

BOOK REVIEW

Rajiv Bhatia, *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours*, (New Delhi: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), Pages: 257, Price: Rs. 895.00

Burma was forcibly retired behind a bamboo curtain by Ne Win and the army when it lost democracy in 1962. Restricted elections five years ago allowed the country to open up, albeit under *de facto* military control. Elections in 2014 gave Aung San Su Kyi's NLD another landslide victory. The future of the nascent democracy is somewhat uncertain as the military establishment retains considerable power under the present constitution, which also prevents Su Kyi from becoming president of the country. However, the clock cannot be turned back beyond a point. The opening up will continue. The prospects of a growing Indian and possibly key role, as an important neighbour, provide an opportunity as well as a challenge. Rajiv Bhatia's book *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours* with its masterly overall view of the country including its history, politics, economy, external relations, etc. is most timely. He situates Myanmar in its regional and geopolitical frame between the two major neighbours India and China, and the growing relationship within ASEAN. He suggests future directions, which could be pursued to mutual advantage by India and Myanmar.

A shadow has hung over Indo-Myanmar relations since the army crackdown after the 1988 elections. At that time the Indian government supported Aung San Su Kyi and the democracy movement unequivocally. Later when the Burmese authorities began retaliating by helping militant activities in the Northeast, a more pragmatic policy of dialogue at the highest military level, as well as normalisation of government to government relations while maintaining as close contact as possible with Su Kyi, was reinstated. Su Kyi has not forgotten this. However, the future will most probably depend more on what India has to offer rather than on the past. She has warmly recalled the warm relations of her father with Jawaharlal Nehru. When Ne Win ousted the civilian government in 1962, Nehru speedily accepted the Embassy's recommendation to recognise the new government although recalling with great regret his close collaboration with U Nu. India was the first country to recognise Ne Win's government. (I was the DCM at that time.) National interest will always trump morality, and identifying the latter is never precise. The so-called international community, which was once as vociferous in support of the Dalai Lama as it was in

condemning Myanmar, now gives him the cold shoulder and has warmed up to Naypyidaw!

In his last two chapters Bhatia discusses the India-China-Myanmar triangle and Future Directions for Bilateral Relations, and makes recommendations for future action. Both are commended strongly to our policy makers. In recent interactions with Myanmar officials and non-officials, they appeared well inclined to enhance relations across a wide spectrum. There is some residual justifiable suspicion that both its big neighbours have to be watched as their traders and business men have a continuing record of wheeling dealing, and evading laws and regulations. This will be put to test as the economic relations develop in the future. For the present, the Indian public and private sectors must step up efforts to take advantage of a growing economy with considerable disposable aid income and a generous quantum of natural resources. In the interaction between the Chambers of Commerce in the region, it is clear that most Indian companies are reluctant to venture into most of Southeast Asia and even more so into Myanmar. In bilateral and multilateral meetings there are eloquent declarations, but little concrete action. Energy and infrastructure are probably the easy entry points, although agriculture and industry appear promising. Fast tracking connectivity is essential for Myanmar's development and in growing bilateral relations between the two countries. The social and communications sectors are seeking collaboration and development, and obtaining skills and training is required by the entire economy. Militancy generated by Northeastern groups requires cross border cooperation. Bhatia's book provides the necessary facts and makes detailed recommendations.

The role of government as a guide and a facilitator is crucial. Some reorientation of the Government of India's approach towards neighbours and even to other counties is called for. Leaving everything to the Ministries of External Affairs and Commerce appear to be the norm. Other Ministries and their public sector units are generally unwilling to become part of an Indian team overseas. Domestic constituencies are their main and often only priority. Bilateral summits will only yield results if they are supported by periodic reviews at ministerial and official level to review the past and future agendas and record incremental progress. The individual country agendas would have to be fitted into any regional or broader agenda, but it should be the basic unit for operations. Our Embassy and the MEA Desk Officer should act as the record keeper. The Chinese, Japanese, Koreans and Europeans seem to have put in place far more effective systems than ours. We should draw on their expertise and not reinvent what already exists elsewhere. There is talk of releasing "animal spirits" to

boost the Indian economy. An instance is the easing of regulations for the “Start-up India” campaign. Similar measures to generate enthusiasm in the external sector are essential. Ensuring a policy of providing excellence in production and a willingness to take reasonable risks will also enable India to gain the status abroad commensurate to its size and capacity. The inherent promise of the Act East policy requires that it be given primacy in allocating resources and ensuring attention of government and business managers. The development of our North East as a major takeoff point for this policy with provision of adequate human, economic, infrastructural and technical resources and close collaboration by local communities and governments is an essential precondition.

India was born into a difficult neighbourhood and most of her energy has been directed at making it more stable and congenial. This has put China and Pakistan at the top of our priorities and this will remain. However, it might be time for a more nuanced policy to be considered. Inevitably, Bhatia draws attention to the India-China-Myanmar triangle. The author and the experts he quotes, consider that there will be an unequal competition with India inevitably coming second to China. Having spent ten years along with others from that region nursing the BCIM Forum, I would opine that in the emerging global multi-polar world cooperation can and should coexist with competition. As we develop connectivity and regional cooperation there is reason to accept that interdependence will grow. As we try to manage, with finite resources, combining to use those available, is certain to make good sense and efficiency. The European Union is built on those premises and even its present difficulties only underline the basic soundness of its design except that it failed to put in place a supranational political system to manage a supranational currency. Asia can and should find durable answers to make the nation state coexist with its neighbours in most dimensions. Cannot the successors to Chanakya and Confucius join together to find a way to do this and undo the ineffectiveness of the existing UN and Bretton Woods Systems? Then Myanmar and the other nations of Asia might find that they do not have to look over their shoulders so hard at their giant neighbours. Indeed, Myanmar is already more wary of Chinese intentions than some of her other neighbours due to past experience. She has found considerable comfort in the embrace of ASEAN. Singapore has long been a favoured adviser, market, and role model. Japan has also been a major source of development aid, technology, etc. apart from its historical role in Burma’s independence. The ASEAN has not been able to establish a constructive dialogue with China over territorial claims in the South China. However, with its vaunted capacity to find answers to problems such as confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia and the great power divide

over Indo-China, maybe it can someday address this problem too.

