

Editorial

1. The article titled “Building Capability, Developing New Partnerships and Protecting National Interests in an uncertain World Order” authored by Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) former Chief of the Naval Staff is the lead article in the current issue of the USI Journal. The USA is the sole super power in the world. However, there is competition between China and US. It is difficult to say as to how exactly things will shape up, but it is likely to move from unipolar to multipolar world order. While geopolitical rivalry and quest for dominance is an ongoing process, it is for the first time that India is placed astride the centre stage of this power competition. Given the arterial trade and energy routes passing through the region, unhindered flow of maritime trade through the Indo-Pacific Region assumes significance in economic terms. It is here that India has a role to play in shaping the global economic and security paradigms. There is renewed interest from the world powers to engage with India as the strategic need to preserve peace, promote stability and maintain security across the Indo Pacific Region as a global imperative. In military terms, we need to build deterrence, protect our sovereignty and maintain a credible presence in areas of our interest. For building military capability we need to invest in developing futuristic technologies and achieve self reliance in military hardware production. Partnering with like minded countries would play a key role. Issue based convergence appears to be the norm. We need to cultivate and enthuse new partners. Protecting our core national interests would want us to keep pace with the changing times, adapt to evolving geo-strategic canvas and anticipate change and prepare for it.

2. The article titled “Iran and the Turmoil in West Asia” authored by Shri Sanjay Singh, IFS (Retd) focuses on tension in and around the Persian Gulf. The author is of the view that if conflict involves Iran also, it would be devastating for the region and harmful for the global economy. With the reimposition of US sanctions, Iran is no longer keeping nuclear development programme on hold. With tense atmosphere, situation can spiral out of control causing tremendous damage. From Indian perspective, peace and stability in the region are very important. Presence of over eight million Indians in the

Gulf Region contribute substantially to the Indian economy. India imports oil from the Region to meet most of her energy requirement. Removal of sanctions on Iran would be in Indian interest. For countering threat emanating from Pakistan-Afghanistan terrorist elements, Iran shares Indian objective. Iran provides India a conduit for outreach to Central Asia through Chabahar port and further link with International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) to facilitate trade. India should join proactively in efforts promoting peace in the Region.

3. The article titled “Emerging Geo-Political Trends in the Indo-Pacific : Implications and Way Ahead” by Major General Rajiv Narayanan, AVSM, VSM (Retd) makes interesting reading. There is a shift in maritime trade from the Atlantic and the Pacific towards the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR). Xi Jinping sees it as an opportunity for China to occupy the vacuum within the Indo-Pacific due to USA’s strategic retreat. China has clubbed the existing and planned infrastructure projects under the “Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)” to gain geopolitical space in Asia. The objective appears to be a phased commercial penetration through these projects and sell a short term ‘economic dream’ to the nations on its periphery. These projects do not appear to be viable due to high rate of commercial interest and are likely to cause financial hardship and debt trap. Through this venture China hopes to gain geopolitical space necessary for China to become a ‘Great Power’ by 2050. The emerging powers of the Region including India need to utilise this window of opportunity to provide alternative economic model to assist small nations to ensure stability in the Region. The Article provides an analysis of the US and China strategies. India needs to be cautious and guard her national interests.

4. The article titled “India’s Strategic Calculus : Reconciling Strategic Autonomy vis-à-vis Engagement with Great Powers” authored by Shri PS Raghavan, IFS (Retd) has brought out that a post Cold War world order is in the making as the sole super power shares the global stage with multiple states with varying influence and national inspirations. India’s effort is to maximize her political and economic space. This includes developing vibrant India-US strategic partnership, while preserving relationship with Russia from the decades of the Cold War. India needs a

combination of domestic capability building and external partnerships to manage contradictory pulls and strategic cooperation and competition with China. Relations with US, Russia, Europe, Japan and Australia are also important for success of this effort. India's strategy in the Indo-Pacific Region seeks to promote bilateral and multilateral partnerships to attain the objective of multi-polar world order. The author has suggested that template for relations with great powers should be akin to joint venture, where partners cooperate for mutual benefit in areas of convergence and yet are free to form other partnerships to pursue their interests, as long as they do not impact core interests of joint venture partners. This could be the basis of India's relations with US and Russia.

5. The article titled "Space the Next Frontier: Opportunities and Challenges for India" authored by Air Marshal Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) is futuristic in nature. Space warfare may take place in outer space. It includes attacking objects in space from the Earth or from other space platforms. International treaties to regulate conflicts in space and limit installation of space and nuclear weapon systems are already in place. China has acquired effective space capability. India has also been slowly building its capability. Space assets will act as force multipliers and play a vital role in formulation of strategies. Space-based systems have enabled improvement in acquisition and accuracy of military intelligence, thus enhancing capability and fire power. India needs a permanent space station. India is among the top six space powers in the world. Space appears to be the future for all military actions.

Current issue of the journal has 12 articles in all. These make interesting reading. Review of the following books has been published in this Journal :-

- (a) K File : The Conspiracy of Silence.
By Bashir Assad.
Reviewed by Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd).
- (b) India the Future of South Asia : Rise of the New Power of Peace.
By Karan Kharab.
Reviewed by Maj Gen Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd).

- (c) Crisscrossing Paths : Through Sorrow, Joy, Departure, Reunion.
By William Hawke.
Reviewed by Maj Gen Rajiv Narayanan, AVSM, VSM (Retd).
- (d) Bugle Calls : A Life in the Indian Army.
By Lt Col Naresh Rastogi (Retd) and Shri Kiran Doshi, IFS (Retd)
Reviewed by Lt Gen YM Bammi (Retd).
- (e) The Forgotten Few: The Indian Air Force in World War II.
By KS Nair.
Reviewed by Gp Capt Sharad Tewari, VM (Retd).
- (f) Major Tom's War.
By Vee Walker,
Reviewed by Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd).

Major General Y K Gera (Retd)