

Security and Military Cooperation between Myanmar and India after 2010

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Abstract

Security and military cooperation between India and Myanmar occupies an important position in the bilateral relationship. On the one hand, India needs Myanmar to obtain the capability of maintaining a stable border. On the other hand, Myanmar also needs to expand its military build-up to deal with the threat of domestic insurgency. This is the direct cause for India and Myanmar to orient security cooperation as the “natural key point” in the bilateral relations. Myanmar locates in the Indian Ocean as well as being the only land transportation hub connecting East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia. Since 2014, India highlighted its “Neighborhood First” policy which focuses on engaging the neighboring countries. India’s LEP and nowadays ‘Act East Policy’ also mandate stronger relationships with India’s Eastern neighbors like Myanmar. India has supported for the ongoing internal peace process of Myanmar and it could promote cooperation in ensuring peace and stability and development responsibilities in border region between Myanmar and India. This paper attempts to explore the strategic dimension for the bilateral security and military cooperation. This paper will focus on why India is interested in Myanmar’s strategic location. It also aims to analyze security cooperation between Myanmar and India.

Keywords: Myanmar, India, military, security, cooperation, strategic

Introduction

During the independence struggle of two countries, India had focused consideration on the strategic significance of Myanmar to India. Although Myanmar and India do not have much military cooperation, India provided arms and ammunition to U Nu government when the government was threatened by the Kuomintang rebellions in 1949. In the military cooperation, Myanmar and India has been basically limited to intelligence sharing and occasional joint operations against the insurgent groups that have been operating along the border areas against both countries. Therefore, Myanmar government has been more or less cooperative when India has information regarding with the Indian insurgent groups. There are many more cooperation between the two countries. From 1951 to the early 1960s, members of the Myanmar military were given training in India. Moreover, since 1994, regular visits between two armed forces have exchanged. In the past decade, this has witnessed considerable strengthening through a series of regular visits at the Service Chief level (and below), provision of training facilities, visits by naval ships, supply or sale of equipment and a continuing dialogue on professional matters and strategic issues. By concerning about China attempts to access the Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal (BoB) and the Indo-Pacific context through Myanmar, India has been making efforts to increase some strategic cooperation with Myanmar and has helped with strategically important road building.

Strategic Dimension/Location for Security Cooperation

Myanmar is significant for India from a host of strategic and geo-political motives. Because of its identified geographical location, Myanmar domestic and foreign policies have a high potential to directly impact on several significant aspects of India’s strategic interests. The protection of India’s territorial integrity in the Northeastern parts of the country is the main interest because Arunachal Pradesh Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland have borders with China, Bangladesh and Myanmar. They share a very porous 1,463-kilometre border with Myanmar and by having that large coastal line with Myanmar, India’s strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and BoB as well as the security of the Andaman and Nicobar Island are also connected

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to sustained good links with Myanmar. Therefore, strategic significant of Myanmar in the Indian Ocean has persuaded India to initiate naval cooperation with Myanmar.

Moreover, Myanmar symbolizes India's "East Gate." India's security consideration in Myanmar is to protect any potential rival from overlooking Myanmar which could posture a threat to India. China's peaceful liberation of Tibet, its increasingly closer ties with Myanmar since 1988, and mainly its "Pearls of the String of Strategy" indicate to India that the danger of China's intent to enclose it. By implementing the Chinese Pearls of the String Strategy, China has been expanded in developing ports in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Therefore, India fears about China in the maritime sphere in perspective by focusing on China's potential threat in the Indian Ocean. In difference view of the United States (U.S) and the EU, India realized that without proper engagement of Myanmar, China's influence would continue to grow unchecked. Therefore, India decided to invest in the Sittwe Port, Rakhine State, Myanmar can be assumed in its maritime doctrine framework. The India's aim of forging a closer relationship with Myanmar is in line with the U.S and Japan's strategic interest of containing China.

Traditionally, India's defense policy has been based on preparing for a war with Pakistan and China, and dealing with internal security threats of terrorism and insurgencies, mostly from neighboring based militants. Since the late 1980s, India started building up its naval and air power in the Andaman and Nicobar Island bases that indicated its concern towards Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCS). This interest improved with India's developing trade with East and Southeast Asia countries, particularly after the implementation of its "Look East Policy" (LEP) in the 1990. As a result in the post-Cold War, Southeast Asian countries created to look upon India as a power that can play a kind of "balancing role". It was in India's interest to verify that Southeast Asian countries would not be influenced by China. In addition, India-ASEAN mutual security concern is shown by two factors: to reconcile US military power in the Asia-Pacific, and to balance the rising power of China in the region.

