



The Making of Indian Diplomacy: A Critique of Eurocentrism

By Deep K. Datta-Ray



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Deep K Datta-Ray is the only outsider to have embedded in India's Ministry of External Affairs. His book on Indian diplomacy overturns much of the accepted wisdom of it being a derivative of European colonial models, in the process shedding new light on the Indian state.

The author argues on the basis of observed practices, and informal interactions and interviews with the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and diplomats, that the core of Indian diplomatic practice is to be found in the national epic, the Mahabharata, whose influence is traced from pre-Mughal times to the present. Moreover the durability of the Mahabharata's influence on Indian diplomacy was secured by India's most significant relationship of the modern political era: between Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. The epic inspired Gandhi's innovative conception of terminating violence non-violently, or satyagraha. His influence over Nehru ensured that satyagraha would shape the new post-colonial nation's diplomacy, testimony to which, and arguably its greatest achievement, is India's nuclear diplomacy.

Dr Datta-Ray's investigation of Indian diplomacy reveals its non-Western rationale, while its presence at the heart of a state presumed Western at inception reveals new possibilities about how to conceptualize post-colonial India, its purpose and role on the world stage. While nation states authorised by nationalism remain hostage to the past, the Indian state's arena for action is very much the present, as its rational objective of non-violently terminating violence now.

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Editorial Review

Review

‘This is a superb rendition of a diplomatic culture which Western observers would normally miss or misunderstand. It is rendered with nuance and depth that make the book something of a master-class in how, sympathetically, to investigate the different and the complex.’ — Stephen Chan, OBE, Professor of World Politics, SOAS

‘This highly original study represents the first examination of Indian foreign policy as the product of a distinctive political culture. It is an important corrective to the allegedly universalistic theories of interest that dominate political analysis of the world outside the West.’ — Faisal Devji, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford

‘A unique, and very original, take on how Indian diplomacy has been conceived, articulated and operationalized. By linking the present state of Indian diplomacy to the nation’s civilizational past, this work debunks many myths and captures the underlying forces driving Indian diplomatic practice better than most recent works on the subject. A must-read for Indian foreign policy practitioners and thinkers alike.’ — Harsh V. Pant, Professor of International Relations, King’s College London

An in-depth discussion of the complexities of a major Third World foreign ministry outside the “Western triad of anarchy-modernity-civilisation.” What sets it apart from most other studies is the way in which the voices of Indian Foreign Service officers interviewed as part of the author’s research bring the discussion to life. ... Rich, subtle and instructive.’ — William Maley, Director, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy, ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University

About the Author

Deep K Datta-Ray teaches at Jindal School of International Affairs and formerly worked with Kroll and Hakluyt & Company. Schooled in Calcutta, Honolulu, Singapore and the English countryside, he attended the University of London and Sussex University, from which he obtained his doctorate in International Relations.

Users Review

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Jeffrey Garner:

Why? Because this The Making of Indian Diplomacy: A Critique of Eurocentrism is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will shock you with the secret that inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any more or you going to regret it. This book will give you a lot of advantages than the other book have got such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking method. So , still want to delay having that book? If I were you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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