

RAPPORTEURS REPORT

**Asian Security: Comprehending  
the Indian Approach  
February 11-13, 2015**



## *Inaugural Session: Address by Admiral R K Dhawan, February 11, 2015*



The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) held its 17th Asian Security Conference from February 11-13, 2015. The theme of this year's seminar was: "*Asian security: Comprehending the Indian Approach*". The Conference was inaugurated by Admiral R K Dhawan, Chief of the Indian Naval Staff, on February 11.

While delivering the welcome address, Brig Rumel Dahiya (Retd), Deputy Director General, IDSA, briefly talked about the origin of the Asian Security Conference. During the 1990s, momentous changes were taking place all over the world. Around the same time, Asia too started rising from its two hundred yearlong backwardness and marginalisation. However, Asia, being the most densely populated region in the world, was seen by many as unsuitable for modernity and economic rejuvenation. Even then since the 1990s, the emergence of tiger economies, Chinese economy as well as India's economic liberalisation seemed to largely negate that pessimistic outlook. Later on, developments like East Asian economic crisis and nuclear tests in South Asia had tremendous impact on the socio-economic as well as political aspects of Asia. Despite such developments within, Asia was hardly discussed and debated. The issue of Asian security continued to be neglected. IDSA, at that time, realised that study of Asian security is extremely important. That is why, it initiated to hold the Asian security conference annually since 1999. This year's Asian Security Conference was primarily looking at what role can India play in shaping structural and normative parameters for Asian security.

Admiral R K Dhawan, in his inaugural speech, basically talked about the maritime aspect of Asian security. Our planet Earth is also known as the blue planet, primarily because of significant dominance of the maritime domain. Seventy per cent of the Earth's surface is covered by water while 80 per cent of world's humanity live within 200 nautical miles of the coast. Ninety per cent of international trade is carried out through the seas. Admiral Dhawan highlighted that countries of Asia have a natural outlook towards the

seas. They have strong maritime interest, as it is closely interlinked with their economic interests. All these are vital aspects of a blue economy.

The world has become increasingly aware of the rise of Asia. The seas in Asia have become the vortex of intense maritime security. Maritime security in Asia has become an extremely vital issue, primarily because around 66 per cent of world's oil shipments and 50 per cent of world's container shipments transit through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The very fact that 80 per cent of the trade that emanates in the IOR is extra regional in nature makes the maritime security aspects in this region all the more vital. It implies that in case of disruption in the free flow of trade in the IOR, not only regional economies but also the economy of the world at large will be adversely affected.

The challenges in the maritime security domain are wide and varied. The threats range from piracy to drug/arms trafficking to poaching. Since 2008, naval forces from all over the world have been working together to counter piracy. Since October 2008, Indian Navy has been actively employed in anti-piracy operations. However, combating non-traditional security threats like illegal activities on the seas is not an easy task due to anonymity of the individuals as well as their intent. Maritime agencies as well as navies have very limited policy options to deal with such challenges. Political fragility and inter-state as well as intra-state tensions can also be deterring factors in countering maritime challenges. Given the volatility of maritime security in Asia, about 120 warships have been deployed by extra regional powers to safeguard their own national maritime interests in the region. Moreover, Asia has witnessed several natural disasters so far. In fact, 70 per cent of the world's natural disasters have occurred in Asia. India too has been a victim of some of those disasters. That is why there is an increasing need for the maritime agencies and navies of Asia to cooperate in disaster relief and humanitarian aid.

Today, there exist immense threat perceptions in the maritime domain, ranging from piracy to human/arms trafficking. No single navy in the world is robust enough to carry out the vast task of policing or patrolling the global commons by itself. That is why navies from various countries should cooperate in the maritime domain. Here, interoperability, capacity building and capability enhancement among various navies of the world are crucial. To develop these, navies should get involved in joint training, joint naval exercise, joint patrolling and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) surveillance, technical assistance and information sharing, etc.

As far as Indian Navy is concerned, it has taken some initiatives to strengthen the bridges of friendship across the ocean. Here, the examples like launching of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) with the membership of thirty five littoral navies; holding of the 'Milan' exercise with other regional navies, etc. can be rightly cited.

India is a maritime nation. It is at the centrestage of the IOR. It has a long coastline of 7516 km and an EEZ of over two million sq. km. India also has a vibrant shipping industry as well as ship-building industry. This largely explains India's maritime interests in the region. At any given time, it has 4000-5000 merchant vessels, over a 1000 coastal vessels and thousands of fishing boats operating in the water. This creates a very dense maritime environment and needs very effective security initiatives to be taken to ensure security in the waters around India. Here, Indian Navy plays a crucial role in providing the security umbrella for securing the seas around the country. In the 21st century, Indian Navy has emerged as the multidimensional network force which is ready to take on any challenges in the IOR. It has come to be treated as a stabilising force in the IOR in ensuing security of the global commons.

Today, the seas around the world are gaining a lot of importance. There is no doubt that the current century is the century of the seas. Given that the global and economic centre of gravity is gradually shifting towards Asia, we can also treat the current century as Asian century. Asian region has evident maritime linkages and

interests of Asian countries are linked with unhindered flow of trade and oil for the region. For all these and to keep the seas secure, a security umbrella is needed which can only be provided by the navies and maritime agencies. Accordingly, cooperation as well as networking among various navies has become extremely vital.

*Report prepared by Dr Pranamita Baruah, Research Assistant, IDSA.*

## Session 1: Asian Regional Order

Chairperson: Amb Nalin Surie (Retd)

Dr Namrata Goswami	Dr Arndt Michael	Prof Santishree Pandit	Prof S D Muni
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- [Dr Namrata Goswami](#) - India's Strategic Approach to Asia: The Key Questions for the Conference Discourse
- [Dr Arndt Michael](#) - *Panchsheel*-Multilateralism and Competing Regionalism – The Indian Approach towards Regional Cooperation and Regional Order in South Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Mekong-Ganga
- [Prof Santishree Pandit](#) - India as the Norm-builder and Norm Contributor of Asia and the World
- [Prof S D Muni](#) - How India is Viewed as a Regional Actor in Asia

Dr Namrata Goswami, in her presentation, explained the rationale for the theme of the Asian Security Conference. She argued that most of the western literature on India's strategic thinking is critical and assumes a lack of clarity in India's strategic thinking. Contrary to this, diplomatic declarations categorically outline India's strategic thought processes. Increasingly, policymakers and institutions are engaged in strategic scenario building. This implies that they mistake the lack of strategic planning with lack of strategic culture. The objective of the conference is to understand what is and what could be the best approach for India to contribute to Asian security.

Dr Arndt Michael shared his research on why regional security institutions where India is a member have failed to succeed. He argued that the normative determinants of India's regional multilateral cooperation, as highlighted in the principles of *Panchsheel*, come in the way of vibrant multilateralism in the region. Given the preference for bilateralism, the SAARC, IORA, MGC and BIMSTEC have low levels of institutionalisation resulting in minimal multilateralism. In addition, India's practice is one of 'competing regionalism' whereby it excludes member countries from one or the other forum and seeks to gain from its presence in all of them.

Prof Santishree Pandit articulated the case of India being a civilisation state that has been a norm builder even before 1947. The normative contribution that India has made includes shared value system with acceptance of universal norms; mechanisms for conflict resolution; multiculturalism which accepts diversity of tradition, religion, history and yet the universality of principles; and the middle path and non-attachment. India's Look East Policy draws on Rajendra Chola's naval forays in Southeast Asia and beyond that was aimed at protecting maritime routes and trade without being expansionist. In conclusion, she argued that unlike in western thinking, norm-building is a way of life not just a theoretical pursuit for India. Moreover, Indian philosophy is at the base of India's norm-building.

Prof S D Muni highlighted the four phases of the evolution of the image of India in Asia. In phase one (1947-50s), India was seen as an Asian leader and a moral and intellectual hub without financial prowess. In the second phase (1960s), India was boxed into South Asia. In the third phase (1970s-80s), India tried to bridge three foreign policy deficits - developmental, security and status with a result that it was seen with respect and anxiety. In the fourth phase (1990s-), India made up for the foreign policy deficits and made economic and military strides. As a result, India is sought after as a balancer, net security provider, and strategic partner. He underlined that some of the expectations from India are unrealistic given India's capabilities and strategic calculations. However, it is important for India to overcome the delivery deficit if it is to be perceived as a credible regional power.

In the course of the session, the chairperson shared valuable inputs as a practitioner of Indian foreign policy. He argued that strategic ambiguity of India is also a conscious strategy. He concurred with the view that India's maritime history has been underplayed. India's Look East Policy, for instance, was initiated at independence but was stalled due to the Cold War. He also emphasised the need for overcoming the delivery deficit.

