491>.

¹⁷ Joan Judge, *Print and Politics: "Shibao" and the Culture of Reform in Late Qing China*, Studies of the East Asian Institute (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1996), 247.

pieces in this prominent weekly are highly indicative of the environments that gave rise to the social changes at the time.

The characterization of the allied powers in the English language publications does not utilize the term “Eight-Nation Alliance,” but rather, use some derivative of it. Take the *North-China Herald*’s four explicit references to the entity as examples. On May 1, 1901, the Herald covered a YMCA lecture that took place the previous Saturday, during which “the members listened to a graphic narrative of the advance of the allies upon Beijing last summer.”¹⁸ In 1924, an article named “The Gold Franc Question: Ministers of the Eight Powers Signatory to the 1901 Reply to Peking [Beijing]” discussed the powers’ response to China’s attempt to pay indemnities in silver instead of gold francs.¹⁹ Six years later, the “From Day to Day” section of the publication marked the “anniversary of the occupation of Peking [Beijing] by the Allied troops in the 26th year of the reign of Emperor Kuang Hsu [Guangxu].”²⁰ Another five years later and in the same section, the paper covered the story of a professor in Canada returning “a lone ancient Chinese coin, lost when the foreign troops of the eight nations entered Peking at the time of the Boxer Rebellion” to the Peiping [Beiping] Palace Museum.²¹ Clearly, there is no commonly agreed-upon or official name for the eight nations in the English expression.

Contrasting the above with Chinese language publications generates interesting results. Both *Shen Bao* and *Eastern Miscellany* dedicate significant coverage to social commentaries written by increasingly patriotic Chinese authors at the time. The earliest example of the years after the invasion, an unnamed commentator published an article titled “Theory (or Argument)

¹⁸ *The North-China Herald* (Shanghai, 1850–1951), <https://www.proquest.com/hnpchineseollection?accountid=14816>. May 1, 1901.

¹⁹ *The North-China Herald*. February 13, 1924.

²⁰ *The North-China Herald*. July 23, 1930.

²¹ *The North-China Herald*. February 16, 1935.

on China Bringing Foreigners' Disrespectful Treatment Upon Itself (外人輕侮中國多由中國自召說),” criticizing the Qing’s weak diplomacy and calling for determined efforts to reform the country. In the piece, the author writes “[the Qing government] called upon barbarous Boxers for no reason, who launched a revolt and killed foreigners out of hate, resulting in the eight nations becoming allies (無故號召蠻野之拳匪。起而讎殺外人。致使八國聯軍。).”²² Notably, the Chinese characters for “Eight-Nation Alliance” and “eight nations becoming allies” are identical. “使” in Chinese can mean “cause,” implying a sense of self-blame, that the eight nations’ coming together was the direct consequence of Boxer chaos. In addition to this instance, the use of the term for “Eight-Nation Alliance” are much more consistent. For example, in a social critique published on *Shen Bao*, the author denounced the presence of superstitious descriptions of events and entities in elementary school textbooks, including sensationalized and mythicized depictions of the “Eight-Nation Alliance.”²³

The use of “Eight-Nation Alliance” under the context of national humiliation became increasingly prevalent with the rise of anti-imperialist sentiment and became a keen representation of foreign encroachment of Chinese sovereignty. A simple breakdown of the frequency of the use of the term would show a sharp increase during the 1920s compared to the decade before, and the trend continues into the 1940s. However, numerical quantification is of limited use in the evaluation of the term in Chinese popular media, especially as a considerable number of new journals and newspapers emerged since the twenties. Compared to focusing on how often the term was being used, investigating what was actually being said is much more significant. In the upcoming pages, I evaluate three categories of popular usage of the term: 1)

²² *The Eastern Miscellany*. 1904. vol 8.

²³ “The Ridiculousness of Elementary School Textbooks,” *Shen Bao (Shanghai News)*, November 10, 1907, <http://shunpao.egreenapple.com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/WEB/INDEX.html>.

