



THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF PEACE OPERATIONS: A DIALOGUE WITH EMERGING POWERS

XENIA AVEZOV*

In April 2012, regional dialogue meetings of ‘The New Geopolitics of Peace Operations: A Dialogue with Emerging Powers’ initiative took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, and New Delhi, India. The meetings were organized by SIPRI and conducted in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). They brought together a range of leading experts, government officials and representatives of international organizations to discuss the future challenges for peace operations and the potential role that South Asia will play in the future global peacekeeping landscape.

The meetings illuminated the potential role of South Asian countries as ‘conservative reformers’ of the international peace operations agenda. Financial interest in peacekeeping contracts, inertia based on an established relationship with the United Nations as troop contributors, and difficult internal relationships that limit regional cooperation—all indicate that South Asia is unlikely to either dramatically rethink its commitment to UN operations or offer alternative institutions for the time being. On the other hand, South Asian countries are increasingly questioning the sustainability of the current paradigm and are concerned about the development of intervention trends that might pose a threat to UN legitimacy while further compromising regional and global security, such as the recent North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) mission in Libya. While it is still a minority position, in India some have begun to question the country’s uncompromising commitment to UN peacekeeping, reflecting shifting priorities and interests as well as India’s growing role as an international and regional leader. To date, there is little evidence of widespread support for a radical shift on these issues—due to a significant degree of inertia and support for the status quo in policymaking circles. Nevertheless, as India develops further and its international interests and engagement grow, there are signs that a more pragmatic and less idealistic approach to peacekeeping could emerge.

* This report attempts to summarize the contents of each workshop session, including both presentations and discussion. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the views of SIPRI, FES or the majority of the participants.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

● In the past 20 years there has been a far-reaching shift in the nature of international conflict management. Within this context, the traditional notion of peace operations has been broadened by ever more robust missions, the expansion of mandates towards peacebuilding, and by an unprecedented growth in both the number and the size of operations.

Today, many are questioning the sustainability of the paradigm of peace operations that has emerged since the cold war. It is becoming evident that shifts in international power relations as a result of rapid economic growth in parts of the Global South are calling into question the existing structures of international conflict management, including peace operations.

SIPRI has launched the ‘New Geopolitics of Peace Operations: A Dialogue with Emerging Powers’ initiative with support from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in partnership with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). The initiative aims to identify potential future challenges for peace operations and new initiatives that will strengthen the legitimacy of peace operations and create greater capacity, enabling peace operations to meet these future challenges. SIPRI, in cooperation with FES, will be conducting a series of dialogue meetings around the world to support these aims.

**Agenda, Kathmandu, Day 1***Opening remarks*

Dr Neil Melvin, Director, Armed Conflict and Conflict Management Programme, SIPRI

Sarah Hees, Regional Coordinator Peace and Security Policy, FES India

Ashok Mehta, Independent strategic analyst, India

Overview of project scope and process

Sharon Wiharta, Senior Researcher, Armed Conflict and Conflict Management Programme, SIPRI

Marius Mueller-Henning, Global Peace and Security Policy Program, FES Berlin

A changing world order viewed from South Asia: what implications for the future of peace operations?

This session unpacks the regional perceptions on the future challenges to international peace and security and their potential implication on peace operation.

Moderator: Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI

Speaker: Professor C. S. R. Murthy, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Norms and concepts: a fragile consensus?

Small group discussion about regional perceptions of exiting norms and concepts vis-à-vis conflict, intervention and peace operations.

Facilitators:

Sarah Hees, FES India

Sharon Wiharta, SIPRI

Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI

Xenia Avezov, SIPRI

Engagement objectives: high politics and interests of stakeholders

How does participation in peace operations fit in with the overall foreign policy objectives of states in South Asia? In other words, what drives South Asian TCCs to participate in peace operation, and are those drivers of a political, normative or economic nature?

