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Introduction by Yafeng Xia

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Introduction by Yafeng Xia, Long Island University

Odd Arne Westad has written a monumental and timely book on China's relations with the world since 1750, which is based on extensive research in international archives, reference to a vast body of secondary literature, and personal anecdotes. He examines the history of China's international relations as seen from a Chinese perspective. He looks at how Chinese people—not just decision makers, politicians and military leaders, but people in general, including diplomats, revolutionaries, missionaries, businessmen, students, and workers — engaged with foreigners and came to see the outside world. So this is not just another book about high politics and diplomacy. Westad brings the stories of ordinary Chinese and foreigners into the historical narrative, recounting, inter alia, the important role played by the Chinese diaspora, e.g., the lives of Chinese laborers in Europe during World War I and Chinese immigrants in foreign land, as well as the key role foreigners played in China's modernization. Westad's accessible writing style makes *Restless Empire* a great example of macro-history written for the general reader. More importantly, as Chen Jian aptly notes in his review, "The main contribution and strength of the book are to be found in its intellectual dimension—the originality of the ideas and thoughts that Westad presents in the book's narrative." The book offers historical insights for understanding present-day China and its possible development.

Restless Empire spans China's relations with Europe, the United States, and the rest of Asia. According to Westad, modern and contemporary China has been decisively shaped by foreign ideas and movements: imperialism, communism, and modern capitalism. Westad argues that China's history over the past two centuries has been unusually turbulent and traumatic, and contends that this turbulence and trauma, together with the country's Confucian heritage, its geography, and its traditional veneration of the state (4), have shaped three big ideas that inform China's worldview. The first idea is that "justice" is or should be central to the international order. As Westad writes: "In the Chinese view today, the outside world over the past two hundred years has treated China unjustly, and this grievance remains a leitmotif" (5). The second idea posits a search for "rules and rituals," i.e., principles, that can bring order to an otherwise chaotic international society (5). The third idea embodies "a sense of centrality" and a belief in China as "the indispensable nation for its region" (5). Westad stresses that "these three crucial concepts should always be borne in mind when considering the past, the present, and future of Chinese foreign policy" (6).

This book receives high marks from each of our four distinguished reviewers. In his extensive review, Chen Jian praises Westad's "careful and professional...treatment of historical evidence." He offers judicious comments on the three subjects Westad deals with in the book – China as a pre-modern empire; the connections between its imperial legacies, its age of revolutions and its nation-building projects; and the relationships between foreign models, Chinese characteristics and modernities. From a Chinese scholar's perspective, Niu Jun speaks highly of Westad's "attention to the diversity of China's internal affairs, the diversity of the intercourse between China and its outside world, and the prospects of various possibilities for China's relations with the outside world." Priscilla

Roberts offers detailed comments on many of Westad's insights and findings. As she points out, Westad covers not just inter-state relations and conventional diplomacy, but also transnational relations at the individual and non-state level; takes on the narrative that China experienced a "century of humiliation" at the hands of the West and Japan; adopts a relatively approving view of the Nationalist period and Guomindang leader Chiang Kai-shek; and many other fascinating points. Qiang Zhai agrees with the three other reviewers on the many strengths of Westad's volume. Nonetheless, he pointed out some weaknesses of the book. Zhai argues that Westad is not on solid ground when he dissects China's partnership with the Third World, for instance, with India. According to Zhai, some of Westad's criticisms of Mao Zedong's performance appear overblown. He faults Westad for listing the unreliable Mao biography by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday¹ as a recommended reading, and notes that Westad's thematic approach occasionally lapses into redundancy.

Participants:

Odd Arne Westad is Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Among his books are *The Global Cold War* (2005), which won the Bancroft Prize, and *Decisive Encounters* (2003), a standard history of the Chinese civil war. He co-edited the three-volume *Cambridge History of the Cold War* (2010). His most recent books are *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750* (2012) and the *Penguin History of the World* 7th ed. (2013).

Yafeng Xia is Associate Professor of East Asian and Diplomatic history at Long Island University in New York. He is the author of *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-72* (2006) and has published widely on Chinese foreign relations during the Cold War. He is coauthoring a book (with Zhihua Shen) on Sino-North Korean relations during the Cold War, tentatively entitled, *Mao Zedong, Kim Il-Sung and the Myth of Sino-North Korean relations, 1949-1976*.

Chen Jian is Michael J. Zak Professor of History for US-China Relations at Cornell University. Among his publications are *China's Road the Korean War* (1994), and *Mao's China and the Cold War* (2001). He is now completing a diplomatic and political biography of Zhou Enlai.

Niu Jun is Professor of Chinese foreign policy studies in the School of International Studies, Peking University, and received his Ph.D. from the People's University of China in 1988. His research is focused on modern China's foreign relations. His main publications include: *From Yan'an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist foreign Policy*, (Norwalk: Eastbridge, 2004). *China's Foreign Decision Making in the Cold War*, (Tokyo: Qianchang Press, 2007), and *The Cold War and the Origin of PRC's Foreign Relations 1949-1955* (BeijingSheke wenxian Press, 2012).

Priscilla Roberts is Associate Professor of History and the Honorary Director of the Centre of American Studies at the University of Hong Kong. She read history at King's College,

¹ Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Routledge, 2009).

Cambridge, where she also earned her doctorate in history. She has published numerous books and articles, among them *Window on the Forbidden City: The Beijing Diaries of David Bruce, 1973–1974* (2001), *Behind the Bamboo Curtain: China, Vietnam, and the World beyond Asia* (2007), and *Lord Lothian and Anglo-American Relations, 1900–1940* (2010).

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Review by Chen Jian, Cornell University

This is a splendid book that many of us who have worked on and written about modern China and its international history have long been waiting for. What Odd Arne Westad has presented in *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750* is a historical and, indeed, intellectual ‘grand tour’ of China’s tortuous journey toward entering into, understanding, and embracing the larger world in modern times. Simply put, this is academic work at its very best, providing the reader with an engaging and, at the same time, thought-provoking historical narrative about the ‘Central Kingdom’s’ transformation in the past four hundred years from a pre-modern empire into a modern state of multinationalities. China is the country with the largest population and one of the longest—and certainly the most continuous—civilizations in the world, and it has changed from a weak and economically backward country at the beginning of the twentieth century into a prominent global power and a leader of the world’s emerging economies entering the twenty-first century. A book like this that traces China’s encounters with the world and explores the deeper historical and cultural forces underlying that experience is thus an extraordinary contribution to both fellow China scholars and a more extensive range of readers of all kinds of backgrounds. By writing and publishing the book, Westad has again proven that he belongs to the small league of the very best historians of our age.

I also find that this book is very different in style from Westad’s previous writings. In actuality, when I was reading the book, I could not help but repeatedly compared his writing style with that of Jonathan Spence, who has long been regarded as the dean of modern Chinese history studies in the world. In the past half century, no other scholar in the China field has been as successful in producing highly popular yet scholarly sophisticated books as does Spence. Over the years, I have used several of Spence’s books, including *Search for Modern China*, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace*, *God’s Chinese Son*, *The Death of Woman Wang*, *The Question of Hu*¹, among others, for my undergraduate and graduate courses on modern Chinese history. On two occasions, I also used Spence’s books as supplementary readings for my lectures in courses serving the non-conventional students of Cornell Adult University, who are more or less similar to those we usually call ‘general readers.’ The students of different backgrounds and varying ages love Spence’s writings and think that his story-telling is both mind-bubbling and catching. In my opinion, few of us in the China field have ever reached Spence’s level in his ability to combine excellent scholarship with readability in the books that we have written. Now, in this book by Westad, I feel that I have found someone who is at least close to being a peer of Spence in this precious respect of history writing. I have been teaching a course at Cornell University (and, before that, at the University of Virginia) entitled ‘China

¹ Jonathan Spence, *Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, third edition, 2012); Jonathan Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1981); Jonathan Spence, *God’s Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York: Penguin, 1979); Jonathan Spence, *The Question of Hu* (New York: Vintage, 1989).

Encounters the World' for many years. I definitely will use *Restless Empire* as a required main textbook for the course in the future. And I absolutely have no doubt that it will be warmly welcomed and embraced by the students.

The book is about high-politics and the state, to be sure. But it is also about society and everyday life. While engaging in discussions of such large subjects as empire, imperialism, war, revolution, and globalization, Westad also writes about people, not only 'great figures' but also ordinary men and women. I find it particularly interesting to see that Westad incorporates into his narrative so many episodes and stories of how China's path toward modernity has been a process persistently driven by the forces and initiatives from below, rather than constantly dominated by the power at the top or from above.

So Westad has actually set up a highly meaningful and insightful example of how new and better international history should and can be written. While nations and states may remain the main "actors" in international history studies, society and culture should also have their prominent positions that interact at every level with the state. Thus, international history should also become inter-societal and inter-cultural history.

Also, when I was reading this book, what repeatedly intruded into my mind was Jung Zhang and Jon Holliday's *Mao: The Unknown Story*.² This probably is the most widely read and extensively reviewed biography on the late Chinese chairman. The general readers' reception of the book speaks for its most obvious strength: it is a book quite easy to follow (though the content of it is by no means easy-going) and also has, as it claims, made use of new and previously-inaccessible materials and provided many new interpretations. In telling the 'unknown story' of the chairman, Chang and Holliday characterize him as a villain from his early life to his death. But their way of citing sources has encountered sharp challenges from historians, and the volume has been "criticized in the academic community on the grounds of unreliability and distorted judgments."³ Whether or not the volume will stand the test of time thus has been called into serious question. Westad's is drastically different in this respect, and its treatment of historical evidence is careful and professional. Indeed, supporting the book's narrative is Westad's extraordinary, heroic, and unprecedented research efforts. In a sense, the high quality of the volume is the fruit of the many years that Westad has devoted to multi-archival and multi-source research.

But the merits of Westad's work go far beyond providing a highly readable and academically reliable narrative of Chinese international history. The main contribution and strength of the book are to be found in its intellectual dimension—the originality of the ideas and thoughts that Westad presents in the book's narrative. Throughout the volume, Westad raises stimulating and meaningful questions concerning several large and

² Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Jonathn Cape, 2005).

³ Alexander V. Pantsov with Steven I. Levine, *Mao: The Real Story* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 5.

important subjects. In the rest of this review essay, I would like to comment on three such subjects that Westad has thoughtfully discussed in the book.

Pre-modern China as an Empire

The first such subject that I would like to highlight is one concerning ‘China’ as an empire in pre-modern times. To be sure, ‘empire’ is a hot ‘label’ these days that many have used to try to make sense of various larger or smaller ‘imperial projects’ in history, and this is especially true when such a ‘great enterprise’ (I am here borrowing the term used by the late Frederic Wakeman in his monumental study on the making and consolidation of the Qing/Manchu Empire⁴) as the Qing, China’s last imperial dynasty, is at the center of scholarly exploration.

There is no doubt that the Qing, like several previous major Chinese dynasties, was an empire. The questions are: What kind of empire it actually was? In what senses was it a ‘Chinese’ empire? And, what kind of legacies has the Qing as an empire bequeathed to twentieth-century China and beyond?

In dealing with these questions, Westad rejects the notion that the Chinese empire—and the Qing Empire in particular—was a static and non-changing phenomenon. For Westad, as reflected in the title of his book, the Qing, as with previous Chinese empires and also the Chinese nation-building projects after the Qing’s collapse, was ‘restless’ in its developing trajectory, even when China was hopelessly embarking on a path characterized by decline and disintegration. But why was this so?

The ‘long eighteenth century’ under the Qing, as Westad depicts, was a time of dynamic and far-reaching changes for China in economic, social, and political terms. And China was also gradually becoming incorporated into the larger ‘outside world’. But the dilemma lay in that in terms of perception and self-imagination, the Qing/Manchu rulers’ ways of treating the emerging new patterns of external challenges that they were facing were in essence very ‘Chinese.’ To be sure, there was new knowledge, and there were new practices (such as what was reflected in the signing of the Qing-Russia Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689, in which the Qing was behaving in a kind of ‘modern way’ in trifling with territorial and sovereignty issues). In an overall sense, however, the Qing Empire refused to embrace the ‘modern’ in political, economic and, especially, normative senses. Therefore, we see the failure of the 1793 Lord Macartney Mission (especially from a British perspective). What Westad has drawn in his narrative for us is a complicated and paradoxical picture of the Qing Empire as one that was unintentionally (but inevitably) entering into the larger ‘world’ while, at the meantime, stubbornly refusing to embrace the coming of a completely new era.

⁴ Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

So, the Qing Empire became something that it was and something that it was not. In many areas, it was an empire similar to other empires (and Western empires included) in world history. For example, like other empires, the Qing embarked on territorial expansion; the Qing and other empires were also driven, though in varying degrees and often reflecting different underlying motives, by commercial and other related interest considerations; and they were all, in one way or another, imbedded in deep 'empire style' security anxieties and puzzled and frustrated by empire-related security needs and dilemmas (often stated as 'imperial overextension'). In describing these features of the Qing Empire, Westad cites convincing evidence to undermine some of the long-existing misinterpretations or myths concerning the Qing's external policies and behavior. The tributary system under the Qing, for instance, has long been treated by scholars as one with little involvement by commercial incentives. Westad points out that one of the critical aspects of the Qing's tributary practice actually was about the trade of commodities and, in relation to it, commercial interests. Therefore, as Westad says, the Qing indeed was "a trading empire" (35).

