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REPORT

On 30, 31 October, IPCS hosted the 12th Annual
Germany-India-Brazil-South Africa (GIBSA) Quadrilogue
in New Delhi, on the theme, **The Evolution of Multilateralism.**

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Key Observations

1. Current multilateral systems are based on sustaining existing peace (and power status quos) rather than securing it. This means the rule of law is still weak.
2. While the future of multilateralism is not certain, the underlying interests and incentives for it will grow. An emergence of a 'coalition of the willing' will not be easy, but it is the only credible and effective response to the challenges faced today.
3. Global governance has become more complex with rising interdependencies that blur the lines between the domestic and the foreign. This has necessarily altered the space within which national policy is framed, with the notion of power undergoing similar change. Increasingly, the limits of hard power and the difficulty of applying soft power are witnessed.
4. Democratisation of old global governance structures is proving difficult, leading to the favouring of 'minilaterals', which is not without its problems: overlapping memberships and agendas.
5. GIBSA view democracy as key to their interactions and are more comfortable engaging with other democracies, however different from their own.

6. Interdependence as encapsulated by connectivity, rising protectionism, and trade are going to be fundamental issue areas for India. The lack of interdependency with Pakistan leads to a hot border, while close dependency with China means the border is seldom prone to flare-ups, and the relationship more constructive despite serious differences.
7. Germany prioritises a development-led approach, within which it has sought greater contact with Africa with the aim of helping stabilise African economies.
8. South Africa shares the German interest in stabilisation and a development-led approach to issues of national interest and foreign policy. It seeks to expand its outreach efforts to stabilise flashpoints in Africa.
9. Brazil, on the other hand, views its deeper integration into international economic systems in order to kick-start a flagging economy as key.
10. The success of multilateral groupings depends on state power and its ebbs and flows, as well as compatibility. This is why a statement from South Africa on a global flashpoint is not given the same coverage as a statement from Germany, and why some regional bodies succeed but others fail.
11. 'Minilaterals' are important to the GIBSA countries as they allow additional levers to bring positive policy change and norm setting.
12. China presents a common conundrum. On the one hand, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an important economic opportunity because it

addresses fundamental infrastructural needs. On the other, Chinese investments come with political strings, and the country's international infrastructure projects are frequently seen as of dubious economic viability. One of the primary challenges for China in this regard is expectation management.

13. One of the main problems of a coordinated policy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR) is the different stages of economic development that the four countries are at. This can translate to each of the GIBSA states having different and frequently incompatible priorities.

On the History and Evolution of Multilateralism

Three lessons were identified from the end of the First World War:

First, the League of Nations failed because the US did not participate. This absence left a big vacuum in terms of political leadership that could not be filled. Second, some of the League members proceeded to violate the League's charter and the territorial integrity of other member states. The League did not have the mandate or the capacity to sanction them for their violations. Third, the impact of economic protectionist sentiments linked with nationalism created fractures in global politics. These sentiments contributed to the political instability that led to the failure of the League.

The current multilateral system is represented by the United Nations (UN), which sought to rectify the mistakes of the League. However, they did not succeed as they adopted an approach based only on sustaining peace, but not securing it. The main problem was that permanent representation and veto power at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) institutionalised a hard power-based approach, rather than a rules-based approach, where the will and interests of the five permanent members of the UNSC became key to sustaining peace. This still forms the main barrier to true multilateralism today.

For example, in peacekeeping today, out of the 53 crises that are on the UNSC agenda, only 14 have attracted a peacekeeping mission, and even here it is the seemingly 'strategically important' areas that get the lion's share of the resources (out of a US\$ 6.8 billion budget for UN peacekeeping operations, almost US\$ 4 billion is spent only on four missions, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Mali, and Central African Republic. Out of the 100,000 peacekeepers deployed, 75,000 are deployed in these four missions). Similarly, in cyberspace, the current approach is based on a 'war and peace' understanding of cyber

space, which is problematic. The discourse is heavily dominated by talks on cyber security, rather than cyber development. This is important because each goal of the UN 2030 Agenda has a digital dimension. There is therefore a need to map and cooperate in cyberspace, and this will require the participation of countries using cyber technology for development.

Similar deficiencies in the UN system in sustaining peace have led to a growth of non-UN multilateral platforms (minilateral groupings). Although UN reforms have been undertaken, these have mainly been in areas where democratic decision-making procedures already exist. For example, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) amended the UN charter and changed the provisions of the UNSC and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1963 and in 1971, respectively. Resolutions for amending those provisions were voted through the one country, one vote rule.

Identifying Interests

Within the spectrum of geopolitical challenges that are increasingly multicausal and intersectional, how does each country prioritise opportunities, what are the respective national areas of concern, and what role does multilateral cooperation play within the concept of the Indo-Pacific, G7/G8, G20, BRICS and IBSA?

