

Short Reviews of Recent Books

The State, Democracy and Anti-Terror Laws in India. By Ujjwal Kumar Singh (New Delhi : Sage Publications, 2007), 345p, Rs 695.00, ISBN 10:7829-670-5 (India-HB).

Laws like the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) are enacted to address what the state deals with as extraordinary situations. These emerge as exceptions to the ordinary legal and judicial procedure. The book has attempted to examine public debates surrounding extraordinary laws like POTA and the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) by enumerating facts of specific cases, procedures adopted at trials and judgements under the above two statutes.

The author has argued that extraordinary laws have ramifications for people's life, political institutions, the rule of law and democratic functioning. He has shown how such laws assume 'normalcy' and acquire a place of permanence in state practices. He has examined the pattern in which such extraordinary laws manifest dominant configurations of political power and ideology. While exploring the unfolding of POTA in specific contexts, the book shows how the law was enmeshed in the politics of *Hindutva*, electoral and coalition politics. It takes into account complexities of centre-state relations and the politics of repression. It focuses on impact of reconciliation against nationality struggles while negotiating issues of poverty and development.

The concluding paragraph brings out that substantive liberty, which holds out the promise of weaving rights into legal formalism, based on the assumption that citizens have moral and political rights, the latter to be enforced by and through courts, remain inadequately realised, precisely because the safeguards are sought to be woven into laws founded on principles of procedural exceptionalism.

The effort comes out well-researched, thought-provoking and topical. The book will be of interest to students and scholars of politics, law, security studies and human rights.

Major General Nilendra Kumar, AVSM, VSM

Managing South Asia's Waters. Edited by Imtiaz Alam (Lahore : South Asian Policy Analysis Network, 2006), 230p, price not indicated, ISBN 969-9060-07-7.

South Asian Policy Analysis (SAPANA) Network came up with the initiatives of South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) and the South

Asian Journal in 2005. In April 2006, 14 working groups of scholars from South Asian countries met at Islamabad at a conference organised by South Asian Journal. They deliberated on issues which included trade, tariff, investment, commerce, energy, water, cooperative security, conflict resolution, nuclear stabilisation, human security, political integration, South Asian Parliament, and rewriting of history. A SAPANA declaration (given at the end of the book) addresses the process of evolving a holistic and integrated South Asian vision to face challenges of the 21st Century. The publication is in 14-volumes. The book under review is the sixth volume dealing with the topic of 'water issues' in South Asia. Agriculture, urbanisation and industries are competing as drinking water becomes scarce.

At the operational level, it is a matter of use of rivers and ground water. The Indus basin is shared by India and Pakistan. The massive Ganga, Brahmaputra, Meghna Basins are shared by Nepal, India and Bangladesh. Nine scholars from India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh have penned 12 papers on issues pertaining to water. The topics such as hydro-nationalism, different perceptions of upper and lower riparian, and untapped hydro potential of the Himalayas are covered. Irritants and opportunities on bilateral treaties such as the Indus Water Treaty (India and Pakistan), Ganga Water Treaty (India and Bangladesh) and Mahakali Treaty (Nepal-India) are included. The choices that emerge are : multi purpose and multilateral cooperation, decentralisation and local management, long term ecological well being of water bodies and human security.

This is a good effort to demolish the myth that future wars will be over water.

Colonel PK Gautam (Retd)

The Eagle Strikes : The Royal Indian Air Force 1932-50. By Squadron Leader RTS Chhina (New Delhi : Ambi Knowledge Resources, 2006), 340p, Price not indicated, ISBN 819035910X.

As the name implies, the book covers the history of the IAF from its inception to the time India became Republic. The book is in the form of a 'coffee-table book', lavishly produced and profusely illustrated with some really rare photographs of the era gone by. Chhina has a remarkable way of telling the story and he has more than succeeded in captivating the readers' interest throughout the book. The book, along with photographs, has some very relevant excerpts of '*the RIAF Journal*' of that period, which have made the book even more absorbing. All in all, this is a well researched book.

