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***Asia Pacific in World Politics*. By Derek McDougall. Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007. Softcover: 370pp.**

As the global "centre of gravity" shifts from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia Pacific, the need to comprehend Asia-Pacific dynamics becomes fundamental to a fuller understanding of world politics. Thus, on the basis of its subject matter alone, the book under review fills an important niche on the personal and institutional bookshelf. Cogently written, it provides an excellent introduction to East and Southeast Asia and will therefore surely feature on many undergraduate course lists from the coming academic year itself. Indeed, the book has the "feel" of an introductory course on Asia Pacific International Relations: it comes as no surprise that the author in his Preface refers to the course he teaches at the University of Melbourne. The book also recalls in part the author's earlier work, *The International Politics of the New Asia Pacific* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1997). I would like in this review to highlight three pleasing features of the book and then put forward one major reservation.

The first positive feature of the book is its chapter plan. The introductory chapter defines the scope of the book, places the subject matter in a historical context and highlights the most important political, economic, social, and cultural features of the states and societies of the region. The six chapters that follow in Part 1 focus on the major powers in the region, the United States, China, and Japan: the first three lay out the respective national contexts in which the Asia-Pacific policies of the United States, China, and Japan have evolved, while the latter three focus on the cardinal bilateral relationships (Japanese-US, Sino-US, and Sino-Japanese). Part 2 of the book contains a chapter each on the two troubling conflicts in Northeast Asia — Taiwan and Korea. Part 3 of the book consists of two chapters on Southeast Asia. The first analyses the changing dynamics of maritime and mainland Southeast Asia, the second focuses exclusively on Indonesia. Part 4 has two chapters on "other key regional actors". The first of these is a rather curious chapter that describes and "compares" Russian and Australian involvement in Asia-Pacific dynamics. The second chapter in Part 4 is on international organizations in the Asia Pacific and has a multilevel approach: ASEAN at the sub-regional level, APEC and ARF at the Asia-Pacific level, ASEAN+3 as the "East Asian alternative" to the Asia Pacific and the United Nations and its agencies at the global level. Part 5 consists of a single chapter that concludes the book through a summing up of its theoretical approaches and a brief

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prediction of the future directions that Asia-Pacific developments could take.

From the brief outline above, it should be evident that the book's treatment of various countries and themes is imbalanced. For instance, in a 370-page book, all of non-Indonesia Southeast Asia is covered in a single, albeit comprehensive, 30-page chapter; Indonesia gets its own chapter of 34 pages while ASEAN is wrapped up in slightly over four pages in the chapter on international organizations. The varying emphases in the book clearly betray its Australian origins. Nevertheless, this reviewer found the imbalance both necessary and refreshing. Instead of a politically correct but sterile chapter scheme in which all countries and issues are given equal space, the author's own assessment of what matters in the Asia Pacific — and, equally, what/who do not matter as much — comes out very clearly in the book.

A second feature of the book that appeals is the clearly eclectic theoretical frame within which it has been written. Although the book is not explicitly theoretical, the author is clearly more than aware of the various theoretical approaches to the study of International Relations. While its opening emphasis on the major powers is obviously realist, even the chapters dealing with the United States, China, Japan and their respective bilateral relationships do bring a number of non-systemic and non-material factors into the analysis. Several of the chapters have a strong liberal institutionalist bias. Constructivism, culturalism, and the critical approaches have not been ignored either; to the contrary, the book emphasises cultural factors and adopts non-traditional understandings of security. The author's willingness to mine the broad range of theoretical approaches serves the book well. That the author has consciously chosen a theoretically eclectic perspective is evident in his own remarks in the concluding chapter (pp. 321–23).

The final feature that makes the book an enjoyable read is its blending of historical richness and contemporary relevance. Historical facts and details permeate the book. The historical overview in the introductory chapter (pp. 7–18) is a masterpiece in brevity. Throughout the book, the historical roots of issues and problems are emphasized. Despite the recourse to history, the book does not at any point lose touch with its year of publication. History is used creatively to cast a light on the current context in the Asia Pacific and clues about how the future could unfold.

