

## **From The Director's Desk**

**Dear Members,**

As the year 2022 draws to a close, let me wish the USI fraternity and their families a very happy and prosperous 2023.

At a juncture when a buoyant India is well on its transition from a balancing power to a leading power, unprecedented geopolitical developments are unravelling at a fast pace in our strategic neighbourhood and beyond. The three strategic shocks viz., corona pandemic, Talibanisation of Afghanistan and Ukraine crisis have impacted globalization and world order with far-reaching ramifications for India. The ensuing strategic environment is characterised by VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Ambiguity and Complexity). There is a new great game manifest in Eurasia and Indo Pacific and it is expanding to other strategic frontiers such as technology, trade, cyber space, outer space and cognitive space. What we are witnessing is the growing trend of multi-domain warfare that combines politics, economy, diplomacy, military, technology and other dimensions of national power and seeks employment of multitude of means; state players, non- state actors, military and non- military, linear and non- linear, applied seamlessly across the spectrum of conflict and up the escalation ladder. The lines between classic state to state wars and peace are blurred by grey zone conflicts. India's perspective and threat perception on collusive hybrid threats that inextricably link internal security challenges with external security threats, need to be re-examined in the context of this New Generation Warfare that our adversaries are becoming apt at. In the spiralling contestation, we see revamping of US led Euro-Atlantic alliance, NATO, East Asian security alliance, QUAD and AUKUS on one hand and China and Russia strategic embrace on the other. It has put middle level and small powers on the horns of dilemma causing them to hedge, align and rebalance their strategic interest vis a vis contending behemoths. Ironically, international institutions, particularly UNSC have become virtually dysfunctional in conflict prevention and management. Historical animosities, conflicting core interests, presence of volatile flash points, dangerous military posturing amid deepening strategic mistrust and lack of conflict prevention

mechanisms collectively heighten the chances of use of force at the peril of global security.

India's strategic security environment too is in ferment. It continues to face collusive hybrid threats from Pak- China nexus. Instability in South Asia has further complicated India's strategic environment. Creditably, India has well- managed its security challenges in Kashmir and Northeast India, deterred aggression at the LAC and LoC, preserved its strategic autonomy in the current crises and become a force of stability in South Asia by reaching out to its neighbours. However, the evolving strategic scenario demands that India should critically examine vital strategic issues with a view to identify challenges and opportunities and clearly map asymmetries and competitive edges vis a vis its adversaries and competitors. A more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of endogenic and exogenic strategic environment is mandatory to identify the strategic capacity gaps and consequently articulate a roadmap for the transformation of our country, empowering it to emerge as a pre-eminent power in its extended neighbourhood, a major power in the Indo-Pacific and an important stakeholder in the new world order. This transformation process ought to be not only 'All of Government Approach' but 'Whole of Nation Approach'. In this endeavour, integration and synergy of multi- domains and instruments of national power is an abiding strategic imperative. India's Presidency of G-20 and SCO in 2023 provides us a great opportunity to shape the strategic environment in a manner that positions New Delhi to plan a major role in re-shaping the global order.

During the year 2022, the USI bounced back after three seasons of Covid pandemic. I am grateful to the outgoing USI Council for their guidance and unstinted support to help the USI navigate through the difficult period of Covid pandemic. The USI, in keeping with its rich traditions, has consistently maintained an upward trajectory of performance, despite financial constraints. The management deserves compliments for the renewal of Land Lease and registration of USI under Section 80G and under Section 12A in the current financial year. The elections for the new Council have been successfully held. New clusters and benchmarks have been setup to enhance the image of the Institution, the Indian

Armed Forces and the Nation as a whole. USI has signed a number of MoUs with national and international institutions and introduced new Chairs of Excellence (CoE) and Memorial Lectures.

The Centre for Military History and Conflict Studies (CMHCS) has created a new Military History website, written a book for the Indian Army, and made good progress on Army Digital Archive project. It is playing a stellar role to showcase India's military heritage as part of our soft power diplomacy. New initiatives such as holding international military festival are being pursued vigorously. Strategic Track 1.5 Dialogues have been initiated with our foreign collaborators.

The Centre for Strategic Studies and Simulation (CS3) continued with its niche in strategic Net Assessment studies, strategic gaming, and development of Strategic Gaming Model for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Conduct of National Level Wargames and International Multi-lateral Table Top exercise for the representatives of the Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies (MLEAs) of the littoral states to the Bay of Bengal has enhanced international visibility of the Institution.

