

India–US Peacekeeping Cooperation

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Both India and the United States (US) have a long history of supporting the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UN PKOs). Over the last two decades, the two countries have significantly expanded cooperation in peacekeeping operations to advance the purposes and principles of UN peacekeeping. In this regard, India and US established a Joint Working Group (JWG) on PKOs to deepen cooperation on peacekeeping issues. They have partnered with African countries to build and enhance the capacity of African troops to help them effectively participate in the UN PKOs. They have institutionalised bilateral cooperation through various joint statements and agreements and trained troops through simulation of UN PKOs during joint military exercises. They have also launched triangular development partnerships in Africa and Asia. Importantly, the world is confronting new challenges to international peace and security with ever-increasing geopolitical and geostrategic rivalry between the great powers, especially between the US and China. Squabble between P-5 members have led to indecision on global issues and the decision-making process with regard to peacekeeping mandates have become more challenging today than ever before. Meanwhile, China has scaled up its peacekeeping role by increasing financial and troop contributions to the UN PKOs. The ensuing developments offer new opportunities as well as challenges to India and the US for strengthening and deepening their peacekeeping cooperation. This article analyses and examines the evolving India–US peacekeeping cooperation, various challenges that they face in further enhancing bilateral cooperation, and prospects for future cooperation. It argues that a strong India–US strategic partnership and their increasing cooperation on peacekeeping as well as on a wide range of global issues, including health, food security, climate change,

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emerging technology, and counter-terrorism will not only benefit the people of the two countries, but the world at large.

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations (UN) through its Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) plays a vital role in maintaining international peace and security. Peacekeeping helps countries pass through the most difficult path from conflict to peace. It helps countries guarantee ceasefires, support political processes, protect vulnerable civilians, and help countries achieve long-lasting peace. Over the last 72 years, more than one million men and women from 125 countries have participated in 71 UN peacekeeping operations. Nearly 90,000 peacekeepers are currently participating in 12 peacekeeping operations.¹ Moreover, peacekeeping as a tool for maintaining international peace and security is based on three basic principles: (i) impartiality, (ii) consent of the parties, and (iii) non-use of force or use of force only in self-defence and defence of the mandate by lightly armed peacekeepers, which gives UN peacekeeping legitimacy as well as credibility.²

Both India and the United States have a long history of providing support to the UN PKOs. India, as one of the founding members of the UN, has played a crucial role in assisting the UN in maintaining international peace and security. Its participation in the UN PKOs commenced in 1950 with participation in the operation in the Korean War and so far, it has participated in 49 out of the total 71 peacekeeping missions mandated by the UN Security Council (UNSC). It has contributed over 2.5 lakh troops and its troops have taken part in some of the most difficult operations over the last 71 years. It has contributed peacekeeping forces, military observers, staff officers, contingents, and also civilian police to various UN missions that were deployed to maintain peace in different parts of the world.³ As of 31 March 2022, India was participating in nine UN PKOs and it was the third largest Troop Contributing Country (TCC) with 5,581 personnel deployed in these missions.⁴ See Table 1 for details.

In the history of UN Peacekeeping, India became the first country to contribute a female Formed Police Unit (FPU) for UN mission in Liberia in 2007. This female FPU became an inspiration to the Liberian women.

Table I Indian Personnel Deployed in UN Peacekeeping Missions as on 31 March 2022

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>No of Personnel</i>
1	UNMISS (South Sudan)	2429
2	MONUSCO (Congo)	2040
3	UNIFIL (Lebanon)	895
4	UNDOF (Golan Heights)	200
5	UNISFA (Abeyi)	09
6	MINURSO (Western Sahara)	04
7	UNTSO (Middle East)	02
8	UNFICYP (Cyprus)	01
9	UNSOM (Somalia)	01
	Total	5581

Source: 'Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country, Mission, and Personnel Type', United Nations Peacekeeping, United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO), p. 21, available at https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/03_country_and_mission_48_march_2022.pdf

India also played a leadership role in many UN peacekeeping missions, including in Korea, Sudan and Congo. Indeed, the Indian peacekeepers' professional excellence and performance under the most challenging circumstances has won them universal appreciation. While serving in the UN missions, 175 Indian peacekeepers have sacrificed their lives, which is the highest among the TCCs as of 31 March 2022.⁵ In addition, India has made valuable contributions in terms of training other TCCs in building their capability to better perform in the UN PKOs. In this regard, it established a Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) under the United Service Institution (USI) of India in September 2000 located in Delhi, which has been providing training to commanders, military observers, contingents and staff officers earmarked for PKOs and appointments. Over the years, India has made real, substantial and practical contribution to the UN peacekeeping mission in fulfilling its commitment to the UN Charter and consistently adhered to the core principles of UN Peacekeeping, i.e., impartiality, consent and non-use of force. It also supports the UN Secretary-General's initiative of Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping.⁶ This contribution and commitment to the UN's peacekeeping efforts has been well acknowledged by successive UN Secretaries-General, the Secretariat and the international community.

