

Riedel, Bruce. *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, The CIA, and The Sino – Indian War*.

Uttar Pradesh: Harper Collins, 2016, pp. 233.

The study of communist expansionism against the policy of containment provides various patterns of US foreign policy under different presidents. Various authors having diverse and contrasting views try to define their positions on four decades long Washington – Moscow competition for global leadership. The story of American struggle against communist forces of Soviet Union also engaged 35th President of United States, John Fitzgerald Kennedy who faced multiple challenges in this contest. Washington's decision-making potential was stretched from Cuba to Tibet. The presence of communist Soviet Union in Cuba paralleled communist China in Tibet, intensely raised a complicated situation for President Kennedy. Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow and director of the Brookings Intelligence Project, discusses the story of Kennedy administration trapped between the Caribbean and South Asian politics.

Riedel while having expertise on security and strategic affairs of the world completed thirty year career in CIA equivalent to serving as a senior security adviser to the last four presidents on South Asian and Middle Eastern politics. His scholarly contribution focuses on President Kennedy's role in the crisis of Cold War era in his recently published book *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino – Indian War*. The crisis year, 1962, trapped Washington between communist forces supported by Beijing and Moscow. The book expressively revolves around the international dilemmas of Kennedy's short period in office.

Riedel, a veteran of CIA and National Security Council, starts the story from President Kennedy's initial experiences of understanding the influence of communism on the politics of different regions. Five chapters of the book debate South Asian politics coupled with thirteen days Cuban Missile Crisis along with revealing interesting details of different issues. First three

chapters, after a formal introduction, chronologically discuss the events that encircled President Kennedy. The fourth and fifth chapters analytically attempt to conclude the whole debate of the book. The covert planning of the CIA's operations from Bay of Pigs to Tibetan uprising against People's Liberation Army (PLA) were chiefly designed by Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, and his brother Allen Dulles, the first civilian director of CIA. Dulles brothers and Kennedy family, American ambassador to India, John Kenneth Galbraith, are main characters the book revolves around. Moreover, the policies of Mao Zedong, Ayub Khan, and Nehru were the main driving forces of American policy during the Kennedy administration. The final chapter focuses on five lessons learned about presidents and their relationship to the intelligence community.

The study by Riedel is an endeavour to theoretically highlight the story of diplomacy, war, intelligence and changing patterns of American foreign relations by discussing the crisis era of Cold War. The period saw India going towards Soviet camp while Pakistan getting closer to China, Cold War politics kept the US interested in South Asia. Nehru's secret connection with President Kennedy through confidential letters, the diaries of the American and newly independent South Asian leaders, the memories coupled with a huge record of recently declassified documents are the real decorations of Riedel's intellectual effort in the book.

After writing several books coupled with numerous research papers and chapters in different books, the book on JFK's challenges is an account of empirical evidence based on mainly declassified sources accessed by Riedel. Analysing the challenges for President Kennedy, Bruce Riedel has presented convincing arguments on America's clandestine operations at the end of Cold War. Critically studying the CIA's role, Riedel presents a record of compelling evidence to comprehend the critical role of American covert operations loosely planned and poorly executed by leading architects of Cold War policies.

**Attiq ur Rehman**

## Book Reviews

Robert G. Sutter. *The United States and Asia: Regional Dynamics and Twenty First Century Relations*

London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015, Pp. 338

Robert Sutter's book is full of information for those interested in studying U.S. policy towards Asia since the end of Cold-War. It gives a balanced analysis of post-Cold War dynamics in Asia, which involve issues of security, economics, national identity and regional institution building. According to the author, post-Cold War situation in Asia is determined by five sets of factors: 1. The changing power relationships among Asia's leading countries. 2. The growing impact of economic globalization. 3. The tensions in Korean peninsula, the issues of terrorism and nuclear proliferation. 4. The rise of Asian multilateralism. 5. The changing extent of U.S. engagement with and withdrawal from involvement in Asian affairs.

Sutter demonstrates that United States has a history of sometimes intense involvement and sometimes unwelcomed intrusion into Asian security matters and sometimes pronounced disengagement and withdrawal. Sutter stresses that growing Chinese-U.S. divergence and competition in Asia headed the list of issues that challenged and tested the abilities of Chinese and American leaders to manage their differences. Economies are no longer the positive force of convergence that they proved to be in previous years, even though the interdependence they foster does not help to curb Sino-American confrontation and conflict.

The author underscores that the current U.S. policy represents a set of objectives in Asia Pacific. First is to maintain balance of power in Asia by opposing the domination of hostile powers, especially China. Second, securing and expanding American economic interests in the region. Third, promoting American culture and values i.e. democracy, human rights and rule of law etc. He explains the rebalance strategy of the U.S. toward China that includes elements of security, economy and diplomacy. He assesses that U.S. interest in promoting human

rights, democracy, and better governance have achieved only mixed results in Asia.

One chapter of the book is on U.S. relations with South Asia. Regarding Afghanistan, U.S. policy is to pacify the country and consider developments in Pakistan and Afghanistan under the “Af-Pak” strategy. Close relationship between U.S. and India gives an idea of important role India can play in the regional politics that can best serve U.S. interests.

The author thoroughly covers U.S. policy objectives in the Asian continent. Language used in the book is easy to comprehend for general readers. The book projects Indian position in the regional and global politics very well, however, lacks Pakistan’s perspective about South Asian politics. The author says that NATO aircraft killed two dozen Pakistani troops at Salala check post on Pak-Afghan border in 2011. Though, it was reported that the attack was carried out by the U.S. gunship helicopters.

Overall, the book presents a balanced analysis of U.S. relations with Asia Pacific in general and China in particular. This could be an ideal book for readers interested in understanding U.S. relations with the region at large. Moreover, the book is written through realist, liberal and constructivists perspectives in international relations.

**Amanullah Khan**