



Indian Council
of World Affairs



Symposium *on*
**Strategic
Competition
in the
South China Sea**

**Interests, Defence
and Diplomacy**

16 September 2022, 1100 Hrs IST

Venue: Sapru House

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About ICWA

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) was established in 1943 by a group of eminent intellectuals led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. H.N. Kunzru. Its principal objective was to create an Indian perspective on international relations and act as a repository of knowledge and thinking on foreign policy issues. An Act of Parliament in 2001 declared the ICWA to be an 'institution of national importance'. The ICWA is headquartered in Sapru House, an iconic heritage building in the heart of New Delhi that was inaugurated by the first Prime Minister of India, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1955. The council today conducts policy research through an in-house faculty as well as through external experts. It regularly organizes an array of intellectual activities including conferences, seminars, roundtable discussions, bilateral dialogues, international conferences, lectures and outreach activities in India and abroad and brings out a range of publications. The Council has a well-stocked library, an active website, and publishes the journal 'India Quarterly'. ICWA has over 50 MoUs with international think tanks and research institutions to promote better understanding in international issues and develop areas of mutual cooperation. The Council also has partnerships with leading research institutions, think tanks and universities in India.

Concept Note

1. The South China Sea has emerged as the fulcrum of great power strategic competition. Decision makers and analysts in major global capitals have been drawn to the region in the Indo-Pacific due to a variety of reasons. The South China Sea (SCS), firstly, has become a primary test case for upholding the core principles of rules-based international order, viz., non-use of force or threat of force to settle interstate disputes and the freedom of navigation of the seas. Secondly, the South China Sea has emerged as one of the most significant sea lines of communication linking the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf wherein an estimated US\$3.4 trillion worth of trade passes through each year. Thirdly, according to some US analysts, the South China Sea is abound with energy resources of an estimated 11 billion barrels of untapped oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Finally, the US, along with its allies in the region has been locked in an open and broad contest with a rising and aggressive China.

2. Thus, it becomes imperative to assess the past, present, and future of the ever-increasing strategic competition in the South China Sea. What are the varied, evolving interests of the multiple stakeholders that drive this competition? What are the defence/military dimensions of the ongoing competition? Similarly, what have been the diplomatic strategies, bilaterally and multilaterally, in recent years and the issues, actors and processes therein?

3. It is equally important to dissect policy choices of specific states bordering the region on the emerging security competition in the South China Sea. What sort of political, military, and economic challenges and opportunities do states such as Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, and Australia envisage in the South China Sea? Are

multilateral, regional forums their preferred mechanisms to deal with the emerging competition or are bilateral mechanisms their route to secure their respective interests?

4. Looking at the medium and longer term, the South China Sea and the strategic competition therein will illuminate the trajectory of the evolving international order as shaped by the interplay of great power rivalry and geopolitical forces. Developments in the region have a bearing on the well-being of the Indian Ocean Region. India has maintained that, in a globalized world, it is vital that freedom of navigation and over flight and unimpeded commerce based on principles of international law are respected and facilitated. It has further, enunciated its Indo-Pacific vision which stands for a free, open, inclusive region, which embraces all in a common pursuit of progress and prosperity.

Programme

The image features a serene background of a deep blue ocean with gentle ripples, extending to a clear horizon under a pale, cloudy sky. The word "Programme" is centered in a bold, dark blue font with a thin yellow outline.

Inaugural Session 1100-1110 Hrs IST

1100-1105 Hrs IST Opening Remarks
Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh
Director General
Indian Council of World Affairs

1105-1110 Hrs IST Introductory Remarks by
Dr. Manish Dabhade
Founder
The Indian Futures & CIPOD/SIS/JNU faculty

Session I: 1110-1215 Hrs IST

Ideational Perspectives: State of Play?

