

“non-alignment” and “third world” were of declining utility. In the case of the two countries at hand, while it is true that they have been generally closer to the West than the East in their foreign policy orientations, this book does not reveal much about the periodic tensions in relations between Washington and Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. We hear little about American irritation with the fact that Indonesia and Malaysia frequently vote against the United States in the United Nations, or about tensions on issues such as the handling of the Indochinese refugees.

I did not find this an inspiring book. It fails to take us beyond earlier important studies such as that by Franklin Weinstein. While I welcome Bandyopadhyaya’s use of a comparative approach, there is a real problem of lack of “local flavour” with this book. Far too often Bandyopadhyaya relies on unrevealing official statements for evidence, apparently accepting them at face value. Gaining access to material and capturing the essence of local politics is always a major problem for foreign scholars, but one might reasonably expect more than is offered here.

Though it does not really carry us forward in our understanding of the dynamics of foreign policy in Indonesia and Malaysia, this book will be of some interest to other scholars working on the subject.

ANDREW MACINTYRE

*Division of Asian and International Studies
Griffith University*

***China and South Asia.* By Ramakant.** New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1988. 195 pp.

It is usual to think of South Asia and Southeast Asia as two security complexes, a term which Barry Buzan explains as “a relatively self-contained pattern of security relationships among a geographically coherent group of states” (*Contemporary Southeast Asia*, Volume 10, Number 1, June 1988). However, the demission of Soviet ideology and the possibility of reduced U.S. involvement in East Asia are likely to cause a certain overlapping of sub-regional security concerns in the years to come. Whether or not local powers dramatically rush in to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawing superpowers, greater interaction between South Asia and Southeast Asia is likely to occur as evolving local — that is, transregional — realities overshadow the historical imperatives which indirectly led to the formation of the two distinct security complexes.

China and India occupy the central place in that interaction. It may be that Beijing–New Delhi relations have been relatively autonomous of the overall global concerns of each side; it is also true that Sino–Indian rivalry has had to do primarily with their contest for supremacy in South Asia. But these premises may not be applicable to the period Asia is entering. Chinese interest in Southeast Asia can only deepen, not least in response to Japan’s emerging attitudes to the region; India, too, is exploring a role in Asia that is commensurate with its position, size and strength. It is unlikely that Beijing and New Delhi will not be drawn into a new relationship in Southeast Asia. It is even more unlikely that the two countries’ experiences and perceptions of each other will not impinge on that new relationship. An appraisal of Sino–Indian relations, and more generally of China’s attitudes to South Asia, is pertinent, therefore, in assessing the Southeast Asian situation.

The essays in this book attempt that appraisal with mixed success. Most are rather detailed histories, written from the Indian point of view, of China’s relations with particular South Asian states, valuable as a source of reference perhaps but otherwise covering familiar territory. There are the usual descriptions of the Sino–Indian conflict of 1962, and Chinese support for insurgencies in India’s Northeast, as well as the proto-Maoist Naxalite movement in the early 1970s; China’s encouragement of Pakistani efforts to offset Indian dominance; Beijing’s opposition to the Bangladesh movement in 1971; Sri Lanka’s attempt to find a Chinese counterweight against India after that event; and, of course, China’s special relations with Nepal. Here and there, we find references to the problems China encountered in aligning the two dimensions of its dual-track policy — state-to-state relations and party-to-party ties — in South Asia. These leads, which alert us to the complexity of communist China’s pragmatic relations with capitalist countries, are soon lost, however, in painstaking analyses of historical phases and neat eras.

A very different note is struck in an article by Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, who studies the transformation of the People’s Liberation Army in the context of China’s overall modernization. Air Commodore Singh succeeds admirably in explaining some of the political software, without an understanding of which descriptions of military hardware remain frozen on the outer reaches of international relations scholarship.

The best papers in the collection deal with themes rather than periods, probing the complex dynamics of South Asian politics and, in the process, advancing a refreshingly candid assessment of both problems and prospects in the region. One such essay is by G.P. Deshpande, who notes darkly that South Asia is entering “a phase of uncertainty, destabilisation, internal strife and decline, if not demise of economic and political sovereignty”.

