

Editorial

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the second issue of this year's volume, even as we are simultaneously working on two special issues on "Atmanirbharta (Self-Reliance) in Defence and Aeronautics" (July–September 2024) and "India–US Defence Cooperation" (October–December 2024). This issue consists of seven articles, five commentaries and three book reviews.

As an emerging space superpower, India has been able to make significant strides in space technology and exploration, and recognises the importance of space for national security, economic development and scientific research. The first article titled "Exploring and Evaluating the Need of a Space Warfare Operations Readiness Division (SWORD) for an Emerging Space Superpower like India", is by Mr John Vivian Prashant A., in which he has analysed India's space security infrastructure and explores the need for Space Warfare Operations Readiness Division (SWORD) through the lenses of economics, law and international relations. The article examines crucial topics such as the importance of maintaining a secure space environment in the current era and the contribution of global institutions in upholding space security.

In the second article, titled "Analysis of Chinese Geographical Renaming Strategy Against India", Major Vikrant Paul identifies the strategic imperatives guiding China as it pursues the colonial concept of geographical renaming in the contemporary international order. The renaming campaign used by China was reasonably successful in its maritime disputes along South and East China Sea. Considering that its application against India has gained pace in the past decade, the author emphasises the need to evolve a coherent response strategy that can target Chinese vulnerabilities and thereby achieve ascendancy in the gray zone.

In the next article "Challenges and Future Prospects: United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)", Ms Tanisha Acharya and Mr Harsh Behere discuss the challenges faced by UNMISS, such as ethnic conflict, protection of civilians, disarmament and gender-based violence, and

underscore the importance of UNMISS in ensuring lasting peace and stability through adaptable methods and collaborative efforts.

Military platforms that use Artificial Intelligence to autonomously locate and engage targets without human intervention, also known as Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS), have been discussed in the fourth article titled “Lethal Autonomous Weapons System (LAWS): An Analysis”, authored by Dr Sandeep Bhattacharjee. The article highlights the need for development and deployment of LAWS for India and also presents a new model called the Lethal Autonomous Weapon System Adoption or Rejection Model (LAR Model), which can assist policy-makers to decide which LAWS can possibly be adopted or rejected.

The fifth article is titled “Asymmetric Air Power: Employing Guerrilla Warfare Principles in Air Warfare”, in which Wing Commander Pichipoo Raja examines the principles employed by the guerrillas and explores possible ways of adapting those to mainstream employment by the regular air forces, thereby offering viable military options to a nation against an adversary that is several times superior in terms of economy, industry and technology.

The sixth article titled “China’s Aircraft Carrier Ambitions: The Numbers Game”, is by Dr Narendran Gurumurthy. In this article, the author talks about how China has embarked on a journey of modernising its maritime fleet, which includes an Aircraft Carrier programme, the aim being to have the numbers to counter inimical agencies and States, specifically the USA and its allies in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. The article also discusses how the Indian maritime strategy can be made more contemporaneous.

Technological advances have enabled air power to manifest in far greater ways than earlier considered possible. Air assets are one amongst varied means available to achieve required ends. It has been noticed that constraints on air power employment is a peculiar sub-continental thinking without concrete backing, though recent military operations have served to break this mythical equalising of air power with escalation. AJ Kolhatkar, in his article “Escalation and Air Power”, states that the fear of perceived escalation should not inhibit employment of air power, and that there is a need to comprehend that the necessary effects matter more than the means employed.

This issue also features commentaries on the following topics: “Deterrence in the Age of Hybrid Threats”, by Wing Commander Amit Gaur; “Japan’s Noto Earthquake: Civil–Military Synergy in HADR Operations”, by Major Michael John Bennis; “An Enduring Dilemma of Artificial Intelligence in the Battlefield”, by Lt Col Ravi Srivastava; “Kauṭilya Uvāca: Seeking Interest in the Adversary’s Prosperity”, by Dr Vinayak Rajat Bhat and Ms Tejusvi

Shukla; and “Human-in-the-loop Dilemmas: The Lavender System in Israel Defence Forces Operations”, by Mr Rohit Kumar Sharma. Three book reviews have also been published in this issue.

We hope that this issue will be received well by our readers. We would also like to thank the authors and the referees who assisted us in the peer review process. We would appreciate feedback from our readers about topics they feel should be addressed by the journal. We hope that along with our growing readership, we will also receive an increasing number of contributions for our future issues.

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