

# Managing Conflict, Building Peace: Opportunities for Developing the EU-India Strategic Partnership

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With possible United States retrenchment and a growing number of conflicts, both the European Union and India are set to play a greater role in securing their overlapping extended neighborhoods. Crisis management, stabilization, and peacebuilding will play a central role in these endeavors, opening up a huge untapped potential for cooperation and collaboration between the EU and India. While both actors would benefit from such collaboration, obstacles – real or perceived – stand in the way: not only has there been minimal interoperability between the EU and India on the ground, but also a lack of familiarity with each other, feeding the perception of ‘strategic divergence’ on top-tier principles about democracy promotion, the use of force, humanitarian intervention, and regime change. However, neither side has an unchanging, much less a perfectly consistent position on these principles; both the EU and Indian positions have evolved

over time. In this paper, we seek to debunk some lingering myths about ‘strategic’ differences between the two actors and set out practical proposals to begin building a truly strategic partnership.

## Policy Recommendations

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- **Training:** To boost operational collaboration, the EU and India should first rapidly implement the already agreed-upon initiatives of the EU-India Joint Action Plan regarding joint trainings and training personnel exchanges, focusing on likely scenarios for side-by-side deployments, and covering both civilian and military personnel.
- **Military training and assistance to third parties:** The best starting point to collaborate in real joint initiatives would be a combined EU-India project to train troops from African states for deployment to UN peacekeeping operations. With regional security in Africa a priority for both the EU and India, a joint pre-deployment training program or a ‘training of trainers’ initiative would not only boost their partnership but also contribute to the growing global demand for well-trained and adequately equipped peacekeepers.
- **Joint civil-military missions and civilian projects:** Most EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations focus on police, border security, justice, and security sector reform rather than armed military deployments, and participation is not limited to EU member states. Providing for Indian contributions to these missions could be a useful and politically attractive option for the EU and India to encourage collaboration among civilian security experts, police, justice officials and unarmed military advisers. Electoral, parliamentary, and legal assistance missions or projects offer additional opportunities for civilian collaboration, while UN missions offer opportunities across the entire civil-military spectrum, including support to the Women, Peace and Security agenda (UN Security Council Resolution 1325).
- **Plant the seeds for future strategic collaboration:** Truly strategic dialogue and cooperation will not be built by technocratic means; it will only flourish once policy-makers and strategic communities in Europe and India develop a stronger understanding of common first- and second-tier interests. Developing additional targeted and well-designed track 1.5 and track 2 formats can provide a foundation for this process, particularly if such forums were to expand beyond diplomats to include military, police, and civilian specialists as well as independent experts.

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## Introduction

The EU-India strategic partnership calls for jointly promoting comprehensive security and identifies “peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and post-conflict assistance” as important priorities for developing the bilateral relationship.<sup>1</sup> Progress on this goal has been limited so far, but not for a lack of opportunities: India and the EU have common security interests in a growing number of overlapping theaters of instability and conflict where their respective neighborhoods intersect. In Afghanistan, India’s security interests are immediate and obvious while migration pressures ensure that Europe maintains a very active interest in the country’s future. The entire Middle East is a source of oil and gas to both Europe and India, as well as a source of security threats, including terrorism. Both India’s and Europe’s trade routes depend on crucial choke points along the coast of East Africa. As India begins to focus its efforts outward and as the EU discovers hard power, the two have begun to increasingly take similar actions in parallel. What is missing from the equation is conversation and working together.

