



A Roadmap for Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in a Post COVID-19 World Order

Report of the Proceedings



**A Roadmap for
Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in
a Post COVID-19 World Order**

Report of the Proceedings

Executive Summary

The Indian School of Business and the US Consulate General Hyderabad organised a series of events focused on joint vision for the Indo-Pacific cooperation in the post COVID-19 world order, that culminated with an international conference held in a virtual mode. Prior to the conference, three workshops were organised on multiple themes pertaining to the Indo-Pacific. The objective was to equip journalists and academic scholars concerned with international relations to understand the complex equations of the Indo-Pacific, especially its security, geopolitics, economic cooperation, and their combinations.

International relations are changing fast and have appeared to be in a state of flux since the pandemic broke out. When the organisers decided to conduct a series of discussions on the Indo-Pacific, the predominant focus was on the increasing Chinese dominance in international geopolitics and geoeconomics. In the first workshop for the journalists held on 07-09 April 2021, most of the speakers urged the countries of the Indo-Pacific to explore ways and means to engage China in constructing a stronger Indo-Pacific rather than countering it. At a time when the Taliban was overthrowing the ruling government in Afghanistan and the geopolitical equations were becoming far more complex than earlier, the organisers scheduled a workshop on July 30, 2021 for the international relations scholars. The theme was democracy and development in the Indo-Pacific. By the time the second journalist workshop on the theme was organised in October 2021, the international security partnerships were shaping up to form AUKUS, to preserve security and stability in the Indo-Pacific, probably to counter Chinese geopolitical influence. The feedback received from around 45 journalists who participated in the two

workshops and representing the print, electronic and online publications, was very positive and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the content and conduct of the sessions. Journalists expressed their keenness to attend similar sessions in the future. They expressed their ability to report better on Indo-Pacific issues post the workshops and the conference. Though it is observed that the unprecedented nature of global events is creating a dynamic environment, the need for constant revisiting is strongly felt. There were some suggestions to incorporate other issues such as cyber warfare/ security, understanding culture and philosophy and its impact on geopolitical developments and legal frameworks, etc. which the journalists felt required in-depth inputs to comprehend. The culminating international conference was held between March 10-11, 2022, when the world was witnessing the Russia-Ukraine war.

The conference 'A Roadmap for Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in the post COVID-19 World Order' was to have 35 speakers in seven dialogues, plus an inaugural and a valedictory dialogue.

The **inaugural dialogue** set the tone by highlighting the rules-based international order, intended to strengthen international trade and business and the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific, in a volatile and disruptive international backdrop. The Indo-Pacific countries were urged to collaborate to prevent future pandemics and join forces globally to tackle climate change and disaster management issues.

In the **first dialogue** on geopolitics, the speakers discussed the key drivers that would shape the Indo-Pacific going forward—the military, economic and political aspects, and their implications on India's strategic autonomy.

Critically, India's strategic autonomy is not 'fence sitting' but is rather a position of strategic importance that stressed on preventing the negative consequences of war.

China was at the centre of discussions during the **second dialogue** on security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. The esteemed speakers of this dialogue saw security from the perspective of developmental partnerships rather than just from a military angle. According to them, India's maritime power is a 'gift of geography' and so India's geopolitics and geoeconomics must have a deep understanding of the seas. The current geopolitical developments must be understood by delinking the country's national security policy and foreign policy. Countries need to look beyond military partnerships and explore collaborations in science and technology, energy, and connectivity infrastructure, amongst others.

The **third dialogue** was on the rules-based maritime Indo-Pacific order. The speakers observed that the dominant rules-based order is being challenged by different coalitions and alternative arrangements in the Indo-Pacific theatre that goes beyond maritime security dialogues. China is an unavoidable power in the Indo-Pacific construct and will be a cause of concern if a combined Russia-China order evolves from the current developments. The speakers held that China will not do with Taiwan what Russia is doing with Ukraine. There is a need to work around divergences in the Indo-Pacific.

The **fourth dialogue** was on building resilience for climate change commitments by the Indo-Pacific countries. Climate change cooperation is

critical for the Indo-Pacific region as it impacts the nexus of water security, food security and energy security in the region. Such cooperation must be at the sub-national level involving the local communities addressing climate issues. A coalition to bring up a disaster-resilient infrastructure and a regional insurance pool to diversify risk is much needed.

In the **fifth dialogue** on modernising alliances, the speakers recommended that the QUAD countries, especially Japan, Australia, and India must assert a greater role in the Indo-Pacific. The countries appeared cautious about contesting ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific. ASEAN'S role has been reduced because of other mini-lateral arrangements like the QUAD. It's in India's interest and that of the other QUAD and ASEAN members to have a stable, peaceful, free, and an open Indo-Pacific.

In the session, the **sixth dialogue**, on building prosperity in the Indo-Pacific, the speakers focused on the Indo-Pacific construct with reference to bilateral/regional/multi-lateral trade agreements and their interactions with the WTO goals. They also talked about developing economic architecture in the region and critically evaluated agreements such as the RCEP¹ and the CPATPP². Since India is not a member of these agreements, the participants discussed opportunities and challenges with bilateral free trade agreements. The panellists pointed out that the pandemic has caused minor disruptions to the supply chains. These disruptions have grown to a scale that has completely undermined the supply chain stability. Though the relationship between the big powers like India, the US, Japan, and Australia was central to the conversations, the panellists

1 <https://rcepsec.org/> accessed on 17-05-2022

2 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/in-force/cptpp/comprehensive-and-progressive-agreement-for-trans-pacific-partnership> accessed on 17-05-2022

called for engaging the smaller powers to enhance the prosperity of the region. They also underscored the importance of understanding the relationship between geopolitics and geoeconomics for continuity and sustainability of trade and other economic interactions.

The Diplomats Roundtable, a panel with the Heads of the Missions from the US, Japan, and the EU in India, discussed the importance of engaging with each other on aspects like climate change, disaster mitigation, science and technology, education networks and student migrations, vaccines and global healthcare. All these engagements would strengthen the security and development architecture of the Indo-Pacific. The speakers shared a common objective of a free and open, connected, prosperous, secured, and resilient region, which is strongly recommended in the US Indo-Pacific strategy. Climate change mitigation and adoption are critical for the Indo-Pacific region, as it attracts 70% of the world's natural disasters. EU advocated for a trouble-free maritime space in the Indo-Pacific, through a rules-based system of governance which would immensely benefit trade in the EU countries. This would probably need the countries to accept UNCLAS. Having more people-to-people connect in the Indo-Pacific through student exchanges, migrations, tourism, etc., is important as the talent one would need to

solve bigger problems cannot be confined to respective geographies.

The valedictory session explored the soft power diplomacy, and emphasised on the people-to-people connect—the basis of success for any regional cooperation. In this context, cultural cooperation becomes critical for stronger economic, development and security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region.

Overall, the conference dealt with multiple aspects of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, and underlined the need for agenda-based dialogues at unilateral, bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. Security cooperation and economic cooperation are interrelated, though foreign policy may have a larger agenda. Most of the speakers invariably urged for action-oriented initiatives in the space of climate change mitigation and resilience. Though the Russian-Ukraine war and its potential impact on the Indo-Pacific was in every speaker's mind, they did not sideline the question of China and its ambitious policies to revisit the geopolitics of the region. For India, its strategic autonomy continues to be the guiding principle for its diplomatic engagement, but the path will be tougher in the future and hopefully it would not have to make a choice in the power equations.

Detailed dialogue-wise proceedings is given below:

Inaugural Dialogue

DNV Kumara Guru, Director External Relations, ISB talked about the importance of the Indo-US partnership in strengthening the Indo-Pacific Region, and ideating a roadmap for the Indo-Pacific Development Cooperation, in view of the international developments.

Madan Pillutla, Dean, ISB, in his opening remarks, talked about the evolution of ISB and the role of the top US B-schools like the Kellogg School in Northwestern University Illinois and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, in shaping ISB to global standards. ISB was created for the perceived need of capacity building in the country. Dean Pillutla emphasised on the importance of global partnerships and active participation in diplomatic dialogues on development.

Consul General Joel Reifman, US Consul General Hyderabad, in his special address highlighted that the US is an integral part of the Indo-Pacific construct and is keen to work with other partners for creating strategic value and strengthening collective security and prosperity in the region. The Consul General talked about Hyderabad, one of the fastest-growing cities in the world, and its significant role in three important sectors—IT and IT Services, Pharma and Biotech and Defence and Aviation. He spoke of the US Consulate's role in strengthening the space. Some examples given were of the strong presence of US based IT companies, the QUAD initiative to manufacture vaccines for the Indo-Pacific countries and the US investments in it, and partnerships between the US firms in aerospace and defence. The long coastlines in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha have a strategic importance in strengthening maritime trade with east Asia and the far east, and maritime security. Odisha is prone to frequent cyclones because of rising

sea levels. There is a need for partnerships in disaster management and risk mitigation, which the US is keen to support. The US Consul General also expressed his concern over thousands of Indian students, many of them from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, held up in Ukraine because of Russian aggression.

The US is an integral part of the Indo-Pacific construct

Jennifer Larson, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for India, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, US Department of States, USA, in her special address, talked about the Indo-Pacific Strategy, laid out by the US President Joe Biden, which stresses on free and open Indo-Pacific region. She touched upon five areas that are important for robust Indo-Pacific development cooperation. First, individual countries in the Indo-Pacific can choose their own paths and partners to strengthen the region's land, seas, and cyberspace; second, strengthen the inter-connectivity of the Indo-Pacific region with shared goals by addressing global challenges. There is a need to knit the allies together and reinvigorate partnerships based on the current scenarios, for example, the QUAD level security dialogue; third, the Indo-Pacific partners must bring their strengths together to increase prosperity in the region and have a constructive Indo-Pacific business dialogue; fourth, there is a need to follow a rules-based international order and address the shared security challenges together; last, climate change is a global issue and the Indo-Pacific must collectively work towards strengthening resilience.

Need to follow a rules-based international order and address the shared security challenges together

G V Prasad, Co-Chairman and Managing Director, Dr Reddy's Laboratories Ltd., in his special address, reiterated the importance of cooperation in the region and urged for a rules-based open and transparent economic strategic partnership as the foundational principle of the Indo-Pacific region. He asserted

on the importance of trade and industry in strengthening this principle. Mr Prasad talked about the need for collaboration to find solutions to prevent the next pandemic and for global collaboration on climate change. The industry sector has evolved itself to contribute to and strengthen the ESG (Environment, Social Impact and Governance) sector.

Collaborate to find solutions to prevent the next pandemics



Dialogue I: Shaping Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific (In-Conversation Dialogue)

Professor Happymon Jacob, Associate Professor Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in **Conversation** with **Shivshankar Menon**, IFS (Retd.), Former Diplomat and Visiting Professor and Chair of Ashoka Centre for China Studies, Ashoka University

China plays an important role in shaping the geopolitics of the region, though it is not a part of the Indo-Pacific construct³. India has had border issues with China for a long time now. US-China relations have evolved from tense standoffs to a complex mix of intensifying diplomacy and growing international rivalry⁴. Yet, both India and the US have high volume trade linkages⁵ and intertwined economics with China.

With this background, Professor Happymon Jacob attempted to explain the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific through the lens of one of the

issues, economic linkages, QUAD, maritime, and, most importantly, strategic autonomy.

