

# Global Governance, Security and Strategy in the EU-India Partnership

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# **Table of Contents**

<b>Putting the Strategy into the EU-India Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Securing Afghanistan</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Regional Connectivity in Asia</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Converging Interests in the Indian Ocean</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Managing Conflict, Building Peace</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Annex: Participants From the Policy Dialogues</b>	<b>48</b>

# Putting the Strategy into the EU-India Strategic Partnership

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While traditionally focused on the economic and cultural domains, today the European Union and India are taking unprecedented steps to deepen the security dimension of their partnership. This attests to the evolution of their relationship, driven by a changing global environment, including possible US retrenchment and the rise of China.

Brussels's new pragmatic pursuit of closer ties with India is a response to New Delhi's increasing political and economic weight in Asia. India's new interest in Europe, in turn, is motivated by the need to diversify options and balance Beijing by partnering with other middle powers. This Indo-European convergence of foreign policy interests throws open a window of opportunity for greater cooperation on strategic issues of security and global governance, marking a change of course after several years of either absent dialogue or deep disagreements.

After a burst of initiative in the early 2000s, with the first EU-India Summit and the launch of the "strategic partnership," the relationship between the EU and India lost steam, facing several challenges – of which the failed negotiations towards a free trade agreement are only one example. While Brussels fixated on the need for climate change mitigation or enforcing 48-hour working weeks, New Delhi kept invoking its right to pollute the environment and disregard labor rights in the pursuit of economic growth. The limits to the partnership were evident in disagreements over the EU and India's different approaches towards Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the EU's past indelicate handling of the Kashmir issue showed a lack of understanding of Indian sensitivities. India, primarily due to the limits of its bureaucratic capacities, never figured out the how to engage constructively with the EU on common areas of strategic interest. Outside of developmental and technical cooperation, the political and strategic partnership continued to stagnate. Cooling off of relations over India's detention of two Italian marines further showed the tenuousness of the relationship.

Such difficulties and disagreements stalled progress on the partnership, with the annual EU-India Summit postponed for four consecutive years, since 2012. Prime Minister Modi's visit to Brussels to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> EU-India Summit in March 2016 therefore marked an important turning point. European and Indian leaders expressed their commitment to give new momentum to the bilateral relationship by endorsing the EU-India Agenda for Action 2020 and adopting a joint declaration on counter-terrorism.

Since then, the EU and India have developed unprecedented efforts to share intelligence, consult on global and regional developments, pool their development

assistance projects, and operate in triangulation with other actors. This opens up the possibility of working together on joint initiatives in a variety of areas, from peacekeeping and state-building to maritime and cyber security.

The new positive momentum is driven by several internal and geostrategic factors. First, the impact of the 2009 recession and Brexit nudged both sides into a franker engagement with each other. This led the EU to recognize the importance of India as an economic partner; consequently, the EU's new Global Strategy pivots around "principled pragmatism" and underlines the "direct connection between European prosperity and Asian security."<sup>1</sup> Post-Brexit, India too no longer takes the EU for granted and recognizes that its own economic prospects depend on the continued growth and internal stability of its largest trading partner.

Second, turbulence in the Middle East (West Asia) is incentivizing greater EU-India security dialogue on their shared extended neighborhood, which stretches from Istanbul to Islamabad and from Moscow to Mauritius. This Eurasian arc of growing instability is of critical importance to Brussels and New Delhi's aspirations to become net security providers and stabilize their peripheries. Whether on stemming refugee inflows, countering piracy and radicalization, supporting conflict resolution, or assisting in democratic transitions, the EU and India are on a converging path towards greater security cooperation in third countries.

Third, the formidable rise of China is swiftly altering the balance of power in the Eurasian heartland. Beijing has invested more than 50-billion euros into the EU since 2000 and developed new initiatives such as the "16+1" multilateral mechanism in Eastern Europe and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In line with similar outreach efforts to Japan, Australia, and other "middle powers," Delhi is therefore also reaching out to Brussels to diversify its options and counter-balance China's European offensive. Similarly, the EU is also bound to realize the costs of excessive dependence on China and, conversely, focus on the potential returns of developing India as an alternative Asian partner.

Fourth, there is the growing realization that a shared commitment to democratic governance strengthens EU-India bilateral cooperation. India now recognizes the value of European expertise in developing regulatory standards and benchmarks in an open society with competing interests, the rule of law, and an assertive civil society. Prime Minister Modi's efforts to expand state capacity and develop institutions that help India grow sustainably will benefit from the European experience, whether on cleaning the Ganga river, skilling youth, upgrading infrastructure, or modernizing the military.

Finally, the EU and India also have similar stakes in the liberal, multilateral order and to protect global commons cooperatively – from trade and the internet to nuclear non-proliferation and the freedom of navigation. In contrast with China, India's foreign and security policies are therefore in harmony with the "vital interests" that underpin the Brussels's external action, as defined in the EU's Global Strategy: "peace and security, prosperity, democracy and a rules-based global order."<sup>2</sup> Beyond a mere leap of

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1 European Union, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe," (2016), accessed April 10, 2017, [http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top\\_stories/pdf/eugs\\_review\\_web.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf).

2 Ibid.

democratic faith, Brussels and New Delhi will have to focus on these cardinal principles to explore the current window of opportunity for greater EU-India convergence.

## Design and Methodology

Building on this momentum, this short monograph suggests four key foreign and security policy areas for improving EU-India cooperation. These areas, covered as individual chapters in the book, are: securing Afghanistan, maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), conflict management and peacebuilding in their shared neighborhoods, and finally, developing responses to connectivity in Asia, particularly China's Belt and Road Initiative. We argue that these areas bring up common challenges and opportunities for both the EU and India, thus laying the groundwork essential for increased cooperation. Each chapter analyses the scope of cooperation, impediments that the EU and India face in working together, and outlines clear policy recommendations for overcoming these hurdles.

This book and its analysis are based on research conducted as part of the 2016 "EU-India Dialogues on Global Governance and Security," conducted jointly by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) and Carnegie India.<sup>3</sup> To investigate questions on EU-India security cooperation in detail and generate applicable and useful policy recommendations, the project conducted two 'policy dialogues' – in Brussels and New Delhi. The dialogues had two broad aims: first, to generate new perspectives by bridging the gap between academia and policymakers, and second, to foster interaction between European and Indian experts working on similar security policy issues. In doing so, the dialogues went beyond the usual pale of EU-India experts, and included the broader research and policy communities from both sides.

The two policy dialogues were attended by around 50 experts, including representatives from the EU Delegation to Delhi, European External Action Service, Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Embassy to Brussels, in addition to leading defense experts and researchers from think tanks and universities. The dialogues were designed as roundtables, with each policy issue area covered in separate working groups. Supported by structured facilitation, participants analyzed future opportunities and threats, and evaluated policy options and tools for enhancing security cooperation between the EU and India.

## Charting the Way Forward

The EU-India strategic partnership will not live up to its full potential unless they can jointly tackle common strategic challenges. As a starting point, the resumption of the EU-India Summit after a four year break can help foster a deeper relationship. The Agenda for Action 2020 document released after the summit outlines broad

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3 This project was made possible by the generous funding of the EU Delegation to India under its "Think Tank Twinning Initiative," 2016. The project team would also like to thank the EU Asia Center and DAI for their cooperation. More information on the project is available here: <http://www.gppi.net/issue-areas/rising-powers-global-governance/eu-india-dialogues/>.

areas for EU-India security cooperation<sup>4</sup>: it mentions concrete cooperation including information sharing between Europol and Indian agencies on counter terrorism on the one hand, but also cooperation on shared normative goals – including freedom of navigation in accordance with international law (UNCLOS), non-proliferation and disarmament, peacebuilding, and post-conflict assistance.

While there are overlaps between EU and Indian interests on these issues, practical cooperation will remain distant dream until existing impediments to partnership are removed. First, policy elites in India do not view the EU as a strategic actor and it will not be the first partner of choice on security issues – at least not until the EU manages to change how it is perceived in Delhi. Similarly, the EU continues to see India through the ‘trade’ lens. Finally, there are hardly any institutional interactions or dialogues on security issues where the EU and India can discuss the practical steps required for a closer cooperation. In order to overcome these impediments, the following steps are critical:

- Increase the EU’s visibility on security issues: the EU needs to move from the abstract to the practical and use its public diplomacy instrument to share information on key facts and figures where the EU has had a tangible impact. This should include information on CSDP missions, conflict resolution, and efforts in Afghanistan – of which there is little awareness in Delhi currently. In parallel to public diplomacy campaigns, the EU should consider expanding the EU Visitors Program to include mid-career Indian government officials, pairing Indian and EU officials from similar organizations to develop long-term synergies.
- Better connect strategic communities: Delhi and Brussels would benefit from closer interactions between the two strategic communities. The Think Tanks Twinning Initiative of the EU Delegation to India is a step in the right direction. Research fellowships and joint projects are essential for exploring potential areas of security cooperation.
- Institutionalize security dialogues: A truly strategic cooperation will only develop when policy makers from the EU and India develop a stronger understanding of common first and second-tier security interests. Developing targeted and well-designed track 1.5 and track 2 formats can provide a foundation for this process especially if they include military, police, and civilian specialists, as well as independent experts.

Beyond these broad recommendations, the following chapters will investigate the scope of EU-India cooperation in each policy area in greater detail.

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4 European Council, *EU India Summit: joint statement, agenda for action and joint declarations*, March 30, 2016. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/30-eu-india/>.

# Securing Afghanistan

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With the US seeking to limit its international role amidst domestic political resistance, India and Europe are facing increased pressure to take on greater international responsibilities. Delhi and Brussels are both pursuing a more ambitious role in international security affairs, and the imperative for strategic cooperation between them is growing. After 15 years of limited cooperation, India and the EU have the opportunity to join forces on promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. Despite extraordinary international attention paid to Afghanistan since the turn of the millennium, prospects for the current regime's failure have increased. A Taliban victory in Afghanistan would impose severe costs on India and Europe in terms of refugee inflows and terrorist threats. To prevent this, cooperation between India and the EU should be directed towards improving Kabul's odds of defeating the Taliban offensive and enhancing its leverage in the negotiations on regional reconciliation. This will require greater trilateral coordination between Kabul, Brussels and New Delhi, in conjunction with a dual track approach that demands short-term emphasis on political and military consultations on the changing ground conditions, along with with a long-term focus on continued economic assistance to strengthen a moderate and stable Afghan regime.

