

Short Reviews of Recent Books

Securing India: Assessment of Defence and Security Capabilities.

By Rahul K Bhosle (New Delhi : Vij Books, 2009), pp 298, Rs 795.00, ISBN: 9788190848787.

This book has a simple leitmotif: assessing how secure India as a Nation and Indians as a people are today. The issues dealt with are enmeshed in a wave of complexity. They need to be analysed and understood because of immense importance to the Nation. The Indian penchant of treating all defence related issues as a 'holy cow', has ensured that the subject was not given the attention it deserves by the policy makers in power, the intelligentsia and even the media. The public at large of course remains blissfully ignorant of the issues involved. This book by Brigadier Rahul Bhosle is a valuable addition to the very limited literature on the subject.

The author has rightly stated that the Indian state has been reticent in articulating National security policies. This is a lacuna which we need to overcome at the earliest considering the multifarious nature of challenges which the Nation is faced with today. As India is yet to articulate a National security policy, the author has attempted to derive it from original quotes by key leaders such as the Prime Minister, the Defence Minister and others on the subject. Despite scanty information from public sources, the author has done a commendable job in analysing India's security concerns and has thrown up a whole lot of suggestions which deserve debate and implementation.

The book has been divided into four parts dealing with the security challenge, Indian capabilities, the role of Indian Industry in defence and finally a review giving out recommendations on how India should be secured. Written in good prose, it is a must read for the strategic community. I recommend this book to all those who have an interest in India's security.

Major General Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM (Retd)

Confronting Terrorism. *Edited by Maroof Raza; Foreword by Stephen P Cohen, Delhi: Penguin India, 2009), pp 201, Rs. 450.00 (hardback), ISBN 9780670083695.*

Are we finding a way to confront terrorism? The action that India's Home Minister proposes; to bifurcate his Ministry into two segments with one totally devoted to tackling terrorism, is a sign of the an attitudinal shift in our methods. However, creating structures is one matter but

understanding the problem is yet another ball game. We succeed only if we mesh the two. It is these problems that the recently released Penguin India publication *Confronting Terrorism*, edited by Maroof Raza, is all about.

He succeeds in presenting several crucial aspects of the Indian difficulties with his selection of multidisciplinary practitioners and scholars contributing to the thematic framework. However, what is material is the long and detailed introduction by Maroof Raza, where he very timely points out, "India's leaders are yet to decide where to start. All they do is, dismiss the wickedness of the individuals rather than challenge the legitimacy of their ideas, despite the fact that, since the mid 1980s, India has witnessed terrorism in one form or other."

According to Professor Stephen Cohen in his detailed and splendid foreword to the volume, "India's security managers have a good idea of how to manage insurgencies that are purely domestic but tackling those which receive outside support require the willing or unwilling co-operation of others, notably Pakistan". This is the kernel issue and Afsir Karim, Gautam Das and Ali Ahmed, all military men turned scholars like Maroof, have objectively referred to this nefarious link whilst elaborating on the canons of the fourth generation warfare. Over and above the commonalities, both Karim and Das have delved at length on the country's home grown radicalism and militancy in the North-East. The most material input in my view, comes from an ex- policeman Ved Marwah, whose review of the deficiencies of the Indian Police is truly comprehensive.

Bharat Karnad is a scholar on nuclear issues and, therefore, his presentation on Nuclear Terrorism is an area for key consideration. Bhasyam Kasturi has ventured to suggest structural changes in the intelligence processes but he has looked at it from a distance; although such changes are already taking place. Shairi Mathur has surveyed terrorism and Swapna Nayudu draws from Afghanistan's experiences.

However, this well informed commentary from the Indian security intelligentsia can only help if we think out of a box of conventional ideas having assimilated what the authors had to tell. There are crucial political issues of interference in matters police, which only a political system can set right. There is an ingrained message that inter - disciplinary learning from each other's core competences amongst the security forces; for internal or external threats must be made the order of the day. And lastly perhaps, is to determine the best methodology through which the politico understands the new nature of the war. This book – a collector's item – does justice to all these issues.