But the Qing Empire also had some striking and substantial differences with other empires of its own age—and with the Western ones in particular; and it was also in many ways different from the empires that had existed in China's own past. For example, comparing the Qing Empire with such Western empires as the British, Spanish, and the French colonial ones, one finds that the Qing's tributary states (Korea, Ryukyu, Vietnam, Burma, among others) were not the Qing's colonies. In organization and structure, the Qing Empire was much more centrally oriented and operated than most Western colonial empires. But what is probably the most distinctive feature of the Qing imperial project is that it had been assigned such extraordinary importance in claiming and enhancing the Qing's own very legitimacy and existence as a Chinese dynasty.

Let me now return to the question of to what extent the Qing was actually a 'Chinese' empire. In Westad's discussion about the making of China's empire tradition and legacies, the Qing's position was critical. This makes good sense, since in order to understand China as a country and nation-state that we see today, it is essential to comprehend the meanings of the Qing in the long evolving history to the land, civilization and people that had been named 'China' (or 'historical China'). Indeed, the Qing made the difference. In several key senses, as many scholars have already pointed out, the Qing occupied an extremely important position in the shaping and making of modern 'China' as a nation-state of multinationalities. In actuality, until the mid-seventeenth century, when the Ming Dynasty (the dynasty before the Qing) was approaching its collapse, the territorial boundaries of 'historical China' were dramatically different from those of the Chinese nation-state of the twentieth century. It was the Qing that had changed it. If it had not been for the Qing dynasty, 'China' today would have been a completely different entity in territorial size (much smaller) and ethnic composition (much less diverse), among other things.

Underlying the Qing/Manchu's territorial expansionist actions, to be sure, were such factors as imperial ambition, security concerns, and geopolitical considerations. In the meantime, it should also be taken into consideration that all of this also represented a

central part of the Qing/Manchu rulers' persistent efforts to create and enhance the legitimacy narrative of the Qing as a Chinese empire.

The Qing Empire was created and ruled by the Manchus, a people who ethnically were not Han Chinese and who conquered China proper through military victories. In order to rule China as a minority ethnic group, the Manchus needed to construct a kind of "Chineseness," which was clearly reflected in their adoption of the Chinese political order (and, as Westad, in quoting Benjamin Schwarz, points out, the "centrality and weight" of the political order was "one of the most striking characteristics of the Chinese civilization" (3), and which was also shown in their embrace of Confucianism as the ideological, cultural, and moral foundation of that political order).

But this alone was not sufficient to allow the Manchus to claim deep legitimacy for their reign in China. After all, no matter to what extent they had been successful in claiming the Qing's 'Chineseness', they could not change—and they certainly would not have wanted to change—their Manchu identity. Therefore, the Qing rulers also had emphasized, beginning even before their conquest of China proper, that it was their precious Manchu ethnic qualities and virtues, as reflected in their martial tradition and superior capacity to resist material corruption and moral decadence, that had placed them in a privileged position, as compared with China's previous Han rulers, to rule China. It is here that one finds the point of departure for the ongoing debate between the 'old' Qing history and the 'new Qing history' concerning what formed the foundation of the ultimate legitimacy claim of the Qing/Manchu Empire: Was it their success in acquiring Chineseness? Or was it their adherence to the 'Manchu Way'?

Although a twentieth-century international historian, I have long been interested in Qing history and thus paid attention to the above debate. I find that the debate's dichotomic way seems to have overlooked a critical aspect of the question under discussion: Did the Qing's empire project play a significant or even indispensable role in supporting and enhancing the Manchus' legitimacy claim as China's rulers? The answer, in my view, should be 'yes'. It was in carrying out their imperial project that the Manchus took advantage of their profound connections and exchanges with other non-Han ethnic groups (such as the Mongols, the Tibetans, and the Uighurs) to have adopted a series of methods and strategies that Han Chinese rulers of previous dynasties had been unable or unwilling to use. Consequently, they also used the project's successes to claim that they, as Manchus, were better Chinese than Han Chinese, and thus they were more qualified than previous Han Chinese rulers to rule China. Indeed, what could be more effective in supporting and enhancing the legitimacy of the Manchus' claim as the rulers of 'China' than the representation of their great capacity in creating a vast, multiethnic, and multicultural 'Chinese' empire that had been unseen in the age-old imperial history of 'China'?

It is here that I find one of Westad's most important contributions to my own understanding of the origins of modern China: He not only makes it clear that the Qing had created the territorial and demographic foundation for 'China' to emerge as a modern nation-state of multinationalities in the twentieth century; he also, and more importantly,

reveals that the impact of the legacies of the Qing as an empire upon modern Chinese history should be identified in the construction of the legitimacy —through the ideology and discourse of Chinese nationalism, and radical revolutionary nationalism in particular— of various Chinese nation-building projects, including the ones that have been carried out by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Empire Legacies, Revolutions, and “New China’s” Nation-building Projects

Thus let me turn to the second subject that I would like to discuss in this essay: how the connections and tensions between China’s imperial legacies and its age of revolutions conditioned and shaped the Chinese nation-building projects, especially the national-building project of the ‘New China’ (as the Chinese Communists have been accustomed to naming it when they refer to the ‘China’ after 1949).

As has been widely discussed by scholars in the China field, the coming of China’s ‘age of revolutions’ was the result of a combination of complicated domestic and international factors. Among them, I would like to argue, there was the profound conflict between the mentality deeply connected with China’s imperial legacies—with their penetration into the ideology and representation of twentieth-century Chinese nationalism—and the Chinese perception of their country’s humiliating experience during the global age of imperialism. While the pursuit of ‘wealth and power’ for China has been the persistent aspiration and established goal of generation after generation of Chinese revolutionaries, how to construct it as a modern state of multinationalities has stood as a central challenge for them. But how should ‘China’ be defined? It is here that China’s imperial legacies became interwoven with the age-old Chinese ‘Central Kingdom’ mentality, as well as with the Chinese perception of China being a miserable victim in a modern world dominated by Western and Japanese imperialism, to create some of the very basic conditions for radical and violent revolutions to prevail in twentieth-century China. Consequently, when the Chinese Communists finally turned out victorious in the bloody struggles and wars for China’s political power, their nation-building project—despite its being fashioned in the name of ‘revolution’— also became profoundly intruded and burdened by China’s own imperial past.

Thus emerges the necessity of discussing the relationship between imperialism, revolution and modernity. In retrospect, the main international forces that crushed the Qing Empire were those related to the global age of imperialism. But the composition, representation, and impact of these forces were complex. They led to international aggression and expansion, and they also brought with them to China elements of modernity. In this volume, Westad devotes two chapters (“Imperialism” and “Japan”) to the discussion of the Chinese experience in the age of global imperialism and China’s paradoxical encounters with Western powers and Japan. Westad’s treatment of the issues involved in these two chapters is truly sophisticated.

Undoubtedly Westad is very familiar with the state of the China studies field. He knows very well that historians of modern China (and Chinese historians of modern China in particular) have emphasized that China had been the victim of Western and Japanese

imperialist aggression and incursions, that at the center of the Chinese victim self-image were the 'unequal treaties' that China had signed with Western powers and Japan, and that the Chinese 'victim mentality' had played a decisive role in shaping the agendas and missions of China's age of revolutions. In this volume, Westad also covers and discusses these important topics, and he thus made it clear that "imperialism and incursions by other states defined the framework for China's relations with the rest of the world" following China's defeat in the Opium War of 1839-1842. (53)

But Westad also goes beyond the usual cliché of China's victim status in the age of global imperialism to highlight how China's encounters with Western powers and, especially, Japan, not only resulted in the collapse of the Qing Empire and the 'Sino-centric world order' but also pushed China to embrace various forces of 'modern', both from within and without. Indeed, even the emergence of China's age of revolutions would have been inconceivable had there not been the huge and complicated impacts of China's encounters with global imperialism upon the country's crises-ridden state and society. China's age of revolutions, in a sense, owed its birth to Western and Japanese imperialism while, at the same, having to take it as its principal mission to challenge and overturn the international order and the 'status quo' that Western and Japanese imperialism had imposed upon China. In the meantime, such a mission became even more complicated and paradoxical as, from the beginning, there were the impact of China's own empire legacies and the specific ways through which the concept and practice of 'modernity' had been introduced in China.

In so far as what 'modern' should mean to China and the Chinese living in the age of global imperialism, an essential challenge for them was how to build a modern nation-state. This was true for the Chinese Nationalists (e.g. the Guomindang), and this has also been true for the Chinese Communists (from Mao to the Chinese leaders in the post-Mao era). Thus I find it inevitable to ask the following questions: What is the relationship between China's imperial legacy and China's nation-building experience in the twentieth-century? How did Chinese leaders of the 'age of revolutions', including Mao and his fellow and ensuing Chinese Communist leaders, deal with challenges in this respect? There exist many different angles from which to answer these questions. What Westad has done is, among other things, to engage in the discussion of the Chinese Communist leaders' perception of and policies toward the nationality issues.

The leaders of the 'New China', as Westad points out, initially followed the Soviet model in dealing with the multi-nationality challenge that they were facing in structuring and designing the constitutional foundation for the People's Republic of China (PRC). As with Soviet leaders, Mao and his fellow CCP leaders believed that by adopting a series of political, social, and cultural revolutionary programs (which were supported by the class-struggle-centered discourse that was first introduced to China through the Soviet model and experience), they would be able to overcome all kinds of ethnic, religious, cultural, and other barriers to build a modern country characterized by universal justice, equality and shared prosperity. At the center of the belief was the Chinese Communist metaphor of 'liberation'. In both symbolic and practical terms, it highlighted the central importance of China's '1949 divide', as epitomized in the statement that Mao made at the birth of the

‘New China’: “We the Chinese have stood up.”⁵ In actuality, this was a huge legitimacy statement, one of the most important that the Chinese chairman had ever made.

In trying to substantiate the statement, Mao and his fellow CCP leaders repeatedly contended that it was the Party that would eventually eliminate all oppressions, including ethnic and racial, in the land of China, and so ultimately its nation-building project was justified. In other words, it was the adjective ‘new’ that provided the ‘New China’ with the legitimacy to become a unified country, and offered the Han-dominated ‘Chinese nation’ the right to claim itself to be a nation formed by multi-ethnicities.

In the practical development of the PRC’s nation-building process, however, Mao and his comrades did not always copy the details of the Soviet model. For them, as when they carried out the Chinese Communist revolution toward its nationwide victory, they found it of critical importance to fit the Soviet model to China’s specific circumstances and conditions. Therefore, instead of making the New China, as in the case of the Soviet Union, a federation or a union of various socialist republics, they adopted a system of forming ‘autonomous regions’ for the non-Han minority nationalities in the centrally-governed PRC.

Here I would like to take one of the most contentious cases in this respect—the one involving Tibet and the Tibetans—to have an in-depth discussion. The CCP’s attitudes and policies toward Tibet experienced some major changes during the process of the Chinese Communist revolution. In its early years, the young CCP approached the ethnicity/nationality issue in general and Tibet’s status in particular in accordance with a broad yet vague understanding of the Marxist-Leninist theory of ‘national self-determination’. In order to distinguish the Party’s policies toward the nationality issue from those of the ‘reactionary ruling forces’ of China, the CCP argued that “While China proper.....should be unified as a genuine democratic republic... Mongolia, Tibet, and Muslim Xinjiang should become autonomous, as democratic autonomies of freedom.”⁶ When the Party was confronting the Nationalist Government in a prolonged civil war, it claimed that while the Nationalist Party, as reflected by its definition of China as a country based upon unity among various nationalities, carried out “a policy of national oppression,” the Party “acknowledges the rights of national self-determination of all minority nationalities, including acknowledging their rights of self-determination, even leading to their separation from China.”⁷ Mao himself, in an interview with American journalist Edgar Snow in 1936, projected that Tibet, together with Outer Mongolia and

⁵ Mao Zedong, “The Chinese People Have Stood Up,” *Mao Zedong wenji* (A Collection of Mao Zedong’s Writings), (Beijing, Renmin, 1995), vol. 3, 342-346.

⁶ “Resolution on International Imperialism and China and the CCP,” adopted by the CCP’s Second National Congress, July 1922, *Zhonggong zhongyang wenjian xuanji*, vol. 1, 62-63.

⁷ Letter, CCP Central Committee to CCP Sichuan Provincial Committee, “Concerning the Questions of Anti-imperialism, Minority nationalities, and the Party,” February 19, 1932, *Minzu wenti wenjian huibian, 1921-1949*, 177-180; 185-187.