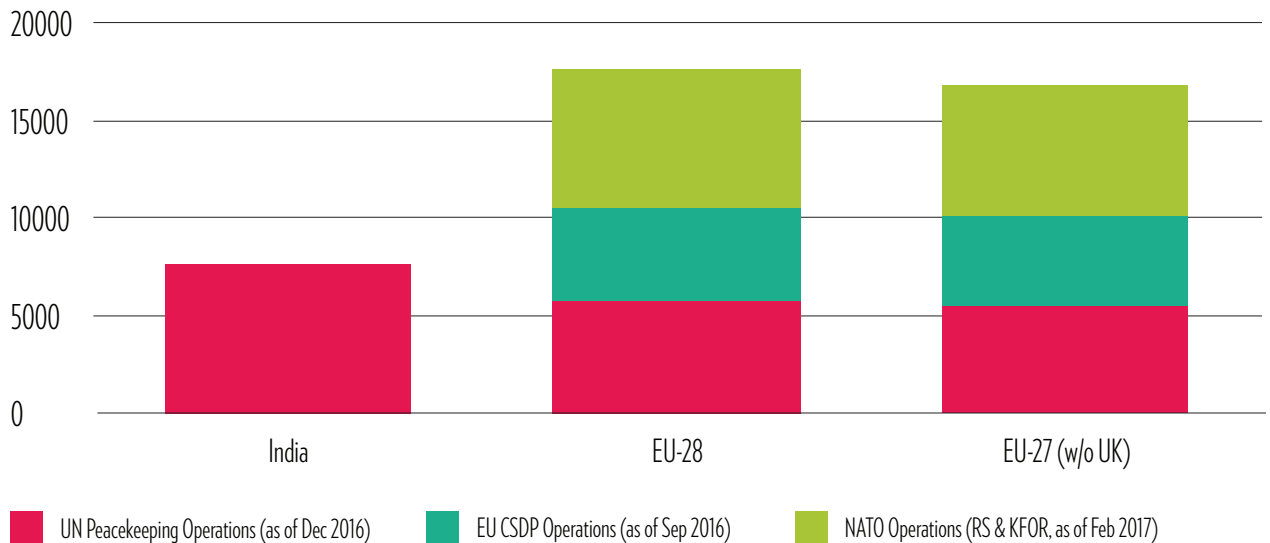
Traditionally, India’s view of the EU has been largely defined by its disregard for the Brussels institutions, which have long played a negligible role in hard security matters. While the EU’s common institutions are expanding their defense and security role, a true strategic partnership will only emerge once India starts dealing comprehensively with Brussels and key member states together, and once Brussels and key EU capitals start dealing jointly with Delhi. For India, this is no more complicated than being an effective political player at the United Nations, where Indian diplomats know well how to interact with the Secretariat bureaucracy in parallel with the five permanent members of the Security Council to get things done at the UN. Similarly, to work effectively with the EU, it is key that India engages both Brussels (the External Action Service, its delegation in Delhi, the EU Military Staff) and its 28 (for now) member states, particularly the three to five leading strategic players. Policy differences and petty rivalries between the Brussels institutions and the EU member states often make it difficult for outside actors to engage the EU comprehensively, but doing so is fundamental to building any partnership with a third actor that deserves to be called “strategic.”

Viewed comprehensively, the EU and India have greater strategic common ground to build on than many realize. EU members deploy 5,790 troops and police to UN peace operations, making the EU collectively the sixth-largest contributor to UN peacekeeping alone. India, of course, is several spots ahead, switching between second and third place, most recently with 7,710 troops deployed to the UN. But the European Union’s own operations, all of which are also strictly based on UN Security Council mandates, add thousands more, making EU-Europe the largest contributor globally to

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1 Council of the European Union (2005), “The EU-India Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan,” accessed March 14, 2017, [www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/86130.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/er/86130.pdf); European Commission (2008), “EU-India Strategic Partnership,” accessed March 14, 2017, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ar14100>.

## India's and the EU's Contributions to UNSC-Mandated Crisis Management and Peace Operations



multilateral peace operations (see figure above).<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding the UK's capability edge, Brexit has surprisingly little impact on these numbers, as London's contributions to NATO, EU, and UN operations have long been in decline.<sup>3</sup> In terms of budgets for peacebuilding and development, Europe outstrips India by an order of magnitude, but India is quickly catching up – and in doing so, it benefits from the fact that it is creating its foreign aid apparatus from scratch, unencumbered by the many inefficiencies and mistakes that plague European development cooperation.

