



Department of Civics and Politics
Call for Papers
International Conference
On
Role of China in South Asia
February 26-28, 2018

China's major interest in South Asia include promoting instability in both West and East of India in order to curb the influence of India in the region and to facilitate trade and energy corridors throughout the region that China can access. China also focuses on enhancing its relations with other South Asian countries, including India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. Further it wants to secure its energy and trade flows from the West Asian countries and Europe, and as part of a global effort to extend its diplomatic and economic influence via OBOR. But the question remains about the Indian perception that China seeks to contain Indian power by building close ties with Pakistan and bolstering Islamabad's strategic and military strength. China likely assesses that, by tilting toward Pakistan, it can keep India tied down in South Asia and divert its military force and strategic capabilities away from China. One of the Objectives of this Conference is to have debate and discussion on such perception so that academicians, policy makers and think tank will not have any misconception. The introduction of the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, which seeks to enhance connectivity and cooperation among countries from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea needs to understand in proper context whether it is aimed at to increase trade facilities to all countries or just to help the Chinese presence in South Asia. Other South Asian nations namely Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal view good ties with China as a useful counterweight to Indian dominance in the region. Through this conference participants will have chance to come clear on China's policy of 'String of Pearls'. China and India have engaged in border talks for the past 20 years, but there is little hope of resolution in the near term. China claims about 35,000 square miles of India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, while India says that China is occupying 15,000 square miles of its territory in the Aksai Chin plateau of Jammu and Kashmir.

South Asia has become an area in which India and China have been seeking to gain political and economic influence over many years. Therefore, it seems appropriate to analyze their relationship with South Asian countries through the lens of the regional power debate. Both countries have claimed regional power status, i.e. a dominant position, and have invested in different ways to shape their respective regions according to their political interests. India has used different multilateral strategies to pursue its regional leadership role in South Asia. In contrast, China has concentrated on bilateral relations rather than on multilateral structures, in order to expand its traditional regional focus from North East and South East to South Asia.

Economically, South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world. The intraregional trade of the SAARC is only around five per cent. The main reasons for this are the various bilateral conflicts, and the lack of complementarity among the major economies. South Asian economies find their most important export markets in the developed countries of East Asia, Europe, and North America. Since its economic liberalization in 1991, India has focused on the development of regional trade. Together with Sri Lanka, India promoted the expansion of regional cooperation in SAARC, which led to the South Asian Free Trade Arrangement (SAFTA) in 1996. During the SAARC summits, India offered unilateral concessions to poorer countries in order to promote trade. Besides the multilateral context of SAARC, India has also intensified its efforts with regard to bilateral trade agreements.

Pakistan and China have long-standing strategic relations, dating back to the mid-1950s when Beijing reached out to several developing nations. Beijing's ties with Islamabad were further solidified following the 1962 Sino-Indian border war, and have remained consistently strong ever since. Chinese policy toward Pakistan is driven primarily by its interests in containing India and diverting Indian military and strategic attention away from China. The China-Pakistan nexus serves both China's and Pakistan's interest by presenting India with a potential two-front theater in the event of war with either country. China's investment from \$46 billion to \$62 billion in transport and energy projects as part of a China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) linking Kashgar to Gwadar has strengthened Beijing's strategic commitment to Islamabad and boosted business confidence among Pakistanis.

China's main interest in Nepal stems from its concern over the large Tibetan refugee community there, numbering around 20,000. Beijing has pressed Kathmandu to tighten its borders with Tibet, which has led to a major decrease in the number of Tibetans able to flee to Nepal in recent years. China also is bolstering trade with Nepal and pursuing road building and hydropower projects, and offered \$500 million in reconstruction assistance following Nepal's devastating earthquake. China is an important source of military hardware for

Bangladesh and has overtaken India as Bangladesh's top trading partner over the last decade. Bangladesh and China hold regular military exchanges and also played a large role in developing and modernizing Bangladesh's port at Chittagong. China provided substantial military aid to the Sri Lankan government in the final years of the civil war with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at a time when the U.S. and India curtailed military supplies because of human rights concerns. China became Sri Lanka's biggest donor and made a \$1 billion investment to develop the southern port at Hambantota.