On the other hand, the US is the largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping with 27.89 per cent in the year 2021 (Table 2). It is also the leading source of technical and material support for UN peacekeeping. The US Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs primarily manages two assistance programmes focussed on building global peacekeeping capacity: (i) the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), and (ii) the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (APRRP).⁷ The GPOI was established in 2005 for Expanding Global Capability for Peace Support Operations (PSOs). With a total funding of nearly US\$ 1.3 billion from Fiscal Years (FY) 2005–20, GPOI intended to enhance global capacity to effectively conduct PSOs by building partner country capabilities. It provides training, equipment, and advisory assistance to help partner countries' development and employment of critical enabling capabilities in medical, engineering, aviation and counter-improvised explosive device capabilities. It also provides mission-specific pre-deployment training, technical assistance, and deployment equipment to enhance partner countries' operational readiness and sustainment capabilities.

Table 2 Top Financial Contributors to UN Peacekeeping Missions for 2020–21, by Assessment Rate

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Per cent</i>	<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
1	United States	27.89	6	France	5.61
2	China	15.21	7	Italy	3.30
3	Japan	8.56	8	Russia	3.04
4	Germany	6.09	9	Canada	2.73
5	UK	5.79	10	South Korea	2.26

Source: 'How we are funded', United Nations Peacekeeping, United Nations Department of Peace Operation (DPO), available at <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/how-we-are-funded>

The APRRP was established in FY 2015 as a targeted initiative to help generate and rapidly deploy peacekeepers from six African partner countries, i.e., Ethiopia, Ghana, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. With a total funding of US\$ 267.5 million from FY 2015–17, APRRP aimed 'to build, strengthen, and institutionalize capabilities to rapidly respond to crises on the African continent'.⁸ In fact, it complements GPOI's broader capacity-building efforts by focussing on developing high demand enabling capabilities such as engineering, logistics, medical and airlift. Both GPOI and APRRP programmes are implemented in close cooperation with the US Department of Defence.

Bilaterally, India and the US have significantly expanded their cooperation to advance United Nations peacekeeping purposes and principles. The two countries launched a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) in 2000 to deepen cooperation on peacekeeping issues. They partnered with African countries to build and enhance the capacity of African troops to help them better participate in the UN peacekeeping operations. They institutionalised bilateral cooperation through various joint statements and agreements and continue to train and strengthen capacity of peacekeeping forces through simulation of UN peacekeeping operations during joint military exercises. They are also working on various triangular development initiatives in Africa and other parts of the world. These issues are discussed in greater detail in the next section.

Meanwhile, China has scaled up its financial and troop contributions to the UN peacekeeping operations and increased its influence in the African and Indo-Pacific region. From total opposition to the PKOs and the UN itself,⁹ China slowly changed its stance and began to participate in the PKOs in April 1990 by sending five military observers to the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) for the first time.¹⁰ It was the ninth largest troop contributor and the second largest financial contributor with 15.21 per cent to the UN PKOs in 2021. In fact, it provides more personnel to the PKOs than any other permanent members of the UN Security Council. Its total peacekeeping personnel contribution of 2,253 as of 30 November 2021 was nearly twice of the four permanent members combined, i.e., US (31), UK (519), France (626) and Russia (77).¹¹ This has provided China with international acceptability and enhanced its image as the leader of the developing world. China has so far participated in 25 peacekeeping missions, contributed over 40,000 troops and 16 Chinese soldiers have sacrificed their lives during service.¹² The personnel and financial contribution to the UN peacekeeping has enabled Beijing to exert significant political and diplomatic influence internationally. While China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aggressive behaviour and claim over the South China Sea (SCS), border clashes with India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and Hong Kong and Taiwan crisis have come under international scrutiny, peacekeeping provided it with a relatively low-risk and non-confrontational means to gain international prominence. China has expanded its role in peacekeeping in an effort to strengthen its global presence as a constructive and responsible power, and also to improve the quality of China's People's Liberation Army

(PLA) peacekeepers by learning from the experiences of other countries and institutions.

