

## Editorial

‘China, India and Pakistan’ was the subject of the 32<sup>nd</sup> National Security Lecture which was delivered by Shri Shivshankar Menon, IFS (Retd), former Foreign Secretary of India with General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), former Chief of the Army Staff in the chair. Shri Menon dealt with this vast and complex subject in a masterly manner, covering the past, the present and the possibilities that may develop in the future. He also identified the bilateral and external factors that impact the triangular relationship as also the trajectories that the three countries seem to be following. The lecture was well attended and was followed by a most stimulating interactive session in which many other aspects of the evolving relationship were discussed and commented upon in a free and frank manner. A few important ‘takeaways’ from the interactive session are being carried at the end of the text in a summarised form. General VP Malik, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) added a lot of value to the proceedings through his most perceptive comments.

The next article is the prize winning essay of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition, Group ‘A’ on the subject of ‘Managing Civil-Military Relations : How to Bridge the Gap’ by Commander Pradeep K Thakur. The subject of civil-military relations in India has been a subject of debate since Independence. It assumed even greater importance and urgency in the light of two recent events : the ‘One Rank One Pension’ issue and the implementation of the Seventh Central Pay Commission. The author has done an extremely perceptive analysis of various issues involved and made some logical suggestions which require attention of the decision makers. Needless to say, the earlier this long festering malady is fixed the better it would be for Indian polity. Apart from other things, this continued hiatus is also eroding the ethos and work culture of the Armed Forces which the Nation can ill-afford.

One of the main reasons for the civil - military dissonance is the archaic Higher Defence Organisation that has evolved in India. In the next article ‘India’s Higher Defence Organisational Structure Dilemma: The Way Forward’, Rear Admiral AP Revi (Retd) pinpoints the structural anomalies and makes suggestions for minimal and pragmatic changes which can set the pace for evolving an organisation suitable in the Indian context in the medium term.

Things have been allowed to slide for too long and it will take considerable time and effort, through trial and error, before we can evolve an organisation which would meet the requirements of the prevailing geostrategic and geopolitical environment. It seems a lot of valuable time has been lost, especially since the Kargil War of 1999 and any further procrastination will be at the cost of national security.

Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), Director USI had participated in the 'Galle Dialogue 2016 : International Maritime Conference' conducted by the Sri Lankan Navy at Colombo on 28 and 29 Nov 2016. The text of the paper presented by him at the Conference on 'Fostering Strategic Maritime Partnership – Critical Analysis' is being carried as the next article. Since the appearance of piracy in the Indian Ocean in early part of this Century and the ongoing contestations in the Western Pacific, maritime issues have assumed great significance, more so for India which is a peninsular power and sits astride the maritime cross-roads in the Indian Ocean. Indian Navy must be prepared to fill the vacuum that exists in the Indian Ocean and be the predominant naval power in not too distant a future.

To visualise the kind of maritime challenges that can confront India, one may flash back to Nov 1988 when a group of terrorists tried to take over the Maldives Islands and that Country called upon India for help. It is also well known that India responded magnificently and the Indian Armed Forces (Army, Navy and the Air Force) acting in unison and in a text book manner managed to not only thwart the attempt but also saved the hostages, apprehended the terrorists and handed them over to the Male authorities. In the next article, General VN Sharma, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) who was then the Chief of Army Staff gives a first-hand account of 'Operation Cactus' (code name for the operation) recounting the complete operation which clearly brings out the kind of effort and synergy required at national level to be able to act in real time in a crisis situation. General Sharma also brings out the lessons and pre-requisites for launching such an operation successfully. Sadly, as subsequent events were to show, we have not quite built up on our capabilities to handle crisis situations.

The world order is in a state of flux and re-alignments are emerging quite frequently. In the next article, 'Geopolitical Shift : Evolving Strategic Landscape', Major General GG Dwivedi, SM, VSM and Bar, PhD (Retd) analyses the power shifts that are taking place and how the emerging powers like Japan, India and other regional groups may position themselves in the evolving strategic landscape.

Conflicts are inherent in a world governed and guided by national interests as such interests quite often intersect and clash. The next article 'Conflict Dynamics: An Ever Changing Paradigm in a Globalised World' by Major General KK Pant maps out a theoretical construct of various types of conflicts and the underlying causes which can facilitate their resolutions.

The PLA transformation continues to be in the news. In the next article 'Linking the PLA's Military Region Reorgansiation with Chinese Military Writings', Brigadier Iqbal Singh Samyal tries to establish a connection and a kind of continuity between the ancient Chinese military thought and the ongoing reforms. A careful study of the Chinese military thought, both ancient and contemporary, would reveal that political and military power are closely enmeshed, and application of military power in any conflict situation is decided upon after thorough deliberations involving all stakeholders. Further, it is coordinated and monitored at the highest politico-military levels, while retaining control of the situation in Chinese hands.

The project "India and the Great War 1914-18" continues to break fresh ground and its ambit is expanding. It has given a great impetus to further research about the Indian contribution in that war in many different fields. In the next article 'Murree and Poonch Mountain Batteries in the 1918 Palestine Campaign', Colonel PK Gautam (Retd) looks at the history of the oldest of the pack artillery batteries which later evolved into the present day 24 Field Regiment. It is a wonderful story of the pride that the mountain gunners took in their animals and the equipment, so much so that they could not be separated from the latter even at the cost of their lives. This article is followed by a brief write up by Squadron Leader Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd) giving an update on the activities of the project.

The last article is the prize winning essay of Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition 2016 on 'The Battle of Hydaspes (326 BC)' by Commander Sarat Menon. It was an important battle from Indian Military History point of view. Though a defeat for the Indian arms it was here that a foreign invader, the famous Alexander was halted by King Porus, unfortunately fighting without the support of other Indian Kings. The author has analysed the battle very critically and brought out many lessons which are relevant even today; namely, intelligence, surprise and deception, and above all the importance of operational art for military commanders.

I would like to share with the members that I would be superannuating from USI on 31 Dec 2016. This is the last Issue of the Journal that I have the privilege of editing and putting together. It has been a wonderful experience and I would like to thank all of you for your support and understanding. I hand over to Lieutenant General Chander Prakash, SM, VSM (Retd) who I am sure will take the Journal to even greater professional heights. I wish him the very best of luck.

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