

OVERREACH

How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise

By Susan L. Shirk

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“An authoritative account of how China is seeking to become the world’s dominant power.” -- *Kirkus Reviews*

“In lucid detail and with clear argument, Susan Shirk shows us how internal politics, particularly after the 2008 financial crash, has become more hardline and is shaping a new more confrontational stance.” – **Rana Mitter**, author of *China’s Good War*

Overreach is an essential read for anyone seeking to understand where China is going--and what America must do in response.” --**Kurt Campbell**, White House Coordinator for the IndoPacific

With *Overreach*, Shirk proves yet again why she is one of the most interesting thinkers and important voices on China of our time.” --**Elizabeth Economy**, author of *The World According to China*

“In this timely and important book, Susan Shirk dissects the nature of China’s emerging threat, driven by growing aggressiveness in foreign policy and Xi Jinping’s tightening domestic grip. --**Jerry Brown**
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From one of the world’s most respected experts on Chinese politics, OVERREACH is a devastatingly lucid portrait of how China went from fragile superpower to global heavyweight.

For three decades after Mao’s death in 1976, China’s leaders adopted a restrained approach to foreign policy. To facilitate the country’s inexorable economic ascendance, and to prevent a backlash, they reassured the outside world of China’s peaceful intentions.

Then, as Susan Shirk shows in this illuminating, sobering, and utterly persuasive new book, something changed. China went from fragile superpower to global heavyweight, muscling its way around the South China Sea, punishing countries that disagree with China, intimidating Taiwan, tightening its grip on Hong Kong, and openly challenging the United States for preeminence not just economically and technologically but militarily. China began to overreach.

Combining her decades of research and experience, Shirk, author of the hugely influential *China: Fragile Superpower*, argues that we are now fully embroiled in a new cold war.

Prying open the "black box" of China’s political system, Shirk shows the shift toward confrontation began in the mid-2000s under the mild-mannered Hu Jintao. As China’s economy boomed, especially after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, Hu and the other leaders lost restraint, abetting aggression toward the outside world and unchecked domestic social control. When Xi Jinping took power in 2012, he capitalized on widespread official corruption and open splits in the leadership to make the case for more concentrated power at the top.

In the decade following, and to the present day, Xi has accumulated greater power than any leader since Mao. Those who implement Xi’s directives compete to outdo one another in fervor, provoking an even greater global backlash and stoking jingoism within China on a scale not seen since the Cultural Revolution.

Shirk’s extensive interviews and meticulous analysis reveal the dynamics driving overreach. To counter it, she argues, the worst mistake the rest of the world, and the United States in particular, can make is to overreact. Understanding the domestic roots of China’s actions will enable us to avoid the mistakes that could lead to war.

Publishing in time for the Chinese Communist Party Congress in Fall 2022, when Xi Jinping is likely to claim a third term, OVERREACH is an essential book for anyone interested in understanding China’s place in the world.

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Susan Shirk is a Research Professor and Chair of the 21st Century China Center at the School of Global Policy and Strategy, UC San Diego. Shirk is the author of *China: Fragile Superpower*, and *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*. From 1997-2000, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs, with responsibility for China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mongolia.