

Editorial

We are all too aware of the impact of the global financial crisis of 2008 on the world economy. Today, the world is passing through a difficult time wherein all countries, with some exceptions, are facing economic headwinds. The behemoth that is the Chinese economy is in a slowdown and economists and analysts are painting a grim picture on the economic front, at least in the near future. Simultaneously, conflicts based on ideology and identity are raging in many parts of the world. Despite terrorism being seen as a common threat to mankind, there appears to be no serious, united effort to counter it. Some states continue to employ terrorism as an instrument of statecraft, overlooking the fact that this monster will eat the hand that feeds it. History, it seems, is easily forgotten. Cyber security is becoming a major challenge threatening economic progress and human security. The wide-reaching and permeable social media that connects people also provides space for the spread of hateful ideology and an easy tool for enticing impressionable youth to join the ranks of extremists. The maritime domain is becoming conflicted by the expanding ambitions of powerful states, thus forcing their neighbours to hedge their positions. This is most apparent in the increasingly complicated security dynamics in the Asia-Pacific. These are some of the issues that require to be addressed by security planners and policymakers. The *Journal of Defence Studies* makes a modest contribution in analysing issues of such importance. Readers will see that the current issue includes articles that address some of these issues.

Over the past few years, the Indian Ocean Region has gained importance not just as a maritime commercial highway enabling the movement of essential commodities and trade across the globe, but also as an arena witnessing competition between economic and political powers. With its own global aspirations and growing economic clout, India now is confidently asserting its leadership in the regional maritime domain. This issue, appropriately, carries a perspective piece by Abhijit Singh titled 'An Indian Maritime Strategy for an Era of Geopolitical Uncertainty'. Singh opines that maritime Asia has been witness to strengthening of military

postures, set against the backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions. The worsening security environment in South and South-East Asia has led maritime forces to bolster combat inventories and revisit deployment strategies. As a regionally dominant force, the Indian Navy seeks to position itself as a key security provider in the Indian Ocean. But the expansion of its regional security agenda has also highlighted predicaments in the framing of the maritime military strategy.

In ‘An Assessment of Organisational Change in the Indian Army’, Vivek Chadha analyses changes that have taken place in the army, focusing especially on organisational innovation. The article discusses two case studies: restructuring of the Army after the Sino-Indian War of 1962; and mechanisation following the recommendations of the Expert Committee in 1975. On the basis of these case studies, Chadha assesses the drivers and desirables for organisational change in the Indian Army, with the aim of deriving policy recommendations for the future which are especially relevant in light of its ongoing transformation. The article finds operational environment and technology to be the principle drivers for change, with doctrine and strategic culture having a limited impact. It further concludes that successful change requires long-term strategic assessment, supportive political leadership, visionary and committed military leadership, strong institutional structures, and follow-up action.

Also pertaining to organisational change across all domains of the military is Professional Military Education (PME). In his article, ‘Military Education in India: Missing the Forest for the Trees’, Prakash Menon discusses how India’s PME system is weighted towards the tactical level in all stages of professional development. According to him, this tilt towards all things tactical results in inadequate exposure of the senior military leadership to strategic studies, thus inhibiting the provision of qualitative advice at the strategic level. While combat as an instrument of warfare is focused on at all levels, it fails to relate to war as an instrument of politics. It thus underlines the absence of an effort to build a broader vision that incorporates the entire constellation of forces. Menon finds that, as a general rule, technology has been privileged over humanities in PME. He opines that the establishment of the Indian National Defence University (INDU) would address some of the existing shortcomings in the system. However, he also advocates a concurrent review of syllabi in the premier joint training institutions in order to achieve a balanced,

progressive shift from an emphasis on technology at the initial stages to a humanities focus at the senior levels.

