

adversaries have nothing to worry about. On the contrary, the PLA has made tremendous strides in the areas of doctrine, equipment, personnel and training so that by 2020 “the quality” of each of these four dimensions “will likely be approaching... those of the United States and other Western militaries” (p. 244).

While students of the Chinese military might quibble with some of the specifics of the author’s framework and findings, most will applaud his efforts. Perhaps the most contentious topic will be Cliff’s treatment of doctrine. Although chapter two provides one of the most thoughtful analyses of PLA strategy and doctrine this reviewer has seen anywhere, some interpretations and characterizations will be hotly debated. But Cliff has done his homework and exhaustively mined a wide range of sources, including Chinese language ones as well as the extensive corpus of PLA studies, such as the proceedings of the two annual conferences hosted separately by the RAND Corporation and the US Army War College.

*China’s Military Power* raises the bar for scholarship on the PLA. Along with other research such as a recent groundbreaking think tank report lead-authored by Eric Heginbotham (*The U.S.-China Military Scorecard: Forces, Geography, and the Evolving Balance of Power, 1996–2017* [RAND, 2015]), this volume indicates that the field of PLA studies is maturing and starting to engage meaningfully with the broader security studies literature.

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*China’s Quest: The History of the Foreign Relations of the People’s Republic of China*

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John Garver has written the most complete, balanced and up-to-date account of the foreign relations of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) available. It likely will remain so for a long time. This well written, lucid and lengthy volume should be a core component of all Chinese foreign policy reading lists. Because of its emphasis on the domestic political drivers of external behaviour, *China’s Quest* also has considerable relevance for those interested in domestic politics. It should be understood that Garver’s book is more about the content of China’s foreign relations and less about the process by which it is made.

Garver’s core analytic assertion is that Chinese foreign policy has been driven by the ongoing need for Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders to overcome a domestic political legitimacy deficit by pursuing a sequence of broad foreign policies (three in number) that each, in its own distinctive way, has sought to provide a legitimacy to the CCP regime that its domestic actions alone could not provide. For Mao, it was a revolutionary foreign policy that could “mobilize positive elements” for domestic change (p. 145). For Deng Xiaoping, it was an economic foreign policy that anchored legitimacy in improved material conditions. To achieve this, he needed to pacify the outside world to the degree possible. And, for Xi Jinping, it now seems to be big power diplomacy anchored in making China great again – the China Dream – assertive nationalism.

Each of these three foreign policy legitimating principles had/has a fatal flaw/flaws. Mao's revolutionary policy impoverished China, cut it off from the world of comparative advantage, and created a hostile international environment that sapped China's strength and the will of its people. Deng's economic foreign policy anchored in globalization created inequalities, changed domestic socio-economic stratification, mobilized the citizenry in terms of rights consciousness, and created a popular impatience to flex the country's muscles internationally. And with respect to Xi's more assertive foreign policy, it runs the risk of exciting expectations that cannot be fulfilled and creating an international bandwagon against assertiveness. In short, Beijing has yet to find a stable equilibrium in which it has a compelling and stable domestic rationale for one-Party rule that simultaneously makes its region, and the world beyond, comfortable and that leads to domestic stability and material progress. The struggle goes on.

Garver has made excellent use of the memoirs of Chinese leaders, the Soviets/Russians, a broad range of secondary sources, recently opened archives in China and Russia, and documents declassified in the West.

*China's Quest* is full of fresh insight about many periods and specific events in the history of the PRC's relations with its neighbours and distant powers. Among the areas where Garver brings new insight and detail, one would include: a long and intricate discussion of Deng Xiaoping's return to power, the 1974 push to assert Chinese sovereignty over the Paracel Islands, Beijing's toughened attitude toward Hanoi just as American involvement in Vietnam was winding down, and the subsequent "pedagogic war" of early 1979 (chapter 14); the long, post-1989 internal debate in China over the intentions of Washington, its strategy of peaceful evolution, and the mounting crises of 1995/96 in the Taiwan Strait, the 1999 mistaken US/NATO bombing of China's Belgrade Embassy, and the ratcheting up of tension over US coastal reconnaissance first glaringly obvious in the 2001 air collision off Hainan Island; and finally, a long and illuminating discussion of the similarities between the foreign policies of Bismarck in Germany and Deng Xiaoping, on the one hand, and Wilhelm II and Xi Jinping on the other.

If there is one area where I would place a different emphasis than the author, it is the era-shifting importance Garver attaches to the 4 June 1989 violence. I get a sense from the analysis that the author believes that the slide toward higher levels of distrust and friction between China and the United States, and China and its neighbours, has proceeded in straight line fashion since that time. In my view, what has happened since 1989 underscores the centrality of leadership. The Jiang Zemin, Zhu Rongji, George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush era was a period of net Sino-American cooperation in which one saw China's entry into the WTO and Jiang was talking about broadening the composition of the Party and changing its internal processes. There was nothing pre-ordained about the frictions we now see. Instead, current frictions reflect bad choices, importantly, but not exclusively, in Beijing. Today's tensions reflect the strategic calculations of particular leaders in particular circumstances. There was, and remains, room for choice and wise leadership, though as Garver said in concluding his book, "[t]here may be further detours..." (p. 785).

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