- 1110-1120 Hrs IST Remarks by Chair
Amb. Ashok Kantha
*Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies
Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International
Foundation*
- 1120-1132 Hrs IST Remarks by
Lt. Gen. Vinod Khandare
*Advisor
Ministry of Defence, Government of India*
- 1132-1144 Hrs IST Remarks by
Mr. Jayadeva Ranade
*President
Centre for China Analysis and Strategy (CCAS)*
- 1144-1156 Hrs IST Remarks by
Prof. Harsh V Pant
*Vice President
Observer Research Foundation (ORF)*
- 1156-1210 Hrs IST **Discussion**
- 1210-1215 Hrs IST **Closing Remarks by Chair**
- 1215-1230 Hrs IST **Tea Break**
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Session II: 1230-1355 Hrs IST

State Perspectives: Alliance, Non-Alignment, or Multi-Alignment?

1230-1240 Hrs IST	Remarks by Chair Amb. Gurjit Singh <i>Former Ambassador of India to Germany Indonesia, ASEAN, Ethiopia and the African Union</i>
1240-1252 Hrs IST	Remarks by Dr. Do Thanh Hai <i>Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam</i>
1252-1304 Hrs IST	Remarks by The Hon. Lisa Singh <i>CEO of the Australia India Institute University of Melbourne</i>
1304-1316 Hrs IST	Remarks by Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli <i>Dean School of International Studies, JNU</i>
1316-1330 Hrs IST	Discussion
1330-1335 Hrs IST	Closing Remarks by Chair
1335 Hrs onwards	Lunch



Bio-Profiles of Chairs and Speakers

Inaugural Session



Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh

Director General,
Indian Council of World Affairs

Amb. Vijay Thakur Singh holds a Master's degree in Economics from Himachal Pradesh University. She joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1985. Her first posting was in Embassy of India in Madrid, Spain, where she later went as Deputy Chief of Mission in 2006. She worked in the Ministry of External Affairs from 1989 to 1999, handling India's relations with Afghanistan and Pakistan. She was posted as Counsellor in the Embassy of India in Kabul from 2003 to 2005.

She has had multilateral experience, particularly in economic and environmental issues. She was Counsellor in the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York from 2000 to 2003. She has served as Joint Secretary to the President of India from August 2007 to August 2012 and as Joint Secretary at the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) from 2012 to 2013. She has been High Commissioner of India to Singapore from 2013 to 2016 and Ambassador of India to Ireland from 2016 to 2018.

For two years from 2018, she was Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and retired in September 2020. She took over as the DG of ICWA in July 2021.



Dr. Manish Dabhade

Founder
The Indian Futures & CIPOD/SIS/JNU faculty

Dr. Manish Dabhade is the Founder of The Indian Futures, a New Delhi-based independent think tank aimed at advancing knowledge of New India, and also a Faculty in the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His areas of expertise include diplomacy- history, theory and practice- with a special reference to India, and great power politics in the Indo-Pacific. He has published several research papers in national and international peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes. He is currently writing a book on India and France.



Session I
Ideational Perspectives:
State of Play?



Amb. Ashok Kantha

Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies
Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International
Foundation

Mr. Ashok K. Kantha is an Honorary Fellow and former Director (2017-22) of the Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi; a Distinguished Fellow at Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi; and Chair of the Core Group on China of the Confederation of Indian Industry.

A career diplomat, Kantha was Ambassador of India to China until January 2016. Prior to this, he was Secretary (East) at Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi with responsibility for about 65 countries in India's extended neighbourhood. His previous assignments include High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka and Malaysia, Consul General in Hong Kong, and Deputy Chief of Mission in Kathmandu (Nepal). Earlier, Kantha served in different capacities at Indian Missions in Singapore, China and the USA, and at headquarters in New Delhi.

In his diplomatic career spanning over 38 years, Kantha specialized in India's neighbourhood and Asian affairs, with a particular focus on China. Apart from three assignments in China, he served as Joint Secretary (East Asia) and Director (China) at Ministry of External Affairs for periods of four years each. He has an advanced certificate in Chinese language from National University of Singapore.



Lt. Gen. Vinod Khandare

Advisor, Ministry of Defence
Government of India

Lt. Gen. VG Khandare was the former Military Adviser to NSCS. He retired on 12 Oct 2021 on completion of his three year tenure. Prior to that he was Director General Defence Intelligence Agency and Deputy Chief of Integrated Defense Staff handling tri services Intelligence, till 31 Jan 2018. He has a vast experience of four decades in handling military affairs and has been involved in advising the apex level on decision making based on analysis and assessments impacting national interests.