#### **The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- Thinking in India is fragmented and therefore it cannot contribute an alternative vision of the global order.
- The alliances with great powers are constraining and are not a parameter for evaluating a great power. A country is a great power by its own merits.
- China's role in multilateralism in Southeast Asia has been problematic and therefore arguments for its involvement in South Asian multilateral institutions should be cautiously advanced.
- Comparing the experience of regionalism in Europe and Asia is not meant to assert superiority of one system over the other, but to gain a better understanding of what furthers regionalism.

*Report prepared by Dr Arpita Anant, Associate Fellow, IDSA and Dr Titli Basu, Research Assistant, IDSA.*

## *Session 2: India and Strategic Partnerships: Impact on Asian Security*

Chairperson: Amb Kanwal Sibal (Retd)

Prof Phunchok Stobdan	Prof Holli Semetko	Dr Vo Xuan Vinh	Dr Vo Xuan Vinh
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- [Prof Phunchok Stobdan](#) - Geopolitics and India-Russia Strategic Partnership
- [Prof Holli Semetko](#) - Framing US-India Relations
- [Dr Vo Xuan Vinh](#) - India's Strategic Partnership with Vietnam: A Perspective from Vietnam
- [Dr Satoru Nagao](#) - The Japan-India Strategic Partnership will be New Hope for Asia

Amb Kanwal Sibal, the Chair, initiated the proceedings by highlighting the lack of congruent definition of the term 'strategic partnerships'. He observed that there is no particular pattern or criterion for India's strategic partnerships with other countries. The country has been managing these partnerships in an eclectic way, although the glaring omission has been the absence of a strategic understanding with its neighbours. Possibly, for India, 'strategic partnership' comes under the ambit of multi-alignment. He also raised the question whether India has devalued the concept by having so many strategic partnerships with different countries.

Amb Phunchok Stobdan initiated his talk by emphasising that strategic partnerships do not carry much significance unless obligatory specifics are embedded to it. His presentation, in his own opinion, was a critique of the India-Russia strategic partnership. He observed that Russia, in its geopolitical form, has always remained the most critical component in India's strategic calculus. If one looks back in history, the developments in Eurasian continent had decisively shaped much of India's political history. Even in the 20th century, the presence of Soviet Union was seen as a positive historical phenomenon with enduring security implications for India. This geostrategic reality and the geo-political context of American weapons and

economic aid to Pakistan and the Sino-Soviet and Sino-India conflict had provided added impetus to the Indo-Soviet strategic alignment. It ultimately resulted in the signing of Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation in 1971. The provisions under Article VIII, IX and X of this treaty were obligatory in nature and helped shape the direction of future ties. However, the understanding of the past has gone down and there are no visible signs of any obligations towards each other. While the two countries may have lofty declarations, yet in reality the relationship is purely transactional in nature and that too in weapons trade. Even President Putin, the architect of closer India-Russia ties in the 21st century, has not been able to arrest the fall. One of the key reasons for the rise in negative trends has been their inability to link their growth centres to each other. While the Chinese and Koreans have taken over the growth centres in Russia, the Indian centres are more inclined towards the West. The benign neglect and indifference is further witnessed in a dramatic decline in the people to people interaction at the social, scientific and academic levels. A plethora of misunderstandings have crept in on a range of issues. These include: 1) Russia's outreach to Pakistan and a shift in its position on Pakistan's contribution towards fighting terrorism and it being an important determinant in Afghanistan. 2) India's weapons diversification policy and its outreach to the West has not gone down well with the Russians while India remains peeved at Russia's failure to meet weapons delivery schedules, supply of unreliable spares and cost escalations. 3) There is likely to be fallouts of Russia's confrontation with the West as witnessed by Obama's parting shot in the joint press conference with Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi.

Amb Stobdan argued that India and Russia today find themselves increasingly on a lesser strategic congruity. In the recent past, they have adopted a divergent pursuit of their foreign and defence policies. On the one hand, India's protracted standoffs with both China and Pakistan continue to remain stalemated; one the other hand, Russia has not only pivoted itself towards China but also started to engage Pakistan. While the context of India-Russia ties has changed, the traditional Sino-Pakistan nexus has not. Against this backdrop, the strategic objective of both China and Pakistan has been to prevent India's access to Eurasia.

However, Amb Stobdan emphasised that Russia-China relations are unlikely to last for too long because there is a perception that China poses far greater threat than NATO. He pointed out that India is entering a field of complicated chessboard of geopolitics since the Indian Prime Minister wants to position the country on the global stage and not just be a balancing force. Against this backdrop, the India-US ties with a strategic tag will be the subject of debate for years to come. But the likelihood of US-China problems lasting for a long time is remote due to the numerous convergences that exist between the two. Similarly, Pakistan is equally important in the American strategic calculus; and the US propensity to underwrite Pakistan's misadventures in South and Central Asia can endanger any enduring strategic partnership with India.

Amb Stobdan concluded his presentation by arguing that irrespective of what the US and other powers may contribute to the Indian growth plans in the coming times, ties with Moscow remain pivotal to India's core national interests. Hence, an understanding with Moscow is important for India to realise its broader geopolitical aspirations. These include the quest for a reform of UN Security Council and needing Russia's support to become a full member of the SCO so that it can play a wider role in Eurasian region. India also cannot afford to wish Russia away as New Delhi is mindful about the risk of relying totally on the US, for it can in pursuit of its political purpose may restrict access to civil-military technologies abruptly as it did after the nuclear tests of 1998. Nevertheless, a lot of hard work is needed to strengthen India-Russia ties since they cannot solely rely on past legacy. The positive thing is that they do not have major disagreements between them.

Prof Holli Semetko started her presentation by highlighting the dawn of a new era that has brought about massive technology changes and evolution of the media. She argued that the new media environment has upended the power of elites to frame issues as easily as they had done in the past. Leaders and managers,

political parties, governments, businesses and organisations all face the same challenge — understanding and responding to new expectations from citizen-consumers empowered by social and mobile media. This access to mobile media is likely to bring about greater social interaction among citizens from both India and the US on issues that were once the purview of elites only. Those with similar interests may group themselves online with greater access to media that differentially magnify certain issues and ignore others, issues that may be of greater concern to some than others.

Prof Semetko quoted that the “best way for shaping attitudes lies with a greater number of society interactions among individuals, so that Indian and American voters better grasp how the relationship benefits their lives on a daily basis”. She stressed that as issues become magnified in the news, attentive publics expand from elite to mass publics. The farther the issue is from personal experience, the greater is the individual’s need for orientation. In today’s world, citizen-consumers turn to news for guidance on international affairs. Elaborating on the concept of frames and framing effects, Dr Semetko opined that frames in news stories provide a schema for citizens to think about the issue or problem. Framing effects refer to the emergence of these schemas in public opinion. On the debate between framing and counter-framing, she pointed out to the battle for public opinion in the US wherein each side is attempting to frame the issue to its advantage. The evolution of the US opinion on climate change is an example of varying success of framing and counter-framing strategies. She also elaborated on the case study of President Obama’s recent visit to India by examining the volume and tone of news, author’s analysis of headlines and its potential influence on American opinion about India, Prime Minister Modi and US-India relations. With a caveat that her findings are preliminary, she concluded that there was high visibility of Obama’s visit with 68 stories during the 3 phases (pre visit-16, during the visit-32 and post visit- 20). The majority of the news was favourable. There is likely to be more public engagement and more disruption to establishment sources of influence on framing US–India relations.

Dr Vo Xuan Vinh, in his presentation, observed that the partnerships that Vietnam has signed can be categorised into comprehensive strategic partnership, extensive strategic partnership, strategic partnerships, sectoral strategic partnership, special relations and comprehensive partnership. Vietnam is India’s privileged strategic partner especially in the context of India’s Look East Policy that was launched in the 1990s. Comparing Vietnam-India Strategic partnership with other bilateral relations of Vietnam, Dr Vinh said that Vietnam-China partnership was established in 2008 yet there is a need for both the sides to develop mutual trust. Similarly, Vietnam and United States also need to develop deepening mutual trust. However, India and Vietnam had underlined the strategic importance of their relationship in 2003 before signing a formal strategic partnership in 2007.

