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ATTRACTED BY THE DRAGON OR THE EAGLE? WILL CHINA OR THE U.S. PREVAIL IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

REVIEW ESSAY OF ENRICO FELS *SHIFTING POWER IN ASIA-PACIFIC? THE RISE OF CHINA, SINO-US COMPETITION AND REGIONAL MIDDLE POWER ALLEGIANCE*

The Asia-Pacific region (or Indo-Pacific region) has been the most important and the most dynamic region of the world since the end of the Cold War. With approximately two thirds of the global population and similar share in Gross World Product, as well as the presence of major military and nuclear powers (United States, China, Russia, India, Pakistan and North Korea) it has attracted attention of both the public and scholars. Therefore, numerous analyses of strategic situation, security, international relations of the region have been written or published by prominent scholars. They have encompassed either broader Asia-Pacific, Asia and, to lesser extent, Indo-Pacific region or focused on more specific issues. It is not possible to discuss the global body of the literature here, but this essay will briefly compare the work of Enrico Fels¹ with other important publications in the field. Generally two categories were selected, firstly – publications dealing with the regional security or international relations in the region (however defined), secondly, analyzing Sino-American relations (sometimes in the context of broader Asia-Pacific policy of the U.S. government).²

¹ E. Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific? The Rise of China, Sino-US Competition and Regional Middle Power Allegiance*, London 2017.

² We can also find numerous books analyzing sub-regions of the Asia-Pacific in details (or given countries). In this context, especially Southeast Asian IR/security should be mentioned, as it is not dominated by superpowers internal superpowers (like Northeast or South Asia, hence much more often

In the first category, a set of books is worth mentioning here.³ I would definitely refer to *Asia's Security* by Robert Ayson,⁴ analyzing different security issues in the region, both international and transnational, providing quite an innovative approach and broad understanding of security. Great power relations, including the role of China and the United States, as well as problem of regional American alliances is undertaken by the author as well. More hybrid approach can be identified in *Asia-Pacific Security. An Introduction* edited by Joanne Wallis and Andrew Carr,⁵ providing analysis of foreign and security policies of crucial Indo-Pacific powers (including problem of middle and small powers), most urgent security issues (military modernization, maritime security, terrorism, non-traditional security or cyber-security), and even searching for solutions in multilateralism or human security. There are no strict quantified analytical schemes, but this book is supplemented with orderly organized data and tries to refer not only to problems of great powers rivalry. A bit older *Security Politics in the Asia-Pacific. A Regional-Global Nexus?* edited by William Tow,⁶ is definitely a theory-driven, high-quality collection of essays, focusing mostly on functional issues in regional security, but two essays are devoted to American policy in the region and Chinese role in Asia-Pacific security.

International relations in the Asia-Pacific are discussed even more frequently, hence selection of comprehensive books in this topic is even more complicated. Starting with

discussed). Out of books discussing this region, the following should be recommended (but will not be further discussed in this essay): M. Caballero-Anthony, *Regional Security in Southeast Asia. Beyond the ASEAN Way*, Singapore 2005 (mostly analyzing role of ASEAN in security of the region); A. Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia. ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order*, 3rd ed., New York 2014 (mostly analyzing role of ASEAN in different dimensions of security, basing on constructivist paradigm – pretty interesting from the theoretical point of view); D.R. SarDesai, *Southeast Asia. Past and Present*, 7th ed., Boulder 2013 (rather historical approach); R. Dayley, *Southeast Asia in the New International Era*, 7th ed., Boulder 2017 (analyzing domestic and foreign policies of each of Southeast Asian countries, as well as, briefly, ASEAN); finally D. Weatherbee, *International Relations in Southeast Asia. The Struggle for Autonomy*, 3rd ed., Lanham 2015 (seems the most comprehensive of those mentioned, crucial issues of the region analyzed in functional approach, individual countries' perspective is generally omitted).