Analysing the aspects which shape the Indo-Pacific cooperation, the former diplomat spoke of the need to understand the aspects of geography, history, and economics and their interlinkages. The oceans are an important space in the Indo-Pacific construct, which has a positive-sum-space (vis-à-vis land which has a zero-sum). China has made the waters a battle space to have control over the oceans around mainland China. However, importantly, China is a territorial power and the thinking of maritime power differs from the thinking of a continental (land) power. China looks at the sea from the view of territorial power, but it's difficult to control the seas. For the first time, China, which has emerged as an important territorial power, yet dependent on the outside world, is trying to become a maritime power. The balance of power is shifting rapidly, creating newer situations in the Indo-pacific region. In this context, diplomacy dialogues on development and other confidence-building measures are probably the best means to avoid conflict in the region.

Mr Menon pointed out that history doesn't support the liberal argument that the economic linkages prevent strategic competition from getting too hot. He counters the argument that trade interdependence doesn't allow the countries to go to war. He cited the examples of trade relations between Germany and the UK before World War I and the current US-China economic relations, among others.

China plays an important role in shaping the geopolitics of the region, though it is not a part of the Indo-Pacific construct

well-known diplomats and the former National Security Advisor, Mr Shivshankar Menon. The conversation, which lasted 45 minutes, touched upon important aspects like geographical

3 Vis-à-vis Asia-Pacific Construct

4 <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-relations-china>

5 India's trade with China in 2021 is around \$125billion; U.S trade with China in 2020 is around \$615 and India-U.S. trade is around \$150billion.

Professor Happymon explored in detail the queries on India's strategic autonomy in international relations, especially in the context of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. He believes there is nothing called strategic autonomy. Mr Menon pointed out that India can follow a policy of strategic autonomy and can work with different partners for different needs. In this context, it's India's choice to abstain from the UN vote against Russia, while underscoring the negative consequences. The Chinese narrative of supporting Russia differs from India's stance.

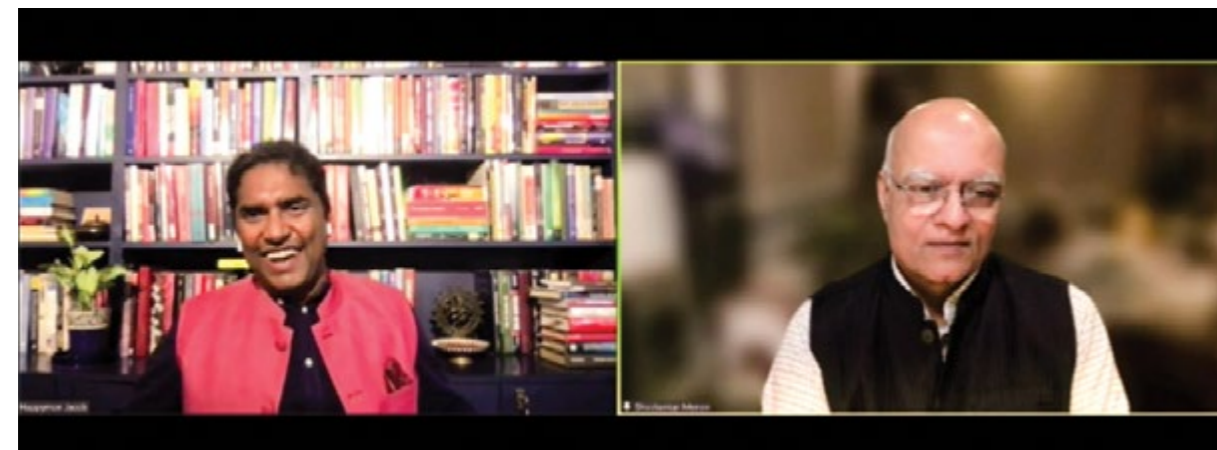
India and the US have shared a common interest in the Indo-Pacific region, to deal with the contestations with China. QUAD is probably not the answer to everything (they are part of the answer) even though China takes it seriously and perceives it as Asian NATO. There is no one key

to dealing with China. It must be dealt with at multiple levels—economic, border, and political.

China looks at the sea from the view of territorial power

India has the capacity to follow a policy of strategic autonomy and can work with different partners for different needs

In the current context of India's relationship, Russia cannot be replaced and what it did in the past to develop India's strategic security cannot be undone either, and similarly the US cannot be replaced by anyone because of the strong developmental partnership India enjoys with it.



Dialogue II: Negotiating Security Partnership in the Indo-Pacific Theatre

Moderator: **Suhasini Haider**, National Editor, and Diplomatic Affairs Editor, The Hindu.

Panelists: **Lt. Gen. Prakash Menon**, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), Director, Strategic Studies Programme, The Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru; **Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam**, AVSM (Retd.), President's Chair of Excellence, National Defence College; **Dr Jagannath Panda**, Head, Stockholm Centre for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) Sweden and Director, Europe-Asia for YCAPS.

The Indo-Pacific is emerging as one of the most important theatres of the 21st century geopolitical affairs. The leaders in the region are striving to protect shared values and promote the security and prosperity of the region. As the foreign policy perspectives of countries vary and change based on diplomatic requirements, it is important to negotiate for a strong security partnership that incorporates not only military capabilities but also cyber and other capabilities, AI, quantum technology and undersea capabilities. The objective of this session was to discuss the latest developments in security partnership in the Indo-Pacific theatre.

Suhasini Haider moderated the discussion on security partnership in the Indo-Pacific and sought comments on its importance as an alternative to other emerging equations and what they could mean for India's entire theatre of threats.

Responding to Suhasini, military historian **Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam** focused on what could be India's likely military posture vis-à-vis China's in the Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and the inevitable upheaval it could cause in the old alliances and in the creation of the new ones. In any security dialogue concerning India, it is inevitable to consider its Northern borders and the Line of Actual Control. Though globalisation and economic engagement are the primary drivers of contemporary geopolitics in the region, deterrence beyond dissuasion and utility of force has not gone out of fashion. The emergence of China as a global power and its stand on Russia is a serious dilemma for India's military posture vis-à-vis China, making it a diplomatic tightrope⁶ walk. Erosion of Russian influence in Central Asia and the advantages of linking the Arctic Sea route with the China sea will probably be the price Russia may have to pay should it jump on to the Chinese Juggernaut. Whichever way it happens, India could feel the squeeze on spares and support from Russia and Ukraine in the future.

The US invocation of CAATSA⁷ against India on the S-400 deal with Russia may facilitate the Chinese playbook of inducing cracks in an adversary partnership. Though chaotic, it is better to be in a multipolar world than have more bilateral (Japan, Korea, India, etc.) and trilateral (AUKUS) security partnerships. The major powers of the world share similar

⁶ The speaker Arjun Subramanyam used the quote 'The ghost of Thucydides' to indicate a possibility of war/cold war between the rising power with the dominant power. The interpretation probably is that the Russia-Ukraine War could create greater adversity between the interests of the U.S. and China. However, both these countries and their partners across the world are banking on their diplomatic capabilities to avoid falling into the 'Thucydides Trap'.

⁷ CAATSA stands for Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act

Deterrence beyond dissuasion and utility of force has not gone out of fashion

Emergence of China as a global power and its stand on Russia is a serious dilemma for India's military posture vis-à-vis China. Making it walk on a diplomatic tightrope

conviction that a revisionist China does and threatens peace and stability in the region.

Ms Haider posed an interesting question to **Jagannath Panda** (who recently took over as the Head of Stockholm Centre for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) and Editor at the Institute of Security and Development Policy (ISDP), Stockholm) on balance between India's Indo-Pacific commitments and its traditional partnerships and India's continental challenges with the region's maritime space.

According to Mr Panda, there must be a balancing act between India's national security interest and India's foreign policy interests. Talk of security partnerships traditionally tend to look at the national security interest and foreign policy from one prism. It is sometimes important to delink these and look at the issues. Security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific must take into consideration both the national security policy of India and the foreign policy of India. First, India must not overlook the traditional great power rivalry of US-Russia; second, India must have an independent security partnership with countries like Japan, Australia, or South Korea. For almost a decade, there was a tendency to see most of the political rivalry from the prism of the USA, even though India's foreign policy moved from non-alignment to multi-alignment to strategic

autonomy; third, because of the multipolarity in Asia, a Pointed Alignment Strategy is recommended to strengthen the security and defence partnerships with like-minded countries like the US, Japan, Australia and many other smaller ASEAN countries; fourth, India's foreign policy outlook goes beyond Indo-Pacific calculations. Its engagement with several European countries and its association with both Russia and Ukraine have made India's choices difficult.

Lt Gen Prakash Menon⁸, Director of Strategic Studies Programme at The Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru comments on India's security partnerships in the context of the current Russia-Ukraine conflict. Gen Menon began by defining the general meaning of 'security' in international relations as 'anything which impedes developmental progress in any manner and could be the candidate for security threat'. That all partnerships are based on contexts anchors India's relationship with various countries and, therefore, the nature of engagement with countries is not constant. It can change depending upon context and issue. Given this scenario, India could probably never be in a military alliance with anybody. It has been the philosophical posture by India. India-US relationship has grown stronger and both the countries understand each other more than ever before. Americans can be sympathetic to how India is looking at Ukraine, though imposing CAATSA on India could be a short-sighted measure. The long history of a strong relationship with the US augurs well for the Indo-Pacific cooperation, as the geography of the Indo-Pacific gives India maximum avenues for cooperation. However, China's reactions against the Indo-Pacific construct (calling it Asian NATO), depict China's worries about its security.

Security cannot be looked at only in military terms, as it spans across much more space than what was traditionally construed. The joint military exercises in the Indo-Pacific were going on much before QUAD's discussions on security. As long as the partner countries understand India's viewpoints and can communicate them, the difference of opinions can be kept under check and in this context, the Indo-Pacific theatre allows India to have win-win scenarios.

Taking the discussion to the next level, Suhasini asked the panellists about the need to balance maritime security with continental security in terms of the resources and the bandwidth, in

The geography of the Indo-Pacific gives us maximum avenues for cooperation

The idea that all partnerships are based on contexts is what anchors India's relationship with various countries

the context of India's Indo-Pacific strategy. Air Vice-Marshal said that both the continental and maritime security issues must be addressed and the resources need to be adjusted accordingly but cannot be looked at it in binary terms. However, India's Indo-Pacific strategy primarily comprises the Indian Ocean region. Gen Menon built on this point to say that strategy is important to balance the resources with the objectives. India must make the best use of the gift of geography—the Oceans—which must be a part of India's national strategy.

When asked about India's abstention in seven UN platforms concerning the Russia-Ukraine

war, Mr Panda said that abstention is not neutrality but a position to demonstrate India's foreign policy interests. It means the foreign

Need to balance maritime security with continental security in terms of the given resources and the bandwidth

policy interests override the national security interests in the Ukraine issue.

Responding to the query on India's Indo-Pacific Strategy on security partnership when India has a different stand on Russia vis-à-vis the QUAD members, Air Vice Marshal Arjun Subramaniam said that QUAD is a forum to discuss security issues along with a lot of other issues and is not specifically a security construct. However, regarding India's security partnership, there has been a lot of interoperability among the QUAD members—like Pitch-Black (with Australia); Milan (with the U.S.) amongst others. Hence, balancing is the key feature of India's Indo-Pacific strategy.

Gen Menon, on the US's shift of balance from China to Russia impacting India's strategy for the Indo-Pacific, said that the US and China are interdependent and they cannot unlock and

It is recommended to have a Pointed Alignment Strategy for Multipolarity

National Security is different from Foreign Policy and there has to be a balancing act between the two

Abstention is not neutrality but a position

move away from each other so easily. India will consider it a mistake if the US shifts its traction from China to Russia, however, it's too early to make this judgement. India's attention should be to minimise the fallout of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

When asked about the EU-India partnerships (Security and Non-Security aspects) especially taking into consideration the changing geopolitics because of the Russia-Ukraine war, Dr Panda believed it would take one more decade for India to have a full-fledged indigenous military system and till then dependence on Russia is unavoidable. However, possibilities of military partnerships with EU countries like France, Germany, and

others having good defence technologies and military equipment cannot be ruled out. Scope, however, exists beyond security partnership—science and technology, energy (renewable), and connectivity infrastructure, among others. EU's Global Gateway Strategy talks about strengthening and consolidating India in Asia, specifically focusing on critical technology, innovation, economy, and investment.

