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Introduction by Yafeng Xia

**Gregg A. Brazinsky. *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War.*** Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017. ISBN: 978-1-4696-3170-7 (hardcover, \$39.95).

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## Introduction by Yafeng Xia, Long Island University

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In September/October 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed that China establish a ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’ and a ‘21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road.’ Since then, China’s new national strategy—the so-called ‘Belt and Road Initiative’—has garnered considerable international media attention. China’s strategy is based on linking its rising domestic industries to the vast natural resources of Eurasia’s heartland and onward to Africa. University of Wisconsin historian Alfred McCoy speculates that China will likely surpass the United States in the struggle for global supremacy by 2030.<sup>1</sup> How could China, an impoverished nation for most of the twentieth century, catch up with and surpass the world’s long-recognized most influential power? Are China and the United States destined for war given China’s rise and America’s relative decline? What do historical analogies suggest about the possible course of Chinese-American strategic rivalry?

Gregg Brazinsky’s timely and well written book examines the U.S.-China competition for influence in the Third World during the Cold War. He argues that Sino-American rivalry in the Third World during the Cold War was “a competition over status” (4). But he does not dismiss the importance of other factors such as national security or economic interests in the Sino-American competition (8). In those years, even when China’s material wealth and military strength were less than five percent of that of the United States, “China proved adept at finding the right message to assuage doubts about its ambitions and fire the enthusiasm of its closest sympathizers” (9). The book shows remarkable continuities in the foreign policies of both China and the United States during the Cold War. More importantly, it offers much food for thought about Sino-American rivalry in the twenty-first century. It is a must-read for anyone interested in the past, present, and future of U.S.-China relations and the world.

All four reviewers offer praise for *Winning the Third World*. Jeremy Friedman considers the book “a solid, well-sourced example” of a new historiographical development in writing Cold War history. Niu Jun concurs, calling the book “the first work to examine systematically the development of Sino-American rivalry in the Third World during the Cold War.” In Qiang Zhai’s view, the book “is brimming with original insights and revelations.” Sergey Radchenko approvingly calls the book “a milestone.” Extolling Brazinsky’s interpretative framework, Radchenko credits Brazinsky with bringing out an “important aspect of the Cold War that has hitherto received insufficient attention.”

All four reviewers, in different ways, also offer some criticism of the book. Friedman writes that “while the status frame provides interesting insights on issues of largely bilateral concern such as Taiwan and Tibet, it seems quite a bit more strained on matters of broader geopolitical significance.” He concludes that “it remains for future work, however, to integrate this argument about ‘status’ into the historiography on the Cold War.” Radchenko takes Brazinsky to task for not engaging “more directly with sticky problems like ideology.” Both Radchenko and Friedman are concerned about the absence of Moscow from Brazinsky’s narrative. Niu Jun pushes Brazinsky to clarify whether “the United States expend[ed] sufficient effort” in its competition with the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in the Third World. Qiang Zhai raises questions related to Brazinsky’s coverage. He laments that the book “fails to capture the full scope of their competition in the Third World.”

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred W. McCoy, *In the Shadows of the American Century: The Rise and Decline of US Global Power* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2017).

He also complains that Brazinsky has not given sufficient treatment to important events in the Afro-Asian sphere, such as Beijing's involvement in the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO).

Brazinsky's gracious response to the roundtable is helpful in that he clarifies several of his critical points. He insists that the Sino-American competition was over status and Washington sought first and foremost to block Beijing's effort to achieve that. He agrees that he does not devote as much attention to Moscow as Friedman, Radchenko, Odd Arne Westad, and others have, but Moscow is not completely absent from his narrative. He concurs that there were fewer high-level visits by U.S. leaders to Afro-Asian countries, but he points out that this does indicate a lack of American commitment to the region. He argues that "the AAPSO was not really a major venue of Sino-American competition because Washington could exert little influence over this left leaning organization."

**Participants:**

**Gregg Brazinsky** is Associate Professor of History and International Affairs at The George Washington University. He earned his Ph.D. in History from Cornell. He is also the author of *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (UNC Press, 2007). He is currently working on two projects. The first explores social and cultural relations between China and North Korea during the Cold War. The second focuses on American nation building in Asia.

**Yafeng Xia** is professor of history at Long Island University, Brooklyn. He is the author of *Negotiating with the Enemy: U.S.-China Talks during the Cold War, 1949-1972* (2006), coauthor of *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Partnership, 1945-1959: A New History*, with Zhihua Shen (2015), *Mao and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1959-1973: A New History*, with Danhui Li (2018), and *A Misunderstood Friendship: Mao Zedong, Kim Il-sung, and Sino-North Korean Relations, 1949-1976*, with Zhihua Shen (2018).

**Jeremy Friedman** is an Assistant Professor at Harvard Business School. Previously he was the Associate-Director of the Brady-Johnson Program in Grand Strategy at Yale, and he received his Ph.D. in History from Princeton in 2011. His first book, "Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World," was published by UNC Press in 2015. His current book project is titled, "Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World."

**Niu Jun**, Professor of International Studies, Peking University, received his Ph.D. at the People's University of China (*Renmin daxue*) in 1988. His current research focuses on a project involving China-U.S. relations and the Cold War in East Asia. He teaches courses at Peking University including: The foreign relations of the People's Republic of China since 1949, and China's foreign policy-making process. Among his major publications is: *Cong yan'an zouxiang shijie: Zhongguo gongchandang duiwai zhengce di qiyuan* which appeared in English translation as *From Yan'an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (Norwalk: EastBridge, 2005).

**Sergey Radchenko** is Professor of International Relations at Cardiff University. His research interests include the Cold War and the history of Chinese and Soviet foreign relations. He is the author of *Two Suns in the Heavens: the Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press, 2009) and *Unwanted Visionaries: the Soviet Failure in Asia at the End of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2014). He is currently working on a history of Chinese foreign relations since 1949.

**Qiang Zhai** is professor of history at Auburn University at Montgomery. He is the author of *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (UNC Press, 2000). His research interests include the Cold War in Asia, Sino-American relations, and modern Chinese history.

Review by Jeremy Friedman, Harvard University

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As the Cold War recedes further into memory, and its history is increasingly written by those too young to have experienced it at its height, what was once seen chiefly as a post-World War II clash between a capitalist world led by the United States and a Communist one led by the Soviet Union is being re-framed geographically, chronologically, and thematically. Gregg Brazinsky's *Winning the Third World* is a solid, well-sourced example of this historiographical development, narrating a story of Sino-American conflict in which the Soviet Union is largely absent, and one that begins not with the seizure of power by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, but rather with the Chinese nationalist awakening in the wake of World War I. While not dismissing the importance of ideology, a topic I shall return to later, Brazinsky puts the emphasis squarely on 'status,' specifically China's desire to attain it and the United States' impulse to prevent that attainment. In the current moment of anxiety regarding American decline and Chinese rise epitomized by Graham Allison's book *Destined for War* and its discussion of a 'Thucydides Trap,' Brazinsky's thesis seems particularly relevant, and he is certainly aware not only of the contemporary echoes of his story, but of the linear relationship between Sino-U.S. rivalry during the Cold War and U.S.-China relations today.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, one begins to wonder what the Cold-War frame meant for this particular period in U.S.-China relations, and that is where the question of status once again becomes entangled with the question of ideology.

Brazinsky argues that the Sino-American rivalry in what he calls the 'Third World'—a term employed differently in Washington and Beijing—was "in essence, a competition over status," by which he means "enjoying a special position in the absence of a formal hierarchy" (4-5). This would then seem to exclude status in the context of a formal hierarchy, which might serve as a point of difference between China's status-seeking in the era of high Maoism and post-1971 China's concern with things like its United Nations (UN) status, membership in the Group of 77, voting rights in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, etc. As Brazinsky notes, this sort of status is inherently difficult to quantify or measure, a point which recurs in the concluding section of every chapter where he attempts to answer some version of the question 'so did China succeed in raising its status or did the US succeed in preventing it?'