Therefore, after the Cold-War, India recognizes Myanmar as an important "land-bridge" on its path to the consolidation of relations with Southeast and East Asia. Therefore, Myanmar appropriates in actual into India's regional plans. On the other hand, Myanmar's policy towards India has been based on its desire to expand its external engagement. The need for expansion was manipulated in the face of growing dependence on China and India was seen as a potential counter-weight to China. Therefore, Myanmar military leaders believe that its relations with India boost its "international image and legitimacy".

In the Indo-Pacific context, Myanmar is the importance for India's reintroduced emphasis on the region. Geopolitical aspects in the Indo-Pacific region have been changing promptly as strategic rivalry strengthens between China and the U.S for influence, access to new markets and resources. Even as India has taken a backseat in the emerging geopolitical play in Myanmar as focus moves to the U.S-China rivalry, India has long-term strategic interests in its Eastern neighbor. In line for the geo-strategic importance of Myanmar for India and the crucial linkage of defense between India's North-East and Myanmar's Western region, India has the largest military in South Asia and Myanmar's Tatmadaw (military) is the second-largest active force in South East Asia. Military cooperation between the two countries is an important component of bilateral relations.

Security and Military Cooperation

Economic and military relations between Myanmar and China are a reason of concern to India because China gets easily access to BoB and the Andaman Sea. In addition China has supplied nearly 80 percent of defense equipment to Myanmar. In the 1990s, as part of the

economic liberalization policy, India initiated the LEP for developing strategic and economic relations with East and Southeast Asian countries and ASEAN members. Among the Southeast Asian countries, Myanmar provides a strategic link to the East and Southeast Asian countries. Hence, improvement of relations with Myanmar became an important requirement for India. Therefore, India has tried to enhance close relations with Myanmar.

India's move to forge closer relations with Myanmar is encouraged to counter China's growing influence as a regional leader and boost its identifiable influence and standing. By establishing strong security mechanisms for land borders to address the ongoing insurgencies and prevent instability in contiguous areas, Myanmar and India recognized the military and security sphere. India has supported Myanmar's military forces through capacity building and has supplied some military hardware. Moreover, India has attempted to increase its naval relationship with Myanmar. Therefore, India has transferred naval hardware to Myanmar. In 2006, India stated that "... Transfer of two BN-2 'Defender' Islander maritime surveillance aircraft and deck-based air defense guns to the Myanmar Navy. Moreover, there are tactics to train Myanmar military personnel too. By means of a maritime neighbor, the Myanmar navy has joined in multilateral maritime forums such as MILAN naval exercises since the mid-2000s. These initiatives are important because India was under enormous pressure to isolate Myanmar when the U.S and western countries had imposed sanctions. However, these activities are the good start to do counter balance to China.

In response, Myanmar military officers assured that they would extend support for joint operations against the remaining camps of Indian insurgents inside Myanmar territory. In 2007, the Myanmar military launched an offensive against Indian insurgent groups, including United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and National Socialist Council of Nagaland Khaplong (NSCN-K), based in the territories of India. Myanmar and India have united their military connections. Major military visits in the past decade included that of Vice Admiral Soe Thane, Commander in Chief of Myanmar Navy in April 2007 and the visit of Admiral Suresh Mehta, Indian Navy Chief in May 2007.

Military cooperation is a vital area of the new emphasis that India has engaged on Myanmar democratic transition. Myanmar has displayed an aspiration to reduce its defense dependence on China. It is not only to India has planned this area of cooperation but also has tried to expand its defense equipment from other suppliers to encounter its requirements. It is the contention of many within the Indian defense establishment that the supplies of a limited nature that has been undertaken by India have been found to be superior to that supplied by China. However, it may have contributed to Myanmar asking for greater involvement of India on the defence side, the main driving force is Myanmar desiring a lowering of China's dominance in this area. It can be assumed that position in the post 1988 period when the rest of the world including India to isolate Myanmar that was being ruled by a brutal military government.