Xinjiang, “will form autonomous republics attached to the China federation” after “the people’s revolution has been victorious.”⁸

However, when the Chinese Communist revolution indeed came closer to a nationwide victory in 1949, the notion of a “China federation” and the favorite tone for ‘national self determination’ lost their appeal in Mao’s and the CCP leadership’s design for the ‘New China’. Instead, Mao and the CCP began to argue that both the Han Chinese and other ‘minority nationalities’ belonged to a unified ‘Chinese nation’, and that it was unity between the Han nationality and other minority nationalities, rather than ‘national self determination’, that should be taken as the foundation of the CCP’s policy toward nationality issues.

Thus we see that in October 1949, an inner-CCP instruction described the CCP leaders’ consideration of how to deal with the “national self-determination” issue in their design of the ‘New China’ as follows:

Concerning the question of the ‘self determination’ by various minority nationalities, we should not emphasize it any more. In the past, in order to win the minority nationalities to the side of our Party, and to oppose the Nationalist Party’s reactionary rule.... it was completely correct that we emphasized this slogan under the circumstances of the civil war. But the situation today has changed fundamentally...., and the New China led by our Party has been established. For the purpose of fulfilling the great mission of unifying our country..., we should not emphasize ‘self determination’ in dealing with domestic nationality issues any more.⁹

I include such a long block quote in a review essay like this because it reveals how the nation-building project of the ‘New China’ had been intruded and burdened by the ‘old’ China’s ‘empire legacies’. The only difference is that the subject had changed from an empire to a new ‘people’s democratic dictatorship’. And this is exactly what Westad tries to convey to the reader in his characterization of China’s modern history being one of a ‘restless empire.’ Despite the efforts by Mao and his CCP comrades in naming the ‘China’ that they were building as ‘new’, it actually was of profound continuity with China’s own historical past, and that of the Qing Empire in particular. Even the ‘Soviet model’ of allowing minority nationalities to have their own nominal ‘republics’ became irrelevant in the Chinese practice. During Mao’s times, the adjective ‘new’ that was used to define ‘China’ could still be justified by the various revolutionary programs that the CCP was introducing throughout China. In the post-Mao era, when all Maoist revolutionary programs had died and increasingly the CCP state has been referring to Chinese nationalism (which is inevitably Han-Chinese-centered) as the foundation of its legitimacy

⁸ Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1968), 444.

⁹ CCP Central Committee’s instruction concerning the question of “self determination” by minority nationalities, October 5, 1949, *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* [Selected Important Documents since the Founding of the PRC] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1991), vol. 1, 34.

claim, what will remain to support the constitutional foundation of the PRC as a modern state of multinationalities? Questions like this one repeatedly came into my mind when I was reading Westad's book.

Foreign Models, "Chinese Characteristics," and Modernities

The third subject that I would like to discuss is how China's tortuous path toward pursuing modernity, as Westad contends, has been "a hybrid of what has developed internally for centuries and what has come from abroad" (439).

In spite of the Chinese rhetoric of 'self reliance' and their self-image of China being the center of the known universe, a critical feature of China's modern history is that the Chinese efforts to embrace modernity have been accompanied by their willing (or unwilling) adoption of models of development that were distinctively of non-Chinese origins. While this is to a very large extent true as far as China's pre-1949 'modernization drive' is concerned, this is especially true when one tries to understand the Chinese Communist projects that were aimed at modernizing China,

As Westad describes, the PRC's modernization drive of the 1950s took the Soviet model as its lodestar. Shortly after the establishment of the PRC, Beijing entered into a strategic alliance with Moscow, which opened the door for massive Soviet aid to China. During the Korean War years, the Soviet Union not only provided China with substantial military and other material support but also, and more importantly, helped China establish the initial foundation of conducting large-scale 'socialist reconstruction' that began after the end of the war. In the first decade of the PRC, the Soviet Union's profound impact could be seen and felt in almost every aspect of the Chinese Communist efforts to pursue the 'socialist transformation' of China's backward economy and pre-socialist society. The most significant steps taken by Mao and his comrades were to be found in the Sovietization of China's overall pattern of development. All of this, as argued by Westad, represented "the largest transfer of foreign knowledge into China ever and enabled the new regime to break with China's troubled past in a quick and streamlined manner" (303). Following the Soviet model, a highly centralized structure of the command economy prevailed in China's cities and countryside. Indeed, this structure was so powerful and resilient that, as Westad contends, even after China's post-Mao paramount leader Deng Xiaoping had launched the reform and opening-up project in the late 1970s, it would persist in China well into the late 1980s and early 1990s. And, even with the CCP adopting a new model of 'socialist market-oriented economy', some key elements of the Soviet model can still be discovered in China's changed economic structure.

Mao and the CCP embraced the Soviet model because the 'core value' of the Soviet project was highly compatible with the ideological foundation on which the Chinese Party was established. Furthermore, the international isolation that Mao and the CCP had driven China into after the PRC's establishment made it only logical for them to closely associate China with the Soviet Union. In turn, the "breadth and depth of the encounters with Soviet experience" (304) significantly enhanced Beijing's dependence, at least for the moment, upon Moscow. But, in the longer term, this also caused deeper and very serious

repercussions for the Chinese chairman and his fellow CCP leaders. After all, there existed a profound sense of moral superiority in the fundamentally China-centered conceptual realm of Mao and his comrades. Beginning in the area of education (not, as many scholars have maintained, in the areas of military cooperation and attitudes toward de-Stalization), the divergence between Beijing and Moscow began to surface in the mid-1950s. In a few short years, the 'great solidarity' between China and the Soviet Union that was once claimed to be eternal and unbreakable deteriorated into a path toward total disintegration. By the mid-1960s, Beijing and Moscow had engaged in a great polemic debate in which each accused the other of being a traitor of genuine Marxism-Leninism. And, then, by the late 1960s, the two former Communist allies became bitter enemies engaged in direct military confrontation. For Westad, it is clearly Mao who should bear the main responsibility for the collapse of the Sino-Soviet alliance.

On the grand scale of history's development, the serious 'Soviet threat' also triggered the process that not only resulted in the Chinese-American rapprochement but also, after Mao's death in 1976, eventually led to Deng Xiaoping's launch of the Chinese 'reform and opening-up' project in the late 1970s. This has been a process through which the Chinese encountered and then entered into the American-led capitalist world economy.

Indeed, the Chinese-American rapprochement was a huge turning point in the ongoing global Cold War. The most obvious impact of it was that it changed the balance of power between the two contending superpowers, the United States and Soviet Union. This has been the common assumption in the study of Cold War international history. What Westad has brilliantly added to the scholarship is the argument that "none of the Chinese leaders at first gave much thought to what would happen if the Sino-American alliance actually succeeded in reducing or destroying Soviet power" (376). Throughout the 1970s and well into the 1980s, the Chinese leaders, from Mao to Deng, believed that between the two superpowers, the Soviet Union was the one that was on the offensive. Consequently, "by teaming up with the Americans, China had contributed to the death wounds of the *weaker* superpower while helping the *stronger*, the United States, achieve global hegemony" (377). This must be regarded as the biggest strategic misjudgment in twentieth-century world history.

But China itself did not suffer from these changes. By achieving rapprochement with the United States, China became a true beneficiary of the process in several key senses. The most obvious was that "working with the United States on foreign affairs opened gigantic opportunities for US technology transfer to China, both military and civilian" (373). This was extremely important for rejuvenating China's modernization drive after Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution. In a deeper sense, China's new relationship with the United States ended its international isolation (and the total isolation during the Cultural Revolution years in particular), and China was gradually entering into the larger world when "the United States, more than any other country ... lobbied for China's entry into international institutions" (378). It is here that Westad raises a critical question, both in an academic sense and contemporary relevance, concerning China's identity in the existing international order dominated by the United States and the capitalist 'West': Is it true that what followed the Chinese-American rapprochement was the beginning of the

gradual yet fundamental transformation of China from an ‘outsider’ into an ‘insider’ of the international order?

Along with Westad, I believe that it is. As far as China’s overall development strategy and, related to it, its path toward modernity are concerned, Beijing’s ‘tacit alliance’ (I am here borrowing a term from Henry Kissinger¹⁰) with Washington was highly compatible with Deng Xiaoping’s new vision of looking to the West for ways to modernize China. This is why, in the critical days of Chinese-American negotiations for establishing a diplomatic relationship in December 1978, Deng made the executive decision for the PRC to establish formal diplomatic relationship with the United States despite the fact that Washington actually had refused to terminate arms sales to Taiwan. Also this is why immediately after the normalization of the PRC-US relationship, Deng visited the United States in late January-early February 1979. In discussing why the United States was so important for China, reportedly, Deng said to his aides that all the third-world countries on the side of the United States had been successful in their modernization drives, whereas all of those against the United States had not been successful. He thus believed that China should be on the side of the United States.¹¹

When Deng made the above statement, he obviously took several Asian countries and regions, all of which were in the neighborhood of mainland China, as the reference. How could he fail to have done so? He should easily have noticed the flourishing of the ‘Japanese miracle’, and he should not have missed the emergence of the ‘Four Little Dragons’ (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore) in East Asia. In comparison, the ‘New China’s’ own records of its modernization drive became much tarnished. Behind the achievements and successes of these Asian countries and regions, there were the profound power and influence of an ‘American model’, one that was never clearly so named but was apparently always in existence and working.

Therefore, the story of successes of China’s own ‘reform and opening-up’ project always has had a substantial or even fundamental international dimension. All domestic factors and forces certainly matter, and matter greatly. However, without this international dimension, which was from the beginning “America-oriented” (in the sense that China’s reform and opening-up project took as its central mission to enter into and embrace the America/capitalist West-dominated global market and the institutions associated with it), it would have been improbable for the project to have been a process as successful as it has been. Therefore, no matter to what extent Beijing’s leaders have emphasized that China has been and will continuously be pursuing a path of development characterized by ‘socialism of Chinese characteristics’, the reality is that China, as Westad insightfully points out, has always been sensitive toward the usefulness of ‘foreign models’ in designing and implementing its own projects for pursuing modernity. All of this is of fundamental

¹⁰ Kissinger to Nixon, “My Trip to Peking, June 19-23, 1972,” Box 851, NSF, NPM, 2.

¹¹ Information obtained by this reviewer’s interview with a senior Chinese party historian, August 2008.

importance to the critical challenge that we are facing today concerning how to understand and deal with the 'China challenge', one that has been presented by a 'restless empire', in the twenty-first century.

Professor Odd Arne Westad's works published in recent years have drawn academic attention for many reasons. To my mind, the most important of these reasons is that the books' methodologies have been far beyond the stereotype of traditional studies of diplomatic history, and Westad has integrated some new concepts and perspectives from global and social history, reflecting the new trends of international historical study. *Restless Empire: China and the World since 1750* is a new representative of these works: it summarizes China's foreign relations from 1750 to the first decade of the twenty-first century, spanning a huge periods of history. The author intends to get rid of the narrow vision employed by the past study of diplomatic history that concentrated on the 'relationships among the states'; instead, he pays more attention to the diversity of China's internal affairs, the diversity of the intercourse between China and its outside world, and the prospects of various possibilities for China's relations with the outside world. This book is enlightening both in its structure and its many new insights, and deserves serious and in-depth consideration, especially from Chinese audiences.

'China and the world' has been a complex and significant issue, although it is not new. Past research findings have been voluminous, and controversy has never stopped. To many Chinese in the last century and before, this is a problem that involves the Chinese much more than for foreigners since it is the Chinese who have been facing the most troubles and dilemmas in interacting with the outside world, and suffering the most miseries and setbacks. Especially since 1840, the Chinese finally realized that they were experiencing the so-called 'greatest changes that never happened in thousands of years', meaning that in thousands years of China's history, the Chinese had never faced such a situation, that is, the civilization and institutions supporting and driving the Western invaders were much more powerful than the Chinese ones. The Chinese suffered from abuse and oppression by the outside world, and more devastatingly, the traditional civilization on which their pride had rested for a long-time was facing unprecedented challenges. In response to Western civilization, the Chinese felt extremely uncomfortable and found it very hard to even express themselves, and for the first time in their long history did not know what to do. In China, study and debate about this historical process has lasted more than one hundred years, and has never been interrupted.