INDIA

There seems to be no point of convergence with Pakistan on cross-border problems, and India has made it clear that any dialogue must take place in an atmosphere of peace, non-interference, and absence of terrorist activity. On the other hand, relations with Nepal have been on the rise with significant outreach from both sides. Both countries are engaging progressively on the economic front. There are also new endeavours in terms of building gas pipelines and oil pipelines that are taking place simultaneously. Relations with Bhutan remain strong, and there is close cooperation on the situation arising out of mutual border disputes with China. India has invested in infrastructure projects in Myanmar, both focused on multimodal transport — the Kaladan project, for example. Border crossings between Myanmar and Mizoram in India are also been functional. Although India is actively working with both Bangladesh and Myanmar to resolve the Rohingya issue, progress seems to be slow at the moment. With Sri Lanka and the Maldives, India is following developments carefully and supports democratic processes in both these countries. Underlying all these engagements in the neighbourhood is the realisation that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is paralysed and as a result, greater activation of the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal Initiative (BBIN) is being actively supported.

India has expressed interest in several connectivity models, such as the collaboration with Japan on building the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor. So far, it has been a statement of intent,

but India hopes to operationalise it soon. Chabahar, viewed as a link essential to open Central Asia to India, is an important project. A trilateral operationalisation meeting was concluded in October 2018, and the three countries — India, Afghanistan, and Iran — are now going to identify protocols on how to proceed. A point of uncertainty could be the US sanctions on Iran. India is trying to negotiate with the US on exemptions for Chabahar, given its strategic importance in ensuring supplies to Afghanistan such as wheat, of which New Delhi has so far delivered over 100,000 tons. There are air corridors between Delhi and Kabul and Mumbai and Kandahar which must be accounted for. The transit corridor from Azerbaijan to Iran is another connectivity model under consideration, although not much progress in terms of operationalisation has taken place. However, the intent of all participating countries remains intact.

Rising protectionism and trade are going to be fundamental issue areas for India. How the US and the China resolve their differences will determine how India move forward. So far, any cooperation from either end seems bleak. Another issue India is looking at very closely is technology. Upcoming developments in technology, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI) and biotechnology are all going to be critical, and any country that cooperates, works closely, or invests in its research and development (R&D) capabilities will have a say in the future global order. In this regard, China has felt some backlash on its Made in China 2025 policy; it has taken a step back because of resistance from the US. The European Union (EU), particularly Germany, has pushed back by stopping Chinese companies from taking over sensitive technology firms within the country.

India-US relations are being strengthened in several areas, such as military transfers, cooperation on logistics management, and in the maritime domain. India's relations with Russia will continue to be a sore point in this regard, but India is unlikely to cede too much ground. On the issue of S-400 imports, India will go ahead with new major defence

agreements with Russia, further strengthening defence ties with its traditional partner, Russia, which meets 60-63 per cent of India's hardware needs.

India and the EU have a special relationship. Although there has been more engagement from the Indian side, the relationship is likely to intensify in the near future. However, given the EU's recent preoccupations with cultural issues and the rise of right-wing politics, this engagement could suffer a slight setback. Trade relations between India and BRICS partners are on the rise. This engagement has now been further extended to Argentina, with Indian Vice President Venkaiah Naidu making multiple visits across the continent in the run up to the G20 summit in Buenos Aires. However, India is yet to see a reciprocal response from Latin America.

India has been following developments regarding the US-China decoupling very carefully. The intricate interdependencies of the two economies will make a clean decoupling almost impossible. This can be seen playing out in the strategic grind of the South China Sea. Many countries consider China's illegal transfers of technology and cyber attacks problematic but are restrained in their response because of their trade interdependency. These are issues that have been identified by successful US administrations, and the Trump administration has been the most forceful. China will not hesitate to use its economic muscle for its political objectives. From 2008 onwards, a more aggressive Chinese promotion of its model of governance and economic development can be discerned. This can potentially lead China to flex its economic muscle to attain its political objectives.

Human rights in China has always been an area of concern, and this has been brought to the forefront by the Uyghur riots. Several countries have pointed out China's alleged violations, but China has managed to exercise its sharp power to bend countries to its will and ensure that there is no criticism.

Currently, India remains agnostic about who it partners with and how it moves forward as long as it meets its national objectives. Although China is making efforts with India, Japan, and Australia, the maritime domain will remain a point of contention, including in the Indian Ocean because increasing Chinese activity in this region. Overall, engagements will have to be maintained and closely monitored, particularly with Central Asian countries such as Tajikistan, which gives India a sharper focus on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

GERMANY

The most important issues for Germany from a foreign policy perspective are migration, the war in Syria, and elections in Crimea in the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations. Climate change and global trade are also likely to find a place in decision-making. German foreign policy has been affected by changes such as those under President Trump and Brexit, which is linked to the crisis in the EU. These areas will dominate Germany's policy focus going forward.

