

### The Dragon's Teeth

*Liu, Yueh-yun, CHINA AS A NUCLEAR POWER IN WORLD POLITICS. New York: Taplinger, 1972, \$5.95.*

*Kalicki, J. H., THE PATTERN OF SINO-AMERICAN CRISES. London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1975, \$17.95.*

*Whitson, William W., THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL POWER IN CHINA IN THE 1970's. New York: Praeger, 1972, \$20.00.*

*Yin, John, SINO-SOVIET DIALOGUE ON THE PROBLEM OF WAR. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971, \$17.50.*

More than a quarter-century has passed since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. War between China and the United States occurred in Korea, 1950-53. Armed confrontation, direct or indirect, occurred in the Taiwan Strait in 1954-55 and 1958 and in Indochina in 1954 and 1965-68. Unilateral perceptions of threat prompted Peking to a political-military demarche in 1962 and Washington to a far-flung system of alliances and bases around half of China's periphery 1951 to 1975.

This historic record of conflict and confrontation stands in contrast with the sudden realignment of 1969-72 which saw China's response to a perceived Soviet threat swing its policy 180 degrees toward détente with the United States. This swing was reciprocated in Washington for

various reasons, including the long-suppressed desire to improve communications with Peking so as to minimize miscalculation and lessen the risks of future conflict. By 1976 American analysts openly argued the merits of providing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with selective military sales and Chinese officials quietly urged a genuine entente based on an alleged common strategic interest against Soviet hegemony.

However, much remains to be achieved in Sino-American relations, even should the Taiwan issue be finessed and the final exchange of ambassadors result in full-fledged embassies on both sides. A direct conflict of interests in the Korean peninsula, exacerbated by an ongoing arms race fueled from Washington and Peking, leaves the two larger powers potentially at the mercy of their smaller clients in north and south. This situation is worsened by recurring repression and political tension in Seoul, on the one hand, and by uncertainty as to the post-Kim leadership in Pyongyang, on the other hand. Should South Korea realize its express ambition to acquire nuclear weapons, the future prospects are further complicated.

The East China Sea offers another arena of potential friction between China and the United States. The uninhabited, minuscule Senkaku Islands lying between Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands are claimed by Peking and Tokyo. The Chinese have "shelved" the issue for the sake of better relations but clearly have not abandoned the claim. Aside from the symbolic importance of territorial integrity, the Senkaku Islands figuratively represent the proverbial tip of the iceberg because they may provide access to suspected oil reserves lodged in the continental shelf. China's willingness to compromise its claim of exclusive ownership to the shelf will affect relations with South Korea and Japan, already actively exploring the shelf, and also with the Philippines and Taiwan. Ultimately, American interests in Japanese energy needs, American private oil companies, and a peaceful multilateral resolution of conflicting ocean claims may force a more direct role in these matters.

The South China Sea is a less serious but nonetheless potential area of dispute. Peking lays claim to all the important islands therein, in conflict with Hanoi, Taipei, and Manila at various points. The PLA seizure of the Paracels in January 1974 from the Thieu regime's small task force has subsequently won repeated prominence in domestic Chinese media. By implication it provides a precedent for similar action in the Spratley's should other claimants not back off. As a "worst case"

situation, extension of territorial and economic claims from these islands could conceivably permit Peking to make the South China Sea a virtual closed area, subject to outside passage and use by permission.

This agenda of extant and potential conflict situations will be addressed in a post-Mao, post-Chou era when leadership struggles may constrain options in Peking and international disputes may be perceived more assertively, at least for a while. It would be wrong, therefore, to dismiss Sino-American relations as necessarily set on a smooth course of mutual confidence and cooperation, just as it would obviously be wrong to project an inevitable return to the past hot and cold wars.

In this context the four books under review are a mixed lot, ranging from irrelevant to indispensable. The Yin and Liu volumes can be dismissed in short order. However, Whitson's collection of essays, while badly dated, has some valuable information and insights, while the Kalicki study is a first-class analytical history of major value for present and future understanding.

Professor Yin's work is superb scholarship, but academic in the worst as well as the best sense of the word. His formidable linguistic talents have been applied to Russian, Chinese, German, French, and English sources to trace in the most meticulous manner the Sino-Soviet argument over all aspects of war, its origins, its various manifestations—civil, local, and revolutionary, and the obligations of a "socialist state" thereto. At least one-fourth of the polemical exchanges occurred during the Vietnam war, yet the analysis is almost wholly limited to the verbal debate between Peking and Moscow, bereft of any action context or implications. As an exegesis of contemporary communist positions placed against the theoretical background of Lenin's writings, Professor Yin's research is thorough, his writing is objective, and his dissection of turgid, repetitive editorials is highly illuminating. Unfortunately, the significance of this "dialogue" is not discernible from his work alone.

Professor Liu's slim volume is neither scholarly nor objective. Granted the difficulties of speculation about the future compared with research on the past, the author nonetheless misleads his audience by failing to differentiate certainty, probability, and possibility. He states flatly, "Both India and Japan will become nuclear powers when Communist China possesses an operational nuclear force." This forecast, written in 1971, does not inspire confidence in his other judgments, as when he quotes an Indian writer on the likelihood of China using nuclear blackmail. Liu argues, "It is doubtful whether the United States would be willing to continue to honor its present commitments

in Asia" once China has nuclear weapons. His image of a nuclear China as "very likely" to pursue "objectives more directly and aggressively" is both unconvincing in argument and unsubstantiated by events to date.

