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Kamala Harris: Making of History

In addition to being the first woman ever to be elected as Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris will be the first Indian-American to occupy that high office. Given that she is 56 years of age compared to President-Elect Joe Biden, who enters the White House at 77, she is being seen as a strong Presidential candidate for 2028 elections or even 2024. This is bound to redefine nearly 250 years of the making of democratic politics in the United States. The next four years will see her setting the foundations for that transformation in American politics.

For India, her election as Vice President provides an unprecedented connect to take forward their last two decades of efforts at building enhanced proximity and partnerships. Given that Indo-US relations have had clear bipartisan support this has already been institutionalised. The next four years are bound to see further strengthening of their expanding strategic, security and defence system partnerships with shaping capabilities. This becomes significant as the world today stands at the cusp of historic changes.

China is one country for which Indo-US ties have always been a matter of concern and anxiety. China's rise and assertive policies redefined not regional but global geopolitics. In this, Beijing's power elite have always viewed growing Indo-US aimed proximity as at containment. The ongoing pandemic -Covid 19 - that originated in China has since engulfed rest of the world and exacerbated major powers further equations with Beijing. Others speculate China's early exit from pandemic

providing further boost to its economic rise thus fuelling its assertive policies. This has since brought major western powers together to redress such exigencies.

Here, Biden-Harris team is likely to fine-tune Trump's whimsical confrontationist policies. They are committed to not just uniting polarised society and politics at home but strengthen multilateralism to reengage their time tests friends and allies. Even on China, the Biden-Harris team plans to replace Trump's tweet-driven blame-games and tariff-wars and initiate nuanced congagement (containment via engagement) policy. This should make India at home in redefining its US and China policies without taking sides.

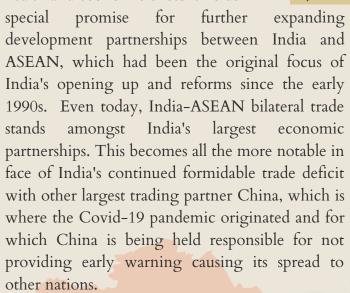
Without doubt these two - largest and oldest democracies - will also continue to have their challenges. Trade disputes, H1B visas, and several other foreign policy issues will see India and US trying to bridge their persistence differences. Likewise, media has highlighted Biden-Harris campaigns having seen them making comments on Kashmir and other human rights concerns. But this is not the first time that a presidential candidate has raised Indian interlocutors. concerns for However, invariably pragmatic foreign policy choices have seen them fine-tune their differences to build working partnerships. With her India connect that Kamala Harris so often eludes to in her speeches, her election as Vice President could forever redefine Indo-US ties as also several other elements of US politics.

> Prof. Swaran Singh Dr. Reena Marwah Editors



Revisiting Post-Covid-19 India-ASEAN Relations: Breaking New Grounds

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected all aspects of international relations. Given that Covid-19 presents unprecedented challenges for redressing ever-deepening health and economic crises it holds



India and ASEAN have been held together by multiple shared economic, political, socio-cultural strategic interests. The traditional and nonsecurity threats have traditional equally contributed to bringing them closer. India's relationship with ASEAN is equally vital in the Indian Ocean, Indo-Pacific region and the South China Sea especially for countering China's everincreasing influence. With a dynamic and actionoriented outlook, India's Act East Policy is instrumental in furthering India's interest with ASEAN. However, the relationship has not seen the true potential yet owing to various reasons such as regional imbalances, difficulties establishing a supply chain, maritime and air connectivity, that further complicates their China factor. In the post-COVID-19, India's Act East Policy can be a significant platform for augmenting opportunities for India to solidify ties with ASEAN.



by Dr Kush Gayasen

Of course, the economic and political consequences of the COVID-19 have also exposed vulnerabilities of India as well as of the ASEAN. Given China's alleged role in the spread of pandemic, especially in the backdrop of its

assertiveness and muscle flexing, have made many ASEAN countries sceptical of Chinese intentions. The COVID-19, therefore, today provides a significant rationale for both India and ASEAN to revisit their relations in order to meet the emerging challenges brought in by COVID-19 and take steps to actualise and shape the Asian century.