Power, Commerce and Influence: India's Look East Experience. Edited by R Sen, T Chakraborty, A Majumdar and S Chatterjee (New Delhi: Lancer's Books, 2009) pp 355, Rs 630.00, ISBN: 9788170951186.

India's Look East Policy is an important foreign policy initiative taken during the stewardship of PV Narasimha Rao even as some argue that its implementation lacks coherence. The basic idea is to integrate India with the growing economies of South East Asia and Asia-Pacific. Amongst other factors this was farsighted and important in context of increasing Chinese presence in Indian Ocean and South Pacific region.

The present collection of 15 papers by intellectuals on international relations deals with the historical and contemporary perspectives. The present volume has been compiled post a National seminar in Jadavpur University, Kolkata under the auspices of the UGC. The essays answer many questions including how 'Policy' can be made more resilient, meaningful and effective in future. Asia Pacific region has emerged as the central pivot in the Indian view of Asian stability. It is interesting to note that definition of the East has now been expanded to include China, Japan, South Korea and Australia. India would like a multilateral security order in the Asia Pacific in partnership with ASEAN.

Can an Asian Economic Community emerge as a third pole of world economy after the European Union and the NAFTA? In the perception of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Asian Economic Community can prosper only if the integrated market is served by efficient 'road, rail, air and shipping services. India has launched military contacts and joint exercises with ASEAN states to include Japan, South Korea and China. There are periodic Naval exercises, bilateral cooperation with Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Laos, Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand. India-ASEAN open sky agreement is also noteworthy.

Is our policy driven by the ineluctable rivalry with China? Many would argue that Japan, South Korea and Australia also are in search of a strategic tie up to counter the growing influence of China in Asia-Pacific. India has done well to forge Mekong-Ganga Cooperation so that China is out of it. Again BIMSTEC has potential for future cooperation that may benefit all parties.

The book throws many valuable insights on a subject vital to our security and economic concerns.

Major General Ashok Joshi, VSM (Retd)

Environmental Security: New Challenges and Role of Military.
By PK Gautam (Delhi : Shipra Publications, 2010) pp 166, Rs 495.00, ISBN : 9788175415249.

This book is the result of a fellowship awarded to the author by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. Out of the four aspects indicated for 'Researching the Role of Military in Environmental Security' the author has covered two in this book viz, 'Role of the Military in Ecological Restoration' and 'Military to Military Cooperation' pertaining to ecology. The two other areas of study mentioned on the Preface of the book have been published as separate studies.

This work combines theoretical knowledge, visits to remote areas and a detailed study of environmental literature, with a deep knowledge of India's security concerns coalesced with the author's passion for environment. Several case studies have been carried out to highlight the activities of the military in ecological conservation. Given the authors interaction with the ecological task forces in the pursuance of his work, the second chapter covers these forces in some detail. Indian Army is the only army in the world which has raised such units. There are eight ecological units in the country; each mandated with a specific task, e.g. one of them has the task of restoring the Agar watershed North of Mussoorie Hills. Subsequent chapters deal with different regions of the country each with its own peculiarities. The insightful study of our less known and remote areas is a highlight of the book.

The author bemoans the lack of sensitivity of the mainstream to the unique culture and people of these areas. The suggested prescription is : develop these areas, urbanise, construct roads and remove entry restrictions where applicable, but with minimum environmental degradation and trampling of biodiversity. The study deftly links ecological episodes to insurgency and points to its economic roots.

Chapter 7 explains another interesting prognosis which identifies ecological threats and links these to the role of Ecological Task Forces. Certain important issues have been raised. Most importantly, the Army plants large number of trees and yet never claims carbon credits and related funds. The advantages of indigenous '*kikar*' over foreign *kikar* have been explained. The latter have been responsible for the extinction of a number of native species.

The last chapter deals with environmental agenda for the military and military-to-military cooperation. The latter, which was one of the two areas of study, has been perfunctorily covered in about two and a half pages. This aspect needed more attention given the fact that the militaries in the region share a common ecological system such as the Himalayas, rivers and the oceans. This cooperation could form an important tool of diplomacy in the region.

