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ANALYSIS

The Chinese Century?

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No one can say we didn't see it coming. Since the end of the Cold War, and even before, it has been obvious that a rapidly rising China could eventually menace America's position and influence in East Asia—and, perhaps, globally as well. Since the Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1995–96, moreover, there have been accumulating signs that Beijing is not a status quo power, but rather one determined to reshape the East Asian order. For decades, then, there has been no shortage of warnings about the emerging China challenge...

...Regardless of how America responds to the Chinese challenge, however, its policy must be rooted in reality. Preventing an increasingly confident great power from remaking the East Asian order, and perhaps challenging U.S. interests globally, will be the defining challenge of American statecraft in the twenty-first century. Meeting that challenge will be hard enough even if America dispenses with its China illusions; doing so will probably be impossible if it does not.