In comparison to other bilateral partners of Vietnam, Indo-Vietnam relationship is based on “traditional friendship, mutual understanding, strong trust, support and convergence of views on various regional and international issues”. The strategic partnership between India and Vietnam has been highly beneficial to both partners. Politically, both India and Vietnam have engaged in bilateral, regional and international fora. While India has been strongly supporting Vietnam’s policy of peaceful resolution of disputes in East and South China Sea, Vietnam has been actively promoting India’s inclusion as permanent member in the United Nations Security Council and for its engagement in the Asia-Pacific region. In terms of India and Vietnam defence ties, India is now the second largest supplier of military equipment and strategic weapons to Vietnam. India is also among the most important countries having military personnel training programme for Vietnam. He concluded that the India-Vietnam strategic partnership is very comprehensive.

Dr Satoru Nagao’s presentation focused mainly on the relevance of India-Japan strategic partnership and its importance in maintaining the military balance in the region. In recent times, the rise of China’s naval power and a relative decline of United States’ naval power in Asia mean that the military balance of the region has tilted in favour of China. This has led to problems between China and countries around it

including Japan, Southeast Asian countries and India. Hence, the current security situation in Asia demands that India and Japan strategic partnership should be forged to maintain a military balance in the region.

The role of India-Japan defence cooperation has *three* aspects to it: Firstly, it will aid India's security by linking India-China border security with security in the East China Sea as Chinese would not be able to concentrate all its forces on one front. Secondly, India is fully capable of playing an important security role in the Indian Ocean Region; and with Japanese technology, it can enhance its capabilities as a security provider in this region. Thirdly, India's assistance will be much helpful in enhancing security around South China Sea to counter the Chinese aggression. In this regard, a trilateral dialogue between India-Japan-Vietnam and India-Japan-Singapore could be very useful. One of the most important factors in India-Japan relationship is that Japan feels that India is a responsible great power. The reasons behind this strong belief are: a) India's military operations since Independence have been all reactive and India has never violated international borders; b) India has had strong experience in international cooperation through its rich history of participating in multi-national fora; c) India is going to be the most important net provider of security in the Indian Ocean in the near future. These reasons make it inevitable for Japan to think of India as a natural ally. Therefore, Japan and India both need to re-evaluate the importance of their strategic partnership.

#### **The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- Defence cooperation will continue to be the pillar of Indo-Russian ties with long term high technology projects being the hall mark.
- Steps should be taken to disseminate the Russian view to Indian masses. Majority of the news about Russia is elicited through Western media that continue to demonise President Putin.
- The relationship of Soviet times cannot be recreated nor is it needed. Even Russia is not prepared to develop Soviet era type ties with India. However, the core of strategic partnership with Russia has not been diluted. The annual summits of the last 15 years contribute to strengthening ties.
- It is in India's interest that Russia remains strong or else balance of power in Eurasia will be disturbed.
- There exist enduring interests with Russia on Iran, Syria and Afghanistan.
- India needs to discuss and pronounce issues like R2P and protection of territorial sovereignty with countries like Russia in order to counter the prevailing western views on them.
  
- There was no major convergence of positions on core security and strategic issues that are of concern to India during Obama's visit to New Delhi.
- Japan and India can intensify their defence ties through joint exercises and information sharing.
- If Japan and India are able to achieve a nuclear agreement, it will be very beneficial for both sides.

***Report prepared by Mr Rajorshi Roy, Research Assistant, IDSA and Mr Nachiket Khadkiwala, Research Assistant, IDSA.***

## Session 3: Asian Economies and Resource Competition

Chairperson: Prof Charan Wadhwa

Rajat M Nag	Sinderpal Singh	Prem Mahadevan	Brahma Chellany
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- [Rajat M Nag](#) - Development through Connectivity
- [Sinderpal Singh](#) - Debating Physical Connectivity between India and ASEAN: Economics vs Security
- [Prem Mahadevan](#) - The Impact of Terrorism and Organised Crime on Asian Economies: Implications for India
- [Brahma Chellany](#) - Sharpening Competition over Natural Resources in Asia

Dr Rajat M Nag, in his presentation, argued that development is not an isolated phenomenon in this age of interconnectedness. He tried to demonstrate how economic development through physical connectivity is also crucial for ensuring security in the South Asian region. Although countries like India and China have attained phenomenal growth rates in the 'Asian Century', there are certain challenges that these countries face, especially high rates of poverty and increasing inequality. In this context, regional cooperation is important as it provides growth through connectivity. Interregional investment leads to greater connectivity and reduces the chances of conflict between the regions. Hence, India's Look/Act East Policy is critical to India's larger regional cooperation and security. India is behind China which already has in place a strong bilateral connectivity with its neighbors. For India, physical connectivity with the East has to be through road linkages through Bangladesh and Myanmar. Connectivity through Northeast India is a necessary condition for India in order to ensure its economic growth and security. Connectivity through roads is not a new concept but it has to be put into the context of reality. There already exists physical connectivity on ground in the form of roads between India, Myanmar and Bangladesh. One does not have to start building from scratch but has to enhance and reconnect the existing roads. For example, large parts of India-Myanmar connectivity is not operational. However, if work starts on this, India would be able to form a new corridor to China from Myanmar. In addition to road connectivity, there is also connectivity through the seas and air. Project *Mausum* of India is an example of multilateral maritime connectivity initiative between nations in the Indian Ocean. However, although there is technical and financial backing for the project, no political will and trust is available to make it a reality. China has already initiated the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) plan; hence, India has to figure out how Project *Mausum* will play out as a parallel

maritime connectivity and security body to the MSR. Dr Nag also stated that Myanmar is a region that is both significant as well as a source of conflict of interests for India and China in the connectivity and security contexts. Hence, both the nations need to plan out how they would cooperate on sharing connectivity lines through Myanmar. He concluded by saying that regional cooperation in Asia cannot happen in isolation. There is no such concept of “Fortress Asia” in this era of globalisation. Open regionalism is the key to the survival of economic connectivity and security in the South Asian region.

Dr Sinderpal Singh, in his paper, highlighted how India through its Look East Policy (LEP) is trying to build closer economic, political and military ties with the member states of the ASEAN group. However, in his analysis, the porous nature of the border between India and Myanmar is seen as a liability rather than an opportunity. The porous nature of the borders in the Northeast region that India shares with Bangladesh, Myanmar and China causes a sense of anxiety amongst the Indian political elites sitting in Delhi. Hence, this also tends to create a certain perception about the Northeast region that hampers the future plans for closer ties with ASEAN members. With Burma, India has to deal with constant incidents of insurgencies. Burmese authorities are not able to stop the Naga rebels (who are challenging the Indian State) from seeking sanctuary and supplies in Myanmar. In addition to this, the weak Burmese state has also not been vigilant about the movement of refugees across the India-Burma border. This has significantly led to a setback in India-Burma bilateral relations.

With Bangladesh too, India has to deal with the influx of refugees into the Indian side; and like Burma, crossing of insurgents in the Northeast has been opposed by the Indian State and is a major cause of concern for successive Indian governments. With regard to China, India has an unfinished border war. India is concerned about China aiding Naga insurgents by both providing them with refuge and supplying them arms to battle with the Indian State since 1960s. Presently, the north-eastern border state of Arunachal Pradesh remains cause of anxiety for the Indian State. Chinese incursions into Arunachal Pradesh is a cause of great concern for the present Indian Government.

India’s Northeast region was supposed to serve as a gateway to physically connect India to Southeast Asia and beyond. In this context, the Look East Policy of India has been significant in strengthening the bilateral relationships with ASEAN members especially Myanmar. This is vital in enhancing peace and prosperity in the north-eastern states of India and also regions in Southeast Asia. However, Dr Singh argued that unresolved border disputes are a threat to this great optimism surrounding the narrative of “open connectivity” between India and its neighbouring regions. Hence, one has to recognise these border tensions and find ways to resolve those to ensure better physical connectivity which will allow the economic prosperity of both India and its ASEAN neighbours.

Dr Prem Mahadevan argued that India cannot be expected to compromise its vital national interests for the sake of extraneous powers. It needs to scale down its expectations of outside support in isolating Pakistan over the issue of cross-border terrorism. The cardinal mistake of Indian counterterrorism policy may have been to wait too long to acknowledge this, although a plausible argument can be made that military restraint has also helped in securing intelligence cooperation against ISI-backed terrorists. Indian counterterrorism needs to focus on strengthening police infrastructure and training. Simultaneously, efforts must be made to leverage India’s economic weight for the purpose of isolating Pakistan. In the main assessment of India’s policy of strategic restraint towards Pakistan, the fact remains that weaknesses in domestic policing and counterterrorism capability harm foreign investor confidence in the Indian economy.