The book consisting of 340 pages is divided into sixteen chapters and six appendices. These chapters can be divided into four distinct parts. The first describing the birth of the IAF and its baptism in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) is covered in the first four chapters viz., 'Birth of an Air Force'; 'Baptism of Fire on the Frontier'; 'Prelude to the Battle'; and 'More Frontier Warfare'. Starting with the recommendations of the Skeene Committee and the dispatch of the first batch of pilots to the United Kingdom for training, good two years before the IAF came into being, its induction into the NWFP and how the newly formed No.1 Squadron matched more experienced RAF units, the eagerness to take on each and every challenge and then coming out with flying colours are all covered in these chapters. The environment in which the IAF operated in this hostile region has been very well brought out. This part also covers the formation of coastal defence flights and the role played by them at the outbreak of the Second World War.

The second part deals with the role played by the IAF in Burma and its growth and expansion during the period between 1942 and 1945. This period is covered in seven chapters and naturally forms the bulk of the book. The deeds of various squadrons have been described in detail and in most absorbing manner. The chapters: 'The Second Arakan Campaign,' the Battles of Imphal, Kohima and Central Burma,' and 'Arakan Triumph,' really stand out amongst others.

The third part consisting of one chapter describes the role played by No.4 Squadron during occupation duties in Japan. In this Chapter, Chhina has covered fresh ground as most of the air force historians have paid little or no attention to this vital task that IAF was asked to share with the Allied Forces.

The fourth part of the book covers the era immediately after India became Independent. Chhina has covered it adequately though one wishes that the process of division of the assets of the unified Royal Indian Air Force into the air forces of India and Pakistan had been also covered. It is an integral but not very widely known fact of the IAF's history.

The fifth part of the book covers the two operations that the RIAF was involved in immediately after Independence- Kashmir and Hyderabad. Unfortunately, Chhina falters in this pan. The RIAF played a decisive and very significant role in Jammu and Kashmir. This very vital part of the IAF's history has been covered in just six pages. Chhina does not mention about the only aerial engagement with the Pakistani Dakota and the attacks by the RIAF over Gilgit. On the other hand, Operation Polo-the name given to operation against Hyderabad has been covered adequately; again this

has been an uncharted territory as far as the history of the IAF is concerned.

The final chapter is on personalities of the period. This is a welcome addition as the chapter highlights the deeds of some of the lesser known persons along with some of the most outstanding personalities of the IAF of that era. It is indeed an interesting and a unique chapter.

The appendices cover the honours and awards from 1937 onwards till and including those awarded for action in Jammu and Kashmir, list of all war casualties from 1939 to 1947 (surprisingly, the list does not include those killed in the Jammu and Kashmir Operations-these are included in Chhina's earlier book) and other data regarding achievements of the RIAF in Burma and strength of personnel from 1st July 1933 to 1st August 1947.

All in all, Chhina has done a remarkable job. The collection of photographs is indeed unique. The book- 'The Eagle Strikes' is a book that must be read and possessed by every person who has anything to do with the IAF.

Air Marshal Bharat Kumar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)

Islam in the European Union : Transnationalism, Youth and the War on Terror. Edited by Yunas Samuel and Kasturi Sen (Karachi : Oxford University Press, 2007), 251p, Rs. 595.00, ISBN 0-19-547251-9.

The book is the result of a Conference on "Youth, Gender and Transnational Identities and Islamophobia" conducted by the European Commission under its Fifth Framework Programme in 2003. It consists of a series of essays and papers by different scholars giving a comprehensive view of Muslims in the European Union, their socio-economic conditions, identity crisis, problems of transnationalism and multiculturalism. These issues have assumed greater significance in the aftermath of London bombings of July 2005 and terrorist attacks in Spain and some other countries of the European Union.

Europe has a history of democratisation of Islam and its founder which goes back at least a millennium, though the term Islamophobia is of a recent origin. Subsequent decline of Islamic power, ascendancy of European Civilisation since the 16th Century and a spirit of scientific and scholarly enquiry triggered by the Renaissance contributed to a better understanding of Islam, but unfortunately it remained confined to the intellectual class and popular prejudices still persist, inspite of common origin of Islam and Christianity. The book effectively counters the superficial clash of civilisation thesis and hackneyed view of Islam, while highlighting serious problems of racism, social discrimination and political marginalisation

faced by the European Muslims; specially source of the so called "War on Terror" has been embarked upon. Section 4 is particularly important as it effectively illustrates how established civil liberties have been curtailed which disproportionately affect Muslim minorities, ostensibly to ensure security. All in all, the book carries a timely warning to rectify some of the deep rooted problems of discrimination, prejudices and faulty legal framework in achieving European aims of egalitarianism and a multicultural, harmonious Europe.

