

Hardcover: US

The unfortunate consequences of China's rise

Beijing's model of authoritarian economic growth provides an ugly alternative that many developing nations are likely to follow

BY J. MICHAEL COLE
STAFF REPORTER

Forget about the military threat from China, risks of war in the Taiwan Strait, Beijing's purchase of US debt or its dislocating effect on jobs at home — all are manageable challenges that have been blown out of proportion by pundits and government officials.

So argues Stefan Halper in *The Beijing Consensus*, a timely little book that turns conventions on the "China threat" upside down and argues instead that the real challenge from Beijing — one that the Obama administration has so far unwisely neglected — lies in the transformative forces, operating at the global level, associated with China's rise.

China is undoing the West, Halper writes, not by a calculated strategy that seeks such an outcome, but rather as a result of its authoritarian model and the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) need to maintain a high level of economic growth at home to ensure its legitimacy and survival. In so doing, it has turned to every corner of the earth for natural resources and energy to meet its growing domestic requirements.

While there is nothing unusual, or even alarming, in this development, Beijing's policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries means that it has no compunction in dealing with the world's worst human rights offenders, as long as they have certain commodities to offer. As Halper rightly argues, the West — from big oil companies to George W. Bush's "war on terrorism" White House — has its own checkered past from turning a blind eye to abuse when it is convenient to do so, but in recent years a certain consciousness has arisen that imposes limits on how Western firms and governments can and will engage serious human rights abusers.

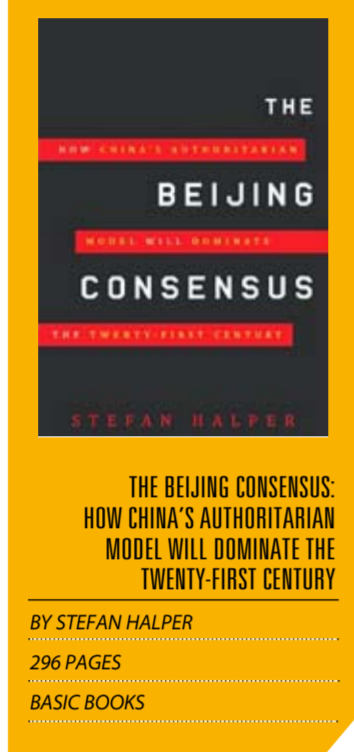
One unforeseen consequence of China's rise and Western conditionality is that rogue states, as well as a large swathe of the developing world, now have an alternative. While in the past states wishing to sell their natural resources or seeking financial assistance had no choice but to turn to the West or Western-dominated institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, they can now turn to Beijing. Given the choice between the painful economic restructuring and democratization imposed by Western institutions and Beijing's no-questions-asked type of engagement, a growing number of states are "learning to combine market economics with traditional autocratic or semi-autocratic politics in a process that signals the intellectual rejection of the Western economic model."

The implications for the ability of the West to influence development on its own terms and traditions are dire, Halper says, especially as trade between groups of developing countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China, along with other emerging markets, now oftentimes surpasses trade with major Western economies. In other words, China's substantial financial resources and willingness to trade and provide loans, added to the preference of a number of developing economies to adopt the semi-autocratic model espoused by Beijing and perfected by Singapore — stability through economic development, while the public stays out of politics — are creating large zones where the West's appeal is quickly dropping. It is also weakening the ability of Western institutions, such as the UN or rights NGOs, to influence policy. In a number of cases, this translates into rising authoritarianism and human rights abuses.

The author argues that the eight years of George W. Bush administration, with its invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and rejection of international consensus, dealt a severe blow to US credibility in many circles, thus creating a moral vacuum that China quickly managed to fill by playing the equivalency card.

At the same time, Western

PUBLICATION NOTES



BY STEFAN HALPER
296 PAGES
BASIC BOOKS

sanctions against rogue regimes like Iran, North Korea, Sudan and Zimbabwe allowed China, which had no qualms about dealing with them, to step in and take advantage of their untapped resources.

Despite what alarmists want us to believe, this isn't some grand Chinese design to undermine the West. It is, rather, the outcome of a domestic process that forces the CCP to seek access to natural resources and markets wherever it can find them. Beijing's fear of instability is such that it cannot afford to be discerning in who it deals with. It is, ironically, locked in a cage of its own making.