This book is a notable follow up of the author's previous book on environment security. It is well written, easy to follow and provides a wealth of knowledge. It has interesting photographs, sketches and good quality print. The depth of research and the authors commitment are discernable. Recommended for libraries and universal reading.

Brigadier MS Chowdhury, VSM (Retd)

Natural History and the Indian Army. By JC Daniel and Lieutenant General Baljit Singh (Retd) *Bombay Natural History Society (Oxford University Press, 2009), 260p, Rs. 1200.00, ISBN (10): 0198064500 & ISBN(13): 9780198064503.*

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has been conserving nature since 1883. In early 21st century, BNHS launched the green governance web portal where the green, pursuits of the Armed Forces are documented. JC Daniel has served with the organisation since 1950. Combined with noted environmentalist Lieutenant General Baljit Singh (Retd) they have filled an important niche in the literature of the relationship between natural history and the Indian Army.

The extinction of species is accelerating. The current campaign to save tigers and the extinction of vultures are the "battle indications" to show that biodiversity is being lost; sometimes even before being recorded. It is well known that in the colonial days the British officers had all the leisure and time to undertake nature watching and recording. Thankfully, this breed of nature lovers were not shikaris who as the book recounts were responsible for extinction of the cheetah.

The excellent book, with added photographs and sketches, has reprinted 25 articles, with comments of editors, from journals by 19 former military officers of which three are Indians. The period is from 1778- 2002.

The subjects covered are Indian trees, birds, animals, reptiles, insects, butterflies etc. as well as essays on natural history of the Narmada region, Kaziranga, and Deesa in North Gujrat, and preservation of wild life.

The question is not just of recording the natural history. It is to encourage a new generation of soldiers and families to revive the strong links of military life with natural history. The military will continue to serve in remote and difficult regions full of wild life. In 2007, a new bird specie Bugun Liocichala was discovered in Arunachal Pradesh. At the same time, documentation by ethnic communities is lacking as some of the languages are without a script. This is an era where even the house sparrow is disappearing as humans and animals struggle for habitat, space and survival in an urbanising India. The book may thus motivate

military personnel to preserve, observe and document wild life and nature. The academic community, scholars, citizens including younger generations as also corporate India will benefit from this book. I would also recommend the book to be in private collection of officers.

Colonel PK Gautam (Retd)

The Armed Forces Tribunal Law. By Maj Gen Nilendra Kumar AVSM, VSM (Delhi: Universal law Publishing Co Pvt Ltd, 2010) pp 357, Rs 395.00, ISBN 9788175348233.

The book is primarily a compilation of The Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007, and its allied Acts and Rules. The author has incorporated suitable notes under various sections of the Act in a lucid and simple language. The notes would serve as a suitable guide and as a ready reckoner to understand the meaning and purport of important provisions of the Act. The inclusion of some of the views aired by the members during Parliamentary debate in the Rajya Sabha at the time of passing of the Armed Forces Tribunal Bill, 2005 is a noteworthy feature of the book. Similarly, the inclusion of the report of the Standing Committee on Defence will help the reader to understand in brief the background and circumstances which led to passing of the Bill, as well as, discussion on various provisions of the Bill before it became an Act of the Parliament. It also gives an insight regarding the reasons which led to exclusion of some of the aspects of military service like leave, transfers and postings etc., from the purview of the Armed Forces Tribunal.

The book interalia contains the Armed Forces Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 2008 and the Armed Forces Tribunal (Practice) Rules, 2009, which will serve as a ready reckoner for a lawyer practising military law. The reader will find useful references in the form of citation of some of the finally adjudicated cases by various courts of India including the Supreme Court. By adding the Army Act, 1950, the Navy Act, 1957, and the Air Force Act, 1950 in the book with up to date amendments incorporated, the author has provided a single, handy and ready handbook on military law.

