

opposition. This in turn undermines Hong Kong's cherished status as "an interface between China and the international economy" (Bush 172).

If there is one prime lesson that could be learned from the Bush and White monographs, it is that even if the Hong Kong people could not reform their government or even defend their city's rule of law, mass mobilization is still a highly potent method in their defense of the HKSAR's status as the freest domain in the PRC, the remaining rights and freedoms of which could still be a source of inspiration for Chinese who long for political reforms in mainland China. For better or worse, it is difficult to imagine the severing of the linkages between Hong Kong and mainland China, a geopolitical reality that ultimately represents Hong Kong's uniqueness as a global city, for when the CCP/PRC leadership decides to change its political system, the HKSAR would likely be the first city to attain genuine democratic governance, thereby making it a laboratory for democratic reforms, just like the Crown Colony was a model for market economic transformations in the 1980s.

In this light, one can only hope that the carefully delineated "comparative democratization theory" in Lynn While's volume (chapter 1) might one day be applicable to the study of China's mainland cities, even if the prospects for democratic reforms in the HKSAR remain "pessimistic" in the immediate future (236). Likewise, Richard Bush, relates the HKSAR experience in a Greater China context for Taiwan, another off-shore domain living under Beijing's shadow with global strategic implications for the USA (292–294). Both authors have done much in their volumes to integrate Hong Kong research with the study of mainstream China and comparative politics. For such contributions, the entire Hong Kong study field should be deeply appreciative.

By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia-Pacific since 1783.

By MICHAEL J. GREEN. New York: Columbia University Press, 2017. 725 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

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By More than Providence is a gold mine of richly documented historical detail, informed by international relations theory, and enlivened by the hands-on policymaker's nose for bureaucratic turf battles, clashing personalities, and Washington intrigue. Green's overall message is singular: for nearly 250 years the United States has advanced its interests and influence across the Pacific, sometimes fitfully, often timidly, but with an ever-deepening commitment aimed at denying any other country hegemonic control over the Asia-Pacific. As a result, the US has itself emerged as the pre-eminent power in the region. The resulting message for today's American policymakers is the importance of sustaining that position in the face of China's rise.

American engagement, Green argues, began initially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as little more than "strategic impulses" driven by merchants, explorers and missionaries. But over time a succession of national governments kneaded these impulses together to forge a sequence of grand strategies that could serve as the lodestars around which specific foreign policies would be developed. Grand strategy for Green demands a great deal: "the deliberate assessment of threats and opportunities, and the measured application of ways and means to achieve national objectives in reference to those threats and opportunities." It necessitates more than military muscle; to be effective it "must incorporate diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tools in a comprehensive approach in time of both peace and war" (p. 2).

In contrast to structural realists, with their convictions about the purported rationality of unified states operating in an anarchic world, Green emphasizes national policymakers' discreet and situational responsiveness to the competing pulls of five perennial tensions: Europe vs. Asia; a continental vs. maritime predisposition (which for Asia has usually meant China vs. Japan); an expansive or delimited forward perimeter; self-determination vs. universal values; and protectionism vs. free trade. For Green, himself a periodic policymaker, America has too often ignored Asia in its Eurocentrism; too frequently obsessed over China while marginalizing Japan; too timidly expanded its Asia-Pacific defense perimeter; and too often made a fetish of universal values or economic protectionism.

Individual policymakers are the key drivers in Green's analysis of big power interactions. America's strategic successes thus pivot around the foresight and effectiveness of strategically insightful and resolute shapers of events. In contrasting ignominy stand the policy failures of blinkered dawdlers—reactive, reticent and prone to missteps. Among the earliest and most influential of Green's strategic heroes, none stand taller than Alfred Thayer Mahan, the tireless advocate of sea power, along with his intellectual admirer and passionate implementer, Theodore Roosevelt. Laurels are also awarded to, among others, John Quincy Adams, George Kennan, Harry S. Truman, Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, George Schultz, and Ronald Reagan. The red thread uniting them all was their commonly clear-eyed assessment of immediate strategic situations, clarity about long-term national interests, and astute mustering of resources to take advantage of unfolding opportunities. Nothing makes Green's case about the importance of foresight more convincingly than the failure of those in strategy-shaping positions to recognize and blunt the mushrooming military advance of Japan in the early twentieth century. Attentive to the disastrous consequences of that fecklessness, postwar political leaders forged an American architecture of alliances in service of a grand strategy designed to "contain" the USSR and communism that ultimately unraveled with the travails of Vietnam. Today, he argues, prewar mistakes concerning Japan should be America's flashing red light in dealing with the Asia-Pacific's next potential challenger, China.

