

**GLOBAL POWER: India's Foreign Policy, 1947-2006.** By *B.M. Jain*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008. *xxi, 303 pp. (Tables.) US\$36.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-7391-2415-0.*

India's self-assurance as an emergent Great Power has a long history. Nehru's musings on Indian civilization and its potential to influence world affairs left him with little doubt that, once freed from British colonialism, his country would assume a place among the chancelleries of the world. Yet as recently as the late 1980s, this peculiarly Edwardian confidence seemed bizarrely misplaced. Indian foreign policy was oddly reactive, stuck to a childless marriage with Moscow and frozen out of any meaningful US rapprochement. Rhetoric aside, it remained suspicious of a powerfully emergent China while with Pakistan it remained belligerent and diplomatically gauche. With its smaller neighbours, such as Sri Lanka and Nepal, India managed to combine incompetence with bullying. There were doubts as to the utility and efficiency of its growing military power, and economically India was by no stretch of the imagination a "tiger": it was not even, in Lord Desai's immortal phrase, a fleet-footed elephant. What was the use of developing blue-water navies with no global interests to defend? Could India really continue to influence world affairs through the tired and seemingly vapid language of non-alignment and generic low growth rates? Finally, the slow and seemingly inexorable rise of Hindu nationalism seemed to threaten India's claims to be the world's largest democracy, undermining its own constitutional uniqueness, and eliminating its one genuine advance at the expense of China. And yet by the beginning of the twenty-first century Nehru's famous tryst with destiny appeared to be coming true; the discourse and tropes used to describe India, its ambitions and capabilities, suddenly changed fundamentally. Indian foreign policy appeared to have crossed some legendary Rubicon (or perhaps an Indus)—better relations with the US, the recognition of Israel, sustained growth—and all the old shibboleths seemed inadequate.

In this ambitious book, B.M. Jain sets out to analyze how and in what ways Indian foreign policy has broken with the past. Jain offers a detailed—indeed in places rather bewildering—narrative of Indian events since Independence organized around a series of chapters that locate Indian policy to the US, to the former Soviet Union and now Russia, to China, to Pakistan and even Latin America and the Middle East. He suggests ways in which India's quest for influence can be meaningfully enhanced, with more efforts at soft power and economic projection. He spots significant changes but also highlights limiting continuities. The resulting book provides an important source of information for students studying Indian foreign policy at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Yet for those more analytically inclined, the book suffers from a singular lack of conceptual clarity. Chapter 1, by far the weakest in the book, sets out to locate the empirical material alongside the theoretical and paradigm debates taking place within mainstream International Relations

and Foreign Policy Analysis. It is a patchy affair at best, summarizing some arguments and ignoring others. The list of paradigms and the literature it conveys on page 5 is at best idiosyncratic. The debates on globalization and regionalism are too short and as such, inconclusive. For someone so anxious to look at the role India's political elite has played in shaping and formulating Indian foreign policy, there is little serious engagement with constructivism and the ways in which this elite has formed and changed over time. Buzan is mentioned *en passant* but not really used to identify the influence that the switch from Congress to a BJP-led government has had on the "image of India," for example, or on the language of power used after 1998. Chapter 2 presents a somewhat disorganized overview of Indian foreign policy by era, which is entirely descriptive and indeed at times subjective: there has never been a serious suggestion that Shastri was murdered in Tashkent, for example, and if Jain has evidence it should be in the text or at least a footnote. His assertion that there has been no public debate on Indian foreign policy is bizarre. The chapter on Indo-Pakistan relations is also weak. On page 159, Jain rightly notes that "both the countries have failed to transcend the deeply entrenched psychology of mutual hatred and hostility" and then proceeds to reproduce the very narrative that re-inscribes this view. Nehruvian narratives on civilizational greatness, which immaculately airbrush out Pakistan from the Indian subcontinent, are exactly the shibboleths that Jain is supposed to be critiquing.

In describing India's wider relationships to the US, Russia and China, there is a clearer sense of purpose and greater clarity but no real summation of the argument in theoretical terms at all. For example, Indian elites have long known that US policy sees New Delhi as a check against China, and that this potentially constrains Indian diplomacy with Beijing. Indian support for US policy after 9/11 had very clear repercussions for Indian policy to Pakistan, even if India was initially out-manoeuvred by General Musharraf: it nonetheless enabled India to squeeze Pakistan's fragmenting political elite with a series of choices that they found harder to deliver domestically and live with regionally. How has coalition government changed foreign policy agency? Jain doesn't really get to grips with these important underlying trends because the book is just too descriptive; it is driven by a narrative that precludes any real debate about structures and agencies, or a critical evaluation of the idea of what global power means to an Indian elite which has transformed itself over time.

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