Jeffrey A. Bader, **Obama and China's Rise: An Insider's Account of America's Asia Strategy**. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2012. 171 pages. ISBN 978-0815724469

Jeffrey A. Bader served as a senior director for East Asian Affairs in President Obama's National Security Council between January 2009 and April 2011. Bader, a long associate of the Brookings Institution, major Washington-based think tank, also served in different capacities at the Department of State and Office of the United States Trade Representative. He has deep expertise in China and U.S. China policy, as he has maintained a long-term focus on Asia Pacific.

In his latest contribution, Bader offers an insider account of Obama's approach to Asia Pacific, with special focus on China. The book primarily describes policy making and implementation and thus offers, given Bader's hands-on participation in the process, an unprecedented access into the decision-making process. By uncovering the behind-the-scenes diplomacy, he seeks to explain and justify some of the Administration's moves and thus challenge negative media reporting and accusations of kowtowing to China. Bader's text aims to show that the White House had a clear strategy to deal with foreign policy issues, despite dealing mostly with domestic issues during the first two years of Barack Obama's presidency. This does not come as a surprise since Obama, as candidate for president in 2008, tried to position himself as a foreign policy president. He wanted to demonstrate that the Democratic Party could have a strong, successful foreign policy and thus erase the popular image that the Republican Party was stronger on national security issues.

Bader proceeds more or less chronologically to examine some of the key issues that arose in the Asia Pacific region that the Obama Administration had to address. He explains how the Administration laid the groundwork and set priorities for U.S.–China relations during Secretary of State Clinton's first trip to Asia (chapter two and three), how it reacted to North Korean missile tests in 2009 (chapter four) and sinking of Cheonan (chapter nine), what were the key issues in the U.S.–Japan relations during the transition from the Liberal Democratic Party to the Democratic Party of Japan (chapter five) and the tsunami aftermath (chapter twelve). One chapter is dedicated to the Obama Administration's effort to build stronger ties with Southeast Asia, which included both strengthening bilateral ties as well as increasing U.S. participation in multilateral regional fora, a major shift from Bush administration.

Bader starts with a closer look at Obama's approach towards Asia Pacific during his 2008 presidential campaign. He examines the composition of Obama's foreign policy team, which consisted of seasoned experts with previous experience in service for the government. According to Bader, Obama's conceptualization of his vision for U.S. Asia policy "did not involve dramatic changes … [as] the problems in U.S. leadership in Asia were not the consequence of Asia-specific policy errors, but rather of the spillover of misguided U.S. policies elsewhere in the world" (p. xvii).

In this context, we can infer that Obama's approach to China, the focus of the book, was influenced by two major factors. First, President Obama followed up on President

Bush's China policy, which was generally seen as a success, and therefore most Obama's advisors found it relatively easy to build upon many of Bush's initiatives. The Bush Administration, for example, laid important groundwork for bilateral (and some multilateral) dialogues that promoted government to government or military to military exchanges but also served as a means of building mutual trust, the lack of which continues to be a key challenge in Sino-American relations. The key dialogues however focused mostly on economic issues. Therefore, the Obama Administration, particularly Hillary Clinton, wanted to increase the prominence of political and security issues in bilateral discussions, leading to creation of so-called Strategic and Economic Dialogue. The discussion of political and security issues was deemed critical since the rise of China and its impact on the world order was of a fundamental concern to Obama and his foreign policy advisors as they were working on the Administration's broader policy towards Southeast Asia. Bader himself joins many of his predecessors in optimism that the United States could have a constructive relationship with Beijing, one that could shape China into a "responsible stakeholder," as he writes on p. 7: "America's relationship with China could be shaped to maximize the chances that China's rise will become a stabilizing and constructive force rather than a threat to peace and equilibrium."

Second, Obama decided to pay more attention to the Asia Pacific region as a whole. Bader, while praising Bush for establishing good relations with Beijing, is critical of the previous president for neglecting Southeast Asia (p. 1). For example, the Bush Administration, mistrustful of multilateral organizations, skipped some of meetings of regional multilateral fora such as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) or Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In times when the U.S. influence was seen as waning, particularly in the aftermath of Iraq and Afghanistan, President Obama and his staff felt it was important to address the mounting concerns of many Southeast Asian countries about the rise of China and its impact on the region. Consequently, Bader argues that under Obama, an adjustment of policy was needed (p. 6): "The Asia-Pacific region deserved higher priority in American foreign policy. With wealth, power, and influence gradually shifting from Europe toward Asia in the past several decades, the region has emerged as the world's center of gravity for economic, political, and security decision in the twenty-first century." Since President Obama deemed reassurance of U.S. allies in the region as crucial, the Administration ramped up U.S. involvement in the region's multilateral fora, intensified bilateral cooperation with many of the U.S. allies in the region, and most importantly announced the policy of "Pivot to Asia" or "rebalance" with its key component of Trans-Pacific Partnership. This strategic shift, as some perceive it, came after Bader's departure from the White House and therefore is not covered in the book, but it can be seen as a natural outcome of the U.S. foreign policy adjustments that Bader initiated with his colleagues.

