

Unraveling Chinese Political Culture

Review by Mark T. Fung

JOSEPH FEW SMITH. *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 332 pp. \$59.95 cloth, \$21.95 paper.

At the September 2001 Sixth Plenum of the Fifteenth Party Congress, members deliberated the course China would follow in the coming Sixteenth Party Congress one year later. Weary from the tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square movement, no single Chinese leader was likely to predominate their future direction. Even so, the politics of the generational transition in leadership were manifested in what was not said as much as by what was. The task of leadership promotion and change in China remains a traditional one. Prized

accomplishments are typically molded into an enduring legacy—this is understood as the model, at least. During this Congress, however, we witnessed President Jiang Zemin's protege suffer an unusual defeat. Zeng Qinghong, an alternate member of the Politburo and the main architect of Jiang's policies, was not elevated, as many had expected, to full membership in the twenty-one member Politburo. As a full member of the Politburo, Zeng would be poised to become one of seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the main decision-making body in China. Was Zeng Qinghong a mere casualty in a political skirmish or symbolic of something grander—Jiang's inability to leave his imprimatur on Chinese politics?

During the latter part of Jiang's rule, China's formal accession to the World Trade Organization was on track and the International Olympic Committee chose Beijing to host the 2008 games. Jiang's now famous July 1, 2001 speech opened

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Communist party doors to entrepreneurs. China appeared to be on the verge of becoming "modern." At the same time, however, politics is a strange animal in contemporary China—discerning predator and prey is difficult.

How far China has come in the past twelve years and how much further it must go are the central questions for Joseph Fewsmith in *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*, his thorough and revealing examination of the ebb and flow of Chinese politics since 1989. Fewsmith exposes the labyrinthine dynamics of Chinese domestic politics, the rising swell of nationalism, and the interaction between intellectuals and the state. He describes the political reincarnation of Premier Zhu Rongji, who lay on his political deathbed as recently as April 1999 after failing to secure a WTO agreement during his visit with President Bill Clinton of the United States. His political career also appeared hampered by the fallout from the U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in May 1999. The anti-corruption campaign launched by Zhu Rongji against Lai Changqing in 1999 had Jiang Zemin's full blessing. By prosecuting an individual who ran a multibillion dollar luxury goods and oil smuggling operation with connections to a string of high-level cadres, Zhu was able to reassert himself into the lifeline of Chinese politics as the prime graft fighter. Fewsmith goes on to argue, however, that the campaign

threatened to undermine the very political continuity that Jiang sought because it exposed the friends and families of the political elite.

To understand China today requires understanding the aftermath of June 4, 1989, when Deng Xiaoping's prestige in the Communist Party declined precipitously. While Deng still remained the final arbiter of authority as the paramount leader, he would use his position methodically and cautiously, seeking more consensus and balance within the political hierarchy than he did before. According to Fewsmith, this led to Deng's installation of Jiang Zemin—party secretary of Shanghai, China's largest city—as the "core" of the next generation of leadership. Jiang's ascent was merely a matter of a process of elimination. A symbol of steadiness and incrementalism, Jiang represented neither a tilt toward conservatism nor toward reform. If anything, he was responsible for shutting down certain publications for fear of instigating political instability. "[Jiang] was thus acceptable to the leading figures in the Party, and that in itself was an important qualification for leadership," observes Fewsmith. In behavior not unlike Jiang's today, "Deng clearly tried to relax the political atmosphere by responding to the popular sentiments that had underlain the Tiananmen demonstrations, by trying to play down ideological tensions, and by ameliorating international tensions to the greatest extent possible."

With China's newfound wealth came intellectual fecundity, the results of which resulted in some opposition to Jiang and those people associated with pro-Western reforms. The intellectual influence on Chinese elite politics was particularly keen during the last decade as an outgrowth of consensus-based politics. Fewsmith provides us a fresh understanding of the new ideological trends in the mid-1990s, when we saw the rise of a "new authoritarianism" and neoconservatism that butted heads with liberal intellectuals. These neoconservatives argued for greater political freedoms, not less. Both schools pointed to the economic dynamism of the Four Tigers (Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore) as the rationale for their position. "New authoritarians hoped to use the power of the state to break through these obstacles and push marketization forward," Fewsmith writes. Deng's reforms now enjoyed relative consensus, so the national debate in China was no longer a clear-cut one between reformers and conservatives. Instead, it was a battle over the best means to achieve the end of economic success and political stability.

