



EDITOR'S NOTE

The year that has just ended witnessed many notable events. Terrorism and the wars against terrorism have continued unabated, Brexit continues to excite interest, and towards the end of the year, Mr Trump's victory in the US presidential election has spawned innumerable commentaries on what might happen. Most importantly, there are few areas in the world that are tension free. That has now become the norm. The New Year does not appear overly promising. The shape of problems facing the world may change but the tensions are unlikely to ease.

Closer home, our attempt for Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) membership was stymied by China, and Indo-China relations saw little improvement although they did not deteriorate. As for Pakistan, its indulgence in state sponsored terrorism against India saw no let-up. A major terrorist attack against a Brigade Headquarters (HQ) at Uri was carried out on September 20, 2016. Nineteen Indian soldiers were killed. Soon thereafter, India cancelled its participation in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit to be held in Islamabad. A number of other members followed India's lead and the summit was indefinitely postponed. Our response to the terrorist attack was a very successful 'surgical strike' on the night of September 28/29, against terrorist camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). The attack led to the inevitable political overtones but, more importantly, in spite of continued denials by Pakistan, our attempts to show Pakistan as the epicentre of terror got some traction. In early December, at the 'Heart of Asia' conference at Amritsar, many telling references to Pakistani support to terrorism were made. In the lead article in this issue of the journal,

Shalini Chawla examines the subject in some detail and opines that the covert war will continue, and recommends how India should respond.

The South China Sea represents troubled waters and the July 12, 2016, award of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in favour of the Philippines has not quelled the situation. The claims and counter claims are still being made. China continues with the creation and militarisation of islands in the area. Of growing interest is the militarisation of Scarborough Shoal that is only 150 miles from Subic Bay in the Philippines. Again, on December 15, 2016, China captured a US underwater drone some 100 miles from Subic Bay. This may be just an instance but it heralds growing tension in the area. There is also perceived reticence on the part of the recently elected president of Philippines to oppose China. The area has great relevance for India and its maritime trade. In a scholarly work, **Vice Adm Pradeep Chauhan** includes many interesting historical aspects and the norms as established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) in 1982. The article is the opinion of an expert and makes compelling reading.

India is very keen that the 'Make in India' programme gathers steam and our aerospace industry matures into a capable and well recognised entity worldwide. The road is difficult and it will be instructive if we could learn from the attempts made by other countries and the success achieved by them. Towards this end, **Gp Capt Vivek Kapur** looks at the development of the aerospace industry in China and Brazil. When we got our independence in 1947, the aerospace industry capabilities of all three countries were essentially comparable. Since then, we have been left way behind. The author argues that we did not have a clear plan, with specific milestones. Possibly, we should not have shied away from foreign help and collaboration with the clear intention to gain knowledge and expertise. Also, we should have invested in building a strong and large team of well-educated and trained professionals by collaboration and creation of indigenous facilities.

In part 2 of a series on the evolution of Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopters, **Wg Cdr Nijjar** discusses the consolidation of capability post 1971. To begin with, the need for more accurate supply drops in the northeast saw the acquisition of more helicopters. As we gained more experience and recognised the many varied uses of helicopters, the acquisition process gained momentum. Helicopters have been used in support of ONGC in the Bombay High area, in Antarctica, with UN missions, as part of the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka and in support of our troops in Siachin. In all these areas, the crew have rendered great service that has been duly appreciated by all. Helicopters were also used extensively during the Kargil operations although their use in a combat role was discontinued very early. Since then, many accretions have been made and many more have been ordered. We will soon have a varied and extremely capable helicopter force.

The dangers of terrorists acquiring fissile material and using it as a Radiological Dispersal Device (RDD) are serious. Arms control got a fillip with President Obama's speech in Prague in 2009 where he also highlighted the need to "secure all vulnerable nuclear material". Since then, four Nuclear Security Summits have been held, with the last in 2016. **Sitakanta Mishra** explores what transpired at the summits and suggests a way forward. It is in everyone's interest to maintain the security of nuclear material but the issue is still work in progress.

Hina Pandey assesses how the US-Iran relations, particularly in the nuclear field, will play out in the coming years. The nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 was signed on July 14, 2015. It was assessed that the deal pushed back Iranian plans, if any, to produce a nuclear weapon, by at least ten years. There are some in the US who were against the deal and now want to abrogate it. Abrogation of the treaty will be a poor outcome that would probably please Israel but, if as a result, Iran felt that it was free to pursue the making of the bomb, a serious avoidable situation could result in the Middle East. Also, it is uncertain how the new dispensation in the White House will react to the situation.

In the last article in this issue, **Kriti Singh** looks at the role of the media in cultivating perceptions through a case study of US Psychological Operations (PSYOPs). Disinformation has been part of the military lexicon for a very long time but with technology, the impact of the media has become much stronger. The media is now a powerful tool to effect disinformation. Similarly, PSYOPs is a time-tested approach to war-fighting. The object is to confuse and adversely impact morale. Again, the media can play an important role. In an interesting and educative article, the author expounds the need for care and how to discern fact from fiction.

Finally, best wishes for the New Year to all our readers.

Happy reading

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kriti Singh', with a stylized flourish at the end.