

Examiners' Report

June 2025

GCE Geography 9GE0 03

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Introduction

The format for this paper is well-established and centres are familiar with its demands. The obvious differences between this paper and both 9GE01 and 9GE02 are that it is thematic, localised and therefore place and often time specific. It is a test of the ability of candidates to blend information that they have drawn from the rest of the course and resources that they are offered here in the resource booklet. That information is self-evidently partial and preparing students for this paper is very much a part of developing a broader critical thinking approach which are helpful elsewhere but are centre stage here. It also matters that candidates know how the AOs work with these questions because a constant theme from the examining team is that there is insufficient AO2, especially for questions 5 and 6, which carry half the total marks. The best route for successful preparation is to build in both critical thinking and statistical skills across the whole course. That will also help with their NEAs. If, for example they decide to investigate the success of hard engineering in location X as their NEA investigation they need to know what hard engineering is but also how success is measured. These skills are not uniquely useful for this paper, but they are more central given the AO3 weighting of the paper.

Question 1

This is a very familiar topic, but the question that was answered was not always the one that was asked. Candidates needed to recognise the focus on the 'vital' and then avoid storytelling about the agreements without reflecting on the reasons why they matter so much. Those who began by observing that this is a global problem that clearly needs global solutions were in the best position to develop that point. Many referenced the Paris agreement, and some observed that the USA was no longer party to that agreement. These candidates could then offer a comment as to why that is so important, given the size of the American carbon footprint. It was also possible to argue, as some did, that global solutions were vital because those contributing least to the problem given the size of their economies were often the countries worst affected by climate change and sea-level rise. The Maldives and Bangladesh were frequently cited here.

This is a 4-mark question that is point marked as is Question 2b.

- 1 Explain why global agreements are vital if the environmental challenges of climate change are to be met.

and Kyoto Protocol

Global agreements, e.g. Paris Agreement, ensure global action is occurring. They ensure the biggest carbon dioxide/greenhouse gas emitters e.g. USA are doing their part to reduce climate change impacts. ^{China, India and} ~~global agreements~~ can also help as targets can be set to encourage the cut of emissions and support can be given (e.g. money) to ~~those~~ lower income countries to help them achieve this reduction in emissions. Global agreements can also help bring the needs of countries e.g. Small Island Developing Nations, to a global platform, which gives them a voice to express how they can be helped and give other countries a reason to try to help reduce environmental challenges ^{positive} for environmental changes to occur, global action is needed.



This is a strong answer that makes two well developed points - the first identifies that those most responsible need to be called to account and the second identifies the need to help those who are not responsible but are likely to be the most seriously affected.



Don't rewrite the question - as in this example just get on with your answer.

- 1** Explain why global agreements are vital if the environmental challenges of climate change are to be met.

As, if nations don't agree on the challenges the change won't be met, so the role of IGOs to support the agreements is vital as allows each country to share a view on current situations on there emissions like for example the UN each member gets to vote on the whether agreements like the Paris agreement are vital for environmental change, but as main countries could be overruled the role of the Security Council could cancel there role out causing or inhibit role of global agreements to change.

(Total for Question 1 = 4 marks)



This candidate gets diverted into something of a dead-end road by offering a view that is, one assumes, taken from the RB referencing the processes at work on the floor of the United Nations. It is not that the information offered is not broadly accurate but it simply isn't relevant to the question asked. They make a reasonable point about the role of IGOs which is illustrated referencing the Paris agreement but then loses focus on the question.



Underline the keywords in the question - in this case 'vital' and 'challenges' would be the main ones identified.

Question 2(a)i-iii

The obligatory statistics question was answered well by most. The commonest error was a lack of understanding that the square of any number is always positive. Those who therefore offered '-4' as their answer to 2(a)(i) then carried the error forward often giving '28' as their answer to 2(a)(ii) and that, in its turn generated errors in the final r_s result. Centres are reminded that incorrect answers to 2(a)(iii) were credited if they followed an error made in answering 2(a)(i) and/or 2(a)(ii) to avoid a double penalty for that initial error. Another common error was to omit the '1-...' part of the Spearman equation which of course generated a very different answer. A rule change for markers this year favoured those candidates who offered the correct answer to 2(a)(ii) but did not show their working as instructed. Given that they gave the correct answer it is obvious that their working was also correct, even if not shown.

Question 2(b)

As anticipated this question produced a range of answers including many who did not deconstruct 'statistical result', nor what might constitute a 'reliable indicator'. This cohort of candidates started, and sometimes ended by observing that happiness is subjective and other things than GDP per capita might also impinge on the levels of happiness within a society. That is not disputed but it is clearly not relevant to the statistical relationship that they were asked to explore. Those who observed that a systematic sample of 12 countries is too small to be reliable or, better 'more' reliable given the number of countries in the world were able, in some cases, to go on and make thoughtful comments about the geography of the 12 countries thrown up by the sampling. Some brought in their own knowledge of these countries suggesting, reasonably enough, that many were small. Others suggested that the sample had 'only' been drawn from UN countries and that this might impact on the reliability. There is logic here and given that there is no expectation that candidates will know that the vast majority of nation states are members of the UN, it was rewardable.