The most significant shortcoming of the book is its conception of the countries and areas that fall within the Asia Pacific. The author

correctly points out that "All regions are constructs. States generally promote definitions of regions to suit their own purposes" (p. 6). He follows this observation with an interesting analysis of the origins of "Asia Pacific" as a conception favoured by the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand for an obvious reason: the term justified the involvement of the United States — the quintessential Pacific power — in the affairs of East Asia in a multilateral setting. He also points out that the Malaysian-sponsored and Chinese-encouraged ASEAN+3 initiative, by conceptualizing "East Asia" as a counterpoint to the "Asia Pacific", was designed to keep the United States out of an alternatively constructed region. But surely, with India, Australia, and New Zealand now in it, the ASEAN+3 gambit has failed to create an alternate regional security architecture that deliberately excludes the United States. The author's decision, therefore, to fall back on the "usual definition" of the Asia Pacific — "East Asia and the Western powers of the Pacific" (p. 7) — can certainly be problematized. While Russia, especially Pacific Russia is included in the book, India is dismissed with a banal, single sentence observation: "India also interacts with Asia Pacific in various ways" (p. 7). Can a book published on the Asia Pacific *in 2007* really afford to exclude India from its analysis without losing its contemporary relevance?

Let us be clear: the criticism voiced above is not driven by the *amour propre* of an Indian reviewer who cannot bear to see his own country being excluded from an analysis of Asia-Pacific dynamics. In 1997, when the author's previous book on the subject was written, not including India in a study of the Asia Pacific would have been totally legitimate and justified. Bringing India into the analysis admittedly is hard work: it involves dragging into the study of Asia Pacific a range of complex and messy issues such as the India-Pakistan "no war no peace" stasis and India's incredibly confusing domestic politics. But any book that seeks to be comprehensive about the Asia Pacific in world politics must take on the troublesome task of interpreting India and analysing its impact on the broader Asia Pacific.

Why should India be included in the Asia Pacific? Let us, in no particular order, list some of the reasons. India has just signed a path-breaking bilateral agreement with the United States which could bring India *within* the global nuclear order. In the next decade, India is expected to emerge as a significant space power, selling satellite launch facilities at a fraction of current market costs. The Indian economy now seems to be on an annual growth path of 8 to 10 per cent. India is ahead of the herd in several frontier technologies, particularly in the area of biotechnology; level-pegging with the

leaders in other technological areas such as information technology; and among the early birds in yet other areas like nanotechnology. By 2025, it is estimated that 932 million Indians — an estimated 64 per cent of India's total population — would be in their working years, thereby giving India a huge economic advantage over its rivals and competitors. China will surpass the United States as India's largest trading partner by 2009. The Sino-Indian border dispute is inching towards resolution; opening up Himalayan passes like Nathu La and ports like Kolkata (Calcutta) to China could transform the bilateral relationship radically by providing Tibet and Xinjiang with their nearest access to the sea.

Strategically speaking, some time in the next three years the *Agni-3* missile will probably enter serial production, thereby bringing all of China within Indian missile ranges and setting up the objective conditions for the construction of a Sino-Indian nuclear deterrence relationship. Indian naval vessels are beginning to sail routinely through the Straits of Malacca into the South China Sea. India's "Look East" policy, launched in 1992, is now 15 years old and has done a lot to reorient India's diplomacy, correcting its earlier West European–North American biases. India is tied into a number of sub-regional cooperation agreements — such as BIMSTEC (Bangladesh–India–Myanmar–Sri Lanka–Thailand Economic Cooperation; now officially called "Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation") and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MCG) — with some countries of Southeast Asia like Myanmar and Thailand. India is officially jettisoning the straitjacket of "South Asia" and is now defining its "extended neighbourhood" (a polite term, perhaps, for security perimeter) to include Central and Southeast Asia, or, in maritime terms, from the Straits of Hormuz to the Straits of Malacca. The United States, by all accounts, is watching and applauding. As the book notes, Indian naval vessels played a significant role in the 2004 Asian tsunami (p. 316).

India has launched a proactive Diaspora policy to attract persons of Indian origin to itself, with considerable success; we could expect this factor to be significant in some parts of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. India also has a negative footprint in the Asia Pacific. As India industrializes, it will become a major consumer of energy and emitter of pollution. India is located between the Golden Crescent and the Golden Triangle and has therefore become a major transit country in the global narcotics trade. India will soon have the world's largest number of HIV/AIDS infected persons.

Our list could go on, but that would perhaps be to belabour the point: India is integral to the dynamics of the Asia Pacific in more ways than one. The countries of the region recognize this point. That is why Japanese-Indian relations are on the upswing. That is why Australia will be selling natural uranium to India before the decade is out. That is why ASEAN+3 failed. Emerging India is a hedge against rising China. The author makes the interesting observation that "On maps of Asia Pacific, using Mercator's projection, Russia and Australia appear to dominate the region." (p. 267) Just such a map appears in the book (p. xii). Russia is to the north, Australia to the south. To the east is India, increasingly difficult to ignore or forget.

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