



China: International Relations, Art & Philosophy

- An Annotated Bibliography

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CHINESE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
ART AND PHILOSOPHY

- AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

There is much talk about China these days in Europe and little discussion with China.

But, always, the real issue is often yourself when talking about another. Thus, the European Union must get its act together and exchange the monologue with dialogue. Internally, a four-point plan was alluded to during President Von der Leyen's MERICS speech¹:
(1) The adoption of the Critical Raw Materials Act,²

¹Speech by President van der Leyen on China [online] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_23_2063

²https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_1661

³Christian Ilcus "Playdoyer for an EU Strategy Towards reform of UNSC", JMPP, 2022(3)[online] <https://doi.org/10.33423/jmpp.v23i3.5741>

(2) A Strategy review of China in terms of de-risking
(3) Ratification of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI)

(4) Multilaterally, the EU must address the development of the EU-UN-partnership to manage change in the international system and better strategize towards an EU seat in United Nations Security Council³.

Thus, a multi-layered EU strategy for China is being put in place. The EU strategy on China was last addressed in 2019 under the headline as a partner for cooperation and negotiation, an economic partner, and a systemic rival⁴. This outlook remains in place and is now being elaborated on. Furthermore, China was deliberated on by The European Council during a three-hour discussion in November 2022, focusing on how best to manage the EU-China relationship in Europe's and global interests⁵. Following the meeting, Xi Jinping, in a rather interesting statement, pronounced himself on China's intentions: "Internally, China will stay committed to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, to a people-centred theory of development, and to deepening reform and opening up. Externally, China will firmly pursue an independent foreign policy of peace, upholding its foreign policy goals of safeguarding world peace and promoting joint development, and stay committed to fostering a community with a shared future for humanity. China's development represents a growing force for world peace, and China will never seek

⁴ https://commission.europa.eu/publications/eu-china-strategic-outlook-commission-and-hrvp-contribution-european-council-21-22-march-2019_en

⁵Remarks by President Charles Michel following the meeting with Chinese Xi Jinping"[online] <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/01/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-his-visit-to-china/>



hegemony or engage in expansionism”. On EU-China relations, he made the following observations: “First, it is essential to keep the correct perception. Second, it is essential to manage differences properly. Third, it is crucial to carry out cooperation at a higher level. Fourth, it is necessary to strengthen coordination and cooperation in international affairs.”⁶

Following the EU-China summit, Wang Yi took stock of the situation during a speech: “As the world is undergoing historical changes of profound and far-reaching impact, we need more than ever a vision to guide our work forward, a viable way to address our challenges, and greater strength to build consensus.”⁷

UVL’s China speech followed on 30 March 2023 ahead of UVL-Macron’s visit to China from 5 -7 April 2023. To signal commitment, it was agreed to resume the work of the EU-China Economic and Trade Commission. The EU-China Human rights dialogue has also been renewed. By the end of April, deliberations on the de-risking strategy were initiated in Brussels. The contours are readily discernible. A de-risking strategy will restrict European companies’ investments in AI, chips, quantum computing, and robots in China. Swing states like Brazil, Nigeria, Chile, and Kazakhstan will be identified as susceptible to the EU’s special attention. EEAS is to devise a position paper on a de-risking strategy ahead of the May 2023 EU Foreign Minister meeting, which will coincide with discussions on China with countries in the Indo-Pacific. On this basis, another debate will be held on China during the EuCo June 2023 summit in Stockholm.⁸

At the same time, DG Trade is formulating an economic security strategy to anticipate future threats and leverage the EU’s position as the largest economy in the world, a work in progress.⁹

There is overall consensus between the US and EU on the need for de-risking, not decoupling on China: “We are for de-risking and diversifying, not decoupling. The moment demands that we forge a new consensus”, says the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan. Typically, the United States and the

European Union coordinate better with China. It is even a rational response to the logic by which EU-Asia interacts that the pendulum now swings back to Europe and that the West asks itself how it can derive strength and unity from the rise of Asia. After all, region-building in Asia is part of the Asian aims in pursuing ASEM. Thus, a multi-layered strategy is in the works to better manage this multifaceted relationship and change in the international system. The EU’s new China strategy also requires the European Union to define its objectives and carry them through. This has to be compared with underlying changes in the share of China and the US in the European trading and investment relationship, a trend tilting the EU towards China. Finally, the EU’s weight within the Western alliance is also essential. May the force be with you. The EU’s interest is otherwise not to stunt China’s growth but to ensure that China understands that Europe means business when it says it wants a more balanced trading relationship and to prevent the take-over of European technologies, which are then used to outcompete European companies. In the words of President von der Leyen: “For the way forward, I see five strands of work: First, we need to make our economies and industries more competitive and resilient, particularly the health, digital, and clean tech. We must work with like-minded partners to build capacities and reduce our dependencies on China for rare earth, batteries, or pharmaceutical ingredients. Second, we want to rebalance our trade relationship. China is a vital trading partner for us, and most trade benefits both sides. However, it has also been confirmed that the trade deficit between the EU and China tripled in 10 years to 400 billion. This imbalance is partly due to non-market practices such as hidden subsidies, discrimination in public tenders, and other distortions created by China’s capitalist system. We need to address these distortions. The third strand is about protecting our security interests. So, we have to discuss controls of outbound investment with a focus on sensitive high-tech areas. The fourth strand concerns competing as partners on core foreign policy and security challenges. We will keep calling on China

⁶ President Xi Jinping holds talks with European Council President Charles Michel[online]www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_6552805/202212/t202211201_10983932.html.

⁷ Address by H.E. Wang Yi at the symposium on the International Situation and China’s Foreign Relations”, [on-line] https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb_663308/2461_663310/202212/t20221225_10994828.html

⁸ Finbarr Bermingham “EU racing to devise new China strategy with ‘de-risking’ at its core,” South China Morning Post, 29 April 2023.

⁹An EU approach to enhance economic security”20.6.2023 [online]https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_23_3358 Electronic copy available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4566630



to refrain from supporting Russia's war. And we reaffirm our unwavering commitment to peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. We collectively oppose any unilateral change to the status quo, particularly by force. And finally, We should intensify our work with others to create an alternative to the Belt-and-Road, our Partnership on Global Infrastructure and Investment".

The European Council continued its deliberations on China, building on the 12 May informal discussions among foreign ministers, during the Stockholm 28-29 June 2023 summit, reaffirming: "The European Union has a shared interest in stable and constructive relations, anchored in respect for the rules-based international order, balanced engagement and reciprocity."¹⁰

This is a descriptive annotated bibliography for the use and consideration of policy-makers and the broader public in Europe, the United States, and Asia. It is geared toward the time between the new EU China Strategy and before the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) ratification and the time after, during which the EU-China relationship must be managed. It raises various issues from the perspective of academia that are relevant to both European and Chinese policy-makers. The emphasis is on cooperation and common ground, not on competition. I do not rationalise political perceptions of competitive issues amongst great powers. Instead, I rely on the literature to generate ideas for developing the EU-China Strategic Partnership in search of a bridging formula between EU-US without surrendering European interests, even as the EU assumes more of a balancing role in world affairs. I am a problem-solver and a doer. I am a leader.

The annotated bibliography originates from a Chinese class at the Confutse Institute in Kolding, Denmark. The dear Laoshi Liuqing Yang, prompted by my interest in Chinese Diplomacy and Arts, asked me if I wanted to make a presentation on Chinese architecture. At this point, I decided to present Ma Yansong, a Chinese architect.

Moreover, I am passionate about books and science since I have been reduced to a literati for reasons outside my influence. My collection of books on China is now the largest in my library. To a certain extent, we are what we read and intellectually digest.

With this annotated bibliography, I want to communicate the insights I have gained and what they impart in the interest of greater mutual understanding and intellectual exchange between China and Europe. In conclusion, I will summarise the implications for US-EU policy from the books on the future course of action between the EU and China.

Kolding, December 2024
Christian Ilcus

IR OF CHINA

P.R. Kumaraswamy China and the Middle East. The Quest for Influence, Sage, 1999.

China has evolved a complex Middle East policy now integral to its great power aspirations. This book, which comprises original contributions from a mixed bag of contributors, examines China's relations with key players in the Middle East and the impact of its Middle East policy on interactions with the USA and the UN, among others. Among the issues discussed are the methods through which China is exercising influence by economic means, the role of arms exports, its growing role in the Persian Gulf, the impact of its policies with other countries such as Turkey, Pakistan and India, as well as how China has succeed in pursuing its interests without alienating the regional powers while negotiating the conflicts and disputes with major powers.

Qiang Zhai China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975, University of North Carolina UP, 2000.

China has traditionally held to the view that it has vital interests vis-à-vis Korea and Southeast, where it has sought a sphere of influence. Drawing on primary sources, Qiang Zhai examines China's Indochina policy during the Cold War, depicting it as a rival of France and the United States, and explores the historical, domestic, and international context of the evolution of the relationship between Vietnam and China during the Cold War. Zhai provides essential insights into China's conduct toward Vietnam and the ideological and geopolitical motives behind Mao Zedong's foreign policy toward Vietnam. Permanent Chinese interest and threat perception vis-à-vis the United States during the 1950'ies and subsequently

¹⁰ European Council meeting 29 and 30 June 2023, Brussels 30 June 2023 [online]

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/65398/2930-06-23-euco-conclusions-en.pdf>



concerns about Soviet inroads in South East Asia during the 1960's and 1970's, which led Mao to prod North Vietnam to conduct peace negotiations with the United States, which in turn contributed to the ping-pong diplomacy. From this, Kissinger drew inspiration and hatched a plan for triangular diplomacy between Beijing-Washington-Moscow to keep the two communist giants from coalescing and paved the ground for the opening up of China to the United States and subsequently to the world economy under new Chinese leadership. For a study on the recent evolution of Vietnamese foreign policy, consult Le Hong & Anton Tsvetov *Vietnam's Foreign Policy under Doi Moi*.

Yeo Lay Hwee ASEM. The Asia-Europe Meeting Process: From Sexy Summit to Strong Partnership ?, DUPI, 2002.

ASEM is the official abbreviation for the Asia-Europe Meeting – an informal forum and process for developing dialogue and cooperation between the two “old world” continents, Asia and Europe. One of ASSEM's most noticeable peculiarities lies in the composition of its regional representation. The club members are characterised by all being on the economic growth trajectory. “ASEM is the result of various constellations of forces and interests. Explanations of its emergence can be explained by the main theoretical strands: the realist, liberal-institutionalist, and quasi-social constructivist. Each IR school explains different aspects of ASEM. The realists emphasise factors such as a systemic change in power distribution, the emergence of East Asia as an economic powerhouse, and the desire for an increasingly integrated EU to become a global actor in the emerging new world order. They also point to the convergence of narrow economic interests among the member states, the commercial race towards East Asia, and the need for the newly developed Asian economy to attract European capital and technology. All these forces combine to create the momentum behind the birth of ASEM. Liberal institutionalists, in turn, underline the rise in interest in regionalism and a trend toward inter-regional dialogue, and as an alternative to traditional bilateralism – which is seen as inadequate for coping with global problems – and to universalism – which is seen as hampered by the multiplicity and diversity of actors involved. Regionalism is a means to address challenges caused by globalisation (read: an intensification of American-led businesses' search for markets). ASEM, like APEC, is a means to an end: the management of complex interdependence. Constructivists, in turn,

claim notably that East Asians are using ASEM to help speed up the process of regional identity-building through inter-regional interaction. They argue that regions and nations are social constructs, and identities and interests are not exogenously given but socially constructed. All these are created and recreated in the process of a global transformation. From this perspective, ASEM is essentially a result of various forces within Asia. Thus, Yeo Lay Hwee introduces his report commissioned by the Danish Institute of International Affairs. The research report covers the following themes: The genesis of ASEM: A Historical Overview, The Inner Workings of ASEM: Summits, Ministerial, and meetings. Facing reality: An empirical Assessment of ASEM. Into the Future: Challenges and Prospects. ASEM and Asia-Europe Relations after 9/11. This is a valuable volume that lays out various explanations and uncovers the motives behind the creation of ASEM and how theoretical optics influence our views of each other.

Mehdi Parvizi Aminéh & Henk Houweling Central Eurasia in Global Politics. Conflict, Security and Development, Brill, 2005.

Persian culture has both impacted Central Asia and is influenced by Central Asia. The departure point for this study is that the US invasion of Iraq was a bid to extend the Pentagon's axis Mediterranean-Persian Gulf-Central Asia, circumventing Iran. This has made Iranians fear they are part of the menu if they don't sit at the table. They want to contribute to a better understanding of American foreign policy on the Eurasian landmass from the perspective of critical geopolitics. They argue that this approach is particularly relevant for studying the foreign policies of projecting power beyond the borders in the era of “sequential industrialisation,” characterised by vast inequalities in wealth and power. Thus, Teheran was resolved to intervene in Iraq to “parry threats to the fatherland,” to adapt to a new era, and to seize the opportunities provided by the theocracy's relative development to respond to this conjuncture and challenge to the Persian world and Shia's rise provoked by the ousting of Saddam. There are thirteen chapters in the book *The Geopolitics of Power Projection in US Foreign Policy and Caspian Energy* that set the framework. Part two is *Nation State-Building in Central Asia*, *Political Processes in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, and *The Economic and Social Impact of Systemic Transition on Women in Central and Caucasus*. In part three, interactions between outside powers and neighbors and Central Eurasian republics are addressed in chapters on *Sino-Indian relations*, *The US and Eu in Central Asia*, *paradigms*



of Iranian Policy in Central Asia Eurasia, and Beyond. Part Four the local conflict addressed in the Southern Caspian Sea, water power in Central Asia, a Transnational policy for Conflict Reduction and Prevention in the South Caucasus, and international challenges and domestic preferences in the Post-Soviet Political transition of Azerbaijan. Thus, Iran should likely be consulted on the EU's Central Asia policy.

As a significant global power, China has an interest in preventing nuclear proliferation, particularly in its neighbouring regions. A nuclear-armed Iran could destabilise the Middle East, affecting China's Belt and Road Initiative and economic interests. The EU has consistently supported non-proliferation efforts. A nuclear-armed Iran could trigger an arms race in the Middle East, threatening European security and destabilising global markets. China relies heavily on stable trade routes and energy supplies from the Middle East. Regional instability caused by Iran's actions could threaten these vital interests. The EU has strong economic and security ties to the Middle East. Ensuring regional stability is crucial for maintaining these relationships and securing energy supplies. Both might argue that Iran's internal human rights violations and support for militant groups require international intervention to protect civilians and promote stability.

The issue of double agents attempting to legitimise their actions and cover up their motives is a serious concern in international relations. Ensuring transparency and accountability is crucial for maintaining trust and integrity. Double agents who engage in illegitimate activities and power grabs will likely be exposed through thorough investigations and intelligence operations. Ensuring that such individuals face severe consequences serves as a deterrent and upholds the rule of law. Individuals who demonstrate integrity, truthfulness, and valour should be recognised and rewarded. This reinforces positive behaviour and strengthens the credibility of institutions and governments. Those who unquestioningly support illegitimate actions for personal gain should be held accountable and, where appropriate, face legal consequences. This helps to maintain a just and fair system where ethical behaviour is valued.

Deception plays a pivotal role in intelligence operations, often balancing strategic necessity and ethical ambiguity. Deception is used to mislead adversaries about intentions, capabilities, or operations. This can include disinformation campaigns, covert operations, and counterintelligence

activities. Deceptive tactics can protect intelligence sources and methods, ensuring that critical information and the identities of informants remain secure. By spreading false information, intelligence agencies can influence enemy decisions and actions, leading them away from real targets or intentions. Deception inherently involves dishonesty, which can raise ethical concerns. Using false information to achieve objectives can lead to a loss of trust and credibility. The line between necessary deception and outright dishonesty can be blurred, leading to moral ambiguities that challenge the integrity of intelligence operations. Deception can legitimize covert operations that may violate international laws or norms. This includes actions such as sabotage, assassinations, and manipulation of foreign governments. States may use deceptive propaganda to justify domestically and internationally actions, often framing aggressive or illegal activities as necessary for national security. Deception can hide illegal activities and shield those responsible from accountability. This can create a culture of impunity within state agencies. Double agents or whistleblowers may reveal deceptive practices, leading to public outcry and loss of credibility for the state. When deceptive practices are exposed, those responsible may face severe legal and moral repercussions, including prosecution and imprisonment. To restore trust, states must commit to transparency and accountability. Truth and valour in exposing crimes and unethical practices must be rewarded, while sycophants and those engaging in deception are held accountable.

In summary, while deception is a critical tool in intelligence, its association with dishonesty and potential to legitimise crimes of the state present significant ethical and practical challenges. Ensuring accountability, transparency, and adherence to international laws is crucial for maintaining the integrity of state actions.

Iran's geopolitical situation is complex and multifaceted, influenced by various regional and international factors. Iran has historically sought to expand its influence across the Middle East, mainly through its support for allied groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and various militias in Iraq and Syria. The ongoing economic sanctions imposed by the United States and other Western countries have significantly impacted Iran's economy, limiting its ability to trade and access international markets. Iran's nuclear program remains a contentious issue, with concerns from the international community about its potential to develop nuclear weapons. Iran is involved in several proxy conflicts in the region, including in Yemen,



Syria, and Iraq, which have implications for regional stability and security. Iran faces significant pressure from international actors, including the United States, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, which have taken measures to counter its influence. Domestic issues, such as economic hardship, political repression, and social unrest, have weakened Iran's position and ability to project power abroad. Military actions by Israel and other regional actors have targeted Iranian assets and proxies, undermining Iran's strategic positions. The formation of alliances and coalitions against Iran, such as the Abraham Accords between Israel and several Arab states, has further isolated Iran on the regional stage. Iran's geopolitical situation is dynamic and continues to evolve, with internal and external factors shaping its regional and global role.

The world has put on notice the Israeli government's intentions in the West Bank following a strike on Iran. The recent Israeli strikes on Iran have significant implications for the West Bank and the broader geopolitical landscape. The Israeli government has been accelerating its settlement activities in the West Bank. This includes legalising outposts, expanding existing settlements, and improving infrastructure to support a growing settler population. There is a clear push towards de facto annexation of parts of the West Bank, particularly Area C, which is under complete Israeli control. This involves transferring administrative powers from the military to civilian authorities, effectively integrating these areas into Israel proper. The Israeli government is reportedly working to weaken the PA economically and politically, potentially as a prelude to its complete dismemberment. This includes reducing financial support and undermining its governance capabilities.

A strike on Iran has heightened tensions across the Middle East. Iran's response and the potential for escalation could impact the entire region's stability. The strike demonstrates Israel's willingness to take preemptive action against perceived threats. This could embolden the Israeli government to adopt a more aggressive stance in the West Bank, using security concerns as justification. The international community is closely watching Israel's actions. There is concern that increased settlement activity and annexation efforts could further complicate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and undermine prospects for a two-state solution. The international community is closely watching Israel's actions. There is concern that increased settlement activity and annexation efforts could further complicate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and undermine prospects for a two-state solution. The US has historically supported Israel, but

the Biden administration has expressed concerns about settlement expansion and annexation. The recent strikes on Iran could strain US-Israel relations, depending on how the situation evolves. The European Union has consistently opposed settlement expansion and annexation. The EU may increase diplomatic pressure on Israel to halt these activities and seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Palestinian leadership and population are likely to resist any further encroachment on their land. This could lead to increased tensions and violence in the West Bank. In summary, the Israeli government's actions in the West Bank, coupled with the recent strike on Iran, have significant implications for regional stability and international relations. The world is indeed on notice, and the coming months will be crucial in determining the future trajectory of these conflicts.

During 2025, D-day will descend upon Iran. Striking Iran is necessary to establish who is in charge and the rules. Iran once more came across as a warrior people bent on dominance in the Middle East, basing itself on campaigns now in Islamic garments. The search for a stable regional order in the Middle East was well worth a shot, but bombing Iran is in the interests of great powers. A limited and comprehensive strike encompassing a strategy of decapitation and nuclear sites is unlikely to lead to a blood bath, let alone regional destabilisation of the Middle East, even if it may weaken the theocratic regime. After all, a Rabbit Bunny is different from externalisation and deception and the abuse Iranians have used by their rulers, leading to an endless cycle of revenge and turning the tables, the conquest of the Middle East and the succession of empires in this region must stop. And the buck stops at the helm in the US and Israel. Glory to the saviour of Europe!

War is often seen as the prolongation of politics because, as the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz famously stated, "War is merely the continuation of politics by other means." his means that war is used as a tool to achieve political goals when diplomacy and other political methods fail or are deemed insufficient. This concept is highly relevant in the Middle East and Iran. The region has been a hotspot for political and military conflicts for decades, with various states and non-state actors pursuing their political objectives through military means. For instance, Iran's involvement in Syria and its support for groups like Hezbollah and Hamas are part of its broader strategy to extend its influence and counter its regional adversaries, to entrap Israel in the clientele in a bid to encircle this heroic people.



You may also, at this point, consult my piece on a Pax Europeana in the Middle East, part and parcel of the post-strike planning in the Middle East.¹¹

Regarding our obligations towards the Palestinians and the broader Middle East, it's crucial to recognise our humanitarian and ethical responsibilities. The ongoing conflict has resulted in significant suffering and displacement for Palestinians, and addressing their rights and needs is essential for achieving lasting peace in the region. This includes providing humanitarian aid, supporting peace initiatives, and advocating for a just resolution to the conflict.

Brahma Chellaney Asian Juggernaut. The Rise of China, India, and Japan, Harper Collins, 2006.

Many books offer insights into specific facets of Asia or the rise of one power or the other. There are quite a few books on the China-Japan or China-India Relationship. However, Asian Juggernaut is the first wide-ranging study that examines Asia in totality to study the China-India-Japan strategic triangle. This book evaluates the tectonic shifts in global geopolitics that foreshadow a world characterised by better power distribution and new opportunities and uncertainties. Chellaney employs a **comparative and geopolitical analysis** to examine the rise of China, India, and Japan. He focuses on the strategic triangle formed by these three powers and their impact on regional and global security. Chellaney highlights the rapid economic growth of China, India, and Japan, emphasising their role as the world's fastest-growing markets. He discusses the increasing military expenditures of these countries and the implications for regional stability. The book explores the geopolitical dynamics of energy security in Asia, including competition for resources. Chellaney examines how historical legacies affect current interstate relations and the potential for cooperation or conflict. Chellaney analyses the complex and often tense relationship between China and Japan, focusing on territorial disputes and historical grievances. He explores the strategic rivalry between China and India, including border disputes and competition for regional influence. The book discusses the growing strategic partnership between Japan and India, driven by shared concerns about China's rise. Chellaney recommends that China, India, and Japan adopt **cooperative approaches** to manage their intertwined interests and promote regional stability. He emphasises the need for

these powers to move beyond historical legacies and work together for greater prosperity and security.

A more cooperative Asia presents opportunities and challenges for the EU and the US. Enhanced cooperation can increase trade and investment opportunities, fostering economic growth for all parties involved. Collaborative efforts can contribute to regional stability, reducing the likelihood of conflicts and fostering peaceful political relations. Joint initiatives in research and development can drive innovation and technological progress, benefiting industries and consumers alike. Cooperation on environmental issues can lead to more effective strategies for combating climate change and promoting sustainable development. Asia encompasses a wide range of economic models and development levels, making it challenging to align policies and standards. Historical and ongoing geopolitical tensions, such as those between China and its neighbours, can hinder cooperative efforts. Varied cultural norms and practices can create barriers to effective communication and collaboration. Competition for natural resources like energy and water can strain cooperative relationships. Assisting in fostering a more cooperative Asia can benefit the EU and the US, leading to stronger economic ties, political stability, and shared technological advancements. However, it is essential to approach this assistance with sensitivity to local contexts and respect for the sovereignty of Asian nations.

Indeed, the West must be cautious not to perpetuate a "divide and rule" strategy to pursue market shares. Historical examples show that such tactics can lead to long-term instability and resentment. Instead, a cooperative approach that emphasises mutual benefits and respect for local cultures and practices is more likely to yield positive outcomes. A collaborative approach in Asia offers significant opportunities for economic growth, political stability, and technological advancements. However, it also comes with challenges, such as diverse economic models, geopolitical tensions, and cultural differences. The West should assist in fostering cooperation but must do so with respect for local contexts and a focus on mutual benefits to avoid perpetuating historical divisions.

While the book provides a comprehensive analysis of the strategic triangle, some critics argue that it could delve deeper into the domestic factors influencing each country's foreign policy. Chellaney's

¹¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/pax-europeana-middle-east-christian-ilcus-4xoif>



recommendations for cooperation may be seen as overly optimistic, given the historical and ongoing tensions between the three countries. The book's strong focus on security issues might overshadow other essential aspects of the relationships, such as economic and cultural ties. Overall, "Asian Juggernaut" offers valuable insights into the rise of China, India, and Japan and their impact on regional and global geopolitics. It encourages readers to consider the potential for cooperation and the challenges ahead.

Stanley Crossick & Etienne Reuter China-EU – A Common Future, World Scientific, 2007.

This volume addresses issues about the initialling of an EU-China partnership & Cooperation Agreement (PCA), negotiations which started in 2007 and ended later. In due course, China will be the largest economy in the world, as it has been for 18 of the last 20 centuries. While it is not yet a military superpower like the US, it nevertheless has enormous and growing political influence. "It is tough to think of a big issue on the international agenda that can be solved without China's active participation. I have never believed that we should regard the ascent of China -or India, for that matter – as a threat to the transatlantic community. On the contrary, the growth and material improvement in the quality of life in these two great Asian countries is an opportunity for the whole world... If we in Europe and China can then up our relationship, it will be good for our citizens and the whole world," writes Chris Patten in the foreword. Thus, the editor proceeds with three parts: Strategic Issues, Geopolitics, Trade, and Cultural and social reflections. Looking at the issue from both sides, the book addresses problems affecting the EU-China relationship: The US factor, environmental matters, WTO, governance, civil society, democracy, the Renminbi, energy security, Taiwan, Japan, North Korea, and many others. The relationship should be mutually beneficial, and recommendations should be made for harmonious relations between China and the EU. This volume was written without regard for the later Strategic Partnership Agreement and Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Japan. At that point, EU-China resolved to contract a pending comprehensive investment agreement.

Julia Lovell The Great Wall. China against the world 1000 BC-AD2000, Atlantic Books, 2007.

Lovell adopts a **historical and critical approach**, examining the Great Wall of China not just as a physical structure but as a symbol of Chinese identity and statecraft. She delves into the myths and realities surrounding the Wall, exploring its role in China's interactions with the world over three millennia. She sets the stage by discussing the modern mythology of the Great Wall and its symbolic significance. It covers the early construction efforts and the Wall's role in ancient Chinese states. Discusses the Wall during the Qin and Han dynasties, focusing on its role in consolidating power and defending against nomadic tribes. It explores the Wall's relevance during the Tang and Song dynasties, including periods of neglect and rebuilding. Examines the most famous phase of the Wall's construction, highlighting the Ming dynasty's efforts to fortify and expand it. It discusses the Wall's role in modern Chinese nationalism and its transformation into a tourist attraction. reflects on the Wall's legacy and its place in contemporary Chinese identity.

The Wall is portrayed as a powerful symbol of Chinese nationalism, representing the country's historical resilience and determination to resist foreign domination. Lovell analyses the Wall's effectiveness as a military defence mechanism and its role in shaping China's frontier policies. The book highlights the human cost of constructing and maintaining the Wall, including the labour of millions of workers and the lives lost. Lovell challenges the romanticised view of the Wall, presenting a more fragmented and complex history that includes periods of neglect and ineffectiveness. The book offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging both the symbolic importance of the Wall and its practical limitations. Lovell effectively connects the historical significance of the Wall with contemporary issues of nationalism and identity in China.

Lovell's meticulous research and use of diverse sources provide a comprehensive view of the Wall's history, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. Overall, "The Great Wall: China Against the World, 1000 BC-AD 2000" is a well-researched and thought-provoking exploration of one of the world's most iconic structures, shedding light on its historical, cultural, and political dimensions.



Bobo Lo Axis of Convenience. Moscow, Beijing, and the New Geopolitics, Brookings Press, 2008.

This book analyses the Russia-China Relationship and the interests driving Russian and Chinese policy. Lo argues that the dynamic between these two emerging powers is a strategic convenience rather than a strategic partnership. It is shaped not by a shared world vision but by expediency, pragmatism, and cold-eyed perceptions of national interests. A good deal of continuity-in-action is discernable: Energy, Arms, Trade. China doesn't want to put its eggs into one basket. On this basis, Axis of Convenience evaluates the state and current prospects of the Sino-Russian relationship against the backdrop of a disordered global environment. The book is built around the following chapters: 1. Cooperation, Ambiguity, and Tension, 2. The Burden of History, 3. Strategic Partnership - Image and Reality, 4. The Yellow Peril - Engagement in Russian Far East, 5. Peaceful Rise and the Shifting Sino-Russian Balance, 6. Cooperation and Competition in Central Asia 7. East Asia - Arena of the Great Powers 8. Geopolitics of Energy 9. The Grand Chessboard Revisited - Russia, China, and the United States 10. Conclusion - From Strategic Partnership to Strategic Tension. Contrary to the perception of some Western observers, China and Russia are not ganging up on the United States, even though a recentering in the world economy is taking place due to China's ascent, whether by design or through trade and investment flows. Bobo Lo considers five future scenarios: Strategic convergence, political-military alliance, the end of history, confrontation, and strategic tension (p.183). This is more than a decade-old book and is still a worthwhile read. Philip Snow's *China and Russia* provides a historical perspective on shifting balances and alignments.