Commodore M R Khan, VSM (Retd)

Trade, Tariffs and Customs in South Asia. Edited by Imtiaz Alam (Lahore : South Asia Policy and Analysis (SAPANA) Network, 2006), 248p, Price - not indicated, ISBN - NA.

This book, Volume II, is part of a series of 14 works published by Lahore based South Asian Policy Analysis Networks (SAPANA). It examines "the problems of standardizing customs laws, improving trade facilities and encouraging regional cooperation in trade". South Asian Journal, together with South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), organised a conference titled 'Envisioning South Asia' in Islamabad (Pakistan) on 29-30 April 2006 which led to publication of a 14 Volume series titled South Asian Studies with the support of Dutch and Norwegian Embassies. [Two of these, Volume XIII and VII on issues related to "SAARC" and "Security and Nuclear Stabilisation in South Asia" were reviewed in our January-March 2007 issue by Lt Gen RN Kapur, PVSM, AVSM and Bar (Retd) and Ms Arundhati Ghose, IFS (Retd) respectively].

It dreams a well laid out road map for South Asia-Tariff and Customs Union. Economic union leading to eventual political union of SAARC Countries from the previous South Asia Preferential Trade Association [SAPTA] to the present South Asia Free Trade Area [SAFTA] that came into force in 2006 and also go for Monetary Union and South Asia Parliament in the process. Recently concluded SAARC Summit in Delhi in April 2007, carried the agenda further with putting in place South Asia Development Fund, South Asia University and to work on poverty, water, energy, environment amongst others.

Basic technical papers are by Amir Ullah Khan, SJ Mohanty and Nisha Taneja from India; M Sulaiman Khan from Pakistan; Dilli Prakash Ghimire from Nepal and Douglas Jayasekera from Sri Lanka. But it is the contributions by Shahid Burki ex-Vice President, World Bank and Finance Minister of Pakistan, Dr S Akbar Zaidi, a leading Pakistani Social Scientist and SAPANA Conference Declaration at the end that merit a read by the Policy Makers here. Mr. Burki advocates a model for Pakistan to draw on

the Indian experience initially and then go on to a new approach. That is to say, start with Information Technology Communication model of ours and to then become hub of North-South and East-West Commerce [with road, rail, airways and ports networks] for China, Central Asia, Iran with the rest of South Asia. Afghanistan is now a member, though Myanmar is still out but China, Japan, the EU and the USA enjoyed Observer status in this Summit. Dr Zaidi accepts the paramount importance of globalisation and liberalisation forces and to some extent privatisation that prods South Asia Countries to come closer in trade. The increase in trade need not wait until a certain level of development has been achieved by these developing countries. The SAPANA declaration added at the end, has fine prints that are alarming. Whilst propagating universal disarmament, it says that South Asia should start to transform into a nuclear weapons free zone. They want to rewrite History, having a few lines on religion, extremism, minorities, women's concerns with human rights, people to people contact, human security making up the scenario.

To conclude, all in all, it is a stupendous effort at NGOs and people to people levels of SAPANA Network to take SAFTA to its logical conclusion.

Commander Prem P Batra (Retd)

History of the Corps of Signals, Volume II : From Outbreak of World War II (1939) to Partition & Independence (1947). By Major General VK Singh, (New Delhi : The Corps of Signals Association, 2006) 392p, Price not indicated, ISBN-NA.

This is the second volume of History of the Corps of Signals being published by The Corps of Signals Association. The third volume is being compiled at present. The author Major General VK Singh, is well known to our readers. An active member of the USI, he is currently holding Chhatrapati Shivaji Chair (2006-07) at USI for carrying out research on "Contribution of the Armed Forces to the Freedom Movement in India". Two recently published books by the author are, *Through-Saga of the Corps of Signals* and *Leadership in the Indian Army- Biographies of Twelve Soldiers*, both master pieces in their own right.

