

BOOK REVIEW

Skand R. Tayal, *India and the Republic of Korea: Engaged Democracies* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2014), Pages: xvii+295, Price: Rs. 795.00.

The book under review is the first and the most detailed study of the numerous facets of the India-South Korea relationship. It examines minutely, the underlying logic of the blossoming strategic and economic partnership between the two countries. The author Skand R. Tayal, a seasoned Indian diplomat, and till recently Ambassador of India to that country, asserts that despite very different foreign policy traditions, both countries have factored in each other's cultural, economic and strategic considerations starting from the *Puranic* age till the end of Cold War, and more intensively, since the 1990s. The study first locates the roots of Indo-Korean relations in the rich socio-cultural tapestry, and analyses various perspectives on the recent developments to underline the future trends.

Besides bringing into light numerous legends and myths, the author considers Buddhism as the ancient bridge between India and Korea, as the early contacts between both countries are "suffused with the radiance of Buddhism" (pp. 5–9, 243). Indian culture, along with Buddhism, was assimilated in Korean indigenous culture over centuries, setting forth visits of Korean monks and scholars to India during the course of history. Given the physical barrier between the two peninsulas, Chinese monks and scholars acted as a channel for the flow of Buddhist philosophy and Indian spiritual thought to Korea. It is believed that the direct contact between both countries was established in the seventh to ninth centuries through Buddhism. In the author's view, "...the spiritual bonds of Buddhism continue to provide sustenance to the warm sentiments of friendship and empathy between the people of present day Republic of Korea (ROK) and India" (p. 8).

The foundation of India-Korea relations can be traced to India's pre-independence period when philosophies and leadership of stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Rabindranath Tagore had substantial influence on Korean people. Tagore's literary works, especially *The Lamp of the East*, that envisioned Korea to be the lamp-bearer in Asia, as the author observes, have become an immortal source of optimism and confidence among the Koreans and remains so. India's neutral but positive role in the Korean

War and views on peaceful unification of Korea in the post-World War II period is recognised by the Korean policymakers. Although South Korea was opposed to Indian forces being stationed in their country, both China and America agreed to the proposal considering Indian military discipline. India's decision to send a field ambulance and surgical unit to Korea and its relentless work in attending to the sick and wounded was appreciated. While involving itself in the Korean peace process, India's basic objective was to maintain a balance between the two antagonistic Cold War blocs without identifying itself with either side (p. 42). According to Ambassador Tayal, "India's pro-active and prominent role in the UN on the Korean question was both a manifestation of India's high standing in the international community as well as a reflection of India's own view of the world, Asia and cold war" (p. 50).

However, various developments in the post-World War II period have given rise to both converging and diverging trends in the Indo-Korea relations. Immediately after the 1953 Armistice Agreement, the settlement of the ex-POWs issue generated some friction as India maintained a principled stand on repatriation of the ex-POWs either to their homeland or to any neutral country. The Syngman Rhee government did not agree with this Indian interpretation. In the process, 88 ex-POWs came to India. India was eager for a quick transfer of these POWs to other neutral countries but it could not happen, resulting in added burden to the national exchequer. Finally, four of them chose to live in India.

On the issue of recognition of the ROK, India took a stand based purely on its political interest. Balancing its non-alignment credentials, the Cold War imperatives, and its relations with China, India took a cautious stand on the recognition of the ROK. During the initial years, India refrained from recognising both the Koreas and continued to advocate for their peaceful reunification while maintaining friendly relations with both. As North Korea did not show any inclination for reunification, India established consular relations with both in 1962. Subsequent developments in the Korean peninsula were a serious foreign policy challenge for India; however, as the author says, "...with his profound understanding of world history, Prime Minister Nehru adroitly charted a course navigating between the pulls of idealism, national interest and equidistance from the two Blocs" (p. 58).

India-Korea relations from the 1950s to 1970s are termed by the author as "period of apathy", mainly owing to the ROK's negative perception of India as a pro-communist country (Chapter 4). In fact, one cannot find any record of direct contact or trade between India and Korea during this period.