This, in turn, has implications for the school of international politics that believes that by engaging Beijing economically and encouraging it to integrate into the global community, the West will be able to foster democratization in China. In Halper's view, such beliefs are misguided and ultimately naive, because China plays by different rules that emphasize stability over liberalization, in which economic growth is divorced from political freedoms, as Premier Wen Jiabao's (温家宝) rejection of the Western democratic model in 2007 clearly showed. In that regard, Beijing learned the lessons of the Soviet collapse, which in its view resulted from Mikhail Gorbachev's failure to rein in politics just as he was promoting economic liberalization, a mistake that the CCP will not repeat.

The Western model, whereby a growing and increasingly affluent middle class will eventually demand more political freedoms, meanwhile, also fails to apply to China, where the leadership has succeeded in co-opting that segment of society by making its economic welfare increasingly dependent on the central authority.

For the time being, Beijing appears to have beaten the West at its own game, using capitalist techniques perfected over the decades to ensure its ascent while slowly transforming a system that not so long ago, pundits claimed represented the "end of history." If the process of China's inadvertent reconfiguration of the international order is to be stopped, a reassessment of how we engage Beijing — it is not *either* a competitor or a partner, friend or foe, but all these things simultaneously — is in order. Thankfully, the contradictions that compel Beijing to act the way it does, its need for constant domestic growth, its focus on stability, fear of confrontation and aversion to humiliation, offer some leverage by which to influence its policy choices. At the same time, Halper argues, the West must also give some serious thought to how it engages the developing world and, just as China did, adapt to the new realities.

Panda bashers and panda huggers alike will likely dislike this book, which for those in between offers a refreshing new way of looking at the "China threat."

BY JACK SCHOFIELD
THE OBSERVER, LONDON

It is the most over-hyped device since the iPhone, but there's just one question: Is the iPad worth buying? If you already own an iPhone or an iPod Touch and wish it had a much bigger screen, the answer is probably yes — if you can afford US\$300 for even the most basic model. If you already own a notebook PC and would like something smaller, the answer could well be no; you'd be better off with a netbook at less than half the price.

Such rationality may not stop you from succumbing, however. The iPad is a wonderfully shiny new toy from a company that understands seduction. And it's cunningly designed to fit in between your smartphone and your laptop without replacing either.

The iPad is the latest and most popular example of what Intel calls mobile Internet devices or Mids. There is a battle between devices that are mobile phones but larger and devices that are notebook PCs (mostly Microsoft Windows) but smaller. It is not just about "chip" technology — Arm chips that power most smartphones versus Intel chips that drive most computers; what really makes phone-type Mids attractive to technology companies and developers is what might be termed "propensity to pay."

It pains the creative industries that computer users generally won't pay anything for a four-minute song, but will happily pay US\$1 or more for a ringtone version of it. PC users won't pay to send and receive thousands of e-mails a year, but will pay to send one SMS text. The iPad is clearly on the "will pay" side of the great divide, which makes its users much more attractive than any number of netbook buyers on the "won't pay" side.

At the moment, most iPad apps have been written for the iPhone and adapted. But there is clearly lots of potential for newspapers, magazines, books, games and other apps designed for the iPad's brilliant-looking screen.

Another thing to bear in mind is that the iPad is missing a lot of functionality: It has no camera for videochats; no SD card slot for loading photos from your camera; and no USB. Like the first iPod and iPhone, it's just a starter for a string of enhanced versions that will tempt you to buy a new model every couple of years, or when the sealed-in batteries no longer work. And you'll be delighted to buy every one.

iPads are already on sale in Japan and Australia, though Apple has declined to say when they will be sold in the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Those made of stronger stuff can wait for similar tablets based on the Google Android software already used in many smartphones. Scaled-up Android tablets won't have the iPad's sheer class, but it's a free, open-source Linux-based system that will enable hundreds of companies to compete.

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY AFP



PHOTO: BLOOMBERG

Components of the iPad

The casing

The iPad feels reassuringly solid, thanks to its brushed aluminum unibody case. While many small electronic devices are now made of plastic, the iPad's contoured base "is machined from a single billet of aluminum," according to the iFixit Web site. This makes it relatively heavy — 680g for the basic model — but gives it a feeling of quality. The actual size of the iPad is 242.8mm by 189.7mm, which is slightly smaller than the Kindle DX.

