

## **The Global Dialogue Security Summit - A 2020 Vision**

### *Contesting the Indo Pacific for Global Domination*

#### **TAKEAWAY**

The world is seeing a shift to the Indo Pacific from the Atlantic as the world battles with the pandemic and changes its perception of China.

- General Bipin Rawat PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, SM, VSM, Chief of the Defence Staff of India said India needed to achieve not only military might, but also economic strength.

“By virtue of our geophysical configuration, strategic and economic imperatives, we look at the seas and oceans surrounding us with ever increasing interest,” he told a global audience watching the virtual Global Dialogue Security Summit organised by Global Dialogue Forum and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung on December 11, 2020.

General Rawat stressed that India needed structured, long-term planning for capability building and development of its defence forces. “In our quest to build a stronger India, we need a peaceful and stable security environment, we need to maintain strategic autonomy, cooperative relations,” he added.

In his inaugural session address, Mr. Peter Rimmele, India head of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, pointed out that not only Germany, but the European Union itself had begun taking note of the Indo-Pacific and China’s growing influence over the region.

“Contesting the Indo-Pacific for global domination is very decidedly what neither India nor Europe want for the region. It is more a threat than a promise. And arguably there is only one force that is both capable as well as willing to strive for this kind of domination: The People’s Republic of China,” he pointed out.

Mr. Rimmele asserted that Germany was looking for partners in the Indo-Pacific. “Germany is not looking to become just another power, trying to unilaterally impose its vision on the region. Like India, we understand ourselves as defenders of a multilateral world order under threat,” he added.

- Mr. Barry O’Farrell AO, Australia’s High Commissioner to India, and former Premier of New South Wales state, asserted that like India, Australia has a keen interest in the Indo-Pacific region in which it is located. Not only does Australia depend on an Exclusive Economic Zone in the Indian Ocean, it has increasingly become concerned about security in the region.

He said: “We also recognise the important part that Australia has to play in supporting security and rule of law throughout the region. Our partners do the same so that collectively we benefit from the growth Indo-Pacific offers all of us. In doing so, cooperation is the key and for this we look to our top-tier partners, like India.”

- The idea of the Quad nations took centre stage in discussions during the summit.

Admiral Arun Prakash PVSM, AVSM, VrC, VSM (Retd), eminent defence analyst, former Chief of Naval Staff of Indian Navy, Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Indian armed forces, who spoke after the Australian High Commissioner, gave an intricate analysis of china’s ambitions and its geostrategic trajectory in seeking global domination.

Admiral Prakash stressed that the US was a force against Chinese expansionism and noted that India faced an unenviable situation in the military stand-off with China. “India has a major role to play in ensuring ‘a rules-based order,’ not only in the Indian Ocean, but also the Indo-Pacific, he added.



Given its strategic location, economic potential and naval capabilities, India, in concert with the US and other members of the Quad, needs to evolve a regional consensus to deter China, he said.

Ambassador Ruchi Ghanashyam IFS (Retd), former Indian High Commissioner to UK spoke of the potential for EU- India cooperation, taking into account their shared values and ethos. She cited the example of the joint efforts on the COVID-19 vaccine as a wonderful template for future cooperation in the areas of AI, climate change, environment and river rejuvenation among other areas.

In the same session, Priya Poojary, Associate Professor, Manipal Center for European Studies, examined the genesis of the Indo-Pacific and its relevance in the geostrategic and geo economic political discourse.

She highlighted the divergences in the concept of the Indo-Pacific and the global approach to the region – in for example, India turning to the Quad approach for leveraging its China containment attempts.

She highlighted the fact that Europe was only now turning its gaze to the India Pacific, with Germany and France leading the way, in spite of the security threats in the region.

- Mr. Rahul Chhabra IFS, the serving Secretary (Economic Relations), at India's Ministry of External Affairs, referred to the UN's Human Development Report 2019 to highlight the rising inequalities in the world economic order, especially in the current global scenario.

He spoke of the negative fallout of the macroeconomic policies of the developed countries, which further increased vulnerabilities in the world economy.

He asserted: "India as the engine of global growth –and soon of innovation, we hope, is prepared to be a leader. It will lead the search for employment and growth solutions and the fight against climate change and create an architecture for effective global governance and an equitable global economic order."

"We feel that an equitable global economic order is the need of the hour for trade and other forms of commercial activities to take place as per agreed upon rules and those rules should reflect the principles of developing countries as well," he noted.

- Dr Rathin Roy, Managing Director, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK, and one of the world's leading economists, echoed similar thoughts, regretting the fact that asset-rich economies were looking to satisfy their own narrow materialistic goals at the expense of looking at globally worrying issues concerning the whole world.
- Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Distinguished Fellow, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, former Permanent Secretary, Singapore Foreign Ministry, founding Dean, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, focussed attention on the fact that never before had so many people been lifted out of poverty as in the last 30 years. For this, he credited globalisation.

Alluding to political scientist and economist, Francis Fukuyama, he pointed out the rising Asian global order and highlighted the cases of India and China as leading examples of growth for the rest of the world.