Besides, Beijing looks to advance its economic interests, especially in the African region, through peacekeeping. The Chinese peacekeeping presence often coincides with its substantial investment in Africa. China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, sees itself as a member of the Global South and its peacekeeping role helps garner influence within the United Nations. Importantly, Beijing sees United States' declining role in UN peacekeeping as a big opportunity to advance its regional and global interests by projecting itself as a benign power. By increasing its participation in PKOs, it also seeks to project its growing defence capabilities in a more positive light and acting as a responsible power, at a time when concerns about the PLA's growing military capabilities among its neighbours are going up. Hence, it has become a champion of PKOs and is looking to further enhance its engagement in peacekeeping activities. The Chinese civilian and military peacekeeping officials are seeking to play a leadership and decision-making role in UN peacekeeping missions.

Consequently, India and the US are looking to further enhance peacekeeping cooperation and undertaking new triangular development initiatives with partner countries to strengthen their presence in African and Asian regions in a more constructive and transparent way. In the meantime, geostrategic and geopolitical rivalry between the US and China has increased. China's assertive foreign policy and strategic encirclement of India, in addition to the unresolved border conflict, along the LAC which flared up in 2020, has pushed India towards the US. These factors, as well as the confluence of their shared values and strategic interests on a wide range of regional and global issues have driven Washington and New Delhi to deepen their cooperation and strategic partnership.

INDIA-US COOPERATION IN PEACEKEEPING

President Bill Clinton's March 2000 visit to India marked a major turning point in India-US relations. During the visit, the two sides signed a vision statement for the 21st century which laid the foundation for developing bilateral cooperation in PKOs. Expressing their common desire and responsibility for achieving regional and international peace, the two sides in the Vision Statement stated: 'In the new century, India and the United States will be partners in peace, with a common interest in and complementary responsibility for ensuring regional and international

security'. It added, 'We will strengthen the international security system, including in the United Nations, and support the United Nations in its peacekeeping efforts'.¹³ Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee paid a reciprocal visit to the US in September 2000 where the two leaders 'agreed to broaden their cooperation in peacekeeping and other areas of UN activity'.¹⁴ In his address to the joint session of the US Congress on 14 September 2000, Vajpayee stated, 'As we talk with candour, we open the doors to new possibilities and new areas of cooperation...our shared values and common interests are leading us to seek a natural partnership of shared endeavours'.¹⁵ This decision reflected the two countries' common interest to work cooperatively for strengthening the United Nations' security system and its peacekeeping efforts. It also represented a significant step towards expanding India–US cooperation on international issues of mutual concern.

Joint Working Group (JWG) on Peacekeeping Operations

Aimed at enhancing and institutionalising bilateral cooperation on peacekeeping, India and the US established the Joint Working Group (JWG) on UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) in 2000. The first meeting of the JWG on PKOs was held in New Delhi on 1–2 November 2000 where an inter-ministerial team of Indian officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Home Affairs met with an inter-agency team of US Officials from the State Department and Department of Defense. At the meeting, the two sides 'agreed that Peacekeeping Operations constitute one of the important activities for the fulfillment of the Charter of the United Nations'.¹⁶ Recalling the vital contributions of the two countries to the UN PKOs, they said, the JWG 'would help to deepen mutual understanding and co-operation, and create better appreciation of each other's perspectives on peacekeeping issues'.¹⁷ They emphasised that PKOs need to take into account the current and future challenges to international peace and security. In addition, they reviewed selected PKOs and the lessons learned from those operations. They further explored ways to increase the role of TCCs 'in helping to craft the mandates and operations of peacekeeping forces'.¹⁸ Functional aspects such as logistical support, command and control structures, training and preparation for effective PKOs were also discussed. The scope of these discussions covered both military and civilian police aspects of the peacekeeping.

Following the first meeting, the two sides held several rounds of meetings of the JWG on PKOs in India and the US alternately. In these meetings, the two sides continued to deliberate on peacekeeping related issues, including partnering and strengthening cooperation with the TCCs, joint training of peacekeepers, role of the civilian police, strategic planning, peacekeeping decision-making, command and control arrangements within the existing security system, and so on. Importantly, the Obama Administration gave greater impetus to the JWG for enhancing bilateral peacekeeping cooperation. When President Barack Obama visited India in 2010, he supported India's membership in a reformed UNSC and regarded India as a defining strategic partner of the US in the 21st century. In the joint statement signed between President Obama and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, they agreed 'to hold regular consultations on UN matters, including on the long-term sustainability of UN peacekeeping operations'.¹⁹ Fulfilling the commitments made by the two leaders, the two sides continued in-depth consultations on PKOs and related issues for deepening India-US peacekeeping cooperation.

