

Political Science 12: IR -- Second Lecture, Part 1



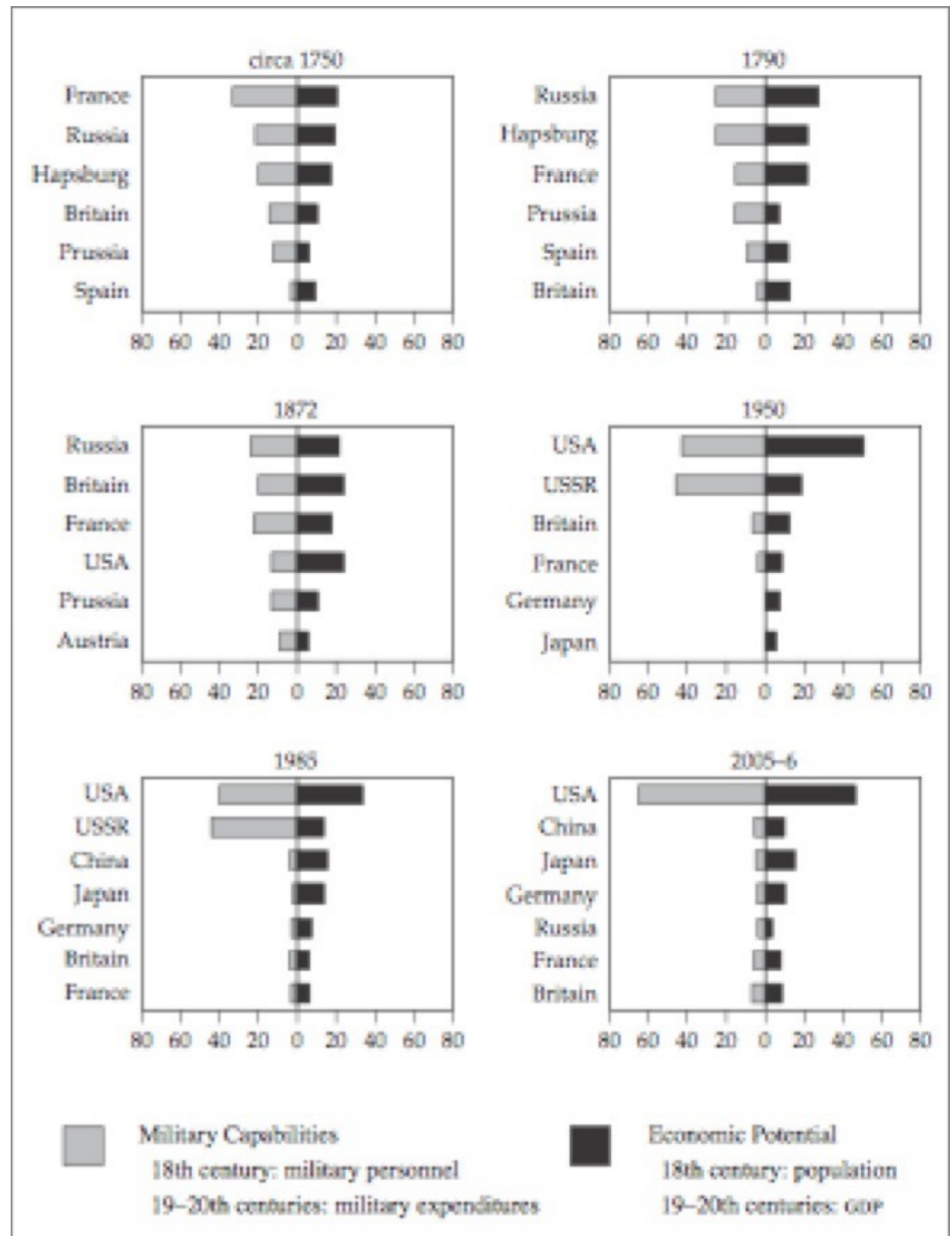
Political Science 12: International Relations

- More Conflict and Cooperation
 - The structure of power
 - Conflict and cooperation
 - Politics
 - Frameworks
 - History

