

Economic Growth and National Security*

Brigadier MS Chowdhury, VSM (Retd)**

This glossy booklet on economic growth and national security has been sourced from five perspicacious papers presented at a joint seminar organised by Centre for Security Analysis, Chennai and United Service Institution of India in October 2007.

Over last two millennium we have learnt to our cost the direct co-relation between economy and security. Both are complex issues made more so in the current environment of volatility and the sheer size of the canvas over which the issues are required to be dealt with. Hence, the importance of this co-relation.

The first paper by Dr Arvind Virmani, formerly Chief Economic Adviser, Ministry of Finance, deals with the economic foundation of national power. He has analysed and evaluated issues such as power potential, economic size of countries, purchasing power parity GDP, uni-polar to quadri - polar world economy and catch up growth potential with the help of graphs and complex equations. He has highlighted the fact that the absolute size of the economy alone does not matter. Other factors like democratic accountability, nuclear weapons, non state actors and the will to exercise power also count. The author graphically shows that by 2050 China's economy would be twice that of the USA and by 2035 Indian economy would equal that of the USA (just 27 years away!) and in 15 years time the world would become economically bi-polar. The author advises India to develop good relations with certain democratic countries, and cautions against the significant risk of conflict between the rising power and the dominant one.

Lalit Mansingh, former Foreign Secretary and ambassador quotes the Puranas to highlight India's ancient understanding of strategic alliances and the historical lack of concept of economic partnership, despite extensive trading activities. For some 20 years post partition, India shunned any type of alliance or partnership and thus was born "non alignment". Then after 1998 a shift from idealism to pragmatism took place. Japan,

**Economic Growth and National Security*. Edited by Lieutenant General VR Raghavan (Chennai: Centre for Security Analysis), pp.106, Rs 390.00, ISBN 81-902317-4 - X.

**Brigadier MS Chowdhury VSM (Retd) was commissioned in the Regiment of Artillery in 1961 and retired as Sub Area Commander, Jharkhand, Orissa and Bihar in 1994. He has been Chief Instructor at the USI for eight years.

Korea and China prospered by importing capital. Belatedly, India has followed suit with gratifying results. And of greater consequence is India forging partnerships aimed at energy security. The author does not believe that India and China can have a genuine strategic partnership and decries the "String of Pearls" policy. The author is convinced that India could become a global power in about 20 years.

In his article Mohan Guruswamy brings the reader down to earth cutting through the euphoria to highlight the grim economic realities. He has illustrated his pessimism with a large number of easy to follow tables / graphs. His conclusions basically arise from an India – China comparison. He has supported his findings with data from impeccable economic experts and organisations. The author has listed seven grim realities and has suggested that India learn from China while preserving democracy. While listing the grim realities the author for some reason has not mentioned the all pervading corruption and the political log-jam. The only plus appears to be favourable demography.

An article on Defence Transformation by Lawrence Prabhakar covers the emergence of new key technologies which permit the creation of new kinds of military forces. The current type of warfare (preceded by three earlier generations of warfare) which the author calls the Fourth Generation Warfare is the antithesis of the technology driven templates of operations. It represents the resilience of political, social networked operations that are of protracted duration (read this as counter-insurgency warfare). He has also examined how the end of Cold War and globalisation made a huge impact on defence transformation. The globalised order has created new security scenarios which are complex and have spawned new types of wars.

The last paper by Colonel (now Brigadier) Amarjit Singh analyses the relationship between military and economic power. It provides a framework for understanding military capabilities in a national security context. India's new found strategic salience owes much to its economic growth and its potential. India's national security objectives have been described. India's possible strategic missions and range of military operations arising therefrom are explained with clarity. The need for and the mode of achieving a single front war has been discussed. Some interesting terms such as Asian Century Strategy, Values Strategy, Growth Strategy and Interests Strategy along with 'mapping capability to strategy' have been covered.

The papers are analytical and have a lot of depth. The hyphenated treatment of economic growth and national security gives a fresh perspective to issues of concern to the strategic community. The publication is highly readable.