After 2010, the situation has changed recognitions to a more open and practical role having been adopted by a democratic military dominated government. If we have accepted the role of supporting the reform minded Thein Sein and to encourage him further in his reform efforts it is a clear essential that India should along with others help him in his efforts to reduce his dependence on China in the defence area. It makes no sense to hedge our bets in this regard particularly as we have also accepted a role in assisting Thein Sein in the socio-economic development of the Frontier States as part of the political process that he is trying to put in place in direct negotiation with the ethnic groups including the Kachins. While the frontier states continue to pose a security problem till a political system acceptable to all is put in place

we need to assist him in every way that we can to assure a secure future for Myanmar including the defence area covering equipment supplies, software and training areas.

Myanmar-India relations have observed remarkable progress in recent years. This is reflected in the growing political, security and economic interactions between the two countries. Myanmar implementation of democracy since 2010 and India's changed to strengthen relations with its neighboring countries has created new spaces for cooperation. The thrust towards developing mutual trust and understanding between Myanmar and India is noticeable in the improved of high-level political and defense exchanges. The achievements have paved the way for the two neighbors to take their relationship to a higher level. By enhancing economic relations, enhancing border security and selecting rich sociocultural linkages are developing as the crucial point of the bilateral relations. It can be seen that these are the possible of redefining Myanmar-India relations within the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Act East Policy initiative.

A frequent reciprocal visit of military high officials is an indicator of deepening military and security cooperation of the two countries. Since the Deputy Secretary of Defense of India visited Myanmar with his delegation in May 2011, the Indian Secretary of Defense as well as the highest chief of the armed forces visited Myanmar one after another. In addition, the Chairman of the Military Staff Committee and Navy Commander of India visited Myanmar in 2011.

In February 2012, Myanmar Navy had taken part in joint naval exercises conducted by India with the participation of 14 nations' navies which is MILAN series of naval exercises. India has been able to involve Myanmar more firmly in its counterinsurgency efforts in its Northeast region. Not only India supports peace process in Myanmar but it also has very important stakes in ensuring peace and stability along the Myanmar-India borders. Moreover, India donated USD one million towards relief in Rakhine state in the aftermath of communal riots that ravaged the region in 2012. Even as the issue of ethnic rebels along the Myanmar-China border has created tensions between the two countries, the issue of ethnic rebels along Myanmar-India border has created space for the two countries in question to cooperate with each other. So, during the visit of Myanmar's Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services to India, the maritime security sphere was emphasized for deepening military relations between the two countries. The visit was the positive changes occurring on Myanmar's political transition had created circumstances for enabling such a high level visit. After the visit, a dozen Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed between the two countries. In order to peace and stability along Myanmar-India border, Myanmar and India emphasized the requirement for enhancement of cooperation between forces.

In order to improve military cooperation, Myanmar and India have been holding regular border liaison meetings. In 2012, Myanmar and India made several discussions for security cooperation. It was informed that the Indian security forces had stepped up the vigil in districts in the tribal-dominated areas. In a significant move, during the visit of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services of Myanmar, to India in August 2012, India again offered to train Myanmar military personnel. Since 2012, Myanmar's high military officials also visited India frequently. The two sides reached an agreement on helping Myanmar to build offshore patrol boat. In January 2012, Chief of Army Staff of India visited Myanmar and from November to December 2012, the Chairman of the Military Staff Committee and Air Force Commander N.A.K. Browne visited Myanmar respectively.

Providing Myanmar with military equipment and staff training is another important part of security cooperation for both countries. Since the adoption of constructive engagement

policy with Myanmar in the 1990s, India began to change its cautious stance in providing military equipment for Myanmar. So, India began to provide the necessary military equipment for Myanmar, such as 105 mm guns, T-55 tanks, light helicopters, transport aircrafts, artillery, naval ships and so on. In order to strengthen the support for Myanmar's military capability, India strengthened its forces in two aspects of military equipment and training military talents. In January 2013, during India's Defense Minister A.K Antony visit to Myanmar, the two countries reached agreement on training the Myanmar's armed forces (such as training the Myanmar air force to drive Russia made "mig-35" helicopters, allowing more Burmese personnel to enter into the Indian army institutes for training) as well as providing Myanmar with such as maritime patrol aircrafts, naval gunboats, light guns, mortars, grenade launchers and other weapons etc. With the political transition in Myanmar after 2010, India has continued its military cooperation with the quasi-civilian government. Many military personages from both sides have exchanged visits to enhance military to military cooperation and address mutual border security threats and challenges. In 29 May 2012, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Myanmar and pointed out during a speech in Yangon that, "India and Myanmar need to expand bilateral security cooperation, which is not only to maintain peace in the border areas but also to protect safety of the maritime trade route between Calcutta and Sittwe."