Moderator: Marius Mueller-Henning, FES Berlin

Speaker: Nadia Sarwar, Research Fellow, Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan

**SOUTH ASIA REGIONAL DIALOGUE:
KATHMANDU, NEPAL****A changing world order viewed from South Asia—
what implications for the future of peace
operations?**

Dialogue participants agreed that the peacekeeping situation has changed significantly in the post-cold war era. A particular area of contention concerned the evolution of the use of force beyond the traditional understanding of peacekeeping. It was argued by some that missions instigated within regimes incompatible with the ‘liberal-democratic’ models undermine the legitimacy of the United Nations Security Council and can create further conflict by seeming more like an occupation. A number of participants noted that South Asia is particularly concerned about peace-enforcement operations that go beyond the original UN mandates. For example, the NATO-led operation in Libya is seen as having gone beyond the letter and spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011).

While South Asian countries are the principal troop-contributing countries (TCCs) for UN peacekeeping operations, several participants, particularly India, contended that TCCs have not been able to translate their troop contributions into proportional policy influence. Following on from this point, some participants also criticized the UN reform process of the past two years that resulted in an organizational split between the UN Department of Field Support (DFS) and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), essentially segregating operational and policy issues. Some participants highlighted the importance of creating a common platform that will ease communication between South Asia and the Security Council regarding peace operations, enabling South Asia to have greater leverage in the drafting of mandates as well as in negotiating operational terms. It was noted that the UN Peacebuilding Commission could be one forum where South Asia could bring to bear its collective leverage. Participants, notably from India, suggested that a permanent Security Council seat for India would be the only way of ensuring greater regional influence. At the same time participants largely did not contest the primary role of the UN in peacekeeping matters but rather called for the strengthening of the Security Council by better representation of key stakeholders and the valuable long-term experience of TCCs in peace operations.

It was noted that there are several factors within the region that could have an impact on South Asian



countries' perspectives on peace operations. Of prime concern was the possibility of conflict escalation in Afghanistan after the planned withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in 2014 and its expected effects on regional stability. A number of speakers suggested that potential conflict triggers in the region such as environmental degradation and scarcities of natural resources—notably water—might affect countries' participation in peace operations. Overall, the discussions suggested that, in the current context, peacekeeping cooperation among South Asian countries (within a formalized system outside the UN system) to manage regional conflicts, notably that in Afghanistan, faces major hurdles. This is mainly due to mutual mistrust among countries in the region and in particular the relationship between India and Pakistan. This means that, in the best-case scenario, progress in regional peacekeeping would be contingent on a major shift in regional relations and would have to be advanced by a step-by-step confidence-building process.

Norms and concepts—a fragile consensus?

Several overarching themes emerged from the working group discussions, including intervention legitimacy; the inconsistent use of international norms such as the responsibility to protect (R2P) and human security; and the importance of promoting local ownership while safeguarding state sovereignty. Interventions in the name of international norms need to be balanced by greater collaboration with and inclusion of local communities; however, for many participants, the legitimacy of an intervention is ultimately rooted in state consent. Some participants argued that greater consultation of TCCs in the mandate-shaping process would result in more clearly defined mandates and rules of engagement, which would help safeguard sovereignty and local ownership.

Speakers also argued that using international humanitarian norms as tools for modern-day intervention is delegitimizing the traditional forms of engagement, which until recently have largely been based on an international consensus. Security Council decisions should not be used to enable interventions in the interests of great powers. The use of the R2P principle in the recent NATO operation in Libya was strongly questioned by several participants, who viewed it as misuse of the principle for the purpose of regime change aligning with Western strategic interests.

Agenda, Kathmandu, Day 2

A new peacekeeping landscape

This session explores possible shifts in to peace operations due to new global and regional conflict trends and actors. In particular, how the role of emerging global actors might influence the global security and peace agenda.