As Burma withdrew from the world books, literature on it almost disappeared. Recently, there has been some revival especially in SE Asia and India. This needs to increase especially from Myanmar itself. During his last visit this writer noticed a welcome cultural revival including foreign presentations in Myanmar.

The book under review with its meticulous research and presentations could well become a text book on Myanmar for many. It will surely be required reading for those in the Indian establishment dealing with that country and also for those interested in India's extended neighbourhood. It is also evident that the Indian Foreign Service can produce scholars who can effectively project a deep understanding of the country of their accreditation. Rajiv Bhatia's book will hopefully encourage more members of the Foreign Service to join the small group that seeks to bring to India and the world the fascinating realities of the countries in which they served.

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Yogendra Kumar, *Diplomatic Dimension of Maritime Challenges for India in the 21st Century*, (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2015), Pages: 272, Price: Rs 995.00

Political leaders, journalists and scholars disagree when it comes to interpreting the defining characteristic of the 21st century. It has been depicted differently: 'China's century', 'India's century', 'Asia's century', and 'Afro-Asian century'. According to Admiral R.K. Dhowan, Indian Naval Chief, the current century is 'the century of the Seas', and India is 'a maritime nation with a direct relationship to the Seas'.

The author of the book under review would agree readily. He is convinced about the vital importance of maritime challenges faced by India in the present

century. He has, therefore, produced a full-length book focusing on the theme's diplomatic dimension, set in the larger context of global geopolitics and the complex transition unfolding at present. The author is well equipped for the task, having served as the Indian envoy in three different regions – East Asia (Philippines), Central Asia (Tajikistan) and Africa (Namibia). His stint in the Ministry of External Affairs, dealing with multilateral organisations has further helped. This book project has been supported by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), the premier think tank specialising in naval matters.

The book's nine chapters ranging from 'Introduction' to 'Conclusion' cover all possible facets of the chosen subject. Substantively, it begins with analysing the evolution of maritime thinking and diplomatic dimension for the period 1949–91. Thereafter, it moves to shed light on the international security milieu post-Cold War and India's national objectives. It then focuses on the post-Cold War international maritime milieu and the role of our maritime agencies.

In the chapter entitled 'India's Mutating Maritime Challenges in the 21st Century', the author presents informed glimpses of what the world should expect in the future. His analysis of future trends in naval and air warfare, cyber conflict and security, space security, terrorism and a whole host of non-traditional security threats is realistic. His pen-picture of international governance issues is relevant. In the chapter prior to 'Conclusion', he offers a set of well thought-out policy recommendations for India's maritime diplomacy in the future.

Throughout its history, India has enjoyed a close relationship with the oceans. Its sailors, traders and adventurers left footprints in places as far away as the Mediterranean in the west, Africa's eastern and southern coasts, and Java and Bali in the east. 'India's maritime history is as old as India's history', writes the author. He notes, that at independence Jawaharlal Nehru's wise leadership was available to the nation. He was a statesman, deeply conscious of the significance of the Indian Ocean for India. K.M. Panikkar, a leading strategic thinker, pronounced in 1951 that India's future was 'closely bound up with the strength she is able to develop gradually as a naval power....' Yet, a strange 'sea-blindness' descended on policymakers for about three decades, with New Delhi constrained to deepen its land-centric focus in view of existentialist threats from Pakistan and China. In 1950, the Indian navy received four per cent of the defence budget and was dismissed as India's 'Cinderella service'.

The above scene began to change quickly, once the British navy started its withdrawal from much of Asia by the mid-1970s. This paved the way for dominance by the US navy and its rivalry with Soviet naval forces. The

Indian Ocean countries, together with India, rode on the bandwagon of the 'Zone of Peace' proposal, with very little actual impact. However, New Delhi did see the writing on the wall. It started programmes to strengthen the navy and allowed it to play a notable role during the 1980s in Sri Lanka and Maldives as well as initiating cooperation with Seychelles and others. The author aptly maintains that the country's 'sophisticated institutional structure', created in the first four decades, helped it 'to grow into a major power'.

The end of the Cold War in 1991, globalisation, improving technology, and the communication revolution combined to transform the world's geopolitics and geo-economics. It was the dawn of a new era that offered a promising future, but it also brought with it new, unprecedented threats. According to the author, India's traditional and non-traditional security challenges are 'full-spectrum 21st century threats'. They are 'a microcosm' of the threats faced by the world at large. India's policy response has been to strive for a peaceful environment – so essential for its economic development, while gaining in strength and staying prepared for conflict and war. Consequently, the nation is perceived as a stabilising and benign status quo power, especially by the West.

To suggest that, as a rising power, India is interested in all the seas, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, reflects ambition and not recognition of the reality. Nevertheless, the author is well justified in stressing the centrality of the Indian Ocean in India's strategic priorities. Robert Kaplan's observation - that the Greater Indian Ocean 'may comprise a map as iconic to the new century as Europe was to the last one' – has indeed proved true.

India's focus of interest, as the book points out, is in 'primary areas' – the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal and various choke points, and 'thereafter' in 'the secondary areas' i.e. the Southern Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the South China Sea and the East Pacific Region. In this broader target region, the presence of the US navy is still 'overwhelming'. The new trend is the growing naval footprint of China, with its policy to create maritime infrastructure capable of dual usage – civilian and naval. Its assertiveness and aggressive postures are quite unsettling. Japan, dependent on energy supplies and international trade, has also been driven to revise its traditional self-defence policy and expand its influence in the region. The great power competition is apparent in both, the west and east of India, albeit with varying intensity.

