Short Reviews of Recent Books

Random Thoughts : National Security and Current Issues. *Air Marshal RS Bedi, AVSM, VM, Retd (New Delhi : Lancers Books, 2006), 376p, Rs. 650.00, ISBN 81-7095-111-9.*

The book is a compilation of articles written by the author during 1994-2005, basically for the press in Chandigarh and published mainly in the *Tribune, Indian Express* and *Hindustan Times* editions printed from that city. There are over a hundred such articles which have been grouped into eight chapters. The book covers a wide canvas, but like all such compilations tends to be repetitive.

Written, as these are, for the lay reader, these articles do not carry out a detailed analysis of national security concerns and the increasing interplay between diplomacy, economics, internal and international policies and the effect of these on national security. Nor are the emerging threats such as energy, water scarcity and environmental degradation covered. Nevertheless, for the lay reader they give a good broad overview of the military and connected diplomatic nuances of national security.

Some of these articles continue to propagate old views, for example the view that national defence was neglected during the Nehru years. The fact is that during 1949-50 to 1962 the Indian Air Force expanded from seven squadrons to 19, practically one new squadron every year - scarcely a case of neglect! Also the Nehruvian policy of 'non-alignment' placed India in a position to be recipient of aid from both the US and Russia after 1962.

The author's views on the management of national security, or the lack of such management, cover familiar ground lucidly but continue to propagate the Air Forces' ambivalence to the concept of a Chief of Defence Staff without proposing any really viable option. The author is at his best when he discusses the Air Force; the problems of the aging fleet, of accidents, of missile defences and the like. However he would do well to reconsider his views on the ubiquity of air power given in the article 'Air Power wins the War Again', referring to the use of air power by the Americans in the Gulf War 2003. The question that arises is, if the war was won as claimed, why is it that there are still some 1,30,000 American ground troops still fighting in an increasingly bloody battle even now. I think the author needs to look at the limitations of air power in asymmetrical warfare. It is possible that he may change his views. The author shows that he can reconsider views as is illustrated in two articles on India sending troops to Iraq. In an article in the *Hindustan Times* dated

23 June 2003, he recommends that India should send troops to Iraq. However, as the situation develops, the author has the courage to change his views and in an article in the same paper dated 13 October 2003 opposes the sending of Indian troops to Iraq.

As stated earlier the book covers a wide canvas; certainly some of the articles being topical in nature may have lost their relevance. Nevertheless, given the author's lucid and concise style well suited to hold the lay reader's attention, the book is a good introduction to the study of national security, particularly the military aspects of it, for the general public.

Lieutenant General V K Singh PVSM (Retd)

Public Perceptions of Security in India – Results of a National Survey. *(Chennai : Centre for Security Analysis, 2006), 44p, Rs. 350.00, ISBN 81-902317-1-5.*

The search for alternative dimensions of security has kept strategic analysts busy since the end of the cold war era. It is now generally recognised that national security is not concerned with only the traditional military security of the State. The comprehensive security of a nation encompasses, besides state security, environmental, economic, social and a host of other non-military security concerns which are clubbed together as human security. In the words of the late Mahbub ul Haq, human security is concerned with human dignity and not weapons. Redefined thus, it implies security through development which is not dependent on the quantum and pace of economic growth but its quality which impacts on human security. Security and governance are, therefore, inter-related.

What are the perceptions of the citizens of this country regarding various dimensions of security threats? The Centre for Security Analysis commissioned a unique study in the year 2003 to understand and interpret the common man's perception on various dimensions of security threats. The initial data collected from 2024 respondents drawn across four geographical zones were subjected to statistical analysis and interpretations which, it is hoped, would help policy makers in effectively responding to those perceived threats.

The traditional external and internal security threats, not surprisingly, have been ranked the highest. As expected, the respondents in the northern region view the external and internal security threats to be highest. On the other hand, the eastern and southern regions perceived internal threats as slightly lower in comparison possibly due to greater exposure

to terrorist's attacks and bomb blasts in the North as compared to the South.

The Study is unquestionably the first of its kind on public perception of security in India. It confirms the prevailing view held by experts that the security of the state and that of its citizens are inextricably linked. Without doubt this path-breaking study will provide valuable insights for policy planning and programme implementation. The publication is a must read for security analysts, bureaucrats, academics and social scientists.

Shri Kalyan K Mitra, IPS (Retd)

Global Rivalries: From the Cold War to Iraq. *By Kees Van der Pijl (New Delhi : Vistaar Publications, 2006), 459p, Rs 650.00, ISBN 81-7829-641-1 (Pb).*

