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## Partners and Rivals: The Uneasy Future of China's Relationship with the U.S. (Rotman-UTP Publishing)

Wendy Dobson

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**Wendy Dobson : Partners and Rivals: The Uneasy Future of China's Relationship with the U.S. (Rotman-UTP Publishing)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Partners and Rivals: The Uneasy Future of China's Relationship with the U.S. (Rotman-UTP Publishing):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very approachableBy The Book WheelI recently attended a forum with Michael Orsquo;Hanlon, director of research for the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution, and we

spent a good chunk of time talking about U.S.-Chinese relations and the future of what it means to be a superpower. It was both informative and eye-opening and it led me to immediately pick up *Partners and Rivals: The Uneasy Future of China's Relationship with the U.S.* by Wendy Dobson. An approachable and easy-to-read discussion about the current state of affairs in both the U.S. and China, Dobson breaks down both domestic and international policies that will facilitate or hinder the relations between a rising China and the reigning superpower. The main problem I had with the book is that it primarily focuses on what China is doing wrong and, let's be honest, the U.S. isn't perfect (Dobson is Canadian). But if you're interested in this topic even just a little bit, then I highly recommend reading it. It's short and broken down into easy-to-understand sections that isn't bogged down with irrelevant information. In an effort to make the review as approachable as the book, I'm going to point out a few of the key bits of information. I hope you learn something!

Both countries think they are exceptional. This isn't surprising but it's no less important for its lack of shock value. We've all heard about American Exceptionalism, but China's rise in contrast to a floundering US (and global) economy has given them a renewed confidence in themselves. But despite this, China considers itself poor and wants to focus on domestic issues following decades of humiliation. More on that later.

Economic interdependency. China's economy is already at 70% of the U.S.'s and they are growing 4x faster, which puts them in a prime position to be the world's economic leader. The problem with this is that China also owns a good portion of the U.S. debt and is the largest foreign holder. Could this be a national security threat? Some say yes because if China surpasses the U.S. then it's a whole new ballgame, but others say that they would never do anything to threaten the relationship.

How China perceives the US rebalancing. For those of you who don't know, the rebalancing (or pivot) is the U.S.'s way of refocusing its efforts on Asia as opposed to conflict in the Middle East. While this may sound great from the U.S. standpoint, the Chinese see it rather differently. China considers themselves poor and wants to focus on domestic issues, meaning they see the rebalancing as a way for the U.S. to interfere with their internal focus and Asian affairs as a whole. This is especially relevant in terms of China's battle with Japan for claim of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Combined with the fact that China is geographically surrounded by U.S. allies, like Japan, they feel a vulnerability they may not feel otherwise.

Cultural differences. It's no secret that Americans and Chinese don't fully understand each other's cultures. Americans have a hard time understanding a country without a democratic government (and thus "illegitimate") that is accused of human rights abuses and authoritarian power while the Chinese see America as a superpower in decline. To be fair, the current government shutdown in the U.S. doesn't bode well for demonstrating how a democracy is efficient and ideal. Mutual distrust and misunderstanding can lead to roadblock in cooperation.

China's domestic policies. China's policy of "growth-at-any-cost" is a source of discontent for Americans who focus on their mismanagement of environmental regulations and labor. Rules about children-per-household and urban migration policies (hukou) are wrought with problems and leaves China with an aging population and rural farmers in poverty. And then there is the fact that the government owns most commercial banks and production, which edges out private competition. Although newer policies are addressing this issue, it will take a massive shift in commercial power in government to affect policies in the long run.

So what needs to happen? According to Dobson, cooperation between the U.S. and China is key to maintaining a vital global economy. China's reluctance to get involved on an international level while it's such an influential economic player needs to be overcome. The U.S., in turn, needs to realize its limits and accept the fact that we are not growing as quickly as we once were and that, just maybe, we're not going to be the biggest anymore. Dobson offers two strategic principles for cooperation: understanding that neither country can dominate the other and reducing mistrust between the two. China will likely end up with the bigger economy, but the U.S. will still have the mightier military and higher number of allies. By managing these differences, the two countries can, and should, work together.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Understanding the challenges is better than living in ignorant fear.

By Margitte As anyone who has visited China would tell you, it is not an open society, which welcomes foreigners under the current Communist regime. Social conditioning and prejudice towards foreigners are present in all societies, but in a competitive, closed society such as China, the chances to get away with anti-western sentiments is much nearer to 100 %, as well as safer to maintain the status quo in that part of the world. Even the internet is severely guarded and strictly monitored. With that said, it is difficult as ordinary citizens, to make sense of the deep economic interdependencies of the two international gigantic economies and what the end result will be.

"Partners and Rivals- The Uneasy Future of China's Relationship with the United States" explains the situation and opens up the uncertain world that is hard to comprehend for most people like us. The reader learns what exactly it is that the fastest growing economy, China, needs from the rest of the world. I recommend this experienced, informative, read to anyone serious about the world: its people and its natural resources.

Until the global financial crisis, China was thought to be decades away from overtaking the United States as the world's largest economy. But while the US skirted economic stagnation, China was able to successfully navigate the crisis, and its growth continues to accelerate. Has the time arrived to re-evaluate our assumptions about the current world order? Will China openly contest the United States' status, unchallenged since the Second World War, as a

world leader? Will conflict be inevitable, or would its costs be unthinkable in a globalized world economy? *Partners and Rivals*, the latest book from acclaimed economist Wendy Dobson, examines the central role that China and the United States will play on the global stage in the next half-century. Dobson provides a balanced and accessibly written understanding of China's domestic challenges, as well as an analysis of both the United States and China's goals on the world stage. Demonstrating why neither power will be able to dominate the other, the book emphasizes that they will need to cooperate and work together in the coming decades because of their deep economic interdependence.

Given the leadership transition that is underway in China and the dawning realization in the United States that a pivot to Asia is more than a symbolic policy gesture, *Partners and Rivals* is both timely and urgently required. Wendy Dobson is a mature and clear thinker on international economics, and her long experience in Asia and her insights into the North American economic space come together in this non-biased, analytical examination of the subject. Touching on economic, social, and political dimensions, the book will be a significant and provocative addition to the literature. (Peter Harder, Senior Policy Advisor, Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP)

**About the Author** Wendy Dobson, one of Canada's leading international economists, provides two unique vantage points based on her own experiences in the two countries and in the international system. One is top-down, informed by her role as Canada's Associate Deputy Minister of Finance responsible for international financial diplomacy in the G-7 in the late 1980s and more recently as a professor at the University of Toronto. The other perspective is bottom-up, drawing on her life and work in India in the 1960s, in a job that took her into politicians' offices and sent her into the villages, and her many visits to China starting in 1978, the year that its transformation began to emerge. Since 1993 she has led research and teaching at the Rotman Institute for International Business at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. She has published twenty books and many articles on Asia and the international economy. Between 1995 and 2002 she was the managing editor of the Hong Kong