Moderator: Rebecca Jovin, Policy Planning Officer, UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Field Support (DFS)

Speaker: C. B. Gurung, Former adviser to the DPKO and Lieutenant General (ret.), Nepal Army

Lessons from South Asia's experiences

What are the particular lessons learned from peacekeeping by South Asian TCCs that would influence their priorities in the future? How would these lessons influence the future of engagement?

Chair: Ashok Mehta, Independent strategic analyst, India

Panelists: Randhir Kumar Mehta, India, Former military adviser, DPKO

Sikander Afzal, Pakistan, Former force commander, UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

Ilyas Iftekhhar Rasul, Former defence adviser, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh to the UN

Pratap Malla, Brigadier General (ret.), Nepal Army

P. R. Wanigasooriya, Military spokesman at the Office of Chief of Defence Staff, Sri Lanka, and former military observer, UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)

P. R. Wanigasooriya, Military spokesman at the Office of Chief of Defence Staff, Sri Lanka, and former military observer, UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)

Scope and feasibility of regional peacekeeping cooperation (breakout sessions)

Plenary discussion about potential regional cooperation around peace and security issues both internationally and regionally. Two case studies—instability in Afghanistan and security threats in the Indian Ocean—were discussed as hypothetical areas of cooperation in two different groups

Group 1: Regional cooperation around the Afghanistan conflict

Speaker: Dr Davood Moradian, Afghanistan, Professor of Political Science at the American University of Afghanistan and Afghan Government adviser

Moderator: Sharon Wiharta, SIPRI

Group 2: Regional cooperation on Indian Ocean security

Speaker: Pradeep Kaushiva, Director, National Maritime Foundation (NMF), India

Moderator: Xenia Avezov, SIPRI

Concluding remarks

Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI

Marius Mueller-Hennig, FES Berlin

Ashok Mehta, Independent strategic analyst

Sarah Hees, FES India



Despite the qualifications noted above, most participants supported the call for stronger emphasis on peacebuilding in peace operations. While there was some explicit criticism with regard to the imposition of a liberal peace paradigm in peace operations by default, the underlying principles of liberal peace were not called into question for the most part. For example, the protection of civilians in the framework of UN peace operations is less controversial than R2P. However, the legitimate need to protect civilians should not be used to override the principle of state sovereignty, as it may lead to unsustainable operations. It was further noted that it is generally not the principles that are questioned, but their application and manipulation. Concern was expressed at the continued (and growing) gap between political support for norms and principles and the actual resources required to deliver on mission mandates that have been guided by those principles.

Engagement objectives: high politics and stakeholder interests

South Asian countries have contributed troops to UN peace operations for a variety of political, economic and normative reasons. There is wide consensus with regard to the political motivations for participation: advancing national standing in the international community and, in the case of India, seeking to strengthen the argument for a permanent Security Council seat; national prestige; strengthening bilateral relationships; creating new partnerships with emerging actors; and a genuine belief in the UN system and the importance of global stability. Other motives for participation by South Asian TCCs noted by the workshop participants included an ambition to cultivate diplomatic relations with the host countries that will in turn provide access to new markets and natural resources.

Speakers noted that South Asian TCCs are proud of the quality of their troops and want to share their capabilities, both as a way to improve the quality of missions and as a way to advance professional prestige. While the individual payment for troops has stagnated over the past decade, it still provides an economic incentive for TCCs and their troops to participate in missions. Participants noted that a surplus of deployment-ready peacekeeping troops in the region is creating competition between South Asian TCCs, all eager to deploy their units. A related and somewhat controversial question was raised about the possible domestic security benefits for TCCs of deploying troops outside the region and the potential domestic implications for TCCs in the event of a decline in militarily robust operations.

There are signs that the established set of motives for involvement in peacekeeping are being questioned, particularly due to the increased complexity of operations with ever-limited resources and in regard to the relationship between operations and achieving national interests in a time of change. At the same time substantial national discussions or a regional dialogue on the implications of these changes have yet to take place. Further, it is not yet apparent what would trigger such a shift nor who would drive a process of change.