Robert S. Ross & Zhu Feng China's Ascent Power, Security and the future of international politics, Cornell, 2008.

China's importance on the world stage usually focuses on a single dimension of China's increasing power rather than on the multiple sources of China's rise, including its economic might and the continuing modernization of its military. This book is based on a collaboration between scholars from the United States and China. They ask: how do Chinese policy-makers evaluate the current international order, and what are the regional and global implications of that worldview? The authors also address the impact of China's increasing power on Chinese policy-making and the foreign policies of Korea, Japan, and the

United States. The analyses are set within the overall framework of power transition theory with essential contributions by Jack Levy, Zhu Feng, and Avery Goldstein. The book is divided into six parts: Structure, Power Transitions and the Rise of China, International Institutions and the Rise of China, Chinese Policy-Making and the Rise of China, and Responding to the Rise of China and a Conclusion. This adds up to twelve chapters. This book has been influential and is well worth the expense. One chapter predicts trouble with the regional power transition in Europe, another by Tang Shiping, the move from offensive and defensive realism, and a third by Jack Levy on the links between regional and global power transitions.

The book examines China's rise from various perspectives, including economic might, military modernisation, and its impact on regional and global politics. The authors explore why power transitions in East Asia have been relatively peaceful compared to Europe. Factors include strong regional institutions, economic interdependence, and the strategic restraint exercised by regional powers. The book discusses how regional dynamics in East Asia are interconnected with global political structures, emphasising the importance of international institutions and multilateral cooperation. The authors analyse China's security strategy through the lens of offensive and defensive realism, assessing how China balances its need for security with the potential risks of aggressive posturing. The concept of a purposeful power transition is explored, highlighting how China's rise is managed to avoid conflict and maintain stability. The book provides insights into how Japan perceives China's rise and the potential implications for Japan's foreign policy, including whether Japan might align more closely with the United States in response to China's growing power.

Japan's alignment with China would be a significant geopolitical shift, given Japan's historical tensions and current strategic alliances. If economic ties between Japan and China significantly deepen, mutual benefits might encourage closer political and strategic alignment. A typical regional threat, such as North Korea's nuclear program, could push Japan and China to collaborate more closely on security matters. If tensions between the US and China escalate, Japan might reconsider its strategic alliances to avoid being caught in a major conflict. Collaborative efforts to address global challenges like climate change could foster cooperation between the two nations. Increased cultural exchanges and people-to-people connections



might help build trust and reduce historical animosities.

This book has analytical strengths. Book provides an in-depth examination of China's rise from multiple perspectives, including economic, military, and geopolitical dimensions. The authors offer balanced viewpoints by including insights from Western and Chinese scholars, enriching the analysis. The book places China's rise within a historical framework, helping readers understand the long-term factors contributing to its current position. The application of offensive and defensive realism provides a clear framework to analyse China's security strategies and their impact on global politics.

While the book offers a comprehensive overview, some readers might find it dense and challenging to navigate through the various dimensions covered. The emphasis on significant powers, primarily the US and China, might overshadow the roles of other significant regional players in East Asia. Given the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, some of the book's predictions and analyses may need updating to reflect recent developments. The use of complex theoretical frameworks might be overwhelming for readers not well-versed in international relations theories.

The book highlights how individual leaders, political processes, and broader geopolitical dynamics shape China's rise. It underscores the importance of understanding the nuanced interactions between these elements to grasp the complete picture of China's ascent. Ross and Feng's exploration of a purposeful power transition is particularly insightful. They argue that China's leadership has strategically managed its rise to avoid confrontation with established powers, focusing instead on incremental gains and regional stability. The book offers a nuanced view of Japan's perception of China's rise. It suggests that Japan is wary of China's growing influence but is also pragmatic in its approach, seeking to balance its security alliance with the US while engaging with China economically.

Overall, "China's Ascent" is a valuable resource for understanding the complexities of China's rise and its implications for international politics. Its strengths lie in its comprehensive analysis and balanced perspectives, though it may be dense for some readers.

Cheng Li China's changing political landscape. Prospects for Democracy, Brookings, 2008.

This book adopts a pluralistic theoretical perspective to analyse domestic politics, interest groups, social issues, and civil-military relations in China, i.e., state-society concerns. This adds fresh air compared to the books on China's economic rise and the relations between China's foreign policy and the US and EU.

Martin Jacques When China Rules the World, Penguin, 2009.

This is not simply a book about China but about the implications of the rise of China. It overturns conventional wisdom thinking about the ascendancy of China, showing it will signal the end of the global dominance of the Western nation-state and a future of contested modernity. The book is divided into chapters on The End of the Western World and The Age of China. The first part contains four chapters, and the second has seven. The book is predicated on the view that China is China, Fritz, and that there will be contested modernities. Western yardsticks don't pronounce itself on the realities of China. First, China is a civilisational state, not a nation-state in the traditional, and it is largely on China to adapt to the modern world, which it has been trying to do so for a long time now by emulating the West. Second, there are enduring features in its relationship with East Asia inherited from the tributary state system. Third, there is the distinctively Chinese attitude towards race and ethnicity, which not even the Hans are, and race is a Western concept. Fourth, China is continental in scale, similar to the EU, Brazil, Australia, and the US, harboring ambitions to be the top dog in Asia. Fifth, it goes beyond saying the Chinese polity has a specific character that must be observed, understood and analysed. There is scant power-sharing in China, and interest groups barely exist. The bureaucracy is a powerful technocracy, and the state is competent and effective in wielding power. It is likely to do so all over the world in the future. Sixth, Chinese modernity is distinguished by the speed of the country's transformation, melding old and new as time-compression societies. Seventh, China is ruled by the Communist Party and enjoys considerable popular support. Eighth, China will, in the foreseeable future, display its hybrid nature with relative rural backwardness as a mix of a developed and developing country. The result is a modernity tempered by and interacting with the Hinterland that will have enormous economic, political, and cultural consequences. In summary, the arrival of China as a powerful state marks the end of Western universalism.



We need to get used to Western norms, values, and institutions that will be competing with those of China, the French author points out.

Jay Taylor *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, Belknap Press, 2009.

This seminal work offers a thorough and nuanced portrait of Chiang Kai-Shek, a key figure in 20th-century Chinese history. Taylor employs a rigorous historical methodology, using primary sources extensively, including Chiang Kai-Shek's diaries, official documents, and personal correspondences. This comprehensive research allows Taylor to present a balanced and detailed account of Chiang's life and career. Taylor explores the dual nature of Chiang's identity as both a moderniser and a traditionalist. This duality influenced his political and military strategies. The book delves into Chiang's military strategy, leadership style, and role in key historical events like the Chinese Civil War and World War II. Taylor examines Chiang's efforts to implement economic reforms, control inflation, and reduce corruption. The book highlights Chiang's role in the transformation of Taiwan from a war-torn island to a model of economic and political development.

The book is divided into several chapters exploring Chiang's early years, his rise within the Nationalist Party, and his consolidation of power. He details Chiang's efforts to unify China and the challenges he faced. He covers Chiang's leadership during the war against Japan and his strategies to resist Japanese aggression. He focuses on the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists, leading to Chiang's eventual retreat to Taiwan. He discusses Chiang's governance in Taiwan, his policies, and his efforts to build a stable and prosperous society. He also examines Chiang's role in the Cold War dynamics and his interactions with the United States and other countries. He analyzes the long-term effects of Chiang's leadership on both Taiwan and mainland China.

The existence of two competing Chinas—mainland China and Taiwan—creates a complex geopolitical landscape with pragmatic implications for both the United States and the broader international community. The competition between the two Chinas helps maintain a balance of power in the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. can leverage this rivalry to counterbalance China's growing influence. The U.S. has significant economic ties with both mainland China and Taiwan. Maintaining relationships with

both allows the U.S. to protect its economic interests and ensure access to markets and resources. The U.S. can strengthen its alliances with other countries in the region by positioning itself as a counterweight to China's dominance. The competition drives innovation and technological advancements, which can benefit the U.S. in areas such as defense, cybersecurity, and economic competitiveness. Competition with Taiwan and the U.S. can drive mainland China to innovate and improve its economic policies, fostering growth and development. By engaging in competition, China can assert its influence on the global stage, promoting its vision of international relations and expanding its soft power. The rivalry with Taiwan can be used to foster a sense of national unity and patriotism within mainland China, strengthening the government's legitimacy. Having two Chinas allows China to navigate international relations more flexibly, balancing its relationships with different countries and regions.

The competition between the two Chinas can contribute to global stability by preventing any one entity from becoming too dominant. Despite the rivalry, economic interdependence between the U.S., mainland China, and Taiwan remains significant, promoting cooperation and reducing the risk of conflict. The competition drives technological progress, benefiting the global community through innovations in various fields. In summary, the existence of two competing Chinas offers pragmatic benefits for both the U.S. and China, as well as broader implications for global stability and technological advancement. It creates a dynamic environment that encourages innovation, economic growth, and strategic flexibility.

Some critics argue that the book's detailed and complex narrative can be overwhelming for readers not already familiar with the historical context. While Taylor provides a balanced account, some reviewers feel that the book could offer a more critical analysis of Chiang's authoritarian tendencies and controversial policies. Overall, Taylor's work is praised for its depth of research and its balanced portrayal of Chiang Kai-Shek. It offers valuable insights into the leader's life and his significant impact on modern Chinese history.

Aaron L. Friedberg *A Contest for Supremacy. China, America and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia*, Norton, 2011.

Aaron L. Friedberg's "A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia"



adopts a **comparative and historical approach**, analyzing the evolving dynamics between the United States and China. Friedberg, a political scientist and former deputy assistant for national security affairs, draws on historical events, strategic theories, and policy analysis to provide a comprehensive examination of Sino-American relations.

A practitioner guide to the management of the US-Chinese relationship covering all aspects and the impact on the world of China's ascent: Means of Ascent, Roots of Rivalry, From Containment to Alignment, Engagement, The Propensity of Things, Hiding our Capabilities and Bide Our Time, To Win without fighting, the Balance of Influence, the Balance of Power, Alternative Strategies, Can America keep its balance. This is a considered and compelling examination of the Sino-American Relationship.

Friedberg traces the history of US-China relations from the birth of the People's Republic of China to the present, highlighting key events and policy shifts. He examines the strategic goals of both nations, with China aiming to "win without fighting" and displace the US as the leading power in Asia, while the US seeks to maintain its influence and security in the region. Friedberg identifies several factors driving the rivalry, including a narrowing power gap, ideological differences, and competition for regional influence. He discusses the role of economic interdependence and how it influences the relationship, arguing that while it can foster cooperation, it also creates vulnerabilities. Friedberg emphasizes the importance of maintaining a military balance, advocating for "better balancing" through alliances and partnerships to deter potential aggression. He offers policy recommendations for the US to enhance its strategic position and manage the rise of China effectively. Friedberg's detailed analysis provides a thorough understanding of the complexities of US-China relations, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming.

Friedberg effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the current geopolitical landscape. Overall, "A Contest for Supremacy" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of the strategic competition between the US and China, making it a valuable contribution to the field of international relations.

Mingjiang Li Chong Guan Kwa China-Asean sub-regional cooperation. Progress. Problems and Prospects, World Scientific, 2011.

The contributors to this book hail from China and Singapore. They examine China relations from a sub-regional perspective in various geographical settings such as Mekong, the Pan-Beibu economic zone, the hydraulic power sector, and economic relations between southeast Asia and China. The book adopts a **comparative and analytical approach**, examining China-ASEAN sub-regional cooperation through various case studies and policy analyses. It aims to assess the progress, challenge The book explores cooperation in regions such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) and the Pan-Beibu Gulf Economic Zones, and future prospects of these cooperative efforts. It analyzes the economic benefits and challenges of integrating ASEAN economies with China, including growth triangles and economic zones. The book discusses China's collaboration with Indochina countries in hydropower projects and the associated challenges. It examines how China-ASEAN relations have evolved following the global financial crisis, focusing on economic statecraft and cooperation. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of sub-regional cooperation, but some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. While the book offers valuable policy recommendations, their implementation may face practical challenges due to political and economic differences among ASEAN countries. The book's strong focus on economic cooperation might overlook other important aspects such as political and cultural factors.

Henry Kissinger On China, Penguin, 2012.

Diplomatic history by the diplomat who opened up China and US relations in triangular diplomacy between Russia, China, US to make sure each state was closer to the US than to one another, an opening desired by China as much as discerned by the US. Kissinger combines historical records with his personal experiences and conversations with Chinese leaders over the past four decades. He examines China's approach to diplomacy, strategy, and negotiation throughout its history, reflecting on the consequences for the global balance of power in the 21st century.

Kissinger delves into China's ancient civilization, emphasizing its self-perception as the "Middle Kingdom" and its historical isolation from the rest of the world. He discusses the impact of the Opium Wars on China's psyche, leading to a period of humiliation



and introspection. Kissinger provides a detailed analysis of Mao's leadership style, his vision for China, and his approach to foreign policy. For instance, Mao states that the reunification with Taiwan can wait another fifty years, i.e. by these days. He highlights Mao's ability to exploit the Sino-Soviet split, playing the two superpowers against each other to China's advantage. This would combine a south-south dimension to squeeze out room of manoeuvre between the US and the Soviet Union. The book focuses on the historic opening of China to the world, orchestrated by Nixon and Kissinger, and the resulting realignment of global power dynamics. Kissinger examines the leadership transition in China and the rise of Deng Xiaoping, highlighting his pragmatic approach to governance and foreign policy. Kissinger's personal narrative adds depth and authenticity to the historical account.

The book is praised for its comprehensive analysis and valuable insights into China's rise as a global power. Kissinger's personal narrative adds depth and authenticity to the historical account. Some critics argue that the book could benefit from a more critical examination of the power imbalances and potential conflicts of interest between China and the United States. Focusing on Kissinger's role in Sino-American relations may also limit the broader perspective on China's global interactions. The Global South is evolving as an alternative, not just as a channel for diplomatic and commercial activity. Kissinger's China diplomacy, at the same time, provides background to US-Taiwan relations, consisting of a legislative act put forward by the US Congress in response to Kissinger's China diplomacy.

Edward N. Luttwak *The rise of China vs. the logic of strategy*, Harvard UP, 2012.

As the rest of the world worries about what a future might look like under Chinese supremacy, Edward Luttwak is concerned about China's prospects. Applying the logic of strategy for which he is well known, Luttwak argues that the most populous nation on Earth – and its second-largest economy -may be headed for a fall. China is pursuing both economic and military might simultaneously. He argues that this dual approach is unsustainable and will inevitably lead to resistance from other nations.

Luttwak posits that China's simultaneous pursuit of economic and military growth is a strategic contradiction. He predicts that China's assertive foreign policy and army buildup will provoke

economic and military coalitions among its neighbours such as India, Japan and Vietnam. Luttwak criticises China's reliance on ancient strategic texts like Sun Tzu's "Art of War," arguing that these tactics are counterproductive in the modern international arena. He advises China to focus on sustainable economic growth and diplomatic restraint to avoid international resistance. Additionally, his reliance on historical strategic texts may not fully account for the evolving nature of international relations.

Critics of Luttwak's work argue that his analysis may oversimplify the complexities of China's rise. Some believe his focus on military and economic growth overlooks other factors, such as political and social dynamics within China. The book also cites the coalescing against Germany as a model. Western strategists have sized on this historical lesson in countering China. Thus, this book has been quite influential. For the EU, it meant contracting trade agreements with several Asian countries, bringing European traders into contact with Chinese merchants.

Sam Van Scaikh *Tibet – A History*, 2013.

Sam van Schaik is a renowned Tibetologist whose work focuses on Tibetan history, Buddhism, and manuscripts. Va Scaikh extensively uses historical texts and manuscripts to reconstruct Tibetan history and religious practices. He combines history, religious studies, and philology to comprehensively understand Tibetan culture and its evolution. His work often involves the study of Tibetan manuscripts, particularly those from Dunhuang, to uncover insights into Tibetan Buddhism and its development. Van Scaikh provides a detailed historical context for Tibetan Buddhism, tracing its development through various periods. He examines the practices and teachings of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly the Dzogchen tradition. His work highlights the interactions between Tibetan and Chinese cultures, primarily through the lens of religions and textual exchanges.

In comparison, Tsering Skhakya's book *The Dragon in the Land of Snows* struggles with the Yeti, offering an account of modern Tibetan history, focusing on the political and social changes since the Chinese invasion in 1950. Shkhyas's approach is heavily focused on political history, detailing the vents and policies that shaped modern Tibet. He uses a variety of primary sources, including government documents, personal accounts, and interviews, to provide a comprehensive narrative. Skhyya critically examines the roles of the various actors, including the Chinese government, the



Tibetan leadership, and international players. He gives detailed account of Chinese invasion and subsequent occupation of Tibet. He explores the various forms of Tibetan resistance, both armed and non-violent, against Chinese rule. Skhaya analyses the involvement of international actors, such as the US and India, in the Tibetan struggle.

Van Schaik's work is deeply rooted in religious and cultural history, providing a nuanced understanding of Tibetan Buddhism and its manuscripts. However, it may lack the detailed political analysis founding Shakyas' work. Shakyas, in turn, offers a comprehensive political history of modern Tibet, but may not delve as deeply into the religious and cultural aspects as Van Schaik. Van Schaik uses an interdisciplinary approach, combining history, philology and religious studies. Shkhya focuses on political history using a wide range of primary sources to construct his narrative.

Both scholars provide valuable insights into Tibetan history, but their differing focuses and methodologies offer complementary perspectives on the complex relationships between Tibet and China.

Thomas Christiansen, Emil Kirchner & Philomena Murray The Palgrave Handbook of EU-Asia Relations, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

This handbook by eminent scholars is divided into eight sections: (1) conceptualising and contextualizing EU-Asia Relations, (2) The Comparative dimension of Eu-Asia Relations, (3) The Political dimension of EU-Asia Relations, (5) The Institutional Dimension of EU-Asia Relations, (6) The Global Dimension of Eu-Asia Relations (7) China in Eu-Asia relations (8) Bilateral relations between the EU and Asia. In addition, the Handbook contains 38 chapters covering the historical development from post-colonialism to partnership, regionalism, and Eu-Asia relations, regional integration support by the EU in Asia, EU-Asia Trade Relations, the institutional dimensions of Eu-Asean +3 Inter-regional Relations, EU, Asia and change, Security and the role of Asia, Eu-China Relations, China in EU-East Asia economic relations, EU-China relations as well a series on the EU Asia-bilateral. This is a comprehensive handbook and one of the best on the market—a real achievement.

Orville Schell & John Delury Wealth and Power. China's Long March to the Twenty-first Century, Abacus, 2013.

How did a nation, after a long and painful period of dynastic decline, intellectual upheaval, foreign occupation, and civil war, manage to burst forth onto the world stage with such an impressive run of hyper-development and wealth creation—culminating in the extraordinary dynamics of China today? The authors show that the answer to this question is recent.

Orville Schell and John Delury's "Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-first Century" adopts a **historical and biographical approach**, examining China's rise by focusing on the lives and ideas of key figures who shaped modern China. The authors, both experts on China, provide a panoramic narrative that connects historical events with contemporary developments. The book traces China's journey from the decline of the Qing Dynasty to its emergence as a global power, highlighting the impact of foreign invasions, internal strife, and intellectual movements. The authors illustrate how these individuals contributed to China's transformation through detailed portraits of influential leaders and thinkers such as Wei Yuan, Empress Dowager Cixi, Sun Yat-sen, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping. The central theme is Chinese leaders' persistent pursuit of "fuqiang" (wealth and power), which drove the country's modernisation efforts and shaped its national identity. The book explores the intellectual roots of China's resurgence, examining how ideas from both the East and the West influenced its development. The authors better understand China's present-day policies and global ambitions by connecting historical insights with current events. Schell and Delury's meticulous research and comprehensive analysis offer a thorough understanding of China's rise, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book provides a balanced view, acknowledging the achievements and challenges of China's development. The authors effectively connect historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's current position on the world stage.

Overall, "Wealth and Power: China's Long March to the Twenty-first Century" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of China's transformation, making it a valuable contribution to international relations and history.

David Shambaugh China Goes Global: The Partial Power, 2014.

Most global citizens are well aware of the explosive growth of the Chinese economy. Indeed, China has famously become the world's workshop, but few have



focused on how this increasingly powerful has become more active and assertive worldwide. The volume reflects China's extensive commercial footprint, growing military power, increasing soft power or cultural influence, diplomatic activity, and new prominence in global governance institutions. Shambaugh argues, however, that China's international presence is broader than deep and that China still lacks the influence befitting a significant power – what he terms a “partial power.” Thus, he sheds light on China's current and future roles in world affairs.

Andrew Tan Security and Conflict in East Asia, Routledge, 2015.

This volume, edited by Australian Andrew Tan, was prompted by a high degree of tensions on the Korean peninsula, between Japan and China, and between the United States and China over Taiwan, the absence of effective regional institutions, the emerging arms race in the region, the rise in nationalism, and the lack of crisis management mechanisms. Thus, there is a potential for miscalculation and misperception to spark a regional conflict. Security conflicts in East Asia can draw in China, the USA, and Japan and impact global security. The Handbook is divided into four parts: the introduction sets the context, explains the history of international relations in East Asia, examining the regional arms race. A series of chapters focuses on China, challenging China's military modernisation, its relationship with the USA, and the various territorial disputes in which it has been involved. A section on Japan and North and South Korea examines the security challenges facing Japan and the Korean peninsula. A concluding section discusses the future role of China and the USA in East Asia and the prospects for managing security in the region.

Sebastian Heilmann China's political system, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016.

The Chinese government is one of the most important actors in international affairs. Understanding how the People's Republic of China has grown in power requires carefully analysing its political system and policies. How do economic modernisation, global economic modernisation, and global economic integration affect Chinese polity? Is the Chinese political system capable of adapting to changing economic, technological, social, and international conditions? Exploring these central questions, this volume provides readers with a comprehensive

assessment of the preconditions, prospects, and risks associated with China's political development.

Quanxi Gao, Wei Zhang Feilong Tian The Road to Rule of Lw in Modern China, Springer, 2015.

Quanxi Gao, Wei Zhang, and Feilong Tian's "The Road to the Rule of Law in Modern China" adopts a historical and comparative approach, examining the development of the rule of law in China from the late Qing Dynasty to the present. The authors draw on empirical studies and historical analysis to comprehensively overview China's legal evolution. The book traces the historical development of the rule of law in China, covering key periods such as the late Qing Dynasty, the Xinhai Revolution, the early Republic of China, and the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The authors introduce the concept of "political constitution," which allows for a more nuanced understanding of China's rule of law, emphasising the political context in which legal reforms have occurred. The book discusses the transition from party rule to constitutionalism, highlighting the challenges and achievements in establishing a legal framework that balances party control with constitutional principles. The authors analyse the reforms and governance measures taken to improve the rule of law in China, focusing on the dualist rule of law system during the reforming times. The book provides a review and outlook for the future development of the rule of law in China, discussing the potential for further reforms and the lessons that other countries can learn from China's experience. The book offers a thorough and detailed analysis of the rule of law in China, which can be both informative and overwhelming for readers. It provides a balanced perspective, acknowledging both the progress and the challenges in China's legal development. The authors effectively connect historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the current state of the rule of law in China. Overall, "The Road to the Rule of Law in Modern China" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of China's legal evolution, making it a valuable contribution to the field of legal studies and political economy.

Bernard D. Cole China's quest for Great Power: Ships, Oil, and Foreign Policy, Naval Institute Press, 2016.

Bernard D. Cole examines China's national security strategy by focusing on three key elements: foreign



policy, energy security, and naval power. He uses a combination of historical analysis, empirical data, and strategic assessments to explore how these elements interact and influence China's future and its relations with the United States.

Cole discusses China's foreign policy objectives, particularly its efforts to safeguard regional maritime interests and navigate global diplomatic challenges. The book highlights the importance of reliable access to energy resources for China's economic growth and military operations. Cole analyzes the development of the People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) and its role in defending China's maritime interests, including sovereignty disputes in the Taiwan Strait, Yellow Sea, East China Sea, and South China Sea. The book examines the complex relationship between China and the United States, focusing on areas of both cooperation and conflict. Cole explores China's mid-century goal of deploying a navy to defend its perceived maritime interests and the implications for global power dynamics.

The book is praised for its comprehensive analysis and detailed examination of China's strategic priorities. Cole's use of empirical data and historical context provides valuable insights into China's national security strategy. Some critics argue that the book may overemphasise military and economic aspects, potentially overlooking other factors, such as political and social dynamics within China. Additionally, the focus on historical strategic texts may not fully account for the evolving nature of international relations.

"China's Quest for Great Power: Ships, Oil, and Foreign Policy" is a valuable resource for understanding China's strategic ambitions and their implications for global security. It provides an even-handed analysis of China's cards in its pursuit of excellent power hood, allowing the reader to come to conclusions about what could and should be done about China's behaviour in addressing the growth of China and its place in the international system. The book is anchored in history and geography.

Emil. J . Kirchner, Thomas Christiansen & Han Dorussen Security relations between China and the European Union. From Convergence to Cooperation, Cambridge UP, 2017.

Over the past decade, the EU and China have expanded their relations beyond a focus on economic and trade issues to the sphere of security. Taking a broad definition of security, a multi-disciplinary

approach, and a comparative perspective (including scholars from both Europe and China), this book provides an in-depth analysis of the extent to which the EU and China express not only similar threat concerns or make declarations about joint responses but also adopt concrete measures in the pursuance of security cooperation.

Kishore Mahbubani & Jeffery Sng The Asean Miracle. A Catalyst for Peace, Ridge Books, 2017.

ASEAN has successfully maintained regional peace and security in South-East Asia. This has come about by holding on to the need for the South East Asians to resolve differences among themselves and address common threats. To improve the livelihood of their people. Successive leaders were able to work together for the common good of the region through more structured summits. The ASEAN FTA was created to lead to the ASEAN Common market and the ASEAN+3 with China, India, Japan, and other dialogues. There is a lot ASEAN can do to increase its cohesion in addressing regional challenges, Goh Chok Tong, a former .sg senior minister, recognises in the foreword. This is an excellent book for those interested in geopolitics and regional integration. The book is divided into six chapters: 1. The Four Waves, the Asean Ecosystem of Peace, Asean and the Great Powers, pen sketches on its members, Asean: Strengths and Weaknesses, and ASEAN's Peace Prize. A follow-up volume is provided by Mikio Oishi's *Contemporary Conflicts in South East Asia: Towards a New ASEAN Way of Conflict Management*.

Jing Men & Annika Linck (eds) China and EU: Reform and Governance, Routledge, 2017.

Reform and governance are of central concern to China and the European Union. China faces demographic and environmental challenges and has experienced a rapid economic transition. The social tensions arising from these challenges call for a governance system that allows Chinese leadership to alleviate social pressures without risking their leadership.

The EU faces the same global challenges, but it has a very different and complex governance system. How can the EU advance its foreign policy interests and values toward China? How can the EU and China find common ground in their governance systems to enhance their strategic partnership and tackle global issues that need a coordinated approach?



Benjamin Barton Political trust and the politics of Security Engagement: China and the European Union in Africa, Routledge, 2017.

In 2008, the EU Commission published a communication on the trilateral cooperation between the EU and China in Africa. However, this policy has yet to generate headlines or make great strides. EU and China are still to convert rhetorical promises into tangible cooperation results concerning international security. This book develops a theoretical framework to explain why the EU and China worked together in the Gulf of Aden but in Darfur. The author contends that a lack of political trust is at issue. I submit that China and the EU should start cooperating on solving the Great Lakes conflict, one of three conflicts that have endured since the dawn of the UN, the other being Kashmir and the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP). Ian Taylor has published a book on *China's rise in Africa*, while Anna Katherina Stahl has published *EU-China-Africa Trilateral Relations in a multipolar world*. Stahl explores how the rise of China and other emerging powers is reshaping the global order, moving away from a unipolar world dominated by the US to a more multipolar system. The book highlights China's growing economic and diplomatic influence in Africa, presenting an alternative to traditional North-South relations and proposing a new type of South-South partnership. Stahl analyses the EU's foreign policy response to China's presence in Africa, including attempts to refocus attention on the African continent and engage in trilateral cooperation. The book offers a new conceptual framework for studying the EU's foreign policy in a multipolar world, emphasising the importance of engagement with emerging powers. Drawing on fieldwork in China and Africa and expert interviews, Stahl provides new empirical insights into the changing global system and the role of the EU. Stahl's detailed analysis provides a thorough understanding of trilateral relations, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging the opportunities and challenges of EU-China-Africa cooperation. Stahl effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the current state of trilateral relations.

