

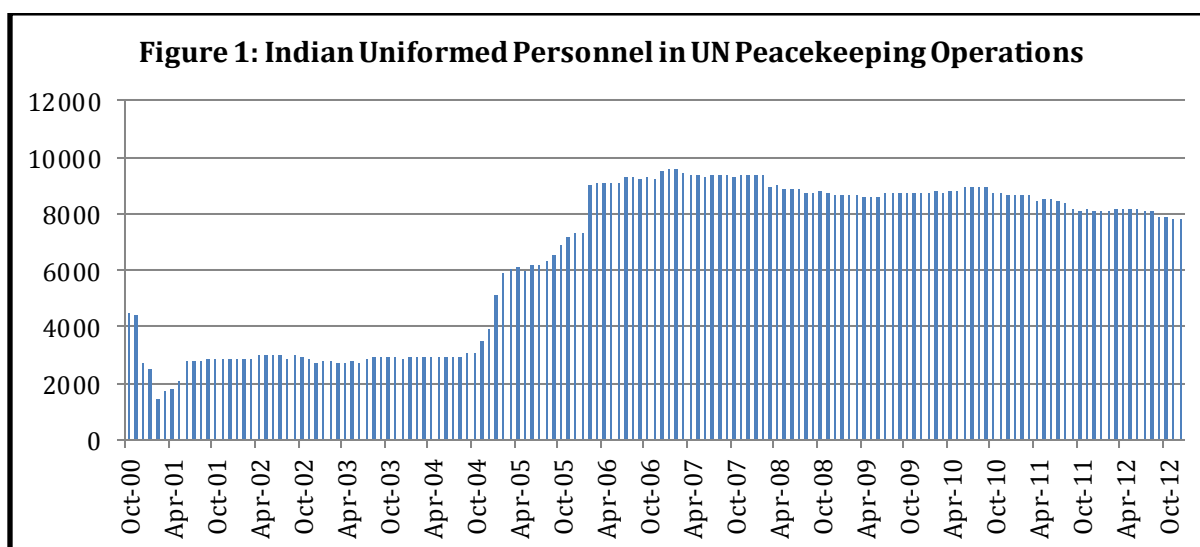
Contributor Profile: India

Dipankar Banerjee
Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi

Active Armed Forces ¹	Helicopters	Defense Budget (US\$)	Uniformed UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
1,325,000 World Ranking (size): 3 Army: 1,129,900 Navy: 55,000 Air Force: 127,200 Coast Guard: 9,500 Civil Armed Police Forces: 1,155,000	Attack: 20 Multirole: 442 Transport: 208	2011-12 \$31.9bn (less pensions) (2.4% of GDP)	7,839 (1,022 police) (133 women) (31 Dec 2012) UN Ranking: 3 rd	MINUSTAH: 462 police MONUSCO: 4,036 (62 experts, 270 police, 3,704 troops) UNIFIL: 898 troops UNMISS: 1,987 (1,949 troops, 33 police, 5 experts) UNDOF: 192 troops UNOCIL: 8 experts UNMIT: 1 police UNMIL: 250 police UNFICYP: 8 police UNISFA: 4 (2 troops 2 experts)	India contributes substantive maritime assets for anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Gulf
Defense spending/troop: ² US\$24,075 (compared to global average of approx. US\$59,000)					

Part 1: Recent Trends

India has consistently been among the largest contributors of UN peacekeepers, contributing approximately 163,000 personnel in 43 UN missions.³ By 31 December 2012 it had suffered 148 fatalities in the process. India has provided one Military Adviser, one Deputy Military Adviser, two Civilian Police Advisers to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), thirteen Force Commanders and several Special Representatives of the UN Secretary-General to various peacekeeping missions around the world.⁴



Since late 2005, India has had approximately 8,000 uniformed personnel deployed to UN peacekeeping operations at any one time, making it the third largest contributor during the

twenty-first century. From January 2000 to late 2012 Indian peacekeepers have increased in number by some 338%. India's increase was primarily a response to the increase in overall demand for UN peacekeeping during that period. India was the first country to field a unit composed entirely of women police officers when it sent a Formed Police Unit (FPU) to the UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in January 2007. Police officers currently make up about 15% of India's UN peacekeepers. India's major current deployments are in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and South Sudan (UNMISS). Then-Major General Dewan Prem Chand commanded the 4,000-strong UN force in the Congo that ensured the integrity of the nation in the early 1960's and India has since considered the country to be a particular Indian peacekeeping priority. Sudan is in close proximity to India and the two countries have had a close relationship, including substantial numbers of Indian soldiers being deployed there in the Second World War.

