

BOOK REVIEW

Harsh V. Pant (Ed.), *The Rise of China: Implications for India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India, 2012), Pages: 270, Price: Rs. 795.

Geography has made it impossible for India and China to ignore each other. The unmatched rise of China has given rise to a number of issues which New Delhi needs to understand and adjust with. With economic growth there is also an increase in the desire for military growth and supremacy within China. Beijing has been working consistently towards building a strong army. This has gained further international attention in the post-financial crisis scenario, which indicates that the United States may be declining in its global stature. Meanwhile, as the two economies of China and India grow, the demand for energy and resources also will increase, and this increases the areas where these two countries have to interact constantly.

The book under review consists of ten chapters divided into sections discussing China's domestic developments, foreign policy and India policy. The contributors argue that China will try every possible means to limit and restrain the rise of other regional powers like India and Japan; where India is concerned, by trying to box it in the South Asian region.

Though China and India have a number of unsettled bilateral issues (border dispute, Tibetan government-in-exile) they cannot avoid interacting and competing with each other. Interaction is unavoidable as both are important players in the international arena. But competition is unavoidable as both countries are working towards gaining the limited resources and energies available in the global market. However, the two countries are also interacting bilaterally more and more. As Bibek Debroy points out, "From Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai, we have moved to Hindi-Chini buy-buy" (p. 49). Meanwhile, Chinese influence in the South Asian region is growing. The Pakistan-China "all-weather friendship" is an accepted fact. Recently, Beijing has also been working towards having closer ties with countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Varaprasad S. Dolla highlights those domestic issues in China which may obstruct its rise. The discussion on nationalism and legitimacy of the Party provides a fresh perspective. The chapter on China in Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region by Ashok Kapur provides a detailed analysis of the overall security as well as diplomatic challenges in this region. In the view of

the author “the PRC currently employs a two-track approach to Asia-Pacific affairs. Diplomatically it seeks normalization and regional stability; militarily it seeks modernization and development of power projection capabilities” (p. 135).

The chapters on territorial dispute (David Scott) and Tibet (Elliot Sperling) point out how closely the two issues are interconnected. Sperling argues, for example, that “the matter of Tibet’s status is inextricably linked to the border issue” (p. 218). The chapters on military modernization (Srikanth Kondapalli) and resource and energy diplomacy (D.S. Rajan) are very informative and insightful.

Harsh Pant, in his conclusion, highlights the primary challenges that India is facing currently against this background. He argues that India must first engage its neighbour in a productive manner; and, secondly, it must “prevent China from gaining a strategic foothold in South Asia and preserve its influence in the region” (p. 255).

The editor points out that “the contributors have examined various aspects of China’s rise – domestic developments, foreign policy agenda, and its positions on issues related to India – from the particular vantage point of what they mean for India” (p. 18). The contributors have provided enriching contributions to the overall debate. However, perhaps, the book could have benefited with a chapter on the environmental, demographic and political situations of the two countries.

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Arvind Gupta and K.D. Kapur, *Emerging Asian Nuclear Environment: Implications for India* (New Delhi: Lancer Books, 2012), Pages: 432, Price: Rs. 895.

In a world that is being increasingly polarized after the end of the cold war, nuclear technology has come to be seen as both demonstrating a nation's technological prowess and as a very important tenet in national security, power projection and as a tool for bargaining and leveraging international affairs in its favour.

Nuclear technology was introduced by the West and was the main driving force of deterrence in the cold war era. But world attention on nuclear matters has shifted to Asia after the 2007 economic crisis. USA may any day lose the attribute of being the world's lone superpower. European states too are facing a severe sovereign debt crisis. These factors have put Asia firmly in the spotlight.

Asia, which houses crucial sea lines of communication (SLOCs) like the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca has now become the most militarized region of the world. It has the highest concentration of nuclear states, declared and suspected put together.

Against this backdrop, two of India's well-known strategic analysts have come out with this detailed, lucidly written book, about the emerging Asian nuclear environment. It has been written using open sources, with ample references. The book answers questions that have gained paramount importance in the domain of contemporary international relations.

Nuclear technology brings with it much legal, social, political and economic baggage (apart from a complicated scientific bedrock), which the authors break down into concepts amenable to a layperson's understanding. They end every chapter with a section on "Implications for India". They also speak about the route that India should consider taking to protect and promote its national interests.

