

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

I am delighted to present the United Service Institution of India's (USI) Journal for the second quarter of 2025. Throughout the past 155 years, the USI has consistently been committed to delivering strategic insights on matters crucial to national security and geopolitics.

The Apr to Jun 2025 issue of the USI Journal continues our commitment to providing rigorous analysis, diverse perspectives on matters of national security, defence strategy, and global affairs. This quarter's edition features a carefully curated selection of articles that engage with contemporary challenges as well as enduring themes in strategic thought. The diversity of viewpoints reflects the increasingly complex and interconnected nature of today's security environment.

This edition comprises 12 meticulously researched articles covering a range of topics, from the Russo-Ukrainian War—covering Operation Spider Web and a possible United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping Mission in Ukraine—to the geoeconomics front focusing on the return of Donald Trump to the White House and various trade corridors and the effects geopolitical churn has had on them. Furthermore, there are submissions on non-contact and non-kinetic warfare and Operation Sindoor. Finally, there are write-ups on defence acquisition, the China-United States (US) contestation in Oceania vis-a-vis Papua New Guinea, the use of UN peacekeeping as a tool of Indian diplomacy, provision of care for war-wounded personnel for the betterment of recruitment in the armed forces, a chronicling of the armies that have operated on Indian soil from the Aryan to the Maratha period, and one on the 'Meghna Heli-Bridging Operation'.

The lead article by Major General BK Sharma, AVSM, SM\*\* (Retd) Mr Neelotpal Mishra, is titled '*Geopolitics of Trade Corridors in Eurasia*' focuses on the Middle, the International North-South Transport, the Chennai–Vladivostok Maritime, the India–Middle East–Europe Economic, and the Northern Sea Route corridors. He explains the geopolitical disruptions, sanctions, and strategic

recalibrations and how these corridors mark the emergence of a diversified and inclusive global order. The second write-up by Lieutenant General DP Pandey, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) is titled '*Restraint in Force Application for Strategic Outcomes*'. It explores the concept of strategic restraint in the use of military force, using the case of Operation Sindoor (2025) as a contemporary reference. The author further argues that restraint in military action, though often unpopular with public sentiment and media narratives, can yield significant strategic, political, and diplomatic advantages using past wars India has fought in.

The third article titled '*Trade Policy and National Security: The Geoeconomic Challenge of Trumpism*' by Dr Sanjaya Baru focuses on the historical evolution and contemporary resurgence of protectionist trade policy in the US, particularly under the Trump and Biden administrations. Against this backdrop, it emphasises the imperative for India to strengthen its domestic foundations—economic, industrial, technological, and human capital—to safeguard strategic autonomy. The narrative of 'Rising India', historically driven by gross domestic product growth, now requires a redefinition grounded in manufacturing capacity, defence self-reliance, and global competitiveness. The next write-up by Major General (Dr) AK Bardalai, VSM (Retd) titled '*United Nations Peacekeeping in Ukraine: Is it a Possibility?*' delves into the details of Russia-Ukraine War and how the recent developments suggest that a potential ceasefire may be gaining momentum. If a ceasefire is achieved, establishing a monitoring mechanism will be crucial to ensure its effectiveness. It further explores the possibility of deploying UN peacekeepers to oversee the ceasefire and the structural and operational considerations necessary to support such a mission.

Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd) in his article '*Spider Web: An Attack with Far-Reaching Implications*' details the operational ingenuity, including clandestine transport, remote launches, and use of open-source autopilot frameworks. It underscores broader implications for airspace management, the vulnerability of rear areas, and the necessity of adaptive defence strategies. Furthermore, it draws lessons for India and calls for regulatory oversight of drone manufacturing, enhancement of

counter-drone capabilities, and a whole-of-nation approach to emerging threats. The sixth piece of this journal is submitted by Brigadier (Dr) Biju Jacob, VSM, titled '*Redefining Defence Acquisitions: Transitioning from Traditional Qualitative Requirements to Technology-Based Procurement*'. It argues that the existing General Staff Qualitative Requirement (QR) model negatively impacts agility and innovation, which result in outdated capabilities of the defence forces. It highlights the challenges faced by the QR model and what makes the Technology-Based Procurement model more advantageous. It delineates an implementation framework and outlines a phased approach and essential policy reforms.