(b) Explain why this statistical result may not be a reliable indicator of the relationship between the GDP per capita of a country and the happiness of its population.

(4)

There are several flaws in this correlation coefficient measure. Firstly, self-determined 'happiness' is not an objective measure and may correlate instead to one's comparison to those around them. Additionally, this selection of countries may not accurately reflect the correlation; 12 countries cannot be said to represent 197, and a more broad test is necessary for a conclusive result to be found.



The first few lines of this response are not relevant to the question asked. It would be entirely appropriate if 'self-determined' happiness was correlated, as they put it to 'one's comparison to those around them'. The second half of the answer is a valid point concerning sample size which is developed for the second mark.



Understanding statistical results is an important skill - their 'significance' is a largely mathematical measure.

(b) Explain why this statistical result may not be a reliable indicator of the relationship between the GDP per capita of a country and the happiness of its population.

(4)

This result may not be a reliable indicator of the relationship between GDP per capita of a country and happiness of its population as it uses a relatively small sample of only 12 nations; this may be unrepresentative of all nations and a larger sample would be needed to ensure these findings are reliable. Furthermore, the nations included all have small-medium populations, potentially meaning inequalities that occur within larger nations are not accounted for, which would skew the dataset.



This is a strong response. As with the first exemplar sample size is raised as an issue with a larger sample needed to increase reliability. The second developed point is that, by chance, some (although not all) of the countries in the sample are quite small and the omission of larger countries may distort the final result. A legitimate second point that is developed.



When offering two reasons identify them by using 'Firstly...' and then 'Secondly...'.

Question 3

It is fair to say that despite the relatively low mark tariff when compared to Q5 and Q6 the two 'Analyse...' questions have continued to trouble a significant number of candidates. The most productive way of answering this type of question is to deploy and then blend knowledge and understanding of the topic gained when studying the relevant part of the specification with the material offered in the couple of hundred words of the Figures 1, 2 and 3 text attached to a map (Figure 1) and the two tables (Figures 2 and 3). The focus was 'the changing patterns' and, put briefly, that should have promoted a forensic examination of the emergence of the US after the Second World War and the decay of the British and French empires, the Cold War that followed and then the late 20th, early 21st century challenge from China to the US. With that chronology in mind some of the best answers also addressed how 'power' is not exclusively military and used Figure 3 to address the role of soft power. Weaker answers told a story, largely derived from the resource booklet (RB) but did not analyse that story beyond simple and often unsupported chronological statements.

3 Study Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 in Section A of the Resource Booklet.

Analyse the changing patterns of power in the world since 1945.

(8)

Towards 1945 global power shifted, the USA became the dominant superpower. This can be seen in figure 2 where the USA had 27% of total global manufacturing, showing the USA had large power over the economy, yet as the year holding this power and even increasing manufacturing to 29% in 1998. Yet by 2024 the USA is losing manufacturing and emerging countries such as China and India are gaining it, demonstrating that the USA is losing economic power to these emerging countries.

Figure 3 Shows Soft power in 2017 and 2023. The top 10 in 2017 was largely European, with the addition of countries such as the USA, Japan and Canada, with Russia in 26th and China in 25th. By 2023 China had jumped all the way to 5th, Russia was 13th and ~~many new countries were entering the list~~, non-European countries were entering the ^{TOP 10} list, such as the UAE, China and China. This demonstrates that soft power is shifting away from the European countries and towards areas like Asia.



This example is typical of a low level 2 answer. The candidate has selected an appropriate, if rather narrow range of information from the RB. There is a series of statements but not much analysis other than the final comments in both paragraphs which offer unsupported views of change in general.



Use words and phrases such as 'however' and 'on the other hand' when analysing this information. It will never be either all right or all wrong.

The main players in fluctuations of power since 1945 include Britain, USA and now China and India. 1945 marked the end of the second world war which caused shockwaves through global superpowers the ideal Nazi Germany party had a collapse leading to economic sanctions and military loss meaning that the power they built up from 1939-1945 was immediately lost. On the contrary the unchallenged superpower being the USA strategically used this period during 1945 to double its GDP leading to economic growth for the country and enter the global economy, by breaking up Britain and France they were able to create trade routes which allowed for them to bring businesses into these once closed markets and have an acceleration of economic growth. This led to the hegemonic power of the USA being in a much more financially stable position than the rest of the bankrupt nations across the globe from the Nazis. Most of USA's power was not exerted through hard power but rather through soft power creating links between nations for military defence such as NATO and ~~the~~ the UN set up in Brussels, Belgium in 1949.

This exertion of soft power reveals that some countries like the British, China and USA of permanent members could exert soft power through their trade links and global contacts.