To that extent, there is no mention of Korea in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Annual Reports of those years. Though the ROK and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) had maintained their respective consulates general in New Delhi, India did not open its consulates general in Seoul and Pyongyang until 1968, mainly because of financial stringency. Despite India's neutral and constructive role, the DPRK developed a negative understanding of the India-ROK relations. For example, during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, DPRK criticised the ROK's support of India as "collaborating with the Indian colonialists" (p. 64). On the other hand, India's approach towards the Korean peninsula altered when the Pakistan-DPRK missile-nuclear nexus came to light in 1999 giving a clear direction to the India-ROK strategic partnership. Therefore, India started moving away from the hitherto sacrosanct principle of absolute equivalence in its relations with the two Koreas.

The period from the early 1970s to 1990s is marked by the author as a period of "increasing interaction" between India and the ROK. In December 1973, following the policy of balance between the DPRK and the ROK, India decided to establish full diplomatic relations with both. During the 1960s, though India gave a clarion call in the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) meetings to withdraw US forces from South Korea, in the mid-1970s India realised that no purpose was being served by discussing the Korean question in multi-lateral meetings and adopting formulations favouring one or the other side (pp. 68–70).

During the 1970s, dramatic developments can be perceived both in India's domestic politics as well as at the regional sphere. These pushed India's external relations with countries of peripheral interest to a back seat. However, owing to the ROK's spectacular economic prowess during the 1980s and its important role in various international forums, the world started taking notice of its stature. By that time, India had already become ROK's 10th largest export market along with three important bilateral agreements in place (Trade Promotion and Economic and Technical Cooperation 1974, Cultural Agreement 1974, and Cooperation in the Field of Science and Technology 1976) (p. 74). The end of the rule by generals, the advent of real democracy in ROK, and the end of Cold War rivalry in the international sphere brought India and the ROK closer, paving the way for their strategic partnership.

India's "Look East Policy" initiated by PV Narsimha Rao commenced the much-needed resolute steps to deepen relations with countries east of India including the ROK. The structural reforms in India's economic policy, and Prime Minister Rao's visit to the ROK in 1983 heralded the process of Korea's

active participation in India's economic development projects and are considered by the author as "the Turning Point" in the India-Korea economic relations (p. 150). One can easily fathom the blossoming relationship from the phenomenal rise in the India-Korea trade volume to \$18.5 billion during 2012–13 from \$5 billion during the year 2000. With the operationalisation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in 2010, the bilateral trade between India and the ROK reached a new height, and it is expected that the CEPA clauses would be implemented in letter and spirit to reap benefits and laurels in the years ahead (Chapter 8). Civil nuclear energy is another potential area for greater bilateral cooperation, and both countries signed a civil nuclear agreement in 2011. Given the momentum and new directions in their engagement, undoubtedly, the two countries seem to have "re-discovered each other as partners in addressing global issues related to trade and environment as well as for their own socioeconomic progress" (p. 104).

The author rightly observes, "...the core of the India-Korea relationship lies in the quest for an ideal global society" (p. 246). To achieve this objective, authoritative emphasis by both sides on certain measures is warranted. First, from India's side, there should be an overhaul of India's "Look East" policy to give strategic orientation; second, both should explore options for joint development of new weapons and defence equipment, along with transfer of technology and co-production; third, both must develop common understanding and positions on global issues at international fora.

At the end, the author succinctly observes, "Koreans, as a nation, are hungry ... to secure their place in the sun. Hungry to be on the top table in the comity of nations." At the same time, they have "a healthy regard for India as a rising power". Koreans have respect and admiration for India's achievements in the field of information technology. However, the author says, Korea does not really consider India as a critical partner for the future growth of Korean economy. Also, India's aim for the UN Security Council (UNSC) permanent membership diverges from the ROK's opposition to any expansion of the Council's membership. In this respect, both countries need to arrive at a workable arrangement without compromising each other's interests. Therefore, the author very pragmatically remarks that the nascent strategic partnership between India and ROK "would gradually acquire more content" given the current security environment in the Asia Pacific, and both India and ROK's interests in keeping the region peaceful. The current trajectory of their rising bilateral relations is a manifestation of the increasing realisation of their common perspectives.

With lucid interpretation of the detailed bilateral engagements and trend analyses, the volume is a valuable contribution to study of Indo-Korean relations, and a must-read for the policy makers as well as the academia.

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Jakub Zajączkowski, et. al. (eds.), *India in the Contemporary World: Polity, Economy and International Relations* (New Delhi : Routledge, 2014), Pages: 522, Price: Rs. 696.50.

