

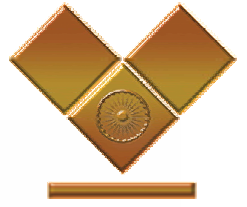
ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023

Seeking Harmony in Diversity

FOUNDATION





If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished.

—Swami Vivekananda

ॐ सहनाववतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु ।
मा विद्विषावहै ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

O Lord! Protect us together,
nurture us together.
May we work together.
May our studies be illuminated.
May we not have discord.
May there be peace, peace and peace.

(Katha Upanishad | Shanti Mantra)

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*Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders Think that you,
young men of our motherland, are destined to do this.
Put yourselves to the task. Lord bless you.*

– Swami Vivekananda



Chairman's Message

I am delighted to present the Chairman's message for the year 2022-23 on behalf of Team Vivekananda International Foundation.

The Director's Report for the year 2022-23 presents an overview of the activities of VIF. It briefly narrates the volume and quality of the work of Team VIF, comprising of experts and scholars from different domains. They deserve to be complimented for their outstanding contribution. The Director, who has provided distinguished leadership to the Team, deserves to be congratulated for yet another wonderful year. Thanks to his innovative initiatives, the activities of the VIF have been expanding and also diversifying as his report shows. The Secretary's multi-tasking ability which supports the multidimensional work of VIF deserves to be commended for her meticulous and efficient performance.

The Director's Report catalogues different VIF initiatives, but two far reaching ones deserve special mention for being critical and strategic. One is the study of Indian forest and hills people from a civilisational perspective, an issue that has caused a strategic deficit, leading to national security concerns. The other is the VIF Task Force Report on *India's Energy Transition in a Carbon Constrained World*, which raises important questions on the energy mix and other assumptions underlying India's Net Zero goal by 2070. This report is of strategic importance in the context of India's energy needs and its quest for becoming a developed nation and for acquiring comprehensive national power.

Strategic Study of Peoples of Forests and Hills

The study of forest and hills people from a civilisational perspective initiated by Team VIF is a new, almost un-treaded area of the Indian polity, which is strategically important for the nation and its peace and harmony. The Indian academic and establishment approach to this topic unfortunately and largely continues to be based on the colonial anthropological view that they are ‘the other people’ – savage, barbaric, primitive, tribal – to be studied, by implication, to be civilised. The colonialists’ privileged burden and the mission to civilise a colonised people, a fundamentally racist approach, later got transformed into a social science discipline, anthropology of modernity – for the people of the plains now to perceive and treat the hills and forest people as ‘the other people’ to be civilised, that is to be modernised. The Western anthropological approach, which considers the forest as backward and plains as enlightened, is the very opposite of ancient Indian civilisational view, which is that the forest is a place of contemplation and a source of enlightenment for the plains.

This is self-evident from the very source of knowledge in Indian civilisation – the Vedic texts. The ancient Vedic texts, not less than 4000-years-old, are expressly divided into two parts. One, “Aranyaka” [etymologically derived from “Forest”] regarded as the Book of Forests, and the “Brammanas”, regarded as the Book of Villages, which is the plains. The Indira Gandhi Centre for Arts, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, says that, in Indian civilisation, the forests are the place from where people of the plains seek enlightenment, To quote:

The term “Aranyaka” is derived from the word “Aranya” meaning “Forest”. The Aranyaka texts are so-called because ‘they were works to be read in the forest’....it has to be understood that Vedic rituals [Yajnas] are intended to confer not only material benefits, but also mental purity by constant discipline. Having obtained purity [by Yajnas], one must seek the solitude of forests for further concentration and meditation.....the Aranyakas containing explanations of rituals and allegorical speculations thereon are meant for Vanprasthas, who renounce family life, residing in the forests for tapas and other religious activities. Winternitz calls them as “Forest Texts” to be studied by forest hermits. Or, the reason might be that these texts were propounded by the Rishis who resided in the forests and thought upon the secrets of the Yajnas. Aranyakas describe the actions of life and also the acquisition of knowledge.

Contrary to Western Anthropology, which dismisses the forest as a home for savages

and the barbaric, in Indian spiritual and civilisational tradition, the forests have been and are still a source of contemplation, meditation, enlightenment and higher knowledge.

But in a bizarre imitation, totally inappropriate to the Indian context, the Indian establishment has applied Western anthropological assumptions to the forest and hill people of India. Indian students of Western anthropologists, guided by Dr Verrier Elvin, blindly saw the forest and hill people through the lens of the West at least till the turn of the 20th century, but labelled them softly as an indigenous people instead of harshly as savages, barbaric and tribals like the colonialists did earlier. Post the 20th century, there was a rethink, even at the global level, about uniformly branding the forest and hill people the world over. Globally, scholars did not agree that all forest and hill people across the world were the same. Their final consensus was that the term “indigenous people” which was appropriate for describing the forest-dwelling people of colonised Europe and the Americas, was not appropriate for describing the forest and hill people of Asia and Africa as the colonisers could not eliminate the natives of those countries as they constituted those nations. Yet, in India, there is no rethink of on what is the difference between the forest and hill people of the Americas and Europe, and why the term “indigenous people” is mindlessly, inappropriately and officially, applied to them even today. Worse still, some sections of the national scholarship, aided by the Indian establishment, have even attempted to theorise that India was invaded and colonised continuously, and therefore, the hill and forest people were the original inhabitants [Adivasis], implying that all others were colonisers of India! This pernicious theory, supported by elements that tend to never view India as a nation, but only as a geographical construct, also has its roots in the anthropology of modernity. Mahatma Gandhi demolished the entire structure of this theory in his Hind Swaraj and defined India as a civilisational and culturally evolved nation.

The blind import of western anthropology of modernity into India has created a psychological divide between the forest people and those living in plains in total negation of their broadly common civilisation, culture, history, mythology and worship. If the forest dwellers in India are animists, the people of the plains are no less. All the characteristics of the forest and hills people can be found in the people of the plains in India. Names of forest and hills communities of today are found in the Ramayana, Mahabharata and other Puranas. But instead of building on that civilisational integration, we have blindly applied western anthropology of modernity, dividing the people of the forests from the people of the plains deliberately and psychologically. This psychological divide has transformed into a political divide in which geopolitical and

external forces have intervened and enlarged it into separatism and insurgency, causing national security concerns. This is despite the fact that the first and perhaps only official study of the forest and hill people of India by the U.N. Dhebar Committee in the 1960s had said that in pre-colonial times the forest and hill people in India were never isolated historically, civilisationally and culturally and enjoyed free movement to the plains and from the plains to the forests. The committee had also relied on the common civilisational bonds between the people of the forests and the plains. The committee had said that it was colonial rule which isolated the forest people through reserved area laws and this had brought about their physical isolation. This became easier to accomplish after the colonialists had co-opted the people of the plains as their subordinates, and even as partners, in the administration of states. The divide that is seen between the forest and plains occurred during the colonial period and this development divide was caused by a couple of centuries of isolation of the forest and hill people in reserved areas.

As in the post-World War II global discourse, the subject of forest and hill people has been globalised to perpetuate the divide between them and the people of the plains. It has become a matter of strategic importance for India's national security to revisit this subject to restore the pre-colonial civilisational position. Team VIF, particularly the Director, should be congratulated for initiating a far reaching strategic study of the forests and hills people and for seeking to re-establish the common cultural and civilisational bonds between them and the people of the plains.

Strategic Study on Energy Transition to Net Zero 2070

Another significant VIF initiative was the setting up of a task force of experts at the request of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). Its report titled *India's Energy Transition in a Carbon Constrained World* is a major strategic outcome of the exercise. The task force took the assistance of IIT Mumbai to do a mathematical modelling of various scenarios for electricity demand up to 2070. It brought out the fact that not only have the developed countries and China exhausted 80 percent of the available carbon space, but are also eating into the meagre carbon budget at a much higher pace since their per capita emission are far above ours. China is the largest emitter, accounting for 30 percent in 2021– the Indian share being just 7.27 percent. China's relative share in the global basket will increase by 2030 as the EU and the US have already accepted capping. It must be noted that moving towards a low-carbon economy essentially means bringing additional sectors of the economy under electric energy from carbon emission-free sources. This will increase demand for electricity

much beyond historical trends, at extra cost – both capital and recurring, depending on what the non-carbon energy mix option the government chooses to pursue.

The report of the task force has brought out three critical facts. One, that electricity consumption estimated by the different think tanks is only $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of the estimate which the VIF-IIT has made. It is too large a difference that can set the energy demand against the government's target of NZE by 2070. Two, the capital cost of the renewable-high mix option for reaching NZE by 2070 will be high [\$15.5 trillion] while the nuclear-high mix option will be low (\$ 11.2 trillion). Renewables are most land-intensive. An exclusive reliance on renewables for NZE 2070 will require double the total surplus land (200,000 square kilometres) available in India today. Three, contrary to the general assumption that renewables are cheaper, providing for the cost of balancing power needed when wind doesn't blow, or the sun doesn't shine, the actual cost comes to Rs. 4.12 per unit. This is higher than the thermal power cost of Rs.3.25 and nuclear power cost of Rs.3.47. The task force points out that Germany has the highest renewable penetration in the world (46%) and also the highest tariff, but it has options for importing nuclear energy from neighbouring nations – a luxury India doesn't have.

The task force has made presentations to the Principal Secretary to the PM, Cabinet Secretary, NSA and CEO NITI Aayog to underline the complexity of energy transition to NSE by 2070. The VIF hopes that the government will take the task force view seriously before it begins to commit large resources on different non-carbon energy options to attain NZE by 2070.

2022-23 – An Overview

The Director of the VIF commences his report by saying that there seems to be no sign of the Russia-Ukraine conflict ending. This disastrous development, seemingly without end, has made the world, including the actors in and behind the war, clueless about the future of the war or of themselves or the world.

The issues and the topics discussed here are just selective, illustrative, not a comprehensive overview of the state of the world today. The stunning developments that keep unfolding post the outbreak of the war, continue to shock the world. It needs continuous and multidimensional tracking to get a comprehensive view.

Team VIF is working on such a comprehensive document and, as mentioned earlier, it will soon present its understanding and exposition of the future of the contemporary

world and its drifting order, including, where, in our view, it is headed and what we see as the role and contribution of present and emerging players, including India, in the new world. This aspect and its near term, and long term effects will be analysed in depth by Team VIF. A comprehensive view of the shift and drift in the world order and the emergence of a different world after the advent of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and a different and New India in the changing world – incorporating the developments after the war as Random Thoughts 2022 mentioned in last year’s message – will hopefully come out soon as Random Thoughts 2023.

But in the context of the message for the year 2022-23 it is appropriate, even necessary to give a quick overview of the developments during the year, particularly recalling the chairman’s message last year. “Year 2022-23 – An Overview of The World and India” is attached to this year’s message.

September 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Gurusamy', is positioned above the printed name of the chairman.

S. Gurusamy
Chairman, VIF

Year 2022-23

An Overview of the World and India

S. Gurumurthy

Let us first turn to the world order that has been wrecked by the Ukraine conflict and how it has turned into a different world and how India has turned into a different India

Post Ukraine Outbreak – A Different World, a Different India

The Ukraine outbreak has changed the world. It was not sudden. It has been brooding for over two decades. In the 1990s, Russia genuinely out of the cold war rivalry, offered to work with the US and Europe. But the US secretly kept Cold War enmity alive and kept expanding the NATO eastward needlessly and provocatively, reviving Cold War apprehensions in Russia's mind. The net outcome of US attempts to subdue Russia and the latter's refusal to be subdued was the rise of Putin in Russia. The US in effect made Putin. That the US pushed Ukraine into the war, which it had made inevitable for Russia, is no secret. The prime motive for the US pushing and supporting Ukraine in the conflict was its old and visceral antipathy to Russia. The US has failed to snap out of this bad habit. The real systemic threat to the US was always China. But ironically, the US regarded China as its close ally and Russia its bitter enemy. The rest of the world, including allies of the US, failed to get Washington to realise this. The other side of US' anti-Russian strategy was the opportunity it saw in the fall of the Soviet Union to make the post- Cold War world order irreversibly and enduringly West-centric. The outcome of these cumulative errors of principle, policies and strategies of the US is the Russia-Ukraine conflict. It has led to consequences which the West cannot control now, to the prejudice of the World and of the West itself.

To capture the current state of the Russia-Ukraine War in three sentences

- Having started the war that it could not avoid, Russia does not know how to end it.
- Having been pawned into the war, Ukraine does not know how to get out of it.
- Having pawned Ukraine into war, the US does not know how to redeem it.

In the backdrop of the Covid pandemic that pushed the world back by a couple of years, the Russia-Ukraine War has caused volcanic tremors and ballistic shocks in geo-politics that have caught all nations, big or small, their leaders and the best minds unawares. The conflict has also nuked all assumptions and foundations of the post-Cold War global order, forcing continuing tectonic shifts that have irreversibly altered the grammar and logic of all global relations. The world before the conflict and the world today seem entirely different. All hidden inconsistencies and conflicts papered over by a short-termist and unsustainable West-led order, have exploded into the open as irreconcilable differences. A point that needs mention at this stage is that the pandemic shock awoke the world to issues not seriously thought about till then, like the importance of resilient supply chains, the need for pandemic preparedness and better institutional oversight. Surprisingly after the pandemic is behind us, the world seems to be back to business as usual, forgetting the near death experience and will perhaps wake up only when the next and perhaps deadlier pandemic hits it.

The West-centric rule-based institutions set up post-World War II to maintain Western dominance in the guise of preventing conflicts are caught in a complex geopolitical theatre that has become unruly, reducing them to a state of helpless bystanders witnessing the conflict like an audience. Undoubtedly, the war has changed the world and many geopolitical thinkers say that a drastically different, abstract and at once complex world is emerging out of the conflict.

The conflict that changed different and significant world nations' equations overnight, has posed the greatest policy challenge to them to respond to the conflict in hours rather than days and months. India faced that critical instant policy response challenge rationally and intuitively. Its decision, in the core national interest, but without prejudicing its global role and responsibilities, is to keep principled and balanced neutrality in the conflict, arguably one of the riskiest and boldest decisions taken in its post-independence history. That single decision has turned India into a nation very different from before the war. A different response from India could have meant a vastly different India and perhaps even a greatly different world. Just as the world after the war is a different world, India too after the war, is a different India.

A significant development

There has been an important development in the Western discourse on the current world order. For the first time since the West shaped the current world order, it seems to

have accepted that there is a serious resentment against it. Western thinkers have explicitly admitted that in the past the West has been hypocritical on human rights; that the world order today is not inclusive and it has to be made inclusive. In our view, this significant development needs to be highlighted and its importance discussed. But to discuss this significant development, what we had said in our message last year needs to be recalled.

World Order – Short-termist, Reactive

Last year, we had said that the immediate and short-termist reaction of the Western nations to Fascist and Nazi thoughts threw the West towards an extreme ideological reaction based on unbridled, even unsustainable liberalism and that reaction, shaped the post-World War II world order. We pointed out that the ideology of human rights, the backbone of the West-led world order, rested on what HG Wells wrote in his book “Rights of Man or What Are we Fighting for?” – a treatise on the universal establishment of human rights as the aim of World War II – which was just a blind reaction to Fascist and Nazi ideologies. And, that was the core thought in the world order that the West had conceptualised. The result, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR], an instant reaction to totalitarian Nazism and Fascism and its derivative, that “one size fit all” social and development approach played the central role in making the post-World War II world order. We said that “the heavy hangover of the most destructive war against organised, extremist State Fascism and Nazism, both Western in origin and construct, had tormented and drove the western thinkers who shaped the post-World War II global order to another extreme of unbridled individual rights that soon began to tower over nation-states, civilisations, cultures, even traditional family.” The explicit narrative of the post-World War II was that it was liberal order. This set the western idea of liberalism against cultural diversity – a conflict which was brewing and brooding among nations.

Ignored Cultural Diversities

We pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi had refused to accept the Human Rights Declaration because it rejected the concept of basic human duties which had been central to human civilisation. In his brief response, Mahatma Gandhi exposed how the UDHR, which ignored diversities, is rights-centric and so West-centric. Not only did it not recognise human and cultural diversities, in the UN advisory to underdeveloped nations which constituted $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of the world population then, to reject their civilisational pasts, philosophies, social relations and bonds if they aspired to develop. This idea emanated

from the western anthropology of modernity. It had no place for diversity. How blind – if not arrogant – must have been the West-centric homogenising world order to the idea of diversity that the word “cultural diversity” entered the UN dictionary only in 2001 – 55 years after the UN was born – in the Cultural Diversity Convention. There too, cultural diversity was subordinated to human rights. The blind reaction to Fascist and Nazi ideologies – two basically intra-Western evils – made the West oblivious of the diverse world outside the West. It framed the world order rules to fight the two organised evil ideologies of the West which had no organised presence elsewhere in the diverse world.

Not Evolved, Top Down

With the result, the post-World War order was not an evolution. To be stable and durable, a world order has to evolve. It cannot be imposed from the top, or even laterally. In a seminal essay titled “Evolution of World Order”, Dr Leonid Grinin, a Russian intellectual and multidisciplinary scholar, a philosopher of history, sociologist, political anthropologist, economist and a scholar of historical trends and future studies, traces the evolution of the world order from ancient times to the late 20th century. It is important to note the word “evolution”. It takes a long time for a world order to evolve. He also explains the origin and decline of the current world order which is based on American hegemony which became the backbone of the contemporary world order. Ironically, American power which became the backbone of the post-War liberal world order – a reaction to the causes that led to the War – was acquired by the US as a result of the war itself in which everyone else lost their all.

Inherently unstable, now in danger

Last year, we had said that the inherent instability in the world order led by the US as the sole superpower began to get exposed after the 2008 meltdown. Its explicit weaknesses made China aspire first to compete and be equal with the US. When the US-led order began shaking after Covid19 struck China, increasingly convinced about the decline of the US, began perceiving itself as a global leader in its own right. We referred to Henry Kissinger saying that the post-Covid world order would change forever, though he didn’t say what the changed order would be. We pointed out that after the Russia-Ukraine War broke out, Kissinger feared the permanent restructure of the world order if the war continued and that George Soros feared, if the world order changed, Western civilisation might not survive. In the apprehension of both was the implied admission that the survival of the Western civilisation depended on a West-led world order.

Painful process of evolution

It needs no seer to say that the contemporary world order is an imposition rammed down on the non-western world by the sole superpower, the US, against their unexpressed will. They had virtually no say in framing it. That is the reason why the post-World War II order was inherently unstable from the start even though the comprehensive power of the US-led West sustained the illusion that it was stable. With the rise of the non-western world, the instability inherent in the world order began to manifest in the growing and open dissent against it. We said last year that it is necessary to re-examine the founding thoughts and institutions of the global order that are facing open reaction and stress. Post the Russia-Ukraine War outbreak, the West itself seems to be recognising the resentment against the current world order and is rethinking on how to make the present an exclusively West-centric order inclusive in which “other people – read the non-Western people – can subscribe to”. From all indications, in the absence of a superpower like the US,, to ram down a new world order in the aftermath of World War II, would be, a painful process of evolution. It can only evolve by a long process. Dr Grinin says that a transition from the West-led order to a new order – that is evolution – would take a long time, some two decades.

West Admits Resentment against Current World Order

Influential sections of global opinion-making seem to be coming round to accept that there is resentment against the current world order and that the West has to rethink it. A most significant development in the western discourse on the contemporary world order took place at the highly influential Munich Security Conference [MSC] 2023 in February last. The US media NPR says “Dubbed the Davos of Defense, the Munich Security Conference attracts heads of state, generals, intelligence chiefs and top diplomats from around the world.” It is regarded as the world’s largest and most influential gathering of its kind. Including the heads of Germany, France, England, US, over 30 highly influential heads of state, ministers, global personalities, organisations, NGOs, including the likes of Freedom House, high-ranking business, media, academia and civil society leaders participate in the annual MSC. It was in MSC 2020 that President Biden announced post Trump that “the US is back” policy, indicating that the US has returned to the Trans-Atlantic Alliance. No further discussion is needed on the influential place that the MSC occupies. The MSC is supported by the German government. Though a global forum, the MSC represents a West-centric world view. That in MSC 2023, Russia and Iran were not invited testifies to

this. A look at the list of participants in MSC 2023 shows some 450 high personalities, including Kamala Harris and Antony Blinken (US), Rishi Sunak (UK), Emmanuel Macron (France), Olaf Scholz (Germany) and Wang Yi of China – from over 70 countries.

The deliberations and report of MSC 2023, its first after the war broke out, brings out the fact that the West has, for the first time, recognised the resentment of the non-Western world to the West-led world order – though in its own interests of preserving it, to make it more inclusive. To quote –

“the fact that a considerable number of actors have not condemned Russia’s aggression shows that ...if we do not address the resentment that countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia feel toward the international order, which has not always served their interests, we will struggle to win the fence-sitters as allies in the defence of key rules and principles.”

The Ukraine conflict forced the internally fragile, externally stable order to implode and forced this introspection in the Western world which otherwise would not have happened at all.

Willing for Course Correction, Inclusive Order

The MSC even admitted that the liberal world – read the West – had made mistakes and had failed to live up to its ideals which is a liability for the order. To quote –

To paraphrase Winston Churchill, many states seem to perceive the liberal, rules-based international order as the worst type of international order – except for all the others. Beyond totalitarian revisionists, much of the dissatisfaction with the order does not seem to be inspired by a fundamental opposition toward the liberal vision per se, but rather by frustrations with its failure to live up to its ideals. For the order, this is still a liability. Without seriously reckoning with past mistakes and the comprehensive reforms that derive from this, the attractiveness of the liberal international vision is likely to continue to wane. Thus, to prevail over the totalitarian vision for the international order, liberal democracies need a three-pronged strategy.

The MSC 2023, whose motto was “Re-vision” – indirectly implying “re-look” – went further. It finally argued for a more inclusive world order. To quote –

“We need a vision of the international order that more people can subscribe to”.

Summarising the MSC 2023 deliberations, it is clear that the West, which owns the faults in the global order, admits the resentment against it, confesses its own hypocrisies and is willing to re-look at it to make it more inclusive. Such rethink as MSC 2023 has openly said, would have been unthinkable before the Covid pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War.

Human Rights – West admits its hypocrisy, resentment against it

The MSC 2023 went the farthest on the issue of human rights. It admitted its own hypocrisies on human rights. Under the significantly worded headings “Universellout” and “Human Rights” the MSC asked the West introspective questions. To quote –

“What does authoritarian revisionism of human rights look like? Why are the United States, Europe and other liberal democracies not better at pushing back? And, why are democratic countries from different regions of the world, less aligned on human rights decisions than one would expect?”

It answered them objectively. Admitting that it is not just the authoritarian revisionists who challenge human rights, it pointed to the illiberal trends that have become deeply entrenched in liberal democracies as well. To quote –

“More than seven decades after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted, the very notion of human rights as universal aspirations has become contested... Emboldened autocrats are not the only challenge. Promoted by right-wing nationalist movements, illiberal ideas are now deeply entrenched in democratic societies themselves. And democracies from different parts of the world often do not see eye to eye on international human rights norms and mechanisms.”

The MSC report is a clear confession that the West itself was not living up the concept of human rights which it wanted others to follow and abide by, and that it needs to correct itself

The MSC 2023 says that “nationalist movements in western democratic societies and democracies in different parts of the world often do not accept international human rights norms and mechanisms” – a clear admission that there is a basic deficit in the concept of

human rights itself.

The overall thrust of the MSC deliberations come close to what we had said last year that “against the historic and contemporary background, it is necessary to re-examine the founding thoughts and institutions of the world order, particularly the concept of human rights which we said was an extreme reaction to the extreme ideas of Facism and Nazism - both peculiar to the West.”

Let us now turn to the significant changes in the global monetary trade and finance domains which we had perceived last year.

Bilateral trade, Use of national Currencies, De-Dollarisation, Dollar Downgrade

Last year, we had said that the Russia-Ukraine conflict would have far reaching consequences on the global monetary and financial, order, and trade and bilateralism, and that the use of national currencies for settlements would grow. Latest media reports say that, by March 2023, at least 20 countries have chosen to settle their trade in their own currencies. India has opened up settlements in national currencies with a score of countries, including the UAE, with whom it has a huge trade volume. This is labelled as the de-Dollarisation Movement in global trade and monetary discourse.

Increasingly, de-Dollarisation, i.e., moving away from the Dollar, has become a shared narrative of many nations, including some friendly to the US. The general erosion in global confidence in the US economy post the 2008 crisis, and reckless US fiscal and monetary policies, has been forcing different nations to think of alternatives to the Dollar. Post the Russia-Ukraine conflict, de-Dollarisation has become almost an urge, particularly among non-western nations mainly because of the US sanctions weaponising the Dollar against Russia and also those who trade with Russia. The weaponisation of not just the use and possession of Dollar assets, but also the global payment and settlement mechanism in Dollars, have made many nations ask whether the Dollar, which is a financial asset, is not a political risk as well.

This seems to have also caused a perceptible shift to bilateral trade in national currencies which is integral to the idea of de-Dollarisation. The latest UNCTAD’s Global Trade Update [1 July 2023] says

“there is notable increase in political proximity of trade since the later part of 2022. This indicates a reorientation of bilateral trade flows to prioritise countries that share similar political values [friend-shoring]. Concurrently there has been a decline in diversification of trade partners implying that global trade has become more concentrated among major trade relationships.”

The shift to friend-shoring is a clear reversal of the famed global supply chains which led to cheap-sourcing that sustained globalisation. It marks a move to safe-sourcing in global trade – a trend which we had mentioned in Random Thoughts 2021

Integral to de-Dollarisation, there are talks of emergence of an alternative common currency to the dollar like BRIC currency. In an article in Foreign Policy in April 2023 titled “A BRICS Currency Could Shake the Dollar’s Dominance”, Joseph Sullivan, formerly special advisor and staff economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers, says “De-dollarisation moment might finally be here”. Whether a BRICS currency materialises or not, a long-term move away from the Greenback - de-Dollarisation - is under way.

Decline of the Dollar

The Dollar has been steadily losing its pivotal role as the world’s reserve currency. Tracing the decline of the dollar as a reserve currency, the European Economic Think Tank Bruegel says:

“In the late 1970s, 85% of world foreign exchange reserves were denominated in dollars. This dominance as much as halved in the 1980s, before steadily increasing to reach 70% at the turn of the century. Since then, the euro has captured some share of the world market. But it has in no way challenged the dollar, which over the past 23 years, has gradually lost only about 10% in reserves to reach the level of 60%. The latest IMF data shows that the share of the dollar in allocated reserves remained at around 59% in 2022. There was an 8% reduction in all reserves held at the end of 2022 compared to the amount recorded at the end of 2021. Given its relative importance in total reserves, most of the drop came from the dollar reduction of 9%”

In a latest, in June 2023, finance market behemoth JP Morgan’s analysts said:

“some signs of de-dollarization are emerging, but the trend is likely to persist

even as the dollar maintains its “large footprint”.

Still later, in July 2023, S&P Chief Economist Paul Gruenwald stated:

“The U.S. (dollar) will continue to be a leading world currency, (but) it will no longer be the dominant world currency”.

The final and most important development was in August 2023. Rating agency Fitch – one of the three recognised by the US Security Exchanges Commission – downgraded the US Dollar to AA+ which is a step below the golden rating AAA. The important point is not the downgrade per se, but how the US responded to that this time as compared to when it happened the only time it did, earlier. When, in 2011 the S&P’s downgraded the dollar to AA+ the US government raised a huge protest and the Obama administration even ordered a probe into S&P. But this time around, there was complete silence, which also showed that times have changed, indicating general acceptance of the dollar downgrade in the US.

Let us now turn our attention to how the power pyramid of the world is shaken by the Russia-Ukraine War and in a diffused world, how middle powers are emerging as powerful players.

Rise of Middle Powers

Last year, we had said that middle-level power players like Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel and the UAE would emerge as important players, while India, a middle player, would rise from the middle to a higher orbit. What we perceived as a possibility; now seems a reality. In a profound article titled “Ukraine and the Rise of the Middle Powers” by Mykhailo Minakov on *July 31, 2023*, which appears in the Blog of Kennan Institute Wilson Center, has brought out the rise of the middle powers in the new superpower rivalry in the global order. It is an important exposition on how the pyramidal global power structure of big middle and small worked in the past and how it has altered drastically. Here are some important extracts from it –

One of these novelties [post-Ukraine war outbreak] is the changing role of the middle powers in international relations. Since February 2022, states that until recently were on the periphery and in the shadow of the global core are now playing a much bigger role and enjoying a much stronger influence in international relations.....

