

the implications of this book are for the understanding of the contemporary East Asian International Society. Should we be glad to see that the shared norm of coexistence among the sovereign states has currently prevailed in this region? Or should we search for a possibility to supersede the modern sovereign state system by critically reconsidering precedent historical cases?

Unarguably, this is a brilliant volume that enables us to acquire a deeper understanding of the lineage of civilization and empire. Given the appearance of this work, I wish that IR scholars would become more sensitive to the Janus face of the International Society.

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The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21st Century Asia

Muthiah Alagappa (ed.)

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Proliferation optimism and pessimism have set the parameters for debate about the strategic impact of the spread of nuclear weapons to an increasing number of actors. Nuclear proliferation strengthens international peace and stability, optimists argue, because the prospect of nuclear devastation would make state leaders ever more cautious in conducting external relations. Pessimists counter that the wider the ownership of nuclear arms, the greater the danger of nuclear calamity, which could result not only from deliberate release of nuclear forces but also from accidental or unauthorized detonation of nuclear devices as well as nuclear terrorism.

Representing the most thorough scholarly discussion of the political and military effects of nuclear spread in twenty-first century Asia, *The Long Shadow* is remarkable for its endorsement of the role of nuclear armament in enhancing regional security. As its editor and main author, Muthiah Alagappa, sums up, '[O]n net, [nuclear weapons] have reinforced national security and regional stability in Asia'. Moreover, this naturally leads to his support of proliferation optimism with regard to states that have acquired nuclear capability outside the nonproliferation regime or may soon do so. Asia as defined in the book, it may be noted, stretches eastward to include the area normally known as the Middle East.

Alagappa bases his nuclear thinking on two broad theoretical viewpoints: defensive realism and nuclear revolution. Even though an 'informal, loose balance-of-power system' is likely to emerge in Asia in coming years, the primary mission of military power for most countries will remain 'the protection of territorial integrity and populations from external threats, not military aggression and conquest'. Such a strategic environment, moreover, will incline states, including those with fledgling nuclear forces, to 'recognize the revolutionary nature of nuclear weapons', thereby encouraging them to highlight deterrence as opposed to defense or offense as the principal role of their nuclear weapons.

These propositions indeed cast a long shadow over Alagappa's interpretation of the findings of the 14 case studies included in the book. Security concerns of various governments in Asia have been assuaged by either their indigenous nuclear arsenal or the commitment of extended nuclear deterrence by the United States. The deterrent effect of nuclear weapons has gone a long way to stabilize outstanding conflicts in Kashmir, across the Taiwan Strait, and on the Korean peninsula.

Insofar as nuclear proliferation contributes to regional peace and stability, Alagappa is right in calling for a remodeling of the international nuclear order to accommodate new nuclear weapon states. Single-minded denunciation of the spread of nuclear arms in Asia, as most nonproliferation advocates in the West allegedly engage in, will serve little purpose and may even smack of racism. First and foremost, 'the tendency to downplay the significance of nuclear weapons for reasons of political correctness' must be overcome.

Pronouncements of proliferation optimism in *The Long Shadow*, however, should not constitute the last word on the subject of nuclear

spread in Asia. As a matter of fact, Alagappa refuses to carry his optimism to its logical end and identifies ‘preventing the spread of nuclear weapons to additional states and to nonstate actors’ as one of the major challenges for the remodeled nuclear order. Alagappa thus believes that in a highly proliferated world not everybody would behave in accordance with the precepts of defensive realism or the nuclear revolution thesis. Which actor then would be more liable to assume an offensive strategic posture and/or expect his nuclear assets mainly to perform coercive, war-fighting, or damage-limiting – rather than deterrent – functions? To what degree does Alagappa’s outlook on this question correspond with empirical analyses such as those undertaken by the case studies in the book?

Alagappa underlines the defensive nature of major Asian powers as well as the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence to all states (including so-called rogue states), while insisting on the necessity of stopping non-state actors from laying their hands on nuclear weapons. If, however, S. Paul Kapur, the author of the ‘nuclear terrorism’ chapter, is correct, deterrent threats could work even against certain terrorist groups. On the other hand, some countries with nuclear arms may face disintegration or, short of that, may see the safety and security of their nuclear assets compromised. According to Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R. Lavoy, concern with internal disorder has figured prominently in Pakistan. Some elements of Iran’s power structure, warns Devin T. Hagerty, might commandeer nuclear warheads for unauthorized use or transfer them to terrorists.

Defensive orientations may not always prevail in the case of major nuclear weapon states in the region, either. In particular, it may be argued, prospects for international peace and stability will hinge critically on the degree to which China can resist revisionist tendencies. As Chu Shulong and Rong Yu note, ‘if China increases its military forces dramatically over the short term, that would change the balance of power and stability in Asia and cause a dramatic response from other powers’.

Assuming that the nuclear revolution thesis is generally valid (and there have been dissents), state leaders, regardless of their defensive or offensive dispositions, may be late in coming to realize that nuclear weapons have fundamentally transformed strategic relations. In the meantime, nuclear proliferation may well increase tension between

regional rivals. According to Hassan Khan and Lavoy, nuclear armament 'exacerbated the intensity' of crises in South Asia. An Iranian nuclear test, opines Avner Cohen, would lead Israel to remove the opacity about its nuclear arsenal, in which case 'Israel and Iran would be more like India and Pakistan'. Alagappa, along with Rajesh Rajagopalan, the contributor of the 'India' chapter, makes more of the fact that India and Pakistan have managed to avoid all-out military confrontation presumably for fear of nuclear escalation, but it is less than certain that such caution should be reproduced in their future relations or in other dyads.

Last but not least, proliferation optimism of *The Long Shadow* rests on the expectation for nuclear armaments to increase the overall odds of peace and stability. It is conceivable, however, that hostile detonation of just one nuclear warhead, however small in size, may alter the rules of the game for international relations from top to bottom. Alagappa's reticence about this eventuality, or his preoccupation with general tendency, is curious and may suggest that he is actually looking upon nuclear weapons as akin to conventional arms, despite his profession of support for the nuclear revolution thesis.

As Alagappa aptly points out, establishing a new nuclear order is urgent business for the international community. Extremely rich in information and generally well-balanced in rendition, *The Long Shadow* affords a solid foundation for such efforts, which can and should be strengthened by further investigation into the character of actual and potential nuclear actors and their interactions, with due attention to the process of their understanding of nuclear revolution.

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