

## BOOK REVIEW

Rajesh Basrur, Ajaya Kumar Das and Manjeet S. Pardesi (eds), *India's Military Modernisation: Challenges & Prospects*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press in association with IRSA, 2014, Pages: 325, Price: Rs. 950.00

The South Asia Programme at S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) brought together a range of military and civilian experts to present their papers on various aspects of India's military modernisation process in a workshop in Singapore on 24–25 February 2011. This book is an edited volume of the papers presented at this workshop. The book despite being published three years after the papers were presented still remains current because of the slow pace of India's military modernisation.

The introduction by the editors, in addition to giving the outline of the papers, gives their understanding of how India's defence and security policy has evolved since independence. It brings out that immediately after independence, the political establishment ensured subordination of the military to civilian leadership and diminished the role of the military in defence policymaking, a policy that continues till today.

The book has ten thematic chapters. The theme of the chapter on the Indian navy is its role in India's socio-economic growth and development and it dwells upon the significance of the Indian Ocean in international trade and the need and role of the Indian navy to safeguard India's maritime interests. It outlines the evolution of Indian naval strategy and the modernisation plans. It suggests building and strengthening of bilateral as well as multilateral partnerships with the other navies. The next chapter covers the challenges for the Indian Air Force in the future. Tracing the history of IAF's dependence on acquisition of aircraft from abroad, it also examines the decline in design capabilities within the country. It critically analyses the LCA programme, the D&D capabilities and the aviation industrial base and advocates the setting up of an Aerospace command under the IAF. The chapter on India's nuclear forces traces the brief history of its weapon programme. It explains the evolution of India's nuclear doctrine, the implications of the No-First-Use (NFU) policy. It explains the need for a credible nuclear deterrence and estimates the number of warheads needed for a Second Strike capability. It concludes that the National Command

Authority and other structures along with the dispersal of assets amongst various agencies insures against an accidental use.

The chapter on “Indian Defence Industry Struggling with Change” traces the policy from “self-sufficiency” to “self-reliance” to the belated recognition of role for the private sector. It is critical of the DPSU/OF defence industrial complex, terming it as, “bloated, non competitive, non responsive, capable, it seems, of producing only technologically inferior equipment, and even then, never on time and nearly always way over their original cost estimates”. It accuses the DRDO of arrogance, self-promotion and weak leadership and with a strong emphasis on acquisition of technology and know-how than its actual application. The author of the chapter, however, makes some factual errors e.g. it mentions MiG-29 as one of the licence-produced aircraft by HAL and credits Bharat Dynamics as the agency building BrahMos missile. It briefly touches on the reforms instituted since 2001 and the successive changes in the DPP and “Offset” policy. The next chapter on “India’s Defence Acquisition and Offsets Strategy” overlaps the issues of industrial policy, role of DRDO and the public sector industrial base, which are also covered in the previous chapter. It covers in detail the offset strategy followed by various countries and the relative advantages, and the hypothesis that India’s offset policy is likely to fail unless the conditions for ensuring viable and sustainable development are secured. It identifies the “doctrine of indigenisation” as the fundamental weakness of India’s offset policy and suggests restructuring of India’s defence economy for avoiding the previous failures of defence indigenisation and industrialisation. This jointly authored chapter has made some unsubstantiated statements, e.g. “...defence spending has been rising not so much because of increased regional tensions but simply because abundant financial resources have become available from high rates of economic growth”, and “India, as a major defence economy became intoxicated with the offset phenomenon during the early 2000s”.

The chapter “Internal Security Challenges and Role of the Seven Central Armed Police Force (CAPFs)” is rich in statistical data and assesses their role when deployed in Counter Insurgency (COIN) in three theatres of conflict, i.e. Left Wing Extremist (LWE) affected states, the North East and the state of J&K. It identifies success and failure areas and the role played by the CAPFs and the state police. It extensively covers the CRPFs role and briefly mentions the role of Assam Rifles and the BSF. It attributes crises of leadership and the inability of the forces to adapt to the demands as the two main reasons of inadequate performance. It makes seven short term and long-term

recommendations to realise the true potential of this mammoth force.

The chapter “Civil-Military Relations and Military Effectiveness in India” examines the theory of civil-military relations and the study of military effectiveness. It analyses the politico-military relationship based on developments post independence and the landmark events, which shaped it to emerge that can be best described as “Objective Control”. The influence of the politico-military relationship on military effectiveness is analysed over the processes of weapon procurement, defence planning, inter-service integration, and human resource development. It sees the shadow of lack of civilian expertise in both the political leadership and bureaucracy having an impact on the ability of civilian leaders to play an effective part in all these processes. It gives credit to the self-correcting strength of democracy and its powerful bureaucracy for the systematic stability.