While Bader promises to take a closer look at the phenomenon of the rise of China and the Obama Administration's reactions to this process, this topic is covered only in a part of the book. Bader focuses mostly on the evolution of the Sino-American relationship. In this respect, chapter six is the most interesting. It provides a glimpse into the behind-the-scenes decision-making related to several important episodes regarding Southeast Asia during

Obama's first year in office, such as the cancellation of the Dalai Lama visit, Obama's visit to China and the climate Summit in Copenhagen. In the case of the Dalai Lama, Bader attempts to explain the logic behind the cancellation and counters some of the media reporting accusing the Obama Administration of caving to Chinese pressure. He points out that the cancellation of the meeting enabled the U.S. officials to exert pressure on China with respect to the Tibet issue – Beijing pledged to renew dialogue with Dalai Lama's representatives, a promise that was upheld in January 2010 (p. 74). Similarly, in his account of Obama's visit to China, Bader expresses frustration with some of the coverage the President received. He describes, for example, President Obama's town hall meeting in Shanghai – Bader believed that the president made his mark, speaking of "tribute to the U.S. system of democracy, freedom, protection of human rights, and constitutional law," but the U.S. media chose to criticize the fact that the speech was broadcast on Chinese terms, exposing efforts of the Chinese to constrain the event (p. 58–59). Bader critiques efforts to portray the U.S. approach to China as kowtowing: "[i]n terms of American public perceptions of the trip, the Western media coverage of these events damaged both the trip and the administration's ability to manage China policy" (p. 60). Bader thus personally experiences the "difficulty of conducting a serious foreign policy in a public domain dominated by superficial discourse, in which sound bites substitute for a sound assessment of the costs and benefits of different approaches." (p. 52)

In the following, seventh chapter, Bader looks at increasing tensions in Sino-American relations which threatened to undermine the Administration's goal of strengthening the cooperation between Washington and Beijing. The tensions were caused by President Obama's decision to approve arms sales to Taiwan, which Beijing had traditionally opposed, negotiations over Iran sanctions, and most importantly by China's activities in the South China Sea and the East China Sea. China's behavior in the South China Sea particularly drew media attention, leading many scholars as well as journalists to speak of China's increasing assertiveness. Bader notes that Beijing's growing assertive behavior most likely reflected an internal discussion in China on the U.S. post-2008 financial meltdown distraction or even decline: "The impression that China was rapidly overtaking the United States was rampant not only in Chinese literature but also in American media" (p. 80). Bader also notes a more confident stance of Chinese diplomats: "It is evident in retrospect that the Chinese were debating the direction of Chinese foreign policy in the last few months of 2010. For most of the year, the advocates of a more assertive Chinese policy had gone unchallenged publicly, while those favoring the more traditional cautious foreign policy had been effectively silenced" (p. 122).

The tensions between the United States and China influenced Hu Jintao's visit to the United States in 2010, described in chapter eleven. Bader describes in detail the preparation of the visit and the topics that needed to be put on the discussion agenda. These included issues of military relations, bilateral trade, such as the trade imbalance and undervaluation of Chinese yuan. Here, Bader remarks on p. 113 that he personally was comfortable with a tougher trade policy, a stance that probably was not welcome at the Department of Treasury. Other

important international issues that the U.S. wanted to be on table for discussions included combating proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Iran and Korea, combating terrorism and stabilizing Pakistan etc. The Administration drew a lesson from Obama's China visit and focused carefully on messaging in an effort to prevent media from hijacking the agenda-setting as well as positive outcomes of the trip. The visit thus focused on the Administration's priority of building a cooperative relationship with Beijing while at the same time getting China to cooperate on international issues. Encouraging China's leader to turn China into a "responsible stakeholder" was however successful only partially. China resisted the U.S. pressure to uphold universal standards, which Bader illustrates by Hu Jintao's reluctant answer: "China is making strides in this area but still had a long way to go." (p. 127)

Only one chapter is dedicated to building stronger ties with Southeast Asia (chapter nine), one of the key priorities of the Obama Administration. Bader briefly describes the U.S. effort to increase activity within regional multilateral fora, such as the ASEAN or East Asia Summit, as well as building strong bilateral ties with key regional players, such as Indonesia, Thailand, or Vietnam. Bader also highlights Obama's announcement of his commitment to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership, free trade agreement, which has been the key economic component of Obama's rebalance policy.

