

Editorial

Dear Readers,

The targeted killing of two Iranians in two different ways in 2020 has once again brought to fore the unlimited ways in which Grey Zone war can be prosecuted. Major General Qassem Soleimani, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander, was killed in a US drone strike at Baghdad International Airport on 03 Jan 2020. Prominent Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed in an attack outside Tehran on 27 Nov 2020. He was widely seen outside the country as a leading figure in the Islamic Republic's nuclear programme. The first killing was obviously in the Grey Zone. A state killed the national of another state in a third state, it also declared it had done so — using loopholes in international law to justify it. The second killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was covert. His car was ambushed by unknown persons in a classic Grey Zone strike.

Grey Zone war is such an amorphous concept that there are varying definitions for it and strategic analysts have varying perceptions about it. In some cases, it is likened to simply unconventional war, while in other cases many other manners of harming the people and interests of a state are taken under its fold. This issue of the USI Journal is themed for Grey Zone war. The 11 articles herein attempt to throw light on it from varying angles.

In the lead article titled 'Finding the Way for India in the Shades of Grey: Capacious, Shadier, Murkier & Below the Belt', Lieutenant General Dushyant Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) argues that in view of increasing grey zone conflicts against India, the national security strategy needs a paradigm shift in perspective that focuses on Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, and Conflict Termination. This is followed by an article by Lieutenant General Ghanshyam Singh Katoch, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd). He in the article 'Milestones on a Murky Road: Getting to Grips with the Grey Zone' says that understanding war in the grey zone is the first step to being able to face adversaries, for whom this is increasingly the only way of war.

The next is the article 'Airpower in the Grey Zone' in which, Air Marshal Anil Khosla, PVSM, AVSM, VM (Retd) brings out that Airpower can play a major role and can effectively be utilised in many ways in grey zone operations with a change in mind-set, organisational adaptation and some amount of capability enhancement, reorientation, and training. This is followed by an article titled 'Dragon in the Misty Land, Chinese Influence in the North-Eastern Region: A Critical Analysis' by Major General Vijay Ranade. The author highlights the fault lines in NE based on ethnic divergence, porosity of the borders and developmental deficit; these vulnerabilities can be exploited by grey zone actions.

The next article 'The Determinants of India's National Military Strategy' is an abstract of the USI National Security Paper 2020 by Lieutenant General (Dr) Rakesh Sharma, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd). In the article titled 'War: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow', the author Brigadier Manoj Mohan brings out the advancements in military relevant technology and connects it with the way war is presently planned to be fought.

For the next article, 'Deciphering Grey-Zone Operations in Maritime-Asia' by Commander Abhijit Singh (Retd), we thank the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) for their permission to carry this article, which was published as an ORF Special Report on 03 Aug 2018, in our Journal. This is followed by an article by Ms Poornima Balasubramaniam. She in her article, 'Securing India's National Security in the Era of Grey-Zone Conflicts: Case of Cyber Warfare' assesses the kind and level of threat posed by cyber-centric grey zone conflicts to Indian national security and international stability.

This is followed by an article titled 'The Corona Whodunit: Grotesque from the Grey Zone' by Group Captain (Dr) K Ganesh (Retd), wherein he comments upon many theories about SARS-CoV-2 being the by-product of Chinese experiments to produce a weapon with devastating effects and deniability for use in Grey Zone war. Wing Commander UC Jha (Retd) in the next article, 'Grey Zone Conflict and Legal Derision' highlights an urgent need to upgrade international legal frameworks and

mechanisms of conflict management which could be employed to address the Grey Zone conflicts.

The last article, 'Unconventional Warfare' by Major BN Sharma, appeared in the USI Journal in 1966 and is added to enable the reader to discern how the interpretation of this type of war has changed in the past 55 years. We would say that it has. The rest we will leave it to you to decide as you go through this issue of the USI Journal.

This issue also carries short reviews of the following books:

- Territorial Army: Gateway for Civilians to Army.
By Lieutenant Colonel Surender Singh
Reviewed by Shri Gaurav Kumar
- The Coolie's Great War: Indian Labour in a Global Conflict, 1914-1921.
By Radhika Singha
Reviewed by Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina, MBE (Retd)

As always, we await your valuable feedback and suggestions while we continue to maintain the standards of meaningful research and original writing.

Happy Reading!

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Finding the Way for India in the Shades of Grey: Capacious, Shadier, Murkier & Below the Belt

Lieutenant General Dushyant Singh (Retd)[@]

“War in the 21st century is conducted at a roughly four-to-one ratio of non-military and traditional military tools and tactics”.

—General Gerasimov,
Chief of General Staff, Russia

Abstract

In light of the progressively increasing grey zone conflicts against India, no instance of human error can be seen as unmotivated. Grey zone conflict has become popular in recent times because of its adaptability, cost-effectiveness, and relative lack of accountability. In such a scenario, the armed forces need to evolve and transform themselves to continue being a powerful protector of national security and ensure credible deterrence. Therefore, the national security strategy needs a paradigm shift in perspective that focuses on Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management, and Conflict Termination.

Introduction

It was a relatively quiet night in Mumbai on 12 October 2020, with the shadow of COVID-19 still looming large over it, when suddenly the economic capital of India and the 10th largest city in the world, with a population of over 1.2 crore, came to a grinding halt. Power was withdrawn from Mumbai for over two hours. All four grids that supply electricity to the city became non-functional