Both India and the EU are set to play a greater role in securing their overlapping extended neighborhoods in the coming decades. This strategic trend is largely unaffected by Brexit, since Britain's expeditionary deployments are already low and both the EU and London seek continued close cooperation on security and defense even after the UK would leave the Union.<sup>4</sup> Peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and post-

2 United Nations, *Contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations*, December 31, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16_1.pdf); United Nations, *UN Mission's Contributions by Country*, December 31, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16\\_5.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16_5.pdf); NATO, "Resolute Support Mission (RSM): Key Facts and Figures," February 9, 2017, [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_02/20170209\\_2017-02-RSM-Placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_02/20170209_2017-02-RSM-Placemat.pdf); NATO, "Kosovo Force (KFOR): Key Facts and Figures," December 7, 2016, [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_12/20161207\\_2016-12-KFOR-Placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_12/20161207_2016-12-KFOR-Placemat.pdf); Center for International Peace Operations, "Peace Operations 2016/ 2017," [http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/ZIF\\_World\\_Map\\_Peace\\_Operations\\_2016.pdf](http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/ZIF_World_Map_Peace_Operations_2016.pdf); UK Stabilisation Unit, "Working in European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Missions," October 2014, <http://www.sclr.stabilisationunit.gov.uk/publications/employee-guide-series/493-employee-guide-eu-csdp/file>.

3 For a more detailed analysis, see James Black, Alexandra Hall, et al., *Defence and security after Brexit: Understanding the possible implications of the UK's decision to leave the EU – Compendium report*, (RAND 2017) [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1786.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1786.html).

4 Ibid.

conflict assistance – or crisis management, stabilization, and peacebuilding, to use terms that are more common in Europe – will play a central role in both India’s and the EU’s growing security postures, so there is a vast untapped potential for cooperation and collaboration. In this paper, we seek to debunk some lingering myths about ‘strategic’ differences and set out practical proposals to begin building a truly strategic partnership.

## **UN, NATO, CSDP: Institutional Frameworks for Crisis Management & Stabilization**

While the EU and India share the commitment to act as “responsible powers,” they have longstanding differences on what that responsibility entails with regard to conflict management and peace operations. Europe’s preference that its military and civilian contributions serve under NATO and EU leadership has led to a reversal of the lopsided supply distribution of the Cold War era: in 1990, over 70 percent of UN peacekeepers came from countries in the “Western European and others” group, but by 2016, that figure decreased to less than 10 percent thanks to the huge post-2000 expansion of peacekeeping, enabled by troops and police from the Global South.<sup>5</sup>

Even after the UN missions in the Balkans, EU member states continued to expand their contributions to peace operations – just not through the UN. Even after large reductions, there are still more than 4,000 EU troops serving in Afghanistan under NATO’s Resolute Support mission. Almost 5,000 additional soldiers, police, and civilians are serving in 17 EU-led missions, such as the counter-piracy mission in the Indian Ocean (“EUNAVFOR ATALANTA,” typically about 1,200 personnel depending on ship assignments) or the EU military training mission in Mali (578 personnel).<sup>6</sup> All NATO- and EU-led missions are mandated by the UN Security Council.

With an uncanny resemblance to the European preference for NATO and EU leadership, Indian diplomacy, too, remains wedded to participating in UN-led missions only. As a result, India continues to be one of the strongest pillars of support for UN peacekeeping, among the top three contributors of both military and police personnel. The EU’s top individual contributors are way below into the double-digit ranks (Italy in 24<sup>th</sup>, France in 32<sup>th</sup>, and Spain in 37<sup>th</sup> were the EU’s top three in the UN ranking in December 2016).

Within UN peace operations, Indian and European uniformed personnel rarely meet at eye level: while the large missions in Africa (with the notable exception of Mali, currently the most dangerous one) remain almost completely neglected by European contributors, Lebanon (UN Interim Force in Lebanon, or UNIFIL) and the Golan Heights (UN Disengagement Observer Force, or UNDOF) are the only missions where Indian and EU troops work side by side in significant numbers. In Lebanon, India

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5 Global Peace Operations Review, “Strategic Summary 2016: UN Peace Operations by the Numbers,” 2017, <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/strategic-summary-2016-un-peace-operations-by-the-numbers/>.