Over the years India has developed a well-rounded policy, created the necessary infrastructure, and developed clear policies for participation in UN peacekeeping operations. In the early years, India's participation in UN peacekeeping brought it much international goodwill and may have set an example for other countries to follow, particularly in South Asia. In recent decades, along with Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, these states have collectively contributed some 40% of all UN peacekeepers. India is content to remain the third largest contributor behind Bangladesh and Pakistan. India also takes a lead in setting training standards and contributing to establishing norms. It has a well-established training center and facilities under the Center for UN Peacekeeping located in Delhi. For almost two decades, the Center has provided the Secretariat for International Peacekeeping Institutes.

Part 2: Decision-making Process

The final decision on whether to participate in a UN peacekeeping mission is taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security, based on an examination of each case and on the advice of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Decisions about whether to participate in a peacekeeping operation follow a set procedure that has evolved over time. Requests for troops are received from the DPKO by the Permanent Mission, India (PMI) at the UN in New York, which transmits this request to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in Delhi. An Army officer of the rank of Colonel located at the PMI reports this request to the Ministry of Defense (MOD) in Delhi. He also coordinates with the UN DPKO and obtains additional information relating to the specific request.

On tentative clearance by the MEA the proposal is forwarded to the MOD for detailed examination. The proposal is then examined from a military perspective by a tri-service joint board under the Director General of Staff Duties at the Army Headquarters. The board considers the feasibility of the mission, the availability of forces, assesses the equipment and support equipment profile required, and assesses the pre-training requirements. The board then conveys its recommendations to the MEA, where its UN Division may consider the proposed participation further from a political angle. If required, additional consultations may be undertaken with the Parliamentary opposition or other agencies. After approval, the External Affairs Minister would likely announce the decision through a statement in Parliament if it is in session, or else through a press statement from the ministry's spokesperson.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Multiple rationales influence India's decision-making process. Initially, peacekeeping was seen as a necessary measure to hasten the pace of decolonization after the Second World

War, and India saw its participation as a statement of its commitment to the developing world. Peacekeeping was also seen as fulfilling India's international obligations to the UN. India always held the UN to be the final arbiter of international peace and contributing to it a necessary obligation. That it often furthered India's foreign policy objectives was an added bonus. Finally, having a surplus of disciplined soldiers trained and well equipped for this role allowed India to contribute troops without much difficulty.

Political and Security rationales: In the late 1940s and 1950s, India's desire to play a more prominent global role, initially in Asia, drew it to participate in non-peacekeeping roles under the UN, for example, in the Custodian Force under the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea and then in Indo-China. It also participated in early peacekeeping missions in the Middle East (in UNTSO from 1948 and UNEF from 1956). From the early 1960's India was involved in peacekeeping in Africa, beginning with the Congo in 1961. This supported Indian initiatives to promote Afro-Asian solidarity and assume a leadership role among these countries. This in turn generated an aspiration for a larger role in the UN system through contributing to peacekeeping operations. In addition to other global norms, India considers its record of participation in UN peacekeeping as evidence of its commitment to global peace.

Nevertheless, no core Indian national security interests are seen to be directly served through participation in UN peacekeeping. The overwhelming majority of its UN commitments have been in Africa, where apart from concerns for global peace, no strategic objectives are apparent. Moreover, today's UN peacekeeping missions are increasingly police operations involving only small arms and sub-unit level operations where no significant combat related lessons or experience are gained. Yet, exposure to different conflict situations in challenging environments does provide some valuable lessons in logistics, medical support and casualty evacuation and in the wider realm of military diplomacy. Peacekeeping thus has a positive impact on the armed forces overall.

Economic Rationales: India's gross GDP is growing rapidly and it is now the tenth largest economy in the world. But its per capita income still remains very low. UN reimbursement for the deployment of well-equipped peacekeeping forces, including combat helicopters and naval ships are substantial, especially when capital costs are included. Hence the sum India receives in UN compensation though not negligible, at about US\$250 million on average per year for equipment and personnel deployment, does not entirely cover its total deployment costs. In either case this is not a major issue affecting troop contribution. As a comparison, India receives approximately US\$60 billion annually from expatriates in remittances alone. But, at the level of individual soldiers and police, financial incentives for participating in peacekeeping remain significant. Only personnel and units that achieve high levels of performance at home are selected for UN missions. This financial benefit then becomes an added recognition of good performance, especially as the Government does not deduct any money from UN payments to its personnel. As less than 0.06% of its overall military strength and an even smaller percentage of its police forces serve in UN peacekeeping at any time, this incentive is negligible for the armed forces overall.

