

Review Article

India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship*

Sharat Sabharwal

Introduction

Conundrum meaning “a confusing and difficult problem or question” is used often and with good reason — in respect of India and Pakistan. While Stephen Cohen’s “Shooting for A Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum” published in 2013 analyses the conundrum with a global perspective hyphenating India and Pakistan, this book analyses the issue from the perspective of Pakistan being India’s conundrum. Born out of the Partition in 1947, from its inception Pakistan turned into an authoritarian state at heart as its founding father MA Jinnah concentrated power in himself by becoming the Governor General, a position held in Independent India by Lord Mountbatten. The governor-general had the power to choose and appoint the Council of Ministers and could dismiss them under his discretion. Mountbatten was Governor General for 10 months and in this time let Indian democracy take root. Jinnah was Governor General for just over a year till his demise and left an authoritarian legacy which has persisted in Pakistan. Concentration of power in the hands of the establishment has remained the norm. Authoritarianism peaked under military rule, but the spells of democracy failed to usher in reform. While Jinnah and Ayub Khan regarded religion as a cultural marker and Zia solidified it — since their time the Islamists have gradually prevailed. As the title of the book says, it would be of help to those wanting to learn about the intractable conflict in the India-Pakistan relationship, for managing it or even understanding it in the context of general knowledge. It’s a Gordian Knot which even Alexander would have been vexed to open.

The Author

Mr Sharat Sabharwal the author of this book was a career diplomat of the 1975 batch of the Indian Foreign Service. As a civil servant

**India's Pakistan Conundrum: Managing a Complex Relationship. By Sharat Sabharwal; Publisher: Routledge, London & New York (February 2022); Pages 228; Price Rs 995/-; ISBN: 978-1-032-37431-4 (Hardcover).*

Journal of the United Service Institution of India, Vol. CLII, No. 629, July-September 2022.

and career diplomat, he held several positions of responsibility, including being the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the UN in Geneva (1999-2002), Ambassador to Uzbekistan (2002-2005), High Commissioner to Pakistan (2009-2013) and the Central Information Commissioner (2013-2017). Mr. Sabharwal has been an author at the Indian Express, The Hindu, India Today, The Tribune and The Wire. This is his first book.

The Book

The book is divided into two parts with six and twelve chapters respectively. Part I is 'The Pakistan State' and it provides a background covering the nature of the Pakistani state, its internal dynamics and how all this impacts India. This enables the reader to better comprehend Part II which is 'India-Pakistan relations and India's policy options'. This part covers the key issues of the bilateral relationship, appraises a range of policy options and offers a way forward.

Part I

Sharat Sabharwal provides a brief and easy to assimilate account of the relationship between India and Pakistan, tracing the religious extremism and Muslim divide within Pakistan — sometimes with political or military patronage. This has given disproportionate influence to religious groups. This influence has however, till now, not reflected in a clear victory to extremist political parties because the agenda for the voter when it finally comes down to it, is to yearn for economic prosperity. Over a period of time it has become evident that such prosperity if sought by being a rentier state will make only a very small proportion of the elite richer without benefitting the general populace.

Though the author does not state, this but in the perception of the reviewer — gleaned from what the author writes in Part I about education as a purveyor of anti-Indianism — both India and Pakistan suffer from "illusory truth effect," a glitch in the human psyche that equates repetition with truth. As the author states Pakistanis right from their primary education are taught that India and Hindus are evil and tend to believe it, in the same manner Indians after reading and hearing repeated references to Pakistan being a debtor failed state believe that this is actually

so. However, as the chapters of Part II bring out, Pakistan is nowhere near that though these frailties do make it vulnerable to fissiparous pressures.

In Chapter three of Part I, the author covers the civil-military imbalance in a succinct brief which makes the subject very clear to even a lay reader. A reader who wants to read in greater detail is advised to read a number of books dedicated to this imbalance such as Christophe Jaffrelot's "The Pakistan Paradox Instability and Resilience" from the perspective of a Western author, Ayesha Siddiq's "Military Inc. Inside Pakistan's Military Economy", from the perspective of a Pakistani-American historian. Obviously, writing on the subject while being based in Pakistan is something inadvisable. The author states that though Pakistan is a dysfunctional state because of its civil-military imbalance yet it is nowhere close to a being a 'failed state'.

The author brings out that Pakistan faces existential challenges ranging from ethnic strife to Islamism, two sources of instability which hark back to elite domination. A major and powerful part of the elite is the army which sees little sense in normalising relations with India. Based upon his ground knowledge the author is sanguine that the resilience of the country and its people, the resolve of the judiciary and hints of reform in the army may open a new and more stable chapter in its history.

Part II

Part II forms more than 60 per cent of the book and this is rightly so because the aim of the author in analysing this conundrum is to try to recommend a way out of the maze. Doing this in respect of India's Pakistan conundrum is no easy task since a number of factors make this intractable.

The author's firm conviction which comes through his writing a number of times in the book is that Pakistan is here to stay, and any strategy based upon its breaking up is bound to go wrong. The author states that all-out war is not a good idea. India's tactical military options to deter Pakistan from its terrorist strategy may carry only temporary impact because heightening tensions to whip up nationalism to garner votes or internal support is a time-tested strategy. Though there are strident cries for abrogating the Indus Water Treaty whenever Pakistan indulges in

an outrageous act of terrorism, the author explains why coercion through water or trade does not work — the act may lead to the same being justified to be used against India, by China, where India is the lower riparian. With the very close China-Pakistan relationship which leads to a collusive threat, Pakistan is now part of India's China problem. In the case of trade, it may not work since the volumes are too small. We have seen in the case of trade sanctions against Iran or in the aftermath of the war in Ukraine against Russia, that trade sanctions may engender some hardship for the people of a country, but never reach a stage of coercion where they capitulate.