The Whitson symposium has something for everybody, but no one will find it wholly satisfying—perhaps an inevitable result of soliciting eighteen contributions only fifteen to twenty pages long. Moreover, the unfortunate timing of Chinese political developments found the authors writing during the PLA ascendancy of 1968-70, but publication occurred just after Lin Piao's disappearance in 1971. This coincided with the demise of PLA power, capped by the December 1973 rotation of regional commanders out of positions they had occupied for a decade or more. The result was to render obsolete a major portion of the analysis and in particular to destroy Dr. Whitson's basic premise, accepted by many of the authors, concerning the dominant role of field commanders and the proportionate allocation of power according to field armies.

Nonetheless, some of the essays are excellent and several others are highly informative. Harry Harding, Jr. speculates with discipline and insight on "the making of Chinese military policy," scrupulously showing the limits of evidence and hypothesis while challenging conventional wisdom on Chinese decision-making. Richard Wich subtly interprets Peking's statements on "allies and adversaries" to offer a succinct, lucid account of its relations with Moscow and its perceptions of Washington down to 1971. He does not venture into forecasting "the 1970's" as suggested by the title, but his suggestive analysis permits the reader to anticipate the likely range of confrontation versus compromise in Sino-American and Sino-Soviet relations. John E. Coon addresses "the PLA and Chinese power abroad" with care and precision, differentiating between "aggression" and "subversion." He avoids polemical language, marshaling data to support his analysis and forecast of how Chinese military power is likely to expand Peking's influence and possible intervention in the domestic affairs of selected nations ranging from Africa through Southeast Asia.

Franz Mogdis highlights the possible role of bureaucratic politics, as does Charles Horner in his discussion of nuclear weapons production. Harvey Nelson's excellent mapping of the differing levels and components under military command highlights the tension between decentralization imperatives and local resistance to central government directives, although his attempt to predict Chinese aggression from the PLA command structure is simplistic. Richard E. Gillespie and John C. Sims, Jr. frankly admit little is known (perhaps that can

be declassified) concerning the General Rear Services Department, but compensate with shrewd political judgment applied to such facts as have been painstakingly assembled. Finally, two articles having little to do with the book's title deserve attention by serious students of China. Edward L. Dreyer gives a superb summary of the military in imperial China while Scott A. Boorman develops highly sophisticated hypotheses concerning deception in Chinese strategy which draws on history, *wei-ch'i* (or *go*), and game theory.

The editor's express concern, "trends over the past five years and over the next five years," extends to 1977, but much of the remaining chapters offered little help in anticipating 1971-73, much less developments to date. Parris H. Chang's essay on the PLA's political role suffers the most from obsolescence, except of course for Thomas W. Robinson's succinct study of Lin Piao, based on his more detailed monograph which unfortunately never saw commercial publication. A similar problem limits the utility of John D. Simmonds' piece on "the new gun-barrel elite" and Ting Wang's "the emergent military class." Perhaps Whitson could persuade the publisher to offer a sequel wherein these same authors would review and update their analysis.

In contrast, Kalicki combines first-rate research, analysis, and writing in a volume that is required reading for any student of Sino-American relations or conflictual international relations. The chasm which separates Sino-centric scholarship from the field of strategic studies is rarely bridged, but Kalicki succeeds to an impressive degree, limited mainly by his apparent inability to use original Chinese sources. His book serves several levels of need simultaneously. It is excellent history, particularly on the American policy-making side, concerning the main confrontations between Peking and Washington down to 1960. He superbly synthesizes his interviews with key figures, other archival materials, memoirs, and journalistic accounts of the time. He specifically identifies the systemic, regional, and domestic political-military contexts and factors which affect situations and participant behavior. Last and not least, he introduces a modest, lucid paradigm of crisis interaction to facilitate comparative analysis by the political scientist without burdening the general reader with a plethora of jargon and academic citations.

Kalicki sensibly argues that governmental behavior is modified by experience and that "learning" affects reactions over time. He is on particularly strong ground since Peking and Washington enjoyed a considerable continuity of leadership and a common arena of confrontation between 1950 and 1958. The author demonstrates by case-

studies of Korea, Indochina, and the Taiwan Straits crises exactly how his hypothesis applies. He remains objective in his judgments although he necessarily knows much more about Washington's thinking as compared with Peking. Thus, Kalicki sometimes tends to take Chinese public statements at their word, a mistake he never makes with the United States. Moreover, while he is willing to give even the devil his due, in this case praising John Foster Dulles's final handling of the 1958 episode, he occasionally lets his personal views prejudice his prose—as with Douglas MacArthur.

Kalicki is best on the earlier confrontations and where he can focus on the Sino-American signals, interactions, and changed relationship. He is weakest in attempting to infer Chinese motives and Sino-Soviet relations. This becomes critical, however, only in his final case-study, the 1958 Quemoy bombardment and blockade. As I have indicated elsewhere, newly available authoritative Chinese material attributed to Mao Tse-tung denies that any consultation over the Taiwan situation occurred during Khrushchev's visit to Peking earlier that summer, a point on which China specialists in Moscow are equally insistent. Moreover, Jonathan D. Pollock's recent doctoral dissertation on the 1958 crisis effectively narrows the range of plausible interpretations concerning the genesis and development of Mao's strategy, refuting *inter alia* much of Kalicki's admitted speculation.

However, the book is a mine of information on American perceptions and politics, bureaucratic as well as domestic, and their effect on our actions and reactions. Kalicki's political acumen makes even the footnotes stimulating and pleasurable. His periodic recapitulation of events and their implications for his wider analysis is especially lucid and penetrating. His slips are rare. Why include Tibet in the same category as North Korea when assessing "gains" versus "losses" in 1954? His conclusions conform on the whole with more narrowly focused studies of these crises. Yet the historical perspective, conceptual framework, and comparative approach give his work a freshness and relevance that deserves a wide readership, particularly among readers of this journal.

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