

BOOK REVIEW

***China Goes Global: The Partial Power.* David Shambaugh. London: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 409.**

The rise of China matters. China has been aspiring to become a true global power in every field. A global power's external behaviour is very important when it comes to assessing its strengths and weaknesses. The same is true for its internal dynamics which relate to its society, politics, and its culture. Therefore, the internal as well as external behaviour of a nation is a credible gauge in terms of assessing its true image as a global power.

Lately, there has been a great amount of discussion about China's role in the arenas of global politics, economy, and culture. Some doubt whether China will rule the world in the future. Many studies have attempted to unveil the complexities surrounding this question. Some of these employ an Occidental perspective. Oriental perspectives are more inclusive, but narrow Chinese perspectives are also employed.

David Shambaugh in *China Goes Global: The Partial Power* assess whether China has global impact from an American viewpoint, in order to understand it as a true global power. The underlying argument in this work is that China is a partial power in terms of its diplomatic, economic, cultural, and military dimensions (Shambaugh 2013, 10). Shambaugh is an expert on China-related studies, and teaches politics and international affairs at the China Policy Program at George Washington University, USA. The work is a fascinating discussion of China's role in world politics, in conjunction with its domestic affairs. It is a well-written and thought-provoking account and critique. A large number of sources have been utilised to accomplish the work.

It is anticipated that the Chinese economy might surpass the US economy by 2025. Shambaugh's core argument is that China is involved in a global network, but it has not been well-integrated into the system. The author convincingly argues that China has to go a long way before it can become a global power (Shambaugh 2013, 9). China has been on the rise in the international economic arena for the past two decades. It has gradually become the wealthiest nation.

The book is divided into eight chapters and well-knitted into 409 pages. In it, Shambaugh looks at the different identities of China that are shaped by its governance, as well as its presence in the economic, diplomatic, and cultural

spheres. At the moment, China is the second largest global economy and military power. However, Shambaugh comments that having a global presence does not amount to becoming a real global power. He argues that “China lacks the real global power status” (Shamsbaugh 2013, 8), which is necessary to influence global politics. He further points out that Beijing does not proactively try to resolve any global problems. He then goes on to state that China’s culture does not influence the outer world. Shambaugh mentions that China’s foreign investment is far below that of the United States’. He also cites that in terms of freedom of press and human rights, China’s image is quite poor.

Aside from Shambaugh’s analysis, China should be seen from different perspectives. China has been moving ahead cautiously within the ambit of many of these dimensions. Whereas it may not contribute directly to the resolution of many global disputes, this does not mean that China is unconscious of such affairs. In fact, China does not prefer to follow a policy of domination, but believes in the creation of a harmonious global society achieved by avoiding conflicts. China’s disputes with Japan, India, and several Southeast Asian nations are well known, but China has been addressing these through economic diplomacy, cooperation, and mutual dialogue. If China follows a policy of domination, such disputes would become much more complicated. Questioning China’s ability to help resolve these matters is thus not fair. China has played a fairly positive role in the Six Party Talks in order to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue along with other global powers. In this case also, China did not dominate the issue through a staunch discourse.

Moreover, in spite of many drawbacks, the Chinese economy is now well-integrated and has become more interdependent with the global economy. Ever since 1978, China has been transforming from an insignificant economy to a truly global one in terms of its impact on world trade and output, international capital flows, financial markets, investments, and its impact on the global commons, environment and climate. These are significant factors which can potentially bring China to the centre stage of world economic leadership. Yet China has not been dictating its terms and conditions, as was done by the United States and Western powers in the international economic system after 1945. This means that China is a cooperative economic power. This also translates into the fact that the Chinese domestic economic forces, institutions, and values are fairly competitive in working and coping with global economic institutions, values, and changes.

The US economy heavily depends on China, as the latter owns US \$1.3 trillion in the US treasury and is ranked a top investor in the US. This situation

could largely impact the US government's decisions. Similarly, China has major involvement in the Japanese government's treasury bonds. In this way, China is capable of influencing or changing the course of events in the US, Japan or elsewhere, whenever it deems such modifications necessary. Therefore, calling China a mere 'partial power' could be misleading. Shambaugh should have considered these points while constructing a holistic argument.

The Western powers have been judging China's political system from the standpoint of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 and the ideals of Socialism. In the long run, increasing economic prosperity would impact China's Socialist political system, but China would most likely remain entirely democratic in its own traditions. Therefore, a whole new perspective is required to effectively gauge the socioeconomic potentialities in this context.

While reviewing China's relations with its allies and friends, Shambaugh delineates complexities in its ties with Russia, Pakistan, and North Korea (Shambaugh 2013, 7). However, this assessment is not true as far as China's relations with Pakistan are concerned. Their relationship has been developed in subsequent periods of odds and difficulties, and both are regarded as each other's time-tested friends. Moreover, Pakistan will be a direct beneficiary of China's development. Both countries can make new inroads to economic development via an economic corridor which links Gwadar's deep-sea port in Balochistan to Kashgar in Western China's autonomous region of Xinjiang. Talks are already underway between them regarding the matter.

The work under review is an essential study for anyone interested in modern China. This volume adeptly summarises predominant discourses and discussions on modern China. However, it must be kept in mind that the work primarily depicts a Western perspective on China's global leadership role.

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