

Editorial

The final issue of POINTER for 2015 is very special to us. We are very pleased to announce the launch of POINTER in Magzter, a cross-platform, self-service, global digital magazine news-stand which is available across multiple devices.¹ This initiative is part of our effort to go digital and make POINTER available on the various mobile platforms for easy accessibility and reach. Our intention is to publish all our older issues online as well. Do download the Magzter app which is free and tell us what you think. The digital issue is listed under the 'Top Free' category.

In this issue, we have lined up articles with wide-ranging topics—from countering threat networks that employ Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), to a study of the IDF's use of media platforms in its information campaigns, to a general discussion of managing transparency in an age of rapidly emerging communications technology. Closer home, we have also included concerns of relevance to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF)—full spectrum operations as a viable strategic posture and the strengthening of Singapore's deterrence as a non-nuclear state. Our final topic covers professional excellence from the perspective of an Army Engineer.

The essay, 'The Use of Counter Improvised Explosives Device (C-IED) Information to Achieve Battlefield Effects for Targeting and Information Operations' is by LTC Adrian Lee. In this essay, LTC Lee conducts an in-depth analysis on countering IEDs, focusing on the ongoing war between Afghan security forces and the Taliban, the extensive use of Information Operations by both sides as well as the campaign by the Afghan government to win the support of the Afghan populace to aid in IED neutralisation and to effectively counter the insurgents. In the essay, the author explains that counter-insurgency is designed to combine both lethal and non-lethal actions to crumble insurgent networks. He examines the purpose of the campaign design, planning and targeting processes of counter insurgency efforts and the vital roles they play in overcoming challenges and fully utilising opportunities. LTC Lee concludes that the tools needed to effectively neutralise IEDs as a battlefield threat will not be found in technological systems or equipment, nor in killing insurgent leaders, but rather in building relationships with the people who have become the

battleground for all modern military conflicts. In his opinion, winning the information arena, leveraging on the C-IED information, addresses the concerns of the people and, this will in turn win them over.

In the essay, 'Full Spectrum Operations – A Viable Strategic Posture for the SAF?', MAJ Jacques Wei-Ren Erasmus explains what full-spectrum capability is, with reference to Singapore, which includes conventional warfighting skills, participation in Operations Other than War and the security of the Singapore homeland. According to MAJ Erasmus, full spectrum capability is a necessity for the defence of Singapore in the new, fluid and complex international environment. Maintaining this posture forms a vital part of Singapore's framework for upholding regional stability and is a basis of Singapore's deterrence and diplomacy efforts. While this presents a host of challenges for a small nation with a largely conscript and reservist armed forces, MAJ Erasmus strongly believes that with the focused use of resources, enhanced leadership training and leveraging of Singapore's and the SAF's inherent strengths, the SAF will be able to sustain its full spectrum capabilities—and even strengthen them further—for the foreseeable future.

LTC Lee Li Huat's essay is entitled 'Will Strengthening The SAF Mean Strengthening Singapore's Deterrence As A Non-Nuclear State?' In this essay, LTC Lee briefly discusses Singapore's independence, highlighting that since 1965, protecting its land and sovereignty has remained crucial priorities of the Singapore government. Due to Singapore's inherent lack of natural resources, the SAF has adopted the strategy of Deterrence and Diplomacy through the Five Pillars of Total Defence. He poses the question of whether, in today's world of increasingly unconventional threats such as terrorism and cyber terrorism, Singapore's deterrence capability is able and well-equipped to defend the country. LTC Lee's essay will define and explain what deterrence is, before continuing to debate if the SAF can defend itself in times of need or, if it needs to strengthen itself further as a 3rd Generation Army. The essay will also deliberate over other important factors that contribute to Singapore's deterrence strategy, such as the national willpower to fight and if the SAF is sufficiently communicating such messages to the public. Lastly, ideas on how the SAF can be further strengthened are evaluated.

In the essay, 'Transparency: The Stand Between Clear And Opaque', MAJ Goh Kiam Seng explores the issue of transparency in a country, the management of information, the influence on its politics and the effects on its internal and external stakeholders. According to MAJ Goh, transparency requires governments to design a system of information disclosure—one that is accountable to both its people and to the international community. While transparency will not solve all security-related problems, nor will it directly lead to better co-operation, tolerance, or democracy, MAJ Goh feels that it will facilitate better understanding between nations and thus reduce the chances of unnecessary violence leading to wars. He concludes that by recognising the effects of transparency and integrating it into policy and decision-making, it is possible to reach a harmonic balance between being clear and opaque.

The essay, 'Professional Excellence Of An Army Engineer' is written by ME5 Seah Ser Thong, Calvin. In this essay, ME5 Seah highlights that Professional Excellence is the epitome of success for military professionals. His essay assesses the attainment of professional excellence by the Army Engineer who is responsible for ensuring that the army's equipment is safe, reliable, maintainable and operational. ME5 Seah further adds that the Army Engineer is the combat force multiplier who optimises the capital investment of weapon systems to enable mission success for the SAF. ME5 Seah stresses that the Army Engineer is an important individual in the SAF and he is required to hone varied skills in his multi-faceted roles as a Soldier, Engineer and Trainer. He further adds that the Army Engineer will need to continuously upgrade his engineering skillsets to attain Professional Excellence. ME5 Seah adds that the SAF plays a huge role here and can aid the process by providing a stimulating environment where the Army Engineer is continuously challenged and groomed. In this way, the Army Engineers can contribute directly to sustaining the combat power for the 3rd Generation SAF.

In the essay, 'Battlefront New Media – Lessons For The SAF Based On A Study Of The Information Campaign During Operation Pillar Of Defence'

CPT Leong Tai Liang, Daniel studies the various social media platforms used by the IDF during an information campaign against its adversary, to analyse the effectiveness, the challenges and limitations encountered and to explore the principles that could potentially benefit the SAF. CPT Leong states that with the advancements in technology and the increased use of new media today, social media, a sub-set of new media, has undoubtedly become the go-to platform for the latest news updates around the world. However, the truthfulness of the messages that are delivered on such platforms still remains a key area of concern. He adds that in today's context, it is easy to find multiple sources on the internet, each with a different side to yet the same story and it is up to the public to discern the right from the wrong. CPT Leong concludes that a well-developed new media campaign will be able to strengthen the will and resolve of a nation, thus avoiding unnecessary internal conflict, preventing any erosion of the collective will to fight, as well as drawing international support. The key to this is ultimately about having the upper hand in the control of information, with new media's social platforms being one increasingly critical avenue to establish this.

POINTER would like at this point to bid a fond farewell to CPL Marc-us Ong and CPL Wallace Tan as they leave to pursue their studies. Their diligence, positive attitudes and excellent work ethics are greatly appreciated. We thank them for their contributions and wish them well in their future endeavours.

We are also pleased to announce that the Chief of Defence Force Essay Competition 2015/2016 is now open for participation. We would like to invite all our readers to take part in the competition. Details can be found on the POINTER website at <http://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/pointer>.

Finally, we would like to wish all our readers a *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Happy Holidays!*

The POINTER Editorial Team

ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.magzter.com/about-us>