Despite these difficulties, framing the problem in terms of status produces several interesting questions about Sino-American rivalry and the Cold War more broadly. Why was the U.S. so concerned with preventing the People's Republic of China (PRC) from gaining status? Was it because the PRC was Communist? If so, was the U.S. similarly concerned with preventing the Soviet Union from gaining status (and were the Soviets as status-obsessed as the Chinese) and would that offer a useful way of re-examining the Soviet-U.S. relationship? Was the U.S. more concerned with the PRC gaining status than the USSR because it saw the former as the greater threat to world peace—and did that estimation change under President Richard Nixon? Was it because the PRC was non-white, and therefore threatened a Eurocentric world order? Then how did the U.S. respond to other ambitious status-seekers in the post-colonial world, especially India, Indonesia, and Egypt? Did the U.S. treatment of China have more in common with its treatment of India or of the USSR? Were racial anxieties at the bottom of the American concern with Chinese status? Are they at the core of American anxieties about China's power today?

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<sup>1</sup> Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides' Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

As Brazinsky demonstrates, making the issue of the status the chief analytical framework offers a useful lens on some key episodes in U.S.-PRC relations that continue to divide the two sides today. His presentation of Washington's concern with the PRC's status as being the defining reason behind the U.S. decision to back the Guomindang on Taiwan, a decision many opposed for good reason, is particularly compelling, though one wishes that Taiwan would have played more of a role throughout the book, given its significance for the PRC's status. Brazinsky's discussion of American and Chinese attempts to use racial and religious tensions within each other's societies as a way of reducing its status in the eyes of others is illuminating as well, and sheds important light on the way that domestic issues become international ones. It also begs larger questions about the United States' concerns for human rights abroad and when and where they are applied, as well as about whether the various figures who chose to embrace a country like Mao's China—the African-American writer and activist W.E.B. Du Bois for example—truly shared the geopolitical agendas of their patrons. It would be easy then for Brazinsky's argument to produce a more cynical reading of both American and Chinese policy during this period, and perhaps into the current moment as well, one where continued tension and conflict over issues like Taiwan, Tibet, and race relations in the United States actually served the interests of one or both sides.

While the status frame provides interesting insights on issues of largely bilateral concern such as Taiwan and Tibet, it seems quite a bit more strained on matters of broader geopolitical significance. In part this is because of the near total absence from the book of the Soviet Union, which, though understandable given the author's research agenda, nevertheless leaves a hole in much of the narrative. For example, the discussion of the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965 and the diplomatic maneuvering between the U.S. and PRC regarding potential Chinese support for Pakistan, does not once mention the Soviet role in ending the conflict, which after all ended with the Tashkent Declaration. The 1971 war, when the status of both the U.S. and PRC was diminished vis-à-vis the USSR through their combined support of a losing Pakistan, does not appear at all in the book. Similarly, Brazinsky's discussion of PRC support for insurgents in Eastern Congo in 1964-5 minimizes the Cuban role, or more importantly, American concern with the Cuban role in assisting revolution in the developing world. As a consequence, at times it becomes difficult to discern and differentiate the impact of American concern with Beijing's status on Washington's policy choices.

Overall, Brazinsky has provided scholars with a new take on Sino-American rivalry made all the more significant by his extensive use of Chinese materials that are no longer accessible to researchers. This new take has much to offer in providing historical depth to the current debate regarding Chinese actions and intentions in Africa and elsewhere, as well as regarding the current and future state of U.S.-PRC relations. It remains for future work, however, to integrate this argument about 'status' into the historiography on the Cold War. Was there something distinguishable and significant about the U.S. concern with China's status in particular that made its policy towards the PRC different from that towards the USSR or Communism in general? Are there other instances of the U.S. or other countries becoming similarly obsessed with the status of another country? What does 'status' really explain?

Review by Niu Jun, Peking University

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**W***inning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* is the first work to examine systematically the development of Sino-American rivalry in the Third World during the Cold War. It succeeds in proving one of the author's key conclusions, namely, that the protracted and complex rivalry "play[ed] a pivotal role in shaping the evolution of the Cold War (1). The impression given by the opening sentence of the book is profound: "No two countries will have greater influence over the destiny of humanity in the twenty-first century than the United States and the People's Republic of China," and many observers "worry that China will spread a model of political and economic development that will fundamentally undermine the liberal international order that the United States seeks to uphold" (1). This immediately makes me wonder whether, in the initial period of the Cold War, many persons also defined U.S.-Soviet relations this way? Be that as it may, with regard to defining and thinking about present and future Sino-American relations, this book may induce scholars to pay more attention to, and to study anew, the history of Sino-American relations during the Cold War era.

The book also impresses me with its consistence with trends in the study of international Cold-War history, emphasizing the global expansion of the American-Soviet confrontation, particularly various kinds of struggles outside of Europe in the 'southern world.' (The term 'global south' might be a more accurate, as is indicated by the book). Its title is enough to arise my thought to Professor Odd Arne Westad's *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*, the most outstanding representative work of this new trend in unprecedented fashion, that book systemically detailed American-Soviet intervention and contention in the Third World, the responses of those Third World countries to American and Soviet intervention, and the resulting consequences. Then it illuminated how the interactions of the two superpowers with Third World countries molded the history of the global Cold War and the influence on the world political economic order in the post-Cold War period.<sup>1</sup> Following this trend, *Winning the Third World* is an important new achievement in the progress of the new Cold-War history. The book demonstrates that in addition to American-Soviet contention, China and the United States, two giant countries, also pursued a persistent and sometimes fierce multi-dimensional competition in the Third World; their Cold-War rivalry spread to the Third World, had a rather profound impact on the fate of a number of Asian and African states, and, conversely, exacerbated the intensity and complexity of Sino-American confrontation. This is an outstanding contribution of the book—it adds rich details to the picture of Cold-War history.

In addition to its contribution to Cold-War history, *Winning the Third World* is also a landmark achievement in the study of Sino-American relations. This book surpasses earlier works dealing with this aspect of the history of Sino-American relations. Even though the continuing opening of diplomatic archives has led to greater depth in the study of traditional subjects and has greatly expanded the space for scholarly investigation, this book does not concentrate yet again on well-worn topics in this forty-year period of Sino-American relations such as war, conflict, crisis management, strategy, secret diplomacy, how leaders wisely or foolishly managed high politics. The story told about Sino-American *rivalry* in the Third World in *Winning the Third World* is rich in content. It includes diplomacy, culture, economic aid, guerrilla warfare, peace delegations, and medical aid groups, all of which were delivered in different ways and from various motives

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<sup>1</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).



and economic models. This kind of study truly enriches our understanding of the complexity of Sino-American relations.

In addition, the book aggregates all of what superficially appear to be discrete, miscellaneous, and even fragmented historical stories, lying outside the realm of security, policy decisions, and high politics, into the core conceptual framework of *status*, and shows how they may similarly reflect the far-reaching ambitions of the leaders and may also have profound significance. Readers, therefore, may also more easily grasp, within a different framework, the great value of some earlier case studies. For example, in both countries, but particularly in China, how did those distinguished leaders combine the various miscellaneous actions relating to foreign affairs in different fields, strive to elevate or maintain their country's *status in world affairs*, and mould a new international order in Asia and Africa and pursue other major objectives? How were they able to convince themselves that these efforts would induce the Third World to accept their own ideals or be of greater benefit to them, notwithstanding the evidence this book provides that many of their efforts were actually futile, whether one considers the defeat of America's military intervention in Vietnam in the 1960s, or China's painstaking support of revolution in Indonesia that came to naught.

*Winning the Third World* covers a very long period, embracing the entire forty years of the Cold War. Following the evolving history, the author opens a new window, gradually unfolding a scroll depicting the ever-broadening conflict between China and the United States, first in China's neighboring region of Southeast Asia, and then expanding into the vast continent of Africa, far distant from both competing countries. The author believes that the most important question is how China and the United States, especially China, developed the basic motive power for competition over such a long period of time and on such a great scale, that is, how did each of them win or maintain their "*status*" in the Third World? The unique character of this *rivalry* is strongly related to the author's viewpoint, that "if great power comes with great responsibility, then great status comes with great obligations" (47). This is really a new thought and perspective. Examining the Cold-War confrontation between China and the United States, the book, in addition to discussing power politics and ideology, contains additional important content that is richer and worth studying systematically.

