

Note from the Editor

This edition of the CLAWS Journal, Winter 2023, is dedicated to the memory of Late Brigadier Narendra Kumar, SM, VSM (Retd), a recipient of the CLAWS Scholar Warrior award of 2021 and a Visiting Fellow at CLAWS. His contribution to CLAWS was immense and distinctive and shall forever be remembered. This edition carries eleven articles on the overarching theme of defence and national security, with contributions from strategic experts and practitioners in the field. These articles give our readers a balanced and researched view of issues related to India's strategic interests, geopolitical developments in our neighbourhood, and measures for developing comprehensive national power and defence capability development.

That the year 2023 has been exceptional is an understatement. The year witnessed the continuation of the war in Ukraine which is reshaping the strategic alignment of Europe and in February 2024 will have lasted for two years.

In the Middle East, a long-festering intractable dispute conflagrated once again, but in an unprecedented manner, when on 7 October 2023 Hamas debouched from Gaza into Israeli communities in its vicinity spreading death and mayhem. The resultant Israeli reaction has plunged the region into chaos and suffering.

Both conflicts are bringing out new lessons in force application and tactical employment of men, weapons and technology which defence practitioners have to study and draw lessons from. This is essential because the manner in which these conflicts are taking place is turning many dogmas on their head. The primary one being to reduce armies and stocks of warfighting material because wars of the future were expected to be short. It appears that a quote from the 30th

President of the US, Calvin Coolidge appears to have been reinforced which says, “the only hope of [winning] a short war is to prepare for a long one”.

A secondary one is that hybrid wars are the new normal. War now encompasses both conventional and non-conventional. There is only one kind of war.

With the above tenor, the first article “The Future of Land Warfare” is by Lieutenant General AK Singh (Retd) a former Army Commander in Southern Command and Lieutenant Governor of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. Having been at the helm of affairs in doctrinal and executive fields the author is eminently qualified to write on this subject. The author explains how and why the future where it concerns Land Warfare is not “Black & White”, but many shades of grey.

The next article, “Smart Maritime Power for India’s Military” by Commodore Anil Jai Singh, IN (Retd) a well-known maritime analyst, brings out why the integration of India’s maritime power in the country’s security matrix will be a pre-requisite to shape the future contours of the region. Air Marshal Anil Khosla a former Vice Chief of the Air Staff writing on “Air Power and War Endurance in the Indian Context” carries out an analysis bringing out that Air Power in prolonged conflicts must demonstrate resilience, adaptability, and effective resource management to endure the challenges associated with extended durations of war.

Lieutenant General Arun Sahni (Retd) a former Army Commander South Western Command writing on “Recent Developments in Tibet and Xinjiang: Implications for India” states that it is necessary for India to be aware of the socio-economic and infrastructure changes in China’s bordering autonomous regions of Xinjiang and Tibet, that have an impact on its war waging capabilities. This article then studies the transformational changes underway in these two bordering regions that directly affect India’s security.

Admiral Thisara Samarasinghe a former Chief of the Sri Lanka Navy has written the article “Island Nation Adapting to Challenges from Great Power Contestation”. He explains the numerous techniques island nations might adopt to align to challenges not only from the great powers but also from other regions.

Writing on “Rising Role of OSINT in Conflict/War”, Major General Sanjay. P. Vishwasrao brings out that OSINT with a high level of civil-military synergy is making major contributions in all periods of conflict, stages of war, and spectrums of war. He brings out how India needs to structure and strategise to win every technology-driven competition in peace and war. Major General PK Chakravorty, an acclaimed writer especially on artillery, pens the article “Massed Fires to Precision: Is the Balance Shifting?” He brings out that we should gradually enhance our Precision Fire content while using Massed Fire as the main component till our Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities are state of the art. An optimum mix would balance cost with success in operations.

The article “Securing India’s Security Interests in a China-Taiwan Conflict” by Captain Kamlesh K. Agnihotri (IN) (Retd) provides a brief overview of the evolving India-Taiwan relations; assesses the contours of China-Taiwan conflict; investigates the effect of such a contingency on India’s interests in terms of quantum and intensity and finally analyses the options available to New Delhi to mitigate, if not wholly address the consequential challenges. Commodore Sarabjeet S. Parmar’s article, “Amphibious Operations: Do We Need a Hard Reset?” brings out that over time the complexity of amphibious operations has increased due to modern technology and weapons which has necessitated a high degree of joint planning and flexibility of execution. The author carries out an analysis of amphibious operations in the contemporary context and examines if there is a need for a hard reset.

The article “AI and the Potential to Create Digital Twins to Transform Military Logistics” by Colonel Munish Tuli, Senior Fellow at CLAWS proposes that all military equipment (embedded with sensors) and military depots in the Indian Army should have their AI digital twins created to facilitate predictive maintenance and AI-driven demand forecasting respectively.

The final article is by Lieutenant General DS Hooda. A former Army Commander Northern Command he writes on “Utility of Military Force in Achieving India’s Strategic Objectives”. The article analyses ‘Military Force’ in the present context and then goes into the specific Army sphere. It gives broad recommendations for managing India’s army to meet the current and future, conventional and asymmetric threats.

Finally, two books are reviewed as a review article and a book review. The review article by Govind Nelika, Web Manager cum Researcher, CLAWS, reviews “Leadership: Six Studies in World Strategy” by the renowned statesman Henry Kissinger. The next review is by Dr Shushant VC Parashar, a Research Fellow at CLAWS, who reviews the timeless classic “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” by Luo Guanzhong.

Happy Reading and as always, we look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

Managing Editor