Even though all states in today's global system are formally regarded as equal, realists have rightly pointed out the different abilities of states to pursue their interests. Indeed, the relationships among states are asymmetrical. Those powers that can influence the governments of other nations and set the general principles of international relations are regarded as great. As Gen. Mark A. Milley famously said, today there are three great powers: the United States, China, and Russia. States that are objects of the latter states' influence and that must accept and adapt to the international rules defined by others are considered to be small. In between those two state types are the middle powers: the political entities that are weaker than the superpowers but that can still shape international events and influence the decisions of the stronger parties. The size of a state can be measured by (1) its GDP, population, or military spending; (2) its ability to influence international politics; and (3) its foreign policy posture. Together these three metrics determine the unequal abilities of states to influence each other politically, economically, militarily, and even culturally.

In extended periods of peace and cooperation, the non-great states have little chance to shape the global or regional political agenda. However, when the great powers enter into antagonistic relations, the middle powers gain a footing to amplify their sovereign stature and influence relations between the states in their region or, sporadically, globally. The current conflict among the United States, China, and Russia created an environment conducive to the growth of the middle powers' new role. The most salient examples of it are Narendra Modi's India, Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey, and Andrzej Duda's Poland. The celebratory reception of Prime Minister Modi by the United States last June demonstrated how fast India has become an influential player in the Indo-Pacific region, and how remarkably profitable that role can be. Since the start of Russia's war against Ukraine, President Erdoğan has vastly increased Turkey's influence with NATO, Russia, Ukraine, and the United States. Poland has also dramatically increased its geopolitical weight over the past two years while becoming the logistical manager of NATO assistance to Ukraine and a new pole of influence in the EU. Perhaps unwillingly, the great powers are adapting to the new situation and accepting the middle powers' vastly increased sovereign authority. This can be seen, for example, in the United States' and Russia's acceptance of Turkey's new weight and the need to strike compromises with that country's leader.

The latest example of how this new power structure dynamics works – after Mykhailo Minakov's article – is how the statement of Turkey, a NATO member, that Russia cannot be defeated, has shaken not just NATO, but the US as well. This shows the increasing diffusion of powers from the big powers to the middle powers. Even before the Ukraine

outbreak, the European Commission Knowledge for Policy Competence Centre for Foresight in its analytical article in 2020 titled Economic Power Shifts had predicted that there will be no hegemonic power by 2030 and the world will see a substantial diffusion of powers

What Mykhailo Minakov says is nothing new. It is borne out by the Cold War experience when the world was divided between two or more powers. In a divided world, the middle powers play a more than significant role in global affairs. India offers an example of how, despite being a middle power, it could punch far above its weight during the Cold War in the heydays of the Non- Aligned Movement. In a divided world, even smaller players get their way due to the nuisance value or their strategic location. Let us now turn to how the world order narrative is becoming bipolar even as the world has diffused into a multipolar one.

Fragmented, 40% of World following “Another Narrative”

An informative article by Brookings Scholar, Colin Bradford, written immediately after the voting on the Ukraine issue last year, brought out that in a fragmented world, an undercurrent of diverse values are replacing universalism – that is, “one size fit all” model – of the West. He calls the emerging world as malevolent – having not a singular value, but diverse values. He points out that on March 2, at the UN, five countries voted against and 19 abstained on Ukraine, but on April 7, those voting against rose to 19, while the number of those abstaining rose to 58. Those unwilling to condemn Russia rose by 34 in five weeks. This meant that a total of 77 countries – 40% of the UN membership of 193 – refused to condemn Russia. Of the 58 countries that abstained on April 7, Bradford says, at least 17 were countries of consequence because of their population size, GDP, nuclear weapons or cultural impact. Adding those who voted against, that is China, Vietnam, Iran, and four Central Asian Countries. On April 7, 24 countries, six of them in G20, with weight in the system, Bradford said they are capable of pushing back on divisive issues. The author says that 40% of the world is following “another narrative” – that is the non-Western narrative. He adds that the tensions between the West and the non-Western world are central, significant and involve many countries. Bradford also notes that the G20 consists of six non-Western countries -- Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa and Mexico -- that make up the BRICSAM Group. As G-20 meets will be successively organised by the Global South – Indonesia, India, Brazil, and South Africa – Bradford says that the visibility of the multivalent global order will be more manifest in the next four years than it has been in the last 14. It needs to be mentioned here that the Feb 2023 INGA resolution marks some backtracking with 141 supporting it, 7 opposing and only 32 abstaining as against the 58

referred to by Colin Bradford. Yet that does not detract from the fact that an alternative narrative is brooding in the world.

Let us now turn to how China, a serious issue for both the West and India, is turning into an issue for itself at least in the immediate context.

End of China's golden period?

On the question of whether China would do a Ukraine on Taiwan, we had said last year that it would be difficult if not impossible for China to respond to the West as Russia did and, could not easily “do a Ukraine on Taiwan like Russia “. One of China's constraints on its ability to exercise military options on Ukraine we had cited was the emerging crisis in its stupendous housing economy which was the prime escalator of China's rise. Additionally, we had also cited the high debt levels of China and the vulnerability of its external investments for Russia-like sanction as further reasons constraining China. Our view that economic risks would prevent China from acting aggressively on Taiwan seems to be proving right and more. Perhaps, we underestimated last year the gravity of the housing economic crisis in China. The unfolding crisis shows that it was perhaps much more than what China had told itself about it and the world. The housing and debt crisis that is emerging in China now – as is evident from the huge and stunning bankruptcy declared by China's housing giant, Evergrande, which may be closely followed by the next inline big Chinese housing company – shows that the problems which China faces are deeper and more complicated than it was perceived to be by China and even by the world.

But there is a caveat -- There are two scenarios, though remote, in which China may take aggressive action against Taiwan. First, should the Chinese economy's downward spiral vitiate China's stability, an attack on Taiwan may be undertaken as a diversionary move. But having survived and escaped unscathed from a disastrous Covid policy, President Xi Jinping may hope to survive a disastrous economic downslide without having to resort to high risk tactics. Second, there has been some speculation that while not frontally attacking Taiwan, China might take one or two of the latter's outlying islands, which in turn could lead to an escalation and possibly a wider military confrontation.

To assess the present state of China in the background of its rise, “Miracle” is the only word that can capture the Chinese growth story. Its GDP has grown at an annual rate of 10% for over 40 years. The Chinese economy is the second largest today, next only to the US. It seems that a great and long story is slowing to an end. The stunning saga

that encouraged a slightly immature China to prematurely and openly aspire for global leadership, needs to be captured for a proper understanding of where China stands and where perhaps it is headed.

Reaching limits of Infra-led growth

The high-growth Chinese economy was built around two powerful pillars -- one, the emphasis on domestic infrastructure, and two, export-led growth. Infrastructure is highly capital intensive, and is equally extensive and intensive in the use of resources such as steel, cement and labour. China's capital-intensive growth model was facilitated by its extraordinary level of domestic savings – that was fostered by policies discouraging domestic consumption – and investment that were around 40% of China's GDP. Additionally, the domestic investment-led growth was aided by very high FDIs. China went for lumpy capital investment in infra, not incrementally, as the growing economic needs justified. As infra projects are of long gestation period, capacity and supply creation have also to be far ahead of demand. Prior development of infrastructure was considered necessary such as ports to aid exports, railways and roads to induce direct investment in industry. The growth of infra and direct industry went hand-in-hand, reinforcing the growth of each other. It is, therefore, a wonder that China's annual steel output today exceeds a thundering 1000 metric tonnes. Now, China seems to be approaching the limits of infra-led growth. Another aspect is that needless infra is becoming a burden on the economy itself, which was earlier an escalator for growth!

Marxist China in Market World – an oxymoron US encouraged

As Chinese domestic consumption was policy-controlled to be far less than production capacity, China planned the domestic demand-led growth in a way that it would not and could not absorb the cost of infrastructure built. As part of its economic strategy to build national wealth, the Chinese production capacity, i.e. investment, was built for export. Domestic private consumption was held down as a consequence. A late comer to global trade, how could China plan for an export-driven economic mode? In the 1990s, China had the geopolitical favour of positive engagement from the US, which chose to ignore the horrendous Tiananmen Square massacre to engage China to break the Soviet Union. The China-US engagement offered MFN status to China, enabling it to build a capitalist growth drive inside a Marxist economic architecture. The China-US engagement later coincided with globalisation. Not being a market economy within, China was strictly not qualified to

be in a rule-based global market system. But despite that, it got admission into the WTO thanks again to the US. The non-transparent Marxist China used the transparent market platform provided by free trade to the hilt. If any particular event became the escalator for China's tremendous rise it was its admission into the WTO. China's opaque state-managed system enabled it to overawe and undermine the discipline of the free market. Result, China, which is competition-free inside, virtually captured the free world's competitive market. The market theoretically and practically works on transparent and verifiable information which the state-driven Chinese could never allow and have never allowed in fact. Realising much later that a non-transparent Marxist China in the global market is an oxymoron, the US and EU made applications to the WTO in 2016 to declare China as a non-market economy, but it was too late, as by that time, China had penetrated the Western and global market and made them dependent on it.

Trade-driven growth

Aided by stunning infra development and cheap labour inside and the US/West geopolitical, economic and technological favour from outside, Chinese exports and imports grew by leaps and bounds, and today trade constitutes around 40% of China's GDP. Given the massive scale of domestic output and exports, China is considered the producer for the world. Foreign direct investment (FDI) into China by multinational companies (MNCs) too went into the export sector in good measure, taking advantage of cheap and unlimited labour, who were directly under the state and party discipline. China began exporting and continues to export at a marginal cost of production – something that no one operating in a market economy could afford. This strategy which enabled them to outsell global competitors also facilitated unprecedented economies of scale in China. Yet, the miraculous Chinese growth intrinsically and inevitably made China dependent on the external world, with Chinese domestic consumption playing a planned subordinate role to promote and drive that nation's exports and growth. This led to one inevitable consequence, namely what ultimately happens to the world, would eventually and inevitably happen to China.

Declining Returns

Two quick developments have upset China's stupendous growth story. One was the Covid-19 pandemic that brought down the global economy and affected the Chinese economy, which was dependent on global demand, and two, was the total lockdown

under China's Zero-Covid policy, and its impact on the domestic and global economy. Both finally pulled down the high-flying Chinese economy. With the outbreak of the Ukraine war, coupled with Covid challenging the very foundation of globalisation that was driving up the Chinese economy, and with the pro-China thrust on Western economies slowing down, even reversing, the great advantages China was enjoying are clearly drying up now. Undoubtedly declining returns have started.

Housing Sector as the third drive

Given the stress in the Chinese housing sector, it has been known for a long time that the largest and equally highly indebted Chinese property developer, Evergrande, was in serious trouble. Yet, the bankruptcy petition filed by Evergrande in the US court in mid-August 2023, has shaken the Chinese economy. Evergrande's debts exceed \$350 billion and its losses are an estimated \$80 billion for the last couple of years. Its bankruptcy has also placed a huge question mark on the credibility of the Chinese development model held out by Xi Jinping as an alternative to the Western model. It is as much a geopolitical setback as it is a serious economic issue. It does not seem to stop with Evergrande. The next big private sector housing company, Country Garden, which is half the size of Evergrande, also seems to be heading towards bankruptcy. The Evergrande bankruptcy is seen by many as the Lehman Brothers moment of the Chinese economy.

Evergrande – China's Lehman Brothers moment

There is a difference between what the Lehman Bros. collapse meant to the US then and what Evergrande's bankruptcy now means to the Chinese economy. Just like the efficient financial market is seen as the face of the US economy, it is an efficient Chinese state that is seen as the face of the Chinese economy. The Lehman collapse raised a question mark over the efficiency of the US financial market, which is still regarded as transparent. But the Evergrande moment is a setback not just for the efficient Chinese state, but also for the alternative and efficient Chinese Marxist state economic model, which is opaque and non-transparent. In a transparent market like the US, the Lehman Brothers fall led to an open crisis in the financial system itself. But in the opaque Chinese system, the Evergrande fall may not immediately explode into an open contagion crisis like the Lehman crisis. The non-transparent Chinese state would try to camouflage its data and not allow an open perception of a crisis. Already the world doubts Chinese data on several fronts, including on its GDP growth. But with the extent of China's economic integration with the

world, camouflaging the data to underplay the crisis can only be a short-term strategy, as ultimately, given the integration of Chinese economy with the world, basic economic laws will have to prevail.

\$15 trillion unsold housing stock?

A mere look at China's vulnerable housing sector, which drives almost 1/4th to 2/5th's of its growth, shows that the housing economy is staring at options ranging from bankruptcy to long recession. With Chinese housing interlinked with the rest of its economy like steel labour, and finance in a big way, it can lead to an overall and comprehensive decline. Empirically speaking, Chinese housing assets are valued at \$75 trillion, out of which the unsold inventory is said to be around \$15 trillion. Both figures are the highest in the world. Many over-leveraged Chinese property developers are stuck, creating bankruptcies and credit events. Credit offtake from Chinese banks halved in the month of July. On top of it, Chinese exports, the other principal driver of its economy, have fallen by 15% in July after continuous decline in the earlier four months, indicating that the decline is a trend. It looks like China seems to be clueless about how to respond to this enveloping crisis. The stimulus it offers seems to be not working as economic sentiments have taken a beating.

Asset Inflation – vulnerability to rate hike

The other notable aspect is that the PRC economy is facing early signs of asset price deflation. While there are bubbles in many sectors and asset prices need to decline, all economic studies from the days of Irving Fisher show that asset price deflation has a corrosive effect on GDP growth. And yet, the country faces a dilemma. If they go in for a large stimulus, it will weaken the currency [CNY] further, which is already at its lowest level against the US Dollar since 2008. This explains why President Xi had been asking the US not to raise interest rates since the beginning of last year, for they know how vulnerable they are to the US interest rate policy.

Non-transparent data

One of the world's other concerns about China is that data about the Chinese economy is neither reliable nor transparent. Even China's real debt levels are not easily obtainable and estimates of current GDP are questionable. Youth unemployment in China was over 21% in June, China has withheld the data for July. In an extraordinary statement on August 22, White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan criticised China for reducing the

transparency of its reporting on basic economic data in recent months, and for cracking down on firms in China that had been providing such data, calling their behaviour irresponsible. He said that the U.S. had seen less openness and transparency in China's reporting of youth unemployment and other data, while preventing other firms from publishing information on the "puts and takes in the Chinese economy."

If not crisis, loss of momentum

Western media which had celebrated China's rise as unstoppable; is now saying that Beijing's growth story is over and described its model as a failure. Whether true or not, what is clear is that whether in a state of crisis or not, the Chinese economy has lost momentum. But trusting its own relentless rise, the Chinese leadership has taken high and tough positions in global affairs which may make things worse, certainly not better for China and particularly its economy. The geo-political advantages that made China rise now seem to be working against it. Chinese stagnation and possible decline, with the kind of integration of its financial and real economy with the world and vice versa, can also leave an impact on the world also. The coming months will provide an answer as to where China stands within and outside and where the world stands vis-a-vis China

Xi's reversal of Deng's Get Rich policy

The Chinese economy is undoubtedly facing tough headwinds now. One background for the headwinds is the conflict that started between the market capitalist drive of the economy and the Marxist state architecture, with the former slowly emerging in power and influence. The Marxist state's fear of the emergence of the power of wealth manifested in President XI Jinping clamping down on Chinese corporate and personal wealth built around equity and debt-raising abroad. This move coincided with the Zero-Covid policy stagnating the economy at home and Covid-19 pandemic striking the world outside. Xi thought of it as an opportune moment to subdue the power of wealth. This was a clear and explicit reversal of decades of high-yielding friendliness between Marx and Market that the Chinese system had fostered since the days when Deng Xiao Ping gave the "Let us get rich" call to the Chinese. With the Communist rulers in China obviously fearing that the powerful rich could also outshine if not threaten the Marxist party structure itself, the Communist psyche of seeing the rich as the enemy – that Deng had put aside to put China on the growth path – seems to have re-manifested itself in China.

Xi miscalculated?

The brute Covid containment measures [which had to be given up by XI Jinping at a huge political cost to himself] and the thrust against wealth building which was the foundation of decades of China's rise since the days of Deng Xiao Ping, has set the stage for reassertion of Marxist autocracy within China. To camouflage this, the Chinese leadership sold the idea of re-rise of [what he called as] the 5000-year old ancient civilisation to the Chinese people, saying that this was the moment for China's rise in the world where the West is declining. Ironically it was this very 5000-year-old civilisation which, in the 1960s-70s, the Chinese government through its Cultural Revolution, wanted destroyed without trace. Though Xi ambitiously predated Chinese civilisation as 5000-years-old to rank it at par with Indian civilisation, somewhere, the Chinese have miscalculated.

Somewhere, the calculations of the Chinese leadership that China's rise is unstoppable and so is the decline of the West, seem to have gone wrong.

Before we end, it may be worthwhile to examine whether Xi Jinping's efforts to reinstitute a Mao-like grip over the Chinese system is beginning to get diminishing returns because of totalitarian politics and economics that had yielded high returns in the past.

Diminishing Returns of Totalitarianism?

In the post-Cold War global order, totalitarian China, a non-transparent and Marxist economy at the core, got disproportionate returns in the transparent world market courtesy of the West and the WTO mechanism, and added unprecedented national wealth in the last two decades. But given its position in world affairs today, including economy, trade and finance, and its claims to be not just an alternative model, but a more efficient model than the West, Xi Jinping's management of Covid and the wealth effect in the Chinese economy seems to indicate that the totalitarian Chinese model might have begun yielding diminishing returns.

Xi Jinping's Zero Covid management policy, a determined effort to show to the world that the more efficient Chinese system could overcome and defeat the Covid pandemic, while the rest of the world failed, was possible only because of China's totalitarianism. But that totalitarian action has undeniably proved to be an unmitigated disaster. In the end, XI Jinping who had staked his entire reputation within and outside China on the Zero Covid guarantee had to go back on it and allow the Chinese to face the pandemic like

the rest of the world. The Covid casualties of China, of course not known, is said to be far higher than in other countries. A direct consequence of the totalitarian Zero Covid policy has been the decline of the high performing Chinese economy. Post-Covid, unlike India, China's economic growth has not picked up. On the contrary, it is staring at stagnation and even an economic stress it has not seen in the last two decades. Result, China has neither been able to contain Covid nor sustain its growth. Added to that, its management of this national tragedy has become a laughing stock both in and outside China. Had it not been an autocracy, XI Jinping could not have attempted that misadventure. A direct and instructive contrast to the non-transparent and totalitarian China way of handling the Covid pandemic was the transparent and highly successful way democratic Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi handled the pandemic. Democratic India's Covid management has been hailed the world over, while the Chinese model is regarded as a disaster.

The next is how totalitarian China, apprehending the risk of dominance of the rich and successful business icons over the party and the government, handled the wealth effect of Chinese corporates particularly those which had immense access to cheap global capital. By a stroke of his pen, XI Jinding denied access to tech companies accessing global capital. That resulted in a huge loss of stock market wealth and turned off the tap on unfettered foreign capital which had put China on an escalator that made it reach the No.2 spot in the global economy. This kind of action would not also have been possible but for China being a totalitarian power. The Chinese government turned hostile to stock market generated wealth at a time when its private sector housing economy, which was dependent on foreign capital, equity and debt, was stagnating and declining. China was milking global capital showcasing its huge rise as an economy. It was in a sense monetising its economic growth in the global capital market which had raised a rich class with fame and influence that could threaten the political class. But the sudden and hostile action against wealth, without adequate information on the need for it or its effect, also increased the stress in the housing economy which is now burdened with unsold home stock of over \$11 trillion.

These two disastrous actions were rooted in the very totalitarian political and economic power – mutually supporting each other – which made China rise as a global economic giant. Why did Xi Jinping's venture into these two high risk courses proved to be a disaster? The answer is to be found in the socio economic thesis of Amartya Sen who compared the Great China Famine of late 1960s, which killed 30 million people, with the few Kalahandi hunger deaths in India. Sen's thesis was that millions who died unknown in China was because of autocracy, whereas in India, the media would splash the news of even a

single death in Kalahandi, grinding Parliament to a halt so that food would be airlifted to Kalahandi. The difference between India and China was simply this. In a democratic India, free information flow would trigger the government into immediate action, while in totalitarian China, information would not flow freely. The spread of a pandemic-like Covid and its management needed transparent information which a democracy ensures and an autocracy denies. With the result, Chinese autocracy could not judge the impact of either the spread of Covid or, the impact of its Zero Covid policy. Likewise in the case of hostile actions against stock market based wealth, only the information flow from the market can warn the government about the impact of such an action. The totalitarian Chinese system is prone to be stymied by the lack of reliable information. Autocracy is prone to misinform it self and others as there is no scope for alternative sources of information. Given the scale of today's China's economy, trade and finance and its integration with the world and the global acceptance and geopolitical leadership which China aspires for, whether it is non-transparent and totalitarian system, which enabled its economic rise, and will continue to yield the high returns, is doubtful. Actually given how China [mis]managed the Covid pandemic and the wealth effect of its corporates, it appears that the increasing returns of China from its totalitarian order may, with China's scale of economy trade and finance and given the lead role it aspires in global affairs, face the risk of turning into diminishing returns.

Finally, let us turn to where India stands in world affairs post- the Russia-Ukraine War

India in a post-Ukraine world

In the overall background of where the world is and where India stands in it, India has unique advantages which it has to leverage strategically.

Democratic with no agenda to democratise the world

India is a democracy, but unlike Western countries, it has no agenda to democratise the world. It leaves every country to have the governance model suited to it. This is where India differs from the universalism of the West. And, other countries know that India will not interfere in their governance model. India can have close relations with other countries, whether totalitarian or democratic. It has a long history of close relations with Russia from the days of Communist Soviet Union to present day Russia, which has been recognised even by the US in the context of India taking a neutral position on Russia's war with Ukraine. Democratic India is systemically closer to the democratic West.

West Needs India

However, the West seems to have realised the need to translate its systemic closeness into political closeness only after the outbreak of the war. In the past, a democratic West ritually emphasised the common commitment of itself and India to democracy, but never moved beyond that. Its think tanks and other institutions used to – as even now they do – consistently run down the quality of Indian democracy. The sudden realisation of the West that India is systemically closer to it is a contextual necessity. The rise of totalitarian China – which the democratic US/West worked hard to promote – has challenged the US/West authored world order in which the liberal democratic West and its allies constitute just 13% of world's population. For the first time, the US/West seems to be looking at the number of humans supporting or opposing them rather than at the number of countries supporting or opposing them. In a world of numbers, the democratic West is far outnumbered without India. More than half the world is under autocracy. Adding India to Western democracies a third of the world is only under democracy. In a world where the West is not the leader, it will be a minuscule minority. The West needs India now more than ever.

Not just two blocs, but too many

Despite the vastly different world that has emerged in the last several decades, the US/West would still like to see the world as bipolar – democracies and autocracies. But the West itself knows that it is too simple a formulation for the post-Ukraine outbreak world. With the rise of middle powers, which consist of both totalitarian and democratic nations, the emerging world is confusingly multipolar.

Legitimacy to national interest

In a world divided into not two blocs -- democratic and totalitarian -- like the two way division during the Cold War days – but in multiple ways, India's position is vastly different from its position in the days of the Cold War non-alignment. India's courageous stand in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, has provided an opportunity to choose to align and not align with anyone, based on issues and aligning its national interests with its geopolitical position. Now, India will have to play its cards strategically in line with its core interests.

Fortunately, post the war, the world seems to have come to terms with the fact that a nation will always legitimately act in its interest, without of course being hostile to other

nations. Before the Ukraine outbreak, acting in one's national interest was the privilege of just a few powerful countries. In the absence of an effective global order, acting in one's national interest without harming any other nation is now the new principle in geopolitics. This is the outcome of the diffusion in global power and the emergence of middle powers. Indian political, diplomatic and strategic establishments will have to transform themselves for a demanding mission ahead.

Promoting theocratic Pakistan

As democratic India is being wooed by a democratic West, a brief recall of the troubled past India had had particularly with the West, particularly with the US, will show how the West has been hypocritical and hostile to India. It will be an instructive recall.

The democratic US/West in the past has been utterly unfair to a democratic India. The West, as it has confessed now, was hypocritical about its professed commitment to democracy, liberalism and human rights. It first promoted and sustained against India the autocratic, theocratic and continuously failing state of Pakistan for its own Cold War goals, which had nothing to do with any of the professed ideals of the West. That imposed heavy financial and geopolitical costs on India, impeding its growth and development for decades. Despite the all-out support of the US, Pakistan continued to fare and fail miserably. It could not even remain united and caused the worst genocide that cost three million lives, and the rape of hundreds of thousands of women, which the US shamelessly condoned. The US even moved its 7th Fleet to threaten India out of the "Liberation War" that led to the creation of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh which emerged with India's intervention and in spite of US opposition is doing better than [West] Pakistan that was ever closer to Washington. and vice versa. Post the 1971 War, Pakistan became an open ally of the US in Afghanistan. In the 1980s and 1990s, Pakistan began using state-sponsored terror as an instrument of foreign policy to bleed India. The US turned a blind eye to it and covertly, even overtly, lent geopolitical support to Pakistan. It was only during the Kargil War of 1999 that the US understood that there was no unified command in Pakistan and that the army of that country had defied a civilian government to start a war. It began moderating its blind support to Pakistan. The near blind support given by the US to Pakistan began waning after Pakistan's role in the 9/11 terror attack, though it still designated Pakistan a major non-NATO ally in 2004. Finally, it lost faith in Pakistan after it found Osama Bin Laden "in the bedroom" of its close ally. Thus seems to have ended, at least in the present context, the long US love for and preference for Pakistan over India. This is not to say that

in its own interest the US would not try to indirectly or even directly use Pakistan to stymie India emerging in its own right.

Promoting Totalitarian China

Coming to China, the US had to promote it to repay the debt it owed to Beijing for partnering Washington to break the Soviet Union. It condoned the Tiananmen Square massacre, began positively engaging with totalitarian China and provided the greatest opportunity for its rise. From the 1970s through the 1990s, democratic US began increasingly engaging and supporting China. It was hostile to India in every possible way. Later, despite China not being a market economy, the US admitted China into the WTO, which was created only for market economies. That provided the fastest route for China's rise to the position of challenging the US itself. How China achieved this miraculous rise has been explained in great detail in the Random Thoughts 2021. For 22 years, no American President visited India after Jimmy Carter in 1978. US Presidents instead undertook visits to totalitarian China and ignored democratic India.

Will the US feel guilty?

At no point did the US keep scales even between India or either of its known adversaries – Pakistan and China. On the contrary, the US directly and indirectly promoted and was mutually supportive of the latter. Its conduct was explicitly hypocritical. The US ideological partnership with Pakistan ended in a disastrous geopolitical failure. Its strategic partnership with China raised a Frankenstein monster against it and India, which has a 4000-km-long border with it. The US must feel guilty. Can India make the US feel guilty? India must make the US feel guilty in private.

Post Pokhran, India stood up, rose

India bore the full brunt of Cold War hostility. The US imposed tough financial and technological sanctions on India for the 1998 Pokhran atomic explosion. India's stubborn resistance against Washington and its rise, made the US to relook at India. Standing up to US/West hostility for decades and countering Pakistan and China whom the US was supporting, India rose through its own efforts, partnerships and strategies. Notwithstanding post Pokhran sanctions, India began faring exceptionally well. Its rise between 1999-2004, with an average GDP growth of over 5.6%, adding 60 million jobs in five years, with low inflation and two successive years of current account surplus aggregating to \$20 billion

after 25 years of continuous current account deficits – all without any significant FDI – made western financial experts look at India as an internally driven economy. With India rising more through its inherent and internal strength rather than by external impetus, like China did in the initial stages, the US could not but look at India positively. Relations between the two improved significantly post the Indo-US nuclear pact of 2009.

As the West Introspects, what should India do?

The engagement between the US and India has resulted in Washington distancing itself partially from Pakistan's hostile positions against India. Later, when the Trump Administration started targeting China, the US attitude to India has become increasingly friendly. Finally the impact of the Covid pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine War has changed the grammar and balance of Indo-US relations. Given the set back to the liberal world caused by the war, the US-led democratic West needs India more than ever to maintain global balance in favour of democracies at least for the present. If the MSC deliberations cited earlier are any clue, the West seems to realise that it has to rethink and remake the global order. The West, as the MSC deliberations indicate, seems reasonably clear that an exclusively West-centric world order will not work for the future and that this world order has to be more inclusive. It means that the West cannot continue to impose its values, but has to accommodate other civilisations and cultures. As the West rethinks, what should India do?