The book also makes use not only of many newly available American archives, but also many historical archives in the Chinese Foreign Ministry and local archives as well as other Chinese historical documents. Such an approach yields a rather even balance between Chinese and American materials and, consequently, a rather even balance in the book's analysis of the two countries' policies and diplomatic interactions. This greatly enhances readers' understanding of both the American and Chinese sides, especially the concrete direction and actual influence of Chinese policies, and enables readers quickly, via direct comparison, to ascertain whether or not the understanding of decision makers regarding the conduct of the other side was accurate and their own response reasonable, as well as to grasp the distinguishing features of Sino-American conflict in the Third World. Because I am a Chinese reader and study Chinese foreign policy, I am particularly interested in this book's treatment of Chinese historical documents and Chinese policy. For the same reason, one may raise the following question: to what extent was the Sino-American struggle, etc., revolving around "*status*" in *world affairs*, related to the traditional definition of Cold-War conflict, or in other words, at what stages was it more directly and more closely connected to Cold War relations? Particularly after China and the Soviet Union parted ways, and China acted independently outside of the Soviet camp, to the point of becoming a diplomatic adversary of the Soviet Union, it is difficult to apply the concept of Cold War to provide an accurate explanation of Sino-American 'rivalry.' In other words, in the period after China left the Soviet camp and became independent (beginning roughly in the early 1960s), was



the Sino-American conflict, especially their ‘rivalry’ and competition in the Third World in essence part of the Cold War? Was Chinese or American external behavior part of the Cold War, especially China’s, considering the historical roots and logic of China’s conduct, just because such conduct occurred within an international system framed by Soviet-American confrontation, and (at a certain stage and in certain important respects) is said to have certain Cold War connotations, etc.? All of this needs to be thoroughly explored. The answer may perhaps assist in clarifying the degree to which today’s increasingly intense Sino-American competition is rooted in the Cold War or whether, with or without the Cold War, Sino-American rivalry would have sprung up and inevitably extended throughout the world or whether the Cold War simply provided a temporary arena and a certain backdrop for Sino-American rivalry. Therefore, looking at Sino-American relations from a perspective that is outside ‘the Cold War system and doctrines,’ especially more systematically decoding the conceptual history of the Chinese who guided China’s external conduct, has particular value. For example, at what stage did Chinese political elites in fact rarely utilize the concept of ‘Cold War’ to make sense of the world they encountered?

According to *Winning the Third World*, laymen considered that China’s pursuit of “status in world affairs” was the primary driving force of China’s foreign policy behavior in the Third World or, at least one of the driving forces. In defining this core concept, we must differentiate between two layers of meaning. The first layer is how did Chairman Mao Zedong and other People’s Republic of China (PRC) leaders define how China should achieve what sort of status internationally, including the so-called sense of “humiliation” imprinted on the minds of Chinese elites by China’s historical status and the blows to this status inflicted by the Great Powers (6), as well as what kind of status should the PRC have in the international communist movement led by Stalin and later betrayed by Nikita Khrushchev? The question arising from this part of the book is: whether and, if so, to what extent was the Chinese historical definition of this status reasonable?

Chapter 1 and, especially, Chapter 2 actually contain the answers to these questions. On the eve of the Chinese Communists’ seizure of national power, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin decisively involved himself in Chinese Communist foreign policy; Mao Zedong gladly accepted the mission that Stalin bestowed on the Chinese Communists of heading the international communist movement in Asia, and, at the beginning of its national construction, this led to a situation in which the PRC acquired the status of the revolutionary leader of Asia, in which role it approved of and carried out its historical mission. In this connection, it engaged in actions such as organizing and training revolutionaries in a number of Asian countries and supported Asian revolutionary movements (40-41). This sort of role later extended to some African countries. This feeling of obligation and historical mission is one of the key reasons why, in the initial period of national construction, the PRC first became involved in Indochina, and is also among the key reasons leading to Chinese troops crossing the Yalu River and fighting the United States on the Korean peninsula. The result is that ‘status’ not only ‘comes with obligations,’ but also with burdens, which is just another way of saying the same thing. At least it is like this in certain cases. For example, throughout the Cold-War era China supplied North Korea with a still incalculable but enormous amount of aid. The burden of this aid continues right up to the present. From a different angle, the decision by the Truman administration not long after the ceasefire talks in Korea began in July 1951 to continue the war had been changed “to prevent China from enlarging its status in Asia” as one of its goals (54). Right up to the present it still shoulders the responsibility of defending South Korea.

The second layer is this question: To what extent did China’s status in history and in the international Communist movement, as understood by Mao Zedong and others, define their attitude to various parts of the outside world, in particular the United States. Did they believe that in order to pursue ‘status in world affairs’ it was necessary to oppose the United States? Or was it because America’s hostile policy impeded their goal of

pursuing status, and led to their resolve to oppose the United States? This appears to be a case of: Which came first: the chicken or the egg? Some histories give the impression that PRC and U.S. conflict, war, and subsequent rivalry in the Third World was always unavoidable, but some new research seems to show this was not so. According to the historical narrative in the first two chapters of this book, the Korean War was not only a war about 'status,' but also determined that from the outset Sino-American relations in the Third World would become a vicious circle in a zero-sum game; "the seeds for a long and enduring rivalry were already planted" (46). In fact, Sino-American rivalry in the Third World began with bloodbath and the sacrifice of millions of lives, whether it was their direct confrontation in Korea or their indirect encountering in Vietnam. This should have served as a warning signal to countries in the region.

In the mid-1950s, the PRC tried to elevate its status via diplomatic efforts in the Third World, thereby raising the curtain on a new round of Sino-American rivalry in the Third World. Thereafter, China's diplomatic efforts expanded in the Third World, and the United States tried to counteract China's influence in every place and in every arena. China's competition with the United States became, at least in appearance, even more systematic and comprehensive. Generally speaking, one may say that, starting from this time, China's leaders began from a theoretical perspective to approach systematically a solution to the fundamental question of status. China's leaders began from a theoretical perspective to approach systematically its national identity, an issue directly related to status. Here, incidentally, I believe, comparatively speaking, that Americans had a more seamless understanding of China's national character. As early as World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed that "the recognition of China as one of the four major powers would prevent any charge that the white races were undertaking to dominate the world," came to "be a barrier to Soviet ambitions in the Far East," and serve also as a centripetal force of the utmost value in limiting the effects of the revolutionary upsurge in Asia."<sup>2</sup> At the time, this sort of understanding of China's special national character was rather widespread, but looked at from an American perspective, the actual role of the PRC and American expectations were precisely the opposite. This was strongly connected to the outbreak of the Cold War and the path to America's confrontation with the PRC.

Here I do not propose to enter into a discussion of American knowledge and policy. There is already too much writing on this subject. *Winning the Third World* also treats this dimension quite systematically and well. With respect to China, since seeking to enhance China's 'status' in world politics is the key motive and driver of Chinese leaders in their external conduct, we must elucidate their worldview, including their perspective on the essence of world politics, the role of all kinds of political forces and developing trends, and knowledge of the basic question of China's historical fate, in order to determine more precisely whether China's quest to achieve an ever more important status among Asian and African countries was ultimately a constituent part of Soviet strategy in Asia or whether it more likely reflected the domestic needs of China's complex identity. In this connection, it is vitally important to achieve a more systematic understanding of Mao Zedong's theory of the 'intermediate zone,' because it was the core ideological content of China's foreign policy during the Cold War. The first chapter of this book points out that in the summer of 1946, Mao Zedong proposed this concept, which had an important influence on Chinese policy toward the Third World as well as its rivalry with the United States (39). In fact, thereafter, every time Chinese foreign policy entered a new stage, Mao Zedong would again put forward this concept, giving it a new interpretation, and ascribing to China a unique status in world affairs unlike that of any other country in the world.