At the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian Prime Minister was quite forthcoming in approaching the ASEAN members (Indonesia, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam) through telephonic conversations. India has lent strong support to many ASEAN members by supplying pharmaceuticals and sharing the required information in their shared fight against the pandemic. India sees great potential in the areas of health, disaster management and pandemics where India and ASEAN can collaborate in the development and the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also led to a surge in the expansion of cyberspace and digitization in every day lives in multiple domains. Cybersecurity, digital connectivity, e-commerce has become another area of collaboration which was the focus of the recently held second ASEAN-India Track 1.5 Dialogue on Cyber Issues.

Besides, the COVID-19 provides India the impetus to gear up its manufacturing sector to re-



negotiate the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) where ASEAN would like to avoid being vulnerable to China's dominance. There are several other platforms, including an annual leaders' summit and ministerial dialogues where India and ASEAN can explore other novel initiatives. India has been building linkages based on core interests in sectors like pharmaceuticals,

"...The approach to revisit ASEAN relations must not skip other channels of sub-regional cooperation between India and its extended neighbours. These include SAARC, BIMSTEC and MGC and so on."

automobiles while enhancing physical and digital connectivity with states like Indonesia and Thailand. To realise their full potential, the connectivity between India and ASEAN remains the key. The recent hiccups in the relations, particularly with regard to RCEP have underlined the need to redress divergences between the two sides. To begin with India has been trying to build required infrastructure in its Northeast region to strengthen it as India's gateway to Southeast Asia. Along with it, the technological upgrading and logistics sector needs to be developed for harnessing potential economic interests.

Like any other intergovernmental organization, ASEAN too has not fully realized its motto as yet. It talks of 'One Vision, One Identity, One Community'. There are gaps between different ASEAN members in terms of both economic strengths and social-political tenets and trends.

The differences in their shared interests often causes some of the ASEAN members to align their interests more with China. The post-COVID-19 equations demand a more dynamic approach from India in the form of both bilateral and multilateral engagements with ASEAN. In light of recent aggression by China, India must focus on strengthening its maritime prowess which will further facilitate engaging ASEAN which in turn would strengthen India's position in the larger Indo-Pacific region.

Last but not the least, the approach to revisit ASEAN relations must not skip other channels of sub-regional cooperation between India and its extended neighbours. These include SAARC, BIMSTEC and MGC and so on. These frameworks of cooperation can also become the launching pad for meeting India's larger interest in Southeast Asia and its rise as a global power. And as COVID-19 has triggered a long term economic crisis, greater economic collaboration is the need of the hour. India and ASEAN will have to look forward to such opportunities for cooperation and find more grounds to work together in order to prosper mutually in the post-COVID-19 era.

The author is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, JMS College, Munger. Views expressed are personal.



Elections in Gilgit-Baltistan: A Victim of Double Colonisation

Pakistan is holding elections for Gilgit-Baltistan Legislative Assembly on 15 November 2020. This election is taking place in the backdrop of making Gilgit-Baltistan as the fifth province of Pakistan. The region has so far been neither a state



by Dr. Shiv Pathak

nor semi-state but a kind of colony of Pakistan. This region was once part of the 'Great Game' of 19th century and, in the changing dynamics of international politics, history seems to be repeating itself.

Gilgit-Baltistan has 33 seats in its Legislative Assembly. However elections are going to be conducted on 24 seats. Six seats for women and three seats for technocrats are reserved and will be nominated later. In its long history this is the third general election of the Assembly so far. There are fourteen registered and recognized political parties but these can be clubbed into three groups of regional parties, national parties and religiously motivated organisations. In the last two elections, it is national parties that had formed the government.

This region has had strong historical linkages with India. India derives its civilisational identity with Indus river that flows in this area. It was the economic gateway for India to connect with Europe, Central Asia, China. Before 1947, there were two kinds of political systems in India: British India and Princely States. In 1947, British India was divided into two dominions and the Princely States were given the choice to accede with either of these. It was a challenge for India to ensure integration of such sparsely populated regions. But the province of Jammu and Kashmir has a historic accession to Indian dominion. Its territory at the time of accession was 222,000 square miles. Now, 121000 square km are illegally occupied China and Pakistan, constituting approximately 56 percent of total land. Soon after India's independence,

Pakistan with help of tribals invaded Jammu and Kashmir on 22 October 1947. And, at the time of ceasefire, Mirpur of Jammu region, Muzzafrabad of Kashmir region and Gilgit-Baltistan as part of Ladakh region were occupied by

Pakistan. Of these, Gilgit-Baltistan region covers near about 65,000 square km.