Sharat Sabharwal favours a pragmatic approach that stresses the region's co-prosperity, in which Pakistan will realise it has more to gain by bettering itself economically than pulling India down. The author acknowledges that this realisation may take time to dawn on Pakistan, but he states that surely and steadily this is happening. However, with every one step forward chance or engineered incidents lead to a step back — as Pakistan's identity crisis comes in the way of rational decision-making and better sense. Closer to the end of the book in his recommendations Sabharwal has a word of advice for India too. He states that if India wants to change Pakistan's behaviour, there is work to be done at home too. He says that this is not just about military strength and counter-terror capabilities. It is about denying Pakistan opportunities to fish in troubled waters. This can be done by putting India's own house in order, including in Jammu & Kashmir, rebuilding what used to be the broad national consensus on foreign policy that no longer exists, and avoiding a tit for tat show of nastiness towards the neighbour. A smaller neighbour will always feel threatened by the bigger entity next to it as happens in the case of India and China. However, with China, a system has been worked out that regardless of the tensions and intractability of the border issue, in matters of trade there continues to be forward momentum. In time it may be the intermeshing of economies which provides greater incentive to find a solution to a conflict.

Sabharwal narrates past diplomatic and political initiatives to find a solution to this conundrum. He narrates how in the not-too-distant past, the two sides were prepared to put aside differences and make rational choices. This was in the trade negotiations between 2011 and 2012. Later also after Nawaz Sharif was elected

in 2013 his government decided to take up the final trade agreement with India once again. This is especially interesting after the Imran Khan government in 2021 did a U-turn on the decision to reopen the Wagah border for limited trade in sugar and cotton making a precondition for its resumption contingent on India's August 2019 decisions on Kashmir. The author writes that soon after his retirement, he came to know from his contacts in official circles which were still existing till then, that if necessary, the UPA government was prepared in 2013 to attempt to complete the trade normalisation process. But the momentum slowed. A retired Pakistani official told Sabharwal that their side through backchannels had been advised that that Nawaz Sharif should wait and sign the trade deal with the incoming BJP government as a BJP victory in the 2014 elections was a clear possibility. But this remained a missed opportunity.

The other chapters in Part II which make very good and educative reading are concerning the backchannel process and the omnipresent nuclear dimension. The final three chapters convey that there can still be a way to resolve the conundrum. The author brings out the silver linings in the shape of firstly, an increasingly vocal constituency in Pakistan which realises the benefits of a rapprochement; secondly, the information revolution globally which has made it difficult for the security establishment to control the narrative, and thirdly, after the end of the Musharraf regime the image of the army has reduced and it gets questioned in varied ways by various constituencies on its self-propped claim of being the final arbiter of Pakistan's destiny.

Conclusion

Sharat Sabharwal's book takes a very detailed look with a first-person insight, covering all aspects of very vexed and complicated relationship and an intractable dispute. It gives out an historical context, the contours and evolution of the issues confronting both countries and also gives a glimpse of the challenges faced by those responsible for maintaining the security and integrity of the borders which are perceived differently by both countries. The book covers the nature of this relationship. The book is highly recommended for those who wish to understand the military, political and social dimensions of India-Pakistan relations. Unfortunately, the peace that should be there in the interest of both countries and especially Pakistan is wanting. It is an imperative

for both the prosperity and the development which has eluded us as mistrust still dominates the narrative between the two countries. The LoC cannot be resolved without keeping the talks channel open and as the author states, realising that “India has to deal with Pakistan as it is and not as India wants it to be”. He is an exponent of the view that talking does not imply a concession and “need not result in a concession unless India decides to make one”. The author’s voice is one of reason, the politics of muscular nationalism often drowns such voices in both India and Pakistan. In Pakistan this suits not only domestic politics but also the army’s agenda.

Lt Gen Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Book Reviews

Military Musings: 150 Years of Indian Military Thought from the Journal of the United Service Institution of India. *Edited by Sqn Ldr Rana T.S. Chhina, MBE; (Speaking Tiger Books, New Delhi, February 2021); Pages: 456; Price: Rs 899/-; ISBN 978-93-90477-38-8.*

This is a remarkable anthology of articles published over 150 years, culled from the pages of Journal of the United Service Institution of India (USI). It is remarkable in the sense that articles cover a wide range of subjects from thoughts on strategy for national defence, changing nature of warfare, scientific and technological advancements, military campaigns, regimental histories, training and man management, customs, traditions and military ethics, personal reminiscences and even on ghosts in military stations.

There are a total of 50 articles; 25 were written by British officers before Independence, the balance was by Indians after India's Independence. While there is confluence of thought between British and Indian writers on many issues, for example, that India's defence was not confined to national borders but its strategic frontiers extended beyond to sea and buffer states. Reading through the articles it becomes evident that the British nurtured the Indian Army to serve imperial interests. The introduction of martial races theory was divisive; it kept other than those designated martial from enrolling in the army (Lt Col G Hunter Thompson 1871) but it served British interests. For better or for worse, groups once designated as 'martial races' still tend to carry that badge with pride. However, there are many articles by British Service officers and officials that point to their pragmatism and foresight in administration and study of racial and geographical characteristics of peoples - a few sample observations - 'they (Chinese) are stately and deliberate and will not be hurried' (Lt Young Husband 1889): 'as soldiers they (Dogras) are not remarkable for daring or impetuous bravery but they are valuable for quiet unflinching courage, patient endurance of fatigue' (Lt Col JJH Gordon 1874).

The regimental history is a unique record of the service and achievements of a regiment. The anthology includes an article titled 'Indian Regimental Histories' (Hyderabad 1929). The author went through the full collection of histories of Indian regiments; his

observation that despite a few exceptions most regimental histories were scanty and of little historical value is valid even today. Research before writing was lackadaisical then and is no better today but the main problem lay in 'astonishing unevenness' of digest of services; most were so sketchy as to be of any value as primary source for compiling regimental histories. The author lists the following essentials to be regarded as 'standard': good printing, adequate binding, bibliography, index, illustrations, maps and appendices. In the present context, authors of regimental histories are not free to include actual maps of unit /formation's operations because these have yet to be declassified by the Ministry, although more than 30 years may have elapsed since.

