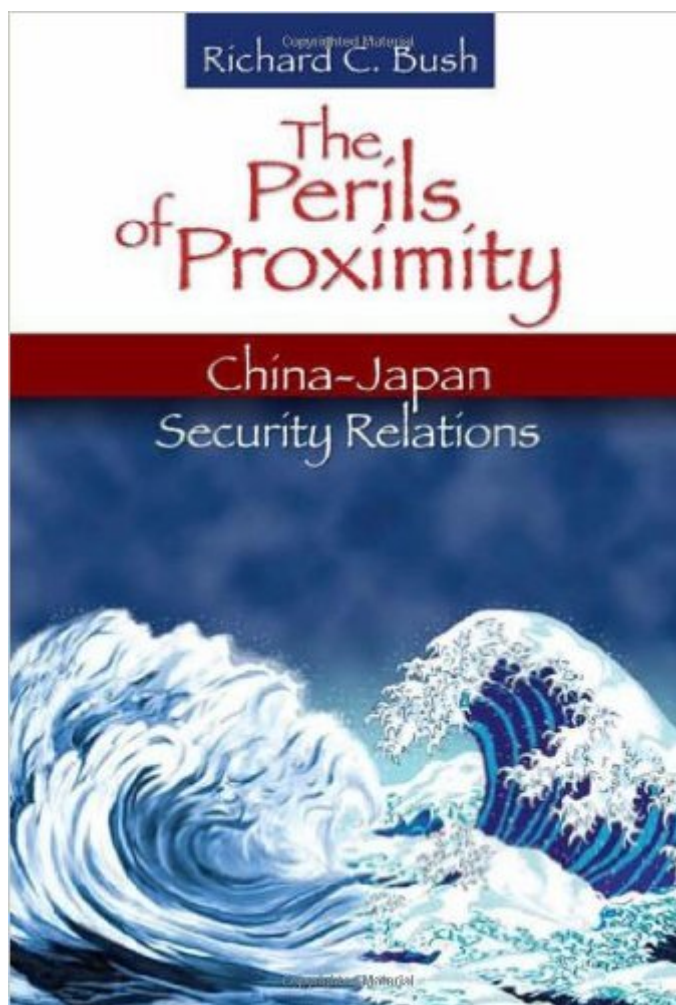


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The Perils Of Proximity: China-Japan Security Relations



Synopsis

The rivalry between Japan and China has a long and sometimes brutal history, and they continue to eye each other warily as the balance of power tips toward Beijing. They cooperate and compete at the same time, but if competition deteriorates into military conflict, the entire world has much to lose. *The Perils of Proximity* evaluates the chances of armed conflict between China and Japan, presenting in stark relief the dangers it would pose and revealing the steps that could head off such a disastrous turn of events. Richard Bush focuses his on the problematic East China Sea region. Although Japan's military capabilities are more considerable than some in the West realize, its defense budget has remained basically flat in recent years. Meanwhile, Chinese military expenditures have grown by double digits annually. Moreover, that the emphasis of China's military modernization is on power projection; the ability of its air and naval forces to stretch their reach to the east, thus encroaching on its island neighbor. Tokyo regards the growth of Chinese power and its focus on the East China Sea with deep anxiety. How should they respond? The balance of power is changing, and Japan must account for that uncomfortable fact in crafting its strategy. It is incumbent on China, Japan, and the United States to take steps to reduce the odds of clash and conflict in the East China Sea, and veteran Asia analyst Bush presents recommendations to that end. The steps he suggests won't be easy, and effective political leadership will be absolutely critical. If implemented fully and correctly, however, they have the potential of reducing the perils of proximity in Asia.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the most part, the book is comprehensive, ranging from analyzing the strategic and historical zeitgeist of both the Chinese and Japanese sides towards each other, an analysis of their respective military capabilities (apparently from secondary sources, but since this is not the central emphasis of the book it is OK), their governmental systems and command and control ... etc to explain where the points of friction and weaknesses are and how they may escalate into conflict or hamper de-escalation. It is certainly all very interesting, and seems detailed and generally even-handed, with criticism meted out to both sides. Still, perhaps because it covers so many areas, there are some points where a American-centric slant and ignorance of alternate interpretations of the facts appears. For example, when responding to the business of the US military in Okinawa, he deflects understandable attempts by the Japanese to get them to move to a less intrusive location by repeating the old American lament that the Japanese don't do enough for their own defense, that the treaty places an unfair burden on America, and thus Japan shouldn't squawk so much. This might have been more acceptable had not half this book been about the Japanese political limitations that strongly restrain action towards this direction. In any case, the fact is that the treaty clearly also serves American interests, and if there is an unfair defense burden on America the Suzerain exists, Japan no doubt pays for it quietly in other areas, from the loss of sovereignty and control (national pride) to the final disposition in various other joint endeavors.

Richard Bush focuses his attention on the interactions of China and Japan in the East China Sea. Despite a clear determination to increase trade flows with each other, China and Japan have conflicting interests in this area of the Western Pacific, i.e., the disputed sovereignty over the Senkaku-Diaoyu Islands that Japan controls, competing rights to exploit maritime oil and gas fields east of Shanghai, the exact extent of China's undersea continental shelf, and the extent of their respective exclusive economic zones. These disputes have as background a resurging, non-democratic China and a stagnating/declining, democratic Japan. Mr. Bush provides his audience with much background information, i.e., institutions and politics, to understand how they affect China's and Japan's broader security and foreign policies. The United States comes into play only when its coverage is useful to better apprehend the complex relationship that China and Japan have with each other. Mr. Bush points out repeatedly that politics and institutional weaknesses on both sides will come to the fore in situations of stress. Chinese and Japanese systems are not well prepared to deal with the unexpected for different reasons. To his credit, Mr. Bush does not have any illusions about the difficulty to reduce tensions between China and Japan in the East China

Sea. Even the most enlightened Chinese and Japanese policymakers will be hard pressed to constructively deal with the conflicting interests mentioned above. Most Chinese and Japanese policymakers will themselves refrain from adopting a difficult and unpopular course of action to help solve or at least reduce the impact of these bilateral disagreements. Mr.

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