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Introduction by James McAllister, Williams College

Few political scientists enjoy a level of respect within the discipline comparable to that of Thomas Christensen. His work is always theoretically informed, but also open to the insights of a variety of paradigms and approaches rather than being the captive of a single school of thought. Both of his previous books on alliance politics and Sino-American conflict in the Cold War, as well as numerous articles, are superb examples of how theoretically informed historical research and area expertise can advance scholarship in both disciplines.¹ Christensen has also helped formulate recent U.S. policy towards East Asia, most recently as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the Bush administration.

The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power, recently updated and published in paperback this summer, exhibits all of the virtues that have marked Christensen's earlier scholarship. The book is divided into two parts. The first seeks to examine the implications of China's rise for the region and the international system. The second part of the book comprehensively examines the policies of the United States toward China from the administration of George H.W. Bush up through the presidency of Barack Obama. In the final chapter of the book, Christensen advances his own thoughts on the best strategy towards China in the twenty-first century. In his view, one that informs much of the book, the United States needs "a strategy that accepts and even encourages China's rise to great power and prominence in international politics but shapes China's choices so that it is more likely to accept burdens as a responsible stakeholder in global governance" (311).

Both of the reviewers in this roundtable find *The China Challenge* to be an exceptional contribution to the already massive literature concerned with the implications of China's rise to great-power status. Xiaoyu Pu argues that the book is "exceptional" and "demonstrates Christensen's aptitude as a top-notch international relations theorist." In his lengthy and very insightful review, Avery Goldstein argues that the book "is a masterful work sure to stand the test of time" and an "exemplar of what the academy can contribute to vital public policy debates." Neither Pu nor Goldstein raise any serious concerns about the book, but they both raise some issues worth further consideration. Pu is concerned that Christensen's preferred strategic course towards China may not be sustainable in a future characterized by declining American power. Goldstein suggests that Christensen could have paid even more attention to the role of domestic politics in the management of American foreign policy, as well as avoided the use of the term "bullying" to describe China's policies towards its weaker neighbors. In his reply, Christensen responds to both of these points as well as other concerns raised by the reviewers.

H-Diplo/ISSF thanks Professor Christensen and the reviewers for contributing to the ongoing debate over the implications of China's rise for the United States and the world in the twenty-first century.

Participants:

¹ See Thomas Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-58* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); and *Worse than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Coercive Diplomacy in Asia* (Princeton University Press, 2011).

Thomas J. Christensen is the William P. Boswell Professor of World Politics of Peace and War and Director of the China and the World Program at Princeton University. From 2006-2008 he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs with responsibility for relations with China, Taiwan, and Mongolia. He is also the author of *Worse than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia*; and *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958* (both published by Princeton University Press).

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Xiaoyu Pu is an Assistant Professor of political science at University of Nevada, Reno. Previously he was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Princeton-Harvard China and the World Program. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 2012. His research has appeared in *International Security*, *The China Quarterly*, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *Asian Affairs* as well as in edited volumes. He serves on the editorial boards of *Foreign Affairs Review* (Beijing) and *Global Studies Journal* (Hong Kong). He hosts a global scholarly listserv on international relations theories and China (GCIR). He is completing a book tentatively entitled "Limited Rebranding: Contested Status Signaling and China's Global Repositioning."

Review by Avery Goldstein, University of Pennsylvania

China's rapid reemergence as a key actor on the international stage has led to a deluge of books and articles interpreting its meaning and implications. Some address insular academic communities eager to demonstrate what their rival theories tell us about China's rise and what China's rise tells us about the merits and usefulness of their abstract ideas. Others aim at a more general audience, as journalists and policy practitioners recount their real world experience, touting the wisdom they've gleaned from their work on or in China, occasionally seizing the opportunity to explain, excuse, or laud their own roles. Thomas Christensen's *The China Challenge* stands apart from the usual fare found in this growing cottage industry. In this brief essay, I indicate what distinguishes this book from others in a crowded field, summarize key features of its contents, and offer a few critical observations.

The China Challenge is distinctive in two respects. First, Christensen is unusually successful in elegantly combining theory and practice. He draws on his background as a leading political scientist specializing on China and international relations to illuminate his observations about the challenges that a rising China poses. Christensen taps his strong scholarly training, his active engagement with the policy communities in China and the United States, and his stint serving in the U.S Government as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State whose responsibilities included China. And he demonstrates a knack for conveying theoretical ideas with exceptional clarity, making them readily accessible to a wide audience, and employing them with a fairness that is too often absent when scholars allow their methodological or theoretical preferences to infect their policy analysis. Christensen, to be sure, identifies what he sees as strengths and weaknesses in the abstract theoretical ideas others have brought to bear on China and indicates which he finds most helpful. But in this book he is uninterested in siding with realists, liberal-institutionalists, constructivists, or any other of the academy's tribes. Instead he taps any and all of their ideas to the extent that they are helpful, while also pointing out the mistaken conclusions that can result if one allows theoretical parochialism to trump an honest look at the complex evidence from the real world.

Second, Christensen avoids some of the pitfalls that plague many books written by practitioners. Despite having served in the George W. Bush administration, when Christensen discusses American policy towards China he is studiously nonpartisan—giving fair credit and leveling fair criticisms against Democratic and Republican administrations alike. Importantly, he avoids the trap of piling on when he identifies failures, empathizing with the tough job that policymakers face. And along many of the dimensions covered in the book, especially on matters of global governance, he notes the significance of difficult progress that American diplomats have made in working with China, progress that is meager only if one compares it with unrealistic expectations about what would result from a Chinese epiphany that led Beijing to embrace Washington's preferences. Christensen also avoids adopting a patronizing stance in his treatment of China's policymakers. To be sure, Christensen does not empathize with leaders in Beijing the way he empathizes with those in Washington. But he takes seriously the political concerns that motivate their decision-making as well as the objective constraints they face in acting on those concerns. While he is not shy about calling out China's Communist Party leaders for bad, foolish, or self-defeating behavior, he eschews the temptation to substitute demonization for analysis, or to assert that Beijing's decisions are simply a reflection of the Chinese Communist Party's political ideology.