Joint Training through Simulation of PKOs

The Indian and US defence forces regularly conduct joint military training exercises such as Yudh Abhyas (war games) for the armies, Malabar exercise for the navies, Cope India exercise for air forces, Vajra Prahar exercise for the special forces and Tiger Triumph exercises for the tri-services. In fact, India conducts more joint military exercises with the US than with any other country, and the growing India-US defence relationship has taken this to highly advanced level.²⁰ These exercises are aimed at training the defence forces by sharing best practices and experiences for meeting the emerging security challenges and developing interoperability. Part of these exercises are also aimed at sharing peacekeeping experiences focussed on counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism, and disaster management, among others. Implementation of these exercises is important for effective and efficient PKOs. In effect, growing defence cooperation has led to optimising of UN peacekeeping through simulation of PKOs.

As part of the ongoing India-US Defence Cooperation, the Indian and US defence forces conducted Joint Military training exercise 'Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2020' from 8-21 February 2021 at Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR) in Rajasthan, India. In this annual training exercise, 250

soldiers from each country held a number of training exercises, including the Command Post Exercise (CPX) which focussed on UN PKOs staff tasks in a combined military setting.²¹ The defence forces of the two countries conducted 14-days long ‘Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2021’²² at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska in October 2021. According to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), 350 soldiers of 7 Madras Infantry Battalion Group of the Indian Army and 300 US Army soldiers belonging to the First Squadron (Airborne) of the 40th Cavalry Regiment participated in the exercise. The Indian and US Army contingents carried out numerous training activities, including on joint training in a Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism environment under the United Nations mandate.²³ According to the US Army, the exercises were ‘aimed at improving the combined interoperability of the Indian and US Army to increase partner capacity for conventional, complex, and future contingencies’.²⁴ These India–US joint military training exercises simulate the kind of cooperation required in PKOs and follow most of the United Nations standard peace-support procedures, techniques and operation training. While India is one of the top TCCs to the UN PKOs, the US hardly contributes regular troops for peacekeeping purposes. Notwithstanding, these exercises are vital for efficient and effective PKOs in terms of improving peacekeeping capability, preparing operational readiness and sustainment capabilities.

Joint Training of UN Peacekeepers

During the 10th JWG on UN PKOs meeting which was held in Washington, D.C. in February 2013, India and the US ‘explored an agreement on a set of Principles of India–US Cooperation in the Area of Training UN Peacekeepers and institutional arrangements between their peacekeeping institutions’.²⁵ Two years later, in 2015, the two sides agreed to jointly train peacekeeping troops starting with six African countries before their deployment in UN peacekeeping missions. Speaking at the India–US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue in Washington, D.C. on 22 September 2015, then US Secretary of State John Kerry stated, ‘We agreed on a joint initiative to train troops in six African countries before they deploy to UN peacekeeping missions’. He added, ‘This responds to a growing need for effective, professional, international peacekeeping in regions of conflict’.²⁶

As a result, the new joint initiative known as the United Nations Peacekeeping Course for African Partners (UNPCAP) commenced

on 25 July 2016 with the participation of 38 peacekeepers from eight African countries (two more countries were added later on) and personnel from the African Union (AU). The training course was held at the Manekshaw Centre of the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in India (CUNPK) at Delhi in association with GPOI where the Indian and US instructors trained the United Nations' core peacekeeping pre-deployment training modules. It was based on a concept of 'train the trainers' where experienced instructors shared 'insights and best practices with less-experienced participants in an effort to help them to become more effective peacekeeping trainers'. It emphasised 'the unique challenges facing peacekeeping missions, including the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights'.²⁷

Delegates from 16 African countries participated in the second edition of the two-week UNPCAP which was held at the CUNPK in July 2017.²⁸ The Indian and US instructors trained the African peacekeeping troops to handle increasingly complex and challenging UN PKOs. The training course covered topics on operational and logistical matters, humanitarian issues, blackboard and tabletop exercises, and mission briefs. During the third edition of the joint training, 40 peacekeepers from 19 African partner countries participated in the two-week training course at the CUNPK in July 2018. The courses were offered in French for the first time for the benefit of Francophone African Countries.²⁹ The fourth UNPCAP was held at the CUNPK from 10–28 June 2019.³⁰ The joint training course conducted by the Indian and US trainers on UN PKOs for capacity building of African troops was in line with Prime Minister Modi's commitment to enhance India's contribution to UN PKOs.