The title of this book resonates with its spirit and themes that deal with contemporary polity, economy and international relations of India. It covers a huge canvas of contemporary Indian reality through a myriad of approaches enunciated through narratives involving culture, society, democracy, economy, development, and security. From culture to economy and security to foreign policy, the book provides a rare glimpse into the understanding of India's socio-cultural, economic and security policies apropos the EU. It is divided into four parts dealing with four different but inter-related themes.

The first part titled "Culture, Society and Democracy" has five chapters under it. The first chapter probes India's democratic success as a "deviant" case. The author attributes India's resilience, when many other postcolonial transitional powers have failed to become successful states, to India's "counterfactual democracy". While it does not fail in mentioning about the roadblocks and irritants in India's democratic transition, an impression is created that the process of the transition has been relatively smooth. The second chapter maps the graduation of the voting situation and rights in India right from its independence. It mostly relies on the data (mostly between 2004 and 2009) collated by the National Election Studies (NES). The chapter

gives a good socio-economic analysis of how elections are voted-in by various sections (class, caste, age, party, etc.) of the Indian electorate.

The third chapter looks at the present Indian state under a postmodernist discourse where nationality and identity can exist without each other. Quite rightly, the chapter points out that if postmodernism involves doing away with the central authority in the state, India remains modernist in its state behaviour. It goes on to analyse India's border problems with its neighbouring countries vis-à-vis people's identity created by the state's institutionalisation of its borders. Identity and the territorial aspects are represented in a cause-effect relationship with the sovereignty of a state, making sovereignty a deliberate political act rather than an offshoot of natural state discourse. The fourth chapter uses the framework of humanism to assess violence and non-violence in the freedom movements of India and Africa. In a comparative effort, the author discusses the basic ideas of some of the proponents of anti-colonial struggle like Mahatma Gandhi, Frantz Fanon, Kenneth Kaunda and Kwame Nkrumah. The last chapter is a comparative study of Indian and European cultures through different paradigms like philosophy, history, religion, and culture. Apart from pointing out the "core" differences between the two cultures, the author's analysis has brought out certain "stable" cultural attributes in the history of India and Europe.

The second part of the book titled "Economy and Development: Domestic and International Dimensions" comprises three chapters. The first chapter analyses the contribution of the services sector to the GDP in the Indian economy where it suggests that the cost-effective services available in India for the whole world have created a conducive atmosphere for innovation and vice-versa. With particular focus on off-shoring services provided by India, the author rightly extols India as the "undisputed leader" in the field of off-shoring of services. The author does commendable assessment in highlighting how the nature of India's exports is knowledge-intensive. The next chapter starts with the debate on globalisation, how it was adopted in India and various critical approaches to globalisation prevalent in India. In particular, the author lays emphasis on the term "alter-globalisation" through which he presents a contextual critique of globalisation in India. Apart from focusing on the positive and negative impacts of globalisation, it concludes by differentiating between the Western and Indian critiques of globalisation put forth through the concept of alter-globalisation. The last chapter assesses the role of banks in the Indian financial system. It presents a historical assessment of the evolution

of the banking system in India, underscoring the presence of a banking system in India much before the advent of the Western models. Although the chapter points out the non-inclusive nature of the Indian banking system as a major drawback, it misses assessing the informal banking system of India.

Comprising seven chapters, Part III is probably the most comprehensive part in the book. Titled “Foreign and Security Policy”, the third part of the book covers India’s foreign policy, its neighbourly relations, its environmental security and India’s relations with major powers, including the United States and China. The first chapter clubs India with the “middle” power group comprising countries like Brazil, China, South Africa, etc. which face similar challenges today. Distinctively, the author points out a “Rising South” trend in India along with other countries of the group, which includes similar growth in GDP, military and nuclear capabilities and soft-power. The lack of social integration in South Asia is very rightly pointed as the reason for low intra-regional trade despite the existence of SAARC, SAPTA, SAFTA, etc.

The next two chapters deal with India’s important neighbours, Pakistan and China, their mutual relationship and their bilateral relationship with India. The second chapter explores the possibility of a strategic triangle between the three countries while adding that India’s economic and military rise has shaken the foundations of the China-Pakistan entente. This point may not find many buyers, as clandestine cooperation between Pakistan and China continues unabated. In applying the strategic triangle model, often applied in the Cold War context between the US, the Soviet Union and the PRC, the author at times seems to extend the analogy a bit too far. The third chapter puts the Sino-Indian relations in strategic and historical perspectives and compares the growing tentacles of influence of both the countries in the Southeast Asian region. The chapter covers many areas of the China-India competition and rivalry but the larger chunk of the argument is directed towards continental rivalry, while maritime competition between India and China has become the most talked about competitive duel between the two countries today.

