The ominous alarm rung by the Fukushima nuclear accident, however disastrous, is unlikely to reverse the longer-term dramatic increase in global demand for civilian nuclear power. Skyrocketing global electricity demand and increased concerns over energy security and greenhouse gas emissions, among other factors, are enough to validate this projection. The main issue that this book addresses is the inflated risks that the expected worldwide spread of nuclear energy poses to the current non-proliferation regime.

The concern is expressed this way: the more widespread the use of civilian nuclear power is, the higher the risks of its abuse and misuse and the greater the need for maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. How, then, is it possible to sever this uncomfortable causal link between a dramatic increase in global nuclear power capacity and possible nuclear insecurity?

This book, a product of the Brookings Institution’s research on and surveys of major stakeholders in the nuclear industry, argues for enhanced collaboration between industry and the government to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. To promote a sustained partnership, the authors suggest establishing and developing a formal, ongoing mechanism through which industry and government can arrive at workable solutions through a sustained dialogue with a view to sharing information, building consensus, and understanding each other’s expectations, both in terms of objectives and benefits.

Reviewed by Taehwan Kim, Director of the Public Diplomacy Department at the Korea Foundation and a book review editor for *Global Asia*. 

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**Business and Nonproliferation: Industry’s Role in Safeguarding a Nuclear Renaissance**

Edited by John P. Banks and Charles K. Ebinger

Brookings Institution Press, 2011, 238 pages, $32.95 (hardcover)

*Nuclear Safety Is Everyone’s Business*
“Nonkilling” is not so widely used a term as “nonviolence” in the social sciences, and, in particular, political science. In choosing their title, the editors of this book intend to describe “a Korea in which no Koreans kill other Koreans, no foreigners kill Koreans, and no Koreans are sent abroad to kill foreigners.” More broadly, this book attempts to explore “nonkilling” as the “absence of weapons specifically designed to kill and absence of ideological justifications for killing.”

This book thus aspires to be global and universal in its ideals, but local and idiosyncratic in its analytical focus. It explores six cultures — those of North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia. The Korean Peninsula is the focal point of the volume, because of the lethal structure of killing that culminated in the Korean War, in which the killing cultures of these six countries converged. By discovering, developing and eventually combining the “nonkilling” assets and capabilities inherent in these six cultures, the contributing authors argue that a “nonkilling” world can be realized.

This book is admittedly a preliminary work that invites further exploration by readers, experts and non-experts alike. Its comparative analysis of killing and nonkilling cultures is limited, as the book simply juxtaposes these six cultures without interrelating them to each other. Reviewed by Taehwan Kim
In the second half of the 20th century, the wealth gap between advanced and developing countries began progressively to narrow, and this pattern is likely to continue until the middle of this century, according to Economics Nobel Laureate Michael Spencer. He describes this 100-year-old trend, which began after World War II, as the “Next Convergence,” and contrasts it with the widening wealth gap that marked the 200 years leading up to the 1950s.

The ongoing convergence is due in large part to the spreading pattern of high growth among developing countries, which were able to demonstrate “sustained growth” (defined by the author as an annual average growth of seven percent for a period of at least 25 years). Why did this pattern of high growth occur in the post-war period in a selective group of developing countries? What did these countries do, and not do, to sustain growth?

As the main enabling factor, Spencer points to the emergence of a global economy in the latter part of the 20th century. The growing openness to trade, the flow of capital, and, most importantly, the transfer of knowledge and technology, enabled sustained growth in those developing countries that exploited to the maximum the features of the new global economy. Spencer also highlights the importance of the internal dynamics of developing countries, including the need for appropriate policies, political leadership and institutional governance. This book is in a very readable style, with numerous issues related to the grand theme arranged under subheadings for easy reference, but also closely interwoven.

Reviewed by Taehwan Kim
In Defense of Dictatorship

Although couched in the sometimes clinical language of political science, Tuong Vu’s basic argument in *Paths to Development in Asia*, is brutal: Asian leaders who destroyed internal opposition from rival elites and the public should get credit for building states with the capacity for rapid economic development.

The key to East Asia’s economic “tigers” and “miracles” lies not in the policies of growth-obsessed strongmen so much as in the political maneuvers of power-hungry dictators who preceded them. Thus, Rhee Syngman’s elimination of any challenge from the left in South Korea after the Korean War created the “cohesive state structure” Park Chung-hee would need to generate rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, Mao Zedong’s ruthless elimination of “rightist” political and intellectual rivals created the state capacity he would need to make reform work after 1978. Vu’s counter-examples are Vietnam and Indonesia, where the “moderate” rule of Ho Chi Minh and Sukarno — “compromising” with rival elites, “incorporating” and not “suppressing” the masses — retarded economic development. In this Hobbesian account of East Asian development, Mao’s biggest mistake was not the Great Leap Forward, but the 1957 Hundred Flowers campaign, when he encouraged criticism of government policy.

