

**Dear Members,**

Every end of the year is a time of serious introspection, reflection and contemplation for me. At the beginning of another New Year, I have great satisfaction in assuring you that the USI continues to embody forward thinking, free discussion, in-depth research, and, has increased its footprints both within the Country and abroad. The Institution derives its strength primarily from two sources. First and foremost is the galaxy of committed members who unhesitatingly come forward to support the Institution in its multi-faceted activities. Their continued support and trust is best exemplified by the fact that 688 new Life Members enrolled this year. The second pillar of our strength is the autonomous character of our Institution which we have zealously guarded for 145 years. Any encroachment on this will compromise the basic ethos of our Institution.

The USI has the unique privilege of being one of the oldest think tanks in the world and for almost a century it was the only think tank in this part of the world. However, today the world of think tanks has grown extremely complex and competitive with networking, patronage and financial support affecting not only the contours of the playing field but even the rules of the game. As you are aware, we get no financial grants from the Government or the Services, and, in spite of our limited resources in manpower and finances, we have been able to keep pace with the developments taking place nationally and internationally. The main activities and achievements of the USI have been covered in the Annual Report of the President of the Council for 2015, which is enclosed with this Issue of the Journal and will also be available on our website for your perusal, reflection and critical appraisal.

Although we have published over 80 books and monographs since 2008, the Journal, which has had an uninterrupted publication since 1871, remains our flagship publication. Our effort has always been to carry articles with a strategic flavour, especially relevant to national security. To the Library, which is virtually a storehouse of knowledge, we added 776 books during the year. We have also scanned nearly 700,000 pages of rare books and USI Journals since 1871 and made these available on the internet for use by scholars and researchers the world over. We continue to lay a lot of emphasis on our annual events, i.e. the Memorial Lectures, National Security Lecture and Seminar, essay competitions, as also the periodical USI events which are well attended by our members. The credit for this rests solely with Maj Gen PJS Sandhu, the Deputy Director and Editor.

Our Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation under Maj Gen BK Sharma, AVSM, SM and Bar has broken new ground in the field of Net Assessment and Strategic Gaming. We now regularly conduct Strategic Gaming Exercises at our National Defence College, Service War Colleges and the Foreign Service Institute. The Centre also conducted training programmes at the National Defence College, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and the Jindal Global University, Sonapat. The USI was invited to participate in 19 international conferences / seminars. The Centre signed Memorandum of Understanding with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Sweden and the Sichuan University, Chengdu, China.

As you would be aware, our Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research under Sqn Ldr Rana TS Chhina has been involved in a four year USI-MEA Project to commemorate the Centenary of the Great War 1914-18. Apart from all the activities planned and undertaken, including an international conference organised jointly with the Shiv Nadar University, I would like to make a special mention about the publications brought out by the Centre and the activities carried out nationally and internationally. The Centre conducted the "Lt Gen SL Menezes Essay Competition" for the first time in 2015. From the next year, this competition will be open to all across the globe and it will be the first time that we will conduct an international essay competition. The details are being worked out and will be communicated to all in due course.

Our Course Section under the new Chief Instructor, Maj Gen SB Asthana, SM, VSM has not only continued the legacy established over long years of its programmes but has excelled the same in many respects. This year we had 1534 officers participating in our correspondence courses and 252 attending the DSSC contact programme. The results achieved by those who took our DSSC (Army) Correspondence Course were outstanding wherein they secured 309 vacancies out of the total of 356 vacancies available. The Chief Instructor and faculty deserve to be complimented for their dedication in guiding the professional growth of our young officers.

The Institution nurtured the Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) ever since it was established on our premises in the year 2000 as a joint venture between the MEA, Army Headquarters and the USI. It is not well known that we had vacated a part of our premises to accommodate the CUNPK. It moved out in August 2014 after a fire incident in its premises. In mid-2015 the Army Headquarters informed us that it had decided to de-link the CUNPK from the USI. This notwithstanding, we continued our peacekeeping and peace-building activities, the details of which are included in the President's Report. I would like to highlight that the USI alongwith institutions from eight other countries; Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Norway, Russia, South Africa and Turkey, have formed a network called the "Peace Capacities Network" and will bring out a book on "Rising Powers and Peace Operations". The Institution is also partnering institutes from the USA, South Africa, Turkey, Indonesia and Norway in a joint project looking at the role of "Rising Powers in Peace-building". The USI carried out field studies in Afghanistan with the team members visiting Kabul, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif for this project.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the silent work done by our Administrative Branch. Their quiet, selfless dedication under the new Deputy Director Administration, Maj Gen PK Goswami, VSM needs to be recognised and commended.

The year saw two of our stalwarts leaving us after long years of dedicated, selfless service to the Institution. Col VK Singh, VSM had joined the Institution as DS (Coord) in the Course Section in 1991 and took over as Deputy Director Administration in 1995 and, finally hung his spurs on 31 Aug 2015. Brig MS Chowdhury, VSM joined as the Chief Instructor on 11 Sep 2000. He tirelessly guided the professional growth of thousands of our young officers. He left us on 16 Mar 2015. The seamless and smooth transition in both the Administrative Branch and the Course Section speaks

volumes of their organisational abilities and dedication to the Institution. On behalf of all members of the Institution I wish Brig MS Chowdhury and Col VK Singh and their families good health, happiness and success in the years ahead.

Finally, I would request you to take time off from your busy schedule to go through the President's Report. We would welcome your valuable views, suggestions and comments to improve the functioning of our Institution. The points may please be communicated to me or to the Deputy Director and Editor by e-mail or post at your earliest convenience. With utmost humility, I request each one of you to continue to come forth for the growth of the USI through your active participation in all our activities. We look forward to meeting and interacting with you whenever you come to the USI.

On behalf of all of us serving on the USI staff, I wish you all a

“VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR”

With best wishes,

Lieutenant General PK Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Retd),  
Director USI