



Water: Asia's New Battleground

Brahma Chellaney

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This book is the 2012 winner of a prestigious international award -- the Bernard Schwartz Book Award. Given by the New York-based Asia Society, the \$20,000 Bernard Schwartz Award is the only prize that recognizes nonfiction books for their outstanding contributions to the understanding of contemporary Asia or U.S.-Asia relations, as well as potential policy impacts relating to the region.

Water: Asia's New Battleground was selected as the winner of the Bernard Schwartz Award in October 2012 from nearly 90 nominations by a nine-member jury co-chaired by Tommy T. B. Koh, Singapore's Ambassador-at-Large, and Carol Gluck, George Sansom Professor of History at Columbia University. According to Ambassador Koh, "This timely, comprehensive, and forward-looking book makes the compelling case that water will likely emerge as one of Asia's biggest security challenges in the 21st century. The equitable and sustainable management of Asia's great river systems should be a priority on the global agenda."

Professor Gluck, for her part, said: "Conflicts over water are an increasingly pressing problem in many places. In his important book, Brahma Chellaney alerts us to the challenges facing Asia in assuring adequate water supplies across the region."

According to Asia Society's vice president of Global Policy Programs, Suzanne DiMaggio, "*Water: Asia's New Battleground* underscores the importance of water as a means of security at multiple levels in Asia. Policymakers need to look at this vital resource in a way that takes into account the complex national security and development issues countries and communities will face as water scarcity in the region intensifies."

Water has emerged as a key issue that will determine if Asia heads toward greater cooperation or greater competition. Asia is the world's driest continent, with availability of freshwater less than half the global annual average of 6,380 cubic meters per inhabitant. Water stress is set to become Asia's defining crisis of the twenty-first century, creating obstacles to continued rapid economic growth, stoking interstate tensions over shared resources, exacerbating long-time territorial disputes, and imposing further hardships on the poor.

Water: Asia's New Battleground is a pioneering study of Asia's murky water politics and the relationships between freshwater, peace, and security. In this unique and highly readable book, Brahma Chellaney expertly paints a larger picture of water across Asia, highlights the security implications of resource-linked territorial disputes, and proposes real strategies to avoid conflict and more equitably share Asia's water resources.

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