

Books of Note

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The India-Pakistan Military Standoff: Crisis and Escalation in South Asia

Edited by Zachary S. Davis, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, 240 pp.

Zachary S. Davis, a senior fellow at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Center for Global Security Research, has assembled a set of articles examining the 2001-2002 Indian-Pakistani confrontation, an extended sparring match between the two nuclear rivals largely overshadowed in Western media by U.S. operations in Afghanistan. The perspectives presented in this volume include first-hand recollections, a diplomatic reconstruction based on interviews, and analyses of the political implications of the events and the means by which future adventures in brinksmanship can be prevented.

The various authors are in agreement that the standoff came perilously close to erupting into war, whether in the form of a limited clash similar to the 1999 Kargil conflict, a full Indian invasion, or a nuclear exchange. Their accounts stress the danger of escalation in an environment in which conventional and nuclear options were intertwined and poorly conceptualized. Former Indian military officer Gurmeet Kanwal claims most Indian military planners believed and continue to believe that a deep drive into Pakistan would shake its commitment to retaliating with nuclear weapons. As a result, they have continued to support the buildup of Indian conventional capabilities. Feroz Hassan Khan, a Pakistani scholar who served in Kashmir across the Line of Control from Kanwal, maintains that the crisis in fact entrenched support for an ambiguous first-strike policy as insurance against conventional defeat. This contrast informs Davis' conclusion that it and similar "unlearned" lessons from the crisis leave South Asia in a precarious nuclear balance. —XIAODON LIANG

How We Stopped Loving the Bomb

Douglas Roche, Lorimer, 2011, 208 pp.

For 35 years, Douglas Roche has tackled nuclear proliferation in a variety of roles, including Canadian ambassador for disarmament, chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Committee, and founding president of Parliamentarians for Global Action. This book narrates the highs and lows of his international diplomacy and arms control efforts. Roche's candor provides insight into behind-the-scene realities. The career diplomat pulls no punches in his observations. He criticizes the five countries that the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) recognizes as nuclear-weapon states—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—for what he sees as their obstruction of nonproliferation efforts. The NPT "is so compromised by forty years of non-action on its key element of comprehensive negotiations for elimination," writes Roche, "that it cannot achieve a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East." Roche also weighs in on a number of pressing topics, from International Atomic Energy Agency funding to missile defense. He describes what he argues are the underlying causes of proliferation, such as militarism and poor global economic development. Ultimately, the book is a call to action, warning that a convention banning production and use of nuclear weapons will happen only "once the public rebels against the weapons that would destroy all life." —FARRAH ZUGHNI

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