



EDITOR'S NOTE

As this issue of the *Journal* is readied for the press, some notable events are taking place in the international arena. President Trump continues to make headlines. Much was expected of his first overseas tour. In the event, it cannot be called an unqualified success. In fact, quite the opposite. He started with Saudi Arabia where it was announced that the Saudis had committed to buy arms worth \$110 billion from the US. Later, it was stated that it was 'fake news'; negotiations on arms deals was work in progress. Possibly, more importantly, in Saudi Arabia and on his tours in West Asia, the impression was given that the US was in favour of giving more strength to the Sunni Muslim movement and against the Iran-led Shia sect. The need for the Muslim countries to fight terror was also stressed. We are yet to see the backlash to the US approach but the intensity of severing of ties between Saudi Arabia, etc, and Qatar has certainly muddied the waters. Incidentally President Trump has favoured the move. Could this lead to a schism in the Sunni fold? Time will tell but it is unlikely that seasoned politicians will fall prey to such baits so easily. Another major announcement made by President Trump is that the US will withdraw from the Paris accord on climate change. The announcement created the expected ripples. His tour of Europe also raised many eyebrows. In short, the happenings in the last few weeks have created ferment in international relations.

Terrorist activities continue apace. Terror attacks have caused widespread suffering and a large number of casualties in, *inter alia*, Iran, France, the UK (twice in a week), Afghanistan and Pakistan. The situation in Kashmir is also far from peaceful. The world is seeking a solution to such wanton killings but with little to show for it.

Whilst the aforesaid concerns occupy the headlines, this issue of the *Journal* examines seemingly less 'eye catching' but some important aspects that impinge on national security.

The subject of our higher defence organisation in India has excited many minds for many years. Numerous views have been propounded, including those that have not really been thought through. All those that write and speak on the subject are, indeed, interested in greater efficiency and effectiveness of the armed forces. It should be taken for granted that nobody has an axe to grind. It is true that thought processes are a result of personal experiences, discussions and readings. However, it must be emphasised that we should not just adopt what some other countries have introduced but look at our own requirements. The subject is far too important for a government fiat to impose a system. A unanimous approach will make the system work much better. And unanimity is a worthy objective to work for. Over the many decades that the subject has been under discussion, on some issues, unanimity has been achieved. It is to be hoped that agreement will be reached on more issues. Towards this end, the lead article in this issue of the *Journal* questions whether major surgery is indeed warranted in our higher defence organisation. The author argues that whilst some changes should be welcome, major surgery is not necessary.

China announced that it would effect major military reforms in December 2015. As with most Chinese pronouncements, the world sat up and took notice. Any number of articles, writings and commentaries followed. Military reforms are an ongoing process in all countries but it behoves us to study the possible impact of the reforms. **Lt Gen Narasimhan** is a noted expert on China and has incisive knowledge about the country. He looks at the history of military reforms in China, the underlying philosophy, the impetus behind the salient changes in the offing and the impact on India. The reader may have read a number of articles on the subject but none that is so complete, clear and all encompassing.

Foreign policy and military capability are two sides of the same coin. Air power came into its own with heightened capability but a few decades

ago. Yet, its impact was so emphatic that it became a tool of foreign policy. The impact increased with the expansion of tasks that it could perform and the demonstrated ability to do so efficiently and effectively. As air power matured into aerospace power, it started to impinge on the sovereignty of nations as well. In a scholarly article, **Air Mshl Mukul** takes us through the growth of aerospace power, the notable milestones and the number of occasions it has both fashioned foreign policy and supported it. Multinational and bilateral exercises, UN peace-keeping operations, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), and many other examples can be quoted that furthered our national objectives.

When Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) were first used for military purposes, they were considered to be a technological marvel. UAS have now mushroomed much more than what could have been imagined only a few short years ago. With the growth in numbers, air space management issues and safety concerns have come to the fore. Regulations are essential and a number of agencies have been grappling with the problem. More complications have been added with civil use of UAS for business and commercial interests, use of Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles (UCAVs) and the impending entry of semi-autonomous and, may be, autonomous UAS as well. **Air Vice Mshl Bahadur** has taken a holistic view and the article covers many varied areas, including legal issues that are bound to take their toll. In another article on UAVs, **Gp Capt Narang** takes a different tack. In a fairly lengthy and informative article, he looks at our efforts at indigenisation of UAV manufacture. He describes the work done so far, and recommends a course of action.

Jointness, or the lack of it, has been the bane of our armed forces. In a well researched and equally well written article, **Wg Cdr Nijjar**, uses quotes and events to describe the turf wars amongst the Services but mentions success stories too. To promote jointness, a prerequisite must be that the 'I know best' syndrome should be shunned. His recommendations are worthy of consideration. The article should be required reading for all air force officers in particular and all others interested in military aviation.

Jai Raina displays maturity well beyond his years. In the concluding article in this issue, he analyses the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism which India proposed as early as 1996. Unfortunately, in spite of the increase in terrorism, the convention has remained deadlocked. The author, in a very readable article, discusses how India has been the victim of terrorism almost since our independence and how we have continued to lend strong support to the convention. Hopefully, our continued efforts will lead to some progress in the near future.

Happy reading.