The next chapter succinctly points out the regional and international determinants, which went on to shape India’s foreign policy at the end of the Cold War. National security, territorial integrity and economic development have rightly been pointed as basic assumptions, which have shaped India’s foreign policy and continue to do so. The chapter concludes with the issues that the Indian foreign policy should focus on. Within this debate, India’s

position in the Asia-Pacific region and its relations with major powers of the world are assumed as important constituents.

The next chapter contextualises the Indian approaches to security and conflict resolution through a comparative study of India with the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the US and the European Union Security Strategy (EUSS). Expectedly, the author concludes that India's national security strategy cannot be assessed on the tenets of either the NSS or the EUSS, simply because India's internal security challenges are much more and different from those in the US or the EU, thereby adding a separate dimension.

The last chapter presents an almost complete picture of the major issues in the Indo-US relationship. The issue of dual-use of technology in exports, which more often than not finds minimum mention in the US-India bilateral assessments, finds itself extensively analysed as an issue at the forefront of the Indo-US defence trade. The Indo-US defence trade has rightly been dealt in the chapter as a major pillar of the Indo-US relations. The chapter concludes by pointing towards the emerging geopolitical dynamics in Asia, which hinges on the nature of relationship that India and the US share. India's growing economic capabilities and military prowess have brought it closer to the US as a potential security partner of the US, something that is often reflected in the official bilateral discourse from either side.

The last part of the book comprises four chapters, which probe the India-EU relations. The first chapter provides India's view points about the EU enunciated mainly through public opinion. Very few compilations have listed the concern of public opinion in the India-EU relations. This chapter will be of immense help to policymakers in the EU as well as in India as it presents a ground-assessment of sorts of the India-EU relations. The rest of the chapters explore the commonality of interests in the India-EU relations. Issues ranging from converging geopolitical interests of both India and the EU in Afghanistan, to the benefits of an FTA between India and the EU, are explored. Since the issue of FTA between India and the EU is fraught, one that is being dragged in negotiations since 2007, the book adequately devotes two chapters towards understanding the issue.

This book presents a composite compilation of essays on various issues with the European paradigm for comparison being the leitmotif, which will be of great academic significance to researchers in India, as also in Europe. As the book is the brainchild of several conferences held in India and Europe, it presents analysis based on the most recent data and facts making it relevant to both academicians as well as practitioners of foreign policy. Comprising high-value research cooperation between India and the EU, this book should

go a long way in bridging the gaps in the India-EU relations. The book also comes with a comprehensive list of abbreviations, which makes reading very friendly.

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Adesh Pal, et.al. (eds), *India and Her Diaspora in the South Pacific* (New Delhi, Creative Books, 2013), Pages: xvii+295, Price: Rs. 795.00.

One of the remarkable developments in social sciences has been the emergence of diaspora studies. Diaspora is a global phenomenon and in an interconnected globalised world, it has become significant in terms of sharing cultural spaces, economic ideas and national narratives. The Indian Diaspora's history has been among the most diverse and complex of migration histories. Indians have established communities on every continent as well as on islands in the Caribbean and the Pacific and Indian oceans. The Indian Diaspora story has focused primarily on the US and Europe. However, the study is incomplete without taking into account the Indian Diaspora linkages to other places like the South Pacific.

The book, *India and Her Diaspora in the South Pacific* is remarkable in this regard, as it extensively covers the Indian diaspora course in Fiji, New Zealand and Australia. It is an attempt to analyse the struggles and opportunities of the old and new Indian diaspora in the South Pacific. The volume is a collection of essays presented at a three-day International Conference, "India and her Diaspora in the South Pacific".

The work has been divided into three parts. The first section brings out the story of the indenture system of the 19th century that led to Indians crossing the boundary to work as indentured labourers in Mauritius, Uganda, Surinam, Fiji, etc. From giving a general overview of the causes of migration, it covers the themes of struggle and suffering, occupations and opportunities,

and the rise of the Indian diaspora from misery to affluence. The essays bring out aspects of the host government's policies towards the Indian Diaspora, the attitudes of the Indian policy makers towards it, and the culture, communication and significance of media and films among the Diaspora community.

