



EDITOR'S NOTE

As this edition of the *Journal* goes to the publishers, two issues take centre-stage. The first is that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government completed one year in office amidst loud claims of major progress made by the government, and equally strident accusations by the opposition of a wasted year. That was to be expected in a flourishing democracy. However, conventional wisdom suggests that much work has, indeed, been done and we are on the cusp of much higher growth and development. It is claimed that the groundwork has been done, the time is ripe and the stars propitious. In defence matters also, progress has been made and inertia overcome. Again, much needs to be done and the “make in India” or “manufacture in India” slogans must be translated into actual planning, research, development and production in a time-bound manner, with clear accountability stipulated. Is that too tall an order? One hopes not. We will review what transpires in the coming year at the same time next year.

The second issue of import is the continuing and growing assertiveness and brinksmanship on display by China, particularly in the East China Sea and, even more importantly, in the South China Sea. It started with the unilateral announcement of an enlarged Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ), followed by interception of Japanese and US aircraft over international waters and vociferous pronouncements of the increasing extent of Chinese sovereignty over the seas. The Chinese moves were not seriously challenged by the littoral states given the economic and military clout of China. A seemingly war-weary America also was apparently subdued in its comments. With this, further escalation was on the cards and soon the Chinese buttressed their claims in the South China Sea by reclaiming land over some rocks and shoals. Much worse, militarisation of the reclaimed areas also started. The unilateral declaration of sovereignty was being given

teeth. Interestingly, all this is taking place in spite of the American “pivot to Asia”. Some checks and balances have to be introduced. It was, therefore, encouraging to hear US Secretary of Defence Ashton Carter, emphatically state at the recent Shangri-La dialogue in Singapore that there must be “an immediate and lasting halt to land reclamation” in the South China Sea. “We also oppose the further militarisation of disputed features,” he added. He also spoke of the growing bilateral, trilateral and multilateral relationships with other powers in the region. More pertinent for us, he also said that the US will “find ways to complement India’s ‘Act East’ policy”. The message sent suggested that America will, indeed, challenge Chinese claims and activities. What actually transpires is anyone’s guess.

The situation in the East China Sea also merits discussion. The dispute over the Senkaku Islands continues and there is little love lost between China and Japan. In fact, bilateral trade is decreasing and Japan is moving some of its industry out of China. The growing tension is a matter of concern as the two countries are major powers and Japan has started to seriously improve its defence preparedness. The role of the US is again important and it has to be actively involved. The rivalry between China and Japan shows no sign of abating. Two articles in this issue address the problem. **Dr Amarjit Singh**, in a scholarly work, discusses the history of the dispute and the chances of reconciliation. **Prerna Gandhi** argues that the undying conflict has forced both countries to strive to improve their war-fighting potential and that Japan’s technological superiority could soon result in an effective military capability.

Our reliance on the internet can only increase and **Ashish Gupta** introduces the term “Internet of Things”. The object is to effect better data management for greater operational effect. Its impact will be felt in a myriad different ways. In fact, the impact will be near omnipresent. The article is well worth more than a mere reading as it is representative of how operations can and should be conducted. The twist in the tail is that Information Technology (IT) does not represent a panacea as security issues loom large.

Dilipraj E, in another well researched and logically presented article presents the covert cyber capabilities of the US. Undoubtedly, the US is well ahead of all others in this field and is intent to retain the superior status.

He cogently argues that “internet functioning is primarily dependent on the laws, policies, infrastructures and security agencies of the US”. He delves deep into US capabilities and shows how the US is not only a major player in the cyber domain but is also the leader by far in the field of cyber warfare. The article is a timely reminder of what we can expect in the not too distant future.

In discussing the role of aerospace power in the Indian context, **KK Nair** makes the classic statement that aerospace power alone can satisfy the needs of flexibility, rapid action, reaction and “reach”. Whilst explaining the role of aerospace power, Nair also recommends that there should be a national body created to oversee aerospace activities. Helpfully, he also presents an organisation chart.

Our area is prone to natural calamities and they seem to occur with punishing regularity. In a very readable article on disaster management, **Nishant Gupta** helps us understand disasters, and what can and should be done to mitigate the resultant suffering, including the interface between the civil authorities and the military. The need for international cooperation is also stressed. This is a text-book article and the recommendations made are worthy of understanding and translation into policy.

A solar powered aircraft landed at night at Ahmedabad on March 10, 2015. The aircraft is on a around the world trip that will cover 35,000 km in 500 hours of flying in five months. The aircraft represents much more than mere adventure. **RK Narang** examines the significance of the experiment and suggests what we can expect in the times to come.

Finally, there is an article by **RA Maslekar** on India’s aerospace footprint over the Indian Ocean. The importance of the Indian Ocean to India in particular and the world at large can never be overestimated. The author examines the present capabilities and future needs.

Happy reading.

