

Editorial

It gives me great pleasure to present to readers the first special issue of the year 2023, titled “India–Africa Defence Cooperation”. India has enjoyed close ties with the African continent since ancient times. The relationship has further strengthened in recent years, owing to the unprecedented outreach and engagement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government since 2014. India has designated Africa as a ‘top priority of its foreign and economic policy’. Engagements such as the India–Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) and the India–Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD), to be held biennially on the occasion of the Defence Expo, demonstrate India’s commitment to building stronger partnerships with African countries and promoting greater South-South cooperation. The historic expansion of the G20 group in September 2023 at the New Delhi Summit witnessed the admission of the African Union as a permanent member. Taking these developments into consideration, a special issue focusing on India-Africa Defence Cooperation is timely. Consisting of 18 insightful articles, this special issue explores various dimensions of India-Africa defence cooperation, while also examining convergence in dealing with existing challenges and the scope for exploring new areas of cooperation in the defence and security sector.

The first article “African Defence: A Statistical Analysis” by Gp Capt Kishore Kumar Khera (Retd) undertakes a statistical analysis of all defence-related issues in the African continent and gives an overview of how African defence paradigms have shifted over the last five decades, and the likely trajectory various African states may take in the coming years. This is followed by an article titled “Unpacking India’s Defence Cooperation with Africa” by Ms Ruchita Beri, in which she has analysed the common security challenges such as the rise of terrorism, extremism, maritime insecurity, energy deficit and climate change. She has also discussed the key principles and pillars of defence cooperation and the recent initiatives taken, such as the India-Africa Defence Dialogue and joint military exercises.

Historically, the training of military personnel, capacity-building and providing necessary security assistance have been the key components of

India's defence diplomacy. In the new millennium, maritime security has emerged as one of the most significant aspects of India's defence diplomacy. How India seeks to expand influence and enhance its strategic footprint through the conduct of defence diplomacy in the geostrategic space from the Indian Ocean to the Gulf of Guinea, is covered in the third article "Expanding Arc of India's Defence Diplomacy", by Dr Sankalp Gurjar.

The COVID-19 pandemic placed significant strain on Africa's frail and fledgling healthcare system and adversely affected many facets of public life. It also put India's defence diplomacy with Africa to the test. The fourth article titled "India–Africa Defence Diplomacy Amid COVID-19", by Mr Samir Bhattacharya, attempts to highlight the disruptions in India's defence diplomacy with Africa caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and elaborates on how the two sides dealt with the pandemic to maintain essential continuity *vis-à-vis* their defence diplomacy.

The fifth article "An Indo-African Military and Peacekeeping Partnership", by Air Vice Marshal Rajesh Isser (Retd) identifies military-related imperatives and opportunities for India's economic and social engagement with Africa. It highlights two issues that can work to India's advantage, viz., China's exploitative model and an anti-colonial movement across Africa. The author has critically reviewed UN-led peacekeeping in Africa and the importance of the military in international diplomacy, especially relevant to Africa, and makes some recommendations towards enabling a whole-of-government approach on India's part.

The next article "UN Peacekeeping Operations: Challenges and Prospects in South Sudan" by Col G. Praveen explores the drivers of conflict in South Sudan and the peacekeeping challenges that the UN Mission in South Sudan faces, especially at a time when the country is preparing for long-pending elections, post formation of a revitalized government, which is by itself a proportional mix of various warring factions. It is followed by a short article titled "India-Africa Defence Cooperation: A Strategic Perspective" by Maj Gen GG Dwivedi (Retd). The article provides an insight into the defence cooperation between India and Africa, and its strategic ramifications.

The eighth article "India–Africa Military-cum-Defence Diplomacy: A Viable Option", by Gp Capt Swaim Prakash Singh, explores initiatives to make the engagements between India and Africa more meaningful and worthwhile, focusing on defence diplomacy, moving to other military arenas beyond UN Peacekeeping Operations, etc. The next article "India–Nigeria Defence Cooperation: Contexts, Drivers and Prospects" by Prof. Eghosa E. Osaghae analyses how global and African currents including rivalry amongst

world powers and the new scramble for Africa, as well as transformations and changes in the conceptions and challenges of security, have shaped defence relations between Nigeria and India. It also covers the expansion of the scope of cooperation to include non-kinetic approaches to defence, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, cybersecurity, research and development, medical security, and maritime security in the oceans and blue economy, especially since Nigeria's return to civilian rule and democracy in 1999.