Act in the national interest

India has already begun playing its cards strategically. After it refused to fall in line with the West on Ukraine, it began buying Russian oil, risking the possibility of attracting Western sanctions to it. India's stand on condemning Russia was accepted by the US, citing her long-standing friendly ties with Moscow, a new principle recognised by Washington. India's decision to buy oil was also accepted as being in her national interest, again a new principle accepting that non-western nations can also act in their self-interest. India has to expand on these areas of acting in national interest, which are now acceptable in the western world view to other areas.

Make UDHR subordinate to culture

The US establishment and discourse still uses human rights and religious freedom issues as political projects to help narrate India in the global discourse as an illiberal

democracy, even positioning it as a semi-autocracy. India must strategically leverage its unique position to negotiate out of this clash on human rights and related issues with the US and the West. Human rights should be limited to fundamental rights guaranteed by the state to its citizens and enforceable by the latter against the former. The UDHR should not be extended to enforceable rights of individuals against and disturb families and communities. The UDHR must be made subordinate to culture, unlike culture being subordinate to the UDHR under the Cultural Diversity Convention today.

Integrate civilisational diversity in world order

India has to impress upon the US and the West in general that the future world order has to be inclusive of the civilisational and cultural aspirations of all nations, and not just centered on trade and finance. It cannot be a one size fits all model. India can deploy its undoubtedly great but untapped civilisational assets in showing the way for universal peace and harmony. The time seems ripe now as the West is admitting to its inadequacies and is willing to correct the contemporary world order.

In *Random Thoughts 2021*, we had explained in detail the civilisational paradigm emerging in geopolitics. We had then pointed out that Communist China, which had sworn to destroy all civilisational connect with the past through the Cultural Revolution as late as in the 1970s, has now begun recalling its 5000-year-old civilisation as a relevant guide for its future.

Leverage on India's non-conflicting civilisational assets

The rethinking of the West provides opportunities for India. India has the unique advantage of being a democracy, a secular nation with deep religious consciousness. In his Brookings essay, Bradford says that even religion will play a significant role in future world order, pointing out that four G20 nations are explicitly religious. India's main religion – Hinduism -- unlike other religions accepts and tolerates other religions.

India has huge non-conflicting civilisational assets that it can strategically leverage on. With the world order drifting, India must press for aligning the emerging world order with the help of the ancient inclusive Indian philosophy that Swami Vivekananda expounded at Chicago in 1893. This will need a paradigm shift in Indian strategic and diplomatic education models. The Indian establishment, which has been a willing consumer of foreign ideas for a long time, will now have to turn into a contributor of ideas for a world

clearly running out of ideas. The Indian strategic and diplomatic communities need to unlearn quite a bit of the old things and acquire new knowledge and skills to seize unique advantages.

India has already begun leveraging on the high values of its ancient civilisation. As the G20 leader, India has presented itself as a civilisational continuum for millennia and not as a yesterday affair. The philosophy of “Vasudaiva Kutumbakam”, which India has made the mascot of its G20 drive, is almost 5000-years-old and yet a living idea. It is a huge non-conflicting and inclusive civilisational asset that it can strategically leverage on.

With the world order drifting, India must press for aligning the emerging world order with the ancient inclusive Indian philosophy Swami Vivekananda expounded at Chicago. This will need a paradigm shift in strategic and diplomatic instruction and practice. The Indian establishment must now turn into a contributor of ideas for a world that is clearly running out of ideas.

To conclude

The issues and topics discussed here are contextual, selective, illustrative and not at all exhaustive in terms of a comprehensive overview of the state of the world today. The stunning developments that keep unfolding post the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine War, continue to shock the world. It needs continuous and multidimensional tracking to get a comprehensive view.

Team VIF is working on such a comprehensive document and as mentioned earlier, it will soon present its understanding and exposition of the future of the contemporary world and its drifting order, including, where, in our view, it is headed and what we see as the role and contribution of the present and emerging players, including India, in the new world.





I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see.

*But one vision I see clear as life before me: that bharat mata has
awakened once more, sitting on Her throne rejuvenated,
more glorious than ever.*

Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace & benediction.

– Swami Vivekananda



About VIF

The aim and purpose of founding the VIF was to bring about a paradigm shift in the national and global discourse in India. VIF is a non-partisan independent think tank focusing on the study of contemporary India – its international relations, security problems, governance, and civilisational issues from an Indian perspective. Monitoring emerging trends, it aims at engaging experts, both within and outside the Foundation, to evolve informed policy options and work out alternative strategies. Through public discourse and interactions, it strives to create greater awareness among people and partner with civil society to make people vital stakeholders in national affairs.

Some of India's leading experts in the fields of security, diplomacy, governance and economy have got together under the aegis of the Foundation to generate ideas

and stimulate action that could lead to India's all-round empowerment and its ability to contribute to regional and global security and stability. Independently funded, VIF is not aligned to any political party, religious group or business house.

Trust Deed of the VIF prohibits it from accepting any donations from foreign sources other than the people from Indian origin who are associated with the organisation. VIF has not received any foreign donation till date since its inception.

Dedicated to India's long-term strategic, developmental and civilisational interests, it aims to ideate on fresh approaches and channelise them to those responsible for managing the affairs of the nation on the one hand and people at large on the other.

VIF works under the guidance of a Trust

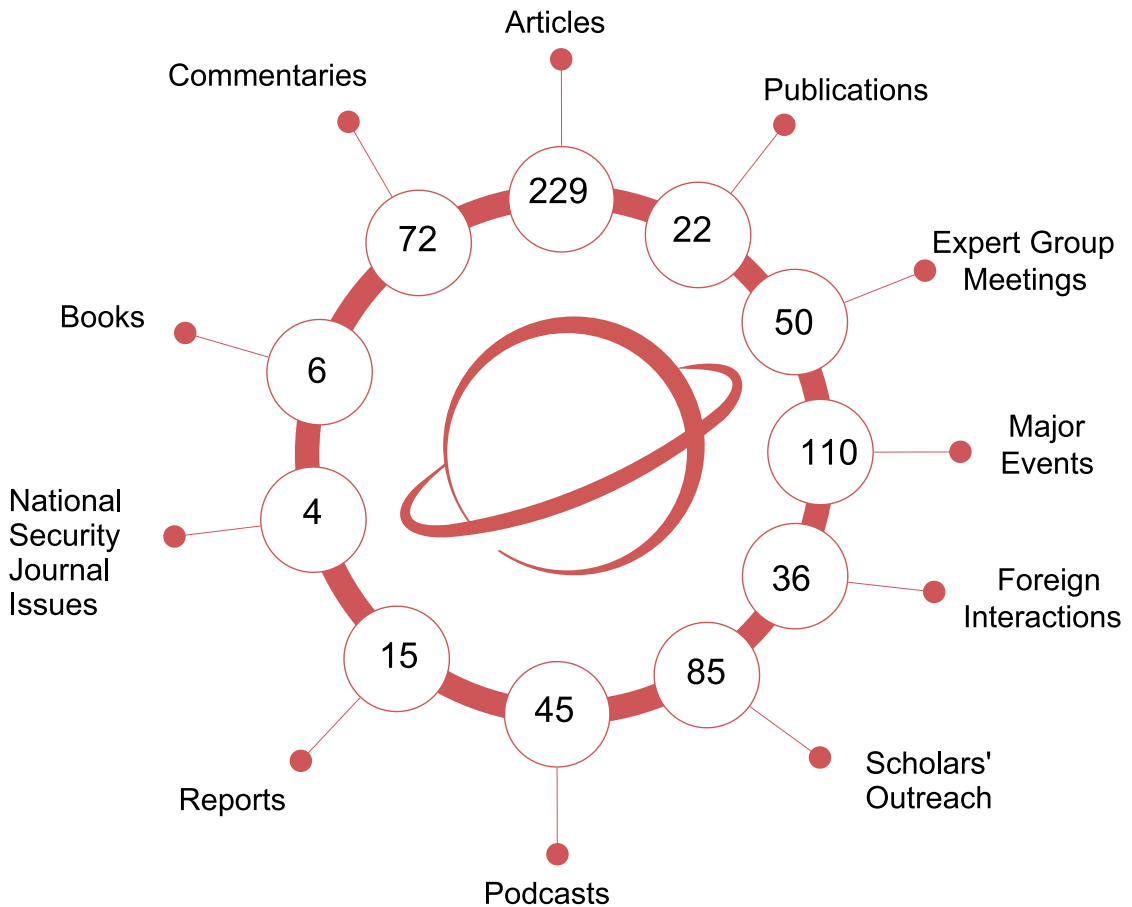
with eminent people in public life as its Trustees. It has an Advisory Council and an Executive Committee comprising of distinguished persons from diverse fields with high professional accomplishments and long experience.

The Director is the Chief Executive of the Foundation and is nominated by the Trust.

Objectives

- **Analyse** India's external and internal security environment to offer effective inputs to shape policies and response strategies.
- **Offer** policy alternatives to contain internal conflicts caused by India's socio-economic disparities and political rivalries.
- **Ideate** on economic policies and models that would facilitate the well-being and prosperity of one and all.
- **Interact** with civil society and offer institutional support for exchange of ideas among conflicting groups.
- **Deliberate** on public policies, the working of national institutions and democratic bodies, and suggest measures for their revival and rejuvenation.
- **Evolve** benchmarks for good governance and efficiency in public institutions.
- **Reassess, formulate and develop** India's civilisational and cultural imperatives in an increasingly globalised world.
- **Promote** initiatives that further the cause of peace and global harmony.

Annual Outcomes



Website

2067611
Views

36668
Downloads

804648
Visitors



Twitter

1382500
Impressions



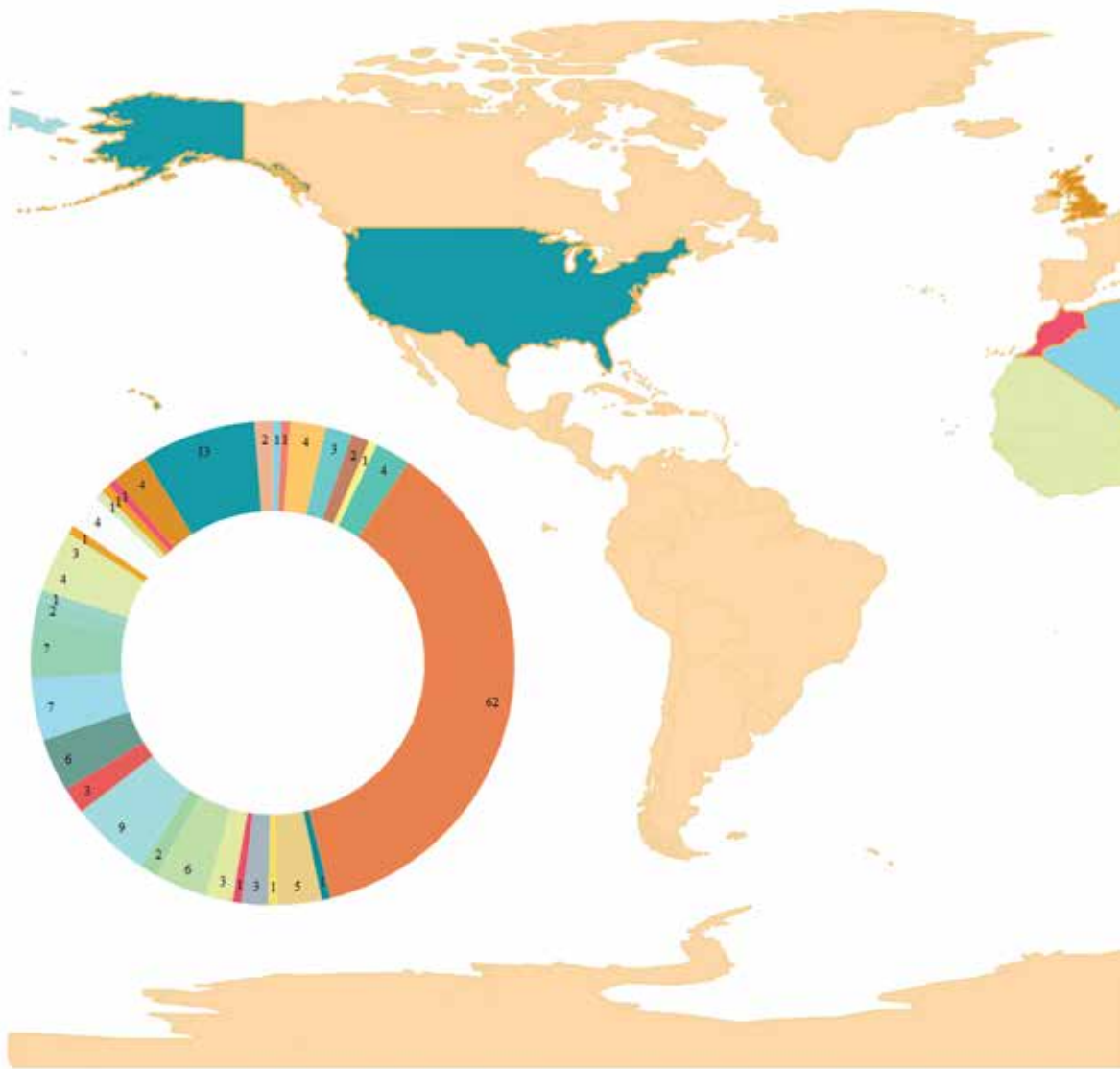
Facebook

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Impressions

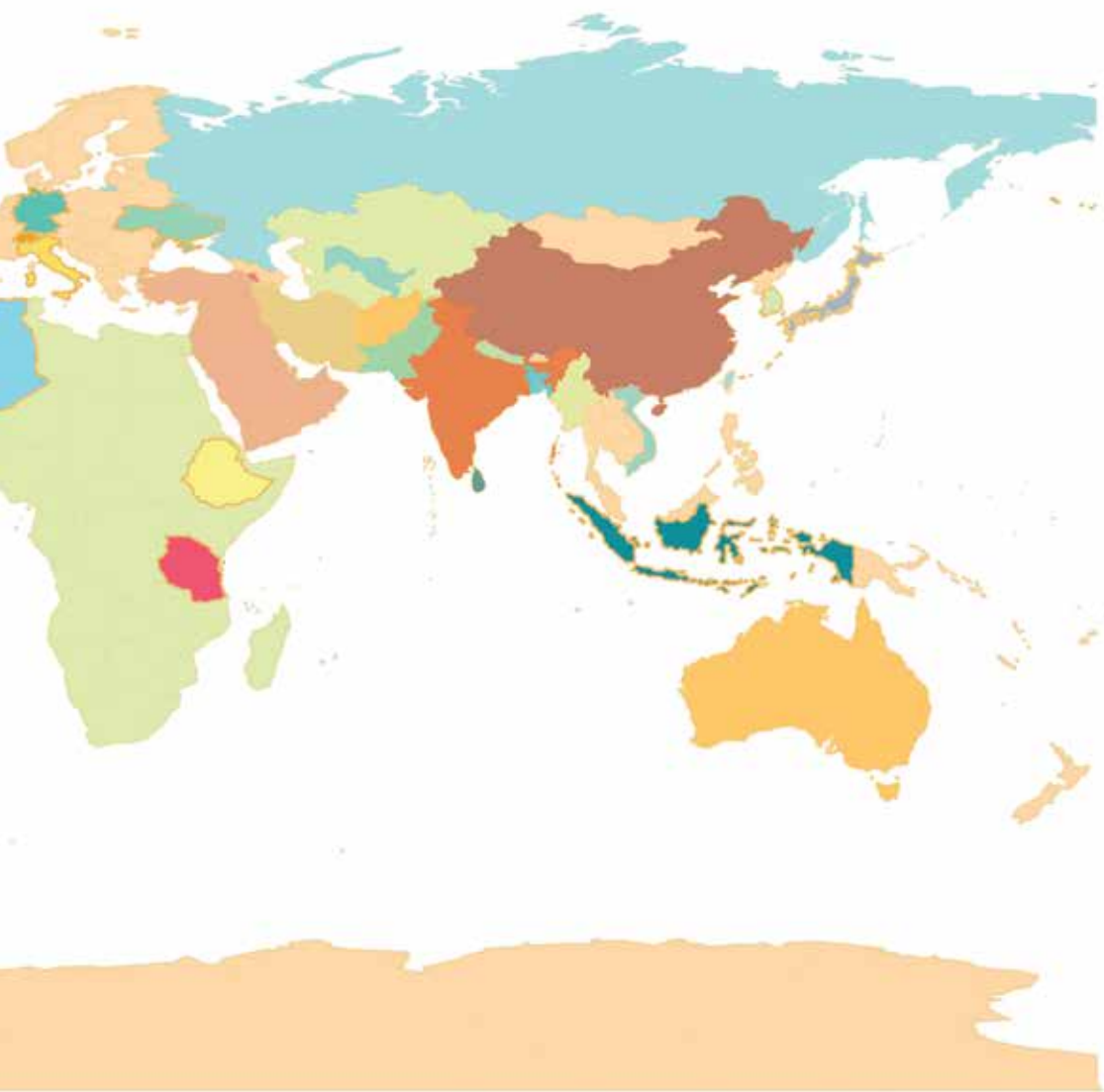


Youtube

6.2K
Hours watched
on Channel



Algeria	1	Armenia	1	Australia	4	Bangladesh	1	China	13	Ethiopia	1	Germany	7	India	12	Indonesia	1	Iran	1	Italy	5	Japan	6	Mexico	2	Myanmar	1	Nepal	1	Pakistan	1	Russia	3
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Europe	1	North America	6	Texas	7	Ukraine	7	Uzbekistan	2	Vietnam	1	Africa	4	Central Asia	1	Georgia	1	Indo-Pacific	4	South Korea	1	Indonesia	1	Tanzania	1	UK	4	US	13	West Asia	2
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Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders

Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this.

Put yourselves to the task. Lord bless you.

– Swami Vivekananda



From the Director's Desk

There is no end in sight to the Russia-Ukraine war, which has dominated global developments during the year 2022-23. With the induction of heavy weaponry worth tens of billions of dollars into Ukraine from over 50 countries and Russia continuing to attack Ukraine's infrastructure, the war itself is transforming into an extremely messy and dangerous conflict. India has navigated the political, economic and social turbulence caused by the Russia-Ukraine war reasonably well, but the impact of it globally will continue.

India's global profile rose appreciably as it assumed the presidency of G-20 and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). India's two-year tenure at the UNSC ended with it organising topical debates on multilateralism and combatting terrorism. India brought a sharp international focus on the need to combat terrorism as it organised historic meeting of the UN Counter Terrorism Committee, a meeting of the Interpol General Council and an international conference based on the theme 'No Money No Terror'. Members of the UN Counter Terrorism Committee were taken to the Taj Hotel in Mumbai, which was attacked by Pakistani terrorists in 2008. Both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister participated in these conferences.

Maintaining a growth rate of seven percent, the Indian economy showed considerable resilience as it recovered from the disruption caused by Covid-19 and resumed its growth trajectory. The RBI and the government, through concerted action, were able to prevent a sharp decline in rupee-dollar rates and manage inflation caused by high-energy prices

and supply chain disruptions.

By adhering to its national interests and following a nimble foreign policy guided by the principle of strategic autonomy, India was able to steer its way in a challenging international environment. By not calling out Russia openly and sending out a clear signal to President Putin that this should not be “an era of wars”, India articulated a position that resonated with many countries who are not a party to the war, but been impacted by weaponised sanctions. India took the opportunity to mobilise the Global South by organising a virtual summit of leaders of 120 developing nations ahead of the G-20 Summit. All these demonstrable initiatives have helped improve India’s image. At the same time, India needs to be conscious of elements who are increasingly exploiting various academic, media and social media platforms to malign her image. The focus in US and Western academia circles to equate ‘caste’ with ‘race’ is one such example. There were indications of concerted efforts being made to fan anti-Hindu phobia in many countries. The well-organised anti-Hindu riots in Leicester (UK) was a testimony to this worrying trend. The book, ‘Snakes in Ganga’ by Shri Rajiv Malhotra, which was released at the VIF, documents such trends in Western academic circles. He also delivered a Vimarsh talk titled ‘The Seven Tectonic Forces Undermining India and How to confront and Defeat them’. Khalistani forces, supported by Pakistan’s ISI, have also become active in several countries. India will have to deal with these worrying trends.

India cannot but be affected by the growing instability in the neighbourhood, particularly with regard to developments in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Myanmar and Afghanistan. India rose to the occasion by providing USD 4.2 billion in assistance to Sri Lanka, which is passing through its worst economic crisis since 1948 and is faced with a considerably high debt payment default, inflation, shortages and acute social unrest, leading to the fleeing of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. India’s timely assistance stabilised the Sri Lankan economy and saved it from collapse. India proved once again that it is the first responder to a neighbour in difficulty, irrespective of relationship status.

While Xi Jinping emerged as the undisputed leader of the Communist Party of China after the 20th Party Congress, the Chinese economy remained in considerable difficulty, first due to the harsh zero Covid policies of the party and later due to a sudden opening up, which led to the massive spread of the virus across the country. US-China tensions rocketed during the year. India would have to be extremely vigilant vis-à-vis China and focus on building its military and economic capability. The serious transgression of the LAC at Yangtze in Arunachal Pradesh (December 2022) was a matter of deep worry for India. In the numerous VIF discussions, an objective view of opportunities and challenges

in the complex geopolitical geo-economics and security environment was taken.

VIF's Activities

Our activities during the year were focused on analysing recent developments, generating policy alternatives, engaging with a wide range of stakeholders in the government and civil society, and assessing policy options for India. Apart from foreign policy, defence and national security, we also enhanced our work on history, civilisation and culture in order to build an Indian narrative on contemporary issues. The VIF shared its output with the government in a variety of ways, including through meetings, publications and correspondence.

Expert Groups

The VIF had started several expert group discussions on the US, EU, West Asia, Strategic, Africa, Indo-Pacific, etc. during the time of Covid. Their output has been reflected in the monthly reports put out on our website. This year we started some new groups to cover the neighbourhood, Eurasia, Geo-economics, Africa, Climate Change and Cyber Security. We revived the Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam group of experts on soft power. This will link up with the G-20 overarching theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam.

Main activities of the VIF: Highlights

The following table provides a glimpse of VIF's activities during the period from April 2022 to March 2023:

Descriptions	Number
Books	6
Monographs	1
VIF Briefs, Papers & Reports	20
Task Force Reports	15
Articles and Commentaries	301
Articles by Scholars published outside of the VIF	85
Podcasts	45

Descriptions	Number
Videos	47
VIF's quarterly journal National Security	04
Global Developments & Analysis Digest and Africa Now	Weekly
China Daily Digest & Neighbourhood News Digest	Daily
International Development & Defense, National Security and Terrorism Digest	Fortnightly
Seminars, Conferences & Interactions	120
Collaborative Seminars	16
Vimarsh Talks	10
New Books added to Library	660 (Books)
E-resources (e-books, articles, Op-ed, digests, occasional papers from various sources)	2762
Entries in VIF Database	619
Tweets Issued	1,256
Followers on Twitter	27,200
Followers on Facebook	12,000
Website hits (Cumulative)	8,04,676
Existing Experts Group	7
New Experts Group	8

During the year, the VIF arranged several lectures and talks by experts, including diplomats, academics and professionals. The ambassadors of Nepal, Algeria, Russia, Armenia, Iran, Ethiopia, Morocco, Indonesia, Germany and Italy also addressed the strategic community at the VIF. We also had the pleasure of inviting Indian ambassadors to Sri Lanka, PMI Geneva and Secretary (East), and these interactions provided deep insights into India's relations and diplomatic initiatives with other countries. An Iranian delegation led by a high official from the Supreme Leader's Office visited the VIF for an interfaith dialogue. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh spoke at the VIF on "Promoting

Culture of Peace for Shared Prosperity: A Vision for South Asia”. Delegations from Hungary, Uzbekistan, Taiwan and the UK visited the VIF for interactions.

Outreach

Two VIF delegations led by the Director visited Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, where they met a wide cross-section of society, including leading politicians, officials, business representatives, security experts and people from other walks of life. VIF experts were invited by the Governments of Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, etc. for high-level conferences.

Publications

The VIF has a strong publication programme. During the year, we published books on Afghanistan: Through the Fog of Instability (Ed. RK Sawhney), Revisiting Myanmar’s Present through Its Past (Ed. Brig Vinod Anand, Cchavi Vashisht), Pakistan Insights (Ed. Tilak Devasher), Evolving Security Dynamic in West Asia and India’s Challenges (Ed. Anil Trigunayat), China in the Cyber Domain (Ed. PK Mallick), Maharaja Raja Ranjit Singh (RNP Singh), Vedic Prayers for Global Peace and Universal Well-being (Shashi Prabha Kumar), India’s Contribution to World Thought and Culture (Edited abridged edition). Eminent authors have contributed to these books.

Apart from the traditional focus on security and foreign policy, the VIF emphasised culture and civilisation in its publications. The VIF believes in cultural nationalism embedded in the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and others. The book Vedic Prayers for Global Peace and Universal Well-being by Prof Shashi Prabha Kumar is a compilation of over a hundred Vedic prayers for peace and welfare, respect for the environment. A unique effort by the VIF. It is hoped that the book will help promote human values in international relations. The book on India’s Contribution to World Thought Culture is an abridged version of the original edition that was published by Vivekananda Kendra in 1971.

Stressing the importance of civilisational values in foreign policy, the VIF has held a series of events in the past on the theme of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam. It was heartening to note that the government chose Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam as the overall theme of India’s G-20 presidency (2022-23). The VIF held a panel discussion of G-20 and the Global South and also had a discussion on the relevance of universalism as implied by Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam for the emerging world order.

The VIF has been publishing a quarterly journal, 'National Security', for the past six years. This year we published four issues (theme) Energy and Climate Change, Ukraine Crises, India's G20 presidency, etc.

Vimarsh

Vimarsh is an important platform of the VIF for outreach to the general public. We organised 10 (ten) lectures covering such themes as China, Food, Indo-Pacific, Narcotics, , Jal Shakti Mission, India's G20 Presidency, India's R& D, Maritime Security, etc. Our speakers were Ambassador Ashok Kantha, Distinguished Fellow; Shri Bishow Parajuli, Country Director of the World Food Programme; Shri Sridhar Vembu, founder and CEO of Zoho Corporation; Shri Rajiv Malhotra, CEO Infinity Foundation; Dr A. K. Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, Bangladesh; Shri Bharat Lal, DG National Centre for Good Governance, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, GOI; Admiral R. Hari Kumar PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, the Chief of Naval Staff, etc. We also held a Vimarsh symposium on the theme Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam. This was addressed by Swami Mitrananda of the Chinmaya Mission and Shri S Gurusurthy. A Vimarsh panel discussion on the G20 and the Global South was also held. Leading experts took part in it.

Training Capsule on Strategic Issues

In collaboration with the Army Training Command, the VIF organised a capsule on strategic issues for newly promoted three-star generals of the India Army. Some of our prominent experts spoke to them. This is becoming a major event in the VIF calendar.

Like in the earlier years, the VIF also organised a series of lectures for the resident diplomatic corps and military attachés. A special briefing session was organised on the Kashmir problem for the benefit of resident military attaché. The interaction was greatly appreciated as the resident diplomats do not always get briefing from top experts on issues of India's foreign and security policies.

News Digests

The VIF's various news digests are a record of important developments in different fields. They cover areas such as the Neighbourhood, Arica Now, Defence, National Security and Terrorism, Science and Technology, Cyber, Myanmar, West Asia, China, Global Developments and Analysis etc. The coverage of topics has grown. Digests are helpful to our readers and researchers.

Task Forces

On the request of Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL), the VIF set up a task force of experts which produced a report titled India's Energy Transition in a Carbon Constrained World. IIT Mumbai was requested to do a mathematical modelling to look at scenarios for electricity demand up to 2070. Coordinated by Ambassador D P Srivastava, the task force estimated that the cost of energy transition to Net Zero by 2070 will range from USD 11 trillion to USD 15 trillion, depending upon the policy choices made regarding the energy mix. The task force report was a sequel to VIF's earlier task force report on nuclear energy brought out in 2018. A presentation was made to the Principal Secretary to the PM, Cabinet Secretary, NSA and CEO NITI Aayog to underline the complexity of energy transition to Net Zero Emission by 2070.

Another task force report titled 'Roles and Tasks of India's Defence R&D vis-a-vis USA's RDT & E: A Preliminary Analysis' written by Admiral Raman Puri compared the DRDO's R&D structure with that of the US's R&D organisations. The comparison is helpful to understand the functioning of the DRDO and where it needs to be strengthened.

