

NATO's relations with the Indo-Pacific region

On February 20, 2024, the Symbiosis School for International Studies (SSIS) in India hosted a guest lecture titled "NATO's Relations with the Indo-Pacific Region." The event commenced with an opening address by Professor Shivali Lavale, Director of SSIS, who warmly welcomed the esteemed speaker, Ms. Sophie Briquetti, from NATO's Division of Political Affairs. Ms. Briquetti's insightful lecture unveiled the core identity of NATO, highlighting three key pillars that stand as the organization's defining features: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. Each pillar, she emphasized, contributes to securing not just the present but also shaping the future trajectory of the organization.

At the heart of NATO lies the unwavering commitment to collective defense, a cornerstone established during the Cold War and enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This principle, Ms. Briquetti emphasized, declaring an attack on one ally an attack on all, solidifying the collective security of its member states. Beyond its defensive posture, NATO takes a proactive approach to global security through crisis management. Whether it be the intervention in Afghanistan or the operation in Kosovo, as Ms. Briquetti mentioned, NATO actively engages in preventing and mitigating crises, aiming to maintain regional stability and minimize the need for future interventions. This proactive stance underscores NATO's commitment to not only safeguarding its members but also contributing to a more peaceful and stable international environment. The third pillar, cooperative security, shifts the focus to building a global network of partners who share a vision of a secure and stable world. It is about building a network of countries that underscores NATO's commitment to upholding national sovereignty, territorial integrity, freedom of navigation, and self-determination in foreign policy and security matters. This commitment manifests within a network of over 30 diverse countries, transcending geographical boundaries, encompassing nations from Europe and the Middle East to the Indo-Pacific region. Some partners aspire to eventual NATO membership, others prioritize neutrality, and still others seek tailored partnerships that respect their unique national considerations.

Ms. Briquetti then highlighted the growing interconnectedness between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions. This link is reflected in NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept, which identifies the Indo-Pacific as crucial to the alliance's security due to the potential impact of regional developments. Emphasizing that security transcends regional boundaries, Ms. Briquetti cited common challenges like cyber threats, emerging technologies, climate change, and disinformation. These issues resonate not only within NATO but also with partners in the Indo-Pacific, particularly Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand. Ms. Briquetti addressed concerns about Russia and China, noting Russia's aggression in Ukraine and China's challenges outlined in NATO's Strategic Concept. She emphasized NATO's focus on the Euro-Atlantic area but acknowledged global security challenges, seeking partnerships beyond its region. This collaborative effort, including support for Ukraine from Indo-Pacific partners, underscores the

importance of global cooperation in addressing security challenges. Ms. Briquetti concluded her address by adding that NATO seeks partnership at a global and collaborative level. The lecture was followed by questions from various students on a myriad of aspects in relation to NATO's approach, challenges and objectives as a global participant and a regional body.