

Editorial

The article “North Korea Blinks : Is it Real or a Ploy to Minimise Sanctions” by Major General SB Asthana makes very interesting reading. Kim’s invitation for talks to President Trump and its acceptance may have generated positivity amongst some of those affected, but an analysis of the ground realities reflects that the situation is complicated and talks may or may not take place. The author has essentially put forward three reasons for his apprehensions. Firstly, it is perhaps too late to convince North Korea to completely denuclearise. Nuclear tipped North Korea is a reality and North Korea is unlikely to give away the only instrument of its regime survival. Secondly, without participation of South Korea, China, Japan and Russia in talks, any lasting solution may not emerge. Finally, strict sanctions are generating pressure on North Korea, but leakages are taking place thereby ensuring that minimum sustenance can be maintained. However, any further misadventure by North Korea may encourage countries like Japan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea to go nuclear leading to a dangerous nuclear world.

Afghanistan derives its political significance because of its geo-strategic position. It is situated at the crossroads of ancient civilisations - Indian, European and Chinese. The article titled “The New Geo-political Realities in Afghanistan : India’s Constructive Role as US Partner” by Shri Gaurav Dixit has highlighted that China has emerged as a new player in the contemporary world order. China is behaving dominantly across South Asia, South East Asia and Africa. It is challenging the unilateral world order dominated by the USA. It appears that a new Cold War between China and the US is likely in the near future, introducing new security dynamics in Afghanistan. China-Pakistan-Russia-Iran axis is emerging in the region. These countries want the international forces out of Afghanistan. Neither Russia nor Iran wants the US in their backyard. US-India-Afghanistan partnership also appears to be getting formalised. The US is trying to counter the growing imprints of the China – Russia nexus. In Afghanistan, India would like a stable regime which is sensitive to its interests. Backed by the US, India can be a crucial player in helping Afghanistan to counter terrorism, usher in stability and promote peace.

A USI delegation visited Vietnam from 27 to 30 November 2017. Report on the visit by Major General BK Sharma has been published as an article. Essentially, the Delegation had interaction with Institute for Defence International Relations (IDIR) of Vietnam. The IDIR is a premium 'Think Tank' of Ministry of Defence of Vietnam, with direct access to top leadership of the Country. Vietnam sees great opportunities in developing multi-dimensional strategic relations with India. However, China factor weighs heavy on Vietnam's strategic engagement with India. India's Vietnam Policy and expectations from Vietnam will need to factor this aspect as an essential ingredient.

The subject for the USI Gold Medal essay Competition 2017 for Group 'A' was "Role of the Indian Armed Forces in Strategic Decision Making and Reclaiming the Strategic Space". Commander Pankaj Kumar won first prize in the competition. Edited script of his essay has been included as an article in the Journal. The author has highlighted that while India has strong Armed Forces, there is absence and lack of involvement of the Military in the decision making process on National Security and Defence matters. The dissonance is based on the civilian bureaucratic view that the Military ought to execute the policies formulated and need not be part of the evolution and formulation of strategic policies. This view is outdated and needs to be changed in the interest of national security and to promote efficient strategic decision making process. The recommendations made by the author are bound to assist in greater role being played by the Armed Forces.

The next article is titled "An Enlarged Partnership" by Mr Claude Arpi. It pertains to emerging Indo-French relations in the field of defence and security. India and France are eager to expand strategic engagement in the Indo-Pacific. The French President, Mr Macron recently visited India. The focus of discussions was cooperation to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international law. France has retained control over the Reunion and Mayotta Islands in the Indian Ocean and New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the South Pacific. France also has military presence in Djibouti in Africa and in the United Arab Emirates. The author has highlighted that the recent

agreement will enable Indian vessels access to facilities in French bases. It is evident that India and France have firmed up arrangements with China in mind. A maritime deal with France when finalised, can enhance India's capacity to counter challenges from China and help protect sea lanes for India's oil imports.

The article "Chinese Culture and Democracy – Chalk and Cheese" by Colonel Sanjay Kannothe makes interesting reading. The Chinese continue to contest that modernisation and democracy are linked to each other. China is neither effected by scourge of Islamic fundamentalism nor faces problem of illegal immigration faced by democracies. China has done well economically and achieved social stability. To promote their interests, the Chinese are trying to propagate their economic, social and political model. According to the author dealing with the Chinese model is a major challenge for India. India has to make efforts to catch up with China in the economic, military and strategic fields. It is apparent that China is not going to switch over to the liberal democratic path anytime soon. The issue to be tackled globally is how to prevent some nations from switching over to the Chinese model of totalitarian system.

