



ASSOCIATION OF ASIA SCHOLARS

GLOBALISING ASIA

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

VOL. 1, No.6

15TH JANUARY, 2021

From the Editors' Desk...

Challenges Ahead for Biden Presidency

In this issue

Commentaries

Big Fish, Small Fish:
Rumblings within the
WTO Over
Overfishing p.no-2

RCEP: Unfolding
the Age of
Economic
Nationalism p.no-4

Indo-Pacific and
Quad: The Russian
Perceptions p.no-6

Webinar Reports

Prof Sanjib
Goswami; "Genesis
of Structural
Violence in India's
North East." p.8

Prof Shin-wha Lee;
Northeast Asian
Foreign Policy in
the Biden Era: A
Korean Perspective
p.9

Prof Mehran
Kamrava; "Iran's
Relations with the
GCC: Institutions
and Policies"
p.10

News in Pictures;
p.11

Feedback p.12

Biden Presidency is being inaugurated on 20th January begins its innings in the midst of a range of unprecedented challenges. Other than the spectre of the fiercely spreading pandemic and resultant economic deceleration, the culture of chaos so effectively cultivated by Donald Trump and the resultant sheet violence would also need some bold initiatives. Taxing the super rich and providing for poor and homeless will be some other challenges requiring consensus and cooption of some left-leaning Democrats and even rank Republicans.

But first the pandemic continues to exacerbate the situation in the United States with loss of tens of thousands of lives, in addition to closure of businesses, disruption of supply chains and even putting millions of hands out of work. The issues facing the Biden-Harris duo are therefore complex and multiple. Especially, now in the face of January 6, 2021 violent insurrection by Trump supporters at the Capitol and his continued tone of defiance, providing a healing touch for American people and restoring faith in the democratic processes of the country will be their formidable longer term test.

While allies across the world have reposed their trust in Biden-Harris leadership embodying the strategic vision and commitment yet, to eliminate Trumpism will be an uphill task. Trump's whimsical, confrontationist and erratic policies and desertion of global institutions have already cast a dent on America's influence around the entire world. *To make America great again*, Trump's America first policy saw him walk out of the Trans Pacific Partnership, Paris Climate Treaty, Human Rights Council, and his bilaterals saw him angering friends across Europe and beyond In the midst of the raging

pandemic, his halting of financial contributions to the World Health Organization allowed China to step in as a benefactor and financial guarantor. Likewise, Trump's abstentions from two ASEAN Summits, repeatedly threatening trade and immigration restrictions, have jeopardised America's bilateral partnerships with several friendlier and allied Asian nations.

China meanwhile has continued with its belligerence across its periphery and its global access and influence has only been further facilitated by continued chaos in the US administration and its foreign policy. And, even during his last days in office, Trump's sudden closure of China's Houston Consulate and his other executive orders have pushed this brinkmanship further making it tough for Biden-Harris duo to bring the bilateral equations to any saner levels. Biden the presidency will, therefore, need to carefully re-calibrate the entire complex web of robust foreign policy goals to regain the trust of its partners, energise engagement with institutions of global governance and regain the country's lost global prestige.

In Asia, various multilaterals like the ASEAN and the Quad would expect greater commitment from Biden presidency and this has been so far missing in his initial outlines. Engagement with India is also likely to redefine its pace and practice. Trump's anti-China rhetoric had surely contributed to strengthening of Indo-US ties. Hopefully, US engagement with India has enjoyed a bipartisan support and institutionalised to make their partnerships lasting.