Prof Brahma Chellaney, in his presentation, argued that competition for natural resources has played a significant role in shaping the terms of the international economic and political order. However, now that competition has intensified, as it encompasses virtually all of Asia, where growing population and rapid economic development over the last three decades have generated an insatiable appetite for severely limited

supplies of key commodities. Asia must find ways to tame its resource competition or face greater geopolitical tensions and environmental degradation. The intensifying competition over natural resources among Asian countries is shaping resource geopolitics, including the construction of oil and gas pipelines. China has managed to secure new hydrocarbon supplies through pipelines from Kazakhstan and Russia. But this option is not available for other Asian countries including India.

### **The following points emerged during the discussion-**

One has to consider the role of the Indian diaspora in the context of connectivity between India and Southeast Asia. The Indian diaspora is crucial in ensuring the ground level implementation of bilateral agreements.

- Maritime connectivity has to be given importance between Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar.
- India has to start putting money on the table; it cannot be simply reactive.
- Financing connectivity projects is a challenge for India but not a binding constraint.
- The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) employed D-Company to conduct the actual bombing in Mumbai, which killed 257 civilians, ISI operatives had closely supervised the targeting and logistics aspects of the attack. The civilian deaths were just collateral damage; the real aim was to hit investor confidence in India's economy especially in Mumbai.
- ISI is working for long term strategy, they do not focus only on short term goals.
- By threatening Indian economy hubs, the Pakistani agency hoped to trigger war crisis and precipitate international mediation efforts.
- The composite dialogue should re-start for reducing bilateral tensions between India and Pakistan. However, India should always be ready to give strong message to Pakistan if they enter in India and do mischievous activities including terror attack.
- Terrorism is not only a tool of Pakistan's domestic policy but also a foreign policy tool.
- Asian economies are facing a new problem on the food front at a time when agriculture's appropriation of the bulk of the water resources is being challenged by expanding cities and industries.
- Rising prosperity and changing diets, including an increased preference for animal-based protein, are compounding Asia's food challenges.
- Central Asia provides example of how water can be wielded as an instrument of power through downstream control, including through threat of force.
- Water, energy and food are at the core of Asia's challenges.
- India should recognise physical connectivity; and it should not only focus on infrastructure growth but on investment in other sectors as well.

***Report Prepared by Dr M Mahtab Alam Rizvi, Associate Fellow, IDSA and Ms Kuhoo Saxena, Research Intern, IDSA.***

## *Special Address by Barry Gordon Buzan on "Rising Powers in the Emerging World Order: An Overview, with a Reflection on the Consequences for India"*



Prof Buzan began his lecture with a brief introduction of the 19th century technological and ideological evolution and stated that some of these were driving forces towards development and creation of an uneven global power balance. He said that no new ideas have emerged since then and the ideological evolution is based on the derivatives of the ideas from the 19th century. The material transformation ushered by industrialisation gave rise to unequal development and widened the power gap between the superpowers and the rest of the world. Due to the lack of equal distribution of power, certain states went on to dominate the world and were recognised as super-powers.

However, he added, at present the world is undergoing the process of levelling of uneven power distribution through the rise of the other states. Globalisation through trade catalyses the economic connectedness between states which in turn increases the distribution of power that will eventually level out the uneven power distribution. There will be no more superpowers but many great powers and regional powers. No country will be able to run or dictate the order of the world anymore. A world without a superpower is decentralised in regard to power.

World, today, is currently treading on a narrow ideological bandwidth called capitalism which opens scope to a new and different world order, where regional powers are likely to emerge. Due to the malleable nature of capitalism the world is about to become more even. Capitalism and nationalism characterise new kinds of powers, where capitalism will adapt to local political and social conditions.

A world with lot of great powers will be extremely different from one with superpower. No one country will be able to run the order on its own like the US or Great Britain in the earlier times. Neither China, India nor Russia want to do the American job. An important factor in this entire process is that the regions are constructed or imagined; they are not merely geographical concepts but are extremely fluid in nature;

what Asia is, has itself undergone changes over a period of time. If every great power has a region of its own to manage then the world moves into a layered form in international relations. Great powers need to start thinking about it. States with diverse political systems but essentially capitalist economies are emerging and they are forced to think whether the political differences weigh over economic interests.

China and India state that they are developing countries and claim the great power status at the same time. Unfortunately, when it comes to shouldering greater responsibilities at the world stage both these countries and many others choose to look the other way. So it can be said that the new great powers are autistic to a large extent; what is inside them dominates their behaviour more than the social norms and conditions. A community of autistic great powers is going to be systemic challenge. The international society is going to be weak because there is no one at the managerial desk. The world order is in need of a managerial role to resolve issues such as environmental challenges, economic interactions and peace.

A concert of capitalist powers could be an ideal outcome given that a strong set of shared interests would emerge. Even then these great powers will have to be what Headley Bull calls *responsible great powers*. Diplomacy is going to play a vital and greater role in these times as military interventions and wars between great powers become more and more likely. Therefore, it is a must for powers to be diplomatically better equipped. From Indian perspective, India needs to introspect into its diplomatic corps' capacity. India also needs to relook its interests in South Asia. India is going to emerge far better than its neighbours that are way behind in the process of economic growth. India needs to decide whether it can let South Asia drag its great power status. India also can think whether it is better off being an Oceanic power. Asia has no shared principles that would guide the legitimacy of the pan Asian order; and it makes its formation that much more difficult.

Going into the future, the US dominated multipolarity is not going to emerge as envisaged. So, the obvious question that comes to mind is what sort of multipolar order world are we looking at in the coming times? Is India going to be a responsible great power or be a part of an autistic capitalist clan?

***Report Prepared by Mr Avinash Godbole, Research Assistant, IDSA.***

## Session 4: The Rise of China

Chairperson: Mr Chandrasekhar Dasgupta

Prof Madhu Bhalla	Prof Pang Zhongying	Mr Gordon Chang	Mr D S Rajan
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- [Prof Madhu Bhalla](#) - India-China relations: The Return of the Sub-Region
- [Prof Pang Zhongying](#) - China-India relations: Objectives and Future Priorities
- [Mr Gordon Chang](#) - China's Military Modernization and Impact on India
- [Mr D S Rajan](#) - China and its Territorial Disputes: Increasing the Security Dilemma

Mr Chandrasekhar Dasgupta, the chair, in his introduction, compared the rise of China to a tectonic shift in the world of geopolitics. Prof Madhu Bhalla was the first speaker whose paper looked at the return of the sub-region. She argued that sub-regionalism is rising because of the trust deficit present in India-China relations, where the countries prefer dialogue rather than policy. She noted that India and China also have different priorities. India's priorities are like a stable South Asia, resolution of the border disputes, cooperation on terrorism, securing maritime interests in Indian Ocean region, enabling policy in Indo-Pacific and partnering on global and multilateral regimes while China's priorities such as nuclearisation in South Asia, cooperation on the maritime silk route have induced concerns in India. Moreover, she commented that China increasingly views South Asia as a region; and is developing a policy whereby it views Pakistan as a strategic partner and India as an economic partner. Due to this, she argued, the trust deficit would continue to be present in India-China relations. India's options are to continue to drive a hard bargain on core issues, improve its role in the regional economy, to initiate a dialogue on Tibet with China and confront China on the issue of its nuclear support to Pakistan.

Prof Pang Zhongying on the other hand spoke on whether a new relationship between the two emerging powers is likely. He felt that it is highly likely that India and China could develop a new relationship. He argued that China has been exploring new relations with the US; and its new foreign policy attempts to seek friends and partners. It wants to create new international institutions to boost Asian regional and global economic development and growth. He also felt that China does not have the capability to challenge the US primacy. The new foreign policy, in his view, still follows the policy of non-interference. The core of this new foreign policy is to set new relations between and among great powers, the established and the emerged powers. In this context, he argued that China wants to have stable relations, seek mutually

acceptable management on disputes, and desires regional and global cooperation. He brought the concept of ‘concert of two rising powers’ in the Pacific and Indian Ocean. This is significant as China is moving forward as a maritime country. Pang summed that Asian solutions are necessary for Asian issues, where there is a multipolar Asia and Asian concert of powers. He also wanted to know whether India can seize the opportunity provided by China-initiated international institutions to transform India-China ties.

Mr Gordon Chang, in his paper, argued that despite the fact that China and India formally have a “strategic partnership”, China seems to consider India as an adversary. China is following a strategy in South Asia and the Indian Ocean that aims to build economic and military relationships with the states in the regions. He perceived that China is doing so to ‘keep India hemmed in’. He especially mentioned the increasing Chinese naval capabilities in the Indian Ocean. He also pointed out the rapidly growing Chinese military mobilisation capacity in Tibet on account of enhanced road and railways transportation capabilities. He referred to the incidents of the Chinese army sending its troops into Indian Territory in the Himalayas. He also underscored some potential Chinese vulnerabilities such as perceived fissures in the Communist Party and the PLA in recent years, unsustainability of its military modernisation on account of military spending increasing much more than China’s economic growth can afford and slowing down of its demographic dividend. However, as a word of caution for India, he argued that there is a possibility that China ‘may decide to try to destabilise a rising India.’