Military historians as a genre suffer from a peculiar predicament. If they base their work entirely on available records, it becomes a dreary read. Any attempt at basing it on hearsay, brands them with questionable credibility. Major General VK Singh has very successfully overcome this by interposing his writing with personal accounts of whichever veterans of that vintage that he could come across. That makes this book a very

absorbing account of happenings from 1939 to 1947, with particular reference to activities of the Corps of Signals.

The Book covers expansion of the Corps of Signals from mere 6,411 to 82,192 all ranks during World War II. List of units raised during the War is quite impressive. In a very short period, this portion of the Indian Army had to be converted from animal transport to mechanised transport. Mechanisation brought in new technologies in desert and jungle communications which, thanks to Indian ingenuity, were successfully adopted. War in Africa, Europe, Middle East and South East Asia is covered very comprehensively. World War II was followed by Independence and traumatic partition of the Country resulting in crucial voids, which were very successfully filled, getting the Indian Army ready for ensuing Indo-Pak War of 1947-48.

A result of very extensive research, one is repeatedly impressed by the hard work put in by the author in various archives of the Government of India. This book is of immense value not only to personnel of the Corps of Signals, but to every student of Military History and World War II. Written in simple language, the General's hallmark easy style shines through dreary accounts of battles lost and won.

Major General Yatindra Pratap (Retd)

The Asian Defence Review 2006. Edited by Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, AVSM, VrC, VSM, IAF (Retd) (New Delhi : Knowledge World), 279p, Rs. 620.00, ISBN : 81-87966-53-X.

This is the first issue of the annual publication planned under the aegis of the Centre for Air Power Studies. China's economic progress and modernisation of its armed forces, India's strides towards achieving regional and global status, availability of petroleum reserves amongst other aspects, are increasing Asia's stature and bringing it centre-stage in global affairs. The volume is a compilation of eight articles dealing with various topics related to the strategic and security dimensions of Asia. Articles written by research scholars at the Institute are well researched and contain numerous details including statistical data.

'The Lebanon War 2006' recapitulates the events leading to the war and major events. It however, highlights the aspect that a regular well equipped and trained Israeli Army could not defeat the *Hamas*! It ponders over the possibility wherein, conventional forces of a state(s) may be challenged by suitably equipped groups employing guerilla tactics. The possible emerging scenarios need to be evolved and analysed; adequate responses to them need to be worked out; its feasibility in our context

cannot be denied. The articles "Trends in Defence Spending" and "China's Military Modernisation and the Russian Connection" highlight the fact that if present trends continue, the balance of military capability would continue to tilt in China's favour and that modernisation of the PLA is not merely a consequence of economic development but should be viewed in terms of it having enhanced capabilities. What emerges is that China has the capability to exercise any option, especially with the accretion of its infrastructure in Tibet; we can ignore the implications only at our peril! The article "The Fissile Material Fuss: India, Indo-US Relations and the FMCT" raises pertinent questions, viz, how much fissile material is required for a credible second strike capability? Will the FMCT constrain India achieving its need of fissile material? It suggests that India needs to focus on enhancing survivability and reliable means of delivery rather than producing more fissile material; these merit consideration.

Other articles on Energy Security, Pakistan's Economy : Trends and Prospects, Technological Requirements of Network Centric Warfare and India's Defence Procurement Policy provide good background material for those interested in further research. The publication fulfills its avowed aim of providing relevant reference material and would be a useful addition to libraries.

Lieutenant General Arvind Sharma, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

The Deadly Embrace: Religion, Politics and Violence in India and Pakistan 1947-2002. Ed. by Ian Talbot (Oxford University Press, 2007), 189p, Rs. 495.00, ISBN 9878-0-19547364-3.