In conclusion, ruptures in the world order are impacting the economic sphere and major decoupling is continuing in the cultural and social sphere, giving rise to two different worlds emerging with very little in common. India has a foot in each and hopefully it won't have to choose.

Dialogue III: Sagar Dialogue: Rules-Based Maritime Indo-Pacific Order

Moderator: Nayanima Basu, Senior Associate Editor, ThePrint

Panellists: **Manoj Kewalramani**, Chairperson, Indo-Pacific Research Programme, and Head China Studies Programme, Takshashila Institution; **Sana Hashmi**, Visiting Fellow, Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, Taiwan; **Premesha Saha**, Associate Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, ORF; **Captain Sarabjeet S Parmar** (IN) Senior Fellow, National Maritime Foundation.

The objective of the session was to deliberate on the challenges of a rules-based maritime Indo-Pacific Order. Uniform prosperity and security in the Indo-Pacific region can grow through dialogue for a consistent, rules-based order that respects sovereignty, territorial integrity, and equality of all nations.

Session moderator Nayanima Basu pointed out that India's vision of SAGAR (**S**ecurity **A**nd **G**rowth for **A**ll in the **R**egion) talks about growth, but what does it say about maritime security in the context of the Indo-Pacific construct? According to **Premesha Saha** from ORF, the aspects of security and growth cannot be seen in two different compartments in India's Indo-Pacific Maritime vision (SAGAR). Security takes into consideration the expansionist activities of China, but it goes beyond to maritime ecology, research and development, science and technology, natural disasters, vaccines distribution, etc.

When asked by the moderator about China-Taiwan relations, in the context of the developments in Europe, Taiwan expert

Security aspect and growth aspect cannot be seen in two different compartments in India's Indo-Pacific Maritime vision (SAGAR)

Sana Hasmi said that the two theatres of Russia-Ukraine and China-Taiwan are different, though China is taking cues from the Russian aggression. Taiwan is internationally overlooked through the 'One China Policy'⁸ by most countries, it is important for Taiwan to boost its security with various partnerships, and it cannot rely entirely on the US strategy. Taiwan can play a decisive role in the Indo-Pacific construct and a collective effort is needed to incorporate Taiwan into the evolving regional order. The idea behind the Indo-Pacific order is to maintain the equilibrium, make sure rule-based order is preserved, and the hegemonic tendencies are countered in a timely manner.

In the Indo-Pacific, China does not recognise a rules-based order and is not acting as a responsible stakeholder, though they are based



8 The One China Policy is the diplomatic acknowledgement of China's position that there is only one Chinese government. Under the policy, the US recognises and has formal ties with China and not the island of Taiwan, which China sees as a breakaway province to be reunified with the mainland one day. The One China policy is a key cornerstone of Sino-US relations. It is also a fundamental bedrock of Chinese policymaking and diplomacy. However, it is distinct from the One China principle, whereby China insists Taiwan to be an inalienable part of one China to be reunified one day. The US policy is not an endorsement of Beijing's position and indeed as part of the policy Washington maintains a 'robust unofficial' relationship with Taiwan, including continued arms sales to the island so that it can defend itself. Although Taiwan's government claims it is an independent country officially called the 'Republic of China', any country that wants diplomatic relations with mainland China must break official ties with Taipei. This has resulted in Taiwan's diplomatic isolation from the international community. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-38285354> accessed on 15-05-2022.

on certain key foundations like the Westphalian notion of Sovereignty⁹, war as a no option, and dispute resolution mechanisms by recognising international agencies working to maintain the order¹⁰. ‘The grey-zone operations’¹¹ and ‘9 dash line’ are a few initiatives from China which are contrary to the rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific order is a liberal order led by the US and its allies. For the US, it is meant to maintain the status quo. For many years, China benefited from the US liberal order. China’s Indo-Pacific Strategy is to establish its hegemony and replace the west led liberal order. Though the contemporary rules-based liberal order is not a perfect order, it is the best mechanism to ensure peace and stability.

Taiwan can play a decisive and important role in the Indo-Pacific construct and there is a need for a collective effort to incorporate Taiwan into the evolving regional order

China’s Indo-Pacific Strategy is to establish its hegemony and replace the west led liberal order

Inviting **Manoj Kewalramani**, who is having an ‘Eye on China’¹² and is one of the foremost Indian analysts studying Chinese politics and

foreign policy, Ms Basu asked how the Chinese read the rules-based order in the maritime domain of the Indo-Pacific. Mr Kewalramani responded by demystifying the ‘Rules-based Order’. Order refers to an absence of chaos or anarchy and all the earlier orders covering Westphalia ideology, bi-polarity during the cold war, the uni-polarity of the US and the liberal world order¹³, revolve around the distribution of power. Currently, there are certain fundamental changes taking place around rules-based order because of the recent geopolitical developments and shifts in the distribution of power in the maritime domain. India too has moved away from its conventional position of deep-sea blindness to greater sea awareness. Security is critical for the economic prosperity of the nations which equally applies in the maritime domain. This is the vested interest of all the involved countries. China’s growth as a major power, with rising capabilities in maritime and continental, is changing the balance of power in the region.

The existing international institutions are strained and are struggling to deal with the current developments, e.g. UNCLOS¹⁴. These institutions either need to adapt or innovate newer ways to deal with disruptions. Mr Kewalramani talked about four kinds of issues—structured (violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity), governance (norms for resource sharing and exploitation), security

9 It establishes State Sovereignty as the global governing principle.

10 Sana gives examples of the International Court of Justice, ASEAN code of conduct, etc.

11 In recent years, the subject of maritime ‘grey-zone operations’ has drawn increased debate and discussion. The ‘grey zone’ is a metaphorical state of being between war and peace, where an aggressor aims to reap either political or territorial gains associated with overt military aggression without crossing the threshold of open warfare with a powerful adversary. The ‘zone’ essentially represents an operating environment in which aggressors use ambiguity and leverage non-attribution to achieve strategic objectives while limiting counteractions by other nation-states. For more on this refer: https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/ORF_SpecialReport_71_Grey-Zone_3N.pdf accessed on 16-05-2022

12 Manoj curates a weekly brief, Eye on China, which tracks developments in China from an Indian perspective.

13 Ambassador Shiv Shankar Menon says that ‘we are in a world of drift which is in search of order’

14 UNCLOS stands for United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Seas. The US is not a signatory of this Convention, objecting to the Part XI of the Convention.

(terrorism, human and drug trafficking) and relief and adaption (joint actions on the effects of climate change). He recommended that the issue-based coalitions, which are away from the weight of institutional arrangements between different countries, must be strengthened,. Such partnerships can help find alternatives to potentially set high-quality standards and create newer institutional frameworks. China sees the current flux as an opportunity to expand its power in the Indian Ocean and beyond. In this context, if the Indo-Pacific partners want to create an architecture to constrain the disruptiveness of Chinese actions, they must act collectively and quickly to create these standards. Any delay or lethargy could create more disruptions from the shared rules of water theatre.

The issue-based coalitions between different countries must be strengthened, which are indeed away from the weight of institutional arrangements

On the rule-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific and the SAGAR, Captain Sarabjeet S Parmar, Senior Fellow at the National Maritime Foundation, said that nations will always interpret international laws and conventions as per the national interest. This means that countries will follow rules as long as it suites them. Second, the dynamics of north and south of the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Oceania region are different and it will be wrong to paint the whole Indo-Pacific region with one

15 As advocated by CHATHAM HOUSE.

16 Le Keqiang, the Premier of the State Council, China, in his Work Report released on March 05, 2022 mentioned that China is committed to the overall policy for resolving the Taiwan question in the New Era. Manoj raises the question of how to interpret what the ‘new era’ could be? For more see http://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/202203/12/content_WS622c96d7c6d09c94e48a68ff.html accessed on 31-05-2022.

brush. UNCLOS has taken a huge beating in the last 15 years as it does not have a mechanism of compliance. Though India argues in favour of Rules-based International Order, some of its actions may not be aligned with it (for example, for the innocent passage of warships in territorial seas, India follows the same line as China and Pakistan). However, there is a balance that nations must take to adopt a rules-based order, which involves legitimacy, equity and complacency¹⁵. In this context, India’s SAGAR is a good framework which fits into the Indo-Pacific order, because it talks about inclusivity which is missing in AUKUS and QUAD. Russia and China condemn the notion of the Indo-Pacific, which they presume has a cold-war mentality. The Indo-Pacific strategy must be more inclusive and must try to incorporate the interests of Russia into the framework.

In conclusion, the dominant rules-based order is being challenged by different coalitions and alternative arrangements in the Indo-Pacific theatre that goes beyond maritime security dialogues. China is an unavoidable power in the Indo-Pacific construct, and a combined Russia-China Order evolving from the current developments will be a cause of concern. According to the speakers, while China will not do with Taiwan what Russia did with Ukraine, there is a need to work around divergences in the Indo Pacific¹⁶.

Nations will always interpret international laws and conventions as per the national interest



Dialogue IV: Resilience Talks On 'Building Resilience In The Indo-Pacific: Climate Change And Disaster Response'

Moderator: **Anjal Prakash**, Research Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business

Panallists: **Ari Nathan**, Indo-Pacific Coordinator, US State Department, Colombo; **Rachel Fleishman**, Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific, Center for Climate and Security, USA; **Ulka Kelkar**, Director Climate, World Resources Institute; **Professor Bronwyn Hayward**, Director and Professor, Department of Political Science and IR, University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

The Indo-Pacific region faces major transnational challenges, the climate crisis being one that needs immediate attention. Being home to 70% of the world's natural disasters, it's imperative for partners to come together to reduce their vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation.

This session was aimed at measures that promote resilience to these 21st century transnational threats in the Indo-Pacific.

Anjal Prakash, the moderator, gave a brief on the IPCC Working Group II Report on Climate Change: Impact, Adaption, and Vulnerability. The report released in early March 2022 predicts that the impact of climate change on people will be much more in the coming years and immediate collective action is needed by the governments. The Indo-Pacific is home to 70% of natural disasters and hence the climate change strategy is critically important for the Indo-Pacific regional cooperation.

Sharing his perspective, **Ari Nathan** from the US Consulate in Colombo articulated

The impact of climate change on people is going to be much more in the coming years and immediate collective action must be taken by the governments

that cooperation is key to addressing climate change issues and building climate resiliency. As climate change impacts the nexus of water security, food security and energy security, a holistic approach is the need of the hour. Governments must avoid policy responses that are in silos. Indo-Pacific theatre is an epicentre for climate crisis and for solutions as emphasised by the US government through its Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Rachel Fleishman sees climate as a threat multiplier and talked about the need for a holistic

There is a need for a holistic approach as climate change impacts the nexus of water security, food security and energy security

The Indo-Pacific theatre is not only an epicentre for climate crisis but also for solutions

approach incorporating defence (operational readiness), development (disaster management and climate finance) and diplomacy (international

Climate Change is a threat multiplier and to address it we need a holistic approach incorporating defence, development, and diplomacy

cooperation). The five strategies needed to address climate change issues at a global level are: projecting climate impacts, early warning systems, climate-smart energy systems, data diplomacy and climate justice.