*Prof Swaran Singh
Dr. Reena Marwah
Editors*

Big Fish, Small Fish: Rumblings within the WTO Over Overfishing

The disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has raised multiple challenges, nonemore pressing than the crisis of food security and loss of livelihoods. One of the criticalsources of both food and livelihood has historically been the global



by Saurabh Thakur

The issue of fishing subsidies has been around since 2001, and it has been a contentious debate within the WTO, where the “least developed” countries have consistently argued in favour of special and differential treatment.

global fisheries sector which has evolved and expanded significantly over the past few decades. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has all along warned of the deteriorating condition of the world’s fish stocks which remain the key part of the global food systems. The blame is principally laid on the \$22 billion subsidies that various governments continue to provide towards this unchecked growth of this sector. In the absence of robust administrative practices and ineffective international legal regimes in the maritime domain, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing has wreaked havoc on the world's marine ecosystems. The IUU fishing has become a critical nodal point of world trade negotiations, and the issue of overfishing, in particular, has gained significant momentum in the past a few years.

China has argued against a blanket ban on subsidies for fishing in high seas, which it deems as essential for meeting the nutritional needs of its population.

China has argued against a blanket ban on subsidies for fishing in high seas, which it deems as essential for meeting the nutritional needs of its population.

China, which self-designates as a developing nation, is currently the biggest fish producer in the world. China has argued against a blanket ban on subsidies for fishing in high seas, which it deems as essential for meeting the nutritional needs of its population.

It favours a more gradual approach to the removal of specific subsidies which contribute towards overfishing and overcapacity. Among the subsidies favoured by countries around the world, the fuel-related concessions are the most ecologically insensitive, and China currently leads the list of countries followed by EU, US, South Korea, Japan and Russia. The developed nations like the US have objected to the categorisation of countries like China as developing nation under the WTO rules and its Office of the US Trade Representative, in February 2020, curtailed its list of ‘developing countries’, thereby revoking the status of multiple Asian countries like China, India, Vietnam, Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore. [1] Other developed nations like Canada and Australia have argued that special and differential treatment cannot be extended to all developing countries and least developed countries. They favour an inclusion of a needs-based approach under the new agreement as a way out of the deadlock. Developing countries, on the other hand, have vociferously defended differentiation as the basis to the negotiations and have pointed out that WTO has no mention of a needs-based approach in its history of negotiations.

As a result, the negotiations on fishery subsidies has reached its most critical stage where all the stakeholders within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) hope to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goal 14, wherein a key indicator is the prohibition of certain fisheries subsidies which have led to both overcapacity and overfishing. The FAO has repeatedly underlined how overcapacity is a critical factor that contributes towards the socio-economic vulnerability of the domestic as well as global fisheries.

According to the 2020 FAO report, an estimated 60 per cent of assessed fish stocks are deemed wholly exploited, and 34 per cent are being exploited at an unsustainable capacity. In the month September 2020, a number of formal and informal meetings of the Negotiating Group on Rules took place to expedite the process of curbing the fisheries subsidies under a WTO agreement.

In a proposal to WTO earlier this year, India has tabled its proposal which argued, “that developing countries with gross national incomes below \$5,000 per annum (for three consecutive years), should be exempted from the need to take on commitments for fishery subsidy cuts.” [2] There has been widespread anxiety among the small fishing communities across India who are protesting that such a blanket move to remove subsidies would lead to the destruction of their communities and livelihoods.

In a proposal to WTO earlier this year, India has tabled its proposal which argued, “that developing countries with gross national incomes below \$5,000 per annum (for three consecutive years), should be exempted from the need to take on commitments for fishery subsidy cuts.”

The resolution to the questions of overfishing and overcapacity are not just vital to achieving the SDGs and ensuring the sustainability of oceans but obtain special significance for food security and livelihoods during pandemic times. As anthropogenic climate change today exacerbates this challenge of achieving sustainable growth, the overexploitation of marine resources will remain a key agenda for the WTO negotiations.

It is critical that the WTO, which currently has no particular rules for categorisation of subsidies or even a clear definition of such subsidies, has to move towards a more commonly agreed upon agenda for tackling the imminent crisis. Nearly 85 per cent of fisheries subsidies, by FAO’s own account, benefits the industrial fleets, and jeopardies the health of fish stocks through unregulated distant water fishing. As more and more industrial-scale boats chase the depleting fish stocks around the world, the crisis of sustainability is likely to deepen even further. The Covid-19 pandemic, therefore, offers both an opportunity to reset domestic and global priorities as well as an excuse to accelerate down the business-as-usual path.

