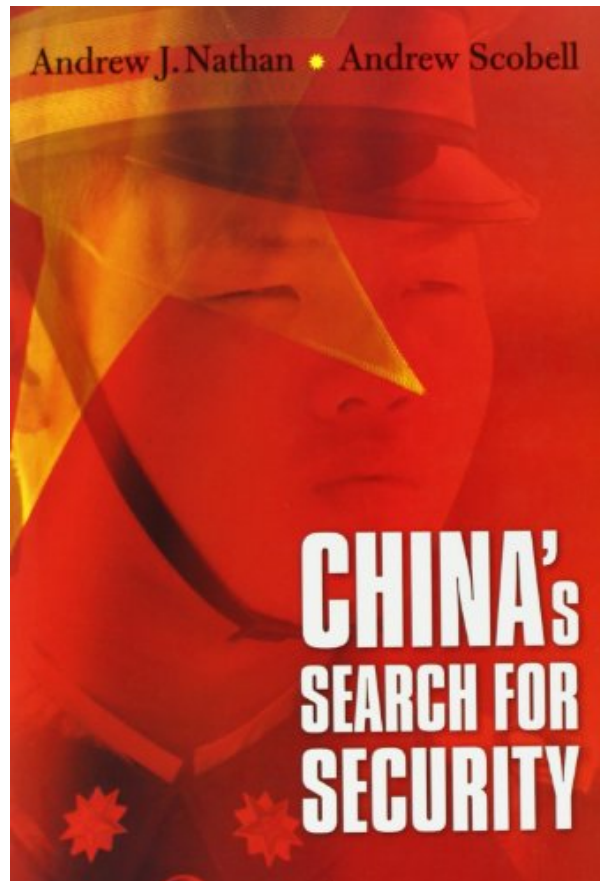


CHINA'S SEARCH FOR SECURITY BY ANDREW J. NATHAN, ANDREW SCOBELL



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Despite its impressive size and population, economic vitality, and drive to upgrade its military, China remains a vulnerable nation surrounded by powerful rivals and potential foes. Understanding China's foreign policy means fully appreciating these geostrategic challenges, which persist even as the country gains increasing influence over its neighbors. Andrew J. Nathan and Andrew Scobell analyze China's security concerns on four fronts: at home, with its immediate neighbors, in surrounding regional systems, and in the world beyond Asia. By illuminating the issues driving Chinese policy, they offer a new perspective on the country's rise and a strategy for balancing Chinese and American interests in Asia.

Though rooted in the present, Nathan and Scobell's study makes ample use of the past, reaching back into history to illuminate the people and institutions shaping Chinese strategy today. They also examine Chinese views of the United States; explain why China is so concerned about Japan; and uncover China's interests in such problematic countries as North Korea, Iran, and the Sudan. The authors probe recent troubles in Tibet and Xinjiang and explore their links to forces beyond China's borders. They consider the tactics deployed by mainland China and Taiwan, as Taiwan seeks to maintain autonomy in the face of Chinese advances toward unification. They evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of China's three main power resources—economic power, military power, and soft power.

The authors conclude with recommendations for the United States as it seeks to manage China's rise. Chinese policymakers understand that their nation's prosperity, stability, and security depend on cooperation with the United States. If handled wisely, the authors believe, relations between the two countries can produce mutually beneficial outcomes for both Asia and the world.

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Most helpful customer reviews

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Insightful view from the "other" side of the fence

By A Customer

I am rather disturbed by the negative review one of the other readers presented. Apparently, the message that Nathan/Ross present in this work is greatly needed... a message that that reader chose to ignore.

This is a book about Chinese motivation. This is not a book seeking to pass historical judgement on the actions of a regime that has evolved over the past five decades. This is not a book seeking to present Western justification for any particular view of where China is going. This is a book about why the Chinese government usually acts, as most of us, in a rational manner within its framework of desires and wishes.

Without understanding that particular framework, it's a hopeless fallacy to believe that you can truly explain the actions of the PRC.

