

**Rajan Menon, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 256.**

Rajan Menon is the Anne and Bernard Spitzer Professor of Political Science, City College of New York/City University of New York, and a Senior Research Scholar at the Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University. In his recent publication, *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*, he presents readers with a critique of the prevailing interventionist view. Menon asserts that there is emergence of an international community providing universal legitimacy to humanitarian intervention but with evident lack of consensus among states. He also evaluates the effectiveness of global institutions to which humanitarian interventionists assign special significance for stopping violence within states and dispensing justice (p.24), the role of great powers, outcomes of interventionist campaigns and manipulation of laws specifically. He critically analyses the strategic gains, power and interests that have contributed to conflict deterioration, mostly through elaborated examples.

Menon, while exploring the humanitarian intervention's intellectual ancestry, argues that states are morally obligated to stop atrocities beyond their borders, by military means if necessary as part of armed humanitarian interventions (p.26). The United Nations put forward the idea that individuals everywhere are entitled to certain basic and inalienable rights simply by virtue of being human (p.29). However, these ideas were not among humanitarianism's foundational credos. The intellectual historian Samuel Moyn highlights that while the commitment to human rights is advocated everywhere today, it emerged only a few decades ago, in the 1970s to be precise, despite its references in the United Nations Charter (1945) and subsequent adoption in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

It is ironic that states have been willing to sign treaties that proclaim the importance of fundamental rights and collective measures aimed at ensuring them, but they are also determined to see that these accords contain language that does not obligate them to act in defence of these hallowed rights. Documents like the 1948 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide' defines the term 'genocide' in detail, but the document otherwise is vague about signatories' obligations. In case of Rwanda, American officials were well aware of what was happening, yet they were reluctant to label it 'genocide' for fear that the United States might then be obliged to intervene (p.78).

'Michael Riesman understands that unilateral humanitarian interventions, clad in human rights robes, can be capricious, selective, and

unrestrained by law' (p.63). It can be said that state leaders invoke and discard the humanitarian principle as needed. At the end, governments will select elements from the law that support what they propose to do for nationalistic reasons and offer interpretations to justify their actions. Ian Hurd, labels this as 'strategic manipulation' of international law. In fact, 'governments will engage in humanitarian intervention when it serves their interests or when the price that they expect to pay is tolerable.' Power and interest, not law, prove to be more decisive (pp.69-70).

Menon points out that it is the mainstream Western agenda that calls for political rights, transnational cooperation among advocacy groups and greater role of international organisations as part of rehabilitation processes, however, the non-western activists have often laid emphasis on socio-economic dimensions, local laws and courts as vehicles of enforcement to be essential developments. Various human rights covenants and conventions employ ambiguous language, contain numerous loopholes, lack enforcement mechanisms, and are overseen by committees containing states that themselves violate the same principles the texts espouse (p.75).

Humanitarian intervention on human grounds is more about 'regime change' these days. Also, developing countries greatly suspect the doctrine of humanitarian intervention, causing levels of anxiety. Weaker states see that powerful ones control the levers of intervention, and thus, fear that the policy will be used exclusively - and selectively - against them, in service of expediency rather than on human rights principles (p.55).

Responsibility to protect (R2P) in this debate is considered a creative breakthrough being the closest operationalisation of the concept of humanitarian intervention. R2P places sovereignty as central since it protects states, particularly weaker ones, from external interference and military intervention; proposals to redefine it open the door to conflict, domination, and disorder. It also seeks to prevent brutal regimes from using sovereignty as a defence against external interference and demands that sovereignty be reformulated so that it safeguards states from external intervention, yet requires that the rest of the world assume an ethical commitment to protect citizens from murderous states (p.80). Also, as Walzer states, 'sovereignty' serves as an incubator of self-determination (p.50). However, states are still incoherent over these mechanisms suggesting various other non-violent measures, which predate R2P, adding nothing new to the doctor's bag of diplomacy.

The Indian intervention in East Pakistan (1971) and Vietnam's in Cambodia (1978) are used to describe the interlinked variables of sovereignty and intervention. Menon believes that Indian and Vietnamese interventions were criticised – as illegitimate, unlawful and an act of aggression. Menon might have neglected the fact that India has been

involved in fueling nationalist separatist sentiments in East Pakistan. India was a protagonist, involved in the training of the separatist group named Mukhti Bahani in East Pakistan. Indian intervention was not on humanitarian grounds; rather it was a conspiracy specifically designed to divide Pakistan.

It is observed that strategic calculations and gains have always overshadowed human rights idealism, sidelining ethics. States contemplating intervention to stop atrocities will weigh their interests - prospective gains, risks, and costs, as best as these can be assayed - against their ethical obligations to non-citizens (p.111). East Timor is a case in point. Western democracies backed a dictator in Indonesia, remained silent and supportive of his designs for the conquest for East Timor simultaneously, until Australia had to build resource links with East Timor and it was called a forcibly annexed territory to legitimise its deal.

