

ASIA'S RETURN TO GLORY

TOWARDS A NEW ASIAN ORDER

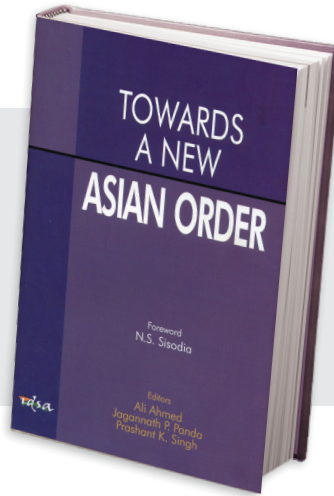
Ali Ahmed, Jagannath P. Panda and Prashant K. Singh
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There was a time when Asia was the promised land for the whole world, and India and China were the jewels in the crown. Things seem to be coming a full circle with Asia regaining its glory and India and China, yet again, joining the group of economies performing well. China is emphatically claiming to enjoy the fruits of its bolstered economy and so are Russia, Japan, India, South Korea, Vietnam and other Asian countries.

Having said that, Asia still faces a lot of hurdles. The continent is plagued by terrorism and instability, which is further complicated by natural calamities and issues of energy, water and over population. *Towards a New Asian Order* is one of the first attempts to identify and present in an organised manner the issues that beset the continent.

This book is a collection of papers written by eminent scholars and experts on the various aspects and facets encompassing Asia, edited by Dr Ali Ahmed, Dr Jagannath P. Panda and Dr Prashant K. Singh, all three associated with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, New Delhi.

It has become imperative to find the tools for mutual

growth for the collective development of Asia. The twentieth century saw two world wars and India for one has had to deal with three full-fledged wars and some major conflicts like the one in Kargil. The weaponry used have become increasingly sophisticated and with the growing arsenal with each country, some form of mutual understanding has become the need of the hour. The book aims to 'survey existing capacities against possibilities', quite rightly pointing out that the future trajectory of Asia is going to depend on how the Asian societies confront their respective socio-political dilemmas.

The book is divided into five sections, encompassing theory, the rising China, regional snapshots, the security ambit and the last one dedicated to issues pertaining to India. Section two, dealing

THE BOOK QUITE RIGHTLY POINTS OUT THAT THE FUTURE TRAJECTORY OF ASIA IS GOING TO DEPEND ON HOW ASIAN SOCIETIES CONFRONT THEIR RESPECTIVE SOCIO-POLITICAL DILEMMAS

with the rise of both India and China under the ambit of 'Changing Geopolitics of Asia and the Contending Perspectives' makes for an interesting read. What makes the issues picked up by the experts and specialists interesting is the spectrum. While the rise of China and India is dealt well, the other sections have explored the parameters of the US, Japan, Taiwan. The contending paradigms include geopolitics, geo-economics and geo-civilisations. The essence has been put well, 'although China's political system remains authoritarian by nature, the leaders have become more responsive to the growing nationalistic sentiments in society.'

While the global presence of Russia has dwindled, it can in no way be overlooked in a discussion on Asia. Alexander Lukin points out that Russia's role in Asia and the Pacific has been largely overlooked since the end of the Cold War which has undergone tremendous changes since 15 years. The cluster of writers has picked up ideas and has very lucidly built up the issues. For a reader, the book not only provides a better perception but also adds to the various facets which otherwise may get overlooked as being part

of humanitarian and disaster issues.

Section Four is fully devoted to issues like Technology, Security and State Development in East Asia and India, Energy Security and Asian Regional Architecture, Towards an Architecture of a Global Disasters Management Regime, The Geopolitics of Himalayan-Tibetan Glacier Melt and Himalayan Hydrology and Hydro politics. Energy security has gained importance over the years. Professor Xia Liping of Tongji University in Shanghai has pointed out that in the contemporary world, major challenges to security come more from non-traditional security problems, which include terrorism, piracy, environmental pollution, global warming, shortage of energy, population explosion, drug trafficking, international crime, HIV/AIDS and so on.

The importance of the issue can be understood from the fact that China imports more than half of its crude oil which is as high as up to three-fourth of its need. The issue has been dealt with very well, not just mentioning various arrangements and developments but also talking about the remedies and the available solutions to decrease the dependence on traditional energy sources.

The chapters have been edited and placed in a logical structure to present continuity and retain the reader's interest. It definitely will be of interest to scholars and analysts. It can be of help to anyone who wishes to understand the dynamics of Asia which in no way can be complete without the thorough screening and analysis of the US factor. Here, too, the book doesn't fall short. www.thesundayindian.com

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