## Policy Recommendations

- **Security consultations:** Expand the working-level, low-frequency contacts on counterterrorism between EU and Indian domestic security institutions with a substantive and even more regular track between external security actors. This should include the sharing of intelligence and exchange of assessments between Indian and European security agencies in Brussels and Delhi as well as on the ground on the dynamic situation in Afghanistan. The EU and India should also not shy away from a frank dialogue on how best to leverage incentives and disincentives to ensure Pakistani cooperation to pressure the Taliban, facilitate reconciliation and strengthen the legitimate Afghan government.
- **Military coordination:** Create high-level exchanges between EU and Indian military establishments on the evolving situation in Afghanistan and coordinating their training and assistance missions. This requires joint EU-India training for Afghan military and police forces.
- **Political cooperation:** Increase political and diplomatic cooperation between the European Union and the Indian Foreign Ministry to heighten pressure on Pakistan to close the sanctuaries for the Taliban. Based on the US-India-Afghanistan trilateral, create a similar EU-India-Afghanistan trilateral consultative mechanism.



- Increase EU-India dialogue on the regional context shaping Afghanistan, including the Middle East and Iran, Central Asia, and the strategic implications of China's One Belt, One Road projects.
- **Development cooperation:** Develop joint EU-India capacity-building projects for the Afghan civil services and public administration.

## India and Europe as Security Actors

While most international attention has focused on the US-China rivalry in Asia, India and Europe have also shown signs of stepping up as security actors in third spaces between Eastern Europe and South Asia. This shift has been driven by the growing capabilities of emerging powers and the United States' scaling back of its costly international military commitments in response to declining domestic support. As a result, the call for emerging powers to take on a larger international security role has gained traction within the last few years.

But the notion of burden-sharing is far from a novel idea: among the Western allies it goes back to the 1970s, not only in Europe but also in Asia, where President Nixon unveiled the 'Guam Doctrine' in 1969. Long before Donald Trump's arrival as the nominee of the Republican Party for the 2016 presidential elections and his questioning of NATO's relevance, Washington had been pressing its allies in Europe and Asia to take a greater share of the burden in maintaining global order. Even at the peak of US power in the 2000s, Washington was eager to draw in allies and mobilize non-allies to join ad-hoc 'coalitions of the willing.' From the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan to the more-recent international mobilization against ISIS, the US has long sought the participation of as many countries as possible.

Notwithstanding the US effort to build international coalitions, there is no denying that the United States continues to bear the lion's share of the security burden. But political developments in the United States – including the intensive questioning of US military commitments from both the political left and the right – now suggest the current framework for distributing that burden needs to be reworked. This new assessment, slowly but surely, has begun to have an effect on both Europe and India. In the articulation of a new Global Strategy in the summer of 2016, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini affirmed: “a fragile world calls for a more confident and responsible European Union, it calls for an outward- and forward-looking European foreign and security policy.”<sup>1</sup> The new doctrine dispels the notion that Europe can be an exclusively civilian power. Rather, it emphasizes the importance of creating indigenous capabilities and institutions to act in the region and beyond while strengthening NATO. While the European contributions to security in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, have been substantive, they were largely seen – from Delhi, but also by many European experts – as adjuncts to American foreign policy. But today, amidst the prospects of US retrenchment, the EU talks of 'strategic autonomy' that demands sharing more burdens with the US where

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1 Federica Mogherini, foreword to *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, (June 28, 2016), [http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160628\\_02\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160628_02_en.htm).

possible and taking more independent responsibility where necessary. As Mogherini put it, “the EU will continue to deepen the transatlantic bond and our partnership with NATO, while also connecting to new players and exploring new formats to advance our Strategy.”<sup>2</sup>

Following in the footsteps of the EU, India has also moved toward ‘strategic autonomy,’ thus radically reinterpreting its own traditional notion of non-alignment. The move marks a decisive redefinition: if an independent Indian foreign policy in the past was about staying away from global conflicts, now it is about taking larger

## Abandoning its lone-ranger identity, India now seems willing to act in coalitions and share the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

responsibility in the international arena. In the words of its top diplomat, India is no longer content to be a balancing power; it wants to be a “leading power.”<sup>3</sup> This newly ambitious outlook can be attributed in part to the expansion of India’s material capabilities in the reform era. Emerging as the third largest economy in the world, with accelerating growth and significant military capabilities, India is building on this momentum to expand its international identity and responsibility.<sup>4</sup> While India has traditionally taken action in matters of regional security, as reflected in its commitment to Afghanistan since 2001, the idea of India as a net security provider is gaining traction within India’s strategic discourse.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, unlike in the past, Delhi has shown an eagerness to work with other powers. Abandoning its lone-ranger identity, India now seems willing to act in coalitions and share the burden of maintaining international peace and security.

In effect, both India and Europe are moving away from idealist notions of their international role and towards ‘principled pragmatism,’ which emphasizes hard power as much as soft power. With shifts in the international security landscape putting real pressures on both, Delhi and Brussels now seem more determined than ever before to cooperate and advance the so-far stagnant strategic partnership unveiled at the turn of the century. Regional cooperation between two forces, especially in Afghanistan, drew

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2 Federica Mogherini, “A Strategy to Unite and Safeguard Europe,” *Project Syndicate*, July 11, 2016, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/new-european-security-policy-by-federica-mogherini-2016-07>.

3 “Indian Foreign Secretary Subrahmanyam Jaishankar’s Remarks at the launch of Carnegie India,” Carnegie India, April 6, 2016, <http://carnegieindia.org/2016/04/06/indian-foreign-secretary-subrahmanyam-jaishankar-s-remarks/iwq8>. For a detailed analysis of the concept see, Ashley J. Tellis, “India as a Leading Power,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 4, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/04/04/india-as-leading-power-pub-63185>.

4 Mohan, C. Raja, *Modi’s World: Expanding India’s Sphere of Influence* (Noida: Harper Collins, 2015).

5 Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, *Net Security Provider: India’s Out of Area Contingency Operations* (New Delhi: Magnum Books: 2012); Mohan, C. Raja, “Rising India: Partner in Shaping Global Commons?” *Washington Quarterly* 33, no.3 (July 2010): 133-48

attention during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the European Union in March 2016. The joint statement issued at the end of the visit affirmed the commitment of India and the EU "for a sustainable, democratic, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan. They supported the ongoing efforts towards an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of peace and reconciliation, leading to an environment free of violence and terror. They welcomed the long-term commitment of the international community to Afghanistan in the Transformation Decade (2015 to 2024), and looked forward to the Brussels Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan of October 5, 2016 with an eye toward renewing the framework for international partnership and cooperation until 2020."<sup>6</sup>

## Avoiding Failure in Afghanistan

Despite their shared commitment to maintaining the present order in Afghanistan, Delhi and Brussels are aware of the very real prospect for failure in Afghanistan. Recent history provides little encouragement: the international community's objectives of stabilizing the post-Taliban regime in Afghanistan and defeating the forces of extremism have not been realized over the last decade and a half. The Taliban, secure in its sanctuaries across the Durand Line, has stepped up its offensive in Afghanistan. Even after internal leadership transitions – including Mullah Omar's death in 2013, followed by the killing of his successor, Mullah Mohammed Mansour by a US drone attack in May 2016 – the Taliban has maintained its ability to destabilize Afghanistan. With secure sanctuaries in Pakistan, it will not be easy to defeat the Taliban through the traditional means of counter insurgency. The Taliban has never fought conventional wars, and its focus has long been on preventing effective governance by the state through local terror. Meanwhile, the continued threat to its survival has begun to generate serious stress on the internal coherence of the regime in Kabul.

As the Taliban continues to wield significant power in the region, robust international support remains critical for the survival of the post-Taliban regime. But it is by no means clear that the international community's current level of economic and military commitments will be unaffected by the present mood of retrenchment in the United States and the West. The military presence of NATO and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, peaking at 130,000 troops from 51 NATO and partner nations from 2012 to 2013, is down to 13,079 troops from 39 contributing nations as of July 2016. The ISAF forces have ended their combat role and are now focused on training and assistance under the Resolute Support Mission. For almost a decade, the EU invested tremendous resources in the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan and in the Afghanistan National Army Trust Fund to train Afghanistan's military, police and judicial forces, but has now largely scaled back or discontinued these contributions. Although the Obama administration, the European Union and NATO have repeatedly affirmed their commitment to sustain international economic and military assistance to Kabul into the next decade, there is considerable anxiety in the region that a change in political mood within the Western democracies

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6 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of India, *India-EU Joint Statement on the 13th India-EU Summit, Brussels*, March 31, 2016, <http://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/26576/IndiaEU+Joint+Statement+on+the+13th+IndiaEU+Summit+Brussels>.

could change these commitments. The situation of the late 1980s, when the West turned its back on Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal, remains fresh in the memory of many in the region.

There is a risk that India, like the West, could also fail to sustain its substantial and longstanding commitment to Afghanistan. Since 2002, Delhi has offered significant resources for the economic development of Afghanistan. Its aid program, amounting to more than US\$2 billion, is one of the largest India has ever undertaken with the exception

The situation of the late 1980s, when the West turned its back on Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal, remains fresh in the memory of many in the region.

of programs in Bhutan and Nepal, which have been beneficiaries of Indian assistance since the middle of the last century. India's military assistance, in contrast, has been rather limited despite its commitment under the Strategic Partnership Agreement of 2011. As the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated in recent years, India has scaled down its aid program and has focused on completing the projects at hand rather than taking on additional ones. The Afghan government, on the other hand, has been putting pressure on India for more military assistance to cope with the challenge from the Taliban. While Delhi has traditionally tended to be cautious in responding to these requests from Kabul, there is hope for a renewed commitment to Afghan sustainability: instead of scaling back, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently signaled a commitment to step up and expand its economic and military support.

## Rethinking Strategy

Preventing the return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan requires more than an assessment of the size and quality of international commitment – both military and economic – to Kabul. It might also demand a fundamental change in the political premises of the international community's strategy in Afghanistan. The first premise relates to the Taliban: in the immediate aftermath of the removal of the Taliban, the international community focused on al Qaeda and had little interest in preventing the Taliban from regrouping and regenerating, either within or across Afghanistan's borders. Half a decade later, NATO tried and failed to root out the Taliban inside the country – not only because the Kabul government did not manage to deliver better governance on the local level, but also because the Taliban's sanctuaries across the border were not effectively addressed. Realizing this strategic oversight, NATO switched to “fight-and-talk,” in the vain hope that it could kill the “bad Taliban” to force the “good Taliban” to the negotiating table. That strategy did not work, either.