Normative Rationales: India pledged its commitment to the principles of peace and justice as enshrined in the United Nations Charter even before its independence.⁵ This international commitment is included in [India's Constitution](#) promulgated on 26 November 1949. Specifically, Article 51 under the section Directive Principles of State Policy, affirms that: "The State shall endeavor to—

- (a) promote international peace and security;
- (b) maintain just and honorable relations between nations;
- (c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another; and
- (d) encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.”

Though not an enforceable part of the Constitution, the Directive Principles are a powerful statement of national policy and provide a normative basis for contributing forces to UN peacekeeping to this day.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative political or strategic priorities: India has developed a consensus-based foreign and security policy over decades. Its political structure is stable and its democracy is based on principles and values that have endured global and domestic changes. There is little likelihood of future governments, even under changing domestic political alignments, altering foreign policy significantly.⁶ Only a major change in India’s strategic circumstances brought about by a major attack on its territory is likely to bring about a significant change in this policy. Following such an attack, circumstances might dictate that its security resources would be focused on domestic issues. However, this is an unlikely contingency. Even when China attacked India in 1962 and over 3,000 Indian troops were deployed under the UN in the Congo, India never contemplated recalling them from UN duties. Even though India today encounters several internal security challenges, it also has a very large civil armed police force, which like in China, is even larger than the regular army. Hence it is unlikely that forces deployed on UN peacekeeping operations would be recalled once committed. Though maintaining a reserve capacity may be a factor in why India does not contribute substantially more forces and attempt to compete with its neighbors.

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: Despite some skepticism in India regarding the UN’s ability to handle complex crisis situations (because of Security Council politics and command and control issues arising from mixed forces of varying capability), India continues to support the UN as the most viable vehicle for international crisis management. There have been three exceptions when India has acted alone. First, it deployed a small Special Forces operation, including a naval ship, in the Maldives in 1988 against an external armed gang that threatened to capture Male. The Indian soldiers went in response to an urgent request from the Maldivian President, secured the capital, captured the pirates, promptly handed back the Island to its legitimate government and returned to India after a year. Second, India sent troops to Sri Lanka from 1987-1990 under the provisions of a bilateral treaty with that country when it faced severe ethnic clashes. India deployed substantial forces but there was no possibility of a political agreement. After considerable effort and many casualties the Indian Peacekeeping Force was withdrawn. Third, some troops were deployed in central Afghanistan from 2006-09 to protect the Indian road construction effort between Zaranj and Delaram (some 218kms) by about 200 armed civil police. India has not contributed to NATO, including ISAF in Afghanistan.

Financial costs: This is unlikely to be an issue with India now or in the near future. It can quite comfortably manage to bear the costs of troop/police and equipment contributions, even with limited UN reimbursement.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: India has not been comfortable with an expanding role for peacekeeping, especially when employed for humanitarian concerns under the “Responsibility to Protect.” In the Libyan crisis, India abstained from

supporting Security Council Resolution 1973. Indian officials have noted that without very clear provisions and safeguards these initiatives may well favor “regime change” and unduly result in a violation of state sovereignty. Quite often the domestic debate within India challenges the current constitution of the membership of the UN Security Council, which is seen to represent the global power structure of the post Second World War era and not the radically changed environment of today. Whether decisions of such a Security Council will truly represent global consensus is being increasingly questioned in India.

Exceptionalism: India claims no grounds for exceptionalism, and it is not happy that some other countries do. Indian officials have been quite vocal in expressing criticism over the failure of the developed world to contribute greater numbers of UN peacekeepers. For example the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council have traditionally not contributed many personnel to peacekeeping. They perhaps consider this to be a task for developing countries, whereas their soldiers are too expensive and should be deployed only for peace enforcement operations. This has increasingly entered the domestic discourse in India. Should this perception persist, India, which has aspirations of great power status, may well conclude that its goals are best met by staying away from so-called “developing country tasks” such as peacekeeping.