The Indo-Pacific Region is witnessing a complex interplay of collaboration and competition drawn by the need for maritime connectivity and security. Japan is expanding international engagements. The article "Japan's Expanding International Engagements and Alignment with India" by Commander Subhasish Sarangi focusses on this emerging trend. The author has highlighted that Japan and India have sought to counter assertive behaviour of China by mobilising opinion on values such as peaceful, equitable and rule based order; freedom of navigation and over flights; and compliance of international laws. The maritime security is driven by economic and strategic factors. With the bulk of the energy sources located in West Asia, security of Sea Lanes of Communications is important for Japan. India's east bound sea trade has also increased. India is also concerned about its sea lanes to the Pacific. However, the assertive behaviour of China in the South China Sea, and non-traditional security threats have created anxiety for the affected nations. Greater engagement between India and Japan has become essential

because of concurrent rise of China. Development of good bilateral relations between Japan and India is significant for maintaining power balance in Asia.

Bangladesh replaced East Pakistan and emerged a separate country in 1971 with India's help. Paradoxically, on 15 Aug 1975, military coup led to assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members and bonhomie between Bangladesh and India suffered a setback. The article "Reflections on Indo-Bangladesh Relations" by Brigadier Dheerendra Singh Kushwah traces the historical background, Social, Political and Economic paradoxes and trajectory of bilateral relations. Two consecutive terms of Awami League Government under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have led to good bilateral relations but Indian policy seems to lack an alternate plan in case reversal with change of Government in Dhaka takes place. Secularism is one of the basic tenets in Bangladesh's 1972 Constitution. However, in Part II of the Constitution it is spelt out that secularism is not enforceable through legal recourse. Islam is the State religion. Share of Hindu population in Bangladesh has been going down in every census. Economically Bangladesh has done well; gradually moving from an aid driven to trade driven. It has ambition of being a middle income country by 2021 and a developed country by 2041. India is anxious with growing footprint of China in South Asia. China sees Bangladesh and Myanmar as means to access the Bay of Bengal, somewhat like access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan. There are unresolved issues between India and Bangladesh. Measures to address trade imbalances and other issues must be adopted with holistic approach reinforced by Indian Soft Power which cannot be matched by China.

The moral and ethical value system is the backbone of organisations in the Armed Forces. Psychologists claim that humans are born with five inherent values of care, fairness, loyalty, respect to authority and restraint. The article "Morals and Ethics – How to Teach, Imbibe, Implement and Enforce Desired Standards in the Indian Armed Forces" authored by Major Sushant Rai makes interesting reading. Indian Armed Forces are drawn from our society at large. As in other organisations, some transgressions occur in the Armed Forces as well. These are linked to moral decline of the society in general and the service

culture is also facing a downfall. However, the Armed Forces have the ability to imbibe high standard of moral values and courage through training and discipline. The Armed Forces leaders need to set personal examples and enforce impeccable discipline.

War is an instrument of policy and not an end in itself. In matters of state, it is essential that policy must guide strategy. The article "Re-learning the Lessons from the 1962 Conflict" by Brigadier Nitin Khare is quite perceptive. Published literature on the issue by and large points towards the shortcomings in the Indian statecraft that led to debacle in 1962 conflict with China. The events that unfolded were a recipe for disaster; wherein the political leadership was seduced by the idea of using military force without due thought process, intelligence appreciation and preparation. The Army also has to shoulder part of the blame because inputs from ground troops were disregarded and military leadership did not discharge their professional role properly. The politico-military synergy was a failure and the strategic military management of warfare was found wanting. Why the Air Force played only a limited role remains unexplained. International politics is about power. Statesmen and military leaders are obliged to protect the vital national interests. The strategy is to be jointly forged by the political and military leadership. Military capability needs time and resources to build up and must be ensured in the interest of national security.

In 1947 before leaving India, Britishers partitioned the country into India and Pakistan. Two bordering provinces of Punjab and Bengal were divided according to majority areas of Muslim and non-Muslim population. Article titled "Partition of India in 1947 : Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO) for Refugees" by Dr Narender Yadav has essentially covered refugee movement from West to East Punjab. The communal passions got aroused to an astonishingly high level and many innocent lives were lost. In order to maintain law and order; in July 1947 a Special organisation called Punjab Boundary Force (PBF) was created. The PBF could not cope up with massive communal frenzy and was disbanded on 31 Aug 1947. Subsequently, responsibility was entrusted to the troops of respective dominions. Headquarters

East Punjab Area Jullundur was given the responsibility for evacuation of refugees from West Punjab to East Punjab. A new organisation called Military Evacuation Organisation (MEO) India with Headquarters at Amritsar was established on 01 September 1947. Evacuation Programme was drawn up, transit camps to collect refugees, their transportation by rail, road and foot columns upto relief camps across the border were arranged. MEO evacuated over three million refugees from West to East Punjab. Despite constraints, MEO did their best to cope up; but casualties and damage to property still took place. The MEO was wound up on 23 August 1948.