Several themes tie the book together. One is its emphasis on the historically distinctive fact that today's China is simultaneously a rising great power as well as a developing country emerging from a long period of poverty, internal turmoil, and weakness relative to other states that dominated Asia beginning in the mid-nineteenth

century. Focusing on only one aspect of this dual Chinese identity can lead to errors of analysis and policy. China's economic and military modernization that accelerated in the late twentieth century have made it a state whose choices have an outsized global, and not just regional, significance that is unusual for a developing country. But the fact that China remains a developing state means that its leaders have to cope with domestic challenges that affect the international role Beijing seeks and is willing to play. Working from this premise of contemporary China's dual identity, Christensen focuses on both China's strengths and its weakness before thinking about their implications for international politics.

A second theme is the importance of correctly assessing a rising China's power, especially its military power. On the one hand, Christensen warns against facile overestimates of China's rapidly increasing economic and military capabilities. On the other, he stresses the ways a still lagging China has already become capable enough to pose serious challenges—even if it is not yet, and may never become, a true peer competitor of the world's sole remaining superpower, the United States.

A third theme is Christensen's emphasis on the twin aspects of coercive diplomacy—specifically the importance of combining threats with assurances (or reassurances as he puts it) in order to provide the right mix of incentives to achieve one's policy goals, especially when dealing with China.

In the five chapters that comprise Part One of *The China Challenge*, Christensen presents his careful assessment of China's changing profile. His general message is that China's rise is real, but too often misunderstood. In chapter one, he depicts the growth in China's economic and military capabilities. By the early twenty-first century, reforms launched in late 1978 had transformed a weak, insular China into a major player in international economic and diplomatic affairs, and a regional military power with ever more impressive capabilities. However familiar this story may be, in chapter two Christensen clarifies why its meaning has often been misunderstood by scholars eager to fit the China story into their existing frameworks about rising powers. He takes to task some of the leading international relations scholars who have commented on China's rise, criticizing them for their mechanistic application of preferred theories. This discussion is not a mere academic exercise. The works that Christensen addresses (including work by pessimists like John Mearsheimer and by optimistic liberals like John Ikenberry) has had a major effect on the public debates about China policy in the United States.¹

Christensen is especially critical of realist scholars whose work treats China's rise in the twenty-first century as if it is simply the latest iteration of a familiar historical pattern of rising and falling great powers.² Christensen underscores the consequential ways in which today's world is different. Among the differences he highlights are the distinctiveness of transnational production chains in a globalized economy that make contemporary economic interdependence more constraining than its pre-WWI predecessor; the strength of mass nationalism

¹ John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105:690 (2006). 160-62; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016) , updated edition; Aaron L. Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 1st ed.; G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

² Such as Mearsheimer and Friedberg. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*; Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy*.

in the modern world that greatly reduces the attractiveness (and feasibility) of conquering and holding foreign territory; the diminished strategic importance of alliances for great powers that reduces the prospect of small allies dragging them into unwanted conflicts—a familiar tale of entrapment that led to wars in earlier eras; and the prospect of nuclear escalation that shadows any thought of direct military conflict between great powers like China and the United States. These differences help explain why Christensen is especially critical of theorists who argue that serious conflicts must result because a rising power like China will inevitably seek to overturn the international order established by the United States over the decades while it was dominant. Christensen presents evidence that confounds such expectations. Echoing the analysis of Alastair Iain Johnston, Christensen underscores the extent to which a rising China has in fact been a strong supporter of key elements of the international status quo, especially the open liberal economic order that the U.S. and its allies crafted after WWII, and the principle of national sovereignty strengthened over the centuries following the treaty of Westphalia and formally embodied in the organization of the United Nations. As Johnston noted, since the end of the Cold War it has often been the United States and its allies, rather than China, that questioned proposals for further trade liberalization, sometimes even indulging domestic calls for protectionism, and that directly challenged the inviolability of national sovereignty through repeated military interventions aimed at producing “regime change.”³

Having explained why, in contrast with many other international relations theorists, he does not expect a China that continues to benefit from the contemporary international order to be strongly motivated to pursue a revisionist agenda, in chapter three Christensen explains why it would be so difficult for China to embrace such an agenda even if it wanted to. Simply put, China has not (and for the foreseeable future will not) significantly narrow the gap in economic and military capabilities that separates it from a globally preeminent United States. China’s economy is large and getting larger; it now has the world’s second largest (perhaps soon, the largest) GDP and has become the world’s largest trading state. Nevertheless, this impressive economic heft is not the whole story. First, China continues to lag on key qualitative measures such as indigenous innovation and global competitiveness for higher value added products (44-45; 72-74; see also 157-60). Second, China has a massive population, only part of which has achieved a developed-world standard of living. Domestic development burdens limit the ability of China’s leaders to harness the country’s strength to an ambitious foreign policy agenda; as important, these burdens are nearly certain to become heavier as China’s working age population shrinks, as the health and retirement needs of an expanding elderly population grow, and as the politically toxic externalities of rapid economic modernization (including inadequate consumer product safety and severe environmental damage) demand attention and resources (74).

The book also exposes the fallacy of equating China’s larger international economic role with increased political leverage around the world. In Africa, Latin America, and elsewhere, Christensen presents evidence that China’s economic profile is typically matched, if not exceeded, by the U.S. and other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. And he notes that China, like other global economic actors before it, is discovering that increased economic involvement is as likely to generate friction and conflicts in host nations as it is to yield gratitude and influence. In this discussion, as elsewhere in the

³ See Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?,” *International Security* 27:4 (Spring 2003): 5-56.

book, Christensen wisely draws on and helpfully cites the very best work being done by other scholars whose work focuses on the issues he addresses.⁴

The book then turns to China's military modernization. Christensen describes the remarkable strides made over the past two decades but also emphasizes the limits to these achievements. Along key dimensions—especially quality of equipment, personnel, training, and logistics that are crucial in determining the effectiveness with which any military can be employed—he indicates that China still lags behind the world's leading military powers, most importantly the United States. In so doing, he provides sound reasons to be skeptical about the hype that surrounds high-profile displays of new Chinese equipment such as the J-20 stealth fighter (85-86) and the Liaoning aircraft carrier (86-87). The new capabilities are undeniably major achievements for the Chinese. But they are typically capabilities that have long ago entered service in the U.S. and other advanced countries already deploying even more modern systems. The problem with the frequently alarmist reactions to each new Chinese rollout, Christensen warns, is not just flawed estimates of China's capabilities. As discussed below, exaggeration can also contribute to unnecessarily pessimistic strategic beliefs about what China's military can do and to strategic responses that exacerbate the risks already inherent in the China challenge.

