

SSIS DIALOGUE SERIES

Recent Developments in West Asia: Implications for Regional Security and India's Interests



Symbiosis School of International Studies (SSIS) hosted a dialogue session on 11 August 2025, on Recent Developments in West Asia, featuring Ambassador (Retd.) Talmiz Ahmad and Shri Vijay Gokhale, who shared their perspectives on contemporary geopolitical challenges, with particular focus on the Israel - Palestine conflict and the evolving global order.

The session started with opening remarks by Dr. Anamika Asthana who introduced the speakers and the topic. Then, Amb. Talmiz Ahmad provided a comprehensive overview of the Israel - Palestine conflict, highlighting the long-standing nature of the struggle and the most recent escalation, including the October 7, 2023 incident. He argued that Israel has failed its people politically, militarily, and socially. This deep sense of failure led to unrestrained violence by Israel on Palestinians in which violence is becoming an end in itself. Yet, he emphasized that Palestinian aspirations for self-determination remain irrepressible, regardless of Israeli actions. He also noted the ineffectiveness of international institutions such as the UN and ICC in restraining Israel, and pointed out the absence of any regional power capable of balancing Israel in West Asia, calling Israel a “triumphant military power in West Asia.”

“West Asia needs to be looked at as an area of Strategic Interest.”



Shri Vijay Gokhale then discussed the roles of global powers, focusing on the United States, Russia, and China. He noted that while the U.S. continues to maintain strong influence in West Asia, Russia’s global reach is constrained by the Ukraine conflict. China, meanwhile, has become a major player in the Middle East since the 1990s, driven by its energy needs and investment in infrastructure, ports, and security partnerships. He also spoke about the difference between Capabilities and Will and argued that China might not be willing to put its “blood and treasure” to commit in the region to establish peace.

The discussion also reflected on India’s position in the region. With nearly nine million Indians living in West Asia, India has a strong stake in regional stability. However, delays in executing projects such as the North-South Corridor have weakened India’s influence compared to China. While India is seen as an important mediator with strong economic and cultural appeal, it still lacks the global power status that stronger states enjoy.

The session further touched upon regional dynamics, such as the unfinished legacy of the Arab Spring, Africa’s growing contestation as a geopolitical space, and the prospects of renewed instability. In this context, India’s role was seen as significant but constrained, with its strength lying more in economic potential than in military power.

The dialogue also reflected on the fundamental changes occurring in the Indian Ocean. The argument was put forward that balance of power is shifting in the region. Indian Ocean has become the new area of strategic rivalry. It was also suggested that India should leverage its position in the Indian Ocean Region for stability and security.

Finally, the speakers addressed some questions posed by the students on BRICS and multipolarity, noting the bloc’s ambition to challenge U.S. hegemony but also the difficulties posed by internal divisions. While the Global South aspires to greater unity, its lack of coherence continues to weaken its impact on global politics.

The dialogue was then joined by Ms. Shivali Lawale, Director of SSIS, Dr. Alvite Singh Ningthoujam, Deputy Director of SSIS and Dr. Shafat Yousuf. The speakers then discussed the strategic importance of Chahabar Port, Plurilateralism and Connectivity projects such as I2U2 and the role of Indian soft power.

The dialogue concluded with the message that while India has not “lost out” to the West, its global role remains a work in progress, shaped by economic capabilities, diplomatic outreach, and the need to navigate complex multipolar realities