Green's retrospective analysis offers only the most abstract guide to future strategies. He demurs in presenting any objective, *ex-ante*, criteria for an "appropriate" balance among his five core tensions. Rather, he sees geostrategic conditions as situational and advises policymakers looking ahead to identify that which is "old" but still relevant, that which is "old" and no longer relevant, and that which is "new" and relevant (p. 426). Yet those elements are hardly self-evident. Melding them into a clear-eyed and rewarding grand strategy demands the foresight of Steve Jobs and the balancing skills of an Olympic gymnast. The book leaves today's policymaker to ponder: How much Japan? How much China? When does an expanding defense perimeter risk overreach? What is the right mix of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tools? Have time and insight reduced the salience of military force while enhancing the leverage of finance, soft power, or multilateral institutions within the region? In contrast to the geostrategic conditions in the age of imperialism or the Cold War, the situations faced by America's most recent administrations provide more proximate geostrategic parallels from which to address such questions. However, the closer one gets to the present, the more difficult it is to be confident of contentious evaluations of successes and failures, since long term consequences may still be unfolding.

The Duchess of Windsor famously declared that "one can never be too rich or too thin." Foreign policy strategists are similarly predisposed to believe that a country can never be too secure. National protection is perforce a central priority for all governments, and Green's focal point is legitimately the evaluation of grand strategy in the service of enhanced US security. Nonetheless, security enhancement for the US has often come at horrific expense to foreign populations or foreign governments (e.g. the Philippines and Filipinos following the Spanish-American War; Hawaiian islanders stripped of sovereignty; Okinawans accommodating a disproportionate share of American military forces in Japan). Similarly, while the book is acutely sensitive to the myriad ways in which domestic impediments have hampered America's strategic planners, it is

less attuned to the policymaker's need to balance off a sixth tension, namely security goals versus domestic costs. Thus, containment of communism in Vietnam necessitated a major roll back in Lyndon Johnson's expansive social programs. Furthermore, the seven-year extension and geographical expansion of that war by Nixon and Kissinger *may* have bolstered American credibility with shaky Asian allies. Yet that claim is far from universally accepted while there is no doubt that it continued a spiraling increase in the death toll, spawned the genocidal Cambodian regime of Pol Pot, and shredded governmental trust among the American public in ways that continue today. Many would have preferred an alternative prioritization.

The Asia-Pacific has long loomed large in American strategic thinking and today its centrality is unparalleled. *By More than Providence* provides a sweep, power, and coherence that anchors that centrality historically. Tragically, its lessons about the value of a grand strategy based on comprehensive engagement with the Asia-Pacific face a wall of deafness in the current administration with its chaotic nationalism, bilateral transactionalism, and undisguised disdain for the type of historical and policy expertise demonstrated in this book.

Asia and the Great War. By XU GUOQI. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 275 pp. \$50.00 (cloth)

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Xu Guoqi has written several books about Asian presence in the Great War, including *China and the Great War* and *Strangers on the Western Front*. The distinguishing feature of his latest exploration, *Asia and the Great War*, is its sweeping breadth and scope: it covers Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean involvement in the Great War. The book illuminates the dynamics that took place during negotiations during and after World War I, which provide disturbing justifications for present dynamics between Asia and the West, giving stark testimony to the ways historical events do indeed shape the future.

Principally focusing on the five Asian countries mentioned earlier, Xu details critical moments in history where Asian participation in world politics was undercut by definitive actions by Europe and America. While Woodrow Wilson inspired Asian countries with his 14 points—as Xu writes, “All five countries were enthusiastic about the new world order laid out in Woodrow Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’ speech” (p. 7)—ultimately America did not extend its ideological generosity to Asian countries that counted on it. While much of Asia longed for its own independence, evidenced by nationalist movements all over Asia, they were not allowed to express or obtain diplomatic audiences in an appropriate way. At key peace conferences, America and Europe refused to give Korea and China an audience where they could articulate their aspirations; meanwhile the Western countries surreptitiously conducted secret deals with Japan, allowing the country to continue its colonialist path in China and Korea. In a specific example, Wilson, even amidst protests from his colleagues and other American diplomats, decided to favor Japan over China regarding the ownership of Shandong province, a decision that has haunted the historical relationship between Asia and the West until the present time. Meanwhile, though Japan emerged with a more promising situation than its Asian neighbors, they still suffered from the refusal by the League of Nations to provide them with a racial equality clause. They continued to feel injured by racial discrimination in wartime negotiations with the west (p. 191).