³ This selection is definitively subjective, hence I'm pretty aware that other choice is fully justifiable and I am open to any criticism. There is also a set of books dealing with problems of IR in the Asia-Pacific or Sino-American relations published in Poland and in Polish: E. Haliżak, *Stosunki międzynarodowe w regionie Azji i Pacyfiku*, Warszawa 1999; idem, *Zmiana układu sił USA-Chiny a transformacja porządku międzynarodowego*, Warszawa 2005; K. Gawlikowski, M. Ławacz (eds.), *Azja Wschodnia na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, vol. 1: *Przemiany polityczne i społeczne*, vol. 2: *Stosunki międzynarodowe i gospodarcze*, Warszawa 2004; M. Grabowski, *Wiek Pacyfiku – polityka Stanów Zjednoczonych wobec regionu Azji i Pacyfiku po roku 1989*, Kraków 2012; idem, *Rywalizacja czy integracja? Procesy i organizacje integracyjne w regionie Azji i Pacyfiku na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, Kraków 2015; A. Jarczewska, J. Zajączkowski (eds.), *Region Azji i Pacyfiku w latach 1985-2015. Ciągłość i zmiana w regionalnym systemie międzynarodowym*, Warszawa 2016. Those books will not be discussed in this review essay.

⁴ R. Ayson, *Asia's Security*, New York 2015.

⁵ J. Wallis, A. Carr (eds.), *Asia-Pacific Security. An Introduction*, Washington 2016.

⁶ W.T. Tow (ed.), *Security Politics in the Asia-Pacific. A Regional-Global Nexus?*, Cambridge 2009.

Asia Pacific in World Politics by Derek McDougall,⁷ one finds a mixture of functional and state-centered chapters, with a definitive prevalence of the latter. Apart from the analysis of crucial powers' foreign policies (both superpowers, and middle powers), one can find three chapters devoted to Sino-American, Japanese-American and Sino-Japanese bilateral relations. The book is well written, but rather descriptive in its narration. Another canonic publication, *International Politics of the Asia-Pacific* by Michael Yahuda,⁸ definitely focuses its attention on great power politics, somehow neglecting other actors in the system. Yahuda's analysis is historical to large extent. Different approach may be found in *International Relations of Asia* edited jointly by David Shambaugh and aforementioned Michael Yahuda,⁹ being a collection of analytical essays of history and future of the region, basic theoretical approaches, external powers' policies (rather exceptionally, European policy in Asia is described), regional powers and sub-regional IR (Central Asia, Southeast Asia). Additionally, brief reference to problems of regional economy, security and globalization is made. Similarly, to previous positions, despite setting the theoretical background, this work is predominantly descriptive in its nature, even though definitely worth recommending for understanding Asian IR. *The New Global Politics of the Asia Pacific* edited by Michael Connors, Remy Davidson and Jörn Dosch¹⁰ is somehow similarly structured hybrid set of essays, analyzing great powers in the region, selected middle powers (like Australia), showing a role of Europe and briefly presenting problems of Southeast Asia (mostly via the prism of ASEAN) on the one hand, and functional issues, like globalization, economic issues, regional security, transnational issues or broadly understood human rights on the other.

Finally, the monumental *Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia* edited by Saadia Pekkanen, John Ravenhill and Rosemary Foot¹¹ and authored by most prominent scholars in the field should be discussed. Due to its nature (handbook) it is definitely the most comprehensive publication dealing with the problems of international politics in Asia. Similarly to the previously discussed publication, the composition of this collection is hybrid, but the structure is more orderly organized than in previous cases. Most important elements in this structure are: an extensive theoretical part (analyzing realism, liberalism, constructivism, FPA – still quite rare in publications on the region, and international society), followed by analysis of economic problems (there are foreign economic policies of crucial countries and regions – SE Asia, Central Asia discussed, as well as different dimensions of regional integration discussed), analysis of security issues (again in state-centric and functional dimensions), finally transna-

⁷ D. McDougall, *Asia-Pacific in World Politics*, 2nd ed., Boulder–London 2016.

⁸ M. Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific*, 3rd ed., New York 2011.

⁹ D. Shambaugh, M. Yahuda (eds.), *International Relations of Asia*, 2nd ed., Lanham 2014.

¹⁰ M.K. Connors, R. Davidson, J. Dosch (eds.), *The New Global Politics of the Asia Pacific*, 2nd ed., New York 2012 (a 3rd edition of this book will be published in October 2017 under the title *The New Global Politics of the Asia Pacific. Conflict and Cooperation in the Asian Century*).