According to **Ulka Kelkar**, climate change has a risk of compounding and cascading effects, and in this context, the Indo-Pacific region is vulnerable. Climate-vulnerable countries in the Indo-Pacific are falling into a climate debt, as their domestic budget for adaption and resilience is falling (40% in Fiji; 20% in Indonesia, etc.) with an increase in international climate finance. It is important to note that climate finance is coming as loans. India could learn a few good practices from Bangladesh, which has done well in reducing mortality because of climate extreme events, for example, by succeeding in early warning systems, evacuation mechanisms, etc. Second, Bangladesh (and also Nepal),

The climate-vulnerable countries in the Indo-Pacific are falling into a climate debt as most of the climate financing is coming as loans

Sub-national cooperation and the involvement of local communities in critical for addressing climate issues

follows good local adaptation plans by involving local municipalities and communities. Sub-national cooperation and the involvement of local communities in addressing climate issues are important. As the economies in the Indo-Pacific region boom and urbanise with growing populations a lot of infrastructures is being created, and to have a coalition for disaster resilient infrastructure is necessary. The International Solar Alliance initiative by India is in the right direction. Creating a regional insurance pool to diversify risk would complement disaster resilience infrastructure.

Bronwyn Hayward, a professor from New Zealand, observed that 40% of the world is now vulnerable to climate and there is more evidence



to take immediate collective action. Two sets of problems need to be addressed: first, the legacies of cities that are already established are not built for the new kinds of risks. Second, the climate impacts are now impacts on human rights. In this context, Prof Hayward calls for climate-resilient development, incorporating

The climate impacts are now impacts on human rights

Climate-resilient development incorporating both mitigation and adaptation actions for sustainable development through equity and justice

both mitigation and adaptation actions for sustainable development through equity and justice. The legitimate historical grievances and planning for the future are critical while discussing climate change.

Sridhar Bhagavatula, PhD, Senior Manager, External Relations, Indian School of Business summarised the day-long proceedings by mentioning that cooperation has immense scope in the Indo-Pacific region to address global challenges like climate change, and disaster management, pandemics, and also universal healthcare, education and international migrations. Issue-based partnerships are proving to be more fruitful in this region. However, the security construct of the Indo-Pacific is evolving primarily to counter Chinese geopolitics and that India's strategic autonomy is making it walk through a diplomatic tightrope.

Dialogue V: Regional Dialogue On 'Modernising Alliances, Strengthening Partnerships: Within And Beyond The Indo-Pacific'

Chair Moderator: Sanjaya Baru, Distinguished Fellow, United Service Institution of India, New Delhi

Panellists: **The Honourable Lisa Singh**, CEO, Australia India Institute, and **Shyam Saran**, Former Foreign Secretary of India and Senior Fellow and Member of the Governing Board, Centre for Policy Research (CPR).

For the last 75 years, the Indo-Pacific region has witnessed several regional alliances, organisations, and treaties. These partnerships have had the region generate 60% of the world's GDP and two-thirds of the present global economic growth. This success has been attributed to a rules-based international order. However, such alliances and coalitions need updation in response to constantly evolving geopolitics, while ensuring that all partners and allies gain the benefits of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is more connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient. Advancement in technology and greater interconnectedness means that our societies get more integrated. The objective of this session was to explore the synergy between these groupings with the larger developmental objectives of the Indo-Pacific region.

To set the context, **Sanjaya Baru** elaborated on the roots of the origin of the Indo-Pacific Cooperation and credited the then Japanese Prime Minister HE Mr Shinzo Abe, for talking about the 'Confluence of the Two Seas' where

the idea was to bring the Pacific and the Indian Oceans together¹⁷ and thus have a dynamic coupling of freedom and prosperity. For India, playing a part in the Indo-Pacific construct came from its Look East Policy (during the Prime Ministership of Shri PV Narasimha Rao)¹⁸. The moderator also credited Australia for rediscovering the Indian Ocean and welcomed Australia's approach to Indo-Pacific. He invited the two esteemed panellists to share their perspectives on the question of forging alliances to strengthen the Indo-Pacific regional cooperation, especially in the current geopolitical crisis.

Lisa Singh, in her address, made a mention of the Indo-Pacific dialogues that have brought India and Australia together on many global issues and economic engagements, though historically the India-Australia relations were not among the best¹⁹. Lisa considers this as 'unfulfilled potential.' The US strategy on the Indo-Pacific acknowledges that there is no region that will be of more consequence to the world than the Indo-Pacific. Plenty of potential and opportunities exist not only economically but also for addressing geopolitical threats. QUAD is a good example of like-minded allies grouping together for regional cooperation. Both India and Australia want a stable, prosperous, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, for a strong foundation of India-Australia bilateral relationship. There will, however, be areas where policy convergence may not be possible and so there is a need to give space to one another.

17 <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html> accessed on 16-05-2022

18 The later governments strengthened the Look East Policy and revisited with Act East Policy and Act Far East Policy.

19 Despite common historical connection, proximity to each other in the Indian Ocean, and shared values of democracy and rule of law.



Indian Foreign Minister Mr S Jaishankar has said that the quality of multilateralism depends on the extent of consensus among major power. Taking a cue from this, Ms Singh highlighted the mini-lateral groupings like QUAD and multilaterals like the UN and WTO to drive home the significance of consensus, which she said brings us together.

QUAD could play an important role in strengthening shared interests in the Indo-Pacific region. A stable Indo-Pacific could leverage the strengths of individual countries to achieve global goals, but for that, going beyond hard power issues in areas like science and technology, vaccine diplomacy, and climate resilience, amongst others, will be necessary. The US Indo-Pacific strategy has helped broaden the QUAD agenda by incorporating areas as mentioned above.

Talking about India's stand in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the former Australian Senator from Tasmania said that India took a very cautious stand which is not only navigating the western response to the Russian leadership but is also ensuring that the strategic and security relationship with Russia is something that it must balance through. India doesn't have a strategic defence alliance like Australia has with the US and hence its cautious approach is justified.

India took a cautious stand which is not only navigating the western response to the Russian leadership but also ensuring that the strategic and security relationship with Russia is something that it must balance through.

India doesn't have a strategic defence alliance like Australia has with the US and hence its cautious approach is justified.

The root cause of the importance of QUAD is not to question ASEAN centrality but to counter China

However, there are other areas where India and Australia and other QUAD members are working together, such as climate working group, vaccine partnership, supply chain resilience, etc.

Though multilateralism is taking a beating, there is a need to reflect on the challenges of the world and how regional groupings like QUAD and G20²⁰ could play their part in strengthening the Indo-Pacific region and the world.

20 India will be hosting the Presidency of G20 by the end of 2022.

QUAD's focus is not to question ASEAN centrality but to counter China. All the four QUAD countries have common concerns about China, because of its growing global power and status

For India, the whole notion of playing a part in the Indo-Pacific construct came from its Look East Policy

It is in India's interest as well as that of the other QUAD and ASEAN members to have a stable, peaceful, free, and open Indo-Pacific.

as a major geopolitical player. QUAD's focus is not on Russia per se but on the possible Russia-China nexus. In the entire sequence of events, India's position is increasingly important.

Ambassador Shyam Sharan spoke of the presence of a certain flux in every region of the world because of the current war in Europe, and the Indo-Pacific region is no exception. There are three major theatres in which the US aspires to play a constructive role—Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific. In view of the current European war, the Indo-Pacific could fall short on the US radar.

To have a viable Indo-Pacific security strategy, countries like Australia, Japan and India should have a greater role to play. The European countries are discovering that they must depend more on themselves for regional security. India, Japan and Australia must also consider strengthening their security architecture regarding the Indo-Pacific. In the coming years, the military expenditure of all the major countries could escalate because of the changing geopolitical equations.

21 ASEAN too came up with a document putting forward its interests in working on strengthening Indo-Pacific

Keeping in mind Russia's presence in G-20 and India's upcoming G-20 Presidency, it may not be in India's interest to isolate Russia and be part of a sharply polarised international regional environment. This could shrink India's room to manoeuvre.

In the cold war era, India was non-aligned. Today, its position may not be as firm, but it still maintains the same inclination. When compared to ASEAN, QUAD countries are careful not to contest ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific, though its role has been reduced because of other mini-lateral arrangements like QUAD²¹.

Mr Baru spoke of the need to strengthen the economic and security architecture in tandem, which is a requirement for the Indo-Pacific to be active and impactful. It is in India's interest and that of the other QUAD and ASEAN members to have a stable, peaceful, free, and open Indo-Pacific.

That in the coming years the military expenditure of all the major countries could go up due to the changing geopolitical equations

It may not be in India's interest to isolate Russia and take a part in a sharply polarised international regional environment. This situation shrinks India's room to manoeuvre.

QUAD is conscious not to contest ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific

Dialogue VI: Economic Dialogue On 'Building Prosperity In The Indo-Pacific'

Chair Moderator: Shekhar Tomar, Assistant Professor, Economics and Public Policy, Indian School of Business

Panellists: **Sanushka Seomangal**, National Vice-Chair, Australia India Business Council and Partner, Thomson Geer, Australia; **Mohan Kumar**, Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi and Professor of Diplomatic Practice, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P Jindal Global University; **Amitendu Palit**, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore; **Sanjay Pulipaka**, Independent Researcher on International Politics and Security Issues (Formerly Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group and ICRIER)

As one of the fastest-growing regions in the world, the Indo-Pacific region can elevate close to 1.5 billion people to the middle-income category. Despite COVID-19 impeding the pace of economic growth in the region, Indo-Pacific remains the epicentre of the world economy. The focus needs to be on improving trade facilitation, promoting digital economy and technology, rebuilding resilient supply chains, pushing for more decarbonisation and clean energy, and equipping emerging economies of the region with high-standard infrastructure.

The panel discussed prospects and challenges of building prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. Professor Shekhar Tomar, moderator for the session, set the context with three broad events in the last five years—first, the US-China trade war giving importance to domestic compulsions; second, the unexpected

COVID-19, which caused the countries to recalibrate their positions; and finally, the Russia-Ukraine war, which shows how conflict impacts world trade and adds to the barriers.

The US-China trade war is more due to domestic compulsions

With these developments in the background, how are the Indo-Pacific trade partnerships expected to shape up?

According to **Ambassador Mohan Kumar**, India can provide a ballast to the Indo-Pacific trade cooperation. The existing Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is complicated and in which both India and the US are not a party. Alternatively, the idea of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) by the US Government could be an excellent platform for India to play a balancing role in the region. For this to happen, Mr Kumar recommended a multi-speed framework and urged the developed countries in the Indo-Pacific to treat India as a 'developing country' and accordingly create the frameworks of trade²². However, India and the US cannot be expected to move at the same speed.

India could join the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APIC), which can be used as an institutional framework. India cannot afford to stay on the side-lines of the digital economy and technology and must have clearly defined policies on data protection, data flow, privacy and ease of digital trade.

The WTO's Most Favoured Nations (MFN)²³ based trade era is over and Mr Kumar does not see any possibilities for it to return. Current negotiations in the WTO are completely plurilateral in character and are not MFN based, which is being questioned by countries like India and South Africa. It is on the brink of irrelevance when it comes to making new trade rules. In this context, the upcoming WTO's 12th ministerial conference could be an important one for the WTO to try and regain its earlier position.

India's decision to not join Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)²⁴ annoyed a few ASEAN countries, but the decision has a lot to do with China. Trading with the east of India has proved difficult, with the exception of Australia. India also wants to move away from MFN trade and talk more about resilience trade (or preferential trade, as Mr Kumar suggested, which is like picking partners with whom you can do business). As far as sectors are concerned, except agriculture and dairy, auto parts and automobiles, steel and a few others, India would like to have regional partnerships in areas like trade facilitation, resilient supply chain, infrastructure, climate change, decarbonisation and digitisation, amongst others. India has become a part of the solutions as far as climate change is concerned. Its leadership in the International Solar Alliance, participation in the Paris Climate Accords, and announcement of Net Zero targets, though ambitious, are in the right direction.