The targeted killing of the Taliban chief Mullah Mohammed Mansour in May 2016 showed the international community that it was possible to disrupt – if not altogether

defeat – the Taliban and decapitate its leadership if it chose to. But Washington has suggested that the drone strike against Mansour might be an exception rather than the rule; thus the hope remains that the Taliban can be persuaded to share power with Kabul through the good offices of Pakistan and now China. There was little support to this view within the administration of Hamid Karzai. However, his successor, President Ashraf Ghani, bet on the prospect for a reconciliation, though he largely gave up after two years of fruitless effort. It is no secret that the Taliban’s vision for Afghanistan

## Modi has recently signaled a commitment to step up and expand its economic and military support.

is not one that can be reconciled with the views of either Kabul or the international community. Betting on that hope will only delay the difficult but unavoidable imperative to defeat the Taliban.

The second problem is with the premise that Pakistan will help bring the Taliban to the negotiating table and support the stabilization of Afghanistan. It took a while for the international community to come to terms with the fact that the Pakistani army saw the Taliban and the Haqqani network as “veritable instruments” of its foreign policy in Afghanistan. After nearly a decade of failed efforts to stabilize Afghanistan, there is a growing sense that the gap between the interests of Pakistan’s security elite and those of the Afghan state are too large to be bridged, and the US needs to learn that its own influence over Islamabad is worth far less than what Washington had invested into that relationship. While the international community would like to see a sovereign and united Afghanistan, Islamabad would like to see Kabul presiding over a loose confederation that is locked in a special, deferential relationship with Pakistan. Islamabad’s commitment to such an outcome is deeply rooted in its geopolitical calculus and the historic evolution of the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although the United States and the West have been unable to persuade Pakistan to change its approach to the Taliban and Kabul, there is hope that the entry of China into the Afghan strategic theater could produce different outcomes. That China has enjoyed excellent relations with Pakistan for more than five decades, with their ties strengthening in recent years, would seem to support that proposition. It might also be reasonable to assume that China’s economic and diplomatic clout, coupled with Pakistan’s influence with the Taliban, might do the trick in stabilizing Afghanistan. But for the moment these are hopes rather than fact-based judgments. While China’s involvement in Afghanistan would be welcome, its ability to definitively shape outcomes in the region remains to be demonstrated.

## Towards Convergence

Despite common interests and extraordinary efforts deployed in Afghanistan, the EU and India have rarely engaged each other in a frank security dialogue due to a number of

strategic divergences. The scope of these differences is now rapidly narrowing, leading to a dynamic of convergence, which is particularly apparent in five areas.

## Role of Pakistan

Under ISAF, the EU and its member states' initiatives in Afghanistan depended on supply routes and support from the Pakistani military and intelligence establishments, especially after the post-2009 surge. This often forced Western states to go soft on Islamabad and neglect New Delhi's concerns about Pakistan as a safe haven for terrorist organizations, with links to the Taliban and targeting India. Brussels also regularly towed the Washington line, asking India to limit its assistance to Afghanistan to avoid upsetting the Pakistani Army.

Circumstances have now changed, facilitating a more frank EU-India dialogue on Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. As ISAF forces are down to a minimum, and several terror attacks in the West have been traced back to Pakistan, European governments are under rising public pressure to take a harder line on Islamabad. Billions of US dollars and Euros in assistance to Pakistan have ceased to make an impact, if they were ever effective at all. The EU cannot hide behind its supposed security irrelevance; rather, it can collaborate with India on effectively leveraging its role as Pakistan's largest trade partner, and a major source of development assistance, to compel its army to cease support for terrorist organizations, isolate the Taliban, and engage the democratic government in Kabul.

## Degree of India's Engagement

The EU's past dependence on Pakistan often sent mixed signals: for example, while the EU invited India to support state-building efforts in Afghanistan, it reproached many of its economic projects – such as road infrastructure in the South – for being driven by security interests and stirring a proxy conflict with Islamabad. As the USit reduces its presence in Afghanistan, voices in Washington have begun to reassess the Indian role, and are even encouraging New Delhi to “fill the vacuum” by bolstering Kabul with military assistance.<sup>7</sup> This has paved the way for New Delhi to adopt a bolder posture: in a first, it supplied attack helicopters and expanded its training programs for Afghan security officials.

With India taking a stronger stance, Brussels and New Delhi are finally on a converging route on how best to bolster Kabul against the Taliban offensive, which opens avenues for trilateral cooperation in the police and intelligence sectors. By building on and sharing their respective experiences in recent years, the EU and India can pool efforts to strengthen the Afghan state's capacity.

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7 See, for example: Hanauer, Larry and Peter Chalk, *India's and Pakistan's Strategies in Afghanistan: Implications for the United States and the Region*. (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), [http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional\\_papers/OP387.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/occasional_papers/OP387.html).

## Talking to the Taliban

Since it provided support to the Northern Alliance in the 1990s, India has been consistently opposed to any negotiation with the Taliban, which it sees as either a proxy Pakistani force or as a security threat to regional stability. After President Ghani's outreach to India, starting in 2015, New Delhi's incentives to engage in talks have been further reduced. The EU, on the other hand, has in past years played an active role through the Quadrilateral Coordination Group to engage the Taliban.

However, after the October 2016 ministerial conference in Brussels, there are now growing signs of convergence, as the EU revives its commitment and attempts to, at the very least, keep the Indian government in the loop about reconciliation efforts.<sup>8</sup> In India, some voices have also argued for some form of outreach to the Taliban.<sup>9</sup> Brussels and New Delhi can now develop a frank political dialogue on the potential and dangers of engaging the Taliban.

## Roping in Regional Powers

In the recent past, the EU and India often found themselves on diverging geopolitical tracks in Afghanistan's regional context. Brussels played hardball on Iran, supporting tough sanctions; after the crises in the Ukraine and in Syria, its relations with Russia deteriorated; the EU also engaged China on the One Belt, One Road initiative, which New Delhi is apprehensive about. India, on the other hand, has privileged engagement with, and has relied on Teheran and Moscow to circumvent Pakistan and develop alternative access routes into Afghanistan.

Following the Iran deal and a timid rapprochement between Brussels and Moscow, there is now scope for greater EU-India convergence on the regional environment and strategic connectivity plans. For example, the International North-South Transport Corridor, first announced in 2002, is being revived as an alternative to OBOR; moreover, India's related plans for the Chabahar port would benefit from the EU lifting sanctions on its banks operating in Iran. Brussels will need to realize that putting all its eggs into the OBOR basket may have long-term strategic and security implications, and that courting India via Russia and Iran will increase its own leverage over China.

## Joint Assistance Projects

For more than a decade, India and the EU talked past each other and executed their development assistance projects in isolation. New Delhi was wary of aligning itself with NATO and other Western powers, and concentrated most of its projects in the East. In

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8 Emmott, Robin and Hamid Shalizi, "World powers pledge \$15 billion for Afghanistan, EU seeks peace," Reuters.com, October 6, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-aid-idUSKCN1250UI>.

9 Arni, Anand and Pranay Kotasthane, "India, and the Taliban's changing dynamics," *The Hindu*, July 17, 2015, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/world-view-india-and-the-talibans-changing-dynamics/article7430357.ece>.

order not to provoke Pakistan and its “strategic depth” narrative, Brussels stayed away and European countries mostly focused on other areas.

With India committing to another US\$1 billion to Afghanistan and the EU recognizing the need for a more sustained presence to stabilize the country, there is an unprecedented scope for Indo-European convergence. Now India is willing to work with other “like-minded” powers in its extended neighborhood, opening up the possibility for joint development assistance projects. New Delhi has also moved away from the reactive hostility to “democracy promotion” and is keen on providing “democracy assistance” to Afghanistan, whether by constructing its parliament or providing training for electoral and parliamentary officials. By pooling their respective support programs, the EU and India can jointly play a crucial role in supporting Afghanistan’s nascent democracy.

## Conclusion

If the international community is unable to prevent a possible return of the Taliban to power in Kabul, there will be significant and far-reaching consequences – stretching well beyond international relations in South Asia and India. A Western defeat and retreat from Afghanistan will significantly boost jihadi terrorism across the world. Already, Pakistan’s permissive environment for extremism is proving fertile ground for a breakdown of state and society in one of the world’s largest Muslim nations equipped with a large nuclear arsenal. Certainly, India and Europe both have a vested interest in Afghanistan’s political stability and economic reconstruction. Yet it is important to come to terms with the fact that the two sides have acted independent of each other rather than in concert for more than a decade. This is partly due to the divergent assessments on how to achieve the goals of stability and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Until now, India and the European Union (and its key member states) have had major differences in their respective approaches to internal reconciliation in Afghanistan and between Kabul and Islamabad. Meaningful cooperation between India and the EU in Afghanistan will only be made possible by reducing differences and building on commonalities. As the United States’ geopolitical focus moves elsewhere, there will be no other option but to develop trilateral consultation and coordination mechanisms between Delhi, Brussels and Kabul.



# Regional Connectivity in Asia

GARIMA MOHAN

Promoting a rules-based, multilateral global order is a central goal of the EU global strategy on foreign and security policy, 2016. However, with the global shift of power towards Asia, the established multilateral system and international organizations are under increasing pressure. China is at the center of this challenge. Beijing-led multilateral arrangements have economic and geopolitical implications for Europe and India alike: they threaten Europe's centrality in the Eurasian neighborhood and markets, and could posit China as the primary actor in India's near neighborhood. And yet neither partner has found an effective approach to deal with these challenges. Looking closely at regional connectivity projects including the One Belt, One Road (OBOR), or Belt and Road initiative, this policy brief argues that they present similar opportunities and challenges for the EU and India alike. By building on these convergences, the two can revive their flagging strategic partnership and gain greater influence in shaping the regional order in Asia.

