

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

Greetings for the New Year!

As we step into a new year, it is an opportune moment to reflect on global peace and security, particularly the role of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs) in an increasingly complex world. The past decades have witnessed traditional peacekeeping models being tested against asymmetric threats, fragile political landscapes, and rising geopolitical competition. As the United Nations (UN) adapts, member states must also recalibrate their contributions, strategies, and engagements.

India, as one of the largest Troop-Contributing Countries (TCCs), has remained an indispensable pillar of UN peacekeeping. With a legacy of deploying over 2,75,000 personnel across missions, India has played a pivotal role in fostering stability in some of the world's most volatile regions. However, the operational, political, and ethical challenges facing peacekeeping today require fresh perspectives and innovative solutions.

Thus, this edition of the United Service Institution (USI) Journal delves into critical dimensions of UN peacekeeping, India's role, and the broader strategic imperatives shaping future deployments. The contributors explore multifaceted issues, ranging from anthropology's impact on mission effectiveness to China's growing influence, from corruption risks within peacekeeping structures to gender inclusivity and reforms.

This special edition of the USI Journal is divided into three sections, each focusing on a key aspect of UN peacekeeping. The sections are titled: UN Peace Operations and Challenges: An Indian Perspective, Multilateralism and UN Peace Operations, and Lessons from Field Missions.

The first section, titled 'UN Peace Operations and Challenges: An Indian Perspective', contains six articles that focus on India's contribution to UN peacekeeping efforts, the challenges encountered, and the lessons to be drawn from past experiences.

The lead article of this section is authored by Major General PK Goswami, VSM (Retd). Titled 'India and United Nations Peacekeeping: The Philosophy, Impact and Way Forward', it highlights India's significant contributions to UN peacekeeping and underscores Bharat's steadfast commitment to multilateralism and dialogue as essential to achieving shared global objectives. The following article, by Major General Alok Deb, SM, VSM (Retd), titled 'The Evolving Character of Conflict: Implications for United Nations' examines the evolving nature of conflict and its implications for UN peacekeeping in an era shaped by rapid technological advancement and shifting geopolitical dynamics. It calls for a re-evaluation of UN peacekeeping doctrines, mandates, and capabilities to meet contemporary challenges effectively.

The third article titled 'Women Peacekeepers in United Nations Peace Operations: Critical to Mitigate Gender-Based Violence in a Mission Area' features the thoughts of Colonel (Dr) KK Sharma (Retd), who asserts that despite the various successes of UN peacekeeping, the world continues to witness a rise in conflicts, many of which are marked by gender-based violence, often targeting women and children. In such contexts, both the UN and its member states increasingly recognise the vital role that women peacekeepers play. The article highlights how women contribute unique perspectives and skills that enhance the effectiveness and credibility of peacekeeping missions. In his article titled 'Protection of Civilians in Conflict Environments: Challenges and Recommendations', Lieutenant General Mohan Subramanian, PVSM, AVSM, SM, VSM, argues that while the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping is frequently questioned, it remains the most viable option available to the international community. Drawing from his experience as the Force Commander of the UN Mission in South Sudan, he analyses the challenges in implementing the Protection of Civilians mandate. He points out that 'Over-ambitious' promises, combined with limited funding and a lack of genuine commitment from host nations, often hinder mission success. These issues, he contends, must be addressed to restore and reinforce global confidence in UN peacekeeping.

Major General (Dr) AK Bardalai, VSM (Retd), in his article titled 'Impact of Anthropology on the Effectiveness of United Nations Peacekeeping', underscores that the multinational composition of peacekeeping missions brings together personnel with diverse training standards, operational ethos, cultural backgrounds, and national traditions. He argues that these anthropological factors significantly influence the performance of peace operations. Rather than being a hindrance, he contends that the varied perspectives peacekeepers bring from across the globe can, if harnessed effectively, enhance the overall success of peacekeeping missions. The sixth and final article of the first section, titled 'India's Perspectives on United Nations Summit of the Future' by Brigadier V Vidyashankar, offers an in-depth analysis of India's position on 10 of the 56 action points outlined in the UN Summit of the Future. Through a critical evaluation of India's engagement with the UN, its policy priorities, and its evolving global role, the article explores key areas of alignment and divergence between India's interests and the summit's objectives, providing insight into India's vision for the future of multilateral cooperation.

The second section of this edition of the USI Journal is titled 'Multilateralism and UN Peace Operations'. This section delves into the evolving dynamics of multilateralism in the context of UN peacekeeping, examining how collective decision-making, international partnerships, and institutional reforms shape the effectiveness and legitimacy of peace operations.