Discussing the war and post-war scenarios, Menon shows that the initiators of wars often express confidence about how their military campaigns will evolve and end in contrast to the results. The author with reference to *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, believes that states cannot ethically fight humanitarian wars and then neglect the welfare of those who have been rescued (p.118). Suffice is to say, states suffer political inadequacies and socio-economic disruptions after the intervention. Besides, rehabilitation consumes double resources than those used during the intervention.

The International Crisis Group report (2014) sums up the Bosnian situation as slowly 'spiraling towards disintegration' (p.122). Civil war in Libya and the crumbling of Qaddafi's state also proved a boon for radical Islamists and terrorists organisations (p.125). Post-war Libya validates John Stuart Mill's view that authentic self-determination must be worked out from within, not delivered or accelerated from without, just as it does Clausewitz's warning about 'friction' (p.126). Like Libya, post-Saddam Iraq rapidly descended into sectarian bloodletting. These snapshots of post-intervention Bosnia, Libya, and Iraq raise some basic questions about the aftermath of humanitarian intervention: How many such nation building ventures can Americans and Europeans stomach? How many years of nation-building - and at what price in blood and treasure - can Western governments and citizens tolerate? (p.128).

States are sovereign units in the international system, each prioritising its interests and gains. There are those with power, ruling the international and supranational organisations, while weak states suffer with little to no power. Humanitarian intervention requires a robust, not 'virtual' international community - one with shared norms and states committed to enforcing them, a strong spirit of common responsibility and obligation, and

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institutions that have the authority and resources required for protecting vulnerable people and punishing their tormentors and killers. The present international system lacks these attributes in sufficient strength (p.144).

Rajan Menon has touched upon the humanitarian and interventionists' views along with the factors dominating the righteous implementation of these laws and conventions. This book contains a realistic perspective of how humanitarian interventions have ended up in complete chaos, landing us in an anarchic contemporary world. This book is a genuine scholarly addition to the subject of international law and politics.

*Reviewed by Maryam Nazir, Assistant Research Officer, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.*

**Bobo Lo, *Russia and the New World Disorder* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2015), 370.**

The author, Bobo Lo, an Australian scholar, is an Associate Fellow with the Russia and Eurasia Programme at Chatham House (UK), and an Associate Research Fellow with the Russia and New Independent States Center at the French Institute of International Relations. This is his fourth book since 2008. It is comprised of three parts, with the first part discussing the context of Russia's foreign policy in terms of the interplay between domestic factors influencing its foreign relations; while the second part focuses on Russia's foreign policy in relation to the evolving world disorder; and the third part explores the proposed recommendations for Russia regarding the sort of domestic and foreign policies it should pursue to achieve world prominence (p. xviii-xxi).

*Russia and the New World Disorder* reviews the country's current closed foreign policy, marked by the annexation of Crimea and tensions in Eastern Ukraine, based on Putin's self-imagined world; Russian assumptions that the U.S. and Europe are on the decline (pp.39,45); and that Moscow deserves to be an independent power centre in the emerging multipolar world order. The author looks at Putin's policies by examining the interplay between Russian foreign policy and the anarchic/fluid and uncertain international environment, termed as the New World Disorder (pp.53-54). The author addresses three questions. Firstly, what are the implications for Russia of a fluid and uncertain international context? Second, how is Putin's foreign policy responding to varying regional and global realities? And third, what are Russia's possibilities in the international system in the next ten to fifteen years? (p.242).

Bobo Lo's focus is on Russia's response to international politics which poses challenges as well as opportunities for Moscow to re-emerge as a major great power and sustain that position by playing a significant role in the global arena. The writer contends that the current Russian idealised view of the universe is in contradiction to the New World Disorder since Kremlin's assumptions about control and power still depend on using the military to advance national interests. While the post-Cold War regional and international environment emphasises geo-economics, technical progress and soft power rather than hard power. Bobo Lo argues that Russia's approach to regional and global affairs indicates tensions between the perceived world of Putin and the real world with the aforementioned features (p.66).

In his analysis, Bobo Lo also argues that although the U.S. power is on the decline, since no other power has displayed the will to provide global

leadership, it is going to be the sole superpower for quite some time, given its unmatched economic and military prowess. In this context, he looks at whether Russia will be able to adapt to the requirements of modern times to play a role in a post-U.S. century, particularly in the face of rising China. He states that Russia will only be able to take on a central role in international politics if it transforms itself into a modern economic and military might. If it fails to do so, by continuing to accord primacy to outdated concepts of power politics, then, in view of its existing enormous economic challenges, it might fail to evolve into an influential world power.

The writer argues that Putin's conduct of foreign policy is under pressure in the existing global political, economic and social matrix characterised by the shifting nature of power, emphasis on socio-economic development and inclusiveness, decline of global leadership, and the fragmentation of governments. According to him, the current world fluidity demands a radically different mindset from policymakers, which is more akin to adapt and more about reinvention rather than containment and consolidation (p.53). In his opinion, Putin is opting for a centralised foreign policy established on his outdated concepts which are likely to contribute towards the ultimate marginalisation of Russia's role in international politics, unless a participatory and pluralistic foreign policy is adopted.