The Indian navy and other agencies have to counter and cope with all these geopolitical and naval trends. Kumar points out that the revision of India's naval doctrine after 1991 has been 'a continuous process'. The navy's

modernisation programme has progressed in accord with the doctrine. Its share of the defence budget has increased from 6.8 per cent in the 1980s to 18 per cent in 2013–14. Increasingly, India is perceived as ‘the net provider of security’ in much of the region.

The above objective can be achieved optimally by not only expanding the navy but also by making our naval as well as other diplomacy much more purposeful. The blossoming web of diplomatic and defence partnerships in recent years is a welcome sign. However, the nation’s internal vulnerability, exposed during the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, Pathankot, and elsewhere, should be addressed far more effectively.

This book presents a thorough review of Asia’s geopolitical contestation and its implications as well as the mutating non-traditional security threats. The former phenomenon sharpens polarisation and competition, whereas the second one induces cooperation. The author’s prudent advice is that India should calibrate its national effort and diplomacy to prepare for ‘both scenarios: creation of an all-inclusive maritime order and the international failure to do so’.

The author lays emphasis on ‘whole-of-the government participation’ in designing and executing a strategy to deal with the challenges. The key instrument would be ‘effective coordination across the multitude of assets and resources’. To quote him: ‘...the maritime challenges for India in the 21st century have to be tackled with great foresight and nimbleness’. Success in tackling these challenges will no doubt mould ‘India’s own success as a strong economy and a stable, harmonious society’. His recommendations need to be debated and considered seriously.

In his assessment of the existing international governance structures, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) receives close scrutiny. The author suggests that this institution should be raised to ‘summit level’.

One of the book’s strengths is its rich bibliography that fills 22 pages. It is a treasure trove for future researchers. In a nutshell, this well-researched book is a treat for the specialist, and the lay reader too will profit from it. It deserves to be given as wide dissemination as possible.

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Pankaj K. Jha, *India and the Oceania: Exploring Vistas for Cooperation* (New Delhi: ICWA / Pentagon Press, 2016) Pages: 248, Price: 795.00

The end of the Cold War has challenged the basic tenets of the ‘Westphalian’ national and international systems, as well as heralded a new era in international relations. As a result, ideological considerations were replaced by new priorities. New opportunities and challenges in the new era compelled each and every nation-state in the international system to respond accordingly. India was no exception in this regard. There were both international and domestic factors that compelled India to change its Cold War mind-set. Fascinating success stories from the Southeast Asian economies were the international factors that enticed India to emulate their development path as a replicable model. The domestic factor was India’s Balance of Payment crisis. In order to achieve fast paced economic growth, India has drastically altered its domestic and foreign policies.

One of the important aspects of India’s changed foreign policy is a ‘concentric circles approach’, which starts with looking at its foreign policy objectives from ‘immediate to extended’ neighbourhood construct. India’s ‘Look East Policy’ is considered a visionary step forward to achieve its political, economic and strategic goals. India’s engagement with the Oceania in the second and the ‘extended’ phase of ‘Look East Policy’ is significant in many respects.

It is at this juncture that the book titled, “India and the Oceania: Exploring Vistas for Cooperation” makes a special place for itself among the texts that throw light into this field of study. The book goes through the geo-strategic, economic, environmental, and cultural aspects of India’s engagement with the Oceania.

The author explains the significance of cooperation between India and the Oceania from a geo-strategic point of view. Both Australia and India are the largest maritime powers in the Indian Ocean region. The author observes that growing surveillance of India and Australia in the region will ramp up maritime security, and serve as a counterweight to Chinese intervention in the Oceania. In addition to that, it will be helpful in curbing the spread of terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Asia-Pacific region.

Enhancement of maritime security will bolster sea-trade and economic prosperity in the region. From an economic point of view, India’s engagement with the Oceania presents both opportunities and challenges. Since India has

been one of the largest consumers and importers of energy and Australia is the eighth largest energy producers in the world, deeper engagement will cater to India's growing energy requirements. In addition to that, New Zealand's clean and renewable energy resources will be helpful in ensuring India's energy security. However, economic ties with Australia and New Zealand posit challenges too. For instance, being the leading producers of agricultural commodities, Australia and New Zealand seek openness in Indian markets with low tariff rates. Therefore, farmers in India have apprehensions over enhancing the pace of trade with the Oceania.

The author explains how various regional and economic groupings link India with the Oceania. In his view, India's leadership of Non-Aligned Movement, its stances against colonialism and apartheid, as well as its commitment to democracy and environmental protection make India a credible actor in extending solidarity to its counterparts in the Oceania.

The significant presence of Indian Diaspora in Fiji, Australia and New Zealand is an important element for India in its proactive role in the Oceania. Even though the Indian Diaspora adapted to the political and economic milieu of the host countries, they retained Indian culture. However, with regard to reciprocating the same sentiments and support, the author critiques the lukewarm approach of India towards the cause of its Diaspora. For instance, over one lakh Fijians of Indian origin had to seek asylum in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada between 1987 and 2004. This was the result of discriminatory policies of the Government of Fiji against their citizens of Indian origin, and political developments subsequent to coups in 1987 and 2000. The author points out the urgent need of an effective 'Diaspora Policy' to support the cause of people of Indian origin abroad.

The author critically examines how Oceania, especially the smaller islands in the South Pacific transformed from the nuclear laboratory of the great powers during the early period of the Cold War to the epicentre of the climate change debate in the post-Cold War period. It is estimated that the US, Britain, and France had exploded 213 nuclear devices in the atmosphere of the Pacific. These nuclear explosions polluted and damaged the environment, livestock, and fisheries and also created serious health problems, including birth defects in the babies born to people in the region. This led to anti-nuclear sentiments in the region.

In addition to the adverse impact of nuclear radiation, small island countries in the Pacific are particularly vulnerable to climate change, which results in coastal erosion and submersion, salination of water supplies, and exposure to more intense tropical storms. All these have led to serious economic and

political problems in the small island states in the Oceania region. Therefore, the author observes that a traditional paradigm to understand ‘threat to security’ does not fit in the situation of the small island countries in the Oceania region.

