

Editorial

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the United Service Institution (USI) of India Journal for the 2nd quarter of 2024. For the past 151 years, the USI has been committed to providing strategic insights on national security and geopolitics to its readers. This issue features 13 well-researched articles on diverse topics, including Small Modular Nuclear Reactors, war crimes in modern armed conflicts, and check dams for Ladakh's water security. In addition, there are three China-centric articles, with the first focusing on Bhutan's border demarcation with China, the second on the Western media's portrayal of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, and the third analysing China's historical thought processes and their impact on its foreign policy. Following which there are two articles which focus on the military lessons to be gleaned from the conflicts around the world. and two contributions on the employment of helicopters and offensive air power. There are also submissions on India's peacekeeping ethos and the creation of a reliable national cybersecurity capability. The Journal concludes with the winner of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2023 focusing on the critical examination of the Ukraine conflict.

The lead article, titled 'Bhutan's Border Demarcation with China' by Major General AK Bardalai, VSM (Retd), addresses the historical Indo-Bhutan relationship, the threat from the People's Liberation Army to the Siliguri corridor, and the need for Bhutan to resolve the border dispute swiftly. This is followed by Professor Amit Gupta's contribution titled 'The Lessons of Ukraine and Gaza' focusing on the teachings from the two wars. He argues that on a close inspection of the two conflicts several lessons have emerged. Though the wars are not the type to be conducted in the future, the takeaways from both are crucial and that they provide India with both opportunistic and cautionary notes for the future.

The third article titled 'Lessons Learnt from Ongoing Conflicts' by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) and Major General VK Singh, VSM (Retd), delves into the wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the need to develop hard power as deterrence, importance of

weaning away from import dependency and oft-overlooked need for strategic communication using social, print and traditional electronic media. The fourth contribution is by Major General (Dr) RS Thakur (Retd) and Dr Beáta Biliková, titled 'Representation of the India-China War of 1962 in Indian Writing and the Western Media'. It covers how the American and British media represented and reflected upon the 1962 War and highlights certain publications that tried to influence readers to adopt a specific bias towards the conflicts.

Dr Roshan Khanijo's article, 'Can Small Modular Nuclear Reactors Provide Realistic Pathways for Clean Energy' explores the idea of using Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) as a sustainable solution for achieving 'Net Zero Emission' goals by 2050, as highlighted in the United Nations Climate Change Conference. She examines various SMR designs and their potential applications, ranging from land-based to marine environments. It concludes with emphasising the need for a holistic approach to address technical, operational, economic, and legal challenges for the successful commercialisation of SMRs and their integration into the global energy landscape. The sixth contribution authored by Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd), 'War Crimes and Modern-day Conflicts' explores war crimes through contemporary and historical lenses, focusing on evolving legal frameworks and accountability. It covers conflicts like Israel-Hamas and Russia-Ukraine, tracing war crimes from the Leipzig Trials to the Rome Statute. The article also discusses key legal instruments, command responsibility, and integrating international standards into national systems for justice.

Colonel Vijay Kumar Goyat's article, 'Check Dams: Solution to the Increasing Water Crisis in Ladakh', highlights the geographical factors which result in low rainfall and, hence, the need for water management through the construction of easy to build and eco-friendly check dams to ensure that the sustainability and tourism needs of the cold desert are met. In the eighth entry by Air Commodore Shirish Dhakate, titled 'Elephant's Trumpet for Taming the Dragon', the author highlights China's historical strategic thought processes that have shaped its foreign policy and examines the linkages to shed light on the drivers behind Beijing's

engagements with its adversaries, neighbours and the world at large. He further brings out that the Indian leadership needs to learn to manage China deftly to defeat them at their own game.

Colonel (Dr) KK Sharma (Retd), in his contribution titled 'Local Community First: India's Enduring Peacekeeping Ethos' highlights the significant contributions of Indian peacekeepers to United Nations Peace Operations, noting their exceptional effectiveness due to strong camaraderie, discipline, and integrity. It also discusses how they support local communities in conflict zones by rebuilding lives and infrastructure through engineering, medical, and veterinary expertise. This is followed by Colonel Suraksh Vir's article, 'Atmanirbhar Bharat: Establishing Credible National Cyber Capability,' which explores the vulnerabilities of cyberspace and how Western nations dominate this realm by controlling systems, technology, services, and software. It also provides recommendations for establishing a credible national cyber capability infrastructure.

In the eleventh article 'Helicopter Operations in Tactical Battle Area', Group Captain Bibhudutta SK Jenamani, VM, examines the role of helicopters in modern warfare, particularly in mountainous regions. He addresses challenges like altitude, terrain, and weather, and discusses the importance of doctrinal clarity, resource availability, integrated operations, and advanced technologies. The article concludes with recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of helicopter operations in future conflicts. In the penultimate article of this edition, titled 'Offensive Application of Airpower', Group Captain Nitin Nayal, VM, explores the integration of emerging airpower technologies and the coordination between different methods of force projection.

The final article, the winning entry of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2023 by Commandant (JG) Gaurav Sharma (Coast Guard), is titled 'Ukraine War: Military Lessons for India'. It critically examines the military aspects of the Ukraine conflict, discusses its background and geopolitical causes, analyses military strategies, and offers recommendations for the Indian Armed Forces.

The Journal also includes reviews of several select publications:

- ‘Bridging Borders: India-Nepal Relations in a Changing Geopolitical Landscape’ by Lieutenant General Shokin Chauhan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, PhD; Reviewed by Colonel RC Patial, SM, FRGS, PhD.
- ‘Grey Zone Warfare: Way Ahead for India’ by Lieutenant General Dushyant Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd); Reviewed by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd).
- ‘War Transformed: The Future of Twenty-First-Century Great Power Competition and Conflict’ by Major General Mick Ryan (Australian Army); Reviewed by Colonel R Abhilash.
- ‘India’s Historic Battles: Imphal-Kohima, 1944’ by Hemant Singh Katoch; Reviewed by Colonel RK Sharma (Retd).
- ‘Geopolitical Shifts and Opportunities: New Horizons in India and Southeast Asia Relations, edited by Prabir De and Temjenmeren Ao; Reviewed by Ms Surbhi Chakraborty.

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions. The USI acknowledges the financial assistance received from the Indian Council of Social Science Research for the publication of this Journal.

Happy Reading!

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Director Editorial