In his assessment military power Christensen also reminds the reader of a stark reality others often omit: China is bereft of allies that might add to its punch (North Korea and Pakistan are more burden than benefit), whereas the United States enjoys a wide array of allies and strategic partners, especially in East Asia. Many of these allies possess their own modernized militaries, provide the United States with bases and access, and train with their American counterparts in ways that partly offset the geographic disadvantages that the United States faces in dealing with China in its own backyard.

The book's critique of inflated views of China's military capabilities is not meant to deny the importance of preparing to deal with the challenge China represents. On the contrary, in chapter four Christensen indicates that such preparations, when geared towards real rather than imagined challenges, are crucial. Here, Christensen builds on his landmark essay published at the turn of the century in which he explained why a lagging China could still be a very dangerous adversary whose military shortcomings would not necessarily prevent it from pursuing interests about which it cared deeply, even if battlefield victory remained beyond its grasp.⁵ China's growing ability to inflict damage on an adversary and to manipulate the risks of escalation (including the unavoidable risk of nuclear escalation exacerbated today by a new Chinese ambiguity about the meaning of its no-first-use policy and the comingling of nuclear and conventional forces and command and control) provides it with leverage over adversaries who find such damage and risks unacceptable. On matters close to home where China seeks to dissuade the United States from intervening (especially in the Taiwan Strait), the relative power advantage that the United States and its allies enjoy may be less important than the

⁴ See, for examples, Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1st paperback ed.; Katherine Koleski, "Backgrounder: China in Latin America," U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2011, <http://www.uscc.gov/Research/backgrounder-china-latin-america>; Thomas Lum, Hannah Fischer, Julissa Gomez-Granger, and Anne Leland, "China's Foreign Aid Activities in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia," *Congressional Research Service*, 25 February 2009, <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40361.pdf>.

⁵ Thomas J. Christensen, "Posing Problems without Catching Up: China's Rise and Challenges for U.S. Security Policy," *International Security* 25:4 (2001): 5-40.

absolute power represented by the ever more lethal capabilities that China deploys. Christensen's point is that China need not be able to win militarily as long as it can convince the adversary that, in order for it to prevail over a weaker China, it would have to suffer damage or run risks that it would find unacceptable.

Christensen also adds his voice to that of others worried about the response to China's growing ability to inflict damage or raise risks. The discussion includes three concerns. First, a reluctance to accept that little can be done to deprive China of a growing ability to inflict significant damage and to manipulate the risk of escalation motivates a search for ways to eliminate these dangers. This has led to calls for an American strategy and new forces that would facilitate preemptive strikes against Chinese forces and command-and-control assets are presented as the only realistic way to neuter Beijing's ability to threaten American air and naval operations in the Western Pacific. The danger inherent in such proposals is the obvious escalation risk inherent in carrying out necessarily large-scale preemptive strikes against the homeland of a major nuclear power and, moreover, having to execute this plan early in a crisis or confrontation. Christensen's work encourages the reader to wonder whether it is plausible that an American leader would ever approve the execution of such an unprecedented operation. He or she would not only have to have high confidence in the effectiveness of planned preemptive strikes, but also high confidence in the acceptability of the consequences if the strikes fall short of full effectiveness.

A second danger or concern that follows from despairing over China's serious but far from militarily decisive capability against American military operations in the Western Pacific (misleadingly dubbed an 'anti-access, area-denial' capability in many western accounts) is that it encourages the belief in Beijing that the United States is unwilling to accept real costs or run real risks over its regional interests. If the specter of suffering significant costs or facing frightening risks suffices to dissuade the U.S. from entering the fray, then China can fulfill the requirements of its strategy even without having forces that can actually deny a more resolute United States access to the area.

This leads to a third, and related, concern—that overwrought worries about confronting China's impressive but outclassed military hint at an underlying imbalance of resolve, which may be more important than the balance of forces in determining who prevails during a confrontation where the specter of nuclear escalation exists. Policy debates that seem to suggest the U.S. is utterly risk averse and fearful of paying a price to ensure its regional interests raise grave questions about American resolve. Moreover, since the U.S. has, as Christensen notes, repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to spend blood and treasure to ensure its interests elsewhere, China's leaders might wonder whether concerns about China's clearly inferior capabilities mean that the U.S. somehow cares less about its interests in East Asia. That in turn might lead to an underestimate of actual American resolve to defend those interests (see 98-99; see also 242-43). If so, Beijing might be more likely to act in ways that ultimately provoke a firm U.S. counter, precipitating a crisis or conflict that could have been avoided.

Chapter five turns from issues of military-security affairs to problems of global governance. Christensen's contribution here is especially welcome. Working from his premise that China is both an increasingly capable great power and a developing country with pressing problems to solve at home, he explains why China's role in global governance may actually pose the biggest challenges of all. The prospects for sustaining effective international economic institutions, addressing climate change, managing the dangers of nuclear proliferation, combating terrorism, and responding to the humanitarian disasters that stem from civil conflicts will, Christensen emphasizes, be significantly determined by China's role. China's outsized effects will be felt whether it chooses to contribute to addressing these issues of global governance or whether it refuses to play

such a constructive role. Christensen points out, however, that simply demanding Beijing do more is likely to be counterproductive. Doing so may well be seen as validating the claims of those Chinese who already argue that attempts to get China to be more internationally active and shoulder more of the load in addressing issues of global governance is part of some nefarious Western plot to hamstring China and burden it with responsibilities that serve others' interests more than its own.

The challenge, as Christensen describes it, is not so much one of providing China with incentives to 'do the right thing' but instead clarifying for China's leaders why it is in their own interest to act as a responsible stakeholder, to use the term famously invoked by then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick.⁶ Christensen explains that threading the needle of global governance requires appreciating that China's willingness to accept responsibilities will be shaped most importantly by the Chinese Communist Party leaders' perception of their priorities and interests. As an example of what may be possible, he presents the change in China's approach to international negotiations over climate change. At the Copenhagen conference, Beijing's leaders refused to accept significant constraints on China's greenhouse gas emissions because the regime was concerned about the adverse effect on China's economic growth, which is essential to the country's domestic political stability today and seen as the foundation of its power tomorrow. But in the run-up to the Paris conference, the views of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders in Beijing shifted as they recognized the potentially destabilizing domestic political consequences of atmospheric pollution triggering outrage across China, making it possible to marry the CCP's self-interest in domestic stability with steps that contribute to the global efforts to fight climate change. Though a hopeful story, Christensen notes that hope must be tempered by the recognition that self-interest may also lead Beijing to give priority to efforts focused on reducing low-altitude pollution (captured in readings of PM 2.5). This pollution has triggered the strongest negative reaction among China's urban residents. But this focus may lead to relying on substitutes for the burning of dirty coal that actually work at cross purposes with global efforts to fight climate change because they can increase the emission of greenhouse gases (see 138-150).