¹¹ S. Pekkanen, J. Ravenhill, R. Foot (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the International Relations of Asia*, New York 2014.

tional security issues, and miscellaneous issues (like regional security and trade institutions, American alliances, geography or strategic Asian triangles). There is no doubt that this handbook is really impressive in the quality of texts and scope of issues discussed. On the other hand, we do not find any precise analytical scheme defined there, as this is not the purpose of the book. Comparing with other publications, Oxford handbook devotes less space to Sino-American relations. Naturally, this book's goals are completely different from Enrico Fels's research-based work.

The second category, discussing U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific, and especially Sino-American relations must include: a bit older, but definitely crucial *Same Bed, Different Dreams. Managing U.S.-China Relations 1989-2001* by David Lampton,¹² analyzing bilateral relations by showing main events, functional spheres of bilateral relations, as well as global, state and civil society and finally individual levels of relations. Regional contexts and relations with other actors in the system are included in the book. Another publication worth mentioning would be *U.S.-Chinese Relations. Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present* by Robert Sutter,¹³ connecting historical analysis (with a strong emphasis on the events in the 21st century) and description of selected areas (like security, economic relations, human rights or maritime challenges in bilateral relations). *Tangled Titans. The United States and China* edited by prominent Asian studies scholar Dawid Shambaugh,¹⁴ is much more comprehensive. The essays that the book comprises deal with history and the future of bilateral relations, theorize them (in realist and liberal paradigms), analyze domestic dimensions of relations, as well as bilateral, regional and global contexts. Despite really high quality and comprehensive composition, this book is prevalently descriptive in its nature. Definitely a more analytical and explanatory approach may be found in *China, the United States, and Global Order* by Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter,¹⁵ focusing on problems of behavioral consistency of Chinese and American foreign policies and their influence on different problems of the global order.

If looking at broader U.S. foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific, one should mention works of Robert Sutter, especially *The United States and Asia. Regional Dynamics in the Twenty-First-Century Relations*,¹⁶ focusing on bilateral relations of the United States with selected countries and regions of broadly understood Indo-Pacific region, as well as analyzing past, contemporary issues (especially the so called 'Asia pivot'/rebalancing of Barack Obama administration) and attempting to predict the future of relations. As for the 'pivot', the book *The Pivot. The Future of American Statecraft in Asia*¹⁷ by

¹² D.M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams. Managing U.S.-China Relations 1989-2001*, Berkeley 2001.

¹³ R. Sutter, *U.S.-Chinese Relations. Perilous Past, Pragmatic Present*, 2nd ed., Lanham 2013 (a 3rd edition under the title *U.S.-Chinese Relations. Perilous Past, Uncertain Present* will be published in November 2017).

¹⁴ D. Shambaugh (ed.), *Tangled Titans. The United States and China*, Lanham 2013.

¹⁵ R. Foot, A. Walter, *China, the United States, and Global Order*, Cambridge 2011.

¹⁶ R. Sutter, *The United States and Asia. Regional Dynamics and Twenty-First-Century Relations*, Lanham 2015.

¹⁷ K.M. Campbell, *The Pivot. The Future of American Statecraft in Asia*, New York 2016.

Kurt Campbell, former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs in Barack Obama administration, should definitely be discussed here. Its composition is less typical, but it is the insider's view of both the creation of strategy of American foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific, reference to the region and its features, history of U.S. policy and the 'pivot' itself, as well as risks and problems of implementation of the strategy. This book is definitely more controversial than previously mentioned, but at the same time broadens our knowledge about U.S. foreign policy mechanisms in the region, and Sino-American relations to a certain extent.

Having in mind the abundance of texts describing and/or analyzing international security, international relations, U.S. policy in the Asia-Pacific region, as well as Sino-American relations, one should rethink the need of writing a new book, especially such a massive one (almost 800 pages) or, precisely saying, its novelty on the market. This problem will be discussed in further part of the essay, but briefly speaking, both the methodology of analysis, as well as its scope (including middle powers' component) makes Enrico Fels's book unique and worth studying.¹⁸