In this very well researched book on external affairs, Van der Pijl brings out political and economic rivalries between various nations of the world, from the end of cold war to date. The author paints a backdrop of struggle between a liberal, English speaking Protestant-Catholic world and a series of contender states beginning with France. He traces the core structure of global rivalries through 17th and 18th centuries and takes his readers to the end of the Second World War. He builds up European integration on this, which he claims was intended to extend the original heartland but failed due to its origins in the contender state experiences of France, Germany and Italy. Gaullist France especially epitomises this incompatibility, which transpired most clearly when the USA was leading the fight against revolution in the Third World. In the early 1970s, East-West detente, Third World emancipation and a powerful groundswell of popular democracy entering into a historic convergence have been discussed at length. In response, ruling class ideologues and policy makers in the West sought to rescind the class compromises of the post-war period. This then developed into a pre-emptive, neoliberal counter-revolution on a global scale. In 1970s, neoliberal hardliners relied on transnational violence in a range of forms, among other things, to clear the field for a rational form of democracy that no longer includes the right to vote for a society different from a capitalist one. The neoliberal counter-revolution included the transformation and partial integration of the contender states of the Third World and the erstwhile Soviet bloc. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, a powerful brake on overt rivalry within wider West was removed; the inner tensions of Euro-Atlantic unity were exposed in the aftermath of war over Kosovo, when the European Union (EU) adopted the Lisbon strategy of neoliberal Americanisation against the US. This makes the high point of neoliberal transnationalisation in Europe. This was not appreciated by electorates in France and the

Netherlands, who in 2005 rejected the nonliberal European Constitution. Now that China has emerged as the next contender in Asia, one wonders if the expanded West will hold together. This coincides with the end of 20th century monopoly of Anglo-American oil giants in the World energy markets and emergence of Russian companies as their competitors. The curtain comes down with the question whether the War on Terror unleashed by the US in response to 11 September 2001 attacks on the US not point to demise of unification project altogether.

Written in a highly academic style, this book has a limited appeal to Indian Armed Forces readers.

Major General Yatindra Pratap (Retd)

Fanaticism and Conflict in the Modern Age. *Edited by Matthew Hushes and Gaynor Johnson (UK : Frank Cass, 2005), 196p, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-714-65716-6.*

Many definitions are offered of fanatics that are truly in the realm of psychology. Indeed a fanatic is both crazed and rational at the same time. Still, the well-worn cliche that one person's fanatic is another's freedom fighter as stated in the introduction makes little sense as fanatics do not adopt non-violent methods. They attack elected governments; institutions and kill or maim innocent citizens. By what stretch of imagination can such violence be justified? The present volume is a part of Cass Series on Military History and Policy. The Editors have selected ten essays by specialists on the subject that make for absorbing reading. World wide the canvas for fanaticism as it were is too large. Amongst the form of fanaticism highlighted are that of dervishes, Japanese soldiers, guerilla warfare in the late 20th Century and the barbarisation of the Pacific War 1941-45. Expectedly, the fanaticism practiced by Germany – *Wehrmacht* and the 12th SS Panzer Division comes in for some special treatment. The clandestine Islamist movement that governs Algerian political fanaticism, the fanaticism practiced by LTTE, fanaticism in Northern Ireland and the religious fanaticism of Hamas - who would like to obliterate Israel from world map - are covered towards the end.

The spread of political fanaticism and ideology gave rise to extreme nationalism, fascism, and communism. The cocktail of fanaticism with religion, political ideology, cultural and racial differences (a clash of civilisations) is indeed explosive. Apart from the *samurai* tradition in Japan, it was *bushido* (code of the warrior) and *kamikaze* that distinguished Japanese soldiery. The Japanese soldiers preferred death to surrender as latter was considered a disgrace. Yet, while both involve killing, the distinction between heroism and fanaticism is perhaps no more than national allegiance. The roots of fanaticism, as various authors argue, lie

deep – the Nazi's fanatic anti-Semitism is traced to an aggressive, evangelic, Protestantism of the Reformation. The events of 11 September 2001 do find mention by some authors but only in passing. Carl Von Clausewitz puts it best when he states that 'a tendency towards extremes is characteristic of, and fundamental to, modern warfare'. What distinguishes fanatical behaviour–deliberate, consistent, cold blooded and long term from battle rage that is situational and temporary is at the root of this distinction. A thought provoking book on an enduring debate, it is intellectually stimulating.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

The Nature of War in the Information Age: Clausewitzian Future. *By David J Lonsdale (UK : Frank Cass, 2004), 269p, Price not indicated, ISBN 0-714-65546- 5.*

The Nature of War in the Information Age: Clausewitzian Future is mostly devoted to an exploration of warfare in the information age. With computers everywhere Network Centric Warfare has transformed Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Dr David I Lonsdale in his masterpiece book focuses on the Clausewitzian theory and practice strategy-". The author ventures the concept of infosphere as the fifth geostrategic dimension to join land, sea, air, and space. He writes penetratingly about the nature of war, strategy and information revolution in the long historical context stating emphatically that nature of war in future would always universally remain the same as it was in the past. The information age has geopolitical ramifications in eroding sovereignty and relevance of the states posing challenges to Clausewitzian nature of war. The strategy of shock and awe propagated by the Pentagon in Iraq was enabled by this new technology for decisive role. In the RMA debate, the command assumes particular importance, as its effectiveness would lie in balance between the human dimension and the role of the technology. In the Strategic Information Warfare (SIW) environment the infrastructure would be more vulnerable and the weapons more accurate and reliable. The modem warfare demands fighting as a joint cohesive team. There is greater emphasis on the intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), command, control, communications, computer applications and intelligence processing (C41) and precision force to achieve Dominant Battlespace Knowledge (DBK) and information dominance. The author envisages that future campaigns will take the form of simultaneous attacks throughout the breadth, depth and cyberspace of the battlespace facilitated by real time information to impose complete systematic shock upon the enemy where tactical, operational, and strategic levels merge to a point and a single action proves decisive. The human factor in decision-making and command is being replaced with artificial intelligence and warfare will be

characterised more by stealth than use of force. Contrary to Clausewitzian thought, in information age the hierarchical structure of existing military command system will become inappropriate when faced with command networks and dispersal of power with quicker information flow. The replacement of conventional strategic bombing by the use of WMDs and various forms of irregular warfare necessitates rethinking on the nature of warfare itself. The heavy dependence on computers networking both in civil and military usage makes them and logistics extremely vulnerable to SIW attacks.