The tenth article "Roadmap for Enhanced India-Eastern Africa Defence Cooperation" by Maj Gen PS Bhatti traces the origins of India-East Africa defence cooperation to understand the basis for its foundation, its effectiveness, the challenges (past and future) and suggest ways to leverage mutual benefits that can be derived from it. It makes an attempt to understand why the centuries-old India-East Africa connect has not been utilised well by India and why India is a reluctant participant in the field of defence cooperation. Analysing through the lens of 'defence diplomacy', the article assesses how this approach can effectively convert India's soft power to the desired 'smart power'.

The next article "Navigating Non-Traditional Security Threats in the Western Indian Ocean Region: Role of India's Defence and Security Cooperation with East African Island States", by Mr Raghvendra Kumar, examines the maritime security architecture in the East African Island States (EAIS) and further explores the capacity and capability constraints these island states face to effectively and comprehensively manage the non-traditional security (NTS) challenges in the region. The article also recommends policy-relevant priority areas of cooperation in defence and security, considering the vastness of the maritime domain which requires optimisation of resources.

The twelfth article "Rising Terrorist Threats in North-West Africa and Challenges and Opportunities for India's Counterterrorism Cooperation", by Dr Md Muddassir Quamar, analyses the rapid rise in incidents of terrorism and proliferation of terrorist groups in the North-West Africa region, especially since 2010–2011, and how they pose a threat to region security. It further delineates the progress in India's counterterrorism cooperation with the North-West African countries and highlights the challenges and opportunities in further enhancing security and counterterrorism cooperation in the region.

It is followed by an article on "India-Egypt Defence and Security Cooperation", by Dr Prasanta Kumar Pradhan. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and President Sisi, India and Egypt seem to have discovered convergence and pathways for cooperation in regard to bilateral

and regional issues. Defence and security cooperation have emerged as key areas in which both countries have agreed to further expand the scope and content of their relationship. The author avers that the pace and scope of the cooperation between the two countries have the potential to revive the golden era of the past in bilateral ties.

In the fourteenth article titled “India-Africa Maritime Security and Strategic Cooperation in the Twenty-First Century”, Ms Arushi Singh has endeavoured to throw light on the drivers for increasing maritime security and strategic cooperation between India and African nations, particularly those in East Africa and the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR). The author analyses the areas of maritime security and strategic cooperation and evaluates the challenges they face in this context.

The next article titled “Collaborative Competence Building for a Better India-Africa Maritime Order”, by Cmde Johnson Odakkal (Retd) and Mr Neeraj Singh Manhas, suggests that India must look at harnessing the significance of the maritime domain on the basis of major geopolitical and naval interactions across the Western Indian Ocean Region (WIOR). The global share of maritime trade passing through the area, including the world’s crude oil supplies, necessitate a stable peace and a stable order. The authors provide an historical overview for the contemporary context, and provide the imperatives for a collaborative maritime competence-based partnership between India and Africa.

This is followed by an article titled “Locating Vanilla Islands in India-Africa Defence Cooperation”, by Ms Radhey Tambi, which focuses on the emerging dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region, the Indian Ocean Region and its littorals, especially the East African islands Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, and Mauritius. The author also talks about how India can leverage these island states to further enhance its presence and leadership role in the region as a net security provider, including capability-building, military assistance, and military diplomacy.

In the seventeenth article “Maritime Security in the Global South: Challenges and Prospects for Africa-India Defence Cooperation”, Dr Godwin Ichimi discusses the importance as well as the opportunities that the oceans hold for the regional countries and the maritime facets of creatively deepening defence cooperation. The author suggests that such arrangements must not be seen in the short term alone, but must be parsed into medium and long-term elements in order to achieve an effective, safe and secure Africa-India maritime development agenda. The last article in this special issue, “India-Africa Cooperation in the Maritime Space” by Ms Saman Ayesha Kidwai

focuses on India and Africa's maritime cooperation, key pillars, historical context, the major agreements signed and achievements, as well as geopolitical considerations which propel the relationship forward.

We hope that the special issue will be received well by our readers. We would like to thank the guest editor, Ms Ruchita Beri, Consultant at MP-IDSA, for anchoring this special issue. We would also like to thank the authors and the referees who assisted us in the peer review process. We would appreciate feedback from our readers about topics they feel should be addressed by the journal. We hope that along with our growing readership, we will also receive an increasing number of contributions for our future issues.

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