

## BOOK REVIEW

Sanat Kaul, *Andaman and Nicobar Islands: India's Untapped Strategic Assets*, (Delhi: Pentagon Press/Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, 2014), Pages: 226, Price: Rs. 995.00

In a world of fast lane geopolitical dynamics, every country aspiring to great power status is re-examining its assets in terms of geo-economics and geo-strategy. The most important “immovable” asset is geography, which for eons has been considered as part of a nation’s destiny. In the prevailing scenario of competition and power play in the region, Sanat Kaul’s book is not only topical, but also provides an in-depth analysis of the most important geographical entity in the Indian waters – the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Having served two tenures (spaced two decades apart) in the administration of the islands, the author brings along a huge reservoir of knowledge of the islands and more importantly, the benefits of the insider’s view (the bureaucrat’s pulse). The title of the book: *Andaman and Nicobar Islands: India's Untapped Strategic Assets* immediately attracts curiosity as the subject rings a bell of an oft-repeated lament that India has neglected the enormous potential of this strategically located archipelago, which is much farther from the mainland, than it is from Southeast Asia.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the book. Chapter 2, entitled Background to the A&N Islands, is far too comprehensive on the history of the islands. In particular it devotes almost two-thirds of its script on the Nicobar group, its people, and their ancient trading system. A major part of the chapter’s conclusion too deals with the Nicobars, leaving a small portion for the Andamans that constitute a majority of the two groups.

The criticality of the Malacca Strait as a choke point, its proximity to the A&N Islands, and its significance to China’s economic lifeline are covered in Chapter 3. China’s search for an alternative to the “Malacca Dilemma” finds a comprehensive argument in this chapter, making a case for this concern to be treated as an advantage to India.

Chapter 4 provides a historical background to the Law of the Sea and enactment of corresponding laws by India. This chapter details the chronology of the three conferences of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS I to III), with little reference or correlation to the A&N Islands, except in terms of the archipelagic

status, and resolution/disputes with all the maritime neighbours of India. What is of interest in this chapter is a mention of the enormous Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) that accrued to India because of the A&N Islands and the maritime boundary agreements with the neighbours to the East, viz. Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia.

Chapter 5 looks like an interesting “add-on”. It dissects the so called “peaceful rise of China”, deals comprehensively with the South China Sea imbroglio, and attempts to explain the Chinese in their “hegemonic” behaviour against neighbours as much in the maritime domain as on land frontiers. It goes on to dwell on the China-US rivalry at sea; the ASEAN angle; the India-Vietnam partnership; and a possible Indian strategy to deal with China in the maritime environment. While the intention of including this chapter must have been to draw attention to the geo-strategic location of the A&N Islands (vis-à-vis the Malacca Strait), very little alludes to the A&N Islands or their significant weight they can bring to bear, against any Chinese designs in the Indian Ocean.

Another addition from the realm of geopolitics is the rise of regional groupings discussed in Chapter 6. From the ASEAN, the BIMSTEC, the IOR-ARC (now IORA), to the Mekong Ganga Project, all regional groupings have been discussed with emphasis on their charter/purpose. Even the Asian Development Bank (ADB)’s role in assisting the BIMSTEC has been touched upon. Once again, there is little connection shown between the importance or relevance of this subject to the A&N Islands.

Chapter 7 covers naval diplomacy and defence initiatives. From the MILAN series of exercises, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) launched by the Indian Navy in 2008, to the Malabar, SIMBEX, and JIMEX, Varuna, Konkan, Indra, and IBSAMAR series of bilateral exercises have been elaborated upon, apart from defence cooperation initiatives with countries like Vietnam. The idea of the author has been to expound the virtues of maritime and defence diplomacy initiatives in building trust and forging partnerships with various countries. The benefits of the Andaman Nicobar Command deputing ships to conduct coordinated maritime patrols with some littorals around the Malacca strait have also been highlighted.

