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The Sino-Japanese Axis, A New Force in Asia?

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concluding that the two sides are roughly equivalent and thus incapable of a successful major offensive without significant foreign assistance. Careful readers should compare these conclusions with the more pessimistic publications of the United States, NATO, and nongovernmental authorities who give greater weight than do the editors of *The Military Balance* to factors such as chemical and toxicological weapons, surprise, deception, and covert mobilization—all of which could tilt some of the balances under analysis toward the Communists.

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Taylor, Robert. *The Sino-Japanese Axis, A New Force in Asia?* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. 132pp. \$27.50

This slim volume addresses a very important topic: the nature of emerging Sino-Japanese relations and how they may influence Asia. The author's key message is well encapsulated by a phrase from his preface, "Sino-Japanese economic ties are already creating a political alliance, promising a new balance of power in Asia within the next two decades." This is the essence of the "Axis" suggested in the title.

Though this is a well-written book, it never makes a persuasive case that such an axis is credible to either Beijing or Tokyo, much less desirable by either. On balance, the book presents a reasonably coherent argu-

ment why the PRC might contemplate such an alignment in pursuit of its interest, but it never succeeds in explaining why Japan might seriously consider shifting away from existing economic and strategic networks that anchor it in the international system. In this sense the author displays a Sino-centric tendency in his analysis that discounts Japan's many other—and more important—global political, economic, and strategic interests which make it unlikely that Tokyo will opt for any explicit tilt toward China.

The thrust of the analysis points to an emerging yin-yang style of economic complementarity which will integrate China and Japan. Though some Japanese also share such a vision, most are skeptical about the feasibility and desirability of Japan edging that close to China. The PRC is simply too uncertain an economic and political entity for the Japanese to gratuitously rely on China in any of the ways the author suggests. Far more likely is the prospect that Japan will try to solidify its place in the larger Western community of free market nations and deal with China from that vantage point. From that perspective, Japan-PRC ties are more likely to become just one facet of broader Western relations with China. China cannot offer Japan what the West can and Tokyo knows this very well. Because of this predisposition of the Japanese, the idea of a Sino-Japanese "axis" is a curiously outdated notion more suited to Japan in an earlier stage of its development. Though some in Asia, the Soviet

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Union, and the Euro-American portions of the West (excluding the Japanese) clearly fear the prospect of East Asia's two major powers developing significant common interests, such convergence is not on the horizon—or over it. Instead, Japan is pursuing parallel interests with China in which each side uses the other but avoids a close embrace. In this sense, Japan's emerging policies are strongly influenced by U.S. policies, and vice versa. So, rather than an "axis," one might well visualize a yin and yang relationship which is divided by a major developmental gulf. For Japan the East and West have long since melded, but the "twain" separating the Japanese east from the PRC's east remains a formidable obstacle likely to preclude the scenarios the author suggests. In sum, analysts of modern Asian affairs should consider the views expressed in *Sino-Japanese Axis*, but they are unlikely to be persuaded.

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Guertner, Gary L. and Snow, Donald M. *The Last Frontier: An Analysis of the Strategic Defense Initiative*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1986. 147pp. \$20

The Last Frontier fills a void in the open literature about the strategic reasoning behind the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). It is a work that examines the strategy and policy issues of "strategic" defense without a purposeful effort to side

with either critics or proponents. While the authors' biases are clear, they lay out a framework to begin to answer the question of why a nation ought to have active "strategic" defenses in the first place. I suggest that a careful reading of this work will bring most readers to the middle ground of the debate.

The strength of this book is the manner in which the effect of military strategy and arms control on the "strategic" offense-defense relationship is described. Clearly, the transition period from an offense-only "strategic" regime to one where defenses are dominant, is most dangerous and potentially unstable. The authors drive the reader to the question that must be answered *prior to beginning* the transition: "Would the transition to strategic defense make us more secure or would each side alter its nuclear employment policy in such a way that cities and population centers would face even greater danger than they have in the past?" The authors suggest that the answer is yes to the second half of the question; that the irony of "strategic" defense is that countervalue (cities) targeting may move from the lowest to the highest "strategic" targeting priority.

In taking the middle course, the authors present a "show me" attitude toward the current Administration's statements that active defenses and offensive arms reduction go hand in hand. They credibly present the case for Soviet offensive proliferation in the face of early U.S. SDI deployments. They propose that defensive