

CONFERENCE REPORT

**International Conference
on
INDIA-VIETNAM RELATIONS IN THE CHANGING
GEO-POLITICS OF THE INDO-PACIFIC**

**9th January 2018 (Tuesday) at Conference Hall-II
India International Centre, New Delhi**

**SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH GROUP
Department of Political Science
University of Delhi**



ZAKIR HUSAIN DELHI COLLEGE
University of Delhi

Institutional Partners



INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
New Delhi

ORGANISING COMMITTEE

ADVISORY BOARD

H. E. Amb. Ton Sinh Thanh

Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to India

Prof. Navnita Chadha Behera

HOD, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi

Dr. Sulekh Chandra

Principal, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi

MEMBERS

Dr. Sanjeev Kumar

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi*

Dr. Om Prakash

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi*

Dr Ashwin Parijat

*Department of History
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi*

Ms. Premola Ghose

*Programme Officer
India International Centre, New Delhi*

CONVENOR

Dr. (Ms) Sonu Trivedi

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi*

**International Conference
on
INDIA-VIETNAM RELATIONS IN THE
CHANGING
GEO-POLITICS OF THE INDO-PACIFIC**

9th January 2018

Venue: Conference Hall-II, India International Centre, New Delhi



Organised by:

SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH GROUP
Department of Political Science
University of Delhi

Institutional Partners: India International Centre and Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi



About SEARG:

Southeast Asia Research Group (SEARG) was established as a research cluster at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi in 2016. The scholars and the researchers engaged in studying the geo-political realities of the region and its economic dynamics have agreed to come together under the umbrella of SEARG to discuss and deliberate upon the issues of common interests and concerns for all Southeast Asia watchers. The research group proposes to provide a common platform for all the members to share their ideas on the emerging issues and challenges relevant to the region. Though, initially launched as a Discussion Group, the SEARG is expected to grow and evolve as a major interactive research forum for sharing ideas and organizing lectures, panel discussions, workshops, national and international conferences and associate young and emerging scholars working on the region. Since past one year it has successfully organized several events in collaboration and support with partners such as Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Indian Council of World Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Indian Council for Social Science Research, India International Centre and India Foundation. The forum envisages active association of all members and hopes to carry it forward at an international level for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of knowledge based on the expertise of each of its potential members.

CONCEPT NOTE

The promising relationship between India-Vietnam have been guided by nuances of real-politick and praxis of diplomacy and geo-strategic concerns. Over the years, Vietnam has emerged as a significant player in India's foreign policy prescriptions—a partner in sub-regional, regional, and multilateral fora. It is an integral member of ASEAN and plays an important role in India's Act East policy. The elevation of the Strategic Partnership between the two countries to that of 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' is a clear indication of the goodwill, trust and importance the two countries place on their relationship. It is also an acknowledgment of the existing strong bilateral defense and security ties and our mutual desire to contribute to regional peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity. Moving beyond the ideological linkages, both countries have endeavoured to revamp their relations under the realities of world politics and subject to global and regional responses of the Great Powers in the Indo-Pacific.

From 'strategic partnership' in 2007 to a 'comprehensive partnership' in 2016, the two countries have built up synergies for a deeper cooperation between them. These have been envisaged in a multi-faceted and a multi-sectoral cooperation on a wide range of issues covering political, defense and security relations; trade and commerce; energy cooperation; science and technology; capacity building; connectivity links; health, education, culture, tourism and people to people exchange; and cooperation in international, regional and sub-regional forums.

From the strategic lens, Vietnam's geographical location in Asia pacific has added to its geo-political importance for the regional players like China, India, Australia and Japan and also for the external powers like the United States and its rebalancing strategy in the Asia-Pacific. It has become a vital element in the South China Sea dispute given the competing interests of the other claimants for the territories in this region. Vietnam's economic prosperity in recent times has added to its bargaining clout vis-à-vis the major regional powers and the United States to balance its relations with China and protecting its stakes in the South China Sea. In the background of such a geo-strategic matrix, it has been following tradeoff between China and the United States, thereby maximizing its strategic independence. In the changing architecture of the Indo-Pacific, Vietnam emerges as a significant actor shaping the 'Great Game' politics in the region.

As Vietnam faces mounting pressure from China amidst its growing assertiveness in the disputed waters of South China Sea, it is looking to multiple partners in Asia and beyond. Vietnam has reached out to the United States and stepped up security cooperation with Japan, Australia and a number of its Southeast Asian neighbours. India has also been of very special strategic interest to Vietnam. Over the years, New Delhi has gradually expanded its defence and naval cooperation with Vietnam and assisted in its urgent effort at modernizing the military force. India's outreach to Vietnam has been a clear indication of its open

challenge to China in its own backyard. The high-level 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' between India and Vietnam is equally important as it shares the worries about increasing Chinese presence in the region. According to security experts, since China continues to increase its influence, defence and maritime cooperation and procurements from countries like India, the United States and Japan enables Vietnam to uphold its position.

Furthermore, internal synergies between – India and Vietnam have played a significant role in bringing the two countries on the same page building upon mutual trust and cooperation over the years. Given the cultural-religious linkages, based on their closer association with the historical kingdoms and the impact of Buddhist philosophy to the anti-imperialist struggle during the colonial rule and foreign intervention during the Second World War and thereafter, both the countries have developed closer ties and a shared destiny. Under the context of geo-strategic paradigm and the forces shaping the internal dynamics of Vietnam, its foreign policy orientations vis-à-vis the 'Great Powers' in the region and its engagement with India is a critical area of concern. In this sense, the proposed Conference is significant as it aims to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the relationship with one of India's most important and enduring strategic partners in Southeast Asia – Vietnam in the changing geo-politics of the Indo-Pacific.

Some of the major issues that can be discussed under the broader rubric of India-Vietnam relations in the changing geo-politics of the Indo-Pacific are as below:

- 1) Vietnam in India's Act East Policy
- 2) India-Vietnam relations and the changing Geo-politics of the Indo-Pacific
- 3) Political and Diplomatic Engagements between India and Vietnam
- 4) Value-chain and Development Partnership between India-Vietnam-ASEAN
- 5) Security, Defense and Strategic Concerns in India-Vietnam Relations
- 6) Trade-Commerce and Connectivity Concerns
- 7) Science Technology – Culture and Education in India-Vietnam Relations
- 8) Energy Security and Maritime Cooperation in India-Vietnam Relations
- 9) The South China Sea Dispute and Indian Foreign Policy responses
- 10) Traditional and Non-traditional Security Issues in India-Vietnam Relations

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

9:30 am	Registration and Tea/Coffee
10:00-11:30 am	<i>Inaugural Session</i>
Welcome Address:	Air Marshal Naresh Verma (Retd), Director, India International Centre
Opening Remarks:	Dr. Sulekh Chandra (Principal, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)
Introductory Remarks:	H. E. Amb. Ton Sinh Thanh (Amb. of Socialist Republic of Vietnam to India)
Chair:	Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra (Rector & Professor of American Studies, JNU)
<i>Keynote Speakers:</i>	
Inaugural Address:	Shri Shakti Sinha (Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)
Plenary Address:	Shri Jayadev Ranade (President, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy)
Chief Guest:	Amb. Nalin Surie (Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs)
Keynote Address:	Dr. Arvind Gupta (Director, Vivekananda International Foundation)
Special Address:	Dr. Anirban Ganguly (Director, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation)
Vote of Thanks:	Dr. Sonu Trivedi (Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)

11:30-12:00 pm ***HIGH TEA***

12:00-1:30 pm ***Working Session I***

Theme: Vietnam in India's Act East Policy

Chair: Prof. G. Jayachandra Reddy, Director, UGC Centre of Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati

Keynote Speaker:

Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Speakers:

- 1) Le Thi Hang Nga**, Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
Vietnam - India Relations in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Technology

- 2) **Dr. Dhruvajyoti Bhattacharjee, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi**
India and Vietnam: Defense and Security Cooperation
- 3) **Mr. Ajay Kumar, Economist & Advisor with Merino Industries Limited**
Trade, Commerce and Investment in India-Vietnam Relations
- 4) **Dr. Shristi Pukhrem, Senior Research Fellow, India Foundation, New Delhi**
Vietnam in India's Act East Policy: Role of 3Cs
- 5) **Dr. Prashant Kumar, Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi**
India's Soft Power Projection in East Asia: Perspective and Practice

1:30-2:30 pm

LUNCH

2:30-4:00 pm

Working Session II

Theme: India-Vietnam Relations in the Evolving Indo-Pacific Architecture

Chair: Amb. Gautam Mukhopadhaya, Former Diplomat and Strategic Thinker

Keynote Speaker:

Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, Former Diplomat and Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House, Mumbai

Speakers:

