

was back sliding and recurrence in many places. Even though the prevention part of the program was never a great success, Mao's authority and example were powerful incentives to accept the new treatments and some prevention. Disease was controlled but not eradicated.

At the national level, this mass mobilization campaign served other goals. Party strategy was to use health campaigns in rural areas to help develop and consolidate Party control as it aimed toward general ideas of socialist collectivization. In addition, technical skills in the villages increased because of the health campaigns, and this led to a kind of grassroots science that was of great help generally, and specifically in strengthening scientific socialism. For better or worse, as Gross argues, this was well demonstrated in the role these local youth would later play as leaders in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (815).

Gross uses newly available archival sources to revise the common view that the campaign against snail fever was an unqualified success, a model of collective, grassroots hygiene that has been seen as leading to the 1978 WHO Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care. As a needed antidote to this popular conception, she provides a balanced and clear-eyed analysis of an important milestone in global health and of the early days of the PRC.

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CONVERGENCE OR CONFLICT IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT: The Illusion of Peace? *Routledge Research on Taiwan*, 18. By J. Michael Cole. London; New York: Routledge, 2017. viii, 215 pp. US\$150.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-138-69623-5; US\$58.95, paper, ISBN 978-1-138-69624-2.

This book has been released at an important moment, timely as we assess the first year of President Tsai Ing-wen in office and China's predictable response, all in the light of speculation about the policies of the incoming Republican administration in the United States. The chapters span the period beginning with the previous Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) administration of Chen Shui-bian through to the run-up to the January 2016 elections and their immediate aftermath. The September 2016 Hong Kong Legislative Council elections were another milepost in a parallel unfolding of the democratic challenge to Beijing, originating back during the final months of 2014. Because of this linkage, the author devotes a large part of the analysis, in a book about Taiwan, to developments in Hong Kong. For both, the prospects appear stark, as observers remain hopeful, prompted by faint signs of medium- and long-term progress. China's response has been predictable, but also, for both international observers and participants, alarming. President Xi's turn toward a new Cold War stance in the region is the backdrop to this concern. Above all, it is the sober evaluation of

objective facts and constraints as they are, and an understanding of the viable pathways forward, that the reader should keep in mind while studying the chapters.

The new government must look to consolidate all potential unofficial ties and points of support among the democracies and emerging democracies, political parties, and democratic movements of East, Southeast, and South Asia. On the front line, together with Taiwan, are: Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and India. International support for the embattled and isolated democratic movement in China forms part of this united front. Continuing to call attention to the growing crackdown in the PRC, which has turned back incremental gains of previous periods, strengthens the resolve of Taiwanese democrats. It also helps to galvanize awareness throughout the region for the need to counter China's threatened subversion of Taiwanese sovereignty. Her natural allies face similar pressures—in the case of South Korea, military. Thus, annexation by China would be a severe blow to the interests of all. The national interest of each of the Pacific Rim democracies, the United States in first place because of its longstanding formal commitment (the Taiwan Relations Act; TRA), coincides entirely with that of all the others. This is the overarching theme of the book, perhaps formulated in a different way in some of the chapters. The incoming Trump Administration is expected to continue to stand by the TRA, as did its predecessor. An interesting question will be the consequences of the predicted failure to ratify the TPP, one of the cornerstones of President Obama's Asia policy. Under pressure from protectionist currents in both parties, even the Democratic candidate abandoned it. The coming weeks and months are full of uncertainty on a number of key points.

A central argument of the author turns on the conditions that will forestall the overthrow of Taiwanese democracy, the "firewall." One that commentators often overlook concerns getting its own developing institutions and civic/political consciousness in order. The consensus on defense of autonomy and de facto sovereignty is broader than it appears; that is, it is not restricted to the DPP and its allies. Even on specific questions of national identity, such as favouring official recognition of the Taiwanese languages, broad layers within the Kuomintang (KMT) find common cause with their "green" counterparts. On some of the relevant core issues, positions surprisingly coincide. For example, a current consensus views the offer by the PRC of a Special Administrative Region status with great skepticism. In the end, overriding imperatives of national unity and security are at stake, an understanding that the Tsai administration, in its moderate and defensive posture, has shown itself to be acutely cognizant of. This orientation, as the author points out, may be related to the exceptional circumstances of Taiwan's transition to democracy, by all measure a model for the region, including for China itself. All of the above, by the way, should serve to reaffirm the commitment of the world's democracies in support of Taiwanese

self-determination. A number of aspects of this assessment are controversial, sparking further debate that we should all welcome.

An effective united front will seek to make the cost of occupation and annexation unacceptable. Chapter 12 is an assessment of the respective military capabilities. The panorama laid out here is the most stark. Readers should pay especially close attention here to the implications, given a possible recalibration on the part of Washington regarding its current security guarantee (for example, in the case of a future PRC reprisal). Given Taiwan's robust capabilities, an invasion would commit overwhelming force of unmitigated violence to ensure that it prevails.

Throughout the chapters, Cole lays a large part of the responsibility for the confusion about the situation that Taiwan faces at the feet of academia itself. Professors and experts working outside of the PRC have choices. The soft power is strong, and the "Taiwan problem" is "inconvenient" (36). The invitations, the return visits, and the access are generous. But the invoice arriving in the mail often asks too much, depending on one's specialty. Even publishing a paper, *in a Western-based journal*, is sometimes easier if you evade the difficult topic or soft-pedal a sensitive concept. Some researchers have made the decision that the complicity, when this happens (a complicated question), is no longer acceptable, that the sensitive topic can't be avoided, and that their next invited lecture in China might be the last.

This study of China and Taiwan points to an important parallel with the threats posed to the smaller and weaker countries on the western border of the Russian Federation. Pursuit of great power pacts and "grand bargains" at the expense of sovereign nations turns out to be shortsighted and dangerous. These considerations have become timely again.

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ETHNIC CONFLICT AND PROTEST IN TIBET AND XINJIANG: Unrest in China's West. *Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University.* Edited by Ben Hillman and Gray Tuttle. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016. vi, 268 pp. (Tables, maps.) US\$60.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-231-16998-1.

This edited volume presents theoretically rigorous and ethnographically rich social science research concerning Xinjiang and the Tibetan areas of China. Its nine chapters cohere not only methodologically and thematically, but in a common argument: the authors challenge longstanding assumptions about the primary importance of ethnic and religious identities to Uyghurs' and Tibetans' discontent *vis-à-vis* the Chinese state and Han Chinese. Instead, they offer explanations rooted in economic change, local government, and ordinary people's perceptions of the state.