In collaboration with DRDO, the VIF published a paper titled DRDO An Atamnirbharta: Progress and Challenges, which looked out the recent reforms done by the DRDO in the context of defence R&D.

Given the growing importance of Africa for India, the VIF has also initiated an Africa Expert Group (AEG) under Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia who has considerable experience of the region. The group will bring out a policy brief on India-Africa relations.

New Projects

During the year, the VIF initiated three new projects which would enrich its understanding of India.

Conscious of the motivated depiction of India's credentials in a variety of democracy-related indices brought out by international NGOs, which put India behind theocratic and authoritarian regimes, the VIF has initiated a democracy project which analysed the funding patterns, methodologies and the antecedent of the people behind the institution who bring out such indices.

The discipline of anthropology dominated by Western scholarships, has a deep bias against the "indigenous" people. People of the hills and forests are depicted as backward

and even as ‘savages’. Western colonialists had gone to the extent of violently wiping out “indigenous” peoples and their cultures from the countries that they colonised. This is in complete contrast to the Indian ethos in which people of the hills and forests have been venerated and recognised as producers of knowledge. The Vedas and the philosophical literature originated in the forests. Western anthropology has done enormous harm to the people of hills and forests. These distortions need to be corrected and a Indian narrative on the people of hills and forests needs to be built. An MoU was signed with the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Art (IGNCA) to launch a one-year project to understand the status of the people of hills and forests in Indian civilisation and thinking. This project involves a series of seminars, round table amongst anthropologies, sociologists and experts to bring out the contributions of these people and communities.

Collaboration with counterpart think tanks

During the year, the VIF had a large number of interactions with foreign think tanks. The director led VIF delegation to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for interactions with strategic, political, economic and social communities in these countries. Useful insights were gained. These were shared with the government. The VIF team also held interactions with delegations from Iran, South Korea, UK, Singapore, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Uzbekistan on global, regional and bilateral issues.

Technology

During the year, the VIF sharpened its focus on technology and national security. Mr Sridhar Vembu gave a Vimarsh lecture on the “Technological Aspect of Indian Strategy”. A MoU of cooperation was signed with DRDO to deepen our work on defence technologies. Collaborative events were held jointly with ISpA to support the involvement of the private sector in India’s space sector. VIF also interacted with the Drones Federation of India. Work was also started on a task force under Vice Admiral Raman Puri (retired) which will look at emerging defence R&D systems in India. The cyber security group continued its work on digital technologies. Distinguished Fellow, Dr Gulshan Rai participated in a cyber security conference in Los Angeles organised by the Heritage Foundation.

Indian Space Association (ISpA) was established in 2020 at the initiative of the Prime Minister following the landmark announcement that henceforth India’s space sector will be opened to the private sector. The VIF hosted the first VIF-ISpA roundtable of experts on commercialisation of space at which noted expert Dr Ranjana Kaul gave an illuminating talk. The VIF also hosted the first meeting of the National Advisory Council of ISpA.

Conclusion

One effort has been to keep India's national interests uppermost, promote India's civilisational values and mainstream them into foreign policy and security discourses.

The VIF consistently maintains that India should develop an Indian narrative on key global issues keeping in mind its own national interests as well as global welfare. The G20 gives India an opportunity to do so. A number of specific ideas have been discussed in our meetings.

The VIF has argued for development of the security and socio-economic potential of Andaman-Nicobar Islands, which are critical for India's security.

To mitigate the risks arising from instability in the neighbourhood, India needs to have a comprehensive approach that includes greater political and economic security engagement. In particular, India should seek to enhance its engagements in neighbouring countries and integrate them economically with her economy through more connectivity, enhanced trade and investments. The investment potential in Trincomalee and Mannar region of Sri Lanka should be assessed. Similarly, there can be greater electricity connectivity with Nepal and Sri Lanka.

While the Indo-Pacific has emerged as central to India's security and foreign policies, VIF scholars have also argued in favour of reimagining Eurasia, which is critical to the continental dimension of India's security. Due attention should be given to contributing to the shaping of the SCO agenda in the backdrop of recent developments.

We have also argued for diversification of our foreign policy, particularly, enhancing engagement with Africa.

The New Education Policy (2020) provides for making a hub of education for international students. The VIF organised a roundtable discussion of vice- chancellors to generate specific recommendations on how this can be done.

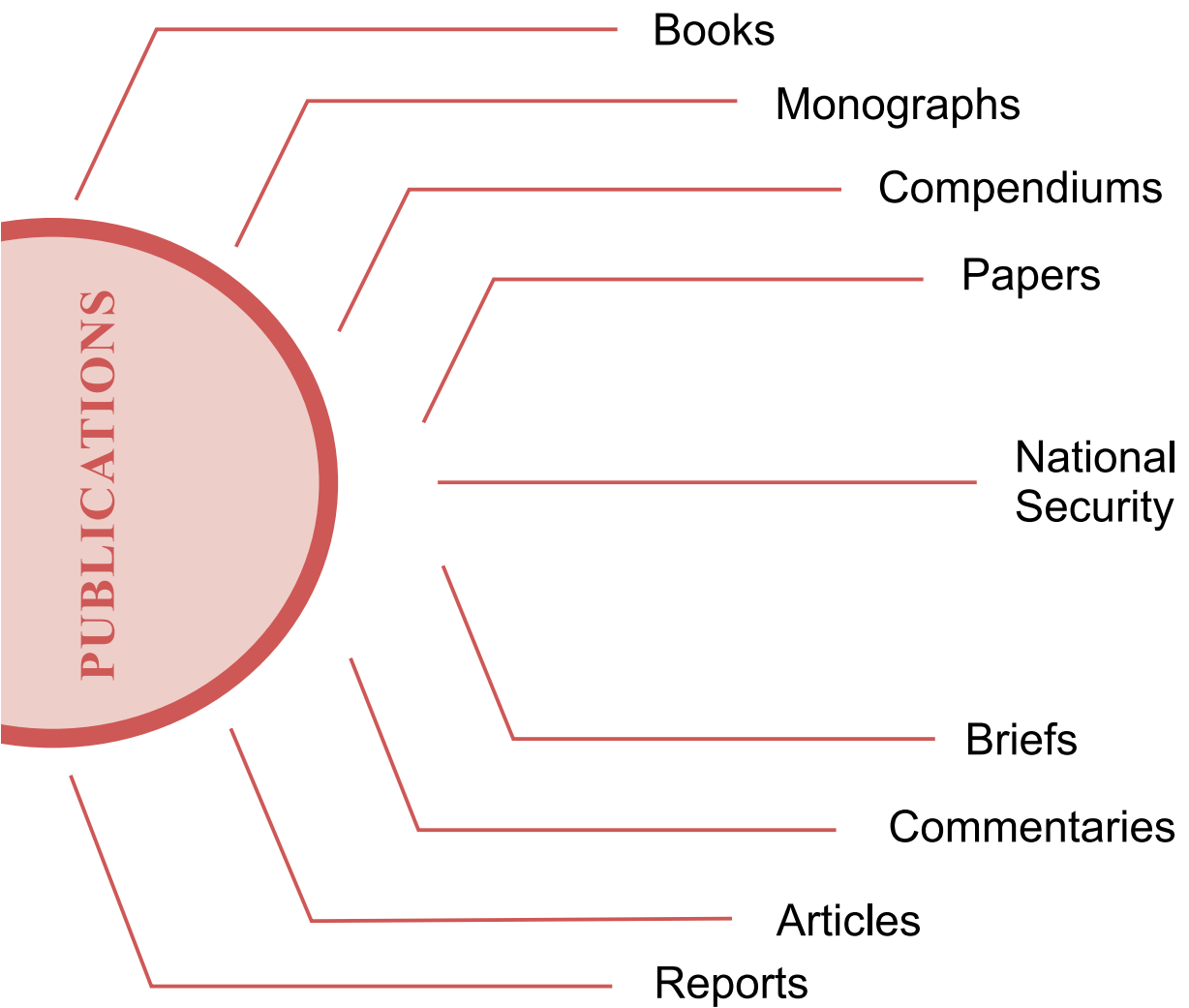
Overall, the VIF maintained a high tempo on its activities accompanied with high quality research, outreach and engagement. A large number of experts deserve our gratitude for agreeing to participate in our activities in a variety of ways. The contribution of the administrative staff to the smooth running of the VIF under Secretary VIF's guidance and supervision is greatly appreciated. The VIF premises was well maintained and kept clean. A mention may be made of our gardeners who kept the VIF in colourful bloom throughout the year.

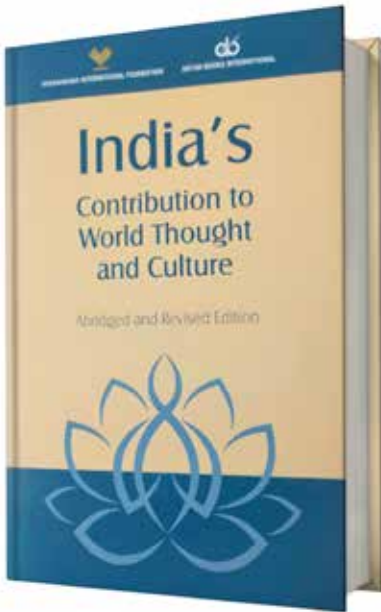
I am also grateful to the guidance provided by the Chairman, the Advisory Board and Distinguished Fellows in our functioning. The VIF activities are multi-disciplinary and have expanded in many areas. A multi-disciplinary approach has led to a vast improvement in our output. In the coming years, we will continue to maintain this high standard of research, analyses and dialogue.



Dr Arvind Gupta, IFS (Retd)
Director, VIF

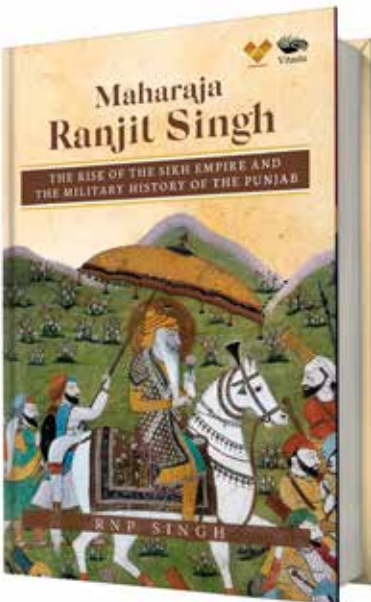
September 2023





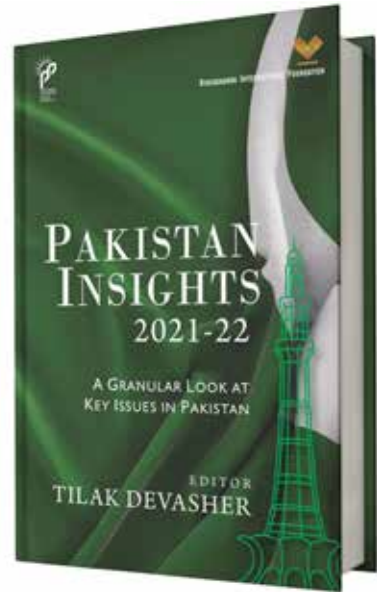
On the occasion of the inauguration of the Swami Vivekananda Rock Memorial in 1970, the Vivekananda Kendra Prakashan Trust had published a book, India's Contribution to World Thought and Culture. However, since then, this subject has remained generally neglected. Recognizing the need to revive this topic in public and academic discussions, Vivekananda International Foundation decided to bring out an abridged version of the original volume. As India begins to reengage with the world, it is essential to conduct deeper research on the spread of India's cultural influence in various parts of the world. It was felt that the volume, in this abridged and revised form, will serve the great purpose of highlighting the importance of India's contribution to global thought and culture which is often either not known or deliberately ignored. It will especially make the present generation aware of what India was and enable them to relate it with the India of today and will serve as a resource book for lay readers and young students

alike. The volume will also be of great use to the diplomatic community in India and abroad. It is hoped that the present volume will help us assess India's seminal role in world civilization.

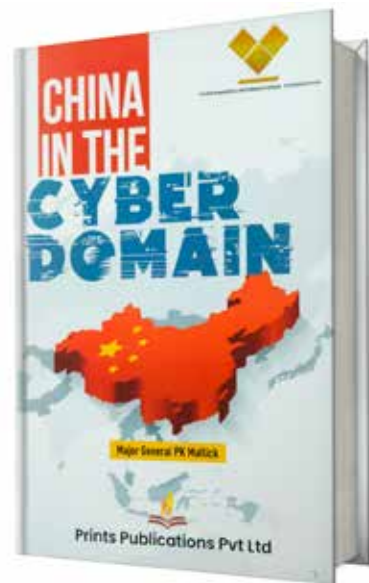


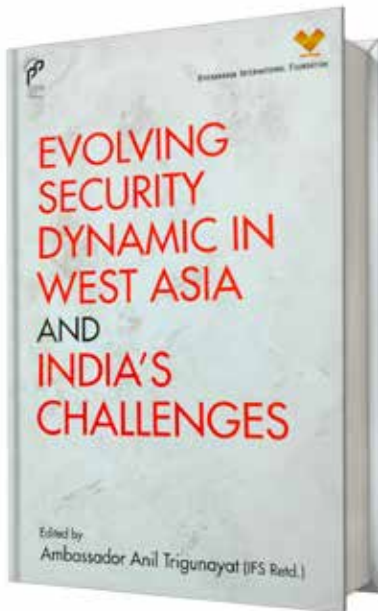
Ranjit Singh was the most adventurous, audacious, and sagacious ruler of the Indian subcontinent since Chandragupta Maurya. Like the Kohinoor he wore, he was a gem among rulers. He abolished the death sentence and created a new empire based on principles of statecraft. In the 1770s, the Punjab was sixty-eight pieces of a wild and prosperous land inhabited by a brutal and querulous people making a living by plunder even as invasion after invasion from the north-west frontier trampled it. Ranjit Singh stemmed these Afghan raids by capturing all the passes on the Hindu Kush and wresting from Kabul the fairest of its provinces. In his fourth biographical work, RNP Singh brings our readers this incredible life story of a self-made Maharaja who became the last bastion of a free India in the 1830s.

PAKISTAN INSIGHTS 2021-22 is the third in the 'Pakistan Insights' series brought out by the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) to deepen the understanding of Pakistan. Ideas for the various chapters are based on the discussions held in the Pakistan Study Group that was set up in February 2018 in the VIF. Pakistan Insights 2021-22 takes a granular look at some of the critical issues facing Pakistan. The book begins with a look at the recent developments in Pakistan including the ousting of Prime Minister Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion and the challenges before the new Shehbaz Sharif-led government; an overview of developments in Pakistan in 2021-22; internal developments and civil-military relations during the period; Pakistan's persisting ethnic fault-lines and the danger they pose for the state; growth of extremism due to Pakistan's strategic choices; Pakistan's non-traditional security threats that includes the looming water crisis, the education emergency, the economic meltdown and the demographic challenge; and the role of Pakistan in the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and its aftermath. The book concludes with some thoughts on the future trajectory of Pakistan.



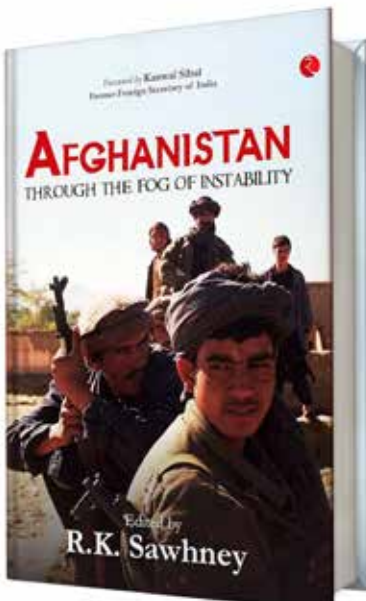
China is developing cyber capacities in pursuit of its economic, political and strategic objectives. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China differs considerably from its Western counterparts in its approach to cyber and network operations. It thinks that cyber and network operations occur in an information domain. Along with the technical aspects of cyber operations, the PLA combines psychological warfare in manipulating public opinion, media warfare and the legal warfare that influences legal arguments to strengthen China's diplomatic and security position. China has undertaken a major transformation of the PLA in 2015. This book takes a holistic look at China's activities in cyber space which also includes its Cyber Espionage Activities, cyber Influence Operations, Military Civil Fusion and its expanding role in international cyber order.



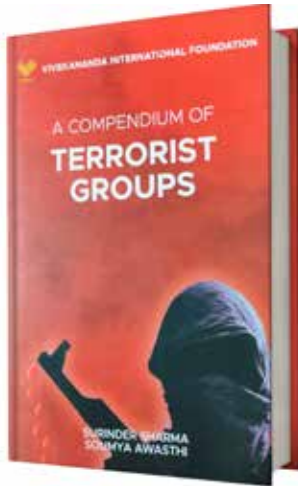


West Asia continues to churn festered by several hot spots including Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq as Arab Spring 2.0 straddles the region forcing socio-economic reforms. The Middle East Process remains defunct as the Israel-Palestine conflict remains at the brink. The region also continues to suffer from the geopolitical, geo-economic, and geo-religious contestations among major powers like Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey, Egypt, and Iran. Qatar has emerged as new `Go To` country. Due to perceived nonchalance and withdrawal of the USA, which was its sole security guarantor, the regional majors have begun to look for some modus vivendi among themselves as they enhance their engagements with China and Russia, and to a great extent, even India. Rapprochement between Israel and some Arab countries like the UAE and Bahrain and Sudan and Morocco have paved the way for new power equations as India, Israel, the UAE, and the USA become engaged in a new Economic Quartet. The winds of change are visible as the Russia-Ukraine crisis

casts a new shadow on the regional dynamic.



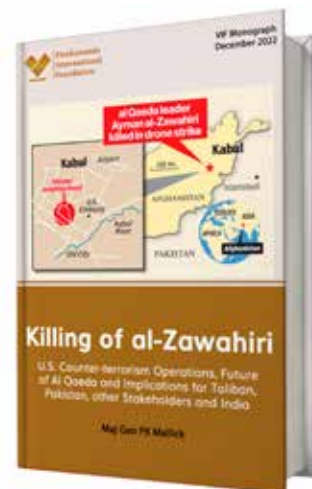
Afghanistan is a country that has seen more devastation than prosperity, especially in the last 20 years. The resurgence of the Taliban and its cat-and-mouse game with the West has brought the once lively nation on the brink of starvation and decline. And it's not just the story of the present times. Even in the early nineteenth century—be it the three Anglo-Afghan wars, or the skirmish between Afghanistan and Pakistan surrounding the Durand Line—the nation has seen much more bloodshed than any other country in Asia. In *Afghanistan: Through the Fog of Instability*, experts from various arenas of expertise including diplomacy, culture and security, have attempted to weave a tale of what Afghanistan was at one time, and how seedy forces had joined together to destroy the wellbeing of this nation. The book also covers the historical overview—from ancient times to the takeover by Taliban 2.0—that gives the readers a peek into how the country was at one point of time.



The last three decades has seen the South and West Asian regions turning into a hot bed of terror activities. Spreading from these regions, and alongside by many other isolated areas across the globe, terrorism today has become the biggest threat to world peace and security. The contemporary brand of terrorism sprouts from the base human instincts of political, ethnic and religious ideals gone corrupt. It is characterised by mindless violence and barbarity carried out by suave, clever but diabolically indoctrinated fanatic groups who believe that it is their transcendent 'duty' to upturn, through unprovoked bloodletting, the human society according to their horribly dehumanised notions. Terrorism has thus emerged as the most fearsome disease to attack the common peoples' aspirations for peace and progress. Civilized world today is at its wits end to stamp out

the disease of terrorism. It is necessary to monitor the various methods adopted to terrorise the hapless targets of their violence. This Compendium of Terror Groups is a continuation of the VIF's regular efforts to record and evaluate the terror phenomena. The Compendium is aimed at providing an updated starting point for the observers of terrorism to proceed to deeper research.

The taking out of Al Qaeda (AQ) emir Ayman al-Zawahiri on July 31, 2022, by U.S counter-terrorism operation in an over-the-horizon attack after a year of U.S withdrawal from Afghanistan has far-reaching repercussions. It has raised a number of critical issues on the role of the Taliban and Haqqani network in providing safe heaven to al-Zawahiri and his family, how the U.S got intelligence for such a precise strike, who betrayed al-Zawahiri, how the attack was carried out, what will be the future of Al Qaeda, how will the Taliban deal with the situation, How does it affect AQIS, how will the Islamic State (IS or ISIS) exploit the incidence, what has been the role of Pakistan, what is the implication on India etc. Maj Gen P K Mallick explores all this and more in this monograph.

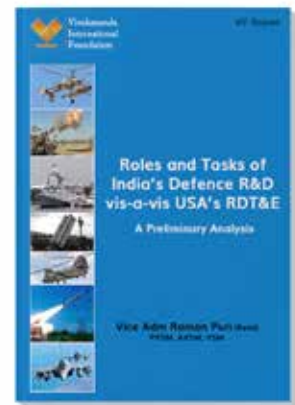




The Intelligence Task Force of experts was set up in 2021 to examine closely the complexity of India's changing security environment and how it impacts the intelligence agencies. The report flags the key directions of the required reforms. The Task Force members came from intelligence, diplomatic and military backgrounds. They have had long and intimate experience of dealing with national security matters. The report summarises the views presented during discussions. The bulk of the Task Force report was written before the breakout of Russia- Ukraine war in February 2022. The Ukraine conflict validated the conclusions of the Task Force that the world has entered in a period of enhanced turbulence and uncertainty. India will need to be extremely alert to the fragility of the current international order and vulnerabilities in global political,

economic and security architecture. The COVID 19 pandemic has further exposed the deficiencies in the multilateral, political and economic architecture. Furthermore, the technological revolution is accelerating and it is bound to impact the political, economic, security and social system.

While developing a range of products for the Armed Forces - covering electronics, sensors, weapons, missiles, armored vehicles, combat vehicles, aircrafts, unmanned systems, advanced computing systems and advanced materials – India's Defence Research & Development Organization (DRDO) has been applying multi-disciplinary engineering, technology and scientific methods. DRDO's strength has helped achieving higher levels of technological maturity and self-reliance in some of the critical Defence systems and technologies such as strategic systems, air defense systems, radars, sonars, aircrafts, airborne early warning & Control (AEW&C), underwater weapons, electronic warfare (EW) systems, guns, tanks and armoured vehicles. DRDO's policies are also helping towards building a robust industry-academia interaction framework and a greater Defence research & development (R&D) and ecosystem in the country. In this context, an analysis of the USA Defense R&D activities by the various Laboratories and Centers and Budget allocations has been carried out to help evolve greater clarity among the stakeholders. Mapping of R&D activities in US DOD's R&D Framework is also done to clarify on certain misconceptions on the roles and tasks of DRDO & the often-stated comparisons to DARPA.

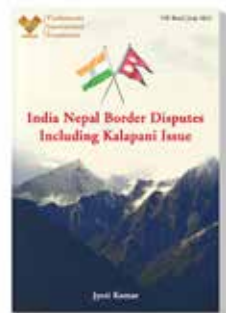
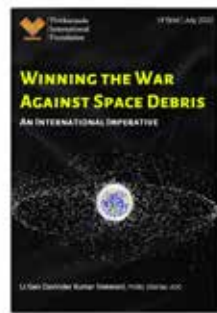
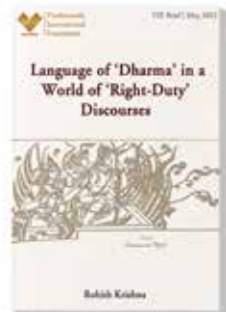
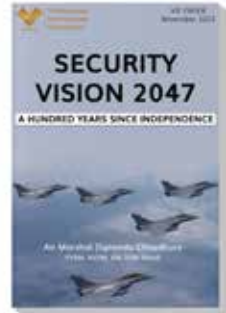
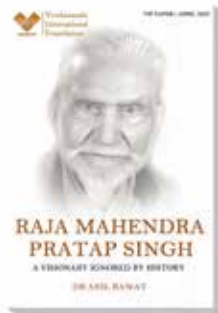


The concern for climate change has spurred an intense debate on energy transition to a low carbon economy. Climate change is an existential problem facing humanity. While the developed world has contributed most to global warming, its consequences will be felt by all countries. The worst affected will be those least equipped to deal with it. Vivekananda International Foundation has undertaken a study of energy choices available to India keeping in mind our development perspective. This is an interdisciplinary study. For this purpose, VIF has put together a Task Force, which consists of senior scientists, engineers, civil servants, and members of academia. Their efforts are supported by a strong research team. The study covers climate negotiations, energy choices made by major economies, and trends in the power sector in India. It explores technology options and finances available to developing countries for making the transition.

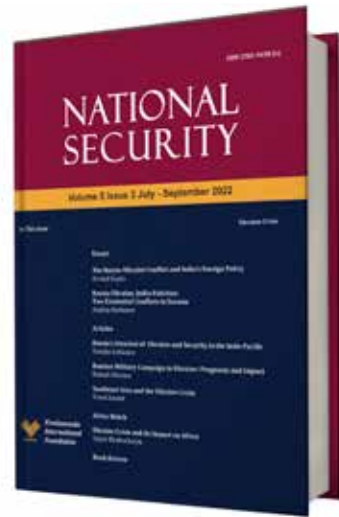


The year 2022 saw addition of new experts group which require more focus. The new groups instituted were the Eurasia Expert Group, Climate Change Expert Group, Africa Expert Group and the Geo-Economics Experts Group. These groups were in addition to the existing Pakistan study group, China expert group, West Asia Experts group, Europe experts group, the Strategic experts group, Indo-Pacific experts group and the US experts group. This Report is a summary of the monthly deliberations held under the aegis of the various VIF Expert Groups, viz Climate Change, Geo Economy, Neighbourhood, Africa, US, Eurasia, China, Pakistan, West Asia & Europe.

PAPERS | BRIEFS



The VIF policy journal, National Security, launched in August 2018 completed five years of publication of 4 issues last year (2022). The journal focuses on principal issues and trends in India’s increasingly complex domestic and international security environment. For the 2022-2023 annual year, two special issues were published – both online and in print by our publishers – Prints Publications, New Delhi. One focussed on “Energy and Climate Change” and the second was devoted to the ongoing “Ukraine Crisis.”



To fulfill the need for a printed copy that could be accessed by libraries and institutions across the country and the world, the printed volumes are being published. The journal is now subscription based. The first issue of the sixth volume was released by March 2023. It gives us satisfaction that despite being behind a paywall, some 5185 readers have so far perused or read the July-September 2022 special issue on the theme: Ukraine Crisis. Publishers are still compiling the full subscription details. We are making efforts to ensure that the journal becomes easily accessible online. Besides, a new website is being designed in the name of the journal.

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Vol. V Issue II | April-June 2022 | Special Issue: Energy and Climate Change

This special issue explored the challenges posed by climate change and the need to create an alternative sustainable development pathway for India. It began with an essay by Arvind Gupta which noted the limited achievements of the Glasgow COP-26 Summit even as the world faces the threat of crossing 'planetary boundaries' in the climate domain. Bishow Parajuli, Country Director of the World Food Programme, explained the lethal impact of the trinity of climate change, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and internal conflicts on aggravating hunger and food insecurity across the developing world.

Dr. T. V. Muralivallabhan, in his article, explored India’s ancient wisdom on sustainable

development and environmental protection, while Professor Nitya Nanda analysed India's climate targets announced at Paris and Glasgow. In his article, P.K. Khup Hangzo made a strong case for India to enhance its hydropower production to meet non-fossil fuel challenges. Hydropower projects can also help augment India's national security, especially in the border states such as Arunachal Pradesh. Heena Samant delved into India's water stress concerns and the remedial actions being taken. In the Africa Watch segment, Samir Bhattacharya drew attention to the ongoing civil conflict in the West African state of Mali, while Hirak J. Das reviewed an important new book on political developments in the Arab world. The issue also carried a report by Dr. Garima Maheshwari on a new study on climate security in the Bay of Bengal.

Vol. V Issue III | July-September 2022 | Special Issue: Ukraine Crisis

The July-September 2022 issue of National Security carried a set of excellent essays and articles on the global impact of the Russo-Ukraine conflict. The issue stood out for the contributions by both Indian and international foreign policy, defence and academic experts. It carried a total of two essays, four articles and a book review.

