

BOOK REVIEW

Asian Geopolitics and the US-China Rivalry

By Felix Heiduk (ed.)

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As a result of competition between the U.S. and China within the Asia-Pacific region, gaining a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics of geopolitics and geo-economics in these two nations has become imperative. It is equally crucial to evaluate the far-reaching implications of this rivalry. The volume of essays titled *Asian Geopolitics and the US-China Rivalry*, under the editorship of Felix Heiduk, assembles a consortium of leading experts who offer a multifaceted and insightful analysis of this intricate strategic landscape. The compilation traverses a diverse array of subjects, including but not limited to U.S.-China relations and their repercussions on regional actors, the contours of Chinese regional strategy, regional security paradigms, the realm of economic competition and soft power dynamics, and the role played by other major global powers such as Japan, India, and Australia.

Drawing from empirical evidence and employing diverse theoretical frameworks, the authors present a range of perspectives on these pivotal issues. They underscore the challenges and opportunities ahead, emphasizing that effectively addressing the regional challenges necessitates a deep understanding of the Sino-U.S. competition and a nuanced comprehension of the intricate web of interactions involving other regional stakeholders.

The book is composed of twelve chapters, commencing with an introduction by Felix Heiduk. The author sets the stage by delineating the Sino-American rivalry's profound potential to recalibrate Asia's geopolitical landscape. He underscores the imperative for regional states to navigate the evolving dynamics adroitly. Chapter 2, authored by R. Foot, focuses on the impacts of globalization on regional confidence and unity, juxtaposed with the potentially fragmenting effects of the

U.S.-China rivalry. Chapter 3, penned by R. Medcalf, explores the long-term consequences of this rivalry. It places a premium on the need for strategic foresight and long-term planning for regional cooperation to manage the multifaceted challenges posed by this rivalry.

Joo Hee Kim, in Chapter 4, provides a reasonable examination of creative and adaptive strategies. Kim brings into sharp focus the promotion of multilateralism and regional stability, particularly emphasizing the role of middle powers. Chapter 5, authored by L. Jones, accentuates the broader ramifications of the Sino-U.S. rivalry, transcending state transformation and security paradigms. Simultaneously, it underscores the necessity for participatory and inclusive processes and advocates for a more comprehensive approach to security and state transformation.

The book extends its purview into case studies, dedicating its analytical chapters to specific regions and countries in the Asia-Pacific. These include the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asia, and individual countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, the Philippines, Malaysia, and South Korea. In these chapters, the authors employ a discerning lens to examine economic and domestic actors, the intricate dynamics of post-conflict reconstruction and development, and the evolving institutional framework under the shadow of the U.S.-Chinese rivalry. Despite the variegated approaches undertaken, all the chapters converge on a common theme: the pressing need for enhanced regional cooperation and dialogue. They collectively advocate for an adaptable, nuanced, and comprehensive strategy to confront the ramifications of the U.S.-Chinese competition.

The richness of this volume emanates from its interdisciplinary approach to dissecting the rivalry between the U.S. and China and its profound implications for Asia. Drawing from various fields, including economics, international relations, security studies, and political science, the book provides a robust and holistic analysis. Furthermore, it offers a meticulous examination of the formidable challenges and issues besetting the region, with claims substantiated through a wealth of primary and secondary sources. A laudable strength lies in the book's diverse perspectives, encapsulated within essays authored by individuals from disparate backgrounds. This diversity of viewpoints contributes to the depth and richness of the analysis.

However, notwithstanding these merits, there exist notable avenues for improvement. Regarding the bibliography, while a substantial portion of

the book pivots on case studies focused on Asian countries, most essays rely exclusively on English-language sources. Few references are made to sources in German, Chinese, or Korean, for example. Additionally, some chapters exhibit a substantial dependence on news and magazine articles, occasionally constraining the depth of analysis. Consequently, there is a discernible inclination toward overemphasizing theoretical frameworks and concepts, sometimes leaving readers yearning for a deeper understanding of the practical applicability of the research. A conspicuous absence is the lack of a dedicated concluding chapter or concluding remarks, potentially limiting the transference of the results of the case studies to broader regional or global contexts.

That said, the book aptly illuminates the strategies and policies embraced by diverse regional actors to navigate the treacherous waters of the U.S.-China conflict and safeguard their interests. It brings together contributions from scholars and experts representing a spectrum of backgrounds and perspectives. Consequently, it furnishes a multifaceted and nuanced comprehension of the intricate dynamics shaping the geopolitics of Asia. Furthermore, it underscores the far-reaching implications of the U.S.-China rivalry for the region and the broader international order, highlighting the indispensability of regional cooperation and multilateralism. These facets balance diplomatic, economic, and security considerations, ultimately reducing reliance on either of the two global superpowers.

Given the diverse interests and viewpoints spanning Asia and beyond, a comprehensive and context-specific understanding of the U.S.-China rivalry has become increasingly essential. *Asian Geopolitics and the US-China Rivalry* is a pertinent and invaluable addition to the scholarly discourse on Asia's geopolitics, the U.S.-China interplay, and their resounding impacts. It is poised to be of immense significance for academics and researchers alike, as well as for policymakers, business leaders, and all those deeply invested in the development of Asia and its global ramifications.

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