A new peacekeeping landscape

Speakers noted that peacekeeping has proved an effective instrument for the international community to address conflicts. Modern conflicts are complex and often require a long-term commitment and diverse capabilities and resources. Over the past two decades, UN missions have proliferated and the concentration of missions in Africa arguably reflects the international community's view of where the most pressing problems are. Reflecting on recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa, it was felt that conflict flashpoints would increasingly be in this region.

Some of the key insights to emerge from the discussion on the new peacekeeping landscape centred on the importance of de-escalation and prevention—including preventative deployment and the early involvement of local civilians and institutions. Several participants were also firm about the potential negative implications of the emerging reliance on UN cooperation with regional organizations in hybrid missions. While some championed the effectiveness of hybrid missions in early intervention, particularly when the UN is unwilling or unable to intervene, participants voiced strong concerns about coordination with the UN during transition phases as well as the political implications of involving regional actors early on. Some speakers suggested that the UN could ensure a sustained engagement in conflict areas by deploying more political missions that would focus on managing political and institutional change. Overall, participants voiced great reservation about the 'outsourcing' of peace operations to regional organizations.

It was suggested that the constellation of South Asian countries providing political, financial and personnel support to UN operations might shift, which could have a significant impact on the future of peace operations. For example, the participants contested the question of whether South Asian countries could and should complement their large troop contributions with increased financial contributions in order to gain greater leverage in the decision-making process. Also discussed was the notion of alternative forms of 'engagement' by South Asian countries, such as providing training for other TCCs deploying to operations conducted by regional organizations like the African Union. Despite concerns about the changing landscape of peace operations and reservations about certain emerging trends, it seems that South Asian TCCs are not yet ready to challenge the current peacekeeping paradigm, perhaps because this debate is still in its infancy.

Lessons from South Asia's experience

The lessons learned from the long-standing collective experience of South Asian countries working to support UN peacekeeping operations are varied and wide-ranging. The growing tendency to over-emphasize force protection (e.g. the strict safety and security protocols placed on mission personnel) unwittingly hampers missions' work. The robust nature of peace operations has also led a number of TCCs to include units of special-forces type troops in every deployment. In addition, there were repeated calls for better access to intelligence for peacekeeping missions.



A recurring theme in the meeting was the lack of proportional representation of TCCs in UN decision making, which, it was argued, often leads to unclear and at times unachievable mandates. This has, in turn, led to a growing trend of national caveats—restrictions placed by TCCs on the use of their forces in an operation—which ultimately affect the operation’s ability to implement its mandate. Since most missions operate in highly complex environments, a realistic mandate with comprehensive rules of engagement and a clear delegation of responsibility is essential to the success of a mission and the sustainability of peace.

Although there has been some progress on this front—the Security Council has increased informal consultations with TCCs—such efforts were deemed by most participants to be insufficient. It was suggested that increasing the number of senior positions in the UN Secretariat given to key TCCs could be a solution. Despite calls for UN reform in this area, there was a general consensus with regard to the UN’s primacy in conflict management. In other words, South Asian TCCs do not question the UN’s leadership in peacekeeping, nor do they seek regional organizations that will replace it.

Scope and feasibility of regional peacekeeping cooperation

Modest room for greater regional cooperation on peacekeeping

There was general agreement that little scope exists for greater regional cooperation in the area of peacekeeping. If cooperation is to be advanced, a possible first step would be increased dialogue and exchange of ideas at both track 1 and track 2 levels. Another step would be increased cooperation between national peacekeeping training centres in the region, including joint ‘training operations’ for soldiers. Finally, cooperation or joint policy initiatives at the UN were seen as a realistic option. At the same time, complex relationships in the region will pose a challenge for significant cooperation in the near future.

Joint interest in maritime security in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean is of vital economic and political importance to the region for trade and commodity transport. Thus, maritime security concerns have become more urgent and have attracted the increasing security engagement of leading powers in the region as well as of external actors such as NATO. Against this background, the potential and need for a regional approach to assuring maritime security found broad support in the meeting.

