



Institute of Chinese Studies

WEDNESDAY SEMINAR

*China's UN Diplomacy:
Domestic Debates and
'Developmental Peace'*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Speaker:
Md Yasin

15 January 2025

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Speaker: Dr. Md. Yasin, Assistant Professor, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh; and, Recipient, ICS-HYI Multi-Year Doctoral Fellowship (2018-22).

Chair: Prof. Alka Acharya, Chairperson and Professor, Centre for East Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; and, Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, New Delhi.

Venue: Zoom Webinar

- The seminar focused on China's evolving role in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, exploring its contributions, motivations, and the domestic debates shaping its approach. The speaker highlighted China's historical association with the UN, tracing its entry into the UN in 1971 after years of confrontation, and its growing engagement in peacekeeping since the 1980s. Over time, China has become a leading contributor to UN peacekeeping operations as the largest troop-contributing country among the permanent members of the UN Security Council.
- Several key factors drive China's peacekeeping participation, including political and economic interests, military modernisation, and soft power projection. Stability in regions like Africa is essential to safeguard China's investments, while the 'Taiwan factor' influences its actions in the UN Security Council. Peacekeeping also offers valuable operational experience for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Furthermore, China's participation serves as a tool for reinforcing its image as a responsible global power committed to international peace and stability.
- The speaker also explored China's domestic debates around its principle of non-interference. Traditionally following a 'low-profile' foreign policy, Chinese scholars are now divided on whether to maintain this stance or adopt a more proactive approach.
- A key debate surrounds the distinction between 'intervention' and 'interference', particularly in the context of military actions. The concept of 'developmental peace' was also emphasised, where China's focus is on economic and social development rather than liberal concepts like democratisation and human rights.

- In conclusion, the speaker underscored the potential of China's peacekeeping philosophy while acknowledging the need for greater alignment with global norms. China's role in peacekeeping has evolved from a passive observer to an active participant, and to maximise its impact as a global peace advocate, China must address criticisms of its pragmatic approach and act as a responsible major power.

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