In individual chapters, each country's nuclear posture is analysed, together with its current and future plans. Nuclear technology proliferation has also been extensively discussed, especially the A.Q. Khan network of Pakistan. The chapter covering Japan's nuclear policies is particularly fascinating.

Recent developments like Obama's Prague speech of 2009, USA's Nuclear Posture Review 2010, nuclear energy renaissance, nuclear terrorism, Fukushima accident and Iranian crisis find repeated mention in the book.

There is also extensive coverage of the Indo-US nuclear deal and the various other steps taken by India (including bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreements) to firmly establish itself as a responsible nuclear power even though it chooses to stay outside the NPT and CTBT because, in the words of Voltaire, “With great power comes great responsibility”. Various options open to India, like being proactive in joining an international nuclear export control regime, have also been discussed.

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David Malone, *Does The Elephant Dance? Contemporary Indian Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), Pages: xxii + 425, Price: Rs. 695.

This book is a perceptive analysis of India's shift from being inward looking to now on the outward-oriented player, covering in its canvas history, geography, economics and strategy. It is rich in details and offers a comprehensive analysis of the ideas, motives and imperatives that determine India's external policy. The author, who has previously served as Canada's High Commissioner to India, writes about India's history and geography and how these impinge on its external outlook. He expresses optimism about India's buoyant economy, soft power diplomacy and the country's desire to play a greater role in the realm of international affairs, at the same time pointing out India's pressing domestic problems that may delay, if not derail its inevitable rise to global stature.

The author particularly focuses on three issues: Sino-Indian relations, India's relations with the USA, and multilateral diplomacy. Indian foreign engagements have been divided into three distinct periods – Nehruvian idealism, realism under Indira Gandhi, and the current economically driven pragmatism. Noting with admiration the shift in India's foreign policy thinking in recent years, he argues that Indian diplomats are highly skilled and are up to the task of effecting the paradigm shift in India's foreign relations. He notes the parallel rise of Brazil and South Africa with India. India's globalized private sector has engaged with these countries. India has also done very well for itself by re-engaging itself with East and South East-Asia in the past decade. India's pivotal position as the beacon of stability in an increasingly unstable subcontinent is well acknowledged, as also the pressing challenges and imperatives for India to cultivate a peaceful and stable neighbourhood.

Internal security challenges range from right-wing religious extremism to Naxalism and ethnic insurgent movements in the North-East. Externally, two bilateral relations are crucial to India in the coming decades – that with China and the USA. While the latter has grown from strength to strength in recent times, the former relationship remains tense, beset with mutual distrust and quest for great-power status. China has the lead over India, while India has great potential owing to its large markets, demographic dividend and, most importantly, its democracy. Reflecting the West's obsession with China, the author's attempt to showcase India's uniqueness in its foreign policy

approach is peppered with preoccupation and concern over China's stupendous rise.

Individual chapters are devoted to India's relations with the South Asian neighbours, Russia, the European Union, West Asia and East Asia and India's multilateral diplomacy. The book also touches on India's ties with Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

India's multilateral diplomacy is a significant part of the author's framework of analysis. While appreciative of Indian diplomats' skills at the negotiating table, he notes that India is "impatient to increase its formal role in a number of international bodies". In the context of his blanket endorsement of legally binding emission cuts for emerging economies, he endorses the popular Western notion of New Delhi's diplomatic posture being more often than not "obstructionist", "defensive" and a "spoiler" in multilateral negotiations, and calls on India to adopt a more proactive approach.

The author paints a bright picture of India's economic and political rise driven by its favourable demography, large markets, growing incomes, a vibrant culture, rich and affluent diaspora and soft power projection. India is today conscious of its role and importance in the comity of nations and is well on its way to joining the global high table. The book, loaded with numerous maps and data, does make for compelling reading.

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Sagarika Dutt and Alok Bansal (Eds.), *South Asian Security: 21st Century Discourses* (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), Pages: 286, Price: Rs. 7478.

