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World Civilization 1

20 April 2023

Research & Writing Assignment

“What if” History

If the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were switched, placing China as the closest Eurasian hierarchy to the Americas, it would have drastically altered the course of history.

In the 15th century, the Chinese were already engaged in extensive maritime activity. Under the leadership of Admiral Zheng He, the Chinese had conducted a series of voyages to the Indian Ocean and East Africa, establishing trade networks and diplomatic relations with foreign powers. The Chinese were interested in expanding their commercial and political influence, and their maritime goals were largely focused on these objectives.

In this alternate timeline, Zheng He's voyages would have taken him across the Pacific Ocean, where he would have encountered the Americas. The first civilization he would have encountered would have been the Aztecs in modern-day Mexico. The Aztecs were a highly organized and sophisticated civilization, with a complex society and impressive architecture.

Zheng He's encounter with the Aztecs would have been very different from the Europeans' "discovery" of the Americas. The Chinese had a different worldview from the Europeans, and were not interested in conquest or colonization. Instead, they were focused on trade and diplomacy. Zheng He would have established diplomatic relations with the Aztecs, exchanging goods and cultural knowledge. The Chinese would have been impressed by the Aztecs' civilization, and would have learned from their sophisticated agriculture and architecture.

The exchange between the Chinese and Aztecs would have led to a flourishing of trade and cultural exchange between Asia and the Americas. The Chinese would have introduced new technologies and goods to the Americas, and the Aztecs would have shared their knowledge of agriculture and architecture with the Chinese. This exchange would have had profound implications for both civilizations, leading to new innovations and cultural transformations.

In this alternate history, the "discovery" of the Americas by the Chinese would have been a peaceful and mutually beneficial exchange, focused on trade and cultural exchange. It would have represented a new era of global exchange and cooperation, rather than the violent conquest and colonization that characterized European contact with the Americas.