

Book Reviews

***US vs China Rivalry in the Biden Era.* By Bambang Cipto. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2009, vii + 228 pp. ISBN: 9786232362598.**

America and China present a complex relationship in relations between two major countries in this modern world. America as a traditional power in international relations has the main goal of maintaining their hegemony as a superpower. The major objective of America, a longstanding global power, is to retain its hegemony as a global superpower. China, on the other hand, is a rising economic, social, and political force that aims to establish its hegemony in the Asian region before expanding to the global level. As the bearer of the previous hegemony in international relations, the United States of America, must exercise caution in dealing with China's attempt to build a new hegemony since it has developed into a distinct dynamic in modern international relations.

This book provides a thorough analysis of the dynamics of international relations between the United States and China during the first term of Joe Biden's presidency. In his book, Cipto makes the case that the United States has to be more cautious while preserving its relationship with China, particularly during the Biden administration when it is important to protect both domestic and global interests. As the subsequent president of the United States, Joe Biden exercised prudence when dealing with China in a new rivalry. Biden has specific demands to improve the role of the United States in the international world after being considered to have experienced a setback in the era of Donald Trump's leadership with his "America First" policy. In addition, Donald Trump openly launched a trade war strategy with China which increased tensions between the two countries. The efforts made by Joe Biden can

be likened to the efforts of "Rambo", a fictional character who represents United States patriotism in "cleaning up" all forms of international threats. But this time what they faced was not an ordinary threat, this special thread can be reimagined as a dragon that had just awakened and could pounce at any time and turn terrifying. Therefore, instead of using firearms blindly as the films illustrate, Rambo must be able to dance beautifully to face the rise of the dragon.

This book consists of seven chapters. In the first chapter of this book, the author discusses US strategy under Biden in dealing with China's rise and how China's response to Biden's efforts hindered China's progress. In the second chapter, the author reviews the rivalry between the US and China in the field of high technology. This chapter explains how China succeeded in dominating the advancement of Artificial Intelligence technology and how Biden's strategy is to deal with China's progress.

Chapter three in this book discusses China's economic diplomacy, in the context of the BRI (Belt Road Initiative), in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Latin America; and how Biden responded. Chapter four discusses the US vs China rivalry in the South China Sea and Biden's response to China's aggressiveness in the Region. The fifth chapter of this book discusses the US vs China rivalry in global vaccine distribution. Then the sixth chapter discuss the military rivalry of the two countries. This book ends with the seventh chapter which discusses the ideological rivalries of the two countries and the future of competition between the two hegemon.

The main strength of this book is the sequence of stories that comprehensively discusses the US vs China competition because in fact this book is the third part of three books written by Bambang Cipto as Professor of International Relations at the Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta which has a focus on

studies of United States studies. The first series was entitled "China's Strategy for Seizing Super Power Status"; the second "Fading Western Supremacy Amid the Rise of Asia". This third book is a more detailed description of the US vs China rivalry in the first year of US President Joe Biden's administration.

Second, this book possesses the power of novelty because it raises a number of very pertinent and current issues for observing the phenomenon of international relations in the 2020s, when the US dominant power started to falter due to both internal and external challenges, including the rise of PR China and Russia, which are thought to threaten the US global economic, political, and military dominance.

This book was written in the midst of a global social context that occurred in June 2021 after Biden's presence at the G-7 meeting in England and continued with the NATO summit in Brussels. At that time, Biden invited Europe to jointly make China the main enemy of the West. Europe also supports it, but whether all European member countries will agree to the invitation, it still needs time to prove it. But what was clear, Biden will still made China his main rival. Automatically, the world will now re-enter the second stage of the American vs China rivalry as a continuation of the trade war launched by US President Donald Trump in 2019. It is not impossible that this feud will become more complex, considering that China is also getting stronger economically, militarily, and technologically.

This book emphasizes the adage of global political realism as a fight for power to control the ways of thinking and acting of others (struggle for power). In this case, the US as the holder of the status-quo wants to show consistency in protecting the national interest. This is reflected in Biden's continued actions, making China his main rival, continuing the second stage of the American vs China rivalry as a continuation of the trade war launched by

the previous US President Donald Trump in 2019.

However, in reading international phenomena, including the US vs China rivalry, we should not get bogged down in the simplification of the conclusion that the US is hostile to China in all respects and forever from the past to the present and the future. It is important to realize this because in fact we must believe in the adage that "In politics, there are no eternal friends or personal enemies. What exists is eternal interest." We can see this, among other things, in the phenomenon of dealing with the rampant narcotics trade in Southeast Asia or the indifference of the two countries to the plight of the Rohingya Muslims who were being oppressed by the rulers of Myanmar." History has also recorded that the US and China were in the same political position during the Second World War (1939 – 1945) where both countries had a global enemy, namely Japanese expansionism.

The main weakness of this book is the absence of pictures, photographs, maps, illustrations and so on, which is necessary for readers to understand the contents of the book, as well as so that this book is not physically boring for readers. Therefore, this book will be better (if there is a revised edition) with various maps, pictures, illustrations and so on that support the explanation of the contents of the book.

This book is important for students, lecturers, writers, journalists, and decision makers working in the field of international relations, especially for those who have a focus on studies on East Asia and the United States.

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