[1] Bryce Baschuk, U.S. Revokes WTO Subsidy Preferences for Some Developing Nations, Bloomberg, February 10, 2020, URL <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-10/u-s-revokes-wto-subsidy-preferences-for-some-developing-nations>

[2] Amiti Sen, Small fishers ask Centre not to support curbs on subsidies, The Hindu Business line, October 5th, 2020, URL <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/wto-negotiations-small-fishers-ask-centre-not-to-support-curbs-on-subsidies/article32776344.ece?homepage=true>

Author is Associate Fellow, National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi, India. He currently holds the Kodikara Fellowship at the Regional Center for Strategic Studies (Colombo, Sri Lanka) and has recently submitted his PhD Thesis to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

RCEP: Unfolding the Age of Economic Nationalism

The four years of Trump Administration saw 'economic security' become the closest component of 'national security'; subsequently, 'economic nationalism' became synonymous with right-wing populism, with its spillover effect for many other nations. The USTR (the United States Trade Representative) approach of limning international trade to a 'Zero-Sum Game' began with its Chief Robert Lighthizer's road map for Trump administration in 2017, which invoked Reganian protectionism of restricting imports by imposing quotas. In a desperate attempt to rebalance trade with China, and discipline China's trade practices, the USTR imposed inordinate tariffs on Chinese goods.



by *Monika Sethuraman*

By 2018 protectionist trade policies were being diffused into the international trading system, defying the two-decade-old game theory assumption that liberal trade policies brought stability and equilibrium in a cooperative international system. In 2019, when negotiations for RCEP (regional Comprehensive Trade Partnership) failed, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlined how "his conscience did not permit him to join." When theoretically interpreted, it read as if India did not wish to enter a "Trade game of payoffs" with China, within a China-led RCEP gambit.

Although the trade imbalance with China remains a major concern for India, its withdrawal from RCEP after having sat for several rounds of protracted negotiations was not about its trade deficit. Given the resentments against China regarding sidetracking the WTO (World Trade Organization) rules and trade-distorting practices, India's Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, had outlined concerns over RCEP's inadequacies and ambiguity in the 'provisions of the treaty' especially the clauses on

Country of Origin, Ratchet Obligation rule and Exclusion from Most Favoured Nation.

India believes that the provisions of RCEP in spirit and principle leaves room for unfair trade practices and creates unequal benefits among members nations. When Mr Goyal said "India must look to leverage FTAs with countries having a transparent trading mechanism" he was indirectly hinting China's opaque, non-compliance record at the WTO, which remains a major concern for India. As China is the largest economy in the RCEP grouping it allows this Asian 'economic juggernaut' to influence the RCEP framework to serve its national interest instead the collective interest of members.

Economic protection is not a new phenomenon in India's interactions at multilateral forums and multilateral free trade arrangements. Mr Goyal and Mr Lightzier share the same opinion that "multilateral system and bilateral agreement conflict with each other" Both have noted that, while China professes multilateralism, it has most often resorted to bilateral FTAs carrying out bilateral arbitration, negotiations, and dispute settlement. It appears that China is using this new multilateral mechanism to re-arrange the outstanding bilateral trade issues to its leverage (gain the best payoff) with RCEP's preferential engagements.

Since China's economic growth is often attributed to its joining WTO in 2001, it is essential to note that a China Specific Accession Protocol was inserted to WTO rules to reform the Chinese financial and political institutions. China was allowed to trade under 'Non-Market Economy' status, which puts it at a disadvantage of attracting anti-dumping tariffs. However, this NME categorisation was supposed to end by 2016, with

Since China's economic growth is often attributed to its joining WTO in 2001, it is essential to note that a China Specific Accession Protocol was inserted to WTO rules to reform the Chinese financial and political institutions. China was allowed to trade under 'Non-Market Economy' status, which puts it at a disadvantage of attracting anti-dumping tariffs. However, this NME categorisation was supposed to end by 2016, with an expectation that Chinese state control over the market will reduce, and China will curtail its overwhelming export subsidies. To the dismay of Free Market proponents, China remains unchanged and with Trump administration's exit remains uncontested.