Furthermore the USA set up Bretton Woods institutions which allowed neo-colonialism through debt to take place, an example of this are SAP's which force capitalist and westernised views upon countries and during the proxy war in Vietnam where the

(Total for Question 3 = 8 marks)

USA's homogeneous power was questioned. Hard power was used in the fight against Communism and Russia. During the cold war USA remained a powerful nation and with an increasing GDP due to its neo-colonialist power, and however during the proxy war USA used Vietnam and others in order to fight for capitalism highlighting its country's need for this system in order to remain homogeneous power.

Over time USA reached mass consumption in Rostow's theory and became the core in the world systems theory by Wallerstein highlighting its place as the global superpower, however due to de-industrialisation in the USA's steelworks due to China's 1978 open door policy and SEZ's, China was able to grow rapidly leading to a big increase in their economic and power and military power posing future uncertainty to the USA's status of homogeneous power, indicating not only a global shift of manufacturing but also power due to the control of trade and goods.



What is impressive about this answer is the excellent weaving of RB material with the candidates' own knowledge and understanding. It is also unafraid of offering a view which may be contentious but that isn't the point. We can have no expectations that candidates have an understanding of the basis of US power since the war and might very well contest the view expressed here that it is largely a consequence of soft power. They also add material regarding NATO.

Question 4

As with Q3 the task here was blend together from background knowledge and understanding with the material offered in the resources, specifically Figure 4 and Figure 5. Figure 4 offers a view of the four major global intergovernmental organisations established largely at Bretton Woods as the Second World War drew to a close. The table offered basic information about the 'stated' role of these institutions which the text challenged. Figure 5 offered candidates a largely neutral description of how the United Nations worked and the power structures within it. The graph showed the historic use of the veto by the five permanent members. The candidates were invited to analyse the role of these institutions in managing economic and political relations since the end of the Second World War. Once again, those students at the lower end of the ability range drew heavily on the resources, especially the 'stated' roles without comment. Those that spotted the details of the voting systems offered a more critical view, picking up on Michael Manley's view on the IMF but also, in many cases offering their own examples of the UN's inability to act citing Ukraine and Palestine as examples of its failure to manage a political crises. There were some very good answers amongst these showing a sophisticated understanding of post-war history.

4 Study Figure 4 and Figure 5 in Section A of the Resource Booklet.

Analyse the role of global institutions in managing economic and political relations in the post-war world (1945 – present).

(8)

⊗ A positive role which IGOs play is in excelling development and trade for all nations. This can be seen as the World Bank's stated role is to finance development projects and to reduce poverty. A significant example of this is the World Bank loaning \$500 million to DRC to complete a halted dam project or funding a poverty reduction programme in the Philippines. This shows that IGOs have a positive effect on economic relations post 2 world war.

However, global institutions may cause rising political tensions. This is because critics believe these were set up to ~~genieve~~ maintain the dominance of the USA through exertion of soft-power. The IGO's were set up mostly by western nations such as the USA and UK. Some believe the IGO's favour those who set up the

organisations as stated by Michael Manley. This can be seen in figure 3 as only the 5 permanent members of the Security Council have the power to veto policies. This shows how IGOs may favour more developed nations and control their dominance which could cause global political tensions.



This is a typical Level 2 response. The first paragraph has some useful examples drawn from their own knowledge but there is no analysis and no critical comment raised. The second paragraph presents a counter argument, again simple statements followed by assertions as in 'that shows...'. It is worth recalling that 4/8 is not a catastrophic mark but breaking through to higher marks is not such an easy 'fix' either. These are challenging questions.

4 Study Figure 4 and Figure 5 in Section A of the Resource Booklet.

Analyse the role of global institutions in managing economic and political relations in the post-war world (1945 – present).

(8)

Global institutions such as the world trade organisation have been very important in promoting free trade and a larger global market. As a result, many countries have been able to accelerate their developments and create strong trade relationships with other countries. However this isn't always the case, as being part of organisations like the WTO comes with both a membership fee and a loss of sovereignty. Many countries can become unhappy with this and pull out of agreements, weakening relations in order to try and regain national sovereignty.

The IMF has a large role in providing debt relief to lower income countries through structural adjustments or HIPC programmes. On the surface, these initiatives do have the right ideas, with Uganda being liberated from \$2 billion in debt, allowing its economic relations to grow as it begins to trade more and invest in its growth. However, since 1945 structural adjustments' interests have been questioned, with 12 toilets being provided for 27,000 children or the lack of government spending allowed in Jamaica, leading to a lack of nurses which meant

more mothers were dying during child birth. As a result, it can be argued, as it was in figure 4, that the interests of these policies lie in the IMF and their members, strengthening their economy as they benefit not of these ^{poor} countries.

