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China Goes Global



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The Partial Power

DAVID SHAMBAUGH

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To Ingrid, Chris and Alex



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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As a scholar and public intellectual, I like to try to understand, research, write about, and explain Big Subjects related to China to multiple audiences around the world. The subject of this book certainly fits these criteria: how China's emergence as a global power is affecting the world. I decided to investigate this subject because I thought, as a specialist on both China and international relations, I might be able to shed some light on the nexus of these two phenomena—China and the world—and thereby could contribute to global public understanding of one of the key issues of our era.

There was a second reason I took on this project: because I am deeply concerned by the academic profession's tendency to "know more and more about less and less" and its increasing inability to generalize about China's development (in all aspects).¹ That is, for the past three decades, the academic China community has produced studies of progressively more micro-level phenomena. Although this has perhaps allowed us to know more about the "trees," it has not necessarily led to a better understanding of the "forest." The excessive disaggregation has not led to better aggregate understanding of China writ large. The rise of China is *the big story* of our era, and it is incumbent upon scholars to be able to explain China to nonspecialist audiences worldwide. I further feel that scholars' increasing obsession with social science theories and methodologies have been further impediments to understanding—more often blurring than clarifying the object of study. Unfortunately, testing of theories and application of methodologies has become an end, rather than a means, to furthering knowledge and understanding. As a result, the academy (universities) in the China field is becoming more and more divorced from its mission: to illuminate and educate. More and better knowledge of China now seems to reside in the professions of business, banking, consulting, law, diplomacy, intelligence, journalism, think tanks, and NGOs than in the scholarly com-