There is an interesting article (Maj Gen D Hunt 1967) in response to correspondence on 'Tradition' published in USI Journal. There were two opposing views: There were those who regard much of army's tradition as legacy of the British and as such alien, and ripe to be discarded, while there were others who argue that army's traditions are not made solely by officers but is built up over the years, revered by all ranks and for this reason it will be disaster to abandon them. The author goes on to argue that much of the conflicting views arise because the difference between customs and traditions is not understood. Tradition is handed down from ancestors to posterity while custom is usual practice of doing things. For example, customs followed in Officers' messes, such as, passing the port, not mentioning ladies' name in the mess, and so in and so forth, are hardly traditions. They are customs, which were created in the British image and therefore are discarded. Regimental tradition is quite different. The conduct of 36th Sikhs at Saragarhi or 13 Kumaon at Rezengla (1962) or 3 Jat in the Battle of Dograi (1965) has become cherished tradition of the Indian Army.

In recent years the celebration of anything associated with our colonial past or foreign rule or foreign origin is considered slavish. For example, Beating retreat ceremony, which marks the end of Republic day celebrations, concluded with the soulful rendition of Mahatma Gandhi's favorite Christian hymn 'Abide with Me'. There are many who attend the ceremony repeatedly for the joy of listening to its moving rendition. The hymn has now been replaced by a very popular emotional song by the legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar but hardly appropriate for the occasion.

Surprisingly, articles written by Indian military officers and others after independence are quite perceptive. 'Peace Making and War Making in the Twentieth Century' (KM Panikkar 1956) provides an insight into the transformation of war into 'total war' as opposed to wars in the previous century, which was essentially limited war. Despite strategic analysts like Panikkar and other service officers having analyzed the nature of future wars and transformation of interstate relations realistically, yet, the Indian State failed to foresee the consequences of China's occupation of Tibet and had to face an ignominious defeat in NEFA in 1962.

There are many articles of contemporary relevance; 'Religious Instruction in the Army' (1960), 'The Girls they left Behind' (1944), 'Tips from the Subedar Major' (1965): the Indian soldier has always been seeker of divine; for him religion is as important as physical and professional education. Guided by the past experience, religious instruction in the Indian Armed Forces is devoid of communalism and sectarianism. The thought that 'India's superb fighting men will be marching home again to the girls they left behind' is revealing. Separated families are no longer in 'pardah'; Family welfare Centre's of units have enlarged the scope of welfare; soldiers' wives have learnt that they are 'home makers' and have a great share in making a happy family and keeping their husbands on righteous path. 'Tips from a Subedar Major' (1965) — 'Roko Toko' —, is simple down to earth but is full of gravitas. The Subedar Major's prescription to his commanding officer to improve discipline is 'roko toko', implying that a leader has to be upright all the time to have the moral authority to tick off those who cut corners, disobey orders and treat unit's valued customs casually.

There are two articles on declining military ethics; An Officer and a Gentleman (Brig NB Grant 1978) and 'Passing It On' (Brig SC Sardeshpande 1982). Brig Grant laments that an officer still remains an officer but his image as a Gentleman is vastly eroded; he no longer placed on the same pedestal of trust that he once was. Of all the reasons, the most responsible for this is tolerance of lack of integrity, which is fast reaching epidemic proportion. Sardeshpande's article is personalised but is an honest appraisal of good and successful officer. He makes a very subtle difference between the two: 'The good officer contributes, but pays a price. The successful officer extracts and manipulates the price. The former is closer to the professional ethic and finds joy in doing his

bit irrespective of upset or success. The latter derives joy mainly in success, but incidentally adds to professional competence of the army as a whole.' Point to ponder.

One of the last articles is on 'Naxalite Problem' (Lt Gen KM Seth 2005). Left Wing Extremism poses a serious threat to the stability of Indian society. Lt Gen Seth examines the internal security challenges from varying perspectives and recommends the road ahead for policy makers. The last article is 'Anniversary of the Battle of Kohima' (Maj Gen Pk Goswami 2019). The remembrance of the battle is relevant. The thought of sworn enemies of the Second World War - Japan and the British forces (mostly Indians) coming together at Kohima for the 75th Anniversary of the epic battle is reminder of the changing fortunes of time. In this chaotic world, there are no permanent enemies.

'Military Musings; 150 years of Indian Military Thought' deserves a place in all public libraries. This excellent anthology must be read by the younger generation of officers for 'A nation that forgets its past has no future.'

Brig (Dr) SP Sinha, VSM (Retd)

House of Terror: An Insider's True Story. By Anwar (Ikhwan code name Umar); (New Delhi: Kautilya Books, April 2022); Pages: 183; Price: Rs 399/-; ISBN: 978-93-90885-72-5 (Paperback).

Anwar (Ikhwan code Umar) invites readers into the house of terrors with a disquiet yet benign assurance of a peaceful Kashmir. Although, in today's popular narrative, Kashmir is a place where militants rule the roost, unfortunately, it is identified as just that. This book is a collection of disappeared thoughts and notes written across a sea of experiences and reflections by an ex-Ikhwan member- Anwar. The writer leads off with a brief exegesis of Pakistan's involvement in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and its subsequent reverberations as Kashmiri youth join militant organisations and encourage white-collar terror groups, all under the garb of religion. The pro-Indian government militia, Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen- which functioned against Pakistan-backed militants in Kashmir- was born in 1993 by Kuka Parray, a well-known local folk singer. Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen was later rechristened as JK Ikhwan (friends of Jammu Kashmir); the group primarily assisted the government in ensuring security and logistics and served as polling staff for untroubled and active assembly elections.