Global institutions strengthen political relations between members, such as the 5 permanent security council members, as well as the 10 temporary members, as they and the ICJ have peacekeeping in mind. However, political relations can become

(Total for Question 4 = 8 marks)

tense due to the unequal distribution of power in these institutions. This can be seen by India not being a security council member, although it meets all of the criteria, or the US having a 16.5% voting stake in the IMF. For any vote to be passed in the IMF, an 86% agreement is needed, therefore no vote can be passed without US approval. This unfair voting system can lead to unrest and political tensions between the US and less involved countries.



This is a very good answer and there were poorer responses than this that also scored 8/8. The candidate brought their own case-study material (Uganda) to illustrate a generally positive view of IMF engagement but then used 'However...' to qualify that view. The political strand of the question was addressed through the case made by India to join the permanent members of the security council with 'its unfair voting system'.



Remember to use your own examples when analysing the material that is the focus of these questions.

Question 5

With a densely worded preamble and five other resources available there was no shortage of information available for candidates to answer this question. Almost all agreed that China was more likely to become a superpower and offered evidence for this view with some valuable AO2 also on display with comments on the 'belt and road' project and cautionary comments about the problem of Taiwan. Three of the resources had no accompanying text which proved to be challenging, especially Figure 6. There was limited use of the overall decline of the 'west' with both European and North American states shrinking. A very occasional candidate noted that the world economy had more than doubled in size during the 1995 to 2023 time period, although some did question the statistics given their age. Adding up the BRICS along with the G7 would also have shown that, between them they accounted for just over 60% of the total global economy in each of the three quoted years. Arguments against the proposition in the question frequently blended good AO3 with thoughtful AO2. The ageing of the Chinese population was seen as an issue and the demographic contrast between China and the other two major powers was seen as giving a major advantage to India in the not too distant future. A significant number of candidates misinterpreted two elements in the resources that were available to them. Firstly, they read Figure 8 incorrectly by missing the point that this data was just for 2024 whilst the second bullet point in the text above the table made it abundantly clear that the back history of global consumption was not dominated by India. The second error was to claim that India was more likely to pose a military threat than China because it spent 2.4% of its GDP on defence whilst China only spent 1.7% of its GDP on defence. They should have noted that 2.4% of 3.4 trillion is a lot less than 1.7% of nearly 18 trillion! There were excellent essays which showcased an impressive understanding of geopolitics and the challenges faced by many countries. It was good to read accounts that ended with a health warning about predicting the future, and several comments about the problems arising from old or partial data.

Colleagues will need no reminding that levels marking calls upon examiners to decide which set of descriptors best describe a candidate's answer. After that the question examiners must address is to identify where in that level a response belongs. This exemplar was placed towards the top of Level 2 and awarded 11 marks. The opening paragraph includes a strong and clear statement that China is showing the 'greater potential' to become a superpower due to its 'economic emergence'. The following paragraph shows some evidence for that suggesting that a growing population fuelled by in-migration is part of this emergence. This is useful AO1 material but there is no comparison made with India here although 'serious challenges' are posed by Indian population growth, which at this stage of the essay are not identified. There is some muddled logic in the following paragraph which suggests that the 33 million added to India's emerging middle-class are, in reality a cost because 'money is leaving the country'? This is not explained. India's military spending (albeit the point about the % of GDP is missed as it is by most students) is seen as of less significance given that, in the view of this candidate, ('hard power is going out of fashion').

And then the essay simply stops. What is here is sometimes very good indeed, a clear direction to the argument and some very useful evidence which blends AO3 and AO2 suggesting a Level 3 mark. However, this material is insufficient and a mark of 11 is appropriate.

5 Study the resources in Section B of the Resource Booklet.

Evaluate the view that China is more likely than India to become a global superpower by the middle of this century.

(18)

~~Currently~~ A global superpower is a country who dominates in more than one, if not all aspects of power (economic, social, political and military). In this essay I will conclude that as it currently stands, China is showing the greater potential in terms of becoming a global superpower by 2050, due to its economic emergence.

In 2023, the BRICS countries overtook the greatest share of the world economy from the G7, with China having a greater share than India. This may be due to China's increasingly high volumes of trade in and out of the country, the global shift of industry into China providing a huge amount of formal, regular waged jobs, contributing to government tax revenue and so to the local economy. The growth of China's population due to relaxed migration policies has led to the emergence of its increasing quaternary sector with over 3.57 million STEM university graduates in 2022. This has further contributed to the

growing economy as this field of work attracts investment from other countries and new inventions may be internationally traded for high prices. Whilst a steady population growth rate of 0.18% in China, in 2023 has had huge benefits. The 0.70% growth rate in India has led to serious challenges.

An increased population has led to an increasing consumerist society which isn't always a good thing. The 33 million consumers out of its 1.4 billion population (2.31%) indicates that money is leaving the country instead of entering. This rapid population growth ~~may~~ ^{has} also lead to the emergence of unplanned urban settlements, such as, Dharavi, Mumbai, contributing to a greater inequality and low HDI ranking.

