

of China. This is mostly a work of history or political ethnography, with a firm and articulated line of analysis. Chapter two profiles Wang Xiaobo (1952–1997), who more or less stands as the theorist for grassroots intellectuals. Wang’s work is carefully presented in the changing contexts of his life and, as well, explains grassroots intellectuals’ focus on vulnerable groups who are not represented in Party propaganda but who make up much of China’s population. Chapter three documents the emergence of “alternate memories” of the Mao period, especially of the anti-Rightist campaign that began in 1957. Here we see “cross-over” intellectuals who are both of the establishment and engaged in the grassroots – such as Qian Liqun at Peking University. Veg maps unofficial historians as *minjian* intellectuals through three stages: commemoration of the Anti-Rightist campaign, documentation of the Great Leap famine, and debating the Cultural Revolution.

Chapter four likewise gives a detailed and spirited exposition of documentary filmmakers. Digital video has empowered a generation of independent filming that has embraced the grassroots intellectual identity and approach of working with and not on local people. Chapter five presents rights lawyers, independent think tanks and those, like Yu Jianrong, who work with petitioners. Chapter six looks at independent journalists, bloggers and the troubled emergence (or tentative emergence) of a new public culture. This chapter also usefully introduces two troubling caveats. First, grassroots intellectuals are internally challenged by residual elitism. Second, the networks and public activities of grassroots intellectuals have suffered increasing repression since 2013, to the point that by 2016 many independent outlets (like the web portal, Consensus Net) and activities (such as representing petitioners or organizing independent film festivals, bookshop discussions or popular blogs) have been shut down under Xi Jinping’s version of the “Chinese Dream.” They may be constrained today, but China’s grassroots intellectuals are living proof of the changes wrought by 40 years of globalization. Not even Xi Jinping can change that.

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Active Defense: China’s Military Strategy Since 1949

TAYLOR FRAVEL

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019

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During the televised parade marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, expert and amateur viewers alike were struck by the images of massive columns of goose-stepping soldiers and the fearsome military hardware of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Yet despite the intense attention directed towards the PLA and its role in China’s rise, the academic literature lacks a comprehensive book-length treatment of the origins, content and changes in Chinese military strategy over those seven decades. Taylor Fravel’s new book, *Active Defense: China’s Military Strategy Since 1949*, deftly tackles this shortfall head-on, marshalling authoritative primary sources, insights from military culture and organization theory, and a keen understanding of China’s domestic and external challenges since the country’s founding to categorize and explain the major and minor shifts in Chinese military strategy thinking. Methodologically, the author is

meticulously careful to highlight his level of confidence in particular sources, never exaggerates their meaning, restricts his speculations within reasonable bounds, and is explicitly circumspect when critical data or documents are simply unavailable for review because of classification or archival shortfalls. Despite these caveats, the deep archival work in this book is a major contribution, and provides strong support for Fravel's bold analytic judgments, especially his primary conclusion that changes in military strategy, regardless of external or internal threats, are only possible during periods of elite leadership unity.

The book is expertly organized, setting the reader's table with a cogent but not obscurantist summary of the literature on the organizational and theoretical origins of changes in military strategy. This is followed by a half dozen rich but not overly dense chapters describing and analysing what the author believes are the major shifts in Chinese military strategy, beginning pre-1949 and tracking through changes in 1956 ("Defending the motherland"), 1964 ("Luring the enemy in deep"), 1980 ("Active defense"), 1993 ("Local wars under high tech conditions"), and the more recent push towards "Informatization." All of these chapters are laid out in a manner that permits structured comparison, beginning with an overview of the strategy and its implications for PLA organization and doctrine, followed by analysis of the external and internal drivers of the change, outlines of the bureaucratic process of drafting and adoption, examination and rejection of alternate explanations, discussion of the implementation within the force, and a concluding bridge to the next major strategic disruption. The author even brings the reader an unexpected *amuse-bouche*, drawing on his significant expertise on Chinese nuclear weapons issues to explain the remarkable continuities in PRC nuclear strategy since 1964. The only regret is that publication timelines permitted only a cursory discussion of the PLA's massive reorganization since 2015, though one hopes that a future edition could include an excursion on the topic.

Overall, this book is an outstanding contribution to the canon on Chinese military and strategic affairs. Like his debut manuscript, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation*, which was the timely and authoritative "expert guide" that the China field desperately needed just when Beijing's aggressive territorial behaviour in the South and East China Seas was making international news, Fravel's new book is an instant classic and a mandatory reference source. I would recommend this volume to students of Chinese foreign policy, international relations and military affairs without reservation.

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Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven: Taiwan's Sunflower Movement and Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement

MING-SHO HO

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Ming-sho Ho's *Challenging Beijing's Mandate of Heaven* is an important and timely monograph which compares the two occupation-style social movements in Taiwan and Hong Kong. Ho is the foremost expert on social movements in Taiwan,