Migration has become a problem because of the massive movement of people into Europe, which has led to domestic challenges, the manifestations of which can be seen in both German and EU foreign policy.

During the 2017 G-20 summit, Germany prioritised greater contact with Africa in order to stabilise African economies and also introduced ideas on how to improve and shape trade relations. Greater trilateral and multilateral partnerships have since been undertaken. There is a strong commitment to the stabilisation of the Sahel region in West Africa, where Germany has a robust alliance with France. The French approach is focused on counter-terrorism and military cooperation, whereas Germany has a more developmental approach and is attempting to change the overall EU perspective towards the region. This was also

discussed at the G20 level with a focus on economic and environmental cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa.

There is no one single model of cooperation with Africa. One of the most dominant models in the region is the Chinese model of neglecting human rights in favour of economics. In Zimbabwe, a new model of cooperation through multilateral institutions is emerging. In addition to Germany and China, greater involvement by Israel and the EU can also be witnessed. The only fear is that the priorities are not set according to what is needed. For example, Sahel along with East Africa and the Horn of Africa are areas with greater vested interests, but there are not enough initiatives being undertaken in the region to tackle their security and development needs.

While Germany does not have any direct engagement with BRICS, it has bilateral relations with all five members. Relations with Russia have deteriorated dramatically since the 2014 annexation of Crimea. Germany and China are engaged in intense economic cooperation, with the human rights situation in China being one of the irritants in the relationship. IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) countries are more democratic and as a consequence they are natural partners when it comes to normative development. According to the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Germany-IBSA cooperation can assume greater importance in the areas of maritime security and blue and green economy. The relationship between Germany and South Africa has improved since the 1990s, and has become a natural ally for Germany due to its strong commitment to western values and international cooperation, as well as prevention of corruption. Strong points of cooperation exist between Germany, India and Brazil, and it will be interesting to see how internal electoral processes in these two countries affect how IBSA moves forward.

BRAZIL

Brazil has been in economic stagnation for four decades and the biggest challenge before it is to break its isolation from the international community. It must give priority to its economy by raising productivity standards and creating its own space for global integration. The Brazilian democratic order was generous in distributing rights and privileges at low cost, but was not able to create a stable economic order. For this, it must open up its economy and prepare itself for greater competition in the financial system. The second problem is that of security, with drug and arms trafficking and organised crime taking centre stage.

Brazil must take an active part in the global technological revolution. Renewable energy is another important area, and the government must begin thinking seriously about how to harness its abundant natural resources for innovation and sustainable development, which will have important consequences for its future.

Brazil must also consider the importance of reinventing electoral politics and make greater space for decentralisation and federalism to enhance democratic governance.

SOUTH AFRICA

Some of the major issues South Africa is likely to look at in light of its non-permanent membership of the UNSC are nuclear Israel and Iran, and Iran's serious involvement in Syria that could lead to a potential nuclear confrontation. The other will be a strong emphasis on re-developing the Zimbabwean economy. With almost two million Zimbabweans in South Africa, Zimbabwe's stability and development is a crucial issue.

Israel and Palestine command great attention among South Africans. After the demonstrations against apartheid, the second biggest demonstration on the ground in South Africa was on the issue of Palestine. There is a robust Jewish population in South Africa which makes this a tough balancing act. The African National Congress (ANC) passed a resolution in this regard to downgrade its relations with Israel, and the government is expected to advance the ANC resolution. Striking the right balance between its relations with Israel and Palestine will be important for shaping South Africa's policy.

The other issue is the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea. There is now a seminal moment of peace after the 20-year Ethiopian-Eritrean War (1998-2018) and leaders from both countries are looking to work together to develop the Horn of Africa and capitalise on the economic opportunity that exists in the region. Since the current UN envoy to Somalia is South African, South Africa will try to host some Somali peace talks to address issues between northern Somaliland and Mogadishu, and devise ways to take forward some of the conclusions of the last Somalia Partnership Forum held in Brussels between the two sides.

Along with some of the positive consequences of migration from countries like Somalia and Ethiopia to South Africa in terms of greater productivity, there are also negative impacts on South African security and development. While migration has been primarily approached from the security perspective globally, South Africa also looks at it from a development lens.

Multilateralism: Future Prospects

Is there a ‘coalition of the willing’ on an international level? What is the future of multilateral cooperation? What is each country’s reading of the ground situation at the UN? What is the receptivity or opposition to reform?

