

Editorial

It is with great pleasure that I present to you this special issue titled ‘United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Lessons, Trends and Future Prospects’. We recall India’s involvement with the United Nations Peacekeeping right from the first mission in Korea, 1951. Since then, India continues to play an important role not only as a major contributor of troops but also as a leader of such missions and as a participant in conceptualising and supervising humanitarian relief operations.

In August 2021, when India held the presidency of the United Nations Security Council, it highlighted three key areas of focus—maritime security; technology and peacekeeping; and counter-terrorism. This led to several discussions and exchange of views on the challenges and opportunities arising in peacekeeping. In keeping with this thrust, MP-IDSA conducted a seminar titled ‘India and UN Peacekeeping: An Appraisal’ on 1 October 2021, in hybrid format, which saw participation of several eminent panelists who provided invaluable perspectives on various facets of UN Peacekeeping. It was during the compilation of the articles submitted by our panelists that the idea of having a special issue of the *Journal of Defence Studies* on UN Peacekeeping Operations was conceptualised.

We received an excellent response to the ‘Call for Papers’ outreach, and after a thorough process, we have managed to finalise 12 articles, six commentaries, one perspective piece and one book review for the special issue, besides the 10 articles being carried in the special section on our seminar.

The first article is by Col Kulwant Kumar Sharma and is titled ‘Multidimensional Peacekeeping: Protection Mandate and Recalibration of the UN Military Peacekeepers’. The article looks at the complexities of multi-dimensional peacekeeping operations, the Protection of Civilians, 2019 policy, and emphasises the need for new structuring and training of the UN military presence in the mission areas. The second article titled ‘UN Peacekeeping and Ambiguity in Normative UN Norms’ is by

Maj Gen A.K. Bardalai, in which he discusses the ambiguity in the norms of principles of UN peacekeeping, by drawing examples from a historical perspective and illustrations from a few past and contemporary peace operations, and how it impacts the performance of UN peace operations. Highlighting the importance of contemporary technologies, the next article titled 'Contemporary Technology in Peacekeeping Operations', by Wg Cdr Swaim Prakash Singh, also offers possible solutions that can be used on a larger scale by UN security forces in various missions for maintaining peace, situational awareness with rapid decision-making and conflict resolution.

The fourth article by Air Vice Marshal Rajesh Isser, titled 'UN Peacekeeping in Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2003–2010: An Operational Perspective for Air Power Employment', attempts to draw important lessons of air power employment in UN Peacekeeping, based on the unique Indian experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This article was previously published in the April–June 2021 issue of the *Journal of Defence Studies*, and is being reprinted in this special issue. It is followed by an article on 'UN Peacekeeping Operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Lessons Learnt and the Future of UN Peacekeeping', written by Lt Gen Chander Prakash. The article highlights how peacekeeping has evolved over the years to meet the challenges encountered. The next article titled 'Four decades of UNIFIL: Mandates, Contributions and Challenges', by Dr Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, makes an assessment of the contribution of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) towards maintaining peace and stability in the area, and the contribution of Indian troops towards the peace-building efforts.

The seventh article is on 'India–US Peacekeeping Cooperation', in which Dr Saroj Bishoyi has analysed and examined the evolving India–US peacekeeping cooperation, various challenges that they face in further enhancing bilateral cooperation, and prospects for future cooperation.

The next article 'Conduct and Discipline in United Nations Peace Operations and India's Perspective', by Col V. Vidyashankar, attempts to understand the salience of conduct and discipline in UN peace operations, Indian Army's approach to the same while deploying troops in various missions and the important lessons that can be carried forward in the future. Dr Anand Kumar, in his article titled 'Bangladeshi Women in UN Peacekeeping: A Case Study', talks about the participation of women in the UN peacekeeping operations and how

this proved useful in implementing the ever-growing mandate of the UN operations.

In the tenth article titled 'Nation-building: A Case for Armed Forces in Post-conflict Peacebuilding', Col Amitabh Hoskote has put forth the argument that the armed forces' involvement in international peacekeeping for over 70 years has garnered a huge bank of institutional knowledge on post-conflict transitions, which should be utilised for nation-building. He has emphasised on an enhanced role for the armed forces in post-intervention and fragile transition governance operations.

It is followed by an article titled 'Uniformed Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations: An Assessment of India's Contribution', in which Prof. Yeshe Choedon delves into India's contribution of uniformed women peacekeepers, with suitable examples from various UN peacekeeping missions. The last article titled 'Peacekeeping Operations by United Nations in Partnership with a Sub-regional Organisation: Experiment in Liberia 1993–98', by Brig Mandeep Singh, discusses how the Liberian experiment has brought forth useful lessons and experience both for the UN and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and would aid pragmatic planning and analysis for deployment in future peacekeeping operations.

Some more interesting topics have been covered in the six commentaries featuring in this issue. Another highlight of the special issue is a perspective piece titled 'Peacekeeping in Lebanon: Reminiscences of the First Indian Battalion Group Commander', written by Col Guru Saday Batabyal, who was the first commanding officer of the India's peacekeeping contingent in UNIFIL (1998–99). A book review of Charuka Ekanayake's book *Regulating the Use of Force by United Nations Peace Support Operations: Balancing Promises and Outcomes*, by Dr R. Vignesh, is also published in this issue.

We hope that you will enjoy reading the special issue. We thank Dr Sanjay Badri-Maharaj, member of the JDS Editorial Committee, for anchoring the special issue. We would also like to thank the authors and the referees who assisted us in the peer review process and would like to hear more from our readers about topics they feel should be addressed by the journal. We hope that along with our growing readership, we would also see more contributions to future issues.

Maj Gen (Dr) Bipin Bakshi, AVSM, VSM, Retd
Managing Editor