Reviewed by John Delury, a book review editor for *Global Asia*
In 2005, US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick coined a new term to define the international community’s expectations of rising China: We want you to become a “responsible stakeholder,” Zoellick said. The term stuck, and now Peking University’s Wang Yizhou, a leading foreign policy thinker in the “liberal” camp, offers a kind of Chinese counter-proposal. The new direction for China’s diplomacy, Wang argues, should be “creative involvement.”

China really has no choice, he argues. Due to its size and expanding role in an ever-globalizing economy, China is already involved in a dizzying array of international issues, in a way unprecedented in her history. So for China, the reality of involvement requires new levels of diplomatic creativity.

To explain theoretically what he means by “creativity,” Wang turns to Joseph Schumpeter’s notion of “creative destruction.” Wang urges Chinese diplomats to model themselves on Schumpeter’s innovative companies, ones that survive the “perennial gale” of capitalist competition by doing things differently. He uses eight case studies from recent Chinese diplomacy where some element of “creative involvement” was at play, and ends up with an intriguing list, including encouraging political reform in Burma after the 2007 crackdown; providing massive humanitarian aid to Sudan; and launching the Six-Party talks on North Korea’s nuclear ambitions.

Wang’s book should be required reading at China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for anyone (able to read Chinese) interested in new trends in Chinese foreign policy thinking.

Reviewed by John Delury

Creative Involvement: A New Direction in China’s Diplomacy
By Wang Yizhou
Peking University Press, 2011, 179 pages, 28 RMB (Paperback) (Available only in the Chinese language)
“Here, in this small but strategic slice of Asia, the decline of the post-Western world is perhaps more evident than anywhere else,” Thant Myint-U writes of Burma. “In this intra-Asian world, relations with China are paramount ... Will India ever become the ‘balancer’ of China in the region?”

That is the essential question driving Thant’s meditation on China’s rise and the fate of Burma. Writing in a style part-journalistic, part-travelogue, Thant is both insider, born of native Burmese parents, and outsider, raised abroad and educated at Harvard and Cambridge. He knows how to set a scene, and finds interesting interlocutors to capture a sense on the ground of where Burma is heading. For Thant, that direction is almost painfully clear: Burma is fast getting more developed, polluted, corrupt and unequal. In other words, more like China.

He meets Chinese entrepreneurs pouring across the porous border, while Beijing has grand plans for an oil and gas pipeline from the Bay of Bengal to Kunming and controversial designs for massive hydroelectric dams. Thant is unimpressed by Washington’s signs of readiness to engage Burma’s ruling junta. Instead, for him the real question is: Where is India in this contest for influence? Considering Burma’s long history as part of the Indic, rather than Sinic, world, Thant is puzzled, almost pained, by India’s neglect of its small cousin.

Reviewed by John Delury
China’s leaders have been trying for years to reassure the world that Beijing is committed to something they call “peaceful rise” — we’ll get rich, and even strong, but never aggressive. A main argument is cultural: in essence, that aggressive behavior is un-Confucian, and as such, un-Chinese. Political scientist Yuan-Kang Wang has put this claim to the test of history. He chose the two most Confucian of Chinese dynasties, the Song and Ming, and looked for examples when the emperor chose harmony over war, as a matter of principle rather than expediency.

He deconstructs icons of China’s purported anti-imperialistic nature such as the building of the Great Wall and the 15th century sea voyages of Zheng He, plus a host of lesser-known cases where China had to choose whether or not to go to battle. His conclusion is remarkable: he finds not a single case where “Confucian pacifism” influenced the choice between war and peace. Rather, Chinese behavior conformed almost entirely to the international relations model of “structural realism” — aggressive when powerful, defensive when weak. In fact, the real utility of Confucian pacifism was rhetorical: emperors used it to justify a soft line in periods of military weakness.

So, Wang concludes, China’s “peaceful rise” today is rhetorical balm to wary Asian neighbors watching its defense spending grow faster than its economy. Wang’s message: expect little of China’s “harmony” promises. Rather, China will shift to “an offensive-oriented grand strategy” as its power grows, and external power constraints will be the only variable.

Reviewed by John Delury
The long-awaited sequel to his bestselling and Pulitzer Prize-winning 800-page *The Prize*, Daniel Yergin’s *The Quest* continues the exploration of the modern world’s building block — energy. As billions more people, Asians in particular, join the middle class, will fossil fuels run out before a transition to alternative energy? Or will a security threat cause systemic risk to the global energy system? Or will nature itself, in the form of climate change, be the undoing of the quest for energy security?

Yergin explains how the Asian financial crisis of 1997-98 led to a complete restructuring of the petroleum industry, how China’s “go out” strategy and giant international oil companies are transforming the global energy landscape, and how Japan’s Fukushima Daiichi disaster put the breaks on a worldwide “nuclear renaissance.” Asia looms large for Yergin, who is obviously inspired by the models of Japanese energy efficiency in the 1970s, and China’s green growth corporate innovators today, from Suntech Power’s solar cells to BYD’s all-electric cars.

Digestibly written, *The Quest* never fully answers the questions posed at the outset, but there is much to glean about the evolution of the global energy industry along the way.

Reviewed by John Delury