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is the largest and one of the most developed economies in the African continent. It has played a major role in conflict resolution, and is a potential leader of the southern African community and the African Union, and at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), it can also showcase itself as a potential global leader. However, it is important to first imagine a world where a decision coming out of an African commission condemning violence in Pakistan is taken with the same amount of attention as that of a press statement of the US President or the German Chancellor's office. Terminologies and classification can be limiting, and in this regard, it is incorrect to call South Africa a regional power. That being said, Africa is a continent of 56 countries where collaborative leadership over centralisation of power must be encouraged.

BRAZIL

As things stand, there is no country that can achieve its objective without aligning itself with other countries — not even the US can do that anymore. That is the makeup of the new order; it is an era of coalitions. In the 1980s, the global economic nerve centre was in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean; in 2008, it was somewhere between Helsinki and Budapest; and in 2050, it is going to be between India and China. Multipolarity and multilateralism are the new realities that the world has to contend with. Although the Global South has emerged

as a new power centre, South-South cooperation still lacks substantial engagement. However, the good news is that countries of the South are trying to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, based on a recognition of the value of civil society, think-tanks, industry, and so on. Brazil has been an active supporter of the multilateral system, a democratic international order, and human rights. While it is considered a regional leader, it has still to carve out a role for itself globally. The future of Brazilian alignments, particularly how it responds to the shift towards Asia, will depend to a large degree on how multilateralism plays out globally.

GERMANY

There are two elements that must be kept in mind with both Germany and South Africa in the UNSC. In the German perspective, there is a serious challenge to its position as a principal multilateralist. It is now in a situation where it has no partners to make it its position effective. Likewise, it is becoming complicated for partners, because aligning too closely with the German model will lead to incurring costs, especially with respect to their relationships with the US.

What concerns multilateral governance today is that the rules-based approach is not compromised when building new coalitions that will enable the transition from a hegemonic to a post-hegemonic age. Germany finds itself not necessarily as one of the whole 'coalition of the willing', so to speak, but rather viewing each partner from a very rules-based approach. Ultimately, the future of multilateralism hinges on the capacity of a state — whether it is rising or falling, advanced and developing, of the North or South — to redistribute, negotiate, and generate collective leadership.

There is a global shift towards domestic priorities which will have meaningful implications for their engagement in international institutions. The US retreat towards nationalism,

Brexit, migration, rise of populism, and so on must be seen in this light. While the future of multilateralism is not certain, the underlying interests and incentives for it will grow.

The alternative to liberal multilateralism is not a new type of order but a disorder. Although an emergence of a coalition of the willing in this scenario will not be easy, it will be the only credible and effective response to the challenges faced today. Governance has become more complex with rising interdependencies that blur the lines between the domestic and the foreign. This has necessarily altered the space within which national policy is framed, and the very notion of power is changing. Increasingly, the limits of hard power and the sheer difficulty of applying soft power are witnessed.

The last decade was about competition between status-seekers with a limit interested in burden-sharing. However, this normative style of global governance is disappearing. This is particularly moot for this platform with Germany, India, Brazil and South Africa, where one major element of commonality is democracy, which appears now to be under threat globally. Nationalism and sovereignty are central to today's discussions, and there is no able leadership shepherding this process. Another important subject is the relationship between multilateral institutions and domestic governance. While there has long been debate on the need for instruments to generate complementarity between the two, the UN later disappeared from the discussion and the Bretton Woods institutions failed to build any such instrument.

Complementarity in regionalism is also essential, especially since the world now features multiple engagements or what can be termed 'mini-multilateralism'. The question that follows is whether this is an efficient model to manage conflict in the world order. This model of composite multilateralism has two essential problems — overlapping memberships and overlapping agendas — given that its construction is taking place vertically rather than horizontally.

Countries that are committed to seeing a new world order emerge based on rules must discuss how they can build and manage future partnerships. These partnerships will be developed around common policy areas, but it must always be remembered that the final goal is of bearing or sharing costs. As a consequence, partnerships should not be limited to focusing on the number of countries with largest populations sizes. Instead, the emphasis should be on sharing the responsibility of maintaining a democratic, rules-based order.

INDIA

India recognises the value of multiple alignments based on an assessment of its interests in a multipolar world. The tenets of multilateralism support India's own aspirations to power, and India sees the potential of various partnerships and platforms in both catalysing its ambitions and giving it a set of flexible options. Of particular importance is the impetus it gives to strategic autonomy in India's foreign policy decision-making. These factors explain India's long-term commitment to multilateralism.

India is considered a relatively stable actor in the region, and this can play to its advantage in projecting itself as a reliable partner that is committed and credible and therefore worth investing in. India's neighbourhood is crucial to its foreign policy enterprise. India has multiple interests in its neighbours and varying levels of political clout. There is certainly the recognition that South Asia is an interconnected, fluid geographical entity and that economic interconnectedness is key to securing the kind of influence that India seeks in the region. A strong neighbourhood agenda and implementing capacity gives its global ambitions the requisite fillip.