6 European External Action Service, “Military and civilian missions and operations,” May 3, 2016, [https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en); European External Action Service, “EUNAVFOR Mission,” <http://eunavfor.eu/mission>; Center for International Peace Operations, “Peace Operations 2016/ 2017,” [http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/ZIF\\_World\\_Map\\_Peace\\_Operations\\_2016.pdf](http://www.zif-berlin.org/fileadmin/uploads/analyse/dokumente/veroeffentlichungen/ZIF_World_Map_Peace_Operations_2016.pdf).

deployed 898 personnel to EU-Europe's 3,448 in December last year, while in the Golan Heights, the figures were 204 and 143, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

These figures explain why Indian and European crisis managers and peacekeepers have been successful ignoring each other ever since Indian Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar served as the first and last Indian general officer in a command position in Europe from 1992 to 1993:<sup>8</sup> For the most part, each focused on different crises and worked through different multilateral organizations. Their worlds of crisis management and peacekeeping touched only rarely, either in the strategic backwaters of almost-defunct UN operations such as UNDOF or in the halls of the Security Council, where their missions received habitual legal blessings in the form of a mandate renewal. Where Indian and European senior leaders did work together in the field – in Angola, in Mozambique, in Timor-Leste, in West Africa, mostly in the 1990s and early 2000s – the lack of mutual interest in capitals precluded any attempt to forge an institutional dimension based on the experiences of these individual leaders. Consequently, interoperability between Indian and EU forces is likely minimal at the moment.

## **Strategic Divergence? Democracy Promotion, Regime Change, and the Use of Force**

The lack of familiarity with each other may have fed the perception of 'strategic divergence' on top-tier principles about democracy promotion, the use of force, humanitarian intervention, and regime change. In India, messy and contradictory decisions such as the UK's participation in the 2003 US invasion of Iraq or the French and British roles in military intervention against Gaddafi in 2011 continue to be seen as examples of a wider strategic Euro-Atlantic consensus to change regimes at will, whether in the naïve attempt to do good or by some grand, malicious imperialist design. That view – taking the two largest former colonial powers of Europe to speak for the majority of its countries or citizens – overlooks the well-founded resistance of most Europeans, led by France and Germany, to the invasion of Iraq. It disregards the more accidental falling out, now between France and the UK on one side and Germany on the other, over Libya. And most importantly, it ignores how useless the two exceptional cases of Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011 (or the French Foreign Minister's isolated calls to militarily safeguard aid deliveries to Myanmar in 2008) are to analyzing the emerging European strategic culture.

In fact, European democracy promotion is built on the EU's soft power tendencies and its considerable capacity to provide financial support. However, as much as the EU is compelled by its own values to support human rights defenders and democracy activists abroad, such support is often constrained by the very real ownership (and lack thereof) of its partner governments. The EU's continuing support to corrupt, kleptocratic, and in some cases authoritarian governments in its Eastern and Southern neighborhoods illustrates that neither EU institutions nor member

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7 United Nations, *UN Mission's Contributions by Country*, December 31, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16\\_5.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2016/dec16_5.pdf).

8 Lieutenant General Nambiar served as the first Head of Mission and Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) during the breakup of Yugoslavia, from March 1992 to March 1993.

states are strangers to tragic political choices when trying to secure European interests and defend European values. Similarly, most European military engagements have been a far cry from their interventionist caricature. In reality, most missions have been cautious at best and ineffectual at worst. The decisive use of military force has been a rare exception: by deploying 1,400 troops (most of them French), the EU's Operation

## India's strategic practice, by comparison, is no less contradictory and messy than the EU member states.

Artemis may have helped prevent a massacre in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2003, but European governments soon reached the limits of their patience and handed over operations to the UN. The only case in which EU governments have sustained large forces to engage in open conflict occurred in Afghanistan between 2008 and 2012 under the UN Security Council's mandate to NATO.