Among Fewsmith's many gifts is his ability to provide an unerring understanding of China's political culture. He argues adroitly that during the 1990s, an unprecedented sense of meandering within the intellectual circles emerged. "It was not just that commercialization presented intellectuals with a profound crisis of identity but also that intellectuals began to disintegrate as an identifiable group. Despite deep divisions among intellectuals throughout China's modern history, there was never any doubt about intellectuals as a distinct social category with a sense of self-identity and group ethos." Part of the reason, Fewsmith con-

tends, is that Chinese society has become more international and trade-focused, both aided by the rise of information and discourse on the Internet.

Even to this day, China seems to thrive in a political culture of contradictions, or *maozi*. So it is no surprise that Fewsmith identifies a rise of counter-reformers at a time when China's economic might is apparent. These counter-reformers are concerned with the costs of financial success: unemployment, crime, and social ills, among others. But another strain of thought, espoused by the neoconservatives, was particularly virulent in the early to mid-1990s. This group rejected Francis Fukuyama's American triumphalist claim of the coalescing of world forces in favor of neoclassical liberalism and the "end of history." Furthermore, Fewsmith notes that when Anthony Lake, Clinton's first national security adviser, gave what would become known as his "democratic enlargement" speech titled "From Containment to Engagement," many Asian intellectuals, including those in China, scoffed at these pronouncements as American hubris.

On the cusp of a new century, Fewsmith found that conservatism and nationalism lurked and fed off popular opinion and elite sentiment. As public opinion changed, so too did Jiang's response to those within the party. We learn how important the Fifteenth Party Congress was to the viability of the party and hence for Jiang. He became bolder and struck out on his own to implement "Jiang Zemin Thought," which was essentially Deng Xiaoping Thought with an eye toward economic reform. Jiang managed to demote Li Peng by shifting him to the National People's Congress, while Li maintained the number-two position in the all-powerful Politburo Standing

Committee. Jiang was reliant upon the leftist conservatives for his political support, but as they died off, the need became greater for Jiang to develop his own base. Enter Zhu Rongji, who became the premier, a position which traditionally is second in the power hierarchy. By the end of 1997, Jiang could breathe a sigh of relief, as he had performed an institutional high-wire act that left many powerful nerves frayed but had avoided a political catastrophe. "In short, the Fifteenth Party Congress was an important milestone in the Party's development: the first time power had passed fully from the revolutionary generation to a postrevolutionary generation. Moreover, it had done so smoothly. Jiang had survived from an improbable beginning to become 'core' of the Party in reality."

Fewsmith's examination of China's body politic is superb in its clarity and conciseness. It sounds a clarion call that China's complex layers of domestic politics, internecine Politburo battles, all wrapped not-so-neatly in the intrigue of intellectual, elite, and popular sentiment, provide uncertain footing for China's political development.

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Missile Defense without Global Diplomacy

Review by Theresa Hitchens

JAMES J. WIRTZ AND JEFFREY A. LARSEN. *Rockets' Red Glare: Missile Defenses and the Future of World Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001, 368 pp. \$28.50.

For several years now, it has been nearly impossible to have a rational debate in Washington about missile defense. Like abortion or gun control, discussion of the issue quickly devolves into a nearly theological dispute between opponents and proponents. An objective analysis is quite difficult when every aspect of the debate—including the science—is refracted through a polarizing lens.

Because *Rockets' Red Glare: Missile Defenses and the Future of World Politics* avoids this approach, it should be commended. By avoiding the temptation to devolve into polemics, it exposes new insights into the missile defense debate.

Rather than debate the question of whether the United States *should* move ahead with missile defense development, each of the ten authors were asked to assume that the decision had already been made. Their task was to consider the international political ramifications of different approaches in how that decision would be implemented—through cooperation with Russia (or China) or unilaterally; within or outside the auspices of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty; and based on a minimalist or maximalist approach. This matrix approach provides a conceptual framework that allows readers to compare the possible repercussions on U.S. and global security identified by the contributors.