India does not have a clearly articulated strategy for dealing with developments in the South Asia region including the rise of China. India needs to be proactive in its approach to the region especially with regards to the maritime domain. A good case can be made for India to discard its antipathy toward the One Belt One Road and instead seriously apply itself to developing the so-called K2K route i.e. Kunming-Ruili-Bhamo-Lashio-Mandalay-Tamu-Imphal-Sylhet-Dhaka-Kolkata, for building better connectivity. In fact, the most appropriate 'outreach' at the SAARC, of course—would have been the BCIM Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar forum. But then, we probably settled for the pompous-sounding BIMSTEC i.e. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, which is an insipid forum, because that is the only conceivable way to keep out China and Pakistan.

Regional groupings built on such zero sum mind set in the era of globalisation have limited future. Regional groupings thrive only if they are willing to be inclusive. The so-called 'Bay of Bengal regionalism' can never mean that Sri Lanka or Bangladesh or Myanmar or Thailand would be willing to forego their cooperation with China for the sake of bonhomie with India in a seaside option facing the Indian Ocean. Basically put, China happens to be much more meaningful and tangible as a partner country from their point of view than what BIMSTEC, BCIM, Chabahar port and North South Corridor can ever hope to offer them even with the best Indian ingenuity. That is the geopolitical reality. How long can India pretend to beat its ineffectual wings in the void in vain? The movement to take China in SAARC has brought power dynamics in the South Asia region. This new found focus has created a growing need to understand the regional dynamics in a more nuanced way.

Focus of the International Conference: - International Conference on the 'Role of China in South Asia' is an academic exercise in discussing the emerging dynamics in South Asia by bringing together local and international scholars, academicians, writers and experts. The Seminar will cover most important issues that concerns China's interest in South Asia at

present context. The current phase of China and South Asia relationship is considered to be an important concerning South Asian Politics and Security. The emerging strategic contest between India and China in South Asia makes it very attractive to the weaker states to cash on the opportunities provided by their rivalry as they see greater economic benefits in engaging with two rising Asian giants on a common platform.

The international Conference aims at discussing various issues concerning China's interest in South Asia region. China's relation with South Asian countries also suggests that it has a dominant power position. India should continue to actively engage with China in all areas. It is in the above context that the proposed International Conference would like to discuss the following sub themes given below: -

1. China and trade policy and trade imbalance in South Asia
2. Geopolitics of Indian ocean and China's presence
3. China Port Policy in South Asia
4. China infrastructure investment in South Asia
5. Nuclearisation of South Asia and China's Role
6. China and India: Revisiting the Cultural History
7. China's role in South Asia: An opportunity or challenge
8. China's Foreign policy towards South Asia.
9. China's Policy of Tibet With special reference to Tibetan Refugees
10. China's Response to India's Nuclear Deal
11. China Pakistan Economic Corridor
12. India, China and South Asia
13. China's Quest for Energy in South Asia
14. China and terrorism.
15. China and BIMSTEC
16. BCIM and India's Act East
17. China's port policy and India's response
18. Role of major powers in South Asia
19. India China on Nuclear issues
20. Oil and Geopolitics in India China Relations
21. China's OBOR policy
22. India China Border disputes
23. Regional conflicts in South Asia.

Contribution on any of the following themes can be deliberated-

Objectives of the International Conference: - The Department of Civics and Politics initiates to provide a platform for the deliberations on the above themes. The chosen themes have gained importance as China's involvement in South Asia has been undergoing a tremendous changing process in International relations in the Post-cold war scenario. The Three days exercise should be academic in context and professional in attitude, should be academically rewarding and personally gainful to the participants. The ultimate objective is to generate an in-depth understanding of China's role in South Asia.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

<u>ABSTRACTS SUBMISSION DATES</u>	<u>DECEMBER 25, 2017</u>
<u>NOTIFICATION OF ACCEPTANCE (EMAIL)</u>	<u>JANUARY 05, 2018</u>
<u>REGISTRATION COMPLETE FORMS</u>	<u>JANUARY 10, 2018</u>
<u>FINAL PAPER FOR THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDING</u>	<u>JANUARY 25, 2018</u>
<u>2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING FOR PAPERS AND ORGANIZING COMMITTEE</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 20, 2018</u>
<u>2017 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE</u>	<u>FEBRUARY 26-28 2018</u>

Submissions

Abstract of not more than 300 words including key words should be submitted to

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The following information is required in the following order

- Title of the Paper- Bold –faced and centered in upper/Lower case
- Name (s) of the author(s)-
- Affiliation(s) of the author(s)
- Address(es) of the author(s)
- Abstract of the paper
- Full paper