Part two of the book contains three chapters that evaluate how well the U.S. has dealt with the realities and challenges of China's rise over the course of the first three post-Cold War administrations. Christensen sees the record as mixed but offers a generally positive assessment of America's China policy. Each chapter identifies achievements and failures. Success, as suggested earlier in the book, was more likely when American policy and the Chinese Communist regime's self-interest could be brought into alignment. Thus, in the late 1990s, American approval of the terms for China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was facilitated by the CCP leaders' interest in the leverage provided by the commitment to openness required for membership as they sought to overcome domestic opposition to advancing liberalizing economic reforms at home. Success in cultivating Chinese cooperation has also been more likely when the United States can tailor its policies to avoid clear nonstarters from the CCP's perspective—most notably, Beijing's rejection of regime change as a goal of international intervention. On this especially sensitive issue, Christensen lays out China's routine objections to most of the international interventions undertaken since the end of the Cold War (especially in the Balkans and Iraq). But he also notes that when the CCP could be convinced that purpose of intervention was not regime change, but rather humanitarian relief (e.g., the protection of civilians in Benghazi, Libya) or support for existing international agreements (e.g., adherence to the NPT norm against

⁶ Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" Remarks to the National Committee of U.S.-China Relations, New York City, 21 September 2005, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>

proliferation by North Korea or Iran) Beijing has dropped its obstructionist stance, compromised its absolutist views about state sovereignty, and sometimes even played an active, constructive role (162-65).

Drawing on his experiences in the Bush administration, Christensen also indicates how important quiet and patient diplomacy was for American success in reshaping China's policies towards the problems in Darfur and Myanmar. This approach, Christensen argues, was crucial in order to gradually convince Chinese policy makers of the advantages of modifying their outdated policies. Christensen is almost certainly correct about the advantages of quiet diplomacy that avoids embarrassing China's leaders or triggering a domestic backlash from the country's growing ranks of nationalist netizens who criticize anything that might be construed as giving into American pressure. Unfortunately, however, this approach can be difficult a difficult one for American policymakers to follow. Demands for regime change when brutal tyrants are seen as the taproot of humanitarian disasters in civil conflicts, and campaigns to name and shame China as complicit with such regimes, are emotionally satisfying and play well in partisan U.S. domestic politics—both in the halls of Congress and in the mass media. Failing to embrace such clarion calls for tough demands aimed at changing Chinese policy leaves presidents and their diplomats open to charges of selling out American (and not just universal) values or, worst of all, of kowtowing to China's communist dictators.

In his review of the United States' China policy since the end of the Cold War, Christensen offers mostly positive assessments of American attempts at coercive diplomacy, especially in managing the sensitive Taiwan issue. The United States has done reasonable well in combining threats (to discourage Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo in a push for reunification) and assurances (to clarify that the United States would also not tolerate Taiwanese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo in a push for independence) to which Christensen draws attention (209-216). Eliciting China's cooperation to address the North Korea nuclear issue has been much more difficult, leading to Christensen's mixed assessment of all three post-Cold War administrations' efforts. His discussion, however, indicates that this checkered American record may not be mostly a result of poorly crafted or implemented U.S. policy. Instead, he highlights the interests of China's Communist Party leaders that complicate the American efforts at coercive diplomacy. Christensen underscores the legacy of China's military sacrifices to save the North Korean regime during the war Mao chose to join in the early 1950s, and the CCP's self-interested concern about the possible domestic reverberations of yet another Communist regime collapsing at a time when its numbers have dwindled to a precious few (123-132; 222-232).

Christensen is most critical when he turns to the Obama administration, though he gives ample attention to its achievements in dealing with China. But he is especially critical of what he sees as its squandering of the hard-won progress that had been made in winning Chinese cooperation on humanitarian intervention. By 2011, this progress had made it possible to secure Beijing's acquiescence to UN-approved intervention to protect the besieged residents of Benghazi, Libya. In short order, however, Operation Odyssey Dawn morphed from the promised humanitarian intervention into a military operation to overthrow the Gadhafi regime, confirming China's lingering suspicions about ulterior American motives. The result was Beijing's predictable retreat to its traditional stance privileging noninterference that subsequently prevented the Obama administration from securing China's support for intervention when the civil conflict and humanitarian crisis in Syria deepened. Any hope of winning China's cooperation surely ended when the Obama administration openly declared that resolution of the Syrian conflict required that 'Assad must go,' making regime change an explicit goal.

Christensen also criticizes the Obama administration for what he sees as problems in the way it publicly presented its China policies—the ‘messaging,’ to use Beltway jargon. Christensen argues that the administration’s initial approach calling for “strategic reassurance” (251-252), its apparent receptivity to China’s proposal that each country respect the other’s “core interests” (253-255), and then its highly public declaration that the United States would begin paying more attention to the Asia-Pacific (quickly dubbed “the pivot,” 252) as rhetorical choices that repeatedly sent the wrong message about the consistency of American intentions in and commitments to the region.

A short review cannot do justice to the many topics covered in *The China Challenge*, nor can it fairly convey the subtleties of its rich analysis. But even a short and strongly positive review has room to raise a few points of criticism that reflect disagreement or a wish that some topics had been given more attention.

Christensen, for example, might have provided a bit more detail about why the relationship with Japan remains the ‘third rail’ of Chinese politics and foreign policy, including its connection with Chinese sensitivity about the management of the Taiwan issue. The book provides evidence of the raw nerves of Chinese nationalists on this score but perhaps not enough of an explanation of their origins for readers lacking a historical background in China’s modern history. And, although Christensen includes some excellent discussion of the way domestic politics in the United States complicates the management of foreign policy, this is a topic that merits even more attention—especially as the debate about American China policy has become increasingly strident in the final years of the Obama administration. What dangers in U.S.-China relations might arise from the constraints American domestic politics place on the president and his/her team? How might these interact with the domestic political constraints that China’s Communist Party leaders face and that Christensen treats in greater depth?

