

and China, some of the author's arguments regarding the policy and strategic responses America should pursue seem to be less salient or even inappropriate. For instance, the author asserts that "history shows that major ruling powers can manage relations with rivals, even those that threaten to overtake them, without triggering war. The record of those successes, as well as the failures, offers many lessons for statesmen today" (p. xvii). However, the challenge here is to distinguish the historical lessons for preventing war, which vary extensively and are in some cases mixed, if not conflicted. Two cases may serve to illustrate this idea: In Case 11, the British response to a rising American power in the early twentieth century, Allison notes that Great Britain chose a strategy of advantageous accommodation, hence resolving "to make a virtue of necessity and to yield to the Americans in every dispute with as much good grace as was permitted" (p. 197). In case 15, a rising Soviet Union challenged the United States for several decades, but with "no war" (p. 42) as end result. The author describes this approach as the "greatest leap of strategic imagination in the history of America diplomacy," a "comprehensive strategy for a form of combat never previously seen," fostered a cold war "by every means short of bombs and bullets" (pp. 202–203). Here, again, although the ultimate outcome was not war, "the US and Soviet Union made systemic, sustained assaults against each other along every azimuth except one: direct military attacks" (p. 203). The above two examples offer undeniably different historically founded approaches: advantageous accommodations or cold war. The advice to "apply history," while wise, thus still prompts questions of which history and how it is to be applied to the unique US–China relations.

A few other issues invite scrutiny. First, the author holds a rather optimistic view of the direction of the Chinese economy—an optimism by no means unanimous share among scholars and analysts who track the Chinese economy. Second, the unprecedented nature of nuclear weapons challenges the usefulness of pre-1945 cases as litmus tests to predict the future of a US–China conflict. At the same time, however, scholars and strategists should not conclusively discredit the historical observations drawn from the pre-nuclear era.

Finally, the book offers too small and limited a data set (only 16 cases), made up of mostly European cases, to support statistically based claims and explain the particularly restrained Chinese track record in terms of military interventions. How do we make sense of Chinese military strategy without looking at domestic and normative variables? Despite these minor shortcomings, this book is an absolute must-read for all those in international affairs or political science, at any capacity.

*China's Crisis of Success.* By WILLIAM H. OVERHOLT. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. 302 pp. \$25.99 (paper).

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As the PRC's fast-paced growth finally comes to a slow-down, and as Maoist traits of governance once again surface in Beijing under President Xi's power centralization, William Overholt takes on the task of examining the regime's future trajectory through an analysis of its economic success in the past four decades. The author attributes China's rapid modernization to what he terms the East Asian Model, whereby a nationwide fear of socioeconomic collapse is harnessed by leaders through fundamental reforms aimed at promoting growth as the absolute priority. While the reforms of the Chinese regime have been successful in achieving the current level of development, it now faces various economic and political challenges that came as a result of that growth. Overholt claims that even though past leaderships' implementation of the East Asian Model was

instrumental for China's rise, the CCP's response to its current woes by tightening control is misguided and may prove to be detrimental to the country's stability.

Much of Overholt's *East Asian Model* is aimed at exploring the role that fear plays in driving economic development. The author maintains that the Asian miracle economies of the twentieth century have all at one point experienced a profound fear of state collapse, which led to a near-universal willingness among their populace to bear significant personal sacrifices in order to ensure its continued perseverance. In the Chinese context, fear stemming from Mao's Cultural Revolution allowed leaders such as Deng Xiaoping and Zhu Rongji to carry out extremely ambitious reforms. For instance, Zhu's decision in the 1990s to privatize state-owned enterprises resulted in the loss of about forty-five million jobs—a sacrifice that a society without fear definitely would not have accepted, despite its necessity in restructuring the economy (p. 49).

However, after a certain level of economic development is reached, the original sense of fear gradually dissipates, causing the populace to oppose large scale reforms and become unwilling to bear sacrifices (p. 35). Yet a more developed economy increases the complexity of issues with which a state must contend, as a higher standard of living allows people to be concerned with matters other than growth (p. 218). Whether the concerns are moral, environmental, or political-rights related, the lack of fear means that both leaders and the populace are likely to be without the resolve to implement the reforms necessary to address their fundamental causes (p. 17). In China, some of these complexities have surfaced through the emergence of powerful interest groups and a growing amount of labor unrest.

In addition to providing an overview of the East Asian Model, Overholt also effectively employs a comparative analysis between China and other Asian miracle economies to contextualize the country's rise within a larger framework. When demonstrating the tendency of these states to prioritize economic growth through military downgrading, the author not only writes of China's reduction of its military budget from 16 percent of GDP in 1976 to only 3 percent in the 1980s, he also examines Japan's practice of never spending more than 1 percent of GDP on the military from 1945 to 1975, as well as South Korea's rapid economic growth of over 10 percent in the 1960s, due to General Park's decision cut military spending (pp. 20–21). Such comparisons allow Overholt to promote the key idea that China's economic success shares similarities with other Asian states, thus allowing an interpretation of its rise and future trajectory through references to the developments of these other countries.

In addition to drawing commonalities within the East Asian Model, the book also contrasts China's economic policies to states that exercise other forms of governance, in order to demonstrate the former's effectiveness. When juxtaposing China's reforms to that of Russia's under Gorbachev, Overholt points out that the Chinese's initial focus on labor-intensive industries successfully created a vast number of basic-level jobs that served to ensure political stability while boosting domestic consumption. On the other hand, Gorbachev's policies consisting of shock therapy coupled with a prioritization of political reforms caused Russia to suffer a 40 percent decrease in GDP and contributed to its eventual reversal to authoritarianism (p. 107).

While Overholt offers substantial compliments to past Chinese leaders for their implementation of the East Asian Model, he is largely critical of how Beijing is handling the country's current complexities. The author believes that the Communist Party ought to accommodate the different interests that have arisen in the country by allowing for a more market-oriented economy and politically freer society. Instead, the CCP's recent attempts to tighten control, as exemplified by Xi's power centralization at the top and increasing media censorship, are perceived by Overholt as leading to undesirable consequences for the country's stability.

Although the author's concerns regarding China's future trajectory should not be taken lightly, an examination of the CCP's rule after 1949 reveals that cycles of power centralization in fact constitute a stable part of its history. With such episodes having taken place during the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, it may be perceived as a

natural tendency for Chinese leaders to centralize power whenever substantial challenges to their reign have surfaced. Aside from the complexities pointed out by Overholt, the current episode under Xi is also made more likely due to the ever-present sovereignty movements in parts of China, as well as the country's ongoing geopolitical tensions involving neighboring states. With the regime having undergone, persevered, and then prospered through multiple cycles of power centralization, it is worth examining whether Xi's current actions will lead to inevitable harm to China's stability and prosperity, or whether they constitute a standard response of the CCP as it attempts to weather the current wave of challenges to its rule.

Through examining the economic successes of states that have applied the East Asian Model, Overholt rejects the Western conception that democracy and capitalism are necessary for poor countries to reach prosperity. Just as the Asian miracle economies capitalized on fear to accomplish their reforms, Overholt urges that distinct pathways to development must be generated based on local contexts, as opposed to adopting a one-size-fits-all model. Conversely, the somewhat widespread concern that Chinese leaders may aim to export their authoritarianism to developing countries elsewhere is largely unfounded, as a vast majority of them do not share the pervasive fear that in China allowed such a governance method to succeed. If development can be understood as fundamentally local in nature rather than the importation of pre-established models from the outside, better policy outcomes can potentially be realized in both developing states and across the field of international relations.