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trace their provenance to the Republic's formation, *Undeclared War* demonstrates that these unresolved debates are integral to American politics and hence are unlikely to fade away.

Through its study of constitutional and political debates about American decisions to intervene militarily, *Undeclared War* analyzes the deeply rooted and highly contentious ideas about which branch of government has the fundamental authority to make war. In so doing, it represents an important contribution to our understanding of intervention in American politics, which remains a matter of permanent interest to scholars and policymakers.

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### **China's Struggle for Status: The Realignment of International Relations**

*by Yong Deng. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008. 312 pp. Cloth, \$90.00; paper, \$29.99.*

Anyone who watched the opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics can attest that China put on a truly spectacular extravaganza. To most students of Chinese foreign policy, the flawless high-tech, mass synchronized performances were impressive but came as no surprise—it is widely accepted that status is very important to Beijing. To China's leaders and ordinary people, hosting the Olympics amounted to overdue recognition by the world that their country had at last attained its rightful place as a respected great power. Many Chinese felt their country had been slighted when Beijing had failed in its bid to host the 2000 games; so when the games officially opened at 8 o'clock on the evening of 8 August 2008 (8 is a lucky number in Chinese culture), there was an enormous swelling of national pride.

This preoccupation with status is often explained as an important dimension of Chinese culture and accepted at face value. As a result of an approach that emphasizes cultural exceptionalism, China tends to be treated as a sui generis case, and the resulting scholarship receives short shrift from mainstream political science. At last, there is a book that addresses China's craving for status in foreign policy that does not ignore the larger literature. In fact, Yong Deng not only places his examination of China's quest for international respect firmly within international relations theory, he also grounds his approach in the relevant literature from psychology and sociology. As a result, China's fixation with status becomes much more comprehensible—and can be understood more as a distinctive attribute rather than a uniquely Chinese characteristic only intelligible on its own terms.

Deng's stated goal is to explain the "dynamics and patterns in China's foreign relations" (p. ix), and his major premise is that Beijing is "intensely sensitive to 'international status' treating it as if it were the overriding foreign policy objective" (p. 8). With a variety of well-chosen case studies, the author

does an admirable job of showing how China's desire for status helps explain its foreign policy. Perhaps the most illuminating case examines Beijing's response to so-called China threat theories; Deng's lucid analysis makes the vociferous tone of Beijing's reaction more understandable to outside observers. The author explains that for China's leaders, countering China threat theories is more than just a matter of defending their country's honor; it is also about preventing damage to China's international legitimacy (which, in turn, could undermine the Communist Party's domestic legitimacy) and battling a "threat reputation" to avoid producing a "dire security environment" for China (p. 122).

In the final analysis, framing the issue of China's rise, as other authors do, in terms of Beijing as a "status quo" or "revisionist" power may not be a particularly useful or worthwhile exercise, because this dichotomy does not adequately capture Beijing's aspirations or *modus operandi*. While China is vigorously working to raise its position in the world, it seeks to do so in ways that avoid upsetting the existing power constellation. Whether Beijing's impressive ongoing "balancing act" (p. 3)—as Deng aptly phrases it—ultimately turns out to be successful remains to be seen; in the meantime, scholars and practitioners alike can benefit greatly from this timely and thoughtful treatment of contemporary Chinese foreign policy.

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**Warring Friends: Alliance Restraint in International Politics** by Jeremy Pressman. *Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2008. 178 pp. Cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$18.95.*

We know that alliances form against threats. But do they also form because allies are trying to restrain one another? Jeremy Pressman focuses on the latter question, and he additionally asks when it is more or less likely that countries will succeed in restraining their allies. Drawing primarily from cases in Anglo-American and American-Israeli relations, Pressman argues that states have to mobilize their power to be successful restrainers. The United States, for example, failed to mobilize sufficient power to stop Israel from invading Lebanon in 1982, but it used positive and negative sanctions effectively in 1991 to restrain Israel in the face of Iraqi missile attacks.

In raising the issue of alliance restraint, Pressman broaches an important and understudied topic. He is not trying to replace balance-of-threat theory, but rather seeks to enhance it. "The point," he writes at the outset, "is not to determine whether one of these two approaches is dominant but rather to see if there are cases in which the restraint explanation is relevant" (p. 11). To explore alliance restraint, the author draws on brief discussions of four cases of Anglo-American relations and six examples drawn from American-Israeli relations.