India is spending 2.4% of its GDP on military spending, compared to China's 1.7%. Whilst this may appear as a benefit towards India as they can extend their influence and connections with allies, but as visited previously, perhaps military power

and the dominance of hard power is going out of fashion, as the world is shifting towards soft power. Therefore, China's increased focus on the 'knowledge economy' may benefit it in the near future.



It is a useful technique to identify the direction of travel of an answer in the opening paragraph, as is done here.

5 Study the resources in Section B of the Resource Booklet.

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Evaluate the view that China is more likely than India to become a global superpower by the middle of this century.

2050

(18)

india culture = bigger

Fig 6 = China > India economy share ✓ knowledge economy

Fig 7a = China > India academics & education

Fig 7b = China > India STEM, culture = important

Fig 8 = India > China consumers

Fig 9 =

Fig 10 = China > India corporations

Fig 11 = China military > India

Fig 12 = China outward migration = bad.

To become a global superpower, a country has to have sufficient cultural, social, economic, political, geographical and military strengths and advantages. Since the 1970s, both China and India have experienced rapid economic growth, which has boosted their global influences, opened up trade agreements, and led to the spread of culture across the world. However, it is arguable that China is more likely to become a global superpower by the middle of the 21st century for a number of reasons.

Firstly, both China and India are part of the BRICS group, an alliance that has challenged the power of other groups, such as the G7. The promotion of free trade policies, particularly evident

in China's 'Open ~~Door~~ Door Policy' (1978), ~~be~~ can be viewed as one of the main reasons for the global shift of power away from the western world and into Asia. Figure 6 shows that between 1995 and 2023, China's share of the world economy has more than tripled^{in 28 years}, contributing to over half of the BRICS's countries' 32.1% share. Although India contributes to the 2.2% difference between G7 countries' ~~global~~ share of the world economy (29.9%) and BRICS share (32.1%), India's proportion is far less than China's. Therefore, Figure 2, although failing to provide exact numerical data in terms of each country's individual share, shows that China is more economically likely to be considered a superpower than India in the future, meaning, in the next 25 years, it is entirely possible that China will become a superpower before India.

Furthermore, politically and socially, China's educated population, particularly in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, exceeds that of India. STEM, in the future, is likely to become a key aspect of maintaining superpower status, therefore, China's 3.57 million university STEM graduates being 1.02 million more than India in 2022 (Figure 7b) suggests that China is more likely to achieve superpower status than India. Equally, China having 552,452 more scientific papers than India in 2022, according to Figure ~~9a~~ 7a, backs up the idea that China's 'knowledge economy' provides an advantage, as

superpower status is more likely to be achieved with sufficient research and development resources.

~~to be~~ In terms of differences in the environments of China and India, India's extra 2 million consumers are likely to produce extra waste whilst putting pressure on services and resources, ~~causing~~ causing possible food, water, and energy insecurity. Although Figure 8 suggests that both China and India are the world's leading climate crisis catalysts, it could be said that China will likely amend this in the future, as, as of 2024, China's government are making an active effort to plant trees and clear pollution. This suggests further evidence for China being more likely to achieve superpower status by the middle of this century. Equally, China's Human Development Index ranking is 79, meaning better than India's 132, showing China's quality of life is better.

However, China's population is aging, compared to India's more youthful, therefore more economically active, population. Figure 8 also suggests India's political state is better than China's, China being ~~dictator~~ communist, India being democratic. Equally, India's cultural influence is better than China's, meaning India exceeds China within the political and cultural aspects of becoming a superpower. Furthermore, India has less outward migration than

China, losing 8,000 high net worth individuals in 2023 rather than 10,000, showing India's ^{Population} ~~demographic~~ is likely to be more stable than China's.

Ultimately, China and India both show superpower characteristics, however, China's economy, therefore ability to invest in military (Figure 11), international trade links and value of corporations (Figure 10), quality of living, ability to mitigate ~~the~~ climate change, education quality and overall superpower potential is greater. Therefore, it is feasible to suggest that China is more likely than India to become a global superpower by the middle of this century, as arguments for China's superpower status ~~rather~~ massively outweigh those against.



This is an impressive essay. As colleagues will understand, essays warranting full marks are not flawless and it is reasonable to argue that some 18/18 or 24/24 essays are better than others. This answer starts with a quick aide memoire list of resources that should be referenced in the essay. The opening paragraph identifies the various manifestations of power and then, as with the previous exemplar, the candidate identifies what they are about to argue, specifically that 'China is more likely to become a global superpower by the middle of the 21st century...'. That case is addressed in the second paragraph which effectively blends their own knowledge and understanding with material drawn from the RB, as they do throughout. The focus is on its economic growth. The following paragraph is linked to its predecessor by the use of 'Furthermore, politically and socially...' develops the material in the RB referencing STEM graduates and scientific papers. The following paragraph addresses the risks to the environment of economic growth and a discussion of climate change, given that both countries are 'leading climate change catalysts'. However, the candidate offers good evidence that China is addressing this actively using material from their wider studies in the subject. This includes judgments about the reliability of the current data. The penultimate paragraph presents some counter-argument largely built around the demographic challenges faced by China as well as the superior cultural and political influence exercised by its rival. The final paragraph returns to the opening comments and adds a few references and tidies up the RB references from its earlier aide memoire. There are gaps here but there always will be, but given time constraints and the complexity of the argument this is well worth its 18/18 mark.



