

EDITOR'S NOTE

The quarter just gone by has been extremely tumultuous, with some earth-shaking events having taken place around the globe – not the least of which was the shock exit of defending champions Germany in the group stage of the ongoing FIFA World Cup. To recount some of these events: trade wars begin between the US and China as Beijing's policies to tie trade to access to emerging technologies appears to be the main complaint President Trump has against China¹; President Donald Trump pulls out of the Iran nuclear deal on May 8, and imposes 'powerful' sanctions on Iran; the historic meeting between President Trump and North Korean President Kim Jong-un finally takes place in Singapore where, in the Joint Declaration, the US and the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) commit to work together to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and the DPRK commits to the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula (in keeping with the spirit of the April 27, 2018 Panmunjom Declaration); President Trump refuses to sign the Joint Communiqué after the G-7 Summit ended in a row over trade, enough for many to call this year's G-7 Summit a "G-6-Plus-1"; President Trump directs the Department of Defence to begin the process to establish a Space Force as the sixth branch of the US armed forces; and governor's rule is imposed in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

Other events in the neighbourhood that are likely to result in a deterioration of the regional security environment comprised the recognition of Jerusalem

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1. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said US regulators will seek to block investment in US technology companies from "all countries that are trying to steal our technology." "Asian Markets Struggle Amid Deepening China-US Trade War Fears", *The Washington Post*, June 26, 2018; https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/asian-markets-slump-again-amid-deepening-china-u-s-trade-war-fears/2018/06/25/cad47f0c-78e5-11e8-93cc-6d3beccdd7a3_story.html?utm_term=.e8649f460af2. Accessed on June 26, 2018

as the capital of Israel by President Trump, and the cancellation of the US-South Korean military exercises, yet again by President Trump, in a bid to placate Kim Jong-un after their 'historic' meeting in Singapore.

Closer home, the Chinese have not been sitting idle ever since the Doklam standoff ended in August last year. In what has been described as an activity that has the potential to become a flashpoint between India and China, the Chinese have begun mining south of Lhunzhe for gold, silver, rare earths and other minerals, the total value of which has been assessed as over \$ 60 billion. What is disturbing is that this mining activity is taking place barely 35 km from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the northeast. In an oblique reference to the egregious actions by China to build runways and other defence infrastructure on the 'reclaimed' disputed reefs and islands in the Spratlys and Paracels, Stephen Chen, writing in the *South China Morning Post* has compared the Chinese mining activity at Lhunzhe – to claim the natural resources of the region, along with its claim that Arunachal Pradesh is 'South Tibet' – as “another South China Sea arising out of the Himalayas”²; something we need to take note of.

This summer issue of the *Air Power Journal* begins with a discussion on India's nuclear doctrine in which **Manpreet Sethi** argues in her article **Massive Retaliation: Is the Threat Less Than Credible?** that nuclear weapons, in view of their damage potential, are best suited for deterrence; also, the credibility of the deterrence lies in the adversary believing that 'massive retaliation' will indeed, be resorted to if nuclear weapons are ever used first by the adversary; it doesn't matter if they are 'tactical' in nature. We are all agreed that the phrase '*tactical nuclear weapon*' is an oxymoron if ever there was one! (This observation, however, appears to have escaped attention in the formulation of the latest Nuclear Posture Review released by the US on February 7 this year).

With no clear definition available on the limits of sovereignty that extend over a nation's air space into space, the arena is open for advanced space-faring nations to exploit this global common to their advantage – paying

2. Stephen Chen, "How Chinese Mining in the Himalayas May Create a New Military Flashpoint with India", *South China Morning Post*, May 20, 2018; <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/2146296/how-chinese-mining-himalayas-may-create-new-military-flashpoint>. Accessed on June 27, 2018.

scant regard to international law. Development of Anti-Satellite (ASAT) weapons and Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability has the potential for triggering a proliferation in space weapons. Existing space legislations belong to an era when a bipolar world space order existed. With greater number of space-faring nations today, the governance of space has become more challenging. The increased number of private players has only added to the challenge. Although the Outer Space Treaty prohibits the placement of weapons of mass destruction in the orbit of Earth, it does not prohibit the placement of conventional weapons in orbit. Does this not amount to 'legitimising' the weaponisation of space? The obvious question, then, that begs an answer is: "Is space militarised but not weaponised?" One would assume so till we carry out a closer examination of what really constitutes 'weaponisation of space'. **Gp Capt Anand Rao** provides a clarification in his article **Global Implications of Space Weaponisation** wherein he also posits that the threat posed by orbital space debris to space-based assets is possibly the real – and only – reason for a 'go slow' in weaponisation of space.