The book is laid in six chapters each followed by exhaustive notes. Chapter 1 is actually the summary of the entire book whereby author explores various facets of nature of war being transformed due to series of phenomenal technological, political, social and economic changes and the information revolution will bring the next shift in the nature of warfare. Military history is the most effective means of learning and works of Clausewitz, Sun Tsu and Jomini have been most influential in shaping our understanding of the nature of war. The author discerns their relevance in the information age. The key elements in any war are uncertainty, violence and destruction, chance, narrow friction and human factors varying in individual perceptions. Intuitive abilities, deception, manoeuvres on the battlefield, human element and minimising destruction. These sum up the phrase – strategy. Chance and friction inherently create chaos in all conflicts that can be overcome by good communication in the information age.

In the final chapter it is debated that in the information age, nature of warfare has become less violent, less uncertain, and a more controllable activity which to Clausewitzian faithfuls would be most sacrilegious. While Clausewitz remains still the greatest military strategy thinker, the author rightly states Clausewitzian thoughts need reassessment and supplementation in the modem information age. The RMA lays emphasis on disruption to win a war, whereas Clausewitzian notion concerns overarching presence of violence and destruction in winning the same. Rationally optimum solution lies in between the two varying thoughts using RMA's disruptive means in supporting role to win any war. Since war will always remain an uncertain activity, how much of violent and non-violent means need to be used to win the war are nothing but part of the art of strategy and its dialectic nature.

It is indeed a highly researched, professional, must read book.

Colonel Narindra Bhatia (Retd)

Democratization in Pakistan : A Study of the 2002 Elections. *Mohammad Waseem (Karachi : Oxford University Press, 2006), 241p, Price not indicated, ISBN 978-0-19-597987-9).*

Although the print media is a reasonably good source of information, there is a dearth of writing about elections in Pakistan. Professor Waseem, a distinguished scholar, has produced an analytical treatise of a watershed event in Pakistan. The influence of legislature in Pakistan has been severely circumscribed by the overarching role of the military and the bureaucracy. Professor Waseem paints an unvarnished picture of the clever manipulations by President Musharraf in having his way. The author has focused on three significant developments by President Musharraf that doubtless influenced the elections of 2002. These are the corruption-accountability nexus, which lowered the image of political parties, the devolution plan affecting national and provincial assembly elections and the Referendum. The Author dwells upon the political undercurrents of partisan de-alignment represented by a low level of voter identification with political parties and a low turnout. While Pakistan, as honestly described by Professor Waseem, is an 'hour glass' society (minimum institutional links and people disengaged from politics except to exercise their right of franchise), the Indian society too needs to look inwards as legislations are seemingly affected with a firm eye on the vote-bank! The present volume is an exhaustive study supported by factual data and analysis of the halting progress Pakistan is making towards democracy. It is a seminal work and covers historical and sociological perspectives, the development of electoral politics, accountability, devolution of powers, referendum and Musharraf's campaign. The legal, constitutional and institutional reforms have been cogently analysed. The author has covered at length the election campaign and the controversy generated. Of special interest is the author's analysis of election results in Punjab, Sind, North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Balochistan. NWFP has witnessed a phenomenal rise of the Islamic parties. MMA has emerged as the single largest party in Balochistan and has made gains in NWFP and urban Sind. As the perceptive Author says, "Islam in danger" found a fertile ground in elections. Professor Waseem brings out that over the last thirty years Pakistan is becoming an increasingly conservative society with larger congregations in Mosques, increase in the number of madrassas and more women taking to veil! He traces this to Zia's Islamisation programme and the *jihad* in Afghanistan and Kashmir. The book is illuminating about the people, politics, society and elections in Pakistan.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

Human Rights in Asia: A Comparative Legal Study of Twelve Asian Jurisdictions, France and the USA. *Edited by Randall Peerenboom, Carol J Petersen and Albert HY Chen (New York : Rutledge, 2006), 529p, Price not Indicated, ISBN 0-415-36002-1.*

The Book provides a critical review of human rights standards and machinery available for their enforcement in France, the USA and twelve Asian countries. It is divided into sixteen chapters. The introductory chapter contains an empirical overview of human rights in Asia, France and the USA. The second and the third chapters are devoted to human rights protection in France and the USA. The next twelve chapters dwell on analysis of human rights in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Chapter XVI is a comparative analysis of human rights in the Asian countries.

Asia is a big continent and the Asian countries vary widely in their human rights performances. The acceptance and observance of a universal standard for human rights has historically been met with significant opposition in Asia. The need to find a universal standard is one of the most significant challenges of the present century. The right to life, for instance, depends largely on state institutions that are meant to respect, protect and fulfill people's fundamental rights. The lack of effective investigation, prosecution and judicial mechanisms can threaten people's rights to life and liberty: innocent people can be subjected to arbitrary punishments including death. Therefore, despite the proclamations of rights in national constitutions or through states becoming parties to international covenants, people will be deprived of enjoyment of rights in the absence of rule of law. In this context, this work is an excellent attempt to foster understanding of human rights norms in Asian countries and will serve as a useful source for academicians, researchers and NGOs working in the field of human rights.