Building on the success of UNPCAP, India and the US launched, on pilot basis, a Joint Mobile Training Team (JMTT) in Zambia³¹ in February 2018 to support its ability to effectively prepare and train for PKOs.³² In this endeavour, under the US GPOI, a team of Indian and US instructors partnered for military medical training to build the capacity of Zambian military personnel who were preparing for deployment to the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).³³ This medical capacity building course marked a next step in advancing India–US peacekeeping cooperation. Building on this strong record of peacekeeping cooperation in Africa, the two sides have now 'decided to expand joint capacity building efforts with partner countries in the Indo-Pacific and to participate in multilateral peacekeeping training exercises'.³⁴

Triangular Cooperation for Development

While the UN PKOs help countries to pass through the most difficult security situation, simultaneous economic development is crucial to sustained peace. Economic development, peace and security are closely connected, and without development, peacekeeping efforts will not succeed. Most importantly, the world is facing numerous urgent challenges, including the global Covid-19 pandemic, healthcare, hunger, food insecurity, water scarcity, human migration, rising energy prices and children's health and education in addition to regional conflict, and great power competition and rivalry. Cooperation among great powers and their contribution to the UN has become more critical than ever. In order to fulfil their commitment to the UN with respect to extending help to countries so that they can transition towards self-reliance, India and the US are working together to augment the capacity of the UN to effectively address the challenges to global development, peace and security.

In this regard, Prime Minister Modi's visit to the US in September 2014 was transformational in nature and set a positive tone and forged an ambitious path for India–US Strategic Partnership. In their first bilateral summit, Prime Minister Modi and President Obama explored India–US coordination in multilateral forums and areas of development partnership in third countries. They issued a 'Vision Statement for the Strategic Partnership' with the theme 'Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go'³⁵ and a Joint Statement for realising that vision.³⁶ Following the first bilateral summit, the two sides signed the India–US Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development in New Delhi in November 2014 to expand joint development initiatives in third countries. The Triangular Cooperation focussed on agriculture productivity, energy, health, women empowerment and disaster management. It provided 'a framework for promoting cooperation between India and the US to meet the developmental aspirations of partner countries' in Africa and Asia.³⁷ It underscored the two countries' contribution to global stability and prosperity. During the second and third bilateral summit in January 2015 and June 2016³⁸ respectively, the trilateral cooperation further deepened in Africa and Asia.

The First Amendment to the SGP Agreement in March 2019 extended the validity of the agreement to 2021. It expanded the scope of capacity-building activities undertaken jointly by India and the US under the triangular cooperation and also provided a 'consultative

mechanism' for biannual monitoring and review of activities undertaken under the agreement.³⁹ This expanded framework primarily focussed on agriculture, clean and renewal energy, regional connectivity, health, nutrition, women empowerment, water, sanitation, education, institution-building and disaster preparedness. The two countries signed the Second Amendment to the SGP Agreement in July 2021 extending its validity up to 2026. The triangular cooperation helps fulfil their joint commitment 'to work together and leverage their combined capacities to provide demand-driven development partnership' in Africa and Asia.⁴⁰ In their first bilateral summit in September 2021, Prime Minister Modi and President Joe Biden welcomed the extension of the SGP agreement and stated that it will leverage their combined capacities 'to address global development challenges around the world, particularly in the Indo-Pacific and Africa'.⁴¹ The demand-driven India–US development partnership in Africa and Asia clearly distinguishes itself from the Chinese debt trap investment policy. The partnership adds value to their evolving peacekeeping cooperation and would help create the conditions for lasting peace and development in Africa and Asia.

Peacekeeping Part of Bilateral Engagement

Since the establishment of the India–US JWG on PKOs in 2000, peacekeeping has become an important part of the India–US defence and strategic partnership. It reflects in their growing engagement on regional and global issues of mutual interest. This also reflects in various bilateral joint statements and agreements signed between the two sides over the last two decades. For instance, in pursuit of the shared vision of an expanded and deeper strategic relationship, the two countries signed the New Framework for the India–US Defence Relationship agreement in June 2005 where the two sides committed to 'assist in building worldwide capacity to conduct successful peacekeeping operations, with a focus on enabling other countries to field trained, capable forces for these operations'.⁴² In June 2015, the defence agreement was renewed for another 10 years. In the 2016 Joint Statement, Prime Minister Modi and President Obama resolved to continue to work together with international community to augment the capacity of the UN to efficiently and effectively address the challenges to global peace, security and development.⁴³

India–US relations progressed further to develop into a 'Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership' during the Trump

administration. His administration reaffirmed ‘India’s role as a net provider of security’ and recognised its ‘developmental and humanitarian assistance’. In the India–US Joint Statement of February 2020, President Trump took note of the fact that ‘a strong and capable Indian military supports peace, stability and a rules-based order’. In this light, he pledged ‘to support the transfer’ of advanced military technology to India.⁴⁴ Reflecting on the shared values, principles and growing strategic convergence, the new Biden administration vowed to advance India–US ‘Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership’.⁴⁵ The two sides are working on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues, including health and pandemic, climate change, critical and emerging technology, cybersecurity, maritime security, regional connectivity, and development partnership. They believe that a strong India–US partnership in these areas is in the mutual interest of the people of the two countries and the world at large.