Professor **Amitendu Palit** from NUS shared his perspective on the regional economic frameworks in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific is a very elastic flexible, large economic heterogeneity and is individual-oriented. It is

WTO's Most Favoured Nations (MFN) based trade era is over and I don't see any possibility for it to come back. India also wants to move away from MFN trade and talk more about resilience trade

India has become a part of the solutions as far as climate change is concerned

not an economic geographic vision and has no existing framework like CPTPP, RCEP, or ASEAN, amongst such other groupings. The non-existence of a framework is an advantage, as it can lead to great opportunities to be innovative and create a new template aligned to the ideas of the modern world post-COVID-19 scenario. For the first time, a framework has been proposed for understanding the global supply chains. As they became national interest issues, it is important to safeguard the global supply chains to counter, for example, chip shortages, and food shortages, which is vital for the idea behind the Indo-Pacific collective action.

The Indo-Pacific is experimental in character, with plenty of opportunities and prospects. The digital standards supply-chain oriented connectivity and trade facilitation; the primarily public and social objectives like achieving sustainable development; moving towards clean energy will be very important for a robust Indo-Pacific framework.

There is no global framework that exists in digital trade so far and hence one can afford to

23 https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/ai17_e/gatt1994_art1_gatt47.pdf accessed on 16-05-2022

24 <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/india-out-of-rcep-china-economy-trade-angle-7053877/> accessed on 16-05-2022

22 The NITI Aayog report says that one out of four persons (i.e 25% population) in India live in poverty. For more see https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-11/National_MPI_India-11242021.pdf accessed on 16-05-2022

be creative to come up with digital economy partnership agreements. A game-changing initiative by India is the announcement of Sovereign Digital Currency²⁵. There is a need to check out the interoperability of this currency through bilateral arrangements and South Africa could be a good starting point for negotiations on the interoperability of digital currency, though there are many other pilot projects amongst the Indo-Pacific countries.

If the countries are creative and are looking to work on a solution, it is easy to create

The Indo-Pacific is a very elastic, flexible, large economic heterogeneity in itself and is individual-oriented.

Indo-Pacific is experimental in character with a lot of opportunities and prospects

A game-changing initiative by India is the announcement of Sovereign Digital Currency

partnerships. The UAE FTA²⁶ is a clear example of mutual recognition and understanding on provisions like IPR, digital trade, services, treatment and movement of pharmaceuticals and more importantly the movement of people. The Supply Chain Resilient Initiative (SCRI)²⁷ between India, Japan and Australia is another good example. They are also working closely with the US on this to make it a QUAD initiative.

Ms. Sanushka Seomangal, National Vice-Chair of Australia India Business Council, spoke about the India-Australia strategic partnerships pertaining to economic security and welfare, which are key to the success of the Indo-Pacific cooperation. Australia and India are playing an important role in strengthening this cooperation and have the shared responsibility to bring other like-minded partners into the region and show the way forward for other partnerships.

Strategic partnerships pertaining to economic security and welfare are key to the success of the Indo-Pacific cooperation

There is immense scope for collaboration in technology between India and Australia. However, the mobility issues need attention, and the Australian government must take initiatives to attract quality skilled labour. One measure in this regard could be to wave off the visa application fee to attract brighter and younger Indian students. Australia-India relations will improve irrespective of any change in the Australian government, liberal or labour, during the upcoming elections.

Sanjay Pulipaka, in his address, talked about two misconceptions on the Indo-Pacific. First, the Indo-Pacific is synonymous with QUAD. In reality, QUAD is a framework of cooperation, and the Indo-Pacific is a regional construct. Second, the Indo-Pacific has been designed to contain China. Power politics plays the way we define regions and concepts. In the emerging dichotomy, in the political realm there is no

25 https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_SpeechesView.aspx?Id=1111 accessed on 17-05-2022

26 <https://commerce.gov.in/international-trade/trade-agreements/comprehensive-economic-partnership-agreement-between-the-government-of-the-republic-of-india-and-the-government-of-the-united-arab-emirates-uae/> accessed on 17-05-2022

27 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1714362> accessed on 17-05-2022



Indo-Pacific security architecture like NATO while in the economic realm there are newer frameworks of engagements like quadrilateral and trilateral—QUAD, AUSUK, RCEP, TPEPP besides others. Such a dichotomy may impact the balance of power that is favourable for democracies in the Indo-Pacific region. There has been a disjunction between the way the economic architecture was conceptualised and the way the geopolitical goals were set. There is a need to bring in geopolitics for better political and economic outcomes. In other words, the political relationship and the economic relationship should go hand in hand and any failure to recognise such relationship may lead to disruptions.

There has been a disjunction between the way the economic architecture was conceptualised and the way the geopolitical goals were set

The political economy expert also articulates that first the major countries should work together towards accelerated infrastructure development. The US's Indo-Pacific Strategy

talks about Build Back Better Framework²⁸, and the QUAD countries are working on infrastructure development assistance. The medium and smaller size countries in the Indo-Pacific construct (speaker preferred to use the word 'powers' vis-à-vis 'countries') like Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and many others could play an important role as they can alter the balance of power and bring in anxieties that might disrupt economic interactions between nation-states. India has always been an important power, but it was reluctant to enter such negotiations.

Further, on the emerging nexus between geoeconomics and geopolitics, much of the trade happens with the political background. The India-UAE Free Trade Agreement happened in a geopolitical context. The initial talks for the formation of West Asian QUAD—India, UAE, Israel, and US—also has strong political intentions. There are three geopolitical developments: first, the Abrahamic Accords²⁹, second, the possible US decline in the use of Middle East Oil in the future and third, the growing recognition of Middle Eastern countries to diversify their trade. All this prompted India to play a role in this region.

28 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/build-back-better/> accessed on 17-02-2022

29 <https://www.state.gov/the-abraham-accords/> accessed on 17-05-2022

Overall, the panel discussions focused on the Indo-Pacific construct regarding bilateral/ regional/multi-lateral trade agreements and their interactions with the WTO goals. They also talked about evolving economic architecture in the region and critically evaluated various agreements such as the RCEP³⁰ and the CPATPP³¹. Since India is not a member of these agreements, the participants discussed opportunities and challenges with bilateral free trade agreements. The panellists pointed out that while earlier there were minor disruptions to the supply chain, with the pandemic the scale of the disruptions has completely

undermined the stability of supply chains. As a consequence, there has been considerable discussion on supply chain resilience. While the relationship between big powers such as India, the US, Japan, and Australia dominated the conversations, the panellists also stressed the importance of engaging with the smaller powers to ensure enhanced prosperity in the region. The panellists also stressed on the importance of understanding the relationship between geopolitics and geoeconomics to ensure continuity and sustainability of trade and other economic interactions.

Dialogue VII: Diplomats' Roundtable on 'Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific: Focus on Education, Healthcare, Technology and People-To-People Connect'

Chair Moderator: **Madan Pillutla**, Dean, Indian School of Business

Panellists: **Patricia A. Lacina**, Chargé D' Affaires, a.i. U.S. Embassy New Delhi; **Ugo Astuto**, Ambassador of the EU to India and Bhutan; and **Kunihiko Kawazu**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan, New Delhi

Cooperation within and beyond the Indo-Pacific region is critical for an inclusive and resilient world order. Networked cooperation and engagement can resolve multiple issues and challenges in areas of education, healthcare, climate change, technology, and manpower, etc. for arriving at a development-oriented Indo-Pacific region. The objective of this panel was to discuss and explore these areas of cooperation which would aim at strengthening the region's collective soft power.

Professor Madan Pillutla, Dean Indian School of Business moderated the session and set the discussion in motion by mentioning that the global challenges need to be resolved through dialogue, especially while talking about the security in the Indo-Pacific where there are multiple territorial disputes. The Russian invasion of Ukraine creeps into every conversation, he said. He set the direction for the discussion with the optimism of immense scope for cooperation in the region, especially in education, healthcare, production and distribution of vaccines, technology and trade. The success of partnerships or alliances depends on the partners' belief, which is the

real soft power, in creating some kind of value from the association.

Patricia A. Lacina, charg e d'affaires, a.i. US Embassy New Delhi, in her address, talked about various aspects of the US engagement in the Indo-Pacific covering climate change, vaccine, disaster response, and humanitarian assistance.

The US is an Indo-Pacific nation, and its security and prosperity are interlinked. While the regional and global challenges presented by the disruption of the rule-based order, the climate crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have tested our shared resilience. An opportunity exists in the region to play a positive role for all nations who believe and share the objectives of free and open, connected, prosperous, secured, and resilient region, which is reiterated in the US Indo-Pacific strategy.

The Indo-Pacific region is at the global epicentre of climate crisis where 70% of the world's natural disasters occur and over a billion people are in danger of rising natural disasters and the nations need to face these challenges together, as no one nation can solve the problem by itself. As John Kerry (US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate) said, 'Each of us needs everybody else at the table to make this happen'. The US government has enhanced the US climate assistance to \$11.4 billion annually to spend on clean energy, clean air, and climate resilience projects throughout the Indo-Pacific region by 2024. Ms Lacina appreciated the Indian leadership in addressing climate change by

30 <https://roepsec.org/> accessed on 17-05-2022

31 <https://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/agreements/in-force/cptpp/comprehensive-and-progressive-agreement-for-trans-pacific-partnership> accessed on 17-05-2022

joining the International Solar Alliance (ISA)³² and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)³³.

She also talked about the US Consulate's role in creating the green building revolution in India 20 years ago, resulting in making it one of the leaders in the number of green buildings constructed. The US partnered with the Confederation of Indian Industry, a premier industry body, to bring the Green Building Council to Hyderabad as CII-Godrej Green Business Centre. The Consulate is partnering with the Telangana State Renewable Energy Development Corporation to design their new net-zero office compound. The US also funded the creation of a new regional network called the Climate Action Champions Alumni Network, which would bring together 100 individuals in a US-sponsored exchange programme to lead Climate Action Policy initiatives in their respective countries and region.

The US is helping produce one billion vaccines by the end of 2022 for the Indo-Pacific region. Under QUAD Vaccine Partnership, the US provided \$50 million in financial support to expand COVID-19 vaccine production at the Hyderabad based vaccine manufacturer the Biological E, which is to be delivered to the seekers free of cost.

QUAD originated as humanitarian assistance for Tsunami disaster relief in 2004 and since then has grown in stature to become a strong grouping for developmental cooperation and disaster response. The Indo-Pacific is one of the most dynamic and critical regions of the world and the US is proud to be a part of it.

The Indo-Pacific is one of the most dynamic and critical regions of the world and the US feels proud to be a part of it

Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the EU to India and Bhutan, considered the Indo-Pacific as the emerging economic and geopolitical centre of gravity in the world that is shaping the world order. EU and Indo-Pacific are highly interconnected, as they are the top investors and leading corporates for the development of the region and one of the largest trading partners. EU represents 60% of FDI flows to Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific is the second-largest destination of EU exports and is home to four of the EU's top trading partners.

The EU vitally depends on maritime transport through which it relies on the stability of the Indo-Pacific region³⁴. Stability in the Indo-Pacific is not only good for the EU but for the world at large. The vision of the Indo-Pacific is to have a cooperative approach to international relations by defending the rule-based system of governance, which is based on respect for international law, especially in maritime space—the UN Convention of the Laws of the Sea (UNCLAS).