The small island countries in the Oceania region need external aid to overcome their environmental, economic and political challenges. This sometimes makes them pawns to the interests of international donors. For instance, China and Taiwan use their financial assistance in satisfying the conflicting interests between Beijing and Taipei. Many a time, it does not cater to the real needs of small island states in the Oceania. The author observes that Chinese aid for infrastructure projects with no development value would virtually enhance the indebtedness of these small states.

The book examines the challenges and opportunities presented by the Oceania from an Indian point of view. The author goes through each minute aspect, which links India with the Oceania and elaborates it in a lucid manner so that the reader gets a clear picture. The author has taken commendable efforts in bringing contemporary developments into the discussion of the themes under examination. As a result the book is a relevant document for the students and experts in the field of India and Oceania.

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D. Gopal and Dalbir Ahlawat, eds., *Indo-Pacific: Emerging Powers, Evolving Regions and Global Governance* (New Delhi, Aakar, 2016), Pages: 319, Price, Rs.995.

The compendium under review has been edited by D. Gopal and Dalbir Singh, pioneers in the studies on India and Australia in their two respective countries. Hence the importance of the book; it brings scholarship from the two extreme

ends of the Indian Ocean. The book carries a full one dozen contributions by those who have devoted years in understanding and deciphering, what is contemporaneously called, the Indo-Pacific – “the vast and single geostrategic arc and geo-economic realm spanning the eastern Pacific Ocean to the western Indian Ocean along the eastern coast of Africa”. Besides its contemporary geo-strategic and economic importance, the Indo-Pacific, historically speaking, has been the cradle of cultures and ideas.

To say that axis of global power is shifting, if it has not already shifted, from West to East is not enough. The editors foretell that it “is a subject of intense debate, contestation and speculation”; expectedly therefore, the reader is served fresh and hot all through the compendium. China has “risen”; India looks like it is going to be in a state of remaining the “emerging” power for a long time. Be that as it may, for US - the post-Second World War hegemon - China and India could be an opportunity or a challenge, or simultaneously both, in the Indo-Pacific region. There is the view that a slight diminution in the political-military power of the United States and a slight increase in the economic-technological weight of China might do well for Asian powers, including India who is engaging both China and US, simultaneously. Other stakeholders such as Australia, Indonesia and Japan, the so-to-say “middle powers” in this arc are all likely to witness rise in their influence and role in the region. In the world view of the Indian foreign policy, one strategic relationship is not to be at the cost of another. Obviously, there are tension areas; more so with China with whom it has a festering border dispute. India in particular has apprehensions of both China and the US – engaged as both are in military build-up and defence networking in Indo-Pacific. India’s economic and technological ties with both might not prove to be sufficient. Faced with peculiarities and dilemmas, the editors surmise, “India seeks in the long-run to retain its so-called ‘non-aligned’ credentials by maintaining strategic autonomy while at the same time developing its own deterrence” (p.10).

The compendium engages the reader in the dense debate on the present and future of the Indo-Pacific. D. Gopal launches an opening salvo; he sees a definitive triangle of India, China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific. In comparison, Dalbir Ahlawat and Fred C. Smith would like to further explore the evolving contours in the region. Pankaj Jha observes somewhat minutely the old and the new multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific, and engages the readers in the debate about whether it is a change or a continuity of multilateral processes. The Indo-Pacific is witness to a growing number of plurilateral arrangements too.

Analysts talk of a new “bromance” between Russia and China. It is said, China has “reset” the relationship with Russia, and Russia has “pivoted” to Asia; perhaps for the rest of the 21st century. Glen Diesen debates the pros and cons of Russia constructing a Eurasian state in a multipolar world. The Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union, and China-initiated “One Belt-One Road” complement each other. Chintamani Mahapatra and Vivek Mishra dabble with US policy and the geopolitical dimensions of the Indo-Pacific. It is US President Barrack Obama who had unveiled the “pivot” to Asia policy as the cornerstone of his foreign policy in his first term. Post-Second World War, the US has seen itself as the principal hegemon in Asia-Pacific; it is believed that today it deploys nearly 70 per cent of its naval force in Asia Pacific under the “pivot to Asia” policy. Significantly, the Malabar exercises involving navies of India, Japan and US will be held in the north of the Philippines and adjacent to the South China Sea towards the end of 2016. It seems the US is also keen to join the trilateral strategic dialogue involving Australia, India and Japan. These multiple engagements enhance India’s strategic profile and presence in East as well as South East Asia.

Sub-national entities have entered foreign policy arenas. The present governments in Australia and India are encouraging provinces’ role in foreign policy; the idea is to leverage a province’s culture and resources for more external trade and tourism. India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi has repeatedly talked of horizontal cooperation between regions and cities for deepening of bilateral and multilateral relationships. RFI Smith handles some of the governance-related issues in Indian and Australian federations. Article by Jeanne Hoffman on the strategic futures of India-China relationship, and by Faisal Ahmed and M. Absar Alam on understanding the trade competitiveness of the Indian Ocean countries use specific methodologies to measure and prognosticate the future trajectories of the India-China ties and the trade potential among the Indian Ocean countries.

“One Belt-One Road” will ostensibly change the way man has known to live and work. “Belt” is 8000 miles of high-speed road and rail transportation, energy pipelines, fibre optics, “industrial parks” and “smart cities”, stretching from Xian in central China to Venice in Italy. A road of diverse cultures, it covers around 4.4 billion people and an economic output of US\$21 trillion. Likewise, the maritime “Road”, starting from Quanzhou in Fujian province, spans ports of some 50 countries connecting Asia, Africa and Europe, and will eventually meet the “Belt” in Venice. There are security dimensions, commonly understood in the terminology of “string of pearls”; Indian scholars in particular highlight the threat scenario posed by China’s “string of pearls”

strategy. Wang Dehua goes into analysing the maritime security dimensions of the “Road” and the “string of pearls” thesis.

