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### Research & Writing Assignment Week 13

In this week's research and writing assignment there will be another "What if?" situation. The question is what if the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were switched, placing China, not Europe, as the closest Eurasian hierarchy to the Americas?

First up I want to compare the Chinese goals in maritime activity with those of the Europeans. The Chinese goals were primarily focused on diplomacy and trading. Their goal was to establish relationships with other nations and to project the authority and dignity of the Chinese state. Admiral Zheng was the one who led multiple expeditions to Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean and East Africa, where he was able to establish good relationships to the rulers there and also gave them gifts from the Chinese emperor.

When looking at the European marine activities in comparison, they were focused on exploration, colonization, and conquest. They wanted to spread Christianity around, expand their territories and also take advantage of the lands they encountered by mining gold and silver from there. Another thing the Europeans did was to find new trading routes to Asia, for example explorers like Columbus and Magellan were looking for new trading routes, but also wanted to establish new colonies and take over control of the indigenous populations.

Now to the real "What if?" part, so what would have been different, if the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans were switched? It is very likely and possible, that the Chinese maritime activity in the Americas would have been around diplomacy, trading and similar activities to what they do in other parts of the world. Admiral Zheng He could have possibly led expeditions to the Pacific Coast of the Americas and potentially develop diplomatic relationships with the Aztec Empire and other native cultures. Another thing could have been

that the Chinese could have potentially exchanged precious materials like gold or silver, for other materials like silk or others. Lastly it is also very likely, that they would have taught the native people about technologies, medicine and agriculture, which could have helped to spark the creation of cultural interactions and new technologies.

But it is also possible that Chinese actions in the Americas could have led to conflicts between them and Aztecs or other native people. This is possible especially if they had tried to colonize and impose their authority in the area they tried to takeover. The Aztecs were a powerful Empire, which possibly would have also led to the fact that they wouldn't give up their Empire without a fight.

Overall speaking, the world and the relations towards native populations would have been very different if Chinese were the ones who discovered the Americas instead of Europeans. The Chinese could have focused more on diplomacy and cultural exchange instead of colonialism and invasion. This could have resulted in a way more cooperative and peaceful relationship between these people. But it is very difficult to say and predict what would have been different and how history would have played out under different circumstances.

#### Sources

Frameworks of World History: Networks, Hierarchies, culture, Volume One: to 1550

“Zheng He.” Encyclopedia Britannica