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<sup>2</sup> Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper, 1950), 186.

Mao Zedong's concept of the 'intermediate zone' was first put forward after World War II when civil war had broken out across China. Mao tried to present a new picture of the world political scene, and to prove that the Chinese Communists should steel themselves to defeat the Guomindang government's military encirclement and suppression and proceed to seize national power. At this time, he explained to the Chinese Communist leaders that the world was divided into three parts, namely, the U.S. camp, the Soviet camp, and a 'vast intermediate zone' between these two. The revolutionary struggle of the people in 'the intermediate zone' would be the key force in deciding the direction of world politics and China stood with them, therefore the Chinese revolution was also a key force in deciding the future of world politics. Conversely, the United States, in order to control the whole world and oppose and suppress national revolutions, was the most ferocious enemy of the Chinese revolution and the world revolution.<sup>3</sup> Further consideration is required regarding the degree to which 'intermediate zone' thinking influenced foreign policy before and after the founding of the PRC, including relations with the United States and policy toward Asian countries, because one year later, in the autumn of 1947, in order to maintain congruence with the Soviet communists' theory of 'two camps,' Mao Zedong's concept of the "intermediate zone" dropped out of Chinese Communist parlance for the next eight years.

Only in the mid-1950s, when China took an active part in the Geneva Conference and the Bandung Conference, did Mao Zedong revive his concept of the 'intermediate zone.' This time it was to provide theoretical support for the beginning of China's foreign-policy offensive in the Asia-Africa region.<sup>4</sup> Sections of Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of *Winning the Third World* provide important background for Mao Zedong's thinking about the 'intermediate zone,' as well as the actual diplomacy this thinking guided. In discussing China's policies and 'peace offensive, vis-à-vis the rising countries of Asia and Africa, these chapters elucidate the process and meaning of the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence" that PRC Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai set forth in December 1953 in his meeting with Indian representatives (78), and the principle of "seeking common ground and setting aside differences" that he proposed at the Bandung Conference (100). This reflects the author's profound understanding of the historical meaning of these ideological principles and helps to explicate the important status of the concept of 'intermediate zone' in Chinese foreign policy.

In the beginning, the "Five Principle of Peaceful Coexistence" were aimed very precisely. Zhou Enlai set forth these guiding principles on the eve of Sino-Indian negotiations because relations between the two countries simultaneously included the issues of Tibet, trade, different social systems, territorial disputes like how to deal with the pre-1949 treaty that gave India special rights in China, and other complicated questions. From this perspective, Sino-Indian relations were the most complicated of China's relations with Asian and African countries, and were a model for PRC foreign policy. The success of the 1954 Sino-Indian negotiations led the leaders of the two countries to believe in and support the notion that the Five Principles ought to be, and could be, extended to relations among all the newly emerging countries of Asia and Africa. Chinese leaders in

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<sup>3</sup> Mao Zedong, "He meiguo jizhe Ann. Luyisi Sitelang de tanhua" (Talk with American reporter Anna Louise Strong), 6 August 1946, *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Mao Zedong's Works) [Beijing: Renmin Press, 1991], vol. 4, 1193-1194.

<sup>4</sup> Mao Zedong, "Guanyu zhongjian didai, heping gongchu yiji zhongying zhongmei guanxi wenti" (On the issues of "intermediate zone, peaceful coexistence and China's relations with the United Kingdom and the United States), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China and Central Literature Research Office, eds. *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* (Mao Zedong works on diplomacy) [Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian and Shijie zhishi, 1994], 159-160.

particular hoped to use ‘the Five Principles as a basis’ for promoting and maintaining unity among the newly emerging countries of Asia and Africa, and thereby facilitate the creation of ‘a new regional order’ (131). Subsequent developments demonstrated that since ‘the Five Principles’ were initially set forth with respect to Sino-Indian relations, there was reason to doubt whether they had universal applicability to Asian and African countries and to the world as a whole, and particularly whether they had any practical significance. For example, they were not accepted by all countries at the Bandung Conference and so were not included as such in the conference declaration although some of their content was included in various clauses of the document. More to the point, in the autumn of 1962 a large-scale border war between China and India took place; ‘the Five Principles’ proved unable to restrain the two sponsors from using military force to resolve the territorial dispute that was left over from history. Here it is appropriate to note in passing that many authors, including the author of this book, attribute the initial iteration of the words “come to seek commonality rather than establish differences” to Zhou Enlai in his well-known speech at the Bandung Conference (100) when, in reality, it was Mao Zedong who systematically expounded these principles to India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in October 1954 during the latter’s visit to China.<sup>5</sup> In his hastily prepared speech at the Bandung Conference, Zhou Enlai cleverly elaborated Mao Zedong’s thought and gave it wide currency, receiving an immediate positive result. This demonstrates once again that in China’s decision-making system, Zhou Enlai’s own utterances were not nearly as important as the outside world assumed; his rhetorical brilliance always derived from Mao Zedong’s guidance. This demonstrates once again that in China’s decision-making system, Zhou Enlai did not have as much independent room for action as the outside world assumed: he just emitting his brilliance under the guidance of Mao Zedong.

Chapters 3 and 4 and part of Chapter 5 show that the PRC’s ‘peace offensive’ vis-à-vis the newly emerging countries of Asia and Africa achieved some obviously positive results. This seems to prove that, at least in this stage, the more moderate China’s foreign policy was, the more it helped to elevate China’s ‘status’ in Asia and Africa.

Conversely, with regard to the United States, according to the assessment of the Eisenhower administration, in this period the results of the U.S. attempt to check China’s efforts to expand its influence via a peace offensive were quite disappointing (131). In every sense, the influence of China, a huge country that in a very short time had ended domestic conflict, maintained political stability, and achieved economic development, would inevitably grow larger and larger, including the attractive power of its development model for newly emerging countries, and no country, including the United States, would be able to stop it. The book also demonstrates how difficult it was for the measures Secretary of State John Foster Dulles proposed at this time to address the PRC’s peace offensive to have any effect, and suggests that the reason why China subsequently encountered great setbacks was basically due to its own defective policies. For example, Chapter 6 shows that the ‘Radicalization’ of PRC foreign policy beginning in 1958 had deleterious effects on China’s ‘international status,’ leading to what may be considered systematic defeats of China in the foreign policy arena in 1965, including the abortive Second Asian-African Conference, the Sino-Soviet split, the September 30 Incident in Indonesia, etc.

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<sup>5</sup> Mao Zedong, “Tong Yindu zongli Nihelu de sici tanhua” (Four talks with Indian Prime Minister Nehru), October 1954, Central Literature Research Office, ed. *Mao Zedong wenji* (Mao Zedong’s Collections), (Beijing: Renmin Press, 1999), vol. 6, 361-362,

Following China's greatly enhanced diplomatic activity in the Asian-African region and the gradual escalation of Sino-Soviet ideological polemics in the early 1960s, the radicalization of Chinese foreign policy increased daily. Against this background, Mao Zedong once again applied his concept of 'the intermediate zone' to draw a picture of the political map of the world. In the new iteration of his theory, the so-called 'intermediate zone' was divided into a first and second part. In this connection, a theoretical explanation was supplied for the development of China's relations with France and other U.S. allies in Europe. On the other hand, it also emphasized more clearly Beijing's 'revolutionary character' vis-à-vis the countries of Asia and Africa.<sup>6</sup> Of course, this new iteration of Mao Zedong's theory of 'the intermediate zone' echoed the radical world revolutionary program in the Center's polemics with the Soviet Communists as well as imparting practical content to the international united front policy.

