

Yu Sui

UNDERSTANDING
TODAY'S
CHINA



China in a Changing World



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Preface

Ai Ping

This book before you is a collection of about 60 articles by Professor Yu Sui, reflecting on the international situation following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

Professor Yu Sui is a renowned Chinese academic expert on international politics, geopolitical strategy, and China's foreign policy. He began his involvement in Soviet studies when he was young, and later expanded his work into the fields of international relations, the international communist movement, and scientific socialism in recent decades. As a diligent thinker and writer, he always provides unique and critical insights and in-depth theoretical analysis of the evolving international situation. His articles are forward-looking, panoramic, inclusive and penetrating. With outstanding academic achievements and widespread social influence, he has been employed by Peking University and several other universities as adjunct professor. He has also been elected as an academican of the International Academy of Natural and Social Sciences, and awarded an honorary doctorate by the Institute of Far Eastern Studies at the Russian Academy of Science.

These are the strengths of this book:

First, it is holistic. The interrelated articles in this book cover a broad range of major issues that have attracted worldwide attention, such as the international strategic landscape, regional flashpoints, major power relationships, international organizations, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the domestic and foreign policies of Russia, China's development model, and China's independent foreign policy of peace.

Second, a powerful thread of theoretical analysis runs through it. The author adds pertinent analysis to his narration. For example, he reveals the unwritten law behind positive interaction between major power relationships as a phenomenon that begins from the standpoint of safeguarding one's own interests while respecting other's interests, both of which are indispensable, then proceeds through coexisting cooperation and competition—retaining integrity in cooperation and abiding by the rules in competition. These are inevitably accompanied by friction, which demands compromise—as long as compromise is adequate, friction will not accelerate into confrontation. The result is mutual benefit and win-win, rather than unilateral benefit. Yu Sui also sums up the inheritance and the legacy of China's diplomacy—the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, an Independent Foreign Policy of Peace, and a commitment to peace, development, cooperation and win-win—with a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity as the ultimate goal.

Third, it is readable. The author offers his fact-based view expressed in vivid language and armed with incontestable arguments. For example, he maps out in a neat and insightful way Russia's development trajectory after the fall of the Soviet Union: from fragmentation and chaos, through improvement, towards prosperity. Vladimir Putin's statecraft takes the national interest as the core—it seeks to learn from history, strengthen central authority, develop the economy, invigorate the country, reactivate the national spirit, unite the whole of society, and return prosperity to the people. It takes the path best suited to the prevailing domestic conditions while improving the external environment. To revive Russia is the ultimate goal.

In clarifying the dominant position of the United States as the only super power in the modern world, Yu Sui concludes that the complex international situation is still vulnerable to regional flashpoints affected by US policies, and that world security is to a great extent influenced by US-dominated major power relationships.

For these reasons and many more, this book will provide you with a rewarding reading experience. I cannot recommend it too highly.

(Ai Ping, a CPPCC member, vice president of Chinese Association for International Understanding, and former vice minister of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee)

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International Issues and the Global Context



Looking Backward to Look Forward, Learning New Things by Reviewing the Old—A Review of Global Issues over the Past Century

The 20th century has come to a close. It is an extraordinary century that has witnessed many ups and downs, saw brilliant spells, observed shocks and miracles and left regrets and recollections. Now, the human race is marching with great passion and eagerness into a new millennium and a new century that is also believed to be full of changes and possible glories.

History serves as a mirror, and people can predict what is going to happen in the future by reviewing what has happened in the past. Of course, it is impossible to go through all the events that took place in the last hundred years within a short article like this one. At the turn of the century, this author just wishes to express certain personal views from the perspective of international politics on major issues by summarizing them into eight points, namely, two disasters, two shocking events, two themes, two camps, two roots of trouble, two slogans and two options.

Two Disasters Left Deep Impression in People's Mind

Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide for the future. The biggest disaster to mankind in the past century is nothing but the two bloody world wars.

The outbreak of both the two wars was due to pursuit of hegemony. The First World War or World War I, also known as the Great War or European War, was fought among a number of imperialist countries in the West due to uneven development of capitalism that caused a loss of equilibrium among the European great powers. Germany, Austro-Hungary and Italy formed an alliance known as the Central Powers, and Germany, in particular, attempted to re-carve up the world by means of a world war. Launched by Fascist Germany, Italy and Japan, the Second World War or World War II was in nature another worldwide war of aggression aimed at global hegemony. As it drew in the masses of people in quite a number of countries from the very start, it can also be considered a people's struggle against Fascist enslavement.

In both the two wars, the line was not drawn between rival countries in accordance with social systems. The major cause for World War I was the fundamental contradiction between the imperialist powers, while that for World War II was a combination of contradictions between the imperialist powers with contradictions between the imperialist powers and the socialist Soviet Union. In the face of fierce attacks from Fascist Germany, Italy and Japan, the socialist USSR could not but to ally with capitalist US, Britain and France.