Mr D S Rajan’s paper drew attention to the linkage seen between China’s traditional *Tian Xia* (Under the Heaven) concept and its stand on modern ‘territorial sovereignty’. He underscores the connection of the *Tian Xia* concept with China’s current sense of borders. In the light of the historical tendencies, Mr Rajan tackled some key questions; such as why China has, in recent years, chosen a line of assertiveness towards its territorial claims and how that line is impacting on the regional security? More importantly, he argued that China’s ‘core interest’-based foreign policy course for making no compromises on all issues concerning the country’s territorial sovereignty has created concerns among the neighbours about the Chinese intentions. He informed that although China has sought to allay its neighbours’ apprehensions, protection of ‘core interests’ will remain as a key objective for it. He further argued that Asian nations on the whole are searching for a regional security architecture in which a militarily strong China does not dominate. They, at the same time, do not want to antagonise China. He concluded that the security dilemmas in Asia may not end soon as no letup can be expected in China’s assertive behavior in the region in the near future.

### **The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- While India may not welcome external presence in South Asia, the fact is that the outside powers — the US, the USSR and China — have always been present here.
- There exists a competition within the Chinese PLA for resources with the Navy and the Second Artillery receiving more attention than the Army. The civil-military relations are straining under the increasing loss of control on the military by the political leadership.
- China’s behaviour on the South China Sea dispute was also discussed, where the Chinese perception of wanting fair treatment in the conflict was highlighted. The ASEAN countries multilaterally negotiating with China would not be considered as a fair treatment. Nor there is a fair environment perpetrated for the resolution of the conflict.
- China has to become used to the democratic changes in South Asia that it cannot ignore.
- Although bringing Tibet to discussion table is not easy, the issue of Tibet still remains important in India-China relations. Tibet is important because the Dalai Lama and the large number of Tibetan refugees live in India. Tibet would be important also in the post-Dalai Lama scenario because that scenario will have its own complications for India-China relations.

- The Chinese side should be more forthcoming in accepting their critique as it tells them how the others perceive Chinese moves and pronouncements. Merely endorsing the best and the bright side of the Chinese pronouncements does not serve any purpose for China.

*Report Prepared by Ms M S Pratibha, Associate Fellow, IDSA and Dr Prashant K Singh, Associate Fellow IDSA.*

## Session 5: Maritime Security in Asia

Chairperson: Vice Admiral Anup Singh (Retd)

Capt Gurpreet Khurana (Retd)	Dr David Brewster	Cdr Abhijit Singh	Mr Francis Kornegay
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- [Capt Gurpreet Khurana \(Retd\)](#) - Indian Maritime Doctrine and Asian Security: Intentions and Challenges
- [Dr David Brewster](#) - The Bay of Bengal: the Indo-Pacific's New Zone of Strategic Competition
- [Cdr Abhijit Singh](#) - India's Security Role in Maritime-Asia
- [Mr Francis Kornegay](#) - Deciphering Oriental Mysteries of Silk, Pearls & Diamonds: Maritime Dimensions of India's Strategic Dilemmas in the Changing Asian Power Balance

The chair, in his opening remarks, underlined the growing significance of maritime security in Asia, international trade and its critical importance to regional peace, stability and security. He also highlighted the geostrategic importance of the vast Indo-Pacific region where India has vital national and regional interests.

Capt Gurpreet S Khurana elaborated the key imperatives for India to articulate the maritime military doctrine and deployment of military forces to address the emerging security challenges in Asia. He argued that the formal articulation of India's maritime-military doctrine in its various forms since 2004 has been valuable as a medium of 'strategic communication' to reinforce deterrence, and thus contribute to regional security and stability. He stated that India's maritime doctrine provides a valuable indicator for Indian policymakers to chart the correct course for its naval power to play a seminal role towards security and stability in Asia. A grey area in Indian Navy's capability pertains to mine countermeasures (MCM), which is highly relevant to India's regional security role. However, since MCM is not considered 'glamorous' enough among other naval specialisations, such capability is usually neglected, particularly so in aspiring blue-water navies like the Indian Navy. As concluding remarks, he said that the Indian Navy's increased commitments to coastal and offshore security since November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attack via the sea translates into a major constraint for its fledgling blue-water capability to play a more proactive role to regional security and stability. Some other specific capabilities also need to be developed in this direction.

As a result, a few doctrinal provisions contained in the Indian maritime doctrinal articulations are not yet implementable. Nonetheless, while proactive measures are afoot to overcome the capability constraints, the maritime doctrine provides a valuable indicator for Indian policymakers to chart the correct course for India's naval power to play a seminal role towards security and stability in Asia.

While explaining the conceptions of a sharp division between South Asia and Southeast Asia as regions, Dr David Brewster highlighted the geostrategic significance of the Bay of Bengal to Asia. He argued that fundamental power shifts in the Indo-Pacific will give the Bay of Bengal much greater significance and strategic coherence. As a physical connector in Asia, it has enormous potential for economic growth and is increasingly becoming an arena of strategic competition among the major Asian powers; mainly between India, China and Japan. However, he said that understanding this region is not a mere academic exercise. He was of the view that a new mental map that recognises the strategic centrality of the Bay of Bengal can help countries such as Myanmar and Bangladesh move beyond their longstanding economic and political isolation. For India, the recognition of such region could also help marginalise Pakistan's role in South Asia and help legitimise India's ambitions to assume a greater security role throughout the Bay and potentially into the Malacca Strait. According to David, China is sponsoring several grand projects to create overland connections between China's landlocked southern Chinese province of Yunnan with the Bay of Bengal region and the Indian Ocean. Another project, the so-called BCIM Economic Corridor, would involve the creation of a transport and manufacturing corridor running from Kunming in China to Calcutta through Myanmar and Bangladesh at a claimed cost of US\$20 billion.

Cdr Abhijit Singh focused his presentation on major structural and operational constraints that could create problems in achieving India's key strategic objectives. He pointed out that while the rise of India has led many regional and extra regional countries to view it as a stabilising force in the region, the expansive mandate of leveraging influence on a region-wide scale has been adversely impacted by its inability to project power in the wider Indo-Pacific littorals. He argued that the Indian Navy has performed commendably by providing regional security. Its coastal and regional security needs have increasingly been in competition with its larger strategic interests in the wider Indo-Pacific region. However, the situation has been exacerbated by China's uniquely successful economic-military strategy in the India Ocean Region (IOR), increasingly assertive maritime postures by other Asia-Pacific powers and the many dilemmas of maritime strategy that confront India's naval planners in their quest to find a working operational balance. He said that the Indian Navy could play an instrumental part in maintaining a stable geopolitical equilibrium, but the strategic messaging for that will need to be as effectively directed as it is well-honed. So far as Chinese military presence in the IOR is concerned, though it has not been institutionalised, it has capability to make its presence in the entire Indo-Pacific region and beyond which is a growing security concern for India. The challenges according to Cdr Abhijit are: 1) acts like attempt by Al Qaeda to hijack Pakistani warship; 2) presence of Chinese fishing vessels and maritime surveillance ships in the South China Sea (SCS); 3) reclamation activity around small islands in the SCS and construction of military infrastructure; 5) foreign military activity and marine research in EEZs. He concluded that India's national and regional interests must be harmonised with its broader strategic role. In the emerging patterns of competition and cooperation, India must find a place for itself and asserting as a rising maritime power.

Mr Francis Kornegay described India's positioning as an emerging power within the larger context of a changing global strategic landscape and various challenges that it confronts in leveraging its capacities and strategic imagination to influence Asian balance of power. From a devolutionary perspective in imagining a regionalising global governance order, for India's purposes, he said, Japan and Indonesia are critical partners. India's challenge is one of balancing competitive US and Sino-Russian Eurasian economic union and 'Silk Route' agendas in Asia while manoeuvring itself into becoming a major actor in shaping a new inter-Asian subsystem in its transcontinental and maritime dimensions. Mr Francis also highlighted India's maritime-focused strategic diplomacy as a basis for analysing its multidimensional calculus. He suggested

that a creatively assertive Indian diplomacy is required in structuring a more clearly resolved and inclusive 'Zone of Peace' multilateralism in the Indian Ocean.

**The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- Conceptual differences between Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific region and their strategic implications.
- The strategic vacuum that has been created in the Bay of Bengal.
- India's military doctrine, force projection and shifting naval expenditure.
- Strategic significance of cooperative security, freedom of navigation, efforts by various stakeholders in countering emerging security challenges.

