Abstract: For international political policy, the development of South-South Cooperation strategies is a fundamental element of the ‘international insertion strategy’ of the Global South as well as a manifestation of efforts towards assertion of autonomy. This article aims to address the current state of security and defense structures that serve as a substructure for South-South Cooperation in this area; the challenges they face, as well as the prospects of South-South Cooperation as a peacekeeping tool.

Introduction

In the backdrop of the growing conflicts and the consequent humanitarian crises happening in the developing world, South-South Cooperation can be a key tool to reduce, mitigate and even prevent them. This can be done through the construction of multilateral structures with inputs from the South and that consider the link between peace and development as central elements.

In this article, we propose to address the current state of security and defense structures that serve as a South-South Cooperation framework in this area; and to inquire about the possibilities of Argentina-India cooperation in this regard especially since both the nations are troop-contributing members in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

According to a World Bank-United Nations report, by 2030, more than half of the world population will live in countries affected by high levels of national and international violence. This number is likely to go up unless preventive measures are taken.

*Advisor - Ministry of Defense, Argentina. Views expressed are personal.

Views expressed are personal.
Besides, according to the 2018 Global Peace Index, the level of peace has deteriorated in 92 countries. It showed an increase in unresolved conflicts, crises and tensions. The spiral of increasing violence was leading to difficulties in ensuring growth and development.

The growing influx of refugees, migrants and/or internally displaced persons are the major problems that the Global South has to tackle while trying to establish and maintain peace. The scenario gets further complicated when elements such as climate change and the war for access and control of natural resources are analyzed as factors that determine an environment of peace and security.

The Global South also face the challenge of finding their own methods for conflict prevention and resolution, since most initiatives in the fields of security and defense come from the Global North, leaving the Global South as mere recipients of proposals.

In the South-South Cooperation structures, security and defense issues have always been overshadowed by the priority given to trade and investment. However, thanks to the negotiation efforts prior to BAPA + 40, the final declaration of the meeting included for the first time the need to consider the socio-economic dimensions of sustainability to move towards peaceful societies, which opens the door to the opportunity to incorporate the South-South Cooperation into the Peacekeeping Agenda.

**Challenges faced by Global South**

Traditionally within the United Nations framework, a small block of countries mainly from the Global North have control over decision-making in matters of peace and security. The countries of the Global South, although the main victims of conflicts, end up being mere recipients of policies designed by the Global North.

his weakness in approach can be seen in various aspects of militarization, including in the framework of peacekeeping operations, police surveillance, short-term mediation from top to bottom as well as hasty and exogenous implementation of peace agreements.

The other major challenge in the field of South-South Cooperation in security and defense for the countries of the Global South is to find ways to demilitarize the strategies and orient the projects towards a sustained development approach as a condition for peacekeeping that links the defense of human rights, the consolidation of peace and the promotion of development.

Since its establishment, the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations have become an effective instrument of the UN Organization for the fulfillment of its original principal mandate: to maintain and strengthen international peace and security.

**Role of Argentina and India**

Argentina and India, as founding members of the United Nations Organization, and in accordance with the objectives of its founding Charter, adhere to the idea that democracy, the preservation of peace and cooperation in the field of international relations are an essential condition for the development and well-being of the people, and the means of international action for their commitment to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security through continuous participation in Peacekeeping Operations within the UN framework.

Argentina’s experience in the UN Peacekeeping Operations started in 1958. So far, more than 40,000 national troops have participated in these operations, mainly members of the three-Armed Forces and, to a lesser extent, the National Gendarmerie. Argentina has participated in 35 of the more than fifty Peacekeeping Operations created since 1948, thereby becoming one of the main contributors for peace missions.

Without a doubt, the most important experience for Argentina in this area was the participation in the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), which was planned within the framework of a political strategy for cooperation in defense matters at the South American level.
The experience of MINUSTAH stands out, not only for the role played by Latin American countries in the process of stabilization of Haiti as the largest contributors of mission effects, but also their role in the field and contact with the population, in the variety of activities developed and the professionalism with which the deployed forces performed.

Currently, Argentina maintains a very small deployment compared to previous years composed of 276 troops and observers in four of the 13 ongoing missions. Adapting to the conditions of the new challenges, and regaining leadership in this area, is one of the main challenges that it faces in the future.

As one of the founding members of the UN, India’s contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security has been more than important in these years. India started his participation in the operations in Korea in 1950. India’s current deployment of 6,170 personnel reflects the commitment of troops, military observers and staff officers and civilian police from the country in nine of the current UN operations, and more than 200,000 in the last 70 years.

The Indian Armed Forces have experience in counter-insurgency operations and this have a marked advantage over forces from other countries without such expertise. At this point there is a fundamental difference with Argentina. Argentina has important legal and political restrictions for participation, and the legal framework makes a difference between security and defense duties. For those reasons, Argentina does not participate with troops in scenarios such as insurgency operations and where there is a high risk of fatalities.

In February 2019, on the occasion of the official visit of the then President of Argentina, Mauricio Macri, to India, a defense agreement was signed with the aim of increasing cooperation ties in defense matters, in which both the countries committed, among other things, to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences in peacekeeping operations, as well as the exchange of defense instructors and/or observers, in addition to joint and reciprocal participation in training courses or defense programs.

With this agreement as a frame of reference, there are some three specific points where it is possible to advance in cooperation. Firstly, it would be important to advance the deepening of contacts between the Training Centers of both countries, ensure pre-deployment training and exchange of instructors for the dictation of courses.

Secondly, efforts can be made to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping operation by taking into account the demand from the United Nations for the same. Although in Argentina, much progress has been made in the inclusion of women in the Armed Forces, the real increase in their participation remains a pending issue. India, in 2007, had become the first country to deploy a contingent of women for a UN peacekeeping mission, deployed in Liberia. Besides, the United Nations Peacekeeping Center of India, in collaboration with UN Women, conducts courses aimed at training military officers to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflicts.

It would be very useful for Argentina to be able to count on the possibility that female personnel of the armed and security forces participate in these training instances, and perhaps also be able to deploy Argentine personnel as part of the Indian contingent in a mission of this nature.

Finally, Argentina has extensive experience in exchanging officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) as part of the multilateral composition of the missions. For example, Officers and NCOs of the Armed Forces of Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay have been part of the Argentine Mission in Cyprus (UNFICYP), becoming a significant regional cooperation venture. The exchange of observers as an integral part of the missions of the other country is an excellent opportunity for the exchange of experiences and the approach to scenarios where the country does not have contingent deployment.
Conclusion

South-South Cooperation is an evolving concept, a legitimate tool to which, countries with a lower degree of development can gain access to growth in certain aspects, thanks to the contribution and collaboration of other countries, on an equal level, under the principles of mutual gain, not interference, collective growth opportunities and without imposition of conditionalities. It is a great opportunity for growth and economic expansion and can be applied to cooperation in defense and strengthening of institutions.

In this context, South-South Cooperation options can be exploited, in terms of capacity building to advance the adaptability in peace operations through the exchange of information and mutual experiences, training instances and even joint participation in missions lead by one of the parties.

South-South defense cooperation, through the strengthening of common ties, must function as a platform to strengthen common positions in the global scenario that allows the participation of the Southern countries in the international security agenda.

An approach from the Global South is necessary, especially since the Southern countries know better than anyone else the specific needs of their people. This insight positions them best to develop our strategies and logic that can guarantee sustainable solutions, implementing innovative initiatives to contribute to the peace processes by addressing the root causes of conflicts.

References


RIS. (2019). Five Modalities of Development Compact-Shaping South-South Cooperation. Research and Information System for Developing Countries.