Be it India's withdrawal from RCEP or Trump's imposition of higher tariff and punitive protectionist measures, from a game theory point of view it is nothing more than a bad 'Nash equilibrium' inflicting damage on both the players. FTAs are often equated as good equilibrium by proponents of cooperative liberalism, ignoring that governments often apply 'Strategic trade theory' of imposing tariffs on foreign goods and provide subsidy to domestic manufacturing to secure domestic players' interest. According to strategic trade theory, state intervention will boost net production and result in increased export volume and GDP.

India's withdrawal from RCEP or Trump's imposition of higher tariff are nothing more than a bad 'Nash equilibrium', inflicting damage on both the players.

In his 2017 Inaugural address President Trump had said "Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength" As each nation seeks to leverage

through tariff, they enter the 'prisoners dilemma' of imposing tariffs on each other, resulting in a sub-optimal outcome; rather than an optimal outcome achieved through cooperation. However, China is a tactical player, which has adjusted its rule of engagements to derive maximum payoff and often has a contingency move such as currency manipulation when met with adversities.

India is aware of the Chinese design in the 'trade game' and hence strongly objects to RCEP's proposed 'Unified Rule of Origin,' clause which would allow Chinese goods to enjoy preferential treatment (escaping the anti-dumping tariffs) on par with other member nations goods, who are not NME states. As much as an increased deficit with China upon joining RCEP has come to be seen as a 'national security concern' for India, the sheer lack of consensus amongst RCEP member nations on rules governing cross-border data flow, data transmission, and e-commerce has discouraged India from joining the club.

Another worrisome fact is the lack of a regulatory mechanism on environment protection and dispute settlement. India fears that China will wallop up its interests in any re-negotiation which does not address the concerns of Indian agriculture, dairy and small industries. The small and economically weak nations could potentially run the risk of their domestic economies being overrun by the expansionist partner China, which faces no competition or opposition within RCEP. Thus entering another multilateral trade partnership, where China would still maintain discriminatory practices against foreign companies, force technology transfer and under-report subsidy programs of critical sectors and over-report frivolous programs, is a cobweb that India wants to avoid.

Indo-Pacific and Quad: The Russian Perceptions

In year 2017, four countries namely, Japan, US, India, and Australia had revived their Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad aims at ensuring a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) region. This idea was first proposed in year 2007 by the then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe but had not taken off given change of leadership in Japan and Australia and due to Chinese displeasure about it. However, US had continued to engage this region through various strategic initiatives like President Obama's 'Pivot to Asia' and President Trump's 'Indo-Pacific' naval command and FOIP strategy. Also in face of China's increasing assertiveness, these countries had not just sustained by institutionalised the Quad with Australia joining the Malabar naval exercises late last year.



by Reeta Kumari

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has often aired Moscow's concerns about changing equations in the Indo-Pacific. On December 10, 2020, addressing the Russian International Affairs Council, he said that some Western countries are using India to achieve their anti-China policy through their Indo-Pacific strategy.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that some Western countries are using India to achieve their anti-China policy through their Indo-Pacific strategy.

With doubt, the twenty-first century has witnessed the Indo-Pacific region emerge as the busiest maritime route: nearly fifty percent of container tonnage pass through its sea lanes. Along with this, the fastest growing economies are located in this region that has also seen major rise in defense spending. China's BRI promises to bring it far greater access and influence across the Indo-Pacific rim. Experts have alluded to Trump administration trying to draft the Quad into an 'Asian NATO' making Chinese still more weary its objectives. In March 2020, the Quad meeting was joined by New Zealand, South Korea and Vietnam for the first time, fructifying the 'Quad Plus' paradigm.