- 6) **Dr. Nguyen Phu Tan Huong, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam**
Vietnam-India Strategic Partnership in the New Context
- 7) **Prof. G. Jayachandra Reddy, Director, UGC Centre of Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati**
Non-traditional Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region: The Response from India and Vietnam
- 8) **Dr. Om Prakash Dahiya, Assistant Professor, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi**
India-Vietnam Maritime Security Cooperation
- 9) **Dr. Amit Singh, Assistant Professor, ARSD College, University of Delhi**
South-China Sea Dispute and its Impact on India-Vietnam Relations

4:00-4:30 pm

TEA/COFFEE

4:30-5:30 pm

Valedictory Session

Chair: **Prof. Baladas Ghoshal**, Formerly at School of International Studies, JNU

Special Address: **Prof. S. D. Muni**, Professor Emeritus, JNU and Distinguished Fellow, IDSA

Valedictory Address: **Prof C. Raja Mohan**, Director, Carnegie India & Consulting Editor, The Indian Express

Summing up: **Dr. Md. Aftab Alam**, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi

Vote of Thanks: **Dr. Sonu Trivedi**, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi



5:30 pm HIGH TEA

Southeast Asia Research Group, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi in collaboration with Zakir Husain Delhi College and India International Centre organized an International Conference on India-Vietnam Relations in the Changing Geo-Politics of the Indo-Pacific on 9th January 2018. This Bilateral Conference on India-Vietnam Relations was organised on the sidelines of the Special Commemorative Summit to be held later in January 2018 on the occasion of Silver Jubilee Celebrations of INDIA-ASEAN dialogue partnership. The event provided academic insights to the evolving architecture of the Indo-Pacific and the role of India and Vietnam in it.

The Conference undertook a comprehensive assessment of the relationship with one of India's most important and enduring strategic partners in Southeast Asia – Vietnam in the changing geo-politics of the Indo-Pacific. From ‘strategic partnership’ in 2007 to a ‘comprehensive partnership’ in 2016, the two countries have built up synergies for a deeper cooperation between them. These have been envisaged in a multi-faceted and a multi-sectoral cooperation on a wide range of issues covering political, defense and security relations; trade and commerce; energy cooperation; science and technology; capacity building; connectivity links; health, education, culture, tourism and people to people exchange; and cooperation in international, regional and sub-regional forums.

This was the second International Conference organized by the Southeast Asia Research Group, University of Delhi in a row in just a matter of six months. This is witness to the fact that how seriously we take the relationship between these two countries—India and Vietnam in each other’s political, diplomatic and academic circles. The overwhelming response received in the previous and this Conference on India-Vietnam Relations speaks for itself.

The year 2018 marks the 46th anniversary of the India-Vietnam diplomatic relations which began on 7th January 1972. But the relationship between these two countries goes beyond this symbolic gesture of 46 years. The historical, cultural and civilisational ties are profound. Internal synergies between – India and Vietnam have played a significant role in bringing the two countries on the same page building upon mutual trust and cooperation over the years. Given the cultural-religious linkages, based on their closer association with the historical kingdoms and the impact of Buddhist philosophy to the anti-imperialist struggle during the colonial rule and foreign intervention during the Second World War and thereafter, both the countries have developed closer ties and a shared destiny.

10:00-11:30 am

Inaugural Session

Welcome Address	Air Marshal Naresh Verma (Retd), Director, India International Centre
Opening Remarks:	Dr. Sulekh Chandra (Principal, Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)
Introductory Remarks:	H. E. Amb. Ton Sinh Thanh (Amb. of Socialist Republic of Vietnam to India)
Chair:	Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra (Rector & Professor of American Studies, JNU)

Keynote Speakers:

Inaugural Address:	Shri Shakti Sinha (Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)
Plenary Address:	Shri Jayadev Ranade (President, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy)
Chief Guest:	Amb. Nalin Surie (Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs)
Keynote Address:	Dr. Arvind Gupta (Director, Vivekananda International Foundation)
Special Address:	Dr. Anirban Ganguly (Director, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation)
Vote of Thanks:	Dr. Sonu Trivedi (Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)



Dr. Sonu Trivedi formally initiated the theme focusing on the importance of this Conference as we celebrated 46th Anniversary of Diplomatic ties with Vietnam on 7th January 2018. She further focused on both the countries sharing civilizational, cultural and historical ties and how profoundly they have been carried forward. The mutual understanding, trust and cooperation long with Buddhist philosophy which stood against imperialist struggles and how it links both India and Vietnam. Dr. Trivedi further elaborated on the contemporary geo-political scenario and spoke about the multi-dimensional relations both the countries enjoy and having termed both of them as ‘Strategic Partners’ in the Indo-Pacific.



Air Marshal Naresh Verma, Director, India International Centre warmly welcomed the gathering and started with a quote by Jawaharlal Nehru, and focusing on the spirit of International co-operation amidst the current realities of world politics. He also looked into the evolution of India-Vietnam relations over the years. He then shed light on its bilateral cooperation in terms of countering insurgency, agriculture, oil exploration and also in security and defense. He also highlighted few facts in reference to the increasingly growing ties between India and Vietnam — political, diplomatic and economic. Collectively, both countries aim at regional peace, stability and cooperation during the major shift in geo political dynamics.



Dr. Sulekh Chandra, Principal, Zakir Husain Delhi College, provided a framework to the conference. With a polite gratitude he welcomed all the delegates in the conference. He then briefed about the events that are going to take place. He further emphasized on how over the years the relationship between India and Vietnam has strengthened and it is very important for the youth to understand the importance of this relation so that they can take this forward. He also elaborated on the structure of the

Conference and need to have a dialogue between the students, researchers and the policy makers.



H.E. Ton Sinh Thanh, Ambassador of Vietnam to India formally addressed the gathering and appreciated the efforts of the South-East Asia Research Group in organizing this International Conference on the occasion of 46th Anniversary celebration of Indo-Vietnam relations. Ambassador Ton Sinh Thanh said that although the global and regional situation is complex and unpredictable, peace, cooperation and development are still a common trend. According to him, scientific-technological development and globalisation are bringing countries and regions,

including the Indo-Pacific, closer in terms of economy and security. He added that the Indo-Pacific region holds an increasingly important role in strategies of many countries in the context of non-traditional security challenges especially terrorism and climate change. He also noted that the growing importance of Vietnam-India ties comes from the fact that both nations' economic potential and positions have considerably improved over the last years thanks to their continuous economic growth and proactive foreign policies. According to the Ambassador, India plays a leading role in the Indian Ocean region, while Vietnam holds an important geopolitical position in the Pacific region. They are facing similar opportunities and challenges, he said, noting that both are located in strongly developing regions and they must make use of this opportunity by enhancing cooperation and mutual support so as to develop more rapidly and sustainably. He emphasized on the proactive foreign policy towards each other and also since both the nations have aligning national interests. Special emphasis was also laid on PM Modi's visit to Vietnam in 2016 which resulted in Comprehensive Strategic Partnership which furthered cooperation in the inclusive goal of technology and partnership and also Science and technology. He also recommended for

strengthening of educational and cultural ties which will stabilize the relations and also advocated for more investment by India in China. He concluded with an advocacy for urgent requirement for stronger relationships in the context of changing geo politics and in spheres of security, peace and development.



Mr. Jayadev Ranade, President, Centre for China Analysis and Strategy gave a holistic view covering all areas of discourse which includes both internal factors of the countries along with the external contemporary factors which shape the relations between the countries. He also touched upon the emotional aspect of the relation between two countries which includes how civilizational ties have ended up connecting both the countries together and they need to be revived. He also channeled his focus onto the aspect of US's withdrawal from Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

paving a way for the regional hegemon, China, to capitalize on this opportunity and become increasingly assertive, which can be seen in explicit instances of conflict building up in the region of South China Sea (SCS). He shed light on the fact that China had already acquired 3000 acres and also have created a recruitment anthem to reinforce nationalism and pride into the people, already claiming the assertion to be legitimate by means of historical claims and he argued that this narrative must be met head on. He also brought onto light the fact and alerts us that the Chinese Navy is rapidly expanding and their naval fleet is turning out to be one of the strongest and also, they are exponentially increase their air-craft carrier numbers, which is a strong notice for other regional powers such as Vietnam and most importantly, India. He also pointed on the rapid military expansion of China, which can be seen as the exponential rise in their military budget. Further he went on to say that this change in the status-quo is challenged by Japan, Vietnam and India and this is where he shed light on the recent 'Dokhlam Standoff' between India and China when the world watched closely, India was able to manage the bully and keep it in check. He vindicated the Chinese threat by bringing into our notice, the Japanese insecurity in this regard where they have signed a deal with Britain to receive missiles. He argued and recommended that Vietnam should work collectively with India in this regard, to counter the Dragon.

He gave recommendations on the areas of cooperation that both the states need to work with, especially the areas of asymmetric cooperation. They are:

- Strong economic policies to regulate Chinese expansionism.
- Moving away from Defense related ties to several long-term ties.
- Joint Production facilities.

