

Editorial

With a land border stretching 15,106.7 km, India has faced numerous cross-border insurgencies over the years and has, on occasion, worked with its neighbours to deal with insurgents. An example is the 2003 Operation All Clear, conducted by the Royal Bhutan Army and the Royal Bhutan Police against Assamese and other North-Eastern insurgent outfits that were operating from Bhutanese territory. However, in 2015, after an ambush on an army convoy in Manipur's Chandel district on 4 June, the 'Indian Army engaged two separate groups of insurgents along the Indo- Myanmar border at two locations, along the Nagaland and Manipur borders.'¹ Commentators were of the opinion that this operation signaled '...the adoption of a new counter-insurgency (CI) strategy, that of actually crossing international borders to strike at anti-India insurgents, including those from the Northeast, who carry out hit-and-run raids taking advantage of their shelters in adjoining nations like Myanmar.'² However, this was not the first such strike to take place along the India-Myanmar border.

The perspective piece titled 'Operation Golden Bird: Revisiting Counter-Insurgency on the India-Myanmar Border', by Rumel Dahiya sheds light on Operation Golden Bird, carried out by the Indian Army in 1995 on the said border. Though portrayed as a joint India-Myanmar initiative, this operation was in reality planned and executed by the Indian Army, with troops ex 57 Mountain Division and those under operational control of Headquarters Inspector General, Assam Rifles (North) or HQ IGAR(N). Using detailed maps as well as his own recollection of events, Dahiya sheds light on the conduct of counter-insurgency (CI) operations in the country's North-East. Golden Bird, he states, was characterised by the availability of local intelligence; adhoc mobilisation of troops who had no knowledge of the ground; ambitious planning without adequate logistics support; and great perseverance displayed by troops deployed to counter a strong contingent of about a 185 to 200-strong insurgent group. In fact, in some contexts, the operation is cited as the first robust

cross-border operation undertaken in Myanmar territory against Indian insurgents. Detailing observations made during the course of Golden Bird, the author finds that the operation was a success from the point of view of disintegration of a large body of insurgents, many of whom were either neutralised or apprehended. The group also suffered in terms of loss of equipment, arms and ammunition and was thoroughly demoralised. Indian troops displayed grit, determination and perseverance in an environment of ambiguity and deployment in an unfamiliar area, without adequate guidance and severe limitation of logistics support, all of which hold lessons for the conduct of CI operations in the future.

In the Focus section, we carry three articles on the Chinese Maritime Militia (CMM), India's increasing importance in Japan's security calculations, and on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Michael D. Armour contributes an article to the current issue titled 'The Chinese Maritime Militia: A Perfect Swarm?' The South China Sea has emerged as a zone of contention between China and other nations in the region. Armour opines that as the US Navy has decreased the number of ships available to counter Chinese encroachments in the South China Sea, the resultant power vacuum may be exploited by the CMM. The militia is comprised of fishing vessels that are used to augment the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), and possesses sophisticated communication and GPS technology. Shedding light on the CMM, the article contends that these units, using swarm warfare tactics and Network Centric Warfare (NCW), have the potential to become a significant combat multiplier in China's endeavours to take control of the South China Sea. Hence, the need to understand the tactics and capabilities of this organisation. Similarly, says Armour, if Beijing decides to close or interdict the South China Sea trade routes or expand naval influence into the Indian Ocean, other actors, such as India, Australia or Japan may be drawn into direct confrontation with the militia.

Staying with our focus on eastern Asia, the issue carries an article by Titli Basu examining the position of 'India in Japan's Geo-strategic Outlook'. Basu says that while Japan's long-standing alliance with the United States is the key feature of its defence and security policy, China's rise and impact on shaping the regional security architecture as well as the vigour of US commitment in the backdrop of a G2 formulation are

making Japan diversify her options. Thus, India features in the Japanese idea of Asia while it struggles to cope with the fluidity of the regional security landscape. The article critically analyses the increasing space accorded to India and the reasons behind Japan's courtship of it. Basu probes whether Japan's India policy is Abe centric, or more enduring in nature, and examines India's position in Japan's defence outlook as Tokyo redesigns its security policy. She finds that India's advent in the Japanese geo-strategic frame will endure since the variables that pushed Japan to incorporate India in its strategic design will mature and complicate the regional security environment in the coming years.

India is a founding member of the United Nations (UN) and has been a participant in UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) since their conception. A.K. Bardalai, with significant experience of participating in PKOs, contributes an article to the issue titled 'UNIFIL: The Many Challenges of Successful Peacekeeping'. Bardalai highlights how the developing world has a far richer and varied peacekeeping experience as compared to the developed world; indeed, he says that nations from the developed world have rarely participated in complex and difficult PKOs. However, UNIFIL is a rare exception among peacekeeping missions as it includes peacekeepers from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), along with Western military involvement. The article discusses how NATO members' involvement resulted in unusual structures and operational philosophy, and adjusting and adapting to this was difficult for non-Western participants. Despite the differences in training, equipment, culture and tradition amongst the Western and non-Western national contingents, UNIFIL's contribution in maintaining peace in the region is praiseworthy. The combined effects of the political and military muscles of peacekeepers from Western nations and special skills of the non-Western nations was able to provide the much-needed stability to Lebanon, which has not seen a major conflict in almost a decade.

We carry reviews of four books in this issue: Adil Chhina reviews *Die in Battle, Do not Despair: The Indians on Gallipoli 1915*; Niranjana Chandrashekhara reviews *The US Pivot and Indian Foreign Policy: Asia's Evolving Balance of Power*; S. Samuel C. Rajiv reviews *Revisiting Nuclear India: Strategic Culture and (In)Security Imaginary*; and Shyam Hari P. reviews *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*.

NOTES

1. 'Army Statement on Operations in North East', Press Information Bureau Press Release, 9 June 2015, available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=122399>, accessed on 12 July 2015.
2. Wasbir Hussain, 'What India's 'Hot Pursuit' Strategy Is and Is Not', *TheWire.in*, 11 June 2015, available at <http://thewire.in/3690/what-indias-hot-pursuit-strategy-is-and-is-not/>, accessed on 12 July 2016.