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The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s

Dale C. Rielage

Nancy Bernkopf Tucker

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of this previously unavailable 1950s manuscript, properly seeing contemporary United States–China strategic relations as his backdrop, has made Lo’s encyclopedic knowledge available to us. However, Lo’s book is instructive beyond that; *China as a Sea Power* is a magisterial contribution to the study of world maritime history and should be known everywhere by those who are interested in that subject.

Lo was determined to illuminate China’s maritime history to edify his countrymen, who had seen the consequences of a lack of naval power. In the first decades of Lo’s life, foreign navies dominated China’s coastal ports and also had wide-ranging rights in other ports hundreds of miles up the great rivers. It was as if foreign navies could, by right, sail at will up the Mississippi from New Orleans to Minneapolis. The Chinese had become accustomed to the seeming inevitability of such circumstances and knew of the failures to revive Chinese naval power at the end of the nineteenth century and of Japan’s easy closure of China’s ports between 1937 and 1945. It was for them that Lo wanted to present a grand history of Chinese power on the sea, and not only naval power but seaborne commercial power and the urbanization, wealth, and sophistication that it had created in great ages past. China’s remarkable efflorescence that we see today derives from such visions.

Of this book’s many compelling accounts, perhaps the richest is Lo’s description of the naval campaigns of the Mongols, who, as the Yuan dynasty, ruled China between 1271 and 1368. The Mongols, who had no experience fighting at sea, quickly adapted and soon organized armadas built and manned by their new Chinese subjects.

They launched invasions northward into the East China Sea and southward into the South China Sea. Today’s increasingly visible and vocal Chinese admirals seem eager to draw inspiration from these huge undertakings, but for all the immense capabilities they demonstrated, Kublai Khan’s two invasions of Japan and his three invasions of Vietnam in the thirteenth century all ended in disaster. Eight centuries later, in his November 2012 valedictory address, Hu Jintao, China’s outgoing president and the Communist Party’s general secretary, urged his successors “to build China into a maritime power.” In this they would be well advised to read Lo Jung-pang’s account of China’s past glories as a sea power, not only as inspiration but also as a cautionary tale.

CHARLES HORNER

Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute, and author of Rising China and Its Postmodern Fate



Tucker, Nancy Bernkopf. *The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2012. 312pp. \$39.50

President Dwight D. Eisenhower is remembered in history as a dedicated Cold Warrior whose staunch anticommunism included commitment to the containment and rollback of communism in Asia. In *The China Threat* Nancy Bernkopf Tucker challenges this narrative, suggesting that Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles possessed a more nuanced view of China than is generally supposed.

Tucker is an established and respected historian of U.S. policy toward China whose earlier works include a study of U.S.-Chinese relations during the

second Harry Truman administration. In this work, she soundly establishes that Eisenhower and Dulles did not view the communist world as a monolith. In contrast to many American observers, Eisenhower concluded that Mao's control of China was a permanent fact and that U.S. rollback of the Chinese communist revolution was unlikely. Like Truman before him, he disparaged Chinese Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek and his unrealistic hopes for reestablishing himself on the mainland. Eisenhower and Dulles believed that Mao could create his own path within international communism, following the independent path of Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito. In this view they anticipated the possibility of a Sino-Soviet split before it came to pass. They viewed U.S. economic sanctions against China as counterproductive, strengthening ties between the communist-bloc nations. Yet despite these assessments, Eisenhower continued on a course of confrontation with China, conducting covert operations and propaganda against China, tying Taiwan into a mutual-defense treaty, and enforcing economic sanctions against the mainland. Tucker thus faces the task of explaining an Eisenhower who "disparaged much of what passed for China policy under his own administration" yet never publicly expressed or substantially acted on his convictions. Eisenhower and Dulles both saw U.S. interests in Asia as secondary to those in Europe. Both had strong personal ties to the European allies and to NATO and were convinced that Europe was America's enduring partner and the key arena for arresting communist expansion. Changing U.S.-China policy carried the probability of significant

political cost. Because the Republican Party had made Truman's "loss of China" a central issue in the 1952 campaign, moderating the U.S. approach would have required Eisenhower to challenge both his own party and the influential anticommunist "China lobby." Political capital expended on China policy would come at the expense of essential support for European efforts—a cost Eisenhower was not willing to pay.

In the end, the fact that Eisenhower and Dulles had a less hard-line view of U.S. relations with China than is commonly assessed becomes a case study in the use and limitation of presidential power. The subtleties of Eisenhower's view of Asia pointed to constraints on his action, real and perceived, and made the cost of a potential change in U.S. policy more than Eisenhower was willing to bear. As Tucker concludes, in the end Eisenhower did not get the China policy he wanted, but he did get the China policy he made.

COMMANDER DALE C. RIELAGE, USN



Strachan, Hew, and Sibylle Scheipers, eds. *The Changing Character of War*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011. 564pp. \$110

Academic strategists have been agonizing over whether war is changing its character or is being changed by any manner of influences, ranging from technology to "war amongst the people," since the fall of the Soviet Union. The tragedy of September 11th added impetus to this inquiry. The Oxford Leverhulme Changing Character of War program, which ran from 2003 to 2009, has been to date the most