
China's Foreign Policy Since 1978:

Return to Power

By Nicholas Khoo

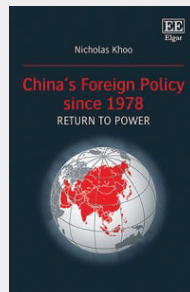
Edward Elgar Publisher, 2020, 200 pages, \$123.06, ISBN: 9781839103049

Reviewed by Irieda Hamzaj, Bursa Uludağ University

Over the past few decades, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has occupied the center of attention of global foreign policy. This attention has been triggered by China's newly implemented political strategies and its immense technological and economic development. This equation gets more interesting when the Marxist one-party rule is considered. China's significant rise in status and influence is reflected in important issues of global dynamics such as diplomacy, military power, economics, climate, global warming, etc.

China's Foreign Policy Since 1978: Return to Power is written by Nicholas Khoo, an Associate Professor at the University of Otago, New Zealand, and an expert in Chinese foreign policy and Asian security. This is his fourth book with China as its focus; it reflects a clear view of China in the most important binomials of world affairs. The book consists of six chapters that are formatted as research articles, disclosing China's policy in different time periods.

In the introduction, Khoo presents an overview of the book while explaining some important terms, such as the 'China Dream.' The first chapter addresses China from the end of the Cold War to 2010, exploring China's troubled international relations with the U.S., Japan, and South Korea. Despite all of the ideological, political, and diplomatic tur-



moil, however, Khoo emphasizes that trade relations have not been affected. Instead, they have grown year-over-year, making China a force that now competes with the U.S. Khoo defines China mostly through its trade while analyzing its main projects, data and actors. He notes that, in the new post-Cold

War 'trade game,' "China emerges in this analysis as a state that is comfortable with the U.S.-constructed international order" (p. 11).

In the second chapter, Khoo delves into the times of the Cold War, explaining the wedge strategy and the termination of the Soviet-Vietnamese alliance. By doing so, Khoo contributes to the "emerging literature on wedges as balancing tools in world politics" (p. 27). This chapter offers a helpful explanation of the wedge strategy and its importance. Giving concrete examples, Khoo analyzes PRC foreign policy from 1975-1978, first by analyzing the selective accommodation wedge strategy—even though this policy adaptation achieved no big success—and then, the shift toward adopting a confrontation wedge strategy that intensified the conflict in Sino-Vietnamese relations. The author also analyzes Soviet-PRC relations and how they affected all of the above-mentioned strategies/policies.

U.S.-China relations and the dynamics of power projection took a big turn in the post-Cold War period, as Khoo discusses in the

third chapter. In this part, the analysis spans from the George H. W. Bush Administration to the Donald J. Trump Administration while emphasizing the importance of U.S.-China relations as a long-term strategy in U.S. foreign policy.

The main content of the fourth chapter is an analysis of Sino-Japanese relations, explained mostly through a neorealist model. Khoo asserts that China's rise has led to an increase in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Meanwhile, Japan has pushed back, extending the scope of the conflict to the South China Sea. The author tries to offer a future perspective, bringing into the equation the role of the U.S., which is directly challenging regional policies. In this chapter, both the power dynamics of the region and China's economic rise are held 'responsible for its power projection into maritime Northeast Asia.

In the final chapter, "China Returns to Power," Khoo provides an overview of the various implications of a strong China in world politics. As the title of the chapter indicates, Khoo contextualizes China's rise, then undertakes an examination of the future of U.S.-China policy, and the principles it may follow, such as interdependency.

Throughout the book, Khoo emphasizes that in order to understand China's rise and rapid

growth, it is important to read China as a neorealist state, since the neorealist power projection model highlights the role of state interest and relative power. The analysis in the book does not focus only on China's relations with the U.S., Russia, or Japan; instead, Khoo provides a balanced analysis by taking into consideration other regional actors—thus presenting a full view of the regional political and economic dynamics.

China's Foreign Policy Since 1978: Return to Power demonstrates how China has projected power and countered external initiatives that undermine its security demands while attempting to prevent encirclement. China has leveraged its position in asymmetrical relationships and implemented wedge strategies to achieve the success it enjoys today. The book would benefit from more updated comparative data, especially in the first chapter, which includes global economic statistics. These statistics, especially some of the trade data, don't go further than 2013. Despite this minor shortcoming, Khoo's book is a helpful addition to the literature for anyone seeking a broader understanding of China's foreign policy and its current position in world politics. *China's Foreign Policy since 1978: Return to Power* is a necessity for the academic library and a must-read for all students and academicians interested in China's foreign affairs.