*Report prepared by Dr Saroj Bishoyi, Research Assistant, IDSA and Dr Yaqoob-ul Hassan, Research Assistant, IDSA.*

## *Session 6: Space, Cyber, Biological, Chemical, and Nuclear Security in Asia*

Chairperson: Dr V Siddhartha

Mr Sean Costigan

Dr Ranjana Kaul

Mr Animesh Roul

Dr Rajiv Nayan



- [Mr Sean Costigan](#) - Emerging Risks in Cybersecurity: Anticipating Change and Building Resilience
- [Dr Ranjana Kaul](#) - India's Approach to Space Security
- [Mr Animesh Roul](#) - Chemical and Biological Dimension of Jihadi Terrorism
- [Dr Rajiv Nayan](#) - The Emerging Asian Nuclear Order

Mr Sean Costigan's paper focused on cybersecurity, cyberterrorism and possibilities for India in the cyberspace. In today's world, advance of the information technologies and growing societal capabilities in healthcare, finance and defence amidst an ever unceasing threat of cyber-attacks, private sector companies continue with the risk of outsourcing because they believe building technologies with security will make it harder to get profits. Mr Costigan forwarded his arguments in the context that computer systems have fundamental weaknesses which are waiting to be discovered by hackers. Cyber-attacks are vastly expanding and the reasons for that are varied. According to him, the prominent reasons are: 1) rapid development of cyber technologies; 2) few international regulations on cyber domain; 3) lack of recognisable difference between public and private spheres posing critical challenge for states.

He said that at the commercial level, huge critical infrastructure poses a threat to cyber-security. According to him, the factors responsible for the challenges in commercial cyber domain are like: 1) admission of risks by a commercial company would not interest customers and other stakeholders; 2) existing laws at global and domestic level cannot deal with the critical challenges; 3) outsourcing risk continues in the domain of cyberspace; 4) even at the US national level, the updating of laws continues to be in a state of flux; 5) countries at international level deal with the challenge of attribution of attacks; 6) acceleration of economic growth by cyber proxy attacks by certain nations. So, criminality, in one form or another, continues in the domain of cyberspace and new dimensions continue to grow.

He said that growth and advancement of new technologies in the last decade has witnessed a simultaneous proliferation of cyber-attacks, because the original design of the technologies were not done with security mind set. He gave the example of Facebook where emphasis was put on user decentralisation rather than privacy and security. He presented the image of ARPANET, a predecessor of the internet, and explained the discreetness of the network. With Edward Snowden's revelation of the US cyber secrets, there has been a renewed focus by intelligence agencies on cyberspace. Mr Costigan argued that nations were taking advantage of grey areas in the cyber domain for industrial espionage. Russia and North Korea, according to him, have sensitive cyber targets for warfare and therefore the domain of cyber security would require to be dealt seriously. He felt that India, as a rising nation, would require focus on cybersecurity.

Dr Ranjana Kaul spoke about the possibility of a common space code for Asia. She referred to China's anti-satellite missile test on January 11, 2007; and expressed her concern that no country actually used the outer space treaty to lodge a complaint. Following the event, there was United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution on peaceful use of outer space. The European Commission put a draft code on outer space conduct which required disclosure on information related to launches. An international code of conduct on outer space has been there since 2012. She argued that the draft of the Outer Space Treaty has been framed to promote militarisation of space. She expressed her concerns on authorised military explorations of space and the way countries continue to adopt to rapid military use of space. The space security index which talks about sustained and peaceful use of space and freedom from space threat should also include protection of national space assets for space security. She explored further about the possibilities of a common space code for Asia and made an exposition on the legal provisions, complications and challenges that are there in the changing geostrategic scenario and rising aggressive space capabilities of nations.

Mr Animesh Roul highlighted that the threat of chemical and biological terrorism emanating from the non-state actors remains a major concern for nation states. The capability and intentions of jihadist groups have changed over the years as they opt for the most destructive and spectacular methods. Though no terrorist group, so far, has achieved success in employing these disruptive weapon systems, facts indicate that several such groups have been seeking to acquire chemical/biological weapon materials and know-how. Conventional literature emphasises upon unlikelihood of chem-bio terrorism by Jihadist groups because of technological challenges. Many Islamic ideologues and jihadists have accepted the use of biological and chemical weapons as legitimate act of war for mass killings of nonbelievers. New evidences suggest that groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) are more than capable of using chemical and biological weapons materials. Their intentions to use these types of weapons have been made clear through available jihadi literature. The changing jihadi strategy on weapons of war and credible evidences of their focus to seize or acquire WMDs and their willingness to use these weapons to inflict mass fatality or injury make this issue urgent for policy discourse. The IS adheres to radical guidelines about extreme retaliatory violence to deter enemies. It indicates that the violent group will not hesitate to use chemical/biological weapons against their targets. The recent seizure of an IS laptop has brought the world's attention towards Islamic State's intention and capability. The information in the laptop of a Tunisian IS militant suggests their interest to acquire or develop a biological weapon capability. With IS's territorial gains in Iraq and Syria, it can be speculated that sooner or later it will capture secret labs and factories that can facilitate to pursue chemical/biological activities. Taliban groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan are not totally averse to the idea of chemical/biological war. There have been reported use of non-lethal chemical weapons by Afghan and Pakistani Taliban groups in the past against both military and civilians. Though South Asia, especially India, has not faced even single chemical and biological weapons (CBW) related terrorism incident involving non-state actors so far, be it the Al Qaeda or Lashkar-e-Taiba, it has always been vulnerable to jihadist violence. However, in October 2010, a purported threat letter from Indian Mujahedeen group's Assam wing threatened to launch a biological war in the Indian northeastern state. The Indian Government has

recognised CBW terror threat as real and imminent. Both the Defence and Home ministries have given high priority to this issue.

Dr Rajiv Nayan suggested that the emerging Asian order is intrinsically linked to the emerging Asian nuclear order. All the new nuclear weapons countries - China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea - are Asian. Iran and Saudi Arabia are suspected of exploring the nuclear weapons option. When international nuclear order is viewed dependent on the Asian nuclear order, it is assumed that any disturbances in the Asian nuclear order will have an adverse impact on other parts of the world. Dr Nayan put forward some questions: What are the emerging trends of the Asian nuclear order in the next 10-15 years? Is Asian nuclear order autonomous? Can India play a role? If yes, what could be the role for India? All the four non-Asian nuclear countries are modernising their nuclear arsenals and have made the size of the arsenals public. Asian countries do not declare the size of their nuclear arsenals in public. Asia is also witnessing development of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles. However, the Cold war type arms race is not visible either in the world or in Asia. There is no action-reaction phenomenon evident, so far, regarding nuclear weapons. Even if the size of the stockpile is not announced, the nuclear weapons tests are generally announced. Israel is an exception, as it has not made any declaration on its nuclear status. As the Asian countries do not declare the size of their nuclear weapons stockpiles, some intelligence agencies and public institutes are active in giving estimates of the number of nuclear weapons and the size of fissile materials stockpiles of the Asian countries. Asian countries are developing submarines of all categories. The development of submarines is being described as the Asian submarine race by media. However, many of reports underline that these developments are not a part of any race. The proliferation network has been a predominant source of nuclear weapons development in Asia. Pakistan projects that the proliferation network stands dismantled. However, on several occasions, officials and analysts of the same countries testify that the network still exists. Although there is no credible proof that terrorist have already acquired nuclear weapons in Asia, hardly any analyst rules out that the possibility of nuclear terrorism in Asia is zero. The possibility of nuclear terrorism in Asia exists because a large number of terrorist organisations are operating in Asia. Asian nuclear chain reaction may really take place if Japan goes nuclear in East Asia and Iran goes nuclear in West Asia. Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia are expected to develop nuclear weapons if Japan goes nuclear. Nuclear South Korea and Japan may not be good for strategic stability of the Asian nuclear order. Similarly, in West Asia, nuclearisation of Iran is expected to force several Arab countries choosing the nuclear weapons option. However, the international policy community seems divided on the issue. India, Israel, the US and the friends of China do have interactions but very limited and not enough to shape the Asian nuclear order. The emerging nuclear Asian order appears to be multipolar but is centred on China. China is predominantly the source of security concern and proliferation. China's military modernisation, especially its nuclear modernisation, is becoming a major concern. Pakistan acts as a third party in the dual Sino-Indian deterrence relationship. This interconnection may have disturbing implications for future regional security. The emerging Asian nuclear order is without Asian security architecture. Regional organisations and institutions discuss Weapons of Mass Destruction, including nuclear issues, but there, is absence of a pan-Asian body. They are not capable to maintain the Asian nuclear order. Despite the willingness of Asian countries to cooperate, even an Asian nuclear security centre has not emerged. Considering the willingness of the countries to cooperate on the issues and the existence of some centers of excellence with a little effort, these centres may be integrated under one Asian umbrella institution. Deterrence as a stabilising factor is relevant for the Asian nuclear order. Extended deterrence is a source of instability for the Asian nuclear order. Disruptive forces or tendencies in the Asian nuclear order are characterised by other disturbances like waging of proxy wars, asymmetrical deterrence, modernisation of nuclear arsenals, uncontrolled and blatant use of the proliferation network. India is an important stakeholder of the Asian nuclear order. It values responsible nuclear behaviour. South Asia is not considered as an appropriate security category for India because of its size. India maintains that 'security assurances in the narrow strait-jacket' Nuclear Weapons Free Zones (NWFZs) would be unfair to 'the wide variety of concerns that emanate from the global nature of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.' India can also

contribute to the Asian nuclear order by supporting the idea of Asian security architecture. The security architecture should be a place for dialogue and discussion, and not turn into a hierarchical bureaucratic organisation.