Recognising the domain expertise and the contribution of the Course Section (CS), IA (ARTRAC) designated CS as a node of excellence for the conduct of 'online phase' of command Pre-Staff Course for three subjects, besides writing precis for promotion and competitive examination.

Consequent to Centre for UN Peacekeeping (CUNPK) becoming a full-fledged unit of the Indian Army, the USI is now focusing on the operational, strategic and policy issues related to UNPK. This year the USI, in collaboration with global partners, conducted Challenges Annual Forum 2022 on the theme, 'Future of UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO)'. The event report will provide a valuable input for the Secretary General's UNPK Summit 2023.

USI-ANBI (*Atamnirbhar Bharat* Initiative) has provided a platform to build synergy between users, designers, developers, and manufacturers with decision makers and, perhaps, even financiers through collaboration in the field of disruptive and niche

technologies and having MoUs for synergising the efforts of defence security, strategic affairs, and issues in cyber domain.

The USI conducted a number of signature events during the year which included seminars, panel discussions, memorial lectures, special lecture series by the Service Chiefs, new Chairs of Excellence, MacGregor Medal award ceremony, conduct of Strategic Games, Strategic Net Assessment studies, DRDO project, and skill development programmes. The events such as conduct of national level Strategic Gaming Exercise, International Peacekeeping Seminar, and International Table Top Exercise have enhanced the installing global footprints.

The USI library with a collection of over 69,764 books, some dating back to 16th and 17th centuries, is a storehouse of knowledge and archival material. During the year, a total of 346 books have been added to the library. The library has Army Lists since the days of the Presidency Armies, dating back to 1793 (Bombay Army List), which are sought after by many, to locate service details of their ancestors. As part of the Information Service for its members, the library is putting out a digital compilation of educative articles from around the world which have come online in the previous fortnight under the name 'Fortnightly First'. The 'Fortnightly First' contains 15 researched articles selected after a scan of national and international think tanks. Articles are then made available on the USI website under Library drop down menu.

The Institution began with a membership of 215 members and it increased to 3500 when USI moved to the present premises in 1996. Today, we have 13575 members. The drive to grant Civilian Special Membership to deserving cases has yielded good results. With concerted efforts to update the addresses and contact details of members, inter alia through interaction with the AG's Branch and Veteran Directorates of Army, Navy and Air Force, membership details of 797 members were updated in the process.

The USI has increased its footprints in the digital domain and expanded its presence through several new social media platforms which include LinkedIn, Instagram, and Telegram in addition to

Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. During the year we have witnessed uptick in our digital presence. As a part of digital transformation and to improve the outreach and visibility of the organisation, the initiative is in process to create a new website of USI, making it more user and mobile friendly. In due course, we will streamline our system to enable us to get digital photographs of the individuals and their signatures through the portal for issue of membership card without asking for the physical visit of the individual to the USI premises. Gateways for payments are also in the process, for online acceptance of various type of payments

USI has been facing huge financial constraints since 2011 due to lack of grant / aid from the Services or MoD. The financial health of the Institution further aggravated since 2020 due to abysmally low bank rate of interest and loss of income from traditional sources due to Corona pandemic. In the meanwhile, inescapable expenditure had to be made for bare minimum repairs of old infrastructure and up-gradation of audio-visual facilities in the seminar rooms. The USI management resorted to extreme austerity measures during 2021-22. The financial status of the USI will remain critical unless there is major infusion of funds / grants from the Services / MoD. In the meanwhile, efforts to raise funds through collaborations and corporate entities have been intensified.

As I conclude the 'Director's page' for 2022, I would like to acknowledge the excellent services provided by the Residency Resorts to the members of the USI and visitors. I commend the staff of Residency Resorts for their efficiency and politeness and efforts made to ensure a neat, clean and friendly lodging at this oasis of calm in a bustling part of Delhi. The utilisation of the Residency — by the Institute of Military Law which had shifted to Delhi Cantt from Kamptee in Jan 2021 — for accommodating JAG Branch officers undergoing courses is testimony to the standards of the Residency.

I thank the esteemed members of the USI, who have actively participated in various activities organised by this prestigious Institution in the year 2022. It gives us great pleasure and satisfaction when we have good participation — especially from

the serving community — at events organised by us. I urge all members to periodically spread a word around about the activities undertaken by us and encourage others to also attend. May I request our esteem members to subscribe to our following social media:

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/USlofIndia>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/United-Service-Institution-of-India-106336161119653/>

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@unitedserviceinstitutionof5147>

**LinkedIn:** <https://in.linkedin.com/company/united-service-institution-of-india>

Also encourage others to take USI membership.

With best wishes,

Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM & Bar (Retd)  
Director