

Book Reviews

India – Pakistan Nuclear Diplomacy: Constructivism and the Prospects for Nuclear Arms Control and Disarmament in South Asia

Mario E. Carranza (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 288 pages)

*Reviewed by Attiq-ur-Rehman**

Scholarly well-organized and theoretically well-structured study of Carranza on South Asian nuclearization stays outside the Realist/Neo-Realist paradigm. It is mainly an attempt to provide a legitimate foundation to global social and normative environment and its unavoidable impacts on Indo–Pak nuclear race. Dr. Mario E. Carranza, a professor in the Department of History, Political Science, and Philosophy at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, tries to release the nuclearized South Asian subcontinent from theoretical monopoly of realism. The idea of debating differently Islamabad–New Delhi nuclear competition comes from Stephen Cohen's analysis, according to Carranza. Cohen views the nuclearized South Asia “is no longer merely a regional matter” and it has significantly become an international issue on the basis of good and bad news. The notion of good news refers to appropriate application of Nuclear Nonproliferation Norm (NNPN) on Indo – Pak nuclear diplomacy, and the bad news denotes the fragile status of nuclear taboo in the presence of enduring conflicted Islamabad – New Delhi interaction. The strategic antagonism, in this way, between both states has proclaimed them good rivals and bad neighbours.

Overwhelming regional and global impact of persistently swelling Indo – Pak nuclear capabilities has alarmed the strategic circles of international community, because the protracted hostility between unfriendly nuclear neighbours has fabricated a different, strategically new environment, contrary to cold war. The unanswered questions belong to the positively visualizing prospects of normalization and the peaceful settlement of Kashmir conflict parallel to establishing a South Asian version of arms control regime academically convinced Carranza to express his views in a book. Apart from Cohen, the second inspirational source of Carranza is

*The reviewer is Lecturer in International Relations Department, NUML, Islamabad.

President Obama's Prague speech which introduces the American way of looking at the future of international nonproliferation regime and the probable scope of disarmament in the twenty first century. Therefore, a combination of Cohen and Obama may be considered as being primary motivational sources of the book.

The writer's scholarly insight tries to justify the association of Constructivism to the swiftly changing dynamics of world politics. The principal argument of Constructivism explains and predicts the unavertable changes of international political system by highlighting the main shortcomings of both Realism and Neo-Realism. The inability of evidently unfolding and constantly changing attributes of international relations by Realism provided sufficient place for the growth of Constructivism. Chapter Three of the book mentioned few readings in support of Constructivism which appeared in post-Cold War environment when the proponent of Realism were unable to explain the peaceful end of four decades long US – USSR confrontation.

The book is divided into seven chapters, and every chapter carries a specific theme respectively while debating the core argument of the book. First chapter of the book provides a comprehensive survey of existing literature discussing the South Asian strategic conundrum and its effects on international nonproliferation regime generally and Indo – Pak enduring rivalry under nuclear shadows specifically. Alternatively structured Constructivist approach and its role in generating the New Delhi – Islamabad normalization which could ultimately lead both nuclear neighbours towards a nuclear-free region is the core theme of the seventh chapter. In short, the book starts debate from South Asian strategically perplexing security environment and ends in a final chapter on expectantly formulating a probable way forward to the problem of India – Pakistan ferocious nuclear journey.

The interesting discussion in second chapter speaks generally about South Asian strategic culture in which nuclear optimists and nuclear pessimists define their contrasting positions on the deterring role of nuclear weapons. A theoretical review of proliferation optimist – pessimist arguments and their South Asian directions covers the third chapter after briefly examining the contesting role of international relations theories.

Finally a well-built Constructivist framework to analyze the impacts of global social and normative attributes with reference to India – Pakistan nuclear diplomacy is central theme of fourth chapter. Fifth and sixth chapters analyze the role of external forces in introducing the prospects of normalization and substantially convincing the leaders across the border on averting their nuclear cannons instead of assisting them in improving their strategic muscles.

The book explicitly highlights the role of extra-regional powers in nuclear politics of India and Pakistan. The perpetual Indo–Pak enmity under American influence portrays a worrisome future of South Asia because of New Delhi – Washington strategic partnership. Indo – US civil nuclear deal along with deranged Dehyphenation policy of the US impartially reflects the prevailing dichotic standards of American foreign policy for engaging both nuclear powers of South Asia. The critical appreciation of Carranza's analysis over ongoing American regional policy for treating rival India and Pakistan differently in last two chapters unequivocally suggests few applicable ways to Washington for overcoming the disastrous consequences for American foreign relations with territorially adjoining nuclear rivals of the world. The continuation of present strategic interaction between Washington and Islamabad equivalent to Washington and New Delhi strategic alliance possess enough potential to cause an unthinkable Indo – Pak clash in future, according to Carranza.

The principal objective of Carranza is to offer a non-traditional theoretical foundation of viewing South Asian nuclear race. He overestimates Constructivism in identifying the role of international norms in shaping New Delhi and Islamabad's strategic posture. The writer adequately lacks or ignores the regional and domestic attributes of Indo – Pak conflict. No doubt, there are several other rational theories available to read the regional nuclear order of South Asia, but the historical record of Indo – Pak nuclear efforts could not be outrightly divorced from the Realist paradigm. The central theme of the book emphasizes purely the Constructivism and reluctantly ignores the other theoretical claims which hold their own legitimate rationales for studying nuclear arms race in India – Pakistan context.

Prior to *India – Pakistan Nuclear Diplomacy*, Carranza has written three books and published various research papers on different political aspects of international non-proliferation regime. His academic insight generally covers South American and South Asian regions. He always attempts to provide a nonconventional account of interesting arguments in his writings. The recent book is more theoretical and less argumentative to mainly understand the present status of strategic interaction of three powers, US, India, and Pakistan. By unambiguously challenging the conventional wisdom, Carranza intends to forecast the future of South Asian arms race parallel to irresistibly growing Indo – Pak toxic diplomatic communication.