**The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- Sources of research on chemical and biological dimension of Jihadi terrorism.
- Challenges for cloud technology computing emanating from non-state actors.
- Cyber threat to be compared with WMD weapons in terms of lethality.
- Challenges regarding attribution of cyber-attacks and possible ways of dealing with them.
- Outdated literature on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) weapons can lead to faulty analysis. Is there new literature reinforcing the possibility of CBRN terrorism?
- Is there a place for *dharma/ethics* within the prevailing trends in the Asian nuclear order?
- Is there a need for the revision of India's nuclear doctrine?
- The use of terminology like jihadi terrorism has larger implications that can project disturbing trend.

*Report Prepared by Dr Reshmi Kazi, Associate Fellow, IDSA and Mr Munshi Zuber Haque, Research Intern, IDSA.*

## Session 7: Major Strategic Regions of Asia

Chairperson: Cmde C Uday Bhaskar (Retd)

Dr Ashok Behuria and Dr Smruti Pattanaik	Dr Micha'el Tanchum	Dr Simon Xu Hui Shen	Prof Shankari Sundaraman
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- [Dr Ashok Behuria](#) and [Dr Smruti Pattanaik](#) -India's Regional Strategy: Balancing Geopolitics with Geoeconomics in South Asia
- [Dr Micha'el Tanchum](#) - India in the new Central Asian Strategic Landscape: Opportunities for Deeper Partnerships and New Alliance Formations
- [Dr Simon Xu Hui Shen](#) - East Asian Scenarios
- [Prof Shankari Sundaraman](#) - Dynamics of Change in India-Southeast Relations: Beyond Economics to Strategic Partnership

The session was chaired by Commodore C Uday Bhaskar (Retd), an eminent analyst on South Asian security affairs. The chairperson initiated the discussion by noting the significance of the conference theme as to how India comprehends Asian security and how the world comprehends India's approach. He further noted the emphasis laid on the term region and how regions are created; and in this respect, how Asia was imagined rather neatly. The trajectory of Asia Pacific to Indo Pacific is noteworthy. The chair also referred to the post-Cold War era where India was no longer boxed into South Asia. In the emerging context, there are growing anxieties as to whether China with its growing political clout and economic growth will subsume Asia?

The first presentation in the session was a joint paper authored by Dr Smruti S Pattanaik and Dr Ashok K Behuria. Providing a broad overview of India's regional strategy, the paper interrogated the assumptions that informed such strategy, factors that brought about shifts in Indian approach and the underlying basis for such change. The paper dealt with certain key questions: What has impelled transformation in India's attitude towards the region? Does it point to a well thought out regional strategy? Does it mean its geopolitical and geostrategic compulsions have become irrelevant? Given China's growing engagement in South Asia, will India's economic engagement translate into a political dividend that will help New Delhi to retain its preponderant influence in the region? The main hypothesis of the paper was: the shift in India's regional strategy is being dictated by changes in regional geopolitical situation and sustained growth in Indian economy. The authors argued that India has its own way of situating itself in the regional context.

As the dominant state of the region accounting for 64 per cent of the territory, 75 per cent of the population and 78 per cent of the GDP, and about 79 per cent of total military expenditure, India has always been mindful of its role in keeping the region safe and secure from external interference and contributing to regional peace and stability. Independent India inherited the strategic outlook of the British Empire as far as its security was concerned. While India's approach to preserve a regional order based on the colonial strategic outlook was viewed with suspicion as an India-focused narrative, the larger question of building a South Asian regional outlook failed to inform the foreign policies of the states in the region. India's sensitivity towards external influence in the region was perpetuated by the efforts of extra-regional powers to seek influence in India's neighbourhood. The end of cold war opened up strategic space for India significantly. India's attempt to move into the realm of geo-economics was fuelled by its understanding that there was a need to unlock the regional potential for economic growth through active engagement with each of its neighbours. Keeping in line with its emphasis on economic linkages, India tried to reinvigorate bilateral and quadrilateral cooperation to make some forward movement in spite of the logjam within the SAARC. Connectivity was a major area of focus. India's geo-economic engagement in the last decade has used multilateral and subregional arrangements to escape the excessive geo-political imperatives brought in by some countries in the larger regional SAARC forum. Simultaneously, India's geopolitical interests are served by several multilateral defence cooperation that it has signed with neighbouring countries including training and capacity building. India's approach to the region is now confronted with the challenge of China's increasing intrusion into the South Asian region. India's geo-economic policy has two major aspects: first, to accelerate its economic development through multiple channels; secondly, to turn economic engagement into strategic gains through sharing of prosperity. The momentum can be sustained by staying into the course, promoting economic cooperation and taking proactive measures to boost regional cooperation while being mindful of security that can be mutually sustained.

Dr Micha'el Tanchum spoke about India's reluctance to engage fully with the Central Asian Republics due to its policy of practising strategic autonomy and not utilising the potential for bilateral trade. Dr Tanchum discussed in detail the Connect Central Asia Policy enunciated by New Delhi in June 2012 to repair the damage it incurred in the year 2010 by losing the Ayni airbase located in Tajikistan to Russia. He noted that India's insistence on maintaining equidistance from both the United States and Russia is likely to isolate it in the region. Also, India needs to counter Pakistani and Chinese influence in the region to assert its strategic interests. He argued that India needs to forge a robust partnership with superpowers to avoid getting relegated to insignificance. India needs to pursue a better calibrated approach of economic engagement with Central Asian republics. India's role in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an observer has proved ineffective. India's reluctance to engage totally with the US due to strategic autonomy has allowed China to increase its influence in Central Asia, where countries in the region have tilted in favour of China. Dr Tanchum also dwelt on the underutilised potential of the India-Tajikistan ties keeping in view the geographical proximity of the two. He later discussed the hurdles India faces in two other important central Asian countries - energy rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan - where he argued India is side-lined by the Chinese. He noted that in the emerging scenario, India's best option is to engage with Uzbekistan which possesses rich energy resources. Dr Tanchum also alluded to India engagement with the Southeast Asian countries and how it faces an imminent threat from China in that region. He concluded by noting that India's challenges will increase manifold post NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan as it is likely to face resistance from the Chinese and the Russians.

In her presentation, Professor Shankari Sundararaman began by stating that since the end of Cold War, huge geopolitical transformations have taken place in Asia with a lot of uncertainty and fluidity. This has created difficulty for India to address its problems and engage with the region. She argued that ASEAN has played an important role in the regional mechanisms in Southeast Asia; and since its inception, it has adopted two approaches – looking at the states internally and trying to insulate the region from external interventions. Initially, ASEAN began as an economic and social organisation but gradually it covered political and security

issues as well. Regional institutions such as ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN+3 and ADMM+ have widened the ASEAN's area of influence. She argued that China's economic engagement with the region, especially trade and investment, has been welcomed by the Southeast Asian countries; at the same time, the political issues such as the South China Sea and the Chinese nationalism have been causes of concern among them. Regarding the renewed role of the US in the region, she stated that while some countries welcome the presence of US, some others feel that it may lead to an increasing US-China rivalry in the region.