Most importantly, the concept is focused on the wide-ranging and systemic changes to the international environment likely to be set in motion by U.S. development of missile defenses. The simple recognition, highlighted in Wirtz's introduction, that the ABM Treaty's presence has created a strategic context for interaction among states on a global scale is profound. Wirtz notes:

"Alter the treaty significantly, and this global strategic context will change."

And while it may be possible for U.S. policymakers to agree on what changes they would like to see from a deployment of missile defenses, it may not be so easy to avoid unintended or unpredicted consequences around the globe. It is glaringly apparent that the U.S. missile defense debate up to this point has failed to recognize this critical reality.

Timothy Hoyt, in his thoughtful chapter on South Asia, aptly summarizes: "American deployment of nation-

Roberts thoroughly explores how China's worldview, its domestic upheavals, and its suspicions of the United States cause Beijing to have a fundamentally hostile view of missile defenses. "U.S. national missile defense fuels the perception that Washington is bent on denying China its rightful place in the sun as a rising great power. In Chinese eyes, NMD confirms fears of encirclement and containment, especially if combined with theater systems in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan."

Roberts persuasively argues that Washington policymakers are mistaken to con-

Rockets' Red Glare is noteworthy due to its largely successful attempt at an objective discussion of missile defense policy.

al missile defense will affect regional stability around the globe—a consequence often overlooked or ignored by contemporary analysts."

This potential for far-reaching and unpredictable fallout from any U.S. deployment is highlighted by Hoyt's analysis of the South Asian reaction, as well as by Bradley Roberts's provocative chapter on China.

Hoyt argues that a U.S. missile defense program could have both direct and indirect effects on South Asian regional nuclear competition. While the many potential negative ramifications to U.S. nonproliferation goals for the region could be avoided if the United States decides to take a cooperative approach to escaping the ABM Treaty and deploying missile defenses, Hoyt stresses that the "single most important factor in determining South Asian responses to U.S. NMD [national missile defense] deployments will be Chinese actions."

tinue to dismiss these Chinese concerns in the belief that China's nuclear modernization program—long planned and already begun—will be little impacted by a U.S. deployment. Instead, China's strategic planning would be fundamentally altered, according to Roberts, even if a U.S. program is preceded by a U.S.-Russian agreement (which Beijing would view as a "sell out" by Moscow).

Taken together, these two chapters highlight the need for U.S. policymakers to consider more seriously the Asia angle in decisions about both missile defenses and strategic-arms control policies.

Another fundamental theme, rightfully highlighted in Larsen's conclusion, is the importance of tying missile defense to an active program of global diplomacy. "The United States must recognize the critical importance of diplomacy in assuaging the fears of allies and adversaries facing even a minimal U.S. missile defense deployment decision." A deci-

sion to deploy missile defenses will fundamentally alter today's strategic status quo. That fact alone frightens those who must react to this change.

Certainly, every author in the regional response section notes that there is nothing to be lost, and possibly very much to be gained, by a cooperative and diplomatic attitude by the United States. This leads the editors to conclude that a unilateral decision to abrogate the ABM Treaty to pursue a maximalist missile defense approach is likely to undercut U.S. security.

While rather densely worded in theoretical language, the chapter on the future of arms control by Julian Schofield hits the nail on the head: the goal of missile defense deployment, like that of arms control, should be to help create a stable, secure international environment in the future. His argument fixes on the link between missile defenses and arms control and nonproliferation measures, stressing: "What is missing is a vision of how U.S. policymakers hope to use arms control and national missile defense to shape the future international security environment."

The idea of *shaping* the future through an integrated mix of tools is key. Missile defense is but one potential tool in combating missile and weapons of mass destruction proliferation, and how it fits or does not fit with other approaches must be clearly delineated by U.S. policymakers. Diplomacy is a tool in and of itself, but also a method of applying other tools to the problem.

The bulk of the essays suggest that, unfortunately, there is a disconnect between short-term advantages and potential long-term costs and benefits of missile defenses—even one undertaken with Russian accord. This is acknowl-

edged by Larsen in his conclusion, where he notes that "most observers agree that national missile defense will enhance U.S. power projection capabilities" especially in the short-term. But analysts disagree about the long-term political and strategic consequences.

It is this concern over a changing security environment in the coming decades that seems to play a major factor in Larsen's conclusion that U.S. security might best be served by a decision to postpone primarily land-based options, while exploring a boost-phase, sea-based system, possibly in tandem with Russia.