Participants agreed that regional dialogue on these issues is clearly the most feasible first step in the short term, with possible greater cooperation on maritime security in the future. Some participants suggested that a regional forum to facilitate the creation of an Indian Ocean security cooperation strategy was needed and that such a forum could reduce the geostrategic tension over military presence in the region. Others argued that, rather than creating a new regional forum, using an existing framework such as the UN Security Council to navigate the process of a common policy would be more practical. Still others argued that individual countries in the region should continue to pursue their own interests and gradually develop a flexible framework around common concerns and interests. Cooperation through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was seen



as an unlikely solution since SAARC is a non-political organization and lacks a security mandate.

Scepticism with regard to regional peacekeeping in Afghanistan post-2014

Given the political dynamics between key stakeholders—particularly between Afghanistan, India and Pakistan—there was considerable disagreement among participants as to the feasibility and appropriateness of a regional role in Afghanistan after the anticipated 2014 withdrawal of ISAF. It was recognized that a military intervention by South Asian countries or intervention through any formalized regional framework in Afghanistan would not be possible. However, capacity building of Afghan state institutions was a potential entry point for a regional role in Afghanistan's stability. Some participants opined that a solution without a Western role would be impossible.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION: NEW DELHI, INDIA

Peacekeeping in India's foreign and security policy as a contribution to international peace and stability

India's commitment to the UN Charter has been a cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. However, in recent years, India has moved away from what many see as the Charter's idealism, and the Indian Government has been increasingly cautious about committing to operations without any clear national strategic interest. One participant noted that while India keeps a steadfast commitment to the principle of *non-intervention*, the country is also aware that there are instances where intervention is the only option. As stated above, India is concerned that the elevation of the R2P principle to a UN doctrine could be misused to justify inappropriate interventions. The NATO mission in Libya was strongly criticized by many participants. It was noted that India's position on non-interference is certainly not written in stone, since India has intervened in regional conflicts in the past (e.g. that in Sri Lanka). However, regional and domestic tensions have inclined India to see non-intervention as 'cautious prudence'.

While the Security Council's consultation with TCCs in its mandate-shaping process has become more prominent in recent years, speakers suggested that mandates will continue to be based on the political and financial considerations of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA; the P5) and other powerful,

Agenda, New Delhi

Opening remarks

Dr Neil Melvin, SIPRI
Sarah Hees, FES India
Ashok Mehta, Independent strategic analyst

Relevance of peacekeeping in India's foreign and security policy as a contribution to international peace and stability

Chair: Ashok Mehta

Keynote speech

C. R. Gharekhan, Former Permanent Representative of India to the UN

Regional and global dynamics and implications for the future of peacekeeping operations

Chair: Shashank, Former Foreign Secretary, Indian Ministry of External Affairs

Findings of regional workshop on peacekeeping

Sharon Wiharta, SIPRI

Conflict dynamics in South Asia and their repercussions for India's approach to peacekeeping operations

C. Raja Mohan, India, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation

Current and emerging norms, trends and concepts and their consequences for India's approach to peacekeeping operations

Chair: Arvind Gupta, India, Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis

Peacekeeping—peacebuilding nexus

Randhir Kumar Mehta, Former military adviser, DPKO

India's position on the relationship of R2P and peacekeeping against the backdrop of the Arab Spring

K. C. Singh, Former Secretary, Indian Ministry of External Affairs

Lessons learned and best practices of the Indian Army concerning peacekeeping; financing of peacekeeping missions

Rajender Singh, Former Director General, Infantry, Indian Army, and former Force Commander, UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)

Tour d'horizon from a UN headquarters perspective

Rebecca Jovin, DPKO and DFS

Concluding remarks

Neil Melvin, SIPRI

Sarah Hees, FES India

Ashok Mehta, Independent strategic analyst

developed nations. Some participants asserted that the UN's response to, for example, the Rwandan genocide illustrates that the Security Council itself is a body governed by a sum of the political consideration of its member states, rather than by humanitarian-based norms. More importantly for India, however, is whether gaining greater influence at the UN for peacekeeping will necessarily be favourable to any of its immediate or long-term national interests, notably permanent membership of the Security Council.

