

Editorial

Over the past decade and more, the *Journal of Defence Studies*, now in the thirteenth year of publication, has disseminated research and in-depth analysis on key issues in defence and military studies, strategic issues and security studies in India. The aim of the journal has been to encourage and facilitate deeper analysis and discussion on defence and military issues and, as much as possible, present an Indian perspective on the same. There is also far greater public interest on defence and military subjects, and strategic and security studies in India today and we are pleased that the Journal has been able to fulfil its role in publishing research on important issues for a specialist as well as non-specialist but informed audience.

The current issue includes three interesting papers on Indian perceptions of China in the Indian Ocean, indigenous traditions as pertaining to leadership and management, and how technological advancements in military technology and the widespread use of autonomous weapon systems raise very important ethical questions.

In 'India's Domestic Debate over China's Growing Strategic Presence in the Indian Ocean', Rajdeep Pakanati seeks to capture the domestic debate in India over China's activities in the Indian Ocean. The article engages the critical geopolitical articulation around formal, practical and popular geopolitics, and provides a narrow perspective on the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Pakanati begins with a discussion of how India and China perceive the IOR; this is crucial to understand how the Indian Ocean is framed in the public consciousness in India. He then looks at debates over China in the Indian Parliament, specifically focusing on the debates and questions raised by various Members of Parliament (MPs) and the response of the Government of India. The article then analyses the largest circulated newspaper in English, *The Times of India* from 2011 to 2015, to discern the domestic discourse on the subject in the public sphere. Additionally, the article also considers the domestic discourse created by think tanks and research organisations which pay close attention to China. Pakanati's analysis reveals that despite concerns

raised by China's presence in the IOR, the overall domestic response articulated in practical geopolitics is one of cooperation; at the same time, the analysis points to the pragmatic steps being undertaken by India to boost its multifarious capabilities. The overall picture suggests the coexistence of cooperative, competitive and conflictual overtones in India–China relationship.

Pradeep Kumar Gautam's contribution—'Leadership and Management Theories in Indic Traditions'—aims to rediscover some key aspects of leadership and management latent in ancient Indian secular texts of statecraft and governance that are also relevant in contemporary times. These include leadership essentials such as self-control in order to acquire the habit of self-discipline; basics of education as it pertains to sharpening the intellect and a spirit for enquiry and thirst for knowledge; the principles of counsel and breakdown of a task to be performed for effective delivery and implementation of a policy or plan; and some attributes of the successful art of persuasion and communication skills. Many of these traditions, because of their enduring nature, are also applicable to the military. Gautam examines these concepts in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (fourth century BCE), combined with few aspects of Buddhist philosophy; the *Nitisashtra* by Kamandaka (sixth century CE); the *Kural* by Thiruvalluvar (second century BCE to the sixth century CE); and the *Hitopadesa* by Narayana (ninth to tenth centuries CE). He opines that certain fundamental attributes of leadership and management have had continuities and resonance over time, and that the values and concepts of these traditions must find a place in modern training and education in military units and training and educational establishments.

The third article in the issue is 'Debating Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems' [LAWS], by Ajey Lele. The author discusses how technology and the armed forces have had a symbiotic relationship. In fact, many technologies which are commonly used in day-to-day life, such as the Internet or navigation systems like the Global Positioning System (GPS), actually have a link to, or are derived from, military innovations. Artificial intelligence (AI) is one arena of present generation technology that militaries have been developing mainly for two purposes: first, for juxtaposing it on their existing defence architecture for its performance enhancement; and second, for developing new types of military instruments and weapon systems. Here, Lele specifically focuses on how the research and development to advance new LAWS has been bearing good results, leading to the operationalisation of a few such

systems. He also discusses how ongoing advancements in LAWS is likely to establish a different context for their military applicability. It is a given that such weapon systems will acquire acceptability and widespread use in the future. Thus the question that is now being discussed and debated is: 'should the choice of decision making to take human lives be given to machines?' The article discusses the various aspects of autonomous and lethal autonomous weapon systems, identifying and analysing the military applications and implications of modern-day LAWS as well as the contemporary debates that surround the use of such systems.

The issue also includes five book reviews: Lakshmi Priya reviews *Perilous Interventions: The Security Council and the Politics of Chaos*; Atul Pant reivews *India's National Security: Annual Review 2018*; Arjun Subramaniam reviews *The Strategy Trap: India and Pakistan Under the Nuclear Shadow*; S. Samuel C. Rajiv reviews *India in Nuclear Asia: Evolution of Regional Forces, Perceptions and Policies*; and Kishore Kumar Khera reviews *Tiger Check: Automating the US Air Force Fighter Pilot in Air to Air Combat, 1950-1980*.

The Editorial Board of the *Journal of Defence Studies* wish its readers a Happy New Year and hopes for a deeper association in the coming year. The Board welcomes suggestions, criticism and feedback with the sole aim of improving the quality of the Journal for the benefit of its readers. Comments and suggestions can be sent addressed to the Editor, *Journal of Defence Studies* on associateeditor.jds@gmail.com.

