**A Level Geography: Personal Learning Checklist – Superpowers**

**AREA OF STUDY: Human Systems and Geopolitics Topic 3: Superpowers Autumn Term Y13**

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| **What do I need to know?** |
| **EQ1:** What are superpowers and how have they changed over time? |
| **Key Idea** | **Detailed content** | **PLC** |
| **RED** | **AMBER** | **GREEN** |
| 7.1 Geopolitical power stems from a range of human and physical of characteristics of superpowers. | a. Superpowers, emerging and regional powers can be defined using contrasting characteristics (economic, political, military, cultural, demographic and access to natural resources). (1) |  |  |  |
| b. Mechanisms of maintaining power sit on a spectrum from ‘hard’ to ‘soft’ power, which vary in their effectiveness. |  |  |  |
| c. The relative importance of these characteristics and mechanisms for maintaining power has changed over time (Mackinder’s geo-strategic location theory). |  |  |  |
| 7.2 Patterns of power change over time and can be uni-, bi- or multi-polar. | a. The maintenance of power during the imperial era by direct colonial control (British Empire, multipolar world 1919–1939) |  |  |  |
| b. Multi-faceted, indirect control (political, economic, military, cultural) including neo-colonial mechanisms has become more important (Cold War era; emergence of China as a potential rival to the USA’s hegemony). (2) |  |  |  |
| c. Different patterns of power bring varying degrees of geopolitical stability and risk. |  |  |  |
| 7.3 Emerging powers vary in their influence on people and the physical environment, which can change rapidly over time. | a. A number of emerging countries, including Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) and other G20 members, are considered increasingly important to global economic and political systems, as well as global environment governance (UN Climate Change Conference). |  |  |  |
| b. Each has evolving strengths and weaknesses (economic, political, military, cultural, demographic and environmental) that might inhibit or advance their economic and geopolitical role in the future. |  |  |  |
| c. Development Theory (World Systems Theory, Dependency Theory, Modernisation Theory) can be used to help explain changing patterns of power. |  |  |  |

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| **EQ2:** What are the impacts of superpowers on the global economy, political systems and the physical environment? |
| Key Idea | Detailed content | **PLC** |
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| 7.4 Superpowers have a significant influence over the global economic system.. | a. Superpowers influence the global economy (promoting free trade and capitalism) through a variety of IGOs (World Bank, IMF, WTO, World Economic Forum (WEF)). (3) |  |  |  |
| b. TNCs (public and state-led) are dominant economic forces in the global economy and economic and cultural globalisation in terms of technology (patents) and trade patterns. (P: role of TNCs in maintaining power and wealth) |  |  |  |
| c. Global cultural influence (the arts, food the media) and ‘westernisation’ is an important aspect of power, linked to economic influence and technology. |  |  |  |
| 7.5 Superpowers and emerging nations play a key role in international decision making concerning people and the physical environment. | a. Superpowers and emerging nations play a key role in global action (crisis response, conflict, climate change). (P: role of powerful countries as ‘global police’) |  |  |  |
| b. Alliances, both military (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) and economic (EU, North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ASEAN) and environmental (IPCC) increase interdependence and are important in geostrategy and global influence. |  |  |  |
| c. The UN (Security Council, International Court of Justice, and peacekeeping missions and climate change conferences) are important to global geopolitical stability. (A: actions and attitudes of global IGOs) |  |  |  |
| 7.6 Global concerns about the physical environment are disproportionately influenced by superpower actions. | a.Superpower resource demands (food, fossil fuels, and minerals) can cause environmental degradation and their carbon emissions contribute disproportionately to global warming. (4) |  |  |  |
| b. There are differences in the willingness to act (USA, EU, China, and Russia) to reduce carbon emissions and reach global agreements on environmental issues. (A: attitudes and actions of different countries) |  |  |  |
| c. Future growth in middle-class consumption in emerging superpowers has implications for the availability and cost of key resources (rare earths, oil, staple grains and water), as well as for the physical environment. |  |  |  |

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| **EQ3:** What spheres of influence are contested by superpowers and what are the implications of this? |
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| 7.7 Global influence is contested in a number of different economic, environmental and political spheres. | a. Tensions can arise over the acquisition of physical resources (Arctic oil and gas) where ownership is disputed and disagreement exists over exploitation. (A: attitudes and actions in relation to resources) |  |  |  |
| b. The global system of intellectual property rights can be undermined by counterfeiting, which strains trade relations and TNC investment |  |  |  |
| c.Political spheres of influence can be contested leading to tensions over territory and physical resources (⎫ South and East China Seas) and in some cases resulting in open conflict (⎫ Western Russia/Eastern Europe) with implications for people and physical environments. |  |  |  |
| 7.8 Developing nations have changing relationships with superpowers with consequences for people and the physical environment. | a.Developing economic ties between emerging powers and the developing world (China and African nations) increase interdependence, generate environmental impacts and bring opportunities and challenges. (P: role of emerging powers) |  |  |  |
| b.The rising economic importance of certain Asian countries (⎫ China or India) on the global stage increases the geopolitical influence of the region but also creates economic and political tensions within the region. (5) |  |  |  |
| c. Cultural, political, economic and environmental tensions in the Middle East represent an ongoing challenge to superpowers and emerging powers due to complex geopolitical relations combined with the supply of vital energy resources. (A: contrasting cultural ideologies) |  |  |  |
| 7.9 Existing superpowers face ongoing economic restructuring, which challenges their power. | a. Economic problems (debt, unemployment, economic restructuring, social costs) represent an ongoing challenge to the USA and EU. |  |  |  |
| b. The economic costs of maintaining global military power (naval, nuclear, air power, intelligence services) and space exploration are questioned in some existing powers. |  |  |  |
| c. The future balance of global power in 2030 and 2050 is uncertain and there are a range of possible outcomes (continued USA dominance, bi-polar and multi-polar structures). (F: uncertainty over future power structures) (6) |  |  |  |

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| **Geographical Skills for Topic 3** |  |
| *NB: These skills are* ***not*** *exclusive to the topic areas under which they appear; you will need to be able to apply these skills across any suitable topic area throughout their course of study.* | **PLC** |
| **RED** | **AMBER** | **GREEN** |
| (1) Constructing power indexes using complex data sets, including ranking and scaling. |  |  |  |
| (2) Mapping past, present and future sphere of influence and alliances using world maps. |  |  |  |
| (3) Using graphs of world trade growth using linear and logarithmic scales. |  |  |  |
| (4) Mapping emissions and resource consumption using proportional symbols. |  |  |  |
| (5) Plotting the changing location of the world’s economic centre of gravity on world maps. |  |  |  |
| (6) Analysing future Gross Domestic Product (GDP) using data from different sources. |  |  |  |