

Trading with the Enemy: The Making of US Export Control Policy toward the People's Republic of China

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United States export controls toward China have generally become less restrictive in the post-Cold War era, this despite warnings by some in Washington that US dual-use technology exports are improving China's military capabilities even as the country remains a potential military adversary of the United States. Although this would seem, on the surface, a clear case of business interests – seeking access to China's vast and rapidly growing market – winning out over security interests, Hugo Meijer's ambitious and comprehensive study of US export control policy toward the People's Republic of China (PRC) paints a more complex picture.

Meijer aims to explain variation in US export control policy toward the PRC both over time and across different types of technology. To guide his analysis, he develops a theoretical framework that identifies several different types of variables, both domestic and international, likely to influence policy outcomes. The book then proceeds chronologically, exploring how these different factors have shaped US export control policy toward China during the Cold War (part one), the 1990s (part two), and the 2000s (part three). Meijer's nuanced empirical analysis draws from declassified documents, government reports and public statements by various US officials, and – most importantly – nearly 200 interviews with a wide range of key actors involved in the making of US export control policy dating back to the 1980s. Two major findings emerge from the study.

First, and most importantly, Meijer shows that the efficacy of controls on US exports to China has been in decline, especially since the end of the Cold War. This increasing “hopelessness” of military/technological export controls is a consequence of several factors, including: the increasing commercialization of military technology and its diffusion internationally; the weakening of the international export control regime constructed during the Cold War to prevent the flow of military and dual-use technologies to the Communist bloc; China's improving indigenous innovation capabilities; and, as US–China trade grew rapidly from the 1980s, the emergence in the US of business groups with a vested interest in technology exports to China. As effective controls have become less viable, in turn, US export control policy toward China has generally moved in a liberalizing direction. Yet Meijer also shows that this trend has not been uniform. In particular, Meijer contrasts information and communications technology (ICT), where export restrictions have followed a liberalizing trajectory, with communications satellites, where initial liberalizations during the 1990s were reversed later in the decade. This divergence emerged, in part, because of different levels of fragmentation within the two industries. Whereas the ICT industry was united in pushing for looser controls on exports to China, the space industry was divided between satellite producers seeking greater access to China's launch market versus US launch providers who worried about low-cost Chinese competition. The ICT industry thus acted as a more effective pro-liberalization lobby.

Second, Meijer demonstrates that the coalitions of actors vying over export control policy toward the PRC have themselves changed dramatically over time. While, broadly speaking, debates in the 1980s pitted “control hawks” against a “pro-trade”

coalition seeking access to China's growing market, by the 1990s the pro-trade coalition had been subsumed by a larger group that Meijer terms a "run faster" coalition. The run faster coalition included not only businesses (and their bureaucratic champions) seeking greater access to the Chinese market, but also officials and analysts who believed that stringent export controls were actually counter-productive to US national security interests. As US technological dominance waned, and as the multi-lateral export control regime weakened, US export controls increasingly harmed the competitiveness of US industries vis-à-vis industries from other countries less willing to place restrictions on exports to China. Meanwhile, the commercialization of military technology meant that policies undermining the competitiveness of the US high-tech industry would, over the long term, undercut US military strength. Members of the new coalition believed that US leadership in military technology could only be sustained if private industry in the US could "run faster" than foreign competition, and that the benefits of streamlining US export control policies thus outweighed the risks of technology transfer to the PRC.

Meijer's book is an impressive piece of scholarship that, despite its technical subject, is both accessible and highly engaging. It is rich in detail (providing, for instance, extensive lists of which individuals in different US institutions aligned with which coalition), and Meijer does an outstanding job of leveraging the information and insights gained from his many high-level interviews in building his argument. The book will be of great interest to experts in the academic and policy communities who focus on US–China relations, as well as those focused more broadly on economic statecraft.

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The Geopolitics of Red Oil: Constructing the China Threat through Energy Security

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The extreme transformation from energy self-sufficient to energy dependent development that China has experienced over the past three decades has received substantial international attention. China's global search for energy resources has become a particularly sensitive issue in Sino-American relations. While, in general, China's rapid and powerful rise is triggering complex responses in the US, ranging from admiration and support to fear and antagonism, when it comes to energy security concerns, China is perceived in the US primarily, if not exclusively, as a threat to its national interests. Campion's informative and timely book addresses this subject, providing valuable insights into how the reading of China's development as a threat has been constructed and institutionalized in US foreign policy in the context of energy security.

Campion bases his analysis on a poststructuralist assumption that national identity and foreign policy represent two intertwined and interconnected discourses that mediate material realities of relations between states in the international system. In the introductory chapter, he explains that his main goal is to show "how contemporary Sino-American relations have been both affected and represented by relations