The EU Strategy for the Indo-Pacific highlights several priority areas. First, sustainable and inclusive prosperity by deepening trade links with the Indo-Pacific region; second, green transition to fight climate change issues by promoting transition towards green energy; third, the oceans governance by sustainable



management of ocean resources; fourth, digital governance to enhance digital partnership with the Indo-Pacific to support human-centric digital transition; fifth, a shared vision for sustainable connectivity; and finally human security, by partnering to prepare for the future pandemics. The EU is also keen to promote open and rules based regional space by enhancing engagement with the member state deployments to strengthen maritime capacity.

The exposure of Indo-Pacific to climate change necessitates quick action with consistency and determination. The EU has a legally binding commitment to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to 55% by 2030 and to reach climate neutrality by 2050. The digital transition can cause success for the green transition. Ambassador Astuto appreciated India's initiatives on climate change with global engagement through the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

Regarding education and technology partnerships, the EU's initiative Erasmus+ (EU programme for education, training, youth and sport) has facilitated around 18,000 student exchanges between the Indo-Pacific and the EU between 2014-2020, which resulted in strengthening academic and research standards. It also helped establish the network of people-to-people connect, which is the foundation of

partnerships. India is an important partner in the EU's overall strategy for the Indo-Pacific.

The International community needs to come together and defend the UN Charter

Digital transition can hold success for the green transition

He urged the Indo-Pacific countries to defend the rule-based system and governance in view of the unjustified Russian aggression against Ukraine, which is threatening the very underpinning of Europe's peace and security. If this aggression is unchallenged, it would set a very dangerous precedence for this part of the world (and for the Indo-Pacific). The International community needs to come together and defend the UN Charter.

The Deputy Chief of Mission of Japan in India **Kunihiko Kawazu** in his address mentioned that we all are witnessing a world order being challenged in an unprecedented manner, especially because of COVID-19. A free and open Indo-Pacific is the bedrock of shared security and prosperity. The objective is to build cooperation in the Indo-Pacific security and

32 US International Development Finance Corporation recently made a 500 million dollar investment to manufacture solar pallets in Southern India.

33 <https://www.cdri.world/> accessed on 17-05-2022

34 Around 40% of the EU foreign trade passes through South China Sea and hence EU has a big stake in the Indo-Pacific region

prosperity for all participants in the region. In doing so, design the architecture in such a way that it incorporates counterparty priorities.

An important lesson the pandemic has taught is to give due importance to resilience. To address the challenges of supply chain, India, Japan, and Australia initiated the Supply Chain Resilience Infrastructure in 2020 to build diversified and dependable supply chains. This initiative is based on the principles enshrined in G-20 for investments in quality infrastructure and sustainable connectivity. The EU-Japan Connectivity Partnership became a good framework, which enabled a similar partnership with India—the EU-India Connectivity Partnership.

There is a need to strengthen technology partnerships. Technology has become the centrepiece in security, economic and policy landscape, and accelerating cooperation in this space is a pressing task. Japan also has some important partnerships in science and technology with various countries in the Indo-Pacific, especially the international joint research in fields like environment, energy and disaster prevention aiming to solve global issues, including climate change. It is becoming even more essential for IP nations to support technological development and innovation in such a way that it facilitates universal

Considered a free and open Indo-Pacific as the bedrock of shared security and prosperity

One of the important lessons that the pandemic has taught is to give the required importance to resilience

35 https://www.in.emb-japan.go.jp/Education/japanese_government_scholarships.html accessed on 17-05-2022

36 The speaker emphasises and re-emphasised that it is the Trump administration (not Biden) that talked about the free and open Indo-Pacific region. This was probably to establish that irrespective of the change in the US Government leadership, the vision of Indo-Pacific remained the same.

That any partnerships or alliances could be successful if the partners believe in creating some kind of value from the association

The talent that one would need to solve bigger problems cannot be confined to respective geographies

principles of freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and rules of law and promote sustainable resilient economic development in the region.

Japan is taking initiatives to attract young students from various nations. For example, Japan offers government funded scholarship called the MEXT³⁵ scholarship for foreign students, including those from India.

It's a matter of pride that Japan belongs to the first group of countries to initiate the Indo-Pacific and the U.S³⁶, EU, the G7, G20 all increasingly talk about the Indo-Pacific cooperation.

Dean Pillutla sought the response of the representatives of the US and Japan on the Chinese Prime Minister's description of the QUAD as an Indo-Pacific NATO to contain China. Both the representatives commented that the QUAD was formed between four like-minded democracies that respect the rule-based order and its purpose is not to contain or counter China.

The Dean urged the diplomats to encourage more education exchange programmes in their respective countries and regions, because the talent one would need to solve bigger problems cannot be confined to respective geographies but needs to spread out to the world.

Valedictory Dialogue

The Valedictory Session was on 'Exploring Soft Power Diplomacy' with the President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Vinay Sahasrabuddhe who emphasised that a successful regional cooperation has to its core people-to-people connect and hence must talk about cultural cooperation. Diplomacy cannot undermine the importance of culture and ways must be found for stronger cooperation between countries based on these.

He elaborated on the evolving strong regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, with at least six ingredients of soft power needed to strengthen it:

Language plays a key role in connecting people and, therefore, there is a need to strengthen linguistic cooperation through language exchange and knowledge exchange

Development is at the core of India's diplomatic and security dialogues



1. Need to respect smaller identities/countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Equality in dignity, security and opportunity will lead to greater democratisation in the culture of the entire region.
2. Greater awareness of different cultures in the Indo-Pacific and the best proposed common approach would ensure that the academic textbooks carry adequate information on all these countries in the region. National libraries have adequate books on the culture and society of the Indo-Pacific region. This could be the beginning of greater awareness.
3. Respect the uniqueness and identity of every culture (dances, music, culinary, knowledge traditions, healing systems, etc.) and talk about it across the region.

4. Encourage greater archival collections and civilisational studies; preserve the monuments that must be regarded as treasure for the entire humanity and must lead to greater knowledge exchange.
5. Language plays a key role in connecting people. Strengthening linguistic cooperation through language and knowledge exchange would enable greater integration, psychological and emotional, in the Indo-Pacific region.
6. Development diplomacy: Asia is at the centre of economic and security cooperation, and development discussions. Development is at the core of India's aspiration to become a developed country. Culture too is at the core of India's growing soft power. India must, for example, encourage bamboo-based entrepreneurship— aspects that are at the intersection of culture and development.

Closing Remarks

The organising partners, the US Consulate General, Hyderabad and the Indian School of Business delivered the vote of thanks. **David Moyer**, Public Affairs Officer of the US Consulate General Hyderabad, said that the values shown at the sub-national level (i.e., Hyderabad, Telangana) are expected to bring different perspectives outside of the Capital³⁷. He also acknowledged the contributions of women in many aspects of our life and was happy that their participation, as speakers, moderators, and participants during this conference, enriched the deliberations. Though the conference centred on the Indo-Pacific cooperation, varied perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine war were welcome. He thanked ISB for partnering with the US Consulate General, Hyderabad for the event and urged the contributors to continue their engagement.

In his vote of thanks, **D.N.V. Kumara Guru**, Director, ISB External Relations thanked the partners from the US Consulate General, Hyderabad. He shared some conference statistics— 1002 registrations, and 610 participants till the last session, which showed that the conversion ratio is much higher than the usual 30–40% for online virtual open conferences. The event had 34 speakers, and participants from 500 different organisations, spread across 20 cities and 11 countries.

The rich content of the conference and the quality of participation makes the conference a grand success

Values shown at the sub-national level would hopefully bring different perspectives outside of the capital

³⁷ Normally, most diplomatic discussions happen mostly in the Capital cities but talking about it in other cities enriches the discussions and adds to the rich content of diplomatic engagements.

Speaker Profiles



Joel Reifman, Consul General, U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad

Consul General Joel Reifman assumed the post of U.S. Consul General in Hyderabad on August 20, 2019. Prior to this assignment in Hyderabad, India, Mr Reifman served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has served at the State Department in Washington D.C. in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research and as Deputy Director of the Office of Aviation Negotiations in the Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs.



Happymon Jacob, Associate Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Happymon is also the founder of the Council for Strategic and Defence Research, New Delhi. Dr Jacob is an elected member of the Pugwash Council since 2013. His concurrent engagements with the Indian media include a column with The Hindu and hosting of a weekly video show on national security on The Wire.in.



Jennifer Larson, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for India, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Jennifer has been Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for India since September 2021. She was most recently overseas as Deputy Principal Officer in Mumbai from 2016-2020. Prior to completing a year-long course at the National Defense University in June 2016, she was Spokesperson at the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. Prior this, she was in Libya where she was Principal Officer in Benghazi, and then Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in Tripoli. She has also served in Pakistan, France, Sudan, Jerusalem and Lebanon.



Suhasini Haider, National Editor, and Diplomatic Affairs Editor, The Hindu

Suhasini regularly writes on foreign policy issues at The Hindu. Prior to this, she was with India's leading 24-hr English news channel CNN-IBN (2005-2014), where she presented the signature show "Worldview with Suhasini Haider", and was Correspondent for CNN International's New Delhi bureau before that. In 2015, she was the recipient of the most prestigious Indian print journalism 'Prem Bhatia' award and has won a series of awards for her work in Television as well.



G V Prasad, Co-Chairman and Managing Director, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Belgium in Hyderabad and Member Executive Board, ISB

Prasad is Co-Chairman and Managing Director of the \$2.3 billion India-based multinational pharmaceutical company, Dr Reddy's Laboratories. He joined the board of Dr Reddy's in 1986 and took on a fulltime role as Managing Director, leading one of the group companies, Cheminor Drugs Ltd in 1990. Upon the merger of all the group companies, he assumed the role of the CEO of the combined entity in 2001. Prasad is involved with the activities of the World Wildlife Fund, AP and Telangana chapter, Wild Life Trust (WTI) of India and other conservation-oriented organisations.



Lt. Gen. Prakash Menon, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.), Director, Strategic Studies Programme, The Takshashila Institution, Bengaluru

The General served in the Indian Army for nearly forty years. Though he retired in Oct 2011, he continued in government as a Military Adviser and Secretary to Government of India in the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) at New Delhi from May 2011 to 2017. He is the author of 'Strategy Trap - India and Pakistan under the Nuclear Shadow' and co-author of 'Non-Alignment 2.0' and 'India's Path to Power: Strategy in a World Adrift'. He writes a weekly column for ThePrint.



Amb Shivshankar Menon, Visiting Professor and Chair of Ashoka Centre for China Studies, Ashoka University (Former National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Former Foreign Secretary, Govt. of India)

Amb Menon's long career in public service spans diplomacy, national security, atomic energy, disarmament policy, and India's relations with its neighbours and major global powers. Menon served as national security advisor to the Indian Prime Minister from January 2010 to May 2014. He currently serves as chairman of the advisory board of the Institute of Chinese Studies in New Delhi. He was also a Distinguished Fellow with Brookings India.



Air Vice-Marshal Arjun Subramaniam, AVSM (Retd.), President's Chair of Excellence, National Defence College

AVM Subramaniam is a fighter pilot from the IAF, a military historian, air power analyst and strategic commentator who is currently a Visiting Professor at Ashoka and Jindal Universities. He has been a Visiting Professor at Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and a Visiting Fellow at The Harvard Asia Center and Changing Character of War programme, Oxford University. He is the author of 'India's Wars: A Military History 1947-1971' and writes extensively in the public domain.



Jagannath Panda, Head, Stockholm Centre for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) Sweden and Director, Europe-Asia for YCAPS.

Dr Panda is the Director for Europe-Asia Research Cooperation at the YCAPS, and an International Research Fellow at the Cannon Institute for Global Studies in Japan. He is the Series Editor for Routledge Studies on Think Asia and author of the book India-China Relations (Routledge: 2017) and China's Path to Power: Party, Military and the Politics of State Transition (Pentagon Press: 2010). His recent work includes Quad Plus and Indo-Pacific (Routledge: 2021); Scaling India-Japan Cooperation in Indo-Pacific and Beyond 2025 (KW Publishing Ltd. 2019), and The Korean Peninsula and Indo-Pacific Power Politics: Status Security at Stake (Routledge, 2020).