The reviewed book was based on Fels's Ph.D. dissertation, hence it is research-based by default. Therefore its author was entitled to select both research problem, theories and methods and naturally has done so. This is why the book is less general in its nature than the aforementioned pieces aiming at broad analysis of IR, security or Sino-American relations in the Asia-Pacific or Indo-Pacific region.¹⁹ On the other hand, what makes the book exceptional is the research problem, defined as assessment of a power shift in the region, defined both in terms of changing relations between material capabilities of the United States and China, and assessing the so called allegiance of middle powers in the region to either the U.S. or the PRC, as such an allegiance illustrates increase of power by one of the countries analyzed. Hence, three research questions and two broad hypotheses were analyzed in the book. As for research questions, the author wondered: *How have the material (and immaterial) capabilities changed in the region of Asia-Pacific since the end of the Cold War?; Is the People's Republic of China indeed capable of gaining greater relational power in regional affairs?; Has a power shift taken place in Asia-Pacific since the end of the Cold War?* Based on those three research questions, two research hypotheses were set (one expanded), namely H1: *If a power shift has taken place between China and the US in Asia-Pacific, then there would be and observable increase in the aggregate power of China relative to the US since the end of the Cold War;* H2a: *If a power shift has taken place between China and the US in the Asia-Pacific, China would have been able to gain more allegiance of relevant middle powers than it had previously in the period since the end of the Cold War;* H2b: *If a power shift has taken place be-*

¹⁸ Naturally, looking broader, and juxtaposing set of books (even of one author, like those authored by Robert Sutter, Like *The United States and Asia...* and *Chinese Foreign Relations. Power and Policy since the Cold War*, Lanham 2016) we can get a proximate overview of American and Chinese relations with regional middle powers, but in a rather descriptive than analytical way.

¹⁹ The book is nominally focused on the Asia-Pacific region, but at the same time, the analysis includes countries located in South Asia, hence the Indo-Pacific region would be more appropriate name.

*tween China and the US in the Asia-Pacific, then the US has lost the allegiance of relevant middle powers that it had previously in the period since the end of the Cold War.*²⁰

Those hypotheses were partly confirmed. Generally, most of countries analyzed in the study of Enrico Fels have increased their capabilities (measured by aggregate power), but the People's Republic of China has dramatically increased its material and immaterial capabilities *vis-à-vis* the United States (more or less doubled it in comparison to the capabilities of the United States). It has resulted in the lost of the American uncontested primacy in the region (as measured by aggregate power). At the same time relational power, measured by the allegiance of middle powers, has not increased significantly. Having increased aggregate power, China has not improved its position in the region (as measured by relations with middle powers) in comparison to the relational power of the United States. On the one hand, China has significantly improved economic relations with all six regional middle powers (i.e. Japan, Pakistan, Australia, Republic of Korea, Indonesia and Thailand), but on the other only in two cases (Pakistan and Thailand) significant security cooperation improvement was observable. At the same time, those middle powers have not downgraded their relations with the United States at similar level in most cases (in case of Pakistan, deterioration of relations was proved and in case of Thailand, stagnation was shown).

Such results were based on an extensive research and referred to a set of theories, mostly in the realist paradigm. The author of the book has conducted a deep study, starting on the philosophy of science (hence beginning from the very general, meta-theoretical level) and finishing it with a decision to apply a mixed-methods approach to the research undertaken. I definitely agree with the statement of extended explanatory power of mixed qualitative and quantitative approaches. On the other hand, I have some doubts if the study is not rather a multi-method study. Generally, two methods were crucial for the study commented. Firstly, quantitative analysis in the newly constructed index, called Composite Indicator on Aggregate Power, applied to virtually all countries in the Indo-Pacific region in order to assess their aggregate power and enable a selection of great and middle powers. Secondly, the comparative-historical analysis, applied to selected case studies in order to analyze their allegiance to either Beijing or Washington. I should add that the study is based on enormous body of literature, generally including all important publications in forms of monographs and scholarly articles (in this case there is a selection, but well done and properly indicating the most important texts, especially in the area of theory).