- Improvement in IT sectors which facilitate employment opportunities and also to pull Vietnam more into the international sphere.
- Adherence and improvement to Artificial Intelligence as this is the era of fourth Industrial Revolution.
- To exploit the economic potential of both the countries and finally,
- To find an alternative for Chinese market and making it better and also bring into picture the Australia in this regard.



Shri Shakti Sinha, Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, gave a conceptual and philosophical framework to the issue under discussion. He pointed out that the conflict is largely seen in terms either 'realist or idealist' lens and reaffirmed his stance that these relationships are a mixture of both. He gave three examples of how the policies of both the countries can be brought about into the two-aforementioned school of thoughts: both India and Vietnam don't like the idea of Hegemon; human and economic loss is humongous in the conflicts; and both the countries are okay

with all the countries expanding its economic potential but only until their interests are not harmed.

He introduced an interestingly new perspective where he advocated that countries shouldn't be tied with historical baggage. Having a hostile approach just because once the country was an adversary or an enemy doesn't justify the same. Thus he brought about a new perspective into the current idea of approach to the world politics and suggested that one should, regardless of the past, approach every other in a similar manner. He argued that if there is something that needs to be built, it's the commonality. He further argued that science cannot be an important aspect in international law as it excludes many countries and might result in loss of good potential ties. Therefore, he suggested few ideas and aspects that India can learn from Vietnam. Some of them are:

- Vietnam can teach us how to fill up the gaps in economic ladder, with reference to its consistent growth from one of the poorest countries to one of the highest growth rates in ASEAN.
- Vietnam and India can learn to upgrade and improve the existing education as this would make the populous aware of the changing world and react to it in a subsequent manner.
- India and Vietnam should work towards overlapping interests and enlarge the possible convergence of interests which would mutually benefit both the countries.

- India and Vietnam should work towards formulating and developing commonality in interests and also both should respect the international law and order and work towards preserving it.

He concluded by presenting to us his ideas on balance of power. According to him, a hegemon should not be replaced by another hegemon and took it back to his perspective of why History cannot become a baggage and prevent us from establishing new ties. He also recommended for building up of strong economic and security ties and to enhance cooperation to prevent accidents and mischief in this era of robust competition between the countries. Also, both the countries must aim to achieve long term peace and development in the region. Finally, he advocated for more dialogues between the two states, not just via state actors, but also through institutions and think tanks.



Dr. Arvind Gupta, Director, Vivekananda International Foundation in his Keynote Address remarked the impeccable timing of the Indo-Vietnam relation conference in the hindsight of China's increased military activities which he believed has created disturbances throughout the region right from Japan to Indian Ocean itself. He even talked about China's growing interest in East Sea. But he was of the view that it was not only China's policies but other countries foreign policies are also creating tension in global scenarios such as USA apart from this he believed North Korea's turf with America won't be solved without Chinese intervention. Hence United States and China's ties will remain as it is. This adds another layer of uncertainty to India's status quo in international arena. He believes that China's growing ambitions have created ripples in the region. The concept of Indo-Pacific cannot be developed without ASEAN on board. Under such circumstances growing Indian presence in Vietnam and vice-versa are imperative. Finally according to him, the two sides can explore joint defence production, wider cyber security and space cooperation.

His major ideas and recommendations revolved around the following:

- Uncertainty of global powers such as China and more importantly, the USA.
- Growing Chinese assertion in South China Sea and inducing conflict.
- Belt Road Initiative of China and expansion of its influence.
- Free movement of Chinese submarines creating security dilemma and alerting all the regional powers in South China Sea region.

- Narrative of “Indo-Pacific” is gaining much more traction as National Strategic Report of USA has used this term 74 times.
- Shortcomings in the ASEAN India trade in volumetric terms and that it stands pale in comparison to China’s USD 500 bn trade with ASEAN.
- He advocates on maintaining the centrality of Indo Pacific to ASEAN.
- Limitations on defining the scope of Asia-Pacific.
- Areas of cooperation should include Cyber security, Artificial Intelligence, resolving Non-Traditional Security Threats and also cooperation in Navigation Facilities.
- Improving cultural ties and people to people interaction between India and Vietnam should also be pondered upon.
- Vietnam should also help India in deepening its ties with ASEAN and also in Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).



Dr. Anirban Ganguly, Director, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research

Foundation began his special address on a hopeful note of Indo-Vietnam relation as he continued his address by appreciating Vietnam and its people and called it a strong nation which has withstood every adversary it has faced. He remarked Vietnam as an ideal blend of idealistic pragmatism. He even appreciated Vietnam’s policy of inside as emperor and outside as king which was used to tackle China in the very first place. He further referred to ASEAN and

the role played by Vietnam in it and explained Vietnams’ transition from a poor country to one of a successful economic entity. He explained PM Narendra Modi’s foreign policy (panchamrit) which rejects expansionism and promotes development, where he referred to dejection of Vistarvaad and promotion of Vikasvaad. He further talked about Indo-Pacific policy and felt that there is a need for a co-equal approach for this policy where every country benefits and none are left at a disadvantage. He also highlighted the fact that Vietnam was able to successfully blend Confucianism with Nationalism and gave reference to, “ASEAN Miracle”. He further argued that India and Vietnam are civilizational states and that they share considerable amount of history and culture. Perhaps the crux of his speech was this idea of ‘creation of new grand narrative’ by China to legitimize its expansion vindicating its claims through historical context, and how India, Japan and Vietnam should create an alternative narrative to counter the grand narrative created by China to revive its old civilizational ties and write a new narrative in the chapter of History. This he claimed to be quintessential in the international context where China is rising exponentially and undergoing expansion which can clearly be seen in the instances such as South China Sea

Conflict. According to him, the Chinese narrative has created the perception of India, Vietnam and Japan as its subsidiary states which take away the agency from these states to have a historic claim over civilizational ties, trade routes and territory. He finally urged that the younger generations should become more aware of these facts. Dr Ganguly concluded by recommending for revival of ties, and work towards establishing peace and stability and also to write a new narrative.

Dr Ganguly's recommendations may be summarized as follows:

- Vietnam as a model of idealistic pragmatism and was able to successfully blend Confucianism with Nationalism.
- Re-enforcement of patriotism that Vietnam has exuded throughout her civilisational history up to the modern times.
- Vietnam has been described as the hardest country as it has never yielded to colonialism and expansionism.
- It stood like a rock even during most violent storms.
- Need for a co-equal approach for the Indo-Pacific policy.
- Creating an alternative narrative by India, Japan and Vietnam to counter the grand narrative created by China.
- Younger generation should play a significant role in bringing the two nations closer.



Amb Nalin Surie, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs who could not be physically present but his speech was read out by Dr Dhrubajyoti, Research Fellow, ICWA. He focused on the topical theme and timely, not only because the Indo-Pacific as a concept is gaining broader international recognition but also since its salience in the region is growing rapidly. It has become a critical element in India's foreign policy thinking. This concept is shared by countries such as USA, Japan and Australia and is now openly being discussed within ASEAN and in China. According to him, Vietnam is a core partner of India in ASEAN and a critical partner in our Look & Act East Policy. This should not surprise anybody given our historical relationship and our long standing support for Vietnam in its efforts towards unification and complete independence. We are now both strategic and developmental partners with growing multi-vector linkages. He further added that given the far reaching geo-political and geo-economic changes taking place in the Indo-Pacific, it is also our belief that our two countries should intensify collaboration not only in ASEAN but also in the broader Indo-Pacific. Since ASEAN may well play a catalytic role in the development of a future Indo-Pacific architecture and Vietnam is

the coordinator for India in ASEAN, our collaboration assumes that much greater importance. The fact that Vietnam is an important member of APEC further substantiates this line of argument. His Speech concluded with a focus that that India and Vietnam, have a convergence of views on various regional and international issues. It is now important that this convergence extends to better understanding each other's perspective and interests in the Indo-Pacific. According to him, conferences such as this can play an important role in bringing this about.



Prof Chintamani Mahapatra, Rector & Professor of American Studies, JNU in his remarks as the Chairperson of the Inaugural Session pointed out that the term Indo-Pacific, though not popular earlier is now slowly becoming a new catchword to discuss and deliberate strategic issues. According to him, Vietnam already is an important player in India's 'Act East Policy' and is going to be an important lynchpin of India's Indo-Pacific strategy in future too. He focused on the role of Big Powers in the region. To the question, is United States withdrawing from the region,

according to him, answer is a big 'No'. He aptly described the relations between the United States and China as that of 'cold confrontation'. This 'cold confrontation' between United States—a Super Power which is relatively declining and China—a Power which is gradually rising, is not going to end and is likely to continue in the future. The real challenge therefore, for regional powers like India and Vietnam lies in how to manage engagement despite the Chinese assertion of power in the region. Prof Mahapatra used the 'Game of Chicken' to explain how the regional powers are going to strategise their relationship with China. He asserted that time has begun to think about India getting a membership of ASEAN. According to him, if NATO could expand, then why could ASEAN not? He further questioned quoting from history that if Pakistan became a member of SEATO during Cold War, then why not India become a member of ASEAN? If India and ASEAN could come together, it would combine 30 per cent of the world's total population and together it is going to be 5 trillion plus economy in the world. Therefore, he concluded by saying that both India and Vietnam may play a significant role in the changing geo-politics of Indo-Pacific.