Nayanima Basu, Senior Associate Editor, ThePrint

Nayanima is a New Delhi-based journalist for over 18 years. She has been covering foreign policy and strategic affairs for various publications. She has written extensively on the subject of Indo-Pacific and recently covered the return of the Taliban in Afghanistan.



Manoj Kewalramani, Chairperson, Indo-Pacific Research Programme and Head, China Studies Programme, Takshashila Institution

Manoj's research covers Chinese politics, foreign policy and approaches to new technologies. He curates a weekly brief, Eye on China, which tracks developments in China from an Indian perspective. He is also the author of the recently released book Smokeless War: China's Quest for Geopolitical Dominance, which discusses China's political, diplomatic and narrative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to joining Takshashila, Manoj spent over a decade working as a journalist in India and China, where he helped set up digital newsrooms and train young journalists



Sana Hashmi, Visiting Fellow, Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, Taiwan

Sana is a Visiting Fellow at Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation. She is an affiliated scholar with the Research Institute for Indo-Pacific Affairs (RIIPA). Her primary research focuses on Taiwan's foreign relations, China's foreign policy, Taiwan's New Southbound Policy, Taiwan-India relations, China's territorial disputes, Indo-Pacific, and Asian security.



Premesha Saha, Associate Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, ORF

Premesha is an Associate Fellow with ORF's Strategic Studies Programme. Her research focuses on Southeast Asia, East Asia and the South Pacific — spanning the Eastern Indian Ocean. Her other research interests include Indonesia's maritime strategy, the emerging dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region, India and Southeast Asia, India's Act East Policy, Asia-Pacific multilateralism.



Captain Sarabjeet S Parmar (IN) Senior Fellow, National Maritime Foundation

Cap Sarabjeet is an alumnus of National Defence Academy (NDA) Kharakwasla, and Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) Wellington, Captain Parmar was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 July 1987. He is a Sea King pilot who has commanded two ships and a frontline Sea King Squadron. He has served as Joint Director Naval Plans in Directorate of Naval Planning at IHQ MoD (Navy) and has been Directing Staff at Defence Services Staff College (DSSC), Wellington, where he was responsible for the national strategy and international law modules. At NMF he looks at maritime strategy and security-related aspects in the Indo-Pacific, piracy, and international maritime law with a focus on lawfare.



Anjal Prakash, Research Director, Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business

Anjal is Research Director and Adjunct Associate Professor, Bharti Institute of Public Policy, ISB. Prior to ISB he worked with TERI- School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi, India as an Associate Professor in the Department of Regional Water Studies. His earlier association was with International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), in Kathmandu, Nepal where he was the Coordinator of the programme - Himalayan Adaptation, Water and Resilience (HI-AWARE) Research on Glacier and Snowpack Dependent River Basins.



Ari Nathan, Indo-Pacific Coordinator, U.S State Department, Colombo

Ari is the Indo-Pacific regional coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Colombo where he coordinates the development and implementation of Indo-Pacific Strategy activities in South Asia. Ari has also served in Washington, Nepal, Spain, Iraq, Colombia, and Mexico. Prior to joining the Department of State, Ari worked for the United Nations in a regional seas program and as legal counsel for the Pacific Island nation of Palau.



Rachel Fleishman, Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific, Center for Climate and Security, USA

Rachel is associated with the Center for Climate and Security where she focuses on the Asia-Pacific region, and Asia-Pacific Liaison at the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS). She started her career in national security policy, working in nuclear arms control at SAIC, the Pentagon and NATO and her interest in climate security was sparked during her tenure working for the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environmental Security), where she helped to conceive and build the Pentagon's international environmental security program.



Ulka Kelkar, Director Climate, World Resources Institute

Ulka is an economist with more than two decades' experience in climate change impacts and policy. She models the economic impacts of low-carbon development pathways for India and supports climate action in Indian cities and states. She previously worked as a consultant climate assessment specialist for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and research fellow with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). She was appointed by the Government of India to formulate India's Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP 2020) in the thematic group on Energy, Environment and Climate Change.



Bronwyn Hayward, Director and Professor, Department of Political Science and IR, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Professor Bronwyn's research focuses on the intersection of sustainable development, youth, climate change and citizenship and is a Coordinating Lead Author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change AR6 report (cities and infrastructure) and was a lead author for the 2018 Special Report on 1.5 (Sustainable development and Poverty eradication).



Sanjaya Baru, Distinguished Fellow, United Service Institution of India, New Delhi

Sanjaya was a Media Advisor to the Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Director for Geoeconomics and Strategy, International Institute of Strategic Studies, London. He was also associated with the University of Hyderabad, ICRIER, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore, FICCI, besides some major financial newspapers including The Economic Times, Financial Express and Business Standard.



The Hon. Lisa Singh, CEO, Australia India Institute

Lisa Singh is a former Australian Senator and was the first woman of South Asian heritage to be elected to the Australian Parliament. She is currently the CEO of the Australia India Institute, a leading research and policy think tank advancing Australia-India relations at the government, business, diaspora and academic levels. She is also Deputy Chair of the Australian Government's Australia-India Council and sits on the advisory board of the University of Melbourne's Asialink.



Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary of India and Senior Fellow and Member of the Governing Board, Centre for Policy Research (CPR)

Amb Saran is a former Foreign Secretary of India and has served as Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Nuclear Affairs and Climate Change. After leaving government service in 2010, he has headed the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and was Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board under the National Security Council. Shyam Saran was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian award, in 2011 for his contributions to civil service. In May 2019, he was conferred the Spring Order Gold and Silver Star by the Emperor of Japan for promoting India-Japan relations.



Shekhar Tomar, Assistant Professor, Economics and Public Policy, ISB

Shekhar Tomar is an Assistant Professor in the Economics and Public Policy area at ISB. He completed his PhD from Toulouse School of Economics in 2017 and worked as a Research Economist at RBI between 2017-2019. His research lies at the intersection of macroeconomics, trade and finance and he extensively uses micro-data to answer macro questions in his work. During his stint at the RBI, he also contributed regularly to the policy work on monetary policy and trade issues in India.



Sanushka Seomangal, National Vice-Chair, Australia India Business Council and Partner, Thomson Geer, Australia

Sanushka is a Special Counsel in Thomson Geer's Sydney office where she specialises in public and private equity and debt fundraising, initial public offerings (IPOs), and mergers and acquisitions involving both private and listed companies. Amongst her many professional achievements, Sanushka was recently named one of the Australian Financial Review's 100 Women of Influence. She was also a finalist at the Lawyers Weekly Women in Law Awards 2015 and has just advised on a successful simple corporate bond offer, only the fourth of its kind in Australia.



Amb Mohan Kumar, Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, New Delhi and Professor of Diplomatic Practice, Jindal School of International Affairs, O.P Jindal Global University

Amb Kumar has an outstanding career in the Indian Foreign Service lasting 36 years which culminated in his being India's Ambassador to France based in Paris. Earlier, Mohan Kumar was India's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Amb Kumar has enormous expertise in the area of international trade- he was India's lead negotiator first at the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and then at the WTO (World Trade Organisation) in crucial areas such as Intellectual Property Rights, Services, Dispute Settlement, Rules and Technical Barriers to Trade.



Amitendu Palit, Senior Research Fellow and Research Lead, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore

Amitendu is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Trade and Investment. Earlier, he worked for several years in the Ministry of Finance, India, and in the Ministries of Industry and Civil Supplies. He wrote Annual Economic Surveys and participated in annual budgetary consultations. He was on the Advisory Committees of the Planning Commission and ILO. His research includes global trade policies, regional supply chains, trade agreements, regional connectivity, and India's public policies.



Sanjay Pulipaka, Independent Researcher on International Politics and Security Issues (Formerly Senior Fellow, Delhi Policy Group and ICRIER)

Sanjay is an independent researcher on international politics and security issues. He was previously a Senior Fellow for Research Programmes and Strategic Neighbourhood at the Delhi Policy Group, Senior Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum Library, and Senior Consultant at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). He was a Wrangler Pavate Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge, UK, and a former Fulbright Fellow in the Conflict Transformation Programme, in the United States. Sanjay's areas of interest include India's foreign policy, Democracy, Indian Politics, India's immediate neighbourhood, political transition, connectivity frameworks, India-China relations, India-US Relations, regionalism, and other related domains.



Madan Pillutla, Dean, Indian School of Business

Madan is a Professor of Organisational Behaviour at ISB. He has an undergraduate degree in Mechanical Engineering from BITS, Pilani, post-graduate degrees from XLRI, Jamshedpur and the University of Illinois and a PhD from the University of British Columbia. Madan has won numerous teaching awards at LBS where he introduced the popular Negotiations elective and directed successful executive education programs such as the Essentials of Leadership and Negotiation and Influence programs.



Patricia A. Lacina, Chargé D' Affaires, a.i. U.S. Embassy New Delhi

Patricia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, assumed the role of Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. on September 9, 2021. Prior, she served as Consul General at the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, Germany; Principal Deputy Executive Secretary in the Office of the Secretary of State; Deputy Chief Information Officer for Business, Management and Planning and Chief Knowledge Officer, besides others.



Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the E.U. to India and Bhutan.

Ugo Astuto entered the Italian Diplomatic Service in 1991 serving in Nairobi and London and was seconded to the European External Action Service (EEAS) in Brussels. He also served as the Principal Director for Asia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome and is the Ambassador of the European Union to India since October 2019.



Kunihiko Kawazu, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan, New Delhi

Mr Kawazu is currently serving as the Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in India. Prior to his current role, he served as an Ambassador to ASEM and in-charge Ambassador of Visegrad Group Plus Japan and the Western Balkans. He was also the Deputy Director-General of the European Affairs Bureau and the Consular Affairs Bureau, where he oversaw crisis management along with other responsibilities.



Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, and Youth and Sports, Government of India

Dr. Sahasrabuddhe is a nationalist social worker at heart, a researcher cum student of political science and a trainer in democracy by profession and a Parliamentarian by elevation. He is a post-Graduate in English Literature and a PhD in Political Science, both from the University of Mumbai. Since January 2018, he is the President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). As a Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Indian Parliament), he represents the state of Maharashtra since July 2016.

The Journalists' Workshops

As part of the partnership with the U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad, ISB organised two Journalists' Workshops covering important aspects of the Indo-Pacific cooperation. The publications include - Andhra Jyothi, Business Standard, Deccan Chronicle, India Business News Channel, Newsweek, Sakshi TV, The Hans India, The Hindu, The Times of India, The Tribune, Eenadu, Hind ka Suraj, besides a few others joined the workshops. The journalists primarily covered the states of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Few of them were also from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and New Delhi. The feedback received from around 45 journalists' who participated in the two workshops put together and representing the print, electronic and online publications, was very positive and expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the content and conduct of the sessions. Journalists expressed their keenness to attend similar sessions in the future. They indeed expressed their ability to report better on Indo-Pacific issues post the workshops and the conference. Though it is observed that the unprecedented nature of global events is creating a dynamic environment, the need for constant revisiting is strongly felt. There were some suggestions to incorporate

other areas like - cyber warfare/security, understanding culture and philosophy and its impact on geopolitical developments and legal frameworks, etc. which needed in-depth insights for the journalists to understand.

