

Editorial

It has been an exciting period for us in the last three months, celebrating not just 50 years of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) on 1st July 2015 but, celebrating especially our nation's 50th birthday on 9th August 2015. Here, all Singaporeans unite as one people to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of our independence. However, we must always remember that the 50 years of independence that Singapore is enjoying now has been hard won and due to a strong and vigilant SAF. As Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said at the SAF50 Dinner held on 24th July 2015 to commemorate 50 years of the SAF giving strength to the nation: "So, as we celebrate the 50th year of the SAF, I salute all the past and current leaders of the SAF, the men and the women who have contributed through your service and to support our nation. Thank you. Thank you for being soldiers. Thank you for guarding and keeping Singapore safe."¹ We would like to pay tribute to all servicemen—the pioneers, the regulars and the NSmen who have contributed so much to keep Singapore safe and defend our sovereignty.

This issue of *POINTER* covers a wide variety of topics, ranging from a discussion on the merits of both sea power and air power, respectively, to an examination of non-lethal warfare today, to a historical coverage of the 1948 Malayan Emergency. Two other topics include a look at the evolving Cyber Threat – a very real and current menace globally as well as locally, and a general discourse on the emotional fitness of a soldier.

In 'Sea Power As A Strategic Domain', ME6 Khoo Koh Giok focuses on the unique characteristics of sea power and its strategic utility. In his essay, he defines sea power with reference to Alfred Thayer Mahan, an American historian and naval officer who was an expert on sea power in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. ME6 Khoo then discusses the characteristics of sea power, its strengths and limitations in the peace to war continuum and its contributions to the Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic (DIME) instruments of national power. He highlights that in some cases, sea power is the strategic tool of choice while in others, it is merely an enabler. He goes on to argue that sea power has limitations to be qualified as a strategic domain on its own. In his opinion, the culmination of land-sea-air powers into a combined military power provides countries with better flexibility and options to employ military forces to meet strategic objectives. He concludes that military power, instead of land-air-sea power in isolation, is better qualified as a strategic domain.

In a similar vein, MAJ Foo Yuk Min in his essay, 'Air Power – A Panacea To Future Armed Conflicts', also argues that it is a military force combined of land, sea and air power that will better serve a country and enable it to achieve its national objectives. MAJ Foo describes that the military force of a country usually comprises three key components: the army, the navy and the air force, all of which can stake a legitimate claim to be the most vital aspect of the military due to their various strengths. However, he also looks at the argument that in recent conflicts, air power can be seen as the most crucial component of the military. In fact, with air forces around the world developing more cutting-edge technology such as precision munitions and more efficient computing processors, as well as working on new operating doctrines, the future of military engagements seem to point to the skies as the key aspect of any country's military. After examining various examples of armed conflicts, MAJ Foo concludes that all three components of military force, that is, land, sea and air power are essential and that a military power comprising all three domains is better qualified to serve and protect national interests.

The next essay, 'The Humane Age of Non-Lethal Warfare' is written by MAJ Phua Chao Rong, Charles. According to MAJ Phua, there have been centuries of conventional warfare whereby each power strives to inflict as much damage as possible, whilst selfishly sustaining their own survival and pushing for their own causes. This is notwithstanding the fact that this kind of war causes collateral damage for all parties involved as well as civilian casualties. MAJ Phua adds that now, mankind has finally started to transcend violence and accept the fact that all it causes is more violence, that is, 'a vicious cycle of conflict', making long term peace solutions impossible. He then discusses the idea of a revolutionary age of Non-Lethal Warfare (NLW)—which is a more holistic form of asymmetric and humane warfare, in which non-lethal weapons are used to defeat the enemies and to achieve a swift yet benevolent victory. In this essay, MAJ Phua assesses the pros and cons of the various aspects of humane warfare and NLW at an operational level, and also assesses its overall applicability to the Singapore Army. MAJ Phua concludes that NLW will likely be the pacifist model of war for many decades to come as the world progresses towards a humanistic civilisation. In his view, it would also be a useful strategy-to-be for states like Singapore on a defensive posture, always deterring but ever ready to achieve a swift and decisive victory, should security be compromised.

MAJ Lim Yu Sing's essay is entitled, 'The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960) – Can Lessons be drawn for Present Day Situations?' In this essay, MAJ Lim details that following the success of the British insurgency during the Malayan Emergency, there has been a countless host of works aimed at uncovering the 'lessons' to be learnt from their victory in Malaya. His essay explores whether the lessons learnt from the case of the Malayan Emergency are indeed a practical template to base future counter-insurgency (COIN) campaigns on or, if the British Army's success was uniquely contextual to the situation in Malaya at the time and cannot be replicated in other COIN campaigns since each insurgency has its own distinct political and socio-economic character. The essay continues with an in-depth study of the situation during the Malayan Emergency, in an attempt to find out what the unique factors were that led to their success, what can and cannot be used as a 'template' for other COIN campaigns. In his conclusion, MAJ Lim states that the assumption that the Malayan Emergency is often viewed as a paradigm from which 'lessons' can be drawn for present day COIN situations is correct. However, MAJ Lim goes on to discuss the propensity by COIN 'practitioners' and 'experts' to 'template' the British experiences in the Malayan Emergency. He also adds that 'templating' has shown to be ineffective for the Americans and British in subsequent COIN campaigns because the 'lessons' drawn from the British 'success' in the Malayan Emergency are fundamentally not universally enduring COIN maxims independent of time, place and situation.

In the essay, 'Cyber Threat – A global Security Threat', ME5 Seah Ser Thong, Calvin explores the technology boom of the 21st century and highlights that this has led to the rapid rise and influence of the Internet on people around the world. According to ME5 Seah, the Internet has now become a universal information sharing platform that brings people from all walks of life closer together. However, this increased interconnectedness of information sharing has its disadvantages and perils. International hacking groups like

'Anonymous' have increased efforts to obtain information through illegal and unethical means, while cyber threats like the Stuxnet Worm has become increasingly prevalent. In response, an increasing number of countries are investing more into cyber security to combat these cyber threats. In this essay, ME5 Seah delves deeper into the nature and extent of cyber threats, its impact on the military and the potential cyber defence measures that could be explored.

The final essay, 'The Emotional Fitness Of A Soldier – Balancing Positivity And Negativity In The Military' is by CPT Chen Jingkai. According to CPT Chen, it is an unspoken fact that negativity and cynicism are damaging to many of the activities conducted within the military. Using examples from psychological studies and various cognitive experiments, CPT Chen argues that positivity can improve one's mental prowess—stating that this is particularly critical for commanders when it comes to training their men and especially out on the battlefield, to lead their men to safety. Conversely, a case is also made that negativity threatens the mutual respect between soldiers and their peers, as well as between commanders and their soldiers. CPT Chen feels that the contagiousness of both positivity and negativity has an important implication for the military—that the emotional fitness of every serviceman now becomes the responsibility of his fellow comrades. In this essay, CPT Chen seeks to use empirical evidence for psychological science to make a case for increasing positivity and decreasing negativity in the military.

POINTER would like to take this opportunity to bid a fond farewell to LCP Kayson Wang as he is posted to another unit. His positive attitude, diligence and meticulous work ethic are great assets to POINTER. We thank him for his contributions and wish him the very best in his future endeavours.

The POINTER Editorial Team

ENDNOTES

1. http://www.mindef.gov.sg/content/imindef/press_room/official_releases/sp/2015/24jul15_speech.html#.VdreJbJCriU