India's strategic practice, by comparison, is no less contradictory and messy than the EU member states. While preaching the developing world's mantras of state sovereignty and non-intervention around the global conference tables of the United Nations, India has frequently used force in neighboring states to achieve political objectives. A study of India's use of force in its neighborhood suggests its position on non-intervention is not unchanging and absolute. The history of India's interventions, actual and planned, include East Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, the Maldives, and Mauritius. As India's security perimeter expands beyond the subcontinent, it is quite possible that its neighborhood approach to peace operations will be extended abroad as well. The increase in the number of evacuation operations of overseas Indians (Operation Raahat in Yemen 2015, Operation Sankat Mochan in South Sudan 2016) also reflects a call for India to assume a more interventionist stance on their behalf.

In order to understand India's strategic practice, it is important to note that the country's emphasis on territorial sovereignty was borne out of a historic moment and a specific set of political circumstances during the Cold War. It was less a matter of absolute legalism or ideology than a reaction to Western favor towards Pakistan and the post-Cold War US diplomatic activism on Kashmir which raised concerns of Western intervention.<sup>9</sup> This has now changed significantly, along with a change in the international context of peace operations in general.

That being said, differences between Europe and India remain stark, as seen in contrasting approaches to atrocities and human rights abuses by governments in India's neighborhood. India roundly rejects Europe's preferred strategy of launching international inquiries through UN human rights bodies and imposing sanctions – as shown, for example, in its involvement in the Sri Lankan civil war or Myanmar today.

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9 For this argument, see C. Raja Mohan, "India and International Peace Operations," *SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security*, no. 2013/3 (2013), <http://books.sipri.org/files/insight/SIPRIInsight1303.pdf>.

While the EU's reflexes may have achieved little more than to maintain its own good conscience, India's dismissive attitude to human rights has no better record in enabling positive change. Still, while such differences will not be quick or easy to overcome, there are areas of convergence among the civilian stabilization and peacebuilding toolbox, for instance supporting transitioning regimes through capacity building for electoral and parliamentary institutions. This is an area that India is willing to make a pillar of its foreign policy and that both the EU and India have significant expertise on.

Therefore, the claims of strategic divergence between the two actors are often overstated. On the ground, neither European nor Indian grand strategy is as coherent in itself as it may appear from the perspective of capitals and headquarters. In their messy practical expressions in the field, their differences are far smaller than they appear at seminars and in white papers. Those differences exist, of course, but they are more the result of disparities in equipment and funding, as well as distinct operational experiences, than a product of grand strategic visions. At the level of strategic culture, recent developments even point to a possible convergence, both within Europe and between Europe and India. The Iraq debacle made the British public weary of interventions, and David Cameron's lost vote in the House of Commons made the country's strategic elite more cautious. Russia's aggression has awakened Germany's long-dormant sense of hard power realities, almost in parallel with India's evolving strategic debate.

## **On-the-Ground Convergence: Civilian Assistance, Military Restraint**

When it comes to conflict management, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, the EU and India have more in common. Both consider effective states to be critical for sustainable, peaceful political orders, leading to a shared focus on development and institution-building as priorities for structural conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding. Based on their own domestic examples, both promote democratic mechanisms to help societies solve conflicts peacefully.<sup>10</sup> Of course, India's foreign assistance is brand new and only starting to scale up to the level of major international significance (Rs 6,479.13 crore or about \$970 million for FY 2017-2018) while EU-Europe is the world's largest aid donor (\$76 billion in 2015), far ahead of the United States (\$31 billion).<sup>11</sup> Having played in different leagues until very recently, the EU and India have limited experience with practical collaboration, even in Afghanistan, where Indian and European strategic interests converge the most.<sup>12</sup>

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10 Sandra Pogodda, Roger Macginty and Oliver P. Richmond, "Intimate yet dysfunctional? The relationship between governance and conflict resolution in India and the European Union," *Conflict, Security and Development* 14, no. 1 (2014): 33-59.

11 Union Budget, "Notes on Demands for Grants, 2017/2018, Ministry of External Affairs," 2017, <http://indiabudget.nic.in/ub2017-18/eb/sbe28.pdf>; European Commission, "EU Official Development Assistance reaches highest-ever share of Gross National Income," April 13, 2016, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-1362\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1362_en.htm); European Commission, "EU Aid Overview," February 27, 2017, <https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/AidOverview.do>.