In the essay segment, while Arvind Gupta, Director of the VIF, explained India's official stance and the factors that have determined it, Andrey Kortunov, the Head of the Russian International Affairs Council, found similarities in the Russia-Ukraine relationship with India's troubled relations with Pakistan. Tomiko Ichikawa, the Director General of the Japan Institute of International Affairs, in her article, was extremely critical of Russia for its violation of international law and the sovereignty of Ukraine, an independent nation-state. Lt Gen Rakesh Sharma analysed the impact of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine and its lessons for the Indian military, while Vinod Anand, Senior Fellow VIF, writes on how the contestation between Russia and the Western alliance in Ukraine and the ongoing US-China rivalry in the Indo-Pacific have impacted Southeast Asia. In the Africa Watch series, Samir Bhattacharya analysed the impact of the ongoing Russo-Ukraine conflict on Africa. The issue concludes with PK Hangzo's review of a recent book on the changes underway in India's north-east and how they are being viewed and understood by academics and intellectuals in the region.

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The fourth issue focuses on the Indian economy. It carries two essays, three articles and two book reviews. Akshay Mathur, in his essay, covers India's G20 presidency and calls for prioritising national interest while upholding global goals in global forums beyond 2023. Devsena Mishra's essay shows how the nature of digital tech products is based on behaviorism. The author explains the scientific movement called "Behaviorism" that surfaced parallel to tech developments, leaving a deep impact on the operation of tech platforms. She

argues that India needs to devise its own alternative methods in keeping with its interests and culture to shape its tech platforms and their operation.

Ambassador V.S. Seshadri, in his analysis of India's international trade, calls on Indian industry to utilise the government's recent initiatives to build a strong and competitive export capacity, and address the high trade deficit. Suhas P. Wani and Dharendra Singh write on ways to transform India's agriculture sector. Rising population, increasing incomes, climate change, and uncertain weather conditions bring about fluctuations in farm produce accompanied by wide price variations that cause wide distress. Transformative changes are needed in agricultural policies and practices if the country is to have sustainable agriculture, food sufficiency and variety, they assert.

Atul Sarma and Shyam Sunder discuss India's climate commitments and the development challenges it faces in the transportation sector with emphasis on Electric Vehicles (EVs). The authors also analyse the role of various stakeholders, including the central and state governments, and industry.

The issue also carries two important book reviews. Arvind Gupta reviews in-depth the highly significant recent book "Snakes in the Ganga: Breaking India 2.0" by Rajiv Malhotra and Vijaya Viswanathan, while Gunjan Singh reviews the path-breaking study -- "The Long Game: How the Chinese Negotiate with India" by former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale.

Vol. VI Issue I | January-March 2023 | General Issue

The January-March 2023 issue of National Security focussed on several key challenges to India's security, environment and trade that flows from its neighbourhood and the need to build an integrated region with potential partners. It carried a total of one essay, four articles and a book review.

Pankaj Saran, former Deputy National Security Advisor, analyses the factors shaping Chinese strategy and policies under Xi Jinping and the threats and challenges they pose to India. Defence expert Amit Cowshish draws attention to the continuing asymmetry between India's military capabilities vis-à-vis its adversaries, notably China. He underlined the urgency of a National Security Strategy (NSS) for optimal defence planning and an appropriate strategic response.

Environmental scientist Shailesh Nayak, in his article, discusses the multiple factors eroding the Himalayan system and that require cooperation between scientific communities of the affected countries in order to ensure the well-being of millions who depend on it. On another dimension of regional environment, academic J. Jeganaathan, explores the complicated strategic implications of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. He argues that India needs to actively communicate with the regime in order to better understand ground realities, influence its decisions and help those in desperate need for food and medicines in Afghanistan. Analyst Nikita Singla focuses on the necessity of expanding India's trade with its South Asia neighbours. She argues that an astute trade policy towards neighbours would not only benefit the region, but also advance India's own interests.

Finally, scholar Samir Bhattacharya reviews a new book on India's development diplomacy towards Africa. He underlines the overtly ideological biases of authors towards the Modi government that prevent them from undertaking an objective study of the theme, and therefore, missing the significant steps India is taking to deepen its developmental ties with Africa.

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Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy



Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran to India



Ambassador of the Russian Federation to India



Interaction with delegates under ICCR's - Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme



Interaction with Brig Nick Sawyer, UK



Director VIF with Ambassador of Algeria to India



Delegation from ISRS, Uzbekistan



Delegation from Institute of Political and International Studies, Iran



Ambassador of Indonesia to India



Ambassador of Italy to India



Ethiopian Ambassador to India



Discussion on Geostrategic & Economic Fall Out of Ukraine Conflict



Interaction with delegation from Singapore



Interaction with Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to India



Delegation from Iran



Interaction with the delegation from Vietnam



Interaction with South Korean Delegation from Korea National Diplomatic Academy



High Commissioner of Singapore to India



Interaction with British delegation



India-Africa Round table on Science and Technology



Ambassador of Germany to India



Interaction with Uzbekistan Delegation



Interaction with Taiwan delegation



Interaction with the visiting batch of Executive MBA programme from Skolkovo Moscow School of Management, Russia

Africa

2022 has been a year of contrast in Africa. When the year started, most African nations were struggling to recover from the pandemic's aftershocks. The continent's economic recovery was also hampered by several disturbances, including supply shortages and quickly rising prices, which were further fueled by the Ukraine crisis. Conflicts and military takeovers continued to plague the continent. The Horn of Africa was most precarious because of Ethiopia's metastasising civil war. The Sahel, Somalia in the east and Mozambique in the south were equally disturbed due to the rise of Islamist terrorism. The trend of previous years' coups was continued by three new coups, two of which occurred in Burkina Faso, and one was attempted in Guinea Bissau.

In 2022, there were 13 elections across the continent, ranging from local to

presidential contests. The governments of Kenya, Somalia and Lesotho witnessed peaceful power transfers. The successful conclusion of federal elections and the establishment of a government in Somalia despite numerous delays and against the backdrop of the Al Shabab's threat, was another impressive accomplishment.

More African agencies were displayed in different multilateral forums where African countries voiced their opinion in unison on most international issues. At the UNGA, most African countries refused to condemn the Russian aggression in Ukraine. At the COP-27 held in Egypt, African leaders called for an end to "climate injustice". Going forward, African leaders must think strategically, removing emotions and personal gain from policy decisions. How the region's leaders manage its policies will largely determine whether or not the coming years will be in favour of Africa.

During the year the African desk at the Vivekananda International Foundation was extremely busy. This was evident from the organisation of several events, the "Connect Africa" program launch, Book discussions, Expert Group meetings, publication of VIF briefs and papers, regular articles for the website, newspapers, podcasts, etc. In 2022, nine web articles, three national security articles, two book reviews and over 30 newspaper articles related to Africa got published in different national and international journals. Five podcasts were recorded on diverse subjects concerning Africa, from India's G20 Presidency to Russia-Africa Relations. In addition, every week, one weekly newsletter, "Africa Now" got published giving a glimpse of every important news from across the continent, consisting of 54 countries.

On May 25, the VIF celebrated "Africa Day 2022" through a book discussion of "The Harambee Factor: India - Africa Economic and Development Partnership", authored by former Indian Ambassador to the African Union, Gurjit Singh.

In September 2022, the VIF unveiled its "Connect Africa" programme. The primary aim of the program is to invite prominent African and Indian figures, such as academics, diplomats, practitioners and journalists, for conversations on emerging African issues. H.E. Ambassador Dr Tizita Mulugeta, (Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary), Ethiopian Ambassador

to India, addressed the inaugural event on September 22.

Under "Connect Africa", on October 27, the VIF held a discussion with the Nigerian Institute of International Studies (NIIA), a premium think tank based in Nigeria. The VIF also signed an MoU for joint work with the NIIA. In March, the VIF also hosted the High Commissioner of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. J.S. Ndebele, and the Ambassador of Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Abdalla Omer Bashir Elhusain, under Connect Africa program.

In 2022, the VIF formed an "Africa Expert Group" under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, former High Commissioner to Kenya, South Africa and Lesetho. The group consists of 20 experts on Africa issues from various backgrounds, including academics, think tanks, industry players and business chambers, as well as four former Indian ambassadors with extensive African experience. On November 2, 2022, the VIF organised its first Africa Expert Group meeting. During the next two Africa Expert Group meetings in December 2022 and February 2023, Secretary, Economic Relations, Shri Dammu Ravi, and Joint Secretary, Punnet Roy Kundal, attended and interacted with the members of the group.

Around the middle of 2023, the VIF will release its paper by the Africa Expert Group, titled "India-Africa Partnership: Achievements, Challenges and Roadmap

2030". The VIF is also planning to celebrate "Mandela Day" on 18th July through a week-long exhibition on "The journey of India-Africa friendship" at the National Museum in New Delhi. VIF will also participate in different national and international forums, discussions, etc. and continue contributing to knowledge generation vis-à-vis Africa.

Central Asia

Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in February 2022, Central Asia has been in the spotlight. Although the effects of this conflict has been felt across the world, Central Asia has been particularly hard hit because of its proximity to Russia and its status as one of Moscow's traditional allies. The region took a balanced stance to the conflict, neither supporting nor denouncing Russia. But because of this crisis, Russian influence in Central Asia seems to be waning, allowing China to benefit the most from the current situation. From becoming a major economic partner, Beijing is now expanding its presence through security cooperation with the region, formerly a key component of Russia-Central Asia relations.

With some significant progressions, ties between India and Central Asia have been on the upswing in 2022–2023. From a time when New Delhi lacked a forum for regional engagement, there is now a framework in place for bilateral

and multilateral exchanges at all levels. With decreasing Russian influence and deep Chinese penetration, Central Asian countries want India to play a more active role in the region. The first India-Central Asia Summit, held in January 2022, was a major success in increasing India's engagement with Central Asia. The establishment of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Afghanistan, an NSA-level meeting between India and Central Asia, and a recently concluded first meeting of the India-Central Asia JWG on Chabahar Port are three significant achievements of the inaugural India-Central Asia summit. These three steps are consistent with India's revamped Central Asia strategy, which aims to achieve greater cooperation on regional security, Afghanistan and connectivity.

India has the presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for 2022–23. Under its chairmanship, India has set up new pillars of cooperation between SCO members, in areas such as traditional medicine, start-ups and innovation, digital inclusion, youth empowerment and a shared Buddhist heritage. This has given impetus to India-Central Asia relations.

As a strategic think tank, the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) hosted several key events to debate the situation in Afghanistan and Central Asia, and SCO, and to enhance cooperation with partners like Russia and Iran.

The VIF has set up an expert group on Eurasia. The group meets at least once in a month to discuss key Eurasian developments, with a special focus on Russia. Former Indian Ambassador to Russia, D.B. Venkatesh Varma is the group's convener.

China

2022 was a landmark year, albeit very challenging one for China. From experiencing the slowest GDP growth rate since 1978 to facing more US sanctions and western pressures for its position on the Russia-Ukraine War, China also saw widespread domestic turbulence over the White Paper protests and the abrupt removal of its Zero-Covid policy. The year also saw the much-awaited 20th Party Congress. President Xi Jinping seemed comfortably placed to achieve his aims and personally oversaw implementation of appointments in the Central Committee, Politburo, Politburo Standing Committee, Secretariat, the Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Central Military Commission. The Party Congress also saw Xi heavily place emphasis on national security and social stability over reform and opening-up China to the outside world in his address. There was a steady dilution of the 'one country, two systems' policy throughout the year— with interpretation of articles on Hong Kong's security law, the White Paper on The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the new era.

China's foreign affairs saw important developments with the announcing of two new global initiatives, a 12-point peace plan for the settlement of the Ukraine Crisis and a major diplomatic win with the Saudi-Iran peace accord. After a hiatus of nearly two-and-a-half years, President Xi Jinping also started traveling abroad in 2022 as he attended a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Samarkand, the G20 Summit in Bali (where he held a first in-person summit with US President Joe Biden), the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok, the first China-Arab States Summit and the China-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in Riyadh. Xi met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing and Samarkand, and visited Moscow in March 2023. In the case of Europe, Xi had over 20 phone calls and meetings with European leaders and received German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and European Council President Charles Michel in China. China continued to reject talks with the US on nuclear weapons. The Pentagon estimates that China will have 1000 nuclear warheads by 2030.

The pattern of China's coercive behavior in its four main theatres of contestation—East China Sea, South China Sea, Taiwan Straits and the India-China border continued where it sought to establish a new normal with its aggressive posturing. Relations with The Philippines, South Korea and Japan saw a steady deterioration. The

PLA's standout live-fire military exercises for four days in six air and maritime areas around Taiwan after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit showcased Beijing's blockading capability. China also called off three dialogues with the US military: the China-US Theatre Commanders' Talk, the Defense Policy Coordination Talks and the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meetings in August 2022. Close run-ins between Chinese and Canadian, Australian, and American fighter jets and ships continued throughout the year. A Chinese surveillance balloon trespassed into US airspace, spiking off tensions in January 2023. China hindered economic and industrial transport data through a combination of delayed government release as well as new Chinese data laws (Personal Information Protection Law and Data Security Law). This bore a significant impact on how companies collect, store, use and transfer data. Technology independence became the centerpiece of Beijing's agenda. The property sector threatened cascading effects on both upstream and downstream industries as investors grew tired of repeated bond extensions.

In the case of India-China bilateral ties, border stability remained the key priority. Though there was disengagement over Patrolling Point-15 in September, the Tawang incursion in December brought the situation to the same trust deficit.

The VIF China Experts Group focused on the above developments and held in depth discussions on the changing political, economic and strategic landscape of China. There were also large deliberations involving other VIF experts' group members on US-China relations, impact of the Ukraine war, China's geo-economic role, etc. A VIF-CICIR-CASS roundtable was held in June 2022 on "China-India Climate Change: Dynamics and the Way Forward". In a public outreach, China group head Ambassador Ashok K. Kantha also gave a Vimarsh lecture on "China Challenge in the Wake of the Ukraine Crisis". Numerous articles, papers, and podcasts, including a daily news digest on China, were brought out by the cluster throughout the year.

Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific region remained entangled in the security and economic challenges that were further fuelled by the Russia-Ukraine conflict. There was consistency in Chinese behaviour and actions along the Indo-Pacific frontier, including military modernization, the deployment of an increased number of warships in the Indian Ocean under the guise of anti-piracy operations, and a disregard for other countries' territorial sovereignty in the East China Sea, the South China Sea, the Taiwan Straits, and along India's northern borders. President Xi's third tenure as leader of the

Communist Party of China represented the country's severe concentration of power. The People's Liberation Army's (PLA) actions were intensified particularly after the visit of US Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. The Chinese navy has been breaching the median lines across Taiwan making it a 'new normal'. The disruption of supply chains in technology, food, fuel and fertilisers has been a major challenge faced by the region.

The closeness in Russia-China relations has become a huge concern for countries such as Japan and South Korea. North Korea's ballistic missile programme was increasingly intense and aggressive. This led to a drastic change in Japanese and Korean foreign policies. PM Fumio Kishida's government approved three policy documents—the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy and the Defense Buildup Program—that propose a significant expansion of Japan's military capabilities and a major increase in military spending over five years. It is a sharp departure from the past. PM Fumio Kishida visited India in March 2023 and made an announcement of Japan's Indo-Pacific Plan from New Delhi. South Korea is not shying away from blaming China for North Korean actions in the Korean peninsula. President Yoon Suk-Yeol launched South Korea's Indo-Pacific Strategy which seeks diversification of economic relations and promotion of rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. Both Japan and South Korea are projecting

India as an 'indispensable partner' in their Indo-Pacific vision.

ASEAN has been striving to come out with a binding Code of Conduct vis-a-vis Chinese encroachment in the South China Sea. However, the attempt is facing a lot of challenges and seems far from getting concretised in the near future. Greater involvement of the European Union, France, Germany and the UK to secure their stakes in the Indo-Pacific and enhanced bilateral agreements such as the Japan-UK defence cooperation and minilateral arrangements such as the AUKUS were some of the trends witnessed last year in the Indo-Pacific region.

At the Quad summit held in Tokyo in May 2022 President Biden, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister Modi, and Prime Minister Kishida met in person after the pandemic. The Quad is diversifying the areas of cooperation which included—the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), Quad Fellowship, Quad Vaccine Partnership and Global Health Security, Climate, Critical and Emerging Technologies, Cyber security, Space, Infrastructure and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. On the sidelines of Quad the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) with 14 members including Australia, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam from the region. IPEF focuses on

four pillars of cooperation: Trade; Supply Chains; Clean Energy, Decarbonization, and Infrastructure; and Tax and Anti-Corruption. India, however, has not agreed to the Trade Pillar of the framework. India is promoting its idea of ASEAN centrality and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific through platforms such as the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD).

The VIF was actively involved in facilitating dialogues and producing policy recommendations through a series of talks, roundtable discussions and by hosting delegations from various countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Japan

The Year 2022 was one of both domestic and international upheaval for Japan. With soaring inflation, assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Nara, Unification Church scandal, etc., Japan saw significant domestic political turmoil and sharply declining ratings for Prime Minister Kishida. The Russia-Ukraine War, intensifying US-China rivalry, ratcheting Cross-Strait tensions, economic and energy shocks, etc. raised challenges for Japan on the international front. But the highlight of the year was on 16 December 2022, when Japan published three important strategic documents – the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Defense Buildup Program – signalling a decisive shift away from its approach to these issues since the end of

the Second World War. 2022 was also the 70th anniversary of India-Japan bilateral ties. Prime Minister Kishida's visit to India for an annual summit saw a reaffirmation of the close bilateral ties especially a new investment target from Japan for 5 trillion yen (\$42 billion) in the next five years to India.

The Japan study desk at the VIF followed all the above developments and more and produced numerous articles including a weekly newsletter. It also participated in two Quad Plus dialogues with think tanks from Japan, Australia, and the US.

Former Indian Ambassador to Japan, Deepa Wadhwa delivered a lecture on “Changing Strategic Outlook and Priorities for Japan” in the VIF Weekly Forum. There was also a trilateral webinar with Japan Institute for National Fundamentals and Prospect Foundation on “Emerging Strategic Environment in the Indo-Pacific”.

Multilateralism

During 2022, the VIF initiated research in a new area namely multilateralism. The main focus of research thus far has been India's presidency of the G20. India assumed the year-long presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia. The theme of the presidency is One Earth, One Family, One Future. It draws on the Vedic concept of “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”, which means the world is one family. India is steering G20 at a challenging time

as the world emerges from the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to grapple with food, fertiliser and fuel shortages unleashed by the war in Ukraine. India's G20 meetings are being held across sixty cities of the country. There has been a concerted effort at engaging the people of India in G20 activities, thus making it a "Jan Baghidari" event. India is seeking to make its presidency "inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented and decisive".

Among the other areas of research on multilateralism are India's engagement with the United Nations; monitoring developments in important multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank; regional and cross-regional plurilateral institutions of which India is a part such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and BRICS; matters of peace and security related to peacekeeping and terrorism, besides other developments of importance in the areas of climate change, human rights, etc.

Two multilateralism-related events were organised recently. The first was the VIF collaborating with the India Writes Network/Centre for Global India Insights in a Vimarsh panel discussion on "India's

G20 Presidency: Forging Actionable Agenda for Global South" on February 24, 2023. The discussion identified and explored concrete South-centric initiatives which India can introduce and advance in the G20 agenda.

Second, renewing its engagement with the idea of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, with the aim of contemporising the idea over a period of several years, the VIF organised a Vimarsh discussion on the theme of multilateralism on March 16, 2023, titled "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Values for Reforming Multilateralism and Creating the New World Order". The main focus of discussion was the universality and inclusivity of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and the importance of imbibing its spirit for reinvigorating multilateralism in critical areas like climate change, disarmament, global financial institution reform, counter-terrorism, etc.

Multilateralism Digest, a monthly review of developments in the multilateral realm, is being published since January 2023. Other areas of reform in the multilateral realm as well as developments that have implications for India will be the focus of upcoming events at the VIF.

South Korea

South Korea saw a change in administration with Presidential Elections being held in March 2022 and a new administration under Yoon Suk Yeol being

inaugurated in May. The year saw marked changes in South Korean foreign policy with closer ties to the US, a stronger leaning towards the West including participation in NATO Summit in June, deteriorating ties with China and a steady rapprochement with Japan. Troubles with North Korea continued as it carried on with provocative missile launches. There were also domestic troubles with increasing inflation, slowing economic growth including declining ratings for President Yoon. With respect to India-South Korea relations, high level interactions continued. PM Modi had a brief interaction with President Yoon on the sidelines of G20 summit at Bali on November 15, 2022. EAM Dr. Jaishankar also met ROK's new FM Park Jin on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting at Bali on 8 July 2022. The South Korea study desk at the VIF followed all above developments and more and produced numerous articles including a weekly newsletter. It also hosted a visiting delegation from Korean National Defense Academy in December 2022.

United States of America

Significant developments have occurred in the United States, both at the domestic and foreign policy level, in the last one year. Internal politics remained increasingly polarised over issues such as inflation, anti-abortion laws, racial discrimination, mass shootings, gun rights, LGBTQ rights, climate change and

immigration. The mid-term elections held in November 2022 had some surprising outcomes. The expected “red wave” did not materialise. A considerable number of candidates backed by former President Donald Trump lost the elections, denying the Republicans a clean sweep in the Congress. The elections led to a divided Congress, with Democrats securing the Senate and Republicans gaining a majority in the House of Representatives. President Joseph Biden and his administration faced a serious logjam when government borrowing hit a debt ceiling of \$31.4 trillion in January. The House Republicans, led by Speaker Kevin McCarthy, refused to raise the debt limit until the government ensured spending cuts.

In its foreign policy, the US has been trying to balance its commitment to its allies and partners in Europe and the Indo-Pacific region. Military aid to Ukraine has continued with no sign of a diplomatic solution to the conflict in sight. The US is getting increasingly involved with European security, even as challenges in the Indo-Pacific region intensify. The Biden administration has reiterated its commitment to aiding Taiwan in case of a invasion or a blockade by China. Documents such as the US National Security Strategy Report and the Indo-Pacific Strategy (2022) have indicated China as a “pacing challenge” to the US and its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. The document mentions

the concept of “integrated deterrence” with allies and partners of the US through “interoperability and joint capability development and planning. The military showdown near the Taiwan Strait by the PLA unravelled with the visit of Speaker Nancy Pelosi to the island country and stopped all communications at the defence level. The Chinese “spy balloon” hovering over the United States further pushed US-China relations to its lowest point. While a hawkish approach has been witnessed in the security arena, the policymakers prefer de-risking to de-coupling economic ties.

There has been a growing strategic and political convergence in the India-US relationship. The US- India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, including artificial intelligence, cyber, quantum, 6G, space and biotechnology is one such that reflects this convergence.

In light of all these developments, the Vivekananda International Foundation held various important talks and discussions.

West Asia

The West Asia Cluster at the VIF is committed to in-depth research and analysis of political, strategic, economic developments of the region and to compliment India’s ‘Think West’ Policy. The VIF in 2022-2023 continued to undertake academic and research pursuits; organised a series of interactions and engaged with academicians, diplomats, journalists, political and security experts and representatives from the West Asian states. The areas of focus were India’s policy options and diplomatic engagements; I2U2 Summit; US’ dynamics; impact of Russia-Ukraine war; domestic and geopolitical issues in North Africa; protest and domestic dynamics in Iran; Iran-Saudi Arabia agreement; Israel-Palestine conflict, etc. The cluster published monthly round ups of the region’s major developments and also conducted podcasts between April 2022 and March 2023.

Activities

No	Date	Title
1	20-Apr-22	Interaction with Brigadier Mark Goldsack, British DA
2	26-Apr-22	Interaction with H.E. Marta Ayvazyan, Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia
3	27-Apr-22	Meeting with Dr. Eldor Aripov, Director of Institute of Strategic and Regional Studies, Uzbekistan
4	28-Apr-22	Discussion on Operational and Tactical Aspects of Russo-Ukrainian War 2022
5	23-May-22	Interaction with visiting delegates under ICCR's - Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme
6	27-May-22	Book Discussion - The Harambee Factor: India – Africa Economic and Development Partnership
7	27-May-22	VIF-Prospect Foundation Joint Webinar on Strategic & Economic Implications of Ukraine War on Taiwan Strait & the Indo-Pacific Region
8	06-Jun-22	Strategic Discussions on the Ukraine Conflict: A UK perspective
9	07-Jun-22	Discussion on Algeria's Foreign Policy in West Asian and North African region and India-Algeria relations with Amb. Abderrehmane Benguerah, Ambassador of Algeria to India
10	09-Jun-22	Interaction with .H.E. Mr. Denis Evgenyevich Alipov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation to India
11	15-Jun-22	Joint VIF-CICIR-CASS Webinar on China-India Climate Change: Dynamics and Way Forward
12	15-Jun-22	Quad Plus Dialogue
13	20-Jun-22	Talk on Asia as Method: Towards Deimperialization and its Afterlife by Prof. Chen Kuan-Hsing, Professor at Institute for Social Research and Cultural Studies, Chiao Tung University, Taiwan
14	22-Jun-22	Interaction with H.E. Mr. Ali Chegeni, Ambassador of Islamic republic of Iran to India
15	06-Jul-22	VIF-RIAC Roundtable Discussion on The Strategic and Economic Implications of the Ukraine Crisis
16	07-Jul-22	VIF-Heritage Foundation Joint Webinar on Geopolitical and Economic Implications of the Ukraine Crisis for India and the US
17	08-Jul-22	Interaction with Mr Giorgio Francesco Cafiero, CEO, Gulf State Analytics on Geopolitical Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Middle East
18	11-Jul-22	Brainstorming Session on Geo-strategic & Economic Fall Out of Ukraine Conflict
19	14-Jul-22	Interaction with Prof. Alexandra Xanthaki, UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights
20	18-Jul-22	A talk on WTO and global trade by Amb Mohan Kumar
21	21-Jul-22	Interaction with 3rd batch of Gen- Next Democracy Network Programme of ICCR
22	25-Jul-22	Interaction with Amb. Dammu Ravi, Secretary (Economic Relations), Ministry of External Affairs, on Prospects for I2U2 summit

No	Date	Title
23	27-Jul-22	VIF-IPIS Bilateral Discussion on India-Iran Bilateral Relations and Regional and International
24	08-Aug-22	Interaction with Taiwanese Ambassador to India, Mr Baushuan Ger
25	10-Aug-22	Discussion on the Changing Parity between the US and China
26	12-Aug-22	Interaction with the UN Rapporteur Mr. Diego García-Sayán
27	24-Aug-22	Discussion on China with Singapore delegation - Mr David Chen, Singapore HC
28	29-Aug-22	Interaction with Ms Kimberly Dozsier, Visiting Fellow ORF
29	05-Sep-22	Discussion on Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Achievements and Prospects
30	09-Sep-22	Interaction with 5th batch of Gen- Next Democracy Network Programme of ICCR
31	20-Sep-22	Quad Plus Dialogue
32	22-Sep-22	Inaugural program of Connect Africa talk by H.E Ambassador Dr Tizita Mulugeta, Ethiopian Ambassador to India
33	22-Sep-22	Interaction with Daniel Markey, Senior Advisor, South Asia Center
34	23-Sep-23	Interaction with Mr Balakrishnan Rajagopal, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing
35	29-Sep-22	VIF-JiNF joint Conference on Emerging Strategic Environment in the Indo-Pacific
36	06-Oct-22	Discussion on Morocco Foreign Policy and India-Morocco Relations with H.E. Mohamed Maliki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to India
37	13-Oct-22	VIF-RIAC Joint Web Conference on Keeping Track of the Ukraine Crisis: New Phase and Progressing Strategic Implications
38	19-Oct-22	Interaction by Sh S Gurumurthy, Chairman, VIF
39	27-Oct-22	VIF- NIIA collaborative discussion on India-Nigeria relations
40	28-Oct-22	Visit by Sinkiang team
41	01-Nov-22	Discussion on Russia with Mr Nandan Unnikrishanan
42	03-Nov-22	Discussion Possibility of Use of TNWs in Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Its Implications particularly for India
43	07-Nov-22	Discussion on the US National Security Strategy
44	10-Nov-22	Interaction with H.E. Mrs. Ina Krishnamurthy, Ambassador of Indonesia
45	11-Nov-22	Interaction with the visiting delegation from Institute of Political and International Studies (IPIS) of Iran
46	15-Nov-22	Discussion on India's Role as a Mediator in the Ukraine Conflict
47	16-Nov-22	Singapore delegation's visit
48	16-Nov-22	Interaction with Prof. Dr. Tomas Casas i Klett, University of St. Gallen, Switzerland
49	18-Nov-22	Book discussion on the book Arab Spring that was and wasn't authored by KP Fabian
50	22-Nov-22	Interaction with H.E. Dr. Philipp Ackermann, Ambassador of Germany to India
51	23-Nov-22	Joint MOU signed between Institute for National Defense and Security Research (Taiwan) & the Vivekananda International Foundation

