

was somehow “exempt” from the global terrorism scourge, a notion that recent evidence has disproved.

Overall, this book is a masterful and comprehensive treatment of a subject that has emerged as a critical security challenge for Asia-Pacific countries. It is a must-read for any serious scholar on the subject. The clear and lucid writing reflects the author’s background in journalism, and the extensive documentation provides a treasure trove for anyone with an inclination for additional research into this emerging and exciting area of security studies. This book would be valuable for both practitioners and scholars alike.

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***India’s Emerging Nuclear Posture: Between Recessed Deterrent and Ready Arsenal.* By Ashley J. Tellis. Santa Monica, Calif., USA: Rand, 2001. 885pp.**

This book describes in a very comprehensive and substantial way India’s emerging nuclear posture in the context of a broader assessment of its strategic interests, institutional structures, and security goals. The Pakistani and Chinese nuclear programmes and capabilities are also addressed, but more with the purpose of illuminating India’s strategic choices and future directions. The book consists of an introduction (Chapter One), four chapters and a conclusion (Chapter Six). Chapter Two surveys the strategic factors conditioning India’s choices with respect to its future nuclear posture. Chapter Three analyses both the extent of the shift in India’s nuclear posture after the May 1998 tests and the implications of what the search for a “minimum credible deterrent” could entail in the years to come. Chapter Four explicates India’s evolving nuclear doctrine and the force posture that is likely to be created. Chapter Five assesses the adequacy of the evolving Indian deterrent in terms of the criteria offered by various nuclear deterrence theories. Finally, the conclusion surveys briefly India’s security competition with Pakistan and China, the nuclear proliferation regime, and the ongoing dialogue in India–U.S. relations.

The author examines the evolution of India’s official attitude towards nuclear weapons and explains the lack of movement in the

direction of overt nuclearization by New Delhi's perception that the security environment India confronted for most of the post-independence period had in general been benign. Therefore, Indian strategic policy focused on attaining two sets of objectives: espousing the global abolition of nuclear weaponry and sustaining India's capability to produce fissile materials and delivery technologies that a full-fledged deterrent would require. While Pakistan's exploitation of its nuclear capability and growth in size of its arsenal would be two critical factors affecting India's traditional nuclear posture, strategic developments in China — India's larger and more significant nuclear rival — will have even more consequential effects. It is China's land-based ballistic missile force that remains India's principal concern in the near future. This concern is enhanced by the recognition in New Delhi that, with every passing day, the relative balance of power between China and India appears to change dramatically in favour of the former, largely because of China's high levels of sustained economic growth. Domestically, the enthusiasm for nuclear weapons could subside if it started to affect the prospects of economic growth. However, the pressures on India to create a large and diversified deterrent may well prove overwhelming if both Pakistan and China become more militant, if Sino-U.S. relations are perceived as developing at India's expense and if Sino-Indian interests begin to manifestly clash in the Asian region at large.

The book identifies five distinct nuclear postures from a continuum of possibilities, each with varying degrees of acceptability to India. They are: renunciation of the nuclear option, a regional nuclear-free zone, maintaining a nuclear option, a recessed deterrent, and a ready arsenal. It is most likely that New Delhi, following its ingrained habit of seeking the middle path, will find itself between a recessed deterrent and a ready arsenal. The most significant and distinguishing facet of India's nuclear doctrine is its consistent claim that nuclear weapons are above all else political instruments rather than military tools because they are emphatically not usable weapons in any military sense. The belief that nuclear weapons are most useful as antidotes to blackmail is deeply embedded in the Indian psyche. This, as Tellis notes, places the Indian nuclear doctrine squarely at the deterrence end of the deterrence-defence continuum. A scrupulous and competent examination of India's capabilities leads to the conclusion that India's claims to being a nuclear weapon state are somewhat overstated, since India continues to lack many of the components associated with a nuclear deterrent. New Delhi appears to have a small quantity of fissile materials, primarily weapons-grade plutonium, that continues to be accumulated at a relatively slow but increasing pace; a small number of nuclear weapons, which by most accounts are maintained in unassembled form; a small

number of delivery systems consisting primarily of short-range tactical strike aircraft; and an embryonic supporting infrastructure. Given these generally limited capabilities, the assertion that India is now a nuclear weapon state must be interpreted more as a symbolic challenge to the existing global nuclear regime than as an accurate description of the country's present strategic capabilities.

Among the major concerns historically associated with the presence of nuclear weapons has been the fear that their enormous power might be unleashed by agents not authorized by the state. Tellis dismisses this possibility in India's case. He believes that it is extremely unlikely, given the organizational structure of India's strategic enclaves. It is almost certain that India will use a combination of secrecy, enhanced security arrangements, and physical safety devices to prevent any entities — including the uniformed military — from acquiring material custody of completed weapons.

When the question of deterrence sufficiency is considered, India's ability to deter a nuclear-armed Pakistan is not an issue simply because Pakistan's geophysical limitations make it highly vulnerable even to relatively low levels of retaliation that New Delhi might unleash. At the same time, China will continue to be a superior nuclear power whose lead both in numbers of weapons and in relative warhead yields is unlikely to be reduced by India's technical achievements during the next two decades. However, Indian strategists calculate that as long as India's nuclear capabilities present more than just token opposition, and so long as Beijing cannot be certain that it can interdict India's nuclear reserves successfully, and that a weaker India will always surrender rather than retaliate, China will in all likelihood be deterrable. They also count on the positive impact of robust American hegemony, which should guarantee that India's regional competitor, China, will not become a preponderant power capable of coercing its neighbours without fear of countervailing responses mounted by the United States in Asia or beyond. To the degree that Indo-American relations also improve over time, it bequeaths to New Delhi all the deterrence advantages accruing from closer Indian collaboration with the most important power in the international system.

Given India's growing interest and strategic dependence on the United States, Washington is urged by Tellis to undertake three policy initiatives. First, to play the role of helpful critic challenging India to think through the kinds of capabilities it needs. Secondly, to share its own assessments about the character of the strategic environment facing India. This contribution may not entail intelligence sharing but does require a willingness to share certain judgments based on the intelligence information that the United States possesses. Thirdly, the United States

can transform its stated preference for Indo-Pakistani reconciliation over Kashmir into a clear and articulated tenet of its regional policy. All this requires a strategic vision from the United States, which seems to be lacking.

This book was completed before the events of 11 September 2001 and therefore could not have assessed the new security challenges and geopolitical realignments in South Asia and their likely impact on India's nuclear policy. At the same time, it is unfortunate that another major strategic development, that is, the United States' growing unilateralism in arms control matters manifested in plans for National Missile Defence and the withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, and its consequences for India's nuclear stance did not receive attention in the book. While New Delhi could certainly gain from Washington's information-sharing on regional security, what it perhaps needs more is clarity regarding Washington's own nuclear posture. The suggestions that Washington's new arms control paradigm is primarily targeting China, if confirmed in practice, could be significant for India's future diplomacy and military planning. Symptomatically, the book offers no recommendations on how the United States could contribute to confidence-building between India and China even though throughout the study Tellis emphasizes the prevalence of the China factor over the Pakistan threat in India's national security calculations. Instead, he urges the United States to become more proactive on the Kashmir issue. It is doubtful if Washington's greater involvement in this perennial conflict would contribute to the peace process, or even serve India's security interests.

Tellis has done a great job by producing an excellent, timely, very detailed and objective study of India's nuclear logic, strategic requirements, and possible choices concerning the nuclear programme — choices that could have a major regional as well as global impact.

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