Russia's vast territory, great natural resources, and multiplicity of identities, are potential strengths, being less equipped than leading western countries to adapt to the fast changing global environment, these forces can become liabilities and Russia could become vulnerable to more drastic and unpleasant consequences. In this context, the author apprehends that if a breakdown in political authority of Putin triggers leadership crisis in Russia, and a prolonged economic crisis leads to political and social instability, then Russia could fall prey to the geopolitical ambitions of others, and become an origin of regional and global insecurity (p.243). This, however, does not seem to be very realistic. In reality, since the break-up of the Soviet Union into many independent states, being a mother state, Russia's leadership has displayed responsible behaviour and it seems really serious about political stability and economic development as was visible in its political and economic strength prior to Western sanctions. In view of its look East policy and its energy related mega projects signed with China, Russia is likely to strengthen its economy again and consolidate its political stability. The author also argues that the past and present shortcomings of Russia do not mean that it is doomed to go wrong, with its potential strengths, it can still rise out of the ashes and emerge as a modern, stable, prosperous and influential state. But this will depend on its self-awareness and a genuine commitment to transformation (p.269).

Bobo's criticism of Putin's closed, geopolitics oriented and non-participatory foreign policy gets credence in the sense that well-deliberated policies are more beneficial and acceptable to the foreign and domestic audience. If NATO's policy of eastward expansion are considered geopolitics-oriented, then Russia's policies are also understandable.

Although the author has based his discussion on the interplay of Russia's policies with the New World Disorder being precarious and uncertain, he has failed to expound on the latter's details. Presenting examples of annexation of Crimea and tensions in Ukraine, he has argued that Putin's Russia believes in using hard power rather than opting to employ soft power in settling issues, which is not in consonance with the modern world trend. Here, the writer has not done a comparison of Russian actions with the U.S. and UK's military offensive against Saddam's Army in Iraq without the authority of the United Nations Security Council, which was also use of hard power, and in contravention of the international legal philosophy.

Despite a few shortcomings, the book is informative for readers who are interested in Russia's power profile and policies impacting regional and global politics and events.

***Reviewed by Col. (Retd.) Muhammad Hanif, Research Fellow, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.***

**Erin Zimmerman, *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 208.**

With the emergence of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Threats, a debate started about what challenges these threats would pose to governance issues in various countries. The main challenge in this respect was how to shift the focus from traditional security to non-traditional security. Think tanks played a very useful role in meeting this challenge by using NTS ideas to change institutional mindsets. One of the recent works on the role of think tanks in prioritising NTS agenda in Asia is *Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security: Governance Entrepreneurs in Asia* by Erin Zimmerman, an Honorary Scholar/Fellow at the University of Adelaide, Australia. The main argument of the book is that think tanks have assumed an important role in shaping agendas and prioritising governance issues in Asia, especially highlighting NTS threats. It further argues that political discourse on security issues in Asia has been substantively influenced by think tanks during the post-Cold War period. By examining the case studies of various think tank networks, the book explores the influence of ideas and discourses on the existing security mechanisms as well as on the formulation of new security structures to meet the emerging challenges of the Twenty First Century.

The book is divided into eight chapters. In the introductory chapter, Zimmerman discusses 'contemporary security in Asia' and writes that 'despite the lingering salience of the military, balance of power and deterrence concerns, states in the region increasingly found their attention drawn to transboundary sources of insecurity stemming from economic, political, social or environmental factors. Soon labelled NTS issues...' (p.4). She further argues that with the emergence of NTS threats, there has also been a change in the thinking of think tanks: 'The shift from traditional to non-traditional security calls for profound structural changes in the architecture of Asian governance' (p.11).

The second chapter of the book entitled 'Discursive Institutionalism and Institutional Change' discusses the importance of ideas as catalyst for institutional change. It also includes the literature review of the debate between ideational and material interests as the leading factors for such changes. While discussing 'think tanks as ideational actors', the author notes that:



...think tanks in Asia are important and underappreciated ideational agents. Due to restrictive diplomatic norms, Asian governments often face political and cultural constraints when engaging in discourse at the international level. Think tanks, on the other hand, often have more liberty. Their ability to more easily move ideas across political space, and their status as experts with significant ideational authority, has allowed them to obtain political power far beyond their comparatively peripheral political position (pp.16-17).

Further, this chapter introduces the theory of Discursive Institutionalism (DI) as a framework to settle various debates on the role of ideas and material interests in changing institutional thinking. The theory is quite relevant in identifying and explaining the influence of think tanks on the security institutions of Asia. While highlighting the importance of discourse, she points to two types: 1) 'coordinative discourse' which takes place between think tanks and policy-makers; 2) 'communicative discourse' used by think tanks to inform policymakers about the importance of certain ideas. According to her, the success of any discourse will depend on different factors, 'such as relevance, effectiveness, consistency, coherence and adequacy' (pp.27-28). The last part of the chapter discusses the role of networking in the spread of ideas. In most cases, think tanks heavily depend on personal linkages of their staff termed as 'invisible college of policy researchers'. Another level of networking relevant to think tanks is the policy groups consisting of professionals and experts:

Often, the strategies of problem framing, agenda setting and networking are used concurrently as think tank networks utilise all available avenues to gain political influence. Through these strategies, they have succeeded at using NTS ideas as catalysts for institutional change (p.30).