CHALLENGES

Peacekeeping as an important instrument of the UN helps create the conditions for lasting peace by providing security, political and peacebuilding support to the conflicting countries. However, the UN faces challenges in conceptualising, formulating, planning, deployment and execution of the PKOs. While the factors for success or failure of the PKOs differ from one conflict to another, the outcome of PKOs are determined by either one or a combination of factors such as a lack of understanding of the core principles of peacekeeping, weak mandate, absence of inclusive peace agreement between conflicting parties, lack of continued support from the UNSC, and inadequate budgetary support.⁴⁶ In addition, inadequate troop deployment, dearth of equipment and training can affect the outcome of the PKOs.⁴⁷ The demand for frontier technologies to tackle new and emerging challenges are growing and may help address issues related to troop inadequacy on the ground and also in post conflict peace-building efforts. Although the evolving India–US peacekeeping cooperation has made significant progress over the last two decades, they face challenges in further enhancing their peacekeeping cooperation due to their divergent approaches and policies towards some of the PKOs, their differing position in the UN, diversity in contribution to PKOs, capacity constraint, and persisting bottlenecks in bilateral relations.

The world is undergoing major transformations with great power competition and rivalry increasing, especially between the US and China. At the same time, the influence of regional powers and organisations such as African Union (AU), European Union (EU) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are growing significantly. The relative decline of the US and its retreat from global commitments; the reduction in UN Peacekeeping budget; the ever-increasing policy paralysis in UNSC; and China's increasing peacekeeping role have thrown up new challenges to the international peacekeeping efforts as well as to the existing norms, rules and institutions. The new grey areas of peacekeeping in cybersecurity, maritime security, climate change, health and pandemic situations are also on the rise. Here, building coordination and cooperation is vital for addressing these challenges to peacekeeping. In this evolving geopolitical and geostrategic landscape, however, crafting robust mandate for PKOs has become a big challenge.

The mandate for PKO is approved by the UNSC, especially by the five permanent members (P-5), i.e., China, France, Russia, UK and the US. Owing to the lack of consensus among the P-5, peacekeeping decisions are mired in indecision in areas of big interventions where human and financial costs are involved. As one of the largest TCCs, India has been continuously raising with UN authorities the demand for greater involvement of TCCs in the 'decision-making process for peacekeeping mandates and their review as and when necessitated by the ground realities'.⁴⁸ It emphasises the need for serious and institutionalised consultations with TCCs in mandate formulation, prioritisation of mandates and allocation of adequate resources for mandate implementation.⁴⁹ It is important that TCCs are fully involved in mandate conceptualisation, development, and all aspects of mission planning and execution in today's multidimensional PKOs. Since peacekeeping decisions are political in nature, political synergy is essential for developing clear and practical mandates for PKOs.

There is a growing demand for deployment of troops to deal with terrorism, to prosecute operations under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) regime, and peace-building efforts mandated as a task for UN peacekeepers. Lt Gen Satish Nambiar who served as the Force Commander and Head of the UN Peacekeeping Mission in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), is of the view that India, as one of the largest TCCs, needs to deliberate, analyse and address various concerns before deploying peacekeepers for these purposes.⁵⁰ In the past, India and the

US differed on the issue of deploying troops to fight terrorism and also on R2P issue because of the India's adherence to the core principles of UN peacekeeping. For instance, the Vajpayee government refused to send troops to Iraq. India also differed with the US on UNSC Resolution 1973 on Libya. The failure of military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan to restore peace and security, and the misuse of R2P principle in Libya under the flawed implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1973 added concerns and caution on the deployment of troops in similar circumstances in future.

Another big challenge for PKOs is that the UN has to deal with persistent financial crisis. The annual UN peacekeeping budget is less than 0.5 per cent of the global military spending.⁵¹ Peacekeeping budget reduced by an average of 2.1 per cent from approved budget of US\$ 6.50 billion in FY 2020–21 to US\$ 6.37 billion in FY 2021–22.⁵² The budget reduced by almost 15 per cent over the last five years from US\$ 7.5 billion in FY 2017–18, while challenges to PKOs, both existing and emerging, have increased and become more dangerous. Meanwhile, the US has accumulated about US\$ 920 million in arrears to UN peacekeeping from FY 2017 to FY 2020, after the Trump administration returned to the US Congressional set limit of 25 per cent cap.⁵³ The Trump administration argued that the UN peacekeeping assessment for the US was too high.⁵⁴ In early 2021, the Biden administration reversed the Trump administration's policy and agreed to fund beyond the Congressional set limit of 25 per cent cap. As a result, President Biden's budget request for FY 2022 proposed full funding for UN peacekeeping and also to pay for a part of the arrears.⁵⁵ The UN however needs to find a more sustainable source of financing to support peacekeeping missions.