Malay Mishra in the opening essay "Indian Diaspora: Today's Thinking, Tomorrow's Need" hypothesises on the social milieu and economic conditions that prompted thousands of Indians to emigrate to foreign lands. The article provides a picture of how the old Indian diaspora experienced an inhuman system of transplantation of labour accompanied by misery, exploitation and suffering. Mishra contends that the new diaspora consists of more voluntary migration of engineers, doctors and management graduates to western countries along with a mass exodus of unskilled and semi-skilled workers to the Gulf States. He focuses on the need to make the Indian diaspora an agent of development and a strategic asset that could be used for the benefit of India as well as the host country.

Greg Battye's essay comes with an interesting title "Audio Visual Masala: Indian Films as Virtual Diaspora". He argues that different forces serve as a cementing agent for the Diaspora spread worldwide. These forces range from food, religion, internet to television. Battye's narrative is gripping as he explains that movies and serials bring out various aspects of Indian Diaspora to life. "Bollywood masala" movies have played a central role in negotiating the national identity. Until the 1980s, an Indian expatriate was painted in a negative light. It was in the post-liberalisation era that the Non Resident Indian (NRI) became the epitome of Indianness, and began to be seen as an instrument of India's reach and recognition in the outside world.

Manmohini Kaul's chapter "Indian Diaspora in the South Pacific: Politico Historical Perspective", talks about the Indian diaspora in Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. She states how certain policies of the host countries led to exclusion rather than assimilation. Australia followed a white immigration policy between 1950 and 1970. As relations between India and Australia improved, the country became more responsive towards Indian migrants. However, the post-9/11 period has witnessed cases of alleged harassment of Indian students and suspicion towards Asians (p. 112).

The second part of the book covers in extensive detail the December 2006 military coup led by Commodore Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama. Writers like Brij Lal, Satyendra Nandan, Ganesh Chand, who have personally witnessed the predicament of the Indian diaspora in Fiji, have contributed to this part. The chapters present the emergence of the power struggle in the Fijian

establishment. The issues of religion, tradition and military in national politics in a multi-ethnic society have led to the politics of exclusion. Lal's chapter "Anxiety, Uncertainty, and Fear in our Land: Fiji's Road to Military Coup 2006" arguing how coups have a negative effect on civil society is a compelling read. Ganesh Chand on the other hand hails the coup as revolutionary for breaking the traditional military-church hierarchy in Fiji in his essay, "December 2006: A Coup or a Revolution?".

The book's underlying theme brings out the sense of banishment and stigma that Fiji-Indians face. Satish Rai in "In Exile at Home: The Fiji-Indian Experience" narrates how Indians were tricked to go to Fiji for temporary indenture labour but circumstances and policies adopted by the British government did not allow them to return to India. Govind Prasad's work, "India and her Diaspora in Fiji: Past, Present and Future" highlights the socio-political life of Indians in Fiji from the 19th century to the present. He explains how Indian dominance in the economic and political life of Fiji resulted in strained relations between the native community and the Indian immigrants. This was reflected in the coups of 1987 and 2000. Both, Rai and Prasad, account of the injustices to the community from beginning to present times, and present a pessimistic view regarding the future. Dharna Chandra also builds up on the theme. Her paper "Locked into Momentum of Decline? Fiji, Indian Population in the 21st Century" talks about the socio-economic and political circumstances that have led to a steady downfall of the Indo-Fijian population. The Fiji-Indians are facing double migration and are settling in countries near to Fiji due to their unwillingness to sever ties with their homeland. Chandra brings out the nostalgic link that Fiji-Indians have with India and the threats they face within Fiji from the native population. Most of the authors while talking about the 2006 political imbroglio, however, hope for a mutually acceptable solution to be worked out in future.

Part III of the book discusses the relevance of literature in the lives of Fiji-Indians. The writings consist mainly of short stories, novels and poems. Dislocation and disorientation have predisposed writers to emphasise a sense of dislocation, dereliction and abandonment. The "Girmit ideology" informs of Fiji-Indian literature, culture and consciousness. Writers like Subramani talk about the above-mentioned theme while also bringing out the present issues. Subramani's "Altering Fictional Maps" states that literature emphasises shared aspirations and symbols, and provides means of healing the rifts in a culture divided along racial lines. Subramani's *Dauka Puraan*, first Hindi novel to have emerged from the Indian diaspora, is a triumph for the Fiji-Hindi language, which is a mixture of Bhojpuri and Awadhi. It is written in the vernacular the author heard when he was growing up.