Chapter 8 seeks to examine India’s Defence posture in the years following India’s Look East Policy. Prominent amongst factors discussed is the American tilt towards India (though to a very limited extent); China’s initiatives and forays into the Indian Ocean; India’s capability in ‘blockading’ the Malacca Strait; and the need for a greater punch in the force levels stationed in the Andaman Nicobar Command. The author recommends a “forward” policy in

the Indo-Pacific through enhanced force levels in that command.

Chapters 9 and 10 contain the meat of the author's argument in terms of the way ahead for extracting the untapped potential of the island chain. The one issue that Indians have always wondered is why this archipelago has not been leveraged on its latent potential in so many fields – the most prominent of them being tourism. For ages there has been an argument about the Andamans substituting for Hong Kong, or proving to be a rival to Singapore in not only bunkering and providing repair facilities for global shipping, but also as a world class tourist destination. The author does well in invoking Joseph Nye's theorem of soft power here. He brings out how the bogey of security followed by environmental concerns more recently, have blocked suggestions of opening the islands to the world, which would generate precious revenue, jobs for locals, and include India amongst the most sought after natural habitats for tourists. The author alludes to a draft tourism policy that continues to gather dust. He draws complementarities between tourism and security on the one hand, and tourism and environment on the other. He passionately believes that permitting high end (high value, low volume) tourism including eco-tourism, would help protect the environment, and that opening up selected islands that remain uninhabited, would also enhance their security as tourism would substitute for formal intelligence in such locales. As far as the threat to environment is concerned, he cites a Supreme Court judgement on a PIL, which lays down strict guidelines for preservation of tribal habitats, and nature's endowments. He feels that dusting the report on tourism and correlating this judgement would easily pave the way for a secure policy on tourism in the islands. A comparison drawn between the existing tourist footfalls in the Andamans and other global tropical island destinations is telling, and gives the reader a clear insight into what India is missing.

The author repeatedly emphasises the fact that the proximity and similarity of terrain to tourism sites in South East Asia next door, should entice India to propel the clear advantage by converting Port Blair into an International Airport; initiate direct flights from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, and attract tourists at competitive travel/residency costs. He concludes by suggesting a new administrative set up under which, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands should be moved away from the tutelage of the Home Ministry, and a liberal environment created for encashing India's soft power, while also sprucing up the elements of hard power – to project the islands' strategic advantage.

While the book has some weaknesses of language (including grammar/ semantics), mixed up chronology, and repetition of facts/phrases in many places in the first few chapters, overall the effort is laudable in that it brings

focus on a subject of national import through interesting facts of history and contemporary global models. Even the chapters that do not have a direct bearing on the book's theme keep the reader's interest engaged in terms of "knowledge acquisition". The book should easily fall under the "Recommended reading" category.

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Amar Nath Ram (ed.), *India's Asia-Pacific Engagement: Impulses and Imperatives*, (New Delhi, Manohar Publication, 2015) Pages: 324, Price: .....

It is now an established fact that the 21<sup>st</sup> century shall be the Asia Century and also that the Asia-Pacific region will be the focus. This premise is based on the fact that Asia's rise coincides with the decline of the West and Asia as the new growth centre has attracted a lot of attention from policy makers, analysts and economic experts. This new phenomena has provided India with a golden opportunity to regain its lost glory by engaging with the rest of Asia. A country of riches at one time, India was brutalised and it also suffered many foreign invasions and plunder by the invaders. Now is the time for India to regain its right place. Seen from this perspective, India's engagement with countries of Asia and the Pacific is the most appropriate subject of study. While policy makers are engaged in carving out the appropriate strategy, academic scholars and analysts are offering valuable inputs to help the governments to adopt the right strategy.

Though there is sufficient literature on the topic, this book under review, *India's Asia-Pacific Engagement: Impulses and Engagement* is a timely addition. Edited by Amar Nath Ram, a former senior diplomat and who played a major role in helping the government adopt a new policy with a forward-looking approach, the book contains 20 chapters spread over five parts, each dealing with security, economic, cultural, political and the future direction of

the policy. The bulk of the contributors are former senior diplomats who had represented India in its missions in the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and therefore, have come out with their assessment based on practical experiences. There are a few other contributors drawn from the fields of academics and media, besides security experts.