Was the PRC's actions in Tibet a matter of territorial integrity? Nathan/Ross doesn't bother trying to advocate any particular view on this, or any other, controversial matter. They DO however suggest that from the perspective of the Chinese, the events in Tibet follow rationally from a consistent foreign policy that values territorial integrity.

This is a crucial book for anyone that wants facts, not more rhetoric.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Must read for students of contemporary China

By M. L. Asselin

Andrew J. Nathan and Robert S. Ross's *THE GREAT WALL AND THE EMPTY FORTRESS* is a clearly and tightly written presentation of Chinese foreign policy and defense issues. It is as reliable in its treatment of aspects of the pre-modern Chinese state and society that impinged on the course of modern Chinese affairs as it is authoritative (and well documented) in its analysis of the contemporary Chinese situation. With books on contemporary Chinese affairs, one must be concerned with material becoming dated, but though this book is some four years old in content, nearly its entirety is nevertheless very relevant. Its treatment of Chinese-Taiwan relations, for instance, is still on the mark. Since the book was written before the restoration of Hong Kong to China, the reader will not be able to glean anything new about that situation here. However that may be, this book remains as "must reading" for any student of contemporary China. The reader will happily discover that the style is eminently readable.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent Overview -

By Loyd Eskildson

The authors look at China's security problems from their point of view and conclude China is too bogged down in challenges within and around its nearly 14,000 miles of borders to threaten the West unless the West seriously weakens itself. On the other hand, it has become one of the few countries that have significant national interests in every part of the world, often driven by a search for resources, and it is the only country widely seen as a possible threat to U.S. predominance. While it has risen, the Soviet Union collapsed and its successor Russian government has struggled to regain its former international role, and Japan has stagnated economically; during this same period the U.S. has drained itself with a series of wars and confrontations that weakened its global influence. The authors also contend that Chinese foreign policymaking is primarily driven by national self-interest (security).

Earlier China relied on its Great Wall to help defend against outsiders. Today's methods of protection are more virtual - a nonconvertible currency, regulatory obstacles to full foreign access to the domestic economy, repression of organizations with foreign connections, surveillance of foreigners and foreign-connected Chinese, and its 'Great Firewall' that restricts its populace's access to the international Internet. Meanwhile, its citizens have become less tolerant of pollution, its per-capita GDP still considerably lags that of Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, its one-child-per-family policy starting in the late 1970s has brought an aging population, its estimated 160 million migrant workers and numerous petitioners are buffeted by the global economy, and maritime territories along its 9,000-some miles of coastline include a number it does not control - eg. Taiwan and Japan, while in the far west, dissidents in Tibet receive moral and diplomatic support from fellow ethnic communities and sympathetic governments abroad.

States contiguous to China include seven of the world's fifteen largest nations, five with which China has been at war during the past 70 years (Russia, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and India), as well as at least nine nations with unstable governments (North Korea, the Philippines, Myanmar/Burma, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan). In addition, China has had border disputes since 1949

with each of its 20 immediate neighbors - though most have been settled. And the U.S., though thousands of miles away, must be contended with because of the stationing of military forces much closer to China than the U.S.

Finally, geography leaves China more exposed than any other major power to damage from global climate change. Its densely populated North China Plain has suffered from a water shortage since the early 1980s (in 2002 China began building the South-North Water Transfer Project, comprising three canal systems totaling over 2,000 miles - however, northern aquifers are on track to dry up w/i 30 years) .

As of now, China stations no troops abroad and there is no sign China intends to use military force to seize territory beyond what it already claims, to drive the U.S. out of Asia. But is building capacity to frustrate American intervention in the Taiwan Strait and enforce its own territorial dominance. Within a few decades the Chinese navy could roam the oceans the way the U.S. does now, the renminbi could replace the dollar as the largest international reserve currency. And democratization, if it occurs, is unlikely to bring fundamental change in China's foreign policy objectives. Nonetheless, China recognizes what even when it becomes the world's largest economy, its prosperity will remain interdependent with that of global rivals.

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