



EDITOR'S NOTE

Once again, the journal consists of well researched writings of both topical and classic nature; articles that should interest our readers.

Adm Arun Prakash is a highly respected naval aviator and a former Chief of the Naval Staff. We carry his article on 21st century naval aviation as the lead article in this issue of the journal. He is a recognised strategist and author and his writings make compelling reading. Even though our first aircraft carrier, the *INS Vikrant*, joined the fleet only in the early 1960s, the author encapsulates the growth of the Indian Navy, with particular reference to our naval aviation since we gained independence. The author also discusses the rise of naval aviation worldwide and the early history is fascinating. He sees into the future as well and discusses the essential tasks for Indian naval aviation in the years to come. His recommendation that we should formulate an air/sea battle doctrine will be favourably received by many. Such a doctrine is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

Military leadership is an amorphous concept but good leadership has often succeeded in the face of seemingly overpowering odds whilst inept leadership could nullify superior strength and favourable dispositions. Whilst leadership training forms part of the syllabus in most military academies and the concept is often discussed amongst Service officers, **Air Mshl S C Mukul** has made a study of the subject and presents his views clearly and cogently. His article on the subject, often laced with his personal experiences, is eminently readable. He laments the lack of institutional training in the young officers' formative years and makes cogent recommendations. The advice of the author, always known for his professionalism, should be

seriously studied. The young should read and imbibe, and the not so young should read to understand what they should have done and recognise that it is never too late to adopt good advice.

It is never too early to plan for the future and foresight is an essential requirement in military planning. **Air Vice Mshl Bahadur** looks at what the Indian Air Force should look like in 2032, when it will be 100 years old, and what can be our realistic expectations. The author also examines the likely air capability of China and Pakistan 16 years hence. It is always instructive to see how the 'bean counts' stack up both qualitatively and quantitatively. As the timeframe is a mere 16 years, fairly good assessments can be made of capabilities and likely equipment holdings but their possible use and training issues is another story altogether. It is a given that far more important than the hardware is the probable planned use, and the training and consequent operational capability to make best use of available resources. The author also extrapolates the discussion to the likely situation in 2047, when independent India will be 100 years old. Refreshingly, throughout the article, the reader senses an air of optimism.

Terrorism in its many forms is a grave threat to the world. That is a truism that has universal acceptability. There are many who read an article on terrorism avidly in the hope that some silver lining will be discernible. With Al Qaeda on the decline, it is the Islamic State in Syria (ISIS) that has excited our imagination. **Air Mshl Kukreja** describes the growth of the ISIS and includes a brief historical account of the concept of the caliphate and the rise of the self-styled Caliph, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi. The *modus operandi* of the organisation and how it is financed is discussed and so is their ruthlessness that is intended to induce fear. Now with the recruitment of professionals, high calibre propaganda is being created that attracts many. The international community is yet to get its act together to seriously challenge the menace. Thus, even though the ISIS is losing some territory and less moneys are forthcoming, the menace is still very much alive.

As the putting together of this issue of the journal is in the final stages before it is sent to the press, the media is abuzz with the imminent admission of India into the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and a possible

acceptance of India as a member of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG). Hence, an article on India's nuclear exceptionalism is timely. The Indo-US nuclear deal and the subsequent waiver from the NSG permitted India to participate in nuclear commerce. India's responsible behaviour as a state with nuclear weapons and substantial in-house nuclear technology was recognised. Our non-proliferation credentials and continued commitment towards nuclear disarmament must have also helped tilt the scales in our favour. **Manisha Chaurasiya** gives a concise history of our nuclear story from the 1940s to help explain how the 'exceptionalism' came about.

Wikipedia defines 'zeitgeist' as "the dominant set of ideals and beliefs that motivate the actions of a society". In referring to cyber zeitgeist, **Gp Capt Ashish Gupta** has in mind the society of cyber warriors. Drawing inspiration from Kautilya, he discusses the history and evolution of intelligence gathering, counter-intelligence and security issues. The cyber domain is home to considerable information of value and is the target of cyber attacks, espionage and other inimical activities. The article is informative and readable, replete with interesting data and information. Cyber activities in China and the USA are used to help buttress his arguments. His essential argument is that the cyber domain, whilst very useful, also has a distinct flip side to it that must be countered and even exploited.

Acceptance of India as a full-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is on the cards. **Poonam Mann** looks at the history and functioning of the organisation, and discusses India's interest in joining the organisation and its attendant implications. She looks at the challenges as well, particularly if India wishes to play a significant role in the organisation in order to further its diplomatic and economic initiatives. She argues that although China is the significant player in the movement and its support of, and by, Pakistan is inevitable, full membership, even with Pakistan on board as well, is preferable to a mere observer status.

The last but very significant and topical article is about the evolution of Russia-China bilateral relations. After Crimea's accession to Russia, the resultant sanctions and the concomitant fall in the price of oil made the situation very difficult for Russia. Russia and China, once friends turned

foes turned friends, saw an opportunity to work together for mutual benefit. Russia needed greater engagement with other countries. The Russian and Chinese interests coalesced with the resultant sale of oil and military hardware to China. In a well-researched, scholarly article, **Chandra Rekha**, in separate sections, discusses the evolution of Russian and Chinese foreign policies over the years as well as the progression of their bilateral relations. She argues that there is some interdependence; they are not as distant as they were but there is no military pact. Again, the two countries are not really natural partners but are competitors. The author also looks at what the future could hold. Towards this end, she analyses a few scenarios that are both interesting and plausible.



Happy reading.