## Policy Recommendations

- **Promoting multilateralism:** The EU needs to develop a strategy for proactively engaging with new multilateral arrangements in Asia. To do so, it must utilize its strategic partnership with India more effectively, focusing especially on the emerging regional governance architecture in Asia.
- **Coordinating positions:** Common concerns on initiatives like OBOR offer new opportunities for deepening EU-India cooperation. Building on these strategic and normative convergences, European member states and India can develop coordinated positions in platforms such as the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), which will be used to fund OBOR projects. Similar strategy can be deployed when the New Development Bank (NDB) starts accepting members in 2017. However, this would require the EU to first develop a coordinated position among member states on dealing with new institutions.
- **Regional connectivity beyond OBOR:** India is in the process of articulating its position on regional connectivity and integration, which in rhetoric at least it is similar to the EU's vision. As India pushes for connectivity and infrastructure development within South Asia and with Southeast and East Asia, the EU can play a role through investments and capacity building to support regional integration. There is also significant scope for infrastructure development within India. While partners like Japan have used this opportunity to deepen their strategic partnership with India, the EU is yet to capitalize on it. Given rapid urbanization and initiatives like 'Make in India' which presuppose quality and resilient

infrastructure, the EU can play an important role and increase its visibility in India by investing in infrastructure development and linking to initiatives like Smart Cities.

## Introduction

According to its new Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, the EU's "primary foreign policy goal is to promote a rules-based global order with multilateralism as the key principle and the UN at its core."<sup>1</sup> Embedding the EU's interests and values in the international system directly supports European security, prosperity, and growth. However, as the geopolitical focus shifts towards Asia, the established multilateral system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, no longer reflects the modern geopolitical terrain. For these emerging powers, newer, more flexible platforms like BRICS, BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) and the India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA) are a useful counterbalance to the Western-dominated institutions. Much closer to a bricks-and-mortar reality in their focus on infrastructure development, the Beijing-led One Belt, One Road initiative and the AIIB are redrawing the map of the Asian continent, and are in direct competition with existing development banks and investment schemes. If the EU is to achieve its foreign policy goal of safeguarding a single, rules-based multilateral order, it will have to engage more proactively with these new arrangements.

This policy brief argues that as the EU engages with Asia, it needs to work with member states to invest in developing a more coherent approach towards new developments like OBOR and AIIB. At the same time, the EU should focus on reinvigorating its strategic partnerships with other countries in Asia, and in particular, India. As the other emerging Asian power, India views China-led initiatives with considerable trepidation. Like Europe, India is wary of the implications of OBOR, which will position China as an important actor in its neighborhood. But India also seeks to benefit from the opportunities that enhanced regional connectivity would provide. Given the similar opportunities and challenges both actors face, this policy brief argues that regional connectivity initiatives open new avenues for deepening EU-India cooperation. Not only could the two develop joint positions on key issues within institutions like the AIIB and on OBOR projects, but the EU could also cooperate on infrastructure initiatives pushed by India within South and Southeast Asia, thereby reinvigorating the EU-India strategic partnership.

## Competing Multilateralism and the EU

The EU promotes a rules-based multilateralism, which differs from the more relational forms emerging in the Asia-Pacific and espoused by emerging power constellations. The EU's doctrine of multilateralism is characterized by a preference for legally binding

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1 Keukeleire, S. and B. Hooijmaaijers, "The BRICS and Other Emerging Power Alliances and Multilateral Organizations in the Asia-Pacific and the Global South: Challenges for the European Union and Its View on Multilateralism," *J Common Mark Stud*, 52 (2015): 582-599.

commitments and international regimes as outcomes and instruments of cooperation.<sup>2</sup> These binding rules cover all policy fields – economic, environmental and social, as well as the internal organization of member states<sup>3</sup> – although participating states do not view them as an assault on national sovereignty. The EU had hoped this model of effective multilateralism would eventually become the global standard, with the EU at the core.<sup>4</sup>

The emerging powers, on the other hand, have opted for a fundamentally different kind of multilateralism based on a purely intergovernmental approach, as seen on platforms like BRICS. This form of multilateralism is characterized as ‘relational’ since it employs informal mechanisms for building consensus among like minded partners; it includes decision-making by consensus, absence of treaty obligations, respect for national sovereignty, prioritizing growth and development, and a reluctance to restrict economic growth with regulations on environment and human rights. In general, formal institutions play a much weaker role, with member states connected by relational rather than rules-based governance.

Yet, even if they do not generate binding rules, they do provide emerging powers with platforms to coordinate positions at international negotiations. Unsurprisingly given the unequal economic and political clout among the various “emerging” powers, China is increasingly taking a leadership role: it is consolidating its leadership of existing groups like BRICS while lobbying for the establishment of a permanent G20 secretariat in Beijing.<sup>5</sup> In the coming years, Chinese diplomacy will continue to promote more informal and flexible forms of cooperation, gradually reshaping global governance. At the same time, China will focus on regional leadership in Eurasia, raising concerns for Europe.

Despite the significant changes underway, the EU has yet to develop an effective policy to deal with the shifting power balance. In its engagement with emerging powers, so far the EU has used the instrument of strategic partnerships with individual BRICS countries. These partnerships, however, have not helped to overcome the different views and interests of the EU and emerging powers.<sup>6</sup> This gap is especially acute in Asia, where the EU has yet to play a significant role as a strategic actor, and where it is all too-often crowded out by its member states.

## Geopolitics of Connectivity

A driving force behind Asia’s growth in the global economy is its investment in infrastructure and regional connectivity – facilitating both international trade and

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2 Schmidt, Juliane, “The EU’s Multilateralism as Proactive Engagement” in *The EU Global Strategy: going beyond effective multilateralism?*, ed. Balazs Ujvari. (European Policy Centre, 2015): 13-16.

3 Keukeleire and Hooijmaaijers, 591.

4 European Security Strategy, *A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Brussels: European Union, 2003), <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

5 Ekman, Alice, *China’s multilateralism: higher ambitions* (Brussels: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2016), [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert\\_2\\_China.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Alert_2_China.pdf).

6 Renard, Thomas and Sven Biscop, “Conclusion: From global disorder to an effective multilateral order: an agenda for the EU” in *The European Union and Emerging Powers in the 21st Century. How Europe Can Shape a New Global Order* by Sven Biscop, ed. Thomas Renard (Routledge, 2012).

foreign direct investment on the continent.<sup>7</sup> However, major infrastructure deficits in the region remain, particularly in cross-border infrastructure. As a result, regional connectivity initiatives are on the rise in Asia. China's OBOR initiative, which aims to create a modern-day 'Silk Road' connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe over land and via sea routes, stands out as a particularly important development. Building on Xi's New Security Concept, which states that economic development is a precondition for security, it has been called "the most ambitious infrastructure-based security initiative in the world today."<sup>8</sup> And not without merit: it promises to unlock the vast potential of unexplored markets by building new infrastructure, institutions and inter-linkages. In fact, China has successfully prioritized infrastructure development not only on its own foreign and domestic agendas but also on the agendas of many multilateral institutions including the New Development Bank (NDB) and the AIIB – the latter especially cannot be decoupled from OBOR.

Reaching beyond Asia, OBOR posits China as the primary engine of economic development globally as well. Thus, the initiative has both economic and geopolitical implications: First, it is meant to favor China's geostrategic position and bring benefits to Chinese enterprises. Second, with financial integration and policy coordination as its two main pillars, there is also concern that OBOR may create a relationship of dependency between amongst China and several Asian countries. Although the EU and India each view the initiative with a degree of caution, neither has developed a coherent policy response to it. However, the similarity of the challenges and advantages facing both actors presents new avenues for cooperation within Asia that could benefit both.

For the EU, there is the concern that OBOR might threaten the centrality it holds in its Eurasian neighborhood – capturing market share and promoting regional frameworks developed in Beijing. Especially as China pursues a proactive policy towards less-developed countries both inside and outside the EU,<sup>9</sup> the scramble for Chinese FDI could further divide an already fraught union. In 2012, for instance, China launched a new framework dialogue with Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, including EU members, under the 16+1 Summit. These annual meetings with heads of governments are now combined with OBOR – as seen in case of the fourth summit held in Hangzhou last November. The 16+1 Summit is neither bilateral nor European and could prevent Brussels from developing a common policy response to OBOR. There is also a possibility that such frameworks could emerge in other parts of Europe.<sup>10</sup>

Benefitting from "better connections with Asia's dynamic economies,"<sup>11</sup> the EU also stands to gain from OBOR, especially by way of increased market access and the

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7 Biswa Nath Bhattacharyay, Masahiro Kawai, and Rajat M. Nag, eds., *Infrastructure for Asian Connectivity* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2016), <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/159325/adbi-infra-asian-connectivity.pdf>.

8 van der Putten, Frans-Paul and Minke Meijnders, *China, Europe and the Maritime Silk Road* (The Hague: Clingendael, 2015). <http://www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/China%20Europe%20and%20the%20Maritime%20Silk%20Road.pdf>.

9 Lisbonne de Vergeron, Karine. "India and the EU: what opportunities for defence cooperation?" (2015) [http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief\\_24\\_EU-India\\_defence.pdf](http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_24_EU-India_defence.pdf).

10 Ibid.

11 Jean-Claude Juncker, interview by Shuai Rong and Yan Lei, "Europe to benefit from China's One Belt, One Road initiative: EC chief," March 19, 2015, Xinhua, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/07/c\\_134219349.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-05/07/c_134219349.htm).

development potential of the countries along the route. So far, the EU has attempted to align OBOR with Europe's own infrastructure initiatives, but a cohesive, strategic collaboration has yet to be reached. The EU wants China to participate in the general

## While India is yet to formulate an official strategy and response to OBOR, it has raised questions about the kind of regional order China has in mind.

infrastructure framework operated by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), while China would obviously like to work with its own platforms. Moreover, there remain normative concerns about OBOR projects' potential to undercut existing multilateral standards for governance – especially the technical and environmental requirements the EU would like enforced. China's willingness to offer 'attractive' financing which might lead to market loss for EU companies, and of course there are broader strategic implications of China setting the rules in Eurasia.<sup>12</sup>

For India too, the initiative raises a number of strategic concerns. Foremost are concerns over national security raised by the planned China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which will pass through Indian-claimed territories. Further projects in India's near neighborhood, including Sri Lanka, the Maldives and the Indian Ocean Region – where India wants to play a leading role – are also cause for apprehension, as they encroach on India's perceived strategic domain. Thus, "the Indian view on OBOR is no longer one of indifference, but of concern."<sup>13</sup>

While India has yet to formulate an official strategy and response to the One Belt, One Road initiative, it has raised questions about the kind of regional order China has in mind. New Delhi rejects Beijing's characterization of OBOR as a physical connectivity project that will benefit all those involved, arguing instead that it was instituted without consulting those who would be affected by it. On several occasions, India has gone so far as to call OBOR a "national Chinese initiative" that is "unilateral" and that it is not "incumbent upon other countries to buy (into) it."<sup>14</sup> This is echoed in Indian concerns about "hardwiring" norms and conditions into the region's economy without building broad-based consensus.<sup>15</sup> Effectively, New Delhi complains that it is being denied its rightful place at the table of Asian geopolitics, elbowed out by China's

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12 Pavličević, Dragan, "China, the EU and One Belt, One Road Strategy" *China Brief* 15, no. 15 (2015), [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=44235&cHash=9dbc08472c19ecd691307c4c1905eb0c#.V7quE5h96Ul](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=44235&cHash=9dbc08472c19ecd691307c4c1905eb0c#.V7quE5h96Ul).