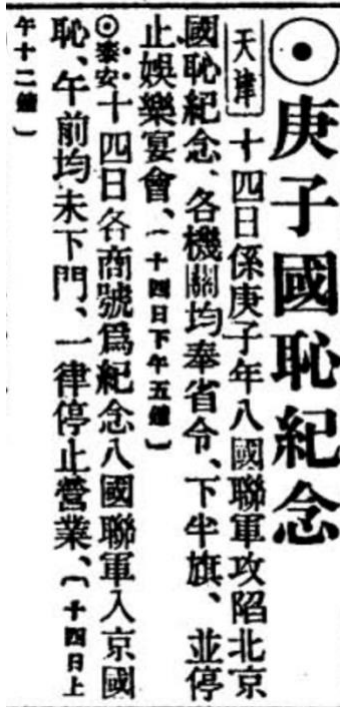
commemoration of anniversaries, 2) non-sensationalized, straightforward references, and 3) sensationalized/dramatized tales.

Commemoration of the anniversary of the allied expedition was a common feature of Republican era newspapers. For instance, in the page corner of the September 8, 1928 issue of one Shanghai periodical, *People's Newspaper* (*Ren Bao*, “人報”), the newspaper included a snippet on Shanghai county's effort to memorialize the signing of the Boxer Protocol:

Yesterday was the [27th anniversary] of the Eight-Nation Alliance's coercing China into signing the unequal treaty, i.e., the Boxer Protocol. The publicity department of Shanghai's division of [Kuomintang] party affairs hope to encourage the community to work together on abrogating the treaty... and avenging national shame (昨日為八國聯軍強迫中國簽訂不平等條約（即辛丑條約）上海特別市黨務指導委員會宣傳部，欲喚起民眾共謀廢約...雪國恥。).²⁴

One commemoration was not enough. During the same year but in a different newspaper, *Shanghai News* (*Shen Bao*, “申報”), the anniversary of the day of the *siege* of Beijing by the allies was printed on the front matter under the title “庚子國恥紀念” (“Gengzi Year (1900) National Shame Commemoration”). The piece specifically covered how two Chinese cities, Tianjin and Taian, were exemplary for their effort to pay tribute to the fall of the capital twenty-eight years ago. Notably, this coverage was from 1928, the first year marking the success of the Northern Expedition (1926-1928) and the establishment of the new Nationalist government in Nanjing—a government that aspired to united all of China, and three years after the anti-imperialist May Thirtieth Movement (1925).

²⁴ *Ren Bao* (*People's Newspaper*) (Shanghai, 1928). September 8, 1928.



Tianjin

The fourteenth was the day of commemoration for the national humiliation of the Eight-Nation Alliance's capture of Beijing in the Gengzi year. All governmental departments and offices follow the province's order to fly the flag at half-staff and pause entertainment and banquet activities.

Taian

On the fourteenth, all business establishments, in order to commemorate the national shame of the Eight-Nation Alliance's invasion of Beijing, did not open by noon and closed operations.²⁵

The popular use of the term as a means of representation and tool of remembrance is partially attributable to the establishment of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 and the May

Fourth Movement in response to it. China's relations with the West deteriorated significantly as the terms stipulated that Germany's concessions in China, most notably parts of the province of Shandong, be handed to Japan. Although the Chinese representative refused to sign the treaty at peace conference, the strong sentiment of humiliation fueled Chinese nationalism and anti-imperialistic zeal back home, carrying the message that history had once again repeated itself. Growing out of a large-scale student protest in the capital, the May Fourth Movement was directed towards reaching the masses, giving rise to more than four hundred new publications. Under this context of sociopolitical transformation, it is evident that "Eight-Nation Alliance"'s invasion played an indispensable role in the process of rebuilding the country both culturally and politically.

²⁵ "May Fourth Movement," in *Britannica Academic*, accessed March 21, 2023, <https://academic-eb-com.proxy.library.vanderbilt.edu/levels/collegiate/article/May-Fourth-Movement/51570>.