In the backdrop of continued financial crisis faced by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), India increased its annual contribution from US\$ 1.25 million to US\$ 5 million.⁵⁶ It has contributed US\$ 1.64 million towards the 'UNITE Aware' platform which aims at enhancing situation awareness and provides terrain-related information to UN peacekeepers.⁵⁷ As of 1 February 2022, it has also paid its regular budget assessments in full of US\$ 29.99 million within the due period.⁵⁸ It is among the few countries which pays its dues on time.⁵⁹ As one of the largest TCCs to the UN PKOs, India raised its concern over the delay and non-payment of funds to TCCs and also about the festering matter of payments for closed peacekeeping missions, non-payment of dues years after the end of the missions ensure that there

is no closer to this matter. As of March 2019, the UN owed India US\$ 38 million, which was among the highest amount to be paid to any TCC for PKOs. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin termed the use of peacekeeping funds for other purposes as 'bad faith', while payments for PKOs remain.⁶⁰ At the same time, the Western countries, including the US, who contribute funds but do not contribute troops to the PKOs, are unhappy with the rising costs of UN PKOs and question the ability and commitment of peacekeepers towards saving civilian lives.⁶¹

Besides consistently arguing for greater role of TCCs in UN peacekeeping decision-making process, India is also urging for urgent reform of the UNSC to make it more democratic and relevant for the 21st century. In his first address to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 27 September 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi strongly advocated for urgent reform and restructuring of the UNSC 'to reflect current political realities'. He 'cautioned that UN would face the risk of irrelevance, if it fails to make itself more democratic and participative'.⁶² In his remarks at the G-4⁶³ Summit held in New York on 26 September 2015, Modi called for reform of the UNSC and said that it 'must include the world's largest democracies, major locomotives of the global economy, and voices from all the major continents'. He further added, with these changes, the UN 'will carry greater credibility and legitimacy and will be more representative and effective in addressing the challenges of the 21st century'.⁶⁴

A majority of countries have supported this demand for urgent reform and expansion of the UNSC.⁶⁵ The G-4 Foreign Ministers in their joint statement on 23 September 2020, 'reiterated that expansion of the Security Council in both categories (permanent and non-permanent) is indispensable in making the body more representative, legitimate, and effective'.⁶⁶ The UNSC reform must reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, otherwise it will find it difficult to resolve the current global challenges to peace, security and development. The reformed UNSC must represent developing countries, including from Africa, in both the categories. This has however been stalled owing to lack of consensus and political will. While the US supports India's membership in a reformed UNSC, China stalls the debate over reform and expansion of UNSC members. Moreover, India's substantial and continued contribution to the UN PKOs is not commensurate with the results of either through gaining a permanent seat in the Security Council or recognition of 'great power status'.⁶⁷

Notably, the US considers India as a rising power and expects it to play an active role in providing peace, security and development in Asia and beyond. It supports India's membership in a reformed UNSC and in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and looks to transform the buyer–seller defence relationship with a move towards cooperation in joint research, development and coproduction of high-end defence technologies for deepening India–US strategic relationship. However, in practice, the US support to India is insufficient in augmenting India's capabilities in assuming a greater burden sharing role.⁶⁸ In addition, there has been a growing demand for use of technology for UN Peacekeeping. In an effort to fulfil this demand, during its presidency of the UNSC in August 2021, India piloted the Presidential Statement on UN Peacekeeping entitled, 'Technology for Peacekeeping', which focussed on using technology to help peacekeepers.⁶⁹ In this regard, a strong India–US partnership in emerging technologies will help address the 21st century peacekeeping challenges. The US thus needs to strengthen technology partnership with India and help it to develop its capacities through technology transfer and take a lead role in reforming regional and global decision-making institutions. India's entry into the decision-making high tables will help enhance India's 'great power status' and its ability to provide peace, security and development.

