

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Two issues have occupied centre-stage in the New Year. The first must be the vitriolic exchange of words and threats between President Kim Jong-un of North Korea and President Trump of the USA. The world witnessed rising tensions in the nuclear arena and was rightly chary about some miscalculation that could plunge it into a near unrecoverable catastrophe. The apprehensions were increased with the release of President Trump's Nuclear Posture Review. In the prevailing environment, the Review became the subject of considerable discussion and commentaries. The upshot was that with a departure from the Obama doctrine, the Trump doctrine spoke of the usability of nuclear weapons. His plan to develop low yield weapons to be used as warning shots and even placing such weapons on nuclear submarines was rightly construed as unnecessary brinksmanship. At the same time, the Review also espoused a strong deterrent approach to the Russian 'escalate to deescalate' philosophy. It is obvious that the deterrent would apply to other countries as well, including North Korea. The contradiction in the two approaches was not lost on anybody. Yet the danger of what two mercurial presidents may do, or cause to happen, represents an ever present danger. Common sense would suggest that no one is likely to use nuclear weapons but then why are the two presidents brandishing swords? Many heaved a sigh of relief when the two presidents agreed to meet in May this year. It is difficult to predict what would be the result of the meeting if, indeed, it does take place, but this *Journal* will keep our readers abreast of the happenings and their import.

The second notable event was the decision taken in China that the tenures of the president and vice president would not necessarily be limited to two

terms or ten years. This was on expected lines and the Chinese strongman Xi Jinping could now remain president for life. Even though it was foreseen by many, the passing of the resolution caused ripples worldwide and in China as well. Has President Xi Jinping been made, or allowed to become, a dictator for life? It is still early to conjecture about the possible repercussions, particularly within China. Will a 'dictator' be allowed unfettered powers in a country rapidly becoming a global power and its people now enjoying prosperity not known for many years? Many questions arise, not the least of them being the president's ability to exercise control over the social media and over the disgruntled elements in the political hierarchy and in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Once again, this *Journal* will reflect on these aspects in our future issues.

Shri R N Kao is a much respected man amongst the 'intelligence' fraternity. We carry the R N Kao Memorial Lecture delivered on January 21, 2018, by the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, **Shri N N Vohra**, as our lead article. The theme of the talk was national security management and Shri Vohra is a noted expert on these issues as well. The article makes very good reading.

The Afghanistan-Pakistan imbroglio and the happenings in China remain of abiding interest. In a well-researched paper, **Dr Shalini Chawla** discusses India's policies and concerns in Afghanistan and **Group Captain Narang** examines the strategic and political implications of the recent PLA reforms.

Warfare has its myriad manifestations and it has been so since times immemorial. Recently, the term 'hybrid warfare' has gained considerable currency. The spectrum of conflict is now vast and all nations naturally use their strengths to advantage. The military machine is not necessarily fighting the war by itself, and can, and should, get support from wherever it can. **Air Vice Marshal Bahadur** explains the concept in some detail and analyses the role of air power in this type of warfare.

Space and cyber are now the fourth and fifth domains of warfare and their relevance is increasing. **Group Captain Rao** looks at the growing importance and relevance of space assets and the need to ensure that the capabilities linked to space assets are not denied to us. The importance of space control can be envisaged at present but will be keenly felt in the not too distant

future. As for the cyber domain, while there is appreciation of the role that the threat of cyber attacks can play in both war and peace, possibly, more work is required on how the domain can be utilised to advantage, and cyber crime, in its various manifestations, controlled. In this respect, **E Dilipraj** and **Ramnath Reghunadhan** explore the issue of cyber space governance in India.

In recent years, there have been numerous occasions when the Indian Air Force (IAF) has been called upon to provide succour during environmental and other disasters. **Air Vice Marshal Isser** has considerable experience in the IAF's contribution towards Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). His first-hand account as a commander of the task force in one such instance is our last article in this issue. It makes compelling reading and should be a guide for all those who may be called upon to plan, or conduct, such operations.

Happy reading.