No	Date	Title
52	24-Nov-22	Interaction with a visiting South Korean Delegation from Korea National Diplomatic Academy, South Korea (KNDA)
53	28-Nov-22	Interaction with Shri Dammu Ravi, Secretary, Economic Relations, Ministry of External Affairs
54	14-Dec-22	Interaction with the Visiting US delegation
55	15-Dec-22	Interaction with a visiting delegation from Iran
56	16-Dec-22	Interaction with high-level British delegation on Russia-Ukraine Conflict
57	20-Dec-22	Interaction with the delegation from the Institute of Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam on Indo-Pacific and India-Vietnam Relations
58	23-Dec-22	Round-up of the world event during the year 2022 and their impact on India
59	01-Jan-23	Talk on Internal, Strategic, Energy and Economic dimensions in Iran in light of the ongoing protest by Prof. Kingshuk Chatterjee
60	16-Jan-23	Talk on Singapore Approach to the Indo-Pacific by H.E. Mr. Simon Wong, High Commissioner of Singapore to India
61	25-Jan-23	Interaction with H. E. Mr. Vincenzo de Luca, Ambassador of Italy to India
62	15-Feb-23	Interaction with the visiting batch of Executive MBA programme from Skolkovo Moscow School of Management, Russia
63	23-Feb-23	Talk by Amb. Arun Kumar Singh on "An Assessment of the New US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)
64	28-Feb-23	Interaction with Amb Binaya Pradhan, Indian Ambassador to Tanzania
65	02-Mar-23	Interaction with the Uzbekistan Delegation
66	03-Mar-23	Interaction on Cross-Strait Relations and Indo-Pacific Security Issues with visiting Taiwan delegation
67	09-Mar-23	Brainstorming Session on Future of Russia-Ukraine Conflict
68	15-Mar-23	India-Africa Round table on Science and Technology
69	15-Mar-23	Talk by Ms Cleo Paskal on Geopolitical Relevance of the Pacific Islands for India and the Indo-Pacific Region
70	17-Mar-23	Interaction with resident foreign diplomats/ Military Attaches on India's G 20 Presidency and Reforming Multilateralism

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	1-Apr-22	Kishida in Cambodia: Seeking Convergences of interests to counter China	Prof Rajaram Panda	4046
2	1-Apr-22	Dereliction of Duty: The Politicization of Climate Change in the US and the UK	PK Khup Hangzo	4563
3	2-Apr-22	Impact of Western Sanctions on Russia: Unintended Ramifications	Prerna Gandhi	4677

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
4	4-Apr-22	The India and Australia ECTA: Reinforcing a Strong Geo-economic Partnership	Amb Anil Wadhwa	4460
5	6-Apr-22	Ukraine Crisis: Towards a New World Order	Brig Dinesh Mathur	5392
6	13-Apr-22	Fresh Challenge from North Korea with ICBM launch	Prof Rajaram Panda	4762
7	18-Apr-22	Joint Report : Impact of Ukraine War on Various Regions/ International Concerns	VIF Young Scholars Team	4177
8	19-Apr-22	Russia-Ukraine Conflict: Implications for Central Asia	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	5240
9	20-Apr-22	Impact of Russia-Ukraine crisis on the Baltic States	Prof Rajaram Panda	4284
10	25-Apr-22	India and Vietnam: 50 years of Diplomatic Ties	Brig Vinod Anand & Prof Rajaram Panda	4730
11	26-Apr-22	The War in Ukraine: Is It a Boon or a Bane for the Future of Climate Change & Clean Energy Transition?	PK Khup Hangzo	4671
12	28-Apr-22	Explained: Why India's Stance on Russia-Ukraine Crisis is Nuanced?	Prof Rajaram Panda	4362
13	2-May-22	War in Ukraine: Are Russia's Cyber Warfare Capabilities Overhyped?	Maj Gen P K Mallick, VSM	5932
14	9-May-22	North Korea's Sabre-Rattling Continues	Prof Rajaram Panda	3834
15	12-May-22	Impact of Russia-Ukraine Conflict on Food Security in Egypt	Hirak Jyoti Das	5443
16	13-May-22	China is Edging over the US: Upcoming Ramifications	Perna Gandhi	4482
17	18-May-22	Challenges that Confront South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol	Prof Rajaram Panda	3949
18	19-May-22	Russia-China: The Unequal Relationship and its Implications	Jayadeva Ranade	4493
19	23-May-22	Russia's Military Understanding of Air Power: Structural & Doctrinal Aspects	Air Marshal Diptendu Choudhury	7785
20	24-May-22	Can there be a Policy Reversal under the New President, Ferdinand Marcos Jr., in the Philippines?	Prof Rajaram Panda	4560
21	25-May-22	The CSTO and Collective Security in Eurasia	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	5139
22	27-May-22	Troubled Times Ahead for China and Xi Jinping	Jayadeva Ranade	3113
23	30-May-22	Should India Worry about Russia-China partnership post-Ukraine Crisis?	Prof Rajaram Panda	4566
24	1-Jun-22	Galwan: A Centrepiece of CPC's Military Propaganda	Raj Gupta	5788
25	7-Jun-22	Is Biden Serious about Defending Taiwan from the Chinese Threat?	Prof Rajaram Panda	4835
26	13-Jun-22	The Changing International Order and BRICS Relevance	Brig Vinod Anand	6359

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27	14-Jun-22	Diplomatic Engagements by Stakeholders in the Indo-Pacific Region	Prof Rajaram Panda	5203
28	15-Jun-22	Initial Analysis of Leaked Video of Chinese War Preparedness Exercise in Guangdong	Jayadeva Ranade	6002
29	20-Jun-22	United States of Africa: Ultimate Dream of a Pan-Africanist	Samir Bhattacharya	4585
30	21-Jun-22	Third C+C5 Meeting: Reinforcing Chinese Influence in Central Asia	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	4893
31	22-Jun-22	After Djibouti and (suspected) Military Base in Solomon Islands, China now Eyes Ream Naval Base in Cambodia	Prof Rajaram Panda	4924
32	25-Jun-22	Economic Dimensions of Russia-Ukraine War	Arvind Gupta	4764
33	28-Jun-22	BRICS – Taking the Long View	Amb DB Venkatesh Varma	4464
34	29-Jun-22	Sino-Kazakh Trans Boundary Water Dispute: An assessment	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	4848
35	6-Jul-22	Fresh Challenges for Kishida as Upper House Elections are held on 10 July	Prof Rajaram Panda	4372
36	7-Jul-22	Critical Assessment of BRI Projects in Iraq	Hirak Jyoti Das	5220
37	11-Jul-22	Shinzo Abe: Tragic Departure of a Colossus – Part I	Prof Rajaram Panda	4394
38	12-Jul-22	A Tribute to Late Shinzo Abe	Prerna Gandhi	4319
39	14-Jul-22	Tragic Departure of Abe: His Legacy Stays on Part – II	Prof Rajaram Panda	4580
40	15-Jul-22	A Case for the USA to Embrace Strategic Clarity in the Taiwan Strait	Harshit Sharma	4713
41	18-Jul-22	The I2 U2: A Matrix of Some Consequence	Amb Anil Trigunayat	5071
42	25-Jul-22	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework: Opportunities for India	Dr Rahul Nath Choudhury	5142
43	27-Jul-22	The Power of the ‘God of War’: Assessing the Russian advantage in Artillery in the Russo-Ukrainian War	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	5310
44	1-Aug-22	Military Civil Fusion in China	Maj Gen P K Mallick	6602
45	1-Aug-22	Russia-Ukraine Conflict and International Developments: An Indian Perspective	Brig Vinod Anand	4176
46	2-Aug-22	AUKUS, India and the Strategic Dynamics in the Indo-Pacific Region	Varuna Shankar	5305
47	4-Aug-22	Xi Jinping Begins Appointing Loyalists to Key Posts	Jayadeva Ranade	4252
48	4-Aug-22	Ayman al-Zawahiri is Dead: The Ending of a Chapter of al-Qa’ida’s Founding Fathers!	Anurag Sharma	4917
49	5-Aug-22	The Regional Integration in Central Asia	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	4499

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50	6-Aug-22	Tracing the Future of India-Africa Defence Cooperation	Samir Bhattacharya	6106
51	8-Aug-22	India should Make 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah' as the Overarching Theme for its G20 Presidency	Arvind Gupta	5440
52	9-Aug-22	Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan takes the Island Nation to International Limelight	Prof Rajaram Panda	4126
53	9-Aug-22	I2U2 Grouping: Transformational Force for Global Good and India's Strategic Imperatives	Prof Debasis Bhattacharya	4860
54	10-Aug-22	The Russia-Ukraine Conflict and its Implications for the Environment	Heena Samant	5671
55	10-Aug-22	India-Japan: Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific	Mitrajit Bakshi	5677
56	18-Aug-22	The Impact of the Marikana Massacre: 'Plus ca change, plus c'est la même chose'	Samir Bhattacharya	5434
57	22-Aug-22	China's transition from Hiding to Showing its Strength! India's Determined March to Developed Nation – 2047	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4163
58	23-Aug-22	Role of Cyber-enabled Technologies in the Russia-Ukraine Armed Conflict	The Cyber Task Force	5346
59	29-Aug-22	Organization of Turkic States: An Instrument of Turkey's Central Asia Policy	Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta	5322
60	31-Aug-22	Russia questions Switzerland's Policy of Neutrality	Prof Rajaram Panda	4549
61	1-Sep-22	A Way out from the Dangers of Nuclear Leakage and Fallout from Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Plant	Gautam Sen	4296
62	1-Sep-22	"Pelosi's visit: Who Won? An after Review "	Gunjan Singh	4648
63	2-Sep-22	Belarusian Dynamics in the Context of Russia-Ukraine Crisis	Varuna Shankar	4406
64	5-Sep-22	Gorbachev's Legacy: A Reformer Who Lost the Game	Arvind Gupta	4604
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Every individual should have an aim. But do not forget that on the quality of your aim will depend the quality of your life.

Your aim should be high and wide, generous and disinterested; this will make your life precious to yourself and to others.

– Sri Aurobindo

Centre for Neighbourhood Studies



With President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Sri Lanka



*Book Discussion on The Pashtuns
A Contested History*



U Min Zin, Executive Director,ISP, Myanmar



Ambassador of Nepal



*Discussion on Power trading between
India and Nepal*



*Amb Shahidul Haque, Former Foreign
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Discussion on Radicalisation in India



*Joint VIF-NIICE Discussion on BIMSTEC Master
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*Discussion on Sri Lankan economic and
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Interaction with a Delegation of Members of Parliament from Nepal



Discussion on Evaluating Myanmar Crisis: Implications for India



Discussion on India's Neighbourhood

Countries in South Asia witnessed significant developments economically and politically, as well as at the bilateral, regional and global levels. Some of the major events occurring in the year 2022 were the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, floods in Pakistan along with its economic slowdown, elections in Nepal and its changing political dynamics, the continued rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan and two years of military rule

in Myanmar. The Centre for Neighbourhood Studies published year-end reviews and projections for 2023 for each country. At the global level, the Russia-Ukraine war impacted South Asia for which a VIF Paper was published in July 2022.

At the regional level, military rule in Myanmar affected India, Bangladesh and the region as a whole. To understand the daily developments, the Centre of

Neighbourhood Studies also publishes a Neighbourhood News Digest and a monthly Myanmar Round-Up. Pakistan Study Group led by Mr Tilak Devasher met regularly to discuss the developments in Pakistan & Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, Afghanistan has steadily been on the decline. The Taliban has managed to undo almost all measures of progress and stability within a year of its takeover. It came to power with a façade of being a “moderate Taliban”, or Taliban 2.0. However, their interpretation of the Sharia law was officially imposed in November 2022, which allowed the Taliban to start public floggings and executions officially. In March 2022, the Taliban announced that all students, including girls, could return to school. In December, it then banned women entirely from universities and from working in international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sparking off international condemnation. Innumerable accounts of violence, retributive and ethnic killings and human rights violations have also surfaced. The Taliban has also managed to suppress and control the media through constant threats and intimidation, leading to the closure of over 200 news organisations. The VIF came out with multiple commentaries and articles to track and analyse the developments emerging in Afghanistan.

The Taliban has consistently voiced its desperate need to be included in the larger world environment and receive international legitimacy and recognition for its government. The situation in Afghanistan was closely monitored over the year and in December 2022, the United Nations General Assembly decided to allow the previous government to hold Afghanistan’s seat in the UN. The VIF also recorded a podcast on ‘What does Taliban Governance mean for the region?’ with Michael Kugelmanto to track these developments.

The Taliban has backtracked on its commitment to not to harbour terrorist groups and has continued to be a safe haven for al-Qaeda and the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), while allowing greater freedom of action to these groups. The Taliban’s attempts to fool the international community became obvious when al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was found in Kabul at a Taliban aide’s house and killed. Further, under Taliban rule, it was reported that the Islamic State-Khorasan’s size has doubled from 2000 to 4000. To highlight the significance of the event, the VIF released a monograph on the ‘Killing of al-Zawahiri: US Counter-terrorism Operations, Future of Al Qaeda and Implications for Taliban, Pakistan, other Stakeholders and India’ by Major General P. K. Mallick, VSM (Retired).

The Taliban is also grappling with an identity crisis and a conflict in

administrative styles between various factions of the Taliban. The VIF released a podcast with Ambassador Gautam Mukhopadhaya on 'Afghanistan- One Year after Taliban Takeover,' recognising the flow of events in Afghanistan and the developments and challenges that the Taliban faces.

Afghanistan has always heavily depended on external aid and assistance, and 75 percent of its public expenditure has come from these sources. The aid has been completely cut off, and its assets have been frozen after the Taliban takeover. This has instantly paralysed the Afghan economy, making it impossible for ordinary people to sustain themselves. The situation has worsened over time, with at least 20 provinces hit by massive floods between May and August 2022, which have claimed over 400 lives and destroyed crops. A food crisis looms as well as severe poverty. In November, it was reported that a UN body stated that Afghanistan was witnessing one of the world's most extensive and most severe hunger crises and acute food insecurity, directly impacting 22.8 million people. In 2022, Afghanistan received over USD 2.6 billion in aid, while the US provided USD 1.1 billion to mitigate humanitarian needs.

The VIF published a book, 'Afghanistan: Through the Fog of Instability,' edited by Lt Gen R.K. Sawhney. The book attempts to weave a tale of Afghanistan from its time

of well-being to a regressive land which fell into the hands of seedy forces that has destroyed the country. It looks into various areas of diplomacy, culture and security it also gives a historical overview - from ancient times to the takeover by Taliban 2.0.

Bangladesh

In 2022, Bangladesh's GDP growth rate increased to 7.2 percent, compared to 6.9 percent in 2021. Additionally, 2022 remained a significant period for Bangladesh to develop its infrastructure at home and build friendship and cooperation with neighbouring countries like India. A VIF delegation led by its Director, Dr. Arvind Gupta, visited Dhaka from March 29 to April 2, 2022 at the invitation of the Bangladesh Foundation for Regional Studies. They held interactions with several domain experts, officials, political leaders, activists and scholars. During their stay in Bangladesh, a VIF edited book "India Bangladesh Bonhomie at 50: 1971 and the Present" was released in the presence of Minister of State, Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh at the BISS in Dhaka.

Over the past few years, India has developed close bilateral ties with Bangladesh and has been an active supporter of her needs. Bangladesh got 1.2 million AstraZeneca vaccines from India under the aegis of New Delhi's Vaccine Maitri Initiative. Besides, in 2022, Bangladesh emphasised building major infrastructure

at home, which included the inauguration of the Padma Bridge, the introduction and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in electric trains and digitally controlled Metro rail services, and many other connectivity projects across the border. To discuss India-Bangladesh relations and explore new possibilities, the VIF organised a talk on June 21, 2022 with Ambassador Shahidul Haque, former foreign secretary of Bangladesh. By touching upon Bangladesh's geo-strategic location and its geopolitical interactions both in the local and regional context, Ambassador Haque outlined the challenges and avenues of cooperation between his country and India. In September 2022, the state visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India reflected the success of bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh. Articles reflecting these developments were published on the VIF website. The VIF also published an article on the Battle of Longewala, which reflected on the different conflict-related scenarios that developed. In 2024, elections are scheduled, which will be crucial in terms of the region's political stability and the future of India-Bangladesh ties.

Bhutan

In Bhutan, the year 2022 saw some significant developments on the economic, environmental, travel, and neighbourhood front. Bhutan's economy depends on two primary sectors: hydropower and tourism.

Since most of the revenue generated depends on other countries, Bhutan is more susceptible to external shocks. The Himalayan nation experienced an economic slowdown and inflation in 2022 due to COVID-19 lockdowns within and outside the country. Another geopolitical factor that played in was the breakdown of supply chains due to the Russo-Ukrainian war.

Bhutan focuses significantly on the environment and on sustainable living. It is important to note that despite its economic hardship, Bhutan did not compromise on its environment, peace and happiness quotient. After months of lockdown and two-and-a-half years of "Zero Covid-19" policy (since March 2020), Bhutan opened itself to tourists in September 2022. Tourism has not reached its full potential as yet. However, the number of tourists is increasing gradually. The VIF published an article on 'Bhutan: Review of 2022 and the Way Forward' to track the developments in the Himalayan nation in the year 2022.

India and Bhutan have a long-standing military engagement partnership to ensure both nations' territorial integrity. Given that India is Bhutan's biggest trading partner, two formal trade routes were also approved from Lhamoidzinkingha and Chhuchungsa, resulting in 80 percent reduction in transit costs. India has also been deeply involved in developing Bhutan's space and digital technologies. The VIF released a podcast

on 'India-Bhutan Relations: Exploring the New Vistas of Cooperation' with Ambassador V.P. Haran to discuss areas of enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

With India's assistance, a massive 720-megawatt Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project was developed in Bhutan. It was handed over to Bhutan's Druk Green Power Corp. in December 2022. The successful completion and handover of the project has given stimulus for initiating talks on the Sankosh Hydropower Project. The VIF also published an article on the 'Future of Hydropower Cooperation with Bhutan' to understand Bhutan's hydropower engagement.

Maldives

In 2022, the Maldives' economy recovered to pre-pandemic levels with the rise in tourist arrivals. Tourism has been the main driver of economic growth in the Maldives. Despite the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, tourist arrivals from Russia have remained strong. In addition, arrivals from India and Gulf countries have compensated for lower arrivals from Europe and China. However, the heavy reliance on tourism and limited sectoral diversification remain key structural challenges. In October 2022, Fitch Ratings revised the Maldives' Outlook from Stable to Negative while affirming its Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'B-'.

In August 2022, Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih visited India. He was accompanied by several high-level officials, including Ibrahim Ameer, Minister of Finance, Fayyaz Ismail, Minister of Economic Development, Aishath Mohamed Didi, Minister of Gender, Family and Social Services, besides a business delegation. The two sides exchanged six documents, covering cyber security, disaster management, women and child development and infrastructure development in this latest visit. An article on India-Maldives' growing convergences reflected the close ties between both countries. On the other hand, as China wants to expand its presence in Indian Ocean Region, it has invested heavily in Maldives' infrastructure projects. In early 2022, Wang Yi, the State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China undertook a two-day visit to the Maldives and concluded several agreements. However, Maldives is wary of Chinese interests. It has refuted claims made by organisers of China's Indian Ocean Region Initiative that they had officially participated in the forum organised by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA).

The year 2023 is crucial for Maldives as presidential elections are scheduled in September 2023. Current President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih would be contesting elections as a nominee of the Maldivian

Democratic Party. Former president Abdullah Yameen of the Progressive Party of Maldives would be the main competitor. Besides him, former Minister of Defence and National Security, Mohamed Nazim of the Maldives National Party and a candidate from Jumhooree Party would also contest the elections. While President Solih values India's close relationship with the Maldives, the forthcoming elections will be very crucial for the future of the two countries.

Myanmar

2022 marked the second year of military rule in Myanmar. The country faced unprecedented violence as the military intensified its attacks via air strikes. The opposition forces, including the National Unity Government along with their PDFs and many ethnic armed organisations fought against the military and attacked military establishments. During the year, several articles and commentaries were published regarding the impact of the crisis, the execution of four prisoners in July 2022, ASEAN and Indonesia's chairmanship and the possibility of a fractured democracy in the future. An article was also published comparing India's Foreign Secretary's visit in November 2022 and December 2021, and reiterating India's border security as its foremost priority.

On September 28, 2022, VIF organised a discussion on "Myanmar's Relations with its Neighbouring Countries". Myanmar has

experienced a fundamental seismic shift. The prospect of a return to normalcy as before is no more there and the new normal is in an evolving stage. The discussion highlighted the characteristics of post-normal Myanmar. One of the important projects undertaken by the VIF Centre for Neighbourhood Studies in 2022 was to work on a book project titled "Revisiting Myanmar: Present Through Past". The co-edited volume (ed. Brig Vinod Anand & Chhavi Vashisht) has contributions from former Ambassadors, Army personnel, scholars and experts from the field.

In 2023, the country entered its third year of military rule and to understand these developments, the VIF organised a discussion on "Evolving Myanmar Crisis and Implications for India" on February 1, 2023. A monthly round-up to cover the developments in the country with domestic and economic position, relations with India, China and international players is published regularly

Nepal

Nepal's year started with soaring inflation, rampant unemployment, hiked interest rates and looming fears of a recession, which were a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. The Nepali rupee is pegged to the Indian rupee and depends heavily on imports for essential commodities. Subsequently,

import costs and consumer goods prices rose due to an appreciating US dollar.

In the first half of 2022, Nepal's foreign exchange reserves were under tremendous strain due to global inflation. In April 2022, the government imposed a restriction on imports of luxury and non-essential items to control dwindling foreign exchange reserves. Amidst the economic disturbance in Nepal, former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba visited India. The VIF recorded a podcast with Ambassador Ranjit Ray on 'Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's Visit to India'.

During the second half of the year, the effects of the import ban on luxury products started showing effects. In the last five months of 2022, imports decreased by 20.17 percent. In August, the government relaxed the ban on imports and finally lifted it in December after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed concerns over the health of the Nepalese economy. A talk on 'Nepal-India Relations' by the Ambassador of Nepal, H.E., Dr. Shankar P. Sharma, was held at the VIF to understand the bilateral engagement of the two countries. Further, a discussion was organised at the VIF on 'Power Trading between India and Nepal' with the Energy Committee at the Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) and Arunachal Pradesh Power Trading Company, which outlined several methods that could be adopted to increase the pace of hydropower and economic

interaction between India and Nepal in the power trading area.

Protests also took place across Nepal in 2022. Nepal was already seeing a continuation of the lawyer's protest from 2021 for the impeachment of Chief Justice C.J. Rana, when the demonstrations against the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Nepal Compact also began. In a bid to exert pressure, the US issued a deadline to ratify the MCC Bill. The Nepal Parliament then approved the MCC-Nepal Compact in February 2022. The VIF published an issue brief of 'Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) in Nepal: Facts, Disputes, and the US-China Contest' authored by Dr. Rishi Gupta.

Fears of a constitutional crisis surfaced when President Bidhya Devi Bhandari declined to ratify the amendment to the Nepal Citizenship Bill for the second time in September. The bill has been a contentious issue in the Nepali Parliament just like the Kalapani issue. Two issue briefs on 'India-Nepal Border Disputes, including the 'Kalapani Issue' and the 'Gorkha Dimension in India-Nepal Relations' were also published by the VIF.

Nepal also held its second elections at all levels of government since the enactment of the Nepalese Constitution in 2015. The VIF organised a discussion on Nepal's Domestic Developments to identify trends in Nepali politics and

the general direction that the elections might take. There were two pre-election alliances. One was led by the Nepali Congress, which included the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) (CPN-MC), and the other was led by the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML). Out of the 275 seats, the Nepali Congress bagged the maximum number of seats, 89, in the general election. The CPN-UML came second with 78 seats, while the CPN-MC secured 32 seats. In December, the VIF organised a Discussion on Assessment of the Nepal Elections to discuss the developments in Nepalese politics.

Despite electoral alliances, after much political manoeuvring, the government was formed by a seven-party coalition consisting of CPN-UML, CPN-MC, Rashtriya Swatantra Party, Rastriya Prajatantra Party, Janata Samajbadi Party, Janamat Party and the Nagarik Unmukti Party. Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) of the CPN-MC was sworn in as the new Prime Minister of Nepal on December 26, 2022. The VIF also released a podcast on ‘Expectations from the Dahal-led ruling coalition in Nepal’ with Ambassador Ranjit Rae, which highlighted the shift in the political process of Nepal and its impact on India. Further, a delegation of MPs from Nepal also visited the VIF, sparking off crucial conversation on investment, bonhomie and enhanced people-to-people connections.

Pakistan

Pakistan’s year started with the launch of the National Security Policy (NSP), in which human security was put at the forefront. Shortly after, former Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Moscow to meet President Putin the day Russia attacked Ukraine. Soon after his return, Pakistan’s Opposition leaders submitted a no-confidence motion against former PM Imran Khan with the accusations that his government had mismanaged the economy and was responsible for rising inflation.

Imran Khan lost the no-confidence vote in the National Assembly and was ousted from power on 10 April 2022. Though a coalition government of opposition parties that had come together under the banner of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) succeeded him, the feeling of political instability was inescapable. The battle lines were clearly drawn, with the PDM government and the Army on one side and the judiciary and Imran Khan on the other. To further analyse the situation, VIF released a podcast with Dr Shalini Chawla on the ‘Evolving Political Crisis in Pakistan’.

VIF produced several articles and commentaries throughout the year on the constant turmoil Pakistan was embroiled in. Some of these include ‘Imran Khan’s ouster and changes in POK’, ‘Growing Prowess of TTP amidst Negotiations’, ‘US Military Assistance Package to Pakistan

will have a Direct Bearing on India's National Security' and 'Pakistan: The Appointment of the New COAS and the End of the Long March'.

From April to November 2022, Imran Khan mobilised a significant support base for himself in the name of haqiqi azadi (true independence) and pressed for early elections. The polarisation took a dangerous turn, and political tensions grew high when Imran Khan was shot in an apparent assassination attempt in Wazirabad, Punjab, at a rally. Following this incident, in a further attempt to force general elections, Imran Khan dissolved the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) provincial assemblies where his party was in power. To address this significant development, VIF organised a Special Strategic Discussion on "Assassination attempt on Imran Khan and its Implications on India."

In a significant development, General Asim Munir was appointed as Pakistan's new Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on 24 November 2022, succeeding General Qamar Javed Bajwa. Even though the Pakistan Army had reiterated that the military does not get involved in civilian political affairs, it was speculated that he was appointed to further the government's agenda against Imran Khan. VIF published an article, 'Pakistan: Appointment of New Army Chief', detailing the event's significance.

Causing further havoc for the people, Pakistan was hit by unprecedented floods

during the monsoon season. Apart from the infrastructural loss, the human cost and the mass displacement were unprecedented. According to the UN, 33 million people were affected overall by the floods, while eight million were displaced and 13,000 were injured. Sindh and Balochistan, where rainfall is not heavy, experienced heavy rain and were unprepared for this environmental disaster.

Meanwhile, to further understand the dynamics of the Pashtuns given the resurgence of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), VIF organised a discussion on the book 'The Pashtuns: A Contested History' authored by Shri Tilak Devasher. Further, VIF also recorded a podcast on 'The Pashtuns - A Contested History' with Shri Tilak Devasher.

Due to the mismanagement of the Imran Khan government, Pakistan was on the verge of an economic meltdown. After the new coalition government took over, forex reserves plummeted to USD 9.7 billion, and Pakistan was on the precipice of economic default in June 2022. This situation made the government seek the revival of the IMF program to get some relief from the glaring economic doom. The program had stalled when Imran Khan, as prime minister, had refused to follow the IMF conditionalities. After imposing stringent measures, the IMF approved USD 1.17 billion in bailouts to avert Pakistan's imminent default. A podcast was recorded with Mr Sushant

Sareen to identify ‘Challenges ahead for the Pakistan Government.’

VIF had set up the Pakistan Study Group (PSG) in February 2018 to discuss and debate issues relating to Pakistan in a holistic manner. Shri Tilak Devasher is the convener of the group. The group consists of highly distinguished members from the strategic community, former defence personnel, and former diplomats who have served in Pakistan. Every month, the group meets to discuss and scrutinise the developments in Pakistan.