13 Sukumar, Mohan Arun, "How India is Running the Race for the Asian Century," *The Wire*, April 5, 2016, <http://thewire.in/27104/how-india-is-running-the-race-for-the-asian-century/>.

14 Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar, "India, the United States and China," speech at IISS Fullerton, 2016,, Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=et2ihw8jHaY&feature=youtu.be&t=46m27s>.

15 See remarks made by Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and S. Jaishankar at the Raisina Dialogues, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26432/Speech\\_by\\_External\\_Affairs\\_Minister\\_at\\_the\\_inauguration\\_of\\_Raisina\\_Dialogue\\_in\\_New\\_Delhi\\_March\\_01\\_2016](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/26432/Speech_by_External_Affairs_Minister_at_the_inauguration_of_Raisina_Dialogue_in_New_Delhi_March_01_2016).

“unilateral” approach. To ensure its position, India is crafting an alternative approach to regional connectivity – differing from China’s and already at work in a number of Indian connectivity initiatives in its neighborhood and Southeast Asia, as shown in the sections below.

Some within the strategic community in New Delhi are calling for a more nuanced approach to OBOR, and argue that India should take advantage of the infrastructure and trade benefits beyond the more controversial projects. For instance, they contend that India should get on board with strategic initiatives that stand to benefit the country – particularly the satellite imaging center in Vietnam, the Iran railway corridor, and the North-South Transport Corridor.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, OBOR is seen as a valuable way for India to gain reliable access to inner Asia, especially as Pakistan continues to refuse access to Afghanistan and Central Asia. India has long viewed Iran as its main gateway to these regions, as well as to Russia and Europe – OBOR projects give it an opportunity to build this gateway through enhanced road and rail connectivity in Iran. As India develops the Iranian port of Chabahar, it could also cooperate with China in developing other commercial links to Central Asia.

## **Normative & Strategic Convergences Create Room for EU-India Cooperation**

Spurred into action by the Belt and Road initiative, New Delhi is already reaching out to other interlocutors in Asia, voicing concerns over a unilateral Chinese approach and stating it will not be a “passive recipient of outcomes.”<sup>17</sup> While China champions the ‘Asia for Asians’ narrative to keep out established powers like the US, it is not in India’s interest to have a unipolar Asia. As India steps up its engagement with other actors like the US, Japan and Southeast Asia, there might be space for re-engaging with Europe.

Within this context of regional connectivity projects and an emboldened Chinese leadership, the EU and India’s strategic interests often converge – offering a viable path to reviving their partnership. Albeit nascent, India is attempting to articulate its own policy on connectivity which, in rhetoric at least, is closer to the EU’s vision. As seen in recent diplomatic interventions,<sup>18</sup> India has stressed the importance of existing multilateral frameworks like ASEAN, choosing to focus on the primacy of regional and sub-regional actors in norm-setting within Asian institutions, distinct from Xi’s top down approach for the Asian century.<sup>19</sup> In its engagements in the region, India has been endorsing a multilateral cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, showing a renewed interest in regional integration, and adopting norms that regulate the behavior of individual states in Asia.<sup>20</sup>

Building upon these convergences, regional connectivity initiatives could be an

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16 Sukumar.

17 Jaishankar.

18 Sukumar.

19 Ibid.

20 See Prime Minister Modi’s speeches on multilateralism in the Asia Pacific, specifically addressed at the International Fleet Review (2016), available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?reliid=136182> and 37<sup>th</sup> Singapore Lecture (2015), available at <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?reliid=131821>.

opportunity for the EU and India to find common ground. Doing so would also lend an element of strategic cooperation to the EU-India partnership, a goal that has been stressed many times in documents such as the Joint Action Plan and the Agenda for Action 2020, but has yet to be achieved.

As the EU looks to promote its vision of multilateralism in Asia, India could be an important ally. What this means in practical terms, beyond developing a common vision for Asia, could be coordination on voting in platforms within institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Bank, which will fund many OBOR projects. While China is the largest shareholder in AIIB, with 26 percent of voting rights, India is the second-largest shareholder with 7.5 percent of the voting rights, as the US and Japan refused to be founding members. European members together account for 21.8 percent.<sup>21</sup> If the European states were to collectively cooperate with India on key issues, Europe and India could gain a powerful voice in the bank.<sup>22</sup> To do so, the partners need to develop a shared agenda, especially on setting standards for finance, democratic governance of staffing and best practices for OBOR projects, which are also important for India. A

## As India develops its own approach to regional integration, it could emerge as an important partner for the EU.

similar strategy for EU-India cooperation could also be deployed in the NDB when it starts accepting members in 2017. However, the EU will first need to generate internal consensus among member states and formulate a common policy for dealing with new institutions such as the NDB.

China's increasing presence in nearly every South and South East Asian country is "causing New Delhi to rethink and reimagine its neighborhood approach,"<sup>23</sup> heightening its focus on social and physical infrastructure as a means of promoting closer cooperation within South Asia, and with Southeast Asia.<sup>24</sup> As the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) hits its usual roadblocks, India is reviving old institutions like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), which met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Goa this year. India is pushing for expanding the focus of the group beyond technical cooperation to include infrastructure development and connectivity between the countries. Additionally, India is involved in a number of connectivity initiatives in the North East, especially involving Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Thailand.<sup>25</sup> India

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21 Peterson Institute for International Economics, "Who will hold the power in AIIB?" (2015), <https://piie.com/research/piie-charts/who-will-hold-power-aiib>.

22 See also Kundnani, Hans "Is Europe out of Sync with India – and Asia?", *German Marshall Fund*, 2015, <http://www.gmfus.org/blog/2015/10/06/europe-out-sync-india-%E2%80%94-and-asia>.

23 Malik, Ashok, "Urgent need for new architecture for India's neighborhood policy," *Observer Research Foundation*, October 10, 2016, <http://www.orfonline.org/expert-speaks/urgent-need-new-architecture/>.

24 Asian Development Bank, "Regional Transport Connectivity in South Asia," <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/47341-001-sd-01.pdf>.

25 Paragraph 15.20, page 198, Twelfth Five Year Plan 2012-2017, Economic Sector, Government of India

recently announced a \$5 billion investment in regional connectivity projects in South Asia – which remains one of the least integrated regions in the world – to help facilitate trade and deal with infrastructure deficits that hinder integration. These include establishing integrated customs ports with Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan,<sup>26</sup> and developing economic corridors with the support of ADB. Since the EU’s larger goal in South Asia is to support regional integration, it could work with India in supporting these connectivity projects. The EU’s specific competencies lie in trade integration and export of regulatory frameworks; capacity building in South Asia through connectivity projects could be one way of supporting regional integration, as well as investments and technical cooperation.

In addition to the rise of China, the perceived withdrawal of the US is setting the stage for a revitalized EU-India partnership. Conscious of the void left by the US, India is seeking new partners in the region, but lacks the capacity to execute a grand OBOR-like project in the region on its own. By collaborating with the EU on investments and capacity building for its own infrastructure development projects, it could enhance connectivity within India and beyond its borders.

And finally, there is much scope for investment in infrastructure development within India. With the final destination and markets for OBOR remaining in Europe, India does not really stand to benefit from them. Instead, India has collaborated with countries like Japan to build infrastructure within the country, particularly in the northeastern region, which will eventually become a hub for regional connectivity in South East Asia. As a response to OBOR, Modi and Abe have pointed to the “synergies” between India’s Act East policy and Japan’s Partnership for Quality Infrastructure (PQI).<sup>27</sup> Japan’s footprint is already visible in India through projects such as high speed rail, industrial corridors and urban mass rapid transport systems. While PQI clearly adds a strategic dimension to Japan’s economic assistance programs, it also answers to Indian ambitions of playing a larger regional role. Collaborating on these initiatives has strengthened Indian-Japanese bilateral ties and their strategic partnership significantly, and presents a model that the EU could emulate in its own relationship with India.

Given India’s rapid urbanization, expanding markets, and policy priorities such as ‘Make in India’ which presuppose good and resilient infrastructure – infrastructure development is a vital and currently unexplored area for stepping up the EU-India technical cooperation. If it is linked to already established programs like the Smart City initiative or to infrastructure initiatives in politically important states such as Uttar Pradesh, it can also provide higher visibility and political capital to the EU in India.

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26 “India to develop regional connectivity projects worth \$5 billion in South Asia,” *The Hindu BusinessLine*, May 10, 2016, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/policy/india-to-develop-regional-connectivity-projects-worth-5-billion-in-south-asia/article8581464.ece>.

27 Mohan, C. Raja, “Raja-Mandala: A new way to Act East,” *The Indian Express*, December 15, 2015, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/a-new-way-to-act-east/>.



## Conclusion

Up until the summit in March 2016, the EU-India partnership has remained stagnant, with each actor appearing indifferent to the other. Policy makers in India do not perceive the EU as an important strategic partner; meanwhile, Brussels has established a better working relationship with China than India. But changing regional dynamics in Asia provide an opportunity for the two actors to break away from this trend. Regional connectivity is of immense importance to India in order to secure its growth, increase trade and expand its role in the region. Furthermore, development as infrastructure is a norm championed by most emerging countries including the BRICS. By partnering with India on regional connectivity as well as infrastructure development within the country and in its extended neighborhood, the EU and India can emerge as important partners.

As India develops its own approach to regional integration, it could emerge as an important partner for the EU. European cooperation with India until now has focused mostly on trade liberalization, while other strategic aspects were largely ignored. Given the change in Indian foreign policy and its more proactive approach towards shaping the regional dynamics in Asia, the time is ripe for the EU to align its interests more closely with the country. This is crucial not only to revive the flagging EU-India partnership, but also for the EU to achieve its aim of promoting effective multilateralism.