Russian remains the other most important stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific and its working together with China has enhancing its system shaping capabilities.

The import of this comment has to be understood in the context of continued Sino-Indian military face-offs during year 2020. US sanctions against Russia after the Crimea's annexation in 2014 pushing Moscow further closer to Beijing. Starting from its 2017 National Security Strategy, US has cemented Sino-Russian partnership by categorising them as two revisionist powers to be countered through US led initiative.

The year 2020, that saw whole world suffer from a pandemic that had its origins in China also saw strengthening of the Quad and Quad Plus paradigms. Their last meeting at Tokyo expanded their core objectives to building close partnership for distribution of COVID-19 vaccine, enhanced connectivity, cyber security, and expanded cooperation in the Indo-pacific. It discussed participation of Australia in the Malabar naval exercise and Japan initiative a trilateral Supply Chain Resilience with Australia and India demonstrating their newfound determination and drive.

Russia had repeatedly called Quad as an “anti-China” forum backed by the West. Moscow’s expected Delhi to appreciate how Quad does not represent any combined vision for the Indo-Pacific.

That it aims just to contain China and disrupt this neighborhood to suit their amplified capabilities as well as narrow national interests. So it seems that Russian opposition to Quad remains primarily driven by China's concerns about it. This can potentially affect on its time tested ties with New Delhi. Igor Morgulov, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia has called it an American strategy for “drawing dividing lines” between regional countries. There are many reasons why Moscow has failed to appreciate any positive features of the Quad as well as Indo-Pacific geopolitical paradigm.

Russia sees China as its most significant supporter in exploring its place in the evolving multipolar world order of twenty-first century. In this multipolar world, states have absolute sovereignty within the domestic and yet in their external affairs they are expected to adhere to US or Western perception of international norms. Russia experts have argued about this Western aggressiveness against China and its implications for Russia. For them the formation of Quad, for instance, moves the focus from Eurasian integration towards the maritime South which contradicts Moscow’s efforts for building Greater Eurasian Partnership. Another reason is that Russia does not want to lose a time-tested friends like India. Among other advantages from friendship with New Delhi, India remains its biggest buyers of defense equipment. And since its joint the Quad reinforces its coming closer to the US, Russian experts have viewed in a negatively light. This has impacted Russia's

general approach towards the Quad as well as India's engagement with it.

Russia considers India as an integral part of the multipolar world order driven by various regional forum like BRICS, RIC, SCO etc with India holding their presidency from this year. Russia seeks to encourage India focus on these forums instead the US-led Quad. Moscow believes these are the forums that can assure India’s peaceful resolution of its conflicts with China.

Russia believes that forums like Quad will use India as a battering ram against China. As the only one of four with no alliance partnership with US, India is not the strongest link in the Quad and Moscow would not like to see India becoming a US ally.

Russia believes that forums like Quad will use India as a battering ram against China. As the only one of four with no alliance partnership with US, India is not the strongest link in the Quad and Moscow would not like to see India becoming a US ally.

India's engagement with the Quad aim to ensure rules-based global order in the in the Indo-Pacific region, including the maintenance of the rule of law, freedom of navigation, overflight and peaceful settlement of disputes, which is often seen as a veiled strategy to counter to China’s growing clout in the region. This makes it relatively doubtful if Russia can successfully wean India away from its expanding partnerships with the US and with the Quad consequently.

Prof Sanjib Goswami; “Genesis of Structural Violence in India’s North East.”



