why Beijing has sometimes acted, or reacted, to harm its strategic objectives. For example, the COVID pandemic presented a strategic opportunity for China to promote its leadership in global health governance, but Beijing harmed its reputation due to a lack of transparency. Beijing also has floundered in its management of Taiwan and Hong Kong issues. The book does not sufficiently discuss the lack of coherence among all of China’s responses or actions in light of the multidimensional nature of China’s model. She also needs to elaborate more on the strategic priority of China’s policy preferences.

The final chapter offers some thoughts on how the United States and the rest of the world should respond to China’s strategic ambitions. There are three main takeaways. First, she points out that US policy toward China is framed as “not about China but rather about the broader context of the rule-based order” (215). That is, the policy has been leveraged to a level of contradiction between two distinctive value-based world orders. Second, cooperation with allies and partners is central to Washington’s China strategy. Economy suggests that it is difficult to respond to China’s strategic ambition because countries have distinctive approaches to China’s economic coercion, and thus greater coordination is necessary. Third, potential cooperation between the United States and China is still possible, such as on climate change, the Iran nuclear deal, and the pandemic. This opinion is shared among Chinese and American experts. Although this cooperation would not fundamentally alter the contested worldviews, it could improve the US-China relationship. Since Economy is a senior advisor (for China) at the US Department of Commerce, her views may be helpful to understand the competing prospects of the two great powers from the US perspective.

Overall, the book offers an insightful, objective overview of China’s foreign policies in recent years. With little discussion of theories, it is suitable for readers with little knowledge about international relations or Chinese politics and who want to learn more about contemporary China beyond the newspapers and social media.

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Protecting China’s Interests Overseas: Securitization and Foreign Policy, by Andrea Ghiselli. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. 304 pp. US$100.00 (cloth); also available as an e-book.

China’s interests have naturally expanded beyond its geographical borders along with its ascent in world politics. How China protects its interests
overseas—including the lives and assets of Chinese citizens abroad—is not only a new challenge for its government but also a window for the outside world to understand the profound implications of its rise in international relations. Andrea Ghiselli’s book is an intriguing study that sheds new light on this timely, significant, but underresearched topic in the study of Chinese foreign policy.

Ghiselli focuses on two “how” questions in examining China’s approaches to protecting its interests overseas: How have Chinese nationals and assets abroad been framed as a security issue in China’s foreign and security policy discourse, and How has the Chinese government developed foreign and security policies to protect its interests overseas, especially with the involvement of its military? Ghiselli argues that international crises that significantly impact Chinese assets and lives overseas, such as Libya’s civil war in 2011, are the major trigger that has encouraged Chinese leaders to securitize these international interests. The policy-making process has not been smooth, especially concerning the role of the military, because “uncertainty, lack of clear information and experience, and the different interests within the bureaucracy have undermined the emergence of a well-thought-out strategy until recently” (3). Therefore, it would be an exaggeration to argue that China’s military involvement in protecting its interests overseas in the Middle East and North Africa, such as the evacuation mission in Libya and the establishment of a military base in Djibouti, is a deliberate strategy to “erode American supremacy in these regions” (241).

Ghiselli’s book makes three significant contributions to the study of Chinese foreign policy. First, it fills a significant gap in our understanding of China’s rise. In their research on China’s rise, scholars and policy analysts have focused on great power competitions, territorial disputes, and China’s “going global” through massive investment projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative. What are the geopolitical ramifications of these new policies for other countries, as well as world politics in general? Ghiselli’s book offers one of the most comprehensive and systematic analyses of these questions, although some readers might challenge some arguments in the book.

Second, a key difficulty in analyzing China’s foreign policy is the lack of reliable, accessible information because of the opaque nature of its political system. Consequently, many scholars and policy analysts put China in a “black box” and examine its foreign policy behavior without considering the nuanced bureaucratic and domestic dynamics in its decision-making process. Ghiselli digs into various Chinese-language primary sources and creatively seeks to open this black box of China’s decision making. He also innovatively integrates his area studies knowledge with social science theory and methodology—securitization theory and case study method—to analyze how different domestic actors influence China’s policy making in protecting its interests overseas.

The third contribution lies in the policy implications of Ghiselli’s findings. Since the Trump administration launched a trade war against China in 2018, the strategic
competition between China and the United States has intensified. Even after Biden came to power, the United States did not change its competitive and even hostile attitude toward China, although cooperation between the two countries is much needed for coping with global challenges such as climate change. One popular argument in Washington, DC, is that China has deliberately employed a “secret” grand strategy to surpass the United States, taking advantage of the fact that China is the largest beneficiary of the US-led liberal international order that emerged after the Cold War. Michael Pillsbury’s *The Hundred-Year Marathon* (2015) has been seen as a road map of Trump’s confrontational policy toward China. In a similar vein but with more sophisticated analyses, a 2021 book, *The Long Game* by Rush Doshi, a policy advisor in the Biden administration, argues that the Chinese government has set a three-stage strategy—blunting, building, and expansionist—to displace the US-led regional and global orders.

Ghiselli’s book takes a different tack and sheds new light on our understanding of China’s foreign and security decision making as largely crisis-driven behavior, which is constrained, shaped, and influenced by internal politics, bureaucratic interests, as well as public opinion inside China. Ghiselli contends it is hard to argue that China’s strategy to defend its interests overseas is a “well-thought-out plan” (242), including the involvement of the military. The book proposes that Beijing does not possess the capability to design and employ a well-designed strategy to defeat the United States. The book reminds US policy makers that overestimating China’s capability or demonizing Chinese leaders’ intentions will lead to a misleading and counterproductive policy toward China.

Two issues, however, deserve further research. First, it is worth examining how securitization leads to negative ramifications for China’s foreign and security policies, especially after President Xi Jinping moved to securitize almost everything since 2013. In addition, how to generalize the findings of this book to other issue areas in China as well as to transfer the knowledge generated from China to other countries is a future challenge for the author as well as other scholars who study Chinese foreign policy.

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