Colonel R Balasubramanian, VSM (Retd)

Democracy and Development in India: From Socialism to Pro Business. By Atul Kohli (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009) pp 447, Rs. 850.00, ISBN 978019567933.

Written over a span of twenty five years from the early 1980s to 2006, the collection of 15 essays alongwith the introduction analyse the political economy of development in India. The commitment of the state changed

from socialism to protecting and fostering pro business interests in this period.

The essays thematically divided into political change, political economy politics and development in select states share a theoretical and normative unity as they adopt a state society frame of reference and argue for a social democratic model of development. Indian democracy, the author holds is best understood by focusing on the way power distribution is negotiated by various groups and not by socio - economic determinants alone.

The author observes that the economic reforms introduced from 1991 onwards have been more pro-business than pro-market. The policies have favoured established business groups which have led to 'India Incorporated' taking shape.

The political process in the management of power has been characterised by continuous adjustments between forces of centralisation and decentralisation. The interests of the powerful are safeguarded. Those who challenge the system are accommodated either by granting them more autonomy or a larger share of resources. On balance, the state has put its weight behind the winners of the new economy, namely business groups, without adequately compensating those who are left behind.

The narrative is descriptive and backed by references. Overall, the author gives primary importance to internal factors in determining the nature of development.

The unfamiliarity of the author with details is revealed in various mistakes and awkward phrases, e.g. names are wrongly spelt; '*Bootlingam*' instead of *Bhootalingam* and '*Pi Panandikar*' in place of *Pai Panandikar*; the book informs of '*landlords employing slave labourers*', '*government raiding business houses*' and '*conducting nuclear blasts*' – such aberrations detract from the scholarship otherwise evident in the book.

The book is nonetheless a valuable addition to the discourse on development written in an inter-disciplinary framework viewed by a non resident scholar who can perhaps see the whole more clearly than the parts.

Mrs Sudha Palot Rao, IES

The Unplanned Revolution: Observations on the Processes of Socio-Economic Change in Pakistan. By Arif Hasan (Karachi, Oxford University Press Karachi, 2009), pp 307, Rs 495.00, ISBN 9780195476699

Arif Hasan, an architect and an urban planner, based at Karachi has captured very well the "enormous" socio-economic changes that have

been taking place in different parts in Pakistan. The author, a keen social scientist, has made the observations during his personal visits in 1980s and 1990s. Subsequent new trends in early this century have been updated as postscripts. "The changes have been varied depending on accessibility of social structure, clan and tribal affiliations." The migration from India in 1947 was the "turning point" in the history of Pakistan. The society which was earlier "multi-religious and multi-cultural became uni-religious and is attempting to become uni-cultural as well." This was one of the reason for the break up of Pakistan. The Zia era established "religious power which destroyed government institutions and institutionalised corruption and nepotism." Pak elite created their own 'westernised' world. The Afghanistan war was responsible for introduction of drugs and guns in the society.

In the NWFP, the deeply entrenched traditional leadership of landlords and Imams have not allowed social changes. The segregation of women in most areas of NWFP is very severe. There are contradictions. The number of women hailing from all over the state studying in Peshawar have increased manifold. The postscript of 2008 adds that American attacks from across the border have further strengthened the political base of religious right.

Karachi, the largest town, has about 50 per cent population living in informal settlements called "*katchi abadi*". Its reality is "emergence of first world economy and sociology with third world wage and political structure." The social values of younger generation are changing fast and the joint family system is breaking down.

Pakistan is a divided society: between the rich and poor, orthodox Imams and upwardly young mobile; corrupt state functionaries and civil society groups. The author is of the view that without the process of dialogue and reconciliation between differing sections, the problems in Pakistan's society can not be resolved. Unless this is done, these differences would lead to more violence and crime.

It is a must read book for any one who wishes to understand Pakistan in its entirety.

Colonel Virendra Sahai Verma (Retd)

The Political Career of Mohammad Ali Jinnah. By William S Metz. Edited by Roger D Long (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp 168, Rs. 495.00, ISBN 9780546736.

