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David Shambaugh

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David Shambaugh : China's Future before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised China's Future:

32 of 33 people found the following review helpful. Will China adopt democracy and if so, would this really solve all of China's many serious problems?By Michael A. HoltIn this latest book by recognized China expert, David Shambaugh, the author likens China's future to a car approaching a roundabout where the driver faces several roads ahead. The problem is that the driver of the car already missed his exit a long time ago, and guard rails together with

momentum continue to make it difficult to change its course. Still, David Shambaugh argues that there are four essential choices: 1. Hard Authoritarianism (the current path) ---> leading to Limited Reform, Stagnation, and Decline 2. Neo Totalitarianism ---> leading to Regression, Atrophy, and Collapse 3. Soft Authoritarianism ---> leading to Moderate Reform and Partial Transition 4. Semi-Democracy ---> leading to Successful Reform and Full Transition He explains that the new leaders of the CCP acknowledged a long list of challenges facing China when they first took the reins of the Party, but set out an ambitious agenda for reform that was described at length shortly after the Third Plenum convened in November 2013. Sadly, more than two years later there has been very little progress made toward achieving these goals requiring economic, social, and political reforms. In fact, while some progress has been made in terms of economic reforms, the new CCP leadership has made a U-turn in terms of the political reforms that are necessary to facilitate the level of economic reform necessary in order for China to avoid "the Middle Income Trap" that has plagued so many other countries that similarly experienced initial periods of rapid economic growth. But, despite the fact that China's debt has grown to a level equal to three times its GDP and is growing at twice the rate of its GDP if GDP is, in fact, growing at close to 7%, David Shambaugh argues that it's still possible for the CCP to right the ship if it can somehow overcome fierce resistance from entrenched interests toward the various reforms that threaten their privileged positions of power. Toward that end, he examines the implications for each of the four paths identified above and the probability of each. This analysis makes a convincing case that only the last two paths, if achieved in sequence--i.e., a transition from Hard Authoritarianism to Soft Authoritarianism and then to Semi-Democracy--are likely to enable China to achieve continued economic development. This view echoes the conceptual framework developed by W. W. Rostow decades ago in which it is believed that economic development can be divided into five stages, and that economic activity becomes much more diffuse as economies develop, so achieving the final stages of economic development require a transition away from centralized government control and decision-making, even though that facilitated rapid economic growth during earlier stages of economic development. Still, it's not clear to me how adopting democracy can really cure all of China's ills, even those that plague existing democracies, such as excess debt. And, in order to avoid the Middle Income Trap, China must also spur innovation throughout the country (not just within SOE's operating within a handful of industries deemed to be of strategic importance), fix its financial system that is controlled by the CCP and has also become a tangled mess, introduce greater competition and market forces throughout the economy, successfully implement a planned urbanization scheme, resolve the hukou dilemma, expand the service sector which, though growing rapidly, is still relatively small since debt-financed Fixed Asset investment Spending has grown to become such a large percentage of China's economy, increase household consumption, tackle corruption, clean up the environment, fully tap factor endowments (including natural resources that it must exploit abroad in order to satisfy its internal needs), and address the long laundry list of additional challenges identified in the Third Plenum documents and a World Bank/State Council "China 2030" report. But, David Shambaugh concludes that a transition to Semi-Democracy is unlikely in the first place, so it seems as if this Chinese laundry list of problems is even more unlikely to be resolved anytime soon.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. TOP OF THE CLASS By Thomas Plate Plenty to disagree with, plenty to think about ... but everything in it is first-rate, from the writing to the scholarship. Without Shambaugh, we would know criminally less than we need to about China. Bravo!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good overview of China By Eddie Choo Author takes a good view of China. Just thought that the consequences of hard authoritarianism could have been fleshed out more. And should also acknowledge the risks of both soft authoritarianism and semi-democracy. Both paths are not without risks.

China's future is arguably the most consequential question in global affairs. Having enjoyed unprecedented levels of growth, China is at a critical juncture in the development of its economy, society, polity, national security, and international relations. The direction the nation takes at this turning point will determine whether it stalls or continues to develop and prosper. Will China be successful in implementing a new wave of transformational reforms that could last decades and make it the world's leading superpower? Or will its leaders shy away from the drastic changes required because the regime's power is at risk? If so, will that lead to prolonged stagnation or even regime collapse? Might China move down a more liberal or even democratic path? Or will China instead emerge as a hard, authoritarian and aggressive superstate? In this new book, David Shambaugh argues that these potential pathways are all possibilities - but they depend on key decisions yet to be made by China's leaders, different pressures from within Chinese society, as well as actions taken by other nations. Assessing these scenarios and their implications, he offers a thoughtful and clear study of China's future for all those seeking to understand the country's likely trajectory over the coming decade and beyond.

“This book is full of thought-provoking, well-argued arguments that are certain to interest China watchers around the world.”