Among the military cooperation of Myanmar and India, maritime security cooperation has become the new trend of security cooperation between the two countries. On 9 March 2013, a frigate and a cruiser of Myanmar sea army arrived in the East port City of India, Visakhapatnam, for interaction with the military command officials of the east sea of India. Then, two Myanmar warships and two Indian warships carried out joint patrols in the nearby area of Cocoa Islands, searching for illegal fishermen, poachers, smugglers and rebel groups. The joint military exercise was of special significance because the Myanmar-India naval joint military exercises had only been carried out within the multilateral framework in the past 10 years. For example, MILAN exercise led by India which were the first time for both sides to carry out joint naval military exercises independently since 2003.

The defense cooperation between the two countries gradually increased. Raksha Mantri led a high level delegation including Defense Secretary, Vice Chief of Naval Staff visited to Myanmar from January 21 to 22 January 2013. During the visit, Raksha Mantri called on President U Thein Sein and had detailed discussions for bilateral cooperation in defense with Commander-in-Chief Vice Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Wai Lwin, Chief of Army Staff. It can be seen that the prolongation of the trend and the growing defense cooperation between Myanmar and India. Many military personages (VIPs) from both countries have exchanged visit to improve military to military cooperation and address mutual border security threats and challenges. As, the security aspect is one of the most important features of the Myanmar-India relations, the visit of three Indian services chiefs were to forge a closer defense relationship with Myanmar. Moreover, according to Army Commander of Eastern Command, India was intense to address its maritime and land security concerns cooperation with Myanmar armed forces. Stable security relations could go an extensive way in safeguarding harmony between the two countries. The thrust areas should be to secure the border areas and ensure greater military to military contacts in order to create an environment of confidence.

India and Myanmar had already begun to expand defense relations before the Modi's government took power. In March 2013, the two countries showed that their first bilateral naval exercise in the BoB. The two countries engaged in coordinated guards along the maritime boundary. In July 2013, Myanmar's Navy Chief-lieutenant General visited India and

made agreement with Indian army to use Indian military body and arm equipment to train Myanmar sailors. Myanmar would consider introducing the domestic submarine sonar and radar technology from India. In October 2013, Bick Ram Singh visited Myanmar. During General Bikram Singh's visit, the two countries discussed Myanmar's military modernization, the safety of India-Myanmar border regions and providing scholarships for Myanmar officers and soldiers to use in human resource development. Interactions between the two navies had also increased including port calls and exchange of high-level visits. In response, Myanmar Vice Senior General Soe Win visited India from 11-16 December, 2013. They discussed matters relating to security and strengthening bilateral military relations of the two countries and other issues with Indian army commander in chief of the eastern military region Dalbir Singh. In 2013, India supported artillery guns, radars and night vision devices to Myanmar's army. It can be said that India has focused on naval cooperation with Myanmar because India wants to counter Chinese influence in the region. The two sides are expected to increase coordinated patrols in the BoB that help the two navies operate together.

Myanmar-India military cooperation has been on the mounting trajectory in the recent years. The regularity high level military leaders visits to each other's country has improved the quasi civilian government took power since 2011. Special efforts have been made by the Indian government to engage Myanmar's political and military leadership since May 2014. In order to support a framework for security cooperation and intelligence exchange, India and Myanmar signed a MoU on border cooperation which provides a Framework for Security Cooperation and Exchange of Information between Indian and Myanmar Security Agencies in May 2014. It provides for coordinated patrols and exchange of information and intelligence in the fight against non-traditional security issues between Myanmar and India. After the cross-border operation, India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar visited Myanmar and discussed with top political and military leaders about border security. Myanmar and India made an agreement on border management and to resolve unsettled boundary issues. To enhance cooperative relationship, navy and air force staff talks between Myanmar and India have been held. Moreover, India has providing professional and technical trainings to Myanmar armed forces.

