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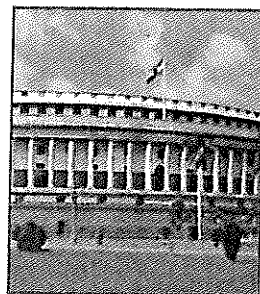
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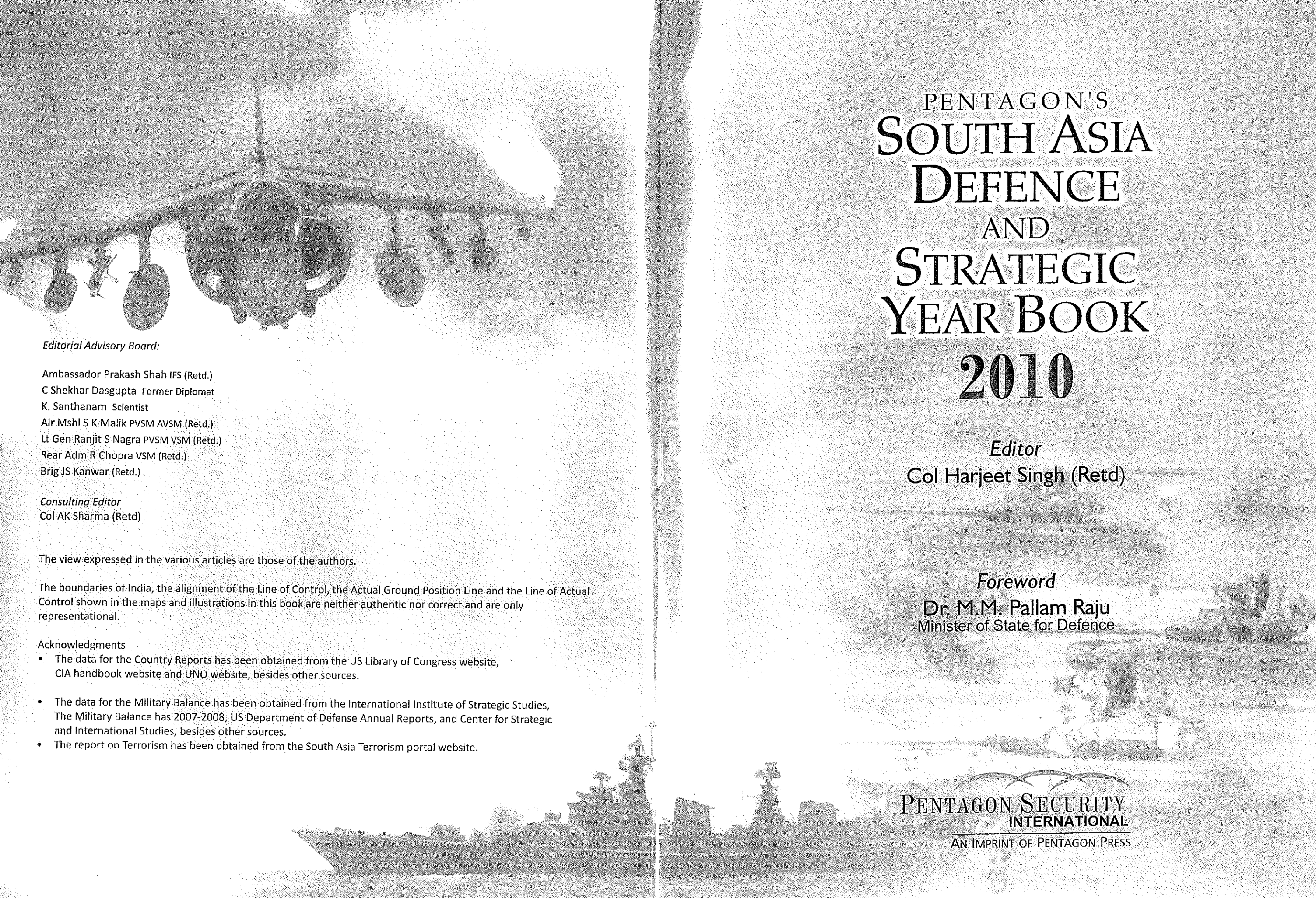
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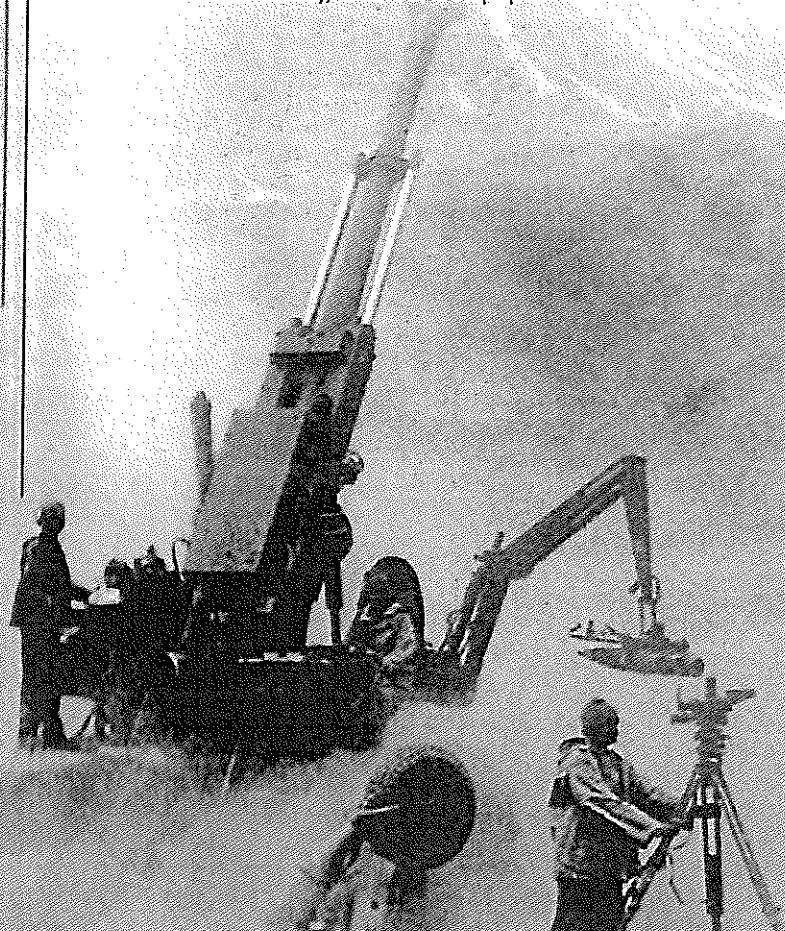
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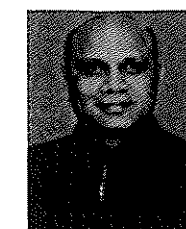
Minister of State for Defence
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रक्षा राज्य मंत्री
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FOREWORD