This volume, published under the auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs, is a sequel to the 2012 compilation by the editor titled *Two Decades of India's Look East Policy: Partnership for Peace, Progress and Prosperity*. Both the volumes include essays, mostly by practitioners and some academicians. Each essay is rich in content as they are based on, as former Foreign Secretary K. Raghunath observes in his foreword, "...reminiscences, detailed analytical comment and in-depth history, recorded by several of our highly competent diplomat-practitioners, who have been closely associated with the evolution of LEP at different stages, as well as eminent and very knowledgeable experts on strategy and foreign policy".

In the introductory chapter, the editor, AN Ram provides a background on the evolution of India's Look East Policy. Since he was involved in the process when the then Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao initiated the LEP in 1992, there could be no better person than Ram to handle this important subject and thereby, disseminate information to the general public on this important strategy of India in the foreign policy domain. In the process, he discusses how India got integrated into the various regional institutions such as the ARF, the ADMM+, the BIMSTEC, other Track-II dialogue processes, etc. This background provides the right platform for other contributors to deal with specific issues in their subject-expert domains.

Part I of the volume deals with the India-ASEAN partnership and how various impulses and imperatives helped India's integration process with the ASEAN region. This part carries three articles by seasoned former diplomats. While Sanjay Singh dwells on the India-ASEAN relations and its salience in the evolving architecture of the region, Latha Reddy gives a personal account of her engagement with the region while she was ambassador in Thailand. Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty tries to analyse India's Look East Policy through a blend of historical narrative with the robust economic content that India's engagement with the ASEAN region has moved.

Part II of the volume deals with the strategic and political relations; and attempts to dissect the prospects for the future while not overlooking the limitations and bottlenecks that might come in the way. This part contains four views. While Ranjit Gupta presents a reality ground check based on personal experiences while he was heading the mission in Thailand, Paramjit

S. Sahai observes that India and the countries of the Southeast Asian region are in the cusp of redefining their relationships. The paper suggests that as Indian economy continues to grow and China's market economy with an authoritarian streak raises doubt about the future, India provides a beacon of hope for the future on its strength of democracy, rule of law, and respect of universal values. Parbati Sen Vyas notes a paradigm shift in India's Look East policy and how the same has been elevated to the next stage. Preet Malik's paper in the same part of the volume dwells on the strategic importance of Myanmar. Indeed, Myanmar is the only country among the ASEAN that has border relations with India and thus, the only gateway for India to reach out to the ASEAN. Indeed, apart from the geographical proximity of Myanmar, the Chinese influence in Myanmar has been a bit of a bother to India. India needs to maintain cordial relations with Myanmar in order to control the secessionist activities in the northeast. In the past, during the military rule, Myanmar was suspected to have provided safe haven to such anti-national elements but after Myanmar's transition to democracy, howsoever managed it may be, there are hopes for India to arrest such activities. Malik's essay deals with this issue succinctly.

Part III of the volume contains two articles, both dealing with economic and trade issues. Indeed, when India initiated its Look East Policy, the economic dimension was predominant as the idea was closely linked to India's economic liberalisation policy and integration with the economies of the region. Over the past four decades, India has leapfrogged its economic linkages by a series of free trade arrangements and deepening economic relationships with the ASEAN member countries. The two essays by V.S. Seshadri and Rajeev Mitter cover this topic in a comprehensive manner. The reviewer feels that the economic and trade issues could have been covered more comprehensively by adding two more papers dealing with micro-issues.

Part IV deals with the security convergences and how there has been a paradigm shift over the past two decades or so. Of the four essays in this section, three essays are not from the diplomatic community, except the one by Skand Tayal. While Kapil Kak provides a defence perspective, Raja Mohan and Darshana Baruah in their joint essay and Satish Nambiar make an assessment of the strategic-security dimension of the India-Southeast Asia-East Asia partnership. It may be noted that the Look East Policy no longer remains limited to the Southeast Asian region but has gone beyond to embrace the East Asian region and therefore Nambiar's analysis is apt to the relevance to the core of the volume. As India's economic relations with the Northeast Asian countries continue to deepen, other common issues such as securing

the global commons, securing maritime commerce from terrorism and piracy, disaster management, and so on gather greater significance. These are new challenges for all the stake holders to cope with. Therefore, there is a close link between security and strategy with economic issues whose importance have grown over time.

