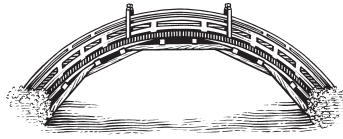


BOOK REVIEWS



Each Book Review is comprised of two parts:

- ≈ *a one-page Executive Summary of the book, drafted by the book's author or editor*
- ≈ *a review of the book written by an expert in the field*

*The New Asian Hemisphere:
The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*

Kishore Mahbubani

New York: PublicAffairs, 2008 ≈ 336 pp.

AUTHOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This book describes and spells out implications of the new historical era now dawning: the end of Western domination of the world and the return of Asia.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Asian societies are finally succeeding again because they are implementing Western best practices in many areas, from free market economics to science and technology. This rise of Asia is unstoppable, and the West has to decide whether to work with rising Asia or attempt to thwart this rise. So far, Western powers have sent mixed signals, reflecting the new geopolitical incompetence emerging in the West.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- In assessing whether the rise of Asia will serve long-term Western interests, the West should understand that the new Asian powers are seeking to replicate, not dominate, the West, and that they wish to become responsible stakeholders in the global order. The West should share power—for example, Asian countries should be allowed to lead the IMF and the World Bank.
- The Asian march to modernity is now poised to enter West Asia. If the Islamic world also successfully modernizes, the West and Israel will be dealing with modern states. As the modernization of the Islamic world benefits Western, especially European, interests, the West should welcome the rise of Asia, instead of feeling threatened by it.
- The West also needs to comprehensively re-examine its policies toward China. Instead of pushing democracy and human rights principles on to China, the West should recognize that China's 30 year record of progressively opening up has fundamentally transformed Chinese society. Even if the West fails to readjust its policies toward China, the extraordinary geopolitical competence of Beijing is making up for the growing geopolitical incompetence of U.S. and European policymakers in their handling of Asia.

Old America, New Asia?

Ellen L. Frost

A review of Mahbubani's *New Asian Hemisphere*

When the eyes of the world are on President Obama, when global investors pin their shattered hopes on a U.S. economic recovery, and when U.S. military power dwarfs the combined arsenals of the next two dozen countries combined, is it worth spending time on yet another book about the rise of Asia? It is, if only to come to grips with the mindset of one of Asia's most candid and prolific public intellectuals.

Kishore Mahbubani likes to provoke people. In this forceful and clearly written book, his powers both to inspire and to irritate have found full expression. A former Singaporean diplomat and now the dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, Mahbubani achieved global prominence in the 1980s as a champion of the "Asian values" thesis. Although he has put that theme aside, he continues to propound similarly broad convictions to large and evidently enthusiastic audiences.

In *The New Asian Hemisphere*, Mahbubani draws on his personal background and his diplomatic experience to hammer his points home. And hammer he does. Those familiar with his earlier work will not be surprised to find an updated, expanded, and relabeled version of the same themes that stud virtually all of his writings, speeches, and interviews to date.¹

The first such theme is that the rise of Asia is both irresistible and good for the world. Mahbubani describes an Asian "march to modernity" that draws inspiration and borrows heavily from the "the seven pillars of Western wisdom," namely free-market economics, science and technology, meritocracy, pragmatism, a culture of peace, respect for the rule of law, and education (pp. 52–96). He documents impressive Asian gains in each of these

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¹ Mahbubani's many publications include "The Dangers of Decadence: What the Rest Can Teach the West," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (September–October 1993); "The Pacific Way," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 1 (January–February 1995); "An Asia-Pacific Consensus," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 5 (September–October 1997); a collection of essays called *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore: Times Editions Ltd, 1998); "Understanding China," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 5 (September–October 2005); *Beyond the Age of Innocence* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005); "Wake Up, Washington: The US Risks Losing Asia," *Global Asia* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2007); and "The Case Against the West," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May–June 2008).

seven areas and an ongoing desire to adapt them to Asian societies. But to continue on this path, Asian countries, Mahbubani argues, need to regain their self-respect and to assert their rightful place in the global system. An intellectual cheerleader, Mahbubani has taken it upon himself to liberate Asians from what he calls “mental colonization” and to empower them to challenge the dominance of the West.²

The book’s second familiar theme is the need for the West to accept Asia’s rise and accede to changes in world order. Toward this end, Mahbubani seeks to jar Westerners into shedding their blindness and arrogance. Western civilization will remain the strongest for several decades more, he writes, but the era of Western domination of world history is over. Unfortunately, the West has thus far refused to cede power. He joins a near-consensus in pushing for more voting rights for Asians in global institutions and for an end to the European and U.S. monopoly of the presidencies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Yet the sins of the West go far beyond global institutions. Mahbubani lambastes the characteristically American conviction that good intentions justify bad outcomes. He pillories the Bush administration’s lurch toward Israel and invasion of Iraq. He highlights the surge of anti-Americanism around the globe, particularly in the Muslim world, and pinpoints its causes. He condemns the United States’ double standards and highlights the contrast between U.S. sermons on human rights and Washington’s policies toward undemocratic Arab states. Mahbubani blasts U.S. cotton subsidies, which deprive poor African farmers of the opportunity to export. He exposes the bankruptcy of the U.S. effort to isolate Iran.

Europe, too, comes in for a good drubbing. Mahbubani glosses over Europe’s substantial contributions to global problem-solving. Europe’s great gift to the world, he believes, is its internal culture of peace and rules-based order. Curiously, he notes, Westerners do not typically cite this contribution in their self-proclaimed list of values and achievements, though he does. Mahbubani argues, however, that Europe is not generous enough in its own neighborhood and that EU agricultural subsidies nullify “virtually all” of the benefits of its foreign aid (p. 130).

These hammer blows are vintage Mahbubani. Forcefully and vividly argued, they amount to the book’s greatest strength. But they do not justify the verdict reached by one or two Western critics that *The New Asian Hemisphere* is an example of “Asian triumphalism” or an “anti-

² This concept also appears in Mahbubani, *Can Asians Think?* 21.

Western polemic.” Mahbubani lavishes praise on the contributions of the West to peace and postwar development as well as to his own transition out of poverty. He heaps compliments on the United States in some detail, including the U.S. record of scholarships for foreign students and foreign exchanges.

Despite these occasional bursts of even-handedness, however, the selective nature of Mahbubani’s arguments gets him into logical trouble. At least five sets of omissions, mixed messages, or outright contradictions run through the book. They concern economic trends, democracy, the West, competence, and China.