The third chapter entitled 'Think Tanks and Non-Traditional Security' explains how non-traditional security threats are different from traditional security threats. It also discusses the growth of think tanks in Asia with reference to their historical and cultural background. The author also highlights how the Asian think tanks are distinct from the Western think tanks. The writer observes that the capacity of think tanks to engage in a meaningful dialogue enhances their power in political institutions. The second part of the chapter discusses the research methodology used by the author in analysing the role of think tanks in highlighting the NTS issues.

The next four chapters present case studies of two categories of think tank networks: the government affiliated and non-government think tanks.

In the fourth chapter she discusses the think tanks networks associated with the government, and looks at how the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Institutes for Strategic and International Studies (AI) has propagated its agenda by creating a political consensus among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN): 'AI has expanded the definition of security to include transboundary and non-military issues. In doing so, it has successfully highlighted the need for better governance and demonstrated to states that it is within states' interests to approach security governance from a collective viewpoint' (p.86). She adds that the AI think tank networks 'often enjoys close relationships with their domestic governments and have facilitated access to regional processes denied to those working outside the system. AI is an excellent place to start the examination of how think tanks, operating within governing processes, are able to influence discourse' (p.94).

The fifth chapter entitled 'Expanding beyond ASEAN: Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP)' begins with the introduction of CSCAP followed by its comparison with the AI network. The author notes that as compared to AI, CSCAP covers the whole Asia Pacific region including the regional network of think tanks associated with ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) (pp.95-96). The next chapter on 'The International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Shangri-La Dialogue' reviews IISS as a case study. The forum began as a security dialogue for Asian defence ministers that held its first meeting in 2002. Today, it is known as the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD). The annual dialogue meetings are regularly held on security matters of Asia. The author notes that 'the SLD represents a turning point in security dialogues in terms of governmental affiliation, organisational structure and constructed political spaces.'

In the seventh chapter on 'The MacArthur Foundation's Asia Security Initiative', Zimmerman notes that:

The ASI has avoided formal governing processes in favour of strengthening the discourse between and among think tanks...The ASI has invested in think tanks and their networks with the specific goal of creating an interactive series of linkages to help think tanks work effectively and cooperatively to influence policy at domestic and international levels. Though significantly more difficult to trace, the ASI's engagement in the promotion of NTS ideas has been profound and adds an additional layer of complexity to the ideational landscape of security in Asia.

The book concludes with the chapter on 'Think Tanks as Governance Entrepreneurs', which emphasises three main perspectives, the importance

of think tanks as political players; the role of dialogue and ideas in creating political space for think tanks; and the correlation between think tank discourse and institutional change. She highlights that: ‘To enhance their discursive ability, think tanks have created unique discursive spaces where they can control dialogue and other communicative processes. These spaces are most often located alongside formal governing structures, but enjoy freedom from the strict political limitations imposed on formal venues’ (p.29). Zimmerman concludes that, ‘Think tanks are more than idea brokers; they are the creators, developers and advocates of specific political agendas.’

The book is a very useful reading on several accounts. First, the conceptual and theoretical part of the book is very comprehensive and strong. The author explains the theory of Discursive Institutionalism (DI) by focusing not only on discourse processes, but also on the importance of discursive space. Second, the findings of the book regarding the role of think tanks for highlighting and prioritising NTS agenda are quite interesting. The study finds that the advancement of the NTS agenda by think tanks has transformed security and governance systems. Further, think tanks have played a very useful role in describing the future outlook of security governance in Asia. The inclusion of four think tank network case studies is an important addition in the existing literature. They explain the political environment where each category of think tanks started to assume political authority over security issues. Further, they clarify the scope of each category of think tank networks and explain the accumulative effect of their combined efforts on regional institutions and security governance.

There are also few limitations of the book as it ignores the role of think tank networks in South Asian security governance. The book focuses more on East Asia. It also ignores several other think tank networks such as NEASA Network of think tanks that covers Near East and South Asian regions. Further, the study has failed to explain the importance of geopolitics of Asia Pacific region in the context of rising power of China and U.S. rebalancing strategy and the security issues in South China Sea. Notwithstanding these limitations, as a whole, the book is recommended for those who are interested in understanding the role of thinks tanks in changing institutional mindsets on security issues, especially their role in Asia.