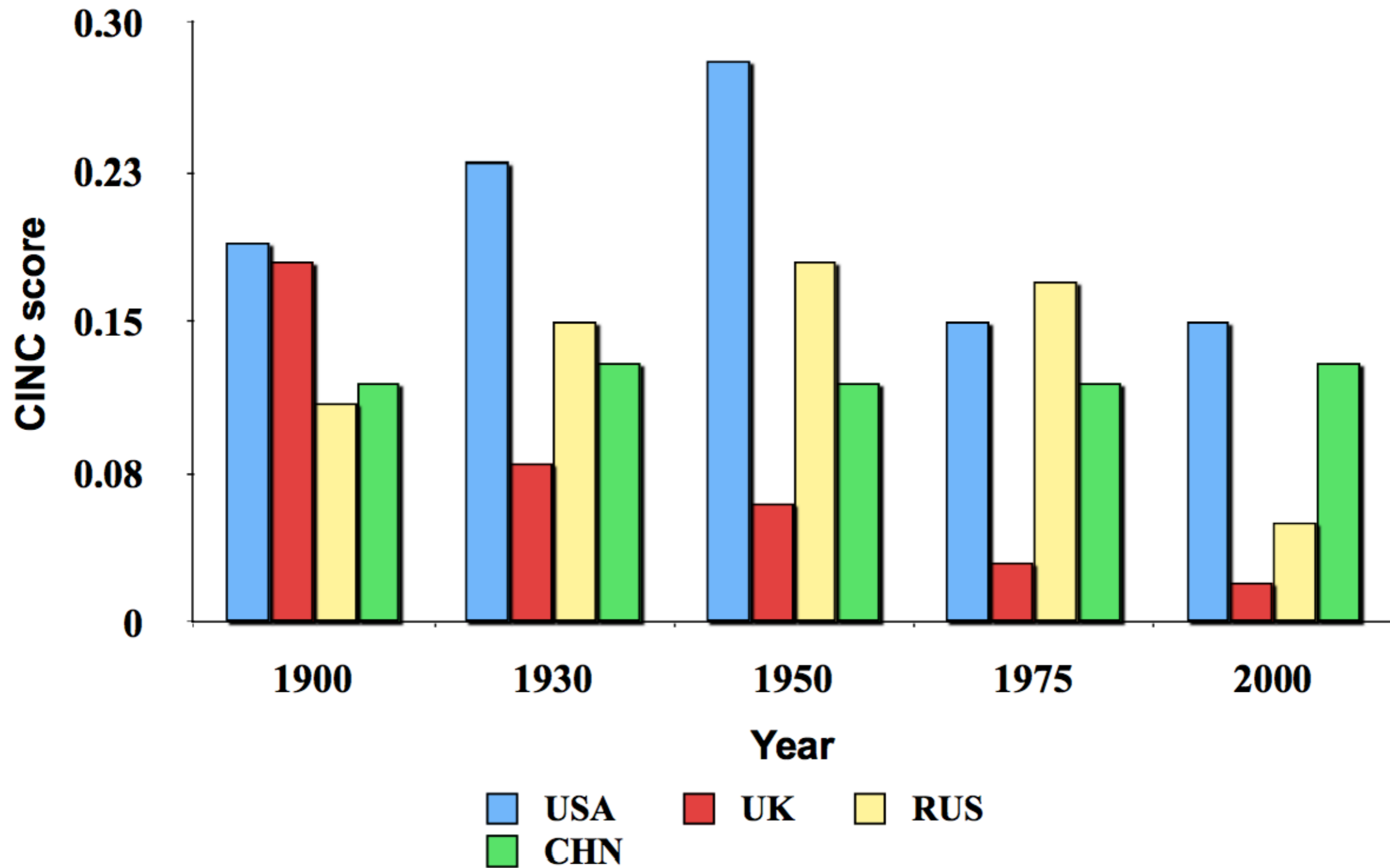
Global power structure

- Puzzle: Why do great powers rise and fall? Or why did the Pax Britannica collapse (and the Pax Romana)? Will the Pax Americana do so as well?
- Today: the United States is in a position of nearly unprecedented international power. At the same time, it has been declining *relative* to other nations, in particular those of Asia (China, India).