Another issue that merits more attention (though one that has become more clearly important since the book was likely already in production) is the economic slowdown in China since 2014. If the slowdown is more prolonged and severe than China’s leaders expect, what are the likely implications for China’s willingness to play the greater role in global governance that Christensen envisions? Might the globalization of production that has enmeshed China’s self-interest with that of its neighbors and other economic partners fray as countries adjust to what China’s leaders have dubbed “the new normal?” Answering such questions would, of course, entail speculation. But given the solid foundation the book provides, readers would undoubtedly be interested to hear Christensen’s thoughts on these developments.

Finally, one somewhat idiosyncratic criticism bears on a matter of style (‘messaging?’) rather than substance. In passages of the book that discuss China’s handling of recently aggravated territorial and maritime disputes with its neighbors, Christensen routinely uses the term “bullying” to describe China’s policies and actions (see for examples, 21, 46, 93, 192, 195, 246, 250, 257, 264, 292, 293, 297, 311). This term adds little to the analysis; on the contrary, I think the language is infelicitous as it needlessly distracts from the important substantive points that Christensen is making about China’s coercive diplomacy. Surely, there are readily available alternatives to ‘bully’ that would be more suitable and at least as precise. China ‘threatens,’ ‘intimidates,’ and ‘pressures’ its weaker neighbors. At times such coercion might justifiably be labeled ‘emotional’ or even ‘juvenile.’ But to routinely refer to Chinese coercive diplomacy against smaller states as “bullying” begs questions about whether all coercive diplomacy undertaken by strong countries against weaker adversaries merits the label. At a minimum, Christensen should clarify his reason for preferring this bit of schoolyard vernacular in his otherwise sophisticated yet straightforward analysis.

As should be evident, however, my quibbles with Christensen are few; none detract from what is a masterful work sure to stand the test of time. If asked to recommend one book about China's rise and its implications for international relations in the twenty-first century, I would recommend *The China Challenge* without hesitation. Among the many such works that have recently been published, it is an exemplar of what the academy can contribute to vital public policy debates.

Review by Xiaoyu Pu, University of Nevada, Reno

Reading Thomas Christensen's new book *the China Challenge* reminds me of an interesting Chinese proverb, "the style is the man" (*wenru qiren*). Christensen's book wonderfully represents who he is: a leading China scholar with deep knowledge of Chinese foreign policy, a former senior diplomat with a moderate view, and a first-rate international relations theorist with a creative mind. Among the increasing number of new books on China, *The China Challenge* is exceptional largely because of its unique author.

Christensen provides a balanced and clear thesis. The first half of the book analyzes the implications of China's rise, and the second half discusses U.S. strategy toward China. Based on solid evidence, Christensen persuasively demonstrates that China's rise is both real and limited. China is not yet a 'peer competitor' of the United States, but it is already strong enough to destabilize East Asia and to influence economic and political affairs worldwide. Instead of seeing China as a global challenger, Christensen argues that the U.S. faces two challenges: preventing China from destabilizing regional order in Asia while encouraging China to contribute to global governance. Drawing upon historical materials and diplomatic experience, Christensen analyzes U.S. strategy toward China since the end of the Cold War. He articulates a balanced strategic approach toward China: instead of containing China's rise, the United States should shape China's choices toward positive directions for regional and global order. To accomplish the goal, the U.S. must carefully combine its strength and resolve with diplomatic reassurance.

The book demonstrates Christensen's aptitude as a top-notch international relations theorist. From a theoretical perspective, here are several take-home messages. First of all, while some realists are skeptical about the pacifying effect of economic interdependence, Christensen highlights the new reality of the twenty-first century: China is rising in a globalized world, and the "transnational production network" is a powerful force for peace in East Asia and beyond (43). Second, Christensen emphasizes the essence of international security politics as "political battles" over limited aims rather than "the brute forces struggles" over survival (93-96). Unlike great-power politics in the nineteenth century, coercive diplomacy has often played a crucial role in contemporary international politics. Thus, "psychology and perceptions are even more important than reality" (101). Finally, Christensen analyzes the complexity of coercive diplomacy in Asia, highlighting the interactions among military capabilities, domestic politics, and international perceptions.

Serving in the George W. Bush Administration as a senior diplomat, Christensen is well known for his moderate view. His opinion often transcends the polarized debates about China. Largely presenting an optimistic view, Christensen is cautious and realistic. He understands the real potential for conflicts, and he also highlights compelling reasons for cooperation. His policy prescriptions are largely based on a U.S. bipartisan consensus on China, and he also demonstrates a deep understanding of Chinese politics and foreign policy. For many contentious issues, Christensen takes an extremely nuanced and sensible position. For instance, while emphasizing the importance of the U.S. military presence in Asia, Christensen cautiously opposes any overly offensive military planning that might jeopardize U.S.-China strategic stability (99-100). While opposing Beijing's coercion and supporting Taiwan's democracy, the United States must reassure Beijing by opposing Taiwan's efforts for formal independence (209-216). While supporting its allies in Asia, the U.S. should carefully avoid taking sides on the maritime disputes in Asia (297). Regarding the South China Sea disputes, Washington could "call for multilateral confidence-building to keep existing disputes from escalating," but it is not in a good position "to prescribe multilateral methods to settle the dispute themselves" (297). Regarding U.S. strategy toward China, Christensen emphasizes an "unusual mix of

strength and toughness on the one hand and a willingness to reassure and to listen to the Chinese on the other” (311).

For such a measured and insightful book, what else can we ask for? If I were to raise a quibble or two, on some issues Christensen might have avoided some long-term questions.

First, while Christensen may have provided the best possible analysis on the *status quo* of Sino-U.S. relations, he does not indicate whether the *status quo* will be sustainable in the long term. Christensen has identified all the advantages of the current U.S. strategy toward China. But even if this strategy has worked relatively well so far, we also see an increasing number of pessimistic views.¹ For instance, some American scholars advocate a much more competitive strategy toward China, while others prescribe a substantial accommodation with China to avoid long-term rivalry.² I am not arguing that alternative strategies are necessarily better choices, but I do wonder whether the U.S. can avoid substantial readjustment of its China policy one way or the other in the coming decades.