The outcome of the wars was beyond the expectations of the war initiators. After World War I, the colonialist system was shattered, and revolution broke out in some capitalist countries. The victory of the October Revolution in Russia produced worldwide impact. The outcome of WWII was that the Allies, including the USSR, China, the United States, Britain and France, triumphed over the Fascist Axis, formed by Germany, Italy and Japan, a number of countries in Eastern Europe and Asia chose the socialist road and the colonialist system collapsed gradually. The two wars brought about a fundamental change to the

global balance of power.

It is impossible for hegemonism and power politics to succeed in the end. After all, the fate of a country must be determined by its own people. War and armed force become more and more unpopular. The relations between countries should be based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence that was generally endorsed by the international community.

It is important to learn lessons from history. The German and Japanese governments, for example, have adopted different attitudes towards history. The German leaders have apologized on many occasions to the countries Fascist Germany had invaded, whereas the Japanese government has all along refused to apologize to China and other Asian countries Imperial Japan had attacked in any formal official document and acknowledge its defeat by China and the other Asian countries. This attitude is tantamount to leaving the door open for Right-wing forces in Japan to revive its militarist old dream.

Half a century has elapsed since the end of World War II, the global village is far from being tranquil though there has not been a new world war. Deng Xiaoping timely took note the favorable opportunity and made the resolute decision to make China shift its primary efforts to economic construction. Hence the introduction of the reform and opening-up policy at the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee in December 1978 and the marvelous achievements in the ensuing 20-odd years and the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Two Shocking Events

The two events are the October Revolution in 1917 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which occurred at the beginning and end of the 20th century, respectively, and both of which produced shocks that was felt throughout the world. The significance of the former was that scientific socialism had turned from theory into reality while that of the latter showed that socialism could suf-

fer serious setbacks in its process of development.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, some people raised doubts about the value and significance of the October Revolution under the pretext of identifying the cause of the disintegration. Moreover, the enemies of socialism attempted to completely negate socialism by slandering the October Revolution and proving the rationale of a unified capitalist world.

History cannot be tampered with. The epoch-making significance of the October Revolution has been recorded in history. It opened up an utterly new path for mankind though it did not solve the problem of what should be the socialist management model. The Stalin model came into being after hard exploration under the circumstances of tight encirclement and wanton intervention from capitalism, fierce struggle within the Soviet Communist Party and lack of experience. In wartime and the postwar economic recovery period, this model displayed its superiority in mobilizing the people to tide over difficulties and this merit of it cannot be written off. Nonetheless, as the themes of the times have shifted to peace and development, modern sciences, with information and life sciences at the core, are developing rapidly and capitalism still retains some vigor, the Soviet model has increasingly shown its weakness of rigidity and needs to be reformed urgently.

The serious Leftist mistakes made by the Soviet leaders in theory, Party line and policies over a long period of time aggravated further the drawbacks of the system. The failure of Gorbachev's reform attempt, which led to the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, was due to some deeply interwoven factors, both internal and external, realistic and historic, the leaders' mistakes and the difficulty of the reform. Yet, all these bottomed down to one fundamental problem, i.e., the deviation from the socialist line by the party in power and its leaders coupled with the rigid model of management.

The Chinese Communists represented by Mr. Deng Xiaoping found with keen sense the real cause behind the failure of the Soviet reform and timely

drew a lesson from it by formulating the basic line of “focusing on economic construction, and upholding the Party’s basic line, and reform and opening up” to guarantee the success of China’s reform. Focusing on economic construction gave expression to the demand of peace and development as the main themes of the times, while upholding the Party’s basic line, and reform and opening up show the Chinese Party’s firm conviction in the four cardinal principles it always upholds, i.e., upholding the socialist path, the people’s democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Communist Party of China, and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, and persisting in reform and opening up. This basic line of the Party is full of dialectics and vitality.

As the chief successor to the former Soviet Union, Russia suffered a great deal for years from mechanically copying the Western model. From Primakov to Putin, the Russians eventually became determined to choose a development path suited to their own national conditions.

Two Themes

“War” and “revolution” were the two themes of the imperialist era and the era of proletariat revolution. Lenin’s proposition was that the era of imperialism was the highest stage of capitalism and the eve for the proletarian revolution. Owing to unevenness of economic and political development, an imperialist war was inevitable and it was a means to compete for market and raw materials, occupy venues for investment and spheres of influence, seek hegemony and strangle small and weak nations. The panic, disaster and bankruptcy caused by imperialism made the stage of capitalism also an era for the proletarian revolution. The global revolution required the working class in various countries to form a close alliance and take concerted revolutionary actions to the utmost extent. The country in which victory was won must bear the biggest national sacrifice in order to overthrow international capitalism; otherwise, the victory in that particular country could in way be consolidated. These form the rich content of