

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910965954003321
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Titolo	The rise of China vs. the logic of strategy // Edward N. Luttwak
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge, Mass, : Belknap Press, 2012
ISBN	9780674071254 0674071255 9780674067936 0674067932
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (ix, 310 p.)
Disciplina	355.033551
Soggetti	Geopolitics - China China Strategic aspects China Military policy China Foreign relations 1976-
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Front matter -- Contents -- Preface -- Chapter One. The Fallacy of Unresisted Aggrandizement -- Chapter Two. Premature Assertiveness -- Chapter Three. Great- State Autism Defined -- Chapter Four. Historical Residues in Chinese Conduct -- Chapter Five. The Coming Geo- Economic Resistance to the Rise of China -- Chapter Six. China's Aggrandizement and Global Reactions -- Chapter Seven. The Inevitable Analogy -- Chapter Eight. Could China Adopt a Successful Grand Strategy? -- Chapter Nine. The Strategic Unwisdom of the Ancients -- Chapter Ten. Strategic Competence. The Historical Record -- Chapter Eleven. The Inevitability of Mounting Resistance -- Chapter Twelve. Why Current Policies Will Persist -- Chapter Thirteen. Australia Weaving a Coalition -- Chapter Fourteen. Japan Disengaging from Disengagement -- Chapter Fifteen. Defiant Vietnam. The Newest American Ally? -- Chapter Sixteen. South Korea. A Model Tianxia Subordinate? -- Chapter Seventeen. Mongolia. Northern Outpost of the Coalition? -- Chapter Eighteen. Indonesia. From Ostracism to Coalition -- Chapter Nineteen. The Philippines. How to Make Enemies -- Chapter Twenty. Norway Norway? Norway! -- Chapter Twenty - one. The Three China Policies of

Sommario/riassunto

As the rest of the world worries about what a future might look like under Chinese supremacy, Edward Luttwak worries about China's own future prospects. Applying the logic of strategy for which he is well known, Luttwak argues that the most populous nation on Earth-and its second largest economy-may be headed for a fall. For any country whose rising strength cannot go unnoticed, the universal logic of strategy allows only military or economic growth. But China is pursuing both goals simultaneously. Its military buildup and assertive foreign policy have already stirred up resistance among its neighbors, just three of whom-India, Japan, and Vietnam-together exceed China in population and wealth. Unless China's leaders check their own ambitions, a host of countries, which are already forming tacit military coalitions, will start to impose economic restrictions as well. Chinese leaders will find it difficult to choose between pursuing economic prosperity and increasing China's military strength. Such a change would be hard to explain to public opinion. Moreover, Chinese leaders would have to end their reliance on ancient strategic texts such as Sun Tzu's Art of War. While these guides might have helped in diplomatic and military conflicts within China itself, their tactics-such as deliberately provoking crises to force negotiations-turned China's neighbors into foes. To avoid arousing the world's enmity further, Luttwak advises, Chinese leaders would be wise to pursue a more sustainable course of economic growth combined with increasing military and diplomatic restraint.