This is the first researched dissertation on the political life of Jinnah, sixty years after his demise. It brings out new material and interpretation relating to the role of Fazl-i-Hussain and Malviya the two fundamentalists, as well as other political players and the Labour Government. The reason,

why Jinnah turned, from a staunch nationalist to a votary of 'two nations' concept has been examined.

It was under the influence of secular minded leaders – Surendernath Banerjee, Naoroji and Gokhale, that Jinnah imbibed nationalism as the key to seek Swaraj. He not only opposed the separate Muslim electorate but also the Khilafat cause. The issues which had a profound impact on him and changed his thinking and course of life were : marital discord at home; public differences in life; and being pushed from the centre stage by Mahatma Gandhi, whose religious fervor to unite the masses to undertake Civil Disobedience dismayed Jinnah. He believed in employing the constitutional methods only.

The neglect of the League by the Congress after 1937 UP elections, wide difference in the Nehru Report and the Delhi Muslim Proposals, and the treatment meted out to him at the Nagpur session further contributed to Jinnah's exit from the Congress.

On "Quit India" call, the Congress governments in the Provinces resigned and their leaders were interned. Jinnah called it "Deliverance Day" and unhampered organised the League on an all India basis. The author absolves the British government of harbouring any motive to partition the Country as was apparent in The Cabinet Mission Plan. That too was rejected by Jinnah and he gave the call for "Direct Action" which led to near anarchy.

The aging leaders of the Congress had a Hobson's choice – Pakistan or Civil War. They chose the former option. The author believes that the demand for Pakistan was only to secure greater say for the Muslims at the Centre and Provinces. The truth of *reductio ad absurdum* was not lost on Jinnah, but the dye had been cast. This is an authentic and highly readable account. It is well supplemented with a comprehensive bibliography and an index.

Brigadier KN Singh (Retd)

Karachi: Megacity of Our Times, (Second Edition), Edited by Hamida Khukhro and Anwer Mooraj (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp390, Rs 1950.00, ISBN 9780195475197.

The book is a historical cum contemporary account of development of Karachi as a city, from ancient times of a small village of Kun of Kalchai on the Arabian Sea (also referred as Kalchai) to the capital of Sindh, and later of Pakistan. Today it is the business hub of Pakistan. The story of how this small port became the strategic and trade anchor of the British Empire in Asia, and its development into a millennium city, are covered in sixteen chapters written by thirteen prominent writers of Karachi. Their

essays exhibit the pride they have in their city, and also their dismay at its decay; especially the temporary migrants living in unplanned areas. The ugly face of terrorism is covered in the last chapter; the last page narrating the events and mood of the city after the fatal terrorist attack on Benazir Bhutto.

The contents can be divided into three major parts; covering history, literature and cultural trends, and the views of the present day people who nostalgically reminisce about the changes the town culture has undergone since 1950s. The unique feature of all narrations is the frankness, sincerity and the feeling of pride with which the authors have described their pieces. For instance, due credit is given to the British for various administrative and planned developments and construction activities which resulted in the city becoming the capital of Sindh, to the Hindu Sindhis for establishing educational institutions, and to the Parsees and the Goanese Catholic Christians for making the city an international one.

A lot of research has been done by Hamida Khukhro on the early history of the city, which she covers vividly in the first four chapters. The literary scenes of Urdu, English and Sindhi society, art and drama (including Indian movies and classical dances), various markets, bazaars, eating joints and entertainments places are covered under Multi-Cultural Karachi-Photo Essay. These take a reader through the town on a 'conducted tour', making the book enjoyable. The chapters 'Saddar of the Fifties and Sixties' by Asif Noorani and 'Millennium Karachi' by Ayela Khuhro need a special mention for their comments bringing out how the past and the present generations feel about their city.

The book has a number of photographs showing the architecture of old and new buildings (including places of worship of all faiths). One wishes the editor had also given a latest map of the city, which would have made it easy for a new reader to identify well known landmarks like Clifton Road and Saddar Bazar etc. The book will be enjoyed much – specially by those who have had any links with the city.

Lieutenant General YM Bammi (Retd)