

A useful Review of Security Challenges

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India's National Security: Annual Review 2016-17

Edited by Satish Kumar

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The 2018 edition of Prof Satish Kumar annual security review has been published. Popularly known by the acronym INSAR, their annual publication is a much anticipated every year. Published since 2002 with the support of National Security Council Secretariat, INSAR has evolved over the years. Taken together, these volumes provide the readers valuable record and analysis of changes in the global and national security environment. Written by some of the leading analysts in India, INSAR provides an incisive and independent critique of the national security environment and government policy.

The latest volume is well structured. Part-I, running into 204 pages, provides a detailed analysis of global security trends and national security strategies of US, China, Russia, Europe, Japan, and Pakistan. Part II has articles by experts on India's relations with countries in India's near and extended neighbourhood. The articles in part III analyze key security challenges including, water security, Islamic radicalization, cyber security. Internal security challenges are analyzed in Part IV and have articles on youth employment, agriculture, border management and left-wing extremism. Part- V looks at China's anti-access-area denial strategy, hybrid threats and impact on global governance. Towards the end of the book the editor provides a well-rounded assessment of national security policies.

In a volume covering such wide variety of subjects and threats, it is sometimes difficult to retain the focus. That is why the editor's own assess-

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ment in the last chapter comes handy. He rightly points out that the key challenge faced by India is from China and Pakistan. Some countries are working to prevent India from acquiring a global stature. The author concludes that India should build its economic power and military capability as quickly as possible.

The articles in the volumes identifying many security challenges for India. Some of these are coming into the reckoning now. Chandrajit Banerjee warns that youth and employment issues require urgent solution. Pushpita Das identifies many shortcomings that persist in proper border management in India. Ajit Lal, former Chairman of Joint Intelligence Committee, warns that left-wing extremism, despite its weaknesses, remains the major security challenge for India. Samir Saran recommends an overhaul of India's cyber security policy of 2013 to include digital economy. Shisir Gupta analyses the problem of Islamic radicalization in South Asia and correctly predicted that the IS would dis-integrate in the coming years. There are a couple good articles on food and water security. Ramesh Chand points out that there is an urgent need to grow more crops on the same piece of land in order to meet domestic demand for food. Shashi Shekhar, a former secretary in the ministry of water resources, provides an excellent analysis of water security situation in India and call for a paradigm shift in how India manages its water resources. He highlights the needs for focusing on river basin development and rejuvenation of rivers. Baba Kalyani, the well-known industrialist, analyses 'Make in India' programme and calls for a partnership between the government and industry to achieve maximum indigenization. Kanwal Sibal, the former Foreign Secretary, provides an overview of India's approaches to developments in the Indian Ocean region. He argues that India should act as a net security provider on its own as well as its conjunction with US, Japan, and others. Other articles analyze India's relations with Iran, Myanmar, and the Gulf countries. These countries influence India's security in myriads of way. The research staff of Foundation for National Security Review (FNSR) lists a number of defense initiative taken by the government of India. The volume has many articles providing an overview of developments in India's internal security, cross-border terrorism, left-wing extremism, J&K, economic security. The strength of the volume lies in its comprehensiveness, attention to detail and in-depth analysis.

As the book covers the developments of 2015-16, some portions of the book are already outdated. However, the analysis provided in the articles is still relevant. The main threats identified in the book are Pak and China but there are no specific suggestions as to how to deal with these countries. The analysis is pessimistic about Donald Trump but he has been quite good for India so far. The editor says that more political and diplomatic capital is needed to be invested in Russia; India should be more active in South East Asia; and a dialogue on Kashmiri should be undertaken. These are standard recommendations which lack specificity.

The book will be well received by the strategic community both in India and abroad. But it must be admitted that similar analyses also appear in the various publications of other think tanks. The editor has a challenge of differentiating the INSAR from other publications. On the whole the annual review is a useful exercise. To make INSAR analyses policy relevant, the editor could summarize the key suggestions in future editions. This will be appreciated by the busy policymakers who are always pressed for time.