The use of drones for aviation terrorism was a subject that was examined by this Centre and presented during the National Security Guards (NSG) Aviation Security Seminar on July 7, 2017. A few key technologies that could be utilised by militant organisations to execute their missions using aviation assets were presented. The attack on a Russian air base in Syria on January 6 this year, using a swarm of thirteen drones, apart from being a vindication of the study carried out by the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), was a chilling reminder that air bases are no longer a safe sanctuary for aircraft – civil or military – and a constant vigil is, therefore, needed for combating this new threat. It is refreshing to see that **Gp Capt Asheesh Shrivastava** has examined some of the aviation threats in greater detail in his article **Mass Attack by Drones: Facing the Challenge** wherein he has outlined a few immediate steps to protect against this threat to military and civil infrastructure.

During the early Sixties – at the height of the Cold War – people in the US tended to live in perpetual fear of an impending nuclear attack. This was identified by the US government as being harmful to their health and well-being. It was, therefore, felt that education on actions to mitigate the

harmful effects of nuclear radiation would prove more useful. However, a majority of the population – both in the US as well as in the UK – was loath to listen to such advice; their clarion call – especially in the UK – appeared to be that the best defence against a nuclear attack was not to possess nuclear weapons, thus, pitching for universal nuclear disarmament. **Wg Cdr Rohit Kaura** assesses the approaches to nuclear civil defence at the national level in his article **National Approaches to Nuclear Civil Defence: An Assessment**.

Despite India being a non-signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the signing of the agreement on July 20, 2017, between India and Japan on civil nuclear cooperation was nothing short of historic – especially in view of Japan's strong condemnation of India after the Shakti-2 tests in May 1998. **Piyush Ghasiya**, in his article **India-Japan Civil Nuclear Cooperation: The Journey and its Future** traces the individual journeys of both nations in the civilian usage of nuclear power and their individual positions on nuclear disarmament. He rounds up the article with the challenges that lie ahead for both nations to make the agreement a success.

The reimposition of sanctions on Iran by President Trump following the US' withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal has only served to bring Iran and Russia closer, despite these two nations' historical mistrust of each other. **Anu Sharma**, in her article **Iran and Russia: Building a Strategic Partnership**, discusses the building blocks of the strategic partnership between Iran and Russia and analyses how Iran seeks preeminence in the West Asian region, while Russia seeks to thwart US designs to remove Syria's Bashar al-Assad from power.

The Central Asian Republics (CARs) have, for centuries, been at the crossroads for flow of goods between Europe and Asia. It was also the region where the Great Game was played between Russia and Great Britain for most of the nineteenth century. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by China in the present times has revived memories of years gone by and is increasingly being referred to as the 'New Great Game' with Chinese characteristics. India's land borders with the CARs lie through the Gilgit Baltistan region (presently under illegal occupation by Pakistan) that borders the Wakhan Corridor. To overcome this 'connectivity dilemma' India joined the Ashgabat

Agreement on February 1, 2018, and secured its connectivity to the resource and oil rich Central Asian region. **Poonam Mann**, in her article **Connectivity: A Major Constraint in India's Engagement with Central Asian Republics**, explores how India plans to improve its connectivity with the CARs.

The intelligence agencies of states have often been glamorised by Hollywood through the '007' series of movies, in which James Bond is the archetypal Secret Service agent belonging to the MI-6, the foreign intelligence service of the UK. The other well-known secret service agencies are the CIA, KGB, Mossad and Directorate General for External Security (DGSE) of France. Little, however, is known about China's secret service, popularly dubbed 'China's CIA' among counter-intelligence agencies around the world. Apart from the cloak and dagger stuff – which is the preserve of the Ministry of Public Security – the entire panoply of Electronic Intelligence (ELINT), Signals Intelligence (SIGINT), Human Intelligence (HUMINT) and Cyber (both offensive as well as defensive) is handled by the Military Intelligence Department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This capability is seen as being crucial for prosecuting successful operations "under conditions of informationalization and Integrated Networked Electronic Warfare". Ground stations provide assistance to China's Haiyang series of satellites to ensure accurate maritime observation. Apart from four ground stations in Mainland China, there are three ground stations located at strategic points in foreign lands in areas through which bulk of the Chinese commercial vessels transit. The resultant maritime domain awareness (with the help of these ground stations) is crucial for safeguarding these assets from enemy action. These ground stations are located in Kenya, Namibia and Pakistan (Karachi). In the last article of the journal titled **China's Military and Satellite Intelligence Programme**, which covers heretofore uncharted ground – and, therefore, makes for some fascinating reading – **Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee** explores this subject in great detail.

Happy reading

