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Vol. 6 No. 1, Spring 2011 (January-March)

Editor's Notes

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1. THE IRANIAN NUCLEAR ISSUE: INDIA'S RESPONSE

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Iran has been pursuing a policy of ambiguity on its nuclear programme though it has now been revealed that it was provided centrifuges by Pakistan. The United States which had been following a containment policy toward Iran since 1979, has now increased pressures of all kinds in spite of the fact that the IAEA kept reporting Iran's innocence, though clearly noting the procedural lapses. India's position on the escalating confrontation has been that Iran should implement the international obligations that it had accepted after signing the NPT. Dr. **Asif Shuja**, a young scholar at the Centre for Air Power Studies, examines the Indian response to the Iran nuclear issue in detail.

2. INTERPRETING CHINA'S GRAND STRATEGY

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China and its strategy are not easy to interpret leave alone understand in spite of, or perhaps because of, the great deal of literature available on China and especially its grand strategy. And yet it is important for us in India to try and make an objective analysis of China's grand strategy in order to understand its policies. Group Captain **J. V. Singh** (Retd), a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies, examines the various facets of China's grand strategy as seen by most analysts, and comes to his own conclusions.

**3. CHINESE SPACE PROGRAMME: INFLUENCE OF
CHINESE STRATEGIC CULTURE ON ITS DEVELOPMENT** 59

Wing Commander **Manu Midha** carries out an objective study of China's space programme and the influence of its strategic culture on the programme. Midha has argued that the PLA has looked on enviously as India's armed forces have modernised and worked through many of the issues that China is currently struggling with, particularly AWACS and refuelling aircraft, for example. India also enjoys the advantage of being able to buy Western as well as Russian equipment. As with its concerns with Japan, China is also concerned at increasing US-Indian military ties, which some in the PLA have begun to view as increasingly aimed at containment.

4. DEFEATING PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR STRATEGY 105

Pakistan's projection of its irrationality and rather cavalier attitude to claim that it will unleash nuclear weapons the moment even one Indian soldier crosses the international border, has indicated that its leaders have not really thought through the realities of nuclear weapons. Three senior former officials had tried to change this attitude to clarify that Pakistan would use its nuclear weapons "first, but in the last resort." Dr. **Manpreet Sethi** argues that it is possible to "defeat" Pakistan's nuclear strategy without having to fight a nuclear war.

5. CHINA'S AIRCRAFT CARRIER AMBITIONS 123

Ever since China purchased the old *Melbourne* aircraft carrier from Australia, ostensibly for breaking it up, the world has watched with great interest and curiosity the question of China's move – so gradually that at times it appears it is not interested – toward the acquisition of an aircraft carrier capability. It is in this context that **Nan Li** and **Christopher Weuve** have undertaken this study to examine in greater depth the issues that China would face as it moves closer to its ambitions to possess not one but a couple of aircraft carriers. China has the financial resources to maintain a few carrier task forces. But will it have the experience to

operate them on the high seas or the technological ability to maintain them operationally? Only time will tell when and for what operational tasks China would convert its carrier ambitions into practical power projection.

6. SECURITY STRUCTURES IN THE GULF:

PAST AND PRESENT

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The Persian Gulf region, with its phenomenal resources of oil and natural gas under the vast deserts, and political systems with intrinsic fault-lines and ideological tensions across borders, has always attracted great attention from scholars and policy-makers. The more recent upheavals in North Africa and the Gulf region only highlight the sub-surface potential instability factors in countries with low population densities and non-representative political systems and cultures. Commodore **M. R. Khan** (Retd), with his vast hands-on experience of the region reviews the past and current security structures in the region.