At this stage, in the PRC's foreign practice the effort to elevate China's 'international status' in the Asian-African region and to promote an anti-American international united front were really two sides of the same coin.<sup>7</sup> This policy, just like U.S. policy at this time, was an important cause of the two countries' increased rivalry in the Third World. This element is reflected more prominently in Chapter 8, "Insurgency and Counterinsurgency, 1961-1968." In this chapter the author first discusses how the theoretical struggle against 'Soviet revisionism' and the armed struggle of Third World countries such as *Cuba and Algeria* to seize power—in America these were seen as insurgency—greatly encouraged Chinese leaders and, moreover, substantially increased their support and expectations regarding revolutionary movements, especially those engaged in armed struggles, and led them to resolve to support Third World insurgency more actively, especially those that were applying the Chinese Communist experience of violent revolution. Chinese policy in Indochina was the prime example. One must properly assess the important influence of this rivalry in PRC policy toward the countries of Asia and Africa. For example, China's support and assistance to the South Vietnamese armed struggle greatly strengthened the tendency to turn the Second Asian-African Conference into a struggle to establish a world anti-American united front. When the Vietnam War escalated in the spring of 1965, China even proposed that the Second Asian-African Conference become "a forum for judging and condemning American imperialism."<sup>8</sup>

According to *Winning the Third World*, while supporting the constantly escalating South Vietnamese armed struggle, PRC leaders launched an active diplomatic offensive in the Asian and African countries, and set forth "Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Aid" as a guiding policy for the provision of economic aid, incorporating lofty moral values (273). Of course, this was directly connected with the rivalry with the United States in Africa, and stimulated China, actively and on its own initiative, to join the international trend of providing economic aid to the newly independent countries of Africa, and not only for the purpose of establishing an international united front against the United States. In this arena, the PRC faced a lot of increased competition. The so-called Eight Principles of Economic and Technical Aid also reflected the PRC

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<sup>6</sup> Mao Zedong, "Zhongjian didai you liange" (There are two intermediate zones), September 1963, January and July 1963, *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* (Mao Zedong works on diplomacy), 506-509.

<sup>7</sup> Li Qianyu, *Cong Wanlong dao Aerjier—Zhongguo yu lici yafei guoji huiyi* (From Bandung to Algiers—China and six Afro-Asian international conferences), (Beijing: Shijie zhishi press, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> "Dangqian xingshi he women de renwu" (Current situation and our task), May 7, 1965, Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, Number: 106-01319-04, 19-21.



leaders' attempts to achieve a superior moral position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union in Asia and Africa by providing African countries with more appropriate preferential aid than they needed without attaching political conditions, and were not aimed at the United States. Another reason that should not be overlooked is that in Africa the PRC felt compelled to compete against Taiwan. The latter's economic activity in Africa directly influenced the PRC's success or failure in securing greater diplomatic recognition and its diplomatic strategy of isolating Taiwan. In addition, the non-aligned movement was seen as a competitor even though its influence was not so great. America's aid to African countries and its other diplomatic activities also had many objectives. Speaking only of Sino-American *rivalry* in these countries, China had to deal with the existence of more competitors, and reduce American pressure. This was only logical. All in all, if the author had clarified what competitors China was aiming at through its specific propaganda and actions, it would have given more insight into the feature, intensity and scope of the Sino-U.S. rivalry.

In reading *Winning the Third World*, a question arises that needs further clarification: in its contention and conflict with China vis-à-vis the countries of Asia and Africa, did the United States expend sufficient effort, to say nothing of going all out, particularly in comparison to U.S. competition with the Soviet Union in the Third World, since, after all, as the book *Global Cold War* contends, the Soviet Union was the most important strategic adversary of the United States? For example, in the mid-1950s, PRC diplomatic activity was represented at the Geneva and Bandung conferences by a large delegation personally headed by Premier Zhou Enlai; in the first half of the 1960s, China's diplomacy vis-à-vis Indochina included Liu Shaoqi, President of the PRC and Premier Zhou Enlai, who paid several visits there. Conversely, the level of comparatively high-ranking U.S. diplomats never reached that of China, and the frequency of visits was not remotely comparable. Prior to the September 30 Incident in 1965, high-ranking PRC leaders visited Indonesia rather frequently and received their Indonesian counterparts, while the Americans, much of the time, were merely anxiously analyzing the situation, notwithstanding that their reports were wholly logical and clearly organized. China's efforts to promote the Second Asian-African Conference included large-scale visits to Asian and African countries over a long period by Premier Zhou Enlai and Vice-Premier-cum-Foreign Minister Chen Yi and others. On the American side it was more a question of rigorous analytic reports by relevant units of the State Department, resident ambassadors, conversations with leaders at different levels, etc. At least with respect to rank, the diplomacy of Chinese leaders cannot be spoken of in the same breath.

Indeed, the Sino-American diplomatic struggle was not always reciprocal in every period of time, in some places not even symmetric. Possibly this may have been because the United States had more financial resources and more formal diplomatic channels, but compared to American leaders, Chinese leaders obviously paid closer attention to the developing situation in the Asian and African regions, and had more high-ranking visits. Of course, this was connected to the predicament they were in. Their limited diplomatic relations and the limits on their economic power made it difficult for them to attempt a broader scope of activity. Even though at times the PRC apparently achieved a more advantageous status and evident successes than the United States, one cannot determine whether it was the result of the involvement of more high-ranking leaders; it is even less possible to prove that the diplomatic activity of these high-ranking leaders helped the PRC defeat American influence in the Third World. However, a further explication of the mutual relations and functions of all the variables would still help us understand what are the elements involved in the attainment and consolidation of 'leadership status' and under what conditions 'soft power' is efficacious.

The preceding are simply some personal views and comments based on my own interests. In fact, much of this book leaves a deep impression, especially stimulating one's thoughts about contemporary Sino-American

relations, and the present and future influence of Sino-American relations on world politics. That was the starting point for the author's study. In fact, the author's general conclusion to the book is a response to the historical judgment and concern expressed at the beginning; his conclusion is not very optimistic: the result of Sino-American 'competition and rivalry' is not very positive, "the sad irony was that the United States and China both had much to offer the Third World, but their rivalry ultimately prevented them from delivering on their promise to bring about greater stability and prosperity" (354). In many circumstances, China and the United States were unable to control the state of affairs in the targeted countries according to their own wishes; the conditions in the countries themselves played a more decisive role. The Vietnam War, the Algerian coup d'état, and the September 30 Incident in Indonesia are the most representative examples. Now, at a time when China and the United States both stand at the center stage of world politics, will the political elites of the two countries continue to be able to draw sufficient experience and lessons from their Cold War rivalry? The world is waiting for the elites of both countries to provide a satisfactory answer.



**Review by Sergey Radchenko, Cardiff University**

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Gregg Brazinsky's important new book challenges the conventional interpretation of the Cold War as a Manichean conflict driven by rival, mutually incompatible, ideologically-clad visions of the future. For this reviewer at least, this is a refreshing take. For too many years we, historians of the Cold War, recited the well-known mantra of ideological divergences between the East and the West, dissected the language of revolution and counterrevolution, Communism and Capitalism—all in the effort to prove that Cold-War statesmen were not just cynical manipulators but true believers who took their creed very, very seriously. The sheer existence of the field of Cold War studies seemingly required recognition of the conflict of ideologies. There was a difference of opinions as to when that conflict started, but everyone seemed to agree that it ended somewhere in the vicinity of the Brandenburg Gate on 9 November 1989.

There are several reasons for the gradual disenchantment of at least some historians with the explanatory power of ideology. One is the persistence of conflict post-1989. Of course, there was conflict before the Cold War, and it would be naïve to imagine that the demise of Communism would bring the end to conflict as we know it. Nevertheless, the remarkable continuities between some of the Cold-War and post-Cold War era conflicts, including, often, the involvement of the same protagonists, the use of similar rhetoric and similar methods, inevitably gave rise to concerns that the Cold War never quite ended in the way we expected it to end. Second, the enormous amount of new documentary evidence that has emerged since the opening of the Communist archives (in Moscow, across Eastern Europe and, briefly, in China) tends to qualify arguments like “so and so believed in revolution.” Of course, they did. But, then, too, they believed in many other things, just as we do today.