First, Mahbubani’s discussion of economic issues is uneven. Although peppered with relevant statistics, *The New Asian Hemisphere* downplays the highly globalized nature of Asian economies. A major driver of Asia’s new prosperity has been a huge web of China-centered production networks. One-half to two-thirds of China’s exports consist of imported parts and materials, many of which come from Asia, but most of the final products are destined for North America and Europe. Furthermore, over half of Chinese exports stem from foreign companies that have invested in China, either alone or in a joint venture with a Chinese partner. In predicting the shift of economic power to Asia, Mahbubani chooses to ignore the region’s enormous dependence on Western markets and Western investment. It is precisely because China depends so heavily on the West that the global financial crisis, which began in the United States, is hitting China so hard.

Asia’s deep and largely successful engagement with the global economy leads to a more basic question. In the 1980s, when Japan began investing heavily in the United States, U.S. policy intellectuals earnestly asked themselves “Who is ‘us’?” Was Honda’s automobile plant in Marysville, Ohio, U.S. or Japanese? Today, the world is highly “networked.”³ The question for Mahbubani might be, “Who are ‘you’?” Just what is this “Asia” that is irresistibly acquiring global power? The book is silent on this topic.

Second, Mahbubani respects the rule of law but seems ambivalent about democracy. Although he implies that democracy is a universal value, he omits it from his list of Western “pillars.” His definition of “freedom” lists a number of basic rights but not the right to turn one’s government out of

³ Anne-Marie Slaughter, “America’s Edge: Power in the Networked Century,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 1 (January–February 2009).

office. He agrees with Chinese leaders, for example, that democracy would lead to crime and social disorder at China's current stage of development.

The place where Mahbubani does want to see more democracy is in global institutions. He believes more in democracy for nations than for people. He likes the United Nations because the organization reflects the principle of "one nation, one vote," and he criticizes the IMF and the World Bank for perpetuating a "deficit of democratic legitimacy." As recently as February 2009 we find him castigating the Europeans for refusing to give up their over-representation in the IMF.⁴

Third, Mahbubani loves to generalize about "the West," but he has never shown any interest in exploring the varied historical meanings of this term.⁵ He defines the West geographically as the United States, Canada, and Europe, joined by the "Anglo-Saxon states" of Australia and New Zealand. (Japan, he implies, is not part of the West because it does not quite share Western values; elsewhere, he argues that Japan is trying to be both Western and Asian.)⁶ He distinguishes between the "material West," which is driven by interests, and the philosophical West, which is driven by values.

Mahbubani claims that Westerners are fearful and pessimistic about Asia's "march to modernity" out of fear that the West will suffer material losses. His evidence, however, is skewed. Citing the anti-globalization crusade trumpeted by U.S. television commentator Lou Dobbs, he writes, "Dobbs and his closed mind represent the new face of America" (p. 237). Yet in 2008 Americans elected one of the most open-minded and internationally aware presidents in postwar history.

Fourth, although Mahbubani floods the book with quotations from Westerners who agree with him, he cannot seem to resist bashing Westerners as a group. Just when the Western reader is nodding agreement with one critique or another, the text suddenly bristles with generalizations about "the Western mind." We are repeatedly told that Westerners are insensitive, self-centered, disdainful of Asian culture, fearful of the future, and clueless about what is said behind their backs. This conceptual caricature takes such an extreme form as to distract the reader and interrupt the flow of logic. It also differs sharply from Mahbubani's warm descriptions of, and numerous personal friendships with, individual Westerners (including this reviewer).

⁴ Kishore Mahbubani, "Europe Must Share Power," *Atlantic Times* 6, no. 2 (February 2009): 6.

⁵ Among the more recent books on this topic are David Gress, *From Plato to NATO: The Idea of the West and Its Opponents* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); and Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Politics, Culture and History* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

⁶ Mahbubani, "Japan Adrift," in *Can Asians Think?* 95.

Mahbubani devotes a whole chapter to Western (particularly U.S.) incompetence and alleged Asian competence in foreign policy. He rightly praises China's diplomatic skill. He adds that ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), despite its obvious weaknesses, has established a culture of peace that deserves wider recognition. But does this really show that "Asians are proving to be capable of delivering a more stable world order" (p. 234)? Asia's most influential foreign policy elites apparently do not think so. A recent survey found that a plurality still name the United States as the greatest force for peace, and solid majorities expressed more confidence in global institutions than in regional ones.⁷ Nor is it clear to this reviewer that Asians would be better at bringing about lasting peace in the Middle East than, say, Europeans or Australians.

Finally, on China, Mahbubani vacillates between uncritical reverence and sensible recognition of China's motives. He frequently implies that China is doing everything right.⁸ He takes a pro-China position on global warming, praises China's aid policies, and buys the argument that China's "soft power" is expanding. Yet he grants that China's decision not to devalue the yuan in the wake of the 1997–98 financial crisis was driven by realpolitik rather than charity. He sees "generosity" in China's trade agreements and whitewashes well-known barriers to the Chinese market. Anyone trying to break into China's market, however, knows that substantial barriers still exist at provincial and local levels, corruption is deep-seated, and violations of intellectual property are still widespread. One would not know this from reading the book.

A self-declared optimist, Mahbubani rejects the idea of East-West confrontation, favoring instead a "cultural fusion" that combines the best of both societies.⁹ His "march to modernity" embodies that idea. For the most part, however, in *The New Asian Hemisphere* he has chosen to polarize rather than to unite. ♦

⁷ Bates Gill et al., "Strategic Views on Asian Regionalism," Center for Strategic and International Studies Washington, February 2009, 6 ~ <http://www.csis.org>.

⁸ For example, Mahbubani praises China's no-strings-attached activities in Africa. Some Africans have begun to complain, however, that many of these projects violate safety standards. In addition, far from providing needed jobs, China airlifts Chinese workers to the scene and flies them home when the project is completed.

⁹ See, for example, Yoichi Funabashi, *Asia Pacific Fusion* (Washington: Institute for International Economics, 1995); and Anwar Ibrahim, *The Asian Renaissance* (Singapore: Times Books International, 1997).

*The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism,
Ethnicity, Political Economy*

Asoka Bandarage

London: Routledge, 2009 ≈ 288 pp.

AUTHOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on careful historical research and analysis of policy documents, this book explains the origin and evolution of the political conflict in Sri Lanka regarding the struggle to establish a separate state in its Northern and Eastern Provinces, and presents a conceptual framework useful for comparative global conflict analysis and resolution.

MAIN ARGUMENT

The book argues that the Sri Lankan conflict cannot be adequately understood from the dominant bipolar analysis that sees it as a primordial ethnic conflict between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority. Instead, a multipolar analysis of the complex interplay of political-economic and cultural forces at the local, regional, and international levels is needed. This book argues that a host of relatively neglected variables—such as intra-ethnic, social class, and caste factors at the local level; India and South Indian nationalism at the regional level; and NGOs and civil society at the international level—all play a role in this Sri Lankan conflict.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Federalist solutions seeking to create exclusive ethno-religious regions will perpetuate the conflict. The pluralism of the island and changing demographic realities—such as the decreasing numbers of the Sri Lankan Tamil population in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and their increasing numbers in the rest of the island—need to be taken into account.
- Greater control over economic resources and access to education and employment must be made available to local people of all ethno-religious groups and regions.
- Tamil nationalist aspirations, including language and cultural rights, need greater incorporation within the union of states and society in India.
- Also required are the incorporation of the Sri Lankan diaspora as partners in the island's long term socio-economic development and the strengthening of cultural pluralism and democracy.

The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Understanding the Conflict Beyond the Iron Law of Terrorism

A.R.M. Imtiyaz

A review of Bandarage's *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka*

The ethnic civil war between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities that has ravaged Sri Lanka since 1983 has attracted a considerable number of inquiries from scholars interested in exploring the complexities of ethnicity in Sri Lanka.¹

Asoka Bandarage's book *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, Political Economy*, however, attempts to "demystify ethnicity as well as religious identity (p. 5)." The book directs special attention to portraying the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as a brutal terrorist movement. In addition, Bandarage's work on the separatist conflict in Sri Lanka provides alternative explanations to the key events and activities that have taken place from the British colonial period to the present.

Bandarage attempts to explain the ethnic conflict between the Tamils and the Sinhalese beyond the existing ethno-political analytical frameworks that primarily include primordialism and contextualism. These broad scholarly approaches provide useful explanations for understanding the conflict between different groups. For primordialists, ethnic identity is inborn and therefore immutable, as are culturally acquired aspects (language, culture, and religion).² Contextualists view ethnic identities as a product of human actions and choices and thus argue that these identities

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¹ For detailed accounts of the history and the origin of the ethnic civil war in Sri Lanka, see K.N.O. Dharmadasa, *Language, Religion, and Ethnic Assertiveness: The Growth of Sinhalese Nationalism in Sri Lanka* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Kumari Jayawardena and Jayadeva Uyangoda, "Special Issue on the National Question in Sri Lanka," *South Asia Bulletin* 6 (1986): 1–47; D.H. Rajanayagam, "Tamil 'Tigers' in Northern Sri Lanka: Origins, Factions and Programmes," *International Asian Forum* 7, nos. 1 and 2 (1986): 63–85; Neil DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); K.M. de Silva, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Politics in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998); A.R.M. Imtiyaz and Ben Stavis, "Ethno-Political Conflict in Sri Lanka," *Journal of Third World Studies* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 135–52; and Ananda Wickremaratne, *Buddhism and Ethnicity in Sri Lanka: A Historical Analysis* (New Delhi: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, 1995).

² Raymond C. Taras and Rajat Ganguly, *Understanding Ethnic Conflict: The International Dimension* (New York: Longman, 2006), 4; and Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Free Press, 1963), 107–13.

are constructed and transmitted rather than genetically inherited from the past.³

For Bandarage, however, ethnicity plays no role in social construction and human activities that compete for social and political resources. She argues that violent ethnic mobilization should be categorized as terrorism in order to promote social stability and to protect the life and liberty of global communities. Therefore, she advocates a violent solution to defeat the spread of terrorism (p. 9).

The key question is what has made young Tamils, both men and women, resort to violence, or for that matter terrorism, and become suicide bombers? Bandarage can simply blame the Tamil polity's unwillingness to live with the Sinhala polity. Ethnic identities, however, are very symbolic, and these identities would not allow any conscious ethnic groups to accept domination of the majority. Sri Lanka's five-decade-old nation-building project triggered the politicization of ethnic identities. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike laid the first foundation for such politicization of ethnic identities by introducing the Sinhala-only language policy in the 1950s. Over the next four decades, Sinhala politicians repeatedly employed similar ethnic tricks to capture a large share of the Sinhalese votes. The ethnicization of the Sinhala polity subsequently produced Tamil militants, notably the LTTE, a secessionist Tamil guerrilla movement.⁴

The first several chapters of the book explain the complex relationships that existed between the Tamils and the Sinhalese during the British colonial period and early years of independence. The Sri Lankan Tamils, Bandarage notes, "held a decisive advantage in the realm of English language education" due to the disproportionate allocation of educational resources and opportunities to the Tamils (p. 31). Furthermore, some key British policies exacerbated ethnic tensions by emphasizing differences between ethnic groups. The reason that colonialists have traditionally favored a minority is easy to understand: a minority, after all, is more likely to ally with an outside power. This minority group often finds itself in a precarious position, however, when independence is gained and the majority group seizes power from the former government. Marginalized politically and economically, the minority might either struggle for power or try to secede.⁵

³ John Stone, "Race, Ethnicity, and Weberian Legacy," *American Behavioral Scientists* 38, no. 3 (January 1995): 391–407.

⁴ Imtiyaz and Stavis, "Ethno-Political Conflict in Sri Lanka."

⁵ Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4. (December 1970): 1112–30.

In Sri Lanka the demand for a separate Tamil nation arose soon after the formation in 1949 of the Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, commonly known as the Federal Party (FP). Led by the charismatic S.J.V. Chelvanayakam (p. 38), the FP predicted future discrimination and oppression from the Sinhala polity, which had introduced the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act No. 3 of 1949 to deny Sri Lankan citizenship to Tamil-speaking Indian plantation workers.

Bandarage's observations on post-1970 events and developments in Sri Lanka further help readers understand Sinhala perceptions of the ethnic conflict. Her analysis attempts to justify the government's decision to introduce new university admissions standards for science-based courses that favored Sinhalese students (pp. 53–55). The new admissions standards for medical and engineering courses, for example, required the average Tamil student to score higher marks than the average Sinhalese student who took the same qualifying examinations.