The nationalist spirit soaring with the rise of China in the last decade has resulted in some new books in Chinese, which are trying to review China and its associations with the outside world from a longer-term process (before 1840). However, from the prospects of the world entering the twenty-first century, 'China and the world' is becoming a bigger problem to people outside China (foreigners) and, perhaps, will become more and more important and urgent for them. This changing historical scene highlights the significant value of the publication of *Restless Empire* at this time and the questions raised by the author in his book. The surprisingly rapid rise of China is dramatically changing almost every facet of the world; there could not have been a better time for such a serious and earnest reflection on how China got along with the world in the past, and what impact China will bring to the world in future. Furthermore, China has integrated into the world so

deeply that it has been difficult to separate China from the world in order to explain the relationships between them. There isn't 'a world without China', but only a 'world's China'; 'China and the world' has truly become 'our' (both Chinese and foreigners') common problem, although many Chinese are still not aware of this change and its far-reaching implications, and continue to enjoy the excitement and thrill of the relatively simple happiness of nationalism. In this regard, Westad offers a very enlightening description in the chapter about the Sino-U.S. relations, particularly after 1970 and their impact on both China's domestic and its foreign policies. In the latter part of tenth chapter, he argues that the United States and the Sino-U.S. relations had played a unique and positive role in China's integration into the world; nonetheless, the attitude of the Chinese toward the United States, due to both the structural contradictions of the relations between the two countries and the ideological confrontation between the Chinese Communist Party and the U.S., continued to be hard to determine. It was unclear as to whether the Chinese viewed the United States as an 'enemy or friend' - as the overall view Chinese of the West. (See 403-404)

As *Restless Empire* tells us, all scholars who study China (either its internal and external affairs) must first answer an "ABC" question: "what is China?" (2) The answer must be complex and diverse as always, depending on the perspectives of students and their study paths. The author chose to begin his study in 1750 - a choice which was affected by his diplomatic history experience - it is from this era, when the Chinese Qing dynasty roughly established its geographic boundaries, which opened up space for Chinese survival, life style, and culture. If there had been no space established and defined, it would be indeed difficult to determine in a simple way whether those people were Chinese or foreigners. Nonetheless, what is more significant, the author points out at same time that complex diversity was everywhere and was forever, that is, the frontier of the Empire was built by the Qianlong Emperor with the different types of foreigners or non-Han through very different ways, for example, the tributary trade with Southeast Asians, a European kind of treaty with the Russians, and the wars with Zungharia. (6-9) From that time on, the Chinese living in this vast expansive space began the history of their exchanges with the outside world, and the content was quite complex, ranging from national security strategy that was conducted by the political elite to the rest of society, including factors like emigration, cultural exchanges, trade and missionary activity, among countless times of war, and so on.

In China, most people believe that the relations between China and the world are numerous, pell-mell and ever-changing, the core of which is the relationship between China and the international system that is dominated by Western countries led by the United States. A large number of studies have focused on how China (as a state) once recognized and dealt with this system. Of course these studies are justified and important, but what is more important is *Restless Empire's* core argument: the history of China's external relations can no longer be simply interpreted as 'state-to-state' relationships. Through a panoramic mode of description, *Restless Empire* shows its audiences a variety of richer aspects and more complex levels in historical scenes of great importance in foreign relations. Professional students and interested audiences must go beyond the traditional historical narrative of state's behavior and official thinking, and look for the clues and logic of how the Chinese view of the world was formed and extended, through interaction between

Chinese and foreigners in the complexity of different classes and different locations (including geographic locations).

One of the most inspiring aspects of *Restless Empire* is the fact that its narrative history of the exchanges between China and the outside shifts from the history of relations between the states to that between people – ‘Chinese and foreigners’. It seems to prove that the author is deeply influenced by global history, social history, etc.; he is more concerned about the interactions among foreigners and the foreign community in China and the Chinese in various fields and at various levels, and vice versa, the interactions among Chinese who traveled abroad or emigrated, and Chinese communities abroad and foreigners there in various fields and at various levels. These interactions constitute the relations between ‘China and the world’ relations. Together with relations between the states, they shape the Chinese ‘view of the world’ and the world’s ‘view of China’. We can even say that the exchanges between Chinese and foreigners, including communities, individuals, families, religions, cultures, education, health care, charity, etc., played a more lasting and more vital role (sometimes) in shaping the Chinese ‘view of the world’. After all, at the national level, during several periods the Chinese state once tried to implement some policies in order to isolate itself from the outside world, such as the “Closed-door Policy” of *the Jiajing Years* (嘉靖时期) and “Self-isolation” of Mao era in the 1950s to 1960s, and more recently various measures such as the firewall (with a very symbolic name “Great Wall”) on the internet, employed by the government to block Chinese from the outside world. Convincingly, *Restless Empire* informs readers that an understanding of foreign relations, especially of the Chinese ‘view of the world’ cannot be separated from the study of personal relations and exchanges between Chinese and foreigners.

Not long before I wrote this review, I participated in an international seminar on China’s foreign relations in the twentieth century. In the panel which I chaired, several papers portrayed China’s external relations in the 1920s from very different aspects, which came together and revealed a historic picture that can only be described as ‘surprisingly bizarre’. The Republic of China’s government at Nanjing was negotiating seriously with the British to address China’s tariff autonomy; at the same period, in the rural areas of Jiangxi province, grassroots revolutionaries were discussing with Soviet representatives how to obtain funds from the Comintern to launch military riots. It confirms the important argument that *Restless Empire* addresses: we must pay attention to the fact that China is very huge in size and also contains regional gap. An author described to the audience that China can be roughly divided into the central and rural areas in history, that different types and sizes of interaction with the external world exist in different parts of China, and that as consequence there are two (may be more than two I think) directions of the nation’s development.

Comparatively speaking, the most exciting development began after the China-U.S. reconciliation in the 1970s. *Restless Empire* impressed me with its account of this period, partly because the author continues to emphasize China’s diversity and the resulting diversified evolution of China’s external relations, despite the fact that the Chinese government began to establish with the outside the world a more comprehensive

relationship, and this relationship greatly benefited China. In short, China was a beneficiary of the modern international system; China's achievements benefited from positive and constructive interaction with this system in the past thirty years. However, China is still 'diversified'; the rapid development of 'states' relations' did not and will not substitute for the contact between Chinese and foreigners in various aspects. Such contacts are booming and irreversible due to Deng Xiaoping's 'Reform and Opening up', and they are deepening China's foreign relations and integrating China into the world. This feature is especially prominent in Sino-U.S. relations. I felt this way when I read *Restless Empire*, since I was engaged in the study of Sino-U.S. relations a decade ago. I have been discussing Sino-U.S. crisis management with the leaders of U.S. political and military elites, meanwhile associating with young Americans who lived in the mountainous rural areas in Guizhou province, known as the remote (bianyuan) province in China. China and the Chinese in the eyes of these two types of Americans are completely different; and they also made me understand how America and the Americans are also very different. Such a variety of contacts are indispensable, because in spite of living in a diverse world, people will instinctively believe that they can and already know everything, including everything in another country.

As *Restless Empire* tells its audiences, from the 1750s China began to be restless, and until the mid-nineteenth century, large-scale development of relations between China and foreign powers exacerbated this restlessness. A further question is whether China today has identified a way forward, or as the book argues, there is still noteworthy uncertainty. As Westad writes: "The past shapes the present"; however, "Nobody today expects to return, at least not in the exact form that once had" (16, 17).

Just over twenty years ago, the collapse of the Soviet Union seemed to leave the United States the world's unquestioned sole surviving superpower or hyperpower, with Japan seen as its most likely competitor.¹ What a difference a couple of decades can make. Dramatic and somewhat unanticipated economic growth in China during the 1990s and 2000s did not simply greatly enhance that country's international political clout, but also brought it new visibility. Explaining the past and present and—perhaps most fascinating of all—predicting the future of China has become a cottage industry employing an entire cohort of intellectuals, journalists, and academics, some though by no means all newcomers to the China bandwagon. Within China itself, policymakers and their advisers, experts of varying qualifications drawn from the media and universities, students, and the general public focus perhaps even more obsessively on where China stands in the world, how it can best maximize its advantages, and what China's rising power is likely to mean domestically and internationally. Assessments of China run the gamut from presenting it as a ferociously assertive totalitarian expansionist power bent on dominating the world, to a rising great power, to a state facing so many internal economic and social weaknesses that it is on the verge of collapse.

Odd Arne Westad, one of the world's foremost experts on China's Cold War history, has taken on the formidable task of providing an overview of China's relationships with the outside world since 1750. This was not, of course, by any means the beginning of China's dealings with the rest of the world. Westad begins by seeking to define China, a task that he finds "elusive" since: "Over the past two millennia it has been an empire rather than a country, but an empire with very open and very fluid borders. Its inhabitants have, until very recently, been defined by the civilization they were part of rather than by the way they look or the ancestors they have" (3). Westad finally describes China as "a culture, a state, and a geographical core, around which identities, boundaries, and definitions of purpose have shifted and adjusted for a very long time. Indeed, perhaps one of the reasons why the concept of China has been so durable is that it is so amorphous and so contentious. Generations after generations have struggled to give their own meaning to it and to its place in the world, while drawing on the history that preceded them" (4). Today, more than ever before, non-Chinese around the globe are also trying to comprehend the nature of China, something that is already an overwhelming preoccupation for millions of Chinese.

A sense of history is, in Westad's view, integral to how the Chinese understand themselves and their nation, since they "carry with them concepts of justice, rules of behavior, and views of China's place in the world that have been shaped by practices developed centuries ago" (2). Fundamental to Chinese thinking is the state and the political order, with which the Chinese have persistently identified, when possible seeking to improve it. The Chinese have a strong sense of the importance of justice and harmony, and also of rules and rituals.

¹ This perspective informed the unexpected bestseller, Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).

In addition, China has long perceived itself as ‘the indispensable nation’ in Eastern Asia, the ‘central kingdom’ that sets the rules and standards for others in the region and effectively plays a hegemonic role there. This concept has immense, almost inescapable appeal to those who consider themselves Chinese. Even today, an outsider is struck by the ferocious hold that the idea of China exerts upon the loyalties of Chinese both within and outside that state’s boundaries. Generations of those who have chosen to live or work overseas have rarely ceased to consider themselves Chinese, and as often as not have remained strongly committed to working for what they consider China’s good, whether as investors, facilitators, or—like Sun Yat-sen, first president and founding father of the Republic of China, and many others—revolutionaries. For decades, the Chinese state has proven remarkably efficient in playing on the loyalties of Chinese beyond its borders, after 1949 appealing to them to come back and build a New China, and from the 1970s onward seeking their funds and expertise in one form or another. Over the past century or more, few countries can have treated their elites so harshly. Yet, to a truly astonishing degree, many of those whose lives and careers were almost irreparably damaged still felt an irrevocable commitment to China, even after enduring hardships that would have persuaded many Westerners to repudiate their countries of origin, leave, and start afresh elsewhere.

Westad seeks to cover the totality of China’s interactions with the outside world, not just inter-state relations and conventional diplomacy, but also the complete range of transnational relationships at the individual and non-state level. He argues that the coming to power of the Manchu Qing dynasty in the mid-seventeenth century marked the beginning of a different type of Chinese polity, a multinational and expansionist empire that had significant dealings with other powers at the state and informal level. At least in those respects, it bore some resemblance to the multinational Ottoman Empire, especially after the Kangxi Emperor brought Mongolia, present-day Xinjiang, and Tibet under its sway, along with strengthening control over distant Sichuan province. It was also a state that by the early nineteenth century faced increasing internal and external challenges, weakening its grip upon society and thereby providing more “room for families and individuals to engage in forms of activity—trade, studies, religious affairs—that took them abroad or at least introduced them to foreigners or foreign ideas” (19). The Qing dynasty’s Manchu rulers had, in Westad’s view, “attempted to control the country and its neighbors in ways that no other rulers had done before,” so that by 1800 China was suffering from “imperial overstretch,” while “the population was becoming weary of a police state that was less and less effective.” During the nineteenth century, therefore, China experienced a “revolution in thought and behavior” that gave rise to “a new form of Chinese modernity, created in constant interaction with the outside world” (20).

Westad is effectively repudiating or at least greatly qualifying the more conventional narrative—very popular in China itself—that views most of the nineteenth century, plus the first half of the twentieth—as a ‘century of humiliation’ that China endured at the hands of the West and Japan, in favor of a far more nuanced and sophisticated approach that emphasizes the agency not just of the Chinese state but also of Chinese as non-state actors and individuals. He lays particular emphasis upon those Chinese who emigrated elsewhere. In the century following 1750, at least a million Chinese spread out across

Southeast Asia, a huge boost to long-established Chinese communities in the region, and after 1850, large numbers also left for Hawaii, the United States, Canada, Cuba, and Peru. The majority came from China's southern provinces, and many retained strong economic and personal links with their home towns and areas, where the new Western-oriented treaty ports and concessions in China were also located. Well before 1900, China's coastal areas effectively constituted a 'global China' tied into the world economy by multifarious inter-related connections that would remain important up to the present.