# Converging Interests in the Indian Ocean

CONSTANTINO XAVIER & DARSHANA M. BARUAH

The Indian Ocean today is critical for the future of the EU and India. The rise of piracy in the late 2000s demonstrated the pernicious effect non-traditional security threats can have on European and Indian economic growth prospects. While both aim to ensure a rules-based order, cooperative multilateralism, and sustainable growth and stability in the Indian Ocean Region, the European Union and India have rarely partnered to pursue these shared interests. Two deeply entrenched myths explain the absence of this dialogue and the consequent lack of cooperation: Indian perceptions of the EU as a strategic non-entity and irrelevant strategic actor beyond its borders; and similarly, European perceptions of an introverted India that is hesitant to take on a leadership role beyond South Asia and unwilling to work together with other middle powers. Based on consultations with policymakers and experts under the EU-India Policy Dialogue on Global Governance and Security, this brief emphasizes that, despite such perceptions, in practice the EU and India's initiatives in the Indian Ocean are widely congruent and complementary.

## **Policy Recommendations**

- The EU and India should move from occasional naval coordination to institutionalized cooperation through regular joint exercises and patrolling initiatives. They should focus on maritime cooperation in non-traditional security domains, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, which underline the Indian Ocean's significance as a global commons.
- They need to jointly develop and transfer defense equipment and devise common programs to build island states' coastal and naval capacity through training. Pursue a "blue revolution" by investing in maritime infrastructure, especially sea ports and communication networks, to connect and integrate the region as a distinct economic space.
- Emphasizing the potential of international law and norms to mitigate and solve disputes, the EU and India should strengthen existing institutions and create new ones that foster a multilateral and rules-based order.

## The Indian Ocean's New Centrality

Rising interdependence and connectivity highlight the fact that Europe and India's domestic security, stability, and wealth are increasingly reliant on a benign external environment in their extended neighbourhoods, which includes the Western Indian Ocean.

The Indian Ocean Region is home to over thirty states and one-third of the world's population. The EU and India rely predominantly (over 90 percent) on sea-based trade. Rich in natural resources, the Indian Ocean contains 62 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and 35 percent of its gas. Every day seventeen million barrels of oil, or 20 percent of the world's oil supply, travel by tankers through the Strait of Hormuz.<sup>1</sup> Although large amounts of oil reach Europe and the Americas via the Suez Canal and South Atlantic, the more important route is eastward, as Gulf oil provides nearly 75 percent of Asia's import needs.<sup>2</sup> Such floating economic assets have fueled a rising number of non-state actors, including pirates and terrorists, who have expanded their reach to disrupt security and stability. For the last ten years, the EU and India have taken the lead in various naval missions to counter such security threats in the Western Indian Ocean.

The region is also on the frontlines of the battle against climate change, which threatens to affect the integrity of island-nations like the Maldives and the Seychelles and the coastal areas of West Africa and the Bay of Bengal. Moreover, the three countries that produce the most refugees are Indian Ocean states – Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia – which also rank highly on the failed state index, and more than half of the UNHCR's "global population of concern" resides in Indian Ocean states.<sup>3</sup> Of the one million migrants and refugees that entered the EU in 2015, almost one quarter came from three Indian Ocean littoral states.<sup>4</sup> India also continues to offer a safe haven for thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar and Tamils from Sri Lanka.

The IOR is vulnerable to natural disasters as well: in 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami killed 228,000 people across the Indian Ocean, from Indonesia to Sri Lanka and beyond, and in 2008 Cyclone Nargis took 138,300 lives, mostly in Myanmar.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the increasing global demand for nuclear energy is further having a significant impact on uranium trade in the Indian Ocean, whose waters are increasingly threatened by the dumping of nuclear waste. More importantly, with the rapidly changing balance of power across Asia and the rise of China, the Indian Ocean is witnessing a new era of geopolitical competition that could quickly morph into militarization and conflict escalation.

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1 "Persian Gulf Oil and Gas Exports Fact Sheet" *Marcon International, Inc.*, <http://www.marcon.com/marcon2c.cfm?SectionListsID=93&PageID=771>.

2 Mohan Malik, *Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific: perspectives from China, India, and the United States*, (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 6.

3 Dennis Rumley, *The Indian Ocean region: security, stability and sustainability in the 21st century* (Melbourne: Australia India Institute, 2013), 49, <http://www.aii.unimelb.edu.au/publications/indian-ocean-security-and-stability>.

4 "Migrant crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts," *BBC News*, March 4, 2016, accessed March 13, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>.

5 "Indian Ocean Tsunami: Then and now," *BBC News*, December 25, 2014, accessed February 13, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-30034501>.

## The EU's Maritime Extroversion and Initiatives

By looking southeast towards the Indian Ocean as a new priority area, Brussels is heralding a new era in the EU's external strategy, marked by a shift from a continental to an oceanic outlook. The Indian Ocean currently assumes a central role in the EU's extroverted maritime outlook. With more goods and services travelling between Europe and Asia than across the Atlantic, 90 percent of the EU's external trade and 40 percent of its internal trade is transported across seas. European ship owners manage 30 percent of the world's vessels and 35 percentage of world shipping tonnage, representing 42 percent of the value of global seaborne trade.<sup>6</sup> The EU is also a resident actor in the Indian Ocean: 85 percent of France's exclusive economic zone, the second largest in the world, is located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, along with 1.6 million of French citizens.

After 1945, the European Union flourished as one of the boldest political and economic projects of the modern era, but this extraordinary experiment now faces significant challenges. At the internal level, economic recession and the rise of populism have strengthened anti-Europeanist currents that were further emboldened by the outcome of the Brexit referendum. At the external level, the United States' global retrenchment and President Donald Trump's skepticism about the transatlantic security partnership have forced Brussels into a realist rethink.

How can the EU be taken seriously if it is seen to lack, for example, the most elementary capabilities to secure its borders and act as a single strategic entity in its periphery and beyond? Beyond traditional security threats – whether it is conflict in the Middle East, the rise in terrorism, or cyber-attacks – are European states prepared to collectively address a variety of new internal and external threats to their continent's stability and wealth? Commenting on these concerns in 2015, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini said to her Asian counterparts: “please don't look at us just as a big free trade area: the European Union is also a foreign policy community, a security and defense provider.”<sup>7</sup> If only in words, such appeals and consequent thought exercises seem to have started to affect the EU's external outlook and presence worldwide, replacing its previously lofty and idealist statements with a more strategic framework.

Reflecting this transition, the EU's new global strategy launched in 2016 develops a pragmatic set of recommendations that question the traditional boundaries of European strategic imagination – hitherto a perpetual and self-sustaining island of peace. Nowhere is this new pragmatism more apparent than in the maritime security domain and its increased focus on EU presence in its extended neighborhood; this involvement is especially evident in the Gulf of Aden, which builds upon previous efforts in the European Security Strategy (2003) and the EU NAVFOR experience there in recent years. Brussels sees stability in the Indian Ocean as a requirement for its own

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6 European Commission, *Towards an EU integrated approach to global maritime security*, March 6, 2014, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-14-224\\_en.htm?utm\\_source=mare\\_newsroom&utm\\_medium=Website&utm\\_campaign=mare&utm\\_content=Towards%20an%20EU%20integrated%20approach%20to%20global%20maritime%20security%20&lang=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-14-224_en.htm?utm_source=mare_newsroom&utm_medium=Website&utm_campaign=mare&utm_content=Towards%20an%20EU%20integrated%20approach%20to%20global%20maritime%20security%20&lang=en).

7 Federica Mogherini, “Speech at IISS Shangri-La Dialogue,” May 2015, [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/6254/speech-by-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-at-the-iiss-shangri-la-dialogue-2015\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/6254/speech-by-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-at-the-iiss-shangri-la-dialogue-2015_en)

internal stability and sustained economic growth. The strategy thus emphasizes “the need for global maritime growth and security, ensuring open and protected ocean and sea routes critical for trade and access to natural resources,” and pledges that “the EU will contribute to global maritime security, building on its experience in the Indian Ocean.”<sup>8</sup>

The European Union Maritime Security Strategy (2014) spells out the EU’s new maritime interests in detail: territorial security, international maritime cooperation and peace, protection of critical maritime infrastructure, freedom of navigation, protection of economic interests at sea, common situational awareness, effective management of EU’s maritime areas and external borders, and environmental security.<sup>9</sup> The strategy

By looking southeast towards the Indian Ocean as a new priority area, Brussels is heralding a new era in the EU’s external strategy, marked by a shift from a continental to an oceanic outlook.

also tackles maritime awareness, surveillance, and information-sharing by attempting to break a ‘silo approach’ through cross-sectoral coordination and interoperability; cross-border surveillance cooperation and information exchange; consistency between the EU’s internal approach and CSDP operations; and development of the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE).

The EU has thus developed a series of initiatives and acquired a niche expertise in the Indian Ocean. Most of these initiatives have a multilateral and institutional dimension, which is largely congruent with India’s emphasis on creating cooperative frameworks to address common challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

Under MASE (Programme to Promote Regional Maritime Security), the EU has enhanced maritime security in the Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean Region (ESA-IO), creating a favorable environment for economic development. Adopted during the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Level Regional Ministerial Conference on Maritime Piracy held in Mauritius in 2010, MASE focuses on the implementation of the Regional Strategy and Action Plan against Piracy and for Maritime Security and has the Indian Ocean Commission as a lead partner. By strengthening maritime capabilities and fostering regional coordination and information exchange in the Western Indian Ocean, MASE effectively contributed to its stabilization in recent years.<sup>10</sup>

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8 High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, “Joint Communication to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions” (2016), accessed March 13, 2017, [https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/join-2016-49\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/sites/maritimeaffairs/files/join-2016-49_en.pdf).

9 European Commission, “Maritime Security Strategy,” [http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime-security\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime-security_en).

10 European Union External Action, “Program to Promote Regional Maritime Security (MASE)” (2016), [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8407/program-promote-regional-maritime-security-mase\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8407/program-promote-regional-maritime-security-mase_en).