Wing Commander U C Jha (Retd)

Tibetan Conundrum. *By Brigadier VP Malhotra (Retd) (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2006), 220p, Rs. 690.00, ISBN 81-87966-40-8.*

One hundred years ago, during the high noon of imperialism, a British Colonel entered Lhasa signalling the recognition of Tibet as a separate entity. The chain of events set in motion by this expedition came full circle in 1954 with the signing of the Panchsheel Agreement which *de facto* put an end to Tibet as an independent nation. The destruction of a sturdy, peaceful and self reliant nation then began. And as the author puts it, ".... in the process a small part of world heritage has diminished."

The author has rendered signal service by producing this well researched book on a subject on which only limited literature is available. It has been emphatically explained that Tibetans have their distinct cultural, social, spiritual and physiological identity but by a quirk of geography Tibet is predominantly accessible from the northeast. This has resulted in penetration into the region by the Chinese border tribes and steppe nomads with the resultant ethnic and political influence over Tibet.

The meat of the subject has been covered in the chapter "Brief History". Upto the ninth century Tibet was a warrior nation and had conquered parts of China and the present Central Asian Republics (CAR) region, but with the advent of Buddism its military prowess evaporated while its religious orders grew. Chingiz Khan and his successors sought spiritual protection and religious legitimisation from Tibetan Lamas. However Tibet became a pacifist and non violent state unable to resist any invasion.

The book again highlights China's masterly handling of the situation while India's ineptness stands out. Resolution of 1931 (Page 22) states, ".... China recognizes the right of self determination of the national minorities in China, the right to complete separation from China [including Tibetans] .... The CCP will do its utmost to help these minorities in achieving complete freedom and autonomy." After victory in 1949 realpolitik took precedence and there were no more promises of self determination. Lebensraum was required for the 94 per cent of China's Han population which occupied only 40 per cent of Chinese land. Further, there were the strategic and material considerations.

The author has explained with clarity how the integration was carried out with ruthless efficiency, the process no doubt being accelerated by the indifference of the international community - which considered this to be a trivial issue in their own setting. And sadly there was no dearth of quislings among Tibet's high lamas.

The author's description of the lesser known Central Tibetan Administration is an impressive eye opener. The Department of Information and Internal Relations has twelve international offices including one in Delhi.

There are brief chapters on Dalai Lamas, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (the current incarnate who is highly distinguished and has authored 56 books on diverse subjects) and the Panchen Lama.

The chapter on the strategic importance of Tibet re-emphasises the key issues. China now has a mounting base in Tibet to address South Asian nations. Her access to Indian Ocean has improved. Tibet has rich

mineral deposits, the largest oil belt in the continent and large deposits of uranium and possibly plutonium. On the hydrographic front the advantages enjoyed by Tibet as an upper riparian state have now passed onto China.

In the chapter on the road map, the author opines that Tibet's best hope lies in China's internal factors. Sixty per cent of the population on the periphery are centrifugal nationalities. There are inner dissensions within the party and even within the PLA. There is tension between the Party and the PLA. All this combined with huge contradictions could unbutton China.

This book is of contemporary value and could well help to reawaken a dormant international conscience or at least focus attention on a dying cause. There are a few avoidable slips in the book. Page 83 shows that construction of Golmud - Lhasa line began in 2007. A mixture of old and new spellings has been used, such as Golmud (Gormo) and Nagchuka (Nagchu), which could confuse a lay reader. Large part of the book consists of annexures reproduced in toto. These would be useful for research scholars as these annexures are not easily accessible otherwise. A separate chapter on religious beliefs and social mores could be added.

Brigadier M S Choudhury, VSM (Retd)

Space : The Frontiers of Modern Defence. *By Squadron Leader K K Nair (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2006), 204p, Rs. 620.00, ISBN 81-87966-44-0.*

The book is a pioneering effort towards understanding the phenomenon of 'Evolution of Space for Military Uses'. Squadron Leader KK Nair has covered the subject in nine chapters ranging from civilian use, space laws, examining space based options for National Power and training the leadership.

Air Commodore Jasjit Singh's introduction highlights that military, civil and commercial space sectors are converging. However, India has yet to recognise and use this potential. In my view one of the reasons for this could be the effect of various technology denial regimes, which India has been subjected to, since after the 1974 Peaceful Nuclear Explosion onwards and Pokhran-II in 1998. China on the other hand has already emerged a world leader in the field of space science, which in turn has military spin-offs.

The author has opined that air and space are complementary to each other and then twist of a Conjoint Defence. However, a very objective analysis proves that there is no similarity in conditions as available in the

earth environment and that obtained in space dimension. In fact, space and air are different in dynamics and should be considered as different levels for military operations. This analogy has been followed by the US Strategic community. Therefore, they have a 'Unified Space Command' which is distinct from the Air Force command structures.