Following the re-organisation of the province of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories in August 2019, India issued new maps that show Gilgit-Baltistan as part of Ladakh. Both China and Pakistan have once again objected to this map and this explains why Pakistan is in a hurry to make Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province. It is well known that Pakistan was the result of the Partition of British India and its territory has been defined by the Independence Act, 1947. The Act provides, "Territory of Pakistan shall be province of East Bengal and Punjab, Province of Sindh and Chief Commissioner's Balochistan and North-West Frontier". The most reliable documents of any country is its constitution. The constitution of Pakistan does not mention anything about Gilgit-Baltistan. Article 1 that defines the territory of Pakistan reads as follows: the provinces of Balochistan, the Khyber Pakthunwal, the Punjab and Sindh and The Islamabad Capital Territory. Even when Pakistan redefined its territory in 1972 after the separation of Bengal, it did not mention the region. Even UNSC resolution accepted that Pakistan had invaded the territory and hence it must vacate the region. It was part of the ceasefire agreement.

Why is Pakistan moving so fast on the subject of fifth province?

• Pakistan is trying to legalise its status on Gilgit-Baltistan by making its fifth province. The urgency perhaps comes from China.



There have been reports of unrest against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that runs through this region.

- On 5 August 2019, India re-organised Jammu and Kashmir province and made two union territories, viz. Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh. It has published a new political map in which Gilgit-Baltistan is shown as part of Ladakh.
- In the Indian Parliament, Home Minister Amit Shah has reiterated that when he talks of the Jammu and Kashmir province, it includes Aksai Chin, Gilgit-Baltistan and Mirpur-Muzzafrabad.

India has always rejected any attempt of Pakistan to change the material position of occupied parts of Indian territories. Therefore, Ministry of External affairs has strongly rejected Pakistan's move for election and "reiterated that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of so-called Gilgit-Baltistan are an integral part of India by virtue of its accession in 1947."

What are India's Options?

Indian Parliament had adopted a resolution on 22 February 1994 that was passed unanimously. It took the resolve that the "State of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is and shall be an integral part

of India and any attempts to separate it from the rest of the country will be resisted by all necessary means." In this spirit, India has always rejected any attempt of Pakistan to change the material position of occupied parts of Indian territories. Therefore, Ministry of External affairs has strongly rejected Pakistan's move for election and "reiterated that the entire Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of so-called Gilgit-Baltistan are an integral part of India by virtue of its accession in 1947. The Government of Pakistan has no locus standi on territories illegally and forcibly occupied by it". It is primary duty of a state to protect its people of Gilgit-Baltistan and liberate them from double exploitation by Pakistan and China.

Author is Assistant Professor (Political Science), at Aryabhatta College, University of Delhi, Delhi. Views expressed are personal.



Webinar Session 24, 21 October 2020

Christian Bartolf; The Breath of My Life- Gandhi's Correspondence with Bart de Ligt on Non-Violence



Link to webinar here.

Mr. Bartolf began his presentation by stating that this correspondence was a dialogue between two peacemakers. Peacemakers are focused on bringing about a state of peace instead of war and this dialogue has been a step in that direction. It stands out as one of the most outstanding conversations of the last century where two peacemakers from two different continents are discussing their differences and their similarities of opinion. Gandhi links the creed of non-violence with the breath of his life.

Bart de Ligt was disappointed not only with Gandhi's support to participation in the first world war but also his lack of dismissal of the politicians in India who favored the building of the Indian armed forces. Bart de Ligt had been a member of the League of Christian Socialists and founder of the International Anti-Militarism Bureau. At a meeting of the War Resistance International in 1934, he had presented his famous plan of a campaign against all wars and preparations for war which took a firm stand against Fascism and Nazism.

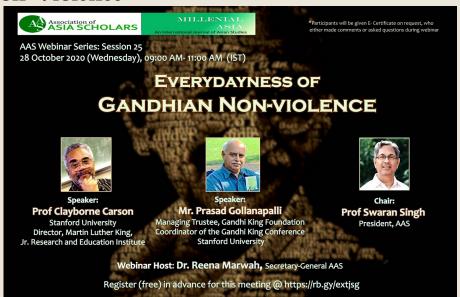
This made him make an open call to Gandhi to reject war in totality. In his response, Gandhi in his last letter to Bart de Ligt wrote, "It is enough for me to give the assurance to my friends in Europe that in no single act of mine have I been consciously guilty of endorsing violence or compromising my creed. Even the seeming endorsement of violent action by my participation on the side of Britain in the Boer War and the Zulu Revolt was a recognition, in the interest of non-violence, of an inevitable situation. That the participation may nevertheless have been due to my weakness or ignorance of the working of the universal law of non-violence is quite possible. Only I had no conviction then, nor have any now, of such weakness or ignorance."

