

“the end of the global Cold War primarily required a strategic rethinking in Moscow which would only come in March 1985 with Mikhail S. Gorbachev’s ascent to power” (p. 537).

Strategic rethinking was necessitated by developments in Europe. Lüthi incisively describes the successful integrationist initiatives in Western Europe and the concomitant failures in the Soviet-imposed Council for Mutual Economic Assistance. He emphasizes the ability of Western economies to recalibrate, innovate, and adjust to changing economic and monetary conditions, and he highlights the failures of centrally managed systems to do so. He minimizes the role of the United States in the reconstruction of Western Europe, mentioning that it “provided a stable and supportive framework” (p. 380). Ultimately, the failure of Communist economies to compete and modernize contributed to the flagging popular support for Communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War. But Lüthi does not make much of an effort to analyze the basic shortcomings in Communist systems, nor does he examine why and how liberal capitalist and social-democratic market economies were able to adapt successfully. For example, he describes the impact of declining oil prices in the 1980s and the constraints that imposed on Moscow’s ability to subsidize the economies of its East European satellites, but he rarely makes an attempt to analyze the dysfunctionality of Soviet agricultural policies or the flawed operations of central planning. He stresses the resilience of West European economies but barely mentions the creation of social welfare states and the role of governments in providing minimal social provision and expanding educational opportunity, access to medical care, and support for basic research.

This volume is a monumental attempt to de-center the Cold War and restore agency to middle-level powers and local actors. What it does is de-center international politics. It illuminates that much was going on in the latter half of the twentieth century that was not the product of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War but at times intersected with it and contributed to its denouement. Small powers had their own agendas, and regional dynamics had their own logic. In complicated ways, developments in one region influenced those in another. Thanks to the prodigious research of an author with staggering linguistic skills and breathtaking knowledge of multiple literatures, one comes away much better informed about the complexities of international politics but not equally enlightened about the Cold War itself.



Sulmaan Wasif Khan, *Haunted by Chaos: China’s Grand Strategy from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. 320 pp. \$29.95.

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Sulmaan Khan’s study examines China’s grand strategy, defined as the way the country’s leaders marshal different forms of power to pursue national objectives. Mao

Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Xi Jinping are accorded separate chapters, with Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao sharing one. The treatment of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders is approving, even verging on the poetic: “All was chaos and misery [in pre-1949 China]. And yet beneath it all you could see something moving: a broken civilization’s stirrings to restore itself” (p. 12). According to Khan, “Mao believed it was in the countryside that China’s beating heart was to be found” (p. 13). Mao is credited with a high degree of prescience: the reader will find little of the experimentation and revision of strategies that have characterized previous studies of Mao, summarized by the late Benjamin Schwartz as “Mao groping toward Maoism.” Khan’s Mao is little concerned with Communist ideology, a take that, although likely true, might deserve some attention. This Mao is eminently reasonable, even described as reaching out to Japan. This again deserves attention, given the prominence accorded to *kangri* (resist Japan) in CCP propaganda during World War II. By the eve of the Korean War, says Khan, Mao “had dragged great China to its feet again” (p. 53). This may be a bit of an exaggeration for a government in power for scarcely a year, though surely the cessation of fighting occasioned by the CCP’s victory in the civil war it provoked was a first step in restoring a degree of normalcy to daily life. Surprisingly, Khan makes no mention of the tensions between Mao and Joseph Stalin, or of the protracted bargaining between them as detailed in the book published by Shen Zhifeng and Li Danhui in 2011, *After Leaning to One Side: China and Its Allies in the Cold War*.

Khan describes Mao as eminently reasonable, always willing to find common ground as long as his vision for China’s grand strategy was unaffected. One might argue that this is a tautological argument: when no agreement is reached, it is because there would be negative effects on grand strategy. Hence, when the Soviet Union allowed nomads to cross the border with their animals to escape the catastrophe of Mao’s Great Leap Forward, the Chinese authorities were angry because the Soviet policy “implied that [the PRC] had failed to provide their people with what was needed” (p. 93). Given the tens of millions of deaths from starvation and related diseases in China during this period, this is a curious statement.

Such issues notwithstanding, Khan’s appraisal—that Mao’s pursuit of a balance of power kept China secure in a dangerous Cold War era yet loosed demons that could ravage all he had achieved—cannot be faulted. Given the disastrous policies of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, Mao’s assessment of the problems of China’s beating heart apparently became less astute after 1949.

Mao’s successor, Deng Xiaoping, dealt with these issues in a very different way. Still, Khan says, their instincts were similar: the overarching goal, keeping China secure, remained the same. This should go without saying, for it would be difficult to find a world leader who did not wish to keep his or her country secure. Khan describes Deng’s ability to make economic modernization ideologically acceptable to the CCP as an extraordinary feat that showed a deep understanding of human nature. Impressive indeed, although it did not prevent the unleashing of demons different from

Mao's—widening income gaps, corruption, and pollution, among others—as shown by the massive protest demonstrations of 1989. These fell to Deng's successors to deal with, with marginal success so far. Nor did Deng's deep understanding of human nature extend to the degree of resistance to his one-child policy or, as Khan points out, to the failure of his attack on Vietnam. Khan contends that Deng “emerged victorious from this final march: a charming invincible sprite of a man who would bring reform and opening to China by any means necessary” (p. 169). Mao, who knew Deng well, was considerably less charmed, describing him as a needle wrapped in a cotton ball.

The eras of Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao receive relatively brief treatment, with Khan observing that they took no bold imaginative leaps of the kind that might have been required to deal with the problems piling up. As Khan adds, dullness can be a virtue. This is truer of Hu than Jiang, whose decision to fire missiles into the Taiwan Strait in the mid-1990s and to pressure Japan into signing a fourth communiqué in 1998 were certainly bold. If, as Khan states, the Chinese concluded that U.S. recognition of China while passing the Taiwan Relations Act proved that the United States acts irrationally and inconsistently (p. 184), this merely underscores Beijing's lack of understanding of the U.S. political system. When President Jimmy Carter made his surprise announcement of recognition a day after Congress had left for Christmas break, even the most casual observer of U.S. politics could have predicted a congressional backlash. Another odd statement is that “Taiwanese” would later claim that the 1992 consensus had been made up (p. 185). This is no mere claim: the representative for the then-ruling political party in Taiwan, the Kuomintang, admitted eight years later that he had done so.

Xi Jinping's background is sketched in near hagiographic terms—not surprisingly insofar as Khan's primary source is the Beijing-published *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Khan describes Xi as pursuing the same goal as his predecessors: keeping the state intact. What has changed is the intensity Xi has brought to the project. As Khan points out, Xi's use of military power may be undermining the larger strategic goal it was meant to achieve: a stable neighborhood. An aging population and a conglomeration of local authorities eager to maintain their fiefdoms as economic growth slows do not help. Khan states, “none of this is to fault Xi” (p. 236). The pollution and the aging population may not be attributable to Xi, but surely the aggressive military policy is, as is the degree of resistance to his heavy-handed curtailment of civil liberties within China. Rather than say China has turned against Xi (p. 235), one might argue that Xi has turned China against himself and many other countries against China. Khan concludes that “great China strode the world, a behemoth whose time had come.” His assessment thus mirrors the CCP line: under the party's leadership China has made heroic strides toward economic and military development, but the country's rulers still feel fragile and “terrified that [China] would fall apart again” (p. 246).