The EU CRIMARIO project was launched by the Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) program in order to increase awareness about potential risks or threats in the Indian Ocean (known as maritime situational awareness, or MSA), together with capacity building, information data sharing, and improvement of maritime governance. First implemented in 2015, the project is expected to run until 2019, with a budget of €5.5 million. It seeks to support Indian Ocean coastal countries in sharing data from various maritime sources such as national and international agencies, the maritime industry, and nongovernmental organizations, in order to support maritime security.<sup>11</sup>

The European Union provides around 80 percent of the total financial support given to the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), an inter-governmental organization institutionalized in 1984, which comprises five Indian Ocean nations: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles. European support, amounting to around 80 million euros, focuses on facilitating the sustainable development in the fields of energy, fisheries, and macroeconomic policies.<sup>12</sup>

The Regional Integration Support Programme (RISP 2) continuation program was established under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) with the overall objective of contributing to regional integration in East and South Africa and the Western Indian Ocean as a means to enhance stability and economic growth. Between 2007 and 2013, the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF allocated a total of €645 million to this region.<sup>13</sup>

In line with India's efforts, the EU has also developed force projection capabilities in the Indian Ocean to combat non-traditional security threats. The first counter-piracy mission of the EU Naval Force, EU NAVFOR Somalia (Operation Atalanta), was established in 2008 off the Horn of Africa and in the Western Indian Ocean.<sup>14</sup> It focused on protecting Somalia-bound vessels and shipments belonging to the World Food Programme and the African Union Mission to Somalia. In 2012, the EU also mandated the EUCAP Nestor mission to build up the maritime capacity of regional navies. European naval forces also cooperate with the multinational Combined Task Force 151 of the US-led Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and NATO's anti-piracy operation Ocean Shield.

Finally, beyond the Western Indian Ocean, the EU is actively reaching out to its eastern shores, an area that has been at the heart of India's Act East policy. The EU has thus invested close to 200 million Euros to support the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) integration project and, in 2015, held a high level EU-ASEAN dialogue on piracy, maritime surveillance and port security, while also expressing interest in a closer security and defense engagement with the ASEAN Regional Forum.<sup>15</sup> As New Delhi focuses on bridging the Bay of Bengal to connect with Southeast Asia, this offers an additional region to develop EU-India cooperation.

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11 European Commission, "EU CRIMARIO: Enhancing Maritime Situational Awareness in the Indian Ocean" (2015), [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-crimario-enhancing-maritime-situational-awareness-indian-ocean\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-crimario-enhancing-maritime-situational-awareness-indian-ocean_en).

12 Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius, to the Union of the Comoros, and to the Republic of Seychelles, "Indian Ocean Commission," [http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/mauritius/regional\\_integration/indian\\_ocean\\_commission/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/mauritius/regional_integration/indian_ocean_commission/index_en.htm).

13 European External Action Service, "Delegation of the European Union to Zambia and COMESA" (2016), [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet-2016\\_final.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/factsheet-2016_final.pdf).

14 European Union External Action, EU NAVFOR, <http://eunavfor.eu/mission>.

15 Federica Mogherini, "Speech at IISS Shangri-La Dialogue."

## India Steps up to Lead

The Indian Ocean is the primary area of importance for the Indian Navy, and stability in these waters is crucial for New Delhi's maritime security environment. India has always played a leading role through initiatives to secure the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) community. While the Indian Navy needs many more capabilities to become a net security provider, it has been a leading contributor in the region. In the strategic sphere too, New Delhi has led efforts to foster dialogue amongst its littoral states to share threat assessments and develop new instruments to overcome common challenges. India's increasing emphasis on multilateral initiatives and institutional mechanisms' importance for promoting regional cooperation and integration aligns with the European approach to the region.

India has deployed ships in the Gulf of Aden since 2008 to keep maritime highway safe for trade and commerce. The Indian Navy patrols the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), a distance of 490 nautical miles in the Gulf of Aden.<sup>16</sup> It also contributes to other anti-piracy missions in the region, such as NATO's Operation Ocean Shield and the EU NAVFOR Atlanta to combat Somali-based piracy. India now regularly participates in SHADE (Shared Awareness and Deconfliction) meetings held in Bahrain, which brings together operations under NATO, EU, the US-led Coalition Maritime Force, the maritime industry, and various navies deployed in the region. Despite occasional overlap in scope and mandate, the Indian and European missions reflect a shared concern and similar outlook on how to cooperatively address a common security threat.

On Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), there is also significant scope for greater EU-India cooperation. As a "low-hanging fruit," such missions can utilize India's rich operational experience in the Indian Ocean, as well as its European coordination capacity and expertise. In the natural disaster-prone IOR, India has played a leading role in Search and Rescue (SAR) operations and assisting rehabilitation after calamities. India has been quick to respond to disasters like the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, Cyclone Sidr (Bangladesh) in 2007, Cyclone Nargis (Myanmar) in 2008, and it contributed toward search and rescue efforts for Malaysian Airline MH370 in 2014. The Indian Navy was also the first to respond to the Maldives fresh water crisis in 2014, and in non-combatant evacuation operations from conflict zones in Lebanon (2006), Libya (2011), and Yemen (2015).<sup>17</sup>

Nowhere is the potential for EU-India cooperation in the Indian Ocean more apparent than in their common efforts to foster governance through multilateral institutions. One of New Delhi's first initiatives toward building an IOR community was the creation of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). Borne out of discussions between South Africa and India in 1995, IORA seeks to explore "socio-economic cooperation and other peaceful endeavors."<sup>18</sup> While IORA has regular meetings among

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16 Ministry of Defence, Government of India, "Anti Piracy Operations" (2016), accessed March 13, 2017, <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/anti-piracy-operations>.

17 Constantino Xavier, *India's Expatriate Evacuation Operations: Bringing the Diaspora Home.* Carnegie India Policy Paper. (New Delhi: Carnegie India, 2017), <http://carnegieindia.org/2017/01/04/india-s-expatriate-evacuation-operations-bringing-diaspora-home-pub-66573>.

18 Indian Ocean Rim Association, "Background," accessed March 13, 2017, <http://iora.net/about-us/background.aspx>.

senior officials of the members, dialogue partners, and observers, in 2014 India initiated the Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) to discuss issues pertaining to geo-politics and security challenges in the IOR.<sup>19</sup>

The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is another key initiative from the Indian Navy to discuss IOR challenges in an open and free platform. While the IOD brings together policymakers and government officials, IONS serves as a platform among the littoral navies to share threat perceptions and security challenges in the region. India also hosts MILAN, a biennial naval exercise among the littoral navies of the Bay of Bengal and Southeast Asia. New Delhi is now keen to build new partnerships and expand its naval exercises both at the bilateral and multilateral level.

An important goal of the Indian Navy's strategy is to develop its maritime domain awareness (MDA), as reflected in its revised maritime strategy of 2015. Through surveillance and analysis, India aims to boost its preparedness and presence in the maritime domain to ultimately emerge as a net security provider. MDA is aimed at increasing "situational awareness" at sea in order to better respond to any kind of scenario in the IOR.<sup>20</sup> Along with installing radar networks on its islands and 7,500 kilometer coastline, the Indian Navy is installing radar networks on the Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka. The Indian Navy assists these island nations in patrolling their vast exclusive economic zones by deploying its surveillance vessels and aircrafts as well as by undertaking infrastructure construction and commissioning patrol vessels.<sup>21</sup> India's focus on island states is similar to European efforts to develop information-sharing and to increase MDA in East African littoral states. At the first IORA leaders' summit in March 2017, New Delhi proposed to host an Information Fusion Centre to coordinate MDA among the IOR members.<sup>22</sup>

Through establishing consultative and institutional frameworks in a transparent and inclusive process, the Indian Navy has been a key contributor toward peace and security in the region. Keeping the Indian Ocean free of threats is of critical importance to India's maritime security strategy. The security environment in the Indian Ocean is rapidly changing today as the Indian Ocean continues to emerge as the new theatre for geo-political competition. Much of this new focus on the Indian Ocean is driven by China's formidable rise in the region. As a key stakeholder in the region, India's priorities are focused on keeping the region stable and secure through a rules based order.

While India continues to modernize and enhance its naval capabilities, its expertise and multilateral approach in the Indian Ocean form a strong foundation from which to explore partnerships with the European Union, which is still a relative newcomer in the region.

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19 Sujata Mehta, "Secretary (ER&DPA)'s address at the first Indian Ocean Dialogue held under the Indian Ocean Rim Association [IORA] at Kochi," (September 6, 2014), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, [http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23983/Secretary\\_ERampDPAs\\_address\\_at\\_the\\_first\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_Dialogue\\_held\\_under\\_the\\_Indian\\_Ocean\\_Rim\\_Association\\_IORA\\_at\\_Kochi](http://mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/23983/Secretary_ERampDPAs_address_at_the_first_Indian_Ocean_Dialogue_held_under_the_Indian_Ocean_Rim_Association_IORA_at_Kochi).

20 For a detailed understanding of India's need for MDA please see: Ministry of Defence, Government of India, "Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy" (2015), [https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy\\_Document\\_25Jan16.pdf](https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/sites/default/files/Indian_Maritime_Security_Strategy_Document_25Jan16.pdf).

21 Darshana M. Baruah, "Expanding India's Maritime Domain Awareness in the Indian Ocean," *Asia Policy*, no. 22 (2016): 49-55.

22 Remarks by Vice President at the 1st IORA Leaders' Summit in Jakarta (March 07, 2017), Ministry of External Affairs, March 07, 2017, available at [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/28119/Remarks\\_by\\_Vice\\_President\\_at\\_the\\_1st\\_IORA\\_Leaders\\_Summit\\_in\\_Jakarta\\_March\\_07\\_2017](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/28119/Remarks_by_Vice_President_at_the_1st_IORA_Leaders_Summit_in_Jakarta_March_07_2017)



## Moving Forward: Policy Recommendations

How can the EU and India leverage their shared interests, similar initiatives, and common objectives to promote stability, peace, and development in an open Indian Ocean order? The European Union's Maritime Security Strategy (2014) and India's Maritime Strategy (2015) reflect converging areas and positive momentum. This section puts forward specific policy recommendations across five areas that have an extraordinary potential to further accelerate Indo-European synergies in the Indian Ocean Region.

### Move from Coordination to Cooperation

Both the Indian Navy and the EU NAVFOR have operated side by side in the Gulf of Aden and across the Indian Ocean to counter piracy and secure sea lines of communication. This ad hoc coordination of efforts must now give way to greater coordination and occasional integration across a wider theater of operations beyond just patrolling and deterring piracy. Indian and European naval forces must institutionalize their engagements, for example through a regular dialogue to share threat assessments in the Indian Ocean Region. Beyond naval officers, these interactions should also include other security actors, including officials from the diplomatic and intelligence domains. Brussels and Delhi should also consider holding a joint naval exercise between EU NAVFOR and the Indian Navy, which would be the first of its kind.