India is likely to face several obstacles in pursuit of its foreign policy ambitions. One of the major points of criticism that Indian governments continue to face is that its Ministry of

External Affairs (MEA) is understaffed and overworked. The question that then arises is whether India has a long-term strategic vision and the capacity to implement it, or, given its limited human resources, will the responses be decided on a case-by-case basis? Capacity issues also impact how other countries and partners view India's ability to get the job done — while they may not question the commitment, they may not be equally convinced about India's ability to engage meaningfully and convert plans into action.

Domestically, a multiplicity of stakeholders as well as issues that require a fine balance and serious negotiating ability exist. While the MEA is at the centre of foreign policy, it has to take into account the views of the states, various ministries, and corporate interests. Media, too, is an important stakeholder which can shape discussions around foreign policy issues and essentially set an agenda for the government. Given this whole range of stakeholders, India undertakes what is effectively alliance management at both the domestic and international levels, and while this is true of every other country, India's sheer size magnifies the problem.

Finally, the debate on India's strategic vision is split, with some saying that it has a clear forward path and others suggesting that it has been fumbling along. Most are agreed, however, that its various challenges — such as size of bureaucracy — have limited its ability to take bold strategic decisions, and that most policy moves are tactical and overly cautious. This imperils any substantive, long-term engagement with multilateralism, particularly one that casts India in a leadership role.

GERMANY

BRI has been in the works for a long time. It is the culmination of previous trends that have existed since the 1990s. In 1992, the Chinese had already promoted the New Silk Route, although its geographical scope was much more limited. In 1999, the Chinese began their "go west" strategy, which was intended to connect infrastructural development with China's western periphery.

This is the strongest foreign policy narrative China has ever launched, with significant public diplomacy to back it. BRI's roll-out was more like a traditional political campaign and there was little conceptual clarity around it at the time. The first clear outline emerged in the official Chinese document on the subject published in 2015. What followed after 2015 were exercises in renaming, rebranding, and expansion to a degree that has diluted the exact meanings of the words "Belt" and "Road". This is evident from the so-called 'Arctic Silk Road', 'Digital Silk Road', and more recently, the 'Space Silk Road'.

Essentially, BRI is not a multilateral project nor is it meant for regional integration, although it has been cleverly projected as a connectivity initiative, along the lines of ASEAN or EU connectivity. It is instead a collection of several bilateral approaches. As President Xi Jinping's flagship project, its incorporation into the Communist Party of China's (CPC) constitution, and Jinping's own indefinite extension of leadership, BRI can only be expected to become even more significant, with further investments of personal and political capital.

BRI poses several vulnerabilities for both China and the countries that have so far been involved in the project. One of the primary challenges for China is expectation management. Many countries were keen to jump on to the BRI train when it was first introduced because of its promises of employment and other economic benefits premised on China's 'win-win' narrative. The lack of progress since then and concomitant debt trap creation has led to disillusionment and a backlash against China. Second is that BRI is built on a government-to-government approach, which means that a country's commitment will be determined by who is in power. This also fails to take into account civilian stakeholder opinions, which can now be seen playing out in local protests against the ecological and environmental costs imposed by BRI projects in other countries.

Any commentary on South Asia today is incomplete without mentioning China. This is also increasingly true of discussions on Europe, although the debates are different in their scope. European scholarly and policy analysis was initially focused on the challenges posed by a rising China. The discourse has now expanded to include discussions on how Europe might best use the opportunities presented by China's ascendance without compromising its core interests or security. Currently, China invests much more in Europe than European countries in China. Chinese investments in Eastern Europe are on the rise, particularly due to fewer regulations as compared to the EU, and a higher demand for infrastructure investment and financing.

The change in perspective is based on realistic assessments of the opportunities and challenges posed by BRI. China's economic capital has bought it important diplomatic leverage that has contributed to a divided EU. In 2017, a EU statement critical of China's human rights record at the UN Human Rights Council was blocked by EU member states. The EU was also stopped by its own member from adding its name to a joint letter recording its concern about reports of lawyers being tortured in detention.

The EU strategy is not to construct an alternative to BRI but to keep China engaged while making European priorities clear. In any case, it does not have the resources to project a separate connectivity initiative. It is willing to endorse China if the latter follows principles it considers important, such as openness, transparency, and sustainability, and for this to succeed, it must look to doing so collectively, in cooperation with partners like India and Japan.

BRAZIL

It is acknowledged that China uses trade as a strategic weapon to expand its presence across the globe. It has taken growth lessons from other countries and built its story of success very carefully. At the same time, it is equally important to acknowledge that China offers attractive opportunities for developing countries such as Brazil, and the crucial point therefore is to find a balance between securing national interests and cooperating with a partner without making heavy strategic concessions.