12 C. Raja Mohan, Arushi Kumar & Constantino Xavier, "Securing Afghanistan: Prospects for India-EU Cooperation," *EU-India Policy Dialogues On Global Governance & Security* (2016) <http://www.gppi.net/publications/rising-powers/article/securing-afghanistan-prospects-for-india-eu-cooperation/>.



Another area of possible convergence can be found in the Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Operations (HADR) where both actors have been involved, but have not worked together until now. While the EU is a leading player in disaster relief, India is beginning to increase its involvement substantially. India participated actively in relief operations in Indonesia, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. In these contexts, Indian forces were deployed outside of the UN framework and coordinated actively with Australia, Japan, and the US. As India raises its profile in the Indian Ocean Region, EU-India coordination on HADR operations can emerge as an important area of on-the-ground convergence.

In the military realm, Europe has begun to make limited but substantial contributions even to the most difficult and dangerous UN peacekeeping operations: this includes countries such as Sweden (intelligence),<sup>13</sup> the Netherlands (intelligence, combat aviation, special forces)<sup>14</sup> and Germany (reconnaissance UAVs, combat aviation)<sup>15</sup> in Mali. Since India is not engaged in this particular mission, there are no immediate opportunities for closer cooperation. Still, European nations other than France are beginning to recognize the strategic importance of peace and security in Africa for Europe's own security and stability, and the key role that UN peace operations can play to secure those interests. While hopes for a large-scale return of European troops to UN peacekeeping are widely seen as premature, targeted contributions may well be on the rise.<sup>16</sup> As a result, more opportunities for Indian and European forces to work together on the ground are probable to emerge, and better interoperability is likely to be required.

When that happens, India and Europe can build on the experience of joint anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden since December 2011. This was an opportunity to institutionalize closer cooperation as well as exchange information and best practices. While the experience in the Gulf of Aden made only modest progress on EU-India cooperation, it laid the foundation for cooperation on similar future missions. The EU's engagement in the Indian Ocean also includes EUCAP Nestor, financing the Indian Ocean Commission, and the EU CRIMARIO (Critical Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean) project, which is intended to improve maritime security in the entire region. India is set to be an important player as it revises and tests its approach to maritime security in the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) – particularly as it embraces multilateral regional frameworks and supporting the development of a nascent regional architecture in the region. This is a major area of common interest – commercially and strategically.<sup>17</sup>

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13 United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali*, S/2016/1137, 30 December 2016 [https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_situation\\_in\\_mali\\_december\\_2016.pdf](https://minusma.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_the_situation_in_mali_december_2016.pdf); Swedish Armed Forces, "MINUSMA – Mali," accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/archived-pages/about/our-mission-in-sweden-and-abroad/current-missions/mali-minusma/>.

14 Ministry of Defence, "Dutch contributions in Mali," <https://www.defensie.nl/english/topics/mali/contents/dutch-contributions-in-mali>;

15 Bundeswehr, "Aktuelle Nachrichten aus dem Einsatz," accessed March 13, 2017, <https://goo.gl/rnuOjv>; United Nations Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Mali*.

16 Joachim A. Koops and Guilia Tercovich "A European return to United Nations peacekeeping? Opportunities, challenges and ways ahead," *International Peacekeeping* 23, no.5 (2016) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2016.1236430>.

17 Constantino Xavier, Darshana M. Baruah, *Making Brussels and Delhi meet in the Indian Ocean*, GPPi and Carnegie India Policy Paper. (Berlin and New Delhi, Global Public Policy Institute and Carnegie India: 2017).

## Intersecting Arcs: The Overlap in Strategic Interests is Growing

Beyond specific projects on the ground, however, the strategic case for EU-India cooperation on conflict management and peacebuilding is rapidly growing as both sides leave behind their passive and insular security postures. The EU's Global Strategy (2016) gives a central role to defense and security, recognizing that the EU's strategic environment has changed radically and is surrounded by an 'arc of instability,'<sup>18</sup> threatening the union's security interests. This European arc intersects with India's expanding security perimeter in several high-profile theaters of war.