Making a plan is essential for these longer essays. Make sure that each paragraph has a clear focus.

Question 6

Equipped with a view about the comparative futures of China and India, candidates frequently saw this final question as the next chapter, and thus happily reused some of their earlier comments. They had three further resources at their disposal. Figure 10 was a complex but not impossibly complex reminder about how US transnationals dominate the world, wherever their core operations actually take place. The data is a little old which some candidates spotted and used it to throw doubt on the story being told. Used properly there was much evidence here that the US was not at any immediate risk of losing its superpower status as an economic force just so long as the US corporations remain 'American'. As with other resource based examination papers an awareness of significant global events can be very useful for candidates. The return of Donald Trump to the White House and the subsequent return of 'protectionism' to the political debate was referenced by many. The more politically aware candidates seized the opportunity to point out that tariff wars were not likely to strengthen the US economy in the short term and may very well hasten its decline. This AO2 opportunity was unforeseen but very useful. Figure 11 reinforces some of the earlier material on military strength but also offers Eisenhower's famous warning to the American people about the military/industrial complex. It also referenced the costs of two of its recent military engagements as a hint to candidates that military expenditure inevitably had both advantages but also significant economic disadvantages. Sadly very few candidates chose to link economic and political outcomes in this way. The third and final resource (Figure 12) gave a few details about the intellectual dominance of Silicon Valley and the role of migration in its development. The intention here was to nudge candidates into comments about closed borders and the impact on economic growth. It also included a very small survey of the movement of high-net-worth individuals which could be easily critiqued as too small scale to allow any meaningful conclusions to be drawn. Once again, only a few took that opportunity although many referenced the high net wealth data as a significant advantage for the US. A few also tied that data back to Figure 7a where China and the USA dominate the publication of scientific papers with this, in theory at least making them key players in a AI and robotically driven world.

There were some very good essays written by candidates who were politically aware, well versed in the theory and historically perceptive. They also knew how to use the resources, how to critique them when necessary and how to distinguish between probabilities and uncertainties. It was a pleasure to read them.

economic, cultural.
You should have read the whole of the Resource Booklet, including Section C, before attempting this question.

1 full USA	1 pol USA
1 ec USA	1 pol USA

- 6 Evaluate the view that there is no serious challenge to the status of the USA as the world's dominant economic, military and political superpower.

(24)

The USA is the world's leading super power, with the world's largest economy and military capabilities. However, there are beliefs that due to the global shift, a bipolar or multipolar world may be emerging.

The USA is still the dominant power, and it looks like it will continue to be so. To be a superpower, a strong economic base is needed, and the USA has the strongest base in the world, with a GDP of 23.3 trillion compared to the next highest, China with a GDP of 17.9 trillion. USA's economic integration is also the highest in the world. Of the 60,000 TNCs in the world, over 21,549 are based in the USA, with that number having more than doubled from 2008-2019. These corporations are also the most valued worldwide, with 6/10 of the largest global TNCs originating from the USA. This economic base is also furthered by the volume of FDI in the USA. Over 1500 FDI entered the USA in 2023, and over 10,000 left China, with some of these

likely to enter the USA. The economic draw of the USA in a modern globalised world is unrivalled, and hence it can be argued that there is no serious challenge to the status of the USA as the world's dominant economic superpower.

However, there is a serious challenge to the USA in the form of China ~~and the political leadership of~~ ~~Tsing~~. It is likely that the USA will be replaced by China as the world's dominant manufacturing power, with the current difference in manufacturing levels between the two countries being only 2% (fig 2). Culturally and politically, China's rising soft power at a rapid rate, up 20 places in 5 years on the soft power index (fig 3) can threaten the USA's cultural hegemony but it currently lags over the western world. China's presence on the Security Council also threatens the USA, as due to China, many protectionist policies are unlikely to be passed. This undermines the USA's position as a political leader on a global scale. Militarily speaking, China holds the largest number of troops world wide, and is in control of the world's 2nd largest military. China's large population is also a threat to the USA, as a large population means a larger amount of economically active people

and hence a larger economic output. As China continues to develop into a HIC, its economic output may surpass that of the USA, and ~~therefore~~ ^{therefore} become the largest worldwide economy. This can also threaten ~~trade~~ ^{trading} patterns as China is able to 'replace' the USA in ~~markets~~ ^{markets} such as 'South America'. Therefore, it has been argued that China poses a serious challenge to the USA as the world's dominant economic, military and political power.

