

Contemporary Issues Shaping China's Civil Aviation Policy: *Balancing International with Domestic Priorities*

While China is gradually growing into one of the world's economic superpowers, it faces issues in political, economic and social reform as well as challenges domestically and internationally. This book gives an overview of China's political, market and national administrative reforms, organizational problems, and competitive market uncertainties with a focus on the development of China's civil aviation industry.

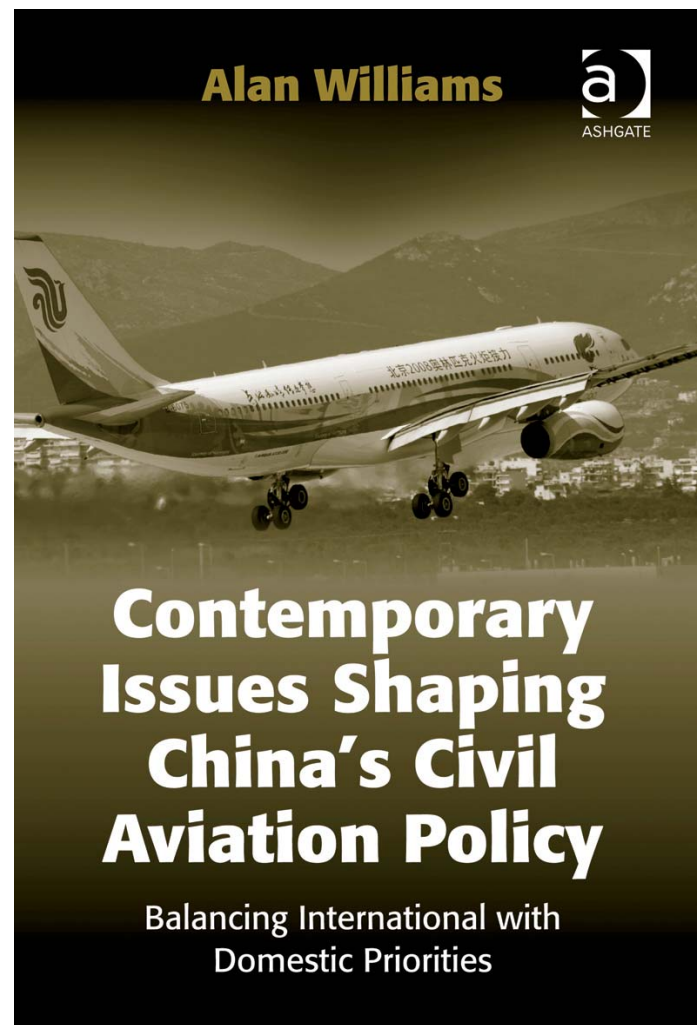
By: Alan Williams

Book Review by: Angela Cheng-Jui Lu

The author summarizes China's evolutionary path of market reform from 1949 to 2008, distinguishing several stages of reforms. Each stage had different strategies due to different political leaders. Reforms under Mao Zedong focused on balancing various political and economic influences, including finding a balance between China's imperial traditions of governing and government in the style of Western powers; and regaining equilibrium after the end of the international hostilities of World War II, China's civil war and the successful Communist takeover in 1949. At this stage, economic and industrial reforms barely existed.

After the death of Mao Zedong and the restoration of Deng Xiaoping's power in the Communist Party, China needed to recover from the disaster caused by the Cultural Revolution and to revise the model of economic and social progress based on the experience of the Soviet Union. The strategy focused on the designation of several special enterprise zones, attracting foreign direct investment and encouraging international trade. The generation of leaders after Deng Xiaoping led the nation further by introducing central administrative reforms parallel to the political and economic reforms.

The reforms in China's civil aviation industry followed a similar pattern to those in other sectors. Although the Civil Aviation Administration of China was formed in 1949 to manage non-military aviation activities, it remained more or less subservient to the military; the People's Liberation Army Air Force was the one that controlled all aviation activities for nearly four decades. The development of a corporatized form of operational management



for airlines only started in Deng Xiaoping's era. In 2002, ten major airlines were consolidated into just three. These three airlines (Air China Group, China Eastern Group and China Southern Group) began to gain operational autonomy and be allowed to become viable, efficient and competitive. In 2005, private capital and foreign investment were allowed in airlines. With the support of domestic and foreign capital and with China's opening up to international trade, Chinese airlines since 2008 have been participating in the international civil aviation industry by becoming members of the SkyTeam and Oneworld alliances. China is also actively trying to enter the aircraft manufacturing market. Its success will depend on its future development and whether it matches the needs of the domestic and international aviation industry.

The author clearly spent a lot of effort collecting all relevant information and organizing it chronologically in the book. It would have been very helpful if the author had articulated the linkage between China's political, economic and social reforms and the reforms in China's civil aviation industry. Likewise, if

the author had spent more time on the impact of developments in the international civil aviation industry on China's civil aviation industry, the book would have been even more helpful for readers.

Conclusion

The book contains a lot of information on China's political, social and economic reforms as well as on the development of China's civil aviation industry. Readers interested in having organized information on these topics will find this book helpful.

About the author

Professor Alan Williams is a professor of Aviation Management in the School of Aviation at Massey University in New Zealand. He has had visiting fellowships or professorships at various universities in the UK and China. His current research interests are aero-politics and market modernization in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

About the reviewer

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China Southern Airlines Boeing 777-21B(ER) at Amsterdam
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