Europe and India share a pressing interest in stabilizing Afghanistan. Europe is heavily involved in the stabilization of Iraq and the fight against the 'Islamic State,' and if the beginnings of a sustainable transition to stability were to emerge in Syria or Yemen, Europe would be a huge player in either country as well – right next door to the Gulf, where India seeks oil and gas resources and protection for its overseas populations. War and instability in East Africa and along the coast of the Indian Ocean threatens Indian investments (e.g., in South Sudanese oil) and overwhelms Europe's ability to cope with migration. Growing instability in superficially stable but dangerously brittle authoritarian countries like Ethiopia are serious concerns for both Europe and India. None of these crises, wars, and potential future threats are likely to diminish in the near to mid-term future, and the awareness and political will not to be blindsided by their ramifications is likely to grow, in European capitals as much as in Delhi.

## Charting the Way Forward

### Boosting Operational Collaboration: Bilateral Trainings, Trilateral Assistance, and Working Together in Missions

Without a history of close partnership, EU-India cooperation must first build practical joint experience on all levels, including policy-level collaboration on mandates and framework diplomacy, as well as operational and tactical interoperability in both training situations and real operations. This starts with rapidly implementing the already agreed-upon initiatives of the EU-India Joint Action Plan regarding joint trainings and training personnel exchanges, focusing on likely scenarios for side-by-side deployments, and covering both civilian and military personnel, from UN peacekeeping operations in places like South Sudan or the Middle East/West Asia to diplomacy and institution-building in Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup>

After bilateral trainings and exchanges, the next step should be to develop practical joint projects on common priorities for training and assistance to third parties. Such

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18 European External Action Service, "The European Union in a changing global environment: A more connected, contested and complex world," June 25, 2015, <http://europa.eu/globalstrategy/en/file/11/download?token=eEpibohl>

19 C. Raja Mohan, Arushi Kumar and Constantino Xavier, *Securing Afghanistan: Prospects for India-EU Cooperation*, GPPi and Carnegie India Policy Paper. (Berlin and New Delhi: Global Public Policy Institute and Carnegie India, 2016), <http://www.gppi.net/publications/rising-powers/article/securing-afghanistan-prospects-for-india-eu-cooperation/>.

projects could be designed anywhere along the overlapping arcs of European and Indian strategic interests, but the best starting point would be trilateral cooperation with African countries that deploy significant numbers of UN peacekeepers. India recently agreed to step up its commitment to training African troops both at the UNGA as well as at the African Union Summit.<sup>20</sup> Given its capacity limits, India has begun to partner with the US to jointly train troops from African states in the entire gamut of UN peacekeeping operations. A similar initiative could be undertaken with the EU and some of its member states under the umbrella of the EU-India Strategic Partnership, building on various bilateral programs by several EU countries as well as India, which has trained South

## Truly strategic dialogue and cooperation will only flourish once policymakers and strategic communities in Europe and India develop a stronger understanding of common first- and second-tier interests.

African troops for peacekeeping in the past and provides educational opportunities for staff officers from many African countries just as many EU countries do. With regional security in Africa a priority for both the EU and India, a joint pre-deployment training program or a ‘training of trainers’ initiative would not only boost their partnership but also contribute to the growing global demand for well-trained and adequately equipped peacekeepers. For the EU, its participating member states, and India, such an initiative would increase in-depth opportunities for operational collaboration – from the diplomatic level through the ranks and institutions down to the level of co-planning and implementing training and assistance efforts.

If the EU and India can set up new training programs with African partner countries, they should also be able to ramp up collaboration within existing, separate programs. The majority of EU CSDP operations is made up of small advisory and training groups focusing on police, border security, justice, and security sector reform. These missions are not limited to personnel from EU member states; in fact, the EU has a number of agreements with third countries, including the United States, enabling their participation in EU missions. Of course, India will probably keep deploying its military exclusively to UN peacekeeping operations – and the EU is currently not in a position to expect anything else, given the efficiency and cost-effectiveness advantages of UN over EU CSDP missions. However, EU CSDP deployments for Indian civilians – security experts, police, justice officials – and unarmed military advisers could be a useful and politically attractive option to boost collaboration. There is similar scope for collaboration within electoral, parliamentary, and legal assistance projects or missions, including election observers, especially where India is already involved as a donor or is interested in increasing engagement.