Part V of the volume tackles another relevant issue. Of the three papers in this section, the ones by Suryakanthi Tripathi and Suresh Goyal deal with the cultural aspect of India's relationship with the region, both historical and contemporary. How effectively India is making use of its soft power, an important tool in furthering its national interests, is an issue that cannot be underestimated in its importance. The large number of Indians who have migrated in the past and have contributed to the economic development of the countries of their adoption is widely acknowledged. As India rises, this Diaspora are keen to find their roots in India. This provides a golden opportunity for India to facilitate this, to bridge and foster understanding among people. Suryanarayan's paper does a micro study of the ethnic Chinese and Indians in the Southeast Asian region. Like India, China too is using its soft power to leverage its external interests. There is scope of mutual gains by sharing from each others' experiences and coordinating policies.

The last part of the volume deals with the imperative of interdependence. This section contains four papers. Three papers are written by the diplomatic community and one by a journalist. In his paper, Parthasarathy looks at the past, present and future of India's diplomatic engagement with countries in its eastern neighbourhood. While Pramit Pal Chaudhuri makes a general assessment of the evolution and expansion of India's Look East Policy, Sudhir Devare views the same from a futuristic perspective. Rajiv Bhatia too adopts a similar approach.

The book is rich in content and has a long shelf life. Students and scholars working in this area would find immense value in the book that has combined multiple perspectives.

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Vinod Misra (ed.), *Core Concerns in Indian Defence and the Imperatives for Reforms*, (New Delhi: Pentagon Press / Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, 2014), Pages: 374, Price: Rs. 1,095.00

India's pressing security challenges arise from its internal security concerns and the envisaged threats from across its land and sea borders. Unsettled borders between India and two of her largest neighbours, and conflicting claims on territory give rise to the possibility of conflict developing over unresolved issues. That both these neighbours are nuclear capable states adds to the complexity of the security challenge. Internally, India faces multiple challenges with respect to combating insurgency in some border states, and left wing extremism in some districts spread across the heartland. Allied with this is the geo-political reality of a deeply troubled neighbourhood, which India has to contend with. The military remains an important tool not only in achieving national security objectives, but also in combating both internal and external security threats. It is understood that addressing present and future security challenges in a very complex geo-political environment would require civilian instruments of power working in tandem with the military.

A comprehensive understanding of issues pertaining to defence, however, remain largely elusive, both, in the decision making hierarchy as also in public debates on the subject. The defence budget is still perfunctorily passed in the Parliament without serious debate, as the lawmakers are not aware of the complexities in various facets of defence preparedness. A lack of direction has thus marked India's modernisation efforts since independence, largely due to inadequacies in the understanding of defence and security issues by India's political leadership and the stranglehold over defence by the country's bureaucracy. The services too have contributed to this malaise by their inability to project their core concerns. It is strange that the orientation of the armed forces still remains Pakistan centric, despite the fact that the long term strategic challenge India faces is from China.

This book, edited by Vinod Misra, former Financial Advisor (Defence Services) and presently Distinguished Fellow at the IDSA attempts to highlight what India needs to do to become a proficient and confident power, capable of protecting its interests. In the process, it highlights the need and the urgent imperatives for reforms. The subject has been covered in a series of articles written by some of the most respected names in the field. These include among others, former service chiefs, former secretaries to the Government of India, financial experts and defence analysts of repute. The very fact that

such a large body of people who had headed their respective organisations, have been brought together to express their views on issues of fundamental concern to the country, is noteworthy.

The book covers a broad overview of the geopolitical environment, the schisms existing in civil military relations, the higher defence organisation as presently constituted, the challenges in defence planning, financial planning, research and development, and in indigenisation and the acquisition process. These issues are covered comprehensively in 18 chapters.