In November 2014, Prime Minister Modi announced India's "Act East" at the 12th India-ASEAN Summit in Myanmar. Prime Minister Modi acknowledged BoB is the East starts for India. He also emphasized the fact that Myanmar and Southeast Asia are at the core of the India's new policy and restated Myanmar's importance as the land bridge between India and Southeast Asia. The event was also a reconfirmation of the fact that traditional concepts of regions are undergoing radical changes as dividing lines disappear rapidly in the era of globalization and as global power politics shift to the Indo-Pacific. In November, the Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba visited Myanmar with the aim of consolidating and enhancing the bilateral maritime relations between India and Myanmar. The two countries share long maritime boundary in the strategically significant Andaman Sea and BoB. So, maritime cooperation has become an equally important aspect of the military to military relations.

In May 2015, the first joint hydrographic survey between the navies of the two countries was completed off Sittwe harbour (India has been involved in upgrading the Sittwe port). Information from the survey is expected to support enhance safety of the vessels that would be operating in the Sittwe port. The most significant improvement in the area of security post under the Modi government has been regarding border security. On 9 June 2015, cross-border operation was conducted by the Indian Army. Through a single operation of the Modi government has sent out a solid political message that it will take all actions to secure the

country's borders. Border security along the 1,643-km shared porous land border between Myanmar and India has been the main security challenge where several ethnic rebels operate. Security cooperation between the two countries has mounted in recent years.

Prime Minister Modi met with Foreign Prime Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin on 15 July 2015 in New Delhi, India. Underlying the strategic importance of Myanmar to India, Prime Minister Modi expressed that India attached the highest precedence to its relations with Myanmar and India's position as a reliable partner in Myanmar's development. In response, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of Defense Services, visited India in July 2015. He met with Prime Minister Modi and other top defense officials. During the meeting, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing stated that India's role as a reliable development partner" and pledge to deepen defense and security engagement with India, including in the maritime security realm.

Prominently, the first Myanmar-India Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) meeting between Myanmar and India was held on 16 July 2015. This meeting was led by foreign ministers of both countries to signal more significance at the top political level. The 2015 JCC meeting also approved that "maritime security cooperation in the BoB is vital for both countries." During the 2015 JCC meeting, India had given a commitment to assistance the modernization of Myanmar Armed Forces, cooperation in IT field for emerging security challenges and training cooperation between the two military forces. In addition, India cooperated to safeguard maritime security with Myanmar in building professional Myanmar Navy.

At a time when the geopolitics of the BoB is undertaking intense changes, there is need for more cooperation between Myanmar and India to deal with the developing security challenges as well as in compelling advantage of the possible economic opportunities. In this regard, the role of India in Myanmar's naval capabilities building and maritime security cooperation is evolving as an area of vast potential for cooperation. As part of the India's Act East policy, India could initiate maritime security cooperation in the BoB region in the lines of the trilateral maritime security cooperation it already has with Sri Lanka and Maldives, or indeed expand this existing trilateral by inviting other key littorals, like Myanmar, to join.

In October 2015, India's National Security Advisor witnessed the signing of peace accord between the Myanmar Government and eight of the 15 ethnic armed groups. China, Japan, Thailand, the United Nations and the European Union were the other witnesses to the accord. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special envoy for the North East R.N. Ravi and former Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga, a former rebel, were also present on the occasion. However, the Myanmar-based National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) (NSCN-K) stayed away from signing the National Ceasefire Agreement. As a response Indian Special Forces had carried out a raid in the trans-border region against the NSCN-K meeting with a degree of success. Three years back S.S. Khaplang, a Burmese Naga, had signed a state-level ceasefire pact with Sagaing Region Minister for Security and Border Affairs in 2012, which is technically still in operation though he pulled out of a 14-year-old ceasefire pact with India in April this year before launching a series of offensives against the security forces in Nagaland and Manipur of which ambush on the Dogra battalion was the most serious. Not signing an accord with NSCN-K by the Myanmar Government is being viewed as a positive development as far as the Indian Government is concerned and should be welcome.