Summary of the Inaugural Session:

- Vietnam has been termed AS the ASEAN Miracle for its valiant stand against the adversaries and also being recognized as hard nation.
- There is a blend of Confucianism and Patriotism and it was successfully achieved by Vietnam.
- India declared Vietnam as the most favorable nation in 1975.

- With the advent of the Look East Policy, India signed a trade and economic agreement in 1993.
- 2007 marked a visit by the Prime Minister which reinvigorated the bilateral relations.
- The narrative of Indo-Pacific which is becoming increasingly popular.
- Usage of the above term also by Japan in 2007, and also by Hillary Clinton which depicts the normalization of this term.
- Importance of sharing of Artificial Intelligence with the advent of Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- Countries must engage with each other and work towards establishing a commonality and should not refrain themselves to remain as adversaries on the basis of their historical baggage.
- India-Vietnam relations is a mixture of both Idealistic and Realistic policies and must be looked at in a bipartisan manner.
- A 'Hegemon' should not be replaced by another Hegemon and countries should respect International law and preserve the order.
- India can learn from Vietnam, the aspect of Patriotism which they valiantly have displayed on the course of history.
- Dialogue should become the only medium of engagement between the countries in terms of resolving conflicts and it should be done also by institution to institution linkages and also the interaction between the think tanks.
- US's withdrawal cannot be taken as its non-involvement in the region.
- US and China are engaged in cold confrontation, termed as 'Game of Chicken' and this confrontation is likely to continue in future.
- There is always an uncertainty associated with major powers.
- India and Vietnam hold wide areas of possibilities of cooperation and especially with regards to ASEAN and Indo-Pacific.
- India should work towards maintaining the centrality of ASEAN in the Indo Pacific.



12:00-1:30 pm

Working Session I

Theme: Vietnam in India's Act East Policy

Chair:

Prof. G. Jayachandra Reddy, Director, UGC Centre of Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati

Keynote Speaker:

Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Speakers:

- 1) **Le Thi Hang Nga**, Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
Vietnam - India Relations in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science and Technology
- 2) **Dr. Dhruvajyoti Bhattacharjee**, Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi
India and Vietnam: Defense and Security Cooperation
- 3) **Mr. Ajay Kumar**, Economist & Advisor with Merino Industries Limited
Trade, Commerce and Investment in India-Vietnam Relations
- 4) **Dr. Shristi Pukhrem**, Senior Research Fellow, India Foundation, New Delhi
Vietnam in India's Act East Policy: Role of 3Cs
- 5) **Dr. Prashant Kumar**, Associate Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi
India's Soft Power Projection in East Asia: Perspective and Practice



Prof. Jayachandra Reddy, chaired the Working Session-I which centred on the theme, *Vietnam in India's Act East Policy*. He initiated the discussion with a brief overview of the theme and told that the visit by the Vietnamese Delegation is a new step in fostering ties between the two countries. According to him, the major concern in the India-Vietnam relations includes a lack of understanding on the role of India in the region. Many scholars say that the Indian Government is not serious on Vietnam. A comparison is always drawn between India and China for their

role in the region. China has been proactive in the region and other parts of the world particularly in South China Sea. A common man has similar expectations with the India i.e. to play a more dominant role in the Southeast region. However, there are several domestic and political compulsions that restricts India to play a proactive role. Firstly, there is a huge

variation in the size of the economy. India is a \$2.3 Trillion economy while China is at \$13.8 trillion. Secondly, there is variation in the type of political establishment, India is largest democracy and always aims at preserving democratic aspirations of nations while China is an authoritarian and one-party state, the decision-making process is quite flexible in China as compared to India. There are several other domestic compulsions that impedes India from playing a proactive role. Because of these above stated limitations India cannot be directly compared and pitched against China.



Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli, emphasized on the evolution of the term “SOFT POWER” coined by Joseph Nye – an American political scientist. As both the nations are commemorating the 45th Anniversary of diplomatic ties between them, Prof. Kondapalli focused on the cultural and historical ties that both the nations shared. The idea of soft power has become much more sacrosanct. Prof. Kondapalli gave a brief idea about the deeply rooted cultural and historical ties between both the nations. The visit by Communist Party’s General Secretary, PM and President of Vietnam to Bodhaya

in their past visits to India legitimise the Buddhist connection. India through the years has become the centre for Buddhist Tourism. Many tourists from East Asian nation came to explore the evolution of Buddhism in India. The Archeological Survey of India has further discovered the similarities in relics and pagodas in North and central Vietnam similar to architectural composition of temples in India. Prof. Kondapalli, then focused on the trajectory of political ties between the nations that developed during the course of 45 years. Indian leaders have always shared the close ties with Vietnam. After the US bombing of Vietnam, Lal Bahadur Shashtri, the then PM of India, cancelled his official visit to US, in a way of expressing solidarity with Vietnam. PM Narendra Modi’s visit to Vietnam further bolstered the economic, cultural and political ties. A new kind of bonhomie is seen to be developed in the past 3 years. The traditional ties have become much more strategic.

He further focussed on a new defence deal was signed between both the nations with total estimate of \$500 Billion help by Indian side to Vietnam, in order to enhance its security by acquiring missile systems and weapons. A multilateral format through ASEAN has been established to enhance India’s friendship & cooperation with its East Asian neighbours. The transformation of ‘Look-East’ into ‘Act-East’ further highlights our commitment towards our eastern neighbours. Military ties have been renewed and both

countries participate in various military and naval exercises. In order to make the role of military more active in the region he further quoted George Fernandes, the former defence minister of India that “under Act-East policy India also requires the support of logistics and bases for organized military role and maritime exercises”. There is still much scope for strategic agreements on defence and security, in order to counter the dragon in South China Sea. He further focused on the India’s commitment for freedom of navigation in South China Sea. On the economic cooperation, Prof. Kondapalli, compared both the role of China and India in the region. \$89 billion is invested by India the region compared to investment of \$89 billion by China. Although China is major trade player in the region but the volume of investment is less. ONGC Videsh Ltd. an Indian public industry is investing hugely in the region for the purpose of oil exploration.



Dr. Le Thi Hang Nga, focused on cooperation culture, science and technology. We must give priority to all this aspect as equal as politics and economics. Under educational cooperation she focused on the scholarship schemes given by the Indian government. She herself benefited from the scholarship. Vietnam has been the largest recipients of the training program under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme. Since 2012 150 ITEC slots are being offered ever year with around 120 scholarships under different schemes of ICCR, General cultural scholarship schemes (GCSS), Educational Exchange Programme (EEP). One of the most influential scheme is Mekong Ganga Scholarship Scheme (MGCSS). Much more collaborations can be seen in the field of academics. She highlighted the role of Vietnam in bolstering the soft cultural and academic relations between the nations. The establishment of INDIA Research Institutes & Centres, Centre For Indian Studies at Ho Chi Minh National Academic of Politics was established in Hanoi in 2014 underlines the commitment from Vietnam side. She also highlighted the increasing cooperation in the field of science & technology. The inauguration of high performance Indian made SUPER Computers (PARAM) at Hanoi University of Science and Technology. Opening of training centres by APTECH, Infotech, NIIT. In 2016, during the visit of PM Modi to Vietnam, both countries signed MoUs, Agreements on the Explorations of outer spaces for Peaceful Purposes which aims towards cooperating in the field of cyber security and uses of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

She, however stated even after 45 years of establishment of diplomatic ties, we haven't utilised the opportunity to the maximum level. She made following recommendations.

- Education should be given more priority should be considered the “weapon” to promote the relation between the two countries.
- India should not limit “only one time” to the applicant who want to apply scholarship in India for the second time.
- A Vietnamese Centre in India should be opened. Classes on Vietnamese language should be taught.
- There is a need to build up awareness about India's strength and advantage (kind of educational fair being organised).