Stahl's work has a broader scope, examining trilateral relations and the multipolar world, while Barton's work focuses more on the specific aspect of political trust in security engagement. Both works offer balanced perspectives, from Stahl's geopolitical and

economic standpoint to Barton's political trust and security cooperation standpoint. Stahl uses empirical insights from fieldwork and expert interviews, while Barton applies a conceptual framework on political trust to explain bilateral interactions.

The environmental challenges, the demographic growth, the market potential, and the endemic conflicts provide sufficient material to warrant a review of the trilateral cooperation between the EU and China. One of several unknown departure points could be addressing the African's wants, engaging in the Great Lakes region, possibly even Darfur, and smearing the wheels of the various anti-desertification initiatives and the associated need for policies and institution-building.

Hong Zhou China-EU relations: Reassessing the China-EU Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Springer, 2018.

This book provides a comprehensive review of relations between China and the EU Strategic Partnership from the perspectives of politics, economy, and culture to better understand its development over the past decade and explore its future direction.

The book examines the political dynamics between China and the EU, including their cooperation in international peace and security, particularly within the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It analyses the economic and trade relations between the two entities, highlighting the challenges and opportunities in global trade governance. The book discusses the role of cultural exchanges as a pillar of China-EU relations, emphasising the importance of cultural understanding in strengthening their partnership. It explores China's relations in global governance, including international financial, energy, and climate governance. The book includes a comparative analysis of China-EU and EU-US relations, providing insights into these partnerships' different approaches and outcomes.

The book is praised for its comprehensive approach, providing a detailed and multifaceted analysis of China-EU relations. It effectively uses empirical studies to support its arguments and offers valuable insights into the complexities of the partnership. Some critics argue that the book could benefit from a more critical examination of the power imbalances and potential conflicts of interest between China and the EU. Additionally, the book's focus on the past decade may limit its ability to address the rapidly evolving



nature of international relations fully. Overall, Hong Zhou's work is valuable for anyone seeking to understand the intricacies of China-EU relations and their implications for global governance and international cooperation.

Ian Easton The Chinese Invasion Threat: Taiwan's Defense and American Strategy in Asia, Eastbridge Books, 2019.

Are war clouds gathering in Asia? Will China make good threats to invade Taiwan? What would this conflict mean for America and the World? Mao raised these questions in the book in his conversations with Kissinger, which would only have to be solved fifty years after the opening to the United States. Expo-sing internal Chinese military documents and restricted-access studies The Chinese Invasion Threat explored the secret world of war planning, strategy, espionage, and national security. This book provides a background to the elevation of staunch -pro-unification officers to China's Military Commission and Pentagon's China Military Power Report.¹² A particular unit has been established to study war preparedness and war contingency planning in Taiwan. Thus, both sides should work actively to ensure that competition with China does not conflict. Xi Jinping has called for the CCP to develop the people's "war doctrine and build a strong strategic deterrence system." This translates into a strategy of winning the masses and adopting a principle of defensiveness. "A people's war is a total war, and its strategy and tactics require the overall mobilisation of political, economic, cultural, diplomatic, military and other power resources, the integrated use of multiple forms of struggle and combat methods," the PLA states. Asymmetric warfare and flexibility are called for. I submit that a self-reinforcing dynamic has been put into place, increasing the risk of war. However, what is suitable for the party is not necessarily good for the nation. The fact remains: The arrangements between China and the US have served Taiwan and China well, as both countries have experienced significant growth.

For a perspective on US-China Rivalry, check out this link.¹³

Michael Tai China and her neighbours: Asian Diplomacy from Ancient history to the present, 2019.

Michael Tai employs a historical and geopolitical lens to examine China's diplomatic relations with its neighbours. Tai provides a comprehensive historical overview, tracing China's diplomatic strategies from ancient times to the present. He analyses the geopolitical dynamics and How China's rise as a global power affects its relationships with neighbouring countries. The book includes detailed case studies of China's interactions with Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Malaysia, offering insights into specific regional dynamics.

Vietnam tends to align more closely with the US and other Western powers due to its historical conflicts with China. At the same time, Thailand maintains a more balanced approach, leveraging its strategic location and historical ties with China. Myanmar's political instability and ongoing civil conflicts have significant spill-over effects on Thailand, including refugee flows and border security issues. Despite political differences, Thailand and Myanmar have strong economic ties, particularly regarding energy and infrastructure. The Shan people are Thai, and the Thais migrated from Yunnan, China. China has historically extended its influence through tributary systems and cultural exchanges. It uses BRI to deepen its economic ties with Southeast Asian countries. It has strong ties with Thailand to counterbalance US influence. China's economic impact is expected to grow, potentially increasing dependency among ASEAN countries on Chinese investments and markets. There are ongoing tensions in the South China Sea and a host of unsavoury practices between Myanmar and China, such as trafficking in people, gems and illegal tree logging, and farms of online abuse and online upturn of the military junta.

India's Act East Policy aims to counterbalance China's influence by strengthening economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asian countries. India enhances trade, investment, and connectivity with ASEAN, promoting regional stability and economic growth.

The Eu prioritises trade and investment relations with Asean, negotiating bilateral trade agreements with individual ASEAN countries, the world's foremost

¹² <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3230682/china-military-power-report-examines-changes-in-beijings-strategy/>

¹³ <https://politicstoday.org/great-powers-foreign-policy-books-on-china-united-states-rivalry/>



growth zone. The EU promotes sustainable development and good governance practices in its engagement with Asrea, aligning with its broader foreign policy objectives. It has so far failed to strengthen ASEAN as a regional organisation in its multi-bilateral policy towards SE Asia and is neglecting to build its relationship with Indonesia, the host of ASEAN.

Tai discusses China's historical view of itself as the Middle Kingdom and how this perception influences its foreign policy. His book examines China's territorial claim in the South China Sea and its implications for regional stability. Tai highlights China's use of economic power to build influence and foster dependency among its neighbours. The analysis includes China's diplomatic strategies, such as bilateral agreements and participation in regional organisations.

While Tai provides a thorough historical context, some critics argue that the book could delve deeper into the contemporary political nuances and the internal factors driving China's foreign policy. The book is praised for its balanced perspective, but some readers feel it occasionally leans towards a more sympathetic view of China's actions. Tai's writing is accessible to both scholars and general readers, making complex geopolitical issues understandable.

Parag Khanna The Future is Asian—Global Order in the Twenty-First Century, 2019.

This book surveys the re-emergence of an Asian international political and economic system, implying a shift in global order from the Atlantic towards Asia, linking five billion people through trade, finance, infrastructure, and diplomatic networks representing 40% of global BNP. It's essential to get Asia right. Its significance in the world's economy is increasing exponentially. Asia is back with a great deal of self-confidence. This book reflects that using Buzan's conception of world history as a metaphor if not entirely applying it throughout this fine book. Khanna, a Singaporean of Indian descent, complained about the lack of respect in China for rule-of-law good governance and human rights. At the same time, it predicted the strengthening of technocracy in Europe due to the rise of Asia.

Khanna adopts a comprehensive and data-driven approach to analyse Asia's rise as a dominant global force. He uses historical context, economic data, geopolitical analysis, and cultural insights to present a detailed picture of Asia's growing influence. Khanna

highlights the rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, and technological advancements in Asian countries. He emphasises the region's economic growth and its impact on the global economy. The book discusses the complex relationships between major Asian powers like China, India, Japan, and Russia. Khanna argues that Asia is not a monolithic entity but a region characterised by a web of alliances, rivalries, and historical tensions. Khanna explores how Asian cultures reshape global business, governance, and lifestyle. He discusses the increasing assertiveness of Asian countries in pursuing their national interests and shaping regional and international agendas. Khanna views the BRI as a significant diplomatic project that promotes collective cultural, infrastructure, and commercial projects across Asia. He believes it will lead to increased Asian economic activity globally.

Some critics argue that Khanna's book challenges Western ideologies by emphasising Asia's economic and cultural primacy. They suggest that it may not fully address the complexities and contradictions within Asia itself. While Khanna acknowledges China's leadership in the BRI, some critics feel that the book might overemphasise China's role at the expense of other Asian countries. Western readers with an intense devotion to individual liberties might find Khanna's views on Asian governance models and economic strategies challenging. Khanna's book provides a compelling vision of Asia's future and its impact on the global stage. Still, it also invites readers to consider the diverse and multifaceted nature of the region. I read this book while travelling in East Asia, and it was enthralling. I warmly recommend it.

Ezra Vogel China and Japan facing history, 2019.

This book surveys the history of the China-Japan relationship, perhaps Asia's most important bilateral relationship, each aligned with different great powers. Japan, however, has a tradition of aligning with the stronger party, so a change of heart is not impossible in thirty-four years as China grows. At the same time, some voices in China propagate anti-Japanese feelings. Thus, the historical background of the relationship is essential in understanding the future course of North-East Asia.

Ezra Vogel's "China and Japan: Facing History" adopts a comparative historical approach, examining the complex and often contentious relationship between China and Japan over the centuries. Vogel, a renowned scholar with deep knowledge of Chinese and Japanese cultures, uses historical analysis to shed



light on contemporary Sino-Japanese relations. The book explores the deep cultural connections and mutual influences between China and Japan, dating back over 1,500 years. Vogel delves into periods of intense rivalry and conflict, such as the Sino-Japanese War and Japan's brutal occupation of China during World War II. The book examines the evolution of Sino-Japanese relations in the modern era, highlighting cooperation and tension. Vogel discusses the geopolitical significance of the Sino-Japanese relationship and its impact on regional and global stability. The book emphasises the historical cultural exchange between the two nations, including the influence of Chinese culture on Japan and vice versa. Vogel effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of Sino-Japanese relations. Overall, "China and Japan: Facing History" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of the complex relationship between these two Asian giants, making it a valuable contribution to international relations.

Barry Buzan & Evelyn Goh Rethinking Sino-Japanese Alienation. History Problems and Historical Opportunities. OUP, 2019.

Bitterly contested memories of war, colonisation, and empire Japan, China, and Korea have repeatedly threatened regional order and security. Identity, territory, and power increasingly pull Tokyo and Beijing in opposite directions. Thus, the book addresses the Japanese-Chinese relationship from a historical perspective in different phases, claiming the essential similarity between Japan and China's experience in modernising and catching up with the West, which relativises their perceived enmity. Unlike the Vogel book, the two political scientists proceed to elaborate different scenarios following from the historical *eclairage*: (1) a revitalisation and continuation of the status quo ante with the US a ring holder between China and Japan, (2) a US-China condominium (3) A Sino-Japanese Condominium (4) a new China-led regional order with Japanese acquiescence and US withdrawal or (5) balance-of-power competition between China on the one hand, and Japan and the US on the other. The point is that piecemeal approaches and comprehensive Chinese methods are needed. From this, the germ of a future course of action may be perceived: India-China peace and reconciliation; Peace on the Korean peninsula; progress on the Kashmir dispute; Dismantlement of the Junta in Myanmar, a struggling nation with an ancient history, Peace in Afghanistan; a new grand power bargain between Japan and China. Switching from one case to the other is a matter of strategy. It

requires harmonising the EU's relationship with China in the function of our intentions in Asia: "to go to emptiness and come back to wholeness." Thus, the power transition unfolding at global and regional levels necessitates careful calculations of The European Union's role in the world and the degree of dependency on China. Thus, rather than identifying the various forms the conflicts may take, unity may be derived from exploring the inventory of the possibilities for change in Asia.

Roy Anthony Rogers The Struggles for Human Rights in Xinjiang, 2019.

This book analyses the human rights conditions in Xinjiang and the internal and external factors influencing China's policies in this region since the 1970s. The human rights have been inconsistent, influenced by China's economic reforms starting in 1978. Various internal policies and external pressures have shaped China's approach to human rights in the region. The Uyghur population has faced significant challenges, including cultural suppression and economic marginalisation. Rogers recommends the Chinese government, Uyghur diaspora groups, and international actors like the United States to improve human rights protections.

He encourages international bodies to pressure China to adhere to human rights standards. We should promote diplomatic engagement with China to address human rights concerns through dialogue and cooperation. The Chinese government, in turn, could do several more things. First, it should implement policies that protect and promote Uyghur culture, language, and traditions. Second, it should ensure equitable economic opportunities for Uyghurs to reduce economic disparities. It could also strengthen legal protections for minority rights and ensure fair treatment under the law. It could also increase transparency in governance and allow independent monitoring of human rights conditions.

He recommends that the Uyghur groups continue their advocacy for human rights through peaceful means and international platforms. They should focus on community building, bolstering ties, and preserving cultural heritage. They should also work with other minority groups and international organisations to amplify their voices and concerns.

These recommendations aim to improve the human rights situation in Xinjiang by fostering cooperation, promoting cultural preservation, and ensuring economic and legal equity.



This may be compared to Li Lin, Li Xiaxia, and Lidija Fleiner's *On Minority Rights in China*, which provides an in-depth analysis of the legal and social protections afforded to minority groups in China, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses. They examine the social changes impacting minority groups, including economic development, urbanisation, and cultural shifts. The authors analyze various policies implemented by the Chinese government to protect minority rights and promote social harmony. This book includes case studies of different minority groups, providing a detailed look at their unique challenges and experiences.

While Roers focuses specifically on the Uyghur population in Xinjiang, Lin and Fleiner provide a broader overview of minority rights across China. Both works discuss the legal and policy frameworks, but Fleiner offers a more comprehensive analysis of the legal protections for various minority groups in China. Rogers emphasised cultural suppression and external pressures, whereas Lin and Fleiner focused on the broader social and economic changes affecting minority groups.

Graham Allison Destined for War. Can America Escape Thucydides' Trap, Scribe, 2020.

Why did the competition between Greece's two great powers ultimately produce a war that destroyed what each cherished most? The Harvard scholar Graham Allison asks: "According to Thucydides, the fundamental explanation lies in the depth of the structural stress between a rising and a ruling power. As the rivalry led Athens and Sparta into successive standoffs, the most passionate voices in each political system grew louder, their sense of pride stronger, their claims about threats posed by the adversary more pointed, and their challenge to leaders who sought to keep the peace more severe. Thucydides identifies three primary drivers fueling this dynamic that leads to war: interests, fear, and honour" (p.39). On this basis, Allison surveys the Chinese-US relationship, warning of the inevitability of conflict if US and EU leaders do not address historical lessons in managing their mutual relationship, a power transition.

Fang Ning China's Political System, Springer, 2020.

Ning adopts a new paradigm of empirical research. Instead of relying on a purely textual analysis, it uses

a method called **materialisation and dynamics** to describe and research the political system. This approach aims to provide a more dynamic and practical understanding of the contemporary Chinese political system. The book delves into the structure and functioning of the Communist Party's leadership. It examines how decisions are made within the Party and the government. The book explores the role and functioning of the People's Congresses in China. It analyses the relationship between central and local authorities. The book discusses the systems in place for training and selecting officials. It covers the mechanisms for inspecting and supervising discipline within the political system. The book looks at the system of consultative democracy in China. It examines how self-governance is practised at the community level.

While the book is praised for its comprehensive analysis and empirical approach, some critics argue that it may present a somewhat **idealised view** of the Chinese political system. They suggest that it downplays specific challenges and issues, such as corruption and the lack of transparency in decision-making processes. Additionally, while innovative, the book's empirical approach may not fully capture the complexities and nuances of political dynamics in China.

Kenneth Pomeranz's The Great Divergence. China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy, Princeton UP, 2020.

The Great Divergence sheds light on one of the great questions of history: Why did sustained growth begin in Northwest Europe? Historian Kenneth Pomeranz shows that as recently as 1750, life expectancy, consumption, and product and factor markets were comparable in Europe and East Asia. Moreover, key regions in China and Japan were better off ecologically than those in Western Europe, with each part facing corresponding shortages of land-intensive products. Pomeranz's comparative lens reveals the two critical factors of coal and access to trade with the New World. As East Asia's economy stagnated, Europe narrowly escaped the same fate primarily due to favourable resource stocks from underground and overseas.

Kenneth Pomeranz compares the economic development of Europe and China, mainly focusing on the Yangzi Delta region in China and England. He argues that Europe and China were similar in technology, urbanisation, and per capita income



before the Industrial Revolution. Pomeranz identifies two key factors that led to Europe's divergence: the availability of cheap energy (coal) and access to vast resources in the Americas. He emphasises that Europe's industrial growth was not due to inherent superiority but rather specific historical circumstances, including ecological contingencies. Pomeranz highlights the role of colonial exploitation in Europe's rise, arguing that the exploitation of the Americas provided Europe with resources and markets. He also discusses the environmental costs of Europe's industrialisation, pointing out the ecological damage caused by coal usage and colonial exploitation. Pomeranz's meticulous research and comparative methodology provide a thorough understanding of the Great Divergence, though some critics argue that his focus on Europe and China may overlook other regions. While Pomeranz challenges Eurocentric views of history, some scholars believe his work still operates within a Eurocentric framework.

Recent scholarship has critiqued Pomeranz's methodology, suggesting that his two-way comparative approach may have methodological limitations. Despite these critiques, Pomeranz's work remains influential in economic history, reshaping debates over the historical causes of Europe's rapid industrialisation. Overall, "The Great Divergence" is a thought-provoking and well-researched exploration of the economic and social changes that led to the rise of the West and the divergence between Western Europe and East Asia.

David Shambaugh China and the World, OUP, 2020.

This volume gathers experts on China's foreign policy to examine its foreign relations, edited by a seasoned expert on China affairs. As the world evolves in increasingly unpredictable directions, one of the keys will surely be the impact of China. The book's authors argue that China brings its benefits but is also a problematic interlocutor for others. It touches upon continuity in transformation in the long-term by Chinese ideas for a new type of great power politics presented in 2013 by Xi Jinping, which had a defensive purpose of preventing an Asian system organised against China, but which was perceived as a bit for hegemony by the US, at which point the bilateral relationship derailed. The US became bent on grappling with China flying.

Ananth Krishnan India's China Challenge. A Journey Through China's and What it Means for India, Harper Collins, 2020.

In this book, long-rime Beijing-resident journalist Ananth Krishnan unpacks the India-China relationship, which is fourfold: The political challenge of dealing with a one-party state that is looking to shape global institutions increasingly; the military challenge of managing an unresolved border; the economic challenge of both learning from China's remarkable and unique growth story and building a closer relationship; and the conceptual challenge of changing how we think about and engage with our most important neighbour. This book provides a good introduction.

Krishnan, a seasoned journalist, leverages his extensive experience reporting from China to provide an in-depth analysis of the complex relationship between India and China. The book is structured thematically, divided into six parts and 24 chapters, each focusing on different aspects of the bilateral relationship.

The book examines the political dynamics of dealing with a one-party state that seeks to shape global institutions. It addresses the unresolved border issues and the military tensions between the two countries. Krishnan explores China's unique growth story and the potential for economic cooperation and competition between India and China. The book discusses the need to rethink and reframe how India engages with its most important neighbor. The book is commended for its insightful reporting and deep understanding of China's internal political and social transformations. The book is commended for its insightful reporting and deep understanding of China's internal political and social transformations. However, some readers might find the extensive detail overwhelming, and the focus on a chronological approach might limit the exploration of thematic or stylistic analyses.

Geoffrey F. Gresh To Rule Eurasia's Waves. The New Great Power Competition at Sea, Yale UP, 2020.

The author of this excellent book, Geoffrey F. Gresh, is a professor at the National Defence University in D.C. He contends that Eurasia's emerging powers – India, China, and Russia – have increasingly embraced their maritime geographies as they have expanded their economies, military capabilities, and global influence. Maritime Eurasia, a region that facilitates



international commerce and contains some of the world's most strategic chokepoints, has already caused a shift in the global political economy and challenged the dominance of the Atlantic world and the United States. The author explores the implications of the melting Arctic ice cap for shipping lanes, which is likely to exacerbate a contest for controlling Arctic natural resources. This is an over-the-horizon issue since less than 30 ships ply the Northern Eastern Passage annually. Finally, he considers the shifts from Europe to the Indian Ocean and Pacific Asia. In short, the gringos have a hegemonic role in today's world but are hesitant to exercise it. This a worthwhile book, which I read with interest.

Xu Xiujiun The BRICS Studies Theories and Issues, Routledge, 2020.

Xu Xiujiun's "The BRICS Studies: Theories and Issues" adopts a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive approach. The book integrates perspectives from international relations, political economy, and global governance to analyze the cooperation and challenges among BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). Xu Xiujiun draws on a wide range of sources, including academic research, policy analysis, and historical data, to provide a panoramic view of BRICS cooperation. The book situates BRICS cooperation within the broader historical context of global political and economic shifts. Xu Xiujiun highlights the importance of policy coordination among BRICS countries to address common challenges and promote sustainable growth. The book emphasizes the complementary advantages of BRICS countries and how these can be leveraged to foster robust, sustainable, and balanced growth in the world economy. The experiences and lessons learned from the BRICS cooperation are presented as positive role models for other countries and regions. The book discusses the new challenges faced by BRICS countries, such as slowing economic growth and complex geopolitical situations, and explores potential opportunities for enhanced cooperation.

Expanding BRICS can enhance the group's economic influence on the global stage, giving it a stronger voice in international economic institutions. Adding new members can diversify the group's economic base, bringing in new resources, markets, and investment opportunities. Expansion can foster stronger strategic partnerships among member countries, promoting regional stability and cooperation. A larger BRICS can better represent the developing world's interests,

challenging the dominance of Western-led institutions.

Expansion can exacerbate tensions and create new conflicts among members, especially given the diverse political and economic interests. China's significant economic power may lead to an imbalance within the group, potentially causing friction with other members. Managing a larger group with diverse interests can complicate decision-making and policy coordination. Including countries with conflicting interests (e.g., Saudi Arabia and Iran) can strain the group's unity.

China's leadership can strengthen BRICS' position as a counterbalance to Western dominance in global economic governance. China can leverage BRICS to secure essential resources and expand its trade and investment networks. China can build strategic alliances within BRICS to promote its geopolitical interests and challenge Western hegemony. China's assertiveness may lead to tensions with other BRICS members, particularly India, undermining the group's cohesion. The economic dependence on China might limit the autonomy of other BRICS members and create vulnerabilities. China's dominance may cause internal divisions and hinder the group's ability to present a united front on global issues. Expanding economic cooperation within BRICS presents both opportunities and challenges. While it can enhance the group's global influence and economic diversity, it also risks internal conflicts and overreliance on China. Balancing these factors will be crucial for the future success of BRICS.

While the book provides a comprehensive overview, some readers might find the depth of analysis overwhelming due to the extensive detail and breadth of topics covered. The emphasis on BRICS countries might overshadow the roles of other significant regional players and their interactions with BRICS. Given the rapidly changing global landscape, some of the book's analyses and predictions may need updating to reflect recent developments. Using complex theoretical frameworks might be challenging for readers not well-versed in international relations theories. Overall, "The BRICS Studies: Theories and Issues" offers valuable insights into the cooperation and challenges among BRICS countries, making it a helpful resource for scholars and students in international relations and global politics.



David Dollar, Yiping Huang & Yang Yao China 2049, Economic Challenges of a Rising Global Power, Brookings Institution Press, 2020.

China is on track to be the world's next economic superpower. Still, it faces tremendous challenges, including a need to foster innovation, a rapidly ageing population, and a global environment sceptical of a more powerful People's Republic. This book results from a collaborative effort among economists from China's University and Brookings's Institution. It explores several essential questions: Does China have enough talent and the right policy and institutional mix to transition from an input-driven to an innovation-driven economy? What does an ageing population mean for the country in terms of labour supply, consumer demand, and social welfare expenditures? Can China contain environmental and climate change risks? How should the financial system be transformed to support economic growth and keep financial risks under control continuously? The contributors also consider the roles state-owned enterprises play in the future Chinese economy, how technological competition between the United States and China will affect each country's development, China's future role in the international monetary system, and whether the United States and other established powers will accept a growing role for China and the rest of the developing world in the governance of global institutions such as the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund. Thus, the book provides an overview of China's challenges in economic policy, ranging from fostering innovation to a rapidly ageing population and managing an uncertain global environment concerned with a more powerful People's Republic. Or the Republic of Desire.

Nong Hong China's role in the Arctic. Observing and being observed 2020.

Nong Hong's book, "China's Role in the Arctic: Observing and Being Observed" (2020), explores China's growing interests in the Arctic and examines the nature of its involvement and motivations. Hong adopts a three-dimensional approach to analyse China's role in the Arctic concerning China's role in international institutions, China's relationship with Arctic stakeholders and China's sectoral engagement in the Arctic. Hong interprets China's Arctic policy white paper published in 2018, emphasising cooperation, scientific research, economic opportunities, and respect for international law. The book discusses China's approach to international cooperation in the Arctic, highlighting its efforts to

work with Arctic states and other stakeholders. Hong examines China's involvement in shipping, resource development, and scientific research in the Arctic. Nordic countries generally hold a **cautious yet cooperative attitude** towards China's involvement in the Arctic. While they recognise China as an indispensable partner for economic and scientific collaboration, they also view it as a potential regional destabiliser. There are concerns about China's authoritarian leadership and its potential impact on Arctic geopolitics. The tension between China's economic investments and the fear of political influence in the region. He challenges the balance of cooperation with China while managing competition and security concerns.

Russia and China have been expanding their cooperation in the Arctic across several domains, including infrastructure, military, energy, and environmental sectors. Russia and China have been working on the Arctic Express route, part of the Ice Silk Road initiative. This project aims to develop the shortest path from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic via the Arctic. The Arctic Express route, launched in July 2024, connects Moscow to Arkhangelsk, where cargo is transferred to vessels bound for Shanghai. The two countries have conducted joint naval exercises, coast guard patrols, and strategic bomber air training in the Arctic. Notably, in July 2024, four Russian and Chinese strategic bombers flew over the Chukchi Sea and the Bering Sea. This increased military collaboration has raised concerns among NATO countries, particularly the United States. China has invested significantly in Russia's Arctic energy projects. For instance, the China National Petroleum Corporation acquired a 20% stake in the **Yamal LNG** natural gas processing project in 2013. This partnership aims to secure energy resources and enhance trade relations between the two nations. While less information is available on environmental cooperation, both countries have shown interest in addressing climate change impacts in the Arctic. This includes scientific research and potential collaboration on environmental protection measures. The growing Arctic cooperation between Russia and China has significant geopolitical implications. It challenges the traditional dominance of Arctic nations and raises concerns about regional stability.

The United States and other NATO members are closely monitoring these developments and are considering strategies to counterbalance the influence of Russia and China in the region.



Aravind Yelery's *Tailspin: The Politics of India-China Economic Relations*, Routledge, 2021.

Aravind Yelery's "Tailspin: The Politics of India-China Economic Relations" adopts a multi-disciplinary approach, integrating perspectives from political economy, international relations, and economic diplomacy. The book examines the complex and often contentious economic relationship between India and China, highlighting the underlying political and strategic dimensions. The book situates the India-China economic relationship within a broader historical framework, tracing the evolution of their interactions over time. It analyzes the patterns of trade and investment between the two countries, emphasizing the economic interdependence and the challenges it poses. The book explores how geopolitical tensions, such as border disputes and strategic rivalries, impact economic relations. It examines the policy responses of both countries to manage and mitigate the economic and political challenges in their relationship. The book discusses the broader implications of the India-China economic relationship for regional and global economic dynamics. While the book provides a comprehensive overview, some readers might find the depth of analysis overwhelming due to the extensive detail and breadth of topics covered. The emphasis on India and China might overshadow the roles of other significant regional players and their interactions with the two countries.

Given the rapidly changing global landscape, some of the book's analyses and predictions may need updating to reflect recent developments. The use of complex theoretical frameworks might be challenging for readers who are not well-versed in international relations theories.

The Routledge Handbook of China-India Relations, edited by Kanti Bajpai, Selina Ho, and Manjari Chatterjee Miller, also provides a comprehensive analysis of the India-China relationship but from a broader perspective. It includes contributions from multiple experts and covers a wide range of topics, including historical overviews, cultural and strategic culture, core bilateral conflicts, military relations, economy and development, and relations with third parties. While both books offer valuable insights into the India-China relationship, Yelery's book focuses more on the economic and political dimensions, whereas the Routledge Handbook provides a more

diverse and thematic approach, covering various aspects of the bilateral relationship.

Thomas Christiansen, Emil Kirchner & See Seng Tan *The European Union's Security Relations with Asian Partners*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2021.

This book provides a background to EU-Asia security relations, dimensions in Eu-Asia Security Relations, Eu-Asia Security: bilateral ties, and the role of External Powers. It builds on former research projects on EU-Japan and EU-China security relations extended to the whole region, drawing on developments in public policy and the evolution of research since the publication of the EU-Asia Handbook.