China and Brazil share extensive economic relations. Chinese investments in Brazil total around US\$ 40 billion, in over 200 enterprises spread across different sectors. Beijing has invested heavily in sectors such as infrastructure developments (e.g. port construction), and agriculture and technology. With newly elected President Jair Bolsonaro having expressed keen interest in building trade ties with China, the relationship is set to further strengthen.

INDIA

The Belt and Road Initiative in the original Chinese reads as the One Belt One Road. Its English translation was publicised quite deliberately by China because OBOR suggests no scope for alternatives (only 'one belt' and 'one road'), or an individual state's agency regarding their involvement in the project. The turning point for China was the 2008 global

financial crisis, a final confirmation of the West's decline. This brought about a marked change in China's own behaviour and tendency to keep a low profile in international relations, which had guided the country for nearly 40 years until then.

Within the various global connectivity models, it is therefore important to keep in mind China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). There has been some progress in terms of China's response to concerns of fiscal debt, transparency, and related issues. BRI will continue to be important to several countries because it addresses fundamental infrastructural needs.

Connectivity is fundamental to India's foreign policy. In this regard, the Indo-Pacific region will remain a zone of strategic development in the years to come, with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) at its core. India recognises that all players — Japan, US, China, Australia and so on — are looking at the Indo-Pacific more or less through the same prism, but with different objectives. China, with its greater engagement in the region, and Russia which has a maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific, will be important focus points in the area.

SOUTH AFRICA

China's historical relationship with the African continent has covered issues ranging from the political and economic to the social and cultural. The current commentary therefore that terms China's engagement in Africa 'neo-colonialism' ignores its historic aspect. Simply put, this is not a new relationship. Further, to suggest that it is neo-colonial is to say that earlier, African countries exercised their own control which is now being wrested by China, which is not true. However, to say that China's presence does not mirror the history of colonialism in the continent is also equally misplaced. In Southern Africa, particularly, China supported liberation movements both financially and militarily. The relationships that were established then exist today in various forms.

Beyond infrastructural inroads through physical institutions, such as the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, which was a gift from the Chinese, China's approach in Africa is based on a mutual acceptance of individual sovereignty with the direct support of the AU, and interventions on request. Work is carried out jointly, and even where blame is apportioned only on China, such in the case of human rights violations, these infractions are not China's alone. However, what Africa has not done is an assessment of what exactly it has gained from BRI so far on the basis of China's 'unconditional aid' and what has been traded in return. Similarly, there is no forecasting on how this will play out for the continent's future, particularly as it relates to debt creation. This is seen in the case of Zambia which has racked up huge debt repayment defaults that will lead to China's taking over key state infrastructure.

China is not going to exit Africa. Countries must come together therefore to evaluate how best to benefit from the engagement, and if China is in a position to be a game changer for the continent that offers a reasonable alternative to other forms of engagement. The task is not to take on China, but to address existing and potential challenges that can safeguard state security.

The point of debate is not whether Chinese companies are good or bad. It is whether other countries have undertaken similar initiatives and what gains can be had from BRI without ceding national interests. After all, China has an over-capacity of resources, and from its point of view, BRI is a logical step to utilise this in an effective way. However, if BRI's basic premise is of fulfilling China's strategic requirements or to primarily address its resource surplus, external resistance will also build-up.

China being in a position to offer financing to projects in other countries is a good development by itself. However, the conditions that China can impose if a country is unable to repay its debt must be subjected to closer scrutiny.

Fourth Industrial Revolution

In what ways is the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR) influencing domestic and foreign policy choices within GIBSA countries? What are the economic costs and viability of high value addition training and the nuances of each market? Can policymaking cope with information war/fake news? What are the problems of cyber-vulnerability and data manipulation in the member states?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR) is a radical re-imagination of how technology and society interact. It is not just this re-imagination that makes FIR so daunting, but — and perhaps more crucially — the pace of its evolution. For example, today, the humanities/arts has been added to the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) domain to make it STEAM, proving that education/training in one subject or two is now insufficient. This is a revolution in education and training. Growth in defence technology is also witnessed as part of the FIR, with the Internet itself having come out of a US military project.

It is thus no surprise that some of the keywords for FIR are interdisciplinary thrust, versatility, and adaptability. Laws, policies, and regulations, and even human interactions, will have to evolve complementarities. One potential side effect of FIR is that ‘long-term planning’ will no longer be an important, or the only, option. The defining feature of FIR (and its subset, the digital revolution) is the knowledge gap between new facts of life (of Internet, social media, and big data) and how they are perceived. The traditional nation-state framework is not prepared to handle these new transboundary realities and networks spurred by social media and the Internet. Innovation must be a multi-stakeholder approach that aims to create an ecosystem in which everyone — particularly those with demonstrated expertise — has a say in the policy domain.