The next two chapters address the prospects and limitations of “The Indo-US Defence Relationship” and the overdependence dilemma of the “Indo-Russian Defence Ties”. The relationship with the US is analysed along three dimensions- strategic logic, military-to-military co-operation and bilateral defence trade. The complexity of this relationship that showed signs of maturity with the signing of the US-India civil nuclear deal is seen in the context of developments of the US-Pak and US-China relationships, and rising economic and military capability in China. The continuing Indian dependence on Russia for supply of weapons, which began post 1962, got cemented post signing of Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1971. It survived the chaotic phase post disintegration of USSR, got back on track with the SU 30 MKI contract, took in its stride the hiccups of the cryogenic and Gorshkov, and the joint development of BrahMos, FGFA and MTA in the face of diversification of sourcing from Israel, Europe and the US.

The tenth chapter appropriately titled “Last Word” explains that “Replacement driven” India’s military modernisation programme reflects the aspiration of the world’s largest democracy to apportion a minimum dividend of its economic progress to play a legitimate role in maintaining peace in its immediate neighbourhood and beyond.

The papers compiled in the book provide enough material, including some details, for those interested in understanding the path taken by India’s military modernisation. The book reiterates the weaknesses of the design and development team as well as the production agencies and lays stress on the need for a strong defence industrial base. From an academic point of view the compilation of well-researched papers blends various perspectives to

understand how the Indian state has been moulding the country's military to meet the demands of an entirely new strategic setting. The book, however, offers little, by way of innovative suggestions other than what are already known in the public domain, to the practitioner and policy makers.

VINAY KAUSHAL  
Research Fellow  
Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi



Soraya Caro Vergas, *India-Latin America: An Alliance for the Future*, (New Delhi, Vitasta Publishing Pvt Ltd, 2014),  
Pages: xxvii + 248, Price: Rs. 745.00

Most of the studies in India on Latin America attempt to draw parallels between India and Latin American Countries that range from their colonial past, independence struggle, democratic institutions and economic policy frameworks, to sharing the Non-Aligned Movement platform and policy perspectives towards the United States and multilateral institutions.

The mismatch between Latin American and Indian perspectives on each other appears to be a product of desktop-research which lacks scientific rigour and is generally focussed on ethno-religious, socio-philosophical or civilisational issues and proves detrimental to a fruitful interaction between Indian and Latin America. The dearth of sufficient intellectual endeavours to objectively decode the India-Latin America relations raises more questions than it answers. The major questions that arise are - what is lacking, when did the relationship go astray, where is it heading now, and how can it be improved?

Soraya Caro Vergas, in her pioneering publication entitled *India-Latin America: An Alliance for the Future* has attempted to answer these and other similar questions. The author, has not only highlighted the historical antecedents and the lack of understanding about each other, but has also pointed out

actions needed to be taken by both India and Latin America to forge an alliance under the unfolding globalisation processes.

In order to forge a meaningful relationship between India and Latin America, Caro emphasises clearing the fog that has been beset by misinformation and outdated understanding of each other. For example, India is often seen as a Hindu country with traditional features and Latin America empathises with India for the excesses committed by the colonisers - who decimated the local culture, religion, social setting and even identity. Different connotations of the simplest of terms can result in divergent understandings. For example, a simple term *Mestizos* is considered to stand for the untouchables, but as per the author, this is not true. "*Mestizaje* is not a sociological concept. It comes from biology..." Contrary to the Indian thought, in Latin America the term *untouchable* refers to the elite who are unapproachable to the common people. Yet another misperception that exists is about political institutions and economic developments. In a nutshell, mutual lack of knowledge, about the developments in Latin America after the "lost decade" and about the economic liberalisation in India since the 1990s, has been the problem.

It is only with the unfolding of the globalisation process that Caro calls "third industrial revolution", and the rise of India and China from the "world's back offices to that of innovative epicentres" that Latin America has taken note of the recent developments.

In the chapter *Where the Two Indias Meet*, the author emphasises that to overcome the misconstructions about each other, there is a need to understand Indian business and the social environment that include the historical antecedents embedded in the Indian culture, such as caste, religion, region, the role of businessmen, politico-business interactions and the influence of foreign invaders. In a similar vein, the foreign investors to be successful need to understand the intricacies of the Indian labour force that is not only protected by the Industrial Disputes Act (1947) but is also historically implanted in a complex network of mutual interdependency. Notwithstanding the differences, there is sufficient scope for complementarities in which India and Latin America can supplement each other in power, transport and clean environment infrastructure; water resources; and information technology.

The chapter, *Regional Platforms of Recognition* highlights the evolving framework of "open regionalism" that includes the refurbished Andean Community of Nations, the Central American Common Market, the Caribbean

Community, and the MERCOSUR, all of which have proved instrumental in reducing the trade tariff to as low as 14 per cent, and in the process have accelerated intra-regional trade and investments. Against the historical relationship of dependency on the North and the dream to come under the umbrella of the US championed Free Trade Area of Americas, Latin America's focus has shifted to the Pacific waters with Asia in mind.