Dr. Dhrubajyoti Bhattacharjee, presented his view on defence & security ties between India & Vietnam. After MoU was signed between the defence ministers of the nations the relation for cooperation got a major boost and we are still following the laws after that. Modi's visit to Vietnam furthered the ties and cooperation between the nations. A \$ 500 billion credit line for defence project was announced during the Modi's visit. Agreements on deal estimated about \$ 100 million for acquiring strategic equipment was signed. Technical agreements on sharing

of logistics and high-speed patrol booth were also signed. Indian government agreed to provide AKAASH Surface and AIR missile and radar sensing technology to Vietnam. The Indian government agreed on providing (Aviation and advanced) training to the Vietnamese Air Force and special training for Sukhoi and MIG Aircraft's. At the Traditional and non-traditional level both the nations agreed to develop and setup defence engagement profile. India agreed to fund on Hi-tech Indira Gandhi laboratory. Further with the establishment of Ministerial level meetings and dialogues the defence relations has got an upper hand. MoU has been signed for cooperation among the two nations on the issues of counter-terrorism, cyberspace cooperation, cyber security, transnational crimes & disaster management & relief issues. Vietnam along with the other ASEAN members has always welcomed the India attention and convergence on regional security. Both India and Vietnam are committed towards marine economy growth and the development of coastal guard service through training and exercise. The other areas of interest and convergence include remote sensing

and coastal surveillance and creation of tracking and data analysis centres. India considers Vietnam as a key strategic partner. India is committed towards Vietnamese interests in the South China Sea and aims at establishing peace stability and shared prosperity in the region.



Mr. Ajay Kumar, highlighted the economic, trade and commercial profile of both the nations. India is in contrast with the Vietnam in terms of economic structure. Vietnam is a labour-intensive economy and has to import consumer goods but on the other hand India is a capital-intensive economy. The level of export and imports between both the countries differs in terms of the type of goods imported or exported. The trade between both the nations has flourished during the last decade i.e. between 2006-2017. The volume of trade has rose from \$ 170 million to a whopping

amount of \$ 6.9 billion during the span of 10 years which is quite remarkable. India earlier exported only manufactured goods but now the exported product also includes the perishables foods, meats and other eateries. India basically imported coffee and mineral fuels from Vietnam. Meat and fish or other aquatics now constitute more than 50% of Indian exports to Vietnam. This shows a shift away from manufactured exports, mainly pharmaceuticals, plastics, iron & steel, a decade ago. The growth in India has largely been driven by the inherently strong domestic factors including large domestic demand, labour force, rapidly expanding modern services, capitulating cross-border interest in investing with increasing integration of the economy with the world economy. The Vietnamese economy is almost 1/10 in comparison to Indian economy but high growth in trade and commerce, due to improvement in investment and business climate, which is reflected in the inflow of investment capital reaching 33 billion USD in 2017. Though different paths to growth, structurally diverse strengths, both the countries have a common economic goal – high growth. India has 168 investment projects in Vietnam, with a total capital of US\$ 756.29 million, ranking 27th out of 126 countries and territories investing in Vietnam.

He made following recommendations:

- Vietnamese has advantage of becoming regional block in major trading countries of East Asia like Japan, China and Korea wherein exports of Indian manufacturing are with dismal growth and high trade deficit.
- India and Vietnam both have similar focus for more manufacturing and exports for consumer goods and labour-intensive manufacturing goods by taking advantage

of relatively low wage costs. However, preferential policies to attract foreign investments in Vietnam are stronger than India.

- Outward FDI flow from India to Vietnam has been stagnant at around \$800 million, which is less than 0.1% in comparison to total outward FDI flow stock in world (of India).
- As Vietnam is moving ahead with global economic integration at faster pace, with its trade to GDP ratio over 1.7, better participation in Global value Chains and Preferential Trade Networks in East Asia and Developed Countries as well, Investments in the country would enhance the market access of a particular regional trade block (East Asia) for India and participate into global value chain.



Dr. Srishti Pukhrem, argued that during Delhi Dialogue 9, Sushma Swaraj, Minister of external affairs, said the 3C's will define the India's role in the Southeast Asian region in the future. The 3C's are basically Commerce, Culture & Connectivity. Dr. Pukhrem further said that the 3C's plays a crucial role in newly defined India's foreign outreach. India is placing ASEAN at the heart of 'Act-East' policy and at the centre of the dream of Asian Century. India is giving more & more weightage to its regional neighbours by deepening the strategic economic, cultural & security ties. India and Vietnam share

deep-rooted trade and cultural ties. Commerce is the focal point of India's foreign Policy. It shares maritime borders with Thailand, Malaysia & Myanmar. India considers ASEAN as the nucleus of dynamic south East Asian region. India's commercial engagement with Vietnam is growing continuously. It's now among the top 10 trading partners of Vietnam. It's among the 3-strategic partner of Vietnam including China & Russia. The present government is focusing on enhancing cooperation and building strategic thrust. During the last fiscal year 2016-17 the total estimate of bilateral economic trade was \$6429.2 mn. The volume of trade is expected to surge to \$ 15 bn by 2020. From the trade data it can be inferred that there has been a constant growth in the levels of trade. She however made a recommendation that the Indian government should become a more responsible stakeholder in the region. Vietnam should also import fibre and yarn from India. Connectivity is a very broad concept. The idea of connectivity shall not be limited to the concept of roads railways and transportation but also include Digital & IT connectivity in its broader perspectives. In India's foreign policy connectivity can be seen as the one of the

founding measures to strengthen its ties with the neighbours. Vietnam is very important from the connectivity angle. There is an ample opportunity for improving connectivity with Vietnam by the extension of existing routes through Myanmar, Cambodia & Laos. By extending the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway to the Thailand-Danang (Vietnam) route, the transportation of goods could be easily facilitated. Culture has become one of the prominent benchmarks of the soft power diplomacy. India and Vietnam enjoy a shared deep-cultural connection. The Ancient kingdom of 'Champa' was deeply influenced by the culture and traditions of India. India and Vietnam are now focusing on lots of opportunities to explore and rejuvenate the cultural ties and connections that stagnated with time. Bollywood is an important example of India's soft diplomacy. We should encourage more and more Bollywood shootings in Vietnam because of its scenic beauty. Promote tourism in both the nation to help the inflow of people in Vietnam and India in order to explore each other's culture and history. She concluded by saying that the upcoming visit by Vietnam's prime minister during the Republic Day celebrations and followed by a presidential visit is the best way to mark the success and achievements of 45 years of diplomatic and strategic ties and cooperation.



Dr. Prashant Kumar, focused on the soft power approach and related diplomacy adopted and practised by India since the 2000s. East Asia has acquired a critical place in the India's power projection and public diplomacy outreach. India's role in the post-Cold War era has evolved significantly. Soft power is basically defined in cultural historical and civilizational terms. India's role and methodologies has been continuously changing in the world Affairs. During the Nehruvian era it opted a universalist role, supported decolonisation and anti-colonial struggles. NAM was launched under the leadership of Nehru to preserve and protect the interests of the newly emerging third world nations. Now it plays a more defined role. Indian role has been highly influential in the international arena since its independence. Gandhism, anti-apartheid stands and support for disarmament were the key objectives during 1950s. Soft power - the term was coined by Joseph Nye in 1990s to define the power politics that took place during cold war era and influence the world politics even in the post-Cold War era. It is the ability of one country to influence other without resorting to hard power measures such as war. MEA in 2006 launched a public diplomacy division. Navdip Suri

former Jt. Secretary in the MEA defined the creation of a public diplomacy division as a measure of influencing people to understand and support the governments foreign policy decisions. After the collapse of Soviet Union and the creation of unipolar world order, the significance of NAM shredded. India could no longer rely on its old policies. After 2000s India opted to influence other by using soft diplomacy. With the improvements in India's economic and military profile, it is now vying for a leadership role rather than being in a balancing and mediator role. The present government aims at promoting cultural, civilizational, commerce & trade and relies on improving infrastructure and connectivity to establish cooperation among nations. Through the Act-East policy, India aims at re-imagining and re-establishing the ancient cultural ties. India funds several research centres in the East Asian countries that also includes Vietnam, these research spots aims at exploring India's cultural and historical genesis. India's major initiatives in this area can be seen in many forms of scholarship to the foreign students and a specially Buddhist scholarship that was announced by PM Modi in Vietnam during his 2016 visit. Promoting tourism and academic collaborations and rejuvenating the India's ancient study centre-the Nalanda University. ASI- the archaeological survey of India, has undertaken several projects to restore and protect the temples built during the Champa Rule. He concluded by saying that the present initiatives are in conjunction with the Act-East policy. India is deeply committed towards re-establishing peace and prosperity in the region along with reimagining and rejuvenating the lost cultural and historical connect. Although there is a very wide scope of developing connectivity, it has not been realised to its potential yet! The continuing policy directives are right but still greater efforts are needed.

Summary of the Working Session-I:

- India has always tried its best to protect and preserve the Vietnamese interest at diplomatic level in the international arena. India is already standing with Vietnam in South China Sea dispute by supporting the freedom of navigation in the Sea. In the present world order there has been a transformation from Geo-Politics to Geo-Economics.
- Invocation of the concept of Soft-Power, in defining the deeply rooted cultural and historical ties between both the nations.
- Focus on the trajectory of political ties between the nations that developed during the course of 45 years.
- Focus on education, culture and science and technology cooperation.