The book has covered many fundamental issues necessary for understanding the space environment and military space theories and doctrines like 'Space Law and its Military Implications'; 'Space Based Options for National Power' and a 'Proposed Space Road Map for Fulfilling Defence Requirement'.

In addition, the author has aptly covered the salient advances in space programmes in the Asian continent here, undoubtedly, China's stride as well as its nexus with Pakistan emerges very clearly. This should lead India to invest more in Military space and have more collaboration with Asian nations to offset the cost factor.

Towards this end, the author builds the case for 'An Aerospace Command' under the Air Force. However, this issue is not only contentious but is contrary to the main theme of 'Jointness' as prevalent across the globe. What is, therefore, required is to talk of an 'Unified Space Command' somewhere in 2010-2815 period when Indian Space assets further grow. Obviously, such an organisation has to be placed under the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff. For instance, even in the case of the USA, the three respective Services have their own space-command, which directly reports to the Strategic Command, which further reports to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Major General A K Lal

Principles of GPS. *By PS Dhunta (Mumbai : Nirvan Knowledge Bank, 2005), 375p, Rs. 1800.00*

This is a volwninous compendium about global positioning systems (GPS) right from inception to the present advances made in the USA, Russia and Europe. Divided in twenty-three chapters the subject is covered in its entirety including the mathematical aspects of GPS. The author is a true professional in the field of avionics and GPS and he takes the reader through the labyrinth and jargon of air navigation systems with ease. The original survey technique was triangulation. This was improved upon by electro-magnetic global trilateration that came out of the use of HIRAN (a high ranging system used in World War II). Subsequently, many other systems were developed including TRANSIT and TIMATION (used atomic frequency standards and had three satellites).

With air traffic the world over growing in a geometrical progression the importance and responsibility of air traffic controllers (ATC) has grown manifold. The conventional CNS systems and procedures can no longer meet the future requirements. This has resulted in better and highly reliable navigation systems like GPS to be used to meet the requirement of aviation. The present GPS developed in 1973 is the handiwork of Colonel Parkinson. GPS has been created out of survey techniques, satellite communication system and long-range navigation system like LORAN, DECCA and OMEGA. Since it is based on satellites, GPS has found many other usages specially by space research organisations, defence, meteorology, crime detection and control, strategic areas of warfare, observation of land movements, fanning, missile control and high end cars to navigate a tourist to any point in the city! GPS signals are presently being provided by NAVSTAR (Navigation by Satellite Tracking and Ranging) of the USA and GLONASS (Global Orbiting Navigation Satellite System) of the Russian Federation. Differential GPS has removed the feature of selective availability from NAVSTAR signals, thus, improving its accuracy.

As the author rightly says, it is difficult to visualise a final form of GPS at this point of time. It is, however, certain that the effort of scientists will be to reduce the errors in GPS data even further so that its multifarious advantages can be enjoyed in the various fields mentioned earlier. Although this is a complete book on the subject, those having some understanding of the subject matter as also a nodding acquaintance with higher mathematics will enjoy it even more.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

Beyond The Bayonet : Indian Special Operations Forces in the 21st Century. *By Brigadier Deepak Sinha (New Delhi : Gyan Publishing House, 2006), 304p, Rs. 690.00, ISBN 81-212-0861-0.*

A military operation carried out by a chosen few or Special Operation Forces (SOF) as they are termed gets attention as SOF have invariably to fight against insuperable odds. Since the probability of success of an SOF operation is high, it is not surprising that almost all progressive nations maintain SOF. While their usage in the past was mostly limited as a sideshow to conventional operations, indications are that owing to the macro changes brought about by globalisation, RMA, net centric warfare, cyberspace security, nuclearisation and space, operations by SOF in future wars will increasingly occupy centre stage.

The present volume by Brigadier Deepak Sinha is an in depth analysis of the development, organisation, concept and employment of

SOF. A second-generation paratrooper, the author pulls no punches and acquaints the reader with harsh ground realities of these stealth operatives. Brigadier Sinha has discussed in detail the SOF of UK, the USA, Israel, Russia and other regional states. The author has also mentioned in some detail the Private Military Companies (PMC) formed by retired SOF personnel. The author is not in awe of the SOF of major powers and has analysed some ventures like Grenada, Iran, Vietnam, by the SOF of USA and the raid in Mullah Omar's compound by Spetznaz most cogently highlighting their relevance in the Indian context. This adds greatly to the value of the book. The author has also covered issues like restructuring, procurement and budget and the legal aspects relating to SOF. An interesting viewpoint mentioned in the book is that the ruling elite to ensure their own survival perhaps creates Special Forces! The use of NSG for VIP protection (a responsibility, incidentally, not mentioned in their charter of duties for fear of public uproar) and the employment of 19th Dzherinkiy Special Operation Motor Rifle Division in Soviet Union for safety of the elite are well known. The ignominy faced by our nation when our vaunted NSG was not employed to prevent hijack of an IA aircraft to Afghanistan due to delay on part of our decision makers has been well brought out by the author. Brigadier Sinha has analysed the multifarious shortcomings of our SOF and makes positive suggestions in overcoming them. The book contains a great deal of information that can be of help not only to military professionals but also to the layman who wants to understand the mystique of intrepid souls to whom danger is merely a daily dose of adrenalin.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

Thimaya - An Amazing Life. *by Brigadier C B Khanduri (New Delhi : Knowledge World, 2005), 394p, Rs. 1095.00, ISBN 81-87966-36-x.*

A remarkable book about an astonishing man. It is not often that reviewers are tempted to open a book review of a well researched biography, with what would normally be the final line. So for those who are looking at this review for leads on whether the book must form part of their personal or institutional libraries, let us get it over with – this book is an absolute must read.

