

This illuminating multi-axed radical position demands serious attention. While enriched with empirical data, the book thus opens up the possibility of a new theory of caste. Although the author invokes some concepts, such as Bourdieu's capital and Weber's power and status, it requires yet another conscious effort to develop a nuanced theoretical framework of caste to encapsulate the complex empirical realities presented in this book.

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N. Nayak (Ed.), *Cooperative Security Framework for South Asia* (New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, 2013), 256 pp.

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This edited book discusses the evolution of the strategic architecture of security in South Asia and underlines how various political events which characterise the history of the subcontinent have deeply influenced security policy. Notably, there has been a different approach to South Asian countries on matters of security before and after the Cold War. The end of Cold War military tensions between the Western and Eastern blocs moved global attention more specifically to regional conflicts, resulting in different distribution of power in multi-polar region-based structures. Reduction of the importance of the nation-state plus low capacity of intervention by large international organisations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) have increased the need for each country to manage its own conflicts.

The book discusses this vast subject in four parts. The first concerns the cooperative security framework scenario in South Asia, while the second debates security challenge perspectives in South Asia based on regional, small country experiences. The third part analyses, through case studies, the perspectives of security cooperation in respect of non-traditional security (NTS). The fourth part proposes a new path towards a cooperative security framework in South Asia.

South Asian countries, as S.D. Muni notes in Chapter 1, have no common threat perception and follow different security policies, in a region which appears like 'one of the least integrated regions in the world', as F. Sobhan later specifically notes in Chapter 3 (p. 32). This explains the lack of security cooperation among South Asian countries. As is well known, conflicts and tensions between India and Pakistan, and between Pakistan and Afghanistan, form major hurdles for strategic regional cooperation. Nowadays however, NTS issues such as floods, earthquakes, ethnic unrest, energy crises and terrorism, have become more prominent. They require a new strategic architecture of security. It is argued that such challenges represent the

best opportunity to promote real and constructive cooperation among South Asian countries on multidimensional security matters which include internal conflicts, interstate conflicts and external security threats. Lack of specialised organisations to address and promote such cooperative processes still poses the hardest challenge.

In Chapter 3, F. Sobhan notes that SAARC, the *South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation*, was envisioned initially as an instrument to facilitate peace, economic integration and prosperity in the region (p. 32). SAARC incorporated many security concerns but without much success. The reasons are clearly explained. Though some NTS matters have been underlined in SAARC declarations, the lack of a common security framework makes it difficult to translate even peacetime cross-country recommendations into specific action programmes. Sobhan explains the failure of organisations like SAARC by the huge imbalances between member states, particularly between India and the rest of the region. Though Nepal and Bhutan received important support by India to address external threats and internal conflicts, hierarchy claims between India and its smaller neighbours are generally rejected by the smaller states. Resultant lack of trust has risen also because of India's inability to become a truly creative leader for regional development. The predicament remains that the strategic architecture in South Asia is cast in a cooperative security mould, wherein capabilities and obligations will necessarily be unequal, with India accepting greater responsibilities, while decision making and exercise of authority will unquestionably give equal voices even to the smallest countries, a point that S.D. Muni already made in Chapter 1 (pp. 8–9). Resulting mistrust and resentment, simmering regional conflicts, nationalism and political and economic disparities are the key impediments for implementation of cooperative security in South Asia.

Sobhan emphasises that the aim of cooperative security is to replace negative conflict with positive competition by promoting trust and confidence. Hence, Sobhan analyses the role of SAARC as a cooperative body and factors in the key NTS challenges for South Asia: food and water, health, environmental matters, disaster management and climate change issues, irregular migration and human trafficking, energy security, transnational crime and terrorism. Sobhan underlines that the correct approach to tackle these NTS issues is to create cooperation, positive competition, trust and confidence (p. 43). Creation of regional bodies based on the pattern of the European Union and NATO requires sharing mechanisms that overcome the traditional diffidence of South Asian countries in respect of transfer of a portion of their sovereignty (p. 48). All things considered, M. Hafeez considers SAARC as the best place to realise this path to cooperative security, even if this organisation did not succeed in creating an effective regional identity (p. 76).

Establishing a cooperative security framework is also considered a fundamental step towards social and economic development of South Asia, a region with a great chance of growth if only it could take advantage of demographic developments and resources. Specifically, investment in young people and higher education represents a real opportunity to meet political, social and economic challenges. Those arguments



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are recalled by S.S. Pattanaik and N. Nayak (p. 52) to confirm the need for a new regional security architecture in a region without regionalism, earlier characterised by Lyon (1992) in terms of the necessity to overcome the regime-centric state, considered in the past as synonymous with state security. As M. Hafeez notes with reference to the problematic relationship between Pakistan and India: 'It is imperative that countries develop a sense of a common future and realize that unilateral attempts to increase their security may be doomed to failure because one state's actions cause corresponding reactions by another state, degrading the security of both' (p. 70).

The book's second part dedicates Chapters 6 to 9 to analysing cooperative security as experienced by some smaller countries, covering Nepal, Afghanistan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. This perspective underlines that a correct approach to cooperative security starts from reduction of tensions and suspicion, seeking to maintain stability in the region (R. Bhattarai, p. 115). The book's third part confirms the importance of cooperative strategy regarding NTS issues, especially when S. Tabassum discusses water issues (pp. 140–2) and C. Dorji (pp. 151–84) focuses on climate change to show the importance of cooperative strategies. For example, the future of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) depends on bilateral cooperation between India and Pakistan within a wider framework of cooperative security at multiple levels, also because of the interdisciplinary nature of water, as elaborated by M. Bisht in Chapter 15.

The book as a whole shows how the traditional state-centric concept of security is nowadays gradually being revised in South Asia. Transnational threats such as terrorism, environment disasters and ethnic conflicts, pinpoint the need for cooperative bodies which are able to overcome conflicts and inequalities among states. South Asia represents an important example of the scope for this approach especially regarding NTS matters. In fact, SAARC can be considered as a model of how to cultivate a new sensibility about countries' security cooperation, which is the first step to meet common challenges towards forming a comprehensive security framework.

### Reference

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