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Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *The China Threat: Memories, Myths, and Realities in the 1950s*,

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Edward Friedman

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Liberation Army. Selection methods have become increasingly competitive, consisting of written and oral examinations evaluated by cadres drawn from different departments in order to avoid personal collusion. "Informal" practices are resorted to at the candidates' pre-selection stage, when only three are considered for each post. Personal links become crucial, as candidates need to be recommended by an officer. According to You Ji, officers conveniently pick those in their own combat units or from the same province.

The next two contributions deal with provincial elites. Bo Zhiyue charts the careers of 31 provincial Party secretaries and governors as of November 2012, showing that the tendency is towards a relatively strict adherence to age limits as well as qualification levels for posts as heads of provinces. He notes the need for varied experience in different sectors in order to be named a provincial secretary. While Bo also describes the cadres' supposed factional attachments, he fails to explain what effect they could have in practice, or possible changes.

In the second chapter devoted to provincial elites, S. Philip Hsu and Jihwei Shao evaluate the level of meritocracy in the cadre promotion system. Their analysis relies on dates, including all provincial Party secretaries and governors between 1993 and 2010. Contrary to previous studies, they show that work experience at the central level is generally not a good indicator for promotion to the top rung in a province, but rather is a sign of approaching retirement. At the same time, the authors show that provincial chiefs are evaluated via a complex system taking into account their short-term economic performance in deciding whether they can keep their post, but also their cumulative results over the long term, compared with their predecessors, in considering them for promotion.

The book's last two chapters are devoted to specific elite types: state enterprise managers and cadres rising through the CCP Youth League. In each case, the authors seek to measure the effect of this experience on their future careers. Chih-shian Liou and Chung-min Tsai describe the CCP's control over major state enterprises via the selection and promotion of their managers and find that those who are aligned with the Party-state's agenda are promoted. In their view, the effects on future careers vary according to industrial sectors. Liou and Tsai, for instance, show that in electrical industry, promotions take place mainly within the sector, but that in the more strategic oil sector, managers can hope for political posts with great responsibility following their industrial careers.

In the last chapter, Chien-wen Kou deals with the careers of cadres who worked in the Communist Youth League after 1978. Charting the careers of 293 individuals, he notes the importance of this promotion channel, pointing out its two main features. First, few former Youth League cadres hold technical or economic ministerial posts, indicating that the League consists of generalists. Then again, League experience gives them an age advantage, helping them get important posts while still young compared to other cadres – a major career advantage. Apart from these two factors, Kou notes that the rapid and numerous promotions of former League cadres is also due to the organisation's strong links with key Party figures such as Hu Yaobang in the 1980s, then with Hu Jintao and later Li Keqiang. While the argumentation seems sound, might Kou not have overplayed the role of the organisation's internal network and by extension the unity of the faction at issue? As he has himself notes, the selection of the League's cadres at all levels rests with CCP organs and not with the organisation itself, calling into question the homogeneity of its recruitment.

To conclude, *Choosing China's Leaders* should interest all readers curious about the process of selecting Chinese political elites. It has the classical

lacuna of collective works in that issues raised in the introduction are only partially addressed in the chapters that make up the book. More generally, while the book has on the whole focused on the interaction between the Party's growing institutionalisation and the persistence of entrenched factions, this separation between policies seen as "formal" or "informal" has not been addressed. The question might well arise whether their constant interaction does not challenge this dichotomy. Personal relations also tend to be treated as a given, without proper questioning of the mechanisms explaining their development and persistence. A more dynamic approach to these networks would thus be welcome for a clearer understanding of promotion mechanisms in the Chinese Party-state.

■ Translated by N. Jayaram.

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**Nancy Bernkopf Tucker,**  
**The China Threat: Memories,**  
**Myths, and Realities in the**  
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## EDWARD FRIEDMAN

Completed during her final battle with cancer, this book by the pre-eminent American diplomatic historian of PRC era USA-PRC relations, Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, is a superb study of Eisenhower era Washington-Beijing relations. She finds that President Eisenhower, Ike, erred when he concluded that political forces in his Republican Party, the U.S. Congress and American public opinion made it impossible for him to act on his personal views that a constructive approach to Mao's China was preferable to an unsustainable policy of trying to isolate a stable CCP regime from international organisations and trade.

For Tucker, Ike should have educated the American public to understand that a powerful PRC was here to stay and also should have made overtures to Mao toward normalising relations. Tucker will not accept what her data establishes, that American politics blocked such policies.

Tucker challenges myths about Eisenhower's policy on the PRC. Her archival digging and interviews with key American actors undermine the story that Ike's successor, John Kennedy, could not open to China because Ike had threatened to rally the people against Kennedy attempting such an opening. Tucker shows that Eisenhower actually wished to end the doomed policy of trying to isolate the PRC.

"The China Threat" also clarifies why the Eisenhower administration got so many things wrong about China. Tucker details why the U.S. administration would not believe the data showing a Moscow-Beijing split and how the administration wrongly saw Mao's economically irrational policies as

somehow making the PRC a successful industrial moderniser. Tucker also finds that Washington was blinded both by Eurocentric presuppositions and an inability to appreciate "the force of decolonization or third world nationalism" (p. 27).