For others who want to know more about the contents of the book through this review, I shall cite the author, who in the preface to the book has mentioned, "that to encapsulate in a mere book, the life of this awesome personality - the man, the soldier, the tactician, the strategist, the peace maker, a lion hearted man who would stand up to any cause - a man of great foresight and vision and on whom great responsibiiities

rested lightly - was evidently difficult." In a society bereft of top quality leadership, in virtually all walks of life, the lessons from the life of this great son of India can be savoured only through a full reading of the book.

The narration is most engrossing, particularly of the period when General Thimayya was the COAS just prior to the 1962 War with China. The book vividly captures over two riveting chapters the well known, but as yet insufficiently documented, spat of General Thimayya with the Defence Minister. Their disagreement on the military strategy to be put in place against the looming threat from China is a matter that bears extensive study.

The author brings out with immense clarity the discontent of the Services over both the conduct of the Defence Minister, and of the tardy decision making apparatus of the Government of India. This impassé lasted well over two fateful years, resulting finally in the General submitting his resignation as the Chief of the Army, in August 1959. The recording of events of this critical period, of how our political leadership interpreted - or more revealingly - ignored - the military threat perceptions formulated by the Army and completely mis-read the danger from China - is by far the most gripping part of the book. Krishna Menon famously tells General Thimayya, "where are the threats; if it is Pakistan then you can handle it, and I say China will not attack India."

For anyone who wishes to study more closely, the perils of an incongruous civil-military interface in a growing democracy, the pages devoted to this period from Chapter 12 to 14 will be revealing. In fact the unfolding of events can also be seen as a barometer to gauge whether there has been any appreciable improvement over the years on the nature of the civil-military interface, so vital to a democratic nation's security. The fact that the Indian military went in for massive reorganisation and modernisation after the Chinese debacle was a classic example of a nation "latching the barn after the horse had bolted." Timmy had been urgently calling for modernisation and expansion but his warnings went unheeded by Nehru and Menon. The book quotes Krishna Menon as remarking that the force level recommendations were "much too much" and the Chief needed to "prune it down."

The other issue of continued relevance today, is the insistence of General Thimayya, as early as 1958, when he was heading the Chiefs of Staff Committee, on the need for greater integration of the Services towards what he felt should be "a better response to national security". He perceived that the role and charter of the Service Chiefs had been turned anomalous by the bureaucratic maze of the Ministry of Defence.

The author quotes Timmy's observations where he felt that the Chiefs of Staff Committee needed a permanent chairman rather than one who was ad hoc and rotating. He felt that if the Chief of Staff Committee was responsible for strategic planning than it must be part of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet and only then could it fulfill its role adequately. If General Thimayya felt, as early as in the sixties, that modern armies could not execute wars without true integration at the highest level, it is worth reflecting where we stand today. The fact that he was seized of this issue, which has as yet not been formalized, nearly fifty years later, speaks not just for the vision of the man, but also of the lack of a strategic culture in the country.

Colonel G Karunakaran

Willingly to War 1939 – 1945 : An Emergency Commissioned Officer in the Indian Army. *Paul Byron Norris (London : BACSA, 2004), 189p, GBP £ 12.00, Rupee price not quoted, ISBN 0907799-81-7.*

This book is the third volume of a trilogy recounting the story of the author's family links with India. As the title suggests, this volume contains the experiences of the author as a young wartime commissioned officer in the Indian Army. All permanent commissions being stopped, all officers were granted emergency commissions for the duration of the war. These Emergency Commissioned Officers (ECOs) formed the backbone of the rapidly reforming Indian Army that rose, like a phoenix from the ashes, after the initial disasters and setbacks of 1941-42.

The war was a period of rapid expansion for the Indian Army. One of the major changes was the whirlwind pace of 'Indianisation' of the officer corps. For the first time, young Indian and British officers fought shoulder to shoulder in action against a ruthless enemy in an all-out modern war.

The author was commissioned into the 15th Battalion of the 7th Rajput Regiment. This was a wartime raising, which was deployed on garrison duty in Baluchistan and on the North West Frontier. He transferred to another war-raised Battalion of the Rajputs – the 18th – which took him on a tour of duty to famine stricken Bengal before moving on to the Burma front. He also served a stint in Burma with the newly raised, and soon to be disbanded, Chamar Regiment, and also with the Burma Rifles. The book, written from the perspective of a young subaltern, is interesting and catches the reader's imagination, particularly as it adequately describes the feelings of a young British officer confronting numerous and varied experiences in the backdrop of a world war and the fast-approaching end of the British Raj.

In all, the book is an enjoyable account of Army life in India at the twilight of the Raj. It is recommended for anyone with an interest in social and military aspects of the British Indian Army in general. Officers of the Rajput Regiment may find it of particular interest as the only extant record of service of two of their war-raised battalions.