***Reviewed by Muhammad Munir, Research Fellow, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.***

**Andrew J. Bacevich, *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (New York: Random House, 2016), 480.**

*America's War for the Greater Middle East* is orchestrated by Andrew J. Bacevich based on a series of failed American policies in the region. The book is a surprising account from an American military historian's perspective who critically views American policies in the Middle East and considers them persistent blunders. Bacevich draws down some fatal mistakes made by the U.S. policymakers, from extensive support of authoritarian regimes to support of dissident groups in various countries of the region. With these, the U.S. has shattered the cohesion of Middle East society. According to the author, the region remained a testing laboratory for the U.S. policymakers; therefore, American influence in the region is waning gradually.

The book offers new insights of the Middle East conflict; and accentuates the interaction of two civilisations, i.e. the West and Islam. The author has divided the Middle East regional conflict into three parts, the Persian Gulf (including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran); Palestine (including Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza); and the region that Washington currently refers to as Af-Pak (Afghanistan and Pakistan). His strong analysis based on concrete evidence shows his authority on the subject. He has used crisp and interesting words for different chapters, which maintain the interest of the reader in the book. Since the author is a military historian, therefore, he has dedicated a larger portion to the historical events in the Middle East. He believes that our interest in the past is informed by our concern for the present and the future.

Bacevich describes American involvement in the region as a forty year war. He writes that the U.S. neither formulated nor applied a coherent and persistent military or foreign policy for the region, which has had detrimental results at large. He has criticised the personalities and administrations of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan and marked their doctrines as vague and shortsighted in nature. He argues that the U.S. approach to contain the Soviets by establishing direct contacts with authoritative regimes helped many anti-American forces to gain public support in the region, which later proved harmful for the country's vital interests. He criticises the creation of the new military institution known as Central Command (CENTCOM); and reveals that it provides a strong platform to the U.S. to continue the war in the region for decades.

The author also feels that American military policies for the region are very shortsighted and tactical in nature. This approach of the U.S. civil and military leadership generates new problems for each presidential successor. For instance, Reagan supported non-state actors in Afghanistan

to defeat the Soviet forces. Later, the same non-state actors became a national security risk for Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. Bacevich is also critical of the wastage of American resources over failed military strategies. For instance, American strategists spent billions to create the Afghan Taliban to defeat the Soviets and after 9/11 they again spent billions of dollars to defeat the same.

For Bacevich, American involvement in the first and second Gulf wars, intervention in Iraq, support of rebel groups in Syria and punishment of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi were severe strategic mistakes. These events created chaos in the region as well as increased the cost of American activities, which directly burdened the American public and made their lives economically tough. He also analyses major personalities of the Bush Administration including Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Bremmer and considers them aggressive and pessimist in nature who did not believe in peaceful settlement of any issue and always jumped to the last resort - use of military force.

The author has also evaluated Barack Obama's Middle East policies over the last seven years and considers his policies a replica of the Bush administration's policies. While using harsh words for the Obama administration, the author reveals that troops' withdrawal from Iraq in 2011 was a political ploy. The Obama administration redeployed those troops in greater Middle East (and in Afghanistan), which further created resentment in the Middle East against the U.S. He also suggests that the U.S. should formulate a consistent strategy for the region. His conclusion developed at the end of the book is that the U.S. cannot afford to make the same mistakes which it has committed in the past. U.S. policymakers must work on winning the hearts and minds of the Middle East people, not the authoritarian regimes.

The book carries significant knowledge of military strategies and military history of the U.S. in the Middle East. Bacevich has deeply analysed every single incident of the Middle East which has taken place in the last forty years; and perfectly blended his arguments, analysis and military information in a very simple manner. Military strategies are explained in an unpretentious fashion, and American civil and military personalities and institutions critiqued bluntly. The book is very useful for Middle East scholars, who are working on the role of external factors in its regional affairs. Though the writer has not tried to make this book academic, it is also a unique contribution to academic circles since it offers many theoretical arguments to explain different events and their impact on the region.

***Reviewed by Khurram Abbas, Assistant Research Officer, Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Pakistan.***

**M.P. Ram Mohan, *Nuclear Energy and Liability in South Asia: Institutions, Legal Frameworks and Risk Assessment within SAARC* (New Delhi: The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) and Springer India, 2015), 142.**

Dr M.P. Ram Mohan in this book, *Nuclear Energy and Liability in South Asia: Institutions, Legal Frameworks and Risk Assessment within SAARC*, assumes that a viable universal nuclear risk framework is either non-achievable or non-implementable. Thus, as an alternative, he proposes a regional approach to the issue which he thinks is more promising. His mindset is preconditioned by the Three-Mile Island incident, Chernobyl, Union Carbide (Bhopal) and the Fukushima fiascos (p. v), as well as the standoff between America and India, on the canvas of Agreement 123, regarding liability in case of a nuclear power plant (NPP) accident. These incidents are used by the writer as reference anchorages throughout his study; he refers to them time and again, sometimes *ad nauseam*. He examines existing provisions of international law and national laws of various countries regarding nuclear liability and transposes them on ongoing nuclear power programmes in South Asia to bring forth glaring incongruences; while at the same time, he reminds the states about their safety and security-related obligations at national as well as international levels (pp.4-6).