The book under review seeks to assess the ambit of security discussions in the South Asian context, which can be extremely complex and perplexing. South Asia perhaps is the least integrated region in the world, one where the strategic setting of the subcontinent and security dependencies among the region's nations remain deeply intertwined and bear the impact of external players such as the US, China and Russia. The geo-political and geo-strategic interests impact upon the regional dynamics, which draw heavily from the tumultuous historical journey of this region. Heavy militarization of borders between the prominent players in the region manifests this reality.

The book deals with the demographic, social, economic and political structures in South Asia, especially with regard to the economic potential of the region demonstrated predominantly by India's economic success in recent years. However, the harsh realities of the region, characterized by mass poverty, unending conflict and challenges of conflict resolution, and access to energy have been underscored as well. Home to 22 per cent of the world's population, with 1.57 billion people, the concept of human security in South Asia is people-centred, with threats ranging from war and internal conflict to hunger, disease and repression. Besides, as the domestic energy resources are inadequate for meeting the requirements, adequate, secure and affordable supplies of energy resources from outside the region are being contended for. The book also delves into the debates, including international pressures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, especially in the context of the inherent limitations of renewable energy, and the availability of natural gas as the cleanest fossil fuel, particularly for the power and industrial sectors.

South Asia's security, including the national securities of various countries in the region, is discussed both in terms of traditional (military) and non-traditional security. The security-insecurity paradox engulfing the region has propelled New Delhi and Islamabad across the nuclear threshold, thus dramatically altering the South Asian security environment. This, in turn, also brings into focus factors such as nuclear triads, non-state actors and issues of nuclear security and terrorism.

State-centric approaches between India and Pakistan are placed in the traditional realist framework of security, based essentially on the concept of power. Prominent traces of Barry Buzan's sectoral approach to security can be found in areas including military security, political security, economic

security (inclusive of access to resources), finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power, societal security encompassing the issue of cultural, religious and national identity, and environmental security. The book also discusses the significant issue of climate change in South Asia, given the plethora of environmental problems in the region, including deforestation, soil erosion, floods, droughts, population explosion, growth, and alarmingly rising levels of pollution.

Themes such as identity, democracy and order are crucial in understanding the internal security dynamics of regional players. The volume focuses on the South Asian nations case by case. Beginning with examining the reasons for the deteriorating security and stability in Afghanistan over the last decade, an overview of the politico-security arrangements put into place by the international community has been presented. The interests of the regional players, including India, Iran, Russia and the Central Asian Republics remain crucial while envisioning long-term stability within and around Afghanistan.

Although the civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009, the issue of adequate representation for the Tamils has not been resolved completely. The cease-fire agreement remains fragile, and so does the future of Sri Lanka. In the case of Pakistan, the ruling elites, in their quest for nationalism and national unity, have always tried to suppress any spirit of genuine federalism, perceiving it as a prelude to separatism. The main challenge would be to assuage the extreme ethnic consciousness and sense of strong socio-cultural identity of most ethnic groups residing inside Pakistan. Besides, various facets contributing to the rise of Islamism in the region till South-Central Asia, extending from the spill-over effects of the ideology of the Taliban, influx of Islamist groups from Central Asia, and impact of the Iranian Revolution have been analysed.

Closer to India, the recent trends in Nepalese politics following abolition of the monarchy and Nepal's political system entering a new phase of transformation have been brought to light. While the traditional political elites exercised power, the Nepalese economy and society continued to be based on feudalism and social hierarchies, thus implying that fulfilment of popular aspirations and socio-economic transformation of the country became secondary to political manoeuvring and politics of power.

The book also discusses the internal insurgency in India's North-East. The region consists of an indigenous population of more than 220 major tribes and numerous sub-tribes, which has been a result of mass migrations over the past centuries, both from South-East and East Asia. A combination of political, economic and cultural factors have ultimately led to insurgencies

in the region. The Indian government has attempted to deal with them by means of a variety of methods ranging from state repression to negotiations.

Economically, South Asia remains perhaps the least integrated region in the world, with low levels of intra-regional trade. Political considerations often override the prospect of economic engagement. In consequence, a regional organization like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) remains very fragile. A significant facet in the South Asian discourse in the current century is growing Chinese trade and investment in the South Asian countries and its looming shadow in the Indian Ocean region.

Although the book has attempted to include every important determinant that would factor in while providing shape to South Asian security in its entirety, it lacks a detailed analysis of the current trends in the politico-security situation in the South Asian nations including Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Maldives.

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