Squadron Leader RTS Chhina (Retd)

'Asam Vikram' Unique Valour : History of the Assam Regiment 1947-2002. *By Lieutenant General SK Pillai, PVSM (Retd) (New Delhi : Macmillan India, 2004), xvi, 464p, Rs. 900.00, ISBN 1403-92340-X.*

This book, an obvious labour of love falls within the ambit of that rare category – a regimental history par excellence. Continuing the story of this war-raised corps from where Captain Peter Steyn, MC, left off, the book covers the development of the Rhinos in the post-independence era in meticulous, painstaking detail. Written in a lucid and eminently readable style, lavishly produced to the best international standards, the author has set the bar very high, both in content and quality, for other units to emulate and follow.

The book is divided into six parts or sections covering the following periods: (i) 1947-1962 (ii) 1963-1971 (iii) 1971 Op Cactus Lily (iv) Interregnum (largely covering the period between 1972 -1991 but also including certain events beyond this such as Op Meghdoot upto 2000) (v) 1991-2002 (vi) A section covering regimental traditions, customs, uniforms, etc. There are detailed appendices which cover (A) Honours and Awards (including World War two honours) (B) Roll of Honour (including a roll of Second World War casualties) (C) Succession lists of Centre Commandants, Battalion Commanders and Subedar Majors (D) Chronology of Battalion moves (E) Officers commissioned through the ranks (F) Outstanding Sportsmen (G) Second Generation personnel (H) Explanatory notes. There is also a useful index.

In addition to its military aspects the book dispels many myths about the integration of citizens from India's North East into the mainstream machinery of the State. At a time in our national history when the north eastern region is increasingly becoming a focus of mainstream attention this book is a timely and valuable addition to the literature relating to that region and how its unique social and political fabric combined in shaping this fine regiment of our army.

The publishers have done a great service in publishing this volume, thereby taking it out of the limited confines of the internal military distribution network and making it available to the public at large. The book is strongly recommended for anyone with an interest in Indian military history in general, and in the military customs, traditions and ethos of India's army, as well as the history of its north eastern region since independence, in particular.

Squadron Leader Rana T S Chhina (Retd)

Men of Steel : 6 Armoured Division in the 1965 War. *by Major General Abrar Husain (Rawalpindi : Army Education Press, GHQ, 2005), 153p, price not indicated, ISBN 969-8125-19-1.*

The book is an account by the then GOC 6 Armoured Division mainly of the battles fought by his Division in 1965.

6 Armoured Vision was converted from 100 Independent Armoured Brigade. General Arif in the preface mentions that the Division was inducted into battle to face Indian Army's main effort, even before it was fully organised, equipped and trained. He blames the civil and military bureaucratic inertia for this. How true; far too many times have we in the Indian Army experienced the same malaise.

In the prelude to war, the author has briefly mentioned the causes and effects of various events from 1962 Sino-Indian War, through the Rann of Kutch hostilities to 1965 War - a total bundle of lies and disinformation faithfully reproducing the official party line of the then Pak government.

The author's description of the battles of his Division and others before them, against the Indian 1 Corps are fairly honest and accurate and so are his assessments.

He has ungrudgingly paid tribute to the bravery of Indian tankmen; at the same time he has commented on the weakness of their commanders in not using armour boldly and instead attempting to creep forward. He has illustrated this from the actions of 8 September 1965 when 1 Armoured Brigade with three Centurion tank regiments was stopped in its tracks by 25 Cavaly alone; and later by other actions or the lack of them.

The book is of use to the Indian military, for most of the strengths and weaknesses on both sides in the 1965 War prevail even today.

Lieutenant General H Kaul, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)

Love Stories of War Heroes. *By Colonel Gopal Purdhani (New Delhi : Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd, 2006), 155p, Rs. 100.00, ISBN 9-788-120-730519.*

Colonel Gopal Purdhani is a law graduate, a post graduate in sociology and has done MBA. At present he is a Special Metropolitan Magistrate in Delhi. His book has 15 short stories depicting high degree of emotions and love of the Army personnel for their country. The text is written in simple English and flows like a stream of water from high mountains merging in ocean of sentiments, touching the hearts of the readers. The real beauty lies in logical narration making the imagination

look like actual happenings in real life. It touches on various facets of love and emotions of a soldier which could be for the country the Army or his Battalion. Also, for the officers who command them and for the soldiers who serve.

The sentiments expressed are so strong that in one of the stories, 'The Enemy Within the Country', an Officer volunteers to marry the war widow of a soldier of his platoon.

In the story, 'My War Hero', a young officer innocently apologises to his brigade commander for something that he had not done, when the latter was telling him the story of betrayal by his fianceé during his young days. The lady in question was none other than the mother of the young lieutenant. In another highly dramatic situation, the hero of the story is shown, so much excited to proceed to the front, that he bids farewell to 'his bride to be' and his parents so casually as if he was proceeding on a routine outing. The story 'Never Say Die' narrates most pathetic conditions of being a prisoner of war and ways to survive and bravely tolerate torture by the enemy. Various practical methods have been discussed to achieve ultimate aim of escape. An effort has been made to prove that it is actually the love of family members and the countrymen that provides real energy to every soldier to die for the country.

The author has highlighted a very serious problem of modern times, about the social settlement of young widows of army personnel and offered suitable solutions. A thought provoking and absorbing book in which there lies in every story a message of inspiration and motivation for officers and men to keep themselves prepared for any sacrifice.