Difficult domestic politics: Domestic politics in India is always difficult and changing. But the consensus regarding troop/police contributions to peacekeeping is likely to endure, as it is considered integral toward fulfilling its international responsibilities.

Resistance in the military: None exists as of now. Peacekeeping in all its complexity is still considered a challenge to professional soldiers in India, though often of a different kind. The operations are more often of a civil-military nature requiring civic actions and developmental efforts and, at higher levels, military diplomatic skills. India’s long experience of countering domestic insurgencies has prepared the military for such roles and they are keen to demonstrate this through “winning hearts and minds.” However, the Indian military is concerned about command and control, namely the problem that UN contingents often first respond to their home countries rather than to the UN Force Commander. This has in the past complicated responses in crisis situations. India confronted this problem in Sierra Leone at the turn of the twenty-first century. It had to deploy an additional 4,000 soldiers, free all surrounded UN forces, and complete demobilization before requesting to be relieved from the mission (UNAMSIL). In this case, India felt that it was inadequately supported by the UN DPKO. Should a similar situation arise again, Indian confidence in the UN is likely to be undermined.

Legal obstacles: The Indian Constitution supports commitments towards international peace, providing powerful legal empowerment for peacekeeping.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

There is little that is likely to challenge current capabilities and choices regarding Indian support to UN peacekeeping (other than those conditions discussed above). The Indian Armed Forces continue to grow in keeping with emerging challenges in the region. In turn this may mean a larger quantum of forces to draw on for UN troop contributions. Even as the Indian Army continues to modernize, some elements can always be spared for peacekeeping duties if other factors support the requirement.

There are two conditions that may be different in the future. First is the question of continuing to provide helicopter support. In 2011 helicopters deployed in the DR Congo were recalled at short notice to meet sudden domestic requirement in countering left-wing armed extremists. This domestic situation is likely to continue for some years, affecting future helicopter support provision. The second element is that increasingly the Civil Armed Police Forces may be provided instead of the regular Army. The UN's peacekeeping activities actually suit their competencies better and the large numbers available in India make them easier to deploy abroad. They are likely to be even more suited and cost effective in maintaining peace in less violent situations abroad, and hence replace the military there. This trend is already starting to manifest in parts of Africa.

Indian troops have consistently performed very well in UN peacekeeping and remain in great demand particularly for difficult enforcement-like missions. Yet, some minor incidents of indiscipline, particularly by soldiers in DR Congo, had to be investigated and disciplinary actions taken. This has not affected India's overall contribution.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There are no key vocal champions or opponents of UN peacekeeping in India. In addition, the burgeoning think tank industry in India has generally not focused on this issue. This has more to do with peacekeeping being a governmental function and hence not subject to much scrutiny or examination from outside actors. Retired senior UN Force Commanders and others who may have been expected to champion the cause tend to fade from public view after retirement. Within the active military and police services there remains strong support for participation, although not as much as in some other neighboring countries. The political leadership in India has not yet involved itself in any major public debate on this issue.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

India's capability to contribute peacekeepers remains very high and will probably continue to grow in the immediate future. There remain no major caveats attached to contributing such forces. Indian forces operate under foreign commanders without hesitation as long as there are sound military principles behind such arrangements. Overall as an emerging global player, India has consistently demonstrated its ability and willingness to share its international commitments. This normative approach to peacekeeping is likely to continue.

Part 8: Further Reading

D. Banerjee, "India," in A.J. Bellamy & P.D. Williams (eds.), *Providing Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of UN Peacekeeping Contributions* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

Notes

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data is drawn from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012* (London: IISS/ Routledge, 2012).

² Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of active armed forces. Figures from IISS, *The Military Balance 2012*.

³ Data based on the assessment of the UN Section of the Army Headquarters, Department of UN Peacekeeping, Deputy Director General of Staff Duties. Author's interview, 17 January 2012.

⁴ Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, *For the Honour of India – A History of Indian Peacekeeping* (New Delhi: Centre for Armed Forces Historical Research, United Services Institute of India, 2009), p.500.

⁵ K.P. Saksena, "India and the Evolving United Nations" in Satish Kumar (ed.) *The UN at 50: An Indian View* (New Delhi: India International Centre, 1995), p.4.

⁶ Nevertheless, today, India does have other avenues to demonstrate its international importance e.g. through membership of the G-20, the BRICS and other institutions beyond the UN.