In 2014, the world observed the centenary of the Great War of 1914–1918—the ‘war to end all wars’, as it was known at the time. A large number of Indian soldiers fought in the First World War as part of the British Indian Army, in theatres ranging from Mesopotamia to the attrition battlefields of France. Of the many campaigns fought then, Gallipoli—which is most synonymous with Indians—is a century old this year. Readers would recall Peter Stanley’s excellent article ‘Indians, Anzacs and Gallipoli, 1915’, that was published in the Vol. 8, No. 3, July–September 2014 issue. We continue our focus on the First World War in the current issue with Chandar Sundaram’s article “Arriving in the Nick of Time”: The Indian Corps in France, 1914–15’. Sundaram contends that historians dealing with colonial South Asian history tend to overlook the fact that during the First World War, the Indian Army was Britain’s strategic reserve. It provided over 150,000 troops to the Western Front to shore-up the British sector in the critical period of 1914–1915. To the Indian sepoys who crossed the *kala pani* to fight, die or be wounded in the trenches there, it was a jarring initiation into modern industrialised warfare. Sundaram’s article examines that episode and advances two arguments: first, that, contrary to accounts written as recently as the 1980s, Indian sepoys performed quite well in the trenches; and second, that racial concerns and the advent of the Kitchener armies, rather than a poor combat record, led to their transfer from the Western Front at the end of 1915.

On 4 June 2015, an army convoy in Manipur’s Chandel district was ambushed by about 50 militants; the attack resulted in the death of 18 soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer. News reports mentioned that responsibility for the attack was claimed by a new coalition/alliance of militants, led by the Khaplang faction of the self-styled National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-K) as part of the United National Liberation Front of Western South East Asia (UNLWSEA). Rajeev Bhattacharyya’s timely and insightful article ‘Birth of UNLFSEA: Internal Dynamics and Implications for India’s North-East’ looks at the emergence of this alliance in the backdrop of vastly changed situations in Myanmar and India’s North-Eastern region. The tendency among rebel insurgent groups in India’s North-East and the contiguous region in neighbouring Myanmar, to form alliances is a distinctive feature of

the insurgency, Bhattacharyya says. Cooperation is deemed advantageous in a hostile terrain, with a powerful and better organised adversary, that is, the Indian Army. Bhattacharyya discusses several coalitions that were formed in Myanmar by the separatist insurgent outfits with well-defined objectives; however, these failed to produce any significant impact on the campaign for secession. There were centrifugal forces pulling in different directions, often determined by the resources available with the groups, their long- and short-term goals and the domestic situation in the areas they hailed from. The new alliance called UNLWSEA, he opines, is different from the previous endeavours in much the way as it suffers from the lacunae that hampered complete unity in the past.

Laxman Kumar Behera contributes an insightful article 'Indian Defence Offset Policy: An Impact Analysis' to this issue. He assess the impact of defence offset policy on the Indian defence industry by taking into account two key parameters: foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows and exports. The article observes that the offset policy has a mixed impact. On the positive side, the offset policy seems to have an impact on certain types of exports. On the negative side, it has not been a catalyst in bringing in foreign investment and technology inflows into the Indian defence industry, nor has it been successful in promoting indigenous high-end manufacturing. Besides, Behera finds, a majority of exports that the policy seeks to promote are confined largely to parts and components.

The issue also includes four detailed, insightful book reviews: Raghavendra Mishra reviews *The Warrior, Military Ethics and Contemporary Warfare: Achilles Goes Asymmetrical*; Mandip Singh reviews *China Borders, Settlement and Conflicts: Selected Papers*; Prashant K. Singh reviews *Asymmetrical Threat Perceptions in India China Relations*; and Y.M. Bammi reviews *Coalition Warfare*.

We welcome thoughtful observations and feedback from our esteemed readers. They would recall that the previous issue of JDS was dedicated to the Indo-Pak War of 1965. The issue was a timely, well-received one and we hope that it will form a useful reference material for the researchers in future. A number of useful lessons can be drawn from the study of the 1965 War and many of these are relevant even today. This is particularly so with respect to weakness in joint planning and conduct of operations.

Our constant endeavour has been improve the quality of articles and the reach of the Journal so that scholars, practitioners and interested readers benefit from the views and analyses offered by the authors. In our effort to

make JDS even more relevant, we would specifically welcome articles on the following topics: Military Transformation; Cyber Security; Military Strategy; Military Leadership and Likely Challenges in Future; Internal Security; Emerging Maritime Security Dynamics; Regional Military Balance; Disruptive technologies that will impact warfare in future; Jointness; Defence Economics; Hybrid Warfare; Military Psychology and Higher Defence Management.