Brazinsky brings out one important aspect of the Cold War that has hitherto received insufficient attention: the question of status. His case study is the Sino-American competition in the Third World. “Status,” he argues, “was the most important driving force behind this struggle” (1). Most important? That is a big deal. No, not conflicting interpretations of modernity. No, not beliefs in the tenets of Marxism-Leninism. No, not messianic revolutionary zeal. But “status.” The Chinese leadership, we learn, “viewed the Afro-Asian world as the region where it could play a leadership role and thus assert its importance in world affairs” (2). The goal of American foreign policy, meanwhile, was to frustrate these aspirations by undercutting China's status. Brazinsky's (concise) introduction mentions the word ‘status’ at least 46 times. I counted one use of the word ‘ideology.’

The book then offers a magnificent overview of Sino-American relations since the early 1920s until the late 1970s. The main focus is on the post-1949 relationship: the war in Korea, Sino-American interactions at the Geneva conference, China's engagement with the Third World in 1955 at the Bandung Conference, radicalization of Chinese foreign policy in the late 1950s—early 1960s, the Cultural Revolution, Sino-American rapprochement, Beijing's contradictory policies in the 1970s, and, lastly, the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping's turn to the United States post-normalization. The overlapping storylines are that a) the Chinese sought to bolster their status by courting the Third World only to be disappointed in the long run; b) the Americans sought to counter these encroachments but realized at last that maybe the Chinese were not as dangerous as they once seemed. In the conclusion, Brazinsky extols Beijing and Washington to recognize that the other has a need for face, and to respect that need. It is a reasonable recommendation.

The book's novelty and the sharpness of the argument will undoubtedly provoke debate. Sceptics will roll their catapults in the general direction of Brazinsky's analytical ramparts. Questions may arise about the

difference between terms like ‘status’ and ‘prestige,’ which are used interchangeably in the book, and why it was so important to be recognized, and recognized by whom, and recognized as what. Political scientists and IR theorists are still fighting a Cold War over these complex issues, and the outcome is far from certain. Brazinsky makes a symbolic effort to engage with this literature on page 8 but to no particular effect. He is right in the sense that this is a work of history, not of political theory: let the others draw their conclusions from the evidence at hand. Yet there are also certain drawbacks, such as a degree of fuzziness around the key concepts.

I say this not in the way of criticism but in the way of acknowledging the difficulties of interpretation, for I struggle with some of the same issues and have not yet found satisfactory answers. Will they ever be found? We are following these rabbit holes without any idea as to whether they will ever lead to some new vistas or simply to the restatement of the same old clichés that we set out to disprove. So, with regard to Beijing, for instance, we may well argue, à la Chen Jian, that Mao sought to return China to centrality in world affairs, yet we may never quite know what exactly it meant to be at the center.<sup>1</sup> At the center of what? Surrounded by whom? And so on and so forth. There are issues here that have not been and perhaps cannot be resolved.

For my part, I would have liked to see Brazinsky engage more directly with sticky problems like ideology for, despite being mentioned only once in the introduction, it repeatedly creeps up throughout the narrative, often in unexpected places. Thus, at one point we learn that Chairman Mao Zedong and President Woodrow Wilson were both “visionaries” who sought to convince the world of the correctness of their respective “visions.” (14) How did these ‘visions’ square with ‘status’? Was ‘status’ a means to attaining the realization of ‘visions,’ or were ‘visions’ but a means to the realization of ‘status’? Also, the statement that Beijing and Washington “promoted ideologically determined visions of global community” (133) seems to bring ideology back into focus. Brazinsky writes, “Setting up model villages and farms, constructing new factories, and building new systems of roads created highly visible symbols of modernity that could foster admiration for the donor country. These showcases introduced new technologies and new ways of thinking, but they did so in a highly ideological way” (270). One wonders, however, what is a “highly ideological way,” and how does it factor in the equation with ‘status’ and ‘prestige’? Finally, towards the end of the book we learn that there were “residual ideological differences” (344) between the U.S. and China that got in the way of their otherwise cooperative relationship. This statement, if projected back onto the 1950s and the 1960s, would suggest that, after all, the Sino-American competition can well be explained using the familiar language of ideological differences, rather than the very intriguing notion of ‘status’ that makes such a grand entry in the introduction.

Then, on occasion, additional explanations enter the picture, making the overall story even more complicated. Thus, reading about China’s and America’s “geostrategic interests” (334) was like seeing Mona Lisa in the Tate Modern: one suddenly beholds those realists of old calling out from beyond the grave: ah, we told you so. Strategy and status even come together in places, as in the statement China was willing to forgo a closer relationship with the United States “if doing so enhanced its status in a strategic neighbouring country,” Cambodia (331).

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<sup>1</sup> See Chen Jian’s hugely influential *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) for the formulation of this argument.

In short, the book offers an extremely stimulating way of thinking about key events in the history of Sino-American relations. The author is in favour of multicausality, as all good historians must be. Simple solutions are tempting but ultimately unsatisfying.

One minor quarrel that I will pick with this otherwise delightful book is that it tends to write Moscow out of history. True, the point of the book is to discuss the Sino-American competition in the Third World but in some cases I felt that the author gave too much prominence to Beijing even where the real culprits were the Soviets. It is in a sense tempting to do this because of the prominence of the Sino-American relationship today but do we amplify the significance of the Sino-American competition by projecting China's present-day power back to the 1950s and the 1960s? Possibly.

The book is a milestone. After reading it, I felt that the winds of Cold-War historiography are beginning to change. The wind of 'status' is prevailing over the wind of 'ideology.' Of course, as Ecclesiastes reminds us, winds tend to go round and round, ever returning onto their course. Who knows where the wind will carry us? For now, I am happy to sail forth, charting uncertain seas of historical interpretation. Come, my friends. It is not too late to seek a newer world. And don't forget to bring Brazinsky's excellent book. The battle for the Third World has already been lost. The battle for history is only just beginning.

**Review by Qiang Zhai, Auburn University at Montgomery**

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The highly contentious and extremely tumultuous course of U.S.-Chinese relations during the Cold War has generated substantial scholarly writings. Gregg Brazinsky's ground-breaking study represents a welcome addition to that burgeoning literature. Drawing on careful and extensive research in archival collections in the United States and China and displaying a firm command of the secondary literature, he provides a sweeping historical overview and astute analysis of the rise and fall of Sino-American competition in the Third World over three decades after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. It is a very rewarding experience in reading his informative and fascinating account, which is brimming with original insights and revelations.

Brazinsky has a clear controlling theme for his analysis. He contends that "Sino-American rivalry in the Third World was, in essence, a competition over status" (4). He believes that the concept of status seeking in foreign policy is essential for understanding Chinese leaders' perceptions, decisions, and initiatives during the Cold War. There were two reasons, according to Brazinsky, why Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong and his associates sought to improve China's status in the international arena: the bitter historical memory of China's past injustice, victimization, and humiliation at the hands of imperialist powers, and Mao's cult of personality. The Chinese leaders were convinced that they had a special mission to help colonial peoples in the Third World achieve liberation and independence. They believed that the Chinese revolutionary model was relevant to the struggle of oppressed nations in Asia and Africa and wanted national liberation movements there to admire and emulate the experience and success of the PRC. "Achieving greater status," Brazinsky persuasively argues, "especially among other postcolonial societies, came to be viewed as a means of ending China's history of humiliation and regaining the honor and glory that had been stolen from it" (6).

Brazinsky has adopted a useful and convincing interpretive framework for understanding Sino-American interactions in the Third World during the Cold War. All states have a set of core values and principles that must be defended and preserved in order to maintain national identity, dignity and self-respect, a commitment that explains why states sometimes make risky decisions and take foolhardy actions. Status may define a state's stake in the international system and its standards of appropriate behaviors. Some readers, particularly those who adhere to the realist analytical framework with emphasis on structural factors and material forces such as balance of power, may not be convinced by Brazinsky's interpretations and discussions, which resemble the social constructivist approach. But they will learn much about Chinese foreign policy, and will have their assumptions about international politics well tested and challenged.