The security of South Asia has been influenced by many factors. Regional relations have been shaped by the colonial background and bilateral issues that have emerged from its aftermath. Global international relations have also played a significant dynamic in its contours and relationships. In the immediate context, domestic factors of economic development, social growth, and societal relations within the countries of South Asia are impacting the directions in which the region is moving. A final point of consideration is the self-images as regional actors, carved by the Governments and intelligentsia of the respective countries, backed by technological and scientific advancements and military capabilities. Lately, environmental issues have added their own dimension to the equation.

It is ironic that, in the creation of the contemporary international order the South Asian states had an extremely limited role. This has resulted in the respective countries creating their independent security doctrines. The nature of the genesis of some of the states e.g. Pakistan and Bangladesh, the inherited problems that have created disputed borders and disputed areas, and the current scourge of terrorism have, however, not blurred the historical societal linkages through a common historical past. The communitarian concerns transcend legal boundaries. Regional security is, therefore, a common concern.

Today, geostrategic factors are being replaced by geo-economic ones in the evolving security environment of the world. The pace of militarization in South Asia needs to be looked at. These developments provide an opportunity for South Asian states to set their own house in order and to look for internal solutions for regional disputes, beginning with a restructuring of regional relationships on the basis of mutual interests rather than as proxy actors. There is a need for greater knowledge through understanding of divergent views for mutual benefit. To this end, the value of a publication like the "South Asia Defence and Strategic Year Book" is inestimable to put various issues of the region in perspective. Now in its fourth year of publication, it is a valuable addition to the available literature on security studies of the region.

M.M. Pallam Raju
(M.M. Pallam Raju)

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