After the May Fourth Movement, the “Eight-Nation Alliance” continued to appear in popular media under the context of other foreign subjugations, including the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945). Two months after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, also known as the September Eighteenth Incident, the “Eight-Nation Alliance” was featured in a social critique embedded in reports on Japanese aggression and calls for resistance. The critique, titled “庚子年倭寇之盜我宮中寶物” (“Gengzi Year Foreign Pirates Stole Our Treasures”), detailed the allies’ looting in Qing palaces during the invasion in 1900 and expressed great pity for the loss of invaluable cultural heritage and artifacts. While at first glance the piece seems out of place given its social context of Japanese invasion, the opening sentence states “倭寇之一再犯我華夏” (Japan, one of the pirates has once again violated us).²⁶ This example alone underscores that not only was the “Alliance” as a whole remembered as a united group of foreign marauders, but individual member states were also perpetually stamped with the identification. What was the purpose of bringing up the allies when only one of them invaded? One answer would be to add weight to the pressing current state of affairs by evoking memories from the past. By reminding the readers that the “pirate” invading Manchuria today used to engage in similar violations of Chinese sovereignty, the piece effectively amplifies nationalistic sentiments and motivations. This coverage also conveys a sense of humiliation, that a country like China, with its size and history of supremacy in Asia, had once again shown that its weakness remained.

Similarly, other publications put the foreign powers’ invasion in parallel with other major military and political events at the time, including the mass demonstration of May Fourth and the

²⁶ The direct translation would be “violated us/our Cathay.” Cathay the name by which China was known to medieval Europe.

humiliating Twenty-One Demands from Japan.²⁷ The dialogue between the past and present demonstrates the perpetual yet changing relevance of the “Alliance” in China. However, some periodicals were even more direct about the “Eight-Nation Alliance” as a lieu de mémoire for humiliation to the extent of dramatization. The publication *Chinese Native Products Monthly* (*Guohuo Yuebao*, “國貨月報”) had a “Tales of National Shame” section dedicated to covering historical events in dramatic and simple language. The 1924 “Chronicle of the Eight-Nation Alliance (庚子八國聯軍記)” was one of the “stories.” After sensationalized coverage of foreign aggression in China and the Boxer War, the piece concluded that

Although the Boxers wanted to defeat the foreign powers, their method was wrong. It is indeed “commendable spirit but pitiful foolishness.” We shall work together to save the country. We shall not learn from their defective strategy nor despair. “With aspiration there’s no fear of failure” ... (義和團雖想打倒洋人的勢力，但他們的方法錯了。真是其誌可嘉其愚可嘆！我們有誌就過，再不要學他們那樣錯用方法，也不必灰心喪氣。只怕誌不堅不怕事不成).²⁸

In another dramatic example of the reference of the “Alliance,” the author writes, with engaging detail, a poetic essay on a delicately designed artifact called the watermelon lamp. The story features the author hearing the story of the watermelon lamp from her grandfather, who shared with her the anecdote that the Qing Emperor Tongzhi had a love for the beautiful artifact and often let his concubines admire the carefully carved watermelon. The author concluded the piece with a sigh,

²⁷ The Twenty-One Demands of 1915 called for confirmation of Japan’s railway and mining claims in Shandong province; granting of special concessions in Manchuria; Sino-Japanese control of the Han-Ye-Ping mining base in central China; access to harbors, bays, and islands along China’s coast; and Japanese control, through advisers, of Chinese financial, political, and police affairs. Chinese president Yuan Shikai’s forced acceptance of all but the last point greatly increased anti-Japanese feeling in China. “Twenty-One Demands,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 11, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Twenty-one-Demands>. *Shanghai News (Shen Bao)*. June 8, 1921.

²⁸ *Chinese Native Products Monthly*, vol. 1 (Shanghai, 1924).

啊，這有名的至寶，不知現在還存在嗎？也許是在八國聯軍攻入時帶走了吧？誰知道呀？(Ah, this well-known treasure. I wonder if it still exists. Perhaps it was taken by the Eight-Nation Alliance during the invasion? Who knows?)²⁹

Even in a personal memory, the “Alliance” is the lieu de mémoire that represented pillage and plunder.