The first seven chapters of the book are devoted to the growth of communal violence in India, and the last two to Islamic violence within Pakistan. The first chapter deals with the violence, which accompanied partition in 1947 on both sides of the Punjab. It convincingly argues that this violence was not spontaneous but deliberately engineered by political forces with the full connivance of the civil and police authorities. These, so called riots, had "functional utility" for politicians and the same pattern can be seen in subsequent "communal riots" in India in various places. The book examines riots in Meerut from 1961-1982, the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and the 2002 Gujarat riots. In each case, the author reinforces that the violence served specific political goals, was carried out with the tacit (and sometimes open) support of the civil and police authorities and that the guilty lumpen elements were never brought to book. It argues that there is an institutionalised "riot production system" existing in many parts of North and West India which can be activated at short notice when political compulsions demand. Both the main political parties use these riots for their political advantage, whenever required.

The book also examines the relative absence of communal violence in Malerkotla in 1947 and how the communal violence was not allowed to spread in Uttar Pradesh during 1947-48 by firm police and civil action as it was in the interest of the political masters that violence did not occur. In fact, the spread of violence would have harmed the rulers' interest in both these cases.

The two chapters on Pakistan trace how various military regimes, particularly those of General Zia and Musharraf have strengthened Islamic militant forces in their quest to gain political legitimacy. The USA by stepping in to organise the so-called *jihad* in Afghanistan allowed the ISI and the Pakistani establishment to implement its own agenda. This had the effect of a sharp rise in violence in Pakistani society at every level - community, sectarian and domestic violence. The growth of violence and its impact on the informal economy in Pakistan, rise of Islamic militancy, flow of sophisticated weapons, narco-terrorism and rising crime and deterioration in the condition of religious and ethnic minorities and violence against women are touched briefly.

The book is a must read for any serious student of violence in India and Pakistan. However, the reader must keep an open mind and draw his own conclusions.

Shri Kulbir Kishan, IPS

India-Security Scope 2006 : The New Great Game. By Brigadier Rahul K Bhosle (Retd) (Delhi : Kalpaz Publications, Satyawati Nagar), 297p, Rs. 720, ISBN : 81-7835-512-4.

This is a year book in which the author seeks to analyse the events of the past to forecast the security threats that may confront India beyond 2006. The analyses includes all types of threats-terrorism, Naxalism and those that may emanate from the neighbouring countries namely Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is an all encompassing work that throws light on India's security challenges as the country positions itself to its rightful place in the world polity of a resurgent regional power.

The author focuses on the likely flash points within India and its neighbourhood. The issues like Kashmir, North Eastern States with Assam in particular, have been deliberated upon in great detail. The author has provided some definite conclusions with regards to the prospects of progress and peace with Pakistan, the settlement with the Maoists in Nepal, the continued strife in Sri Lanka and the growing concern with Bangladesh. There is a caution for the Muslims to resolve the conflict within and advice to the nations not to raise the Frankenstein as it could strike back. The chapters on the Indo-US Nuclear deal and acquisitions of arms by India are very informative.

The book is a product of detailed research by the author. It is remarkably well written. It addresses India's Security concerns. The issues contained in the book have long term implications for the security of India. Therefore, the utility of the book would have been better had the prognosis looked at a horizon of at least ten to fifteen years.

Major General Samay Ram, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd)

Acquisition and Competition Strategy Options for the DD (x) The US Navy's 21st Century Destroyer. By John F. Schank et al. (Santa Monica, Rand, 2006), 136p, Price not indicated, ISBN 08330-3870-2.

The DD(x) (since redesignated DDG 1000) programme of the US Navy, originated out of their requirement for a new destroyer type ship for projecting power ashore in littoral operations. This is part of their programme initiated in 1994 to develop a new surface combatant fleet for the 21st Century.

Concept studies for the new ship were authorised in early 1995 and acquisition approval given in early 1998. Two industry teams led by Northrop Grumman Ship Systems and Bath Inou Works, the shipyards selected for constructing these ships, competed to develop the "initial system design". Northrop Grumman Ship Systems was selected in 2002 to act as the lead design agent to programme a three-year "system and sub-system design and technology development effort". It was soon apparent that acquisition and contracting decisions for the "detailed design and production phase" for this new class of ships shall have important implications for the US shipbuilding industry which had already shrunk considerably. The challenge before the Department of Defense was, threefold : designing a way to support the desired shipbuilding industry base in the country, adopting an appropriate strategy to sustain competition throughout the production phase of these destroyers, and meeting the DoD objectives with respect to cost, schedule and performance of the programme. RAND Corporation of the USA was, therefore, commissioned in 2003 to analyse different acquisition and contracting strategies and recommended how these issues could be best resolved.

