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Однако в целом мелкие недочеты не умаляют высокого класса и научной объективности этой работы, которая по праву не только кодифицировала существующее на сегодняшний день синологическое знание в этой области, но и будет служить долгие годы источником

знаний для нового поколения российских синологов, а также исследователей, интересующихся всеми аспектами многообразных проявлений китайской цивилизации в прошлом и в нашей современной жизни.

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**Review of the book
«The Chinese Challenge
to the Western Order», edited by Antonio
Fiori and Matteo Dian. Trento,
FBK Press, 2014**

It would not be a too much to say that there is already a large number of texts on the role of China in the world, both from a regional and a global perspective. The stunning and sustained economic growth that the country has been enjoying for more than twenty years has scholars from all corners of the globe scratching their heads and asking, is Chinese growth sustainable in the long term? And, will it represent a model for other developing countries?

The economic power acquired by China in the course of the last few decades has brought to the fore further issues. In particular, the question of if and when this impressive growth will be channelled towards military power, and a more assertive foreign policy. In this sense, we are lead to ask, will China move to challenge, or even overthrow, the world order as it stands, led by western powers and based on the principles of liberal democracy?

It is into this densely populated intellectual landscape that the latest

offering, *The Chinese Challenge to the Western Order*, edited by Antonio Fiori from the University of Bologna and Matteo Dian from the University of Venezia, finds its own voice. The collection of seven essays approaches this controversial issue from several of points of view, attempting to delineate a coherent and comprehensive analysis of the changes in Chinese international relations since the end of the Cold War.

The overarching analytical lens adopted in the volume ranges from an explication of the development of innovative and autochthonous ideas tied up in the political and social development of China, to strategic and military issues, and on to a broader analysis dissecting China's relations with regional and global actors. Given the indepth and broad discussion that is a hallmark of each chapter, this work clearly holds academic value.

From the introduction onwards, it is clear that the battle will be fought primarily over the difference between challenge and threat. Intuitively, between the two terms there arises a positive/negative dichotomy, but also a distinction in terms of an asymmetry of power, since a challenge implies a newcomer moving to undermine

a consolidate position. Quite often, this scheme led to a polarization of opinions between optimists and pessimists. A great merit of this book lies in the successful attempt to stay away from evaluating the rise of China through this kind of lens, instead focusing on the effects of this “brand new China” on the global order.

The volume is divided into two parts; the first focuses on what can be called the real challenge, that is the innovations — or the rediscoveries — that the new role of China in the global order is bringing to the spotlight. The two opening essays share the same attention to the importance of the long cultural legacy of China and its impact on current political issues. Using a constructivist approach, Menegazzi’s analysis on Chinese foreign policy is based on the consideration that historically informed Chinese identity and ideas still shape the way in which Chinese scholars and policy makers interpret the sphere of international relations. Concepts like *chaogong* (the tributary system) and *Tianxia* cannot be discarded as outdated because they continue to play a significant role, and taking into consideration these concepts encourages a better understanding of contemporary Chinese foreign policy.

In a similar vein, Onnis’ contribution on the Chinese political order shows how the development model, elaborated by Beijing over the past thirty years, is becoming an alternative to the western liberal order, especially since the global financial crisis, beginning in 2008.

The third and fourth essays in the first section deal with military and strategic matters. The transformation of the People’s Liberation Army, the subject tackled by the work of Dian and Giacomello, can be interpreted as an intellectual encounter

between contemporary Western concepts, such as Revolution of Military Affairs and informatization of warfare, and the classical Sun Tzu notion of “winning without fighting”. Similarly, Fiori’s analysis of China’s oil diplomacy and the voracity of the “Dragon” for energy supplies points out how the impact of strategic energy security issues will influence China’s foreign policy and its projection on the global arena.

The second section of the book shifts the focus to reactions to the challenge. Passeri and Fiori’s essay discusses the emerging Sino-american rivalry in the Southeast Asia theatre. Through clear and comprehensive analysis and explication the authors demonstrate how middle and small powers strive to take advantage of the competition between the two global powers. This is done by various means, such as hedging, as in the case of Myanmar, or soft-balancing strategies, as for Vietnam.

Koldunova’s essay on Russia’s response to a rising China and Dian on the American rebalance toward Asia introduce the role of the Big Powers. In particular, the last contribution to the volume looks at the issue of the close relationship between the rise of China and Washington’s Pivot to Asia, a strategy that encompasses military, diplomatic and economic components. While most scholars have focused on the military aspects, Dian’s analysis points out the importance of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, an economics focused element within the Pivot. Dian describes economic strategy as an American efforts to limit China in the area in which it has achieved the most prominent results and risks being able to undermine the U.S. position to re-establish a new Sino-centric order in East Asia.

Despite the weight of analysis within the second part of the volume, several significant deficiencies are encountered. If, in fact, the first part manages to touch on the main issues with regards to the rise of China, some fundamental points appear to have been entirely omitted. The theater of Northeast Asia, for example, is not taken into account, although that is precisely where it could be argued that China exerts the most influence, geopolitically and culturally, it is China's 'backyard'. In addition, recent developments show that the region is of crucial importance for the Sino-american relationship, and one needs look no further than the North Korean nuclear issue, renewed Japanese nationalism, or the increasingly close relationship between Beijing and Seoul to find examples of this.

Another aspect worth considering, is how the Chinese challenge to the Western order is materializing in developing regions of the world, especially in Africa and the Middle East, and how the role of China within the larger group of the BRICS countries could represent a further and stronger challenge to the West.

In the end, *The Chinese Challenge to the Western Order* is a fascinating and welcome contribution to the field of Chinese contemporary studies. This text serves as both a clear introduction to the turbulent and often opaque relations between China and the West and as a valuable and original academic analysis of the biggest challenges facing the world in the near future.

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**Рецензия на сборник статей
«Критическая геополитика» /
отв. ред. И.Ю. Окунев, С.О. Савин.
Новосибирск : Аналитика Родис, 2014**

Сборник статей «Критическая геополитика» подготовлен редакционной группой МГИМО в начале 2014 г. на материалах Клуба геополитических исследований, существующего с 2013 г., и конференции «Современные направления геополитических исследований: пространство, власть, политика», прошедшей в МГИМО в ноябре 2013 г. В составлении материалов сборника принимали участие молодые специалисты с различным бэкграундом: политики, социологи, экономисты-меж-

дународники, географы, регионоведы. Данный факт обуславливает как значительную часть плюсов, так и ряд минусов сборника.

Первым достоинством, очевидным даже неподготовленному читателю при знакомстве с оглавлением, является множественность рассматриваемых проблем и углов, под которыми они рассмотрены. Междисциплинарность, в последние десятилетия все в большей степени становящаяся ключевым фактором научной продуктивности, присуща и сборнику, и положенным в его основу конференции и научному студенческому обществу. Это выгодно отличает работу коллег — авторов и составителей — от значительной части