

Role of media and islam in pakistan's politics

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With the end of the cold war, the drive towards democratization assumed center stage. Out of a total 206 states in the world, 195 claim to be either democratic or republican. In spite of it, the nature and function of many self-proclaimed democratic systems leave much to be desired. This has led to international efforts, led by the US, to engage in the twin task of democracy promotion and democracy protection. India joined the community of the democracies in 2000, at the turn of the millennium, and later became a member of the UN democratic funds in 2005.

It has sought to contribute to the efforts aimed at promotion and strengthening of democracy in its own way. The author of the book under review, Professor Muni, calls it "significant shift" in India's foreign policy. As a close follower of India's foreign policy he has tried to isolate the "democracy dimension" in India's foreign policy towards its immediate neighbors on an individual country basis over three distinct phases, which makes interesting readings. Professor Muni has enough experience as an academic and a diplomat to comment on such an important issue with great care and diligence.

After a brief review of theories of democracies and its interface with foreign policy, the author situates the Indian experience over three different phases. He argues during the first phase (1947-1960s) soon after freedom from colonial rule, India emphasized "independence and nationalism". The principal architect of Indian foreign policy, Jawahar Lal Nehru, set out to build a free, cooperative and peaceful Asia. This explained Nehru's vociferous argument in favor of inclusion of communist China in the comity of nations as an independent state.

He went on to fashion his policy of non alignment as a main benchmark of India's foreign policy and try to stay out of the bipolar power politics. His policies towards neighboring countries demonstrated his predilection for democracies in spite of the compromises he made to protect the strategic and economic interests of India. The author makes a detailed analysis of Nehru's approach towards Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Myanmar and Pakistan and concludes that Nehru's preferences for democracies was often trumped by India's vital security concerns.

During the second phase (1960s-2000) the successors of Nehru, the author argues, adopted a pragmatic policy devoid an idealism that marked the Nehru years. The post 1962 (sino-indian war) years, as Nehru confessed shocked him out of his idealism and prepared the grounds for unapologetic realism in Indian foreign policy. Professor Muni demonstrate through his narrative of twists and turns of Nepalese politics that Indian supported democratic moments in Nepal when its suited its strategic interests unencumbered dilemma that characterized by Nehruvian years.

All through, the main driver of India's policy towards neighbors was to keep the region free from adversarial influences. The security challenges post by china and Pakistan largely determined the parameters of India's foreign policy since the 1970s. Even as India evolved as a democratic nation and institutions promoting democratic values took firm roots in the country, during this phase there was no enthusiasm to propagate democracy and encourage democratic forces in the neighborhood.

Nevertheless, India played an important role in the liberation of East Pakistan in 1971, integrated Sikkim in 1975 and supported exiled democratic forces

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from Myanmar in 1970s and 1980s. Democracy mattered only when it converged with India's strategic interests. However, India chose to disassociate itself from democratic forces in the mid 1970s. In Bhutan, India sided with the king and discouraged the popular movement raised by Bhutanis of the Nepalese region. It is quiet and India forced the Nepalese king to negotiate with the democratic forces in 1988.

In the case of Myanmar, since the late 1980s, it decided to mend its relationship with the military Junta and ignore the democratic forces to balance China's increasing proximity to Myanmar. The third phase since the start of the new millennium as found India in the company of US, seeking to promote and protect democracy around the world. India has calibrated its policy towards its neighbors accordingly. Despite its aversion from the Maoists of Nepal, it played a critical role in the mainstreaming of this group and revived the democratic process.

Despite playing a modest but critical role in Bangladesh's return to democracy in 1990, it has maintained a studied aloofness from the rough and tumble of Bangladesh politics. In recent years a fresh wave of the democracy swept the neighborhood. The author has appreciated India's diplomatic responses to these changes. There is also a brief discussion on India's efforts and Indo-US coordination in the process of reconstruction and democratization in Afghanistan since 9/11.

The author implies that in view of India's strategic interests in Afghanistan, it is imperative for India to continue with its developmental work despite attacks on its citizens by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists. In some authors suggest that in its conduct of foreign policy, India should not blindly follow

the US at the cost of its strategic interests. The book provides useful insights to India's neighborhood policy over the last six decades. The author brings to bear his personal interaction many leading actors in both India and Nepal to present his analysis of Nepalese politics forcefully.

His study of other neighbors of India somehow struggles to come that level of compliance and intensity. To be share to the author, given india's leverage in Nepal and its ability to influence its politics, Nepal was certain to attract that much attention and care. However, one wondered if the author have accorded some space to India's reaction to the imperfect nature of Srilankan democracy with its lack of emphasis on inclusivity and pluralism. Given the threat it posed to the Srilankan polity and deep Indian involvement in the 1980s, Srilanka deserved some attention in the book.

To the conclusion reader of the book finds the book and the author holds a strong grip over the material and issue it contained. The book deserve the attention of foreign policy analysts and scholars of international relations in India because in recent years India has sought to spell out its neighborhood policy tentatively with emphasis on building a web of interdependencies the neighbor and finally the book is a good depiction of India's foreign policy specially in reference to its influences the democratic scenario in the outer world.