He has first hand experience in dealing with China on LAC , with Pak on LoC and in countering terrorism in the hinterland of J&K and the North East Region. He has enhanced synergy between technical and human intelligence at tactical, operational and Strategic level. He is an expert in capability and capacity enhancement including Atmanirbhar mission and Defence Diplomacy. He synergied inter ministerial output related to security. He is an avid thinker in Conflict Prevention, Management and Termination as also in technology search and incorporation.

He played important role in evaluating and formulation of reforms in security sector.

Currently he is Distinguished Fellow at USI New Delhi and Emeritus Research Faculty with Rashtrya Raksha University Gandhinagar. He is

active giving lectures and participating in international, national and Armed Forces Seminars. He renders advice to various Ministries, Think Tanks and pursues Atmanirbhar Bharat agenda in Defence Production as also in shaping youth as the national Human Resource capital for the present and future. He is working on ancient and medieval period wisdom lessons derived from history for the military and non military way forward.

He is now the Principal Advisor to Ministry of Defence.



Mr. Jayadeva Ranade

President
Centre for China Analysis and Strategy (CCAS)

Jayadeva Ranade, is President of the 'Centre for China Analysis and Strategy'. He retired as Additional Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India in August 2008 and is a former Member of the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). He is a Member of the Core Group on China of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), Distinguished Fellow of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) and Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS), New Delhi.

Mr. Ranade has specialized for over 40 years in analysing developments relating to China, Tibet and East Asia and his foreign assignments include Hong Kong, Beijing and Washington DC. He has prepared and finalized briefs and analysis on issues of strategic importance for the highest echelons in Government.

He obtained a Diploma of Advanced Proficiency in Chinese from the Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Certificate and Diploma in Mandarin from the University of Hong Kong.

Mr. Jayadeva Ranade was conferred both the highest awards of the Organisation out of turn.

Mr. Ranade is author of the books 'China Unveiled: Insights into Chinese Strategic Thinking', released in January 2013; 'Xi Jinping's China' and

'Cadres of Tibet' both released in October 2017; and 'Xi Jinping: China's Third New Era' published in February 2022.

He writes frequently in leading national newspapers and strategic and defence magazines and is often requested to comment on national and international Television channels. He is regularly invited to speak on China, Geopolitics and security issues at conferences in India and abroad.



Prof. Harsh V Pant

Vice President
Observer Research Foundation (ORF)

Professor Harsh V Pant is Vice President – Studies and Foreign Policy at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. He is a Professor of International Relations with King's India Institute at King's College London.

He is also Director (Honorary) of Delhi School of Transnational Affairs at Delhi University. Professor Pant has been a Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; a Visiting Professor at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi; a Visiting Fellow at the Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania; a Visiting Scholar at the Center for International Peace and Security Studies, McGill University; a Non-Resident Fellow with the Wadhwani Chair in US-India Policy Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC; and an Emerging Leaders Fellow at the Australia-India Institute, University of Melbourne.

Professor Pant's current research is focused on Asian security issues. His most recent books include *India and Global Governance: A Rising Power and Its Discontents* (Routledge), *Politics and Geopolitics: Decoding India's Neighbourhood Challenge* (Rupa), *America and the Indo-Pacific: Trump and Beyond* (Routledge), *New Directions in India's Foreign Policy: Theory and Praxis* (Cambridge University Press), *India's Nuclear Policy* (Oxford University Press), *The US Pivot and Indian*

Foreign Policy (Palgrave Macmillan), Handbook of Indian Defence Policy (Routledge), and India's Afghan Muddle (HarperCollins).

Professor Pant writes regularly for various Indian and international media outlets including the Japan Times, the Wall Street Journal, the National (UAE), the Hindustan Times, and the Telegraph.



Session II
State Perspectives:
Alliance, Non-Alignment, or
Multi-Alignment?