Based on the discussions held in the PSG meetings, VIF has started coming out with an annual publication called Pakistan Insights, with contributions from the members of the group. Following the success of Pakistan Insights 2019 and Pakistan Insights 2020, PSG brought out the third edited book, Pakistan Insights 2021-22. The book included an overview of developments in 2021-22, ousting of Imran Khan through a no-confidence motion, challenges for the Shehbaz Sharif-led government, internal and military developments in Pakistan, the civil-military relations, in-depth analysis of the ethnic fault lines and growing terrorism in Pakistan, the new National Security Policy, non-traditional security threats faced by Pakistan, foreign policy of Pakistan, the role of Taliban takeover and the issue of nationalism and identity in Pakistan. The PSG is working towards bringing out the fourth edited volume titled ‘Pakistan

Insights 2023’. It is expected to be released by the end of 2023.

Additionally, two book reviews were also done by VIF on ‘India’s Pakistan Policy: How Think Tanks Are Shaping Foreign Relations by Stuti Bhatnagar’ and ‘The India-Pakistan Sub-Conventional War: Democracy and Peace in South Asia by Sanjeev Kumar.’

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka faced its worst economic crisis in 2022. Initially the country was faced with Omicron, a variant of Covid19, followed by deep political and economic distress throughout the year. Economic distress appeared at the end of the first quarter, when Sri Lanka ran out of fuel shortly after the Ukraine crisis. The situation, particularly the economic crisis, forced Colombo to cut its expenditure and seek help from the IMF, WB and the ADB, besides countries like China and India. The situation took a turn for the worse when protesters asked for the resignation of the president. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned and left the country in April 2022, and Sri Lanka’s parliamentarians elected Ranil Wickremesinghe as the new President. President Wickremesinghe pledged to restore political order vis-à-vis the economy. In this background, articles were published on the making and unmaking of the Sri Lanka Crisis, political developments in the country, and options for India and China’s debt trap policy.

The VIF organised discussions on developments in Sri Lanka and its implementation, economic situation in the country, the implications of the political and economic crisis in Sri Lanka and on political developments in Sri Lanka and

Indian choices. On invitation from the Pathfinder Foundation, a VIF delegation led by Dr. Arvind Gupta made a visit to the country and had fruitful interactions with various stakeholders.

Activities		
No	Date	Title
1	11-Apr-22	Discussion on Developments in Sri Lanka & Its Implications
2	18-May-22	Talk by Amb Gopal Baglay, High commissioner of India to Sri Lanka on Evolving Situation in Sri Lanka
3	20-May-22	Discussion with Dr. Ganeshan Wignaraja on Implications of Political & Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka
4	01-Jun-22	Talk by H.E. Dr. Shankar Prasad Sharma Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Nepal on Nepal-India Relations
5	06-Jun-22	Discussion on the upcoming book Revisiting/Understanding Myanmar's Present through Its Past
6	13-Jun-22	Discussion on India's Economic Cooperation in the Neighbourhood
7	21-Jun-22	Talk on Bangladesh-India Relations and New Horizons of Possibilities by Amb Shahidul Haque, Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh
8	03-Aug-22	Joint VIF-NIICE Discussion on BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity
9	17-Aug-22	Discussion on Sri Lankan economic and political crises and India's policy opportunities in the way ahead
10	28-Sep-22	Discussion on Myanmar's Relations with Its Neighbouring Countries
11	11-Oct-22	VIF-Pathfinder dialogue on Security and Maritime Cooperation
12	14-Oct-22	Book Discussion on The Pashtuns: A Contested History authored by Shri Tilak Devasher
13	18-Oct-22	Discussion on Nepal's Domestic Developments
14	09-Nov-22	Special Strategic Discussion: Assassination attempt on Imran Khan and its Implications for on India
15	21-Nov-22	Book discussion on Radicalisation in India authored by Abhinav Pandya
16	08-Dec-22	Talk on Issues and Options for Bangladesh and India in the Context of International Migration by Prof Shahidul Haque
17	16-Dec-22	Round Table Discussion on Power trading between India and Nepal
18	19-Dec-22	Discussion on the assessment of the Nepal elections
19	10-14 Jan 23	VIF Delegation's Visit to Colombo

No	Date	Title
20	01-Feb-23	Discussion on Evaluating Myanmar Crisis: Implications for India
21	23-Mar-23	Discussion on India's Neighbourhood
22	29-Mar-23	Interaction with Nepal MPs Delegation

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	7-Apr-22	What Can BIMSTEC Deliver That SAARC Could Not?	Prof Rajaram Panda	4701
2	11-Apr-22	Blasphemy Laws and Female Madrassa of Pakistan	Soumya Awasthi	5494
3	17-May-22	In Aid of a Troubled Maritime Neighbour: India and the Sri Lankan Financial Crisis	Shashank Sharma	4729
4	23-May-22	Expect a Recalibration in the Pakistan- Taliban Relationship	Dr Anwesha Ghosh	4579
5	26-May-22	The Presence of Islamic State-Khurasan Province in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan	Anurag Sharma	6020
6	8-Jun-22	Imran Khan's ouster and changes in POK	Amb D P Srivastava	5285
7	12-Jun-22	Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan Versus Pakistan Government	Soumya Awasthi	5901
8	1-Jul-22	Nepal Army and SPP – Multiple Nuances	Brig (retd) Rahul Bhonsle	4579
9	11-Jul-22	Sri Lankan Leaders: Forcing the Hands of its Citizens	Dr Sreeradha Datta	5093
10	22-Jul-22	The Unmaking and Making of Sri Lankan Crisis: Options before India	Rishi Gupta	4877
11	28-Jul-22	What Lies Ahead of the Military Executions in Myanmar?	Cchavi Vasisht	4450
12	29-Jul-22	Remembering Kargil: How it Redefined the Concept of War between India and Pakistan	Dhritiman Mukherjee	4432
13	30-Jul-22	China's Debt Trap Diplomacy in Sri Lanka	Akhila Nair	7255
14	4-Aug-22	Executions in Myanmar Disturbing News for the Region and the World	Prof Rajaram Panda	4218
15	8-Aug-22	India- Maldives – Growing Convergences	Dr Sreeradha Datta	4342
16	18-Aug-22	“Victory Day” Parade: One year of a Pyrrhic Victory for the Taliban	Soumya Awasthi	4781
17	5-Sep-22	Emerging Synthetic Drug Market in the Bay of Bengal A Case Study of Amphetamine-Type Substances	Shivanshi Bhadouria	5013

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
18	7-Sep-22	Growing Prowess of TTP amidst Negotiations	Soumya Awasthi	5434
19	22-Sep-22	Reflections on the Visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India	Amb Pankaj Saran	6045
20	29-Nov-22	Pakistan: Appointment of New Army Chief	Rana Banerji	4841
21	16-Dec-22	A Possibility of Fractured Democracy in Myanmar - 2023	Cchavi Vasisht	4593
22	30-Dec-22	Making sense of Nepal Elections	Dr Sangeeta Thapliyal	5063
23	18-Jan-23	Looking Back at Military Rule in Myanmar in 2022: Way Forward for 2023	Cchavi Vasisht	4658
24	20-Jan-23	Bhutan: Review of 2022 and the Way Forward	Aarushi Gupta	4326
25	30-Jan-23	Bangladesh in 2022: Year-End Review and Way Forward	Dr Anil Kumar	4102
26	3-Feb-23	Pompeo's Balakot Claim and the Need to Adopt a Nuanced Understanding of Indo-Pak Deterrence Relationship	Dhritiman Mukherjee	3725
27	6-Feb-23	Peshawar Bombing likely to Heighten Stress in Pakistan-Taliban Relations	Dr Anwesha Ghosh	4054
28	8-Feb-23	Peshawar Mosque Attack: "Snake Bites its Snake Charmer"	Anurag Sharma	4030
29	9-Feb-23	Challenge before Indonesia as ASEAN Chair to Deal with Myanmar Issue	Prof Rajaram Panda	3752
30	13-Feb-23	Assessment of the Nepal Elections 2022	Aarushi Gupta	4020
31	15-Feb-23	Review of Sri Lanka Crisis and the Way Forward	Dr Anil Kumar	4282
32	21-Feb-23	Pervez Musharraf : The 1999 coup	Tilak Devasher	3898
33	22-Feb-23	Post-election turmoil within Nepalese politics	Aarushi Gupta	3747

Commentaries

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	22-Apr-22	Storm after a Lull: Kabul Attack	Soumya Awasthi	3819
2	10-May-22	Can Sri Lanka break the Chinese hold?	Dr Gunjan Singh	3569
3	11-May-22	Future of Hydropower Cooperation with Bhutan	Amb VP Haran	5779
4	16-May-22	Uncertain Future of Women Rights in Afghanistan	Aakriti Vinayak	3835

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
5	22-May-22	The Boiling Baloch Pot: A Continued Saga of Baloch Resistance	Tejusvi Shukla	3721
6	27-Jun-22	The Padma Setu– Bangladesh’s Pride	Dr Sreeradha Datta	4971
7	19-Jul-22	Recent Developments Add to Instability in Pakistan	Aakriti Vinayak	4142
8	12-Aug-22	POK: Truth, Lies, and Deception	Amb D P Srivastava	4713
9	29-Aug-22	Sri Lanka – Current Political Situation	Team VIF	4759
10	5-Sep-22	Sheikh Hasina India visit: Reiteration of Tested Ties	Dr Sreeradha Datta	4336
11	27-Sep-22	Energy: A New Dimension in India-Nepal Relations	Rishi Gupta	5288
12	8-Oct-22	One year after the Taliban Takeover- Afghanistan in Crisis	Aakriti Vinayak	5010
13	9-Nov-22	Pakistani PM Shehbaz Sharif’s Visit to Beijing and CPEC	Amb D P Srivastava	2723
14	21-Nov-22	Security Challenges along Indo-Nepal Border Regions	Prof Hari Bansh Jha	4329
15	30-Nov-22	Pakistan: The Appointment of the New COAS and the End of the Long March	Amb D P Srivastava	3072
16	9-Dec-22	Foreign Secretary’s Visit to Myanmar: Border Security Gets Foremost Priority	Cchavi Vasisht	3568
17	21-Dec-22	Pakistan: Bhutto Legacy	Amb D P Srivastava	3370
18	11-Jan-23	Resurgence of Tehreek-i-Taliban (TTP) in Pakistan	Aakriti Vinayak	3687
19	2-Mar-23	Economic-Political Developments in Nepal: Looking Back at 2022 and the Way Forward	Aarushi Gupta	4085
20	29-Mar-23	International Order and Taliban: Theory and Practice	Georgi Asatryan	3774

Podcasts

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	8-Apr-22	Evolving Political Crisis in Pakistan	Dr Shalini Chawla	4311
2	29-Apr-22	Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba’s Visit to India	Amb Ranjit Rae	3371
3	04-May-22	What does Taliban Governance mean for the region?	Michael Kugelman	3828
4	05-May-22	Sri Lanka’s Current Economic and Political Crisis	PM Heblkar	3613
5	06-May-22	India-Bhutan Relations: Exploring the New Vistas of Cooperation	Amb VP Haran	4129
6	11-May-22	Challenges ahead for the Pakistan Government	Sushant Sareen	3554

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
7	22-Sep-22	Afghanistan- One year after Taliban Takeover	Amb Gautam Mukhopadhaya	4962
8	16-Nov-22	The Pashtuns - A contested history	Tilak Devasher	2381
9	27-Feb-23	Expectations from the Dahal-led ruling coalition in Nepal	Amb Ranjit Rae	2321

Centre for National Security and Strategic Studies



Chairman VIF with Army War College Representative



VIF-IIM Indore & Army War College Joint Strategic Leadership and Perspective Planning



VIF-ISPA Joint seminar on Vision 2047 and Role of Indian Space Industries



Vice COAS, Lt. Gen. BS Raju, UYSM, AVSM, YSM



Atul Dinkar Rane, Director General BrahMos, DRDO India and CEO & MD



Brainstorming Session on Assessing the Strategic Significance and Development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands



Interaction with Foreign Military/Defence Attaches posted in New Delhi on India's Approach to Multilateralism

From April 2022 to March 2023, the Centre for National Security and Strategic Studies (CNSSS) at the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) undertook significant activities under the assigned charter. Along with generating a “Fortnightly News Digest on Defence and Terrorism Studies”, which covers crucial developments in defence and terrorism (National & International) studies, the Centre continued the “VIF Cyber Review”, a monthly digest focusing on policy, industry and incidents-related developments in the cyberspace domain, both domestically and internationally.

The Centre focused on issues related to hybrid warfare, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict. All events, including in the hybrid mode, witnessed the participation of distinguished experts from policy-making, defence, academia and media.

During the above mentioned period, the Centre had several Publications, including Commentaries/Articles, Briefs, Papers, Books, Compendiums/Task Force Reports/Expert Groups Reports, News Digests & Cyber Reviews and Book Reviews.

Throughout the year, the VIF hosted several events, concentrating on various aspects of national security, defence/armed forces readiness, science and technology and foreign policy. Continuing the series of lectures-cum-discussions, the VIF organised a ‘Short Capsule’ programme in May that was aimed at acquainting diplomats of foreign missions about India’s foreign and security policies.

In July, the VIF organised an interaction with the Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS), Lt Gen B S Raju, UYSM, AVSM, on the prospects of Agniveers and various

measures being implemented to enhance the combat potential of the Indian Army. During the lecture, Lt Gen Raju also touched upon aspects of the theatre command.

In August, the VIF hosted a three-day learning session on "Strategic Leadership and Perspective Planning" in partnership with ARTRAC (Army Training Command) and IIM Indore, in which the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Manoj Pande, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC, addressed the participants. Several army officers attended the event and discussed various subjects related to the armed forces, developing a strategic environment, strategic culture, ethical decision making and visionary leadership.

To discuss the vision of making India a hub for drone technology, the VIF and the FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) jointly organised

a two-day conference in September that brought together representatives from government, business executives, academics and researchers from various organisations.

In the coming year, the VIF looks forward to carrying out activities centering on national security and related areas. Continuing its engagement over the last four years, the VIF is looking forward to jointly organising the annual conference with the FICCI on "Homeland Security" in the second half of 2023. The VIF-FICCI Homeland Security conference aims to bring together leading industry people, Central and State government officials and other stakeholders to share their experiences and ideas on various aspects of technology, regulations and applications concerning national security.

Activities

No	Date	Title
1	18-May-22	Short Capsule on India's Strategic and Security Perspectives
2	07-Jul-22	VIF-ISPA joint seminar on Vision 2047 and Role of Indian Space Industries
3	20-Jul-22	Interaction with Shri Atul Dinkar Rane Director General BrahMos, DRDO India and CEO & MD, BrahMos Aerospace
4	21-Jul-22	Interaction with Vice COAS, Lt. Gen. BS Raju, UYSM, AVASM, YSM on Measures being Adopted to Enhance the Combat Potential of Indian Army including the Agniveers
5	22-Aug-22	Brainstorming Session on Revisiting India's Nuclear Policy & Doctrine in the Emerging Strategic Scenario
6	23-Aug-23	VIF-IIM indore & Army War College Joint Strategic Leadership and Perspective Planning

No	Date	Title
7	15-Sep-22	Brainstorming Session on Assessing the Strategic Significance and Development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands in the Current Scenario in Indo-Pacific
8	26-Sep-22	Briefing cum Discussion with Defence/Military on India and the UN
9	01-Nov-22	Discussion on India's National Defence Doctrine Now
10	25-Nov-22	Brainstorming Session on New Trends in Terrorism
11	20-Mar-23	Brainstorming session on Understanding Khalistan 2.0

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	12-Apr-22	Global Terrorism Trends in 2021 & Projections for 2022	Anurag Sharma	5436
2	21-Apr-22	Ukraine: How is the Air and Air Defence War Unfolding ?	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	4286
3	14-May-22	Learning to Win Wars, Not Just Battles!	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4615
4	3-Jun-22	Indigenisation: A New Awakening- Where are We Headed?	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena (Retd)	3681
5	26-Jul-22	Modern Warfare and Structural Transformation	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4646
6	17-Aug-22	The Future of Ground Based Air Defence	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	4734
7	26-Aug-22	Challenges in Defence Acquisitions	Amit Cowshish	4776
8	27-Aug-22	Revitalising Indian Military Ethical Leadership	Lt. Gen Ajai Kumar Singh	4988
9	9-Sep-22	Impact of Climate Change on the Blue Economy of the Indian Ocean Region: Case Study of the Fisheries Sector	Anagha P.	7410
10	12-Sep-22	Deterrence in Asymmetries	Air Marshal Rajesh Kumar	5361
11	13-Sep-22	Next Step in Disengagement in Eastern Ladakh and Contemplating Larger Implications	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	6694
12	19-Sep-22	Indigenization of Defence Production: India's Journey from Vision to Outcomes	Brig (Dr) Ashok Pathak	6666
13	17-Oct-22	A Perspective on Kashmir Situation: Tunneled View and Wide-Angle Scan	Brig (Dr) Ashok Pathak	3943
14	28-Oct-22	Political Control on Use of Combat Power	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	3726
15	4-Nov-22	COP 27: High Stakes, Low Expectations	Heena Samant & PK Khup Hangzo	4100

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
16	14-Nov-22	Border Management in India: Methods, Challenges and Opportunities	Maj Gen (Dr) Ashok Kumar	4867
17	17-Nov-22	The Significance of Exercise Malabar 2022	Prof Rajaram Panda	4510
18	2-Dec-22	Longewala December 1971: If it Was Fought as a Unified Theatre Command Battle	Brig (Dr) Ashok Pathak	5628
19	9-Jan-23	Defence Procurement & Production: A Feel of Fresh Air as the New Year Dawns	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	4315
20	11-Jan-23	Contemplating Deterrence by 'Integrated Missile and Rocket Force'	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4266
21	16-Jan-23	Terrorism and Extremism Trends in Bharat: Review of 2022 and Prognosis for 2023	Anurag Sharma	4635
22	7-Feb-23	IAF's Revised Doctrine 2022: An Overview	Air Marshal Diptendu Choudhury	5821
23	8-Feb-23	Disentangling the Perceptions of 'Grey Zone Warfare'!	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4079
24	13-Feb-23	A Perspective on Defence Budget 2023-24	Amit Cowshish	4933
25	20-Feb-23	Imperatives for Reconsideration of the Armed Forces Doctrines	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	3907
26	27-Feb-23	Punjab: Frankenstein amidst Witches Brew	Brig (retd) Rahul Bhonsle	3807
27	27-Feb-23	Geo-engineering: A Fringe Idea Whose Time Has Come?	PK Khup Hangzo	3912
28	17-Mar-23	Self-Styled 'Bhindranwale 2.0': A Troubling Element in Punjab	Anurag Sharma	5390
29	17-Mar-23	India's Internal Security Challenges	Arvind Gupta	10726
30	20-Mar-23	AUKUS's Nuclear Submarine Pact: Implications	Prof Rajaram Panda	4173
31	26-Dec-22	The Kashmir Files: Much Ado about Honesty	Rajesh Singh	4737

Commentaries

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	31-May-22	Transforming-transformation into neo-Army	Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma	4000
2	8-Sep-22	India's Freedom: Subhas Bose and INA	Raghvendra Singh	4928
3	18-Oct-22	Pakistan's Invasion of Kashmir, UN Resolutions and POK	Amb D P Srivastava	4270
4	2-Nov-22	'Tagging' the Major Powers: US National Security Strategy	Kartikeya Pandey	3336
5	7-Feb-23	India's Defence Budget 2023-24	Laxman Kumar Behera	4109

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
6	22-Feb-23	Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX): Where do We Stand?	Naval Jagota	3043
7	10-Mar-23	Take Aways from the New IAF Doctrine	Naval Jagota	3404
8	16-Mar-23	Could the Reaper Have Been Saved – An Analysis	Air Marshal GS Bedi	3749

Podcasts

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	3-Aug-22	India's Clean Energy Transition	Amb D P Srivastava	4115
2	19-Dec-22	Personal Data Protection Bill 2022	Dr Gulshan Rai	2533

Centre for Historical and Civilisational Studies



Release of Nationalism in the Study of Ancient Indian History



Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission



*Prof. Jeffery D. Long, Prof. of Religion and Asian Studies,
Elizabethtown College, USA*



*Dr. P. Ram Manohar, Research Director, Amrita School of Ayurveda,
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kollam, Kerala*



*Shri Srinath Mohandas, Assistant Professor, EGCS and Social Systems, Chinmaya
Vishwa Vidyapeeth*



Iconic Indians: 75 Extraordinary Individuals Who Inspired the Country



Prof. Maria Krzysztof Byrski, Warsaw University, Poland



Discussion on Indian Culture: Challenges & Potentialities with Dr Nivedita Raghunath Bhide



Prof Jeffrey Sachs on the Vivekananda and the World Today



Discussion on The War Diary of Asha San: From Tokyo to Netaji's INA

Lecture Series on 'Gītā

In January 2022, the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) started an online lecture series on the Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā by Swami Mitrananda of the Chinmaya Mission. The series was titled 'Gītā for the Millennia' and it is ongoing in the year 2023. This periodical lecture series by Swāmi Mitrananda aims to seek guidance from the scriptures to continuously inspire us towards

enlightenment and to foster original thinking among us to rebuild a narrative for India and the world in the contemporary global scenario.

Holistic Health

How Āyurveda can Power Development of a Global Health Culture

During the year, discussions were organised to understand the necessity of holistic health, covering various aspects of

Āyurveda, including its potentialities and strategies, to popularise it for the benefit of the world. Dr. P. Ram Manohar Vaidya, Research Director, Amrita School of Ayurveda, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Kollam, Kerala, spoke about the need to adopt these steps to make Āyurveda contemporary.

Understanding Indian Ethos and History

Asia as Method: Towards Deimperialisation and its Afterlife’ by Prof. Chen Kuan-Hsing, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan

Professor Chen discussed Asia’s intellectual legacy as against its European definition, which emerged largely from enlightenment. This legacy is a result of Asia’s regional and diverse cultural heritage and community interactions. Professor Chen highlighted the contemporary need for an inter-Asian interaction and inter-referencing towards de-imperialisation of European concepts from Asian thinking. The speaker highlighted the prominence of India in building infrastructural capabilities for Asia, not just because of its economic stability, resources and vastness, but also because of its geographical location.

“The Vedic doctrine of the creative Sacrifice of Puruṣa and the Christian doctrine of redemptive Sacrifice of Yeshua as the keystones of Hinduism and Christianity” by Prof. Maria

Krzysztof Byrski, Professor Emeritus of the Warsaw University, Poland

The talk intended to experiment the ways in which Hinduism and Christianity can come together for a dialogue. The speaker discussed his ongoing research which explored the chosen hymns of the Rig Veda and the Atharva Veda with the intention to show that the Vedic idea of the creative sacrifice of the Puruṣa is compatible with the Christian idea of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The maxim of ‘Yagna’ is embedded in the Hindu cosmology of creation, which is often loosely translated as sacrifice, was compared by the speaker with the Christian idea of the sacrifice of Jesus. It was highlighted that there is an ontological disagreement from the Hindu position for this comparative study. However, it was also mentioned that the sharing of thoughts can open new ways for dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity. Even if the dialogue may lead to subjects and issues that are debatable, it would help these two communities to have a better understanding of their ‘cultural differences’.

‘Vedānta and Nationalism’ by Śrī. Śrīnāth Mohandās, Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth

By bringing in thoughts from Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Subhramanya Bharati, the speaker highlighted that Indian nationalism at its core is not treated by ‘Diversity’, rather, it

understands diversity as a work of nature. The talk emphasised on how the Vedāntic concepts like Chiti, Dharma and Karma Yoga are integral to the idea of Indian nationalism. In the words of the speaker, “The conception of nation is like the conception of an individual as Jivatma with a body, mind and intellect complex for self-expression, and fulfilling its purpose in the world.” The speaker concluded the talk by saying that there is a need for re-articulating the idea of Indic nationalism in a contemporary way.

Apart from the above, a seminar to discuss the State of Archaeology in India (in 2022) was held during the year. It was led by Dr. Dilip Chakrabarti, Professor Emeritus, Department of Archeology, Cambridge University. It was attended by the Director General of Archaeological

Survey of India (ASI), Smt. Vidyavathi and Dr. Alok Tripathi, ADG, Archaeology, ASI. Prof. Dilip Chakrabarty spoke about the crisis of archaeology in India from various angles.

Book Discussions

During the year the centre organised discussions on "Hinduism in America: A Convergence of Worlds" by Prof. Jeffery D. Long, Professor of Religion and Asian Studies at Elizabethtown College, U.S.A, ‘Snakes in the Ganga: Breaking India 2.0’ by Śrī. Rājiv Malhotra and Smt. Vijaya Viśvānathan, Nationalism in the Study of Ancient Indian History and Towards a Nationalist Narrative of India's Ancient Past: Including Recent Research on the Indus Civilization by Prof. Dilip K. Chakrabarty.

Activities

No	Date	Title
1	18-Apr-22	Talk on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
2	02-May-22	Third Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
3	09-May-22	Book Discussion - Hinduism in America: A Convergence of Worlds authored by Prof. Jeffery D. Long, Professor of Religion and Asian Studies, Elizabethtown College, USA
4	12-May-22	Fourth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
5	10-Jun-22	Fifth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
6	01-Jul-22	Sixth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
7	29-Aug-22	Seventh Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda
8	30-Aug-22	The Vedic doctrine of the creative Sacrifice of Purusha and the Christian doctrine of redemptive Sacrifice of Yeshua as the keystones of Hinduism and Christianity by Prof. Maria Krzysztof Byrski, Professor emeritus of the Warsaw University, Poland
9	21-Sep-22	Eighth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission

No	Date	Title
10	10-Oct-22	Release of Nationalism in the Study of Ancient Indian History & Towards a Nationalist Narrative of India's Ancient Past: Including Recent Research on the Indus Civilization
11	14-Nov-22	Seminar on The State of Archeology in India (in 2022)
12	14-Nov-22	Ninth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
13	17-Nov-22	Talk on How Ayurveda Can Power the Development of a Global Health Culture? by Dr. P. Rammanohar
14	23-Nov-22	Talk on Vedānta and Nationalism by Shri Srinath Mohandas, Assistant Professor, School of Ethics Governance Culture (EGCS)
15	24-Nov-22	Book discussion on 'Iconic Indians: 75 Extraordinary Individuals Who Inspired The Country' authored by Sanjeev Sanyal & Rajesh Singh
16	08-Dec-22	Signing of MoU between VIF-IGNCA
17	31-Jan-23	Tenth Lecture on Gita for the Millennia by Swami Mitrananda, Chinmaya Mission
18	10-Mar-23	Book Discussion on The War Diary of Asha San: From Tokyo to Netaji's Indian National Army
19	22-Mar-23	Lecture by Prof Jeffrey Sachs on the Vivekananda and the World Today
20	23-Mar-23	Book Discussion on Indian Culture: Challenges & Potentialities by Ms Nivedita Raghunath Bhide

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	3-May-22	Many facets of the Indian Archive	Ankit Mohonto & Ankita Vinayak	4250
2	20-May-22	Remembering Swami Vivekananda's Concept of Universal Brotherhood on Africa Day	Nikhil Yadav & Dr Neha Sinha	4572
3	30-Jun-22	Mohini on a Swing: Between the Singularity and Plurality of Desire(s)	Rohith Krishna	4548
4	21-Jul-22	Diversity within the Indian Subcontinent: Gandhara Region, its Art and Architecture	Rishika Dhumal	4660
5	24-Aug-22	Examining the Confluence of Tradition and Modernity in Modern Indian Temples	Anirudh Naveen	4993
6	30-Aug-22	Perceiving Silk Road as a Pilgrimage Route to India	Rohith Krishna	4993
7	6-Sep-22	An Outline of the Development of Ancient Historical and Archaeological Studies in India	Dr Dilip K. Chakrabarti	6003
8	11-Sep-22	The Precondition to 'Tolerate': Remembering Swami Vivekananda's Wisdom on September 11	Nikhil Yadav & Rohith Krishna	5800
9	1-Feb-23	The Unbroken Guru-Sishya tradition and The Continuity of Bharatvarsha	S Gurumurthy	3603

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
10	22-Mar-23	The Decline and Reclamation of the Discourse on Duties	Rohith Krishna	3957
11	31-Mar-23	Buddhism and India's Soft Power Diplomacy	Ankit Mohonto	4325

Commentaries

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	24-Jun-22	Swami Vivekananda: A Short Life Sketch	Ruveer Vohra	6285
2	28-Oct-22	Sister Nivedita and India's Freedom Struggle	Dr Arpita Mitra	4648

Podcasts

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	29-Jun-22	New Focus on Hindu Studies	Kalyan Viswanathan	4716
2	3-Aug-22	Understanding Hinduphobia	Prof. Jeffery D. Long	3703
3	9-Mar-23	Cultural Entrepreneurship for Shaping Brand India	Arunima Gupta	2507



Joint FICCI-VIF seminar on Drones and Counter Drones

Centre for Technological and Scientific Studies



Shri Hari Babu Srivastava, Outstanding Scientist and DG TM, DRDO



ISpA-VIF Roundtable on Space



Pastor Jan-Aage Torp, Ambassador for Peace, Global Socio-Economic and Financial Evolution Network, Geneva



Sangam Sinha, O/S & DG R&M, DRDO



MoU signing between VIF & DRDO



Interaction with a visiting UK delegation

In 2022-23, science, technology and innovation (STI) topics remained major areas of focus at national, regional and global level discourses. The role of STI has significantly increased in delivering economic growth, achieving national security priorities, and addressing emerging threats and challenges, including health, education, cyber, energy, climate change, defence and security. While India scaled up its Make in India and Self-Reliant India initiatives to meet its own growing demands for technological goods and to build an STI ecosystem in the country, the great power competition and rivalry created concerns over security of supply chains pertaining to advanced technologies and materials. The Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership further expanded international cooperation in the STI sector to overcome some of these national concerns.

