The West’s strategy of engagement with China has failed. More than three decades of trade and investment with the advanced democracies have left that country far richer and stronger than it would otherwise have been. But growth and development have not caused China’s rulers to relax their grip on political power, abandon their mercantilist economic policies, or accept the rules and norms of the existing international system. To the contrary: China today is more repressive at home, more aggressive abroad, and more obviously intent on establishing itself as the world’s preponderant power than at any time since the death of Chairman Mao. What went wrong?

Put simply, the democracies underestimated the resilience, resourcefulness, and ruthlessness of the Chinese Communist Party.

For far too long, the United States and its allies failed to take seriously the Party’s unwavering determination to crush opposition, build national power, and fulfill its ideological and geopolitical ambitions. In this timely and powerfully argued study, Aaron Friedberg identifies the assumptions underpinning engagement, describes the counterstrategy that China’s Communist Party rulers devised in order to exploit the West’s openness while defeating its plans, and explains what the democracies must do now if they wish to preserve their prosperity, protect their security, and defend their common values.
Aaron L. Friedberg is Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. Over the past two decades he has written numerous books and articles warning of the dangers of an intensifying economic, military, and ideological rivalry between China and the West, including *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia*, *Beyond Air-Sea Battle: The Debate Over U.S. Military Strategy in Asia*, and *Partial Disengagement: A New U.S. Strategy for Economic Competition with China*. Follow him on Twitter @AaronFriedberg

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