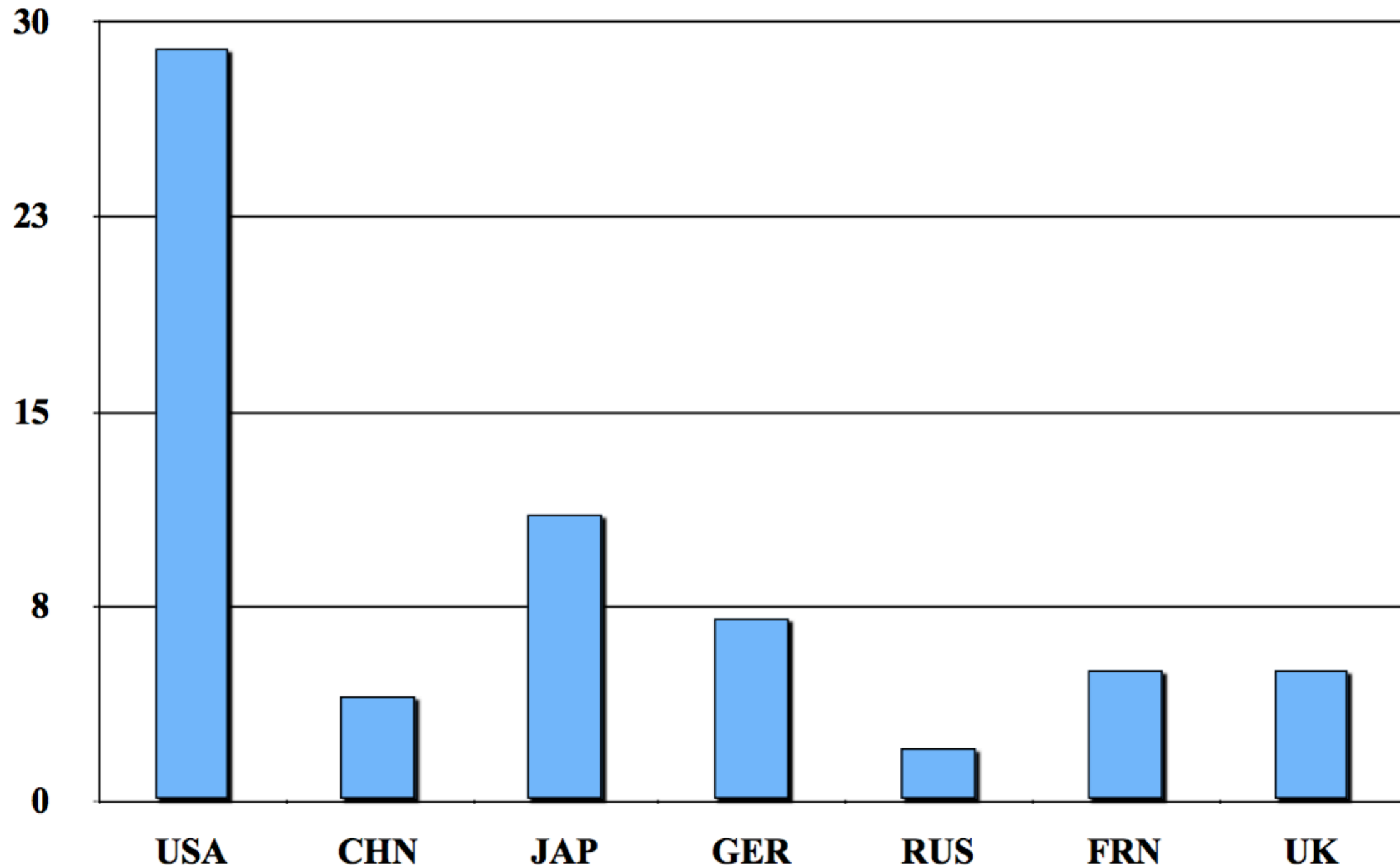
Global power, 1750-2006



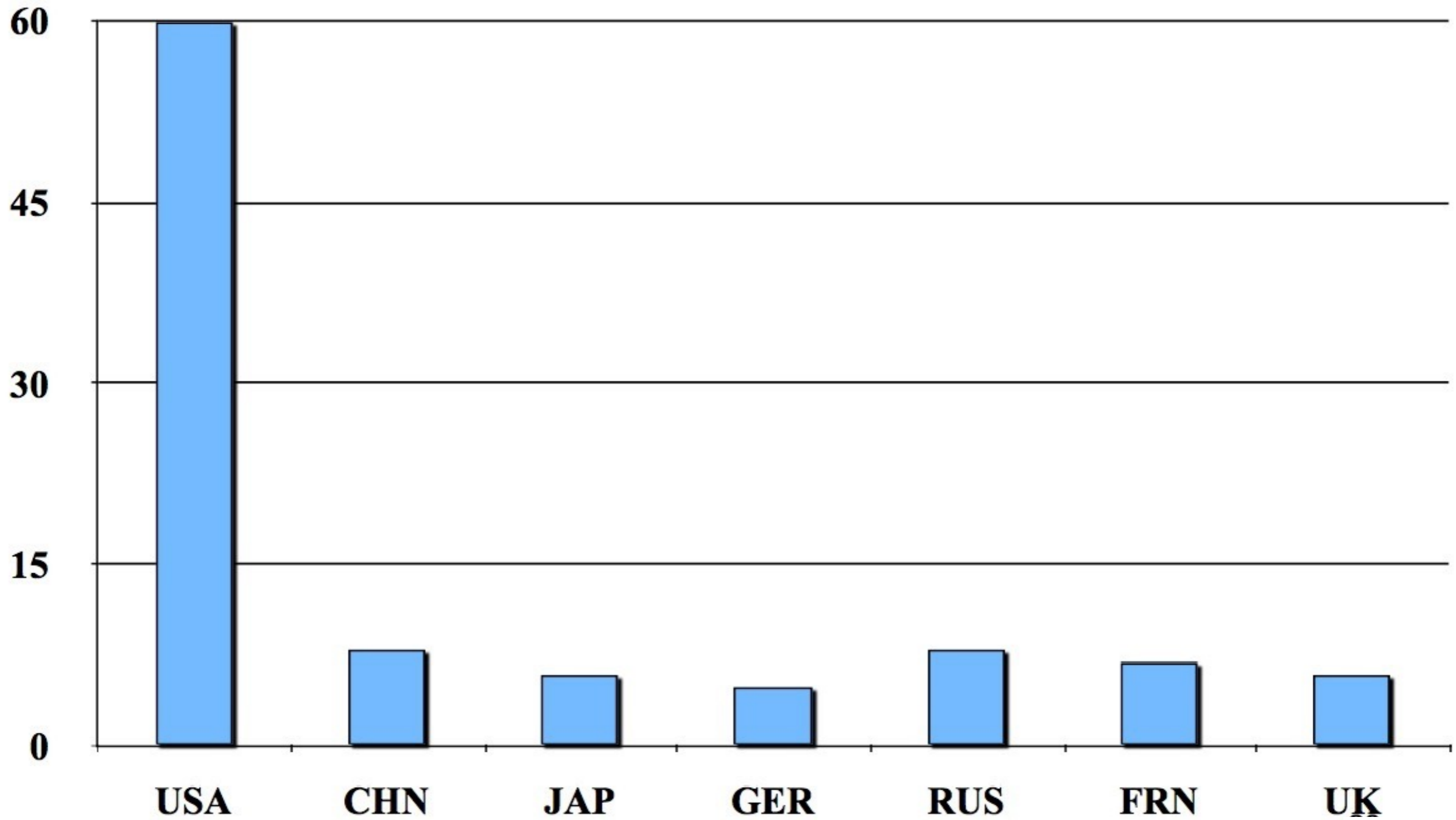
Share of world power, 1900-2000



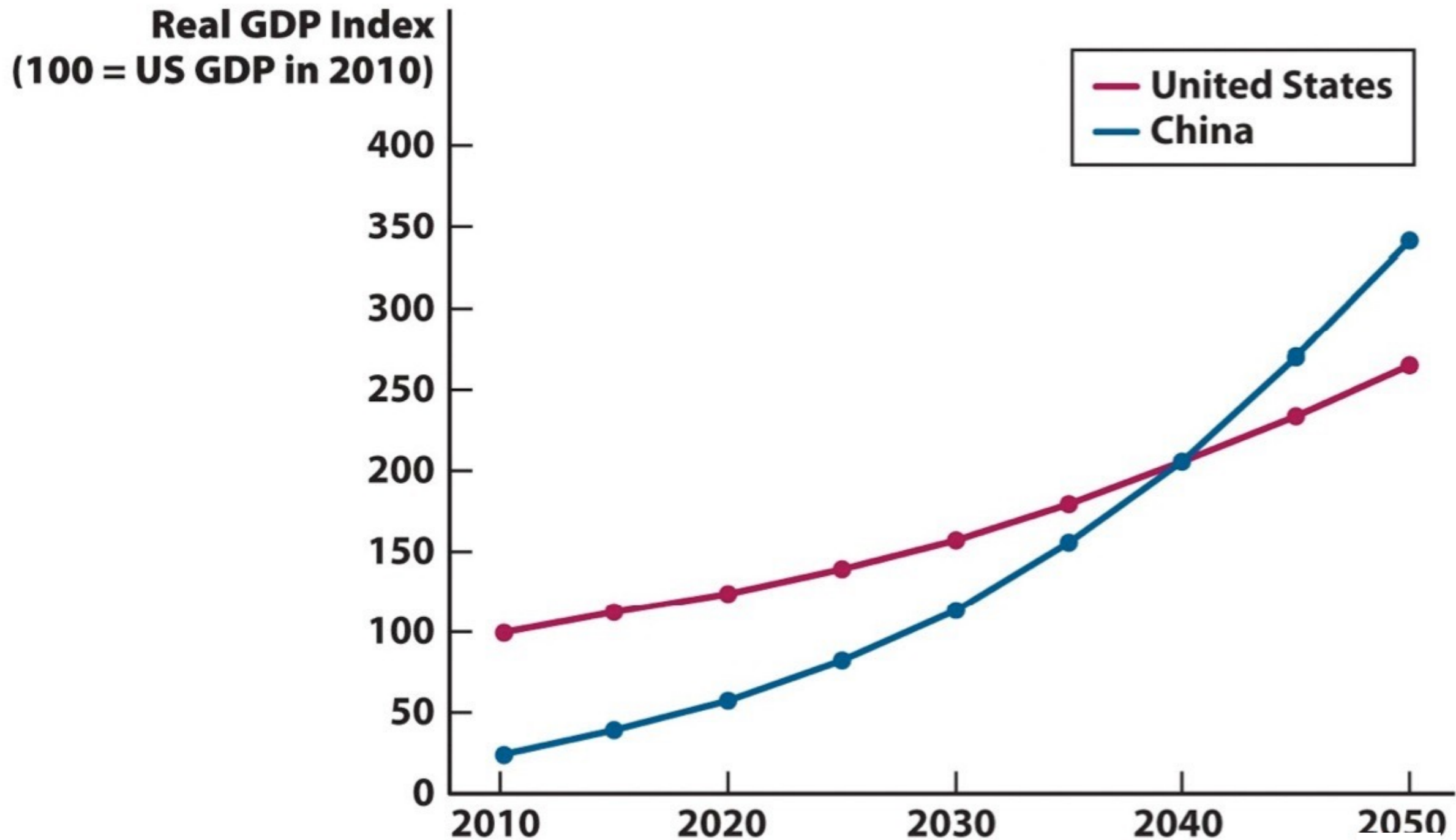
Share of world GDP, 2005



Share of world military expenditures, 2004



Projection of US and Chinese GDP, 2010-2050



Conflict and cooperation

- Conflict and cooperation vary dramatically over time and space.
- Understanding why countries make the choices they do will help us understand not only patterns of conflict and cooperation but also how to enhance the prospects for peace and prosperity in the future.

Politics

- What is politics?
 - Archaic Def: from Greek *politikos* "of, for, or relating to citizens"
 - Def: "authoritative allocation of values" - David Easton
 - Def: "who gets what, when, and how" - Harold Lasswell
- What makes politics "international"?
 - inter = "between," national = "countries," so "between countries"
 - Too narrow/rigid for modern international relations, reflects pre-globalization
 - Def: politics occurring between or involving issues among more than one country.

Framework

- Given the complex and dynamic nature of the subject, we need a framework to organize our study and understanding of international relations