China's dealings with the outside world were by no means entirely commercial, however. Business, diplomacy, and warfare often went hand in hand. The British seizure of Hong Kong in 1841 at the end of the First Opium War not only facilitated trade, but also forced China to recognize the significance of Western military and naval technology, knowledge that successive Chinese governments became increasingly eager to acquire and utilize themselves. By the mid-nineteenth century Christian missionaries and educators were active in China, translating the Bible into Chinese and preaching Christianity, but also disseminating Western knowledge, both scientific and medical learning of every kind and also political ideas, especially the free trade and liberalism associated with Western Enlightenment thinking and governmental theories that—not entirely unlike Confucianism—emphasized the reciprocal obligations of rulers and ruled. In what could become a potent cocktail combining homegrown and outside influences, the Chinese often adapted Western knowledge to suit their own circumstances. The longest and most bloody conflict anywhere in the mid-nineteenth century world was the Taiping rebellion of 1850-1864, when Hong Xiuquan, a failed Chinese civil service examination candidate, drew on both Christian and Chinese millenarian traditions to declare himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ and launch a revolt that lasted fifteen years, during which 20 to 30 million Chinese died. These casualties dwarfed the 750,000 death toll during the United States Civil War of 1861-1865, or even the hundreds of thousands—one estimate claims as many as 10 million over ten years—of Indians who died in the aftermath of the Indian Mutiny/Rebellion of 1857-1859.² Significantly, however, Western governments, groups, and individuals eventually cooperated with Qing and provincial authorities in suppressing the Taipings, whose continued depredations jeopardized the stability that was essential to maintaining both Qing rule and Western activities in China. In his millenarian adaptation of an originally Western ideology to fit Chinese circumstances, and his assumption of a personal messianic role, Hong was perhaps a forerunner of Mao Zedong, who showed equal skill and creativity in tailoring Marxism-Leninism so that it underwent a sea-change into something indigestibly rich and unquestionably strange, that promoted Mao's own and what he considered China's best ends.

Thanks to the mountainous geographical barriers to its north, south, and west, China has always, in Westad's view, looked eastward. He focuses particularly upon the role of the treaty ports, especially Shanghai, as venues for cultural transfers of every kind that, he argues, "did much to create modern China, economically, culturally, and politically. With

² For the debate over the number of casualties resulting from the Indian Mutiny, see Randeep Ramesh, "India's Secret Holocaust: 'One Where Millions Disappeared. . .,'" *The Guardian*, August 24, 2007.

their complex systems of governance and social interaction, they provided the space in which the hybridity and fluidity of contemporary Chinese society were born” (62). The foreign population of the treaty ports was relatively small; it was, he argues, Chinese at least as much as outsiders who were the architects driving this transition as they sought to define and partake of modernity. “By the early twentieth century China’s intelligentsia had joined the same messianic search for scientific truth as had Europeans, Americans and other Asians, using the same measures and standards” (74). The Chinese began travelling extensively to the West and Japan, where many Chinese studied. Beginning with the Tongzhi Restoration of 1860-1874, China sought to renew itself by appropriating western knowledge. For obvious reasons, military expertise ranked highest of all, but enquiring Chinese explored a comprehensive range of scientific and intellectual ideas, often filtered through Japan, which pioneered such transfers. Until war broke out between the two countries in 1895, the Chinese and Japanese demonstrated deep mutual admiration and cooperation, and the transmission of knowledge between both states was intense and wide ranging.

The sense of conscious Chinese nationalism was also burgeoning. This did not necessarily imply total hostility to all aspects of modernity. But it did lead to growing anti-foreign sentiment, often provoked by the special privileges that Western and Japanese nationals enjoyed in China. This became one of the major forces driving the Boxer Revolution of 1900. Yet isolation from the outside world was no longer a feasible option, and rather than slowing, the pace of Chinese practical and intellectual engagement with the world beyond its borders intensified. In these respects, Westad argues, major continuities characterized China’s history before and after the 1911 revolution, right up to the Communist takeover in 1949. On average, in the first half of the twentieth century, at any given time between 300,000 and 500,000 foreigners—about half of whom were Japanese, and after World War I including perhaps 100,000 refugees from Europe—could be found in China. If anything, change and moves toward modernity accelerated after 1911, accentuated still further by the intellectual ferment of the May Fourth Movement. Sun Yat-sen, generally regarded as the father of the Chinese Revolution, was himself an overseas Chinese who sought to implement Western ideas of revolution and democracy within China itself. Much of the funding he raised from this enterprise came from overseas Chinese and from Western-oriented Chinese Christians, including the Soong family, into which he married. During World War I, between 1916 and 1919 150,000 served as laborers on the Western front, with at least another 50,000 over on the Eastern Front, in Russia.³ During and immediately after the war, many more Chinese—future Communist party leaders Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping among them—worked or studied in France, with others pursuing their education elsewhere in Europe or in the United States or Japan. After the Bolsheviks won power in Russia and consolidated their hold during the Russian Civil War, a further ingredient, revolutionary communism, was added to the volatile ideological mix. Soviet advisers drawn from the Comintern were initially associated with Sun Yat-sen’s Nationalist Guomindang Party, as well as the Chinese Communist Party.

³ Xu Guoqi, *Strangers on the Western Front: Chinese Workers in the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Westad takes a relatively benign view of the Nationalist period and of Guomindang leader Chiang Kai-shek. It was, in his view, the heyday of a globalized, internationalized, cosmopolitan China's "age of openness, an age in which foreigners delivered some of the key premises for the country's development. . . . The foreign blended with the domestic to such an extent that it quickly became impossible to say which was which" (173, 179). Shanghai, China's economic and cultural capital, the birthplace of modern Chinese journalism and the home of the Christian Soong family into which Chiang himself also married, was China's ultimate city, where art, music, jazz, and films flourished, and detective stories featuring a Chinese version of Sherlock Holmes appeared in print. In 1929 it even hosted a world exposition, then as now among the top international status symbols. Foreign capital, much of it from overseas Chinese, invested heavily in China. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the rapid expansion of Christianity, especially Protestantism, in China, its spread possibly facilitated by the conversion of Chiang himself in 1931.

Westad takes a rather more generous view of Chiang Kai-shek than many previous historians. Jonathan Fenby, a recent biographer of Chiang, highlights the degree to which China's two great rivals, Mao Zedong and Chiang, fundamentally resembled each other, and were "consummate and ruthless political power players. . . unready to compromise, determined to destroy opponents and rule supreme. . . . Neither leader had true friends, courting those he needed and then dropping them—or squashing them if they became a threat. Each was profoundly, chauvinistically nationalist, and emotionally hostile to his principal foreign ally. Power was the sole dream and ambition."⁴ Both leaders also shared a profound commitment to the unification of China, a common outlook that effectively blocked what otherwise might well have become the permanent break-up of the country, which by 1920 was effectively divided up among numerous rival warlord regimes, with different provinces and regions serving as the bases of different military units that in practice ran them. The underlying truth may have been that even China was not big enough for both of them.

In the late 1920s Chiang, himself a professional soldier trained in Japan, who commanded the Soviet-funded Huangpu Military Academy in Guangdong, emerged as leader of the Guomindang Party in succession to Sun Yat-sen, who died in 1925. He made it his first priority to reunite China by eliminating or winning over his manifold military rivals, an agenda that ideally required the creation of a strong, modern state. German and—until he turned against the Communists—Soviet military advisers and equipment were also major assets that Chiang showed considerable skill in deploying. Like Sun Yat-sen before him, Chiang also obtained substantial funding from overseas Chinese. Driven by a profound belief that it was his destiny to reunite China and set it on track to regaining international respect, Chiang was also fiercely nationalist, determined to eradicate foreign influence from China and eventually to fight against Japan's ever increasing demands. Between 1925 and

⁴ Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China He Lost* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 252.

1946, he enjoyed considerable success in regaining many of the sovereign rights China had lost to the West, thereby boosting his prestige within and outside China. As Westad points out, Chiang's fundamentally authoritarian vision of a strengthened Chinese state was, however, one that would have involved the imposition of much greater social control. Chiang "wanted to plan the country's future according to nationalist principles, and resented the 'chaos' that allowed Chinese and foreigners to regulate their own lives" (211). Interestingly, Westad sees this as one of the Guomindang's great weaknesses, by comparison with the Qing, arguing: "The Qing ruled for a long time because they learned that China is a pluralistic society and has to be governed according to its discongruity. The Guomindang did not realize this and fell quickly" (450). Yet, if Chiang's Guomindang had little liking for pluralism, this was true in spades of its great rival, the Chinese Communist Party.

Except for limited periods when China was at war or close to war with Japan, Chiang—though generally prepared to compromise with his military rivals provided they accepted some level of allegiance to his regime—was unwilling to make similar bargains with the Chinese Communist Party. Recognizing that Communism was a faith that ultimately sought to dispose of all competitors, Chiang put the elimination of its supporters from Chinese politics high on his agenda. Though perhaps not quite high enough—had he sent his top rather than second-best military units against Mao Zedong and the survivors of the Long March in late 1935, he might well have managed to mop up the bedraggled remnants that had made it through China's version of the Great Trek. Or, had Chiang's authority over his warlord allies been stronger, they might have done far more to harry and destroy the Communists as they retreated to remote Shaanxi province.⁵ As it was, Mao and his followers lived on, not just to fight another day, but with a skill in spinning equaled only by the British after Dunkerque, to make what might have been considered a major defeat into one of the Chinese Communist Party's founding myths. In the mid-1930s, the simple fact of survival against the odds sufficed to ratify the Communist Party's position as a credible political player. One historian has described the United States as "a country made by war." How much more forcibly is this description true of China in the first half of the twentieth century. One recent historian contends that China's wars lasted from 1911 to 1949—and even that span does not include the three years of the Korean War—with an underlying civil war always in progress, nested from the early 1930s onward within a regional war with Japan, which in turned was from 1941 to 1945 nested within a global war. And then, of course, within a developing Cold War, a competition that would dominate and help to define the international system for the next forty years.⁶ On a global scale, the most substantial fighting of the 1920s and 1930s took place on Chinese soil, first the civil conflicts of the later 1920s and early 1930s, in which around 2 million Chinese died, and then between Japan and China, a war that left between 10 and 20 million Chinese soldiers

⁵ Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2009), 110-112, 114-116.

⁶ S. C. M. Paine, *The Wars for Asia 1911-1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

and civilians dead.⁷ During the 1945-1949 Civil War, somewhere between 1 and 3 million additional Chinese died.

Chiang's defenders suggest that, absent the additional strains to which the war with Japan exposed China, he would have successfully consolidated his regime and gradually moved China in the direction of national regeneration and modernity. Westad argues, indeed, that the war was a catalyst for modernity in China. Maybe. Chiang's wife, her family, what seems to have been his sincere embrace of Christianity, his reliance on German military advisers and technology, his employment of modern financial practices, his readiness to play the diplomatic game and work with leading official and unofficial representatives of the United States, and his hopes for foreign intervention on China's behalf, were all evidence of Chiang's willingness to accept and take advantage of the transnational forces that had for decades gradually helped to transform China. Even his nationalist repudiation of special foreign privileges resonated not just with millions of Chinese but also with the anti-colonial outlook of many top American officials. But Chiang's regime undoubtedly had its weaknesses, which Westad perhaps underplays. First and foremost, perhaps, was the question whether—especially in terms of his military—he was ever more than *primus inter pares* among the motley assortment of warlords whom he convinced to accept his leadership. This in turn not only meant that Chiang's hold on his own armed forces was relatively weak, but made it difficult if not impossible for him to eradicate corruption of every kind within the military. The Guomindang fragmented, with some of its top leaders willing to work with the Japanese, even as others fought on. There were also credible allegations that Chiang's own relatives and his wife's family profited substantially through their connections to power. Despite his personally austere lifestyle, Chiang's hold on government was not strong enough to tackle and overcome these problems. With Japan in at least nominal control of east and central China, the Guomindang lost most of its predominantly eastern, urban tax base. Worse still, the expense of fighting first the Japanese and then the civil war provoked hyperinflation and major economic problems within China, demoralizing many who had been his supporters, and impelling them to compromise with the Communists. But worst of all, during the civil war Chiang's military strategy probably laid undue emphasis on holding Manchuria, at the expense of the rest of the country. His vision of a united China in itself proved self-defeating. The northeast became a morass into which he poured well-trained men and equipment he was then unable to replace.⁸

Given the balance of forces, it probably did not matter so much that the Communists, their idealism, austerity, and self-sacrifice in the popular cause ably highlighted by the charmingly diplomatic and approachable Zhou Enlai, the top Chinese Communist Party representative in China's wartime capital of Chongqing, who generally presented his party as an inoffensive and admirable group of agrarian reformers, won the respect and

⁷ Jeremy Black, *Avoiding Armageddon: From the Great War to the Fall of France, 1918-40* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), chs. 3, 8.

⁸ See esp. Denny Roy, *The Pacific War and Its Political Legacies* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009), 10-22.

admiration of a number of American reporters and youthful diplomats, notably Edgar Snow, Theodore H. White, John Stewart Service, and John Paton Davies. In 1945 and 1946 the indubitably anti-Communist Chiang was still, after all, the man who had the support of the U.S. government and much of Congress, not to mention the influential publisher Henry R. Luce, who was quite prepared to kill stories unflattering to the Generalissimo's regime. Undoubtedly, the Soviet Union provided the Chinese Communists with extremely significant military assistance and supplies, particularly in terms of strengthening their position in the Manchurian Northeast, which Soviet forces invaded in the final weeks of World War II. But the United States was almost equally assiduous in helping Chiang's troops re-establish themselves further south, in East and Central China. Ultimately, perhaps the fairest assessment is that the Chinese Communists—who, as Westad points out, killed more Chinese than Japanese during World War II—showed themselves more astute and quite possibly more ruthless than Chiang in capitalizing on the logistical, economic, ideological, and military assets available to them, including support from outside patrons, as well as an ability to present themselves as the incarnation of Chinese nationalism.