Thomas Christiansen, Emil Kirchner, and See Seng Tan's "The European Union's Security Relations with Asian Partners" adopts a **comparative and interdisciplinary approach**, drawing on international relations, political economy, and security studies. The book brings together contributions from leading experts to examine the evolving dynamics between the EU and its key Asian partners in the context of global changes. The book explores the international context in which EU-Asia security relations develop, including the influence of major powers like the US and Russia. It covers a range of security dimensions, including traditional military security, non-proliferation, energy security, and climate change. The book examines specific bilateral relations between the EU and its Asian partners, highlighting convergence and divergence in threat perception and policy response. It discusses the institutional channels facilitating regular interactions between the EU and Asia and how these interactions contribute to joint actions in various security areas. The book presents an overall assessment of EU-Asia security relations and offers insights into the future outlook for cooperation and challenges. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of EU-Asia security relations, but some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. It offers a balanced view, acknowledging the opportunities and challenges in EU-Asia security relations. The book effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics in EU-Asia security relations.

Overall, "The European Union's Security Relations with Asian Partners" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of the complex interactions



between the EU and its Asian partners, making it a valuable contribution to international relations.

Michael Wesley China and The Pacific Islands, New Zealand, 2021.

The book explores the economic and political interactions between China and the Pacific Island countries. Wesley examines how China's increasing presence in the region has led to both opportunities and challenges for the Pacific Island nations. He discusses China's strategic interests, including its Belt and Road Initiative, and how these initiatives have impacted the regional dynamics. Wesley highlights China's economic investments in the Pacific Islands, including infrastructure projects and trade relations. The book discusses China's efforts to expand its political influence in the region through diplomatic engagements and strategic partnerships. Wesley analyzes the geopolitical competition between China and traditional powers like the United States, Australia, and New Zealand in the Pacific region. The book examines the potential impact of this competition on regional stability and the responses of Pacific Island nations. Critics have praised the book for its comprehensive analysis and insightful perspectives on China's role in the Pacific. However, some have pointed out that the book could delve deeper into the socio-cultural impacts of China's presence in the region and provide more case studies of specific interactions.

Oceania, often referred to as the "outer periphery," has become increasingly significant in China's strategic priorities. China has been actively engaging with Pacific Island countries through trade, investment, and infrastructure projects. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a major component of this engagement, aiming to enhance connectivity and economic cooperation. China has been expanding its diplomatic presence in the region, establishing stronger ties with Pacific Island nations. This includes providing aid, loans, and technical assistance, which has helped China gain political influence. China's interest in Oceania is partly driven by its desire to counterbalance the influence of traditional powers like the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. By gaining support from Pacific Island nations, China aims to isolate Taiwan and strengthen its position in regional geopolitics. China has also shown interest in environmental cooperation, particularly in addressing climate change impacts in the region. This includes scientific research and potential collaboration on environmental protection measures. Critics argue that China's growing presence in Oceania could lead to

increased dependency on Chinese aid and investment, potentially undermining the sovereignty of Pacific Island nations. There are also concerns about the environmental and social impacts of large-scale infrastructure projects. Overall, Oceania plays a crucial role in China's broader strategy to expand its influence and secure its interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

To make the relationship between Oceania and external powers less asymmetric and ensure equilibrium among the Pacific Islands, several strategies can be employed. Encouraging stronger regional cooperation among Pacific Island nations can help balance external influences. This includes forming regional alliances and organizations that can collectively negotiate with larger powers. Pacific Island nations should diversify their international partnerships to avoid over-reliance on a single external power. Engaging with multiple countries and international organizations can provide more balanced support and reduce dependency. Investing in local capacity building, including education, healthcare, and infrastructure, can reduce the need for external assistance. Empowering local communities and governments can lead to more self-sufficient and resilient nations. Focusing on sustainable development can help Pacific Island nations achieve long-term stability. This includes addressing climate change, protecting natural resources, and promoting economic diversification. Ensuring fair trade practices and equitable market access can help Pacific Island nations benefit more from their resources. This includes advocating for better trade agreements and reducing trade barriers. Enhancing diplomatic efforts and engaging in international forums can help Pacific Island nations voice their concerns and interests. Active participation in global discussions can lead to more balanced and equitable outcomes.

By implementing these strategies, Oceania can work towards a more balanced and equitable relationship with external powers, ensuring that the interests of Pacific Island nations are better represented and protected.



Thierry Kellner & Sophie Wintgens China-Latin America and the Caribbean Assessment and Outlook, Routledge, 2021.

China-Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment and Outlook," edited by Thierry Kellner and Sophie Wintgens, adopts a multi-disciplinary and empirical approach. The book is a compilation of contributions from experts across three continents, providing a comprehensive analysis of the political, economic, and geopolitical dynamics initiated by China's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean between 2008 and 2020. The book examines the political relationships that China has developed with almost all Latin American and Caribbean countries, highlighting both the benefits and challenges these relationships have brought. It analyzes the economic impact of China's presence, including trade, investment, and infrastructure projects, and how these have influenced local economies. The book explores the geopolitical implications of China's growing influence in the region, including the emergence of new forms of dependence and the potential for a zero-sum game with the United States. It considers the phenomenon of deindustrialization in Latin America and how China's economic activities have contributed to this trend. The book investigates the challenges that the densification of China's relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries poses to traditional partners like the United States and European countries, as well as to Latin American regionalism.

While the book provides a comprehensive overview, some readers might find the depth of analysis overwhelming due to the extensive detail and breadth of topics covered. The emphasis on China and its relations with Latin American and Caribbean countries might overshadow the roles of other significant regional players and their interactions with China. Given the rapidly changing global landscape, some of the book's analyses and predictions may need updating to reflect recent developments. Overall, "China-Latin America and the Caribbean: Assessment and Outlook" offers valuable insights into the multifaceted relationship between China and the region, making it a useful resource for scholars and students of Chinese foreign and economic policy, Latin America, the Caribbean, and wider geopolitics.

If China becomes the main trading partner of all Latin American countries except Mexico by 2035, it could have several significant implications. Latin American countries would diversify their trade partners, reducing their dependence on traditional markets like

the United States and Europe. Increased trade with China could stimulate economic growth in Latin America, providing new markets for exports and attracting Chinese investments in infrastructure and other sectors. The region might become more reliant on exporting commodities to China, which could expose them to fluctuations in global commodity prices. China's growing economic presence could enhance its geopolitical influence in the region, potentially challenging the traditional dominance of the United States. Latin American countries might seek closer strategic alliances with China, aligning themselves with Beijing on international issues. The shift in trade partnerships could alter regional dynamics, leading to new alliances and potential tensions among Latin American countries. Increased Chinese investment could create new employment opportunities in Latin America, boosting local economies and improving living standards. Enhanced economic ties could lead to greater cultural exchange and cooperation between China and Latin American countries. Overreliance on China could make Latin American economies vulnerable to changes in Chinese economic policies and global market conditions. Trade imbalances could arise if Latin American countries primarily export raw materials to China while importing higher-value manufactured goods. Increased economic activity could lead to environmental degradation if not managed sustainably. Overall, while China becoming the main trading partner of Latin American countries could bring economic opportunities and diversification, it also poses challenges and risks that need to be carefully managed.

James M. Smith & Paul J. Bolt China's Strategic Arsenal: Worldview, Doctrine and Systems, Georgetown UP, 2021.

This book assesses all essential aspects of China's increasingly capable nuclear arsenal. The book surveys the technical, doctrinal, geopolitical, and cultural dimensions of the evolving atomic thinking that appears to be shaping China's current and future policy. Experts by experts make the contributions. Nine chapters address the US-Chinese Relationship and China as Twenty-First Century Strategic Power, China's "Nested" worldview, China's Nuclear Doctrine and Deterrence Concept, Strategic Stability and the impact of China's Modernizing Strategic Strike Forces, China's Strategic Systems and Programs, China's Regional Nuclear Capability, Non-nuclear Strategic Systems, and integration of Concepts and Operations, Organization of China's Strategic



Forces, China on Arms Control, Nonproliferation, and Strategic Stability and China's Strategic Future.

China's modernization of its nuclear arsenal and its shift away from being a second-tier nuclear power have several significant implications for the region, the EU, and the Pacific:

China's enhanced nuclear capabilities could heighten tensions with neighboring countries, particularly those with existing territorial disputes. There may be a regional arms race as neighboring countries seek to bolster their own military capabilities in response to China's advancements. Countries in the region might seek stronger strategic alliances with the US and other global powers to counterbalance China's growing military influence. The EU may have heightened security concerns, particularly regarding China's potential to project power beyond its immediate region. The EU might need to reassess its diplomatic relations with China, balancing economic interests with security considerations. The EU could push for stronger nuclear non-proliferation measures and dialogue to prevent further escalation. The US may perceive China's modernization as a threat, potentially leading to increased military presence and strategic maneuvers in the Pacific. Allied nations in the Pacific, such as Japan and Australia, might feel compelled to enhance their defense capabilities and deepen security ties with the US. The overall stability of the Pacific region could be affected, with increased military activities and potential flashpoints. China's shift towards a more robust nuclear posture underscores the need for careful diplomatic engagement and strategic planning by regional and global actors to maintain stability and prevent escalation.

Paul Bolt and Paul Smith, in their work on China's strategic arsenal, argue that concerns about China's political ambitions might be overstated. They emphasize that China's approach to military competition is guided by a notion of strategic stability. This means that China aims to avoid a strategic arms race with the United States and instead seeks a stable relationship. They believe that China's nuclear doctrine and deterrence concept are designed to ensure mutual vulnerability, which reduces the risk of nuclear conflict. Regarding whether we have anything to fear from China's political ambitions, it's important to recognize that China's growing strategic capabilities and modernizing nuclear arsenal do raise questions about its future intentions. However, the key uncertainties lie in whether China's new capabilities will lead it to be more assertive and take more risks. Nuclear arms play a significant role in international

politics as a vector of power and deterrence. They have historically been used to maintain a balance of power and prevent large-scale conflicts. In the current geopolitical landscape, nuclear weapons continue to influence the behavior of states, with some seeing them as essential for their security. The evolving role of nuclear weapons, especially with the emergence of new technologies and changing global dynamics, makes them a critical factor in international relations.

The presence of multiple nuclear-armed states in Asia can be attributed to several factors:

The region has a history of significant conflicts and tensions, such as the Korean War, the Sino-Indian War, and the Indo-Pakistani Wars. These conflicts have driven countries to seek nuclear capabilities as a deterrent. Asia is home to major powers like China, India, and Pakistan, each with strategic interests and rivalries. Nuclear weapons are seen as a means to ensure national security and deter potential adversaries. The presence of US military forces in the region, particularly in Japan and South Korea, has influenced neighbouring countries to develop their nuclear capabilities as a counterbalance. Some countries, like India and Pakistan, have not signed the NPT and have pursued atomic weapons independently. North Korea withdrew from the NPT and continued its nuclear program. The complex security dynamics in Asia, including territorial disputes and alliances, have contributed to the proliferation of atomic weapons as a means of ensuring security and influence. These factors have led to a situation where several countries in Asia possess nuclear weapons, contributing to regional tensions and the need for careful diplomatic engagement to maintain stability.

James A. Milward Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang, Hurst Publ., 2021.

Xinjiang, the vast northwestern region comprising one-sixth of the PRC today, borders India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and Mongolia. Since antiquity, it has stood at the crossroads between China, India, the Middle East, and Russia. Today, Xinjiang's historic Silk Road linkages have gone global. At the same time, the Belt and Road initiative and repression of the Uyghurs have drawn the world's attention to the geographical centre of Eurasia. James Milward draws on primary sources and scholarly research in several European and Asian languages to provide the first general account in English of the history of Xinjiang and its people from the earliest times to the present. "Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang" by James A. Millward is a



comprehensive historical account of Xinjiang, a region that has played a pivotal role in the social, cultural, and political histories of Asia. Millward employs a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on primary sources in several Asian and European languages. He integrates historical, cultural, and geopolitical analyses to thoroughly understand Xinjiang's rich heritage and its significance over time.

Millward highlights Xinjiang's role as a hub of the Silk Road, facilitating the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam into China. The book explores the interactions between Sinic, steppe nomadic, Tibetan, and Islamic imperial realms. Millward discusses Xinjiang's strategic position and its impact on domestic and international politics, especially in the context of the Chinese Communist Party's policies. The book examines the diverse indigenous Central Asian peoples and their challenges under the Han-dominated Chinese Communist Party. The Han Chinese come across as thieves who call themselves Coran readers. Their ethnocide is the result of the exploitation of Uygyur's rich underground. Beijing neither shares wealth with the local government nor respects the need to strengthen the local government, reduce inequalities, and spread wealth from the coastal regions inland. Thus, Xinjiang has become a post-colonial enterprise. Beijing is not credible. If China's projection of power into Central Asia cannot be correlated with a balanced and harmonious approach to the Uygyurs, coupled with correct actions in Xinjiang. Or, as a Chinese proverb says: "If you work hard enough at it, you can grind even an iron rod down to a needle".

Critics have praised the book for its balanced and empirically grounded analysis. However, some argue it could delve deeper into the region's contemporary socio-political issues and human rights concerns. Others suggest that while the book is comprehensive, its depth and breadth might overwhelm casual readers. After all, three feet of ice does not form in a single day.

This volume could be read together with Gulbahar Haitwaji and Rozenn Morgat's *How I Survived a Chinese Re-education Camp*.

Michael Smith & Laura C. Ferreira-Pereira *The European Union's Strategic Partnerships. Global Diplomacy in a Contested World*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2021.

This book aims to provide a critical analysis of the nature of the EU's strategic partnership diplomacy and the partnerships themselves in the conditions of the

2020s. It links with vital aspects of the EU's global strategy. It brings together a substantial list of experts who work within a clear framework for analysis. It deals not only with the substance of the policy but also with how it has emerged, is conducted, and might develop in the future. Chapter ten on the EU-China strategic partnership is written by Andrew Cottey, *The EU and China: Partnership in China & the World Changing Times*. The book calls for a strategy toward the EU's Strategic Partnerships, provides an inventory for a shift toward a plan, and deplores the lack of communication on the EU's Strategic Partnerships. Instead of taking action necessarily momentarily, the world has transformed by itself, and it is from this continuity effect that has proceeded. The non-action opted by the High Representatives proceeding Lady Ashton has, in this sense, been somewhat effective, taking into consideration hesitation and opposition to a new excellent power concert on a global scale. Thus, a multi-bilateral policy review of the EU's Strategic Partnerships toward an EU-led international society is now very much appropriate and tunes in with the idea of a new type of excellent power policy (Xin Xing Dagou Guanxi), launched in 2013. The concept of forging an Amarna-like international society in the Middle East exists. Is a new world order finally in the making?

Scott Brown *Power, Perception and Foreign Policymaking: US and EU Responses: US and EU responses to the rise of China*, Routledge, 2021.

China has been known in the past for engaging in perception management. This book addresses American and European elites' perceptions of China's rise. In doing so, Brown examines the changing dynamics in the international arena since the end of the Cold War. The analytical focus is on the changing perceptions of US policy-makers to the rise of China, comparing the similarities and differences in perception, policy discourse, and behaviour between these two Western powers. Brown argues that China's rise is a contested notion, yet its ascendancy shapes policy preferences in ways inconsistent with concerns over the threat of an impending power transition. Combining concepts and methods derived from IR and FPA, the book examines the linkages between great power politics and policymakers' competing interpretations of key international actors and their impact on foreign policies. Decision-making processes and outcomes are analysed to this effect. Sebastian Biba & Reinhard Wolf in *Europe in an Era of Growing Sino-American Competition* pleads for a more pragmatic and independent European foreign policy.



Adam Grydehøj *China and the Pursuit of Harmony in world Politics*, Routledge, 2021.

Adam Grydehøj's book "China and the Pursuit of Harmony in World Politics" (2021) explores the concept of harmony in Chinese international relations (IR) theory and its implications for global politics. Grydehøj adopts a decolonial approach, focusing on China's cultural and epistemic terms. The book is rooted in ancient Chinese thought and contemporary Chinese IR theory, analyzing how these traditions influence China's foreign policy.

The book describes three traditions of the concept of harmony in ancient Chinese thought. These are rooted in Confucian philosophy, this tradition emphasizes moral virtue, social harmony, and hierarchical relationships. It advocates for a harmonious society through ethical governance and mutual respect among individuals and states. Inspired by Daoist philosophy, this tradition focuses on natural order, balance, and non-action (wu wei). It promotes harmony through aligning with the natural flow of events and minimizing interference in both domestic and international affairs. Based on Legalist thought, this tradition emphasizes strict laws, centralized control, and the rule of law to achieve social order and harmony. It advocates for strong state power and clear regulations to maintain stability and harmony. These traditions provide a foundation for understanding China's approach to international relations and its pursuit of harmony in global politics.

It analyzes three strands of contemporary Chinese IR theory that draw upon traditional thinking. This strand draws from traditional Chinese thought, emphasizing the importance of state power, national interest, and the balance of power. It advocates for a pragmatic approach to international relations, focusing on maintaining stability and security. This strand focuses on the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping international relations. It emphasizes the importance of cultural and historical contexts in understanding state behavior and promoting mutual understanding and cooperation. This strand is rooted in Marxist and Leninist thought, highlighting the role of class struggle, economic factors, and historical materialism in international relations. It advocates for a revolutionary approach to global politics, aiming to create a more equitable and just world order. These strands provide a comprehensive framework for understanding China's approach to international relations and its pursuit of harmony in global politics.

The book presents different recommendations for achieving harmonious relations, advocating for a radical deepening of China's relations with other countries and intense interdependence for global peace and prosperity. Harmonious recommendations are:

1. Mutual Respect and Non-Interference: This recommendation emphasizes respecting the sovereignty and cultural practices of other nations. It involves refraining from interfering in the internal affairs of other states and recognizing their right to self-determination.

2. Cooperation and Win-Win Solutions: Promoting cooperative and mutually beneficial relationships is key. This approach encourages collaboration in areas like trade, technology, and environmental protection, where all parties can gain. This is not a *deus ex machina* but requires strategies.

3. Inclusive Dialogue: Ensuring open and inclusive dialogue between nations helps resolve conflicts and misunderstandings. It involves regular diplomatic engagements and multilateral discussions to address global challenges collectively.

4. Sustainable Development: Prioritizing sustainable development initiatives that consider economic, social, and environmental factors helps create long-term stability and prosperity. This includes focusing on green technologies and equitable resource distribution.

5. Cultural Exchange: Promoting cultural exchange programs and people-to-people connections fosters mutual understanding and goodwill. This can be achieved through academic exchanges, tourism, and cultural events.

Grydehøj applies harmonious IR perspectives to the Belt and Road Initiative, demonstrating how understanding Chinese IR theories can illuminate the motivations behind Chinese foreign policy.

1. Holistic Approaches: Applying harmonious principles requires considering the broader impact of policies and actions. This means integrating economic, social, and environmental considerations into decision-making processes.

2. Balance of Interests: Ensuring a balance of interests among all parties involved is crucial. This



consists of negotiating agreements that consider the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders.

3. Long-Term Perspective: Focusing on long-term outcomes rather than short-term gains is essential for achieving harmony. Policies should be designed to benefit future generations and promote sustainable development.

Critics appreciate the book's **comprehensive analysis** and **insightful perspectives** on Chinese IR theory. However, some argue that the book could provide more detailed case studies and explore the socio-cultural impacts of China's foreign policy.

And so, joining these to correct action is then essential, once the analysis is set:

1. Implementation: Correct actions involve effectively implementing the recommendations and strategies identified in the analysis. This requires strong governance, transparency, and accountability.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation: Monitoring and evaluating the implemented policies and actions are crucial. This helps identify any issues or deviations from the desired outcomes and allows for timely adjustments.

3. Adaptability: Being adaptable and open to change is essential. The international landscape constantly evolves, and policies should be flexible enough to respond to new challenges and opportunities.

4. Collaboration: Continuous collaboration with international partners ensures that actions remain aligned with the principles of harmony. This includes fostering trust and cooperation through transparent communication and shared goals.

By following these recommendations and principles, nations can work towards achieving harmonious international relations that promote stability, prosperity, and mutual understanding.

Nian Peng International Pressures, Strategic Preference, and Myanmar's China Policy since 1988, Springer, 2021.

What are the driving forces of Myanmar's China policy? The author addresses this question from a neo-realist perspective by connecting systemic and unit variables that refer to the external environment and domestic restraints. This is a rarity in the IR literature

on Myanmar's foreign policy. Nian Peng explains how Myanmar's relationship with China is a function of the country's leaders' political preferences pendulating between isolation and integration. The book contains seven chapters, outlines and reviews the origins and evolution of Myanmar's China policy, and predicts its future direction. Nian Peng uses neo-classical realism, which connects systemic (external) and unit (domestic) variables to explain state behaviour. This approach helps to understand how international pressures and domestic constraints shape Myanmar's China policy. The book introduces the concept of Myanmar's strategic preferences, specifically "integration" and "isolation. These preferences have influenced Myanmar's responses to China over the years. The book examines different periods of Myanmar's China policy, including swing to China (1988-2004), alienation from China (2005-2010), hedging against China (2011-2015), and approaching China (2016-2020). It analyses the international pressures and benefits that have impacted Myanmar's policy towards China. The book provides predictions on the future direction of Myanmar's China policy based on historical trends and current dynamics.

Some critics argue that while the book provides a comprehensive overview, it may lack an in-depth analysis of certain aspects of Myanmar's domestic politics. There is a debate on whether the book sufficiently addresses the negative impacts of China's influence on Myanmar, such as human rights issues. While the book extensively covers Myanmar's policy towards China, some critics feel that it could have included more on Myanmar's broader foreign policy strategies. Overall, Nian Peng's work is praised for its theoretical contribution and comprehensive analysis, but like any scholarly work, it has areas where it can be critiqued and expanded upon.

Together with Michael Aung-Thwin's *A History of Myanmar since Ancient Times: Traditions and Transformations* and Thant Myint-U's *The Hidden History of Burma: Race, Capitalism and the Crisis of Democracy in the 21st Century*, the books make a pleasant read. Ashok Kumar's *India-Myanmar Relations: A Strategic Perspective* provides the Indian narrative, while David I. Steinberg addresses China's contemporary approach to Myanmar in *Modern China-Myanmar Relations*.

Myanmar's struggle to unite its diverse ethnicities and transition beyond military rule is deeply rooted in its complex history and socio-political landscape. Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, has a history of



ethnic diversity and conflict. The British colonial rule amalgamated various independent kingdoms and principalities, creating a state with over 130 ethnic groups. Post-independence, the central government has often been dominated by the Bamar majority, leading to tensions with other ethnic groups. Since gaining independence in 1948, Myanmar has experienced prolonged periods of military rule. The military, known as the Tatmadaw, has played a significant role in the country's governance, often prioritising its interests over democratic reforms. The 2021 coup further entrenched military control, leading to widespread civil unrest and resistance. Ethnic conflicts have been a persistent issue in Myanmar. Various ethnic groups have fought for autonomy and recognition, leading to ongoing civil wars. Disagreements over resource management, land rights, and political representation have fueled these conflicts.

To help Myanmar transition to a stable state, several steps could be taken:

1. **Inclusive Governance:** Establishing a federal democracy that respects the autonomy and rights of all ethnic groups.
2. **Ceasefire Agreements:** Encouraging dialogue and ceasefire agreements between the government and ethnic armed groups.
3. **Economic Development:** Investing in infrastructure and economic opportunities in conflict-affected areas to reduce poverty and inequality.

Myanmar's journey towards unity and stability is challenging but not impossible. It requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders, including the government, ethnic groups, and the international community, to build a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Raffaello Pantucci & Alexandros Petersen
Sinostan – China's Inadvertent Empire, 2022.

This satisfactory book surveys China's Central Asian policies and the elements thereof in a comprehensive manner.

The authors employ a multi-level analysis, combining global, regional, and personal perspectives. They draw on a decade of travel, research, and conversations with many people, including truck drivers, merchants, politicians, and diplomats. This approach allows them to present a nuanced picture of China's regional influence. The book documents the intensification and multiplication of China's political, military, and economic linkages with its Western neighbours. A

significant focus is on the physical infrastructure projects, such as roads, pipelines, and railways, which have been crucial in connecting China with Central Asia. The authors analyse the geopolitical implications of China's presence in Central Asia, including the displacement of Russia's influence in the region. The book highlights the experiences and perceptions of people living in the region, providing a human dimension to the geopolitical analysis.

Some critics argue that while the book provides a rich tapestry of anecdotes and personal stories, it may lack in-depth analysis of certain political and economic aspects. There is a debate on whether the book sufficiently addresses the negative impacts of China's influence, such as human rights issues in Xinjiang. While the book extensively covers Central Asia, some critics feel it could have included more on China's broader global strategies. Overall, "Sinostan: China's Inadvertent Empire" is praised for its insightful and engaging narrative, but like any work, it has areas where it can be critiqued and expanded upon.

While economic interests and the stabilisation of Xinjiang drive the push to the West, the approach has increasingly taken on a security dimension. The authors contest that China's Central Asia policies will inform overall Chinese foreign policy in the coming years. Thus, this geographical region, comprising Afghanistan, constitutes an interface between Europe and China, where the EU must engage China to get the attention and help of the Kingdom in the Middle East.

Michael Pillsbury
The Hundered-Year Marathon. China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower, 2022.

Michael Pillsbury's scholarly approach is anchored in his reading of how Chinese military strategists have evolved a bit to become the ba, the hegemon in the world, out of readings derived from the Warring States period to surpass the United States as the world's leading superpower. He traces its origin to historical experiences and cultural narratives of past greatness and humiliation. The goal of becoming the baby in 2049 is rooted in the desire to restore China's preeminence, and seven strategies are listed (p. 35).

To explain China's strategic thinking, Pillsbury draws heavily on Chinese history, particularly the Warring States period. He argues that ancient Chinese military texts, such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, influence



China's modern strategies. Pillsbury posits that China has a secret, long-term plan to replace the US as the global hegemon by 2029, the centenary of the People's Republic of China. This strategy involves economic growth, technological advancement, and military modernisation. He claims that China uses deception and manipulation to achieve its goals, often presenting itself as a benign power while covertly advancing its strategic interests. Pillsbury criticises the US for underestimating China's ambitions and for policies that have inadvertently aided China's rise. He argues that American policymakers have been too complacent and trusting.

He lists China's seven holy fears: (1) The US plan to blockade China, (2) the Plundering of China's maritime resources, (3) The US's choking off China's sea lines of communication, (4) The US seeks China's territorial dismemberment (5) The US may assist Chinese rebels inside China (6) The US may foment riots, civil war or terrorism inside China (7) The US may threaten Chinese air carriers.

These fears and China's relative inferiority have then led the PLA to develop Assassin's Mace (shashoujian) weapons, a concept in Chinese military strategy involving using unexpected, powerful weapons or tactics to gain an advantage over a more powerful military adversary. Historically, it was a weapon used to break an enemy's blade or armour. In modern times, it metaphorically describes specific Chinese weapons systems designed to counter the United States' military superiority. These include anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBM's), hypersonic Glide vehicles (HGVs), and Cyber-warfare capabilities to disrupt US Army communications and operations. The US perceives these weapons as significant threats for several reasons, such as that they could prevent the US from operating freely; they challenge US defence systems because their sophistication and surprises can undermine US military planning and readiness. While the Assassin's Maze concept highlights essential aspects of Chinese military strategy, some critics argue that it may overstate the coherence and effectiveness of these strategies. They suggest that the term is sometimes too broad and may not accurately reflect the complexities of US-China dynamics.

Pillsbury outlines several steps the US should take to counteract China's strategy, including:

1. Recognize and overemphasise knowledge of China's long-term ambitions and the threat they pose.

2. Strengthen alliances: bolster alliances with other countries to counterbalance China's influence.
3. Economic measures: Implement economic policies that reduce dependency on China and protect intellectual property.
4. Military Preparedness: enhance military capabilities and readiness to deter Chinese aggression.
5. 5. Technological Innovation: Invest in technological innovation to maintain a competitive edge.
6. Diplomatic efforts: engage in proactive diplomacy to isolate China on the international stage
7. Information warfare: Counter Chinese propaganda and misinformation campaigns
8. Human rights advocacy: highlight and address human rights abuses in China.
9. Cybersecurity: Strengthen cybersecurity measures to protect against Chinese cyber threats.
10. Trade Policies: Implement trade policies that are fair and reciprocal.
11. Educational initiatives: Promote education and awareness about China's strategies and ambitions.
12. Domestic resilience: Build domestic resilience to withstand economic and political pressures from China.

Critics argue that Pillsbury's approach may overemphasise China's threat, potentially leading to unnecessary escalation and conflict. Some scholars believe that Pillsbury's analysis lacks nuance and does not fully account for the complexities of US-China relations. While Pillsbury's recommendations are comprehensive, they may be challenging to implement in practice and have unintended consequences.