It is through the Fiji-Indian literature that writers are able to articulate the problems of powerlessness, marginalisation, dispossession, and disempowerment. The “deformed and rustic” language becomes one of the most important forms of expression. It is a subaltern language, which is able to bring out the issues of location as well as dislocation. Geeta Patil also brings home the point while interpreting the works of Indian Diaspora writers in “The Celebration: A Diasporic Experience”. Padma Lal mixes poetry with prose to bring out the emotion of Indo-Fijians who underwent a tragic transformation after the 1987 coup. Her composition “A Gap in the Hedge” brings out the way of life, culture and importance of the language. Lal weaves together the biographical narrative of an individual along with that of the community and nation while explaining the saga of colonialism and race related violence. Compiled chronologically, the narrative is superbly written. It includes Lal’s own experiences as an observer.

The essays presented in the book invite pluralistic engagements. The book scores high in bringing out the political conditions of Fiji. Post-colonial Fiji lacked any institutional or political framework for inter-group contact, which led to racial prejudices and ethnic conflict. Following the 1999 election, there was an opportunity to forge a broad inter-group alliance. However, communal in-group tensions led to political fragmentation and instability. The coup of 2000 further caused in-group divisions and dissension. The 2006 coup aimed at encouraging inter-group contact and conciliation. Nevertheless, tensions prevail as Fiji continues to struggle with the cycle of political instability and ethnic conflict. The papers bring across exploitation of the Indian Diaspora as a community, beginning as indentured labourers – “girmityas”, to the present day struggles of race-related issues and identity politics. The book has an emotive appeal as it brings out the experiences of the “doubly uprooted” and “twice banished” Indian Diaspora community of the South Pacific that have often been ignored in the Diaspora literature. The publication of the book is timely as Fiji prepares for the first general election in September 2014, after the 2006 coup.

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Rudra Chaudhury, *Forged in Crisis: India and the United States since 1947* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2014), Pages: xii +368, Price 699.00

In an op-ed article titled *India and the United States: Our Time Has Come*, which appeared recently in the Huffington Post, the US Secretary of State John Kerry expressed his belief in the strength of India-US relations as an “opportunity against long odds”. As destinies of India and the US converge into a deepening partnership to collaborate, invent and create a prosperous future together, he opines that it is one “strategic partnership whose time has come”. Indo-US relations have gained momentum, generated enthusiasm, and enlarged arenas of cooperation. Rudra Chaudhury’s book *Forged in Crisis: India and the United States since 1947* comes at an opportune time for scholars to excavate the depth of this relationship, which outlines the contours of India’s approach to the United States. The author has written a carefully researched, balanced and thoughtful account of Indo-US relations based on rich historical records covering a period from 1947 to 2010.

The book examines the diplomatic and contemporary history of the Indian foreign policy and relations with the US, and successfully sets the tone and framework for further substantive discourse. There are detailed chapters elucidating the leadership, political acumen, fortitude and strategic patience displayed by Indian Prime Ministers – Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, through high points of crises and controversies, such as the Korean War, conflicts over Kashmir and the nuclear deal, in addition to withstanding the pressures of sending troops to Iraq. The book has an introductory chapter followed by three parts thematically arranged and further divided into eight chapters spanning 368 pages. The book establishes a distinctive edifice of an Indian approach to foreign affairs in general and the US in particular.

The introductory chapter narrates the lack of understanding of the world powers of India’s non-alignment policy as a “cerebral approach to international affairs”, which in fact is guided by thought and action to assert India’s autonomous place in foreign affairs (p. 3). Comprehension of this Indian approach to politics, that is to remain non-aligned, rooted in both idealism and pragmatism was arduous to absorb at a time when the world was undergoing a structural transformation. Rudra Chaudhury’s thesis furbishes a fresh break from the simplistic binary view of looking at the Indian foreign policy, driven either by ideation of commitments or by material interests as the standard

lens of understanding the India-US relations. By his nuanced approach in examining the complex mesh of both, ideas and interests in India's strategic calculus, he vividly captures and defends India's independent policy of maintaining contact with all powers, but being forced by none.