However skillfully the Chinese Communists might occasionally seek to portray themselves as democratic agrarian reformers, they were, as Westad makes extremely clear, hard-line Communists with a fierce commitment to the Marxist-Leninist ideology of an all-controlling and all-powerful state sector. In its first years in power Chinese Communism was above all, as Westad highlights, Leninist in its adherence to a vision of an omnipotent party whose reach extended into every aspect of society, to a degree never seen before in China. Far from withering away, the state would become everything. And at its apex was a charismatic cult-style leader who, modeling himself on Lenin and Stalin, implicitly proclaimed, *L'état, c'est moi!* It was a paradigm that neatly combined traditional Chinese and Soviet communist practices. In the first two decades of Communist rule, China effectively cut most of its links to the West, and millions of Chinese unfortunate enough to have had foreign ties or experiences endured enormously painful and humiliating persecution. The demands of fighting the Korean War, in particular, allowed Chinese Communist leaders “to destroy the wish to be part of a wider world that many Chinese cherished” (297).

This does not mean, however, that China was completely isolated from the outside world. Rather, it looked elsewhere. One of the great strengths of Westad's volume is to bring out the closeness of the Sino-Soviet alliance during the first decade or more of the People's Republic of China, a legacy that remains exceptionally strong even today. “[I]t has,” he argues, “taken other foreign influence more than thirty years, since the 1970s, to try to move China away from its Soviet heritage, but only with limited success” (304). Seeking to assist China, the Soviet Union launched the biggest foreign aid program in world history, one that brought many thousands of Soviet advisers to China, as well as hundreds of millions of roubles. In every aspect of life, whether education, town planning, agriculture, industry, or techniques of indoctrination, the Chinese sought to learn from Soviet experiences, with tens of thousands of Chinese party officials and students receiving training or education in the Soviet Union, and many others affected by their encounters with visiting Soviet experts. Ironically, although Mao displayed far less respect for Stalin's

successor, Nikita Khrushchev, than he had for his predecessor, it was Khrushchev—who, despite a lifetime of brutal service to the Russian Communist Party, still possessed something of an idealistic streak—who greatly increased Soviet aid programs to China. The ferocious attacks to which Chinese party officials increasingly subjected every kind of Western intellectual or cultural influence only enhanced the impact of Soviet practices, to which many Chinese communists had already been exposed between the wars, on fraternal or educational trips to Moscow and other Soviet cities. China's prestige also stood high in the developing and decolonizing world, with the suave Zhou Enlai—then as for most of his adult life the acceptable face of Chinese Communism—successively displaying his star power at first the 1954 Geneva Conference, where the great powers tried to settle outstanding sources of conflict in Asia, and then the 1955 Bandung Conference of non-aligned Asian and African states. And many Chinese themselves felt great pride that “China had stood up” to the West, especially in terms of fighting the United States to a standstill in Korea, achievements in which other Third World states took considerable vicarious pleasure. At the level of what is now termed soft power, China's credit rating was high.

But during the 1960s, as Westad shows, China squandered almost all these assets, driven it seems by a combination of Mao's radical ideological quest for a new, improved form of permanent revolution that would enshrine him as the communist theorist *sans pareil*, and his more pragmatic intention of shoring up his political power against potential rivals and critics. From the late 1950s relations with the Soviet Union spiraled ineluctably downward, immune to sporadic efforts by assorted Soviet and Chinese officials to rescue them, as well as mediation efforts by alarmed smaller communist nations. Cultural Revolution activism in North Korea turned even Kim Il Sung against the People's Republic. Other communist or left-leaning countries once friendly to China took an equally jaundiced view of radical Chinese demonstrations on the streets of their capital cities, vituperative criticisms of their own socialist practices, and in many cases attacks on their embassies in Beijing. Third World leaders across much of Asia deeply resented Chinese support for communist insurgencies within their borders. Mao sought to lead “an undefined and unorganized Third World front against both American imperialism and Soviet revisionism” (350). This was, however, a crusade for which virtually no other state—Albania excepted—was ready to sign up.

Westad rather cavalierly ignores the degree to which, among 1960s Western radicals, Maoism—along with the names and sayings of Leon Trotsky, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Ho Chi Minh—did carry considerable intellectual cachet. Mao's image adorned thousands of T-shirts, and among student protesters little red books were prime items. One group of student entrepreneurs at a Welsh polytechnic even requested a bulk consignment of little red books from the Chinese legation in London, and upon receiving these made considerable profits selling them to leftists around campus. In 1973 Mao received the ultimate accolade of pop culture, being enshrined in a series of silk screen portraits by Andy Warhol, images that came with a very high price tag. But by then, China's foreign policies had experienced what retrospectively—though this was by no means clear at the time—appears a decisive turn towards the West. The Korean War was not quite the last occasion when Mao took China into a major military conflict. But nothing on the same scale took place again. In October-November 1962 China fought an unofficial border war

with India over disputed territory. Chinese troops took areas that China claimed for itself but advanced no further, and hostilities ended one month after they had begun. Otherwise, Mao's frequent invocations of crisis and of fearsome international threats to China usually served primarily as pretexts for internal political moves designed to counter and if possible destroy those he considered domestic enemies. In the late 1960s, however, Mao initiated a series of border clashes with Soviet troops on the Ussuri River, over an island that both states claimed. Initially the Soviet Union threatened war, though Soviet leaders subsequently turned to negotiations. Having sown the wind, however, Mao feared reaping the proverbial whirlwind. When he consulted his top military officials—most of them still purged, courtesy of the Cultural Revolution—they recommended turning to the United States, a strategy that was implemented over the next two years.

Much of Westad's study focuses upon the development of China's relationship with the United States over the following decades. He highlights the centrality of the United States to China's sense of the outside world. In these years, he argues, "one foreign country dominated the sense most Chinese had of 'abroad' in a way that had never happened before and probably will never happen again. American influence was everywhere: in the economy, politics, arts, and consumer patterns" (366). One wonders if, by his own showing, the same was not true of the Soviet Union in the 1950s. Whether Mao himself was entirely happy with the tilt to the United States remains open to debate; there are some indications that it was an expedient that he adopted *faute de mieux*, as a means of deterring Soviet attacks, and that his true preferences might well have been to adopt immolatory policies resembling those initiated by Cambodia's Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, in an effort to cleanse China of all forms of surviving bourgeois decadence. Most of Mao's long-term colleagues, by contrast, were sated with ideological experimentation for its own sake. In very short order, with the Great Helmsman safely embalmed in history and his (Soviet-style) mausoleum, his long-time and thrice-purged colleague Deng Xiaoping returned from exile, and Mao's radical wife and her confrères found themselves under arrest. Adept communist theorists do, of course, possess a skill probably unrivalled by any except the Jesuits in reconciling seemingly contradictory courses and practices with their fundamental dogma. But Deng, perhaps not coincidentally a champion bridge player, must rank very highly among the casuists of socialism. Economic prosperity soon came to feature as prominently as military security on China's agenda. While maintaining strict political control, Deng then embarked on a course of economic development and modernization that accelerated dramatically with each following decade. Most observers assumed China's economic growth would be gentle and gradual. But little more than thirty years later, in 2010, China overtook Japan as the world's second largest economy.

China's rapid rise has had a dramatic impact upon its relationship with other Asian countries. One of the strengths of Westad's survey is that it places China in context in terms of its dealings with several of its closest neighbors, notably Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. For much of its history Korea was in many respects a tributary of China, the source from which its political and cultural heritage was largely derived. Korea was also the vector whereby Chinese culture was transmitted to Japan, though not without experiencing a definite metamorphosis in translation. For the Chinese, this might seem—in a phrase in which older women have for centuries taken comfort—a matter of *filia pulchra*,

mater pulchrior (the daughter is gorgeous, the mother even more so). But transmutation is the condition of cultural transfer. From the late nineteenth century until their defeat in 1945, and perhaps beyond, many Japanese leaders regarded China as a failed state in great need of Japanese takeover, rule, and direction. Japan's efforts to win dominance over not just China but all of Southeast Asia and even beyond left bitter memories through much of the region (though not, it seems, in India, where Japan's failure to accomplish its aims meant Subhas Chandra Bose is enshrined in popular history as the embodiment of patriotism). Recollections of Japan's undoubted atrocities and depredations may have faded in much of Southeast Asia, or governments have at least found forgetting convenient and politic. For decades, a combination of Japanese investment power and admiration for Japanese products—not just electronic goods, but fashion, popular culture, even food—encouraged discreet disavowal or disregard of the past across Southeast Asia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In Taiwan, indeed, a substantial number of pre-1949 residents had at least some favorable memories of Japan. And in Hong Kong, in terms of historical study, the period when the Japanese occupied the territory was discreetly ignored until a British-born historian decided to write a book on the subject.⁹

But in China memories of Japan's brutalities are, it seems, fresh, evergreen, and well-watered, not just in numerous museums, but also in government-sponsored textbooks. And in Japan, at strategic moments politicians boost their standing by visiting Shinto shrines to the dead of World War II and asserting present-day claims to islands under dispute with China. *Vita brevis, memoria longa* (life is short, memory long), all too often seems the motto of Sino-Japanese relations.¹⁰ Westad rightly notes that at present Chinese students constitute two-thirds of foreign students in Japan, a resumption of turn-of-the-century patterns that is an index of how close in some ways the two countries once again are. But at least since the 1990s, at moments when they see advantages to be gained politicians in both countries have resorted to provoking nationalist fervor over historical issues, most recently over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In Westad's view, "What is striking in the relationship today is the complete failure of strategic vision on both sides. Leaders in Beijing and Tokyo *know* that they have nothing to gain from further demonizing the other. In fact, each is increasingly dependent on the other to succeed: China in its great power ambitions and Japan in its need to overcome economic stagnation. But nobody so far has been able or willing to put the past to rest" (418).

Westad points out that, paradoxically, in China young people who never experienced it and can have no personal memories of the Pacific War feel greater resentment of Japan's past behavior than do those who lived through those years. Another historian has recently noted that from the 1970s onward, once China and Japan had resumed diplomatic

⁹ Philip Snow, *The Fall of Hong Kong: Britain, China and the Japanese Occupation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹⁰ On the conflicting Chinese and Japanese interpretations and memories of World War II, see Roy, *The Pacific War and Its Political Legacies*, chs. 8-10.

relations, the Chinese government began to highlight Japanese brutality in World War II.¹¹ It was in 1985, for example, that the Nanjing municipal government opened a memorial hall commemorating the Nanjing Massacre. Around the same time, the last emperor's palace in Changchun underwent major renovations and extension. In terms of justifying its legitimacy as a government, the Chinese Communist Party has always placed much weight on its nationalist credentials, especially its role in the war against Japan. As China has modernized, in practice if not always in formal ideology, distancing itself ever further from Marxism, nationalism or 'patriotism'—as inculcated by textbooks at every level from kindergarten up to university—has become even more central to the maintenance of the Communist Party's position. But, once indoctrinated, such patriots can be difficult to control. As the sorcerer's apprentice and Victor Frankenstein both learned to their cost, it is easier to set an instrument or a monster in motion than to restrain it. China is far from a democracy, but public opinion does exist, and—as the events of 1989 demonstrated—can become combustible. As anti-American sentiment soared in 1999 after the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, it was alleged that Chinese officials encouraged student protests outside the U.S. embassy in Beijing. But three years earlier, when major demonstrations erupted in Hong Kong over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the mainland government consciously sought to damp down public feeling in China, removing prominent activists from Beijing. If we are looking at historical memory, every Chinese leader must be conscious of the protest movement of May 4, 1919, sparked by resentment of concessions to Japan at the Paris Peace Conference, a spontaneous campaign that brought down the government of the day and led to the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. Managing and profiting from nationalism without letting it get out of hand may well be proving more of a challenge than the current party anticipated. It remains a force with the potential to complicate China's relations not just with Japan and the United States, but also with other nations in Asia and beyond.

Most readers of Westad's book will be approaching it in the hope of discovering, not just where China is coming from, but where it is going, both domestically and in terms of its relationship with the outside world. Sensibly, Westad reminds us that he is a historian, not a prophet. But he nonetheless makes some astute observations. One is the fairly basic point that, even when China becomes the world's largest economy, which is likely to occur in the 2030s, its per capita GDP will still lag far behind that of the United States, much of Europe, and elsewhere. Indeed, at that time Singapore is likely to lead the world in per capita GDP. Those who anticipate—whether apprehensively or gleefully—that China will replace the United States as the world's hyperpower are probably mistaken. Multipolarity, with several large states—India among them, given that by 2050 its population may be 50 percent greater than China's, with its GDP possibly topping that of China by 2060—contending or cooperating across a wide range of issues, is a more likely scenario. At present, at least, in military terms China is a regional power. While it may once again be predominant in East and Southeast Asia, repeating patterns that often prevailed—as Westad deftly describes—in the Qing dynasty and before, it is unlikely to enjoy unchallenged hegemony.

¹¹ Black, *Avoiding Armageddon*, 175.