Various contradictions — primarily that of the smaller states of the area with India — are extremely important in speculating how the Chinese react when the “pieces start falling apart in South Asia”.

That rather extreme view is answered in Monoranjan Mohanty’s essay on “India-China Relations on the Eve of the Asian Century”. Mohanty considers Asia to be on the threshold of technological, economic and political power, a situation in which “the rulers of India and China today share a common perspective on modernisation and can communicate with each other far better than before”. He is confident that India and China can resolve their border problems once they make the issue part of a wider understanding linked to the two countries’ roles in Asia. The incentive for China in not promoting tensions between India and its neighbours is that such tensions strengthen the superpower presence in South Asia, which is “expensive” for China as well. India, on its part, needs to recognize that a domineering attitude encourages the smaller South Asian states to seek a Chinese, or other, counter-balance to India.

Dismissing the continent’s division into East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Southwest Asia and West Asia as the handiwork of colonialism, Mohanty calls on India to redefine its China policy in terms of pan-Asian, rather than a purely South Asian, framework. He acknowledges that this framework cannot be one of solidarity given existing contradictions, but he plays down the nuclear element to argue that the pan-Asian balance will not be a balance of terror. It will consist of “limited but constructive cooperation” accompanied by a competitive relationship among countries such as India, China and Japan.

Much as Asia desperately needs co-operation between India and China, we can note two problems in visualizing that co-operation in these terms. The first is the fallacy of assuming that merely because the two countries have a common perspective on modernization, their political thinking will draw correspondingly close, and close enough to overcome the considerable differences in world-view which have marked their dealings for the past forty years.

The second problem is that it is meaningless to speak of co-operation coexisting with competition without addressing the specific issues which might force a choice between the two attitudes. However, this is not to belittle Mohanty’s boldness in advancing the idea — a boldness that is refreshingly different from the cynical strait-jacket into which assessments of Sino-Indian relations tend to fall, most of all in the two countries themselves.

The essays in this book, which were delivered as papers at a seminar in 1986, were written before a number of important contemporary developments took place in Asia: the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka’s civil war;

India's role in frustrating the coup attempt in the Maldives; former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China; the Sino-Soviet summit; India's trade rift with Nepal which healed following the democratic revolution in Kathmandu; and, of course, the Sino-Indonesian decision in July 1990 to restore diplomatic ties.

A future volume in the series to which the publication belongs — South Asian Studies — can address these, and other developments, not so much to present yet another history but to offer an analysis of the trends in a region whose destiny is going to be crucial to Asian stability as a whole. Of course, if the winds of change that have swept away the East European regime finally arrive in China, historians might find it difficult to keep pace with the creation of history.

ASAD LATIF

Business Times, Singapore

***The United States and the Defence of the Pacific.* By Ronald D. McLaurin and Chung-in Moon.** Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989. 353 pp.

In early 1990, U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney declared that the Bush Administration would slash the number of U.S. forces in the Far East by 12,000 troops over the next three years, 5,000 of which would come from forces stationed in the Korean peninsula; while the rest would come from Japan and the Philippines. We are thus in a period where the lessening of superpower tensions, re-emergent nationalisms, talk of American "declinism" and domestic economic problems have forced U.S. policy-makers to reconsider the role and structure of their armed forces world-wide. In this respect, one can hardly fault the timing of the authors of this book for they offer much food for thought and discussion on an issue of relevance to all states in the Asian-Pacific region.

The first section of the book provides an introductory discussion of U.S. national interests and overall defence posture in the Far East. The authors are quick to highlight the central role that maritime power plays in the national military strategy of deterrence, forward defence and coalition warfare (p. 38). This theme of naval supremacy continues in the next section where the authors delve, very competently, into the technical details of the force structure and deployment patterns of the Pacific Fleet. The focus of the inquiry, however, is so skewed towards naval force roles