Silk Roads would ostensibly change the maritime geography of Asia and thereby change the geo-politics of Indo-Pacific. Indonesia has a US\$50 billion project to become the maritime bridge between Asia and Africa; China has a proposal of a canal cutting across the Kra isthmus in Thailand so as to once and for all resolve its “vulnerability” to the Malacca Straits. Arvind Kumar is a specialist in security matters; and holds his forte in analysing the emerging security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Munmum Majumdar delves into complex aspects of the Indonesia-Australia relations in the context of developments in the Indo-Pacific. For Australia, nuclear non-proliferation begins from below; it is the leading exporter of uranium. With India proposing to build a number of nuclear power plants, sourcing of uranium from Australia comes into spotlight. India is keen to have a long-term strategic partnership on win-win terms; bilateral relations between India and Australia are too important and too deep to be left to the vagaries of *ad hocism*.

Pioneering works such as the one under review make a long-term contribution in catalysing a relationship between two different peoples and societies. Over the past twenty-five years, the Australian Studies Programme of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) at New Delhi has become the main depository of source material on Australian Studies and has provided a platform to scholars from India and Australia to come together to jointly explore and research ideas and policy inputs. From Down Under, the Department of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism at Macquarie University, the NSW is engaged in a similar exercise in developing a robust programme of geo-strategic and security studies on India and the Indo-Pacific region. *Kudos* to the editors and to their *Guru*, Prof. R. Narayanan, to whom the volume is dedicated.

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Ruchita Beri (ed), *India and Africa: Common Security Challenges for the Next Decade*, (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016), Pages 150, Price: Rs. 595.00

India and Africa recognise security as essential for long term progress and sustainable development. As both regions are today confronted with plethora of similar security challenges, ranging from maritime security, terrorism, energy insecurity, food security and climate change, having implications for development, they are increasingly realising the importance of greater security cooperation.

The book 'India and Africa: Common Security Challenges for the Next Decade' is a relevant reading in this context, as it addresses the most significant security challenges that India and Africa are likely to face in the coming decades. Those challenges include reforms in global governance institutions, rise of extremism and terrorism, maritime security in the Indian Ocean and energy insecurity. The volume, a compendium of 12 articles, drawing on contributions from scholars from different fields, presents both Indian and African perspectives on these challenges, seeking answers as to how both can cooperate to resolve them.

On the aspect of UNSC and global governance reforms, Francis Kornegay in the first chapter argues that for India and Africa, it is not enough to continually push for UNSC and global governance reforms. To make such reform compelling they need to proactively table comprehensive reform proposals and where there is opportunity they should take action. One such prospect is seen in the southern oceans (Indian and the Atlantic). Given the commercial and strategic centrality of the Oceans, both Africa and India have a major common security concern in building an oceanic community in the southern hemisphere. In doing so they would further the creation of the much needed southern hemispheric international subsystem to balance the North-South asymmetry.

Ruchita Beri in Chapter 2 however, argues that both sides need to develop greater understanding of each other's position on UNSC reforms to smoothen any difference in the future. She also provides a broad perspective on India-Africa security engagement in areas of training, peacekeeping and maritime cooperation and highlights the common concerns on global issues such as international terrorism, piracy, energy security, food security and climate change. As a way forward she offers some recommendations. With regard to

dealing with global security challenges she suggests that both India and Africa need to devise common solutions but what kind of solutions are needed is not further elaborated. As regards cooperation at the continental level, she states that India's initiatives need to be in line with Africa's initiatives like the Africa's Agenda 2063 vision for peaceful, united and prosperous Africa. It would have been useful if some of the African initiatives were discussed by the author.

The issue of terrorism discussed in Chapter 3, 4 and 5 presents the African and Indian experience and the areas where both sides can cooperate to deal with the challenge. Festus Kofi Aubyn presents an overview of terrorism in West, North and East Africa and examines the efforts made at the national and regional level to counter the menace. Drawing lessons from Indian experience he notes that India has managed the terrorism challenge relatively well by adopting a comprehensive approach encompassing security, political, economic, social, psychological, operational and diplomatic aspects in dealing with terrorism.

In Chapter 4 Vivek Chadha, while shedding light on terrorism threat in India and the different facets of Indian response, however, argues that Indian experience of fighting terrorism includes both successes and failures. The transnational character makes it increasingly challenging to tackle terrorism. He observes that the threats facing India and Africa are similar and therefore their successful resolution can become the basis for drawing lessons. Further he suggests that India's military experience can become an useful contributing tool for capacity building in Africa, but what kind of military experience and in what areas is not explained further. Here it is important to note that African counterterrorism methods, for instance as seen in Ethiopia, can be useful for India also.

Manish Chand in Chapter 6 discusses spread of terrorism in Africa, the root causes, the efforts made to counter them and its implications for global security and India. He argues that India has huge stakes in curbing terrorism in Africa and it needs to scale up its security cooperation with individual states, the African Union (AU) and AU's Peace and Security Council. He points out that while Western countries like the US and France are engaged in individual and joint strategies to combat the scourge of terrorism, India should do more. However it needs to be kept in mind that Western strategies in Africa has not been successful, rather it has led to spread of terror. Therefore, India needs to support African initiatives in combating terror.

Maritime security issues facing India and Africa are discussed in Chapter 6, 7 and 8. Alex Benkenstein in Chapter 6 focusing on piracy notes that in the first decade of 21st century escalation of piracy off the Horn of Africa was dealt with an unprecedented level of international cooperation. Though piracy has receded, the ability of coordinated and sophisticated groups to carry out high profile attacks on vulnerable targets will remain, particularly in the context of weak African states and their limited ability to secure their land and maritime domain. Therefore, the author argues, maritime security cooperation should respond to broader range of governance concerns.