Already, as China stakes out ambitious claims to contested islands in the South China Sea, it is encountering strong and public resistance from Southeast Asian states, who show every sign of being prepared to withstand Chinese pressure and band together, rather than following the path of bilateral negotiations with each separately that China might prefer. Despite warnings from China, they also have the option of “internationalizing” these disputes by taking them to global organizations. In so doing, they will probably win the support of the United States, which—economic problems and embroilment in Afghanistan notwithstanding—is still by far the world’s strongest military power. In 2010 China held its biggest naval exercises ever in the South China Sea. But far from retreating from the Pacific and resigning the region to Chinese hegemony, President Barack Obama has very publicly announced a “strategic rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific.”¹² His first major overseas move after winning re-election was to attend an ASEAN-United States summit meeting in Cambodia, an occasion that he used to urge “restraint” in the South China Sea, a moderate and non-inflammatory prescription that nonetheless demonstrated U.S. interest in the area.¹³ Japan has quietly intimated its intention of becoming an important military player in the region, one willing to boost its own self-defense forces and provide military training and hardware to Southeast Asian states.¹⁴ Other competing regional nationalisms include those of Korea and Vietnam. And waiting in the wings is India, with a lengthy history of territorial disputes with the People’s Republic. The realigning balance of power as the Asia-Pacific region attempts to counter China’s preponderance offers a field day for Realist International Relations specialists.

Since the 1980s the United States has, as Westad points out, effectively facilitated China’s economic rise and its consequent growing heft in the international arena. The United States has, of course, been China’s best customer, but more was involved. The Clinton administration helped to engineer China’s entry into the World Trade Organization, and despite spats and crises, in many ways an informal alliance existed between the two countries, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union removed the unifying factor of a common enemy. American academic institutions have trained a new generation of Chinese economic and political administrators, a phenomenon that should eventually help to break the strength of the grip that Soviet-style models and practices still enjoy within the Chinese bureaucracy. When George W. Bush took office in 2001, relations temporarily cooled, as his administration began terming China a “strategic competitor.” But after September 11, 2001, China swiftly aligned itself with the new U.S.-led War on Terror, while the Bush

¹² See, e.g., “Joint Statement by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda of Japan: A Shared Vision for the Future,” April 30, 2012, The American Presidency Project Website, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=100727&st=rebalancing&st1=>, accessed June 5, 2013.

¹³ Jeff Mason and James Pomfret, “Obama Urges Restraint in Tense Asian Disputes,” November 20, 2012, Reuters Website, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/20/us-asia-summit-idUSBRE8AJ08520121120>, accessed June 5, 2013.

¹⁴ Martin Fackler, “Japan offers military aid to counter China power,” *International Herald Tribune*, November 28, 2012.

administration had other preoccupations, especially after the adventure that Bush and his advisers had optimistically believed would be a quick and splendid little war in Iraq evolved into a lengthy and wearing occupation and civil war. Somewhat opportunistically, China opposed U.S. intervention in Iraq, but left Bush's European allies to carry the real burden of this (ultimately unsuccessful) cause. Privately, Chinese leaders—though sometimes miffed that China did not feature more prominently on the Bush administration's radar screen—welcomed the opportunity to focus upon economic development, investing heavily overseas, especially in raw materials of every kind, and also buying up U.S. Treasury bonds.

Paradoxically, Westad criticizes Chinese policymakers for paying too little rather than too much attention to international affairs. Prominent among the mantras that Chinese officials repeat incessantly is the idea that China will enjoy a 'peaceful rise.' Despite increases in defense budgets intended to modernize China's armed forces and keep the military happy, many Chinese leaders bluntly acknowledge that war would be enormously damaging to the economic growth that has been their great accomplishment over the last three decades, which now represents their strongest claim to political legitimacy. It was, after all, wars of various kinds that ended Chiang Kai-shek's regime. Adopting a concept popularized by the Harvard political scientist Joseph S. Nye, Jr., in 2007 President and Party General Secretary Hu Jintao told the Seventeenth Party Congress that China would employ "soft power" to facilitate its rise to global influence and greatness.¹⁵ By relying on the international prestige and respect that a country's culture and institutions commanded, rather than on military or economic coercion, soft power seemed to offer a quick, easy, and inexpensive route to international clout. In the words one historian used to describe U.S. foreign policy in the 1920s, China was apparently seeking "empire without tears."¹⁶ Hu's announcement was followed by the rapid establishment in universities around the world of Confucius Institutes, funded by the Chinese government, their mission to familiarize foreigners with Chinese language and culture. China made every effort to ensure that the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games were a spectacular demonstration of national accomplishments, sporting, architectural, and cultural. At the 2012 Olympics China ranked second in the overall medal count, winning 88 medals to the United States' 104. (Two former world superpowers, Britain and the Russian Federation, vied for third and fourth place, with Britain winning five more gold medals than the Russians, but behind in the total medal count.) At home and beyond, China hired top architects to design its public building, including a new high-profile embassy in Washington. It also embarked on a well-publicized space program.

¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2004); and "Hu Jintao calls for enhancing 'soft power' of Chinese culture." October 15, 2007, Xinhua News Agency Website, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/15/content_6883748.htm, accessed June 5, 2013.

¹⁶ Warren I. Cohen, *Empire without Tears: America's Foreign Relations 1921-1933* (New York: Knopf, 1987).

But, alluring though the idea of soft power as the route to international success may be, achieving it is rather more difficult. Much of a country's soft power stems not just from the policies of its government—though these undoubtedly have an impact, negative or positive, on its prestige and attractiveness to others—but on the intangible appeal of areas where the government often has limited input. Excellent educational and cultural institutions; a vibrant popular culture of music, movies, literature, and even computer games that appeal to young people elsewhere; admired high culture, music, dance, art, literature, museums, theatre, and the like; top fashion design; vineyards and haute cuisine; leadership in architectural and household design, in sports, or in space: all can be indices and vectors of soft power. So, too, can the ability to set the intellectual agenda. In Westad's view: "China is singularly lacking in soft power: No young person of sound mind in Tokyo or Seoul, or even in Taipei or Singapore, is looking to the People's Republic of China for music to download, films to watch, or ideas to latch on to" (459). South Korea and Japan are, indeed, far more successful in catching the imagination of young Chinese. Korean soap operas win huge audiences in China, while on any given weekend the campus of the University of Hong Kong is liable to be overrun with Chinese teenagers and students elaborately dressed as Japanese manga comic characters.

While China is home to very active artistic, literary, and film-making sectors, government censorship and repression, not to mention harsh official protests when dissident authors, directors, and artists win international recognition outside China, are deeply counterproductive in terms of promoting Chinese soft power. Sending spectacular museum exhibitions of Chinese historical treasures on tour around the world is no real compensation. Government-sponsored propaganda, no matter which government produces it, rarely commands much respect. The towering Chinese basketball player Yao Ming and the female tennis player Li Na have probably done more for China's international image than all the Confucius Institutes combined. But even so, soft power does not necessarily translate into influence. Chinese young people have an apparently insatiable appetite for American movies, music, blue jeans, and food, desires that can coexist quite comfortably with deep distaste for U.S. policies. At times of Sino-American crisis they may boycott U.S. products, but a week later, sales are back to normal.

Far from fearing that China may in future exercise a disproportionate global impact, Westad is more struck—and alarmed—by China's lack of genuine preparation for international power, influence, and input. In his view, China badly needs to develop a truly global policy, a potentially challenging enterprise, given that: "The Chinese population is relatively uninterested in foreign affairs and less and less interested the more foreign these become" (465). Relations with the United States, he feels, loom too large in Chinese consciousness, pre-empting the ties China should also be developing with the European Union. And its policies toward Africa reach no further than the extraction of mineral resources and other raw materials. At present, moreover, on most issues China has little to contribute outside the economic wherewithal, and may not wish to do any more. On terrorism, for example, China has no alternative strategy to present. Its worldview seems limited to repeating the need for free trade and respect for the inviolability of borders, and on many United Nations votes Chinese representatives abstain. And its backing for a

motley crew of exceptionally unappealing dictators does little to enhance its international image; rather, it is judged by the company it keeps.

China usually tends to support international organizations, as mechanisms that offer it a level of protection against other states. And Chinese officials have undoubtedly taken a very active interest in efforts to combat the economic tsunami that engulfed the world in 2008, warning other nations and the international financial community of the need to moderate the excesses of capitalism, and launching the “largest stimulus program of government spending in history” (446). Even so, Westad contends, China gives the “impression of a power that wants to abdicate responsibility in the international community rather than assume it” (436). Looking at the United States, China pragmatically perceives a power that imperial overstretch has left weakened and overextended, a fate it wishes to avoid itself. In Westad’s view, most Chinese officials and people have little wish to intervene in failed states, a task they consider a nuisance that is liable to distract China from its own central concerns, particularly since Chinese hold faulty Western policies largely responsible for the failures of such states. Except where direct Chinese interests are involved—the Chinese navy’s February 2011 evacuation of Chinese nationals from Libya, for example—China prefers to sit on the sidelines.¹⁷

A comparison with the United States of the first three or four decades of the twentieth century, when many European nations sought to persuade and exhort American leaders to become more involved in international affairs, particularly, though by no means exclusively, those of their own continent, may be instructive. Then, too, the United States picked and chose the issues it considered of interest to itself, a strategy that Joan Hoff has termed “independent internationalism” or “unilateral internationalism.”¹⁸ At least two top American political leaders, however, presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, had already eloquently formulated appealing visions of a major international role for the United States beyond its own borders or its informal sphere of influence in Latin America, blueprints that drew on longstanding American traditions of mission, plus the allure of global power. An important cohort of influential Americans, some based in the diplomatic service but more often working in private capacities in the financial, legal, academic, intellectual, and media communities, subscribed to some version of these schemes, and helped to implement them during and after World War II.

Whether China possesses a similar elite group, committed to making China a proactive major player in international affairs, must be very much an open question. Any enterprising Chinese who might cherish such aspirations could, moreover, if thwarted within China itself, almost certainly discover niches for themselves in international

¹⁷ Hui Jia, “Homesick Chinese nationals airlifted from Libya,” *China Daily Show*, February 28, 2011, China Daily Show Website, <http://chinadailyshow.com/homesick-chinese-nationals-airlifted-from-libya/>, accessed November 28, 2012.

¹⁸ Hoff makes extensive use of these concepts in Joan Hoff Wilson, *American Business and Foreign Policy, 1920-1933* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971); and Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy from Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush: Dreams of Perfectibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

organizations. Many Chinese undoubtedly find highly appealing the rather fanciful accounts of Gavin Menzies, who has the fleets of Admiral Zheng He circumnavigating the world and discovering the Americas in 1421, before jumpstarting the Renaissance in Italy in 1434.¹⁹ But these immensely popular exercises in “Kilroy-Was-Here”-style China-centered self-congratulation are simply complacent affirmations of the global centrality of China well over five centuries ago. To a much greater degree than the turn-of-the-century United States, a nation extremely rich in resources that also had a much smaller population to support, China is by now almost inescapably tied to the international economy, in terms not just of trade and investment but also of the raw materials needed to fuel its economic miracle.

But is the glass half-empty or half-full? China does, Westad points out, possess a significant number of “foreign policy analysts and diplomats” who embrace “a search for a better-organized international community that can accommodate China’s international economic expansion” (458). Foreign observers now comment on the excellence and sophistication of China’s diplomatic representation abroad.²⁰ China’s current range and depth of involvement with the outside world far surpasses that attained in the 1920s and 1930s. To an extent certainly not seen since the globetrotting Zhou Enlai’s pre-Cultural Revolution peregrinations, top Chinese leaders are once again travelling the world. Given the tumultuous change that China has experienced over the past three decades, one might even suggest that, rather than China being slow in making its presence felt in international organizations of perhaps peripheral interest to China’s mostly pragmatic concerns, it is indeed doing rather well. As Westad observes, none of China’s new top political leaders studied in the United States or, indeed, at a Western university; at the highest levels of the Chinese state, individuals formed by education in strongly Marxist Chinese institutions and by their experiences during the Cultural Revolution predominate. In 1979, as Deng’s modernization policy began, 523 Chinese students obtained visas to the United States; in 2010-2011, the comparable figure was 157,558, an increase of 23 percent over the previous year.²¹ For almost thirty years, outside Chinese contacts with the Western world were extremely limited, and even those with the Soviet bloc and countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America were decidedly circumscribed. In the past three decades, a new generation of Chinese have steadily acquired the skills, expertise, sophistication, knowledge, and confidence needed to function at the international level. Many are still only at mid-career level. One suspects that, over time, they will feature ever more prominently on the global stage.

¹⁹ Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* (London: Bantam, 2002); idem, *1434: The Year a Magnificent Chinese Fleet Sailed to Italy and Ignited the Renaissance* (London: HarperCollins, 2008).

²⁰ David M. Lampton, *The Three Faces of Chinese Power: Might, Money, and Minds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 125-128.

