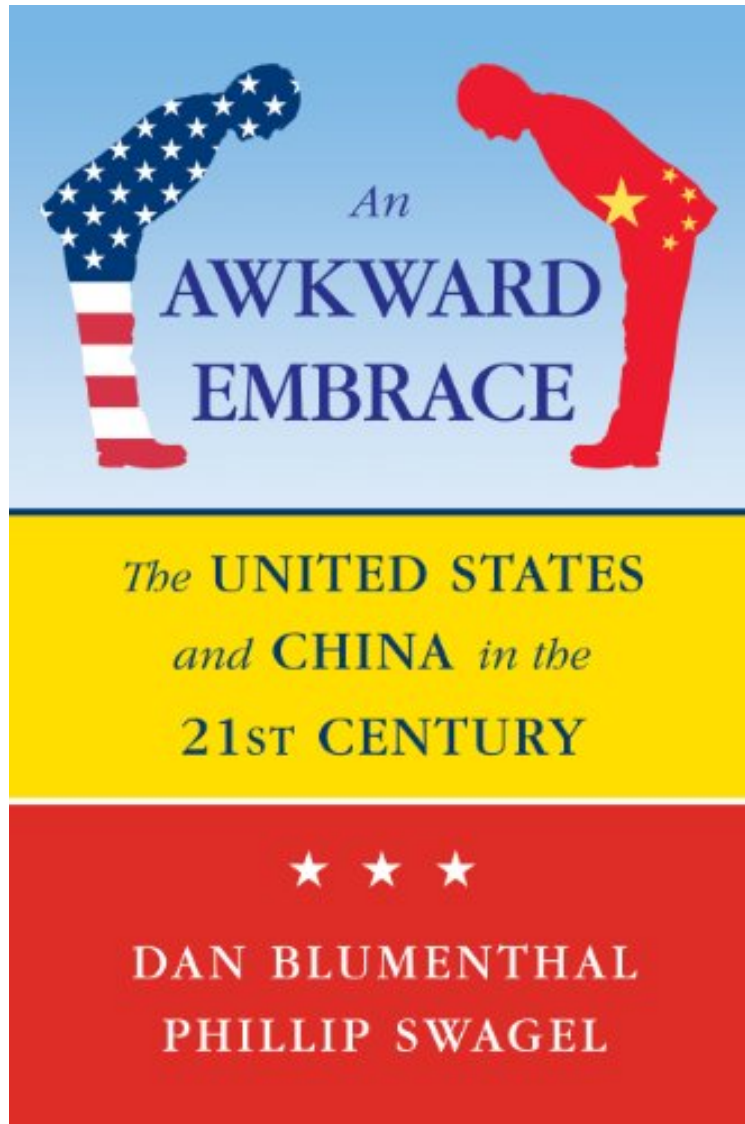


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# Awkward Embrace: The United States and China in the 21st Century

*Daniel Blumenthal, Phillip Swagel*

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In *AN AWKWARD EMBRACE*, Swagel applies his experience at the Treasury Department to show the reader why America's economic relationship with China has been a beneficial one and details what needs to happen for this trend to continue. But Blumenthal, a former official specializing in Asia at the Department of Defense, is far less optimistic when examining the military, diplomatic, and security ties the United States has—or lacks—with China. China's overall view of the West—and especially of America—is one of hostility and suspicion. Furthermore, China has engaged in military, diplomatic, and human rights actions that are objectionable to a nation such as the United States, which seeks to encourage the establishment of responsible government worldwide. The tension here is real: how can the United States manage this relationship in a way that keeps its economic engagement with China on a steady course but likewise protects its national security interests? Blumenthal and Swagel offer three possible paths for the U.S.-China relationship. In all of them, they strive to demonstrate how internal forces are shaping China's interactions with other nations, and, furthermore, how US leaders can attempt to attain a world order that includes a strong China that contributes positively, while nonetheless preparing for the worst-case-scenario of China engaging in more assertive and destabilizing behavior.

About the Author Dan Blumenthal is a current commissioner and former vice chairman of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Commission, where he directs efforts to monitor, investigate, and provide recommendations on the national security implications of the economic relationship between the two countries. Previously, he was senior director for China, Taiwan, and Mongolia in the Secretary of Defense's Office of International Security Affairs and practiced law in New York prior to his government service. At AEI, in addition to his work on the national security implications of U.S.-Sino relations, he coordinates the Tocqueville on China project, which examines the underlying civic culture of post-Mao China. Phillip Swagel, an economist and academic, was assistant secretary for economic policy at the Treasury Department from 2006 to 2009. He has also served as chief of staff and senior economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers and as an economist at the Federal Reserve Board and the International Monetary Fund. He is concurrently a professor of international economics at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. He has previously taught at Northwestern University, the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, and Georgetown University. Mr. Swagel works on both domestic and international economic issues at AEI.