

## ➤ EDITOR'S NOTE

There is no denying the fact that the world today is witnessing an unprecedented churn of events that are going to leave a lasting impact on the emerging world order. The tragedy is that the contours that seem to be emerging do not augur well for peace and prosperity. From terrorism, social media, narrative warfare, continuing conflicts, trade warfare, ethnic conflicts and migration along with a tenuous no war, no peace situation that India is witnessing in its neighbourhood, the challenges for nations only seem to grow by the day. It is not only the absence of dialogue but the lack of faith in diplomacy and dialogue to resolve problems that plague nations that is the major worry. It is in this tumultuous period that some of the issues that are of concern have been covered in this edition of the *Defence and Diplomacy* journal.

The South Asian region has been plagued by historical grievances driven by radicalism and ideology, and exacerbated by the redrawing of boundaries post colonialism. Pakistan's doctrine of asymmetric warfare has been aided and abetted by the decentralised global network and modern technology leading to this new age of terrorism that requires a strong and emphatic response. This has been comprehensively covered in *Changing Nature of New Age Terrorism in South Asia*.

The impact of social media has been unprecedented with the advancing spread of internet services and the availability of affordable mobile phones. With India's mobile internet base exceeding 750 million, this has become a potent tool that can be weaponised for spreading narratives. The battle, apart from the physical domain, needs to be won in the minds of the people as well.

*Weaponising Influence: Navigating the Impact of Social Media on our Armed Forces* explores the effect that social media has and the challenges of this for the armed forces.

*India-China Missile Equation: 'No War, No Peace'* attempts to assess the threat from China's People's Liberation Army Rocket Force (PLARF) and suggest suitable measures from India to counter this threat. While dual-use ballistic missiles have the probability to create strategic ambiguity with their own pitfalls, the article recommends that India should adopt this approach.

*China's Global Initiatives: Dominance Through Diplomacy* covers the diplomatic strategy being followed by China to extend its influence and reach across the world. China seeks to dominate the world in its quest for becoming a global power that is able to challenge the United States. China's initiatives of global development, global security and attempts to create an alternative order against this backdrop have been analysed in the article.

Sri Lanka was plagued by the longest civil war in South Asia until its end through military action in May 2019. The roots of this conflict were steeped in the discrimination of the Tamil population against the Sinhala majority. India too got embroiled militarily through the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987. The conflict had political ramifications in the state of Tamil Nadu and also led to large scale migration of the Tamils into India. *Ethnic Conflict and Migration: An In-Depth Analysis of Tamil Migration from Sri Lanka* covers in detail the issues related to displacement due to the protracted conflict and the challenges faced by the Tamil refugees.

In a trilateral meeting in May 2025 among China, Afghanistan and Pakistan, a decision to extend the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan was discussed. This would have security and strategic implications for India, given its geographical location. *Extension of the CPEC to Afghanistan and its Implications for India* explores this project under the lens of China's economic and strategic interests in the region and the security implications for India.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict continues unabated despite efforts by various nations to bring the two sides to the negotiating table. While Ukraine continues to get support from the West, Russia grapples with sanctions. This has had an adverse effect on the Russian economy, which, in turn, has led to constraints on its military industrial complex. *Assessing the Impediments to the Growth of Russia's Conventional Military Capabilities* examines the challenges for Russia's military industrial complex, the capability building plans of the Russian armed forces, and the implications for India.

Drones continue to play a major role in military operations across the world. The use of drones in the Russia-Ukraine conflict has seen an increase during the ongoing war. Into the war, Ukrainian President Zelensky created the Drone Systems Force as a separate branch within the Ukrainian armed forces. Ukraine has used drones as autonomous weapon systems while employing a human in the loop as a concept. The scale of production of autonomous drones as modular systems has greatly enhanced and achieved the objective of removing soldiers from getting into direct combat. *Autonomous Drones : Emerging Trends from Ukraine* explores this subject, giving a detailed analysis of how Ukraine is using autonomous drones in the current war with Russia.

In the Book Review section, *How China Sees India and the World* by Shyam Saran has been analysed. With the author's knowledge of China as a practitioner of diplomacy and his sound understanding of China as a civilisational state, the book attempts to unravel the enigma of China's outlook towards India and the rest of the world.

I would also like to take this opportunity to inform our subscribers that the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) has been rechristened as the Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies (CAPSS) keeping the acronym the same with just an extra 'S'. This has been done keeping in view the growing remit and responsibility reposed in us by our trustees. Our effort has always been to pursue the quest for learning and knowledge and bring to our readers articles that not only satiate their thirst for

knowledge, but also provoke. This has only been made possible by all those who actively support CAPSS through their writings and subscriptions.

Happy reading.



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