Overall, Pillsbury's work provides a comprehensive, provocative, and detailed analysis of China's strategic ambitions. Still, it is essential to consider multiple perspectives and approaches when addressing the challenges posed by China's rise.

Elizabeth C. Economy *The World according to China*, Polity Press, 2022.

China can transform the international system into an economic and military superpower with 20 per cent of the world's population. Xi Jinping's bold calls for China to "lead in the reform of the global governance system" suggest he has just that ambition. But how



does he plan to realise it? And what does it mean for the rest of the World?

In this book, Elizabeth Economy reveals China's ambitious new strategy to reclaim the country's past glory and dramatically reshape the geostrategic landscape. The author argues that the international community needs to understand the risks and opportunities and respond to China's grand strategy under Xi Jinping.

Elizabeth C. Economy's book "The World According to China" comprehensively analyses China's evolving role in global governance and its implications for the international order. Economy employs a meticulously documented approach, drawing on extensive research and data to analyse China's actions and strategies over the past decade. She examines China's use of both soft and hard power to reshape global norms and institutions. Economy argues that under Xi Jinping, China seeks to reorder the world order to suit its interests better. This includes asserting sovereignty over regions like Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the South China Sea. The book highlights China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its efforts to extend influence through economic and technological leadership. China's attempts to reshape international institutions and norms, particularly around human rights and global governance. Economy discusses the global backlash against China's assertive policies and the potential challenges these pose to China's ambitions. Critics of the book appreciate its well-researched and forceful argument, but some note that it is written from an American perspective, focusing on American national interests and liberal democratic values. This perspective may limit the book's appeal to a broader international audience. Additionally, some critics argue that the Economy's analysis may overemphasise the threats posed by China, potentially leading to a more confrontational stance rather than a balanced view of opportunities and risks.

What are the true motives of Xi Jinping, then?

First, Xi Jinping aims to position China as a global leader, reshaping international norms and institutions to reflect Chinese values and interests. This includes promoting the BRI, the Global Development Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative.

Second, Xi seeks to enhance China's economic power, reducing its dependency on the US and other Western economies. This involves advancing technological innovation, securing critical supply chains, and promoting the international use of the Chinese Yuan.

Third, strengthening China's military capabilities is a key goal. Xi has focused on modernising the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to ensure it can protect China's interests and assert its influence, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Fourth, Xi aims to promote Chinese culture and political ideology globally. This includes countering Western values and promoting a narrative of a community with a shared future for humanity based on Chinese principles.

Fifth, maintaining internal stability and control is crucial for Xi. This involves strict governance, anti-corruption campaigns, and ensuring the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) dominance in all aspects of Chinese society.

Critics argue Xi's approach is increasingly authoritarian, focusing on consolidating power and suppressing dissent. This has raised concerns about human rights abuses and the erosion of freedoms within China.

Xi's assertive foreign policy, including territorial claims in the South China Sea and confrontational diplomacy, has led to tensions with neighbouring countries and the broader international community.

While Xi aims for economic dominance, China's economy faces significant challenges, including slowing growth, high debt levels, and trade tensions with major economies like the US.

Xi's strategies have led to a global backlash, with many countries wary of China's intentions and influence. This has resulted in stronger alliances among China's rivals and increased scrutiny of Chinese investments and initiatives.

Xi Jinping's true intentions are multifaceted. He aims to elevate China's global standing while maintaining strict control domestically. His strategies reflect a blend of historical Chinese principles and modern geopolitical ambitions. However, these ambitions face significant challenges and criticisms, both within China and internationally.



**Fang Cai, Xiaojing Zhang & Guopeng Yu
Constructing Political Economy with Chinese
Characteristics, Springer, 2022.**

This book analyses the characteristics of China's economic operation in the new era and explores Xi's thoughts on China's development. The book is divided into six parts. First, the guiding principles and main contents of the political economy of socialism with Chinese characteristics. The second addresses epistemology and methodology. The third part reveals the extensive logic of the new normal of economic development from the time and space dimensions. The fourth part examines the purpose, motivation, necessary conditions, and measurement of the scale of action according to the new development concept. The fifth part discusses the path of building a modern economic system. Finally, the last part focuses on how China's wisdom and China's solution could contribute to global governance and the promotion of development.

Fang Cai, Xiaojing Zhang, and Guopeng Yu's "Constructing Political Economy with Chinese Characteristics" adopts a **comparative and interdisciplinary approach**, drawing on political economy, international relations, and development studies. The authors analyse China's economic model, global governance, and development implications. The book outlines the guiding principles and main contents of political economy with Chinese characteristics in the new era, emphasising the importance of Marxist political economy and China's five-thousand-year civilisation. It discusses the epistemology and methodology of constructing a socialist political economy with Chinese characteristics, providing a theoretical framework for understanding China's economic development. The authors reveal the significant logic of the new normal of economic development from a time and space dimension, focusing on the purpose, motivation, necessary conditions, and measurement scale of development according to the new development concept. The book examines the path of building a modern economic system in China, highlighting the role of green and coordinated development. It discusses what China's wisdom and solutions could contribute to global governance and promoting international development, emphasising the importance of open and coordinated development.

The book provides a comprehensive analysis of China's political economy, but some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. It offers a balanced view, acknowledging the strengths and

challenges of China's economic model. The authors effectively connect historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's financial strategies. Overall, "Constructing Political Economy with Chinese Characteristics" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of China's economic model and its implications for global governance, making it a valuable contribution to the field of political economy.

An antidote is provided by Emmanuel Dubois de Prisque & Sophie du Rocher *Le Chine et le Monde: essai sur la sino-mondialisation*. They explore China's ambition to become a global superpower and how it uses economic, cultural, and political tools to achieve this goal in pursuit of its global ambitions. They discuss the ancient Chinese concept of "Tianxia" (everything under heaven), which China has revived to position itself at the centre of global affairs. The book examines China's economic strategies, including the Belt and Road Initiative, and how these initiatives are used to extend its influence globally. The authors analyse China's efforts to promote its culture and values internationally, enhancing its soft power. The book assesses the geopolitical consequences of China's rise, including its impact on international norms, laws, and global governance. The book provides a thorough and detailed analysis of China's global strategies, which can be informative and overwhelming for readers. It offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging China's positive and negative global influence. The authors effectively connect historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's global role.

In summary, Fang Cai outlines the principles of China's political economy, emphasising Marxist theory and Chinese civilisation. They analyse China's new standard of economic development, focusing on green and coordinated development. They discuss building a modern financial system and China's contributions to global governance. They explore how China's economic model can contribute to global governance and development. Dubois and Du Rocher focus more on China's global ambitions and its strategic use of soft power. In contrast, Fang Cai and colleagues emphasise China's political economy's theoretical and practical aspects. Dubois and Du Rocher take a more geopolitical and strategic approach. At the same time, Fang Cai and colleagues adopt a political economy perspective, analysing China's internal development and its implications for global governance. Both perspectives acknowledge China's significant global influence but differ in their emphasis on how China



wields this influence—through geopolitical strategies or economic policies. Ultimately, who is "right" depends on the specific aspects of China's rise in which one is interested. Dubois and Du Rocher provide valuable insights into China's strategic and cultural ambitions, while Fang Cai and colleagues comprehensively analyse China's economic development and theoretical foundations.

Ho-Fung Hung City on Edge: Hong Kong under Chinese rule, Cambridge, UP, 2022

For decades, Hong Kong has maintained precarious freedom at the edge of competing world powers. In the City on Edge, Ho Fung Hung offers a timely and engaging account of Hong Kong's development from pre-colonial times to the present, focusing on the post-1997 handover period. Through careful analysis of vast economic data, a myriad of political events, and intricate networks of actors and ideas, Hung offers readers insight into the fraught economic, political, and social forces that led to the 2019 uprising while situating the protests in the context of global finance and the geopolitics of US-China rivalry. The book traces Hong Kong's development, highlighting key events and transitions, especially the impact of the 1997 handover from British to Chinese rule.

Ho-Fung Hung's "City on Edge: Hong Kong under Chinese Rule" adopts a **historical and comparative approach**, analysing Hong Kong's development from pre-colonial times to the present, focusing on the post-1997 handover period. Hung uses economic data, political events, and social forces to account for Hong Kong's complex history comprehensively. Hung examines Hong Kong's evolution into a global financial hub and its role as China's offshore financial centre. The book analyses the economic, political, and social forces that led to the 2019 uprising, situating the protests within the broader context of global finance and US-China rivalry. Hung discusses the struggle for autonomy in Hong Kong and the increasing repression by Beijing, highlighting the tension between local resistance and central control. The book situates Hong Kong's struggle within a broader global trend of local regions trying to break free from dominant nation-states, comparing it to similar struggles in Tibet, East Timor, Northern Ireland, and Kosovo. Hung's meticulous research and detailed analysis provide a thorough understanding of Hong Kong's complex history, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging both the achievements

and challenges faced by Hong Kong under Chinese rule. Hung effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of Hong Kong's current situation.

Hong Kong can leverage its status as a global financial hub to facilitate economic cooperation between China and the West, acting as a bridge for investment and trade. By fostering innovation and technology transfer, Hong Kong can serve as a conduit for sharing advancements between China and Western countries. Promoting cultural exchange and tourism can help build stronger ties and mutual understanding between China and the West. Hong Kong can promote environmental sustainability and cooperation on climate change initiatives between China and Western nations. By maintaining a robust legal and regulatory framework, Hong Kong can provide a stable environment for international business and diplomacy.

Hong Kong has made significant strides in fulfilling its ambition to be a "super-connector" between China and the West, but there are still challenges to overcome. Hong Kong has consistently ranked high in global competitiveness indexes. For instance, it rose to 5th globally in the "World Competitiveness Yearbook 2024" published by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). The city's economic performance has improved, with actual GDP growth forecast at 2.5% to 3.5% for 2024. This growth is supported by measures to attract enterprises, investment, and talent worldwide. Hong Kong's business efficiency and infrastructure rankings have also improved, placing it within the top 10 globally. The city's government efficiency remains high, staying within the top three globally.

The political and social unrest, particularly the 2019 protests, have created uncertainties that could affect Hong Kong's role as a super-connector. The challenging external environment, including geopolitical tensions and global economic uncertainties, risks Hong Kong's financial stability and growth. The tension between maintaining autonomy and adhering to Beijing's directives continues to be a delicate balancing act for Hong Kong.

While Hong Kong has made notable progress in its ambition to be a super-connector, it must navigate political, social, and economic challenges to realise this potential fully. The city's future success will depend on its ability to maintain stability, attract global talent and investment, and balance its unique position between China and the West.



Susan L. Shirk Overreach: How China Derailed its Peaceful Rise, OUP, 2022.

As the book's titles suggest, something has changed in China. It no longer reassures the world that its rise to power will be peaceful, believing that internal threats to the Communist Party's control were the leading cause of a restrained approach to foreign policy. Instead, they reassured the outside world of China's peaceful intentions to facilitate the country's inevitable economic ascendance and prevent a backlash. Then something changed. China went from fragile superpower to global heavyweight, threatening Taiwan and its Neighbours in the South China Sea, tightening its grip on Hong Kong, and openly challenging the United States for preeminence economically and technologically militarily. China began to overreach. To counter it, Shirk argues that the worst mistake the rest of the world, and the United States in particular, can make is to overreact. Understanding the domestic roots of China's actions will enable us to avoid the mistakes that could lead to war. She argues that understanding factoring in personalities, politics, and political processes is crucial to comprehending China's actions and preventing potential conflicts.

Shirk examines China's initial strategy of a "peaceful rise," where China reassured the world of its peaceful intentions to facilitate economic growth and avoid backlash. She highlights the shift in China's strategy under Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping, moving from restraint to a more aggressive foreign policy. Shirk argues that China's overreach in foreign policy and domestic repression has derailed its peaceful rise. This includes threatening Taiwan, tightening control over Hong Kong, and challenging the US in various domains. She explores how domestic issues like corruption and dysfunctionality paved the way for Xi Jinping's more aggressive and personalistic rule. Shirk discusses the deterioration of US-China relations, particularly during the Trump administration, leading to a new cold war.

Shirk's detailed analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of China's political system and its impact on foreign policy. The book offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging China's achievements and overreach. Shirk effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's current situation.

Jianwei Wang & Weiqing Song The European Union in the Asia-Pacific: Rethinking Europe's strategies and policies, Manchester UP, 2022.

It is to Hanns Maull, Gerald Segal, and Jusuf Wanandi's book *Europe and the Asia Pacific* that we owe the origins of the three geographical terms: Asia-Europe (Assyrian: Asu-Ereb), the Asia Pacific, encompassing the Americas, Russia, Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific, and Pacific Asia inclusive China, Japan and South Korea and the Asian countries on the Pacific rim. The implicit assumption is that the European Union may contribute to the forging of an East Asian caucus by exploiting the European's desire for markets and their bad conscience. The EU, however, doesn't have a policy towards the Asia-Pacific. Instead, the European Union has an Asia policy that needs a policy review and an Indo-Pacific strategy hatched in part in exchange for US assistance in Ukraine and the Middle East, where the EU felt let down by the Obama administration. The authors claim, however, that the EU has defined the Asia-Pacific since the 1980s as one of its strategic targets on its ambitious road toward a global power. Therefore, they contend correctly that it is high time to evaluate the EU's performance in its Asian policy. The EU must redefine its interests and roles and rethink its strategies and policies towards the dynamic and ever-important Asia Pacific region. This book addresses this theme by elaborating on the general context, significant issues, and countries in the EU's Asia (Pacific) policy. It covers traditional security, economy and trade, public diplomacy, and human security issues and focuses on the EU's relations with China, Japan, the ASEAN countries, and Australasia.

Krishnan, Ananth & Johnny, Stanly The Comrades and the Mullahs. China, Afghanistan, and the New Geopolitics, Harper Collins, 2022.

Suppose China has acted with caution beyond its borders in the past. In that case, there is growing confidence under the rule of Xi Jinping and a willingness to insert itself as a power player and work more forcefully to secure its economic and security interests in the neighbourhood. Beijing would conclude that the best way to manage the risks in Afghanistan would be by betting on the Taliban, this book argues. Marlène Laruelle addresses the Central Asian country's approach to Afghanistan in *The Central-Asia-Afghanistan Relationship*. Olga Alinda Spaiser depicts the EU in *The European Union's Influence in Central Asia* as a somewhat defensive but



trusted partner. In the 2019 Central Asia strategy, the EU recognises the growing strategic interest of the region and that Central Asians “are aiming to diversify their options and are looking at a stronger EU presence as a factor to balance the regional equation and a committed partner for reform and modernisation.”¹⁴ The Strategy also mentions the link between Central Asia and Afghanistan. It suggests different areas where the EU could contribute “in the interest of an inclusive peace process and sustainable development.” A meeting between Dashi Fu Cong and EUSR CA Hakkala took place in 2023. I am not aware of the content of the conversation. This has. However, this is compared to how Afghanistan works and the failures, pitfalls, and challenges of the morass left behind as the West exhausted its role—Timor Shahan’s *Inside Afghanistan. Political networks, informal order, and state disruption depict how Afghanistan works in terms of political networks and centres of power engaged in patronage, corruption, and illegality and the impact of these networks’ dynamics* on the collapse of the Afghan government in 2021.

Tilak Devasher The Pashtuns – a contested History, Harper Collins, 2022.

Tilak Devasher employs historical and geopolitical analysis to explore the complex history of the Pashtuns, the largest ethnic group without a country of their own. He combines archival research, interviews, and contemporary geopolitical insights to comprehensively understand the Pashtuns' history and their role in regional politics. The book traces the history of the Pashtuns from ancient times to the present, highlighting their cultural and social characteristics. Devasher examines the strategic importance of the Pashtun-dominated areas, particularly in the context of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the US-led War on Terror. The book delves into the Pashtunwali code, the Pashtuns' traditional social and legal code, and its impact on their society and politics. Devasher discusses the historical and contemporary issues surrounding the concept of Pashtunistan, a proposed independent state for the Pashtuns. The book addresses the challenges faced by the Pashtuns in the 21st century, including the impact of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the shifting power dynamics in the region.

The book is praised for its detailed research and comprehensive analysis of the Pashtuns' history and

geopolitical significance. Devasher's use of diverse sources and his deep understanding of the region provide valuable insights. Some critics argue that the book may focus too heavily on historical events and not enough on the contemporary social and economic issues facing the Pashtuns. Additionally, the complex nature of Pashtun politics and society may require further exploration. This book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history and geopolitics of the Pashtuns and their role in South Asia.

The Pashtuns are perhaps the largest ethnic group in the world without a state, habituating the land between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Having subjected themselves to abuse by outside powers such as the US and Pakistan, their proletariat is now forming the core of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. A history of these people's travails is thus overdue. A veteran Indian diplomat provides it.

Manoj Joshi Understanding the India-China Border. The Enduring Threat of War in High Himalaya, Hurst, 2022.

This book examines the Indo-China Border dispute in detail from the historical perspective by that of a journalist-researcher. The border between India and China runs in the eastern sector along the McMahon line, loosely defined in the Shimla Convention and otherwise by traditional and customary usage. The border's Western, Central, and Eastern sections are patrolled from point to point according to the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The frame is yet to be delineated on a map and marked in both instances. Thus, there are different versions of what constitutes the LAC. India and China wish for an Asian-centric international system and have entered into a Closer Development Partnership, which also comprises a committee on border management. Historically, there has never existed an Asian system organising the entire region, yet the cultural and religious links between India and China are a fact. That is to say, China seems obsessed with its relationship with Japan and the West. In the book, Manoj Joshi provides nine maps of the areas of dispute that need clarification. The pragmatic trade-off appears to be India recognising Chinese control over Aksai Chin in return for Indian control over Arunachal Pradesh, joined with establishing a border delimitation commission to mark the border proper towards solving all outstanding 18-

¹⁴ Factsheet EU-Central Asia
{online}www.eas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/docu-
ments/EU-

Central%20Asia%20Asia%20relaitons%20factsheet.
pdf



20 border issues, including between Bhutan and China. This would facilitate the development of the bilateral relationship, while the partnership agreement could serve as a model for Tokyo and Beijing. The power political rationale is defensive in preventing India and Japan from coalescing with the United States and offensive in laying the ground for a Sino-centric Asian system with Beijing as the top dog.

Shyam Saran How China Sees India and the World. The authoritative Account of the India-China relationship, Juggernaut Publication, 2022.

So, how does China perceive India? According to the author, the Chinese perceive themselves as the most consequential and most important of ancient civilisations. Saran uses contemporary Chinese scholarship, CCP leadership speeches and writings, and his experiences as a diplomat and foreign secretary. China's likely future behaviour can be assessed based on understanding what drives their worldview. Shyam Saran's "How China Sees India and the World" adopts a **historical and analytical approach**, examining China's strategic culture and foreign policy through the lens of its rich history and cultural heritage examining China's strategic culture and foreign policy through the lens of its rich history and cultural heritage Saran, a former Indian diplomat, leverages his extensive experience to provide an in-depth understanding of China's worldview and its implications for India and the broader international community. Saran delves into China's long history, exploring how historical events and cultural developments have shaped its contemporary strategic thought. The book analyses China's rapid rise as a global power, emphasising the role of economic reforms, military modernisation, and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Saran thoroughly examines the complex and often contentious relationship between China and India, highlighting key issues such as border disputes and strategic competition. The book discusses China's ambitions on the global stage, including its efforts to project power and influence through economic, political, and military means. Saran challenges the Chinese claim of historical centrality, arguing that India also played a significant role in the region's history.

Saran's meticulous research and use of diverse sources provide a comprehensive view of China's strategic culture, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book offers a balanced perspective, acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of China's approach to international relations. Saran effectively connects historical insights

with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's foreign policy. Overall, "How China Sees India and the World" is a well-researched and thought-provoking exploration of China's strategic culture and its implications for India and the global community. It encourages readers to consider the historical and cultural factors that shape China's worldview and its interactions with other nations.

Thomas J. Biersteker, Robert Carlin & Chung-In Moon Understanding Kim Jong-Un's North Korea. Regime Dynamics, Negotiation and Engagement, Lexington Books, 2022.

This book is organised around an assessment of how Kim Jong-Un's regime calculates, balances, and addresses the various key policy challenges it faces based on the three author's wide-ranging experience with North Korea. This gives the authors a hands-on experience with how North Korea works. Contrary to the perceptions, myths, and single-issue studies – such as dynastic survival or economy-based analyses, this study provides an integrated approach and constitutes an essential contribution to our understanding of North Korea. Required reading for those who want to re-engineer the six-party talks toward peace on the Korean peninsula are Mi-Yeon Hur's *The Six-Party Talks on North Korea: Dynamic Interactions among the Principal States* or on the same issue by the prolific Leszek Buszynski 's *Negotiating with North Korea: The Six-Party Talks and the nuclear Issue*. Indeed, the strategy of incurring costs on Pyongyang is a harbinger of conflict and seems to have created another unproductive and unstable stalemate. Jagannath P. Panda addresses the power play among major Asian powers around Korea and its impact on the Indo-Pacific region from an Indian perspective in *The Korean Peninsula and Indo-Pacific Power Politics*. Bo Gao examines the influence of sub-state and non-state actors on Chinese-DPRK relations in China's economic engagement in North Korea. Wonjae Hwang's *South Korea's Changing Foreign Policy: The Impact of Democratization and Globalization* provides a perspective on Korea's foreign policy. Marco Milani, Fiori, and Dian's *The Korean Paradox: Domestic Political Divide and Foreign Policy in South Korea* approach the subject by studying beliefs, traditions, and identities. Finally, Jongwoo Han, in *The Metamorphosis of US-Korea Relations*, traces the evolution of US-Korea relations from US aspirations of linking up Alaska, the Philippines, The Samoan Islands, and Korea to complete a defence perimeter in the Pacific and its dominance in the Asian market. This led to a decline



of the Chinese sphere of influence and reduced size of Russian power in the Pacific, and to the rise of Japan, which brought about all sorts of ills to the Korean peninsula, such as Japanese colonisation, the division of Korea along the McArthur-line following the occupation of Japan and subsequently the Korean War due to China's backing and Stalin's eagerness for war and for revanche stimulated by the North Korean regime's desire for challenging the post-WWII-status quo. According to Wasif Khan (2022:60), considerations of Mao were three-fold: First, Beijing's need for a buffer zone ideally ideologically sympathetic to its North East. Second, the non-recognition of the US of the PRC. Third, an interest in providing sufficient Chinese capabilities, upending American troops in South Korea, withdrawing all US troops from Taiwan, and the PRC's resumption of China Taipei's seat in the UNSC. Thus, the Korean War broke out, which ended along the 38th parallel, drawn up by General MacArthur. Han believes the US-Korea relationship has come around full circle and that it is time for the US to recognise North Korea in the interest of a settlement of the Korean question. Given that Korea has been used as a staging ground for both Chinese incursions into Japan and, more recently, Japanese colonisation of Korea and incursions into China, and Western projected interest in preventing a Japanese-Chinese condominium, compared with Japan's historical tendency to tilt towards the stronger party in Asia, care needs to be taken about the form. Content Korean unification may take and impact the balance of power in North East Asia. Renewing the peace and cooperation treaty between Japan and China is not anathema to Western interests. But how would China and Japan react to a unified and strong Korea?

Brian Gewirtz Never Turns Back—China and the criminal history of the 1980s, Belknap Press, 2022.

"Never Turn Back: China and the Forbidden History of the 1980s" by Julian Gewirtz is a comprehensive examination of China's political debates and reforms during the 1980s. Gewirtz uses newly available Chinese sources, including internal documents and interviews with former officials and intellectuals, to recover the debates of the 1980s. He traces the Communist Party's diverse attitudes toward markets, state control, technological change, and political liberalisation. The book highlights the intense debates within the Communist Party about the future direction of China, including proposals for democratisation and economic reforms. Gewirtz emphasises the roles of reformist leaders like Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang, who advocated for significant political and economic changes. The book details how the Tiananmen Square

protests and subsequent crackdown led to the purging of reformist leaders and the suppression of alternative political visions. Gewirtz shows how the Chinese government recast the transformations of the 1980s as the inevitable products of consensus, erasing the memory of the debates and alternative proposals.

Critics have praised the book for its exceptional research and detailed analysis. It provides a nuanced understanding of the 1980s in China, challenging the official narrative and highlighting the complexity of the political landscape. However, some may argue that focusing on internal debates might overlook broader social and economic factors influencing China's development.

The book highlights the intense debates within the Communist Party about the future direction of China, including proposals for democratisation and economic reforms

This is a rather interesting book about the discussion taking place not only on the streets and among a fringe group of dissident public intellectuals but also inside the corridors of power about the possibility of China transitioning to democracy in the 1980s, based on Chinese archives, official accounts, diaries, and memoirs, some of which have only recently become available.

Mauricio Santoro Brazil-China relations in the 21st Century. The making of a Strategic Partnership, Palgrave, 2022.

Mauricio Santoro explores the evolving relationship between Brazil and China. Santoro adopts a **comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach**, combining historical analysis, political science, and economic perspectives to examine the bilateral relationship. He uses qualitative and quantitative data to provide a nuanced understanding of the partnership. The book delves into the historical ties between Brazil and China, tracing their diplomatic relationship to the mid-20th century. Santoro highlights the role of commodities in Sino-Brazilian trade, with China being Brazil's largest trading partner. The analysis includes China's investments in Brazil, mainly in infrastructure and natural resources. The analysis consists of China's investments in Brazil, mainly in infrastructure and natural resources. His book discusses China's involvement in climate diplomacy, especially concerning the Amazon. Santoro examines how



nationalist politics in Brazil have influenced its relationship with China.

Some critics argue that while the book provides a thorough overview, it could delve deeper into specific case studies or sectors. There is a debate on whether the book sufficiently addresses the potential downsides of China's influence in Brazil, such as environmental concerns and economic dependency. While the book extensively covers Brazil-China relations, some critics feel it could include more on Brazil's broader foreign policy strategies. Overall, Santoro's work is praised for its insightful analysis and comprehensive coverage, but like any scholarly work, it has areas where it can be critiqued and expanded upon.

Sulmaan Wasif Khan Haunted by Chaos. China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping, Harvard UP, 2022.

More often than not, the premise of deliberations on China in the United States has been that China's foreign policy has changed in the recent decade with both expanding goals and a desire to tip the balance of power in Asia to its advantage. Khan argues in this book that since before the People's Republic's founding, there has been a great deal more evolution in continuity in terms of the objectives pursued by China, even as the Chinese elite's definition of security has expanded. Khan asserts that profound national insecurity has driven Chinese elites. His book is a valuable reminder that for China's apparent strengths today, its frailties and insecurities continue – a paradox worth watching as Beijing becomes a world power. Wasif Khan uses a somewhat fuzzy concept of instinctual grand strategy, distinct from other perspectives on the evolution of grand strategy quoted in the detailed notes of this enlightening book. An **instinctual grand strategy** relies heavily on national leaders' and policymakers' intuition, experiences, and instincts rather than formalised, structured frameworks. Decision-making in this approach is often based on gut feelings, personal judgments, and situational assessments rather than predetermined plans. This strategy can be flexible and adaptive, allowing quick responses to changing circumstances. However, it might lack consistency and long-term vision, as it depends on the individual instincts of leaders, which can vary widely.

Sulmaan Wasif Khan's "Haunted by Chaos: China's Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping"

employs a historical and analytical approach. Khan draws on a wide range of sources, including archival documents, interviews, and secondary literature, to trace the evolution of China's grand strategy from the era of Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping. Khan situates China's grand strategy within its historical context, emphasizing how past experiences of fragmentation and weakness have shaped its approach to security and power. Despite changes in leadership, Khan argues that China's core objectives have remained consistent, focusing on national security, territorial integrity, and economic development. The book explores how China's leaders have harnessed diplomatic, military, and economic power to navigate a hostile world and ensure the country's survival. Khan examines the different leadership styles of Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao, and Xi Jinping, highlighting how each leader's approach has influenced China's grand strategy. A central theme is the profound sense of national insecurity that has driven Chinese leaders, leading to a cautious and sometimes assertive foreign policy.

While the book is praised for its comprehensive analysis, some readers might find it dense and challenging to navigate due to the extensive detail and historical depth. The emphasis on major leaders might overshadow the contributions of other influential figures and institutions in shaping China's grand strategy. Given the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape, some of the book's analyses and predictions may need updating to reflect recent developments.

I enjoyed reading the book, and swallowed it raw. The alternatives to instinctual grand strategy are realist grand strategy, focusing on maintaining power and security through military strength and strategic alliances. Its goal is to ensure national survival and dominance by preparing for potential threats and conflicts. Its approach emphasizes the importance of balance of power and deterrence. Liberal grand strategy would promote democracy, rule of law, and economic interdependence. Their goal is to create a stable and peaceful international order through cooperation and shared values. Its approach is to build strong international institutions and alliances to foster mutual benefits and prevent conflicts. Constructivist principally focus on shaping international norms, identities, and cultural factors. Its goal is to influence global perceptions and behaviors to align with national interests. They engage in diplomacy, cultural exchanges, and norm-building activities to create a favorable international environment. Marxist grand strategy would address



global inequalities and promote social justice. Its goal is to challenge and transform the capitalist international order to create a more equitable world. They support revolutionary movements, build alliances with socialist states, and advocate for systemic changes. Feminist grand strategy incorporate gender perspectives and promote gender equality. Its goal is to ensure that international relations consider the impact on women and marginalized groups.