Second, can Washington unilaterally “shape” Beijing’s choices in the long term? To be fair, the shaping strategy conceptualized by Christensen should still be valid for important reasons. In particular, the U.S. must maintain a delicate balance of both deterrence and reassurance in Asia. But there are important limitations on how Washington can shape Beijing’s choices. Given China’s historical experience with Western powers, positive change should ideally come from within China rather than being made under foreign pressure. Otherwise, foreign pressure might lead to a backlash against those reformers in China. Also, the Sino-American relationship should be largely viewed as a two-way interacting process instead of a one-way street. While Christensen might have suspicions over Xi Jinping’s “new type of great power relationship” (*xin xing daguo guanxi*), it is premature to reject these proposals just because they are “made in China.” It is better for the U.S. to deal with Chinese initiatives and ideas on a case-by-case basis. If the United States can define the U.S.-China relationship through proposing the concept of “a responsible stakeholder,” China should co-define its relationship with the U.S. as well. Ultimately it might not matter much if an idea originates from the United States or China. Furthermore, China will increase its voice in global agenda setting, and China’s quest for equal partnership with the U.S. will “no longer be the outsized claim of a vulnerable country.”³ Instead of envisioning a U.S.-shaped bilateral relationship, U.S.-China relations might eventually enter into a stage of “co-evolution.”⁴ This means that the relationship might be much open-ended as “both countries

¹ Harry Harding, “[Has U.S. China Policy Failed?](#)” *The Washington Quarterly* 38:3 (November 2015): 95-122.

² For a more competitive strategy, see: Robert D. Black and Ashley J. Tellis, *Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2015); for a more accommodation strategy, see: Charles L. Glaser, “A U.S.-China Grand Bargain? The Hard Choice between Military Competition and Accommodation,” *International Security* 39:4 (Spring 2015): 49-90; Lyle J. Goldstein, *Meeting China Halfway* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2015).

³ Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), Kindle edition, 472.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 505.

pursue their domestic imperatives, cooperating where possible, and adjust their relations to minimize conflict.”⁵

Third, is the future of an American-led order really that certain? I agree with Christensen’s analysis on the enduring strengths of American power. But as many scholars have pointed out, the U.S. will not be as dominant as it was before.⁶ Given China’s historical experience, national ambitions, and power potentials, China will never become “another Japan” that could be completely integrated into the American-led order. While China and other emerging countries might not know what they want for a new order, they have clearly demonstrated what they do not want— “a world under the continued hegemony of the West.”⁷ This does not necessarily mean that China has ambitions and capabilities to push the United States out of Asia. Beijing’s approach to the existing order might be viewed as a “reformist” approach or a “rightful resistance” strategy rather than a “revisionist” approach.⁸ As Beijing is ‘hedging’ against the existing American-led order, Beijing’s new activism in global affairs might push the United States to rethink its primacy in the long term. The future of the international order might be much more uncertain.

There may be no easy answers for these questions. Allow me to offer a personal observation in the end. Christensen’s publications are highly valued in American academic and policy circles. How would Beijing view his scholarship? Since the global financial crisis, China has become more assertive but also has faced increasing diplomatic challenges. An influential scholar in Beijing’s foreign policy community made the following interesting appeal, “To repair China’s diplomatic problems, let’s listen to the voice of Thomas Christensen!”⁹ Given the complicated and sometimes tense relationship between the United States and China, how many voices are so constructive that they are well received both in Washington and in Beijing? This probably indicates Christensen’s extraordinary reputation as a moderate, innovative, and thoughtful scholar.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ For instance, Christopher Layne, “This time it’s real: The end of Unipolarity and the Pax Americana,” *International Studies Quarterly* 56:1 (2012): 203-213; Amitav Acharya, *The End of American World Order* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2014).

⁷ Charles A. Kupchan, *No One’s World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming. Global Turn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 183.

⁸ Barry Buzan, “China in International Society: Is ‘Peaceful Rise’ Possible?” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3:1 (2010): 5-36; Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, “After Unipolarity: China’s visions of international order in an era of US decline,” *International Security* 36:1 (2011): 41-72.

⁹ Li Wei, “Listening to Christensen’s Criticism,” [Qingting Keqinsheng De Piping], manuscript, School of International Studies, Renmin University of China, Beijing, 2011.

Author's Response by Thomas Christensen, Princeton University

I am very grateful to the editors of H-Diplo/ISSF for creating this roundtable discussion of my book and for inviting two highly qualified commentators to provide reviews. Professor Avery Goldstein is one of the leading experts on China's grand strategy and U.S.-China relations. He has long been one of my role models because he seamlessly melds international relations theory with true area expertise. Professor Xiaoyu Pu is a rising star in the field of Chinese foreign policy studies. His work uncovers China's dual and sometimes contradictory identities as both great power and developing country. Moreover, he parses the implications of those dual identities for China's policies toward international institutions and various regions of the world.¹

Since I have learned much from these reviewers, I am particularly honored that they both view my book in such a positive light. In fact, to respond to their reviews with much more than a sincere thank you runs the risk of appearing defensive. But they both raise typically intelligent critiques as well, so to do them justice, I will focus on those critiques in my response below.

My first response is a general one for both reviewers. They reviewed the hardcover edition of my book, which was completed in the second half of 2014 and published in June 2015. Some of the issues raised have been addressed in the updated paperback edition, completed in January 2016 and published this past summer. That edition updates the thematic chapters and includes an afterword covering U.S.-China relations from late 2014 to early 2016 with an eye to the challenges that will be faced by the next administration in the United States.

In his review of my book, Professor Goldstein fairly points out that I did not offer sufficient historical coverage of just why Japan is the "third rail" of Chinese politics. I take his point and find the reality almost ironic, since I have spent a good deal of my professional life studying the Japan-China-United States triangle. The reasons for Chinese national bitterness toward Japan are legion. They range from the abstract humiliation of having been overtaken and defeated in the late nineteenth century by a previously inferior regional power viewed in China as a little brother of sorts, to the more concrete—the unimaginable brutality and deprivations leveled against the Chinese nation by Japanese invaders in the 1930s and 1940s.