The opening chapter by Kanwal Sibal, India's former Foreign Secretary sets the tone for the rest of the book by succinctly outlining the external security environment of the country and its impact on India's defence. Thereafter, a former defence secretary and former chiefs of the three services have expressed their views on civil-military relations and the higher defence organisation, which bring out the different perspectives of the civil bureaucracy and of the service headquarters.

Shekhar Dutt, former Defence Secretary, in his contribution, states that senior military leadership is "discomforting, to say the least, at higher organisation levels" denotes a mindset, which is perhaps part of the problem that has prevented the integration of the service head quarters with the Ministry of Defence. Admiral Arun Prakash, former naval chief, provides cogent reasoning for the need for synergy in civil-military relations and brings out in detail, the roots of civil-military schism in India. On the other hand, Air Chief Marshal A. Krishnaswamy, former air chief, argues against the concept of having a Chief of Defence Staff, which has been the stated view of the Indian Air Force for long. He also argues against the concept of "theatre commands", and gives out his views on how "jointness" can be achieved within the services through other means. General Deepak Kapoor, former army chief argues in support of the need of jointness in military operations, the necessity of integrating the service headquarters with the Ministry of Defence, the need for a Chief of Defence Staff and for theatre commands. Overall, these four viewpoints make for interesting reading and give the reader a good idea of the complexities of the issues being discussed.

This is followed by two very interesting articles on defence planning, the first by A. K. Ghosh, another former Financial Advisor (Defence Services) and the second- a joint article by N S Sisodia, former Secretary (Defence Production) and Amit Cowshish, former Financial Advisor (Defence Acquisitions), Ministry of Defence and presently Distinguished Fellow at the IDSA. These articles bring out the major pitfalls in India's current approach

to budgeting, examine practices followed by other countries, and suggest measures, which the government needs to take now. There is obviously a need to go into capability based planning, as suggested in these papers, but perhaps the first step would be to prepare a defence white paper, for setting the strategic orientation towards envisaged threats and then building appropriate capability for the same. Evidently, India still has a long way to go in this regard.

Two more chapters dealing with finance come up later in the book, which perhaps should have been grouped with the above articles. The first is a factual account of constraints and capability building in defence planning by Vinay Kaushal, a consultant at the IDSA and the second, another article by Amit Cowshish on financial management in defence. These chapters give a holistic view of the financial planning and resource constraints, but the road map for the future could perhaps have come out with greater clarity.

A chapter on “Defence Research and Development” by A.S. Pillai, former chief controller of R&D in DRDO highlights the achievements of the DRDO, but substantive issues that concern the services, such as the lack of progress in making a small arms family of weapons systems, armoured vehicles, artillery guns, and aircrafts do not find mention. The chapter could have done with more focus on issues pertaining to accountability and the core technologies, which the DRDO should focus on, leaving non critical sectors to the private sector. The editor, Vinod Misra has written a chapter on defence acquisitions, which makes for useful reading.

Another chapter on strengthening the defence industrial base has been written by R. Gupta, former Secretary (Defence Production). On one hand, the author claims that the ordnance factories and the DPSUs have served the nation well but in the same breath, he states that the productivity ratio of the employees does not measure up to the benchmarks of even the domestic private sector. A cursory feedback from the user would have also determined that the quality of products produced is far from satisfactory. Suggestions given by the author as road maps for improvement are useful, but it remains to be seen how much can be implemented.

The last few chapters of the book deal with defence manpower, logistics and supply chain management, offsets, and oversight in defence. Defence manpower is dealt with by Lt Gen Satish Nambiar, former Director, USI of India and presently a Distinguished Fellow at the IDSA. The suggestions offered are well known but most would be difficult to implement. Air Marshal P. Athawale has a focused approach towards logistics and supply chain

management, and argues for a collaborative approach. The chapters on offsets, written by S.N. Mishra, former Joint Secretary (Aerospace), Ministry of Defence and by L.K. Behera, a Research Fellow at the IDSA make for interesting reading.

