

DIRECTOR'S PAGE

As I assume stewardship of the United Service Institution of India, I am deeply conscious of the responsibilities I am undertaking, particularly in context of the Institution's history, and record of dedicated performance. My immediate predecessor, Major General S C Sinha, and his predecessor, the late Colonel Pyara Lal, had devoted their lives, more or less, to the Institution. They have steered it through difficult times, and set it on course to becoming an institution the Armed Forces and its members can be proud of. Colonel Pyara Lal's unmatched contribution will be commemorated by naming the new library after him, and by an annual memorial lecture that the Council has approved, funding for which has been contributed to, by his brother, Shri S L Agarwal. In so far as Major General Sinha is concerned, the new building that will house the Institution and all its facilities, is in itself a tribute to his untiring and dedicated efforts; all of us should be indebted to him for what he has managed to achieve, against some fairly heavy odds. We therefore say thank you very much, and farewell with a heavy heart, but secure in the knowledge that, his advice and services will always be available to us.

With the move of the Institution to the new premises from the rather restricted environs of Kashmir House, the fact that the new premises are indeed generous in terms of space for the reading room and library, and have some very fine facilities in the form of a well-equipped auditorium and two seminar rooms, rooms for research workers, and hostel accommodation on site, among other things, there is very naturally a perception that the United Service Institution of India must play a more dynamic role in allowing its members and others connected with it, to articulate views and ideas on matters of national security, defence strategy and international relations, among other subjects; all this without losing the perspective that is enshrined in its Charter - that of providing an appropriate forum for serving and retired officers of the Indian Armed Forces and civil services to sustain, improve upon and further kindle, interest and knowledge in the art, science and literature of national security in general, and the Armed Forces in particular. In this eminently laudable and vital task, the addition of the Research Centre will, no doubt, play a significant role.

When I was requested at the meeting of the Council on February 29, 1996, to take over the stewardship of the Institution from Major General Sinha, I accepted in all humility, fully aware that running it in the new environs, in context of the enhanced expectations, and with having to try and match the standards set by my illustrious predecessors, would be a daunting task indeed. Secure in the knowledge that I shall have the support, advice and guidance of not only the Council members, but of all other members, as also of the

dedicated staff of the Institution, I wish to assure each one of you through the medium of this page, that I shall spare no efforts to ensure that the United Service Institution of India takes its rightful place among the leading think-tanks on national security and defence strategy, by providing the forum, facilities and research material, to all its members and well-wishers within the Armed Forces and outside.

In conclusion, allow me to quote what the Institution's founder, Maj General Sir Charles MacGregor, had stated in a memorandum apparently circulated to all members and dated May 8, 1878, "I submit that nothing will be done that will stand, unless this principle is recognised, that everyone, secretary, Council, corresponding members and ordinary members, must take an active personal and continuous interest in the success of the Institution"; what he then said is still valid, and I hope to draw strength and support on the basis of that principle.

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Director