

Kanti Bajpai, Saira Basit & V Krishnappa. Eds. 2014. *India's Grand Strategy: History, Theory, Case*. New Delhi, India: Routledge. 582pp. ISBN:978-0-415-73965-8

Journal of Asian Security
and International Affairs
3(3) 376–379

Jalil Mehdi¹

©2016 SAGE Publications India
Private Limited
SAGE Publications
sagepub.in/home.nav
DOI: 10.1177/2347797016670763
<http://aia.sagepub.com>

Does India have a strategic culture? Most of the scholars of the field of International Relations and Security Studies agree that India doesn't have a culture of strategic decision making. It has evolved an *ad hoc* system of strategic decision making that is reactive rather than reflective. Indian policymakers make decisions reacting to specific situations that they find themselves in. Regardless of the origins of the lack of strategic culture, this provides an explanation for India being a 'soft state' that often 'fails to enforce enacted policies' which is a 'serious handicap in building and mobilizing hard-power resources'. This also exposes the roots of 'Indian diffidence in asserting power in the International arena' (Nayar & Paul 2004, 60-61).

The present volume is intended to be a corrective to the view that India lacks a grand strategic thinking. Organised in three sections, the book has neatly explored the sources and historical context of grand strategic thought and practice in ancient and modern India. The first section outlays the practice of grand strategy in the different phases of Indian history and successfully shows that India has had a 'coherent, identifiable way of deploying its military, diplomatic, political, economic, cultural and moral resources toward the goals of security' (p. 6). The second section explores the practice of strategic thinking in modern India and looks

¹ Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India-110025