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS MILLENNIAL ASIA An International Journal of Asian Studies

*Participants will be given E- Certificate on request, who either made comments or asked questions during webinar

AAS Webinar Series: Session 32
16 December 2020 (Wednesday), 05:30 PM- 07:00 PM (IST)

GENESIS OF STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA'S NORTH EAST

FROZEN IDENTITIES
Genesis of Structural Violence in India's North East
Sanjib Goswami

Speaker:
Prof Sanjib Goswami
MS Sankaradeva Vishwavidyalaya (Guwahati), Adjunct Research Fellow, Swinburne University of Technology (Australia)

Chair:
Dr. Reena Marwah
Secretary-General, AAS

Registration FREE

Webinar Host: Prof. Swaran Singh, President AAS

Register in advance for this meeting @ <https://rb.gy/jqtrcv>

[Link to webinar here.](https://rb.gy/jqtrcv)

Dr. Sanjib Goswami, Professor at MS Sankaradeva Vishwavidyalaya, Assam and former research fellow at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, whose area of research includes the colonial and post-colonial political history of India’s North East, addressed Association of Asia Scholars (AAS) webinar on the topic, “Genesis of Structural Violence in India’s North East”.

Dr. Goswami initiated his talk by citing the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 as the main root cause of violence in North-East India. At that time, Britishers were unable to comprehend the cultural context and therefore, shifted from economic colonial model to cultural colonial model. It was first implemented in North-East India.

Generally, violence is binary in nature. Binary violence is revolutionary and is between two groups. However, triangular violence is non-revolutionary and is violence across groups. In 1858, the Britishers constructed new identities and converted the binary structure into a triangular one. It is evident that a formation of triangular violence further leads to structural violence.

Dr. Goswami blamed Britishers for fixing our past, present and future by rewriting history, marking people into slots through census and implementing divisive laws. The speaker also highlighted the framework of Settler colonialism to analyse the violence in India’s North-East as

well as in Rwanda, Nigeria, and Uganda. Settler colonialism seeks to replace the indigenous population of the colonized territory with a new society of settlers. Settlers operate on three principles- they cut themselves from the metropole, find solidarity within themselves and eliminate indigenous people.

In order to decolonize settler colonialism, we must begin from the bottom i.e by bringing change in the structure. However, economic development cannot act as a solution, unless the socio-political issues are resolved. The speaker believes that this problem could have been solved at the time of making of the constitution, had the focus been on homogenising nationalism. Though the law emphasised on multiculturalism, it led to silo nationalism; as a result of which, Silo nationalism grew and led to subregional and ethnic violence.

*by Komal Bhadana
Runjhun Goel*

Webinar Session 33, December 23, 2020

Prof Shin-wha Lee; Northeast Asian Foreign Policy in the Biden Era: A Korean Perspective



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS
MILLENNIAL ASIA
An International Journal of Asian Studies

AAS Webinar Series: Session 33
23 December 2020 (Wednesday), 11:30 AM- 01:00 PM (IST)

*Participants will be given E-Certificate on request, who either made comments or asked questions during webinar

NORTHEAST ASIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE BIDEN ERA: A KOREAN PERSPECTIVE

South Korean Strategic Thought toward Asia
Edited by Gilbert Ramirez, Jo Suk Hyun, and Shin-wha Lee

Registration FREE

Webinar Host: Dr. Reena Marwah, Secretary-General, AAS

Register in advance for this meeting @ <https://rb.gy/bxjjiv>

Speaker:
Prof Shin-wha Lee
Professor at Department of Political Science & International Relations
Director of Peace & Democracy Institute
Korea University (Seoul)

Chair:
Prof Swaran Singh
President, AAS

[Link to webinar here.](https://rb.gy/bxjjiv)

The Association of Asia Scholars' thirty-third webinar was held on 23rd December 2020 on the theme "Northeast Asian Foreign Policy in the Biden Era: A Korean Perspective". The lecture was delivered by Prof Shin-wha Lee, Professor of Department of Political Science and International Relations and Director of Peace and Democracy Institute, Korea University, Seoul. The webinar was chaired by Prof Swaran Singh and was hosted by Dr Reena Marwah. Prof Shin-wha Lee initiated the talk on the premise of Korean Scholars thinking on current international situations especially after the election of Biden as President. She elaborated on her thoughts on the Biden election for the world and its implications for North-East Asia in the context of U.S. China Competition. The other area of focus was North Korea Nuclear Issues.