Those who suffered most from the government's standardization policy were Tamil students from the Jaffna District.⁶ The measures aroused deep despair among the Tamils, who worried that they were being systematically squeezed out of higher education. Consequently, the Sri Lankan Constitution, which had opened the way for numerous Sinhalese opportunities, came under fire from the Tamil community. Tamil leaders described the first republican Constitution of 1972 as a "charter of Sinhalese Buddhist supremacy" and argued for the establishment of a separate state for the Tamils of the Northern and Eastern Provinces (p. 72).

In 1977 the United National Party (UNP) government opened the Sri Lankan economy to privatization. Bandarage notes that both the Muslim and the Tamil minorities benefited disproportionately from the new open economy, whereas "many of the local industries that had to be closed down in the face of cheap foreign imports belong to Sinhala entrepreneurs" (pp. 80–81). What is equally true, however, is that the new economic policies aggravated poverty among non-urban Tamils and Muslims in the south and in the Tamil-dominated northeastern region of the island.⁷ The inability of the Sinhala political class to ease the suffering of Sinhalese victims of the new open economy further created ethnic tensions among the different groups, particularly between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. The rapid ethnicization of politics eventually internationalized the Tamil problem.

⁶ Walter Schwarz, *The Tamils of Sri Lanka* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1988), 12.

⁷ See Patrick Peebles, *The History of Sri Lanka* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006).

Developments in the 1980s—such as the 1983 ethnic pogrom against the Tamils—contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions. Human Rights Watch, for example, documented the cruelty of the 1983 “state sponsored” Sinhalese riots.⁸ Bandarage admits that the state played a strong role in the pogrom, which she describes as “an organized and officially encouraged massacre or persecution of a minority group” (p. 106). Such violence strengthened the ethnic forces in Sri Lanka, and the growing ethnic tensions attracted considerable global interest. The message of the global community was clear: seek political solutions to freeze the differences. These global efforts, however, have been subject to attacks by the Sinhala nationalists, particularly since 1995. As Bandarage notes, the Sinhalese groups who oppose peace with the Tamils reject international help (including from India) to negotiate peace in Sri Lanka. These groups believe that the global community and human rights organizations have been overly critical of the level of force Sri Lankan security forces have used against the Tamils. Bandarage would like to see the global community equally condemn the attacks by Tamil insurgents on large numbers of soldiers and civilians (p. 123).

As Bandarage aggressively points out, the LTTE indiscriminately used violence against Sinhalese villagers and bombed Buddhist shrines. The LTTE also violently silenced the Tamil opposition (p. 147). What is equally true, however, is that both the increasingly violent Tamil campaign, primarily led by the LTTE, and pressure from India were key factors behind the government’s moves that eventually culminated in the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of Sri Lanka in November 1987, which recommended the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Sinhala political groups such as the extremist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), however, opposed the pact for electoral gains and argued that the Thirteenth Amendment is “illegal.”⁹ The JVP brought the case to the Supreme Court. In a major ruling on October 16, 2006, a five-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Sarath N. Silva, declared the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces invalid. As Bandarage correctly observes, electoral competition between the major Sinhala political parties over the

⁸ Jo Becker, “Funding the ‘Final War’: LTTE Intimidation and Extortion in the Tamil Diaspora,” Human Rights Watch, March 2006, 6 ~ <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2006/lte0306/index.htm>.

⁹ B. Muralidhar Reddy, “JVP to Oppose Devolution Move,” *Hindu*, February 29, 2008 ~ <http://www.hindu.com/2008/02/29/stories/2008022959912000.htm>.

ethnic conflict was a significant factor behind the collapse of peace talks with the LTTE (p. 161).

In Sri Lanka's case, Sinhala elite political leaders believe they can win support and strengthen their positions by exploiting anti-Tamil ethnic cleavages. Leaders have encouraged followers to use crude violence—for example, pogroms—or exploit ethnic tensions in electoral politics. This process frequently results in a polarization of the political system along ethnic lines—a dynamic that often erupts in violence.

What the political situation in Sri Lanka proves is that elites manipulate ethnic identities in their quest for power, even to the point of deliberately inciting ethnic conflict and violence. Therefore, Bandarage is wrong to identify Sri Lanka's ethnic crisis, which is the by-product of the Sinhala elite's power struggle, as a terrorist problem. Furthermore, it is unconstructive to call for "international support to destroy the LTTE" (p. 175) and to portray international organizations and countries that support peace—Norway, in particular—as enemies of Sri Lanka (p. 204).

Ethnicity exists, and there are numerous reasons why ethnic leaderships resort to non-violent alternatives. Yet there are ways to de-ethnicize the system. For this purpose, the future offers three options: ethnic war, partition, and power-sharing. Bandarage strongly recommends the first option and vehemently rejects the rest as alternatives to war (pp. 207–17). The conflict resolution literature highly recommends power-sharing as a feasible solution to guarantee the security and stability of ethnic groups. If there is resistance to power-sharing (with the Tamil minority, whose demands will not go away with the LTTE's defeat), the third option is partition—"after all, the secessionist goal of the Tigers."¹⁰

Although Bandarage attempts to persuade readers that the conflict in Sri Lanka is a conflict between a ruthless terrorist organization (the LTTE) and the legitimate state, she also helps readers to understand the grievances and concerns of the majority ethnic group (the Sinhalese). This book, therefore, is a must-read for students, academics, and all others hoping to gain some understanding of the ethnic civil war beyond the "iron law of ethnicity." ♦

¹⁰ "The Agony in Sri Lanka," *Boston Globe*, April 25, 2009 ~ http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2009/04/25/the_agony_in_sri_lanka/?s_campaign=8315.

*China's Struggle for Status:
The Realignment of International Relations*

Yong Deng

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008 ≈ 312 pp.

AUTHOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This book provides an original and comprehensive account of China's remarkable rise from the periphery to the center stage of post-Cold War world politics.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Chinese foreign relations since the Cold War have been a process whereby the once beleaguered country has adapted to, and proactively realigned, its international environment. In so doing, the ruling Communist Party has striven to simultaneously manage China's domestic and international transitions while balancing nationalism with globalization, power with recognition, and change with compliance within the globalized world. This duality is evident in Beijing's policies regarding such key issues as international hierarchy and Taiwan. Moreover, developments in world politics, though not always of China's making, have overall aligned well with Beijing's policy adjustments.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Chinese foreign policy does not neatly fit any of the mainstream international relations theories. Thus, when devising a China policy, the U.S. needs to creatively address the Chinese desire for recognition, change, and power.
- Given that status recognition is such a potent force driving Chinese action abroad, the U.S., while being tough, should eschew characterizing disagreements with China in terms of "us versus them" strategic hostility.
- The Sino-U.S. relationship does not exist in isolation but should be considered by Washington in a broad rethinking of how to renew U.S. global leadership. As an up-and-coming power, China is more likely to become the "responsible stakeholder" that the U.S. wants it to become if the constraints on wayward behavior and zero-sum power competition are firmly embedded in a world continually defined by openness, globalization, and shared governance.

The End of Chinese Realpolitik?

Yuan-Kang Wang

A review of Deng's *China's Struggle for Status*

China specialists have noted the realpolitik penchant of Chinese foreign policy. "China may well be the high church of realpolitik in the post-Cold War world," wrote one eminent Sinologist in the mid-1990s.¹ According to this view, the pursuit of power has dominated the foreign policy agenda of China since the PRC's inception. At the turn of the 21st century, however, Chinese foreign policy appears to have forgone the antagonistic rhetoric of the past and instead embraced the virtue of cooperation and mutual gains. Beijing publicly proclaims that China would like to develop peacefully and become a "responsible great power" on the world stage. As a result of Beijing's diplomatic finesse, perceptions of China as a kinder, gentler nation seem to be on the rise. Does China's new diplomacy mark a significant departure from the power politics of the past?

In *China's Struggle for Status*, Yong Deng argues that the term "power politics" no longer captures the essence of Beijing's foreign policy. According to him, "the predominant pattern of China's foreign policy simply cannot be adequately explained by the balance-of-power proposition, nor have foreign powers reacted to China's rise in the way posited by various brands of realist theory" (p. 275). Realism aside, liberal and constructivist theories also have their shortcomings when applied to China, albeit to a lesser extent. Drawing on insights from relevant international relations (IR) theories as well as from sociology and social psychology, Deng argues that Chinese foreign policy is best understood as a struggle for status and recognition rather than as a struggle for power: "The PRC may well be the most status-conscious country in the world," he observes (p. 8). As a nation with a glorious past, China is particularly sensitive to how the country is perceived by the outside world. Chinese elites frequently attribute their country's foreign policy quandary to the mistrust and misunderstanding of foreigners. The PRC longs to be accepted and recognized as a great power in the international community.

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¹ Thomas J. Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (September–October 1996): 37. See also Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross, *The Great Wall and the Empty Fortress: China's Search for Security* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 4; and Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 198.

China is operating, however, under an international system dominated by the Western powers, who in the aftermath of the Cold War have cultivated an “in-group” identity based on liberal democracy, free-market capitalism, and international responsibility. As a member of the “out-group,” China invariably suffers political discrimination and faces trenchant criticisms of the country’s human rights record, illiberal polity, and noncompliance with international norms. Consequently, Chinese elites are understandably frustrated and seek to revise the unfair international arrangement. In this sense, “China is a non-status quo power” (p. 29).

Deng argues that China’s strategy to overcome its status deficit comprises “an amalgam of conformity and revisionism” (p. 39). That is, Beijing selectively adapts to Western norms and institutions while striving to alter the international arrangement that puts the PRC at a disadvantage. China has joined various international institutions, adopted a good-neighbor policy, and avoided directly confronting the United States. In the meantime, Beijing promotes “an alternative world vision” (p. 60) in which sovereignty remains an inviolable principle, different political systems are respected and honored, and all cultural beliefs and values are equally valid.

After laying out the overarching framework focusing on status, Deng examines China’s responses to international criticisms of human rights and the “China threat theories.” Both criticisms pose significant obstacles to China’s quest for status. According to Deng, international pressure has had a positive effect on China’s human rights record. Commentators have overlooked the PRC’s compliance with many of the international human rights treaties as well as the government’s increased attention to human rights within China. At the same time, as part of a conformist-plus-revisionist strategy, Beijing has sought to “reshape the human rights discourse” (p. 89) by emphasizing respect for the different cultural, societal, and economic conditions in each nation, thus minimizing human rights as a criteria for international status.

Compared to the issue of human rights, China threat theories are potentially more damaging to Beijing’s quest for status. Thus, Chinese leaders have orchestrated a concerted effort to discredit such theories. Beijing cares deeply about its international reputation and image because “a threat reputation would be particularly damaging to an aspiring great power’s social standing and hence to its security interests” (p. 103). Chinese leaders have learned to appreciate the security dilemma, understanding that China’s security-motivated measures could be interpreted by others as threatening. Being viewed as a threat would not only diminish China’s international

legitimacy and status but would also cause other states to balance against the country. In response, Beijing has countered China threat theories by “equating them with the cold war mentality, ill will, and bias against China,” and meanwhile striving to “reassure the international community of China’s peaceful, cooperative intent” (p. 114). Beijing has argued that China is still a relatively weak power; that its Confucian culture and history have been benign; and that China’s rise should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat. These concerted efforts have “achieved important successes in allaying foreign hostilities” (p. 125), although threat perception has lingered in places such as Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. In Deng’s view, realist theories on deterrence, power politics, and the security dilemma cannot account for China’s responses to threat theories: “The way the Chinese have shown empathy, learning, and adaptation in response to the China threat theories defies the realist propositions” (p. 123).

Deng then surveys China’s strategic partnerships with Russia, the European Union, and India. He notes that China’s diplomacy with these actors reflects efforts to mold a friendly international environment and thus should not be construed as a balancing attempt against the United States. On Japan, Deng argues that Sino-Japanese relations can be best understood as a competition for status in Asia. Both countries are interdependent, but neither is willing to grant the other the recognition it seeks. Looking beyond the major powers, Deng investigates Chinese multilateral diplomacy with minor countries in Asia and Africa, highlighting China’s positive roles in the six-party talks on North Korea’s denuclearization, engagement and confidence-building with ASEAN nations, security cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and trade and investment through the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Beijing’s objective has been to “reorient the regional and global order” (p. 19) to better serve its interests. China’s diplomatic activism, however, also reflects “a reconstituted national identity that values globalization, responsibility, and win-win international relations” (p. 244). Finally, Deng argues that China’s quest for great-power status has greatly increased the diplomatic costs of coercing unification through the use of force in the Taiwan Strait.

