

**2023 Lionel Gelber Prize awarded to Susan L. Shirk for *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*** [munkschool.utoronto.ca/gelber](https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/gelber) | [@gelberprize](https://twitter.com/gelberprize) | [#GelberPrize](https://twitter.com/GelberPrize)

- ***Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*** selected as the best non-fiction book published in English language on international affairs
- Lionel Gelber Prize is awarded annually by an international jury, in partnership with University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy
- High-resolution photos of the author and images of the book cover are available upon request

**TORONTO and WASHINGTON, April 10, 2023 /CNW/** — Judith Gelber, Chair of the Lionel Gelber Prize board, announced today that the winner of the 2023 Lionel Gelber Prize is *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise* by Susan L. Shirk, published by Oxford University Press. Chosen by a jury of international scholars and practitioners, the Gelber Prize is awarded annually to the top book on international affairs published in English and has a value of \$50,000 CAD. The prize is presented by the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy.

*Overreach* is an analysis of the leading contemporary challenge in geopolitics by a long-time close observer of China. “Shirk skillfully answers two critical questions for managing the ‘China problem’: how did we get here and where are we going?” said jury co-chair Ian Shugart. Jury co-chair Janice Stein praised the extraordinary quality of the analysis and the writing: “Shirk peels away the layers of Chinese politics to uncover the divisions and coalitions that drive Chinese decisions. Much of what alarms the world today, she tells us, began not with Xi Jinping but in the log-rolling politics of overreach under Hu Jintao.”

The winning book was selected from a shortlist which also included ***Chip War: The Fight for the World’s Most Critical Technology***, by Chris Miller; ***Revolution and Dictatorship: The Violent Origins of Durable Authoritarianism***, by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way; ***Slouching Toward Utopia: An Economic History of the Twentieth Century*** by J. Bradford DeLong; and ***Spin Dictators: The Changing Face of Tyranny in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***, by Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman.

The 2023 Lionel Gelber Prize was chosen by jury co-chairs **Janice Stein** (Toronto), **Ian Shugart** (Ottawa), returning juror **Francis J. Gavin** (Washington), **Rosa Brooks** (Washington) and **Luis Rubio** (Washington, Mexico City).

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## **About the Author**

Susan L. Shirk is a Research Professor and Chair of the 21st Century China Center at the School of Global Policy and Strategy, UC San Diego. Shirk is the author of *China: Fragile Superpower*, and *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*. From 1997-2000, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs, with responsibility for China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mongolia.

## **Event**

### **Dialogue with this year's Lionel Gelber Prize Winner**

Please join this year's winning author Susan L. Shirk on **Tuesday, April 25, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. ET** for a hybrid event presented by the University of Toronto's Munk School.

The event will feature a lecture followed by a moderated Q & A with author Susan L. Shirk.

Register here: <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/event/2023-gelber-prize>

## **The Winner**

***Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*** by Susan L. Shirk, published by Oxford University Press

For three decades after Mao's death in 1976, China's leaders adopted a restrained approach to foreign policy. They determined that any threat to their power, and that of the Chinese Communist Party, came not from abroad but from within—a conclusion cemented by the 1989 Tiananmen crisis. To facilitate the country's inexorable economic ascendance, and to prevent a backlash, they reassured the outside world of China's peaceful intentions.



Then, as Susan Shirk shows in this illuminating, disturbing, and utterly persuasive new book, something changed. China went from fragile superpower to global heavyweight, threatening Taiwan as well as its neighbors in the South China Sea, tightening its grip on Hong Kong, and openly challenging the United States for pre-eminence not just economically and technologically but militarily. China began to overreach. Combining her decades of research and experience, Shirk, one of the world's most respected experts on Chinese politics, argues that we are now fully embroiled in a new cold war.

To explain what happened, Shirk pries open the "black box" of China's political system and looks at what derailed its peaceful rise. As she shows, the shift toward confrontation began in the mid-2000s under the mild-mannered Hu Jintao, first among equals in a collective leadership. As China's economy boomed, especially after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, Hu and the other leaders lost restraint, abetting aggression toward the outside world and unchecked domestic social control. When Xi Jinping took power in 2012, he capitalized on widespread official corruption and open splits in the leadership to make the case for more concentrated power at the top. In the decade following, and to the present day—the eve of the 20th CCP Congress when he intends to claim a third term—he has accumulated greater power than any leader since Mao. Those who implement Xi's directives compete to outdo one another, provoking an even greater global backlash and stoking jingoism within China on a scale not seen since the Cultural Revolution.

Here is a devastatingly lucid portrait of China today. Shirk's extensive interviews and meticulous analysis reveal the dynamics driving overreach. To counter it, she argues, the worst mistake the rest of the world, and the United States in particular, can make is to overreact. Understanding the domestic roots of China's actions will enable us to avoid the mistakes that could lead to war.

### **About the Lionel Gelber Prize**

The Lionel Gelber Prize was founded in 1989 by Canadian diplomat Lionel Gelber. A cash prize of \$50,000 CAD is awarded to the winner. The award is presented annually by the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy at the University of Toronto.

**Lionel Gelber Prize website:** <https://munkschool.utoronto.ca/gelber/>

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### **For further information:**

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