The international nuclear liability regime today remains complicated and features sparse participation. National laws, on the other hand, are different from each other and evade major questions on transboundary liability (p.7). Mohan states that despite absence of compatible transboundary legal cover, a large number of countries, especially in Asia, have enthusiastically embarked upon setting up and/or up-gradation of their nuclear power generation programmes. He opines that since almost all countries of South Asia are moving speedily to expand their nuclear energy capacities, therefore, this region has a singular opportunity to evolve a region focused nuclear liability framework (pp.8-11). He points out that:

Though there is a movement towards a regional agreements led by the EU and, reciprocity between Canada and the U.S., this mechanism as a way forward to other regions have not been given adequate attention (p.14).

The writer shows satisfaction that the severity of the problem is well known to most countries engaged in nuclear power production, and this awareness could serve as a foundation stone for creating transboundary regimes. According to him, 'concerns arose from both the liability of the technology supplied and also from transboundary consequences in the

aftermath of a nuclear accident. Importantly, countries began to worry about State liability and its extent in the event of a possible atomic reactor accident abroad' (p.27). However, 'the supplier countries [have] ring fenced themselves from possible liability claims through the use of bilateral treaty provisions, domestic legislations and also through advocating adoption of unique principles, in particular liability channelling and limits on liability. Many countries have adopted these founding principles in their domestic legislations' (p.47).

Mohan does his national duty by projecting that, 'The making of the "Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010" was one of the finest legislative endeavours in the recent times. The exercise was significant because nuclear energy and the consequences of pursuing such an energy form were debated extensively in the Indian Parliament for the first time' (p.53). However, in the same breath, he acknowledges that:

The result was a liability law that had an exceptional domestic political acceptability, but in many ways appeared to defy conventional international practice. The international nuclear community, led by supplier countries and vendors has argued that the law should be amended to be compatible with the established practice of international nuclear liability law (p.53).

The book proposes a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) focused liability framework and supports it by the argument that:

India and Pakistan are set to expand their nuclear capacity substantially, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will be the new entrants. Interestingly, all these developments are taking place without substantial public debate, nationally or regionally, and in the absence of any transboundary legal remedies and institutional structures (p.72).

The writer could not be more accurate when he observes that, 'As a densely populated, geographically linked region with rich biodiversity, South Asia will face serious adverse impacts on life and livelihood, in case of a major nuclear disaster' (p.72). He also correctly points out that:

South Asia has a history of discord, this adds to the seriousness of the risk dimension, and adequate mitigation response to a nuclear accident. To deal with such eventualities and to make the countries accountable; cooperation and multilateral agreements; commitments between the countries are essential - both for an effective response mechanism and to secure remedies through adequate liability and compensation regime (p.72).

Dr Mohan argues that the SAARC already has an appropriate institutional mechanism available to form a regional nuclear risk community because of its programmes on 'natural disasters and has had institutional and procedural success with the creation of response mechanisms' (p.92). Therefore, its scope could be expanded to include response to a nuclear disaster as well. He concludes that 'it is fully within the SAARC's Constitution - to create a nuclear energy risk community that will allow regional concerns to be shared, discussed and a structure to put in place to respond to these challenges' (p.93).

The text proposes an elaborate technical criterion for ascertaining the magnitude of nuclear risks quantitatively, approximate the level of risks that each state of South Asia could face in case of hypothetically envisaged accidents (pp.26-37). However, keeping in view the lack lustre performance of SAARC in relatively benign domains like trade and connectivity, he expresses the reservation that consensus on this important issue is doubtful:

It is highly unlikely, in view of the relationships, international legal requirements and political considerations, that there will be any substantive cooperation in setting up a regional cooperative nuclear power plant in South Asia. However, in case of a nuclear accident, it is very likely that South Asia as a community will bear the brunt of the same. Keeping this in view, the priority for the SAARC countries should be to build a firm foundation for a responsible nuclear future (pp.90-91).

The book meticulously maps the South Asian nuclear risk zone, 'based on the international criteria mandated by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.S.A., France, the UK, India, and experiences of impacts from Chernobyl and Fukushima' (p.97). The mapping results throw up conjectures about transboundary risks in South Asia. However, his results appear to be an overstatement when compared with the IAEA criteria in the context of major evacuation emergency guidelines (pp.99-102).

Through wide spectrum and broad-based interviews, Mohan gauges the possibility of developing a constituency that he calls the 'South Asian Nuclear risk community' (p.121). He finds that 'interviewees were clear that development of nuclear energy programmes should be seen as a sovereign decision taken in the best interest of the country, and no other country has the right to interfere. At the same time, every interviewee was unanimous that concerns regarding the proliferation of NPPs and the consequent risk of transboundary radiation impact should be seen as a regional issue' (p.132). He suggests conceiving a proposal to establish a 'SAARC Nuclear Risk Community.' Interestingly, India emerged as



‘strongly opposed to the creation of a regional convention.’ And the writer wrongly assumes that, ‘Judging by India’s stand, it is likely that Pakistan too would hold the same view’ (p.132).