After spending three years in POK, Pakistan and Afghanistan for training, Anwar headed to Kashmir in 1992 and joined the Ikhwan in 1994. What instantly pulls the reader in is the substructure titles and chapterisation adopted by the author over the course of his narration. He chronicles assuming a new identity, Khalid (meaning eternal), as he left for Pakistan. Nevertheless, we find one whole chapter of Anwar explaining his former identity as a son, brother, diligent student and above all, a Kashmiri who aspires to undergo rehabilitation and witness constructive peace in the Paradise of Earth. The author's journey from Anwar to Khalid to Umar recalibrates the power of core identity, longing for effectual peace and security that never entirely withdrew from his selfhood despite his engagement with militants.

Among the plethora of issues gripping Kashmir, the book indulges in important developments in the valley, such as the business of smuggling young Kashmiris to POK, traces of heavy financing by the ex-army Pakistani chiefs on Jihadi training, manipulated crime reporting sponsored by Pakistani intelligence, Operation Balakot, ISI plans to target Chinara Crops office, K2 movements and much more. The heavy socio-political events are at the helm of the narration as they deeply affected Anwar's evolution. For a reader sitting miles away, this account serves as a peak into the fervour of Kashmiris that remain majorly unknowable through doctored media, or in most cases, with no coverage at all. Anwar's plight of growing up in a trauma-stricken land is intensively unpacked; what is especially chilling is his decision to pick up an AK-47, and training in POK was initially piloted by protecting his father from the terrorists. The protagonist's transformation into a member of the counter-terrorism group came with its own set of challenges as he incurred financial crunches, a threat to life, lack of disbandment benefits or rehabilitation schemes from the Army and the Indian government. The final chapter- "Untouchables Again", truthfully examines the trials Anwar faced, both psychological and social, after joining the JK-Ikhwan. Rung at the bottom of economic gains, there came a time when Anwar struggled to find solace in his decision to help the Indian Army.

Moreover, the Ikhwani and their families were reupdated from religious gatherings and social events and termed 'traitors' of Kashmir. Anwar recalls how at the behest of the Kashmiri elites, which he believed were influenced by Pakistan, locals openly rallied

against Ikhwan as social pariahs. The author frustratingly unveils the fallacies in policy by the Indian Government and Army mirrored in the lack of safeguarding schemes offered by them. Due to frequent postings, weak institutional mechanisms, and a lack of sentimental understanding towards the Ikhwanis, there brewed a feeling of neglect and loneliness in their quest for ideological redirection.

Every terror organisation is spearheaded by the question, why? Why is it essential for them to go on? What is the motive behind unwarranted massacre and ferocity? Once their members lose confidence over the answer to why the group struggles to thrive on impressionable minds. There is a quote in the chapter "Umar's Soul searching while in Ikhwan-ul-Muslimeen", which says, "...with Jihad nowhere in sight, the sentiment for it began gradually losing its hold on him". House of terrors, as the name suggests touches raw nerves teeming with horrors of facts and fiction overshadowing Kashmir. Anwar's story serves as a severe interjection in fractionating the role of the state, Army and other security bodies in Kashmir's conflict reconstruction post abrogation of article 370. It is only by asking questions like how serious, or rather tight, the state policies, particularly the ones in Srinagar and Delhi, in defusing insurgency and safeguarding ex-militants who chose to fight for Kashmir, can we begin to fructify Ikhwani's sincere contributions. In the foreword Lt Gen AK Bhatt, who got acquainted with Anwar during his posting as a Corps Commander of XV Corps in Srinagar, hopes for him to republish his story under his original name and reclaim the identity which once got crushed under the weight of trepidation and terror.

Ms Samriddhi Roy

The Lurking Hydra: South Asia's Terror Travail. By Lt Gen Subroto Mitra; (Pentagon Press LLP, New Delhi, April 2022); Pages: 216; Price: Rs.462/-; ISBN: 9789390095551.

A superfluity of reasons and circumstances in South Asia has given rise to an 'insecurity community' which has played into the hands of local and international terrorists, thus becoming a broad incubator of terrorism and posing additional challenges of violence, terrorism, and instability across the entire Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

A highly decorated soldier for operations where he had played a sterling role makes General Subroto Mitra just the right person to assess the terror travails of South Asia. His excellent command over the English language, military acumen, and eye for detail, his astute observation and understanding of the unfolding geopolitical drama combined with the panoply of experiences in counter insurgency operations played their role in shaping the articulate author in him.

I have read and re read the book all in order to savour the profound professional philosophy and thought of Gen Subroto Mitra. The book in its finished form bespeaks the intellectual reach of his knowledge and military acumen, and reflects the strength of his persona in professional field and elsewhere. Frankly, the lucidity of the book is such, that on turn of each page I feel myself looking at Gen Mitra and tending to find myself in dialogue with him.

The General presents a meticulous as well as itemised account of the dawning of terrorism in the South Asia combined with the travails of the nations in the region. The author's purpose in writing the book is to lay bare before the reader, the origins of an insidious process that ultimately metastasized into a sprawling beast, threatening our very existence. Noteworthy is the penetrating reason and rationale with which he examines current developments that are having an unnerving effect to further enervate the dangerously careening peace and conflict balance in the region.

Reader will be stunned to learn the true extent of the planned disorder behind the scenes and to find how well the arguments in book mesh with the facts of our live experiences. He explains how a 'Mumbai type carnage could trigger retaliatory air strikes on Pakistani economic and nuclear assets followed by an expanded canvass of war drawing in the USA, Russia and Israel to the conflict triggered by Pakistani sponsored global terror groups'. He observes the shortcomings, both major and minor, of the concerned nations in addressing the menace in its initial stages with insightful reflections. The book offers a compelling, and at times chilling, expose on how this multi headed organism, with its far-reaching tentacles, arrived where it is today. But while the causes leading to the rise of terror are blasted, that is only one facet of the book.