If looking in a more detailed way on the structure of the book, we can find a mixture of theoretical/methodological chapters and analytical ones. Such a structure may seem a bit awkward at first glance (as they are not composed in the way – theory/methods and analysis), but actually is quite logical, as chapters 2, 3 and 4 introduce the crucial chapter, where Composite Indicator on Aggregate Power is introduced and applied to the Asia-Pacific countries (44 countries of the broadly understood region) and chap-

²⁰ E. Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific...* As this part of the review essay refers to the aforementioned book, references will only be made in case of exact citation.

ter 6 introduces following six 'case-study' chapters analyzing situation of selected middle powers, i.e. Australia, Pakistan, Japan, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. Having looked at the introductory chapter, dealing with literature and the research design (quite well established and impressive in terms of methodology, as well as data gathered and analyzed), one faces chapter 2 forming the theoretical framework of the work. This theoretical setting is based on a realist paradigm, with brief characteristics of classical and structural realism, as well as balance of power theories and problems of cooperation in a realist paradigm analyzed in this chapter. It is hard to undermine this approach, being anyhow the most spread in the world, hence this selection is justifiable. On the other hand this chapter, and some other 'theoretical' chapters seem a bit too long with too many quotations and references included. It is naturally important in the dissertation, but could have been slightly shorter in the book itself. The following chapter focuses on power definitions. Three important categories are discussed by this chapter: aggregate power, *aggregate resources a state has at its disposal to achieve its aims*,²¹ relational power, generally focused on interactions between countries (crucial for the analysis and forming a core for the argument of the book), and finally quite an interesting concept of structural power, hence the power to influence the structure of the international system (structure determining behavior of actors in the system), but unfortunately almost impossible to measure or assess. As for Sino-American relations, military-political and financial-economic spheres were chosen as crucial for the relational power analysis (as social sphere is again difficult to be properly approached).

The next chapter is focused on the issue of middle powers, definitely less studied in IR theory, even in countries fulfilling the definition of middle power themselves. Enrico Fels recalls some historical attempts to approach this category of states (like those of Saxoferrato or Treitschke), but generally presents definitional problems of this category, as well as vagueness of the definition of middle power. Three models are recalled: hierarchical (middle power in relation to other units in the system, especially great powers), functional (middle powers performing set of functions, usually where they're most designed or interested to operate), and behavioral one (middle powers behave in a specific way, namely tend to pursue multilateral solutions, embrace compromise and follow 'good citizen principle' in their diplomacy). If one can define it this way, a crucial achievement of this chapter is a definition of a middle power, including *sufficient control over material (and non-material) resources, willing to exercise some form of responsibility in regional affairs [...], must be militarily self-sufficient enough to inflict great costs upon an actively aggressive great power*.²² What is important, to large extent middle powers gain relational power by aligning with a certain great power and an alliance with middle powers may be beneficial for great powers (as they increase relational power being supported by middle powers), and the latter to large extent defines relational power of the United States and China in the Asia-Pacific region.

²¹ A. Pape, quoted in: E. Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific...*, p. 158.

²² E. Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific...*, p. 213.

The most innovative and useful aspect of the book, namely Composite Index on Aggregate Power was introduced and applied in chapter 5. Having referred to different ways of measuring power, Enrico Fels decided to reconstruct the famous formula of Ray Clay's,²³ generally developing quantitative components of the formula (C – critical mass, i.e. population and territory, E – economic capability and M – military capability) and dropping qualitative ones (strategic purpose and national will), with an attempt to weight and standardize it according to guidelines of OECD and based on Leader-Laggard approach. Such an approach is definitely useful in terms of objectification of the research, hence should be appreciated, even though weighting of those components must still be somehow arbitrary. The new Composite Index of Aggregate Power was finally based on 55 variables in the aforementioned three categories (critical mass: size of population and territory, economic capability and military capability). Out of those, economic capability was analyzed in a really detailed way and it would be hard to question this category. I would, however, consider inclusion of the level of investment (or broader composition of GDP by end use), as well as composition of labor force (by occupation), but I understand reliable data is not so easily accessible in this area. Also innovativeness should be incorporated (measured by R&D and/or number of patents). As for military capabilities – the index includes fewer categories, but they seem properly chosen. The most dubious part is in the category of critical mass, as especially in population category the 'quality of population', referring e.g. to the Human Development Index (or, as GDP is integrated into CIAP, to level of education and life expectancy). In some cases, the lack of data makes certain indicators (like role of strategic minerals) disputable. Generally, however, the index is definitely a step forward in measuring power or capabilities of states in the region (or world-wide). What is important, the Author decided to analyze for scenarios with different weight ratios for sub-indices of C, E and M (CIAP I: 1:2:2; CIAP II: 1:2:3, CIAP III: 1:1:1, CIAP IV: 1:3:2) and apply them to data from 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 respectively, taking into account an impressive number of 44 countries in the Asia-Pacific (or Indo-Pacific region – as South Asian countries were included, this name seems more suitable).²⁴ In almost all scenarios the U.S. kept its leader's position, while the PRC was second (apart from CIAP III with China as a leader). Finally, in all scenarios China dramatically increased its aggregate power and its relative position towards the United States. What is also important, in all scenarios the same 10 countries were identified as top powers in the Asia-Pacific region: United States, China, Russia, India, Australia, Pakistan, Japan,