The book acknowledges that, ‘The international law on liability and compensation resulting from a transboundary nuclear accident, has developed remarkably over the last sixty years.’ And that ‘changes such as enhanced compensation, enlargement of the geographical scope for claims, and expanded definition of damage etc. are fundamental in nature and have strengthened the regime’ (p.135). However, ‘critical review of the provisions of the revised protocols reveals the gaps that threaten the very purpose behind the reforms – harmonisation’ (p.135). Mohan closes the book with a way forward under the caption ‘Future Scope of Work’, including (but not limited to) sections on drafting a framework agreement on a SAARC Nuclear Energy Risk Community (p.139).

This thesis is well-structured into chapters, and is adequately indexed; however, editing could have been better to avoid repetitions. It is a pioneer work on the subject and it fills in essential research gaps regarding the necessity of a nuclear liability framework in the context of South Asia. It is equally useful for students, amateurs, and accomplished researchers. Hopefully, it would inspire South Asian researchers to undertake further studies on the areas suggested by Mohan.

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**Robert Harmel, Matthew Giebert and Kenneth Janda, *American Parties in Context: Comparative and Historical Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 124.**

The book under review is co-authored by Robert Harmel, Professor of Political Science at Texas A and M University, Matthew Giebert, a doctoral student in Political Science at the same university, and Kenneth Janda, Payson S. Wild Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Northwestern University. It is divided into six chapters that deal with the historical context of American political parties; and gives an elegantly composed, brief, and astonishing correlation between the latter and those in the United Kingdom (UK) and other Western systems. It shows that American political parties in the mid-1900s were not as 'irresponsible' as some have asserted, and that today's parties, while more 'responsible' do not fit the present American political environment.

The authors draw most of their analysis and recommendations from a report published by the 'Committee on Political Parties' of the American Political Science Association (APSA) in 1950 who put great effort to analyse the historical context of American parties. The APSA Committee's 'responsible parties' model' was an attempt to compare American political parties with those in Britain in particular and with other European democracies in general. The authors argue that the Virtues vs. Drawbacks of the American political parties have been debated for two centuries by thoughtful political observers. Important figures such as George Washington and James Madison argued, decades ago, before the evolution of true party organisation that parties would only serve to accentuate particular interests and damage the common good. Washington, in his farewell address, warned that parties help to organise factions among the masses and provide them an artificial force to put the delegated will of the nation in place. On the contrary, Madison linked parties with factions defined as number of citizens actuated and united by some common interests.

The contributors of this book are of the view that American parties are generally characterised as 'pragmatic' parties, while according to the APSA Committee, British parties were more 'programmatic' parties. The difference between a pragmatic and a programmatic party lies in its comparative commitment to policy issues or ideology as opposed to winning the election or for the sake of power. Candidates and elected members of a programmatic party would seemingly remain loyal to the ideology of the party. On the other hand, representatives and candidates of a pragmatic party would apparently be willing to change policy commitments or positions, when that is supposedly imperative for winning elections.

The authors further go on to say that the most important dimension of political parties is ideological which divides voters along another important dimension of politics, i.e. economic dimension, labelled as 'right' and 'left.' Right parties advocate a very limited role of the government in the economic sphere, while the left advocate a substantial role of the government vis-à-vis the economy.

The authors argue that, today, in many ways American parties look rather different from what the APSA Committee perceived and observed in the 1950s. Today, few would argue that ideologically, parties seem to be similar and it is, seemingly, difficult to tell them apart. The authors further go on to say that parties today appear to be united within, look to oppose one another at every turn so much so that forging coalitions of bipartisanship look like a distant dream. Today, the common complaint is ideological polarisation, rather than partisanship.

The APSA Committee visibly assumed that ideologically the American parties were too close together to accomplish the requirements of their 'responsible parties' model. This assessment of the American parties was a result of the comparison to the parties in Britain. Both Britain and the U.S. share a two-party system, however, the advocates of the APSA report argue that the British parties provided clear programmatic differences to their voters, on the other hand, American parties rarely provided meaningful differences.

The authors collected some data and inferred results on the right-left range. On the basis of that score, they place Democrats slightly to the left side of the ideological centre, while the Republicans are placed slightly to the right of the centre. It has been widely assumed that ideological parties will have extreme ideological positions and be consistent with their ideology. On the other hand, pragmatic parties have centrist positions and sell issues that please the voters and are less consistent with ideology.

In the U.S., mostly, people are either members of the Republican or Democratic parties, and most do little more for their party than vote in the elections. While in many democracies of Europe, being a party member means much more than that. Members are even required to pay dues to the party. The authors have cited an example from the Austrian People's Party, where it is mandatory to pay the membership fee, show willingness to work in the organisation of the party, and give dynamic support to its programmes. The European approach is consistent with the concept that not only do members belong to the party, but the party also belongs to the members. By this sense, a clear distinction is made between members and voters of a party. Voters only support and vote for a party but don't own it. In the U.S., where a party doesn't have members, an appropriate distinction

is between the activists of a party and those who only vote for candidates. The activists do more and render more services than simply vote.