The structure of the book is sound and fluid. The blending of chronological and thematic chapters allows the author to explore in depth certain aspects of his story such as cultural diplomacy and economic offensives. I especially like his chapter on cultural diplomacy. The cultural competition in the global South between China and the United States during the Cold War has not received as much attention and scrutiny in the existing scholarship as their political confrontation and military clashes there. Marshalling fresh evidence, Brazinsky demonstrates that in the 1950s and 1960s, both Beijing and Washington employed publications, radio broadcasts, films, and exchange programs to promote their own virtues and to expose each other's shortcomings in an effort to win the hearts and minds of Afro-Asian readers and audiences. Brazinsky identifies a striking similarity between the Chinese and American propaganda projects: they both attempted to play the racial card against each other. "As they competed for the loyalties of nonwhite peoples," he writes, "Chinese and American propagandists often focused on racial and ethnic minorities" (149). Chinese officials

cited racial segregation in the American South to highlight the fact that the United States would never treat populations in Asia and Africa as equal. Washington responded to Beijing's criticisms and condemnations by calling attention to the PRC government's struggle with opposition from non-Han minorities, especially Tibetans and Uyghurs, who dwelled within China's borders. The CIA wasted no time in exploiting the 1959 rebellion in Lhasa to undermine Beijing's claims to be a supporter of racial equality.

Although Brazinsky offers a strong and extensive coverage of Sino-American rivalry for status and influence in Asia and Africa, he fails to capture the full scope of their competition in the Third World. Latin America, in particular, "receives relatively little attention" as Brazinsky himself acknowledges (12). This is regrettable because Mao paid serious attention to the situation in the Western Hemisphere, especially in the wake of the Cuban Revolution. The CCP chief strongly endorsed Fidel Castro's confrontation with the United States. In a meeting with former Mexican president Lazaro Cardenas in Beijing on 21 January 1959, Mao declared that "we are very interested in Latin America. It has a big population and a level of economic development close to ours." Speaking of the Cuban Revolution, the Chinese leader remarked that the new government in Cuba "has a firm attitude toward the United States. We believe that the Cuban incident is a major event at present. The Asian peoples should assist them [the Cuban people] in their resistance against the United States. Secondly, we must support the Congolese people's struggle against Belgian domination. Our three continents are not isolated from each other. We are supporting each other."<sup>1</sup> In January 1964, when riots broke out in Panama over sovereignty of the Panama Canal Zone, Mao issued an enthusiastic statement in support of the Panamanian people's cause and unleashed mass rallies and demonstrations in major cities throughout China. A year later, he made an ardent declaration condemning the Lyndon Johnson administration's intervention in the Dominican Republic and organized a million-people protest in Beijing.

Even in the Afro-Asian sphere, where Brazinsky focuses his investigation, there are important events and happenings that fail to receive sufficient treatment. For instance, Beijing attached great importance to the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), considering it a major platform for expressing Chinese views and establishing influence within the Asian-African community. From 1957 to 1965, AAPSO convened four conferences, and China attended all of them. American officials viewed these conventions with great suspicion, assuming that they were inspired and sure to be exploited by Communist countries.<sup>2</sup> Egypt hosted the first conference in 1957-1958. Before the opening of the gathering, Washington exerted pressure on Cairo to limit Chinese activities at the meeting. Yielding to the American pressure, the Egyptian government asked Beijing not to include the Taiwan issue in the final resolution of the convention. China agreed to the Egyptian request.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 中共中央文献研究室编：《毛泽东年谱，1949-1976》（*Chronological Record of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976*）（Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2013），vol. 3, 573-574.

<sup>2</sup> Jason C. Parker, *Hearts, Minds, and Voices: US Cold War Public Diplomacy and the Formation of the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 112.

<sup>3</sup> 李潜虞：《中国对亚非人民团结大会的政策（1957-1965）》（*Chinese Policy toward the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conventions, 1957-1965*），《外交评论》（*Diplomatic Review*），No. 4 (2012), pp. 112-128.

Another area which Brazinsky does not fully discuss is the impact of Mao's Cultural Revolution on China's relations with Third World countries. Especially during the so-called Boxer Diplomacy period in the summer of 1967, Red Guards took control of the operations of the Foreign Ministry. All the embassies in Africa, except that in Egypt, had their ambassadors recalled and were only headed by *chargés d'affaires*. Quite a few African countries were alienated by what they considered as Chinese provocations and meddling in their internal affairs. Tunisia, for example, severed diplomatic ties with the PRC after being condemned by the Chinese media for colluding with American imperialism. Kenya lowered its relations with Beijing to the level of *chargé d'affaires* after the Chinese embassy in Nairobi distributed Maoist publications to the local population.

Closer to home, China's partnership with Cambodia plummeted as a result of the Cultural Revolution's extremism that was unleashed by Mao. In Phnom Penh, the Chinese embassy handed out *Quotations of Chairman Mao* (Mao's Little Red Book) to ethnic Chinese groups, urging them to rise against their reactionary rulers. The overseas Chinese community in Cambodia, inspired by the radical frenzy in China, declared themselves loyal to Mao. In early 1967, Sino-Khmers held demonstrations outside the Soviet embassy. Chinese instructors working with the Cambodian army distributed Mao badges among Cambodian soldiers. Khmer leftists openly endorsed the Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association, which was active in Chinese-language schools in eulogizing Mao. An angry Sihanouk reacted by closing the Khmer-Chinese Friendship Association, shutting down Chinese-language newspapers, and announcing the withdrawal of diplomats from Beijing.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that China's standing and reputation in the Third World suffered a great deal due to the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Mao's self-destructive policies undermined China's ability to compete with the deep-pocketed United States for influence in the Third World. But this development is not fully reflected in Brazinsky's tome.

In addition, a couple of factual errors mar the book. Brazinsky writes: "While remaining neutral, nations such as Indonesia, Cambodia, and Pakistan had become sufficiently disgruntled with Moscow and Washington to create potential allies for Beijing" (195). While Indonesia and Cambodia were neutral countries, Pakistan was not. As a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), Pakistan was aligned with the United States. The author of *Recast All under Heaven: Revolution, War, Diplomacy, and Frontier China in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* is Xiaoyuan Liu, not Xiaohong Liu (411).

Despite these quibbles, Brazinsky's volume remains a deeply-researched and highly-revealing study of an important topic that deserves a close reading by students of global Cold War. Brazinsky adroitly combines pioneering research with a synthesis of the extant scholarship. His account greatly enriches our knowledge about the intensity, variety, complexity, and meanings of Sino-American interactions in and engagement with the Third World during the Cold War.

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<sup>4</sup> 陈扬勇, 《苦撑危局：周恩来在 1967》 (*Coping with a Dangerous Situation: Zhou Enlai in 1967*), (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1999), 371.



## Author's Response by Gregg A. Brazinsky, The George Washington University

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Our view of the Cold War is constantly in flux. As new research on the conflict continues to appear, our understanding of who the most important actors were and the nature of their principal motives evolves. In *Winning the Third World*, I attempted to modify our view of the Cold War in two key ways. First, I argue that Sino-American rivalry was critical to shaping the conflict and, in some instances, even eclipsed the more studied confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. Second, I argue that status was the most important impetus behind Sino-American rivalry. Much of the ground that I cover both conceptually and historically had not received much attention from other scholars. It was therefore inevitable that the book would be a starting point that would raise as many questions as it answers.

I am very pleased to have four excellent scholars raise some of these questions. All of them are cited extensively in *Winning the Third World*, and the book, in many places, builds on cornerstones that they laid. Jeremy Friedman helped to establish the importance of China as an actor in the Cold War and contributed to a more multi-polar view of the struggle. Sergei Radchenko's fine book on the Sino-Soviet split helped me to understand the complexity of what we call the 'Communist Bloc' as well as the way Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev rankled the nationalistic sensitivities of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders.<sup>1</sup> Qiang Zhai's work on China's involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia provided critical background for the sections dealing with Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> And finally, Niu Jun's influential essays on Chinese foreign policy and Mao's 'left turn' during the early 1960s were critical to the development of my ideas for some of the chapters. I would like to thank H-Diplo, Thomas Maddux, and Diane Labrosse for organizing this roundtable and giving me the chance to discuss my work. I would also like to thank Yafeng Xia for writing the introduction and offering suggestions on a draft of the book some time ago.

