

## Book Release

***Indian Armed Forces at the Centenary of Independence***, Ed. Gautam Banerjee, the Vivekananda International Foundation, Pentagon Press LLP, New Delhi, 2023, Pp. 310, Rs 1295/-

India's past idealist notions of reconciliation and harmonising of interests with neighbourhood adversaries who swear by unrelenting aggressive animus, appear to have recently undergone a pragmatic change. There is wide recognition now that India needs to seriously consider as to what kind of military power she must wield that would ensure security and be in tune with her long-term strategic vision — within the affordability of its resources. The challenges underpinning that consideration are exacerbated by India's geographic situation between two compulsively revisionist, militarist and nuclear neighbours—China and Pakistan— working together. Rising burden of economic compulsions and the ruthless dynamics of global politics adds to that challenge.

This new and path-breaking publication visualises a futuristic direction of military technology and hard power that would be a bulwark to the government's 'new India' vision. In that vision, the 75<sup>th</sup> Year of Independence is adopted as the base year and its Centenary — Year 2047 — as the first destination. Authored by prominent military thinkers of the country, the book is made of 20 essays, each discussing one aspect of the nation's future military security. The visualisations conform to India's strategically non-aggressive ideals for achieving security, while the discussions are consciously tethered to the nation's affordable defence economics.

The essays provide a 360-degree view of India's security environment and the imperatives of a joint security architecture for the armed forces. The theme is brought to focus with the first essay, '*Future Wars, Nations and its Militaries*', followed with the '*Seeds of Conflict in the 2050s*'. Essays, '*Regional Politics in the Future: Strategic Saliency of Non-Adversarial Neighbours*', and '*A Troubled China and Asia's Growing Anxiety*' offer another dimension to the subject. In '*Military Capability Development: Modernisation, Transformation and Indigenisation*', the author argues for an express need for regular as well as asymmetric capability development for the Indian armed forces. The chapter,

*'Shaping India's Military Strategy in the 2050s'*, takes a holistic view of India's principal threats and challenges, including the asymmetric, transnational and unanticipated threats.

Essay seven, *'Indian Navy at the Centenary of Our Independence'*, delves into the capability requirements of the Indian Navy, concluding with an outline of the Indian Navy's Force Structure in 2047. In *'Indian Aerospace Power - The Way Ahead'*, the focus is on creating a 'consolidated air picture' that conforms to effective awareness of all air, surface, sub-surface and space dimensions for the use of air power in multi-domain joint operations. The essay, *'Strengthening Defence Intelligence for Future Challenges'*, is a candid assessment of futuristic military intelligence requirements of India's vast area of military interests and influences — from the Straits of Malacca to the Gulf of Aden. *'India's Military Vision: Mismatch with Reality?'* grapples with the question as to how India's military vision and her efforts at self-reliance might close the gap between emergence of defence requirements in the coming decades and development of capabilities. In the following essay, *'Towards A Comprehensive Security Architecture'*, defence sector reforms, defence industrialisation and foreign policy initiatives are analysed in the context of the overall efforts to deal with the threats posed by China.

The chapter *'Technologies to be Developed for The Indian Armed Forces'* makes a technological evaluation of critical military technologies that are changing the nature of war. *'Restructuring Special Forces for the Future'* highlights the salience of special forces in providing 'low-cost, high-gain' options to achieve military, political, economic, foreign policy and psychological objectives. Equally significant is the essay on *'Information Warfare - Time for a Rereview'* which explains the nuances of cyber warfare, electronic warfare and psychological warfare across the entire spectrum of conflict. A perspective on India's future security environment and the need for compatible air power is examined in the essay *'Indian Air Power - 2047'*. In keeping with the theme the chapter *'Future Organisation for Joint Services Air Defence'* discusses India's air defences against emerging air threats from our adversaries and suggests an integrated air defence. Optimisation of budget allocation and an organisational structure for the future are advocated.

The essay, *'Building India's Counter-Terror Capability'* cautions against external forces attempting to exacerbate, in conjunction with internal dissent, India's security problems. Upgrading of the state police forces and the role of Armed Forces Special

Operations Division in counter-insurgency tasks are, therefore, specifically examined. *'Future Technology and Security Landscapes: Trailblazing Pathways towards Self Reliance'* suggests some forward looking decisions to shape the future course of India's defence technology strategy. The strategy of self-reliance over Short (2035) and Long Term Measures (2050) is also discussed. Neighbours playing 'balance of power' games have the potential to create strategic challenges for India. The issue is discussed in *'Emergence of Strategic Challenges from India's Friendly Neighbours'*. Steps to secure Indian interests in the neighbourhood, without expecting any reciprocity, are suggested.

The last essay, *'India's Military Security Imperatives in 2047'*, suggests that it is time to visualise, with realist rather than idealist forbearance, how the Indian State might proceed to safeguard its sovereignty, integrity, stability and progress over the next 25 years. It affirms that a robust capability for national defence would have to be one prime instrument of that process. In that context, 'facts' to imbibe, 'inevitable' to manage and 'imperatives' to invest in enhancing India's future military security are discussed.

The essays in the book advance practical suggestions for the policy-makers to consider. The other feature is that the advocacy is for meeting India's security needs keeping in view 'affordability' and Indian ideals of non-aggression. Besides general reading, the book is highly recommended for the security-sensitive, future-thinking community.

## **Authors**

Lt. Gen. JS Bajwa, Maj. Gen. Ajay Chaturvedi, Brig. Rahul Bhonsle, Prof. Sujit Dutta, Lt. Gen. Anil Ahuja, Lt. Gen. Rakesh Sharma, Vice Adm. AK Chawla, Air Mshl. Anil Chopra, Lt. Gen. Kamal Davar, Air Vice Mshl. Rajesh Isser, Maj. Gen. Dhruv C. Katoch, Maj. Gen. P K Chakravorty, Lt. Gen. Prakash Katoch, Maj. Gen. PK Mallick, Air Mshl. Diptendu Choudhury, Lt. Gen. VK Saxena, Maj. Gen. Bipin Bakshi, Lt. Gen. NB Singh, Brig. Vinod Anand, Lt. Gen. Gautam Banerjee.