The subsequent chapter, *Six Latin American Strategies to Approach India* takes the lion's share in the book, comprising 76 out of the 192 pages. This chapter focuses on the growing two-way trade, business and investment paradigms. It also highlights the potential in answering India's quest for natural resources and fulfilling Latin America's need for innovation, technology and investment. For this study, the author focuses on six Latin American countries: Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Peru.

Fora like BRICS, and IBSA provide many opportunities to Brazil and India to not only share issues at the international and regional levels but also complement bilateral trade in areas such as aerospace, aviation, telecommunications, automobile, iron and steel, footwear, ethanol industries, banking and private investments. India and Colombia got a boost in their relationship with President Andres Pastrana's visit to India in 2000. Argentina and India with their long established relationship since the 1920s have inked several agreements to promote trade in natural resources, private investments, joint developments in information technology, biotechnology, oil, etc. Argentine investors, however, are yet to make serious inroads into the Indian market, the book notes. Mexico being the first Latin American country to recognise India as an independent country holds a special place in India's Latin America policy. Since the 1960s, the two countries have developed "reciprocal perceptions" on many international issues and have taken steps to expand economic ties with a vision to increase bilateral trade to US\$10 billion by 2015. Chile and India have cooperated in the mining sector, particularly in the mining of copper. Their cooperation also extends in other areas like silviculture and forest products. Peru and India are exploring the potential for ties in non-traditional agricultural products, mining and in the services sectors. Here, Caro cautions Latin American countries that to come out of the shackles and vagaries of the past, instead of exporting unsustainable raw natural resources, they should take tangible steps to move up the value chain and export processed and finished products.

The chapter, *Latin America: A Continent Without Identity*, discusses the Indian understanding of Latin America. The author points out that the Indian

perspectives on Latin America mainly focus on history and it appears that the Latin American history froze in the 1980s. The India-Chile dialogue organised in India in 2010, according to the author, witnessed repeated references made by the Indian participants to the 1973 era and Augusto Pinochet, as against the Chilean efforts to project a modern Chile. The book notes that there is just a minuscule number of Indians who actually specialize on Latin America and argues that the reason behind it is the lack of employment opportunities, language barriers and insufficient funds for scholars to visit Latin America. The author laments that "...updated economic and social information about this region seems scarce and the academic debate to renew ideas and concepts is still pending" and recommends that to transcend the existing barriers, a proactive role by Latin American embassies in India and other institutes is imperative. The book does recognize that a similar problem lies with the Latin American scholarly communities as well and also points out that the few research projects undertaken in Latin America on India, focus mainly on historical or social issues like "poverty, gender and traditions". What is required from both sides, the author suggests, is to overcome the "stereotypes".

The chapter, *A Different Approach to Development History*, rightly points out that the Latin American history should not to be considered "as a succession of calamities, an era of victims and perpetrators", but should be seen as "Trans-Modern". Similarly, the author sketches the history of India since the advent of the Aryans, discusses the evolution of unique social, economic and political traditions that are difficult to understand and says that Indian history appears to be beyond Latin Americans and hence gets misinterpreted.

The last chapter, *Steps to Come Closer*, primarily emphasises the role of the academicians to shift from "shallow generalizations to systematic and specialized studies". To take the lead the Department of Finances, Government and International Relations, has been established at the *Universidad Externado de Colombia* with the aim of highlighting recent developments in India and Latin America on topics such as culture, economic and financial developments, social inclusion, models of democratic consolidation, prospects for strategic outreach, etc.

Overall, the author has made an insightful attempt to highlight the historical antecedents, misconceptions and lack of necessary information, current state of business and trade, and the potential for a positive future relationship between India and Latin America, to re-identify each other. The book is adequately supported with seven annexures that include business and trade statistics as well as commodities traded between India and Latin American countries like Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico, Chile, and Peru. The book

would prove valuable to students, researchers, businessmen, traders and policy makers interested in understanding the dynamics as well as forging closer relations between India and Latin America. The book is timely and well structured and is an important addition to the existing literature on India-Latin American relations.

DALBIR AHLAWAT  
Lecturer,  
Centre for Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism  
Macquarie University, North Ryde, Australia



Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan and Daniel A. Porras (eds.), *Awaiting Launch: Perspectives on the Draft ICOC for Outer Space Activities*; New Delhi, Observer Research Foundation, 2014, Pages 275.

