Editor's Note

The articles in this issue could almost form a theme issue on the topic “Rethinking and Reviewing Trans-Pacific Relations.” I would love to take credit for this thematic unity, but we did not plan it that way. It just happened.

Xiaoqing Diana Lin’s “John Fairbank’s Construction of China, 1930s-1950s: Culture, History, and Imperialism” traces the subtle games which Fairbank had to play as he reconciled his desire to move beyond Eurocentric history to a China-centered history. Fairbank is often linked with his Harvard colleague Edwin O. Reischauer, who was important both in shaping Western ways of knowing Asia and in diplomacy, becoming ambassador to Japan in the aftermath of the anti-American riots of 1959. Bruce Reynolds reviews George Packard’s intellectual biography, *Edwin O. Reischauer and the American Discovery of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). Packard argues that Reischauer, with whom he studied and under whom he served in the embassy, was unfairly labeled as a supporter of America’s war in Vietnam. Reischauer in the 1930s had returned to Harvard rather than stay in diplomatic service, and it is probable that he had a greater impact as an intellectual civilian. He and Fairbank joined their introductory surveys into one course in the early 1940s, just as America was entering the war with Japan. Their survey of Asian history and culture, known as “Rice Paddies,” was finally published as a two-volume textbook just as America escalated its involvement in Vietnam.¹

Asia specialists are in wide agreement that this scheme of history opposed “tradition” and “modernity” in a way which does not explain history satisfactorily, but we still need studies of how (or if) this story it shaped American and Western knowledge of Asia. Lin’s article is very helpful in this respect. Fairbank as a student in the 1930s picked up the nationalist

interpretations of T. F. Tsiang; Fairbank the academic statesman and entrepreneur of the 1950s and 1960s formed it into a larger, detailed, and persuasive narrative. In this we see the interaction of “power” and “culture” which drives so much of the discussion in our journal.

And seeing Fairbank as a “China Hand” ties into the “Lost Chance in China” controversy, which continues to demand new thinking and inspire new approaches. Wang Jingbin recently critiqued the “false realism” of the wartime foreign service officers whose policy recommendations came under fire after the war, and Hannah Gurman laid out the politics and the rhetoric of composing diplomatic dispatches. John McNay’s review of John Paton Davies, *China Hand: An Autobiography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) points us to this rich book.

Sally Burt’s article in this issue, “The Ambassador, the General, and the President: FDR’s Mismanagement of Interdepartmental Relations in Wartime China,” is another brick in this Great Wall of scholarly discussion. Burt looks at what wartime Washington called the “Far East” from her vantage point in the “Far South,” Australia. Her contribution is to explore the historiography in order to formulate a clear statement of Roosevelt’s responsibility for the confusion in policy. This confusion made success difficult if not impossible for the American ambassador, Clarence Gauss, and the American senior military commander, General Joseph Stilwell. Burt, like Tsou Tang’s classic monograph, *America’s Failure in China* (University of Chicago Press, 1963), raises a question in my mind: if America’s policy in China was a “failure” (which it was), then what would have constituted a success? It is not necessary to find an answer to that question in order to ask the next one, that is, whatever you might define “success,” was any success possible? Is it fair, then, to speak of “failure” or to blame Roosevelt for not accomplishing the impossible to define or accomplish?

There is a rethinking of a different type in Yamaguchi Wataru’s “The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Shift in Japanese Diplomacy at the Beginning of the Second Cold War, 1979: A New Look.” The full-year JAEAR volume 17 (2008) “Cold War Across the Pacific” contains a spectrum of approaches and analysis which showed the intricacies of the “Second Cold

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