Its approach Advocate for policies that address gender-based violence, support women's participation in diplomacy, and promote inclusive governance. These alternative grand strategies offer structured and principled approaches to navigating international relations, providing a contrast to the more adaptive and less formalized instinctual grand strategy.

Daniel Leese & Shi Ming Chinesisches Denken der Gegenwart – Schlüsseltexte zu Politik und Gesellschaft, C.H. Beck, 2023.

In this anthology, the editor invokes all those of his countrymen who haven't lost the courage to give their opinion on how to help China become a pluralist society. In the search for the key to China, it is surely important to understand and follow what is being discussed inside China among the public intellectuals (*gongong zhishifenzi*) at the nexus of state-society dynamics. This approach is superior to Western works anchored in the hope China would develop into a pluralist democracy and does so on China's premises, which is the better way for a society to develop: to safeguard its social order and the integrity of its developmental path. The book is divided into four parts: Chinese Self-Understanding, State-thinking and legitimation of the power, Peasant questions, and Rural Development and Future Perspectives. In part I, topics are addressed such as when China debated what China is and could become, and how the unity of the peoples of China could become a flowering nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). Next, the evolution in China's nationalities policy is addressed as are the national security and the constitution and what true patriotism is about. In Part II, the official thinking and conceptualization of the reform and opening up policy around notions of market, freedom, and rights are discerned to co-exist together with three other traditions hailing from the Mao era concerning equality and justice and the revival of the Confucian tradition organized diffusively around family values, human interaction and relationships and attachment to your local area (*Heimat*). The co-existence of these three traditions is a hallmark of what makes China special and reinforces the Chinese civilization. This is

actually in itself grafted onto Confucius' notions of the interrelationships of the three traditions (*Tong san tong*): 1. The emergent cultural identity (*lishi wenming gontongti*) 2. The build-up character of the unitarian political community (*zhengzhi gongtongti*), 3. The historical continuity of the political community links old concepts with new ideas to a visionary reform mindset. This then leads to another interesting chapter on how to overcome political polarization by linking the three traditions and renew the one party-state through a Confucian dream society by Chen Ming to pierce the veil of revolutionary discourse and the enlightenment project in the interest of political reconstruction of the Chinese state around People-Nation-State. Philosophy and history, the role of humanism and estrangement, and the game of representative politics through hiring practices. Part III dwells on how rural development first led to a deconstruction of modernization through the Cultural Revolution, underlining the problem of the worker and the farmer is also a national concern. China does not need advice on how to bring wealth from the coastal areas into the interior. Still, it does seem to need a more sensitive rural development policy and public debate on domestic migration. Part IV addresses the need for continuous systemic reform, capitalism, socialism, and women, discussions about the royal road to more accountable and participatory governance, and the dangers of governance by algorithm exemplified by the social credit system. Other debates concern the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese system addressing the need to strengthen inter-party democracy and the four-staged development path based on Porter's phases: the factor-driven phase, the investment phase, the innovation phase, and the consumer society, i.e. when JinJin Dingeling has become a mother as a glowing example of the abundancy of Asian women, the reduction of poverty in China and the investments made into education and health services and sustainability in China. The performance of centralized power structures is then addressed, and how angry people will no longer stand to be intimidated. This excellent book is capped by a piece addressing the various roles of intellectuals as a learned person, a driven scholar, and a designer of public policy in the formation processes of emergent Chinese cultural identity.

This book is a rare treat and a real achievement. I recommend reading for those interested in what is going on in Chinese civil society and intellectual circles.



Ayse Zarakol Before the West. The rise and fall of Eastern World Orders, Cambridge UP, 2022.

How would the history of international relations in “the East” be written if we did not always read the ending – the rise of the West and the decline of the East – into the past? What if we did not assume that Asia was just a residual category, a variant of “not-Europe,” but saw it as a space with its particular history and sociopolitical dynamics, not defined only by encounters with European colonialism? How would our understanding of sovereignty, our theories, and our theories about the causes of the decline of the Great Powers and international orders change? For the first time, *Before the West* offers a grand narrative of Eurasia as a space connected by normative and institutionally overlapping successive world orders originating from the Mongol Empire. It also uses that history to rethink international relations' foundational concepts and debates, such as order and decline. As the book seeks to answer these questions, it positions itself in the literature by offering a perspective that is either Eurocentric or Sino-centric. There seems to be nothing magical about the notion of Asia as a region in this book on the macro-history of the rise and fall of Eastern world orders. The account is mainly about a network of ethnolinguistically Turco-Mongol dynasties throughout Asia. I submit Ayse Zarakol, like many Turks in need of a sense of belonging and at the same time with a memory of her world, which will translate into a more Eurasian slant in EU's foreign policy should Turkey accede, something already underway for reasons of strengthened energy links between Europe and Central Asia combined with China's desire for partnership on Central Asia and Afghanistan in return for engagement on Xinjiang, a fundamental stumbling block on the road to ratification of the EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI).

Li Xing China-EU Relations in a New Era of global transformations, Routledge, 2023.

Li Xing's "China-EU Relations in a New Era of Global Transformation" adopts a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, drawing on insights from international relations, political economy, and area studies. The book brings together contributions from leading experts to examine the evolving dynamics between China and the European Union in the context of global changes. The book explores the increasingly complex interactions between China and the EU, influenced by factors such as China's global rise, US-China strategic competition, and the EU's internal

challenges like Brexit. It examines whether China-EU relations should be conceptualized as a strategic partnership or systemic rivalry, highlighting the dual nature of cooperation and competition. The book discusses how China and the EU navigate multilateralism, including their roles in international organizations like the WTO and AIIB. It analyzes the interplay between energy policies and climate change in the context of China-EU relations, particularly the Sino-Russian energy relationship. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of China-EU relations, but some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. It offers a balanced view, acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges in China-EU relations. The book effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China-EU relations. Overall, "China-EU Relations in a New Era of Global Transformation" offers valuable insights into the evolving dynamics between China and the EU, making it a significant contribution to the field of international relations.

Steve Chan Rumbles of Thunder Power Shifts and the danger of Sino-American War, Columbia UP, 2023.

Steve Chan of Colorado University picks up the scholarly conversation on power transitions where Robert Ross and Zhu Feng in *China's Ascent* stopped while relating to Allison's *Destined for War*. He argues that power shifts matter and may account for why international relations lead to tensions, though not in the manner power transition theory predicts. The state's policy capacity and capabilities are more critical, while the US preponderance is longer-lived than assumed. This means self-fulfilling prophecies of a coming war between the US and China are misperceived. Domestic political alignment and policies are the primary determinants of foreign policy. The implication is that the growth policies in other countries are more significant factors than the rise of China per se. Taiwan constitutes a fulcrum for the US-China rivalry. Thus, there are multiple paths to war, argues Chan. The policy choices and agency of executives and, consequently, the nature of decision-making make the difference rather than structural forces. Thus, on the management of change, Chan quotes T.V. Paul: “The process of accommodation in international relations is exceptionally complicated, as it involves status adjustment, the sharing of leadership roles through the accordance of institutional membership and privileges, and acceptance of spheres of influence: something established powers rarely offers to new-comers” (p.17). Professor Chan quotes



Allison, saying Americans should be careful about wishing to Chinese to be “more like u,” giving democracies are more prone to warfare than more isolated elites. Even so, in Chan’s view Chinese leader’s “win-set” has shrunk, while the “selectorate” that the need to answer to has grown (p.27) Win set refers to the range of foreign deals politically acceptable and feasible given a leader’s domestic environment. Selectorate refers to the size of the leader’s political constituency and the minimum number of supporters required for the leader to retain power. Thus, the greater the constituency, the greater the political constraints and the smaller the win set. Chinese and American leaders are subject to more constraining predicaments in favor of what Chan describes as a desirable bilateral deal.

Sebastian Biba & Reinhard Wolf Europe in an Era of Growing Sino-American: Coping with an unstable Triangle, 2023.

Sebastian Biba and Reinhard Wolf's "Europe in an Era of Growing Sino-American Competition: Coping with an Unstable Triangle" adopts a comparative and interdisciplinary approach, analyzing the evolving dynamics between the USA, China, and Europe. The book takes a trilateral perspective, examining key issue areas such as trade, technology, investment, climate change, and security. The book explores the complex interactions within the strategic triangle of the USA, China, and Europe, highlighting the intensifying rivalry and its implications for global stability. It analyzes the impact of Sino-American competition on trade and technology, including the challenges and opportunities for Europe in navigating this rivalry. The book discusses how the Sino-American competition affects global efforts to address climate change, emphasizing the need for coordinated action. It examines key security issues, such as maritime security and nuclear non-proliferation, and their implications for Europe's strategic interests. The authors offer policy recommendations for Europe to adopt a more pragmatic and independent approach to its foreign and security affairs, balancing its interests and values in a changing global environment. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of the Sino-American competition and its impact on Europe, but some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. It offers a balanced view, acknowledging both the challenges and opportunities for Europe in navigating the Sino-American rivalry. The book effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics within the

strategic triangle. Overall, "Europe in an Era of Growing Sino-American Competition: Coping with an Unstable Triangle" offers valuable insights into the complex interactions between the USA, China, and Europe, making it a significant contribution to the field of international relations.

Xianbai Ji Mega-regionalism and great power geoeconomic competition, Routledge, 2023.

Xianbai Ji's "Mega-regionalism and Great Power Geo-economic Competition" adopts a **comparative and interdisciplinary approach**, drawing on international relations, political economy, and trade policy analysis. Ji uses a mix-method research strategy, including computable general equilibrium modeling, game theory, desk research, and perception surveys, to provide a comprehensive analysis of mega-regional trade partnerships and their implications for global economic dynamics.

The book examines the rise of mega-regional trade partnerships, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (led by the US), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (backed by China), and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (between the EU and the US). Ji explores how these mega-regional trade agreements are used as instruments of geo-economic competition between the US, China, and the EU, aiming to gain economic, geopolitical, and legal advantages. The book develops an innovative model of competitive spill-over to uncover the historical and contemporary sources of mega-regionalism, highlighting the multidimensional competition between great powers. Ji analyzes the impact of mega-regionalism on global trade governance, discussing how these partnerships influence international economic benefits, geopolitical influence, and the authority to write rules governing emerging trade issues.

Ji's thorough research and comprehensive analysis provide a detailed understanding of mega-regionalism and geo-economic competition, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book offers a balanced view, acknowledging both the opportunities and challenges posed by mega-regional trade partnerships. Ji effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of the evolving dynamics in global trade governance. Overall, "Mega-regionalism and Great Power Geo-economic Competition" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of the complex interplay between mega-regional trade



partnerships and great power competition, making it a valuable contribution to the field of international relations.

BUSINESS CHINA

Lulu Chen Influence Empire: The Story of Tencent and China's Tech Ambition, Hodder & Stoughton, 2022.

This is the story of Tencent and its app WeChat, the messaging tool used by 1,3 billion people. They also make an account of a generation of Chinese tech entrepreneurs whose wings were clipped by the omnipresent hand of their government for the story of Ma Huang, the founder of Tencent, who searches for Leng Hu and Tencent.

Christopher Marquis & Kunyuan Qiao Mao and Markets: The Communist roots of Chinese Enterprise, Yale UP, 2023.

This book traces the evolution of the Chinese development model to Mao and its roots in communist thinking as an alternative to a Western capitalist model. It constitutes an essential blueprint for doing business in China. At the same time, the book provides insights into Chinese nationalism.

Christopher Marquis and Kunyuan Qiao use a **comparative and historical analysis** to explore how Mao Zedong's communist ideology continues to shape Chinese enterprises. They draw on government documents, corporate reports, interviews with business executives, and survey data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The authors argue that contemporary Chinese business principles, such as "country over capital," resource consciousness, reliance on informal norms, and persistence, have their roots in Maoist ideas and policies. They challenge the conventional wisdom that free-market economies are more efficient than state-controlled economies, showing how China's economic success is based on the continuing influence of Mao Zedong. The book illustrates how Mao's ideological principles, mass campaigns, and socialist institutions have enduringly influenced Chinese entrepreneurs' business strategies and the management of their ventures. Marquis and Qiao demonstrate that the enterprise and commercialism of China's "economic miracle" have remained in step with Maoist thought,

showing how a communist party can still run a seemingly capitalist country.

The book is praised for its thorough research and detailed analysis, providing valuable insights into the enduring influence of Maoist ideology on Chinese enterprises. Some critics argue that the book may overemphasize the role of ideology and not fully account for other factors such as global economic trends and technological advancements. Overall, "Mao and Markets: The Communist Roots of Chinese Enterprise" offers a nuanced understanding of how China's economic success continues to be shaped by its communist roots.

Keyu, Jin New China Playbook. Beyond socialism and capitalism, Viking Press, 2023.

Keyu Jin's "The New China Playbook: Beyond Socialism and Capitalism" adopts a comparative and analytical approach, examining China's unique economic model and its implications for global economic dynamics. Jin, a bicultural economist with deep insights into both Chinese and Western perspectives, provides a nuanced and data-driven analysis of China's economic evolution. Jin explores how China has transitioned from a state-dominated economy to one that embraces entrepreneurship and global market participation. The book delves into the far-reaching consequences of China's one-child policy, including its impact on demographics and economic growth. Jin discusses China's focus on technological innovation and its efforts to become a global leader in technology. The complex relationship between the Chinese government and entrepreneurs is examined, highlighting both support and challenges faced by private businesses. Jin places China's economic rise within the broader context of global economic trends, comparing it with Western economic models. Jin's thorough research and clear-eyed analysis provide a comprehensive understanding of China's economic system, though some readers might find the level of detail overwhelming. The book offers a balanced view, acknowledging both the strengths and weaknesses of China's economic model. Jin effectively connects historical insights with contemporary issues, providing a nuanced understanding of China's current economic strategies. Overall, "The New China Playbook: Beyond Socialism and Capitalism" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of China's economic landscape, offering valuable perspectives for anyone interested in understanding China's role in the global economy.



Skylar, Orianna Mastro Upstart. How China became a great power, Oxford UP, 2024.

Oriana Skylar Mastro's book "Upstart: How China Became a Great Power" presents a scholarly approach that combines granular data and authoritative Chinese sources to analyze China's rise. The main analytical point of the book is that China's ascent to great power status was achieved through a mix of strategic emulation, exploitation, and entrepreneurship on the international stage. China adopted similar strategies to the United States in areas where it believed doing so would build power while reassuring the U.S. of its intentions. China adopted similar approaches in new areas of competition when it felt that the overall U.S. strategy was effective but didn't want to risk direct confrontation. China pursued innovative approaches to new and existing areas of competition when it believed a more effective approach was available that would better enable Communist Party control. While Mastro's analysis provides valuable insights into China's rise, some critics argue that the book may overemphasize the role of strategic emulation and exploitation, potentially underestimating the unique aspects of China's approach. Additionally, the book's focus on China's actions might not fully account for the responses and adaptations of other global powers, particularly the United States.

ART

Yang Xin Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting, Yale UP, 1997.

This is one of the best single-volume guides to the evolution of Chinese painting, as it depicts an in-depth knowledge of Chinese painting. Chinese artists, philosophers, and critics have constantly discussed the role and qualities of image throughout its long and complex history. To this day, the work of most Chinese art historians reflects the distinctive interaction between the painting tradition, on the one hand, and the other hand, philosophy, poetry, calligraphy, and other cultural forms. The interaction between the art of the brush and painting, calligraphy and poetry, and the related art of seal engraving produces so many of the masterpieces. The depiction of imagined likenesses, not strictly realistic ones, is at the heart of what most Chinese scholars see as distinctive about the Chinese painting tradition.

Indeed, the conquest of objectivity is a theoretical advancement by the West. Thinking about its possibility has preoccupied Western philosophers, allowing for the success verified by science. The classical painting devoted itself to its representation, passionately searching for the illusion of the truth. But this rational construction of the object is one of many available. The ancient Chinese painting does not provide images that close itself into exigencies of the form but transform itself by the breathing of emptiness and the plain and writing itself into the polarities of the landscape, the incitement that tempts life.

Ann Paludan Chinese Sculpture – a Great Tradition, Serindia, 2006.

This book by Dane, the mother-in-law of Professor Clemens Stubbe Østergård, an expert in Chinese foreign policy, who taught at both Århus University and the moribund Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Århus, surveys the history of Chinese sculpture based on the latest archaeological discoveries from a European perspective. This tradition encompassed a belief in the power of statuary to influence events in both the seen world and the cosmos, the *li*, that elusive Confucian concept translated as propriety but, embracing the fundamental basis of civilized life, the whole organization of human society on earth within the wider cosmic order. The origins of the Chinese sculptural tradition are found in pre-imperial times, the Terracotta Armies and the world below the ground, and the uses made of Stone from where the classical sculptural tradition emerged combining a correlative cosmology with Han Confucianism. This meant certain ideas and attitudes toward sculpture developed which were to be accepted throughout the Chinese empire characterized by a certain association between sculpture and authority, a belief in the efficacy of images, the use of symbolism, and a choice of medium to convey a message, the use of sculpture to create three-dimensional scenes, and the overriding importance of catching the essence or inner nature of a subject. A sculpture was believed to possess inherent powers both of the subjects it portrayed and of the subject's symbolism. These invisible powers enabled the image to draw on the wider cosmic forces for help with worldly affairs (p147). This link between authority and sculpture. Sculpture was thus a means to an end, not an end in itself. This classical notion was to last until the Republic while excavations are still ongoing to understand the degree of Confucian style next to Taoist and Buddhists sculptural works. Sculptures adorned terraces, in parks or on roofs and were never placed at random in public spaces. Of course, Chinese sculpture also had to adapt to the ages.



The classical tradition was not a set of aesthetic principles but a set of attitudes and ideas which meant sculptures could be applied to many situations. When the Buddhists arrived, China already had a deeply entrenched and sophisticated sculptural tradition and highly developed technical skills in modeling, carving, planning, and executing large-scale sculptural projects. This empowered Buddhism to spread and the Chinese sculptural principles to remain in place amidst political disunion. In the process of the export of Indian-Himalayan concepts into China, Paludan recounts how already linguistic problems of translation meant a Chinese version of or modification to Buddhism occurred to bring them closer to Chinese ways of thought. Concepts such as Enlightenment, non-existence, and Nirvana were unconceivable. Thus, Nirvana became non-action, morality filial submission, and obedience. The Chinese would never accept a soul could cease to exist, and the idea of complete annihilation was also rejected due to ancestor worship deeply engrained in Chinese and other ancient civilizations. In terms of sculpture, Buddhism meant human form was introduced into Chinese sculpture to lead the believer into the correct path of Buddhist thought. The copying of sacred images, like the copying of pictures and texts became a way of earning merit since it spread the faith. As strife once more came to an end, prosperity, and the wealth and confidence of the later ages were expressed in traditional forms of display – grandiose architectural projects accompanied by sculptures, and magnificent civic and religious monuments such as was the case during the reign of Yang Jian of the Sui Dynasty, who used both Confucianism and Buddhism to consolidate unity. Sculptures were now carved as solid, corporeal figures with square feet and short necks or with attempts to depict the human body beneath its clothing. On Sui followed Tang, and on Tang Song, and Song, and then Yuan during the Mongols. The Mings ruled until the Qing Empire took charge. You can read more about these ages in this fine book which ends with an epilogue when no incentives, no challenges, and no fresh sources of inspiration were present to renew the Chinese tradition of sculpture. The 1911 Revolution inaugurated a new era in sculpture as well as politics. This has seen an unprecedented explosion of experimental sculptural production.

The book traces the history of Chinese sculpture from prehistoric times to the imperial period, highlighting the long and rich tradition of statuary in China. It discusses the unwritten beliefs shared by all classes about the nature of the cosmos, the importance of maintaining contact with ancestors, and the idea that

images contain power to influence events in both seen and unseen worlds. Paludan outlines how Chinese sculpture has been adapted to serve the political, practical, and spiritual needs of its rulers over two thousand years. The book emphasizes the impact of archaeological discoveries over the last fifty years, which have revolutionized knowledge about Chinese sculpture. It outlines the principles underlying all forms of statuary, regardless of size and material, and how these principles have been applied throughout Chinese history. Sculptures were a vital part of palace, tomb, temple, or other complexes intended to further harmony between worldly society and the cosmos. It elucidates the extent to which sculpture in China has been adapted to serve various needs and its influence on Chinese society

Paludan's book is praised for its comprehensive analysis and detailed historical insights. The book includes many previously unpublished photographs, providing visual evidence of the rich tradition of Chinese sculpture. The inclusion of many previously unpublished photographs adds significant value to the book. The depth of research and the use of archaeological discoveries provide a thorough understanding of Chinese sculpture. Some critics argue that the book may idealize certain aspects of Chinese sculpture, potentially overlooking some of the challenges and complexities. Overall, Ann Paludan's "Chinese Sculpture – A Great Tradition" is a well-researched and insightful exploration of the rich tradition of Chinese sculpture, making it a valuable resource for anyone interested in the subject.

Li Zhiyan, He Li & Virginia L. Bower Chinese Ceramics. From the Paleolithic through the Qing Dynasty, Yale UP, 2010.

Ceramics enjoy a unique place in the history of China: they are the link between the Paleolithic period and the present, and throughout much of recorded history, they represented the very idea of China to the outside world. The coffee-table book traces the history of ceramics in China and tells the story of the international trade in ceramics that made China the envy the world. This is an excellent introduction to Chinese ceramics. The breadth and depth of this book is impressive. Six themes runs through the presentation of the history of Chinese ceramics as signposts: (1) Continuity meaning the production of earthenware never stopped during the period studied as each epoch builds on the preceding one linking style with technique (2) National character referring to clarity in both complex and simple design with an emphasis on a sensitive, even spiritual, portrayal of the



natural world (3) Geography means different environments, raw materials, habits and customs in north-central, north-eastern and southern tradition ensuring diverse and continually innovative influences throughout the development of Chinese ceramics (4) Periodization implying periods such as Sui, Tang, Qin, Song, Han, Yuan & Ming are recognized by distinct characteristics (5) Synthesis of various foreign influences which were absorbed and adopted from the Byzantine, Persian and Arab World (6) Export refers to how Chinese ceramic-making techniques in other countries were an indirect or direct result of contact with the Chinese art and craft of making porcelain or earthenware.

The book traces the development of Chinese ceramics from the Paleolithic era to the end of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. It highlights the ongoing practice of invention and innovation in forms, materials, decorations, and functions of ceramics. The book emphasizes the importance of ceramics in Chinese culture, society, and civilization. It includes a chapter on Chinese export ceramics, discussing trade activities and ceramic wares made for export. The book addresses issues related to the authenticity of Chinese ceramics and the connoisseurship of this art form.

In comparison to Li Zhiyan, He Li, and Virginia L. Bower's book is more focused on the historical evolution and cultural significance of Chinese ceramics, while He Li's book the Standard guide to Chinese Ceramics is a more comprehensive guide that includes provenance, technique, history, and ancient traditions. He Li's book is often considered a definitive guide for collectors, connoisseurs, and students, with over 700 color photographs and detailed explanations, whereas this book is more scholarly and may be more suitable for academic purposes. Praised for its comprehensive historical review and cultural insights, but some may find it less practical for collectors. Highly regarded for its detailed and practical information, but some critics argue it may be overwhelming for casual readers due to its depth and breadth. Both books are valuable resources, but your choice may depend on whether you're looking for a scholarly historical account or a practical guide for collectors and enthusiasts. Since He Li's was sold out, I purchased this book which holds pride of place in my table in my living room adorned by the Chinese lunch plates hanging on the Wall, which the father in law of my great-grandfather Captain Schultz brought home from China. The tea set is only taken out for special occasion - my god the tea taste heavenly when drinking from Chinese cup of tea.

Nancy Steinhardt Chinese Architecture: A History, Princeton UP, 2019.

This book surveys the origins and evolution of Chinese architecture from the last millennia to the mid-twentieth century. Throughout history, China has maintained one of the world's richest built civilizations. The nation's architectural achievements range from its earliest walled cities and the First Emperor's vision of the city and empire to bridges, pagodas, and the twentieth-century constructions of the Socialist state. With rich political and historical context, Steinhardt covers more than forty centuries of architecture, from the genesis of Chinese buildings to the twenty-first century and the challenges of urban expansion and globalism.

Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt's Chinese Architecture: A History is a comprehensive survey of Chinese architecture from the last millennia BCE to the present. Steinhardt employs a rich political and historical context to explore the evolution of Chinese architecture, covering a wide range of structures including walled cities, bridges, pagodas, and modern constructions. Steinhardt presents a continuous chronological narrative, tracing the development of Chinese architecture over forty centuries. She highlights a standardized system of construction that has been consistent across various types of buildings, whether temples, imperial palaces, or shrines. The book examines the influence of Chinese architecture on neighboring regions such as Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Tibet. Steinhardt includes a variety of architectural examples from different ethnic populations and religions, such as monasteries, mosques, and tombs. She follows the extraordinary breadth of China's architectural legacy and considers the influence of Chinese architecture on Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and Tibet. Steinhardt shows that Chinese architecture is united by a standardized construction system, applicable whether buildings are temples, imperial palaces, or shrines. China's unique design has made its built environment a profound symbol of Chinese culture. Surprisingly, few historical buildings are left over in China, while the communication of this great civilization's heritage is concentrated in a few museums in the great cities. This must change.

Critics have praised the book for its comprehensive scope and depth, noting that it sets a new standard for the study of Chinese architectural history. However, some may find the extensive detail overwhelming, and



the focus on a chronological approach might limit the exploration of thematic or stylistic analyses.

Jing Tsu Kingdom of Characters – A Tale of Language, Obsession, and Genius in Modern China, Allen Lane, 2022.

This is an informative story narrating the simplification and modernization of the Chinese written and oral language to make it fit for the age of printing, data processing, and the internet, combining a linguist's insights with the storyteller's artistry. Chinese characters have three functions: (1) Meaning, (2) Strokes (3) Tones. A Chinese character is a written unit that bears meaning roughly equivalent to what we mean by a word in English – more or less. Characters often appear in pairs to convey a complete sense, and each character only carries one syllable. Characters are also called pictographs or logographs in Chinese Hanzi (named after the dynasty that first standardized them). Like in the alphabet, a character conveys meaning and sound, though to a different degree of direct correlation and emphasis, explains Jing Tsu. Only 3% of Chinese characters are pictograms, so object depiction is rarely at stake. The remainder characters are ideographs. Characters are made up of strokes meaning continuous lines of any length, including dots that are the essential elements in the composition and writing of an ideographic character. Strokes are written in a specific order established by calligraphy: left to right, top to bottom. The character Yong meaning eternity, contains eight strokes, including all dots: horizontal, vertical, hook, rising, downward left slant, below right slant, and folding. Initially, writing by hand involved bodily and brain processes such as stopping and focusing, feeling, and invoking one's memory. Then comes planning the idea to convey to the reader by connecting with one's intentions and emotions. Next, we must build a grammatical structure from our semantic word stock. Finally, we select the graphic signs and sequence of movements corresponding to each letter so that our hand can assemble it.¹⁵ Thus, writing involves dealing with your thoughts and emotions in all languages. Artful writing, or calligraphy in Chinese, has been considered an art form by the Chinese-educated elite

and was linked to fine art and history.¹⁶ There were four principal pieces of the calligraphic script: clerical, standard, cursive, and wild cursive. The leitmotifs: First is the central role of people as subjects under heaven. Second, there is freedom from the need to depict wholly and literally, and the use of ink reinforces the allusive character. Third, subjectivity and expressiveness are accepted without abstraction; each art form -poetry, painting, calligraphy - alludes to and completes the other. Fourth is the insistence on inner refinement. Fifth, honor is bestowed on creating paintings and calligraphy reflecting persons of understanding, the delicacy of perception, and moral fastidiousness¹⁷. These strokes are not randomly put together; a character comprises distinct parts. These smaller clusters of intersecting strokes or components combine with other groups of stroke patterns to form a more complex, standalone character. Finally, Chinese is a tonal language, which means the same syllable can be sounded at different pitches or tones. Because characters carry only one syllable, tones evolved to help differentiate between characters with the same syllable and pronounced the same way. There are many homophones in Chinese with the same pronunciation but also less frequently the same tone, Jing Tsu recounts. Chinese dialects often vary according to tone. Lurking beneath the grand narratives about great powers and national humiliation in contemporary understanding of China's encounter with the West is a more profound entanglement of China's script worlds. As the Communists assumed control, Jing recounts that the Kangxi Dictionary contained over 25,000 characters. Many dialects were spoken throughout China, meaning over 50% illiteracy rate in the 1950's and sometimes even a lack of mutual understanding. Reform was necessary for the Chinese language to transition into modernity, adapt to the machine age, and unify the country. It is Jing Tsu's contribution to recount the twist. It turns, skirmishes, and struggles involved in this modernization effort of Chinese towards establishing the Beijing dialect as *putonghua*, which means the "common language," also referred to as standard Mandarin¹⁸. Jing Tsu even goes so far as to claim: "Behind every written character that can be learned and used today stands a group of human characters who went to extraordinary lengths to make sure that could happen. With no guidance other than their

¹⁵ "Why is calligraphy so good for your brain" <https://www.domestika.org/en/blog/6627-why-is-calligraphy-so-good-for-your-brain>

¹⁶ An Introduction to Chinese calligraphy [online] [https://education.asianart.org/ressources/an-introduction-to-chinese-](https://education.asianart.org/ressources/an-introduction-to-chinese-calligraphy/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI2v2fiYul_glVmsF3Ch0IbQsEAAYAiAAEgJVY_D_BwE)

[calligraphy/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI2v2fiYul_glVmsF3Ch0IbQsEAAYAiAAEgJVY_D_BwE](https://education.asianart.org/ressources/an-introduction-to-chinese-calligraphy/?gclid=EAlalQobChMI2v2fiYul_glVmsF3Ch0IbQsEAAYAiAAEgJVY_D_BwE)

¹⁷ Liu Jui'an Calligraphy and Painting – The Essence of a Civilization in Sherman Lee *China 5,000 Years. Innovation and Transformation in the Arts*

¹⁸ <https://studycli.org/learn-chinese/putinghua/>



obsessive love for the Chinese language, their ambition opened up a world of discovery, revolution, and bold, perilous adventure”.

