

Editorial

By the time this issue of the Journal reaches our readers it will be fifty years, almost to the day, since the Chinese launched a war of aggression against our northern and northeastern borders. There is really nothing to celebrate the fifty years about that war but yes, certainly a good reason to commemorate the sacrifices of our soldiers. Equally important, this is a good time for introspection by the political as well as the military leadership to be able to come to terms with that debacle. In fact, this should have been done long ago but since the same has been kept under wraps, its ghosts have not yet disappeared. We need to squarely face it at the political, diplomatic and military levels, so that appropriate lessons are learnt for the future.

In the same context, I would like to draw the attention of our readers to Volume CXLI, No. 586, Oct - Dec 2011 issue of the Journal wherein, an article "1962 – Battle of Se-La and Bomdi-La" has been carried. Encouraged by the response from our readers, USI has now undertaken a project to do a critique on the entire war from all angles. Hopefully, we plan to publish the same in the form of a book before long. Through this column, I appeal to our readers that if they have a personal experience to share about that war (political, diplomatic or military) and the same has not been published anywhere so far, please be kind enough to share it with us so that the same can be used for the project study.

The Sixteenth Colonel Pyara Lal Memorial Lecture on the subject "Indigenisation in the Defence Industry – Current Status and Future Prospects" was delivered by Shri MV Kotwal, Member L&T Board & President Heavy Engineering on 05 Sep 2012 and the same is being carried as the lead article in this issue of the Journal. Shri Kotwal covered a very wide canvas, especially from the point of view of the defence related Private Sector. He laid great stress on the issues related to policy implementation, including offsets and highlighted some examples of successful collaboration between the Defence Research & Development Organisation, Ordnance Factories, Defence Public Sector Units and the Private Sector. The talk was well attended and generated a stimulating discussion.

In keeping with our policy of organising events at other stations with large membership, USI had organised a joint panel discussion with Amity University at their campus in NOIDA on the subject of "Problem of Naxalism in India: Ground Realities and Strategic Challenges Towards Conflict Resolution" on 26 Jul 2012. Many interesting ideas were articulated by the eminent panelists. The Amity University provided unstinted support for the event. A full report on the panel discussion is being carried in this issue of the Journal.

Continuing with the same theme, the next three articles : "Urban Perspective Plan – An Analysis of Maoist Perspective and Assessment" by Lieutenant General VK Ahluwalia, PVSM, AVSM and Bar, YSM, VSM (Retd); "Countering Terrorism" by Lieutenant General PC Katoch, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SC (Retd) and "The National Counterterrorism Centre : Critique and Recommendations" by Dr Prem Mahadevan deal with various facets of terrorism as it affects the Indian State. If India is to become a developed nation, which it must, it is important to deal with the scourge of terrorism, be it home grown or externally sponsored.

Recent sectarian violence in Assam shocked the entire nation. Its ripples were felt far and wide; the disturbances in Mumbai on 11 Aug 2012 and thereafter the exodus of the people belonging to the northeast from many cities of the Country, are events which are of great consequence for cohesion and integrity of the Country. In the next article "The Recurring Violence in Western Assam – An Analysis", Shri EN Rammohan, IPS (Retd) who has served in the northeast for many years analyses the basic causes for this flare up which happens time and again, and makes some sharp observations.

China's presence and activities in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), especially in the Gilgit-Baltistan region have been of great concern to India for quite some time. In the next article "India's North West : The New Great Game", Lieutenant General Kamleshwar Davar, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) analyses the strategic significance of this area and its connection with the Siachen Glacier Issue, namely the Saltoro Ridge which he has called *the strategic fulcrum*. As India negotiates this issue with Pakistan, it ought to take into account the effect it may have on the ongoing Sino-

Indian negotiations to resolve the boundary dispute, particularly in the J&K region abutting the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

In the next article "Indian Strategic Interest in Afghanistan", Wing Commander Anurakshat Gupta looks at the effects of Indian efforts in stabilisation of Afghanistan. Wing Commander Gupta, a surgeon by profession who spent a year as part of an Indian surgical team working amongst the people of North Afghanistan feels that the Indian soft power has begun to make a significant impact on the lives of ordinary Afghan people.

Captain Akshat Upadhyay in the next article "Impasse in the Middle East" traces the history of the US - Iran relations since the Mid-nineteenth century which were quite cordial and how these have grown to be of intense distrust and confrontation. The young author has tried to put the US - Iran - Israel imbroglio into perspective that may help in understanding the issues at play and the leverages that each player is trying to obtain for itself.

In the next article 'Electronic Document Handling in the Armed Forces : Need for an Automated Approach', Commander K Ashok Menon (Retd) highlights the extent to which the Armed Forces have become dependent on electronic documentation but the safeguards have lagged behind. He outlines the main concerns in a simple manner and makes certain recommendations for protection of electronic documents through organisational measures at each level.

Colonel Yogesh Nair in his article 'Environment as a National Security Concern : A Perspective' has emphasised the impact of environmental issues on national security. He recommends that 'environment' *per se* ought to become a factor to be considered universally while dealing with security issues and planning military operations.

The last article in this issue contains a report by Colonel KS Dhami (Retd) on the USI sponsored "Study cum Adventure Trek to the Baspa Glacier – source of the Sutlej River" which he undertook from 08 - 17 Jul 2012. This is part of the ongoing USI programme since 2010 for *in-situ* monitoring of the 'snout zones' of big glaciers in the Himalayas to study the environmental impact of climate change.