Gandhi's non-violence was never a fixed principle but was ever evolving. The conversation between Bart de Ligt and Gandhi was significant because it was a dialogue about life and death and not only about war and peace.



Webinar Session 25, 28 October 2020

Prof Clayborne Carson and Mr. Prasad Gollanapalli; Everydayness of Gandhian Non-Violence



Link to webinar here.

webinar commenced with Dr. Marwah's welcome address, followed by the speaker's introduction by Prof. Swaran Singh. Prof. Carson began by describing how the 20th century saw the first global movement for human rights in the anti apatheid movement and likened it to the Black Lives Matter movement which was ten to twenty times larger than the March Washington. According to him all these movements are inspired by Gandhian philosophy. Prof. Carson highlighted the roles of those influenced by Gandian philosophy who preceded and succeeded Martin Luther King. Du Bois was one such example.In 1936 a delegate of African Americans visited indian under Reverend Thurman whose purpose was to personally meet Gandhi and discuss how his philosophy might apply to the context of the United States. Discussions included questions pertaining to how African Americans should respond to lynchings. James Farman founder of the Congress of Racial Equality that launched the Freedom Rights of the 1960s was influenced by direct action nonviolence of Gandhi.In 1959 Martin Luther King Jr visited India and this led to the adoption of Gandhian means to

combat racial prejudice in the USA. Prof. Carson discussed the use of the practice of 'jail no bail' by Black activists. By demonstrating that Gandhian ideas could be applied to the African American movement it highlighted the universality of these ideals.

Mr. Gollanapalli traced the location of the everyday applicability of Gandhi. He stressed the importance of not confining Gandhi to history and the 1984 movement but applying his philosophy in everyday life. Mr. Gollanapalli discussed the application of non violence and self suffering as a tool of guilt in the opponent. In his opinion Non violence is not just passivity but being actively committed to a way of life and he even sees it as a creed. The discussion was followed by a question and answer session which included a conversation on the loss of faith among the youth in Gandhian ideals of non violence and the need to reconcile it, as well as the adoption of Gandhi in peace and conflict policies for the legitimizing of non violent defence.

by Ankita Ghosh



Webinar Session 26, 04 November 2020

Prof. Yves Tiberghien; Geopolitics of Covid-19 – What are its Early Takeaways for International Relations?



Link to webinar here.

Prof. Tiberghein began his presentation by posing two questions- What is the long term impact of the COVID-19 shock? Addressing COVID as a tricky virus, he projects another puzzling question as to why is a global pandemic of relatively limited mortality rate (compared to Spanish Flu 1918-1920, Asian Flu 1957 and Hong Kong Flu 1968) triggering the greatest economic recession and the most dangerous geopolitical confrontation since the Great Depression?

Prof. Tiberghien further elucidated that COVID-19 has generated a multilevel global crisis that involves health, economy, society, global economic order and geopolitics thereby generating great stress and fissures in the global order. The most particular point about COVID is the timing when it occurred i.e. when US- China ideological conflicts has reached its pinnacle and US veto in this regard has blocked the path for peaceful global cooperation.

Prof. Tiberghein aptly points out that the pandemic can be defined as a moment that will decide if we keep an open global civilization and march towards progress and human interactions, which requires reforms or whether we would

unravel the interconnections that sustain modernity. Reducing tensions around the globe, the need for reforming paralyzed global institutions such as G20, NATO, UNSC, UNGA, WTO etc, speculating the emergence of an innovative multilateralism by middle powers as an effective form of multilateralism are some of the key takeaways to be derived from the pandemic, according to Prof. Tiberghein.

academically enriching talk by Prof. Tiberghien was followed by a question answer round. The questions pertained to India- China relations, economic US- China capacities of states in terms of handling pandemics, the emergence of vaccine governance, the anticipated rise of data governance and it's repercussions, the future of humanity and trade wars, possibility of the emergence of a Chinese Century in lieu of an Asian Century, global institutions and the pandemic of infodemics, among others. He concluded by emphasizing that there is an utmost need to break free from the tightening jaw of USA-China confrontation to let other voices of leadership emerge across the globe.

by Barkha Dubey



Webinar Session 27, 11 November 2020

Professor Wang Gungwu; Rewriting History: East and West



Link to webinar here.

