

China & The World
David Shambaugh (Ed.)

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Year 2020 will be significant in the annals of history—first, because of the global pandemic and second because of China’s behaviour in the international sphere. This year has seen some very notable shifts in international politics that could possibly bring about a change in the existing global order. China has been a key player in impacting the world and international relations in multiple ways. In this backdrop, the book *China & The World* edited by David Shambaugh is a timely and comprehensive volume.

David Shambaugh is Gaston Sigur Professor of Asian Studies, Political Science & International Affairs and Director of the China Policy Program at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. He is an eminent scholar with an authority in the field of Chinese studies.

At the foremost, the book explores all the factors that impact China’s foreign policy, both internally and externally. It examines the source of China’s Grand Strategy and explains how the past shapes the present. Furthermore, it brings forth China’s interaction with major powers and institutions in the international arena. Most importantly, the book successfully attempts to understand China’s calculations and behaviour as well as the number of challenges that China is going to face in the future. The book is divided into six sections with sixteen individual chapters, authored by renowned experts in the field of Chinese Studies from across the world—making the book both distinct in outlook and comprehensive in nature.

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David Shambaugh in his introductory chapter on “China’s Long March to Global Power,” explains the ‘intentional’ usage of the term China’s foreign relations. The author emphasised the need to analyse the factors from within a nation-society, in order to understand the behaviour of a country in the international arena. The chapter describes China’s evolution over the past seven decades and tries to explain China’s actions—the beginning of which can be traced during the period 1950s-1990s. During this period, China remained isolated internationally without much external diplomacy. During the 1990s many important developments took place in China, like many sanctions imposed on PRC were lifted, Hong Kong was returned to Chinese sovereignty and participation of China in many multilateral institutions. The author goes on giving various examples of how China normalised its diplomatic relations with most of the nations in the world and broaden its international footprint. The Chapter explains how Xi Jinping’s ascension to power in 2012, led China to exhibit increased confidence and proactiveness in the international arena.

The second section of the book focuses on the ‘historical sources’—whereby, the authors Odd Arne Westad and Chas W. Freeman Jr, in their respective chapters, explain how history of a nation determines its present. For China, two aspects matter the most—one, legacy of the empire and second, is authoritarianism. In his chapter on “Legacies of the Past,” Westad points out how the Communist Party of China (CPC) today has created its own version of history to justify its economic success. This chapter posits that China’s historical legacies, authoritarianism, now mixed with nationalism, may create problem for China, and predicts that due to the tremendous change China has undergone, a different China might emerge. While Freeman Jr in his chapter on “China’s National Experience and the evolution of PRC Grand Strategy” argues that China as a civilisational state has different strategies to rule. China in the past has been governed, conquered, humiliated by the West; however, PRC has

established a Chinese state that today embraces the Westphalian Order. To which, PRCs grand strategy has changed with the changing global scenario, specifically with unsettled frontiers and further explains as to how the changes in the international system, led China to fully integrate itself into the American-sponsored globalised order. More importantly, with US retreating from that order, China has started to expand and reshape the world affairs which uphold Chinese interests.

Social influence matters in shaping of the Chinese foreign policies—as explained in the third section on “Domestic Sources” that dwells into this assumption. Peter Hays Gries examines the Chinese attitude towards different parts of the world and certain major policy initiatives in his chapter, like Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by drawing from Chinese views on platforms such as *Zhibu* (Chinese version of Quora). However, the query remains—Do these voices matter? While Suisheng Zhao in his chapter on China’s foreign policy making process, highlights the fact that the highest decision making and foreign policy making is concentrated in the hands of the CPC—the important role is played by the ‘leader’. As evident from President Xi Jinping’s commitment to fundamentally change from low-profile diplomacy to ‘big power diplomacy’.

Section four of the book deals with the “Domains of China’s Global Interactions.” The authors Barry Naughton, Shaun Breslin, Kathrine Morton, Phillip C. Saunders in their respective chapters explore China’s global interaction such as economic, cultural, governance, military and security interactions. In “China’s Global Economic Relations,” Barry Naughton explains the new policy initiatives and structural changes in China and how the interactions with the world have changed from time to time. He brings out the expectations of China and how China has evolved in its interactions globally. As the author argues that China’s initiative to offer financial access to countries through the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Belt and Road Initiative has shown the world, that China is capable of running world class institutions. However, China’s

policy adoption is incomplete and not yet successful. While Shaun Breslin in his chapter “China’s Global Cultural Interactions” traces the history behind the contemporary promotion of Chinese culture through Confucius Institutes, education, and sports which has resulted in greater awareness of Chinese programmes and ‘what it is and what it wants.’ Besides, the CPC tries to influence by using state media, although it is not a new phenomenon—recent programs aired by CGTN is seen as China’s aggressive use of soft power. However, Breslin remarks that there have been few lukewarm responses to such actions of China as there exists a disconnect between what China as a State promotes and what it does on a daily basis.

Katherine Morton in her chapter on “China’s Global Governance Interactions” reflects on China’s ambition of global leadership by playing a major role in the global governance system. The author presents an argument, that a shift is taking place concerning China’s interaction with the global governance system as evident from China’s position in the United Nations, policy making related to issues of climate change, setting up of regional and multilateral institutions like SCO, AIIB, BRI, and others. Morton also discusses major dilemmas confronting China in its transition towards global leadership. While Phillip C. Saunders in the chapter on “China’s Global Military-Security Interactions” reviews China’s overseas security interests, the military missions of the People’s Liberation Army, its organisational structure, and the capabilities of the PLA. Saunders argues that China’s foreign policy objectives are supported by its military diplomacy as the PLA supports China’s economic and security interests.

Section five of the book deals with “China’s Bilateral and Regional Relationships.” The section focuses on China’s interactions with major countries across the world, mainly the United States, Russia, Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Middle East and also provides an understanding of the way China practices regional multilateralism.

Chinese interactions with each of these countries as cited above, has a history and a new trajectory has been evolving based on the interests and contemporary developments; however, interaction with each country is distinct as explained by Robert Sutter (United States), Alexei D. Voskressenski (Russia), Francois Godement (Europe), Michael Yahuda (Asia), and Joshua Eisenman and Eric Heinbotham (Africa, Latin America and Middle East). Each author in their respective chapters analyses the dynamics of China's relations and what it means for the future, and also ponders on the key challenges faced by China. Specific to China-led multilateralism, Srikanth Kondapalli in his chapter on "Regional Multilateralism with Chinese Characteristics," argues that multilateralism is predominant in China's diplomatic practice as evident from China's membership to most of the international organisations except a few. Besides, China has also created a wide range of new organisations and regional groupings across the world—a move towards gaining China's regional and global dominance.

Finally, in section six, David Shambaugh in the concluding Chapter on "Patterns and Prospects" highlights China's future and the challenges that China will face in the decade ahead. As noted, the book ends with mentioning that it will be a recurring series of books once in every half a decade or a decade and the existing literature will be updated accordingly.

On the whole, the book is an excellent read and gives an in-depth analysis on various aspects of China and its policy-making process, interactions with different actors across the world and finally analyses and understands why China behaves the way it always does. The book is a must-read for all the analysts, policy makers, International Relations students and people who wish to understand China.