

Korean Foreign Policy is an excellent book. It is a valuable addition to the literature, and I highly recommend it to all who study North Korea.

■ Terence Roehrig
National Security Affairs Department
US Naval War College

China's Rise and the Two Koreas: Politics, Economics, Security. By Scott Snyder. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009. 241 pp. \$22.50 (paper).

Without a doubt, Scott Snyder's new book, *China's Rise and the Two Koreas*, offers a solid, comprehensive, and engaging—if not provocative—analysis of Sino-Korean peninsula relations since the 1992 Sino–South Korea diplomatic normalization. Snyder presents a fresh lens through which one can appreciate the complex interactions that China's rise has imposed on the international dynamics around the Korean peninsula. It is also a noble attempt to analyze the security implications of the transformed economic relations, an area that has oddly lacked systematic evaluation in both theoretical and policymaking literature.

Snyder first offers a compelling account of transformation in South Korea's economic relationship with China. In spelling out the evolution of China–South Korea relations, he provides a useful time line that captures the gradual deepening of South Korea's economic dependency, evolving from the “economic honeymoon” of 1992–1997 to the emergence of the “China threat” discourse in Korea around 2005. The challenges posed by the structural changes have fallen disproportionately on South Korea, Snyder finds, due to the asymmetric trade interdependence between the two countries. As economic ties deepened, difficult moments in various trade and investment issues began to emerge. This book is exceptionally successful in depicting the growing frequency and intensity of such disagreements in an approachable and succinct way but without simplifying them. Equally impressive is the account of political challenges between the two countries. According to Snyder, although economic rationales managed to contain the potential areas of political conflict between China and South Korea in the 1990s, they nonetheless began to appear in 2004. Snyder concludes that political disputes are unlikely to affect the trend of intensifying economic interdependence but admits that the latter's effect on the former remains to be seen.

Political scientists and policymakers alike would probably find the North Korean case more intriguing, since the absolute economic vitality

China has recently harbored vis-à-vis North Korea has yet to yield any comparable visible adjustment in their strategic behavior. As long as China's policymakers regard North Korea as a strategic asset rather than a strategic liability, Snyder argues that the ability of China to use economic instruments as leverage will remain limited and mitigated. The North Korean situation also represents an inevitable but somewhat tough test for China's position as a regional power. For instance, growing expectations for China to actively participate in stabilizing North Korea requires Beijing to contradict the much-claimed principle of noninterference and sovereignty. Moreover, China's handling of North Korean issues will be a tricky test for China's ability to manage regional stability through multilateral commitments. Overall, Snyder is skeptical about China's ability to induce either economic reform or a resolution of the nuclear crisis. Instead, China's role is limited to coordinator, while the ultimate external determinant is US policies.

The last three chapters appropriately look at the broader regional dynamics and implications that the new Sino-Korean peninsula relationship entails. Snyder examines it in terms of three areas: the strategic triangle of China, South Korea, and the United States; the Sino-Japanese rivalry; and the implications for the United States of intensifying Sino-Korean economic ties in the region. These chapters remind the reader that Sino-Korean relations have remarkable consequences for the power dynamics within the region. Snyder concludes by calling for more active US participation to secure a peaceful Korean peninsula and to act as a counterweight against China's rising influence.

Overall, Snyder observes that the two Koreas are neither currently experiencing nor are prepared to accept China's increased leverage in their political choices, despite the growing economic dependence. It is a definitive contribution to the literature that skillfully puts the well-publicized, but often narrowly understood, challenges of the region in the broader economic and political context and that provides a detailed and balanced overview of Sino-Korea relations in the last two decades. Readers, however, should be mindful of possible limits in the applicability of the analysis.

Two recent events suggest the need for such cautions. First, the aftermath of the *Cheonan* incident and the attack on Yeonpyeong island clearly confirmed growing tension in the "trade with China, security from the United States" equation that South Korean foreign policy has been based on. China's response was informed by its historical ties with North Korea, and this understandably caused trouble and anxiety for South Korean policymakers. Arguably, the separation of security from trade in its

relationship with China is slowly becoming counterproductive and costly in a growing number of issue areas, and such perceptions may play some transformative roles in Korea's strategy formation sooner than anticipated. Second, the recent Sino-Japan clash over the Diaoyu/Shenkaku Islands demonstrates China's ability and willingness to weaponize its natural resources and economic power to achieve political ends. It suggests that as far as the Korean peninsula is concerned, Snyder's argument that China is unlikely to exercise its economic muscles due to the "danger of South Korea's trade diversification" (p. 77) and North Korea's perception of itself as an "asset" (p. 132) is potentially precarious. The dynamic and unpredictable nature of the interaction between China's domestic politics and regional relations means that many policy analyses of the region are often subject to a considerable degree of fragility, thus making policy prescriptions speculative at best.

However, such volatility in the region is precisely why books such as this should not be taken lightly. Snyder provides a reliable basis and detailed narratives from which sound policies can be built. Although some readers may not agree with parts of his analysis and policy recommendations, one cannot dismiss the depth of Snyder's knowledge, his balanced approach, and his ability to forge broader regional perspectives in a coherent and accessible manner. The changing dynamics of the region may well require further elaboration on, or even replacement of, Snyder's conclusions. However, this book will serve to stimulate more fascinating works on the evolving complexity of this region's economic and political dynamics.

■ *Inwook Kim, doctoral student
Department of Political Science
George Washington University*

Playing Our Game: Why China's Rise Doesn't Threaten the West. By Edward S. Steinfeld. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. 320 pp. \$30.95 (cloth).

Playing Our Game is a powerful book written by a highly credible MIT scholar with a long field experience in China. It deals with the great debate about the nature and global impact of China's economic rise. The book stands against usual arguments presenting China as a dire threat and an unfair mercantilist power bent on taking over the world system. Steinfeld offers a fundamentally positive take on the rise of China. He argues that China's rise is deeply integrated into the globalized production networks developed by Western firms. China is primarily a "capitalist