In writing the book and developing its argument, I put a great deal of thought into my conception of status and how status related to ideology. As Radchenko notes, status is tricky to define. If I had made the definition too precise or too general it would have lost its analytical unity, so I strove to find a middle ground. Nonetheless, both Radchenko and Friedman bring up some issues with how I define the term and use it in the book. In particular, they both contend that I did not do enough to disentangle status from ideology. It would have been difficult to pull these two apart completely because they are in so many ways interconnected. Taking my cue from Chen Jian's work, I argued that the desire of Chairman Mao Zedong and other leaders in the CCP to achieve greater status was in many ways a product of their revolutionary nationalism and anti-colonialism.<sup>3</sup> In their worldview, it was natural for the People's Republic of China (PRC) to play a key role in leading an Eastern Revolution and uniting the Afro-Asian world against Great Power hegemony. One might say that the Maoist belief system contained an implicit status claim. Why then did I make the focus of the

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<sup>1</sup> Sergey Radchenko, *Two Suns in the Heaven: The Sino-Soviet Struggle for Supremacy, 1962-1967* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Qiang Zhai, *China and the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Chen lays out this argument in Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001).



book status and not ideology? Because, in my view, the Sino-American competition was over status. It was different from the Sino-Soviet competition in that it did not involve wrangling over ideological orthodoxy. Even if Maoist ideology underpinned Beijing's quest for status, it was China's efforts to achieve status that Washington sought first and foremost to block. The United States recognized that it could not do very much to change or destroy China's ideology. It could, however, try to prevent Beijing from gaining status.

Many of the other criticisms made by the reviewers focus on the book's coverage. Why did some actors and events receive less attention than in more traditional works on the Cold War? The main reason is that I wanted to make the book about Sino-American competition. It is not a general survey of Chinese foreign policy in the Third World or a general history of the Cold War in Asia and Africa. Thus, I devote little attention to Latin America. Although China showed some interest in the region, Washington never did much to contest Chinese influence there and thus, as I see it, there was never much Sino-American competition. Both Friedman and Radchenko contend that I more or less wrote the Soviets out of the story. I certainly do not devote as much attention to Moscow as Friedman, Radchenko, Odd Arne Westad, and others have, but it nonetheless is not completely absent from my narrative either.<sup>4</sup> Much of chapter 6 focuses on how the Sino-Soviet split radicalized Chinese policy in the Third World and exacerbated Sino-American competition. In other places, I talk briefly about Beijing's outreach to Afro-Asian countries during the 1950s and Moscow's activities in Africa during the early 1960s. Some might argue that after the late 1950s Cold War competition was actually trilateral or multi-lateral, and thus not paying more attention to the Soviet Union is a significant omission. But I do not see it that way. Often the Cold War in the Third World was less a multi-lateral competition than a series of simultaneous discrete bilateral competitions. In many Afro-Asian countries, Beijing and Moscow competed for the loyalties of leftists and revolutionaries—groups that the United States wanted to suppress rather than court. Most often, it was when Washington saw Beijing rather than Moscow as the guiding force behind the left in a particular country that it prioritized countering Chinese influence. As one can easily glean from reading Friedman's own work, there were certainly times and places where Beijing got the upper hand in its rivalry with the Soviets. Two examples that I include in the book and have also written about in a Cold War International History Project Working Paper are Guinea and Mali.<sup>5</sup> These were both countries where the Soviets stumbled early on, and whose leadership was more attracted to Beijing. When the United States tried to push these countries toward greater moderation, it was natural therefore that it looked at China rather than the Soviet Union as its most significant adversary.

Qiang Zhai's review brings up several other omissions that he believes deserved greater coverage. In particular he mentions the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) and the Cultural Revolution. I agree with Qiang that the AAPSO was important to China and that the Cultural Revolution had an important impact on Chinese diplomacy. At the same time, the AAPSO was not really a major venue of Sino-American competition because Washington could exert little influence over this left leaning organization. As Jeremy

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<sup>4</sup> Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Gregg Brazinsky, "Showcasing the Chinese Version of Modern Tea in Africa: Tea Plantations and PRC Economic Aid to Guinea and Mali during the 1960s," CWIHP Working Paper #80, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/showcasing-the-chinese-version-modern-tea-africa>

Friedman has explained, this is a far better venue for looking at the competition between the Chinese and the Soviets.<sup>6</sup> I do devote some attention to the Cultural Revolution in *Winning the Third World*. At the same time, it does not receive nearly as much attention to the 1950s and 1960s. American recognized that China's global influence was declining precipitously once the Cultural Revolution entered its most radical phase. The PRC closed embassies in many countries and alienated longstanding allies. China's hostility toward the United States certainly remained (at least until 1972) but Washington recognized that Beijing was destroying its own status and saw less need to actively contest its agenda.

Niu Jun raises a host of interesting questions in his detailed review of the book. Many of them do not seem intended as criticisms so much as further explorations of some of the issues raised in the book. I do want to address a couple of the points that he raises, however. First, Niu asks whether the story of Sino-American rivalry that I tell in *Winning the Third World* should really be considered a Cold War story. He notes that the "historical roots and logic of Chinese conduct" can be traced to the May Fourth Movement and the flowering of Chinese radicalism in 1919. I think Niu is right about the pre-Cold War origins of Maoist diplomacy but it is also important to remember that the Cold War itself was a struggle that had its origins in the Industrial Revolution and the different ideological responses to it. Odd Arne Westad's recent history of the Cold War emphasizes this point.<sup>7</sup> In many ways, the Cold War was a reckoning with debates that had been left unresolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Therefore, I do not see calling Sino-American rivalry a Cold War conflict as problematic even though the struggle had its roots in the earlier period.

Niu also notes what he calls an imbalance in the struggle between China and the United States. While Beijing sent or tried to send high-level emissaries and delegations to newly independent nations in Southeast Asia and Africa, the United States most often seemed to put pressure on these countries through ambassadors or lower level personnel. While this is true to some degree, I do not think that we should take it as evidence rivalry with China in Afro-Asian countries was unimportant to American policy makers. The foreign-policy making apparatus of the United States at the time was simply larger and more complex. The United States sought to extend its influence almost everywhere while China's efforts were more focused. Moreover, many nations did not even recognize the PRC so those that did naturally received a larger share of Beijing's attention. Nonetheless, *Winning the Third World* demonstrates that high-level American officials were very concerned about, if not obsessed with, Chinese influence in Asia and Africa. Even if Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson did not make the same kind of extensive tours of Asia and Africa that Premier Zhou Enlai did, they invited many leaders from these regions to the White House and prioritized maintaining friendly relations with them. Moreover, the book also demonstrates in numerous places that anxieties about Chinese influence extended to the White House and the highest levels of the State Department. I show how China figured into American thinking in key instances, such as Johnson's decision to escalate the war in Vietnam. So Niu is right that there were fewer high-level visits by U.S. leaders to Afro-Asian countries but I think it would be wrong to imply that this indicates a lack of American commitment to the region.

While I have a few areas of disagreement with the reviewers, I take their reviews as being, for the most part positive, and more focused on bringing up questions that the book raises than on pointing to deficiencies in

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<sup>6</sup> Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 44-47.

<sup>7</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *The Cold War: A World History* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

evidence and argumentation. Many of these intriguing questions arise because, while my book pushes Cold War historiography in a new direction, no single book can completely chart its course. I have already seen a number of younger scholars both in China and in Western institutions beginning to explore other facets of Chinese interactions—political, cultural, and economic—with Afro-Asian countries. It seems a good bet that they will more completely answer many of the questions that my book raises.