

Book Review

Tai Ming Cheung (ed.). *China's Emergence As a Defense Technological Power, Strategic Studies special Issue, Vol. 34 No. 3, June 2011 (Oxon, U.K.: Hobbs the Printers, 2011).*

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In August 2011, when China introduces its first unfinished aircraft carrier to the world, global major mass medias have flashed out its picture and commend that it represents Chinese assertiveness and power aggrandization.

In June 2011 when U.S. Defense Minister, Robert Gates visited China, the Chinese People's Liberation Armed Forces also revealed to the public its first stealth fighter, J-20, the fifth generation fighter flying from Chengdu to Beijing. Mr. Robert Gates admitted that the United States has underestimated Chinese armed production development. In early of 2007, Chinese Second Artillery corps which in charge of Chinese missile and ballistic armed forced also shot down one of its old weather satellite to demonstrate its anti-satellite capability. On top of these, China has also developed space technology and cyber warfare capabilities that are necessary for the twenty-first century warfare. The Western security and defense watcheres, thus, are concerned of Chinese defense technology development and arms manufacturing industries. How large and modern of the Chinese space and defense industries? How long does it take China to keep up with the United States, the world most advance and innovative arms manufacturing country. Most economists have predicted that Chinese would take over the United States as the world largest economy in the next 10-15 years. What would happen if China could take place the United States as the world top largest economy and arms production nation?

Professor Tai Ming Cheung of University of California has edited a special issue for the *Journal of Strategic Studies* to answer these timely important security questions under the title of *China's Emergence As A Defense Technological Power* for the volume 34, Number 3, June 2011. This special issue composes of 8 articles.

As one of the most authoritative on Chinese defense and security issue, Tai Ming Chueng, in his introduction statement, confesses his uncertainty regarding Chinese strategic objective by saying that "China is beginning to flex its expanding military and strategic clout in the pursuit of its broadening national security interest. ...whether it is a temporary phenomenon or the beginning of a more deep-seated strategic shift are not yet well-understood." (p.295)

The demonstrations of Chinese modern technologies development in the past few years and its assertiveness against Japan, Vietnam and the Philippines over territorial claims of the Diaoyutai Islands and South China Sea Islands could have been driven by multifactors in Chinese apparatus such as leadership competition, surging nationalistic sentiment needs to protect its core interests and Chinese ambition to play more important role commensurate to its rising status. It would take some years before one could determine Chinese grand strategy. However, he is certain that Chinese defense technological development is visible. China's defense economy could catching up with the West by the beginning of the 2020s. China is also making steady progress in building up its innovation capabilities and has given high-priority on space and aviation. (p. 295)

The eight papers in this special volume offer three insight into the state of development of the Chinese defense economy. First, the technological development of the Chinese defense economy since late 1990s has been impressive. Second, the aviation and space industries are leading the way in the Chinese defense economy's transformation. Third, Chinese military technology capabilities today match or exceed those of Japan, South Korea and India but still lags far behind the US and Europe. Tai Ming Chuan's findings support Robert S. Ross's

conclusion in this latest article on “The Rise of Chinese Power and the Implications for the Regional Security Order” Ross contends that “China’s global economic reach is insufficient to transform regional or global security orders. The transformation of the PLA into a region-wide strategic power will require many decades.... The transformation of the PLA into a global strategic power is an even more distant prospect.” (p. 545) The reason is simply that the United States continues to maintain its maritime

power, to modernize its forces and to enhance cooperation with its regional allies. All Chinese watchers should read Tai Ming Cheung’s special edited issue in comparison to Robert S. Ross’s work and Pentagon’s pessimistic assessment of Chinese hi-tech weapon development. (Robert S. Ross, “The Rise of Chinese Power and the Implications for the Regional Security Order,” *Orbis*, Vol. 54 No. 4, Fall, 2010, pp. 525-545)