Looking at the multilateral platform for military cooperation, both Myanmar and India are members of ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) Plus Forum where shared military and security concerns are discussed and joint exercises are carried out especially in the

areas of non-traditional security. The basic objective of creating such a framework was to bring about cooperative security, especially in the areas of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, maritime security, counter-terrorism and peacekeeping operations. Therefore, scope for further military and security cooperation between the two nations has been enhanced under the aegis of ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting.

Since 2013, the two Navies have coordinated patrols along the maritime border. For example, the 4th India-Myanmar Coordinated Patrol (IMCOR) was cooperated in 2016 along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) in the Andaman Sea. Myanmar and India signed the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for IMCOR which is a significant achievement between the two countries. In addition, Myanmar and India have been taking part joint naval exercises biennially. Military and security cooperation has strengthened over the years. Exchange of high-level visits, signing of MoU on Border Cooperation, and training programmes, Army, Air Force and Naval Staff discussion are important indicators for Myanmar-India security and military cooperation. In order to strengthen the ongoing bilateral defense and security cooperation, Admiral Sunil Lamba from 1 November to 4 November 2016 and General Bipin Rawat from May 27 to 31 May 2017 visited to Myanmar respectively. As a result of the high level visits, they held wide-ranging discussions on improving the scope and depth of defense ties. In July 2017, Senior General Min Aung Hliang, Commander-in-Chief Myanmar Defense Services visited to India, giving an opportunity to further reinforce defense relations. Myanmar side has provided pledges at the highest levels that it will cooperate with India in taking necessary action in preventing the use of Myanmar territory for anti-India activity.

On top of those traditional security cooperations, Myanmar and India have planned a strategy to counter transnational crime such as drug smuggling, arms smuggling, insurgency, etc. During the annual Home Secretary-level meeting at Naypyidaw, the two countries agreed to initiate necessary steps to prevent smuggling of drugs, arms and ammunition. Therefore, both countries had agreed to the Ratification of Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Criminal Matters (MLAT) in 2010. It is a useful instrument to address a number of transnational crimes across the borders of the two countries.

Conclusion

In the military and security domain, Myanmar and India have acknowledged the need to establish strong security mechanisms for land borders to address the ongoing insurgencies and prevent instability in contiguous areas. In the past, India has supported Myanmar military forces through capacity building and has supplied some military hardware. Undoubtedly, India desires strengthening its strategic relationship with Myanmar. Then, India considers Myanmar as a gateway and a launch place for its 'Act East Policy'. In correspondence with its political relationship, India requires to boost its progressing military to military relations with Myanmar because Myanmar is strategic importance for India in the region. India needs to further build up capacity of Myanmar armed forces so that not only they can deal with internal challenges but also enable them to provide a secure environment along the land and maritime borders. It should be noted that the most of the inventory of Myanmar military is from China and this heavy dependence needs to be offset by India.

Security occupies centre stage in any discussion about South and Central Asia. It is necessary to find solutions beyond the obvious, to understand the contexts rather than to give one-size-fits-all formulaic solutions. We should be ready to work together with the Myanmar government to accelerate the process of development in the areas bordering India. This has traditionally been viewed as an area of common security concern but it is also a new economic

frontier. Myanmar and India have cooperated against armed insurgency; however, it is the planned connectivity and development projects in the Rakhine and Chin States and Sagaing Region which are today of special importance.

Myanmar democratization process has provided an opportunity for India to engage its neighbours. There have been several high level visits between the two countries. Myanmar and India are connected by roads and interlinked by seaway, thus strengthening its security cooperation with Myanmar is an important part of India's development of the relationship with Myanmar. After 2010, military exchanges between the two countries were increasingly frequent, military exercises were transferring from relying on multilateral framework to bilateral development mechanism. And more importantly, both parties show the will of establishing reciprocal type defense cooperation mechanism.

As concerns security and military cooperation, it is treated as a subject of vast significance, given the long history of insurgencies in both countries. Stability having been regarded as an essential requirement for development of the border region, special efforts has been made to strengthen cooperation between security authorities in order to tackle the problems created by terrorists, insurgents and criminals in the past two decades. Dialogue mechanisms, legal instruments and agreements, regular arrangements for exchange of intelligence and for security cooperation have been in place for long.

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