²⁹ Chen Qin 沉琴, “西瓜燈” [Watermelon Lamp], *Shanghai News (Shen Bao)*, August 21, 1934.

Conclusion

In front of the ruins of allied invasions in the Second Opium War and the Boxer War, Chinese students in Beijing today gather for the ceremony of joining the Youth League.¹ The Yuanmingyuan Park (also known as the Old Summer Palace) has been named as one of the first National Patriotism Education Site (“全国爱国主义教育基地”) by the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, and there is hardly anything more straightforward and effective in achieving this goal than having pupils take the oath on being admitted to the Youth League in front of the aftermath of multiple allied foreign plunders. Throughout the twentieth century, the dense and complicated history of the Boxer War took on various meanings in different historical contexts. In Chinese popular culture, the allied invasion perpetrated by the “Eight-Nation Alliance” is a clear and oft-used representation not only of the dangers of China’s past weakness, but also of a “united ‘West’” that humiliated the Qing state, and by extension, the Chinese people. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of the concept of the allied powers in China today.

This thesis has not been a study of the general history of facts of the Boxer War, but a glimpse at how the aspects of conflict, disagreement, and even clashes during this unique episode of multinational collaboration and competition can push back against the notion that the participating powers had formed a united and well-coordinated front. This study also sheds light on the usage of the term “Eight-Nation Alliance” to foster and orchestrate a sense of patriotism that emerges out of humiliation and powerlessness.

The first insight of this study is that the emergence of the so-called “Eight-Nation Alliance” revolved significantly around an overlooked sense of competition among the foreign

¹ The Communist Youth League of China is a youth movement responsible for assisting the Chinese Communist Party with the management of youth affairs. The League has also performed the function of cultivating younger cadres and Party members between the ages of fourteen and twenty-eight. Chinese students are encouraged to apply to join the League while in school.

powers. The unusual military intervention included “old” and more established colonial powers like Great Britain, France, and Russia facing not only each other, but also their arriviste competitors. The first multinational military force in history has served as a lens to evaluate the powers’ diplomatic squabbling, the competitive and mutually suspicious nature of allied efforts, and the fluid global dynamics at the turn of the century. Germany and Japan’s ambition, the caution of the U.S., and the interconnected and complicated alliance networks of European powers all revealed themselves in the Far East. The divide among the powers calls into question the far-fetched notion of an “alliance” during the volatile mission in 1900.

The second insight of this study is provided by a focus on conflict during the negotiation process for the Boxer Protocol and the joint administration of the TPG. By evaluating the powers’ reaction to Li Hongzhang’s appointment, the year-long drafting of the unequal treaty, and the case study on occupied Tianjin, this chapter reiterates the internal fluidity of the allied forces beyond the battlefield. Diverging opinions and schemes within the “Alliance” with regard to negotiations, spheres of influence, and dividing the spoils of war illuminate the fragmented nature of imperialism in China at the time.

Finally, this thesis shifts gear to reveal the evolution of a symbolic afterlife of the so-called “Eight-Nation Alliance.” The lasting mark that the powers has left on the Chinese social memory and collective imagination sheds light on the important functions of the “Alliance” as a lieu de mémoire of national humiliation, self-blame, and anti-imperialist mobilization. The selected local gazetteers and newspapers used in this thesis are some of so many examples that illustrate the undying echo of the allied forces in the Chinese psyche. While this thesis only covers up to the Republican period, the usage of the term “Eight-Nation Alliance” only becomes

more widespread, extensive, and relevant after the establishment of the People's Republic of China and invites further research.

All this discussion surrounding the conflicts during the allied invasion also matters beyond China. While this thesis revisits an entity and a memory so central to China itself, literature on global imperialist history and the formation of alliances during this period offers a future opportunity to identify similarities, differences, and patterns between the "Eight-Nation Alliance" and its predecessors and contemporaries as well. The far-reaching diplomatic, political, and cultural impact of this multinational coalition would surely generate insights, discoveries, and lessons not only of the past, but also of the present and future of China and the world.

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