Given that Chinese foreign policy is motivated by a desire for international status, Deng concludes by cautioning other countries, notably liberal democracies, that withholding due status recognition from China could trigger a violent great-power struggle. It is thus in the interest of the United States “not to succumb to the simple balance-of-power logic” (p. 293) and to refrain from imputing malign intentions to China. Washington

should take note that Beijing has distanced itself from the power politics of the past and has chosen to embrace a “win-win, growth-oriented, and nonthreatening foreign policy approach” (p. 274).

China's Struggle for Status offers a China-centered perspective on international relations and should be taken seriously by those who wish to understand Chinese thinking on the post-Cold War world. The book provides rich details on China's diplomatic activities in the last two decades and makes an important contribution to the growing theory-conscious literature on Chinese foreign policy. Deng is limited, however, by his reliance on the public statements of Chinese officials and the writings of Chinese analysts. To be fair, given the secretive nature of the Chinese polity, this limitation applies to every scholar studying China. Nonetheless, such reliance on public materials raises questions about the book's argument that power politics is playing an increasingly smaller role in Chinese foreign policy. Leaders of every country tend to describe their foreign policy as cooperative and nonthreatening. Behind closed doors, however, are Chinese leaders mainly concerned with the country's international status and recognition, or do they adjust strategic choices based on calculations of China's power position in the international system? One could make an equally plausible case that Chinese foreign policy has been driven by balance-of-power logic.² Bismarck's diplomatic finesse, for example, does not make him less of a “realpolitician.”

The tension between status competition and power competition is evident in the book. Deng takes pains to depict China's earnest efforts to mitigate the harmful effects of competitive power politics, asserting that “we see a world politics as totally different from that viewed by [the neorealism of] Kenneth Waltz” (p. 275). But when he writes that “it is imperative to give due consideration to the power politics logic still persistent in world politics” (p. 39) and that “realpolitik often seems to trump morality” (p. 79), one cannot help but wonder if we are really living in a different world today. At the end of the book, realism seems to be smuggled back in: “As China grows even stronger, it may be tempted by power politics logic to force its way in world politics” (p. 294). Realists couldn't agree more. ♦

² See, for example, Robert S. Ross, “Bipolarity and Balancing in East Asia,” in *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century*, ed. T.V. Paul, James J. Wirtz, and Michel Fortmann (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); and Robert Sutter, “China's Regional Strategy and Why It May Not Be Good for America,” in *Power Shift: China and Asia's New Dynamics*, ed. David Shambaugh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

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From Iron Fist to Invisible Hand: The Uneven Path of Telecommunications Reform in China

Irene S. Wu

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009 ≈ 208 pp.

AUTHOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This book examines the Chinese government's vacillating liberal and conservative approach toward telecommunications reform, the policies that both promote and constrain business, and the major hurdles that lie ahead in reform.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Using six case studies in the telecommunications sector—the evolution of the regulator, changing market structure, foreign investment, interconnection, retail price wars, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and mobile phone service—this book finds that China is still struggling, often in a piecemeal fashion, to build a solid foundation for a rules-based telecommunications economy. Further complicating China's telecommunications reform is the government's companion efforts to control, for ideological reasons, the content of communications, including the Internet. Thus China's policymakers lurch forward and back in liberalizing telecommunications because they want to both control information and promote economic development.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- When telecom and media authorities collide, the guardians of political ideology prevail.
- Not until Beijing believes that greater media freedom serves the purposes of the state is this uneven path of telecommunications reform likely to change. When first introduced, the Internet was regarded as a telecommunication service; now it appears more like a media service.
- In a number of cases, however, market and technological changes have forced policymakers to reform after the fact.
- Pluralizing decisionmaking to include the views of businesses and consumers would result in a more orderly market, thus strengthening—not weakening—the government's authority.

Twisted Tale of Telecommunications Tells Much

Barrett L. McCormick

A review of Wu's *From Iron Fist to Invisible Hand*

Irene Wu's *From Iron Fist to Invisible Hand: The Uneven Path of Telecommunications Reform in China* deserves to be read at many different levels. With less than 150 pages of text, this is a short and unpretentious work, but one that offers many great stories and explains complicated issues with clear prose. As director of research in the International Bureau of the U.S. Federal Communications Commission, the author is eminently qualified to tackle this subject.

Telecommunications is an important case study in economic reform. Above all, this book explains one of the great successes of post-Mao China. In 1980 there were only 2 million telephones in China, but by 2000 the country had 230 million, expanding to 744 million by 2005. This, I would argue, is significant because the increasing number of telephones not only reflects increasing prosperity but—given that gaining greater access to information makes people more productive—is also a powerful stimulus to further development. The state's reluctance to allow foreign and private firms access to telecommunications markets makes this sector a special case, but this reluctance also means that the telecommunications sector offers an especially vivid illustration of how politics and markets interact in China.

China Telecom was a monopoly administered by its parent, the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications (MPT), until 1993 when the government authorized a coalition of ministries led by the Ministry of Electronic Industry to create a competing firm, China Unicom. Competition was limited, however, as long as the MPT both owned the larger competitor and regulated the market. In 1998 the State Council intervened to reorganize both ministries as the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) and put more distance between regulation and ownership. According to Wu, the resulting competition was the main reason telecommunication services became so widely available in such a short period of time. Prior to Unicom, there was a backlog of over two million people waiting for telephone service. Afterward, vigorous competition for customers led to lower prices and better services

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and a virtuous cycle of market-oriented reforms that solved old problems but created new ones that stimulated yet more market-oriented reforms.

At another level, this book presents a fascinating study in bureaucratic politics. Wu finds that firms did not gain access to telecommunications markets without ministry-level backing. As noted above, even ministerial-level support is no guarantee of a level playing field. Wu outlines a series of such struggles, including MII's attempts to leverage control over wires to move into cable television, which was successfully resisted by the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television despite this agency's sub-ministerial status.