Prof Shin-wha Lee claimed that the Biden Presidency has brought global expectation for normalization of U.S. Diplomacy. This is because Biden declared that "The United States is Back" which reminds us of Obama's talk when he came to power. Given that the Biden Presidency has come amidst grave challenges being faced by the United States and World, it will face internal challenges such as deep-rooted conflicts, COVID-19, racial crisis etc. He would strive for racial integration and social harmony. Multilateral cooperation, among states, is the way forward. Grouping of liberal democracies and illiberal democracies can exacerbate in future but the new situation is not a

new cold war. There would be an emphasis on US-led multilateral alliance that could also be anti- China such as QUAD plus; in her opinion, these trends will continue. Multilateral Security Cooperation will be more realist, and there should be strategic thinking on how this can be constructive. U.S China Strategic Competition will face five challenges, firstly return of Geopolitics as mutual perceptions in COVID 19 is not good among states and tit for tat escalation can take place. Secondly, the fourth Industrial revolution is more challenging for US china competition. Thirdly, COVID-19 pandemic will further initiate vaccine politics. Fourthly, economic crisis readjustments will change old global values. Fifthly in the name of multilateralism U.S. and China will encounter competition in regional groupings. In the opinion of Prof. Lee, Biden will exert more pressure on China than Trump. Biden will also aim for stabilization of Asian region. The Quad will continue to be more important for American foreign policy. As for Korea, the US-China hegemonic competition has important implications. The alliance between South Korea and the US will continue, but the Biden Presidency will focus more on the Middle East rather than on North Korean nuclear issues. The academically enriching talk by Prof Shin-wha Lee was followed by a question-answer round.

by Dr. Silky Kaur

Webinar Session 34, January 06, 2021

Prof Mehran Kamrava; "Iran's Relations with the GCC: Institutions and Policies"



 Association of ASIA SCHOLARS
 MILLENNIAL ASIA
 An International Journal of Asian Studies

*Participants will be given E-Certificate on request, who either made comments or asked questions during webinar

AAS Webinar Series: Session 34
06 January 2021 (Wednesday), 05:30 PM- 07:00 PM (IST)

IRAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE GCC: INSTITUTIONS AND POLICIES

 **TROUBLED WATERS**
 INSECURITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

 **A Concise History of REVOLUTION**
 MEHRAN KAMRAVA

 **Speaker:**
Prof Mehran Kamrava
 Georgetown University,
 Qatar Campus, Doha

 **Chair:**
Prof Swaran Singh
 President, AAS

Registration FREE

Webinar Host: Dr. Reena Marwah, Secretary-General, AAS

Register in advance for this meeting @<https://rb.gy/5eudmj>

[Link to webinar here.](#)

The thirty-fourth webinar session was held on 6 January from 5: 30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. on 'Iran's Relations With The GCC: Institutions and Policies?' The lecture was delivered by Prof. Mehran Kamrava, Georgetown University, Qatar Campus, Doha. The webinar commenced with Prof. Swaran Singh's welcome address, followed by the speaker's introduction by Dr. Reena Marwah.

Prof. Kamrava spoke of the inherent contradictions in the process of decision making in the context of Iran's foreign and security policies. He emphasized on the three primary decision making centres of Iran which can be referred to the three pillars of Iran- namely the Foreign Ministry which is a part of Presidency, the other one being the Islamic revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and the third is the office of the Leader, appropriately known as the Supreme Leader. Both the Foreign Ministry and IRGC often remain in loggerheads with each other due to their divergent interests.

The IRGC is mostly inclined towards laying security policies and the FM looks into diplomacy and foreign relations with their interests consistently overlapping yet their decisions conflicting each other. Further, the conflicts between both these bodies are resolved by National Security Council which is the Supreme Council of National Security. Therefore, any policy decision in Iran is a result of bargain between these decision making bodies.