The Centre gained momentum from the national security perspective and

aimed to keep pace with the steadfast rate at which STI developments have been advancing. A series of discussions highlighting the importance of indigenous STI capabilities in India were organised during the year. A large number of reports and articles were also published, including “Protection of National Critical Information Infrastructure”, “Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita: Pioneers of Indian Scientific Research”, “Legal Dimensions of Commercialisation of Space”, “Semiconductor FABs: A National Mission”, “India-Singapore FinTech Cooperation” and “Changing Dimensions of Information Warfare”, among others.

The Centre also brought out a fortnightly Science and Technology (S&T) Digest, covering areas such as STI in space, nuclear technology, defence technology, emerging technologies and applications and international STI cooperation. The Centre will further delve into these subjects of national importance in the coming year.

Activities		
No	Date	Title
1	09-May-23	Brainstorming Session on Role of Cyber-enabled Technologies in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine Armed Conflict
2	08-Jun-22	Talk by Shri. Hari Babu Srivastava, Outstanding Scientist and DG TM, DRDO
3	05-Aug-22	Discussion on India's Cyber security preparedness
4	02-Sep-22	Joint FICCI-VIF seminar on Drones and counter drones
5	19-Sep-22	A talk by Shri Sangam Sinha, O/S & DG R&M Drdo on & Ease of Doing Business with DRDO: New Initiatives
6	13-Oct-22	MoU signing by DRDO

No	Date	Title
7	17-Jan-23	Interaction with Pastor Jan-Aage Torp, Ambassador for Peace, Global Socio-Economic and Financial Evolution Network, Geneva
8	18-Jan-23	2nd ISpA-VIF Roundtable on Space
9	16-Feb-23	Interaction with a visiting UK delegation

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	25-Jul-22	DRDO-Industry Interaction on Improving the Defence R&D Ecosystem	Naval Jagota & Shashank Sharma	4845
2	14-Oct-22	A 'Quiet' Test with a 'Big' Impact	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	5137
3	5-Dec-22	Why Securing the Information Domain has become an Urgent Necessity for India?	Tejusvi Shukla	4541
4	6-Dec-22	A Quiet Revolution in the Making	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	3996
5	12-Dec-22	AIIMS Cyber-Incident— An 'e-epidemic' Situation for Digital Bharat	Anurag Sharma	4749
6	21-Dec-22	US-China Tech Rivalry: Pentagon Report on China's Emerging Technology Strategy	Dr Saroj Bishoyi	4507
7	30-Jan-23	US Critical and Emerging Technology Strategy	Dr Saroj Bishoyi	4474
8	31-Jan-23	Geopolitics of Cyber Attribution	Divyanshu Jindal	4490
9	16-Feb-23	India's March towards Achieving Hypersonic Capability	Lt Gen (Dr) V K Saxena	3884
10	20-Feb-23	Balloon Surveillance and the Near Space Region	Air Marshal Rajesh Kumar	3461
11	21-Mar-23	India-Singapore FinTech Cooperation	Dr Saroj Bishoyi	4126

Commentaries

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	14-Nov-22	India's Preparedness in the Digital Milieu	The Cyber Task Force	3027
2	13-Mar-23	Successful and Effective Therapy in Radiation Oncology	Dr Suvro Parui	2495

Centre for Governance and Political Studies



Seminar on Criminal Justice System in India



Prof Salvator Babones, Associate Professor, University of Sydney



RNP Singh





Interaction with the students of MIT School of Government, Pune

Global Democracy Indices

VIF has undertaken a project on the comparative assessment of democracies around the world by liberal publications of the western world, in terms of Human Rights, Minority Rights, Freedom of Religion, Environmental rights, Press Freedom, Corruption, etc. Leading organisations of the USA & several Western European countries, in their periodically published assessments claim the sanctity of their studies under the purview of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), primarily under Article 18 (right to freedom of religion) & Article 19 (right to freedom of opinion).

On the topic of human rights, India has been emphasising the significance of both duties and rights. It may be recalled

that following a request by Julian Huxley (the then Director General of UNESCO) to contribute an essay on the Declaration of Human Rights, in May 1947, Mahatma Gandhi in his letter had stated that “Begin with a charter of Duties of Man and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter...”

The Western organisations publishing these studies are well networked with influential people and are funded by their Governments and related Agencies, various foundations & Funds, individuals, etc.

Curiously, these reports are not sensitive towards legacy issues, local economic and political conditions, socio-cultural diversity, religion & culture, historical and civilizational factors, and traditional

practices of the people. Also, the sources used are largely anti-government, ideologically biased, and mostly opinions gathered from a small and selected elite group.

They are also uniformly critical of India's Constitutional and democratic values and practices. The publication of such reports, built on misinterpreted and incorrect information that amplify India's deficiencies rather than its many achievements raise serious questions about the sincerity of these studies and their motivations.

India, being the largest and among the most vibrant democracies, is a secular constitutional republic with well-established independent and state institutions, free and regular elections, an independent judiciary, a free media, and rule of law.

The Constitution of India guarantees fundamental rights stated in Article 12-35. Its people are overwhelmingly proud of India's achievements as the only successful and continuous post-colonial democracy since Independence in 1947.

It is in this background that the VIF study seeks to analyse some of the leading Western reports on global democracies, their aims, methodologies, findings, and the reasons for their uniformly negative assessment of India's democratic experience and practices.

Climate Change

Climate change is the most relevant and serious issue of our time. Science has reiterated time and again how human activities have warmed up the world faster than ever imagined. The average temperature of the earth's surface is now about 1.1 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial levels. This change has proved to be disastrous. Sea-level rise to ocean acidification, melting of glaciers, biodiversity loss, extreme weather, water scarcity etc. are factors that have ravaged the planet and human life. It is expected that these events will become more frequent and severe in the future. The year 2022 was no exception in this regard. In fact, the impact of climate change escalated significantly in both 2022 and 2023. This was evident from some of the most severe weather events witnessed across the world. From mid-June till end August 2022, Pakistan experienced record-breaking monsoon rainfall, leading to large parts of it being flooded. Similarly, flooding was also reported in Australia, China, India, Thailand, Vietnam and Venezuela. The floods in Pakistan were preceded by a searing heat wave in its eastern part. Dangerous heat waves also engulfed parts of China, Europe and the US. A relentless monsoon brought states across northern India under extreme and severe floods, while a devastating flood rocked Libya in September, 2023 following heavy rainfall.

Climate Diplomacy

On the climate diplomacy front, the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly referred to as COP-27, was held at Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, from November 6-20, 2022. COP-27 aimed to secure stronger emission reduction pledges from participating countries to achieve the Paris Agreement goal of limiting increase in average global temperature to 1.5°C. However, only a fraction of the nearly 200 parties attended COP-27 and submitted updated national pledges consistent with that goal. As a result, the 1.5°C target becomes much harder to achieve. COP 27, however, did secure a historic agreement on loss and damage aimed at compensating countries severely affected by climate change.

India: An active player in the fight against climate change

India demonstrated its commitment towards the fight against climate change by submitting updated national targets to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2022. It included reducing emission intensity of GDP by 45 percent by 2030, achieving about 50 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030 through transfer of technology and low cost international finance, including from the Green Climate Fund, and to put forward

and further propagate a healthy and sustainable way of living based on Indian traditions and values of conservation and moderation. This included launching a mass movement for 'LiFE' also known as 'Lifestyle For the Environment', introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during COP 26 with the aim of combatting climate change. Additionally, this Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) update is a step towards achieving India's long-term goal of reaching net-zero emissions by 2070, a target set during COP 26 in Glasgow in 2021. For this, India has submitted a framework document titled 'India's Long-term Low Carbon Development Strategy' to the UNFCCC in November 2022. The fact that India has revised and updated its NDCs to include more ambitious targets is an indication of her seriousness about climate change and unwavering commitment to do more than its fair share.

India has always been an active player in global efforts to combat climate change. It has served as the voice of developing countries on different international fora. India is a firm believer of the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities, respective capabilities (CBDR-RC) and historical responsibilities. Climate justice and climate finance are the two most important issues for India at the global climate change negotiations. Thus, it is evident that India is committed to finding a solution to the climate problem. Towards this end, the country has taken

part in global climate change processes which are discussed below.

India is a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement in 2015. India had submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), to UNFCCC on October 2, 2015. They include the following:

- a. Reduce emissions intensity of the economy by 33-35% by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- b. Achieve about 40% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy sources by 2030.
- c. Create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

India has already achieved few of these targets.

India has also been instrumental in establishing the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in 2015 as an action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies as a means for bringing energy access, ensuring energy security, and driving energy transition among member countries. India has also established the Coalition for Disaster

Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in 2019. The CDRI is a partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programs, multilateral development banks and financing mechanisms, the private sector and knowledge institutions that aims to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

The next COP, i.e. COP 28, will be held from 30 November-12 December 2023 in Dubai, which will undertake a “Global Stock-take” on how countries are faring on their emission-cutting commitments since the Paris Climate Accord of 2015. India is expected to actively engage in the discussions during the Summit on the principles of equity and climate justice.

Climate change: A key area of interest at the Vivekananda International Foundation

Climate change is a key area of interest for the VIF. The VIF in collaboration with the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR) and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), hosted a virtual round table on “China-India Climate Change: Dynamics and the Way Forward” on June 15, 2022. Additionally, the VIF also organised a Vimarsh (monthly lecture) on “Water Security in India” on February 7, 2023 that focused on how India is trying to overcome its water crisis and moving towards

becoming a more water secure nation. To further facilitate a greater understanding of climate change and its implications for India, the VIF instituted a Climate Change Expert Group comprising of experts from several fields, including climate and weather systems, environment, energy, diplomacy and national security. The group holds regular meetings and consultations to understand various ways in which climate change has affected India's national security, foreign policy, geopolitics and geo-economics. It has also discussed the challenges and gaps in India's climate change policies. Some of the key outcomes were as follows:

- Climate tipping points need to be understood better.
- Himalayan glaciers deserve greater attention.
- Climate justice should continue to be at the core of India's arguments during global climate negotiations. India should claim its fair share of the carbon budget.

- India should protect its agricultural sector at all costs.
- India should foster greater sub-regional cooperation on climate change.
- India should strengthen its policy research and analysis capacity.
- India should aim to develop its own climate models.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, VIF's researchers have published articles and commentaries on clean energy transition, critical minerals, extreme weather events, climate diplomacy, water security, the environment, etc. They have also published podcasts on issues pertaining to the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report as well as on COP-27 and its outcomes. And more recently, they have also published a compendium on "Climate Change Adaptation in India: From the Past to the Present."

Activities

No	Date	Title
1	08-Jun-22	Interaction with Shri RNP Singh on his Long Journey in Government, Politics and Academics
2	09-Aug-22	Seminar on Criminal Justice System in India
3	07-Nov-22	Interaction with Prof Salvator Babones, associate professor, the University of Sydney
4	28-Nov-22	Interaction by Sh S Gurusurthy, Chairman, VIF
5	01-Mar-23	RTD on Developing India as a Vibrant International Education Hub
6	13-Mar-23	Interaction with the students of MIT School of Government, Pune

Articles

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	2-Jun-22	Is India Ready to Adapt to the Impacts of Extreme Weather Events?	PK Khup Hangzo	6053
2	4-Jul-22	Floods in Assam: The Case for Rethinking Adaptation	PK Khup Hangzo	7857
3	3-Aug-22	Clean Energy Transition: Opportunities and Pitfalls of Mining the Deep-Sea for a Cleaner Future	PK Khup Hangzo	3051
4	30-Aug-22	Freebie Debate: and Kautilya's Arthashastra	Brig (Dr) Ashok Pathak	4949
5	15-Nov-22	Understanding the Apex Court Judgment on EWS Reservations	Rajesh Singh	3928
6	22-Nov-22	Supreme Court's Observations on Forced Conversions	Rajesh Singh	4543
7	29-Nov-22	Welfare Schemes for Girl Child: Need for Convergence between the Centre and the States	Dr Govinda Bhattacharjee	3881
8	12-Jan-23	Climate Change: A Review of 2022 and Projections for 2023	Heena Samant & PK Khup Hangzo	7863
9	10-Feb-23	How Ayurveda can Power the Development of a Global Health Culture	Dr. Ram Manohar	3883

Commentaries

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	17-Jan-23	India: Mother of Democracy @G20	Dr Hitashi Lomash	3384
2	20-Feb-23	India Launches World's First Intranasal Anti-Covid Vaccine	Amb Satish Chandra	2571

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
3	2-Mar-23	Saving the Tiger	Dr Arpita Anant	2771
4	21-Mar-23	Yamuna Biodiversity Park: An Ideal Instrument for Environmental Sustainability in Urban Spaces	Heena Samant	3646

Podcasts

No	Date	Title	Author	Views
1	3-Aug-22	Climate Change: Takeaway from the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report	PK Khup Hangzo	3696
2	8-Sep-22	India at 75: Foreign and Economic Policies and the Road ahead	Arvind Gupta	4569
3	12-Sep-22	India's G20 Presidency	Amb Rajiv Bhatia	4047
4	21-Oct-22	India and the Changing World Order	S Gurumurthy	3908
5	27-Dec-22	COP 27 and its Outcomes	PK Khup Hangzo	2086
6	2-Feb-23	Finance track of the G20: An Analysis	Dr Saon Ray	3302

Vimarsh



Arif Mohammad Khan, Hon'ble Governor of Kerala releasing Snakes in the Ganga: Breaking India 2.0



Sridhar Vembu, Founder & CEO, Zoho Corporation, India on Technological Aspects of Indian Strategy



Bishow Parajuli, Representative of the United Nations WFP on Food and Nutrition Security- Key to National Security, Staying in Course



Amb Ashok K Kantha, IFS (Retd), Former Amb. to China on China Challenge in the Wake of the Ukraine Crisis



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Values for Reforming Multilateralism and creating a New World Order



Dr. A K Abdul Momen, MP, Hon'ble Foreign Minister, Bangladesh on Promoting Culture of Peace for Shared Prosperity: A Vision for South Asia



Admiral R. Hari Kumar PVSM, AVSM, VSM, ADC (Chief of Naval Staff) on National Security Challenges in the Maritime Domain



India's G20 Presidency: Forging Actionable Agenda for Global South



The Seven Tectonic Forces undermining India - How to Confront and Defeat



Bharat Lal, Director General, National Centre for Good Governance, Dept of Adm Reforms and Public on Water Security in India

*Books are infinite in number and time is short.
The secret of knowledge is to take what is essential.
Take that and try to live up to it.*

– Swami Vivekananda



MOU with DRDO



MOU with INDSR, Taiwan



MOU with IGNCA



MOU with ISpA

Our Exchanges Worldwide

Think Tanks, Institutions, Universities with whom VIF had Exchanges during 2022-23

Australia

- Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI)
- Australian National University (ANU)

China

- Research Institute for Indian Ocean Economies (RIIOE), Yunnan University of Finance and Economics
- National Institute of International Strategy (NIIS) of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS)
- Center for South Asia & West China Cooperation & Development (SAWCCAD), Sichuan University
- China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)

Iran

- Institute of Political and International Studies (IPIS)

Indonesia

- The Habibie Center

Israel

- The Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs (JCPA)

Japan

- The Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIJA)
- Japan Institute for National Fundamentals (JINF)

Jordan

- West Asia-North Africa Institute

Myanmar

- Myanmar Institute of Peace & Security (MIPS)
- Thayninga Institute for Strategic Studies (TISS)

Nepal

- Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement (NIICE)

Nigeria

- Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, NIIA

Russia

- Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC)
- Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS)
- The Valdai Discussion Club

Singapore

- S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

South Korea

- Korean National Diplomatic Academy

Sri Lanka

- Pathfinder Foundation

Taiwan

- The Prospect Foundation
- Taiwan Foundation for Democracy
- Institute for National Defense and Security Research (INDSR)

UK

- Institute of International & Strategic Studies (IISS)

USA

- The Atlantic Council
- The Heritage Foundation
- US-India Security Council Inc. (USISC)

Uzbekistan

- Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS) under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies
- Center for International Relations Studies (CIRS)
- The University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED)
- Development Strategy Center (DSC)

Vietnam

- The Institute for Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies (Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam)

Indian Universities

- Gorakhpur University

Other Institutions

- Defence Research and Development Organisation - (DRDO)
- Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)
- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)
- Indian Space Association (ISpA)
- Army War College
- Indian Institute Of Management–Indore (IIM–Indore)



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Shri Puneet Dalmia



Shri S Kishore



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Shri M Hanumanth Rao



Shri D Bhanudas



Ku Rekha Dave



Shri Pravin Dabholkar



Shri Kishore Tokekar



Shri Arif Mohammad Khan



Shri Anil Baijal



Amb Kanwal Sibal



Amb Prabhat P Shukla



Prof Kapil Kapoor



Amb Rajiv Sikri



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Former Professor of Finance, IIM Bangalore

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Journalist, Editor and Author Chairman, VIF

Amb Satish Chandra

Former Deputy National Security Advisor

Gen NC Vij,

PVSM, UYSM, AVSM
Former Chief of the Army Staff, Founder Vice Chairman, National Disaster Management Authority, Former Director, VIF

Dr Arvind Gupta

Former Deputy National Security Advisor & DG, IDSA
Director, VIF

Secretary VIF

Anuttama Ganguly

*On Long Leave

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Prof Dr. (Ms.) Shashiprabha



Prof CR Babu



Amb DB Venkatesh Varna



Dr Gulshan Rai



Amb Asoke Mukerji



Lt General S A Hasnain



Amb P S Raghavan



Dr VK Saraswat



Amb TCA Rangachari



Prof K.K. Aggarwal



Amb Ashok K Kantha



Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma



Amb Anil Wadhwa



Amb Arun K Singh



Prof Hari Babu Srivastava



Prof Sujit Dutta



Lt Gen Anil Ahuja



DP Singh



Prof Srikanth Kondapalli



Amb Anil Trigunayat



Amb Dinkar P Srivastava



*Air Marshal Diptendu
Choudhury*

Prof Dilip K Chakrabarti

Editor, VIF History Volumes & Professor Emeritus, Department of Archaeology, Cambridge University

Prof Dr. (Ms.) Shashiprabha

Chairperson, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla

Prof CR Babu

Professor Emeritus, Delhi University, Ecologist & Environmentalist

Amb DB Venkatesh Varma

Former Ambassador to Russia

Dr Gulshan Rai

Former National Cyber Security Coordinator

Amb Asoke Mukerji

Former Ambassador & Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Lt General S A Hasnain

PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM (Bar), VSM (Bar) (Former GOC 15 Corps & Military Secretary)

Amb P S Raghavan

Chairman National Security Advisory Board, GOI

Dr VK Saraswat

Member NITI Aayog, Chancellor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Former DG, DRDO & Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister

Amb TCA Rangachari

Former Ambassador to France & Germany

Prof K.K. Aggarwal

Founder Vice Chancellor, GGS Indraprastha University, New Delhi & Chairman, NBA, MHRD, New Delhi

Amb Ashok K Kantha

Former Ambassador to China

Lt Gen (Dr) Rakesh Sharma

Former Adjutant General of Indian Army

Amb Anil Wadhwa

Former Ambassador to Italy, Poland, Oman & Thailand

Amb Arun K Singh

Former Ambassador to US, Russia and Israel

Prof Hari Babu Srivastava

Professor of Practice at IIT Delhi & Visiting Professor of Practice at IIT Kanpur and Roorkee

Prof Sujit Dutta

Former Professor Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

Lt Gen Anil Ahuja

PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM & BAR (Former Deputy Chief of the Integrated Defence Staff)

DP Singh

Eminent Lawyer

Prof Srikanth Kondapalli

Professor in Chinese Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Amb Anil Trigunayat

Former Ambassador to Jordan, Libya & Malta

Amb Dinkar P Srivastava

Former Indian Ambassador to Iran

Air Marshal Diptendu Choudhury

PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM (Former Commandant of the National Defence College)

TEAM VIF



Arvind Gupta



Lt General R K Sawhney



Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee



Tilak Devasher



Anuttama Ganguly



Manash Bhattacharjee



Brig Vinod Anand



Prof Sujit Dutta



Raghendra Singh



Commodore Gopal Suri



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Samir Bhattacharya



Chhavi Vasisth



Heena Samant



Jyoti Kumar



Neetu



Sarada Subhash



Aarushi Gupta



Umang Bhansali



Shekhar Singh Negi

RESEARCH

Director VIF

Arvind Gupta

Former Deputy National Security Advisor & DG, IDSA

Centre Head

Lt General R K Sawhney

*PVSM, AVSM, Senior Fellow,
National Security and Strategic Studies
& Internal Security Studies*

Consultant

Tilak Devasher

*Member, the National Security
Advisory Board*

Editors

Lt Gen Gautam Banerjee

*PVSM, AVSM, YSM, former Chief of
Staff, Central Command*

Brig Vinod Anand

*Senior Fellow,
Defence Studies, China & Myanmar*

Prof Sujit Dutta

Editor, National Security Journal, VIF

Senior Fellows

Raghvendra Singh

History and Civilisation

Commodore Gopal Suri

Maritime Studies

Sunil Yadav

Civil Military Relations

Research Fellows

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Multilateralism

Associate Fellows

Perna Gandhi

Japan, ASEAN & Koreas

PK Khup Hangzo

Non-traditional Security Threats

Dr Sweta Kumari

US & Indo-pacific

Dr Pravesh Kumar Gupta

Central Asia

Senior Research Associates

Hirak Jyoti Das

West Asia

Anurag Sharma

Terrorism & Cyber Security

Samir Bhattacharya

Africa

Research Associates

Cchavi Vasisht

Maldives, Myanmar & Nepal

Heena Samant

Climate Change

Research Assistants

Sarada Subhash

National Security Journal

Aarushi Gupta

Pakistan & Afghanistan

Umang Bhansali

Srilanka

ADMINISTRATION

Secretary VIF

Anuttama Ganguly

Manash Bhattacharjee

(Assistant Secretary)

Administration

Abhinandan Rai

Asst. Administrative officer

Krishan Redhu

IT & Web Manager

Ramphal Vashisth

Senior Executive Assistant

Alka Sahasrabudhe

Front Office Executive

Kamal Singh

Executive Assistant

Subrat Kumar

IT Assistant

Resource Research Centre & Library

Jyoti Kumar

Library Consultant

Neetu

Assistant Librarian

Shekhar Singh Negi

Library Assistant

Office Assistants

Christopher Francis

Naresh Singh

Naresh Kumar

Kishore Kumar

Keshab Ram Sharkee

Finances

Vivekananda International Foundation, created under the aegis of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, was registered as a Trust on 25 March 2010 at New Delhi.

The trust holds its meetings periodically.

The Annual Audited Accounts for the financial year 2022-23 is presented here.

Statutory Auditors: M/S Purohit & Purohit, Chartered Accountants, New Delhi

VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
3, Institutional Area, San Martin Marg,
Chanakypuri, New Delhi - 110 021

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 2023.

PARTICULARS	SCHEDULE	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
SOURCES OF FUNDS			
Corpus & Non-Corpus Fund	*A*	23,824,794.90	23,830,491.94
TOTAL ::		Rs. 23,824,794.90	Rs. 23,830,491.94
APPLICATION OF FUNDS			
Fixed Assets	*B*	5,666,483.00	5,736,095.00
Current Assets	*C*		
- Advances, Deposits & Receivables		399,222.90	411,632.00
- Cash & Bank Balances		20,547,610.24	19,988,994.74
		<u>20,946,833.14</u>	<u>20,400,626.74</u>
Less: Current Liabilities	*D*		
- Other Liabilities		2,788,521.24	2,306,229.80
		<u>2,788,521.24</u>	<u>2,306,229.80</u>
		18,158,311.90	18,094,396.94
TOTAL ::		Rs. 23,824,794.90	Rs. 23,830,491.94
Notes on Accounts and Significant Accounting Policies	*E*		

Signed in terms of our Report of even date,
For PUROHIT & PUROHIT (FRN:003282N)
Chartered Accountants


C.K.K. Purohit, B.Com(Hons), LL.B, FCA, MFF, ISA
Partner
Membership No.054763

New Delhi, Monday, The 28th day of August, 2023.



For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION


Dr. Arvind Gupta
Director


Kishor Tokekar
Managing Trustee


Anuttama Ganguly
Secretary



VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION
3, Institutional Area, San Martin Marg,
Chanakyaपुरi, New Delhi - 110 021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH, 2023.

PARTICULARS	CURRENT YEAR'S FIGURES	PREVIOUS YEAR'S FIGURES
(A) INCOME		
Donations	37,000,000.00	42,000,000.00
Bank Interest	740,722.68	596,688.00
Publications Royalty	162,936.44	101,118.00
Grant for Nuclear Project	205,000.00	1,845,000.00
Other Interest - IT Refund	606.00	36.00
Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year - transferred to VIF Non-Corpus Fund	5,697.04	-
TOTAL ::	Rs. 38,114,962.16	Rs. 44,542,842.00
(B) EXPENDITURE		
For Attainment of Objectives		
Studies, Programmes, Workshops & Other Activities	16,804,479.00	16,052,788.00
Honorarium, Fees & Salaries	7,891,382.00	6,397,537.00
Resource Research Centre & Library expenses	1,674,557.00	1,293,372.00
Fees/Hon/Publication Exp-NPCIL	819,985.00	1,203,618.00
Postage & Courier Charges	30,723.00	64,383.00
Printing & Stationery	130,770.00	37,037.00
Communication - TMI Expenses	127,731.00	155,031.00
Travelling, Transportation & Conveyance	314,406.00	189,693.00
Website Renewal & Maintenance Charges	309,146.00	328,391.00
Administrative & General Expenses		
Audit Fees	70,800.00	64,900.00
Bank Commission & Charges	2,467.61	3,271.02
Corona Preventive Expenses	6,320.00	2,260.00
Depreciation	962,430.00	995,983.00
Gardening Expenses	520,277.00	431,406.00
General up-keep and Cleaning Expenses	2,888,486.00	2,349,783.00
Insurance Charges	3,526.00	3,526.00
Legal & Professional Fees	73,220.00	54,950.00
Office Expenses	356,505.00	242,101.00
Power & Fuel Charges	2,235,847.55	1,690,880.08
Repairing & Maintenance Expenses	1,606,529.00	1,073,190.60
Round off	-	0.12
Security Services Expenses	1,178,343.00	1,318,981.00
Water Charges	106,832.00	61,366.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year - transferred to VIF Non-Corpus Fund	-	10,528,394.18
TOTAL ::	Rs. 38,114,962.16	Rs. 44,542,842.00
Notes on Accounts and Significant Accounting Policies	*E*	

Signed in terms of our Report of even date.
For PUROHIT & PUROHIT (FRN:003282N)
Chartered Accountants

CA. K.K. Purohit, B.Com(Hons), LL.B, FCA, MBF, ISA
Partner
Membership No.054763

New Delhi, Monday, The 28th day of August, 2023.



For VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION


Dr. Arvind Gupta
Director


Kishor Tokeskar
Managing Trustee


Anuttama Ganguly
Secretary







Those who work at a thing heart and soul not only achieve success in it but through their absorption in that they also realize the supreme truth – Brahman. Those who work at a thing with their whole heart receive help from God.

- Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda International Foundation
3, San Martin Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021
Phone No: +91-(0)11-24121764, +91-(0)11-24106698
E-mail: info@vifindia.org | Website: www.vifindia.org