However, from a political and militaristic view, the USA will continue to be the dominant power. The USA's military expenditure of approximately 800 billion USD per year is more than 3.5x that of China. This large amount of military spending has also been consistent over the last 30 years, whereas China and other BRIC countries have only started to ramp-up spending to current levels in the last 10 or so years. Due to the WW2 destruction for bases agreement with the USA, the reach of America's land power is global and is often in areas near other potential superpowers, undermining their security. This land power has been used in areas such as Afghanistan and Iraq and ~~NATO~~ ^{USA} backed ~~American~~ ^{NATO} troops are currently deployed within ~~Ukraine~~ ^{Ukraine}. The USA's power is also furthered by its use of soft power,

as it currently ranks first on the soft power index. This soft power, be it through Hollywood or music has enabled the USA to push anti-communist and anti-Russian beliefs since the cold war, which can in turn sway and affect global opinions on emerging superpowers such as China. The USA has managed to perfect a balance of sharp power, but has enabled it to stay politically and economically relevant for the last 80 years. If it continues to do so, which it likely will, then it is highly likely that there is no serious challenge to the status of the USA as the world's dominant ~~political~~ military super power.

Politically, the USA still remains one of the strongest powers in global organisations due to most IGOs being fundamentally American. The USA's seat on the security council allows it to veto any anti-USA agreements and its voting ~~share~~ stake of over 16% in the IMF means that the IMF is a western dominated IGO. The same is true for the world bank. Although the Belt and Road Initiative threatens the USA and its role politically, the G7 initiative of the 3BW (build back better world) aims to reduce the impact that the BRICS have upon western hegemony, in particular, China. However, the USA is currently threatened politically by president Trump, whose

isolationist policies may mean that trade partners of the USA become replaced with China. Fortunately, due to term limits on presidency, this is likely to only be a temporally short-term issue for the USA, and it is easily capable of recovering. This is in part due to the USA's ~~large~~ wide spread influence, be it through the American TNCs, NATO or various IGOs. Due to these relationships, the USA is far less vulnerable to global events than it would be if it ~~was isolationist~~ did not have these good political relationships. Therefore it can be argued that there is no serious challenge to the USA's status as the world's dominant economic, political and military superpower.

In conclusion, although the emergence of China poses a threat to the USA, that threat is almost purely economical. The USA (Total for Question 6 = 24 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 70 MARKS

will still remain the dominant military and political power for many years to come, primarily due to historic relationships and ties that the new and emerging superpowers simply do not have. Therefore there is only a serious challenge to the USA's position as the world's dominant economic superpower.



This is a very good essay. Despite an abbreviated introduction and limited reflection on the reliability of the qualitative and quantitative data (the penultimate bullet point on the MS) this remains a strong Level 4 essay. The opening lines are equivocal and do not entirely reflect what follows, which for the most part argues that the USA will retain its status. That argument is built in the second paragraph which blends RB material the candidates' own information. As is characteristic of stronger responses there is both qualification of comments and a clear understanding of the complexity of the global geopolitical structures. That is addressed here in the analysis of Figure 10 which is blended with Figure 12 and the candidates' own knowledge. Paragraph 3 begins with 'However, there is a serious threat to the USA in the form of China..' which the candidate goes on to amplify and develop in the rest of the paragraph. That is followed by another 'However...' start to the next paragraph which argues that both militarily and politically the USA remains dominant. In both this paragraph and the one that follows the candidate continues to effectively blend the RB material with their own knowledge and understanding. There are references to the impact of Trump and isolationism and a thoughtful comment about how all things pass and that things may change in the future. The comments referencing the role of political relationships with NATO allies is used here to suggest that the USA is 'less vulnerable to global events...'. In summary this is clearly Level 4 although not unequivocally so given a couple of errors and only limited reflection over potential weaknesses in the data a mark of 21/24 was awarded.



Don't forget that the resource booklet cannot be comprehensive which gives you the opportunity to point out what might be missing. - for example Figure 12 shows the results from 'one wealth management company'. Just one!

You should have read the whole of the Resource Booklet, including Section C, before attempting this question.

- 6 Evaluate the view that there is no serious challenge to the status of the USA as the world's dominant economic, military and political superpower.

(24)

The USA has been the world's dominant superpower since the end of the second world war. A superpower, is a nation that dominates the world sphere, through its global influence, whether it be economically, militarily or politically or even culturally.

The USA spearheaded itself, as the global influence, by its manufacturing exports after ww2, along its 'rust Belt'. This part of Eastern USA, had industrial cities such as Detroit and Chicago being at the head of the secondary sector, and this was through its production in factories such as Ford and Chrysler, that it established itself as the dominant world manufacturer. This is evidenced by the Cold War, where the US had a 27% global share of the global economy. Although this position as world no. 1 exporter has been under threat, since the global shift has spread eastward toward China and India. As the USA's global manufacturing presence wanes, China's continues to grow exponentially, to the point where it is at 2% reach of the USA's global manufacturing.

