

INDIA'S EVOLVING SECURITY RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

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India's security relations with Africa have centred around providing training to African security personnel, participation in United Nations peacekeeping efforts in the region and maritime cooperation. In 2008 India initiated a new phase in its relations with the continent by hosting the first India Africa Forum Summit. This summit evolved a framework for India-Africa cooperation in multifarious fields, including peace and security issues. The third India Africa Forum Summit in October 2015 calls for a closer look at India's evolving security ties with Africa.

In recent years the African continent has witnessed rapid economic growth. During the last decade Africa was the fastest growing region in the world with an average annual growth rate of 5.1 per cent. As a result Africa has moved from being perceived as a "hopeless continent" to a region that is rising. However this transformation may not last for long if efforts are not made to check the never-ending cycle of conflict in the region. Over the last fifty years, more than half the African states have been ravaged by conflict, at one time or another. While there has been considerable decline in interstate wars, intra-state wars are on the rise. Another important trend is that the conflicts are not only between state and non-state actors, there is also a rise in conflicts between different non-state actors. This trend is visible in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Other African countries such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, South Sudan, the Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic have also been prone to conflict in recent years. At the same time an arc of instability is spreading across the continent with

terror groups, such as the Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao), Signed in Blood Battalion, Islamic Movement for Azawad (IMI) in Mali to the Al Shabab in Somalia, crafting chaos in the region. The advent of piracy in Indian Ocean littoral states in East Africa (though now curtailed) and the Gulf of Guinea region in West Africa has added to the insecurity in the region.

The enduring nature of African conflicts may be due to multiple factors such as poor governance, incomplete process of state building, corruption, and struggle for control of resources. While African countries, made several attempts through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to strengthen security, it was the failure of the international community to respond effectively during the Somali crisis and the genocide in Rwanda in the 1990s that prompted African leaders to evolve "African solutions for African problems" and led to the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) in 2002 and the emergence of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Notably, the AU has moved from the policy of non-interference as prescribed by the OAU to non-indifference that calls for intervention in cases of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Recently as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations, the AU pledged to silence guns by 2020.

Against this backdrop, how have India's security ties evolved with Africa? Over the years India has trained military officers from several African countries at Indian military training

institutions. Some of the prominent alumni include, President Muhammadu Buhari as well as former Presidents Ibrahim Babangida and Olusgun Obasanjo from Nigeria and Fred Akkufo, the former President of Ghana. It has also been involved in training and infrastructure development in countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mauritius, Zambia, Ghana, Sudan, Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania, Egypt and Lesotho. This entailed the building of operational and administrative facilities and infrastructure, such as roads, airfields, communication networks etc. Presently India continues to help African countries to enhance their capacities to train their military personnel.

India is also involved in improving the security situation in the African continent through active participation in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO). While India's contribution to the UN peacekeeping budget may be less than one per cent, it has contributed nearly 160,000 troops, the largest by any country, for 43 UN peacekeeping missions across the world. With around 70 per cent of UN peacekeepers deployed globally and more than 50 per cent of all UNPKO in the post Cold War era being based in Africa it can be argued that Indian peacekeepers have been involved in reducing conflict in this troubled region. Currently Indian peacekeepers are deployed in UNPKOs in Liberia, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. India has also been supportive of the AU's efforts towards enhancing its region's peace and security architecture. In this context India has pledged \$1 million for the African led Support Mission in Mali and \$ 2 million for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). India's support of AU initiatives is also evident in the regular presence of high ranking Indian officials at AU summits.

In recent years India has taken the initiative to provide maritime security in its strategic neighbourhood. It has committed to improving the maritime environment in the Indian Ocean region by becoming the "net security provider". In this context it has forged secu-

rity relations with Indian Ocean littoral states in Africa such as Mozambique, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Since 2000, India has jointly patrolled the Mauritius Exclusive Economic Zone along with the Mauritian coastguard. It has over the years provided several weapon systems such as seaward defence boats, interceptor patrol boats, maritime surveillance aircraft, helicopters and an offshore patrol vessel, to Mauritius. The Indian Navy also carries out hydrographic surveys in the country and transferred a hydrographic survey vessel to Mauritius in 2013. India also assists the Seychelles by undertaking maritime surveillance and providing military equipment. It has also transferred a fast attack vessel, an aircraft and helicopters to the island nation.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to these two island states in March 2015, India signed pacts to strengthen relations with these two countries. It has agreed to help build sea and air transport facilities in the Agalega Island (Outer Island) in Mauritius, which will go a long way towards helping Mauritian defence forces protect their interests. Similarly in Seychelles Prime Minister Modi inked a pact to develop infrastructure in Assumption Island and also inaugurated the first of the eight coastal surveillance radar systems being set up by India in the country. Similarly India extended maritime security cover to Mozambique during the AU Summit in 2003 and during the World Economic Forum at Maputo in 2004. In 2006 the two countries signed an MOU on defence cooperation that included among other things joint patrolling off the Mozambican coast. More importantly, in a bid to check the surge in piracy off the Somali coast, the Indian navy has been undertaking constabulary duties in the Gulf of Aden since 2008, and has successfully escorted over 2,400 vessels.

Apart from bilateral security issues India and Africa share common concerns relating to global issues such as the menace of international terrorism, piracy, communicable diseases, drug trafficking, climate change and environmental degradation, the challenge

of providing food security to all and the long pending reform of United Nations Security Council. Some of these concerns have been raised by experts from Africa and India at the Track II “India- Africa Strategic Dialogue” hosted by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs over the past few

years. In order to take these discussions a step further, and develop a cooperative security framework that incorporates both traditional and non-traditional security issues, it is imperative to institutionalise an official dialogue on the side lines of the India Africa Forum Summit at an early date.