

***The Rise of China and International Security: America and Asia Respond.* Edited by Kevin J. Cooney and Yoichiro Sato. Abdingdon, Oxford: Routledge, 2009. Hardcover: 264pp.**

The emergence of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and its increasing competition with the United States and other fast-rising powers such as India, is destined to be one of the most important stories of this century. The pre-eminence of the PRC has become even more pronounced since the onset of the global economic downturn. Since late 2008, the leadership under President Hu Jintao has been aggressively projecting both hard and soft power. This ranges from building nuclear submarines and developing plans for the navy's first aircraft carriers to Beijing's bold suggestion at the April 2009 G20 meeting in London that special drawing rights of the International Monetary Fund should replace the US dollar as the international currency in which countries hold their reserves. A key reason behind Beijing's decision to revise late patriarch Deng Xiaoping's "take a low profile, never take the lead" mantra is the golden opportunity afforded by the relative decline of America's global clout.

While *The Rise of China and International Security* was written before the global financial crisis, this collection of thoughtfully written and cogently argued essays provides us with a useful set of criteria and frames of reference with which to assess how China's rise would affect global security as well as its relations with major players such as the United States, Japan and India. In his chapter on "Chinese-American hegemonic competition", Kevin Cooney notes that while both China and the US would avoid lose-lose military clashes, "the problem is that the boundaries defining 'peaceful coexistence' may be different for Beijing and Washington" (p. 55). Cooney warns that if Beijing becomes too "impatient" in projecting hard power, "we may see an aggressor China assert itself into a conflict with the United States, which it currently stands to lose" (p. 56). Another disturbing factor behind China's emergence is the force of nationalism. In her piece on "US strategic relations with a rising China", Evelyn Goh points to the "rising salience of nationalism ... which the regime may feel compelled to pander to given the demise of communist ideology as a mobilizing force in domestic politics" (p. 84). The confrontation between US "spy ships" and Chinese coastguard vessels in the South China Sea in March 2009 seem to suggest that the possibilities for run-ins between the world's lone superpower and the rising quasi-superpower could be

larger than is generally assumed.

Possible collisions between China and Japan are aptly analysed by Yoichiro Sato in his article on “Japan’s awkward co-prosperity with China”. While both countries are enjoying a symbiotic economic relationship, Sato notes that “competition over global and regional political leadership between China and Japan has intensified”. This is particularly worrisome given the no-holds-barred upgrading of Chinese weaponry. Sato observes that “the intensifying maritime rivalry stretches from the area of sea control (including sea lane control), resources transportation (notably oil from the Middle East), to resource exploration and exploitation” (p. 115).

Ties between China and India seem even more problematic. As J. Mohan Malik points out in his chapter on “India’s response to China’s rise” the two giant neighbours are divided by “simmering tensions over territory, Tibet, energy resources, and rival alliance relationships”. Malik predicts that Indian foreign and security policy in the foreseeable future will be characterized as a “pro-US, pro-Japan tilt” (p. 208). This interesting anthology also includes chapters on how South Korea, Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries respond to China’s rising power.

In his eloquent analysis of how Chinese themselves perceive their country’s much enhanced global profile, Jian Yang suggests that it behooves Beijing to “address other countries’ concerns about its rise in a more sophisticated, rational manner”. “Clearly, the acceptance of China’s rise by the international society is a core Chinese national interest”, Yang argues (p. 31). As the Chinese Communist Party makes preparations for an unprecedented grandiose military parade to mark the 60th anniversary of the People’s Republic on 1 October 2009, however, the question of whether Beijing will temper its hard-nosed power projection with sensitivity towards the feelings of friends and foes looms ever larger on the world stage.