This global shift, in making China an international manufacturing powerhouse, is partly through fault of the US. Promotion of 'free trade', and 'privatisation' made it easier for business owners to offshore their firms, in

search of more profit, due to lower wage demands of foreign workers, and lower factor input costs. This therefore has seen the emergence of the BRICS nations. As of 2023, China now holds a higher % of the global economy, showing that the country is making a serious attempt to overthrow the US as the economic superpower of the world. The economic status for China as a whole is undeniable, but for the individuals in the country, standards of living and quality of life may be questioned. For example, per person in the USA, GDP is \$70,248, compared to China at \$12,598. There is a huge contrast in how much a citizen from each earns. There are also many more TNCs in USA, which dominate global trade, with many of the most expensive businesses being situated on the US west coast in Silicon Valley, where firms such as Twitter (x) have their headquarters. Not many Chinese companies have the same sort of global influence as the American ones.

Militarily, it is slightly more clear cut as to who the world's dominant superpower is, and it is the USA. The US spends 3.4% of their total GDP on military activity, which has seen them acquire more military bases than any other nation worldwide, at over 500, which are as far spread as Turkey and Greenland. At the height of the Afghan and Iraq wars in 2010, the USA were spending 1 trillion dollars annually on the 'war of terror', and has spent on the wars \$8 trillion overall. Since the introduction of Trump as President and Vance as Vice, military spending shows

no sign of slowing down. This establishes the USA as a peace-keeper within the world, and is an ally that no nation try test due to its nuclear reserves. The only nation that ever got close to the USA militarily was Russia during the Cold War, although that attempt pretty much disabled their entire economy. Now second in the world China spend a quarter of what the US do on military power.

Politically, the Bretton wood institute and the UN, essentially keep the US the world's political superpower, as they hold what is known as neo-colonialism, a controversial form of smart power. According to wagner's theory, the US is the world's core, and they keep the periphery poor through exploitation. The international monetary fund (IMF), give out loans to developing nation. Although these loans usually have strings attached, and these nations that are trying to develop always have to owe the USA, and it's alive.

Overall, china would be the USA's main competitor and this is down to their economic influence gaining through the eastwardly global shift of production, and the growth of outsourcing. Although politically, the US still holds pole position, which could be through smart power and cultural influence. ~~And then~~ Such as Disneyisation. And Militarily no one comes close to the USA, ~~although~~ and unlike the USSR during the Cold war who were spending upwards of 50% of their GPP on weapons, and unlike Eisenhower's theory, the

USA only spend roughly 3% of its GDP on its military making it pretty sustainable. This all means that the USA's status as a superpower on an economic stage may be waning, but its influence overall makes it still the world's number 1 superpower.



This is also a Level 4 essay but measurably better than the other exemplar included here. Scarcely a word is wasted in this answer which takes a very clear view although it is very reflective to produce an essay that is coherent, logical, rational and substantiated throughout. The opening paragraph is clear in identifying the various aspects of power adding 'cultural' to those identified in the question itself. Returning to Figure 2 the candidate gives as a quick overview of the USA post-war economic status followed by a recognition that China poses a threat to that. In one of the best passages of the essay the candidate comments that the neo-liberal policies pursued by successive US administrations have inflicted wounds on the US economy as global shift has been driven by TNCs seeking higher profits. A very interesting passage follows this with a critical examination of the data suggesting that (for China) 'standards of living and quality of life may be questioned'. This in turn is followed by a reminder that US TNCs still dominate. All in all, a very impressively coherent chain of logic supported with evidence. The paragraph on military strength is also peppered with thoughtful observations covering the war on terror and the impact of Trump and Vance in driving US 'defense' spending further upwards. The comment that trying to compete with this spending might lead to economic ruin, as with the former Soviet Union is a deft reference to the task facing China. The 'political' paragraph shows an appreciation of role of the US in the dominant IGOs, most notable the IMF. This is preceded by a reference to core-periphery theory and, in the following paragraph an assessment of the role of 'smart power'. The essay ends with a paragraph that suggests that although there are challenges it is not plausible that that USA will lose its dominant global status in the near future. Any classroom A level teacher could improve on this essay and tie a few strings together. For example, one might point out that if US TNCs still dominate then has a global shift truly taken economic power eastwards. However, this essay is very high quality with a dense argument and worthy of its 23/24 marks. Why not 24/24 - maybe a stronger opening paragraph and tidier conclusion?



Try to start essays with clear statements that address keywords - what does 'dominance' look like?

Paper Summary

These are the five key lessons of this exam and its predecessors.

1. Know how you are being marked - especially the AOs for Q5 and Q6.
2. Remember that the data in the resource booklet is partial and selective, so there will be gaps.
3. Revise the key methods of statistically testing data and the limitations of those methods.
4. Use qualifying language as in 'although', 'however', 'despite' and many others to show that you understand the complexity of the points that you are making.
5. Remember that there are many ways of showing that you understand that it is a complicated world.

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
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