Professor Wang underlined the importance of history re-writing in the context of the formation of the modern state system. He elaborated on the establishment of nation states starting from Europe and moving on to Asia and Africa during the periods of decolonization. This process impelled that the various nationalities re-think their historiographies and re-discover their historical past. This became an important step towards nation building. He mentioned the works of Jawaharlal Nehru and Romila Thapar in this context for India.

On the question of the contemporary rise of extreme nationalism and its contradictions with globalization, Professor Wang highlighted the issue that almost all countries, especially in Asia are not homogenous and consist of different ethnicities, religions, languages and culture. One way of resolving these differences both intra and inter countries is by focusing on common interests and regionalism. This can be difficult even within established nations, but one way to overcome this would be to augment the processes of globalization and think of ourselves as one human race with shared global problems like climate change and pandemics.

On the question of what would be the consequences of any ASEAN (Association of Southeast Nations) country taking sides in the emerging cold war type dynamics between the United States and China, he underlined the importance of this regional bloc for protecting these ten countries to resist any form of domination by major powers.

However, as the countries here have extremely varied histories and cultures, the task of focusing on commonalities can be very difficult. This is the weakness of ASEAN but the strength of it lies in the fact that it is geo-politically threatened from all sides. It is the geo-central location of ASEAN, which places it within the Indo-Pacific which has become even more important in contemporary times. Professor Wang underlined how ASEAN has survived for so long by coming together and playing down their differences and not only was this miraculous but also that this resilience needs to be appreciated.



News in Pictures



INDIA: The Malabar exercise comprising the navies of four Quad countries began in the Bay of Bengal. Credit: IndiaToday



HONG KONG: Pro-democracy lawmakers resign en masse after Beijing moves to quash dissent. Credit: CNN



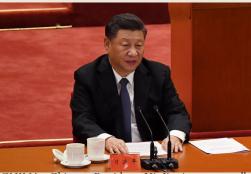
INDIA: Government will oversee online news, social media and video streaming platforms, fears of censorship rise. Credit: Reuters



MYANMAR: Scientists discover new endangered primate species, *Popa langur*, with only 260 left. Credit: CNN



INDIA: Indian Navy's fifth Scorpene class submarine 'Vagir' launched as part of Indian Navy's Project-75. Credit: ANI



CHINA: Chinese President Xi Jinping personally called for Ant Group's \$37bn IPO to be halted. Credit: Al Jazeera



PHILIPPENES: Typhoon Vamco has caused serious flooding and killed at least 7 people in Manila, Philippenes. Credit: The Guardian



MYANMAR: Aung San Suu Kyi's ruling party claimed victory in the second parliamentary election since the end of military rule. Credit: Reuters



THAILAND: Thai police use water cannon on prodemocracy protesters in Bangkok. Credit: Al Jazeera



INDIA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about territorial sovereignty at the 20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State. Credit: Rajya Sabha TV

Feedback

A wonderful international conference on "Revisiting Gandhi" organised by The Association of Asia Scholars, which increasingly is providing a valuable platform for scholars and practitioners to discuss and share perspectives on domestic and global issues of importance. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Prof Swaran Singh and Prof Reena Marwah and their team for organising excellent events with exemplary enthusiasm and hardwork.

- Prof B. R. Deepak, Vice President, AAS Center of Chinese and South East Asian Studies, JNU, Delhi

AAS Webinars and specially commemorating the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi have been contributing for generating original research and observations on international relations. During the period of the Covid Pandemic, these webinars have been able to effectively connect researchers all around the world. I specifically highlight the importance of holding the Two Day Webinar celebrating Gandhi's work as it would help generating non-Western IR scholarship contribution to expand the scope of a global IR

-Prof. Lailufar Yasmin, Department of IR, Dhaka University, Bangladesh

AAS has made tremendous intellectual contribution through its regular webinars which reflect professionalism, diversity and balanced approach. They are popular not only in India but also in Pakistan (a rare case). For me, Professor Swaran Singh, the chief organizer, is a role model as a teacher.

- Dr Ghulam Ali, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, China

Forthcoming...

Millennial Asia – Volume 11, Issue 2, August 2020

This issue is comprised of theoretically well-grounded and evidence-driven research papers on comparative issues of Asian countries.



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