The book ends with two chapters on defence oversight, the first by Vinod Rai, former Comptroller and Auditor General of India (who is also a former Defence Secretary) and the second by P Sinha, former Central Vigilance Commissioner. Both articles make for compelling reading.

In conclusion, the book offers great insight into India's core concerns with respect to achieving adequate defence capability and highlights the need for reforms.

This is a book, which must be read by all officers of the armed forces of colonel and equivalent level and above and their colleagues in the civil bureaucracy, diplomatic establishment, and police forces. It is a useful book for all research scholars and those with an interest in understanding defence issues pertaining to India. Policymakers perhaps, could find some of the ideas useful, though the implementing strategies would have to be thought out.

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S.D. Muni and Vivek Chadha (Eds.), *Asian Strategic Review 2015: India as a Security Provider*, (New Delhi, Pentagon Press, 2015), Pages: 408, Price: Rs. 995.00

The *Asian Strategic Review 2015* by IDSA focuses on the possible role of India as a security provider. Edited by S.D. Muni and Vivek Chadha, this volume brings together the contributions of 17 scholars from the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. The topics cover a wide range of issues, such as India's internal political compulsions, the immediate neighbourhood of South

Asia, the extended neighbourhood of the Indo-Pacific region and West Asia, and nuclear issues.

In the introduction, S.D. Muni lays out the conceptual framework underlying security provisions, and their various dimensions. These include capacity building, military diplomacy, military assistance, and finally military deployment. The evolution of India's security approach over the years has been examined up to the present day when India is seen by major world players as capable of playing a greater role in international security affairs. The scope of this volume is understandably limited to India's immediate and extended neighbourhood, where India's role as a security provider should emerge.

Brigadier Dahiya provides a surgical analysis of the political and military factors underlying India's ability to provide military security. India's vital interests now extend far beyond its borders, with new challenges emerging such as piracy, terrorism, security of energy flows, etc. He argues that despite India's capacity in economic, technological, political and military terms, it has played a rather modest role in providing security in the region. The questions of whether India is indeed ready for a role as security provider and the attitude of the Indian military have been appropriately addressed. Dahiya concludes that India will get increasingly involved in security provision in the neighbourhood. India, he says, will work under the UN framework while undertaking security role, and points out that the political leadership will need to deal with some fundamental issues, such as public support, coordination of military, diplomatic and intelligence functions, and building sufficient capacity.

The five contributions on India and its immediate neighbourhood cover, in some detail, security related issues in Myanmar, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and various interests and challenges involved in the growing security cooperation of India with its neighbours. S. S. Pattanaik's article starts with the capacity constraints in Indian defence, coupled with other challenges such as China's growing role, and the perceptions of civil society and political entities in the region. There is already a substantial framework for security cooperation with many of India's neighbours. However, there is need to integrate this into strategic planning. Greater demands are arising for security in non-traditional areas, such as disaster relief, where India is unquestionably able to take on a major role.

S. Kundu argues that the stage is now set for India to be accepted in the region as a "benign security partner", and there are now increased opportunities

for building security partnerships with Myanmar. R. Agarwal examines the post 2014 scenario in Afghanistan, and India's security interests and challenges. He advocates a multi pronged approach to security cooperation with Afghanistan: that is, while eschewing direct military deployment or the transfer of lethal weapons, almost all other forms of cooperation – such as training, intelligence cooperation, satellite data sharing, and cooperation with some neighbours of Afghanistan – should be included. Here, India could emerge as a security collaborator, if not a security provider.

N. R. Nayak looks at recent developments in Nepal-India relations, and the new bilateral frameworks that have emerged in the context of security cooperation. Turbulence in relations, the growing role of China, the rise of Maoist insurgency, and non-traditional security threats, have, according to the author, complicated matters. Stability in Nepal is vital for India as is countering any tendency of China to act against Indian interests. He recommends that, within Nepal, a red zone should be identified where there should be no third country presence, and a yellow zone where no major strategic engagements with third countries are encouraged.