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<sup>20</sup> Dinakar Peri, “India, U.S. to train African troops for U.N. peacekeeping,” *The Hindu*, July 24, 2016. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/India-U.S.-to-train-African-troops-for-U.N.-peacekeeping/article14504907.ece>.

What works for CSDP should work equally, if not more easily, for the UN, whose peacekeeping and political missions offer similar opportunities to expand operational collaboration in various fields of crisis management, not just military deployments.<sup>21</sup> Within UN missions, the EU and India could also cooperate on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. Given India's deployment of the first all-female police contingent in Liberia, and the EU's 'Comprehensive Approach' to the implementation of the Resolution, the two actors can collaborate on training of peacekeepers on human rights, addressing needs of children and women affected by violence, and preventing sexual abuse and exploitation.

The EU may be able to give a boost to exploring and implementing some of these operational opportunities for closer cooperation by deploying a security advisor to the delegation in Delhi, in lieu of national embassies' military attaché staff. An EU security policy team in place in Delhi, possibly also including military personnel, would make liaison and potential collaboration with the Indian military and defense sector much easier.<sup>22</sup>

## Sowing the Seeds for Future Strategic Cooperation

Truly strategic dialogue and cooperation will not be built by technocratic means; it will only flourish once policymakers and strategic communities in Europe and India develop a stronger understanding of common first- and second-tier interests. Still, there are necessary and conceivable preparations that can be made through expanding the EU-India strategic partnership's thematic scope, particularly by adding track 1.5 working groups to address common challenges and learning opportunities in conflict management and peacebuilding at the level of military, police, and civilian experts. This would present an opportunity to systematically expand sectoral contacts beyond diplomats to include the leaders of the Indian armed forces and the EU Military Committee,<sup>23</sup> RAW, and INTCEN, and so forth.

In parallel, longer-term strategic discussions on topics such as the role of the use of force in robust peacekeeping or principles for adapting the rules-based international order should be addressed in a track 2 setting among independent experts. Such formats should also draw upon the rich experience of senior Indian and European military commanders and civilian mission leaders who already served together in UN missions or alongside each other in the same theaters of operation.

For all of these formats, effective ways need to be found to incorporate the views and lessons of EU member states who have particular experience in the respective subject area. There is no point in two-dozen European diplomats participating in 'working' group meetings when most of the smaller European nations have very limited roles and ambitions in managing conflict anywhere. At the same time, it is crucial to

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21 Luis Peral, "EU-India relations: in search of a paradigm," *II India-EU Forum on Effective Multilateralism*, (2010) [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/India-EU\\_Forum\\_Report\\_policy\\_options.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/India-EU_Forum_Report_policy_options.pdf).

22 Ibid.

23 Stefania Benaglia, *How to boost EU-India relations*, CEPS Policy Brief. (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2016), <https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/CEPS%20PB%20How%20to%20boost%20EU-India%20relations%20S%20Benaglia.pdf>.

include – by informal invitation, if necessary – the perspectives of those European governments that have significant operational commitments to the subjects and regions at hand and that maintain bilateral ‘strategic’ relationships with India. For issues involving UN peacekeeping or lessons from it, such formats should include personnel from missions to the UN in New York; as an alternative or additional measure, elements of the dialogue could be taken to the New York level.

## **Less Preaching, More Analysis Will Pave the Way to a Strategic Partnership**

Ultimately, patience with each other’s byzantine institutions and political sensitivities will be key for the EU and India to develop a truly strategic partnership in the years ahead. Along the way, each side’s sensitivities should not stand in the way of an open, honest, and therefore critically constructive exchange of ideas. This is perhaps best achieved by including an element of self-criticism on either side, starting with an admission of the limits to one’s own knowledge and insight about each other’s sore points. Less preaching and more analysis, including some painful introspection, will be required for both sides to become truly strategic actors on the global stage, and to develop a truly strategic partnership along the way. ●

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