Speaking on the India-ASEAN ties, Prof Sundararaman noted that the relationship has moved from economics to political and strategic issues in recent times. The first phase of the India-ASEAN relationship focused on bilateral trade with ASEAN which has been further strengthened by signing of FTA and increasing trade in goods and services. India has adopted a two pronged strategy – bilateral and multilateral – in its relationship with the region. Bilaterally, India has focused strengthening bilateral ties with the countries of the region such as developing land connectivity with Myanmar and defence ties with Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia among others. India has also been conducting maritime exercises with a number of countries in the region. On the multilateral front, India's inclusion in the ARF, East Asia Summit, ADMM+, ASEAN Maritime Forum etc. has given a boost to India's relationship with the region. India's role has expanded since the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in 2012 which raised the relationship to a strategic level with maritime security as its core concern. The role played by India in the Indian Ocean region has been recognised by the countries of the Southeast Asian region and India is expected to play a leadership role. India's Look East Policy forms the core of its engagement with the region. In November 2014, the policy was rechristened as Act East Policy. She concluded by saying that one of the key challenges for India in determining a more robust interaction is to translate its identified 'rhetoric' into actions in the region.

#### **The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- How far has the Look East Policy been translated into Act East policy?
- India, not China, is a factor of stability in the Southeast Asian region.
- Recent developments have weakened the ASEAN; therefore, India has to adopt a more calibrated approach towards the region.
- Whether all the Southeast Asian countries have similar approach towards India?
- The use of the concept "Indo-Pacific" is ambiguous and need to be defined further.
- Growing trend of Jihadism in Central Asia.
- India's engagements with Central Asia and the role of Russia there.
- Connect Central Asia Policy is not a failure even though it has not accrued desired outcomes.
- There are serious problems of internal cohesion within the ASEAN with a definite decline in ASEAN centrality.
- On the issue of Silk Route, India has been unable to marry its perceived gains with the externally induced fear of China. It fears that China's footprints will expand even further with the Silk Route project.
- Whether Central Asia is an India Israel axis?

***Report prepared by Dr Priyanka Singh, Associate Fellow, IDSA and Dr Prasanta Kumar Pradhan, Associate Fellow, IDSA.***

## Session 8: Future trends and Scenarios

Chairperson: Major General B K Sharma (Retd)

Dr Boris Volkhonsky

Dr Samuel Rajiv

Ms Shruti Pandalai



- [Dr Boris Volkhonsky](#) - Strategic Trends in Asia: Future Directions
- [Dr Samuel Rajiv](#) - Strategic Trends and Scenarios 2025: Policy Options for India
- [Ms Shruti Pandalai](#) - Decoding India's Agenda: New Ideas and Emerging Trends in Asian Security

Dr Volkhonsky's formulated his arguments around four major developments that took place in 2014, that are 1) Chinese economy surpassing the US economy in terms of 'purchasing power parity (PPP)', calculated by International Monetary Fund. This development effectively marked the end of the US global economic monopoly. 2) In July 2014, at the BRICS summit, its member states signed a deal to create a new US\$100 billion development bank and emergency fund. This initiative can be viewed as a challenge to the monopoly of the US Dollar. 3) In September 2014, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) finalised the procedures for admitting new members, leading to hopes for countries like India, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan etc. acquiring full membership in SCO. This development has opened the possibility of viewing SCO from a different perspective, moving away from the China-centred grouping prism. 4) In May 2014, the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus signed a treaty transforming the Customs Union into Eurasian Economic Union, which came into force on January 1, 2015. More than 30 countries have expressed their desire to form a free trade zone with it, throwing light on the attractiveness of the Union beyond its geographical boundaries. All these four points have tried to give an outline of the various contours of a global setup, witnessing the rise of alternative centres of power and eventually presenting a real challenge to the unipolar world order.

Dr Volkhonsky stressed that in the current times of the decline of its hegemony, United States is resorting to the tactics of 'proxy confrontation'. He further added that the US is reviving the old and forging new alliances with countries of East and Southeast Asia. Formulating closer relations with India seems to be as one of the ways for the US to counter the growing superpower, but China-Pakistan axis demonstrates Chinese eagerness to employ the same tactics of 'proxy confrontation'. In addition, he assessed India's Look

East Policy, as an asymmetrical response to China's activity in close proximity to India's maritime borders. Dr Volkhonsky concluded by emphasising on a need of improvement in the quality of integration in Asia which would enable to overcome the existing geographic and geopolitical barriers hindering cooperation in the continent.

Dr Samuel Rajiv, in his presentation, stated that the core aspects of the future Asian security scenario building revolves around two critical contentions, i.e. the South China Sea dispute and the Iranian nuclear concerns. In the South China Sea dispute, assertive strategic behaviour has been displayed by countries, especially China, to safeguard their territorial claims that has translated into regional security angst. This security dilemma has generated thickening of trade linkages in an otherwise immensely economically prosperous and commercially significant region. The increasing security predicament has further been fuelled by increasing military profile of the countries in Asia. The US presence is felt overwhelmingly in the region due to its massive naval deployments. On the other hand, even though ASEAN has tried to mitigate the tensions in the region, the friction appears very high. India has vital interests in the Asia Pacific region, considering its fourteen out of 25 top trading partners in 2013-14 were in Asia. On the matter of territorial disputes, India has stressed on mutually acceptable cooperative solutions in accordance with the UN Convention of Laws of the Seas (UNCLOS). In order to strengthen India's ties with the countries of the region, the Modi government has activated India's 'Act East' policy.

Dr Samuel further explained the Iranian nuclear concerns, calling the whole episode a diplomatic-political roller coaster. The ascendance of various contentions contributed to the delay in resolving issues of concern while the continued Iranian nuclear capabilities further fuelled apprehensions. On the back of the various sanctions by the West which negatively affected Iran's economic standing, prospects for an agreement to address concerns improved after Rouhani came to power. In context of India, due to the imposition of the unilateral sanctions measures (which India opposed) it had to bear the brunt of some of them, especially in terms of the crude oil imports from Iran. India has consistently held the stand of 'dialogue and diplomacy' to resolve the Iranian nuclear contentions. Dr Samuel stressed that even though Indian policy makers have consistently held that the possibility of a nuclear Iran would be against its interest and the regional stability, India has resolutely opposed the pursuit of a possible military solution by the US or Israel to deal with the Iranian contentions. He concluded by giving five policy options for India- 1) to step up strategic engagement that is essential for India; 2) to increase the volume and level of strategic engagement with Southeast Asia; 3) to understand the imperative of increased strategic engagement with the US; 4) to enhance people to people interactions with China; and 5) to strengthen its out of area contingency capabilities.

The crux of the final speaker Ms Shruti Pandalai's presentation was that the road to realise the 'Asian Century' is a rocky one. Ms Pandalai listed three broad foreign policy approaches of India since the Modi government came into place - 1) revitalising India's strategic partnerships with major powers and gaining recognition as a rising global power; 2) reclaiming the South Asian neighbourhood as a strategic asset; and 3) a renewed thrust on economic diplomacy independent of strategic compulsions. The new government in New Delhi has been taking steps towards multi-alignment, fostering better relations with China, Russia etc.; and has been consolidating leadership in East and Southeast Asia especially including the larger Indian Ocean region. The major external factors which affect India's strategic approach towards Asian security are: the rise of China, Indo-US relations and the 'Act East' policy. Apart from the external factors, there are few domestic factors as well which affect India's foreign policy plans about economic stability, Islamic extremism, the Maoist/Naxal challenge, insurgencies in Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeast, rise of nationalism and the role of the Indian Diaspora.

Under the umbrella of broad trends for Asian Security (the Indian perspective), Ms Pandalai painted two scenarios. The worst case scenario could be a confrontational Sino-centric Asian order. The primary factor for a China-centric Asian order would be China's mammoth economy and increased military status. For

India, in such a scenario, despite its steady economic growth, the trade deficit with China in a China-centric order would make Indian economy very fragile and widen the power differential. In the other but most likely scenario, the slow but certain build-up of the Sino-US rivalry in the region can be expected. In such a scenario, India pulls its weight in the regional order while continuing with its cautious policy of cooperation and competition with China. Ms Pandalai concluded by presenting few trends in India's approach in such a scenario: 1) multi-alignment to power 'India-first' policy; 2) managing China; 3) consolidating regional influence in South Asia; 4) strengthening Indo-US partnership and raising global profile; 5) 'acting east': deeper economic and strategic integration; 6) advancing maritime modernisation and strengthening maritime cooperation; 7) managing resource competition cooperatively; 8) cooperative frameworks for transnational challenges; 9) conservatism in the issues of nuclear non-proliferation; and 10) cooperative security framework confined to conflict prevention.

**The following points emerged during the discussion-**

- India's future approach towards a probable Asian security framework.
- Even though shale discovery could be highly beneficial for India presently, its future in the country is ambiguous.
- The effect of various developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan impacting India's future policy approach.
- Concern regarding the threat from non-traditional aspects and non-state actors.
- Comparing the speed at which India's relationship is proceeding with US and the Southeast Asian countries with its engagement with China.

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