

2 **Net Security Provider : India's Out of Area Contingency Operations.** By IDSA (New Delhi : Magnum Books Pvt Ltd, 2012), pp..84, Price ₹ 395/-, ISBN 9789382512004.

This book, laid out in nine chapters, deals with India's Out of Area Contingency (OOAC) operations. It analyses previous UN peacemaking, non-combatant evacuation, overseas humanitarian and disaster relief missions and military operations; and makes recommendations for future OOACs in line with Indian trans-border interests and responsibilities; even though the authors were without access to after-action reports, particularly of UN Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO) and military operations.

Major recommendations include : evolving an OOAC Policy; establishing Emergency Directorate in Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and OOAC Directorate in HQ IDS; creating an inter-agency coordination organisation under the Prime Minister; enhancing MEA, Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Military Synergy; improving intelligence, situational awareness, communications, training, logistics and the like. The book is well researched, well referenced, smooth flowing and adds knowledge of nuances and challenges in conducting OOACs.

Taking this book as basis for future OOAC deliberations, issues requiring focus are : proposed synergy between MEA,

MoD and Military must also incorporate Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) controlling the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) linked with Global Information Grid; total integration of HQ IDS and MoD with MEA and MHA adequately interfaced; appointing CDS rather than voicing “as and when appointed”; survey of Indian diasporas abroad and countrywise evacuation plans; establishing a separate specialised OOAC force including civil affairs components funded over and above the defence budget.

Separate OOAC Directorate in HQ IDS is not warranted as DCIDS (Ops), a three star officer, coordinates OOACs. His office could be suitably augmented. The lift capability for military operations need not be restricted to military aircraft and vessels but must include commercial capacity as considered by Chinese Airborne Corps / Rapid Reaction Forces (RRF).

Akin to a chapter on dealing with strategic communications and perception management, there should also have been a major focus on Strategic Intelligence, which is missing. Covert Special Forces deployment to assist respective missions, as a tool for OOAC, perception management and shaping environment for military operations, are vital in the present day environment. Evacuation of Chinese nationals from North Africa is assisted by on ground Chinese Special Forces. We need to learn from deployment of Chinese Special Forces ‘in guise of development projects’ and Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW).

The book is recommended to be read by anyone interested in streamlining OOACs and dynamics of their impact on India’s future.

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