In Chapter 7 Vijay Sakhujia dwells on India's coastal security experience and discusses the initiatives India has taken to address issues of coastal security after the Mumbai terror attacks. Some of the best practices that the author hopes African states can adopt for enhancing their maritime security are maritime awareness, technological solutions and cooperative measures. Besides, he also emphasises on maritime multilateralism to deal with the challenges at sea and recommends that for African countries sub-regional approach to deal with maritime concerns should be the priority.

Abhijit Singh in Chapter 8 reflects upon enhancing India-Africa Maritime security cooperation by taking into account both security and economic aspects. He highlights that while India must start cooperating with African countries on improving maritime domain awareness, building local policing ability and training of personnel, it will eventually need to provide assistance for the development of African maritime economy and a maritime system that enables the optimum utilisation of African resources. In practical terms, it means assistance for capacity building, infrastructure creation, law enforcement and good governance.

The last four chapters examine the issue of energy insecurity faced by India and Africa. Underlining India and Africa's energy security challenges, Shebonti Ray Dadwal in Chapter 9 suggests ways for a mutual sustainable energy partnership between both regions. Africa, as an energy rich partner, assumes importance for India as latter is one of the largest and growing hydrocarbons consuming countries in the world. On the other hand, as Africa requires technology, human resource skills, infrastructure and governance mechanism to convert their natural resources to usable energy, India's assistance becomes significant. Besides, India's considerable experience in renewable energy sector can be of help to Africa in developing capacity to harness its renewable energy resources to resolve their energy poverty.

In Chapter 10 Aparajita Biswas states that quest for energy security has prompted India's move into the African oil sector. Given this dependency, India has been compelled to adopt a proactive policy towards Africa to nurture its relations with major oil producing countries. African countries on the other hand are benefitting from India's engagement in capacity building, infrastructure development, pipeline projects, education and health sector.

Alike Ambrose Ejiofor in Chapter 11 examines the challenges faced by Nigeria's oil and gas sector such as lack of infrastructure, militancy, crude oil theft and non passage of Petroleum Industry Bill. He states that as India is dependent on Nigeria for crude, any major energy challenge will have implications for India, and therefore, both can cooperate in resolving the challenges.

Rajiv Nayan in Chapter 11 provides fresh insights into India's nuclear energy expansion plan, its need for diversifying its Uranium supply from the existing three countries and the possibility of Africa emerging as a significant supplier of Uranium to India. He suggests that India should look upon Africa as an alternate supplier of Uranium and that cooperation between India and Africa on uranium commerce may mark a new beginning. India may share its mining experience with African countries and the countries seeking to develop their own mining companies will benefit immensely from this.

This book is a timely contribution in presenting an array of perspectives on the significant common security challenges, relating to global governance reforms, terrorism, energy and maritime security that India and Africa will face in the foreseeable future. This book is an excellent information and analytical resource for understanding emerging areas of security cooperation between India and Africa. It is recommended to everybody who is interested in India – Africa engagement on security issues.

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Anand Kumar, *Multi-Party Democracy in the Maldives and the Emerging Security Environment in the Indian Ocean Region*, (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016), Pages: xi + 192, Price: 795.00

Maldives has been in the news for quite some time due to continuous political crisis in that island nation since 2008. In this context, the book tries to analyse the 'fledging multi party democracy in the Maldives, its foreign policy and its impact on the security scenario in the IOR'.

The first chapter of the book deals briefly with the history and current political and security scenario and explains the methodology, besides explaining further chapterisation.

The second chapter, 'The Road to Multi-Party Democracy' touches upon the constitution making process in Maldives since 1953 and changes that it brought about in the political system. This was a crucial period in Maldives' history as it redefined its ties with Britain and emerged as an independent nation in 1965. The chapter demonstrates that the volatile political situation and power struggle among sultanates and aristocracy in Maldives was exploited by Britain to increase its influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Maumoon Abdul Gayoom was elected as the President in 1978 and ruled Maldives for next 30 years with an iron hand. His term, as the author correctly points out, was marred with protests for political change and demand for 'introduction of multiparty system, separation of powers and mechanisms for accountability and transparency'. This led to the adoption of the sixth constitution in 2008, paving the way for the first multi-party democratic elections in the country.

The third chapter, 'Multi-Party Democracy in the Maldives' deals with the rule of first democratically elected President, Mr. Nasheed of Maldives Democratic Party (MDP). This chapter is useful in understanding the problems faced by newly democratic countries such as Maldives. The author argues that, even though people voted for Nasheed in the Presidential elections, opportunist political alliances during Parliamentary elections in 2009 led to the consolidation of the opposition, led by the former President Mr. Gayoom, in the Parliament. Economic hardships coupled with the decisions taken to reform the economy, judiciary and administration led to popular dissent against the government. Another challenge Nasheed faced was in the form of increasing radicalisation. According to the author, 'this was due to the continuation of institutions that were set up during Gayoom's rule to control society through

Islam'. For example, 'ultra conservative religious ideas such as Saudi Wahabism and South Asian Deobandism, entered Maldives ... during Gayoom's rule'. In 1994, 'Protection for Religious Unity Act' was passed that only allowed practice of Islam in the island nation. An attempt by the Nasheed government to control religious extremism was hampered by its own Islamist coalition partner, the Adhaalath Party (AP). Apart from some of the reasons mentioned above, Nasheed's own inability to forge political alliances and his handling of a corrupt judiciary and political opponents, the author mentions, led to his resignation on February 7, 2012.

The fourth chapter 'Maldives under Waheed' touches briefly on the GMR controversy and the role India played in handling the crisis. The author argues that 'the lack of government policy in India regarding the engagement of India's corporate sector in foreign countries created an awkward situation in India-Maldives relations'. Anti-India sentiments were encouraged by some of the Maldives' politicians to protect their vested interests in operating the International airport, which the Waheed government failed to control, as expected by India. In that scenario, the writer opines that India should have followed "a pro-active approach" rather than "allowing internal processes to sort out the issue".