The lead article in this section, titled 'Preserving United Nations Peacekeeping for a Multilateral World' by Colonel (Dr) Ali Ahmed (Retd), argues that UN peacekeeping is currently under strain due to increasing polarisation in international affairs. He contends that for peacekeeping to remain relevant and effective in a shifting global order, emerging powers—referred to as aspirant pole countries—must individually and collectively assume greater responsibility in supporting and sustaining peace operations. In the following article, titled 'A Few Implications of United Nations Peacekeeping Reforms on the United Nations Police', Dr Ai Kihara-Hunt examines recent developments such as the Pact for the Future and the Independent Study on the Future of UN Peacekeeping: New Models and Related Capabilities. She explores

the implications of these reform initiatives for the UN Police (UNPOL) component and highlights the critical role of member states in reshaping peace operations. Dr Kihara-Hunt argues that personnel selection must be based on skill and merit, and that the training, deployment models, and operational posture of UNPOL should be adapted to the specific needs and context of each mission.

The third article in this section, authored by Parth Bhatt and Aislinn, is titled 'The Pact of the Future and its Implications for Peacekeeping'. It acknowledges that while UNPKOs have historically served as a vital tool for maintaining international security, they are increasingly challenged by the rapidly evolving nature of contemporary conflicts. Drawing from the Pact for the Future, the authors explore how UNPKOs can be reformed and strengthened to effectively address the complex and multidimensional conflicts of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the subsequent article, 'Corruption and United Nations Peacekeeping', Dr Parineet Kaur and Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) examine instances of corruption within UN peace operations. They have referred to findings from the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, which, during its inquiry into the causes of the country's 1990s civil war, identified endemic greed, corruption, and nepotism as key factors that eroded national dignity and plunged much of the population into poverty. The article concludes with a set of lessons learned and offers actionable recommendations to enhance integrity and accountability in future peacekeeping efforts.

The final article of this section, authored by Colonel (Dr) DCS Mayal (Retd), titled 'China's Strategic Manoeuvring in United Nations Peacekeeping Dynamics', examines the advancement of China's strategic calculus through the UN peacekeeping framework. As a major financial contributor and one of the largest TCCs, China utilises its position—particularly its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council with veto power—to expand its soft power and influence the shaping of international norms. The author argues that as global governance structures continue to evolve, China's growing role in UN peacekeeping reflects a broader shift in international power dynamics and strategic alignments.

The third and final section of this Special Edition of the USI Journal is titled 'Lessons from Field Missions'. This section offers grounded insights drawn from the practical experiences of peacekeepers who have served in various UN missions across the globe.

Lydia Walker, in her article titled 'From War to Intervention: The Korean War and the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission', focuses on General KS Thimayya, former Chief of the Indian Army, who led the prisoner exchange and resettlement programme under the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (1953–54) in the aftermath of the Korean War. Contrary to the common portrayal of this mission as a one-off or unique event, Walker argues that the Commission represented a new form of international intervention—one where the objective was not territorial conquest but managing conflict through negotiated settlements and humanitarian mechanisms. The Korean War and its tenuous truce thus exemplified a shift in how international peace efforts were conceived and implemented. The second article in this section, authored by Major General (Dr) Pawan Anand, AVSM (Retd), is titled 'Impact of Technology on Conflicts'. He contends that emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing—along with the military adaptation of commercial technologies, have fundamentally transformed the nature of warfare. These advances have given rise to multi-domain conflicts that blur the lines between military and civilian spheres, leading to a persistent state of contestation. The article stresses that UN peacekeeping missions must urgently acknowledge and adapt to these evolving dynamics if they are to remain effective and relevant in future conflict environments.

The next article, authored by Dr Alexander Gilder and titled 'Learning from United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's Entanglement in Counterterrorism', examines one of the more contentious aspects of United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's deployment—its direct and indirect involvement in counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel. The article outlines how the mission operated in a complex environment where other actors pursued counterterrorism through offensive military means. Dr Gilder argues

that this entanglement blurred the lines between peacekeeping and counterterrorism, potentially undermining the impartiality and credibility of the mission. He concludes by recommending that future UN peace operations should avoid supporting counterterrorism activities to preserve the core principles of UN peacekeeping. The penultimate article of this edition, authored by Major General AK Dhingra, SM (Retd), is titled 'Assessment of United Nations Mission in Liberia: A Strategy for Successful Peacekeeping'. It focuses on the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), widely regarded as one of the most effective peacekeeping operations undertaken by the UN. The article highlights the mission's strategic collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States, which played a crucial role in fostering regional cooperation, political stability, and post-conflict reconstruction. UNMIL, according to the author, serves as a model for designing future peacekeeping missions with clearly defined objectives, strong regional engagement, and a focus on sustainable peace.

The final article of the Journal is by Ramanshi Dwivedi, titled 'Case Study of United Nations Operations in Congo: Impact on India's Future peacekeeping', wherein, she provides a historical case study of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She further provides the role of the Indian military, its legacy, and the future of such contributions and the evolving role in the coming time.

We look forward to your feedback and suggestions.

Happy Reading!

Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd)  
Director Editorial