

Conference: The regional stakes of India's foreign policy

8-10 December 2020

Where: Online (Zoom)

Date: 8-10 December 2020

Institutional sponsors: CERI, IRSEM, GIGA

This conference proposes a series of roundtable sessions on India's foreign policy from a regional perspective. The objective of this event is to debate the regional stakes of India's foreign policy today and their policy implications for France and Germany.

Today, the regional and the global dimensions of India's foreign policy are interlinked in new ways, as some regions have become the stage of a new competition with China. Regional dynamics in South, Southeast, Central and West Asia increasingly overlap for India, which has included these sub-regions within what it labelled as its "extended neighbourhood". In these sub-regions, political, trade, and investment dynamics as well as the proliferation of regional organizations have been stimulated by hegemonic and counter-hegemonic dynamics involving Asia's two largest powers, China and India. China has invested billions in infrastructure projects across Asia as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India has equally boosted its economic and political relations with various regional actors, albeit not to the same degree.

China and India's unprecedented involvement in these regions poses a series of important questions. For instance, to what extent does their increasing competition for resources, markets and allies preclude cooperation based on shared interests in strategic stability or the safe access to resources? How do other regional actors perceive Chinese and Indian engagements? How do India and China manage their relations against the background of both competition in third countries and growing bilateral tensions? Lastly, to what extent have Indian foreign policy elites' threat perceptions emanated from dynamic in South, Southeast and Central Asia and how has their sense of vulnerability contributed to their embrace of the Indo-Pacific as a new regional complex? Those are some of the questions that will be explored during the conference.

Three regions, the Middle East, India's South Asian neighbourhood, and the Indo-Pacific, will be analysed and discussed in three roundtables held on Zoom. The conference also includes a closed-door seminar with policymakers from France and Germany.

The below mentioned time and schedule are in CET (Central European Time).

8 December 2020

14.00-14.15 **Introduction**

Patrick Köllner (GIGA), **Christophe Jaffrelot** (CERI, Sciences Po Paris), **Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer** (IRSEM)

14.15-16.00 **Roundtable 1: New dynamics between South Asia and the Middle East**

This roundtable examines how India has developed relations with countries in the Middle East and how this intertwines with its competition with China. Participants discuss, for instance, reciprocal investments, the accommodation of priorities, counterterrorism, and connectivity between India and Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE/Qatar, and Iran.

Panelists:

Hasan Alhasan (KCL/IISS) and **Camille Lons** (IISS) – Saudi Arabia and the UAE's relations with India and China

Tanvi Madan (Brookings) – The India-Iran-Saudi Arabia-China relation

Meena Singh Roy (IDSA) – India-China in West Asia: Connectivity & Strategic Dimensions

Nicolas Blarel (Leiden University) – Israel's policy vis-à-vis India and China

Chair & Moderator: **Eckart Woertz** (GIGA)

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9 December 2020

15.00-17.00 **Roundtable 2: The India-China relationship in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative**

This roundtable examines how key neighbours of India have responded to the Belt and Road Initiative, and how related projects are transforming the geopolitics of the region. Participants focus on the cases of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, and Bangladesh.

Panelists:

Avinash Paliwal (SOAS) – Afghanistan-China-India relations

Filippo Boni (The Open University) – Pakistan-China-India relations

Isabelle Saint-Mézard (IFRI) – Myanmar-China-India relations

Johannes Plagemann (GIGA) – Bangladesh-China-India relations

Chair & Moderator: **Raphaëlle Khan** (IRSEM)

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10 December 2020

12.30-14.30 **Roundtable 3: The Indo-Pacific as a strategic region**

This roundtable examines key strategic issues of the Indo-Pacific region, from maritime security to economic competition, military activities, the role of international law and multilateralism,

and global commons issues. The roundtable also discusses whether this region has the potential to become another battlefield for the India-China rivalry and how China will cope with the growing involvement of extra-regional powers in the region. Finally, participants look at the strategic implications of the 'Indo-Pacific' concept for a regional order and discuss the prospect for institutionalizing the Indo-Pacific economically, politically and strategically.

Panelists:

Nilanthi Samaranayake (CNA) – Military activities in the Indo-Pacific

Sandra Destradi (Freiburg University) – Governance and multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific

Karanveer Singh & Christophe Jaffrelot (CERI) – Economic (inter)dependence in the Indo-Pacific

Hugo Meijer (CERI) – Awakening to China's Rise? European Foreign and Security Policies in the Indo-Pacific

Chair & Moderator: **Patrick Köllner** (GIGA)