²¹ Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1992), 367; Institute of International Education, Press Release, “Open Doors 2011: International Student Enrollment Increased by 5 Percent in 2010/11,” Institute of International Education Website, <http://www.iie.org/Who-We-Are/News-and-Events/Press-Center/Press-Releases/2011/2011-11-14-Open-Doors-International-Students>, accessed November 28, 2012.

One further irony remains. Nineteenth-century Chinese visitors to Europe and the West often professed themselves shocked by the extreme individualism and pace of technological change in these societies, “the lack of a moral rather than a material justification for actions taken” and “the preference of people in the Western empires for material progress over moral self-betterment.” Westad recounts how: “Observing . . . ongoing industrialization, . . . Chinese travelers often commented on the destructive elements of the new technologies. The pollution, the changes in landscapes, and the impermanence of manners, methods and lifestyles all shocked the visitors, even as Western products attracted them and the power and productivity of Western industry awed them” (78-79). As modernizing China currently experiences drastic changes at least as great as these, the situation has in some ways been reversed: China pursues economic progress and material wealth at almost any cost, while outsiders, especially though not exclusively Westerners, seek to remind Chinese of the importance of environmental concerns, social equity and harmony, sustainability, and non-economic values. Westad—himself a Norwegian based in London—rather suggests that China’s fixation with the U.S. experience may have blinded it to other alternatives, and that European social democratic models of development might carry lessons of value to China. In terms of the morals each now draws from the other’s experiences, over the past 150 years China and the West have, it seems, traded places.

Review by Qiang Zhai, Auburn University Montgomery

In the last few years there has been a proliferation of disputes between China and its neighbors over the South China Sea, Diaoyu island (the Senkaku in Japanese), and the Sino-Indian border. Although this series of spats is not likely to produce a meltdown of international peace and stability, it does indicate that China's rise in recent years has been so dramatic, dazzling, and surprising that leaders and commentators around the globe, as well as those in China itself, are still scrambling to digest the situation and adjust to it. How did China arrive where it is today? What role might China play in international affairs in our future? And how should we properly understand the implications of China's ascendance or re-ascendance for the rest of the world? Odd Arne Westad has written a highly revealing and sensible historical guide for those who want to tackle those questions.

Drawing on research into fresh archival materials and synthesizing a large body of secondary literature, Westad reviews China's engagement with foreign countries since 1750, focusing on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He mixes chronological and subject chapters, highlighting China's ties with Japan, the United States, and the Soviet Union. He blends his treatment of high-level state-to-state diplomacy with accounts of people-to-people interactions, recounting the story of Chinese laborers in Europe during World War One and the lives of Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia. By examining China's connections with the outside world at different social levels (from top to bottom), Westad has made an admirable attempt at linking 'diplomatic' and 'social' history and bridging elite politics and the lived experience of ordinary people. In doing so, he has provided us with an integrated and holistic reassessment of China's encounters with the international community over the past 250 years.

Brimming with acute insights, Westad's wide-ranging study emphasizes both foreign influences on China and the ability of the Chinese to adapt to external stimulations. His analysis of the role the Chinese diaspora played in the transformation of China usefully reminds us that not all changes in China stemmed from within. His chapter on China's relations with the United States is especially instructive. He correctly observes that "Throughout the twentieth century, Chinese have had a complicated but almost obsessive relationship with the United States" (365). Many Chinese had a love-and-hate attitude toward the United States: on the one hand, they admired American ideas, wealth, and technology; on the other hand, they were troubled by the American challenge to their values and habits. Westad aptly describes the last part of the twentieth century as "America's decades in China" (366) to underscore the enormous impact that the United States exerted on China.

While Westad is on strong footing in his discussion of China's dealings with major powers (the United States, the Soviet Union, and Japan), he is on a less solid ground when he dissects China's partnership with the Third World. For instance, his rendering of Beijing's attitude toward India is confusing. He contradicts himself in his description of Chinese Communist perceptions of India. In one place, he points out that Liu Shaoqi, the People's Republic of China (PRC) chairman, once considered India "the fulcrum of Third World anti-

imperialism and anticolonialism” (351). On another occasion, Westad writes: “During the Maoist years the Chinese Communists looked down on India because they thought its politics and overall development were too closely patterned on the model set by its former colonial masters” (432). In fact, the Chinese Communist leaders’ view of India changed over time. When Mao Zedong and his associates assumed power in China in 1949, they followed Soviet leader Joseph Stalin’s example of condemning the Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru as being ‘a running dog of imperialism.’ In the mid-1950s, however, they began to accept Indian neutrality, exemplified by Chinese premier Zhou Enlai’s courting of Nehru at the 1955 Bandung Conference. China and India cooperated in opposing U.S. efforts to bring neutral countries like Cambodia and Laos into the (South East Asian Treaty Organization) SEATO orbit. Sino-Indian cooperation collapsed in the late 1950s, culminating in a bloody border clash in 1962.

While Westad is judicious in his scrutiny of the views and activities of such major figures as Nationalist leaders Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek, some of his criticisms of Mao’s performance appear to be overblown to me, and redolent of contemporary journalistic Mao-bashing. Westad states that “Mao’s final ladder to paradise, his Cultural Revolution, rose among heaps of bodies, the way Stalin’s and Hitler’s had done in the past and Pol Pot’s would do in the future” (334). Did Mao launch the Cultural Revolution to kill Chinese people as Hitler had done when he unleashed the Holocaust against the Jews? It is true that hundreds and thousands of people died during the Cultural Revolution, but many of them perished as a result of local initiatives and actions, that is, individuals at the local level used Mao’s political campaign to settle previous personal scores by committing violence against each other. In assessing historical events, we should make a distinction between motives and results. Mao’s Cultural Revolution and Hitler’s Holocaust are two different things. Mao did not *intend* to terminate the Chinese population by setting the Cultural Revolution in motion. The Cultural Revolution is not a genocide.

Some of Westad’s judgments of Mao’s conception of international politics are open to debate. Westad contends that the race factor never figured in Mao’s comprehension of China’s role in the world and that Mao only adhered to “Marxism –Leninism, pure and simple” (326) It is true that Mao approached foreign relations on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of class struggle and anti-imperialism, but that did not preclude Mao’s use of other categories in his analysis. Actually, after his break with the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, he increasingly employed racially-tinged language in his conversations with visitors from Asia and Africa. He envisioned himself as leading the struggle of non-white people against the domination of world affairs by the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, both of which were white countries. In recommending readings on Mao Zedong, Westad lists the biography of Mao written by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday,¹ but that volume has been faulted by many serious scholars of modern China, who refer to it as “not history” but “propaganda,” not “reliable scholarship” but “pseudo-scholarship.”²

¹ Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Routledge, 2009).

² Gregor Benton and Lin Chun, eds., *Was Mao Really a Monster? The Academic Response to Jung Chang and Jon Halliday’s “Mao: The Unknown Story”* (London: Routledge, 2009).

While the thematic approach Westad adopts in his book yields the benefit of focused and in-depth analysis, it has the drawback of lapsing into repetition and redundancy. For example, Hans von Seeckt, a top German adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, is first discussed in a chapter on the Republican period (134). He is later mentioned again in a topical chapter on “Foreigners” in China (196). The same occurs when Westad introduces John Leighton Stuart, the president of Yanjing University and later US ambassador to China (132, 191).

Despite these quibbles, Westad’s volume remains a well-informed, innovative, and clearly written overview of China’s intersection with the world since the mid-eighteenth century. It broadens our knowledge about the rich legacies of modern China’s international experiences.

I am very lucky having such a stellar panel of commentators discussing my book, and I am grateful to each of the participants.

Let me deal first with some of the broader points raised by Professor Chen Jian. As everyone knows, Professor Chen has almost singlehandedly turned the study of the history of China's contemporary foreign relations upside-down over the past two decades, and there is no other scholar I have learnt more from for my own work.

One of Professor Chen's most useful points is about how to write Chinese international history. I think he is completely right in saying that the student of China's foreign affairs always needs to take a long view, and to think about the 'international' in the broadest possible terms. Far too often the inability of China scholars to do this leaves the market open for 'world historians' – with very limited knowledge of the country's history – to incorporate 'China' into some grand scheme. These – despite all protestations to the contrary – tend to range from the Euro- (or Amero-) centric to the straightforward Orientalist. It is entirely the fault of the students of Chinese history that this can still happen on a large scale.

Professor Chen's remark that "the Qing made the difference" is especially astute. It is indeed impossible to understand China's modern development without a firm grasp of the Qing empire and its complex relationship with the outside world. Whoever looks at Beijing's manifold connections with its region today needs to comprehend them in light of what happened during the Qing era. Far too often thinking about China's past in order to make sense of its present ends up in a muddle about '5,000 years of history'. Professor Chen is exactly right: As I attempt to show in *Restless Empire*, the Qing made the difference – as rulers, they were profoundly different in their concepts of empire than any regime before them.

Allow me one final comment on the wonderfully rich remarks of Professor Chen. He points out how, from the mid-nineteenth century on, foreign empires tried to exploit China, and in the process gave rise to a set of Chinese revolutions, the effects of which are still with us. The ideas that fuel 'China's rise' today are foreign ideas in Chinese form. They may be different in shape from today's Western concepts. But they are much more different from anything that would be recognizable in China two or three hundred years ago. Contemporary China is international to a degree that few historians (or contemporary foreign policy analysts) realize.

Professor Niu Jun of Peking University is one of the founders of the field of contemporary international history in China. He has always impressed me with his sensible and non-dogmatic approach to China's past. His point about the development of Chinese historiography on Sino-foreign interaction is very apt: It is difficult to create a balanced historiography as long as many of its domestic practitioners feel that they are under

foreign attack (an attack that some felt did not end until Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997).

Professor Niu's remarks about the need to understand the continuity in Chinese foreign affairs of what happened before and after the 1840s (the 'opium wars') are also very significant. Like Professor Chen, Professor Niu objects to any attempt at making the first Western incursions the primary dividing line in Chinese international history. I agree. It is striking, though, how few scholars – Chinese or foreign – are working on Qing history in the early nineteenth century. Surely we can hope that some of the bright youths at Peking University will take up the task.

Priscilla Roberts of Hong Kong University is one of the foremost mediators between scholarship in China and scholarship abroad, and many of us are deeply indebted to her for her efforts in this regard, as well as from what we have learnt from her own publications. Her review here produces an excellent overview of the book; the best, in fact, that I have seen in any review so far. If anyone wants a summary of what the core arguments of the book are, they should consult Roberts's review.

Her comments on Mao Zedong's turn to the United States in the early 1970s are well taken. I interpret the new turn in the Chinese Communist party's foreign relations from 1969 on first and foremost to be a product of extraordinary fear. From then on (and well into the 1980s) Mao's adherents, including Deng Xiaoping, viewed the Soviet Union as the rising Superpower, and therefore as the greatest threat to China. It was not love for the United States that brought them into U.S. president Richard Nixon's game. It was a misreading of the international situation at the time. The Chinese leaders were of course not the only ones who exaggerated Soviet strength. But their teaming up with Washington had more long-term consequences than the actions of most of their contemporaries.

Roberts is also right to note the intensity of China's current attraction to market values. This is often not understood well enough by Western scholars. All through the 2000s, opinion polls show that more Chinese than Americans believed that the free market could solve their problems. This is a much more important fact for the future than the often harped-upon percentage of China's industries that are state-owned.

Turning finally to Professor Zhai's review, let me just make a few remarks. As can be expected from one of the foremost scholars of China's policies in Asia, many of Professor Zhai's insights deal with Sino-Asian relations. On India, my sense is that Premier Zhou Enlai's early 1960s comments on Indonesia replacing India are more a statement of China's (wishful) thinking about the former than a recognition of the (hitherto) position of the latter. Up to the end of the 1950s the People's Republic of China (PRC) followed the Soviet position on India in its ups and downs rather slavishly, until the Tibet situation blew the Sino-Indian relationship entirely off course from 1958/59 on, at a point when the Sino-Soviet alliance was already in trouble.

Professor Zhai asks whether Mao launched "the Cultural Revolution to kill Chinese people as Hitler had done when he unleashed the Holocaust against the Jews?". Yes, to some

extent he did. Not as genocide, of course, but as what R.J. Rummel calls politicide: Extermination of classes or groups of people. The characterization of whole families as 'former people', who, through their class background had forfeited their role in society or their right to life, is eerily reminiscent of Hitler's savagery. As it is, of course, of some aspects of life under the Soviet purges.

Professor Zhai's comments on Mao's views of race are interesting. There is obviously much development here. As Mao moved further and further away from Marxism (not that he had been all that close to begin with, of course), race became an increasingly important factor to him. My sense (but Professor Zhai will know better) is that the Chairman's preoccupation was first and foremost with the Chinese as a 'race', different from (and better than) anyone else. But he certainly also believed that 'Asians' had something in common in their battles against 'Europeans'.

Finally, a comment on my recommendation of Chang and Halliday's book on Mao. Although, like Professor Chen, I disagree with some of their conclusions, the research for the book is strong (and should have been followed up much more closely by academic experts on China).

I am grateful to all of the reviewers for the time and care that they took in reading my book, and to the H-Diplo editors for letting me pen a response.

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