- Defence and Security cooperation is high on agenda between the two countries.
- Cooperative engagements among the two nations on the issues of counterterrorism, cyberspace cooperation, cyber security, transnational crimes & disaster management & relief issues already exist.
- Both India and Vietnam are committed towards marine economy growth and the development of coastal guard service through training and exercise.
- The other areas of interest and convergence include remote sensing and coastal surveillance and creation of tracking and data analysis centres.
- Focus on trade, commerce and investment between the two countries.
- Discussions further focused on 3C's—Commerce, Culture & Connectivity.
- Focus on India's Soft Power projections and efforts towards re-establishing peace and prosperity in the region along with reimagining and rejuvenating the lost cultural and historical connect.



2:30-4:00 pm

Working Session II

Theme: India-Vietnam Relations in the Evolving Indo-Pacific Architecture

Chair: Amb. Gautam Mukhopadhaya, Former Diplomat and Strategic Thinker

Keynote Speaker:

Amb. Rajiv Bhatia, Former Diplomat and Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House, Mumbai

Speakers:

- 6) **Dr. Nguyen Phu Tan Huong, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam**
Vietnam-India Strategic Partnership in the New Context
- 7) **Prof. G. Jayachandra Reddy, Director, UGC Centre of Southeast Asian and Pacific Studies, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati**
Non-traditional Security Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region: The Response from India and Vietnam
- 8) **Dr. Om Prakash Dahiya, Assistant Professor, Zakir Husain Delhi College (Evening), University of Delhi**
India-Vietnam Maritime Security Cooperation
- 9) **Dr. Amit Singh, Assistant Professor, ARSD College, University of Delhi**
South-China Sea Dispute and its Impact on India-Vietnam Relations



Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhyaya, chaired the Working Session-II on the theme India-Vietnam Relations in the Evolving Indo-Pacific Architecture. According to him, the present World Order has become Tricentric with explicit focus on the Asian continent in the last 50 years. There has been a change of narrative with respect to Asia Pacific and is now being called “Indo Pacific”. This has been a result of significant shift in the global order towards this region. World can witness a significant rise in Chinese assertion and how countries like Japan and Australia are particularly affected by it. He proposed on the requirements to build a concrete approach for security purposes and defence architecture, with regards to ASEAN and TPP. He further focused on the significance of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. He highlighted on the idea of Balance of Power with respect to China and India and Maritime security. He also focused on the Mekong Ganga project and the potential role of Vietnam in it.



Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia started with laying emphasis on how the discourse of Asia Pacific has changed to Indo Pacific. He argued that the discourse of "Indo Pacific" has been normalized to a great extent in China as well and thus referring to the power of Ideas which led to the change in narrative. The focus of his presentation lies on the idea

of strategic management in terms of security and that is where he brings up the idea of QUAD, which further on becomes the point of focus for every other panelist. He argued that India, rather the East Asia, should aim for an open and collective security where there is free flow of information and resonating interests. He focused on the association of countries like India, Australia, Japan and US, which collectively is called QUAD. He sets up a caveat saying that the actions of QUAD will largely be contingent on the actions of China and that they build up the nucleus of the new security. He also provides an advice of not to underestimate or overestimate QUAD. This is where he brings about the role of Vietnam and he focuses on its role in supporting India within the ASEAN, and to garner up support as opposed to Cambodia, Laos and Philippines who openly sided with China. He argued that Vietnam should focus on pushing countries like Indonesia, Myanmar and Singapore towards focusing on the QUAD. He also said that in the past, Vietnam had always sided with India and pushed its necessity for ASEAN, advocating for collective action against China as the South China Sea issue effects everyone and also warning other states of how China seldom does what it says.

He offered following recommendations:

- Vietnam should share its perception about each ASEAN countries on the road to negotiation with China.
- Vietnam should also focus on the status of connectivity and maritime co-operations with India.
- Thirdly, Vietnam should also channel its efforts on bringing about balanced outcome on shared gains in RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership).
- Fourthly Vietnam should assist India in BIMSTEC and otherwise security Issues.
- Fifthly, Vietnam should also be open in sharing the information about China's shortcomings, under Xi Jinping's regime, as they understand and know China better than India does.
- There is huge scope for expanding and diversifying bilateral dialogue and mutual cooperation to newer areas
- For this, Vietnam's image as an authoritarian political system and society needs to be softened. This should be possible by engaging more with India's civil society, academia and media
- Another effective way is to bring young and hitherto-untouched scholars within the ambit of India-Vietnam dialogue in the future.



Dr Nguyen Phu Tan Huong, focused on the ties between India and Vietnam with respect to the new strategic context, shedding light on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Vietnam's Renewed interests towards India and vice versa. She started her presentation by focussing on the current relationship status of Vietnam with its neighbours and India. According to her, Vietnam is enjoying highest level of bilateral relations with China and Russia, along with India and also the establishment of diplomatic ties with India in 1972. She

highlighted the commonality in the approach towards foreign policy along with India highlighting the aspects like 'No Wars and No Conflicts' and also focused on Vietnam's consistent policy towards India. She also highlighted on the commonality of the interests with respect to China in the context of South China Sea dispute and both the countries share common vision of free navigation, against Chinese expansionism. Dr Huong focusses on Vietnam's renewed interests towards India and vice versa. She talks about the direct interests, which are cultural and religious interests, Economic Interests, Political interests, and Security and defense interests. She also argued that India is an important factor in Vietnam's balancing policy in relations with major powers. She further argued that Vietnam has undergone Multi-lateralization and diversification in its external affairs since renovation in 1991. She talked about India as a traditional partner and a major regional power and moves into the idea of 'new context' and how it affected the relations between the two countries.

She arrived at the following recommendations:

- She talks about improving bilateral relations with the revival and the evolution of grassroots contacts
- Enriching Vietnamese knowledge about India (Films and Festivals).
- Holding Indian tournaments for Young Vietnamese and providing them with scholarships.
- Improving Public relations and religious tourism in Vietnam and finally,
- People to People relations and city to city cooperation.

Prof. Jayachandra Reddy began with laying out the context, more precisely in the geographical framework he talked about why non-traditional security challenges come up. He defined Non-Traditional Security challenges in a very brief sense as "non-defensive problem" not involving the state directly but generalizing it to the problems of Terrorism,



Drug and Human trafficking, Cyber security, Border threats and other crises. He further emphasizes on the humongous size of Indo Pacific and alleged it to be the reason for the issues as mentioned above since there is very less possibility of reconciliation among various actors. He portrayed diversity to be the source of the conflict. He also shed light on geographical centrality of India in this region and argued that this is possibly the best time India can take a lead role in resolving the issues and improve its global image. His presentation focused on the cooperation between India and Vietnam in resolving these non-traditional security challenges, where both the countries can work on Maritime security and thereby also engage with the conflict occurring in South China Sea. He classified these non-traditional security threats in five categories with respect to their quantum. They are:

- Problems pertaining to sustainable development.
- Transnational organizational problems such as terrorism and Human trafficking along with Drug trafficking.
- Rise of Non-state organizations which also include terrorism.
- Problems of Cyber Security.
- International issues and changing global dynamics.

He highlighted few of the major challenges which include how China is becoming one source for resolution of conflicts for the other nations, which can be clearly vindicated by the fact that there was a declaration of cooperation between ASEAN and China in its 6th Summit, against the non-traditional security threats. He emphasized particularly on how Vietnam has been a consistent victim to natural disasters and both countries can cooperate also in the spheres of disaster management. He also highlighted on the fact that there is a security dilemma created as a result to constant Chinese expansion in its military strength.



Dr. Om Prakash Dahiya extensively focused on the evolution of security and strategic ties between Indo-Vietnam relations. He argued this specifically in the context of China's rising military and speeding up of high ranking visits in the nations from both the sides. He also argued this in the context of ASEAN and said that Vietnam is the "linchpin" to ASEAN and India. His paper focused on the exclusive maritime threats and security challenges faced by India. According to him, India and Vietnam share a larger goal of achieving long term peace and stability in the region. He brought into this a

new perspective as to what drives these relationships forward. He argued that the evolution

of relationships has led to decision made by choices, rather than circumstances. Therefore, he vindicated the assumption of consistency in development with regards to security and defense relations between both the countries. He also presented the factual data of how the credit exponentially raised with the advent of PM Narendra Modi visiting Vietnam and declaring 500 Million USD credit to incentivize Vietnam to purchase defense equipment from India such as Brahmos and Akash Missiles. He talked about Maritime Partnership and argued that India holds its primary interests in this regard. He also lays emphasis on continuous defense exercise performed by India with respect to its Malabar Naval exercise and also, it's collaboration with ASEAN nations. He also highlighted the fact that India helps Vietnam procure the defense equipment from Russia and also about how India trains 500 Vietnamese personnel, especially Naval officers, in Vishakhapatnam. He further focused on the possible areas of cooperation where he included the aspect of Sharing of Information which is very vital to the security purpose and also the data pertaining to the naval movement within the Indo Pacific and South China Sea. Finally, he concluded with advocating for a better expansion in defensive and strategic ties with Vietnam, as they are quintessential in the status quo and also advocates for quick upgradation of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Vietnam. He also talked about ASEAN collective security dealing with the challenges and how Vietnam can push India into ASEAN and help conglomerate the security ties of both in helping deal with the contemporary problems, especially with regards to changing dynamics in Indo Pacific.