Space Security is a relatively new concept in the overall security paradigm despite its ever-growing relevance in our daily lives. This fast growing dependence on space assets, with increasing relevance in the socio-economic and security domains, has important consequences. The outer space has become crowded, congested and competitive. To be able to continue using outer space well into the future, it is time that some rules of the road are clearly spelt out. The Outer Space Treaty that came into existence in 1967 is a good measure. However, the context in which it was written is very different from the extant circumstances. There are several lacunae including definitional aspects such as what constitutes peaceful activity, which need to be fixed.

Given this backdrop, there are several efforts being made to regulate the activities in outer space. One such effort is the European Union (EU) proposed International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities (ICOC). While this document is quite comprehensive in its scope and coverage, the ICOC came under international opposition, principally because of the process by which they developed it. While the EU has made efforts in enlisting greater support for the ICOC, there are still a few outstanding issues that



need to be worked out before it can ensure a large support base.

*Awaiting Launch: Perspectives on the Draft ICOC for Outer Space Activities*, edited by Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan and Daniel Porras is an important contribution in this debate. The editors argue that the idea of establishing certain ground rules in the outer space domain is real. They cite at least three key reasons as to why there is a need for an effective space regime. The reasons given are: securing outer space from any danger or threat to space utility; maintaining order and ensuring that freedom of action in space does not create adverse, harmful effects on outer space; and sustainability, so that space continues to be used only for peaceful purposes and so on. All of these objectives are shared by most states, at least rhetorically. Even as most countries agree on these broad objectives, the political differences have been a big hindrance in establishing certain ground rules with regard to activities in outer space.

As Dr. Rajagopalan and Mr. Porras note, the strength of this book lies in the diverse perspectives brought together, with contributions made by practitioners from the academic, scientific and industry community, as also views coming from various continents like Africa, Asia, America and Europe. The book is divided into three sections: the ICOC debates in the context of outer space regime that deals with specific issues such as the space debris, and right to self defence among others; unique perspectives that highlight the role of industries, and universities in space security; and lastly regional perspectives that has views emerging from Africa, Latin America and Asia.

These days, launching of satellites for other countries is seen from a commercial perspective as well as an important aspect of soft power projection. As argued by Beatrice Fihn and Gabriella Irsten, "Space is one of few global commons that border every community on earth. It has become an increasingly important factor for the economy, communications and development. As our dependency on space assets has grown, it is becoming increasingly important to address the issue of safety and security in space, and to preserve this unique environment so all can use it responsibly". (p. 134)

As argued, satellites have great importance in the day-to-day functioning of a country as well as in its security and power projection and are at grave risk with the rise in space debris, which is also an outcome of increased space activity. Most of the satellites are at risk because of these free flowing objects and there seems to be no binding law governing and safeguarding satellites and other space objects vis-à-vis debris collision.

As argued by Mohamed Hatem Elatawy, "...the current draft, however, fails to specifically identify what constitutes an imperative safety consideration or how to reduce the creation of space debris". (p. 50) This brings forth the debate that there is a lack of monitoring capabilities and methods. As argued by Ajey Lele, "...the safety, sustainability and security of outer space activities are fragile, particularly if one takes a long-term view. Responsible use of outer space by all actors is essential to preserve outer space as a safe and secure environment". (p. 88)

Another interesting debate brought forth in the book is the connection between cyber threat and space security. Today, cyber threats have become the prime mode of attack by any country. Space assets are all the more vulnerable to these attacks. They also become difficult to control and trace as the attacks can be undertaken by anyone sitting anywhere in the world. In the words of Christian Olarean, "...an example of cyber interference with outer space activities could be a cyber attack that occurs before, during or after the launch of a satellite". (p. 112–113)

As mentioned earlier, the book provides a collection of essays providing different regional perspectives with respect to the ICoC in particular and space security in general. This also brings one to the question of a shift of the haves and the have-nots from nuclear to space technology. The spin offs acquiring space technology is also a very important factor driving new entrants into the domain. The various authors arguing for regional models clearly highlight the fact that space is a necessary element in their quest for greater economic development. Another important aspect is the relevance of space technology in the handling of natural disasters and other calamities.

The book lucidly highlights the fact that the ICoC can be regarded as a work in progress as there are a number of issues, which need to be debated and discussed before these can be universally accepted. This sentiment has been argued by Victoria Samson. She states, "Sensitive to the historical precedent of the West presenting them with a *fait accompli* for national security issues, many countries were concerned that the ICOC negotiations were scripted to deliberately leave out new emerging actors in space". (p. 74)

This book will prove useful for diplomats, practitioners in the scientific domain and researchers who are interested in understanding space security dynamics as well as the context in which space security regimes are being developed. One big contribution of this book is its annexure, which has documented all the treaties and instruments that are relevant in this domain and thus, it becomes a one-point reference book. The book is a timely and

important addition to the existing literature on the subject and highlights the fact that space security and development are important for India and thus, there is a need to undertake such a project.

GUNJAN SINGH  
Research Assistant  
Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses  
New Delhi

★ ★ ★