Chapter Five, 'The Controversial Second Multi- Party Elections', brings out as to how political forces opposed to democratic reforms in a country can use the same democratic institutions to consolidate their power. Developments during the 2013 Presidential elections in Maldives are given as an example in this regard. The elections of September 2013 'were one of the closely observed elections by 2000 international observers including India'. But the opinion of international actors had a limited impact on the verdict of elections in which Mr. Nasheed got the majority votes. The judiciary of Maldives, which remained loyal to the former dictator, Mr. Gayoom, annulled the elections citing problems in the voter lists. Judicial interference and political alliances that followed ensured the victory of Mr. Abdulla Yameen as president in the November 2013 elections. After winning, Mr Yammen's government undermined the role of the Election Commission and used state institutions to imprison political opponents including Mr. Nasheed - on terrorism charges. In this scenario, the author observes, 'Maldives will revert back to one candidate rule'.

The Sixth chapter, "Changing Regimes and Maldives Foreign Policy" describes the foreign policy changes under three regimes, after the country's transition to democracy. Under Nasheed, climate change and global warming were the priorities. Maldives' relations with China continued apace, despite

reservations expressed by Nasheed in the past regarding China's increasing influence in the IOR. China opened a resident diplomatic mission in Male in November 2011. However, to allay India's fears, Nasheed said that he will always be India's friend and also claimed to follow an "India first policy". Nasheed's closeness with the UK and other Western powers, the author observes, might have led to 'India's unease and [perhaps] the reason for India's prompt recognition of Waheed's government in 2012'. However, this did not help in the continuation of GMR contract to develop the international airport in Male. Under the current Yameen's regime, bilateral relations with China and Saudi Arabia are at an all time high. The visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in September 2014 for the first time to Maldives helped in achieving China's objective of getting Maldives support for the Maritime Silk Road (MSR). Saudi Arabia is active in funding Islamic education and infrastructure in Maldives. With regard to implications for India, the author concludes that, 'there is a thaw in India-Maldives bilateral relations under this regime' but 'repeated misreading of internal political situation in Maldives by India since 2011 has led to Maldives' closeness to China and Saudi Arabia'.

The seventh chapter 'Strategic Importance of the Indian Ocean and the Maldives' explains in detail the strategic and economic importance of the IOR in general and strategic interests of the US, China, Japan, Australia and India in particular. The author argues that due to considerable differences in economic and military capabilities, the IOR nations have failed to emerge as a Unified Trans Oceanic Community. From India's security perspective, even though the cooperative mechanisms are in place such as IORA, BIMSTEC and IONS these mechanisms are not enough in addressing hard security issues such as 'increase in naval power of the littoral states and presence of extra regional powers' in the IOR.

The eighth chapter, 'Maldives and the Great Game in the Indian Ocean Region', deals with the aspect of Chinese and US strategic interest in the IOR, reorientation of Maldives foreign policy and its implications for India's Maritime Security and Strategic interests. India's commitment to play the role of a 'net security provider' in the IOR needs the support of India's neighbours. However, some of the constitutional amendments in Maldives - such as the one passed on July 22, 2015, could possibly lead to establishment of military bases of foreign powers. The amendments permit foreign countries to own free hold land after meeting certain criteria such as \$1 billion investment and reclamation of 70% of the land from the sea. Both Maldives and China have denied any interest in setting up of military bases.

The US and Maldives had signed a Maritime Surveillance System Agreement under the Waheed regime and the US has tried to push for Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). India and Maldives Defence and Security cooperation includes joint training exercises (DOSTI); joint military training exercises (EKUVERIN) and Trilateral Maritime Cooperation Agreement with Sri Lanka and Maldives. Defence and security cooperation figured prominently in India- Maldives Joint Commission meeting held in 2015. However, Maldives has been attempting to make the best out of the situation, given the competitive environment prevailing in the IOR.

The ninth chapter, 'The Future of Democracy in Maldives and its Impact on the Security Environment in the India Ocean Region', concludes that India needs to tread cautiously, in promoting democracy as the democratic transition in the country has coincided with the greater rivalry for control of the IOR and emergence of Islamist forces. The chapter has taken note of the contradictions in the Western policy that supports democracy in Maldives. Strains in bilateral relations between India and Maldives, author points out, can be used by major powers to promote their interest; whether it is the US or China. India needs to follow a cautious and effective maritime strategy in the IOR, having synergy with its foreign policy objectives.

The book is a useful source for understanding the complex political developments within Maldives; how they have moulded the foreign policy of Maldives and its impact on India's security interests.

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Priyanka Singh (ed.), *The Role of Media in Promoting Regional Understanding in South Asia* (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2016), Pages: xxxi + 256, Price: Rs 995.00

In both democratic and non-democratic forms of governance, the media plays a significant role. In a democracy, it effectively manages to “manufacture consent” in favour of one or the other group,¹ and in a non-democratic system it is used as an instrument by the authorities to legitimise their authoritarian rule. In a globalised world, to a certain extent, due to the mushrooming of social media like Twitter, Tumblr, etc, a ‘global commoner’ no longer remains only a recipient of information rather is also a participant in the process of ‘construction’ and dissemination of information. This process has also created a virtual world where two unknown individuals from two different corners of the world can easily interact by pushing buttons of their respective key boards. Positively, it helps one to understand the other and erase any prejudices. On the darker side, often, it deepens differences by generating hyper nationalism, which is quite apparent on social media. In South Asia, due to the tenuous nature of political relationships among neighbouring states, both these cases are taking place simultaneously. This edited book by Priyanka Singh covers the aforementioned aspects, and aptly discusses the effects of media in South Asia.

In their chapter, Smruti S. Pattanaik and Ashok Behuria agree that the increasing role of corporate houses in the media and its ownership has made it a tool for effective bargaining for political favours. On promoting cooperation, the example of collaboration between the *Jang* group and *The Times of India* in promoting peace is cited. They also mention The South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA), which is also contributing to exchange of media personnel and of views among the members of media community in the region. The grey sides of media in promoting hyper nationalism against the ‘others’ are also mentioned.