²³ Ray Clay used to serve as a Director of Intelligence and Research of the American Department of State, Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency – CIA, as well as Director of Center for Strategic and International Studies – CSIS.

²⁴ He included: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Macao, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, French Polynesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, Vanuatu, Vietnam (again in original text DR Korea instead of DPR Korea/DPRK/Democratic People's Republic of Korea).

Republic of Korea, Thailand and Indonesia. Out of them, Japan was the only with relative decrease of power between 1992 and 2012.

But not only aggregate power, but also relational power was taken into account (especially focusing on Sino-American relations), again proving innovative character of the book reviewed. This, much more complicated, task was undertaken in chapter 6 and based on political outcomes as measurement of relational power (with a special focus on allegiance of middle powers towards the U.S. or China). This allegiance was measured by security indicators (participation in military exercises and training, arms trade, external defense funding), economic indicators (foreign trade, Foreign Direct Investment – flows and stock, foreign aid) and political indicators (public opinion, congruence of voting behavior with the US in the UN General Assembly, share of Chinese population). At the same time, six middle powers were indentified in the region for 2012, based on K-means clustering (Australia, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan, Thailand and Indonesia).

Those six middle powers' allegiance towards either China or the US was later analyzed in chapters 7-12, structured in the same way, with justification of middlepowermanship at the beginning (economic development, foreign policy, security profile), followed by analysis of relations with the United States and China accordingly, and concluded with the analysis of shifting allegiance. The description of selected case studies was based on comparative historical analysis, being mostly qualitative method, but also set of aforementioned indicators (in quantitative way), hence the Author declared mixed methods approach. As for middlepowermanship, some doubts may exist in case of Japan,²⁵ but its relative decline in power situates it in this category, even in scenarios stressing economic power more than other dimensions of power.

If looking at Australia (chapter 7), its role in regional affairs, developed economy, education, driving role in the regional multilateral forums, as well as sophisticated military makes it a middle power in the region, even with a relatively small population. Definitely, its economic relations with China have been growing substantially in the two decades analyzed, but despite of this development, strong security links make Australia still allegiant to the United States. The situation is different with a newcomer in regional middle powers, namely Pakistan (chapter 8). Its middlepowermanship is based on military self-sufficiency and very capable, professional military, economy (with serious problems), but especially its role in international Islamic organizations. In case of Pakistan, gradual growth of importance of relations with Beijing was observable, with deteriorating alliance with Washington ('necessary evil' in Pakistani policy),²⁶ still providing more money and better weaponry. The analysis shows, however, that Beijing has been a crucial ally for Islamabad and ties between China and Pakistan have become much stronger since the end of the Cold War. Japan (chapter 9), surprisingly located

²⁵ As there are four categories: primary powers (in 2012 United States, China and Russia were identified as primary powers), regional great powers (in 2012 just India was identified in this category), middle powers (Australia, Pakistan, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia) and small powers or 'the rest'.

²⁶ E. Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific...*, p. 488.