This book would motivate JCOs and Jawans as well. The author should also bring out a Hindi version of the book. A good addition to all Libraries.

Commodore R P Khanna, AVSM (Retd)

With A Pinch of Salt. *By Vinod K Sharma (Mumbai : Madhu Sharma Publications, 2004), 287p, Rs. 300.00.*

"There are parts of a ship which, taken by themselves, would sink. The engine would sink. The propeller would sink. But when parts of the ship are built together, they float....." The same can be said of this book. It comprises hundreds of snippets, covering episodes stretching across fifty years of seafaring, every one quite distinct and separated from the other but together, telling a story, which began when Commodore Vinod K Sharma, the author, just turned 19, arrived at the naval base, *INS Venduruthy*, in what was then Cochin. Stories about the sea and seafarers are essentially full of some romanticism. It is for this reason that for all the devilry of Long John Silver and his cohorts, Robert Louis Stevenson's

Treasure Island still remains one of the most widely read books about the sea. This treasure house of tales may not elicit the same readership or royalties but it is certainly worth a read, and several times over.

Life at sea is monotonous at the best of times. Even in war, one spends days cruising around in ships, doing nothing in particular, and then, there is that one shining – or disastrous moment – in which one sinks, or gets sunk, without sight of the adversary. Humour, is therefore, key to survival, or to unity. It is not surprising that sailors have evolved their own quaint 'customs and traditions' or a language which ordinary 'landlubbers' can not understand. Many of these go back several hundred years. The book, through its snippets, tells us what life at sea is all about, a lot of hard work or 'elbow grease' as the puritan sailors would call it, and a great deal of good fun, always clean. To everyone, especially those in need of some relaxation, my exhortation is – get hold of "With A Pinch of Salt", put a glass of the good brew by your side, and start reading. You will not regret it.

Vice Admiral Premvir Saran Das, PVSM, UYSM, VSM (Retd)

War on Terrorism. *Edited by Alan O'Day (UK, Aldershot : Asgate Publishing Company, 2004), 421p, £100.00, ISBN 07546-2424-2.*

A major problem for rigorous analysis of terrorism has been an absence of readily available, widely disseminated research and serious academic discussion. Many valuable articles have appeared in a range of academic libraries and professional periodicals. However, often these journals have a limited circulation, and, thus, the study of terrorism and the ability to offer this subject as air university option are frequently hampered by absence of research material. This problem is greater in many smaller educational centres and institutions.

The author, has produced a compilation of a series of articles by many experts on terrorism and a partial remedy to the non-availability of pertinent material. The articles selected are wide ranging and reflect various opinions as also a glimpse into the controversies about such matter as the very definition of terrorism, its various dimensions and future prospects

The articles are extremely well researched and cover a wide spectrum on various 'themes' on this subject. However, they are primarily sourced from the western experience and from publications of American, British and Australian origins. Significant attention is paid to the difficulties of determining the limits and nature of the war on terrorism. The impact of' ideological forces', 'fundamentalism' and the religious terrorism has perhaps been inadequately examined. The experience of South Asian countries in

combating terrorism, has surprisingly been left out, except for a brief mention of the LTTE & Sri Lanka. Periodicals and publications of Indian authors also do not find any mention in the analysis. Similarly, the Indian experience in successfully combating terrorism in the states of Punjab and Mizoram and the ongoing counter terrorism operations in J and K has not been discussed, although many Indian periodicals have covered these. The successful termination of terrorism in Northern Ireland, the longest terrorist movement in the history (since 1920) and relevance of the 'Good Friday Agreement' as a model for a possible solution to similar problems could have been enlarged and researched in greater detail. The chapter on 'Pragmatic Counter-Terrorism' is of particular interest as it examines the 'counter-terror policies' and its application with 'pragmatism'.

It is the continuation of the policy of pragmatism, by Israel – by not invading Syria and Iran, who nurture 'Hizbollah', but instead blasting Lebanon, being a weaker state. Israel, despite her military strength, realises that operations against Syria and Iran would be costly and also invite severe international criticism.

India has been often termed as a soft state, because of her restraint in her military response against the terrorist targets in Pakistan and POK by many critics at home. However, this restraint has to be seen against the backdrop of the overall security equation with Pakistan, where military response is unlikely to achieve decisive results, without international cooperation. The USA, aware of Pak involvement in the J and K is pursuing her national interest of nurturing global resources for counter-terrorism, by restraining India to settle the issue by talks and as well as pressurising Pak, by toning down the support to the 'Jehadi terrorists'. In fact, the 'Good Friday Agreement' in Northern Ireland was also brokered by the USA, to not only resolve the complex issue but to consolidate the British resources for the global counter-terrorist campaign.

The need to gain Russia's acceptance of American deployments in Central Asia to defeat the Taliban also required the US to mute criticism of Moscow's use of force against Chechen rebels which had been widely critisised as excessive. This is yet another instance of pragmatic counter-terrorism policy.

The compilation of articles by the author, on various facets of terrorism provide a wealth of knowledge and pertinent literature on the subject and the related aspect of legal framework, weapons of mass destruction and economic warfare. An excellent addition for the study of war on terrorism.

Lieutenant General Chandra Shekhar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)