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From Aden to Hong Kong, British Imperialism and the Roots of National Resistance By Justin Chen

This paper addresses the colonial presence and effect of the British Empire, facilitated through the trade ports established to promote the interests and thoughts of the Western empire, and its implications for the course and narrative of history. This paper places the individual routine and dimension into the context of British imperialism with the macro scale events being constructed from the realities of the situation on the ground. Examining trade manifests and the writings of Englishmen in Aden and Hong Kong, this paper demonstrates that a socially imbedded belief, cultivated by British global hegemony, changes in reaction to social or political events to become larger historical events, or as a result of them. As a result, nationalism inevitably emerges from the weakening of the “invincible” West, which as a continuation of long-term beliefs is historically and socially charged. Specifically building off of Akahitsu Shigeru’s interpretation of Wallerstein’s World System Theory, I find capitalism, the connection between political diplomacy, and economic enterprise as the primary factor of British Imperialism as an action. Through understanding the British colonial system, and applying its broad structures as a factor in the course of events in the locale, I find the roots and underlying perspectives of the Chinese and Arab’s nationalist resistance and contact with the Occidental West, specifically Britain and later the United States.