The batteries

The iPad has two long, thin, lithium-ion polymer batteries that lie side by side at the bottom of the case with the dock connector cable between. This should provide a total of 24.8 watt-hours, which should keep an iPad going for about 10 hours, depending on use. However, just extracting a battery involves a 21-step process and special tools, according to one expert guide, so it's unlikely you'll ever change them yourself.

The processor

Apple could have based its new tablet on the Arm chip, used in the iPhone and iPod, or on an Intel Atom, which is a low-power/low-cost chip compatible with the processors used in its Macintosh computers, as well as in most Windows PCs. It chose the Arm route, creating a system than can't run full Mac OS X or Windows applications but runs the same operating system and apps as its older but much smaller stablemates.

But, as it often does, Apple went further. Instead of buying an off-the-shelf Arm (which includes system-on-a-chip designs such as Nvidia's Tegra and Qualcomm's Snapdragon, widely used in smartphones such as the Google Nexus One), Apple developed its own 1GHz A4 system on a chip. Presumably, this development was aided by Apple's purchase of PA Semiconductor, a small Californian chip design company, for US\$278 million in 2008. X-rays reveal that the A4 processor package includes an Arm similar to the Samsung-sourced chip in the iPhone, plus two Samsung memory chips that provide 256MB of memory. The A4 provides snappy performance in the iPad, though there are more powerful dual-core Arm designs that could be used in later and much better multitasking versions of the iPad; the current graphics chip could also be upgraded.

Apple and Arm have a long history and Arm might not even have been founded if Apple hadn't wanted to use its chip in the Newton Messagepad, a touchscreen organizer or PDA, launched in 1993. The Arm, originally the Acorn Risc Machine, was first used in the Acorn Archimedes desktop computer. It was renamed Advanced Risc Machine and spun off into Arm Ltd, which was owned by Acorn, Apple and chip company VLSI. Arm-based chip designs are now used in more than one billion phones every year.

The screen

The first thing that catches your eye with the iPad is the vivid 9.7-inch LCD color screen. It uses the same capacitive touchscreen technology as the iPhone and iPod Touch, which is both sensitive and surprisingly accurate, though it's admittedly a bit on the shiny side. It uses IPS (in-plane switching), which is more common on TVs than laptops and provides a wide range of viewing angles.

Ebook readers, such as the Amazon Kindle, Sony Reader and Plastic Logic's Que, have monochrome e-ink screens that are easier to read in daylight, but the iPad's screen is better for Web browsing, games, movies and other applications.

The resolution is 1024x768 pixels, which is less than high-definition, and not widescreen. In fact, it's the 4:3 shape that was popular on notebook PCs a decade or so ago, which means movies usually appear with broad black bands top and bottom.

The storage

Although the iPad is sometimes touted as having a solid state drive (SSD), which is the sort of drive you get in some laptop PCs and even netbooks that can benefit from their speed and reliability, it doesn't. The iPad, like the iPod Touch it resembles, has Flash memory chips soldered to the board. Flash chips, which have nothing to do with Adobe Flash software, are commonly used in MP3 players, USB memory sticks and similar devices. These memory chips provide iPads with 16GB, 32GB or 64GB of storage without adding the bulk, weight or cost of a real disk drive, or of an SSD designed to fit in its place. This is a pity because having an SSD would make it feasible to swap out Apple's drive for a larger one, or in the case of a dead iPad, to rescue the user's valuable data and access it from a different computer.

Softcover: UK

Exploring identity in the modern world

In 'Who Are We — and Should It Matter in the 21st Century?' Gary Younge considers a world in flux

BY SARFRAZ MANZOOR
THE GUARDIAN, LONDON

On a recent visit to Amsterdam I fell into conversation with a woman who owned a gift shop. "Tell me, where are you from?" she asked, after we had been chatting for a few minutes. "Oh, can't you tell?" I said, smiling and taking care to over-articulate my words.

