

REPORT

CISS-ICS (Hybrid) Joint Panel Discussion on India-China Relations

Host: Centre for Security and Strategy, Tsinghua University, Beijing, P R China

Venue: CISS & Online

10 June 2021

The Centre for International Security and Strategy (CISS) held a hybrid Webinar on the Future of India-China Relations on 10 June 2021. The agenda for the webinar was to discuss the various areas of conflict and cooperation between India and China in the current times and the near future. The webinar began with an introductory address by Col. Zhou Bo, Senior Fellow at CISS, and Dr. Hemant Adlakha, Associate Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and Honorary Fellow, ICS, Delhi.

The closed-door panel discussion was conducted under the Chatham House Rules. However, both sides welcomed observers from the two respective institutes to login.

The ICS team was led by Ambassador Vijay Nambiar, besides Dr. Manoj Joshi, Dr. Madhurima Nandy and Dr. Hemant Adlakha.

The CISS scholars were led by Colonel Zhou Bo. The other three Chinese scholars who spoke were Professor Da Wei, (who has delivered two ICS webinars in April 2020 and in May 2021, respectively), Prof. Qian Feng and Prof. Li Li.

There were four technical sessions.

Amb. Vijay Nambiar and Col. Zhou Bo started the first session with the focus on the Galwan Valley clash between India and China and its implications on bilateral relations between the two countries. The speakers also discussed the importance of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) that would prevent such standoffs in the future.

In the second session, Prof. Qian Feng, Senior Fellow at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, and Dr. Manoj Joshi, Distinguished Fellow and International Security Expert at Observer Research Foundation (ORF), deliberated upon the maritime aspects of India-China relations. The discussion included the role of South China Sea in India's Act East Policy, increasing presence of PLA in the Indian Ocean, and the geopolitics of the two countries being in each other's backyard.

The third session had two speakers, Dr. Madhurima Nundy, Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, with expertise in comparative health systems and inequalities in public health, and Prof. Li Li, Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of International Relations at the Tsinghua University. The discussion explored the scope of cooperation between India and China in combating the health crisis in India induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The final and concluding compelling session had Dr. Hemant Adlakha and Prof Da Wei, School of International Relations, Tsinghua University and a leading expert on the US-China relations discuss the implications of QUAD and increasing US-India cooperation on China.

Each session had a short Q & A round.

Both sides expressed satisfaction on the free and frank atmosphere and on the high quality of the dialogue between the two sides.

Professor and Senior Fellow, Col. Zhou Bo, as the host and initiator of the CISS-ICS dialogue, expressed strong desire and invited the ICS to consider institutionalise the dialogue between the two institutions. The ICS representatives agreed in principle to regularise the interaction and welcomed the idea that the dialogue be held periodically.