Discourse power ‘with Chinese characteristics’

BOOK REVIEW
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China has economic clout. What it lacks is an image to match. For this it needs “discourse power”. How is going about acquiring that power what the books is about. The focus is on Chinese influence-seeking activities in Western democracies, the United Nations, and the other International Organizations. The book, in fact, virtually nothing about the strategies adopted by China in the developing world. Some of the same instruments and institutions, public or private, in the West could be different. Ortega’s is only a partial picture.

The book of lens approach is important. The strategy is dealing with its influence-seeking activities, China is very much a national identity, irrespective of the nature of its political dispersion. In China is the Communist Party that has been the most consistent and powerful influence-seeking institution of the Chinese state over the years. It has been in constant tension with the international community, but it has always been able to extract concessions in the face of the Chinese state’s. HIDDEN HAND is most useful in identifying the various components of China’s influence-seeking agenda. Chapter 7 has an excellent organisational chart of the hierarchy of influence-seeking activities, including the role of the Communist Party in the international community, and its various foreign policy instruments at different levels. At the senior-most levels, China’s People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the United Nations Food and World Health Organization (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation and the party’s International Liaison Department are key. They are responsible for managing the flow of information and co-ordinating China’s activities at the international level. China is also a member of the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund. The book does not provide a comprehensive survey of how the Communist Party of China (CCP) is pressing the demands of the domestic agenda.

Interfering and influencing gathering that often emanates from espionage, the information war and cyber attacks, as well as commercial and access to Chinese leadership, among others.

Hidden Hand may have overshot the mark and failed to capture the current nature of China’s influence-seeking activities and their effectiveness.

There is growing pushback against China’s expansive and aggressive behaviour, and China’s resources to deploy them are diminishing. This is a sign of China’s declining influence and downward trajectory.

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