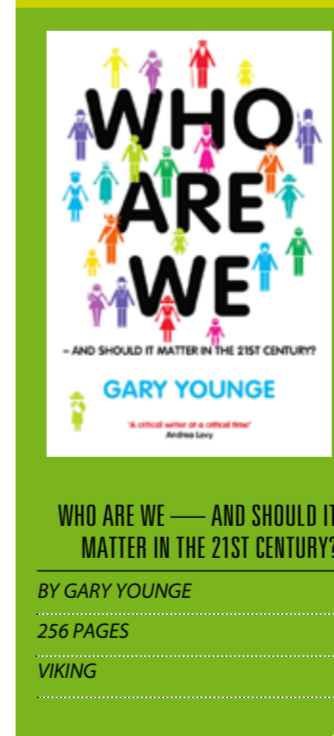
"Well, you speak with a British accent," she said, "but you're not white like me, so where are you from?" For non-white travelers, such incidents are familiar and a reminder that identities are not wholly ours to define. Neither my passport nor my accent nor the fact that I had spent virtually my entire life in Britain qualified me, in this woman's eyes, as British. Since she appeared not to be persuaded by my honest answer that I was British I eventually explained that my family were originally from Pakistan, and this satisfied her. It was only after reading *Who Are We?*, Gary Younge's penetrating and provocative new book, that I realized the best response to her question would have been to turn the tables on my interrogator and demand to know where she was from.

"The more power an identity carries, the less likely its carrier is to be aware of it as an identity at all," Younge notes. "Because their identity is never interrogated they

are easily seduced by the idea that they do not have one." Among the great merits of Younge's book is that he reminds us — and them — of the falseness of that assertion. There are few journalists better equipped to navigate this territory than Younge, not only because of his experience as a foreign correspondent for *The Guardian* but because his own biography demonstrates the fluid nature of identity.

In the book he weaves his own story — the working-class son of a single mother from Barbados, who was raised in England and now lives in the US — with powerful reportage from across the globe that reveals the changing nature of identity. There are fascinating tales, such as the black girl born to white South African parents and the son of a Jewish leader who was judged not to be Jewish. Younge correctly notes that identity is dependent not only on the individual but also the behavior of the wider world. This helps explain why Barack Obama, the mixed-race son of the white mother who raised him, defines himself as black, and it is also a factor in the emergence of political Islamism across Europe. Younge cites compelling statistics that depict the weak position of Muslims in Britain: More than a third of Muslim households in Britain have no adults in employment, a third

PUBLICATION NOTES



of young British Muslims leave school without any qualifications and those of Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent are eight times more likely to be victims of racial attacks on the streets than whites. That, coupled with what is happening to Muslims globally in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere helps explain, Younge suggests, the growth of Islamic identity

among young Muslims: "Muslims will be more likely to organize around their religious identity both home and abroad, so long as they feel attacked as a result of that religious identity." This, surely, is only part of the explanation. After all, the first generation of Muslims who came to the UK suffered far more discrimination and yet they expressed far less hatred towards the country than some young Muslims today. Indeed they often urged their children towards education precisely so that they could prosper in the UK.

Moreover, the biographies of many British jihadi terrorists reveal that they were not especially the victims of discrimination. Thus the question of why some young Muslims assert a form of religious identity that runs counter to a British identity cannot be simply about economics or racism: It has to also be about a weakened sense of what it means to be British. Islam is a potent potential identity precisely because it offers clarity at a time when no one is quite sure what Britishness is. Younge is, of course, right that identity is formed in the crucible of politics and economics, but identity is also about having a sense of belonging, and that is not measured in money; it is about having a stake in a country, feeling that it is a home and realizing that the myth of return to the motherland is

likely to remain only a myth. There is a lovely passage in the book that demonstrates how that sense of belonging can be subtly transmitted when Younge describes buying his nephew and niece England football tops emblazoned with David Beckham's name.

Younge ends his book with a plea that we search for a common higher ground that lies beyond our conflicted and confused identities. To reach this promised land he suggests the familiar routes of greater equality and more democracy. That common ground would be likely to be reached sooner, I would suggest, if the British public had more in common with those who we elect to power. Of the 23 members of the new cabinet, 22 are white, 18 are millionaires, 15 are Oxbridge graduates and 13 went to private schools. It is not just those who run the country who are overwhelmingly from this background, but the media too. It is hard not to reflect on the privileged clique and conclude that although the world is becoming ever more mixed up, and identities ever more complicated, the identities of those in power are the same as they ever were.

NOTE: Sarfraz Manzoor's *Greetings From Bury Park: Race, Religion, Rock 'n' Roll* is published by Bloomsbury.