The two workshops had SEVEN Masterclasses, organised in the months of April and October 2021, most of the speakers urged the countries of the Indo-Pacific to explore ways and means to engage China in constructing a stronger Indo-Pacific rather than countering it. The workshop had three masterclasses

- First Masterclass in April was on 'Security Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region' by Lt. Gen. **Prakash Menon**, who was the former Military Advisor at the National Security Council Secretariat and is also associated with multiple institutions. Primarily he leads the Strategic Studies Programme at Takshashila Institutions, Bengaluru. He systematically laid down the security architecture in the Indo Pacific region and emphasised that geo-strategically India is well placed to play an important role. China was at the centre of his presentation and also touched upon QUAD, Indian Ocean, ASEAN, and others. He opined that India could play a

constructive role in strengthening the Indo Pacific cooperation and that the Western powers especially the United States are relatively stronger in military power than China.

- Second Masterclass in April was on 'Strategic Economic Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region' by **Alexander Slater**, the Deputy Managing Director for U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC), who offered a political economy perspective of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and specifically emphasised on the importance of a strong Indo-U.S. relations for a successful Indo-Pacific cooperation. He said: "The US-India partnership is the driver of a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. Leveraging the bilateral relationship's "trust assets" to overcome its "trust deficits" will be critical to maximising economic and social progress. Stronger US-India trade and investment ties can do this by using these assets to deliver sustainable and inclusive growth and job creation in both countries."
- The third Masterclass in April was on the Geopolitical Issues in the Indo-Pacific by Sinologist **Shikha Aggarwal** who is currently the Visiting Fellow at National Chengchi University at Taipei. She is also a Senior Research Fellow at the India Foundation, New Delhi. She touched upon various dimensions of geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region in the context of China, including the European angle, the Korean angle, the US angle, and the Indian angle. However, she strongly opines that the success of Indo-Pacific indeed depends on how best China is engaged in the cooperation. She says: "Indo Pacific strategies, as an alternative to China must explore strengthening partnerships on semiconductors and

computer chips manufacturing. Otherwise, Indo Pacific as a region cannot succeed without China".

- The fourth Masterclass in October 'The Emerging Scenarios in International Relations that challenge the Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation' by **Admiral Sunil Lanba**, PVSM, AVSM (Retd.), Former Chief of the Naval Staff, Indian Navy & Chairman, National Maritime Foundation (NMF). In his class, he emphasised that there is a rebalancing of the global economy towards Asia and that the rise of China as the global military power is changing the equations. The impact of climate change also has a profound effect on the environment, security and social architecture. These global changes are leading to ongoing power transition making it harder for international treaties (eg. UNCLAUS), increasing competition leading to regional instability.
- The fifth Masterclass in October 'International Legal Order during Power Transition' by **Dr Rajdeep Pakanati**, Associate Professor, Centre for Global Governance and Policy, Jindal School of International Affairs, OP Jindal Global University. He considered the Indo-Pacific as a construct of contested interpretations. He too emphasised that the international rule-based directives and charters like WTO, UNCLAUS, and many of the other UN charters are having a tough time for global acceptance. However, one potential area of possible cooperation is climate change.
- The Sixth Masterclass in October 'The E.U. Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific' by **H.E. Mr Ugo Astuto**, Ambassador of the European Union to India. He talked about EU's approach to the Indo-Pacific and considered that





the rule-based international order is critically important for the EU's trade connections with the Indo-Pacific region. He elaborated on the EU Strategy paper for the Indo-Pacific.

- The Seventh Masterclass in October 'The run-up to COP 26: Evolving a Climate Diplomacy for the Indo-Pacific' **Dr Anjal Prakash**, Research Director Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business. He emphasised the need for equitable climate space and that the net-zero targets for the global south and global north cannot be the same due to historical reasons of past polluters. He argued that the Global North should move to Net-Zero by 2050 Global South by 2050.

Overall, the Seven Masterclasses gave a good perspective to the Journalists and tried to approach the Indo-Pacific issues in a systematic way. Though the aspects of security, geopolitics and economic cooperation are strongly interrelated, it was important to see things from those angles. Expert speakers felt that it is important to have a level playing field in the Indo-Pacific region for which the contestations with China must be addressed by not only preparing against it but also exploring ways and means to engage China for the larger Indo-Pacific regional cooperation. Climate change cooperation, technology and trade, has immense prospects to come up strongly in the Indo-Pacific region.

International Scholars Workshop

At a time when the Taliban was overthrowing the ruling government in Afghanistan and the geopolitical equations were becoming far more complex than earlier, we scheduled a workshop on July 30, 2021 for the international relations scholars. The theme was democracy and development in the Indo-Pacific. The IR Scholars' Workshop had four stand-alone Expert Sessions:

- In the first session, **Vice-Admiral Girish Luthra** (Retd), Distinguished Fellow,

ORF, gave an overview of the security and development dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region. He elaborated in detail about the Indo-Pacific as a coherent strategic space, current and emerging challenges, cooperation, and India's maritime interests. He opined that there is an increased convergence on strengthening stability and maritime security in the region. The Quad members - Australia, India,

Japan and the US - and others like France, UK, and now the EU have strong convergence in free and open Indo-Pacific; rule-based regional order; connectivity; climate change; maritime security cooperation and China as a challenge. However, India is not inclined to support the Quad's evolution into a military alliance.

- In the second session, **Professor Chintamani Mahapatra**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), explained the evolving geopolitics and challenges to a stable, free, and open Indo-Pacific. He opined that China's growing assertiveness raises important geopolitical questions that would need an integrated deterrence by other major players in the Indo-Pacific. QUAD is a security dialogue process and not a group to counter China. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has disruptive consequences for Indo-Pacific geopolitics and development.
- In the third session, **Amruta Karambelkar**, Research Associate, Vivekananda Foundation, talked about security in the Indo-Pacific development strategy. She

opines that China's BRI is bound to play an important role by filling the substantial infrastructural gaps in the Indo-Pacific and Central Asian region. The alternative strategies like - Blue Dot Network of the US, G-7's B3W, India's SAGAR are yet to develop & will be challenging to match the BRI. BRI is also evolving to be a health BRI & Digital BRI.

- In the final session, **Manoj Kewalramani**, Chairperson, Indo-Pacific Research Programme, at Takshishala Institution, points out that China has had a fragmented approach towards the Indo-Pacific. At one level, it has sought to use its economic clout and military capacity to its advantage. At another, it sought to make tactical adjustments with India, Japan and the U.S. But increasingly, it seems Beijing believes that a systemic competition is taking shape in the region, resulting in it adopting a more assertive posture.

It was a well-appreciated workshop, which had the participation of around 150 scholars representing 32 universities/institutions/think tanks from across the country.

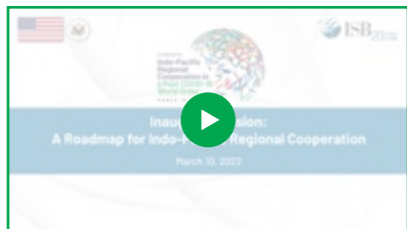


The Organising Team

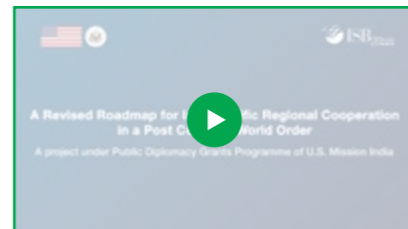
- The U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad
 - David Moyer, Public Affairs Officer, The U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad
 - Salil Kader, Advisor, Cultural Affairs, The U.S. Consulate General, Hyderabad
- The Indian School of Business
 - DNV Kumara Guru, Director External Relations, ISB
 - Sundeepp Jammalamadaka, Associate Director, External Relations, ISB
 - Sridhar Bhagavatula, Senior Manager, External Relations, ISB
 - Prashant Srivastava, Manager, External Relations, ISB
 - B Nagaraju, Assistant Manager, External Relations, ISB
 - Naman Sharma, Assistant Manager, External Relations, ISB

Video Recordings

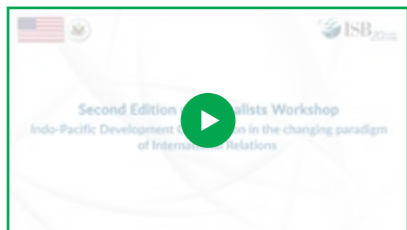
To watch videos of the panel discussions held during the conference, and those of the Journalists' and Research Scholars' Workshops held as part of it, please visit the below links



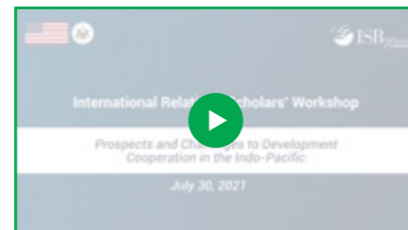
Conference videos



Journalists Workshop Part 1



Journalist Workshop Part 2



Research Scholars' Workshop

Tweets by Speakers

Happymon Jacob @HappymonJacob
 As always, I had an intellectually stimulating conversation with the wise, insightful and (now) professorial @ShivshankaMenon on the Indo-Pacific.
 Thanks @ISBedu for the invitation

Sana Hashmi | 胡莎娜 @sanahashmi1
 I argued, despite the US-China rivalry, there are other rising Asian powers such as India and Japan that are making substantial contributions in shaping the rules-based order. This is not just about power politics but also about keeping the Indo-Pacific stable & peaceful.

Arjun Subramaniam @rhinohistorian
 Looking forward to what will be a stimulating and Multi- dimensional Engagement

Nayanima Basu @NayanimaBasu
 Look forward to this much-needed discussion — A roadmap for Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in a Post Covid-19 World Order
isb.edu/en/Indo-Pacifi...
 Register: docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAI...

Australia India Institute @AIInstitute
 Our CEO @Lisa_Singh will be speaking this Friday at the @ISBedu Conference: A Roadmap for Indo-Pacific Regional Cooperation in a Post-Covid 19 World Order.
 Learn more and register to attend here: lnkd.in/gD6Wn_PC
 #IndiaMatters #IndoPacific

Lisa Singh @Lisa_Singh
 Looking fwd to joining @Barugaru1 for a panel discussion co-hosted by @USAndHyderabad and @ISBedu register

U.S. Consulate General Hyderabad @USAndHyderabad
 Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennifer Larson at the #IndoPacific Conference: "Our Indo-Pacific Strategy is fundamentally an affirmation of our values. It lays out our government's vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific that is connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient."

Manoj Kewalramani @theChinaDude
 Do join this conversation later this week if you can.

U.S. Consul General Hyderabad @USCGHyderabad
 I delivered remarks at the #IndoPacific conference hosted by @USAndHyderabad and @ISBedu. Here's the message I shared:
 'The United States is part of the Indo-Pacific region and therefore has long recognized it as vital to our collective security and prosperity.'

Salil Kader • 3rd+
 Advisor - Strategic Public Engagement at U.S. Consulate Ge...
 4mo • Edited
 Very proud to be partners with the Indian School of Business for this timely conference on the geopolitics in #IndoPacific region. We have an eminent set of experts speaking on various panels spread across two days. More details below. March 10-11, in the virtual mode. Do join us.

Shekhar Tomar • 3rd+
 Assistant Professor at Indian School of Business
 3mo
 Looking forward to discussing trade cooperation in the #IndoPacific. We have an excellent panel to understand the potential of such partnership and how to make it work.



Indian School of Business

Registered office: Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500 111, Telangana, India. Ph: +91 40 2300 7000

Mohali Campus: Knowledge City, Sector 81, SAS Nagar, Mohali - 140 306. Punjab, India. Ph: +91 172 459 0000

E-mail: externalrelations@isb.edu, Web: www.isb.edu/en/Indo-Pacific.html



[external-relations-at-isb](#)



[ISBExternalRelations](#)



[isbextrelations](#)



[isbexternalrelations](#)

Founding Associate Schools

