

Institute of Chinese Studies

PANEL DISCUSSION

*India-Pakistan Conflict and
its Implications for China*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speakers:

Ambassador T.C.A. Raghavan

Atul Bhardwaj

9 July 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speakers: Amb. T.C.A. Raghavan, former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan and Singapore; and, Adjunct Professor, School of Conflict and Security Studies, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru.

Dr. Atul Bhardwaj, Visiting Research Fellow, School of Policy and Global Affairs, City St. George's, University of London; and, Adjunct Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Chair: Dr. Hemant Adlakha, Associate Professor, Centre for Chinese and South East Asian Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; and, Vice-Chairperson and Honorary Fellow, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The seminar explored the implications of the recent India-Pakistan military conflict following the Pahalgam incident, with a particular focus on China. Dr. Hemant Adlakha began by highlighting a range of consequences for China, including military, security, political, and economic, drawing on insights from the PRC's strategic community and ongoing social media discourse.
- Amb. Raghavan highlighted that the relationship between both India-Pakistan and India-China has declined incrementally since 2016. Another key trend was the increasing power asymmetry between India and Pakistan since the 1990s, driven by India's rise, alongside a widening asymmetry between India and China due to China's rapid ascent.
- The China-Pakistan relationship has evolved from a political-military alliance in the first decade of the 21st century to an economic issues centred partnership in the second decade, particularly after 2013. This shift in China's approach reflects its acknowledgement of Pakistan's growing dysfunctionality. In order to protect its own interests, China is making efforts to alleviate Pakistan's predicament.
- The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is the leading beneficiary of military cooperation with China. Recently procured equipment include the modern air defence systems,

advanced avionics, and fighter jets such as the JF-17. The JF-17 has been effectively inducted into the PAF, while routine air exercises have put the systems in practice.

- Amb. Raghavan cautioned that while India's strategy covers the possibility of a two-front war, or facing a united front led by China and Pakistan, it should not let it become a self-fulfilling prophecy. As against this, India should pursue policies that avoid conflict and ensure stability along the border.
- Dr. Bharadwaj argued that the integration of Chinese satellite, aircraft, missile, and other systems, along with smooth exchange of data with Pakistan reflects that India is confronting not only an economic threat but also a military threat.
- He further stated that, strategically, Pakistan is following a typical non-aligned policy where it is able to successfully maintain a strong relationship with both the US and China.
- From stock market investment to student exchange programmes, China is emerging as a desired destination for Pakistan. However, the Pakistani elite still maintain proximity to the US. In conclusion, it was suggested that given the present dynamics, Indian think tanks and research institutes should analyse the Pakistan-US and Pakistan-China relationship carefully.

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