This was duly reflected by Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg's Congressional hearing, in which senior US lawmakers struggled to understand the basics of big data and digital privacy. In many ways, this was a defining moment. It showed that intermediaries bear some responsibility in protecting user data, as well as a sense of technological McCarthyism, in that these developments can also be inherently political.

With FIR, developing economies will have to grapple with some critical questions: should they continue on the path of industrialisation or directly move to services? We might of course already have an answer to this. Services alone is not sufficient to generate the kind of growth industrialisation can/has achieved, of which a case-in-point is India. These countries could be instructive in actively forging globalisation and participating in international forums by developing the niche area of service-sector digitalisation.

If FIR is going to materialise, mass employment will suffer in countries like India. The focus on productivity and efficiency will bring down the need for human labour. Further, will the digital revolution lead to an erosion of the realist world order? Localised identities, democratisation of foreign policy, and broader dissemination of information, although controlled, may all be early signs of this development.

BRAZIL

For Brazil, FIR has been both a challenge and a necessity. It is a challenge because it represents a stage in industrial production that Brazil currently lacks the research and development and technical capability to deliver.

In the past 30 years, manufacturing as a percentage of Brazil's GDP has been steadily decreasing: in 1985, it was a bit more than 20 per cent, as of 2018, it is not over 10 per

cent. As a note of comparison, in Germany, it has remained steady at around 25 per cent for at least 10-15 years. Brazil, on the other hand, has seen a decline in the average productivity of industries. The quantum of industrial goods in Brazilian exports has also been decreasing. FIR is thus crucial because it can increase competitiveness and efficiency, and add value to our industry and economy.

Truly competitive industry increasingly relies on technology, and education and innovation must thus be FIR's key pillars. Currently, just 11 per cent of Brazil's new graduates come from STEM backgrounds and opt for similar careers. Further, 70 per cent of those possessing doctorates choose careers in public administration instead of being absorbed in productive sectors.

For innovation, ties between public and private sectors must be encouraged. Towards this, Brazil has created EMBRAPA, the Agency for Industrial Research and Innovation, which exclusively supports technological innovation projects made in partnership with private sector and public research institutions. It is also important to promote value-added foreign investment, of which the Norwegian oil and gas sector is a good example. Domestic investments spurred the creation of domestic innovation entities that absorbed technologies from foreign countries, and ultimately ended as net exporters from a position in which no oil and gas was being extracted at all. Moving beyond the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) model to one involving serious investments and a bigger role to technology transfers must therefore be considered, given the former's exploitation of resources and cheap labour.

INDIA

Following India's independence, technology was seen by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and others as a great equaliser. Big dams, creation of the Indian Institutes of Technology

(IIT) through parliamentary statutes, and so on provided an early technological base for the country. There were several private-public partnerships in science, for example with the Tata Group, and emphasis was laid on also on Applied Sciences, rather than just fundamental research. On the other hand, India's computer literacy suffered a setback despite Dr Homi Bhabha's recommendation for big computing across the country based on negative feedback about how this would threaten labour, a key vote bank. Through the years, the tension between technological innovation and political compulsion has played out in various sectors in India.

The 1970s saw the emergence of India's nationalisation debate, which led to expulsion of companies like IBM from the country and a growth in nascent indigenous computing companies. During the technology denial regime and international isolation roughly around the same time, India looked to indigenisation as the answer. While the approach has been slow to develop, it has also helped to build a base to deal with future shocks. In fact, India built the Param 8000 supercomputer while under sanctions, which shows, to some extent, and at least in India's case, that sanctions have boosted indigenisation of technology. In the 1990s, the computerisation of the Indian Railways spurred a major computerisation drive, and this public investment led to private interest and investments in the sector.

This decade wrought enormous changes in India's foreign policy. Militancy in Kashmir spurred a counter-reaction, and there was significant discussion about Pakistan seeking to target India at multilateral forums. This led to sovereignty emerging as a major adjunct of foreign policy, which has since extended to technology policy as well. Sovereignty as a major concern can be seen in the example of the cryogenic engine crisis, which involved initial US interest in helping India but later inviting sanctions due to India's interest in being assisted in the endeavour by Russia. Now, defence technology is leading to public interest in private entrepreneurship, particularly in computing, as witnessed in the Indian Navy.

India's more assertive foreign policy also demonstrates the sovereignty question that furthered the debate on how to govern the Internet in the post-2000s phase. In these debates about digital governance, 'multilateral' and 'multi-stakeholder' became important keywords. While India has always been part of multilateral forums, it has had to fight for its place at the big player's table. This applies also to the digital and technology sphere: India has not been invited to join the Budapest Convention on Cyber Crime, or the authorship of the Tallin Manual, which is the only multilateral document to deal with cyber warfare.