Tucker reveals that Ike was more worried about war prone forces in the Chiang Kai-shek government on Taiwan than by such forces in the PRC. Eisenhower "worried about Chiang Kai-shek's ability to plunge the United States into an unwanted war" (p. 15); "Dulles believed that Chiang would not hesitate to incite World War III..." (p. 29); Dulles "blunted Nationalist efforts to provoke Beijing" (p. 30). In contrast, Mao was "extremely cautious" (p. 21). Although Dulles "collaborated with Dean Rusk to drive the Generalissimo from power" in 1950 (p. 26), Tucker concludes that the Ike-Dulles administration did not try to topple Chiang. But part of the resolution to the 1958 crisis in the Taiwan Strait may have been Chiang Kai-shek pulling way back from provocative incursions into the PRC in return for the USA ending its efforts to replace Chiang.

Tucker finds that by 1953, the Mao leadership no longer saw the U.S. as a military threat (pp. 57-58). She dismisses Mao's language welcoming nuclear war as the "rhetoric" of "self-protection" (p. 59). Nehru experienced Mao's declarations as madness. In fact, Mao recklessly self-isolated China, alienating Russia, India, and numerous others.

Tucker offers rich data on the two 1950s crises in the Taiwan Strait. Her data persuades me that the CCP leaders, after a century of war and chaos, wanted to modernise China. They therefore had to push Chiang's forces off islands all the way north to Shanghai, islands that blockaded Chinese ports and prevented trade with the world. "China's southeast coast had been suffering the effects of a Nationalist Chinese blockade..." (p. 87). The PRC sought talks with the U.S. to "tackle trade" (p. 97). "China wanted to buy goods which were better made than the Russian variety and send students to the United States" (p. 98). The PRC wanted to end the U.S. "trade embargo" (p. 99).

In 1954-5, Chinese attacks were meant to end the Chiang blockade of the PRC. That is, CCP "goals were limited" (p. 97). China "was not... prepared to attack Taiwan" (pp. 75-77). "Mao stressed that PLA forces should at no point engage the Americans directly" (p. 77). Because Eisenhower responded by getting Chiang off the islands used for the blockade, "Mao concluded that Washington wanted so desperately to avoid war..." (p. 79). In like manner, "Eisenhower doubted that the Chinese Communists wanted to risk war" (p. 82).

When Mao instigated another crisis in 1958 by ordering the shelling of the offshore islands of Jinmen and Mazu, once again Eisenhower and Mao "both sought to avoid a military collision" (p. 139). Mao sought to create a crisis atmosphere to facilitate the mobilisation of villagers into gargantuan collectives euphemistically dubbed communes (p. 158) and to display his own ability to manage the Americans in the interest of wars of national liberation as Khrushchev's policy of peaceful coexistence and detente supposedly could not. Jinmen and Mazu "were of no military value" (p. 149).

Mao's irresponsible playing at war alienated Moscow (p. 169). Mao boasted that he was keeping Ike and Khrushchev "scurrying," something "wonderful" (p. 149). Mao's recklessness forced Ike to spend a lot of political capital beating back American hawks and Chiang, both of whom sought to use Mao's provocations to legitimate a war against the PRC. Once again, Mao saw that the American president sought peace (p. 148). The U.S. intensified pressure on Chiang to "cease commando raids... and efforts to blockade mainland ports" (p. 157).

But Tucker errs when she forgets Mao's domestic and international agenda and places the crises in an alleged context of "China's yearning for unification" (p. 157). There is no data on such "yearnings." In fact, Mao never fixated on Taiwan, an island that was not part of Chinese nationalist consciousness before 1942.

The author similarly errs in lending credence to the CCP narrative that "The Chinese understood the humiliation of exploitation by the West, having endured a century of semicolonialism and near national extinction" (p. 47). Actually, the last dynasty, the Qing, more than doubled the size of territory controlled by the Sinicized Ming, annexing huge swathes of non-Sinicized territories. Subsequently, the Han CCP has threatened national extinction for Manchu, Mongol, Tibetan, and Uyghur communities. The Han, through a policy known as "settler colonialism," now pervade the territories of these peoples. The post-Mao myth that the Mongol and Manchu invaders had somehow re-united China and that the Han who resisted the invaders were splitists is a rhetoric that legitimates Chinese revanchism, as does the narrative about a century of humiliation.

For Mao, the nation stealing the most land hitherto conquered by the militarily expansionist Qing was Tsarist Russia and their heirs, the New Tsars of Soviet Russia, not the West. The invader that killed the most Chinese was Hirohito's Showa era Imperium, not the West. Sun Yat-sen's nationalists took as the people who had long humiliated the Han to be the Manchus, not the West. It is the domestic political purposes of an anti-liberal CCP that leads to a historical myth that demonises "the West."

Tucker shows how important it is to comprehend what governments get wrong and why, such as missing early opportunities for the normalisation of Washington-Beijing relations. While Mao's China increasingly fixated on the Soviet Union as Enemy Number One, the Eisenhower administration, goaded by Chiang and the Republican Right, greatly "exaggerated the Chinese menace" (p. 177). In contrast, Mao, by 1961, the year Eisenhower left office, wanted to make overtures to Washington for an entente, according to the director of the CCP archive, Hu Hua.

Tucker's study brilliantly explores how American domestic politics shaped and delimited Eisenhower's foreign policy choices. She seeks similar data on China. She is wise to do so. To fill out the picture of USA-PRC relations, analysts need access to Chinese archives that would reveal the forces at work inside of CCP politics. Without that data, it is natural and misleading to underestimate how domestic Chinese politics were, and still are, central in shaping and informing CCP foreign policy choices.

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