G. Sultana takes one through the tortuous history of Indian involvement in the security of Sri Lanka, the interventions in 1971, and 1987–89 following the eruption of armed conflict with the LTTE. By virtue of its size and location, India has to play a key role in Sri Lanka's security, though some balancing with other states might be sought, and the legitimate aspirations of the Tamil community addressed within the constitutional framework. India is, therefore, best positioned to be a security provider or guarantor for the island. The change in government in Sri Lanka has brightened the prospects for cooperation.

The Indo-Pacific region comes in for considerable attention through no less than seven articles in the book. This is natural considering the rapid and changing dynamics of this region. Abijit Singh argues for a proactive and responsible role for India as a stabilizer and balancer. Response to the aggressive actions of China requires a wider role for India beyond its littoral zone, and also a stronger engagement with the navies of South East Asia, Japan, South Korea, and Australia, besides the US, UK, France, and Russia. Saroj Bishoyi looks at the potential for Indo-US cooperation to translate into India's greater security role not only in the Indo-Pacific but in West and Central Asia. US support for upgrading India's security and defence capacity will be critical for India, and will also serve US interests.

India's security engagement with South East Asia is growing, and is

encouraged by the countries of the region, argues Rahul Mishra. While the US and China will remain the leading external powers in the region, strategic rivalry between them will grow. Prospects for India's deeper and wider security partnership with the region are bright, including assistance to deal with nontraditional security threats. India will need to enhance its capacity to meet the demands of increased engagement. East Asia presents a complex situation, according to J. Panda. He advocates multilateral cooperation with like-minded countries, especially Japan and South Korea to balance China, with India becoming a security partner rather than a provider.

A. Godbole looks at the competition and cooperation between India and China and India's security role in the region. Competition from China in South Asia is growing (for example, in Nepal and Sri Lanka), while the scope for strategic convergence is decreasing. P. Baruah considers the scope for security cooperation with South Korea as being promising, and that relations must move beyond trade and investment into security cooperation, including stronger defence R & D collaboration and manufacturing. Given China's aggressive posture, T. Basu notes that Indo-Japan cooperation in security and defence meets the strategic interests of both sides. Maritime security is an especially constructive area of cooperation.

Three articles cover India's relations with West Asia. The first, by P. K. Pradhan, identifies India's constraints in the Gulf region. There has been growing interaction in defence and security with these countries, driven by the desire for stability and regional security. Turbulence and the rise of extremist movements and sectarian conflicts in this region are the main challenges. M. A. Rizvi notes Iran's strategic importance and some common security interests in Afghanistan. In recent years, India has begun playing a role in combating piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and there is considerable potential for further strengthening India's security engagements. S. C. Rajiv surveys the India-Israel strategic ties which he sees as important for India to play a security role in the region. There is a good fit between Indian and Israeli interests, and cooperation in defence technology has been growing. Next could be to move beyond the supply of equipment to joint research and development activities. The prospects for cooperation to grow further are good.

In the domain of nuclear technology, R. Kari examines India's role in hosting the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) as a contribution to nuclear security. Though India is not a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), it nevertheless seeks to abide by many of its principles. There is growing concern over safety and security in nuclear

establishments and the possible leakage of nuclear material and technology into the hands of non-state actors, such as terrorist groups. India's decision to set up the GCNEP seeks to meet these challenges, as also provide training services in cooperation with the IAEA and several other countries, such as Russia, France, and the USA.

In a concluding the assessment, Vivek Chadha notes that there is an increasing demand for India to assume a greater role as a security provider. India is seen as non-threatening, and the US is reducing its commitments to security in the region; it is looking for partners to take up the slack. Also, many countries are seeking a counterbalance to an assertive China. India also recognizes that its strategic interests will be better served by a greater role. As India's economy and profile grows, this role will correspondingly grow and will require careful management. Thus, the publishing of this volume is timely, and would serve as a good reference for the strategic community in the near future.

There are some other areas that could have been covered in the volume. India's security role in Central Asia has been dealt with only in passing. India's role in providing security in the Indian Ocean rim countries and in maritime security has also been poorly reflected. Perhaps these areas could be covered in future publications.

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