Rockets' Red Glare is noteworthy due to its largely successful attempt at an objective discussion of missile defense policy; unfortunately, there are also places where it falls short. One of the book's weaknesses is that it gives the overwhelming impression that missile defense is necessary and inevitable, and that the ABM Treaty as it stands is, at a minimum, no longer serving U.S. interests. This bias is most clear in the first section of the book, which is unfortunate since that section—on the history of the treaty and missile defenses, and recent political, military, and technological developments affecting the regime—ought to be the most objective. Unfortunately, both the chapter on the origins of the treaty by Kerry M. Kartchner and that on the changing political and military environment by Robert Joseph make clear that these authors see the ABM Treaty as no longer in U.S. interests, if ever it was.

Joseph, in particular, seems to go out of his way to criticize the strategic approach of President Bill Clinton as not only flawed, but dangerous. His essay reads more as an effort to make the case that the missile defense debate has already

been won by right-thinking proponents, rather than as a wide-ranging review of the political and military landscape shaping current thinking. Joseph's essay concludes: "The words of Article I and their meaning are very clear; ... the language makes evident the need to confront the contradictions between today's imperative to defend America's population against ballistic missile attacks from rogue nations and the underlying strategic rationale of the treaty." The use of the word "imperative," for example, highlights the rhetorical bias inherent in the essay.

The final chapter in Part I, Denis Ward's description of the changing technological environment, while highly informative and detailed, also suffers from what could be interpreted as a pro-missile defense bias—although perhaps it is simply technological optimism. Ward understates the continued technical challenges to any and all missile defense systems, while somewhat overstating the missile developments of concern. Ward's chapter also highlights another of the book's weaknesses: a failure to discuss in detail the role of theater missile defenses. Ward himself provides a good overview of the development of such systems, including important information such as the fact that the Army's Theater High Altitude Air Defense (THAAD) was "intended to counter the most capable theater class missile existing in the early 1990s, China's CSS-2, with a range of around 3,000 kilometers." He also does a good job explaining the closing of the capabilities gap between theater and strategic missiles over time, and the

issue's importance in considering how to proceed with the ABM Treaty.

Elsewhere in the book, however, there is little discussion of how theater missile defenses might be integrated with a continental U.S. system, or of the role they might play in diplomacy. There is also little focus on the unmet theater missile threat to U.S. forces abroad—one that is not being addressed even as the United States concentrates on national missile defense. Perhaps this is inevitable because of the focus on the three national missile defense scenarios set out in the editorial framework, but more focus on theater defenses could have been integrated into the various chapters, particularly those on the regional effects.

Rockets' Red Glare is well worth reading for policymakers and students of missile defense, although it is certainly not a primer for beginners. Benefitting from the book requires some up-front knowledge of the debate, the technology involved, and the global security environment. Most importantly, the book provides a needed public service by shining a spotlight on the importance of a global approach to any analysis of the costs and benefits of missile defense. "This book points out the dangers of making short-sighted policy decisions that fail to take into account either current international reactions or longer-term systemic consequences," stresses Larsen. His comment illustrates this book's utility precisely.

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The Red Herring in the Sands of Sudan

Denis Dragovic

Recently, I have begun to question the reasons that led me to accept a job as a foreign aid worker in Sudan. Although I played a positive role in rebuilding East Timor as an aid worker, many people told me that I would be disheartened by the Machiavellian maneuvering of domestic and international players in Sudan. I doubted them. I was interested in aid, not politics. Yet they spoke the truth. Looking back, life in Sudan was surreal. Due to the longevity and sheer size of the humanitarian disaster, personal priorities and perspectives have become warped. We erected camps to house displaced persons forced to flee from camps built only a few months earlier. We provided medical relief only to see the same patients returning with new wounds. We distributed seeds and tools to a farming community unsure of who would control the land in the next harvesting season.

Despite forty-six years of on-again, off-again conflict since Sudan gained independence, influential domestic and international leaders refuse to recognize that peace is a prerequisite to alleviating human rights violations and humanitarian disasters and to freeing the people of Sudan to prosper in their own right. With each new government in Khartoum or Washington, confidence of imminent peace pervades the air. But like the governments before them, they deem the path toward establish-

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