Another reason why relations with Japan are such a sensitive issue to this day is that the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy is wrapped up in its portrayal of itself as the leading force in the defeat of Japanese imperialism in that period. The Party's inflated historical image was on full display in September 2015 at the festivities commemorating the seventieth anniversary of Japan's surrender. From that event and the television programming and media propaganda that surrounded it, one would think that the major battles against Japan were fought by the Chinese Red Army and the majority of casualties in the war were in the Communist ranks. The Communists had their share of brave battles against the Japanese, and many patriotic martyrs wore the Red Star on their caps, so stories of Red Army valor are hardly all fiction. But objective histories show that the

¹ See, for example, Xiaoyu Pu, "Status Signaling, Multiple Audiences, and China's Diplomatic Repositioning," *Foreign Affairs Review* (April 2014), 20-41; and Randall Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions and International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security* 38:3 (Winter 2013/2014): 41-72.

army of the Communists' Civil War enemy, the Kuomintang (KMT), did most of the serious fighting against Japan and suffered the vast majority of the casualties.²

The more important point is that for Chinese nationalists of all political stripes, remembering the “Anti-Japanese War” and standing up to perceived Japanese slights are requirements. And in the reform era beginning in 1978, when communism as a revolutionary and internationalist ideology was largely jettisoned in China's domestic and foreign policy, nationalism and a more raw and ethnically based version of patriotism is at an even greater premium for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as a legitimizing force. In the book, I discuss at length how the CCP's rather twisted official version of Korean War history has helped bolster Chairman Mao Zedong's image as a great strategist despite his clear failures as a political and economic leader. Similarly, the CCP's rather self-serving and inflated portrayal of its role in the war against Japan serves its contemporary legitimacy needs in ways that limit Beijing's options in how it responds to perceived challenges from Japan and the U.S.-Japan alliance. The sensitivity about this history was on full display this past spring when a Chinese historian came under heavy legal pressure for questioning the veracity of a tale of five Red Army martyrs who allegedly died fighting the Japanese on an isolated mountaintop. The CCP apparently could not tolerate a revision of a story told to hundreds of millions of Chinese schoolchildren in ways that help create an ineluctable bond between loyalty to the Chinese nation and loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party.³

Goldstein also addresses the slowdown in Chinese economic growth in recent years. Like many aspects of China's foreign relations, this is a double-edged sword. On one hand, slower growth exacerbates the domestic legitimacy problems of the CCP, a process that can make China more assertive abroad when Beijing is reacting to perceived provocations over such issues as maritime disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. On the other hand, the ability to provide growth and jobs is a major pillar of CCP legitimacy itself, and the nature of the transnational production chain described in the book means that, whenever possible, CCP leaders will likely remain reluctant to provoke avoidable military conflicts that would threaten the regional trade and investment that produce so many of those jobs. In periods of slow growth, that reluctance should be even more prevalent than in heady economic times.

It is difficult if not impossible to prove a counterfactual argument, but it is my belief that along with the U.S. presence and U.S. alliances, globalization and regional integration have been major forces for peace in the East Asia region. As Goldstein has noted in his own incisive writings, the region suffers from an unusually large number of potential causes of conflict in the post-Cold War environment. But it has remained generally peaceful despite many periods of tension, including the period since the financial crisis of 2008.⁴ This

² For an excellent account, see Rana Mitter, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013).

³ Kiki Zhao, “Chinese Court Orders Apology Over Challenge to Tale of Wartime Heroes” (Sinosphere column), *New York Times*, 28 June 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/29/world/asia/china-hong-zhenkuai-five-heroes.html?_r=0.

⁴ See, for example, Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and Avery Goldstein, “An Emerging China's Emerging Grand Strategy: A NeoBismarckian Turn?” in G. John Ikenberry and Michael Mastanduno, eds. *International Relations Theory and the Asia Pacific* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

analysis makes all the more worrisome the popular strands of isolationism in the anti-trade and anti-alliance rhetoric of presidential candidates like Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. China's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, an outcome which is considered a disaster by both candidates, produced wealth for the region and the world, including the United States. U.S. exports to China have grown faster than U.S. imports from China since 2001, and China is now America's third largest export market. What is often also missed is that China's accession to the WTO catalyzed the process of regional and global integration and that integration in turn is a major force for peace in an area of vital interest to the United States. These candidates' criticism of the Clinton administration for that hard-fought achievement seems odd to any person knowledgeable about East-Asian international relations. And the popularity of that criticism only bolsters the most virulent strands of anti-American nationalism in China.

Goldstein also wisely cautions against my use of the term "bullying" to describe China's coercive diplomacy when I rarely use such terms for the policies of the United States and its allies. In some instances in the book, I used the term to describe what the United States and its allies are trying to dissuade China from doing in the region, and in that context it seems a fair description. In other instances, I used the term to describe how regional actors perceive certain actions taken by China's military and other Chinese government assets (e.g., Coast Guard ships and aircraft) and diplomatic statements such as the then Foreign Minister's comments at the 2010 ASEAN Regional Forum that China's neighbors needed to recognize the People's Republic of China's (PRC) overwhelming size in comparison to their own. Again, that seems a fair description of the region's reactions to China's behavior in such circumstances. But to be truly fair as a scholar, I should have emphasized that Chinese analysts often view America's military and diplomatic efforts as examples of bullying as well. The dispatch of two U.S. aircraft carriers during the 1995-1996 Taiwan Straits crisis, President Obama's invocation of the U.S.-Japan alliance in Tokyo in 2014 in reference to the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands dispute, and the recent Freedom of Navigation operations by the U.S. Navy near Chinese artificial islands in the South China Sea all seemed like laudable policies to this American observer, but such muscular U.S. policies are routinely described by Chinese observers as attempts by the United States to bully China. Goldstein is right in stating that political scientists should avoid language that conflates perceptions with realities. We should at least avoid reporting the perceptions of only one side in a dispute.

Professor Pu raises several important points of his own. He praises the book's analysis of the current state of U.S.-China relations, but he wonders if that analysis will remain valid as China's rise continues and the gap between the two nations' overall power shrinks. I have three responses to this fascinating question.

First, as Professor Goldstein points out in his review, the slowdown in Chinese economic growth rates has persisted through 2016. Moreover, the economic reform program pushed by President Xi Jinping in 2013 has stalled and the anticorruption campaign has frightened local leaders away from certain economic ventures that previously fueled China's growth. So we cannot assume that China will successfully manage a transition to a consumer-based growth model and that past performance will be reflected in future growth rates. And eventually, slower growth in the economy will affect growth in military budgets as well.

On the strategic front, China's development of power projection capabilities has been impressive, and the U.S. military has suffered from sequestration at home in responding to various challenges, including the rise of China. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, Air Force, and Strategic Rocket Force continue to modernize apace, as do maritime law enforcement assets (Coast Guard and maritime militia) that have been used to increase China's persistent presence in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. And Beijing's

construction since 2014 of several artificial islands in the South China Sea provides future forward outposts for these military assets.