It is important to note here that peacekeeping, since its inception, is an adaptive innovation. It kept pace with the challenges in a changing international environment. Peacekeepers have played multiple peacekeeping roles and peacekeeping itself has transformed from being an impartial and limited activity to playing a larger role in peace-building, peace enforcement and regional partnership. There has been a direct correlation between peacekeeping and peace. In the midst of multiple challenges to PKOs, including the increase in demand for technical, logistical and financial support for implementing peacekeeping mandate, peacekeeping will continue to be relevant owing to the norms, rules and institutions that it developed over the years to maintain international peace, security and development. However, developing peacekeeping cooperation and working together is essential and key to successful peacekeeping.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

India–US peacekeeping cooperation is deepening based on the two countries' commitment to United Nations' purposes and principles, and

their shared common interest to work together on peace, security and development issues in Africa and Asia. They believe that the UN and international norms, rules, and institutions that it has fostered over the years remain the most effective means for addressing the current global challenges, including peacekeeping, peace building, poverty, sustainable development, climate change, migration, health and pandemic. They also believe that the UN can play a vital role in tackling the new and emerging security challenges, in the domain of cyber security, maritime security and emerging technologies such as digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this regard, India and the US have a common interest in the development of an effective and better-resourced UN peacekeeping system that is capable of meeting the challenges. There is thus a considerable convergence of India–US strategic interests in closer engagement in support of the UN PKOs.

Furthermore, the growing India–US defence and strategic relationship provides a strong basis for further strengthening of bilateral peacekeeping cooperation. In fact, the relationship has developed into a ‘Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership’ based on their shared values, strong people-to-people ties, and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues. The partnership enjoys strong bipartisan in the US and popular support in both the countries. India and US have established more than 50 bilateral inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms for exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. More importantly, the US has recognised India as a Major Defence Partner (MDP) in 2016 and elevated India’s status to Tier I of the Strategic Trade Authorization (STA) license exception in 2018, which would help facilitate advanced technology cooperation between the two countries to a level similar to its key strategic partners and allies.

In fact, defence cooperation has emerged as a key component of India–US strategic partnership with an increase in high-level personnel exchanges; joint military exercises such as Malabar, Yudh Abhyas, Cope India, Vajra Prahar, Tiger Triumph; defence trade which reached US\$ 21 billion; and cooperation in maritime security, peacekeeping and disaster management. Meanwhile, conclusion of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016, Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018, Industrial Security Agreement (ISA) in 2019 and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geo-Spatial Cooperation in 2020, has further cemented bilateral defence cooperation.

Besides, the US has emerged as the largest trading partner of India in terms of trade in goods and services. India–US trade in goods and services reached US\$ 146.1 billion in 2019 compared to US\$ 139.6 billion in 2018.⁷⁰ Bilateral trade in goods reached US\$ 113.391 billion in 2021.⁷¹ In addition, the US has been consistently expressing strong support for India's permanent membership in a reformed UNSC. It has also welcomed India's joining the UNSC for a two-year term for the eighth time beginning in January 2021 where they are cooperating on regional and global issues of mutual interest, including on Afghanistan, climate change, health and Covid-19 pandemic. The growing India–US economic, defence, technological and strong people-to-people ties, with increasing strategic convergence on regional and global issues, provide a positive and forward-looking momentum for future cooperation in the areas of peacekeeping and joint development partnership in third countries.

With strengthened India–US defence and strategic relationship, the two sides are poised to play greater cooperative role in peacekeeping. Building on years of peacekeeping cooperation and successfully partnering with African countries for peacekeeping training, the two countries are now collaborating and coordinating on a number of regional and global issues of peace, security and development. They are now expanding their partnership to tackle important global peacekeeping courses in 2022. In this regard, India, US and the UN collaborated to deliver the inaugural UN National Investigation Officers (NIOs) Training of Trainers (TOT) course in April 2022 at the CUNPK. Select TCCs from around the world participated in this course which aimed to 'build national capacity to effectively train NIOs'. The two-week training course concluded on 29 April with a valedictory address by India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla.⁷² In addition, India and the US will 'co-host a UN Peacekeeping Contingent Commanders Course' for TCCs from around the world. The course is 'designed to prepare future UN Contingent Commanders for all important aspects' of PKOs, including logistics, humanitarian issues, and thematic subjects such as protection of civilians.⁷³

India and US are also looking to expand peacekeeping cooperation with Indo-Pacific partner countries. Currently, they are working together to promote peace, security, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. In this regard, they have partnered with like-minded countries in the region to exchange information on Covid-19 response, vaccine development and

therapeutics. They are engaging with regional countries on reopening of economies and supply chain management issues.⁷⁴ Such bilateral cooperation reflects the strength of India–US strategic partnership and their mutual commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations charter. Given the changing geo-political and geo-strategic dynamics, peacekeeping operations become very important and complex in nature. The evolving India–US peacekeeping cooperation provides a flexible and alternative approach to international peace, security and prosperity which is going to intensify further in the years ahead.

NOTES

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