It is with logical eloquence that he presents his views regarding solutions to counter the medusa head; by strengthening the regional

cooperative mechanism and forging new avenues for joint action. He offers area wise recommendations to counter terrorism in a comprehensive, integrated manner.

Gen Mitra's conviction of power of volition in countering the surge is an inspiring aspect of the book. Certain Reforms in SAARC Development Bank, Societal and Media Responsibilities, Corporate initiatives are some of the tools that he suggests. 'Capacity building in youth', 'nimbleness of thought and action by the governments' as being the precise requirement in dealing with the emergent situations speak volumes about his in depth understanding of generators of terror and his penchant for their systematic erasure. Dr Jamadagni, HOD, Defence and Strategic Studies, University of Madras have aptly stated, 'Though the book talks extensively on the South Asian Region, it offers immense scope for interpretation for other terror affected areas of the world'.

The best feature of the book is its writing style. Far from being a dry military work, the narrative is totally engrossing and absolutely enlightening. A must read not only for military personnel but anyone interested in understanding the reasons for the rise of terror, especially in South Asia. It is worth delving into this deeply analytical and very well worded work to capture the thrust of his thinking - which is to seek solutions. Indeed, a well-constructed, well written, book worthy of your time and attention.

Col Shanti Swaroop (Retd)

Heroes of 1971: The Braveheart of the War That Gave Birth to Bangladesh. Edited by *Rajesh Ramachandran*; (*Harper Collins India, 16 January 2022*); Pages: 272; Price: 399/-; ISBN: 978-93-54893216.

The Tribune Group has published stories relating to the 1971 conflict to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of what is easily considered as India's finest hour. The stories particularly relate to the heroic deeds of our soldiers, many of whom did not return home but their sacrifices enabled the country to win the war. In the march to free Dacca, Lieutenant General SS Mehta, then a Squadron Commander, talks about the battle of Akhura and the way General Sagat Singh seized a fleeting opportunity by crossing the Meghna River and headed for Dacca the strategic centre of gravity even though it was 'beyond his brief'. Admiral Arun Prakash writes

about how the Indian Navy employed 'the full gamut of their maritime capabilities' unfortunately their successes did not stamp the vital role of this Service in the minds of the decision makers.

Rajesh Ramachandran while analysing the role of a leader in the conflict and of strong institutions wonders whether today's leaders 'can repeat Indira's feat while presiding over people anxious about discord and dissension within the nation'.

Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam talks about the air operations and how the IAF showcased its prowess in the strategic, operational and tactical domains while orchestrating air operations that were meticulously planned and 'delivered disproportionate results in the battle for Bangladesh'.

Lieutenant General Sujana writes about the 'born to battle' officers, those commissioned just before the war, many of whom would not return. He writes of the exploits of Second Lieutenant Ashok Taskar of 9 PARA (SF) at Poonch against an enemy infiltrating column, the exemplary courage of Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal of Poona Horse at Basantar where a Pakistan Brigadier has stated; he stood like an unsurmountable rock between victory and defeat of the counter attack by Pakistan's 13 LANCERS. Major General Randhir Singh who served as the ADC to General Sagat Singh has written a wonderful tribute to him, highlighting both his professional competence and personal qualities. There is no doubt that 'he was ruthless in pursuit of his vision but ensured that his troops and commanders were imbibed with enthusiasm for it'.

The book is full of wonderful pieces such as Ajay Banerjee's telling us how General Jacob gave General Niazi 'thirty minutes to reconsider the decision not to surrender'; a simple but stern message that forced General Niazi to surrender the same evening. Wing Commander Bhalla's account about two officers who had been in the same training institute now faced each other one of whom was now a prisoner of war but in true soldierly tradition the Indian Colonel still addressed the captured Pakistani Commodore as Sir. The stories include those of Veer Naris and are a part of 'the tapestry that is the Indian Army'.

The second part of the book covers individual stories of the gallantry award winners those who have won the Param Vir Chakra and Maha Vir Chakra. Ordinary men who have performed

extraordinary feats and who willingly put the honour of the country above all. These are the deeds that continue to inspire the next generations and represent the finest spirit of our Armed Forces. The names and valliant deeds of Major Hoshiar Singh of 3 GRENADIERS during the battle of Jarpal, Second Lieutenant Arun Kheterpal of Poona Horse during the battle of Basantar, Lance Naik Albert Ekka of 14 GUARDS at GangaSagar and Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon, the first Air Force PVC awardee at Srinagar will always continue to inspire future generations. Three of the four laid down their lives unmindful of their personal safety putting the honour of the country and the units above all.

The book has also documented all the seventy-six Maha Vir Chakra winners of the 1971 war. Of these fifty-seven are from the Army which include two Brigadier Sant Singh and Brigadier (later General) Arun Vaidya who got a Bar to the Maha Vir Chakra. Eleven are from the Air Force many of whom went on to become Air Marshal including Air Chief Marshal SK Kaul and eight are from the Navy which include Captain Mahendra Nath Mulla who in the highest traditions of the Navy chose to go down with INS Khukri on 04 December 1971.

Heroes of 1971 tells the stories of fearless warriors and brave hearts who fought these battles to give India what is considered its most conclusive victory as also created Bangladesh. It is written by several eminent people who were either part of the conflict or have carried out extensive research on the war. These are stories of remarkable gallantry, determination against all odds, upholding honour and valour in the finest traditions and self-sacrifice needs to be passed on to future generations. The book edited by Rajesh Ramachandran is a fitting tribute to the fearless courage and commitment of our soldiers and is an inspiration for the readers.

Maj Gen Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

Valour & Wisdom: 100 Years of Unparalleled Leadership.
Edited by Air Marshal PP Reddy and Mr Sidharth Mishra;
(Published by Rimcollian Old Boys Association (ROB), January 2022); Pages: 495; Price: Rs 2095/-; ISBN: 978-93-5607-596-2 (Hardcover).