In the concluding chapter, Bader summarizes the necessary principles for U.S. foreign policy, which should, in his opinion, guide Obama's Asia policy. These were in fact later, after Bader's departure, transformed into the "Pivot to Asia" concept, which involved the following goals: devote a higher priority to the Asia Pacific region, react in a balanced way to the rise of China, strengthen alliances and develop new partnerships, including joining regional institutions that the United States had so far stayed away from, expand the overall U.S. presence in the western Pacific and maintain its forward regional deployment. It was also deemed essential to work towards breaking the cycle of North Korean saber-rattling and ultimately dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. Last but not least, the United States pledged to speak and act with clarity on the universality of human rights while taking into account the differences between societies (p. 142). Most importantly, it is essential, according to Bader, to understand that it would be impossible to pursue a sound policy without economic recovery at home.

As an insider to the decision-making process, Bader generally offers a positive account of President Obama's Asia policy making. Bader offers a candid assessment of U.S.–China relations, especially in response to reports of China's increasing belligerence. He remarks that "those of us who had decades of experience with China could not recall ever seeing it quietly roll over in the face of foreign demands" (p. 80). Bader believes that at the moment of his departure, the Administration's rebalance to Asia led to a "strengthened U.S. position in the region, and more constructive Chinese behavior … [and] stable U.S.–China political/security relationship." (p. 120)

Jeffrey Bader wrote an interesting, engaging book that provides an overview of President Obama's policy towards Asia Pacific in the two first years of his administration. Bader offers an explanation and, in some cases, also justification of President Obama's approach

to the Asia Pacific, and to China in particular. However, despite the title, it is not a thorough study of the U.S. strategy towards the rise of China. It rather offers snippets from the world of foreign policy making and diplomacy; it is a memoir rather than an academic study. Still, Bader shows the world of painstaking diplomacy where planning every last detail is important and even small, insignificant missteps can throw off months of planning and negotiation. The book thus offers an interesting insight for experienced students of U.S. foreign policy, the practice of diplomacy, and the U.S.–China relations. Bader writes for those who already know the basics and want an insider's detailed account.

Jana Sehnálková

Michael Cox, Timothy J. Lynch, and Nicolas Bouchet, eds., **US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion: From Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama**. New York, NY: Routledge, 2013. 224 pages. ISBN 978-0-203-55037-3 (ebk); 978-0-415-67980-0 (pbk)

Since the end of the Second World War and, moreover, since the end of the Cold War, democracy promotion has come to be considered an intrinsic feature of U.S. foreign policy. The maintenance of a liberal world order became the hallmark of the Cold War ideological confrontation. Not only was the creation of a free, democratic world considered to be morally correct, it was also perceived to be the only world order that could fully preserve U.S. interests, safety and "way of life." Thus, when the ideological struggle ended with the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States – from its position of world hegemon – had enough leeway to shape the world order to its liking. Yet, challenges (both internal and external) to the United States' nearly unlimited spread of liberal values soon emerged. For a rising China, the liberal world order may not be the most strategically convenient international architecture and in the not-too-distant future, Beijing may seek to revise certain aspects of the present order. Furthermore, George W. Bush's initiation of the intervention in Iraq in 2003 on the premises of democracy promotion has arguably done great harm to the policy – both in its perception on the international scene and amongst the U.S. population.

This edited volume, compiled by the most renowned democracy promotion scholars, maps the range of challenges and opportunities that the policy of promoting democracy faced throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and examines the individual roles of a number of U.S. presidents in the process. Given the vital importance of the policy to basic American interests and values, the subject of democracy promotion is by no means understudied in U.S. and world scholarship. But to put it simply, most research focuses on providing an (at least partial) answer to two basic questions: What type of democracy (or political system) is, in fact, being promoted? What is the proportion between the normative and practical U.S. interests (that is, value-based and material-based) while formulating the policy?

In analyzing the intellectual and practical approaches to the policy of promoting democracy (in other words, promoting a liberal world order) of a number of U.S. presidents, this