Regional and global dynamics: implications for future peacekeeping operations

The international community is at a critical juncture with, on the one hand, fundamental questions being asked about the premises of the traditional humanitarian agenda and, on the other, clear ambivalence about the use of force as a legitimate way to protect civilians. At the same time, there are concerns that support for the current form of international peace operations will decline: ambitious, long-term commitments to address complex conflicts that seldom produce lasting peace have created fatigue and even contention with the UN model for peace operations; the global economic crisis is likely to limit further the resources available for missions; and mandates will continue to be contested at the UN Security Council if members of the P5 cannot agree on the basis and scope of the international community's role in conflict management. Speakers also noted that although multipolarity might be the emerging reality in international relations, it may not be the best guarantor of peace.

Participants believed that India will continue to act with prudence until the transition towards multipolarity is complete. In the meantime India is likely to distance itself from interventions that do not fit with its narrative of soft power and non-intervention.

While there are areas where India and other players in the region can cooperate, primarily where there is common interest (e.g. security in the Indian Ocean), cooperation around the Afghanistan conflict is less likely because of geostrategic competition and contrasting interests. As a dominant regional power, India sees itself as defining the security environment in the region, even if it is unable to take on the role of a regional leader. Other countries in the region have found a way to balance India's power through the involvement of international actors. India itself was characterized as



uncomfortable with a UN or international presence in its region, and some participants suggested that India should be more proactively encouraging regionalism in security matters.

Norms and concepts in India's approach to peacekeeping

India's current priorities are domestic and regional. The shift in regional power due to China's rise is compelling India to focus on its immediate environment. As an emerging global power, India is also uncertain about the future locus of global power, particularly as the Security Council itself may become a less prominent international body if disagreement among the P5 becomes the rule rather than the exception.

Participants spoke about India's reluctance to cooperate with the Non-aligned Movement (NAM). It was argued that the agenda of the movement has been taken over by other countries, notably Iran, and India has lost its ability to lead the NAM. In the context of current global developments, India is quietly building capacity in its own region and in other developing regions while waiting to see how the current global transition will settle before making a significant formal move on the global stage.

Some participants were critical of India's current approach and argued that India should embrace the momentum of the global shift of power and push for its own agenda, and perhaps emerge as a norm shaper, although this view was strongly challenged. For example, they suggested that India should engage in the international debate about the R2P principle—which it sees as a simplistic and ineffective solution for creating long-lasting peace and reconciliation as R2P has neither been established as an international norm nor has its future operational form, if any, been made clear. Participants engaged in a strong and heated discussion on whether or not India should consider being more selective about its commitments to UN peacekeeping, and instead engage or lead interventions that are conducted by regional organizations or ad-hoc coalitions. In many ways the conversation reflected a debate that is still in embryonic form in Indian political circles.

CONCLUSIONS

The dialogue meetings in Nepal and India on the new geopolitics of peace operations point to an emerging questioning in the region of the existing approach to peacekeeping. This reflects a backdrop of increasing controversy about the boundaries around the use of force in the international system, who defines those boundaries and what norms give the use of force legitimacy. Currently, for the region as a whole, and critically for most of the key actors on peacekeeping issues, the position is one of 'status quo-plus'. Important reforms are sought in the decision-making process (forming mandates and defining missions aims) and there is resistance to more interventionist agendas such as R2P. At the same time, South Asia remains committed to UN peacekeeping and the broad principles that have defined it. This general regional position also holds for India. The far-reaching economic transformation of the country is, however, promoting new perspectives on the traditional national position. Some speakers articulated a 'realist' position