The story of RIMC is the story of Indianisation of the officer cadre of the British Indian Army. Due to persistent demands from the

national leadership, particularly after the World War I where more than 70,000 Indian sacrificed their lives in support of the Allied forces, the British relented and set up the Prince of Wales Royal Indian Military College (PWRIMC) at the Dehradun in March 1922. The college came up on the campus of the erstwhile Imperial Cadet College, popularly known as the Rajwada Camp, as the Indian royalty was trained there. The PWRIMC was inaugurated on 13 March 1922 by the Prince of Wales, Prince Edward VIII, and set up on the pattern of British public schools to groom the selected Indian boys for entry into the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, UK, before awarding them Royal commission.

In March 2022, the college, renamed as Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) post-Independence, completed 100 years and celebrated its Centenary. This book is the story of 100 years of RIMC – not of a century of existence in brick and mortar, but of the leadership its alumni have provided at various stages of evolution of our nation. The book is not a glossy coffee table book, nor a compilation of various achievements of its Old Boys, known as the Rimcollians. It is a story of leadership – mainly in military – but also in diverse fields such as administration, governance, and corporate sector, of its Old Boys who went on to occupy critical positions, rose to become military chiefs in various countries, influenced policy, and contributed significantly to the growth of strategic culture in India.

The Rimcollian Old Boys Association (ROBA) was formed in August 1949. The ROBA office bearers have several defining moments in the history of its existence. It has been an architect of progress and ably supported the college to maintain highest standards. Most of all, the ROBA has contributed to retaining the exclusive status of the RIMC. The pre-partition Old Boys made efforts at national level, in Track 2 diplomacy to facilitate people to people relations with Pakistan. during the 1990s. As a repository of values and its deep commitment in nation building, the Association and the Alma Mater are committed to take the RIMC to grander levels. The RIMC and the ROBA are the umbilical cord of impregnable bonds between the cadets called 'RIMCOS' and the RIMCOLLIANS.

The Old Boys of RIMC were everywhere. As the title goes, the 'valour' first –Second Lieutenant Premindra Singh Bhagat won

a Victoria Cross at the young age of 22 years in the World War II and was the highest decorated officer in the Indian Army at Indian independence. Post-independence, the first recipient of Param Vir Chakra, was another alumnus of RIMC – Major Somnath Sharma for his actions on 03 November 1947 in defending the Srinagar airport. He died in the Battle of Badgam, but prevented the tribal invaders from advancing towards Srinagar. His younger brother, who followed him in RIMC, went on to become Chief of Army Staff in 1988 - General Vishwa Nath Sharma.

There were other Chiefs from this beautiful 140-acres campus. RIMC produced five Army Chiefs, four of the Indian Army - General KS Thimayya, General Sundararajan Padmanabhan, General GG Bewoor, General VN Sharma, and one of the Pakistan Army - General Gul Hassan Khan. It has also produced four Air Chiefs, two of the Indian Air Force - Air Chief Marshal NC Suri, Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa, and two of the Pakistan Air Force - Air Marshal Asghar Khan and Air Marshal Nur Khan. Their stories, lives, and military leadership, particularly those in India, form an important part of the book.

The initial part covers the Indianisation of Officer Corps and the Great War, the Commandants and Principals, and the Guru-Chela traditions of RIMC. Later, there are debuts of young military leaders from RIMC in World War II, the key role played by Rimcollians in integrating Kashmir with India, and the military leadership provided by Rimcollians in all other wars, conflicts, and operations of post-independence. During the 1971 War with Pakistan, three of the four Army Commanders were Rimcollians – Lt Gen CP Candeth, Lt Gen PS Bhagat and Lt Gen GG Bewoor. The trend has continued. In 1998, Group Capt AG Bewoor, a Rimcollian, flew the first IL-76 aircraft to Male in Operation Cactus; and in the 2019 Balakot air strikes by India, the Air Chief and the AOC-in-C Western Air Command – Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa and Air Marshal C Hari Kumar respectively – were Rimcollians.

An interesting chapter is the role of Rimcollians in shaping the strategic culture of India. They write, they strategise, and they have quietly worked behind the scenes. Jaideep Saikia and Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam have been leading writers on North East and on India's wars respectively. Other names which ring a bell are Maj Gen Ashok Mehta, Sidharth Mishra and Ali

Ahmed, who are well known writers. The first Chairman of NTRO was a Rimcollian, Major RS Bedi, a brilliant officer. Rimcollians have excelled in diverse fields – they have been diplomats, governors, IAS and IPS officers, and have occupied senior positions in the corporate sector. The book has a separate chapter titled Corporate Centurions, and another for public service. There are adventure narratives – climbing Everest to sailing around the world.

The book is well-researched; there are end-notes and few precious photographs. Reading the book may provide an insight on what makes the RIMC tick – a small bunch of alumni (only less than 50 pass out in a year) punching much above their weight in a diverse and competitive country like India. But then diversity, inclusiveness, and meritocracy is what makes RIMC a successful experiment which smoothly transited from a British-era school to a cradle for excellence in post-independence years. The boys do not come from privileged backgrounds. They are selected on basis of a competitive examination without reservations, a Naga boy meets his classmate from Kerala for the first time, the Masters (teachers in RIMC) are UPSC-recruited, and an Old Boy is the Commandant. The place is egalitarian. The stories are genuine, not everyone is brilliant – some excel in squash (Ritwik Bhattacharya was first Indian to break into top 50 of the PSA World Rankings) more than mathematics. Not everyone is in military. There are Rimcollian Start-ups in California. There are advertising gurus like Suraja Kishore, and actors – such as Sidharth Jyoti in Don (2006) and Rudrashish Mazumdar in Chhichhorey (2019).