Wu's book is also a study in the relationship between new technologies and politics. In recent years many authors have discredited technological determinism by showing how the Chinese state has succeeded in regulating the Internet despite its ostensibly open architecture. Wu agrees that the state has a demonstrated ability to regulate content, and yet, in her nuanced account, new technologies repeatedly offer entrepreneurs opportunities to challenge state-owned firms and state policies. One of the chapters, for example, narrates how entrepreneurs introduced Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for long distance service at rates that threatened the big firms' lucrative long distance business. The authorities outlawed VoIP service but were widely criticized in the media and undermined by their own firms when the latter discovered that they, too, could make money from VoIP. Elsewhere she describes how the authorities' attempts to maintain price controls were also subverted by their own firms.

There is also a thoughtful line of comparative analysis that draws on a spectrum of countries, including the United States, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, and India. Wu finds that the more that China's telecommunications markets are liberalized, the more they resemble telecommunications markets in other third world countries.

Wu leaves us with a couple of puzzles. First, she argues that Chinese regulatory authorities would have more authority if they had a more open and consultative process. She finds that because regulators proceed without much consultation, they issue rules that fly in the face of powerful economic incentives, with the result that actual practice often seems to contradict rules. But as much as the gap between rules and reality may seem like a problem, do we really want to be critical of a regulatory regime that results in this much growth?

Second, in Wu's account even though the government is repeatedly pushed off balance by unexpected effects of market competition and new

technologies, it is nonetheless consolidating control over media content. How can there be so much anarchy in markets but such effective limits on politics? Wu's answer is that leaders have prioritized politics, but she does not explain how this has been accomplished or how "politics in command" now is different than in years past, leaving her argument more tentative than persuasive.

Although the rich data and clear explanations presented elsewhere in this book may lead readers to expect answers to even these most difficult questions, that would be an unreasonable standard for what is an unpretentious, admirably brief, useful, and highly readable book. ♦

*China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere:
Implications for Latin America and the United States*

Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz, eds.

Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2008 ~ 276 pp.

EDITORS' EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This book analyzes China's increased presence in Latin America and considers the implications for relations among the U.S., China, and Latin America.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Beginning with President Hu Jintao's state visit to South America in 2004, China has experienced a growing trade relationship with the exporting countries of the region. China's interest, to date, appears to be in securing guaranteed access to the commodities and raw materials of the area. This book argues that there is no reason to believe that this commercial relationship will become increasingly geopolitical in the future.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- There is no evidence that Beijing has any interest in identifying with the anti-U.S. government rhetoric of countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. The Chinese leadership appears very aware of the need to act carefully in a region that has long been seen as a U.S. "neighborhood."
- China's diplomatic relations with the region are part of Beijing's expanding "South-South" diplomacy. Diplomatic outreach to Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America represents a maturing of China's foreign policy in the last 20 years.
- China will continue to pursue increasingly active, but peaceful, participation in multilateral organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank, and will seek support from its allies in the "South" to do so. In turn, Beijing will support efforts by the emerging market economies to gain greater space in negotiations such as the Doha Round of the WTO.

China on a Roll in Latin America, so Who Cares?

William Ratliff

A review of Roett and Paz's *China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere*

China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere is intended to assess the implications of China's "growing economic, political, and security influence" in the Western Hemisphere (p. 1). The twelve authors of eleven chapters come from universities, institutes, and international organizations in China, Latin America, the United States, and Europe. Co-editors Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz, from the Johns Hopkins University (SAIS), provide an introduction that is also something of a conclusion, touching on the major points of the book. Jiang Shixue, a scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Xiang Lanxin, a professor at Shanghai's Fudan University and at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, provide often differing Chinese perspectives, while Robert Devlin, of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, focuses on China's economic rise in the region. Other authors provide views from the different regions covered in the book and discuss South-South relations, Latin winners and losers in trade with China, and Latin America as an energy supplier. Chapters on China's policies toward Africa and Southeast Asia put Sino-Latin ties in a broader context.

Conspicuously missing from a book on the strategic and other impacts of Chinese foreign policy, however, are analyses by U.S. Sinologists who have a comprehensive grasp of China's history and foreign relations. Most of the comments on U.S. security interests are by the editors and two of the more probing foreign authors, Xiang and Argentine professor Juan Gabriel Tokatlian. But these analyses still fall short of a unified appraisal from the U.S. perspective that would place Latin America in the broader context of China's emerging global strategy and evaluate the real or imagined challenges China's links to Cuba and Venezuela, as well as Beijing's views on Chavista-oriented populism and other issues, pose for the United States.

Most of the contributors agree that "China's strategic agenda with Latin America is driven primarily by economic interests" (p. 16) and is "characterized by pragmatism and caution and led by necessity and

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opportunity” (p. 3). Even Xiang, who focuses more on geopolitical issues, agrees that China’s drive into Latin America was “largely motivated by the pressing issue of energy security” (p. 49). Over the years, Latin America has been tucked into China’s general “lie-low” foreign policy, analyzed by Jiang (pp. 31–32), which Deng Xiaoping laid down in a cryptic 24-character formula as the Cold War ended. China prefers to deal with stable countries and predictable governments, such as Chile, Peru, and Brazil, because these states are both more likely to honor contracts and less likely to worry the United States. Yet in pursuit of long-term interests, Beijing also has developed trade and investment links with resource-rich populist regimes, such as the Hugo Chavez government in Venezuela—without, however, endorsing their anti-Americanism. China does so even though these regimes cause some instability, including periodic disruptions in resource production and trade, as well as apprehension in Washington.

Xiang argues that the “key foreign policy dilemma” for China is the United States, and it is this that makes geopolitical factors “the primary drivers of Chinese policy toward Latin America” (p. 45, see also p. 49). The editors themselves state that during the 21st century “there will be no more important bilateral relationship than that between China and the United States” (p. 4). Given that for almost two centuries Washington has considered Latin America to be within its sphere of influence, Chinese policymakers know they must be careful in the region. Thus, this situation, and China’s competition with Taiwan over diplomatic recognition by a dozen regional governments, highlight the geopolitical complexities. On a trip to the United States in February 2009, Jiang said that opposition to U.S. imperialism plays a role in China’s ties with Latin America, but he adds, “China is well aware of the fact that the United States considers Latin America its backyard, and China has no intention of challenging U.S. hegemony in the region (p. 40).”¹

Some Latins worry that Beijing will try to influence Latin American politics. Chinese officials reportedly denied having this motive in bilateral talks with U.S. officials that began in 2006, but as Jiang observes, Chinese and Latin political leaders already regularly “exchange views on strategies to improve governance, the management of party affairs, political modernization and socioeconomic development” (p. 35). After the publication of this book, Beijing officially elevated China’s goals in the region to the “strategic” level with a policy paper that describes the development of