- Dr. Jefferey Becker, Research Programme Director, Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, Centre for Naval Analyses, George Washington University, Washington DC, US, viewed China's maritime expansion and its Silk Road formulation as causes of concern.

Yet, he added, these developments had created an opportunity for India and the US to work together on new challenges. Being democracies, the Quad countries shared common values and were natural partners to address the behaviour of China, he added.



Referring to the recently signed foundational agreements signed between the US and India, he said more needed to be done to progress this further on the ground.

- Dr. Connie Bakrie, President, Indonesia Institute for Maritime Studies, Jakarta, and Trustee at National Air Power and Space Centre of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia, said that the challenge now for Indonesia and ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) was to seek a balance between the “coalitions of the willing - like Australia and the US - and of the ‘unwilling’- like China”.

She stressed that India and ASEAN needed to work together, and to “quit the talking” and “start the doing”.

- Dr. Laura Yereksheva, Professor at al-Farabi Kazakh National University’s Oriental Faculty (Almaty, Kazakhstan) spoke of the concept of space and its various interpretations.

She argued that while globalisation was all about shrinking space, the pandemic was about expanding it, with social distancing being advocated in almost every avenue of daily life. In the Indo-Pacific too space was interpreted differently, notably by France, USA, Japan, Germany, India and other interested countries.

She brought into focus the potential of Eurasia to contribute to the economies of the in collaborations and between the Eurasian economic community and that of the Indo Pacific.

- Lt Gen Arun Sahni (Retd.), former General Officer Commanding in Chief, South Western Command, said that the post-WWII liberal world order was under stress and its replacement was looming.

Due to many crises and challenges plaguing it, Europe had diminished in stature, he said, adding that China in turn, had become a huge player in the European block, while Russia needed to find opportunity to regain its lost glory.

To this effect, Russia and China are synergising their effort to create a regional space that is free of western influence, he said.

- Mr. Salman Khurshid, former External Affairs Minister, former Law and Justice Minister and currently senior advocate at the Supreme Court of India, was the onscreen to say India had come a long way since its independence and that it deserved a place on the global high table.

He argued for a need to reorient priorities and cultural ethos adopting humanistic approaches.

He said, “Subscribing to the idea of dialogue and connectivity is important. Two dimensions are important in dialogue - expressing aspirations and the backdrop in which the aspirations are expressed”.

For India, priorities needed to focus on food security and legal rights among others, he added.

- Professor John Varghese, Principal, St Stephen’s college, advocated for a stronger reliance on education as a key driver for growth of India. He said, “India has ability to make a difference in the world - we have a large youth demographic which, with right ideals, can effect change. The future of India is the future of the world. education with the right value is key. Education, and not military education...the attempt to thrust one ideology on the world will not work. This is where a democracy will work. India’s cultural variations are a strength”, he stressed.

- Ritu Rao, specialist on urban water bodies, Teri School of Advanced Studies, highlighted the distinguishing characteristics responsible for the degradation of water bodies like rivers in the context of urbanisation and how this degradation was affecting humankind.
- Dr Ashok Swain, Director, Research School of International Water Cooperation at Uppsala University, Sweden, noted that water scarcity could trigger forms of violent conflicts among or between groups.

He advocated that water cooperation could trigger regional peace, that it had the power to transform mistrust and suspicion among the countries to bring opportunities for shared gains and establish a pattern of reciprocity.

It is, however, important for the countries, particularly in South Asia to use their common water resources as a catalyst to cooperate and develop together, he added.

- Dr. Matthais Strümer, Head of the Research Center for Digital Sustainability, Bern University, Switzerland, revealed how Big Tech companies like had a market capitalization of over USD \$ 8,700 billion, which was almost three times India's GDP, and how they were responsible for data colonialism in Cyberspace.

He noted that data was a strategic good and that there was the issue of data sustainability especially with regards data sovereignty and data localisation as a source for AI, etc.

Professor Carlo Masala, Director of Project Metis: Institute for Strategy & Foresight and Chair for International Relations, University of German Bundeswehr, Munich, Germany. speculated on the possibility between rising power of China and declining power of USA.

Mr. Shreyas Jayasimha, <sup>[OB]</sup> head of Aarna Law, Aarna ADR, Singapore, space, technology and nuclear law specialist, elaborated on the legal implications of increased use of unmanned technology in warfare such as Drones and AI controlled devices. He lamented the fact that there were not enough laws to deal with new advancements in science.

- The Valedictory Address was delivered by Air Marshal Diptendu Choudhury, AVSM, VM, VSM, Commandant, National Defence College, India's highest seat of strategic learning for senior military and civil service officers.

He pointed out the "geopolitical jostling" that has resulted from the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the disappearing of boundaries between the traditional and the non-traditional, between friends and rivals and other aspects of life.

He stressed that collaborations between like-minded powers had the ability to force China to rethink its ambitions in the Indo Pacific.

"We see the helplessness of world organisations like UN on one hand and on the other, reluctance on part of traditional powers to take charge. Collective leadership by like-minded powers is the way forward in the Indo-Pacific. It is time for like-minded governments to come together with a common goal, strategise and analyse," he added.