- Framework: interests, interactions, institutions
 - Interests: What are interests?
 - These are the preferences of actors, what they want to achieve.
 - Interests may or may not change over time, through institutions and with interaction.

Framework, cont.

- Interactions:
 - Interactions are “the ways in which the choices of two or more actions combine to produce political outcomes.”
 - Interactions are complex, inherently contingent and difficult to interpret.
 - Part of the objective of the course is to give you some tools to help you do this interpretation, even prediction.

Framework, cont. II

- Institutions:
 - “A set of rules, known and shared by the community, that structure political interactions in particular ways”
 - Institutions vs. norms...
 - Institutions structure interactions and determine (in part) how interests are aggregated and who can be constituted as an actor.
 - *Political actors* are an equally important element of the framework, but one that is not explicitly discussed here (hidden assumption).

Interaction

- How do actors in international politics interact?
 - Institutions can form the basis for interaction (congress, courts, school)
 - but in international politics, institutions are relatively less abundant
 - and less restrictive (less powerful relative to the actors)
 - Interaction occurs through **bargaining**
 - direct negotiation (tacit, informal or formal) between actors to determine disposition of resources or prerogatives (who gets what).
 - Anarchy:
 - Def: the absence of central authority (*not* the same as chaos)

Other frameworks

- The bargaining framework is **new** to international relations
 - Levels of analysis (J. David Singer 1961):
 - System
 - States
 - Domestic politics

Other frameworks, cont.

- The “isms”:
 - Realism (Thucydides, Morgenthau, Waltz)
 - Liberalism (Kant, Locke, Wilson, Keohane)
 - Constructivism (Ashley, Ruggie, Wendt)
- Putnam (the two-level game)

History...

- Things happen, things change
 - Historians: “What happened?” “What changed?”
 - Political scientists “Why did this happen?” “Why did it change?”
 - Very difficult to identify cause and effect without change.
- Big historical themes:
 - Increasing: individual liberty, (also) state power, more trade, population
 - Decreasing: territorial competition, national autonomy, role of geography

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