In the initial part in the first chapter titled *Negotiating Non-Alignment*, the author explains the influence of Nehru's idea of Indian nationalism "based on the most intense internationalism". This was guided by a sense of reason, love for history and his travels both in the East and the West (p. 19). The second chapter of the book brings out the complex struggle of conflicting ideologies when the Cold War coincided with the premature manifestations of the non-alignment policy. Most importantly, this chapter addresses Nehru's policy towards the US, which was formed by ideation and material necessities and hemmed with the strategic need for non-dependence. Chapter 3 highlights that the Korean War in 1950 and its aftermath provided an opportunity for India to show how and why non-alignment was an innovative approach in securing Indian interests whilst reaching out for a peaceful settlement in the Korean Peninsula. Nehru emerged as the sole spokesperson in a position to mediate between the US and the People's Republic of China (PRC), reflecting more realism than idealism in his policies. High-water mark of the Indian diplomacy was showcased in negotiations for the food assistance bill, as India remained undeterred under pressure. India convinced the US that India's position on the Korean War was to be treated separately from the negotiations for food assistance: "a quest for engagement without entanglements" (p. 66).

Part Two of the book, comprising Chapter 4, *Negotiating Change*, examines the crisis period of the India-China War of 1962. This chapter underpins the difficulties faced by a nation defeated and "shocked into negotiating change" (p. 83), however, withstanding internal and external pressures of entering into a vortex of alliances. The author, in this chapter dispels the narratives that India abandoned the policy of non-alignment by receiving American military aid. Instead, he contends that Nehru's non-alignment was alive and a plausible idea. Even in the face of crisis, India was able to achieve "unconditional" aid of the US "without any strings" attached (p. 104).

Chapter 5 underlines India's firm stand on Kashmir even after the 1962 defeat. Americans made long-term military aid contingent on the success of talks on Kashmir. The rhetoric of "No settlement, no US aid at all" (p. 142) ensued while the Americans simultaneously devised a "soft border approach" policy towards Kashmir (p. 140). Dominant historiography on this period,

notably Dennis Kux's seminal work, underscores that the American aid in 1962 represents 180 degrees reversal of Nehru's non-alignment policy. The author, acknowledging a degree of justifiability in Kux's contention, argues that the non-alignment policy was undergoing a process of changing its ideas around autonomy. Thus, weapons from abroad were no longer considered a taboo. Rather, it was viewed as a matter of interest in the quest for stability. The author craftily brings out Nehru's acumen and political patience and elaborates on "Indian Exceptionalism" (pg.142) as the Cease-fire Line across Kashmir remained intact even during the crisis.

Chapter 6 highlights Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's sure-footed and pragmatic approach to international affairs, demonstrates her astute sense of timing of when to go to war and her brand of non-alignment. Gandhi's approach to non-alignment was impregnated with streaks of realism; however, it was by no means divorced from the Nehruvian ideas of autonomy. Scholars have commented that signing the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union buried the principles of non-alignment. Arguably, the author suggests that by engaging both the US and the USSR, Indira Gandhi guarded Indian autonomy. Post the war, she was able to achieve the twin objectives of establishing better relations with the Nixon administration whilst not allowing consolidation of Soviet influence. This injected a new vigour of pragmatism interlinking old and new ideas of greater engagement and cooperation (p. 170).

Part Three, Chapter 7- *Negotiating Engagement*, deals with the complex series of dialogues, debates and public opinions on the matter of contributing Indian troops to the US led war against Iraq. In spite of pressures from the Bush administration and noteworthy efforts of American officials like Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Blackwill, India could not be persuaded to send troops to Iraq. Rudra Chaudhury writes prolifically in this chapter regarding the compulsions of the Vajpayee government of deploring ("ninda") the war against Iraq. The author in a nuanced manner presents the political restraint demonstrated by Indian political leaders by retaining the right to say no to the Americans even though it meant letting go of an opportunity to work more closely with the US in raising New Delhi's profile in the Persian Gulf.

In Chapter 8, the author argues that signing the nuclear deal with the US did not lead to moving away from the cerebral strands of non-alignment. Rather it has only sealed the efficacy of India's uncompromising autonomy by ensuring and emboldening India's nuclear sovereignty. The lengthy series of arbitrations, which led to the nuclear deal in 2008, serve as a clear example of how officials on both sides managed to remain resilient whilst understanding

each other's position with a sense of deep trust.

This book hinges on three key findings - first, India's relationship with the US has been its most comprehensive bilateral association. The author takes a renewed look at Indo-US relations, moving away from the popular discourse of fractious "estranged democracies". Second, the book offers a critical corrective in defence of the stewardship of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In addition, it refrains from "simplistic analytical dichotomies" of explaining India's motivations as a product of either ideas or interests. Third, the book establishes India's journey of uncovering the myriad layers of non-alignment rooted deeply in non-dependence and autonomy of partnerships.