Stephen Owen *An Anthology of Chinese Literature beginnings to 1911*, Norton, 1997.

Stephen Owen's anthology adopts a comprehensive and chronological approach to Chinese literature, spanning from the earliest texts to the end of the imperial system in 1911. The anthology is organized by genres, themes, forms, and other groupings, providing readers with a sense of how different texts build upon one another and reflect the evolution of Chinese literary traditions. Owen includes helpful apparatus such as a general introduction, notes on translation, period introductions, a timeline, and interpretive commentary to make the tradition accessible to both students and general readers.

Genres

1. **Classical Poetry:** Focuses on nature, emotions, and philosophical musings. Notable works include the poems of **Li Bai** and **Du Fu**.
2. **Historical Fiction:** Explores historical events and figures. An example is "**Romance of the Three Kingdoms**" by Luo Guanzhong.
3. **Philosophical Texts:** Offers wisdom and guidance on life and governance. Key works include "**Tao Te Ching**" by Lao Tzu and "**The Analects**" by Confucius.
4. **Novels:** Includes epic tales and complex narratives. "**Dream of the Red Chamber**" by Cao Xueqin and "**Journey to the West**" by Wu Cheng'en are prime examples.
5. **Modern Fiction:** Addresses contemporary social issues and personal stories. "**Wild Swans**" by Jung Chang is a notable example.
6. **Essays:** Covers various topics from personal reflections to social commentary. The works of **Lu Xun** are highly regarded.

Themes

1. Nature and Harmony: Explored through classical poetry and philosophical texts.
2. Love and Relationships: Central to novels like "Dream of the Red Chamber".
3. Power and Strategy: Discussed in "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu and historical fiction.
4. Spiritual Quest: Highlighted in "Journey to the West".
5. Social and Political Critique: Featured in modern fiction and essays, addressing issues

like revolution and change, as seen in the works of Lu Xun.

Forms

1. Shi (诗): Classical Chinese poetry, characterized by regulated verse and strict tonal patterns.
2. Ci (词): Lyric poetry that follows specific rhythmic patterns.
3. Sanwen (散文): Prose, including essays and literary criticism.
4. Xiaoshuo (小说): Fiction, encompassing both short stories and novels.
5. Zaju (杂剧): Traditional Chinese drama and plays.

Highlights and Integrated Insights

- "Tao Te Ching" by Lao Tzu: Offers profound philosophical insights into living in harmony with the Tao (the Way).
- "The Art of War" by Sun Tzu: Provides strategic wisdom applicable to various aspects of life, emphasizing adaptability and foresight.
- "Journey to the West" by Wu Cheng'en: An epic adventure story that combines elements of fantasy and spiritual quest, reflecting the richness of human imagination and resilience.
- "Dream of the Red Chamber" by Cao Xueqin: A deeply emotional and intricate novel that explores the complexity of human relationships and the impact of societal changes.

These genres, themes, and forms showcase the diversity and depth of Chinese literature, offering insights into the richness of humanity and the variety of human character. They explore themes such as the complexities of human relationships, the struggle for power and survival, the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment, and the impact of historical and social changes on individuals and families. Through their diverse genres and styles, these works provide a window into the human experience, reflecting the universal themes of love, loss, ambition, and resilience.

Howard Goldblatt & Joseph C.M.Lau The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, 2007.



The Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature, edited by Joseph S. M. Lau and Howard Goldblatt, offers a comprehensive overview of modern Chinese literature from the early 20th century to contemporary times. The anthology includes a wide range of genres, including short fiction, poetry, and essays, from mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The anthology provides a chronological narrative, highlighting the evolution of Chinese literature in response to historical events such as the Communist takeover in 1949 and the Cultural Revolution.

The works included reflect the cultural, social, and political changes in China over the past century, offering insights into the lives and thoughts of Chinese people during different periods.

1.Short Fiction: This includes a variety of short stories that reflect the social, political, and cultural changes in China over the past century.

2.Poetry: The anthology features poetry from different periods, showcasing the evolution of poetic forms and themes.

3. Essays: This section includes essays that provide insights into the intellectual and cultural debates of the time.

4.Avant-Garde Works: Post-1976 literature includes avant-garde works that experiment with form and content

5.Works by Women: The anthology highlights contributions from female authors, reflecting diverse perspectives and experiences.

6.Misty (Menglong) Poetry: This genre emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s, characterized by its obscure and ambiguous imagery.

These genres collectively offer a rich and diverse view of modern Chinese literature, reflecting the complexity and richness of Chinese culture and society. Some of the key names include:

Short Fiction

- **Lu Xun:** Known for works like "Diary of a Madman" and "Kong Yiji."
- **Shen Congwen:** Notable for "Bian Cheng (The Border Town)" and "Changhe (The Long River)."

Poetry

- **Bei Dao:** One of the most influential poets, known for works like "The August Sleepwalker" and "Old Snow."

- **Yu Guangzhong:** A prolific poet, often considered one of the top poets of modern Taiwan.

Essays

- **Lu Xun:** Renowned for his sharp and unique essays, such as "A Madman's Diary."
- **Zhou Zuoren:** Known for his essays and translations, contributing significantly to Chinese literature.

Avant-Garde Works

- **Mo Yan:** Nobel Prize-winning author known for "Red Sorghum" and "The Garlic Ballads."
- **Yu Hua:** Famous for novels like "To Live" and "Chronicle of a Blood Merchant."

Works by Women

- **Zhang Ailing:** Known for "Lust, Caution" and "Love in a Fallen City."
- **Eileen Chang:** Renowned for her stories and novels exploring themes of love and betrayal.

Modern Fiction

- **Mo Yan:** Notable for his epic narratives and blending of traditional Chinese literature with modern storytelling.
- **Yu Hua:** Acclaimed for his poignant and honest writing style.

These authors have made significant contributions to modern Chinese literature, reflecting the richness of Chinese culture and the depth of human experience.

The character, sentiments, and intelligence reflected in Chinese literature have indeed evolved over the ages, reflecting the changes in society, culture, and historical context. Here's a brief overview:

Ancient and Classical Periods

- **Character:** Ancient Chinese literature often portrayed noble, heroic characters who embodied virtues such as loyalty, bravery, and righteousness.
- **Sentiment:** Sentiments in classical literature were deeply connected to nature, family, and morality. Poetry from this era, such as the works of Li Bai and Du Fu, often expressed a profound connection to the natural world and a longing for harmony and balance.
- **Intelligence:** Wisdom and philosophical insights were central themes, as seen in texts like the "Tao Te Ching" by Lao Tzu and "The Analects" by Confucius, which offered guidance on governance, ethics, and personal conduct.

Modern Period



- **Character:** Modern Chinese literature, especially post-20th century, began to explore more complex and multi-faceted characters. This includes individuals grappling with personal and societal conflicts, reflecting the turbulent historical events of the 20th century, such as wars, revolutions, and social changes.
- **Sentiment:** Sentiments in modern literature often include themes of alienation, identity crisis, and the struggles of ordinary people. Writers like Lu Xun and Yu Hua depict the harsh realities of life, societal critique, and the resilience of the human spirit.
- **Intelligence:** Modern works often reflect a critical and questioning intelligence, challenging traditional norms and exploring new ideologies. This era brought about a blend of Eastern and Western literary influences, as seen in the avant-garde and experimental works of Mo Yan and Bei Dao.

Contemporary Period

- **Character:** Contemporary Chinese literature continues to evolve, presenting characters that navigate globalization, technological advancements, and changing social norms. There is a focus on individualism and personal narratives.
- **Sentiment:** Sentiments now include a broader range of emotions and perspectives, from the nostalgic and reflective to the bold and revolutionary. Writers explore themes such as urbanization, environmental issues, and cultural identity.
- **Intelligence:** Contemporary literature often demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of both local and global contexts. Authors like Ma Jian and Ha Jin engage with complex political and social issues, offering nuanced critiques and insights.

Overall, while the core values and philosophical foundations of Chinese literature remain, the expression of character, sentiments, and intelligence has diversified and adapted to the changing times. This evolution highlights the richness of humanity and the depth and variety of the human character across different periods.

Philosophy

Anne Cheng *Histoire de la pensée Chinoise*, Editions du Seuil, 1997.

Throughout four thousand years, Chinese intellectual history displays excellent continuity. Still, during a record of ruptures and mutations but also exchanges, China saw the birth of original thinkers as Confucianism and Taoism assimilated Buddhism and engaged in the modern era in a dialogue with the West. Anne Cheng synthesizes this tradition in her book, which is in French. The book proceeds in six parts: The antique foundations of Chinese thinking, free exchanges under the combatting kingdoms, inheritance planning the great Buddhist upheaval, Chinese thinking after the assimilation of Buddhism, and the formation of modern thought. Finally, she invokes Laozi as a teaser: “He that stands on tiptoe does not stand up, who takes double strides can’t walk, who pushes himself in the eyes of all is without light, who always gives himself reason is without glory, who boasts of his talents is without merit, who prides himself of his successes is not made to last.”

Paul R. Golding *Confucianism*, Routledge, 2010.

This volume presents the history and salient tenets of Confucian thought from a social and philosophical point of view in the modern world. Although all work of Confucius has been translated into English, there need to be more short textbooks on Confucian philosophy in any Western language. This book seeks to rectify this situation. It guides readers through the philosophies of the three principal classical Confucians: Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, and concludes with an overview of later Confucian revivals and the standing of Confucianism today.

Nicolas Zufferey *La pensée des Chinois - Connaître la pensée de la Chine pour comprendre la Chine d’aujourd’hui*, Poche-Marabout 2014.

Isn’t it a joy to study, and then, when the right moment has arrived, put into practice what you have learned ?, Nicolas Zufferey asks together with Confucius in this fine pocketbook. Professor Zufferey considers already the classical Chinese language a barrier for abstract reflection on the being, substance and accidents, variable terminations, declinations from stale roots, the system of desinences, the opposition between the subject and verb, between the names and the verb. With a language with less frozen vocabulary in the grammatical categories, a different type of thinking emerges. While not as technical and abstract as in Europe, the Chinese language lends itself well to forms of expression that are vaguer but also more open and more stimulating and more often employed according to criteria of utility. The word *zhexue* is derived from *tetsugaku* (jp) translates to the love of



wisdom not necessarily the existence of a discipline of sagacity: predicated, phenomenal, and transcendental are just as a foreign word as metaphysics, logic, and ethics. When Chinese thinks, they meditate on the meaning of *dao*, *qi*, *yin*, *yang*, *yi*, or *li*. The thinkers in China were moralists, pedagogues, councilors, and civil servants. House names like Confucius, Mencius, Laozi, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming are the luminaries of Chinese thinking. While the thinking constitutes a canon, it also reflects regional variety and is not reserved for the initiated. In the words of Confucius: the virtuous man doesn't exploit people, the good man doesn't specialize himself, the sage is not thick-headed, an honest man is not a jar. Or "Man is identical to Heaven and Earth" (Lüshi Chunqiu). From this flows a central role for the divination of the turtle, the buffalo, or the frog (*Qinwa shi de*) to give meaning to the mutations in culture and life. Man has power over nature, the sage can see what others cannot, the belief in a hidden reality or virtual reality, that yang is hidden in yin, spring in winter and that magic doesn't happen in a vacuum. There is a living bond between the living and mortals, a measure of everything to maintain order and social harmony, religions are in the service of politics albeit no mythology exists in China. Chinese thinking is concrete, practical, and pragmatic. Theory must ally with practice, study with exercise, and exercise implies apprentice or homework something the Confucius-Institute respects, albeit not without weaknesses due to the advent of modern technologies. Heaven, Earth & Man constitute a fundamental Triad. Heaven intervenes to express its wrath faced with poor governance, human disorders occur along with natural disequilibria (*zai yi*). When yin ascends on yang, catastrophes are boundless. Then follows an exposé of the various thoughts of schools and thinkers and political programs to preserve and reinforce order and adapt to change. A central notion in this regard is resonance (*ganying*), which is assisted by the irresistible communicative nature of mankind (*qi*). Man needs to regulate his bodily fluids and needs, and is not an isolated atom but interacts with his environment envisaged in terms of his position in loose networks and social hierarchies. He is a monad and not a persona, and a member of a community of relationships and human interaction before being an individual with human rights. Indeed, originality and innovation were not part of the vocabulary of most Chinese thinkers or encouraged. Yet, the idea that a ruler can lose the mandate of Heaven, the respect for education, and the legitimacy of criticism is an enduring feature of Chinese mentality since Wang Chong.

Roger T. Ames & David L. Hall Dao de Jing – Making this life significant, Ballantine Books - A Philosophical Translation, New York, Random, 2003.

Daoist philosophy has given rise to several works. The Dao de Jing is a critical source for illuminating the cosmological question of the head and the nature of creativity. The translators argue that the defining purpose of the daodejing is bringing into focus and sustaining a productive disposition that allows for the total appreciation of those specific things and events that constitute one's field of experience. It is making this life significant. Perhaps, the most crucial contribution of Chinese culture, broadly speaking, according to Tang Yunyi, is "the spirit of the symbiosis and mutuality between particular and totality. In our understanding, this means an unwillingness to isolate the particular from the totality. Regarding feeling, it means the commitment of the particular to do its best to realize the totality". Daoism derives and sustains harmony from a balance between simplicity and complexity.

Karl Brunnhölzl Milarepa's Kungfu: Mahamudra in his Song of Realization, Wisdom Publications, 2022.

Milarepa was a Tibetan master who lived in the 11th century. He is known for his songs and poems that express his spiritual insights and experiences. Some of the thoughts Milarepa offered to his disciples of his realization are The importance of meditation: Milarepa emphasized the practice as the way to realize the true nature of the mind and attain liberation from suffering. He said: Life is short, and the time of death is uncertain, so apply yourself to meditation. Avoid doing evil, and acquire merit, to the best of your ability. Even at the cost of life itself. In short: Act so that you have no cause to be ashamed of yourselves and hold fast to this rule". The futility of worldly pursuits: Milarepa renounced all worldly attachments and pleasures and lived a simple and austere life in caves and mountains. He said: All worldly pursuits have but one inevitable end, which is sorrow; acquisitions end in dispersion, buildings in destruction, meetings in separation, births in death. Knowing this, from the very first, one should renounce acquisitions and storing-up, construction, and discussion, and be faithful to the commands of an eminent Guru, set about realizing the Truth. That alone is the best of religious observances. The power of the mind: Milarepa taught that reason is the source of happiness and misery and that mastering the mind can overcome all obstacles and achieve enlightenment. He



said: “When you run after your thoughts, you are like a dog chasing a stick: every time a stick is thrown, you run after it. Instead, be like a lion who, rather than chasing after the stick, turns to face the thrower. One only throws a stick at a lion once.” The value of compassion Milarepa stressed that compassion is the essence of Buddhism and that without compassion, one cannot attain Buddhahood. He said:” All meditation must begin with arousing deep compassion. Whatever one does must emerge from an attitude of love and benefitting others”. The joy of realization Milarepa expressed his happiness and gratitude for realizing the ultimate truth of reality, which he described as non-dual, luminous, blissful, and empty. He said: “In the gap between thoughts, nonconceptual wisdom shines continuously.”

Francois Jullien *Traité de l’efficacité*, Grasset, 1996.

Francois Jullien is a philosopher, Hellenist, and Sinologue. He asks in this book: Where does effectiveness come from? How do you think of it without constructing a model that poses it as a goal, without going through the theory-practice relationship, and without any heroic confrontation? The European difficulty of thinking of effectiveness – even on the realist side of our philosophy (From Aristoteles to Machiavelli or Clausewitz) – is opposed to the Chinese approach to strategy: when energy is expected from the “potential of the situation,” the opportunity to be sized is no longer the initiated tendency, and the most significant general only wins “easy” victories without one even thinking of “praising” him for it. From this cleavage, one will better perceive what consists of the possibility of effect, and notably that it is necessary to depart from a spectacular conception of the effect to understand that an effect is all the more significant in that it is not aimed at, but arises indirectly from the process undertaken and that it is discreet. Thus, Chinese strategists perceive transformation as a long-term process with articulated aims visible on the one hand; on the other hand, they seek to profit from the tipping of the balance of forces in nature in ways that are not visible.

Conclusions – Implications for EU Policy

The EU-China relationship has indeed become more complex and multifaceted over the years. The EU-China relationship has evolved from one of optimism to a more cautious and realistic approach. The EU now views China as a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor, and a systemic rival. This shift is due to various factors, including China's political assertiveness, human rights abuses, and lack of reciprocity in business practices. To address these issues, the EU has adopted a strategy of "de-risking" rather than "decoupling," aiming to reduce its dependence on China while maintaining cooperation on global challenges like climate change

China is the EU's second-largest trading partner, and the EU is China's biggest trading partner. This economic interdependence has been a cornerstone of their relationship. The EU-China relationship has evolved from constructive engagement to a strategic partnership, emphasizing cooperation in various fields. The EU has consistently raised human rights issues with China, often leading to tensions in their relationship. Both sides have engaged in technological collaborations, such as China's participation in the Galileo satellite network. The EU and China have cooperated on security issues, although there are divergent views on certain matters, such as the EU arms embargo on China. The relationship has seen growing geopolitical rivalry, especially with China's increasing assertiveness and the EU's alignment with the US on certain issues. There have been numerous cultural and educational exchanges between the EU and China, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. China's growing authoritarianism and assertiveness have posed challenges to the EU's commitment to a liberal international order. These enduring truths highlight the complexity and multifaceted nature of the EU-China relationship, which continues to evolve in response to global and regional dynamics.

The EU-China strategic partnership has significant implications for power transitions at various levels:

- **Asia:** China's growing influence in Asia, coupled with its strategic partnership with the EU, can alter the regional balance of power. The EU's engagement with China can help promote stability and cooperation in the region.



- **Europe:** The partnership affects Europe's strategic autonomy and its ability to navigate geopolitical challenges. The EU's approach to China involves balancing economic interests with the protection of its values and security.
- **GLOBAL:** The EU seeks to work with China on shared global challenges while ensuring that cooperation aligns with its principles and interests. The EU seeks to work with China on shared global challenges while ensuring that cooperation aligns with its principles and interests.

Best Practices for Change Management

To effectively manage changes in EU-China relations, the EU should consider the following best practices:

Refine Economic-Security Strategy: Develop a comprehensive economic-security strategy that addresses vulnerabilities and reduces risks associated with China.

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Pursue Strategic Partnerships: Engage with like-minded countries and emerging economies to build mutually beneficial partnerships and reduce dependence on China.

Conduct National Risk Assessments: EU countries should conduct national risk assessments to identify and mitigate potential risks in their interactions with China.

Promote Dialogue and Cooperation: Maintain open and constructive dialogue with China on key issues such as trade, climate change, and human rights.

By adopting these strategies, the EU can navigate the complexities of its relationship with China while safeguarding its interests and values.

What are the lessons for EU policy-makers in distilling the insights from the above-cited books? As we relate to one another, what does collective intelligence impart?

First, the EU's priorities are forging trade agreements with Asian countries, deepening integration in Europe, and stabilizing Europe and adjacent areas. Hence, the delicate balancing act of von der Leyen enrolling Macron for the benefit of a self-staged dismantlement of former French national leadership in the furtherance of EU priorities and EU-China concertation. EU is working with the ASEAN countries to promote European values in China. China is making inroads into the Middle East to pursue its self-interests without narrowing the EU's space of action, even as a more cohesive and strategic European actor-hood in the Middle East is called for. Second, China is an ideological competitor to the West, but there seem to be no strategic disagreements between the EU and China. While China claims it does not seek hegemony, this may result from the policies it pursues, albeit lower growth rates are already making themselves felt. Third, the EEAS has professed no policy on the desired regional order in North-East Asia and exploited the friction to forge ahead with the Strategic Partnership Agreement and Economic Partnership Agreement with Japan. This could be emulated with other democratic countries like India and Korea as Asia's Strategic Partners. This does not prevent the United States from exploring ways of reorienting the Korean conflict, which the EU could associate itself with in a substantially well-considered manner once it is understood what can be achieved. Fourth, an opportunity now exists for the EU to engage China without exploiting friction between the US and China, even as the EU strengthens its Asian policies and the parliament ratifies the comprehensive agreement on investment treaty between the EU and China regarding its influences. Fifth, there is a need for a debate on China's policies in both the EU and the US. At a diplomatic level, the forum this could be addressed is the newly established EU-US Dialogue in China. President von Der Leyen's MERICS speech¹⁹ is an indication of a desire for engagement and dialogue on the concerns, points, and issues raised in this literature review, without ignoring the anxieties some Europeans feel as they face history and change, even as she calls for a refocusing of the bilateral relationship and a strategy review. Sixth, the power transition at both global and regional levels is a matter of concern for the declining European nation-states. At the same time, policy-makers grasp the knowledge economy of the EU-China Relationship – more or less. Seventh, the EU Strategy Review has a material basis regarding increased European dependency on Chinese investments in sensitive industries. Still, the concern

¹⁹ <https://merics.org/en/events/president-ursula-von-der-leyen-future-eu-china-relations>



for Western civilization and Europe's weight in world affairs ultimately drive EU strategy. When Xi Jinping states that there are no strategic disagreements between China and the EU, this may be taken at face value. Chinese Foreign policy is transmissive in wanting to have as close as possible a relationship with its trading partners, transformational analogous to the evolution of nature and a human couple, and transactional in wanting to cut deals. Or in the words of Josep Borrell: "The real challenge before us is how best to make our relations work and manage our differences. This will be in the interest of China and the European Union. We owe it to the world."²⁰

Much work is ahead to rebalance world affairs without neglecting hurdles to strengthen the EU internally and the EU's global Asia policy, even as the multi-faceted EU-China relationship is managed with a more significant deal of strategic foresight. And this starts at home in Europe. Efforts at a more firm and united strategy vis-a-vis China reflect increased Western cooperation in response to Chinese long-term plans, geopolitical shifts, and long-standing EU complaints about unfair competition and an unbalanced trading relationship. Thus, resuming the EU-China Trade and Economic high-level dialogue is a welcome first step. EU must also get its act together on Iran and its policies towards the Middle East, Europe's near abroad, a high-maintenance area, and an unstable region of international politics. Or in the words of Dashi Fu Cong: "China and EU are big players in the world. There are many things that the leaders could talk about, both bilaterally and globally"²¹ Thus, a harmonious strategic partnership could evolve between China and Europe, two old and regenerating civilizations. In literary terms, China has adopted a policy of Strategic Opportunity in its foreign policy and is increasingly using its relationship with Russia in a quest for status. At the same time, new modes of competition are being introduced, impacting China's rise and reshaping world politics.²² For the Chinese, the creative process is about interaction and how we relate to one another- human rights and individuals are not at the forefront. Or, to coin Stanley Hoffmann: The US hegemony undoubtedly suggests one subsumes under the US-led international order, but there are different ways of doing so.

How to advance the EU-China relationship? How to promote the US and EU's interests?

²⁰ Josep Borrell "My views on China and Eu-China relations"https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/my-view-china-and-eu-china-relations_en

²¹ Interview with FT[online]http://eu.china-mission.gov.cn/eng/mh/202304/t20230404_11053811.htm

I propose to proceed with a discussion in the format of the EU-US Dialogue on China inaugurated by Helga Schmidt in 2021 and to put it to good use to understand better what can be achieved based on an assessment of all involved parties' objectives and interests.

This implies, amongst others, an exchange on how to proceed: (1) The integration of China, India, Turkey, Iran, and perhaps even Russia – they have CIS and CSTO- into the follow-up on EU's Central Asia strategy and along with the engagement on dialogue on Afghanistan (2) A package on China in cooperation with EP to promote the ratification of the EU-China comprehensive investment agreement building on the Michel-Jinping & Macron, UVL-Jinping dialogue. For instance, (a) China could implement the ILO conventions and move towards a UN project portfolio on Xinjiang, possibly linked to a series of political dialogue meetings in a format to be decided as appropriate in return for progress and help in Afghanistan²³ (b) Chinese police offices in EU are inappropriate and smacks off post-colonial revenge and resentment. Instead, China should open consulates and Confutse-institutes in the EU, and at the same time, relay public services for Chinese migrants to digital format (c) strengthen inter-university cooperation between EU-China in the area of human rights, the rule of law, and good governance, e.g., through the opening of branches of European schools in China teaching masters-programs in human rights, rule-of-law, good governance, as EU and China relate to one another (d) the deployment of two Europol agents into the EU's Delegation in Beijing (e) Parliamentarian's input (f) Elimination of indebtedness clauses in China's trade deals and belt-and-road projects (g) resolution of disputes in South China Sea through resort to international law and multi-bilateral dialogue (3) Encouragement of US-China Dialogue on the subsequent phases of bilateral trade agreements and the conditions for US joining TPP and the resumption of WTO multilateral talks. (4) EU-China Dialogue on conflict-resolution in Afghanistan, Great Lakes region, Darfur, Syria, Iran and the Middle East, Cuba, North Korea, and Myanmar (5) Engagement of India and South Korea on the establishment of SPA & EPA and regional security futures (6) Multi-bilateral policy review of EU's Strategic Partnerships tu-ning-in with the

²² Scott M. More China's Next Act, Oxford UP, 2022.

²³ Is this wise given the new constellation in Foreign Policy personnel in Beijing ?



Chinese *xin xing dagou guanxi* towards an EU-led international society as a delay-ed second-best option. (7) On India: Insist on (i) Implementation and evolution of the Closer Developmental Partnership. (ii) on a pragmatic trade-off between recognition of India's control over Arunachal Pradesh and China's control over Aksai Chin (iii) Establishment of a border demarcation committee proper rather than a working mechanism for the management of the conflict in anticipation of Chinese regional hegemony in Asia (iv) consideration of a balanced trading relationship (8) On Japan, similarly a departure from piecemeal *engrenage* towards a comprehensive approach to address the impasse in the bilateral relationship and the question of regional order in North-East Asia. The model partnership between India and China contains provisions on dialogue on security, economy (trade & investment), and culture, which could enrich deliberations between Tokyo and China on bringing the relationship forward and lessen tensions in North-East Asia arising from identity, territory, and power. I might add that Korea historically was a bridge and staging post for mutual invasions of Japan and China. Kim indulges in a Stalinist utopia; without ignoring, he kills with a borrowed dagger, even as he seeks to advance national interests as a Korean patriot. Thus, the strategy on North Korea needs to be reconsidered, and the stalled peace talks re-engineered for peace on the Korean peninsula and for the current rapprochement between Tokyo and Beijing to lead to a renewal of the bilateral relationship. Next, (8) Decide on Taiwan as a good first case for an EU Arms Export Policy, taking into consideration the apparent absence of implementation of US arms sales and

having regard to the need for provisions thereon in TFEU²⁴ (9) Engage India and Pakistan in dialogue on how to move forward in Kashmir²⁵ to reach a balanced solution, as progress between India and China bears fruit, Iran is socialised, Syria stabilized. Comprehensive peace in the Middle East is pursued. (10) Define the terms for the resumption of multilateral trade talks in WTO²⁶ as called for by The European Council. There is consensus between the US and EU on the need for China to sign up for the WTO as a developed nation. WTO governance structures, in turn, should be strengthened – not merely normalized. (11) Ask EEAS to put forward proposals on what kind of data is to be collected on China and Asia (12) Put pressure on Xi-Jinping to integrate environmental planning into CCP's five-year plans²⁷, the most influential and consequential way to introduce a change of direction into China's policy processes. (13) Launch an EU initiative -management in the South China Sea (14) Adopt policies and cooperation projects on food security in China to ensure the encroachment of man onto animals and the closing down of the Chinese wildlife animal farming industry serving social purposes. Man and animal breathe together, as the Bible says. They should not devour each other (15) Address the problem of exploiting the Pacific's undersea resources in an appropriate format (16) EU-China Dialogue on Beijing's relationship with the US-led international order²⁸
This strategy should be considered a package and executed according to a sequencing based on fundamental trade-offs and choices to be agreed upon by executives. There is the TPP, which is not necessarily in the interests of EU merchants. My

²⁴ Careful: New type of great power relations could be used by Beijing as a cover for further encroachment on Hong Kong and Taiwan and elsewhere. Thus, it is important to tightly coordinated and integrated policies and clear messaging vis-à-vis Beijing on how to move the EU-China relationship forward and how to advance European interests.

