The book is an important intervention that helps us better understand the complexities involved in the pursuit of common economic benefit by countries in a conflict-ridden region.

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The second edition of *India’s Strategic Culture: The Making of National Security Policy* has been updated with the latest developments on India’s national security, but the core of the study has remained the same. The book seeks to tackle the question of the nature of the Indian strategic culture. While the book offers an excellent overview of many aspects of the history, development, and current state of Indian foreign policy, it also manifests several problems that tend to be common among the scholars on the subfield of Strategic Culture.

Shrikant Paranjpe sets out an ambitious and colossal objective for the study: to track down the development and define the Indian strategic culture. In addition, the book seeks to analyse the change and continuity which the Indian strategic culture has encountered after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The motivation of the study comes in the aftermath of several attempts by Western scholars to define Indian strategic culture through rather orientalistic lenses. In this context, Paranjpe’s contribution to the field is more than welcome. In the book, strategic culture is introduced as a concept that has evolved through three generations and Paranjpe seems to build up the framework of study by picking up bits from each of them. In Paranjpe’s terms, strategy, in general, offers a consciously followed road map to the execution of actions in order to achieve goals. Strategic culture on its part is the very specific and individual worldview which is the source of that strategy. Thus, there is an Indian strategic culture that differs from the Western one, and ought to be surveyed. Principally, strategic culture is understood as a military and defence-related phenomenon, but Paranjpe acknowledges that economic and diplomatic fields should also be considered as extensions of security policy.

The main content of the book focuses on the development of the Indian strategic culture. The book moves chronologically through eras, starting from the
pre-modern Indian history with references to authors and characters such as Kautilya, Sukracharya, and Ashoka. The book further introduces to the reader the influence of Mughal era on Indian strategic thinking. From this context emerges also one of the main points that is laid out for analysis of Indian strategic culture. The book argues that in India, the origin of the strategic culture is rather a civilizational framework than a narrowly national one. Paranjpe continues the historical journey through the pre-modern times to the independence movement, the Cold War, and finally to the post-Cold War era. While moving through the eras, the text seeks to reflect on the diplomatic and military aspects of strategic culture during each period of time. The book carefully reviews the development of those fields and examines the changes in the context of broader international developments. However, even though the economic aspect of national security was earlier defined as one of the main fields of interest, it is still completely left out from the analysis. In addition, there is very little focus on India’s alignment towards international organizations or non-governmental organizations. For Paranjpe, an overarching theme in this longue durée of the history of Indian foreign affairs tends to be the global transformation from bipolar to a unipolar and supposedly multipolar world.

The main argument that is derived from the survey is that since the pre-modern era, the Indian civilizational strategic culture has emphasized defence rather than expansion. To some extent, this strategic view is accompanied by voluntary isolation and the aim of self-sufficiency. In addition, there is a tendency that conflicts are addressed primarily through peaceful settlements. This has led to an Indian approach to how peace should be maintained in international society. Paranjpe argues that the pre-modern tradition affected the creation of the non-alignment doctrine on Indian foreign policy. On the other hand, the 1962 Indo-Chinese war together with the discipline of International Politics spiced up the Indian strategic culture with realist notions. The end of the Cold War and the gradual movement to the multipolar world order together with the earlier building blocks of the Indian strategic culture have influenced the shape which of Indian foreign policy has today. At the very core of that policy are strategic autonomy, realist security, and the pursuit of recognition of India’s great power status in the multipolar world.

However, from time to time, it is hard to follow how Paranjpe arrives at these conclusions. In the main text where the development and different aspects of the Indian security policy are introduced, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are rarely referred to. The early chapters of the book emphasize the importance of separation between ideological and operational levels of strategic culture. Yet, there is no real discussion between these levels throughout the text. The focus tends to be mainly on the operational level, and the relationship between the ideational and physical world in the creation of strategic culture is left very obscure.

Paranjpe’s main argument is that there is an Indian strategic culture that is separate from the Western one. However, in the construction of this claim, Paranjpe mainly operationalizes Western concepts of international relations and seems to accept the realist paradigm on the nature of global affairs. From the
point of view of Strategic Culture as a subfield of research, the book offers a monolithic approach on the subject. Thus, strategic culture is seen as a general theory that has an overarching explanatory power over the whole national security policy. As such, all aspects of security policy can be reduced to the basic principles that guide nations’ actions. It is debatable if this kind of approach should be preferred. In Paranjpe’s study, the monolith approach enables a wide examination of the whole Indian national security policy. However, on the other hand, the focus tends to meander, which makes it harder to keep the study together. The research field of Indian Strategic Culture has traditionally been generalistic and monolithic in its understanding of strategic culture as a concept. The question that arises is if the field would benefit from a more pluralistic approach that would involve more focus on strategic subcultures. In addition, it seems that there is a demand for wider fundamental research on Indian strategic culture that would take as its starting point the question of the very ontological concepts that define that culture.

In conclusion, the second edition of India’s Strategic Culture: The Making of National Security Policy is a thought-provoking book. It illustrates well the challenges that strategic culture includes as a concept, gives a clear general overlook over the history of Indian foreign relations, and discusses the development of global power relations through the 20th century. There are also various detailed descriptions of changes and continuity on India’s organizational culture and structure in the field of defence and national security, where the writer seems to be on their element. What a reader is left without is an introduction to the second edition, which would reflect the feedback and discussion around the book. However, the book succeeds to be a relevant piece of literature on the field of Indian Strategic Culture, as the demand for the second round of printing shows us.

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India is actively engaging with Mongolia through its Act East policy which received boost with the visit of Prime Minister Modi to the country in 2015. India marks its significant presence in Mongolia’s Third Neighbor policy. This book by Prabir De and Sreya Pan covers the evolution of India–Mongolia economic relations and trade linkages. It begins with the evolution of India’s engagement with Mongolia. India’s Look East policy signifies an intensified level of