The book is readable – any ‘in-my-times’ nostalgia has been weeded by stern editors. There is no glorification or oversimplification. It does not read like a list but like a story, spanning 100 years, commencing in Dehradun, and then meandering all over the Indian sub-continent and the world. In sync with a young, dreamy and growing-up India. It should be read by military readers, history buffs, younger generation – and anyone else who does not yet believe in the India story. The book may convince them.

Col Shailender Arya (Retd)

United Service Institution of India Strategic Year Book 2022.
Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma (Retd), Lt Gen GS Katoch (Retd) & Gp Capt Sharad Tewari (Retd); (Vij Books India Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 2022); Pages: 265; Price: 2250/-; ISBN: 978-93-93499-95-0 (Hardback).

The USI of India Strategic Year Book 2022, which was released on 20 July 2022, continues the writing excellence the publication has established since its first issue in 2016. The book is presented in a 11-inch by 9-inch trim size which is a good size for a reference book of this genre. This makes it equally suitable to be kept on a book shelf or a table. The USI Year Book has gained respected reputation as a compendium of professionally researched and presented strategic issues of relevance to India, of both the current time and previous year. The 2022 issue has 31 comprehensively researched articles on contemporary security studies by knowledgeable Indian strategic thinkers and scholars, both from the military and civil field.

The articles deal with security issues covering international and domestic affairs presented in six thematic sections titled 'India's National Security Overview', 'Internal Security Issues', 'Pakistan-China', 'India's Strategic Neighbourhood', 'Global Issues' and 'National Security Capacity Building'. The lead article by Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar carries out 360-degree geopolitical scan and sets the stage for the articles that follow making them easily comprehensible even by the lay reader. In this issue the first article in section six i.e., National Security Capacity Building is about the 'Transformation of the Indian Military'. This has been compiled by the editorial team from the gist of talks by the three Service Chiefs in August 2021 at the USI. It is particularly valuable to gauge the transformation philosophy of the Services of the Indian military.

Other articles deal with the existing paradigm of India's national security, in particular, with reference to the past 12 months. The articles deal with Kashmir and the North East insurgency challenges, terror finance, Pakistani and Chinese challenges, the Ukraine war, the new cold war and where and how should India align its national interests with respect to that. While it may be out of place in this review to list each and every subject covered or name each and every one of the subject authority authors, it

would suffice to state that the articles contribute to security studies in fields of international relations, geopolitics, changes in the character of war, technology, transformation, organisational changes, space, economic issues connected with defence and internal security threats and responses.

A yearbook by definition presents events of the past year. When it is the yearbook of an organisation or educational institute this is simple. The events covered are from January to December, regardless of when the yearbook gets published. However, a strategic yearbook of the genre of the USI Strategic Yearbook faces a dilemma. In the fluid dynamics of strategic affairs, an article even a month old may appear dated. The authors and editors of the USI Year Book have achieved a balance between recording past events and analysing future impact on global, regional and country specific affairs in its 250 pages and this is what makes the book valuable, as the articles empower the reader to carry out further research on strategic subjects of their interest. In this manner, the Year Book provides an increased 'upstream' focus on defence and security policy practice for all military or civilian practitioners in the field and those researching strategic and security issues.

The Year Book is available in both Hardback paperback and Kindle formats and is a useful addition to private collections, as well as educational and institutional libraries.

Mr Vinayak Sharma

ONLINE CPSC: DSSC/DSTSC-2023

1. Online CPSC will be conducted for Current Affairs (CA), Science & Mil Tech (SMT) and Mil History (MH). Duration will be 14 days. Tentative schedule and fees for subscription are as under:-

Course	Nature of Course	Duration of Course	Fees
DSSC/ DSTSC (Army)	CPSC 2023	20 Feb - 04 Mar 06 Mar - 18 Mar 20 Mar - 01 Apr 03 Apr - 15 Apr 01 May - 13 May 15 May - 27 May	(a) All Three Subjects - Rs 15000/- (13500/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees). (b) Two Subjects - Rs 13000/- (11500/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees). (c) One Subject - Rs 7500/- (6000/- CPSC+1500/- USI membership fees). (d) Existing members will deposit only subscription fees.