Amb. Gurjit Singh

Former Ambassador of India to Germany
Indonesia, ASEAN, Ethiopia and the African Union

Amb. Gurjit Singh is a former Indian diplomat with 37 years of experience. He has been the Ambassador of India to Germany, Indonesia and ASEAN and Ethiopia and the African Union besides having been in Japan, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and Italy on assignment. He was the Sherpa for the first 2 India-Africa Summits and his book *The Injera and the Parantha on India and Ethiopia* was well received. He has also written books on India's relations with Japan, Indonesia, and Germany. He is an Honorary Professor of Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Indore. He Chairs the CII Business Task Force on Trilateral Cooperation in Africa. He comments on current events on TV and in journals. He is associated with the social impact investment movement and is working on expanding it in Africa along with other trilateral initiatives for B2B engagement.



Dr. Do Thanh Hai

Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Dr. Do Thanh Hai currently serves as Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Vietnam in India. He was previously a Senior Fellow and Assistant Director General at the East Sea Institute at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV). He obtained his doctorate on political science, international relations and strategic studies from the Australian National University and his master's degree from Erasmus Mundus Global Studies Program on Global Studies.

He published on *The Pacific Review*, *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, *East Asia Policy*, *The ASAN Forum*, *CSIS PacNet*, *Journal of International Review (DAV)* and many news outlets. He is the author of the book titled *Vietnam and the South China Sea: Politics, Security and Legality* and published by Routledge in 2017. His latest books, both co-edited with Prof. Leszek Buszynski, are *The South China Sea: From Regional Maritime Dispute to Geostatetgic Competition* published by Routledge in 2019 and *Maritime Issues and Regional Order in Indo-Pacific* published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2021.

He is currently also serving as an honorary scholar at the East Asia Security Centre, Bond University Australia, and a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of East Asia Policy*, National University of Singapore.



The Hon. Lisa Singh

CEO of the Australia India Institute
University of Melbourne

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

In 2014 she was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman by the President of India for building friendly Australia-India relations, the highest civilian honour for a person of Indian origin. Representing Australia as an influential professional, Lisa has been advancing Australia's social and economic ties with the Indo-Pacific region for over a decade. In 2016, representing Australia, Lisa was seconded to the United Nations General Assembly as an Australian government delegate. She continues to actively participate in inter-country dialogues. She holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Tasmania and a Master of International Relations from Macquarie University. She lives in Melbourne.



Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli

Dean
School of International Studies, JNU

Srikanth Kondapalli is Dean of School of International Studies and Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He was Chairman of the Centre for East Asian Studies, SIS, JNU from 2008-10, 2012-14, 2016-18 and 2018-20. He is educated in Chinese studies in India and China with a Ph.D. in Chinese Studies. He learnt Chinese language at Beijing Language & Culture University and was a post-Doctoral Visiting Fellow at People's University, Beijing from 1996-98. He was a Visiting Professor at National Chengchi University, Taipei in 2004, a Visiting Fellow at China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing in May 2007, an Honorary Professor at Shandong University, Jinan in 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019; at Jilin University, Changchun in 2014 and at Yunnan University of Finance and Economics, Kunming in 2016 and 2017, a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at People's University since 2014 and a Fellow at Salzburg Global Seminar in 2010. He has written two books: China's Military: The PLA in Transition in 1999 and China's Naval Power in 2001. He has also written two monographs, co-edited six books and a number of articles in journals and edited volumes – all on China.

He received the K.Subramanyam Award in 2010 for Excellence in Research in Strategic and Security Studies. He is a guest faculty at Indian armed forces units, including at the National Defence College, Army War College, College of Air Warfare, College of Naval Warfare, and

College of Defence Management. He is a distinguished fellow at several think-tanks including Vivekananda International Foundation and Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. He supervised about 30 Ph.D. researchers at JNU and is also an academic advisor for Ph.D. researchers at Al Farabi Kazakh National University and Ablai Khan University at Almaty and Tamkhang University (Taipei). He is Editor of JNU SIS International Studies Journal (being published by the Sage).

16 September 2022

**Sapru House
New Delhi**