Still, from an overall net assessment of China's power and influence in East Asia, it is difficult to say that China is much better off today than it was several years ago. China's actions and growing capabilities have contributed to its neighbors' decisions to cooperate with the United States and with each other more actively in the security sphere. The Abe administration successfully shepherded a reinterpretation of the Japanese Peace Constitution through the Diet to allow for Japan to fight with the United States in 'collective self-defense,' not just in defense of the home islands of Japan. The Philippines has offered the United States persistent base access for the first time since the early 1990s as part of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. Malaysia has allowed the United States to fly P-8 patrol planes from Malaysian bases into the South China Sea. Moreover, Japan and India have increased maritime security cooperation with regional disputants such as the Philippines and Vietnam. And China's obstreperous ally, North Korea, has on occasion catalyzed security cooperation between Japan and South Korea and convinced the latter to join the U.S. regional missile defense program. All of this might lead thoughtful Chinese analysts, long concerned with the prospect of encirclement, to think that China is not significantly better off today from a security perspective than it was before the 2008 financial crisis.

Finally, it is not at all clear to me that the current approach advocated in the book would become inappropriate for the United States and its allies for the foreseeable future even if the regional balance of power in Asia and across the Pacific were to shift dramatically in China's favor. The robust U.S.-led alliance system, the existence of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to exploitation of local conventional superiority, the prospect of more countries acquiring nuclear weapons if they feel threatened, and the restraining realities of transnational production chains in the regional economy would all still be in place if China were to close the overall power gap with the United States on a bilateral basis. Even if China became a true peer competitor of the United States, the PRC would still have reasons to avoid unnecessary regional conflicts (and the United States and its allies would still have strong reasons to avoid unnecessarily provoking Chinese nationalism in counterproductive ways).

This relates to a second excellent question raised by Professor Pu. Can the United States on its own expect to shape the choices of a rising China even as China closes the gap with the United States? He correctly points out that political forces within China, not decisions in Washington, will determine China's foreign relations. I could not agree more. I have two responses. First, the United States cannot shape China's choices effectively on its own. As I suggest above, success requires Washington to work with allies, security partners, and other neighbors of China. This coordination will only become more important as China's national power grows in comparison to that of the United States and those other actors. Second, the words 'shaping the choices of a rising China' were chosen extremely carefully during the George W. Bush administration and repeated in the Obama administration. The intention was never to suggest that Washington would make strategic decisions for Beijing or that the United States and its allies could dictate outcomes to the PRC. Instead the idea was that Beijing would certainly make its own choices but that, in coordination with other actors in the region and beyond, the United States could shape an environment in which Chinese leaders are more likely to seek increased influence and prestige on the international stage in cooperative and constructive ways and less likely to use coercion and force to settle China's many disputes with its neighbors. This is a more humble ambition than would be implied by a phrase like 'shaping the policies' or even 'determining the policies' of a rising China. And as Professor Pu's excellent comments imply, one of the best ways for the United States and others to shape choices effectively is to recognize the policy debates that occur inside China and to try to empower

moderate arguments and undercut aggressive ones. To do so requires toughness and assurances in combination as well as an understanding of domestic and intellectual trends within China itself.

Along the same lines, Professor Pu calls into question my criticism of the Obama administration's agreement to embrace President Xi Jinping's concept of "New Type Great Power Relations" (*Xin Xing Daguo Guanxi*, sometimes translated as "New Type Major Power Relations"). I respect his point of view, but from my perspective, the problem with the NTGPR concept is not its authorship. The United States should not and did not object to Chinese-authored phrases such as 'peaceful rise,' 'peace and development,' or 'responsible great power.' The biggest problem with NTGPR is that Beijing and Washington generally do not seem to mean the same thing by the term. Washington clearly believes NTGPR means that the leading global power, the United States, and a rising power, China, should cooperate actively around the world to solve problems of global governance and in the process build bilateral trust. (This is in no way different from Robert Zoellick's concept of the United States and China being "responsible stakeholders").⁵ But many in China seem to think that NTGPR means the United States should respect China's 'core national interests,' which would include full U.S. acceptance of China's sovereignty claims in the Asia Pacific and total avoidance of U.S. government criticism of China's domestic politics. This looks to American and allied observers more like a Chinese request for an 'old type great power sphere of influence' than anything new in great power relations.

There are many other nations in Asia—great and small—who do not like to think of the U.S.-China relationship as fundamentally different or more important than their own relationships with Washington and each other. Many saw NTGPR as a resuscitation of the idea of a "G-2" that could potentially marginalize American allies and security partners as the price to the United States of stabilizing Sino-American relations. This jealous view was especially strong in Japan.⁶ In any case, as with earlier concepts in the public diplomacy of the Obama administration's China policy—'strategic reassurance,' 'mutual respect for core national interests,' and 'the pivot to Asia'—over time the administration became disillusioned with and then distanced itself from the concept of New Type Great Power Relations as well. Rightly or wrongly, administration leaders apparently have come to agree with my criticism of the problems in their earlier public diplomacy.

In addition to thanking the two reviewers for their highly intelligent and quite generous reviews, I would like to close by expressing my special appreciation for the final point in Professor Pu's review. I am very pleased that a leading Chinese international relations expert privately expressed to him the view that China should adopt regional and global politics consistent with those prescribed in my book. I sincerely believe that U.S.-China relations are not a zero-sum game and what is good for China is not bad for the United States and vice versa. I do not think either China or the United States is better off today because of the increased tensions in the region since 2008 over sovereignty disputes, and I believe both the United States and China benefit when China seeks greater prestige and influence through cooperative and constructive behavior on global governance issues. That is true whether the constructive initiative includes the United States—as in the Paris

⁵ Robert Zoellick, Deputy Secretary of State, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility," Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005 at <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>.

⁶ Andrew S. Erickson and Adam P. Liff, "Not-So-Empty Talk: The Danger of China's 'New Type of Great-Power Relations' Slogan," *Foreign Affairs*, Snapshot, October 9, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-10-09/not-so-empty-talk>.

Climate Change Agreement and the Iran nuclear deal—or does not—as with the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. For some reason, I am known as an optimist. But I worry greatly that domestic forces in both countries might prevent such a common vision from being promoted in U.S.-China relations in 2017 and beyond. Although sadly my book could never be published in the PRC without unacceptable editing, I am hopeful that it might make a positive difference in the United States and in other capitals in reducing the prospect for conflict with a rising China and increasing regional and global cooperation.