Dr. Amit Singh provided a deeper insight in one of the major contemporary issues which will have drastic impacts on the relations between India and Vietnam. He highlighted on the magnanimity of the situation and security conflict issue that the South China Sea (SCS) conflict has become and went on to explain its significance and importance. He provided us with few factual data of SCS being the world's second busiest trade route and how the China's global times have termed the region as "Second Persian Gulf" which boasts about containing about 50 Billion tons of crude oil and more than 20 Trillion cubic meters of Natural Gas. Also, the EIA estimates that SCS contains approximately 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of Natural Gas in proven potential reserves. He also quoted Samuel P Huntington and Robert D Kaplan which predicted the situational and maritime conflict arising because of China. He also emphasized on the importance of SCS to India, vindicating with factual data such as 55% of India's trade with Pacific transits through this region and that this

is a maritime link and gateway for Indo-Pacific and East Asia respectively. He further discusses about how China has been building islands in this region and expanding and using historical claims to vindicate its sovereignty, but in real is trying to expand its Exclusive Economic Zone. Later, he focused on the India and Vietnam relations in this context. He shed light on the fact that India and Vietnam will mark its 46th Anniversary of Diplomatic ties with the advent of PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc's visit to India on the Republic Day this year. He also argued that India and Vietnam resonate with their congruent idea of establishing long term peace and security in Indo-Pacific region. He further highlighted on how India is training Vietnamese Naval personnel and how India has facilitated Hanoi to continue more of the defense purchases from it, after it announced 500 Million USD credit. He concluded with the Chinese String of Pearls strategy to contain India and to counter its influence with its neighbours and also on the Chinese assertion on South China Sea block. He argued that China is working on 'revisionist agenda' and also that ASEAN is seeking assistance from US and especially India to balance China. He also recommended for the change in the approach of foreign policy to more substantial unlike just symbolic as India would likely remain in this area to protect their interests. Also, he recommended India to work strategically, especially this time, with its allies in the region.

Summary of the Working Session-II:

- There has been a rapid shift in global dynamics for the past fifty years and 21st century has witnessed exponential rise in countries like India and China.
- The global narrative and discourse on Asia Pacific has undergone rampant changes and gained relevance as Indo Pacific. This narrative used by Australians years ago has gained relevance and has been normalized in the discourse of China as well as the United States.
- India should learn the value of Patriotism from countries like Vietnam which stood strong against French colonialism and US intervention despite being a weak country financially.
- Importance of QUAD as an alternate security mechanism and how this idea has gained relevance and finally on how Vietnam can assist us with bringing about ASEAN into the picture.
- The idea of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership which has become an essential requirement as the circumstances demand.

- Re-establishment of civilizational ties are required and development of people to people interactions will strengthen the relations between both the countries, leading to a stronger and long-lasting relations between both the countries.
- There is a rise in Non-Traditional Security threats as a result of humongous geographical area and diversity of actors in Indo-Pacific.
- India should capitalize on this opportune time to establish itself as global power by taking a lead role in resolving these conflicts.
- India should make efforts to pull ASEAN countries towards approaching it as 6th ASEAN summit between China and ASEAN declared a cooperation with dealing with non-traditional security threats.
- Resolution of dilemma that exists with ASEAN nations to choose between India and China to resolve these conflicts in the region.
- India and Vietnam enjoy expanding security and defense relations and with respect to Maritime security ties.
- Relations have progressed to a point where the decisions taken by the countries are based on their legitimate choice unlike circumstances, which brings to us a new perspective to draw analogy of the relations between the two countries.
- India sells defense equipment to Vietnam and has increased the credit to 500Mill USD to facilitate more purchase from India.
- Both India and Vietnam need to work on sharing of information which is very vital to the defensive purpose and also facilitate exchange of information regarding the maritime navigation and patrol in the region of South China Sea.
- India and Vietnam must act fast and timely, with the advent of China's military expansionism and especially with regards to naval enhancement and South China Sea conflict.
- The recent upsurge in tensions in South China Sea (SCS) represents a security flashpoint with global consequences.
- The tensions in the SCS are also drastically affecting India and Vietnam's maritime, commercial, strategic and more importantly, Energy interests in the region.
- South China Sea region boasts about humongous amounts of crude oil and natural gas reserves which for obvious reasons has become zone of interest for nations like China, India and Vietnam.

- India should find this as an opportune moment to strategically work with its allies in the region to successfully establish long term peace and stability and more importantly to protect its interests within the region.
- India should collaborate with ASEAN in its efforts to bring about stability in the region and also improve its strategic ties to prevent maritime security threats.



4:30-5:30 pm

Valedictory Session

Chair:

Prof. Baladas Ghoshal (Formerly at School of International Studies, JNU)

Special Address:

Prof. S. D. Muni (Professor Emeritus, JNU and Distinguished Fellow, IDSA)

Valedictory Address:

Prof C. Raja Mohan (Director, Carnegie India & Consulting Editor, The Indian Express)

Summing up:

Dr. Md. Aftab Alam (Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)

Vote of Thanks:

Dr. Sonu Trivedi (Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi)



Prof. Baladas Ghoshal remarked that India's international relations in South-East Asia should be dynamically multilateral, with an emphasis on stronger bilateral relations with Vietnam. The challenge for India is not only limited to establishing robust relations with Vietnam, but also with all the other South-West Asian countries. India's trade volume in comparison to that of China is very low in that specific region. During the last 70 years, India's ties with these relatively-small nations in the South-East Asia are very vapid, be it in trade and investment, people-to-people contact, and these are the major impediments assailing India. Besides the ideological, and emotional linkage, which is very longstanding, commencing from the flow of Buddhism to the screening of Bollywood movies (this is also known as the soft power of India), India has failed in halting the Dragon Nation's hegemony in the region. This is currently the most vital challenge for India. Moreover, he stated that building stronger and trust-worthy relations with these countries is not easily surmountable for India, especially when the Dragon Nation (China) has already established its roots over there. There are various obstacles in building relations, one of the most seemingly insurmountable ones being the lack of proper communication between the citizens of the two nations, rendering establishing robust relations with Vietnam a difficult task. Lack of knowledge of each other's cultures and understanding of each other's language is a major obstacle for India. It is quite evident that the four major quad countries, which comprises of the US, India, Australia, and Japan, are unified in their attempts to resolve the crisis prevalent in the South China Sea (SCS), wherein China is claiming the region to be a part of its territory, by exploiting supposed historical relations it had with the region in question, and is preventing other nations from the pursuit of engaging in free maritime navigation in the South China Sea. Therefore, according to him, one of the important reasons for the intensification of the crisis in Vietnam could be the rivalry between the USA and USSR as it was prevalent during the Cold War Era. Consequently, he suggests that there should not only be a single approach towards tackling the crisis persisting in the SCS. There should also exist multilateral arrangements through different outlets, such as ASEAN, SEATO, India, Vietnam, etal, to battle the crisis. However, it is evident that the mutual problem for all these nations in the region pertains to the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.



Prof. S. D Muni began his presentation with uneasiness on the dearth of extensive studies on the ties between India and Vietnam. Adding to that, he averred, “India’s relation with Vietnam is mutually exclusive of the one with China.” Moreover, he highlighted the fact that India should be sensitized towards Vietnam and reinvigorate its stronger ties with Vietnam, established by two of esteemed personalities, Jawaharlal Nehru and Ho Chi Minh. Also, India must envisage a better understanding and relations in future, reiterating the fact that

India received humongous support from Vietnam during the Cold War era. He also recalled few anecdotes of his university, JNU, campaigning and celebrating the victory of Vietnam over the great power, USA, which he remembered with great enthusiasm. He also recommended few aspects which India essentially has to learn from Vietnam, and they are: Nationalism - Indian nationalism is not as accommodative of secularism as that of Vietnamese who are dedicated to protect their territory and sovereignty. Education- India also needs to learn to establish itself in a premier position in Primary education as that of Vietnam. Also, the poor image of India that reflects within the minds of Vietnamese should be removed and this remains a vital area to be worked upon.

He provided the following suggestion to improve the relations:

- India should divert special attention to the countries of CMLV (Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam) in the ASEAN countries to pull them towards India. Laos and Cambodia along with Philippines have declared their support to China. Although this has been happening for the last two decades, it needs to be reinvigorated again as the time has arrived.
- Vietnam stands as most important country that sided with India within the CLMV and that India needs also to concentrate on developing the weaker economic ties.
- For the last 70 years, Andaman and Nicobar weren’t developed and now it should be the primary focus to establish good control over the maritime route which also involves the concern of security.
- NSA (National Security Advisor) Shiv Shankar Menon proposed for a land to land connect with the Vietnam within the Look East Policy. Given the distance of 2400 km by the sea route can be shortened by about 600 km but this stands out as

incomplete project even with the advent of Act East policy and this must be looked at.

