

## Review Article 1

# USI Strategic Yearbook 2019\*

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The United Service Institution of India 'Strategic Yearbook 2019' is the fourth of the series which was started in 2016. The publication of the "Strategic Year Book" is a key endeavour to articulate India's national interests and the tenets of national security strategy, iterating the ends, ways and means. Its focus is on strategic issues and formulation of long term strategic view.

The Book has a collection of 30 well researched articles, grouped under five sections. The sections are : National Security Overview; Internal Security Environment; Pakistan – China Strategic Challenge; India's Strategic Neighbourhood; and National Security Capacity Building. The articles have been authored by experts in their respective fields. It is a boon to find so much of wisdom, logic and analysis clubbed in a single book. For review, it is not proposed to comment on each article, only a few general comments are being offered to give the reader an idea of what to expect from the Book.

**Section I. National Security Overview.** To secure India's integrity, citizens, values and assets, emphasis should be on national development and transformation into a strong, prosperous and modern nation. Pragmatic guidelines for enhancing development and national security have been spelt out. Despite substantial investment in defence, India is perceived as an under – performer as far as upholding vital national security interests are concerned. Civil-military dissonance and lack of indigenous military hardware are perceived as India's critical vulnerabilities.

**Section II. Internal Security Environment.** Jammu and Kashmir imbroglio has been persisting for a long time. Pakistan's inimical designs and China's strategic interests have aggravated the problem. Political expediency and inconsistent policy for Jammu and Kashmir has also exacerbated the scenario. Key areas need to be addressed for ensuring peace and reconciliation in the State. In the North East, Manipur is an area of concern. Good governance is needed to address alienation and aspirations of the people; implementation of national register of citizens in Assam has internal

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and external challenges. Hybrid nature of security threats, emanating from the ensuing issue have to be faced with ingenuity. Emerging challenge to financial system is crypto currency. It violates established financial norms and can be misused for funding terror activities and other international crimes. It needs massive mitigation efforts.

**Section III. Pakistan – China Strategic Challenge.** The lead article “Evolving Geopolitical Developments in China : Implications for India” sets the trajectory for this section. The author comments on internal dynamics of China; developments in Tibet and implications for India. Chinese look at strategic issues through the prism of their core national interests. India needs to build credible deterrence and deft diplomacy. The article on “Doctrinal Shift Decoding China’s Way of War Fighting” is based on analysis of China’s White Papers. Salient features of China’s military modernisation and force restructuring have been well covered. China seems to be facing internal security challenges in Tibet and Xinjiang. The issues are terrorism, separatism and extremism. China’s strategic forays in the Indian Ocean are well known. In China’s calculations, Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is important to ensure balance of power and uninterrupted supply of oil from West Asia. Pakistan harbours chronic animosity against India. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has articulated ‘Naya Pakistan’ and spelt out his desire to achieve new goals and make an attempt to reset India policy. Reality check reveals that goals are not likely to be achieved.

**Section IV. ‘India’s Strategic Neighbourhood’.** The lead article “India’s Neighbourhood First Initiative : Hits, Misses and the Way Ahead” sets the pace. “Neighbourhood First Policy” has inspired new hope and optimism in neighbouring states. There have been some major achievements in re-invigorating bilateral and multilateral initiatives steered by India. Also some shortcomings in its implementation due to tardy response to complex geo-political developments in Maldives, Sri Lanka and Nepal have come to light. The author has focused on nuances of India’s China Challenge in South Asia and suggested guidelines for making policy more effective. Central Asia is part of India’s extended neighborhood. Article titled “An Appraisal of India’s Connect Central Asia Policy and Need for Recalibration” is very relevant. The author suggests measures to provide traction to India’s Connect Central

Asia Policy (CCAP) in sync with India's 'Look North Policy', developing Central Asia – South Asia connectivity and undertaking of economic projects. Iran is strategic gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia and West Asia. Chabahar – Zaranj – Delaram corridor passes through Iran. Article titled "India – Iran : Way Forward after the US Sanctions" analyses dynamics of bilateral relations, impact of US economic sanctions and Pakistan, China factor on the Indo-Iran relations. Other articles in this section deal with "Maldives", "India- Japan Strategic Convergence" and "India's Engagement with the Great Powers : Emerging Paradigms".

**Section V. National Security Capacity Building.** For India's rise, building Comprehensive National Power (CNP) and credible deterrence capability are inescapable imperatives. The lead article titled "Developments in India's National Security Architecture and Way Ahead" brings out how China is configuring its CNP for creating China Centric Asian Order. There are inadequacies in India's security framework. Urgent policy and strategic reforms need to be undertaken. Article titled "India's Strategic Culture and Use of Force in Furtherance of National Interests" suggests measures for developing better understanding of strategic culture and nuances of use of force in furtherance of national interests. The author has commented that in comparison to China, India's infrastructure along its northern borders is abysmally inadequate. Other articles cover the following aspects:-

- (a) Optimising India's Military through Transformation: Intelligence Driven Effectiveness in the Changing Security Environment.
- (b) Towards Enhancing India's Aerospace Capability.
- (c) Transformation of India as a Maritime Power.
- (d) Agni I to VI - Not Just a Number Game.
- (e) Emerging Niche Technologies in the Nuclear Domain.
- (f) Indigenisation of Defence Manufacturing in India: Participation of Private Sector,
- (g) Reforming the Police: A Necessary Condition for Robust National Security.
- (h) Information Strategy India: A Conceptual Approach.

- (j) Use of Technology to Counter Modern Terrorism.
- (k) Mending India's Civil Military Relations.

In the beginning of the Book, abstract of contents has been titled "The Yearbook 2019 – At a Glance". It contains major takeaways from each section and indeed, from most of the articles. This is a value addition which facilitates better assimilation by the reader.

Overall, the Book is a treasure house of knowledge and will provide vital inputs for a strategic dialogue and preparation of a national security policy framework. Approach is systematic, with inbuilt logic and rational and balanced views. The Book would be very useful for researchers and policy makers. It is bound to create general awareness on strategic issues facing the country. The Book would be of great help for professional education of armed forces officers and those concerned with national security.