The next article by Professor Kiranpreet Kaur Baath titled '*Peacekeeping as Diplomacy: India's Strategic Future in Global Politics*' argues that India's peacekeeping engagements, from UN Operation in the Congo in the 1960s to UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the present day, should be understood not only as operational commitments but as deliberate forms of peace diplomacy. It examines the theories of soft power, strategic narratives, and middle-power diplomacy, from the lens of how India's peacekeeping legacy can be reframed as a strategic asset—supporting its aspirations for global leadership. The eighth submission by Ms Manah Popli titled '*Balancing United States and Chinese Influence in Papua New Guinea: Opportunities for South Pacific Cooperation*' attempts to analyse whether Pacific Island countries are trying to balance between the Chinese and the US interests in the South Pacific region. It attempts to highlight the benefits of the balancing act for the Pacific Island Countries through the lens of Papua New Guinea. Further, it analyses whether the balancing game is sustainable in the long run. It concludes by briefly looking at the opportunities this regional dynamic might present for India.

The ninth article of the Journal is the winner of the USI Gold Medal Essay Competition 2024 titled '*Non-Contact and Non-Kinetic Warfare in the Indian Context: Concepts and Pathways*' and is written by Flight Lieutenant Vatsalya Yadav. It examines the evolution of warfare, focusing on the emergence and implications of non-contact and non-kinetic conflict in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Tracing

the trajectory from classical battlefields to fifth-generation warfare particularly explores the Indian context, detailing how hybrid threats—from cyber-attacks to disinformation campaigns—challenge national security. It ends with providing recommendations for improving the national defence apparatus. The tenth feature is the winner of the USI-War Wounded Foundation 2024 titled '*Caring for the War-Disabled: How Will Their Treatment Impact Future Recruitment*' and is authored by Squadron Leader Aryan Raj Chowdhary. It explores the critical link between the care of war-disabled soldiers and the long-term sustainability of the Indian Armed Forces.

The penultimate submission titled '*Leap Across the Meghna River: A Tactical Manoeuvre Leading to Strategic Victory in Indo-Pak War 1971*', written by Colonel Vikas Yadav, is the winner of the Lieutenant General SL Menezes Memorial Essay Competition 2024 and critically analyses the famed '*Meghna Heli-Bridging Operation*', which proved to be a significant tactical airlift manoeuvre that played a vital role in destabilising the enemy's Centre of Gravity and eventually defeat of Pakistan in the Eastern Sector. The final article of this edition of the Journal is the from the USI archives. A noteworthy addition from this issue onwards is the inclusion of a selected article from the USI Journal archives. This initiative is intended to highlight the enduring value of past scholarship and to demonstrate how historical reflections continue to enrich current debates and understanding. The article '*Armies of India from the Aryans to the Marathas*' by Jeffrey Greenhut highlights how India's geography, particularly the exposed northern plains, shaped its military history through repeated invasions. Each invading force brought distinct military systems, leaving a lasting impact. The piece traces this cycle of conquest and adaptation from the Aryans to the Marathas, illustrating the evolving nature of warfare in the subcontinent.

The last part of the journal contains three book review articles and the same number of short book reviews, which are as follows:

- *Who Dares Wins* by Lieutenant General YK Joshi, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VrC, SM (Retd); Reviewed by Major General Jagatbir Singh, VSM (Retd)

- *No Mission Impossible—Memoirs of a General in War and Insurgency* by Lieutenant General JBS Yadava, PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM (Retd); Reviewed by Colonel (Dr) RC Patial, SM, FRGS (Retd)
- *Spies Among the Sands: Assessing Seven Decades of Mossad and Israeli National Security* by Prem Mahadevan; Reviewed by Mr Vinayak Sharma
- *Ancient Strategies: Lessons for the Modern Leader* by Nick Sawyer; Reviewed by Colonel Harjeet Singh (Retd)
- *Requiem for a Soldier* by Abhishek Amal Sanyal; Reviewed by Colonel Ravinder Kumar (Retd)
- *Heritage Under Siege: Protection of Cultural Property in War* by Wing Commander (Dr) UC Jha (Retd) and Group Captain Kishore Kumar Khera, VM (Retd); Reviewed by Ms Komal Chaudhary

We hope that the articles presented here stimulate meaningful reflection, critical engagement, and informed dialogue among our readers across the military, academic, and policymaking communities.

In conclusion, the USI Journal remains steadfast in its mission to provide a platform for informed discourse and strategic analysis. As we eagerly await your feedback and suggestions, we express our sincere gratitude for your continued support. A special acknowledgement is extended to all the authors whose efforts have brought this journal to fruition.

Happy Reading!

Major General Sanjeev Chowdhry (Retd)  
Director Editorial