### Focus on Non-Traditional Security Domains

The EU is still struggling to develop its distinct security presence beyond Europe. Even if only in rhetoric, India's past commitment to self-reliance and non-alignment occasionally still hinders its investment in multilateral initiatives. While still committed to its non-alignment policy, New Delhi however is beginning to work closely with a number of friends and partners on areas of common interests. Brussels and New Delhi should focus on the "softer" and non-conventional domains of naval security in the Indian Ocean, for example by exchanging best practices, promoting joint exercises, and taking coordinated action on issues relating to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). This could include disaster mitigation and expatriate evacuation operations, as well as issues relating to the preemption of environmental degradation and monitoring migration. Given the risks of instability in the Gulf and the larger Middle East regions, including in Afghanistan, the EU and India should foster a close dialogue on preempting and managing refugee flows.

### Jointly Develop and Transfer Defense Equipment

Both India and the EU have invested significant resources in the Indian Ocean's littoral and small island states' capabilities to secure their exclusive economic zones. Congruent with the EU CRIMARIO project, in recent years India has sanctioned radar systems,

offshore patrol vessels, coast guard launches, and naval reconnaissance aircrafts to Mauritius, the Seychelles and other states in the region. Besides delivering such assets separately, Delhi and Brussels should develop communication channels to coordinate their respective efforts in order to avoid redundancies, for example through a regular security dialogue on the Indian Ocean Region. They should also consider jointly training coast guard and naval personnel, from Mozambique to Malaysia. More importantly, India and the EU must consider leveraging their export-competitive naval industries to consider joint production of patrol boats, radar systems, among a wide range of equipment. Finally, in order to increase synergy and explore comparative advantages, the European Defence Agency must be encouraged to take on a more proactive role in partnering with Indian organizations such as the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), which are at the forefront of developing and implementing new defense technologies that can be deployed in the surface, underwater, aerial, and spatial domains across the Indian Ocean.

## Invest in Infrastructure to Connect and Integrate

The EU's Blue Growth Initiative, which seeks to harness maritime wealth from everything from fisheries to tourism, energy and resource extraction, corresponds with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for India to embrace a "Blue Revolution." In the Indian Ocean, however, this will first require significant investments in connectivity and infrastructure projects that can facilitate the emergence of the region as an integrated economic and geopolitical space. With reference to the International Maritime Organization's 2017 Maritime Day theme, "Connecting Ships, Ports and People," the EU and India should develop a strategic plan that implements the concept of the Indian Ocean as a dense maritime communication network. New Delhi should rope in European expertise and investments in its efforts to upgrade Indian coastal ports and facilitate their direct connectivity with smaller littoral and island states in the Indian Ocean.

## Strengthen Institutions and the Rules-Based Order

Reflecting their democratic nature and their reluctance to rely exclusively on bilateral power projection strategies, the EU and India have dedicated significant resources to institutionalize cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. Such a shared normative commitment towards multilateralism, should lead both sides to pool their resources to strengthen existing organizations and create new ones where necessary. In their joint statements, Brussels and New Delhi should make more explicit references to the importance of the rule of international law for governing the Indian Ocean as a global commons and emphasize the centrality of UNCLOS to conflict resolution in the maritime domain. Their statements should be supported by a frank Indo-European dialogue on how existing legal mechanisms can be expanded to let the Indian Ocean Region lead by example regarding the peaceful settlement of maritime disputes. At the institutional level, the Indian government should ensure that the EU becomes a partner member of the IORA and is involved in the IONS, while the EU, in turn, could

facilitate India's engagement with the IOC and other initiatives on the East African littoral region.

## **Towards Convergence Across the Ocean**

The European Union (EU) and India have shared interests and objectives in the maritime security domain, which offers an extraordinary potential for coordination and cooperation across the Indian Ocean Region: The EU has recently adopted a more extroverted and pragmatic outlook on the importance of stability, growth, and security in regions beyond its immediate periphery. Similarly, India is investing in unprecedented resources to consolidate its role as a leading power in the wider Indian Ocean Region.

Whether on the narrow naval security front or on the wider, multilateral, normative and economic front, Brussels and New Delhi must take further steps now to actualize the potential for greater cooperation and joint action. Greater Indo-European convergence and engagement will help to ensure that the Indian Ocean – a key space for geopolitical competition and host to a variety of security challenges – is able to attain sustainable growth and stability through cooperative frameworks and a rules-based order.

# Managing Conflict, Building Peace

PHILIPP ROTMANN & GARIMA MOHAN

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

- **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.

## Introduction

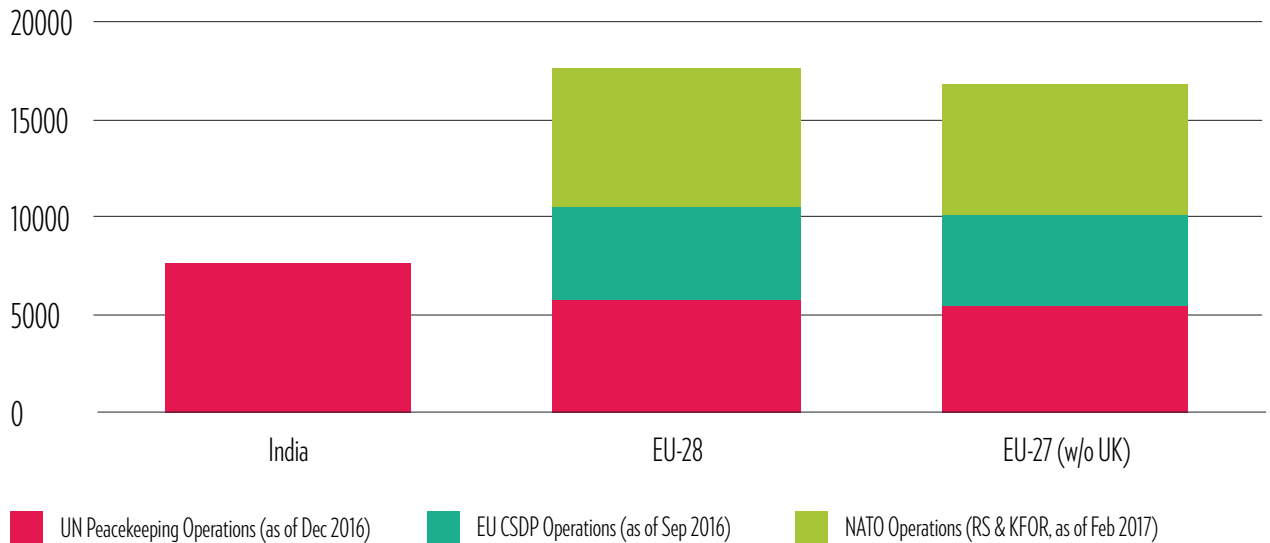
The EU-India strategic partnership calls for jointly promoting comprehensive security and identifies “peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and post-conflict assistance” as important priorities for developing the bilateral relationship.<sup>1</sup> Progress on this goal has been limited so far, but not 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)

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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%3Arl4100>.

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



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 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

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>.

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-conflict assistance – or crisis management, stabilization, and peacebuilding, to use terms 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.

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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.

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://eas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations\\_en](https://eas.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).

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 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

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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.



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

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

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 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 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. 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

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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>.

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.

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>

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

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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/>.

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>.

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>

## 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.

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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).

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=eEpihohl>

## 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 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 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

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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/>.

20 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>.

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

## 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.

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.

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

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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.

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 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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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>.

# Annex: Participants From the Policy Dialogues in Brussels and New Delhi

First EU-India Policy Dialogue on Global Governance and Security  
Carnegie Europe, Rue du Congrès 15, 1000 Brussels  
Thursday, September 15

- Alka Acharya, Director and Senior Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies Delhi
- Fraser Cameron, Director, EU-Asia Center
- James Flett, Deputy to the Director, WTO Team, European Commission Legal Service
- Elena Flores, Director, International Economic and Financial Relations, Global Governance, Directorate General for Trade, European Commission
- Andrea Frontini, Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre
- Vaclav Haas, Research Assistant, Carnegie Europe
- S. Inbasekar, First Secretary (EU), Embassy of India, Belgium
- Paul Ivan, Senior Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre
- Frederica La China, Research Analyst, European Institute for Asian Studies
- Rakhee Mayuri, Third Secretary, Embassy of India, Belgium
- C. Raja Mohan, Director, Carnegie India
- Garima Mohan, Research Associate, Global Public Policy Institute
- Peter Nagy, Deputy Head of Division, India, Nepal, Bhutan, European External Action Service
- Michael Reiterer, Principal Advisor, Asia and Pacific Department, European External Action Service
- Thomas Renard, Senior Research Fellow, Egmont—The Royal Institute for International Relations
- Philipp Rotmann, Associate Director, Global Public Policy Institute
- Juliane Schmidt, Junior Policy Analyst, European Policy Centre
- Raghav Sharma, Assistant Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs
- Shivnath Thukral, Managing Director, Carnegie India
- Balazs Ujvari, Research Fellow, European Policy Centre
- KN Vaidyanathan, Chief Risk Officer, Mahindra India
- Constantino Xavier, Associate, Carnegie India



Second EU-India Policy Dialogue on Global Governance and Security  
Carnegie India, 12 Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Road, New Delhi, 110011  
Thursday, November 3, 2016

- S S Bakshi, DACIDS (Net Assessments)
- Duccio Bandini, EU Delegation
- Darshana Baruah, Research Analyst, Carnegie India
- Soumita Basu, Assistant Professor, South Asia University
- Ummu Salma Bava, Professor of European Studies, JNU
- Ruchita Beri, Senior Research Associate, IDSA
- Benjamin Cabouat, Second Counsellor, Embassy of France
- Anil Chopra, Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House
- Marco Corsi, DAI-Europe
- Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, Former Ambassador to EU
- Ioannis Ferentinos, EU Delegation
- Arushi Kumar, Research Assistant, Carnegie India
- Nishant Kumar, Director (Military Affairs), MEA
- Gerrit Kurtz, GPPi / KCI
- Sanjiv Langer, Armed Forces Tribunal, Former Chief of Pans for Africa, UNHQ
- Alexander McLachlan, EEAS
- C. Raja Mohan, Director, Carnegie India
- Garima Mohan, Research Associate, GPPi
- Axelle Nicaise, EU Delegation
- Naveen Kumar Nijhwan, OSD (PP&R), MEA
- Anil Patni, DAI Europe
- Alok Prasad, Former Ambassador to Japan
- Philipp Rotmann, Associate Director, GPPi
- Bijay Selvaraj, Deputy Secretary, Policy Planning, MEA
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