The authors of this book opined that the organisation of any party is essential and to support their claim they quote James Q. Wilson, i.e. 'organisation provides continuity and predictability to social processes that would otherwise be episodic and uncertain.' It is, therefore, the organisational aspect of any political party, which provides substance and character apart from its leaders and prominent candidates. This was what APSA Committee supposed six decades ago that organisation matters. The authors are of the view that despite the marked changes in organisations and courses of American society in the Twentieth Century, formal organisation of a party is still a substantially main feature. The authors further describe that the electoral system of America has not changed in substantial ways, for decades. However, the Democrats and the Republicans are more apart ideologically than was the case in the mid-Twentieth Century. Today, the Republican Congress members are more conservative than virtually all the Democrats, distinguished from the past when the liberal Republicans could be more liberal than the conservative Democrats. The book ends with useful recommendations in order to strengthen the electoral system of the U.S. The book is highly recommend for those who are interested in American politics, its political parties, how American elections work and voting behaviours and patterns.

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**Marin Katusa, *The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped from America's Grasp* (New Jersey and Vermont: John Wiley & Casey Research, 2015), 246.**

The out-dated multidimensional acumen of foreign policy has now been replaced by energy policy and energy politics which has created stringent competition among the great powers. Therefore, in a world of strategic inflexibilities, political incompatibilities and escalating economic inconsistencies, the energy resources have predominantly become principle instruments of conflict. The study of Marin Katusa *The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped from America's Grasp* is a commendable attempt to comprehend the contemporary trends of American-Russian energy cemented enmity.

Katusa, an attractive magnate and devious tycoon in the energy exploration field, and an eminent media commentator of energy politics, explores unmapped energy deposits across the globe. He has actively contributed in various financial and market-centred investigations conducted by several energy companies such as Casey Research. In his study of energy politics between Washington and Moscow, he advocates the diminishing U.S. role in energy markets. The recent ferocious wave of global crisis revolves around the geopolitical struggle between Obama and Putin, which is the central theme. A well-rearticulated title and rephrased phenomenon *The Colder War* recalls the decades back communist-capitalist antagonism of the Cold War. The author claims that the contemporary non-traditional format of world politics is a Colder War which cannot be won 'through the sword, but through control of the world's energy supplies' (p.3).

The twelve chapters of Katusa's study significantly attempt to forecast the future of world politics by exclusively emphasising the Russian role under Putin. The first chapter begins at the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The subsequent chapters focus on the progressive emergence of Moscow to restore its former glory. According to Katusa, the nauseating characteristics of post-Soviet oligarchs along with the Americans propagating anti-Russian media campaigns degraded the national image of Moscow globally (chap.2). Eventually, Putin's political vision, inventive policies, adroit strategies and astute geopolitical schemes challenge American hegemonic values worldwide (chap.5). Russia's multilateral economic frameworks, under Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC countries) prove Putin's sneaky tactics of expanding Moscow's sphere of influence worldwide (chap.6).

Putin as a statesman has enhanced the role of major Russian companies such as Rosatom (nuclear power giant), Rosneft (petroleum company) and Gazprom (gas company). The comparative performance of such companies and their geopolitical impact are central points of discussion in three chapters, *Putinization of Oil*, *Putinization of Gas*, and *Putinization of Uranium*. Putin's share in Middle East oil politics explains the competitive landscape of the new great game over Arab states. The recent chaotic upsurge based on various violent non-state and sectarian forces in the Muslim world inaugurated a war of resources (chap.10). The last two chapters discuss the political impressions of the petrodollar and the escalation of various anti-petrodollar financial arrangements. Several financial structures under Rouble and Yuan, along with diverse barter schemes, are potentially underestimating the dominating status of the dollar. However, discussion about the sunset of the dollar marking a gradual decline of energy-ravenous America needs further description.

While supporting (or overestimating) Putin's vision for Mother Russia, Katusa feels that talking about energy refers considerably to talking about Putin. Instinctively, the academic imbalance of the book presents a different account of American-Russian energy confrontation, but it inadvertently undermines the vicious geostrategic extent of the U.S. In short, the political influences, economic expansions and strategic interests of sceptical America are now possibly under attack. Putin's shrewd strategies of the Colder War, unlike the Cold War, are gradually encircling the White House's global approaches. For Katusa, Moscow's policy to dominate natural resources parallel to counterbalancing the dollar encompasses sufficient power to inaugurate an era of American-resistant forces.

The valuable insight of the author about the continuing apocalyptic energy war endeavours to attract the international community towards a relatively deserted scholarly domain. The meticulously explored issues provide a comprehensive, yet pugnacious picture of energy politics – the heart of world politics now. For anyone interested in the politics of insecure pipeline plans, conflicting concerns over ports, dwindling natural resources, agonising financial crisis, along with rapidly deteriorating economic situations, this is a must read.

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