Prof. Kamrava elucidated on the guiding principles of the decision making processes in Iran which are primarily based on the firm belief in maintaining Balance of Power with GCC and ultimately the USA, the experiences drawn from the legacy of war with Iraq, Iran's involvement with the non state actors, doctrine of asymmetric warfare, giving autonomous powers to the local commanders, among others. He further mentions that Iran doesn't consider GCC as an independent agency but a direct ally of USA which consequently leads to troubled relations between them. Prof. Kamrava anticipates that with the onset of Biden presidency in USA there are chances of the maintenance of status quo between both the countries as the mutually assured destruction demonstrated from each side might act as a deterrent. He also speculates for a return to the Nuclear Accord and the reopening of talks between them as Iran's ultimate interest lies in having the sanctions lifted. The academically enriching talk by Prof. Kamrava was followed by a question answer round. The questions pertained to the relations between Iran and US particularly after Soleimani's death, India and China's role with reference to GCC, Hormuz Peace endeavor (HOPE), the possibilities of engagement of GCC countries with HOPE, the catastrophic situation of migrant laborers, Israel-Iran relations and so on.

By Barkha Dubey

News in Pictures



United States of America: Pro-Trump insurrection at Capitol on January 6, 2021 by President Trump and his enablers termed an "attempted coup". Credits: NYT



Indonesia's Flight SJ182 crashes into the Java Sea. Credits: Financial Express.



Oman to get its first crown prince in constitutional overhaul Credits: India Today



North Korea: The ruling Workers' Party of North Korea unanimously elects Kim Jong Un as the general secretary, the highest position, once held by Kim's father. Credits- Arab News



India set to begin its two-year tenure as non-permanent member of UNSC Credits- The Hindu



Nepal in political turmoil after PM calls for new elections. Credits- DW



Chinese PLA Holds Military Drills At Major India-China Friction Point In Ladakh Credits: Eurasian Times



BioNTech lifts 2021 Covid-19 vaccine output target to 2 billion doses Credits- India Today



USA: Donald Trump impeached for second time Credits- Times of India



Chinese Foreign Minister Embarks on Southeast Asia Tour Credits- The Diplomat

Feedback

“The AAS webinars have covered a wide range of pressing global concerns. They radiate a commitment to bring together the best of academia at a platform where researchers can interact freely despite the pandemic restrictions. Along with accessible newsletters, they have honed our knowledge base considerably.”

Dr Swasti Rao
Department of Strategic and Security Studies
Aligarh Muslim University

“Continuing from the lockdown times of early 2020, Association of Asia Scholars commenced the new year shifting their weekly Wednesday Webinars to fortnightly meet. The webinars organised by AAS focus on substantive contemporary concerns. They inform the academic community of area specific developments through comprehensive reviews and analysis and pave a way for collective consideration. Also the AAS newsletter engenders a sense of community among the scholars from various streams..”

Dr. Jaya Keral
Assistant Professor
Bharati College
University Of Delhi,

"Association of Asia Scholars provides a valuable platform for engaging IR scholars. Especially, webinars organised by the AAS have helped me to gain a greater understanding of each of the topics discussed during these webinars and its Q&A sessions. The speakers are highly professional and they patiently engage in discussing the topics in detail."

Dr. Kush Kumar Gayasen
Assistant Professor
JMS College, Munger University, Munger

Millennial Asia – Volume 11, Issue 3, December 2020

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

[click here](#)



Graphics and Design by:
Mr. Ashish Dangwal

Research and Content Team:
Dr. Silky Kaur, Dr. Gazala Fareedi, Dr Kush Gayasen, Ms. Barkha Dubey, Ms. Komal Bhadana, Ms. Runjhun Goel.



[Website](#)



[Twitter](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Linkedin](#)



[Youtube](#)