- India and Vietnam should work together to limit or regulate the influence of the dragon and therefore work on towards the defense and security ties with regenerated enthusiasm.
- He opined that India shouldn't be selling the Bramhos missile to Vietnam as half its profits go to Russia, and he sarcastically termed it under the "Brahmanical Ethos" of India and that it should be let go of. Instead selling AAKASH missile would be considered a better idea. Through this, he meant that India should strongly advocate for negotiations.



C. Raja Mohan, emphasized on the rise of China in the Pacific Ocean or South China Sea (SCS) and argued that is not new and that there was a traditional juncture between Indian Ocean and South-East Asian seas which is not static but keeps changing as they evolve. He mainly focused on Chinese expansion in the Pacific region. He argued that the birth of Indo-Pacific term was initially coined by geographers due to the fact that Indian coastal climate is similar to that prevalent in Southeast Asia. However, this term has been used in various contexts, sometimes representing physical

boundaries. However, the political context especially refers to India and then to the Southeast Asia. In this way undivided India has much contribution to these regions and to name a few, during the Second World War when the British Indian army fought against the Japanese in Burma (now Myanmar) and have defeated the Japanese Army. In this period however Subash Chandra Bose had formed Indian National Army in Japan to fought against the British rule post which he came back to the Cold War era, stating that SEATO (South East Asia Treaty Organization) in which India was only an observer member where even Pakistan became a founding member and the treaty also came to be known as 'Colombo Power'.

He further recognized the major changes that have happened in the region and articulately stated them, which are as follows:

- Rise of China has significantly resulted in changes that can be seen in the regions of South Asia and Southeast Asia.

- He argued that the relations between the countries cannot be built anymore on the basis of an 'Ideology' as they are hollow to actually build foundations for the long-term basis. Therefore, there should a shift in the approach of foreign policy and they should be based on not ideology, but something that remains more permanent such as economics.
- He vindicated the above assertion with an example of such incident in 1962 when China attacked India, and the Vietnamese ambassador expressed in disbelief that a socialist country can't attack another socialist country. So, according to him, we need something more than the ideological, historical, or cultural relations.
- In terms of security, both India and Vietnam share common beliefs in collective security. Both of them experienced the growing might of an imperialist power; India in 1962, and Vietnam much later.
- He emphasized on the importance of the Balance of Power, he said, "When power shifts, things begin to change." However, he also stated that India has a clean ideological relation unlike China or other countries. It is the duty of nations to balance their inordinately surging powers with their neighboring countries. For example, Russia balanced its power with China in 1969. So, countries must know how much effort they require balancing the power and should not engage in reckless maneuvers vis-a-vis their neighbors. In this way, Balance of Power should be accentuated upon. He also stated that India can imbibe a lot about asymmetrical administration from Vietnam. We can't match China on several parameters as China's G.D.P. is five times greater, and military expenditure is four time greater than that of India.
- Lastly, according to him, strategy is the only way for India to make its relations with nations much more robust, and empowered. Timing is an important factor in strategy. It is an important aspect in strategy-formation. Both India and China should act in time before being ensnared in the machinations of international agencies' orders and directives. So, one of India's biggest failures in the last 70 years is its inadequacies in converting rhetoric into reality.

Summary and Major Takeaways:



Dr. Aftab Alam summarized the presentations during the Conference and also focused on the major takeaways which are as follows:

- Focus on the political, diplomatic and strategic aspects.
- History cannot become a baggage and a hegemon cannot be replaced by another.
- China and USA are currently engaged in a “Game of Chicken” as put by Prof. Chintamani Mahapatra.
- Major discussions on Look East to Act East.
- India needs to learn values of patriotism from Vietnam.
- India and Vietnam should focus on space technology for security purposes.
- Narendra Modi’s narrative of Vistarvaad to Vikasvaad.
- Dialogue should become the only medium of engagement between the countries in terms of resolving conflicts and it should be done also by institution to institution linkages and also the interaction between the think tanks.
- United States withdrawal cannot be taken as its non-involvement in the region.
- India and Vietnam hold wide areas of possibilities of cooperation and especially with regards to ASEAN and Indo-Pacific.
- India should work towards maintaining the centrality of ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific.
- Vietnam has been termed the ‘ASEAN Miracle’ for their valiant stand against the adversaries and also being recognized as hard nation.
- There is a blend of Confucianism and Patriotism and its successfully achieved by Vietnam.
- South China Sea has turned out to be the region of conflict in Indo-Pacific leading to the security dilemma of many countries around.
- 55% of India’s trade passes through SCS and that it is absolutely a matter of national interest and India in not defying from its role in the region.
- Vietnam and India need enrichment in cultural and educational ties. Along with this, India also needs growing people to people interaction with Vietnam in order to precipitate the bad image India has in the minds of Vietnamese.

- India's ideas of Unity in Diversity and cultural diversity are a major source of attraction to the Vietnam.
- India needs to share its technology and work towards cooperating with Vietnam in the areas of Science and Technology and also Artificial Intelligence.
- India and Vietnam should overcome their language barriers to improve people to people interaction.
- The Vietnamese have the pro-China factions present in the communist party, which produce compulsions in exploring relations with India. Although Vietnam had its own experience of love and hate with China but also it lagged to ease up its relations with India.
- There has been a rapid shift in global dynamics for the past fifty years and 21st century has witnessed exponential rise in countries like India and China.
- The global narrative and discourse on Asia Pacific has undergone rampant changes and gained relevance as Indo Pacific. This narrative used by Australians years ago has gained relevance and has been normalized in the discourse of China as well as the United States.
- India should learn the value of Patriotism from countries like Vietnam which stood strong against French colonialism and US intervention despite being a weak country financially.
- Importance of QUAD as an alternate security mechanism and how this idea has gained relevance and finally on how Vietnam can assist us with bringing about ASEAN into the picture.
- The idea of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership which has become an essential requirement as the circumstances demand.
- There is a rise in Non-Traditional Security threats as a result of humongous geographical area and diversity of actors in Indo-Pacific.
- India should capitalize on this opportune time to establish itself as global power by taking a lead role in resolving these conflicts.
- India should make efforts to pull ASEAN countries towards approaching it as 6th ASEAN summit between China and ASEAN declared on cooperation with dealing with non-traditional security threats.
- Relations have progressed to a point where the decisions taken by the countries are based on their legitimate choice unlike circumstances, which brings to us a new perspective to draw analogy of the relations between the two countries.

- India sells defense equipment to Vietnam and has increased the credit to 500Mill USD to facilitate more purchase from India.
- There is widespread historical ignorance in both the countries.
- India and Vietnam can be studied exclusive to China and not necessarily all the policies formulated are henceforth with respect to China.
- Civilizational ties are very important and they exist between the two.
- Land route between India and Vietnam should be rebuilt to establish people to people contact and also to explore back the civilizational ties.
- Indo-Pacific as a narrative has evolved over the time and it is not a conspiracy fancy of America or any other nation.
- Time is a very important component and timely action results in legitimately good outcomes.



ORGANISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Dr. Sonu Trivedi

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi
Email: sonutrivedi@zh.du.ac.in*



Dr. Sanjeev Kumar

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi
Email: sanjeevkumar78@gmail.com*



Dr. Om Prakash

*Department of Political Science
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi
Email: omprakash2k@gmail.com*

Dr Ashwin Parijat



*Department of History
Zakir Husain Delhi College, University of Delhi
Email: ashwinparijat@gmail.com*



Ms. Premola Ghose

*Programme Officer
India International Centre, New Delhi
Email: premolag@gmail.com*

About SEARG:

Southeast Asia Research Group (SEARG) was established as a research cluster at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi in 2016. The scholars and the researchers engaged in studying the geo-political realities of the region and its economic dynamics have agreed to come together under the umbrella of SEARG to discuss and deliberate upon the issues of common interests and concerns for all Southeast Asia watchers. The research group proposes to provide a common platform for all the members to share their ideas on the emerging issues and challenges relevant to the region. Though, initially launched as a Discussion Group, the SEARG is expected to grow and evolve as a major interactive research forum for sharing ideas and organizing lectures, panel discussions, workshops, national and international conferences and associate young and emerging scholars working on the region. Since past one year it has successfully organized several events in collaboration and support with partners such as Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Indian Council of World Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, Indian Council for Social Science Research, India International Centre and India Foundation. The forum envisages active association of all members and hopes to carry it forward at an international level for the exchange of ideas and dissemination of knowledge based on the expertise of each of its potential members.



Organised by:
SOUTHEAST ASIA RESEARCH GROUP
Department of Political Science
University of Delhi

Institutional Partners



ZAKIR HUSAIN DELHI COLLEGE
University of Delhi



INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
New Delhi