



EDITOR'S NOTE

As this issue goes to the press, a new government is in place. The expectations from the government are high and it is hoped that the next five years will be a period of rapid growth. The Centre for Air Power Studies, like many others, is keenly interested in the fillip likely to be given to national security needs. It is too well recognised by now that national security underpins national growth. The world respects power and often exploits weaknesses or even a perception of weakness. The armed forces, on their part, must also appreciate that the defence needs have to be weighed against the requirements of other claimants of the national pie. However, once the need for a weapon system is accepted, budgeted for, and a stringent selection process undertaken, there should be no unwarranted delays in the maturing of the project. Such delays lead to cost escalations and undermine the short and mid-term potential of the armed forces. The needs of India's armed forces should not be held in abeyance for too long and certainly not for mere administrative reasons. To quote just one instance, it is hoped that the deal for 126 Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) is finalised soon. India's air power potential just must be maintained.

This issue of the *Journal* comprises a number of scholarly articles on disparate subjects. Air power is the instrument of choice for deterrence and coercion of possible adversaries. This mere statement requires examination and our lead article in this issue is a scholarly work on the subject by AVM Bahadur. Deterrence, compellence, and coercion are the products of the adversary's perception of our capability and resolve. A fuller treatment is merited.

The importance of Central Asia is growing and Vivek Kapur discusses the US and Russian air bases in the region. This will give an idea of the type and extent of use of air power in the region. Equally importantly, AVM Tiwary discusses the very topical subject of cyber space. The cyber sphere has excited the imagination of very many, particularly as a result of so many instances of successful cyber attacks. Cyber is now the fifth domain of warfare after land, sea, air and space. Its potential impact is likely to be so great that some powers are seriously working towards a 'Code of Conduct' in the cyber world.

The two articles that follow relate to nuclear issues. Arjun Subramanian discusses the political and military implications of deploying Ballistic Missile Defences (BMD) in Asia. The viability of such systems has always been in question and yet so many players on the world stage are diverting resources to produce a viable system. The US is the big player and it is a moot point as to which country in the region is the intended target of US BMD capability. Stuti Banerjee's article is another attempt to make some sense out of Pakistan's nuclear capability and the cooperation and mutual suspicion between the USA and Pakistan. Terrorism, and the threat of nuclear weapons falling into wrong hands, remains a perennial worry.

That Crimea overwhelmingly voting to join Russia is an ongoing story with many ramifications in the diplomatic, economic and military fields. In a really well researched article, Amarjit Singh has taken great pains to explain the history of wars waged in the area through the centuries. The author takes a neutral stand and just encapsulates the history. Understanding the history brings into focus the current happenings and permits a better understanding of current events. The author's projections for the future are logical and neutral readers will readily accept them.

The article on the irony of China-Japan relations is written by another young scholar from the Centre. Prerna Gandhi argues that there is considerable economic cooperation and even mutual interdependence between the two countries. Yet there are serious disagreements and a history of adversarial relations. The US' commitment to Japan and other allies in the region was reiterated by President Obama recently. Be that as it may, the countries in the region are steadily increasing their military power. The fear is that the East China Sea could well become a battleground. However, the author suggests that the two countries have so much to gain from each other that it would indeed be to their detriment if a major skirmish was to occur.

The last article in this issue of the *Journal* is by Indrani Talukdar, on Oman's strategic location. Undoubtedly, Oman's geographical location has great geo-strategic importance in an increasingly troubled area. It oversees the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It has given the USA and UK access to its airfields and facilities. Yet it follows an independent foreign policy and even recommends a policy of engagement with Iran. The article sets the stage for a better understanding of events in the region.

Happy reading !