2. Registration will open from 01 Oct 2022 onwards.

USI LATEST PUBLICATION DURING 2021-2019

Pub Code	Title of Book & Name of Author	Price(Rs)	Year
Adm-4 (UNPO)/ 2021)**	"UN Peace Operations Part - IV : Protection of Civilians" Edited by Maj Gen AK Bardalai and Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM (Retd)	295	2021
CMHCS-3	"WITH HONOR AND GLORY - Five Great Artillery Battles" By Maj Gen AJS Sandhu, VSM (Retd) Published by USI (CMHCS)	–	2020
R-105**	"Tao of Soldiering the Chinese Paradigm – The Shift in Human Resources Development in PLA and Lessons for India" By Col Nihar Kuanr	1995	2020
OP-1/2020**	"The Dynamics of the India – Nepal Relationship" By Lt Gen Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM & VSM (Retd)	295	2020
OP-2/2020**	"Chinese Intransigence in Ladakh : An Overview" By Maj Gen PK Mallick, VSM (Retd)	295	2020
OP-2/2019**	"Unpacking SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)" By Cdr Subhasish Sarangi	150	2020
CMHCS-1	"Traditions and Customs of the Indian Armed Forces" By Brig SP Sinha, VSM (Retd) M/s Manohar Publication, New Delhi	4500	2020
CMHCS-2**	"Laddie Goes to War – Indian Pilots in WWI" By Mr Somnath Sapru	1250	2020
R-106**	"India and China Building Strategic Trust" By Maj Gen Rajiv Narayanan, AVSM, VSM (Retd) & Professor Qiu Yonghui	1950	2020
R-107**	"Strategic Year Book 2020" Edited by Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd) Lt Gen GS Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) and Dr Roshan Khanijo	1850	2020
R-108**	"The End of an Era India Exits Tibet - India Tibet Relations 1947-1962, Part-4" By Claude Arpi	1950	2020
R-109	"China, The Rising Aerospace Power-Implications for India" By Air Marshal Anil Chopra, PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Retd) M/s Pentagon Press	995	2020
R-110	"Non-Contact Warfare : An Appraisal of China's Military Capabilities" By Brig Vivek Verma M/s Pentagon press	1295	2020
Brief History 1870-2020**	"A Brief History of the United Service Institution of India (USI)" By Col VK Singh, VSM (Retd)	750	2020
Adm-1/ 2020	"When Sparrows Flew Like Eagles – 1971 Indo-Pak War of Liberation of Bangladesh" (Memories of a Signal Officer) By Brig M.R. Narayanan, VSM (Retd) (M/s Pentagon Press)		
JC/2020	"Military Musings 150 Years of Indian Military Thought" from the Journal of the United Service Institution of India Edited By Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE M/s Speaking Tiger	1899	2020
GPMST-7/ 2020	"Bajirao I – An Outstanding Cavalry General" By Col RD Palsokar, MC M/s Mervin Technologies, Manoj R, Kelkar, Indranagari, Dahanukar Colony, Kothrud, Pune-411038	525	2020
M/1/2020**	"CDS and Other Reforms – A Midway Milestone" Edited by Col (Dr) Rajneesh Singh	295	2020
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Op-1/2019**	"Kashmir Valley Politics : Alignments and Re-alignments" By Prof Kashi Nath Pandita	150	2019
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R-102**	"Pakistan's Internal Security Challenges and the Army's Ability to Overcome Them" By Brig Shaman Chodha	995	2019
R-103	"China's Strategic Behaviour" By Brig Sanjeev Chauhan (M/s Pentagon Press)	995	2019
CAFHR-40**	"RIDING THE WIND – THE STORY OF ONE OF INDIA'S GREATEST TEST PILOTS" By Wg Cdr P Ashoka (Retd)	850	2019
CAFHR-41**	"Distant Battlefields – The Indian Army in the Second World War" By Harry Fecitt MBE TD	2495	2019
CAFHR-42	"THE KARGIL VICTORY BATTLES FROM PEAK TO PEAK" By Col SC Tyagi (Retd) M/s Speaking Tiger Publishing Pvt Ltd	299	2019
NSS-65**	"Evolving Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Region- Challenges and Prospects" Edited by Cdr Subhasish Sarangi	850	2019

* Available at USI of India ** Available at M/s Vij Books of India Pvt Ltd

USI

(Estd. 1870)

OUR ACTIVITIES

Library and Reading Room

The library holds over 68,000 books, and journals, including some books of 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, on an astonishing variety of subjects. While the principal emphasis is on strategy and defence, there are a large number of works on different vistas of Indian life. There are memoirs, biographies, recollections, diaries, journals, manuscripts for scholars and researchers. The reading room is air-conditioned, spacious and well stocked in terms of current reading material. Library was automated in 2002.

Correspondence Courses

The Institution runs regular correspondence courses for officers of the Armed Forces to assist them in preparing for promotion examinations, and for the entrance examinations to the Defence Services Staff College and Technical Staff College. Over the years, this has been a significant and well-received activity.

USI Journal

The USI Journal is the oldest surviving defence journal in the country and in Asia, having first appeared in 1871. In an era when there is a feeling that free expression of views by Defence personnel is not looked upon kindly by the establishment, the Journal in fact provides just such a forum, without regard to seniority and length of service in the Armed Forces, subject of course, to propriety and quality of the written work.

Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation

The Erstwhile Centre for Research and its resources have been merged into the new Centre named as USI Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (USI-CS3) wef 01 January 2005. The Centre aims at conducting detailed and comprehensive enquiry, research and analyses of national and international security related issues, and gaming and simulation of strategic scenarios, to evolve options for wider discussion and consideration.

USI Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

The Centre was established in 2000 and functioned with USI till Aug 2014, when it moved out of USI premises and was delinked from USI. Its aims were organising workshops, seminars and training capsules for peacekeepers, observers and staff officers – both Indian and foreign. It also oversaw the practical training of Indian contingents. It functioned under a Board of Management headed by the Vice Chief of the Army Staff and worked in close coordination with the Service Headquarters and the Ministries of External Affairs and Defence. In August 2014, CUNPK moved out to the accommodation allotted by the Army HQ.

Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS)

The Centre was established on 01 Dec 2000 and encourages study and research into the history of the Indian Armed Forces with objectivity, covering different facets such as strategy, tactics, logistics, organisation and socio-economic aspects and their implementation.

Gold Medal Essay Competition

Every year the Institution organises a gold medal essay competition open to all officers. These essays, the first one of which was introduced in 1871, constitute a barometer of opinion on matters that affect national security in general and the defence forces in particular.

Lt Gen SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition

This has been instituted from 2015 on a subject related to Armed Forces Historical Research. The Essay Competition is open to all across the globe.

Lectures, Discussions and Seminars

A series of lectures, discussions and seminars on service matters, international affairs, and topics of general interest to the Services, are organised for the benefit of local members in Delhi.

MacGregor Medal

This medal is awarded to Armed Forces personnel for valuable reconnaissance and adventure activity they may have undertaken.

MEMBERSHIP

The following are eligible to become members of the Institution :

- Officers of the Armed Forces
- Class I Gazetted Officers of Group 'A' Central Services.
- Any category mentioned above will be eligible even though retired or released from the Service.
- Cadets from the NDA and Cadets from the Service Academies and Midshipmen.

For further particulars, please write to Director, USI of India, Rao Tula Ram Marg, (Opposite Signals Enclave) Post Bag No. 8, Vasant Vihar PO, New Delhi – 110 057

Printed by Manish Comprint, New Delhi - 110 015 Phone : 011-41037172