that focused on a wholesale re-evaluation of existing commitments to international peacekeeping in light of changing national interests (notably commercial interests) and a shift to a case-by-case consideration of the merits of each mission, rather than a presumption that India would follow the international consensus and the decisions of the Security Council. Such a shift would also see India prepared to move beyond the model of UN-sanctioned and UN-conducted peace missions to participate in coalitions of the willing, hybrid missions, and UN-sanctioned but not UN-led missions. To date these remain very much minority views. The key questions are, therefore, whether further economic development will strengthen such views and how such a shift would influence the commitment to traditional peacekeeping.

At the same time, the meeting highlighted the major constraints on any possible radical shift in South Asia's approach to international peacekeeping. First, there is considerable vested interest in the current arrangements (notably as regards the military, which is the main domestic actor on peacekeeping issues) and a high level of inertia in regards to these issues. Second, policymakers to date have shown little interest in undertaking a far-reaching review of peacekeeping issues, which would have to be conducted as part of a wider examination of their foreign and security policies. Similarly, peacekeeping issues generate relatively little interest among the region's academic and expert communities, although this is slowly changing. Finally, difficult internal regional relations continue to constrain the possibilities for regional cooperation, including on peacekeeping matters. The asymmetry between India and its neighbours—which is only increasing as a result of India's rapid economic growth—is perhaps the main issue in this context.

The discussions raise the prospect of increased differentiation in South Asia's approach to peacekeeping. India's growing global influence and interests are likely to cause a gradual revision of some of the key approaches that have defined the country's foreign policy for several decades. As a result, it may begin to exhibit greater flexibility towards its engagement with a range of peacekeeping missions and formats. While the other countries of the region may be prompted by India's shift, it appears that they remain anchored within the UN framework. This commitment to international institutions may even be strengthened as a means to balance India's growing regional position.

It was also noted that a pure realist approach to security issues may underestimate the importance of norms and multilateral institutions for fostering cooperation and promoting shared action, even in the face of complex and divergent national interests. Peacekeeping perhaps stands at the centre of this normative debate. While there are clear disputes about new norms such as R2P and cases of major international divergence, notably over the recent intervention in Syria, there remains in South Asia a sense that peacekeeping is generally effective and that participation in it is an aspect of being a responsible international actor, and there is broad support for the idea of keeping and building peace through peace operations—although there is also a general call for reevaluating the unrealistic expectations placed on peace operations.



The central challenge that emerged from the discussions was how to adapt existing and new global and regional institutions to manage relations in a positive way. Forging multi-level security governance that can link changing national interests, regional organizations and global institutions emerged as a priority. While this is a task that can only be achieved slowly, it is an increasingly urgent one. Finding inclusive ways to fashion shared values into practical mechanisms to manage conflict remains a key challenge. South Asian countries are likely to be ‘conservative reformers’ of international conflict management: hesitant to shift away from their existing relationship with the UN and their significant commitment of troops to UN peacekeeping, but propelled to support gradual incremental change by altering intra-regional dynamics and shifting global interests and relations.

SIPRI is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

GOVERNING BOARD

Göran Lennmarker, Chairman
(Sweden)

Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar
(Indonesia)

Dr Vladimir Baranovsky
(Russia)

Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi
(Algeria)

Jayantha Dhanapala
(Sri Lanka)

Susan Eisenhower
(United States)

Ambassador Wolfgang
Ischinger (Germany)

Professor Mary Kaldor
(United Kingdom)

The Director

DIRECTOR

Dr Bates Gill (United States)



STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Signalistgatan 9
SE-169 70 Solna, Sweden
Telephone: +46 8 655 97 00
Fax: +46 8 655 97 33
Email: sipri@sipri.org
Internet: www.sipri.org

THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF PEACE OPERATIONS: A DIALOGUE WITH EMERGING POWERS

PROJECT PARTNERS