¹ “China busca vínculos con Latinoamérica para contrarrestar a EEUU” [China Looks for Ties with Latin America to Counter the U.S.], Associated Press, February 20, 2009.

an elaborate web of political and other relations with Latin America.² The *People's Daily*, an organ of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), called the paper "the first Chinese government document [of its kind] released toward the Latin American region." Jiang elsewhere has called the policy paper "a road map for future relations" within the region.³

Chinese analysts sometimes overplay current U.S. concern by highlighting the most negative of U.S. comments on a "Chinese threat." Most Americans today seem to agree with the 2008 testimony of a high-level U.S. official, who stated that although the United States and China have some different perspectives and interests,

in general, we believe that China's economic engagement with the developing world is a net positive for China and for the recipient countries, which need assistance, investment, trade opportunities, and expertise...We believe that China can serve as an exemplar of how pragmatic economic policy and trade openness can lead to increased literacy, managed urbanization and poverty reduction.⁴

In February 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said "we believe the United States and China benefit from, and contribute to, each other's successes."⁵

Any book dealing with fast-moving current affairs is bound to be in some degree out of date at publication. For example, since publication of *China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere*, China has released a policy paper on the country's relations with Latin America, and President Hu Jintao and other top Chinese leaders have visited several Latin countries, promising still closer ties. At the end of 2008, China announced that Sino-Latin American trade had catapulted to \$140 billion in 2008. The wild-card everywhere now is the global financial crisis sparked by a profligate and irresponsible United States. This crisis set fire to other tinder-box economies overly dependent on the U.S. economy and may launch a prolonged period

² The text of this policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean is available from *China Daily*, November 6, 2008.

³ Sun Hongbo, "Shuxie Zhongla Guanxi Xin Pianzhang," *Renmin Ribao*, November 17, 2008; and Jiang Shixue, "China's First Latin American Policy Paper Is a Road Map for Future Relations," *Beijing Review*, November 27, 2008. Xiang notes that for China "strategic" "refers primarily to economic and energy interests" (p. 52).

⁴ Thomas J. Christensen, "Shaping China's Global Choices Through Diplomacy," statement before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington, D.C., March 18, 2008.

⁵ Mark Landler, "Clinton Seeks a Shift on China," *New York Times*, February 14, 2009. Some in the Obama administration have been more confrontational; see, for example, Mark Drajem and Rebecca Christie, "Geithner Warning on Yuan May Renew U.S.-China Tension," *Bloomberg.com*, February 15, 2009.

of deglobalization and even conflict.⁶ The financial crisis may raise the stock both of the Chinese or Asian model of export-led growth and of a balance between what Xiang calls “the role of the market and the role of the state” (p. 52).

One of the main concerns of some in the United States and Latin America, voiced most eloquently in *China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere* by Tokatlian, is that a greater Chinese presence may slow down the movement in recent decades of Latin governments toward more effective democratic governance and greater respect for human and civil rights and the rule of law. But though this concern is genuine in some quarters, it overlooks reality in the context of Latin history.

What is now Latin America was colonized five centuries ago by Spain and Portugal and exploited for Iberian interests on the backs of the indigenous population. Most of the region, however, gained independence some two hundred years ago, providing quite enough time for Latin American countries to have developed more stable and broadly productive economic systems and representative political institutions if they had been inclined in that direction. Mostly these countries were not so inclined, and so today Latin America still has paternalistic institutions and values that serve largely the elites. A high CCP official told me in 2007 that China is generally quite satisfied with Latin America's elites and institutions, for they increase the probability that governments will honor trade agreements. It is simple scapegoating to charge that Latin America's failure to develop more popularly responsive economic and political institutions during these past two hundred years was the fault of Great Britain or the United States, as many in Latin America and abroad still do, and blaming China for shortfalls in the future will be no more convincing. On that, the buck stops in Latin America.⁷ The absence of constructive economic attitudes and policies in the region is noted by several contributors—including Devlin, who observes that most Latin American governments lack the long-term strategic vision that guides China (p. 128), and Barbara Stallings, who writes that few Latin governments “seem to want to significantly change the status quo” (p. 256).

⁶ Heather Scofield, interview with Niall Ferguson, “There Will Be Blood,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), February 23, 2009.

⁷ According to Kishore Mahbubani, a diplomat and dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore, the first commandment of development is to refrain from blaming others for one's past failures, because seeking scapegoats prevents critical self-examination and in the end guarantees continuing failure. See Kishore Mahbubani, *Can Asians Think?* (Singapore: Times Books, 2008), 246.

Finally, there is very little consideration in *China's Expansion into the Western Hemisphere* of the chief argument usually made by those who consider China a strategic threat to the United States and the Western Hemisphere: that China has an imperialist past and either has or will develop a global imperialist agenda for the future. But any objective analysis of centuries of history and recent international actions demonstrates clearly that Europe and later the United States have intervened far more aggressively around the world over the centuries than has China. This gives more credence to Chinese concerns about the United States than to U.S. concerns about China, though history does not preordain the future. Second, China's greatest progress in Latin America—in political, economic, and military fields—has not been from confronting or subverting the United States. China has almost always walked through Latin doors that the United States opened, either by the globalization that the United States promoted or because U.S. indifference or arrogance drove Latins to seek alternatives. Several contributors here suggest that the United States should consider the Chinese drive into Latin America a “wake-up call” to stop ignoring the region while Latin American governments should take the opportunities and competition China presents as a “wake-up call” to get their own houses in order. For example, if Chinese trade and investments decline significantly in 2009–10, the fact will be exposed that Latin America's impressive GDP growth (by regional standards) in recent years has usually masked inadequate basic reforms.

The prospects for cooperation or conflict among China, the United States, and Latin America will in large part depend on the willingness (or refusal) of one or all sides, particularly the United States and China, to pursue a more positive road on a global level, whatever obstacles may come up. If the Sino-U.S. relationship goes truly sour, Latin America will be drawn into more and nastier foreign feuds than it ever even dreamed of during the Cold War era. That need not happen, but the responsibility for that future lies with all of us.⁸ ♦

⁸ See William Ratliff, “In Search of a Balanced Relationship: China, Latin America and the United States,” *Asian Politics & Policy* 1, no. 1 (January–March 2009): 1–30.

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