This book describes the various issues that the research team from RAND Corporation addressed, the manner in which the analysis was conducted and major findings of their study. The complex and unique nature of defence acquisitions, the reasons why they cannot follow typical business practices of price competitions and yet, how a variety of competition enhancing arrangements can still be introduced for such acquisitions have been well argued.

The book is a particularly useful reading for all those associated with weapon acquisitions, ship design and constructing acquisitions.

Vice Admiral Inderjit Bedi, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)

South Asia Defence and Strategic Year Book: 2007. *Executive Editor K Santhanam, Edited by Colonel Harjeet Singh (New Delhi : Panchsheel, 2007) 301p, Rs. 1750, ISBN-81-86505-85-7.*

This is the first issue of the Yearbook, which contains a mix of articles on various security related issues. The articles are topical and cover a wide range of issues that are relevant to South Asian region and in particular to India, while others have wider perspective and focus on threats and challenges and the nature of war in future.

The nuclearisation of India and Pakistan in 1998 has had a profound effect on the security concerns in the region and these find expression in some way or the other in the articles. There are conflicting views amongst authors on its fall out. One view is that the nuclear parity has foreclosed all possibility of a conventional war between the two antagonists; it is argued that Pakistan will take advantage to this parity by opting to wage war by other means, like proxy wars through sponsored insurgencies and trans-border terrorism. The termination of Operation *Parakram* without India achieving any tangible advantage is quoted as an illustration. The other view is that there is still space for a limited conventional war provided, the nuclear threshold is factored in and escalation of the conflict is calibrated. There is no finality and the debate is wide open.

The nuclear issue is examined from yet another perspective, i.e., the prospect of strategic stability in nuclear environment. The author argues that India's interest lies in pursuing universal nuclear disarmament, even while developing a minimum credible deterrent. This is also the government's view but what constitutes 'minimum credible deterrent' has been conveniently left unanswered.

Refreshingly, Claude Apte has examined the recent Chinese consolidation in Tibet with great clarity in his article. For too long, Tibet has been absent from the radar screen of India's security concerns. The article brings out India's naivete in dealing with China. The article revisits the past and warns against falling once again in the Chinese trap. There is renewed 'romanticism' about China. The recent apprehension of India's Defence Secretary as reported by a TV channel that China was preparing to win the regional war reinforces the apprehensions expressed in the article. It would be prudent to take note even as the countries are engaged in high-level talks on the border issue.

The internal situation in India is grim. The articles dealing with the subject draw our attention to the causes and consequences of spiralling violence in India's hinterland. The author (Lieutenant General R Subramanyam) cautions against deployment of the army to deal with left wing extremism in '*Madhya Bharat*' and warns that such a course would be a monumental blunder.

There are external factors that impinge on India's internal security. The rapid Islamisation of Bangladesh has far reaching adverse consequences for India's internal security, particularly in border states of the Northeast, Bihar and West Bengal. A large migrant population, mostly infiltrators indoctrinated by religious extremism is a dangerous cocktail. This has been adequately analysed in the article on militancy in Bangladesh. Equally illuminating are the articles on recent events in Nepal and Afghanistan.

There are other articles on South Asia's contribution to the UN peacekeeping missions, threats to national security posed by migration and displacement of population due to environmental degradation and unplanned development, threats to maritime security by piracy and terrorism at sea, and the course of the peace process between India and Pakistan, all of which are very well researched.

The value of the Yearbook is greatly enhanced by inclusion of country-wise information and military balance of states in India's larger neighborhood, a directory of think tanks in the countries of South Asia, a brief survey of nuclear and missile capabilities of India, China and Pakistan and trends in military technology. The Yearbook is a goldmine of information for security analysts and policy makers alike.

The printing, production and quality of photographs at the end of the book are of high quality and eye catching.

Brigadier SP Sinha, VSM (Retd)