Rasul Baksh Rais, on the basis of his study of news and analysis of two English and two Urdu newspapers- *The News*, *Dawn*, *Nawaiwaqt* and *Jang* discusses the situation in Pakistan. Giving importance to India, in recent years the news items that have occupied main space in these print media are the Kashmir dispute, democracy in India, the electoral process and the outcome of the 2014 general elections. The second important country for them is Afghanistan. It has been a dominant foreign as well as national issue in Pakistani

discourses since the communist takeover of the country in April 1978. Its importance has increased in the post-2001 strategic muddle and web of confusions. The third consistent theme or discourse highlighted by these media houses is the 'Islam and the West' debate.

Syed Badrul Ahsan talks of the pathetic situation of journalists and reporters in Bangladesh. Although he mentions the impact of divisiveness of society on a journalist's profession, he does not explain the visceral reasons for it. The political partisan sentiment is clearly visible in the Bangladeshi dailies. On a good note, Badrul writes, "...the newspapers, in their print form, have gone for more public-interest news together with regular analyses and commentaries on the defining issues of the times. That has been a most encouraging development in Bangladesh's journalism".

Like Bangladesh, Afghanistan is a divided and polarised society. Amrullah Saleh describes the socio-political situation in Afghanistan. In the post-Taliban period, the Afghanistan media has been vital in creating public awareness in the war torn country. This, he writes, "...is in contrast to the past when media was merely an outlet to spread propaganda of a particular faction, the ruling party or the state".

Kunda Dixit, talks about two extremes of journalism that make it difficult to steer a moderate foreign policy- too little control or too much control. Both the forms, according to him, are present in South Asia, including Nepal.

In the second part of the book, Dilrukshi Handunneti writes that at strategic points of time, the majority of the media houses have performed the role of "hurrah girls" and "hurrah boys" for the incumbency, failing to differentiate between journalism and government propaganda. During the last Eelam war (2006-2009) the media in Sri Lanka had been biased in favour of the Sinhala leadership. They eulogised the then President Mahinda Rajapakse as the incarnation of Sinhala King Dutugemunu, who defeated a Chola king in the second century BCE.² The human rights violation and genocide carried out by the Sri Lankan army was captured by reporters of European television Channel IV.

Ibrahim Waheed discusses the media in the Maldives. In this island-nation the media had played a significant role during the tussle between democracy and coup in 2013. The leading newspaper then was *Minivan News*, which worked despite a lot of pressure against its staff members.³ Unfortunately, Ibrahim does not mention it.

Kaberi Gyen has theoretically discussed the behavioural aspect of the media. The author aptly points out the serious negative consequences of the

emergence of corporate dominated media houses. With the increasing popularity of social media like Facebook, Twitter, blogs and various news portals, an alternative view of society is now a reality. The author, in a case study of the media in Bangladesh, mentions that except coverage of India and Pakistan, the media in Bangladesh is silent about other neighbouring countries.

Tenzing Lamsang mentions that a revolution in the Bhutanese media took place in 2006, with the advent of Bhutan's first private newspaper, the *Bhutan Times*. Since then the media has played a significant role in various fields like promoting democracy, nationalism, attacking corruption, etc., Lamsang adds: "...earlier the leaders did not accept criticism. Now media has played an important role in changing this pattern, by not only publishing critical stories, but also giving more voice to the common people".

Myo Lwin writes about the situation in Myanmar where, the author maintains, there are about 400 periodicals - weeklies and monthlies, and twelve dailies. It has about ten private and government FM radio stations and also four TV stations. The author maintains that despite this freedom, media persons have often expressed concerns about impediments from the state.

Danish Karokhel, Director of one of the Afghan news agencies, writes, "It is unfortunate to see that most of the media space is devoted to material promoting hatred, tension and violence among communities rather than mutual respect and trust". Interestingly, he writes, "After controlling internet access in the country, the Taliban themselves are now turning to twitter and face book to promote their agenda, including recruitment of new members".

Shruti Pandalai discusses the role of the Indian media in policy planning and formulation. She writes that technology has proved to be a dangerous game changer in the media-policy relationship. On the issue of media impact, she adds, "While there is little evidence to suggest that media has an impact on the long term process of policy formulation in diplomacy, it does hijack agendas in short term and disrupts the decision making process influencing immediate decisions". With the explosion of social media there has been a sudden slump in the traditional media-government relationship. The present government is very active on social media. On the policy issue, the author rightly maintains that Pakistan and China consume a significant amount of time. The media professionals hardly talk about cooperation. Also, there is a lack of expertise among the journalists.

Lakshman F.B. Gunasekara, in the third part of the book discusses the state of affairs in Sri Lanka. He maintains that one of the reasons for media to become irresponsible is that the news media's direct income is from

advertising. He further maintains that as a result, the news media industry's product that is sold in the market is not "news" at all. The essential, revenue earning "product" is its audience (or audiences) which are provided (sold) to advertisers. Talking about Sri Lanka, he writes that in Sri Lanka, the ideological function of "constituency" is indeed a big problem. This is the reason for the media to remain in virtual chains.

Khin Maung Soe talks about media in Myanmar. He says that the government of Myanmar has abandoned its pre-publication censorship of August 2012 on a number of magazines and newspapers, and issues concerning freedom of the press and freedom of speech are of great interest to it.

Deepak Adhikari discusses the role of media in the transformation that Nepal has witnessed in a decade. He also talks about its role in intermittent changing relationship with India, and also with China.

A full chapter on social media could have added value to this volume and could have helped researchers, journalists and media professionals to understand the issue.

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Notes

- ¹ See Herman S. Edward and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, 1988, New York: Pantheon Books.
- ² Samantha Subramanian, *This Divided Island: Stories from Sri Lankan War*, 2014, Penguin India.
- ³ JJ Robertson, *The Maldives: Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy*, 2015 London: Hurst Publications.