

Editorial

I am pleased to present the Jul–Sep 2024 issue of the United Service Institution of India (USI) Journal. For more than 151 years, the USI has provided informed perspectives on national security and geopolitics. This issue brings together 12 articles and two reviews, addressing both contemporary challenges and historical legacies. The opening contributions examine India's evolving military art through Operation Sindoor and the conceptualisation of integrated 'Rudra Brigades,' highlighting shifts in doctrine, jointness, and force restructuring. Broader security concerns are analysed through studies on the politics of terrorism, the implications of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and the weaponisation of social media. Historical perspectives explore cartographic disputes, Rajput warfare, and the military innovations of Benoît de Boigne. Forward-looking discussions assess India–Taiwan relations, the potential of directed energy weapons, and the rise of non-contact and non-kinetic warfare. The issue concludes with an appraisal of the Indian Air Force's transformation towards joint, technology-enabled operations, underscoring India's pursuit of future-ready security.

The lead article, titled '*Application of Operational Art in Operation Sindoor*' by Major General (Dr) SB Asthana, SM, VSM (Retd), analyses India's calibrated and integrated response to the Pakistan-sponsored Pahalgam terror attack of Apr 2025. This is followed by '*Rudra Brigades: India's Leap Towards Agile and Integrated Force Structures*' by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd), which evaluates the army's initiative to raise all-arms integrated formations. The article underscores their potential in enabling rapid, multi-domain operations while cautioning that issues of sanction, logistics, and command clarity must be addressed for success.

The third article, '*Politics of International Terrorism*' by Lieutenant General DV Kalra, PVSM, AVSM (Retd) and Lieutenant General (Dr) SK Gadeock, AVSM (Retd), traces the historical evolution of terrorism, its hybrid manifestations, and future risks such as artificial intelligence-enabled radicalisation and weapons of mass destruction proliferation, while emphasising the urgent need for globally coordinated counterterrorism strategies. The

historical roots and enduring consequences of colonial-era cartographic boundaries in the Indian subcontinent is addressed in the next contribution '*The Lines of Fire: A History of Cartographic Conflict*' by Major General VS Ranade (Retd), which analyses how colonial-era boundary making continues to fuel disputes with Pakistan, China, Nepal, and Myanmar, while advocating for diplomacy and confidence-building measures as pathways to transform these contested lines into instruments of peace.

Geopolitical shifts are explored in the fifth article, '*Quiet Diplomacy and Strategic Interests: India–Taiwan Engagement under Modi 3.0*' by Dr Beena, which examines the delicate balance India maintains between its adherence to the One-China Policy and its quiet but consequential engagement with Taiwan in trade, technology, and strategic domains. In the next submission, '*Lethality at Light Speed: Directed Energy (Laser) Warfare*', Colonel Tirath Singh Rawat (Retd) evaluates the strategic and operational relevance of Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) for India. The article argues that DEWs, when integrated with command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and conventional platforms, could reshape India's layered air defence in the face of drone swarms and hypersonic threats.

In the seventh article, military history finds expression in '*The Rajput Way of War: Lessons from the Battle of Tarain*' by Dr Alok Yadav, which examines the tactical and strategic dimensions of Rajput warfare, drawing lessons of enduring value for contemporary military thought. Complementing this is the study of *Benoît de Boigne from the USI archives*, whose disciplined European-style battalions transformed Maratha military power in the 18th Century India, demonstrating the interplay of personal ambition, innovation, and cross-cultural exchange in shaping Indian military history.

Regional security concerns are addressed in the ninth article '*Evaluation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its Security Implications for India*' by Lieutenant Colonel Pankaj Bisht, Colonel (Dr) Rajan Bakshi, and Dr Reetesh Sah. The article critiques China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as a strategic tool of China-Pakistan convergence, highlights its risks to India's territorial sovereignty, and argues for a counterstrategy to safeguard national

interests. The sociotechnical dimension of contemporary conflict is explored next in *'Weaponising Influence: Navigating the Impact of Social Media on Indian Armed Forces'* by Colonel Satish Kumar Sinha, which assesses the psychological, operational, and organisational risks of social media exposure while recommending institutional safeguards and proactive narrative dominance.

Expanding on the evolving character of warfare, *'Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare in the Indian Context: Concepts and Pathways'*, the runner-up entry of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition by Colonel Vikram Tiwari, highlights the growing importance of cyber, information, space, and psychological domains, urging integration of these tools into India's strategic architecture. Finally, the essay *'Transformation of the Indian Air Force for Future-Ready Joint Operations'*, which won first place in the USI–Chief of Air Staff Essay Competition, highlights Squadron Leader Naveen Rana's assessment of the Air Force's ongoing reforms. He underscores the efforts to deepen integration with the Army and Navy, accelerate the adoption of next-generation technologies, and develop joint capabilities across the air, land, sea, space, and cyber domains — positioning India for success in a rapidly evolving security landscape.

The final section of the Journal includes the following Review Articles:

- Review of the book, *General's Jottings* by Lieutenant General KJ Singh, PVSM, AVSM** (Retd), by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd). The review compiles sharp analyses on India's security challenges, including China, Pakistan, insurgencies, and defence reforms. Clear and insightful, it offers pragmatic strategies and is a valuable resource for students and practitioners of national security.
- A review of the book, *Honours and Awards of the Indian Armed Forces* by Dr Amlesh Kumar Mishra, by Dr Navaneeth Krishnan S traces India's military decorations from premodern times to the present, examining their symbolism, institutional framework, and cultural significance. It highlights both individual valour and state recognition, making it an authoritative reference and a tribute to service.

This issue underscores the breadth and depth of contemporary and historical security discourse, highlighting the interconnections between strategy, technology, and military tradition. Collectively, the contributions reaffirm the need for holistic, multi-domain approaches that integrate historical insight, strategic foresight, and innovation to safeguard India's national security and shape its future trajectory.

We await your feedback and suggestions.

Happy Reading!

Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd)
Director, Centre for Publications