The author maps key trends, which he identifies as relevant to how India and the US engage. Engagement and dialogue with the US would not lead India to become an ally. Successive US administrations have realised this need for India to remain non-aligned. Additionally, public pronouncements of the US administration declaring an intention to solve the dispute over Kashmir is going to do far more harm than good to both India and Pakistan. Scholars need to give credence to the idea that India represents and advocates an alternative set of arguments in the international system. Hence, India-US 'alliance-like-relationship would also do little good for international politics.

Rudra Chaudhury in his book champions India's relations with the US and with dexterity argues that tenacity and longevity of the relationship is palpable through the seamless debates and dialogues "Forged in Crisis" and strengthened through it. One of the noteworthy features of this book is that it highlights the negotiating genius of Indian and American diplomats and leaders. Officials working indefatigably along with their respective administrations for strengthening India-US partnership have found central importance in this book. A recommended reading for people desiring to comprehend the strands of commonness and divergences between the world's oldest and world's largest democracies.

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T.P. Sreenivasan, Divya S. Iyer (ed.), *Applied Diplomacy: Through the Prism of Mythology* (New Delhi, Wisdom Tree, 2014), Pages 330, Rs.895.00

It was Harold Nicholson who exhorted that an ideal diplomat cannot be a lawyer, a missionary or a fanatic. He must be a humane, sceptical, and commonsensical individual who works tirelessly for his country's interests with an open mind. Diplomacy is an art more than a science. Over the past six decades, India has produced many excellent diplomats, serving their country and the international community with idealism and perseverance. After retirement (which I believe is still at an inconceivable age of sixty), some have dabbled in scholarly works, while others have devoted their energies to journalistic writing, media commentaries, and community participation. Some others are active in think tanks and busy at track-II meetings. T.P. Sreenivasan fits into all categories and somehow handles it very well with surprising ease and finesse.

This background is given to show that the reviewer was able to appreciate many things Sreenivasan is discussing in his latest book, *Applied Diplomacy: Through the Prism of Mythology*. This is a compilation and an updated version of his several op-eds and speeches, put together by a young and dynamic editor, Divya S. Iyer. Divya a medical doctor by training, new entrant to the Indian Administrative Service and an accomplished writer of three books, has organised the chapters under the leading figures in Hindu mythology to show that the statecraft that Sreenivasan is talking about can indeed best be exemplified by the behavioural traits of these figures revered in India, not only as religious figures but as moral or immoral characters. The short summary of these epic figures offers great reading and the reviewer learned a lot, while recollecting the stories one read in school textbooks.

The book contains 42 short chapters under seven sections on a variety of subjects. These range from nonalignment, Sino-Indian relations, US- India relations, nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation, the United Nations and India's bid to enter the Security Council, and challenges Kerala faces in education to peculiar behavioral traits of Malayalees. Reading these chapters offers a high quality exposure to the many challenges that India has faced, especially in the area of foreign policy and diplomacy. The author minces no words to show where he disagreed and where he agreed with the positions that successive Indian governments took when dealing with security, nuclear weapons, nuclear energy, environment, relations with the great powers,

especially the US, the United Nations, and links with neighbouring countries, in particular Pakistan. Sreenivasan's language is both succinct and easy to read and the anecdotes in it, based on personal experiences, make the book a page-turner. For an academic, like the reviewer, who presents some of these topics as complicated theoretical discourses, it offers a good example of how to write for a larger audience.

One broader message in the chapters is that prudence is the essence of good diplomacy and statecraft and that India's achievements and failures cannot be reduced to slogans or sound bites. The book is concluded with a brief discussion of Sreenivasan's personal journey from a village in Southern Kerala to some of the most enchanting places in the world. He also encountered some difficult times in Fiji and Kenya as ambassador to those places when he found himself in the midst of internal conflicts that affected India and Indians living there.

Any aspiring diplomat or civil servant as well as budding scholar in India can learn many lessons by reading these pages on how to achieve something major in life and never stop doing what one is good at.

It is an inspiring set of ideas from a seasoned diplomat and his creative editor.

T.V. PAUL
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McGill University, Canada
and President-Elect, International Studies Association (ISA)

★ ★ ★