India favours South-South cooperation for Internet governance, which is evident from its move away from a multilateral to a multi-stakeholder framework, which is seen as equalising stakes in the digital economy. However, there is a disconnect between theory and practice, which reveals itself in India's position papers at international platforms and in public consultations, where various key voices — such as civil society and academia — are absent, and there is a preponderance of government and corporate entities. A further gap emerges given India's traditional emphasis on a government-led approach to domestic debates, where, although multi-stakeholder opinions are invited, there is still suspicion of agenda-driven interests. This may play out negatively in the foreign policy domain with regard to Internet governance, quite apart from the fact that there are no multi-stakeholder formats already in place internally to debate the issue. The Aadhar and net neutrality debates are stories that evince this lack of a multi-stakeholder approach, in which consultations/debates were monopolised by the government. The eventual net neutrality victory was not because of the government but in spite of it, and thanks to the intervention of disparate civil society groups.

These debates or the lack thereof extend to big data. There is disagreement with regard to the public structurally evaluating government policy on open data. Data localisation or holding data within national borders, which stems from surveillance needs as well as data colonisation, has also emerged as a major issue in India.

The weaponisation of big data was first seen in the 2014 elections in which data was systematically gathered and marshalled for political campaigning, which continues till date, as seen in the dissemination and proliferation of fake news. Traditional psychological operations and disinformation campaigns are now being adapted for localised political campaigns through digital means.

Much of this ties into a constitutional strain: the Indian constitution holds up both freedom of speech and right to privacy but this does not carry over clearly in terms of access to information. India thus faces a dilemma about whether it should follow the Chinese or Russian approach to digital freedoms, or what is loosely seen as the West's model which is more democratic. Fighting fake news, too, presents challenges. While the emphasis should be on regulatory controls, it is increasingly becoming a political battlefield. The current domestic debate pits privacy and security in opposition — this is a false equivalence. In addition, India's federal framework can also lead to further friction and legal issues. In any case, India is unlikely to see the same kind of job creation as in China due to increasing automation. Currently, there is a pushback to IT services in India.

There is a lack of a comprehensive cyber policy and a proper framework on critical security infrastructure. The 2013 National Cyber Security Policy must be revised. Responding to external pressure or not undertaking a thorough overview of domestic needs and environment can lead to future unsustainability. It must be remembered that the IT Act was passed in 2000 primarily to assuage European concerns about a statutory framework around data rather than domestic compulsions. Further, flawed business models are being fostered. Start-ups, for example, are mostly dependent on funding and valuation rather than actual wealth. These reasons contribute to India's role as a dominant consumer, but not producer, of the Internet.

SOUTH AFRICA

Every country in Africa is different and needs a different policy template. Although GDP is predicted to be rising and largely stable (macroeconomic) and growth is going to be high, Africa will still not be able to catch up with the rest of the world. Africa is dependent on agriculture, but mostly subsistence agriculture. It is popularly believed that Africa can develop through manufacturing, and that several countries have undergone structural transformation from agriculture to industry. However, this is not actually happening on the ground.

Instead, African countries are moving from subsistence agriculture to low-yield retail services in formal areas. Though this helps people emerge from poverty, the services sector is not sustainable and can be growth-reducing. Manufacturing can give a boost to other sectors, including technology. It has forward and backward linkages — manufacturing encourages innovation. In terms of productivity, services do not deliver as much. Africa is under-industrialised and is perhaps even starting to de-industrialise. The contribution of manufacturing to GDP is on a downward trend.

Global value chains are changing because of more localisation and customisation. There is a move from labour to non-labour components. What opportunities do these present to Africa? Changing economic trends in Asia could be beneficial in this regard. The free flow of information and globalisation could be helpful, as seen in the education and health sectors. Knowledge and technology were the edge that the developed world had over the developing world, and this is what motivates the current protectionist drive.

Africa needs political will. At low levels of development, a political elite's commitment to development is more important than regime type. In this regard, Africa's potential for renewable energy and technology could be a critical way forward to industrialisation.

GERMANY

The term FIR was coined by German industry, with the objective of increasing productivity. The key idea was to link machines with processes, and this will have far-reaching implications that are still not yet fully visible. Increasing productivity means less labour and employment, which is not a problem for Germany because of its shrinking population. However, it is a challenge for developing economies because it invalidates the demographic dividend, like in India's case. An impact of FIR could be the rolling back of employment outsourced to other countries. With digitisation reducing the need for low-cost labour in countries like India and China, it may be more cost-efficient for companies to simply remain at home.