only in middle-powers category, is an example of a country which is perceived better than actually performing. Its middle-power position stems from its deteriorating economic position (especially debt problems), but on the other hand the country has still been playing crucial role in international economic organizations and having 4th biggest military budget in the region. If we look at economic relations, we may observe dramatic increase of Sino-Japanese ties despite political problems. At the same time, in political and security spheres relations between United States and Japan have improved substantially, whereas Sino-Japanese deteriorated in the analyzed period. South Korea (chapter 10) is an interesting example of the middle power *per se*, with official middle power diplomacy embedded in government policies. Its position is reinforced by the impressive growth of the economy, capable military, and strong engagement in regional Northeast Asian initiatives. The analysis conducted by Fels definitely proves huge increase in Sino-Korean economic links, but political ties are still strong between Seoul and Washington. Therefore one may conclude that Beijing was not able to change Seoul's stance towards Washington, and despite Korean economic hedging between China and the U.S. in security and political spheres RoK remains crucial U.S. ally. The next middle power analyzed in the book, namely Thailand (chapter 11), is another case of (limited in this time) allegiance shift. Its role as a middle power has been sometime questioned and Thailand is perceived as an emerging or peripheral middle power, but there are some factors reinforcing its position in the region (relatively fast growing economy, despite socio-political problems, strong military, support for regional initiatives, especially Thailand's role in the ASEAN, however, Thailand has rather been passive in IR in comparison to other regional middle powers). Having been traditional ally of the United States, Thailand maintained security links with the U.S., but its relations with China have improved substantially. In both economic and political-security cooperation China and Thailand have gotten closer and Washington is currently one of the partners of Thailand, not necessarily the crucial one. Generally, China has gained a lot since the end of the Cold War, and, even though, the U.S. has not lost too much, relative position of China *vis-à-vis* the United States has substantially improved. Indonesia (chapter 12) is the final middle power discussed in the book, it is also the last one, joining the middle power category in cluster analysis only in 2012. Nevertheless, there are many reasons for its inclusion in the analysis, including growing economy, developing democracy, big military (not necessarily capable in international environment), but especially its role in regional organizations (ASEAN may be prominent example here, but one should also take non-aligned movement into account, Islamic organizations, or MIKTA²⁷). Analysis made by Enrico Fels showed improvement of relations between Indonesia and China since the end of the Cold War, but at the same time maintenance of good relations with the United States. Indonesia may seem a model example of hedging country, benefiting from cooperation with both powers and aiming quite successfully at conducting of an independent foreign policy.

²⁷ An informal group of global middle-powers: Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Australia, was created in 2013.

Analysing relational power in the Asia-Pacific region was definitely a complicated task, but results of this endeavor are definitely worth the effort undertaken by the author. Briefly reiterating results of the research of Enrico Fels, one may observe a paramount increase of Chinese aggregate power in two decades between 1992 and 2002, but not necessarily accompanied by the similar level of increase of relational power. Beijing's relational power (in the reference to regional middle powers), has substantially grown only in the economic sphere, whereas in security sphere only Pakistan (and to some extent Thailand) has changed its allegiance. As author stresses, Washington has allies in the region, whereas Beijing predominantly has business partners.

Summing up, the book authored by Enrico Fels is absolutely worth recommending for both scholars interested in the Asia-Pacific region, and students willing to understand this region and power competition in the region better. It is definitely well designed and has a unique research concept. As in all books, some minor corrections could be introduced,²⁸ but there is no doubt that this work is a very important contribution to further understanding of Asia-Pacific region in a form that is normally somehow neglected. Even though large number of books (monographs, edited volumes, or even reference works) in the subject of international relations in the Asia-Pacific (Indo-Pacific) in general and Sino-American relations in particular were published, there was still a room for a publication, bringing novel approach to the aforementioned subjects, and the book of Enrico Fels is definitely fulfilling this task. It's been innovative in its approach, especially by the introduction of the Composite Index of Aggregate Power (based on well designed formula, but also impressive research and data gathered), but also focusing on middle powers in international relations of the Asia-Pacific, a dimension often neglected in regional and global analyses, and finally a unique approach to Sino-American (or broadly speaking, great powers' relations), with relational power analysis and middle power allegiance as an indicator for this dimension of power.

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- Campbell K.M., *The Pivot. The Future of American Statecraft in Asia*, New York 2016.

²⁸ Some of them were mentioned in previous footnotes, other include minor spelling mistakes, like Murayama statement – p. 538 (should be Murayama), confusion in number of North Korean nuclear tests – p. 304 (three or four), showing Pakistan as a country with second biggest Muslim community in the world – p. 442 (it's India) or omission of Western Papua, when referring to non-peaceful Indonesian behavior – pp. 700-701. Definitely such issues are unavoidable in a text of almost 800 pages and do not have a negative impact on the whole work.

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