²⁵ Robert G. Wirsing *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute On regional Conflict and its resolution* addresses the reasons and possible resolutions for the Kashmir conflict, the oldest unresolved conflict in the UN-system together with the Great Lake conflict and the Middle East Peace Process. Shahid M. Amin *Pakistan's Foreign Policy* approaches the topic from the perspective of a practitioner within the context of the evolving Pakistani Foreign policy. Sisir Gupta *Kashmir a study in India-Pakistan relations* places the evolution of the conflict in the context of the schism in the Indian National Movement. Ataf Hussein Para addresses the role of Kashmir's leader Shaikh

Abdullah in *The Making of Modern Kashmir*. Cedric Penny addresses the role of the UN and studies the various negotiations between India and Paki-stan on Kashmir in *A Forgotten Conflict: Role and Significance of United Nations involvement and Indo-Pakistani bilateral interactions on the Kashmir conflict*.

²⁶ Stefan Pantekoek, Yvonne Bartmann & Hajo Lanz *China's role in the multilateral trading system*, FES, 2022.

²⁷ Min Zhu, Nicholas Stern, Joseph E. Stiglitz, Yonsheng Zhang, Jungfeng Li *Embracing the new paradigm of green development. China Carbon Neutrality Policy Framework research report*, [online] <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/embracing-the-New-Paradigm-of-Green-Development-in-China.pdf>

²⁸ Michael Mazarr, Timothy Heat & Astrid Stuth Cevallos *China and the international order* (online)|China and the International Order | RAND



message: Call China's bluff and proceed pragmatically with determination and ambition with both "roundness" and "squares." Thus, the EU is faced with a stark choice. The nation-states of Europe may use themselves in furthering the EU integration project until they collapse and the Asians take charge. Or a new European order may emerge along with EU leadership in global affairs. This is my approach towards an integrated US-European Strategy on China towards constructive cooperation and international partnership. Indeed, France's style of a staged dismantlement of former day's national leadership does not need to be translated into a total abandonment of the uses of Great Britain's rule-and-divide-policies in Asia, which historically has served the ascendancy of the European nation-states in World Affairs and the conquest of markets in Asia, and which China, in turn, has learned to take as a given and advance its interests from that place. Nor should we pretend things can and will remain the same as Asia rises. Ultimately, it is up to the Asians to address the question of the political maturity of Asia as a region. Suffice it to say that international politics have no permanent losers or winners. This, in turn, raises the question.²⁹What is a great power? Who are the great powers? What are the goods they compete over? What is the relationship and sequencing between the EU's strategy for reforming the UNSC and the objectives of a multi-bilateral policy review of the EU's strategic partnerships or perhaps even the setting up of an EU-led international society?

The point is not to be harsh or intelligent but to adapt to the situation, to move forward on strengthening the EU's competitiveness and political integration and unification, to assert Europe's role in the Middle East, and to achieve a more balanced relationship between the EU and China. EU is concerned about security, economy, and values in South East Asia, and China has interests in the Middle East. South-East Asians, like most actors, want a diversified foreign policy and do not want to be made to choose between partners, especially not with a King Kong loose in the neighbourhood. None of these are incompatible but could be seen as mutually reinforcing. While perception management is part of the Chinese diplomatic toolbox, care must also be taken to foster mutual understanding and dialogue. Cooperation in conflict management could be considerably

reinforced. The sum of conflicts in the world is constant, while the US has the hegemony but has always exercised it hesitantly. This constitutes an opportunity for EU-China cooperation to build their global partnership.

Cross-strait trade and investment affect Taiwanese preferences and have transformed the political forces inside Taiwan³⁰. The Taiwan issue is a sensitive case for both China and the US. It should, therefore, be deferred or defused given that the arrangements have served China and Taiwan well, combined with the difficulties of managing the regional power transition and the vagaries of US domestic politics. It is necessary to recognize that the communist insurrection has become more nationalist and the nationalists more democratic. Yet, the need for pragmatic adaptations to an interdependent world and rapidly changing global politics requires communication, mutual understanding, and exchange at several levels – not a long period of cooperation and conflict between two opposing systems. This sends the wrong signal³¹. What is needed is a coherent and holistic idea of how to manage change in the international system and, in the process, achieve the translation of ideas into a daily power practice, which is subtle but not without horizon, humble but not without ambition. That is fine if this involves straightening the crooked timber on both sides. The process of transformation from unipolarity over non-polarity to multi-polarity is at stake. And this has to be a peaceful transition – at excellent power level. Can you follow me?

My approach is organized around four concentric circles: (1) EU-US Dialogue on China, (2) EU-China Global Partnership, (3) EU Strategy towards reform of the UNSC to better manage change, (4) EU-led international society without rule-and-divide policies in the Middle East and as second best alternative implemented with delay to China's desire for a new type of great power politics.

This approach is compatible with Chinese notions of *guanxi* and perhaps even with Chinese precepts concerning the pursuit of harmony in World Politics.³²

My instinct otherwise tells me that the Myanmar regime should be bombed and Auntie Suu freed, subsequently to which US-EU-China-India could pursue a genuine conflict solution in Burma, a fulcrum

²⁹ <https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/6/30/the-case-against-the-concept-of-great-power-competition>

³⁰ Tse Kang-Leng *The Taiwan-China Connection: Democracy and Development across the Taiwan Straits*, 1996.

³¹The Veil of Isis: An essay on the History of the Idea of Nature[on-line] <https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/the-veil-of-isis-an-essay-on-the-history-of-the-idea-of-nature>



between India and China. Myanmar is an excellent example of how geopolitics is often not about good against evil but good against another good. The power transition, China's ascent, and the regional order in Asia are some of the most consequential topics of international politics in our era, so we need to get it right.

Appendix 1 – EU-US Strategy to Elevating China from a Developed to a Modernized Country

The **EU-US Dialogue on China** is a high-level platform for the European Union and the United States to discuss and coordinate their respective approaches to China's growing influence and actions on the global stage. This dialogue covers many topics, including trade policies, security concerns, human rights issues, and China's role in international organisations.

The most recent meeting took place on September 9-10, 2024, where Deputy Secretary of State Kurt Campbell and European External Action Service (EEAS) Secretary General Stefano Sannino discussed recent engagements with China and the trajectory of their bilateral relationships. They emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication channels with China, addressing economic coercion, and promoting rules-based, free, and fair trade.

The dialogue also highlights the shared concerns of the EU and the US regarding China's support for Russia's actions in Ukraine and the need for China to act in support of international law. Both parties reiterated their commitment to advancing shared objectives and democratic values while managing the competitive aspects of their relationship with China.

Comprehensive EU-US Strategy on Elevating China's Status in the WTO

1. Overview

China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 marked a significant milestone in its economic development. However, as China has evolved from a developing country to a modernised economy, a comprehensive strategy to reflect this change within the WTO framework is needed.

2. China's Position and Interests

China has been a staunch supporter of the multilateral trading system and has advocated for the WTO to play a more significant role in global economic governance. China's interests include:

Promoting International Trade: China aims to enhance its role in promoting international trade and economic growth.

Sustainable Development: China seeks to contribute to sustainable development through its trade policies.

Global Economic Governance: China advocates a more significant role for the WTO in global economic governance.

Anti-Protectionism: China takes a firm stance against protectionism and supports trade liberalisation.

3. Challenges and Desiderata

Challenges:

- **State Intervention:** The influence of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and opaque subsidies create competitive distortions.
- **Transparency:** There is an overall lack of transparency in China's financial subsidies for key industrial sectors.
- **Compliance:** Ensuring compliance with WTO rules and commitments remains a challenge.

US-EU Desiderata

- **Market Reforms:** China should adopt reforms to align with its economic weight.
- **Transparency:** Improve transparency in subsidies and state interventions.
- **Compliance:** Enhance compliance with WTO obligations, including notification obligations.

4. Execution Strategy

The EU and US can adopt the following strategy to address these challenges and achieve the desiderata.

Enhanced Coordination: Increase coherence and coordination between EU and US stakeholders to present a united front.

Economic Security: Implement defensive instruments and new protections, such as better coordination of export controls and outbound investment screening mechanisms.

Partnerships: Seek partnerships with like-minded countries like Australia and South Korea to support de-risking efforts.

Dialogue and Negotiation: Engage in continuous dialogue and negotiation with China to encourage market reforms and transparency.

Monitoring and Compliance: Establish robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure China's compliance with WTO rules and commitments.

By implementing this comprehensive strategy, the EU and the US can work towards elevating China's status in the WTO, reflecting its modernized economy and promoting a fair and transparent global trading system.



EU-US-China Action Plan for WTO Reform

1. Institutional Building

- **Stakeholders:** EU, US, China, and other WTO members.
- **Interests:** Ensuring a fair, transparent, and effective multilateral trading system.
- **Impact:** Strengthening global trade governance and reducing trade tensions.
- **Contentious Issues:** Dispute settlement system, transparency, and representation of developing countries.
- **Potential Solutions:** Reforming the Appellate Body, enhancing transparency measures, and ensuring fair representation.

2. Legislative and Policy Development

- **Stakeholders:** EU, US, China, and global South.
- **Interests:** Modernizing trade rules to reflect 21st-century realities.
- **Impact:** Addressing digital trade, environmental sustainability, and state intervention.
- **Contentious Issues:** Balancing trade liberalization with regulatory measures.
- **Potential Solutions:** Developing plurilateral agreements, updating rules for digital trade, and integrating sustainability into trade policies.

3. Regionalism and Globalization

- **Stakeholders:** EU, US, China, and global South.
- **Interests:** Harmonizing regional trade agreements with multilateral rules.
- **Impact:** Enhancing global trade integration while respecting regional dynamics.
- **Contentious Issues:** Compatibility of regional agreements with WTO rules.
- **Potential Solutions:** Promoting outcome multilateralism and ensuring regional agreements complement the multilateral system.

4. Weight of US, European, and Chinese MNCs

- **Stakeholders:** US, EU, China, and global South.
- **Interests:** Maintaining competitive advantage and market access.
- **Impact:** Influencing global trade policies and practices.
- **Contentious Issues:** Addressing trade practices of state-owned enterprises and subsidies.
- **Potential Solutions:** Establish clear subsidy rules and enhance market access for developing countries.

5. Role of the Global South

- **Stakeholders:** Global South and WTO members.
 - **Interests:** Ensuring equitable participation in the multilateral trading system.
 - **Impact:** Promoting inclusive growth and reducing trade imbalances.
 - **Contentious Issues:** Special and differential treatment for developing countries.
 - **Potential Solutions:** Enhancing capacity-building support and flexibility in trade commitments.
- ### 6. Sticking Points and Potential Solutions
- **Contentious Issues:** Dispute settlement crisis, negotiating function, and representation of developing countries.
 - **Potential Solutions:** Reforming the Appellate Body, modernizing trade rules, and ensuring fair representation.

Conclusion

All WTO members must adapt and reform the organization to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Failure to do so could undermine the multilateral trading system and exacerbate global trade tensions. Collaboration and compromise are essential to achieving meaningful reform and ensuring a fair and effective global trading system.

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Appendix 2 - Historiography and Domesticity:

1. Historical Analogy

Definition of "Historical Analogy"

A historical analogy is a comparison between a current situation and a similar historical event or period. This comparison draws parallels and derives insights that can inform decision-making processes. Historical analogies can help to understand patterns, predict outcomes, and develop strategies by learning from past experiences.

Pros of Using Historical Analogies in Diplomatic Strategizing and Practice

1. Learning from Past Mistakes:
 - Insight: Historical analogies provide valuable lessons from previous errors, helping diplomats avoid repeating the same mistakes.
 - Example: The Munich Agreement (1938) is often cited as a lesson in appeasement, influencing modern decisions to avoid similar concessions to aggressive states.
2. Pattern Recognition:
 - Insight: Identifying recurring historical patterns can help predict future outcomes and shape strategies accordingly.
 - Example: The Cold War's containment strategies can inform modern approaches to counterbalance emerging superpowers.
3. Contextual Understanding:
 - Insight: Analogies offer context and background that enrich the understanding of contemporary issues.
 - Example: Comparing the post-WWI Versailles Treaty to modern peace treaties helps illustrate the

long-term consequences of punitive peace terms.

4. Strategic Decision-Making:

- Insight: Historical examples can guide policymakers in crafting more effective and strategic decisions.
- Example: The Marshall Plan's success in rebuilding post-WWII Europe can inspire similar economic assistance programs for conflict-ridden regions today.

Cons of Using Historical Analogies in Diplomatic Strategizing and Practice

1. Oversimplification:

- Risk: Historical analogies may oversimplify complex situations, leading to misinterpretations and flawed strategies.
- Example: Comparing the Iraq War to the Vietnam War may overlook each conflict's unique political, cultural, and geographical factors.

2. Misleading Comparisons:

- Risk: Not all historical events are comparable; forcing parallels can lead to incorrect conclusions.
- Example: Analogies between the Cuban Missile Crisis and contemporary nuclear standoffs might neglect differences in technological advancements and geopolitical contexts.

3. Confirmation Bias:

- Risk: Decision-makers may selectively use historical analogies confirming their preexisting beliefs or strategies, ignoring those contradicting them.
- Example: Politicians might cherry-pick favourable historical examples to justify military interventions, ignoring lessons that advocate for diplomacy.

4. Fixed Mindset:



- Risk: Relying too heavily on historical analogies can create a rigid mindset that resists innovative thinking and adaptability.
- Example: Viewing all insurgencies through the lens of the Vietnam War could limit creative counterinsurgency strategies suited to new conflicts.

Summary

While historical analogies can offer valuable insights and lessons for contemporary diplomatic strategizing, they must be used cautiously. It is crucial to recognize the unique aspects of each situation and avoid oversimplified or misleading comparisons. Balancing historical wisdom with fresh perspectives and innovative thinking can lead to more nuanced and effective diplomatic practices.

2. Strategies Derived from the Warring States Period

The Warring States period (c. 475-221 BCE) was a time of intense conflict and political fragmentation in ancient China. It followed the Spring and Autumn period and marked the final centuries of the Zhou dynasty. Numerous states vied for dominance during this era, leading to constant warfare and significant military, bureaucratic, and political reforms. The period is named after the "Record of the Warring States," a historical work compiled during the early Han dynasty. The seven most powerful states were Qin, Zhao, Han, Wei, Qi, Chu, and Yan. This period ended with the rise of the Qin state, which eventually conquered the other states and unified China under the first imperial dynasty in 221 BCE. The Warring States period was also a time of significant intellectual and cultural development, with the emergence of influential philosophers like Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, whose ideas shaped Chinese thought and governance for centuries.

When comparing "she" and "shi," it's a bit like distinguishing between someone giving you a warm hug and a strategic nudge. One offers comfort, while the other offers cunning.

So, remember: if "she" is the heart, "shi" is the art... of strategic scheming!

The Stratagems

Induce Complacency to Avoid Alerting Your Opponent: This strategy involves making the opponent feel secure and unthreatened, reducing their vigilance and readiness.

- **Relevance:** This can be seen in China's approach to international relations, which often projects a non-threatening image to avoid provoking other nations.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could translate to maintaining a low profile in policy changes to avoid public unrest.

Manipulate Your Opponent's Advisers: Influencing the advisors or decision-makers of the opponent to sway their decisions in your favour.

- **Relevance:** Historically, China has used this strategy in its diplomatic relations, subtly influencing other countries' policies.

- **Alternatives:** In domestic politics, this could involve lobbying or influencing key political figures to gain support for specific policies.

Be Patient - For Decades or Longer to Achieve Victory: Long-term strategic planning and patience to achieve long-term goals.

- **Relevance:** China's economic rise and long-term strategic goals, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, reflect this approach.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could mean gradual implementation of reforms to ensure stability and acceptance.

Steal Your Opponent's Ideas and Technology for Strategic Purposes: Acquiring knowledge and technology from others to enhance one's capabilities.

- **Relevance:** China has been accused of intellectual property theft and espionage to advance its technological and military capabilities.

- **Alternatives:** Encouraging innovation and research within the country to reduce dependence on foreign technology.

Military Might is not the Critical Factor for Winning a Long-Term Competition. Instead, Emphasis should be placed on non-military means of achieving strategic goals.

- **Relevance:** China focuses on economic and soft power to expand its global influence.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could mean prioritizing economic development and social stability over military expansion.

Recognise That the Hegemon Will Take Extreme, Even Reckless Actions to Retain a Dominant Position: Understanding that dominant powers may take drastic measures to maintain their status.



- **Relevance:** This can be seen in the actions of major powers in international relations, including China's assertive actions in the South China Sea.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could mean preparing for potential internal unrest or external threats.

Never Lose Sight of Shi (Deception to Make Your Opponent Do Your Bidding for You, and Waiting for the Maximum Opportunity to Strike): Using deception and strategic timing to achieve goals.

- **Relevance:** This classic military strategy can be applied in various contexts, including diplomacy and business.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could involve strategic planning and timing of policy announcements to maximize impact.

Establish and Employ Metrics for Measuring Your Status Relative to Potential Challenges: Continuously assessing one's position and potential threats.

- **Relevance:** China uses various metrics to evaluate its economic and military strength.

- **Alternatives:** Domestically, this could mean regular assessments of social and economic indicators to guide policy decisions.

2. Weaknesses and Threats to the Cohesiveness of the Chinese State

1. **Economic Disparities:** Despite rapid economic growth, there are still significant regional disparities in income and development

2. **Ethnic Tensions:** China is home to numerous ethnic groups, and tensions between the Han majority and minority groups can pose a threat to national unity.

3. **Political Repression:** The Chinese government's strict control over political dissent and media can lead to internal unrest and dissatisfaction.

4. **Environmental Issues:** Pollution and environmental degradation are significant concerns affecting public health and social stability.

5. **Ageing Population:** China's rapidly ageing population challenges its social security system and labour force.

6. **Corruption:** Corruption within the government and state-owned enterprises can undermine public trust and economic efficiency.

7. **Cityscape:** The CCP has given priority to high-risers to raise people out of poverty. It will need to pay greater attention to both the intellectual structure of its cityscape and people's desire for single family and intergenerational home settings as well as refine its rural development strategy.

3. From Unipolarity to Multipolarity and back again?

Major Trading Partners

- **United States:** The US's top trading partners are Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, and Germany.

- **European Union:** The EU's major trading partners include the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Japan.

- **China:** China's primary trading partners are the United States, the European Union, ASEAN countries, Japan, and South Korea.

Transition from Non-Polarity to Multipolarity

- The transition from a non-polar to a multipolar world involves the rise of multiple power centres, each with significant influence on global affairs. This shift requires:

Transition from Non-Polarity to Multipolarity

The transition from a non-polar to a multipolar world involves the rise of multiple power centres, each with significant influence on global affairs. This shift requires:

1. **Balanced Leadership:** Leaders like Christian Ilcus, the Balhara of Salma BA, must adopt strategies that promote cooperation and mutual benefit.

2. **Institutional Strategies:** Institutions must be reformed to accommodate the new power dynamics and ensure fair representation and decision-making processes.

3. **Economic Policies:** Diversifying trade partnerships and reducing dependency on any single country or bloc.

Stakes and Strategies

- **Economic Stability:** Ensuring that trade policies and agreements benefit all parties involved.

- **Political Stability:** Promoting peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution mechanisms.

- **Technological Advancement:** Encouraging innovation and collaboration in technology and research.

Likelihood of Reverting to Unipolarity

The likelihood of reverting to a unipolar system, such as a Pax Sinica (a period of Chinese dominance), depends on various factors:

- **Economic Growth:** China's continued economic rise.

- **Military Power:** China's military expansion and influence.



- **Global Alliances:** The strength and stability of alliances and partnerships.

Asian-Centric International System

An Asian-centric international system would see Asia, particularly China, as the dominant force in global affairs. This could lead to:

- **Shift in Trade Dynamics:** Increased focus on intra-Asian trade and investment.
- **Cultural Influence:** Greater dissemination of Asian culture and values.
- **Geopolitical Shifts:** Changes in global power structures and alliances.

Appendix 3 -Three-Day Conference Program: China and the EU: Regional Realities, Global Ambitions

Venue: International Conference Center, Brussels, Belgium. Dates: June 15-16, 2025

Day 1: Understanding Regional Realities

08:00 - 09:00: Registration and Welcome Coffee

09:00 - 09:15: Opening Remarks

- Speaker: Conference Chairperson
- Overview: Introduction to the conference theme and objectives.

09:15 - 10:30: Keynote Address

- Title: "China-EU Relations in a Changing Global Landscape"
- Speaker: Distinguished Scholar on International Relations
- Overview: Historical context, current dynamics, and prospects of China-EU relations.

10:30 - 11:00: Networking Break

11:00 - 12:30: Panel Discussion 1: Economic Cooperation and Competition

- Moderator: Senior Economist
- Panelists:
 - Trade Policy Expert from China

- EU Economic Advisor
- Representative from a Multinational Corporation

- Topics: Trade agreements, investment flows, industrial policies, and economic synergies and frictions.

12:30 - 14:00: Lunch Break

14:00 - 15:30: Session 1: Regional Security and Strategic Interests

- Speakers:
 - Defense Analyst from the EU
 - Security Studies Professor from China
- Overview: Security dynamics in Asia and Europe, defence collaborations, and strategic challenges.

15:30 - 16:00: Networking Break

16:00 - 17:30: Session 2: Technology and Innovation

- Speakers:
 - Technology Policy Expert from the EU
 - Innovation Specialist from China
- Overview: Technological advancements, digital economy, 5G development, and cooperation in research and innovation.

17:30 - 18:00: Closing Remarks Day 1

- Summary: Key takeaways from the day and a look ahead to Day 2.

18:30 - 20:30: Networking Dinner

Day 2: Global Ambitions and Future Directions

08:30 - 09:00: Morning Coffee and Networking

09:00 - 09:15: Opening Remarks Day 2

- Speaker: Conference Chairperson
- Overview: Recap of Day 1 and introduction to Day 2 themes.

09:15 - 10:30: Panel Discussion 2: Climate Change and Sustainability

- Moderator: Environmental Policy Expert



- Panelists:
 - Climate Scientist from China
 - EU Green Deal Representative
 - Sustainability Officer from an International NGO
 - Topics: Joint climate initiatives, sustainable development goals, and environmental policies.
- 10:30 - 11:00: Networking Break
- 11:00 - 12:30: Session 3: Global Governance and Multilateralism
- Speakers:
 - International Relations Expert from the EU
 - Diplomatic Policy Advisor from China
 - Overview: Roles of China and the EU in global governance, UN collaboration, and multilateral trade agreements.
- 12:30 - 14:00: Lunch Break
- 14:00 - 15:30: Session 4: Cultural Exchanges and Soft Power
- Speakers:
 - Cultural Diplomacy Expert from the EU
 - Cultural Exchange Program Director from China
 - Overview: Cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, and the role of soft power in international relations.
- 15:30 - 16:00: Networking Break
- 16:00 - 17:30: Closing Panel: Future of China-EU Relations
- Moderator: Renowned International Affairs Commentator
 - Panelists:
 - Senior Policy Maker from the EU
 - Government Advisor from China
 - Independent Foreign Policy Analyst
 - Topics: Vision for the future, potential areas for cooperation, and managing conflicts.
- 17:30 - 18:00: Conference Summary and Closing Remarks
- Speaker: Conference Chairperson
 - Overview: Summarize the conference insights and outline future steps.
- 18:00 - 19:00: Farewell Reception
- Day 3: Working Group Discussions: Global Hotspots**
- Session 1: Myanmar and North Korea
- 08:30 - 09:00: Morning Coffee and Networking
- 09:00 - 10:30: Working Group 1: Political and Human Rights Challenges
- Moderator: Human Rights Expert
 - Participants:
 - Diplomatic Representatives
 - Human Rights Activists
 - Policy Analysts
 - Topics: Assessing the political landscapes, human rights violations, and international responses. Strategies for peacebuilding and humanitarian interventions.
- 10:30 - 11:00: Networking Break
- Session 2: Sudan and Congo
- 11:00 - 12:30: Working Group 2: Conflict and Development
- Moderator: Conflict Resolution Specialist
 - Participants:
 - Representatives from International NGOs
 - Development Economists
 - Regional Experts
 - Topics: Understanding the root causes of conflict, the impact on regional stability, and development challenges. Approaches to



conflict resolution and sustainable development.

12:30 - 14:00: Lunch Break

Session 3: Cuba and Argentina

14:00 - 15:30: Working Group 3: Economic Reform and Regional Integration

- Moderator: Latin American Studies Scholar
- Participants:
 - Economic Policy Advisors
 - Trade Experts
 - Regional Integration Specialists
- Topics: Examining economic reform efforts, trade relations, and regional integration initiatives. Prospects for economic growth and regional cooperation.

15:30 - 16:00: Networking Break

16:00 - 17:30: Closing Session: Synthesizing Insights and Future Directions

- Moderator: Conference Chairperson
- Overview: Summarizing insights from the working group discussions. Identifying key action points and future collaboration opportunities.

17:30 - 18:00: Conference Summary and Closing Remarks

- Speaker: Conference Chairperson
- Overview: Reflecting on the three days of discussions and outlining the next steps for continued engagement and cooperation.

18:00 - 20:00: Farewell Dinner

This comprehensive three-day conference program is designed to foster in-depth discussions and collaboration on critical regional and global issues. It combines keynote addresses, panel discussions, interactive sessions, and working group discussions to provide a holistic understanding of the complex dynamics.

Summary

As the EU and US strategize their goals in Asia, they must take a balanced and nuanced approach. It is crucial to recognise Iran's historical role as a vital link between Europe and China. This bridge highlights the interconnectedness of civilizations and the importance of diplomacy and trade.

The EU and the US should focus on deep structural reforms, bolstering their power capabilities and generating wealth to solidify their positions. By strengthening their internal foundations, they can engage more effectively globally.

A balanced, equitable, and fair approach remains an eternal truth for addressing modern challenges. The resurgence of ancient civilizations like China need not be viewed as a threat but rather as an opportunity for Europe and the West to reevaluate their roles and contributions to the world.

The return of these ancient powers should inspire reflection and adaptation, promoting a more inclusive and cooperative international order. In embracing this perspective, the West can navigate the complexities of the modern world with wisdom and foresight, ensuring a harmonious future.

This holistic approach underscores the need for collaboration and mutual respect in a multipolar world, fostering a global environment where diverse civilisations contribute to shared prosperity.

A convergence of ancient wisdom and modern innovation will mark the next wave of globalisation. As the EU and US navigate this complex landscape, their strategic goals in Asia must reflect a commitment to balanced engagement, recognising the vital role of countries like Iran as historical connectors between Europe and China.

Iran's strategic position as a middle power and transmission belt between China, Europe, and Eurasia is pivotal for facilitating trade, cultural exchange, and geopolitical stability. This role underscores its importance in connecting major economic regions, enhancing regional integration, and being a trustworthy partner-in-power and flourishing economic centre. Ensuring a smooth power transition in Iran is essential for maintaining stability and fostering mutual benefits among these regions. By promoting what is right for individuals and the community, this transition can contribute to a more harmonious and cooperative international



environment. Ultimately, a balanced and equitable approach to managing Iran's role can help create a sustainable future for all involved parties.

Powerful nations foster cooperation, champion innovation, and uphold justice to create a stable global environment. They avoid exploiting weaker nations, refrain from unnecessary conflicts, and resist the temptation of unchecked dominance. True greatness lies in inspiring and uplifting humanity, promoting peace, progress, and prosperity for all.

Deep structural reforms within Europe and a focus on enhancing power capabilities and wealth generation will provide a strong foundation for meaningful participation in global affairs. This internal strengthening will enable Western nations to approach global challenges with resilience and adaptability.

In this new era, upholding principles of fairness, equity, and cooperation is essential. The resurgence of ancient civilizations, far from being a threat, should be seen as an impetus for the West to re-examine its role and power in the world. Embracing this shift with an open mind can lead to a more inclusive and harmonious international order.



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