

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL EXCHANGE COUNCIL

ASIAN FORUM ON GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, INDIA



16 OCTOBER TO 25 OCTOBER 2016

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Executive Summary

The 2016 Asian Forum on Global Governance (the Forum) was the sixth of its kind, and took place in New Delhi, India from 16 October to 25 October 2016. The theme for the Forum was '*NAVIGATING THE NEW NORMAL: Making Multilateralism Work with Multipolarity.*' The workshop is jointly organized by the Observer Research Foundation, India and the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius, Germany. The Forum takes a close look at the Asian region and at the challenges facing the global community. This year's focus was how to implement strategies of multilateralism to overcome these challenges.

The foundation of the Forum is an instructional and networking platform for young professional leaders from a mix of diverse regions including Europe, Americas, Africa, Asia and Australia.

There were 49 participants altogether from 30 different countries from a range of fields including government, NGOs and the private sector.

The Forum provides an opportunity for delegates to discuss, debate and challenge the complex global environment we currently are operating in with talks ranging from terrorism to climate change to managing growth. It enabled delegates to engage with high-ranking figures from the political, business and academic communities from around the globe and hear from experts in their various fields.

The conference was well-structured and facilitated academic discussion, as well as provided the opportunity for networking and cultural exchange.

Report

Sunday, 16 October: Introductions

The afternoon began with a tour of Lodhi Gardens, which has been rated the best urban oasis in Asia by Time magazine. The Forum formally began in the evening with Samir Saran's, Vice President and Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation, *Welcome Address and Introduction to the 2016 Asian Forum on Global Governance*. This was followed by a Keynote Address by Sanjeev Sanyal, Economist and Writer, on *'The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History.'* A copy of Sanjeev's recent book was provided to delegates. The discussion of the extent to which human history has developed along the rim of the Indian Ocean was an appropriate starting point for the issues that we discussed later in the Forum.

Monday, 17 October: Old Regimes, New Security Threats

The first day of the Forum focused on *Old Regimes, New Security Threats* with Samir Saran, Vice President and Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation as the Chair for the day. The day began with introductory remarks and self-introductions of the participants. Sunil Joshi, Director, Observer Research Foundation and Michael Goring, Chairman and CEO of ZEIT-Stiftung provided opening remarks.

The first plenary session began in the afternoon on *Deconstructing failing and flailing multilaterals* which was led by David Held, Professor, and Master of University College in the School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University, UK. We had a wide ranging discussion about the changing form and nature of transnational and multilateral governance.

There was then a panel discussion on *Insecure Asia: Intentions and Institutions* where we had the privilege of hearing from the following panelists:

- S Paul Kapur, Professor, Department of National Security Affairs, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, USA
- James Kraska, Professor, International Law, Naval War College, USA
- Eva-Maria Nag, Editor, Global Policy Journal, UK
- Harsh Pant, Head, Strategic Studies Programme, Observer Research Foundation, India

It was abundantly clear from this panel discussion that Asia will continue to play an increasingly important role in global affairs.

In the afternoon we had our second plenary session on *Managing Crisis in West Asia* led by Sabine Sparwasser, German Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and Director General in the Federal Foreign Office for Africa, Asia, Latin America and Near and Middle East, Germany. Ms Sparwasser reflected on her experiences with a particular focus on Afghanistan.



Tuesday, 18 October: Managing Growth, Development, Climate and Rights

The second day of the Forum focused on *Managing Growth, Development, Climate and Rights* with Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs in India, as the Chair.

The first panel discussion was entitled *SDGs and Climate Deal: Navigating Legal, Development and Financial pathways to meet global objectives*. The panel included:

- Rathin Roy, Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, India
- Catherine MacKenzie, Senior Associate, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, UK
- Tisha Schuller, Strategic Advisor, Natural Gas Initiative, Stanford University, USA
- Lydia Powell, Head, Centre for Resource Management, Observer Research Foundation, India

There was a fulsome discussion about the challenges faced in dealing with the issue of climate change and the competing interests involved.

The next panel was entitled *Digital Opportunities: Managing Access, Privacy and Security Panel Discussion* and had the following panelists:

- Caitríona Heintz, Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security, RSIS, Singapore
- Arun Mohan Sukumar, Head, Cyber Security and Internet Governance Initiative, Observer Research Foundation, India
- Jovan Kurbalija, Founding Director of DiploFoundation and Head of the Geneva Internet Platform, Switzerland

We discussed the challenges of maintaining security and privacy in a global digital environment. Security of information will become increasingly important moving forward particularly due to recent global developments.

In the afternoon, we split into working groups to discuss the following topics:

Group 1: The State is back. Are we witnessing the end of multilateralism as we know it?

Group 2: Is it time to rethink globalisation? Does it work for all?

Group 3: New areas and actors of conflict – Are the UN and Bretton Woods past their sell by date?

It was very interesting to hear the perspectives of the various delegates from all over the world and their views on these important issues.



Wednesday, 19 October: Agra Retreat

India is a nation with a fascinating cultural history and one of the highlights of the conference was a visit to Agra where we had the opportunity to visit the Taj Mahal. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983, the Taj Mahal has an interesting history in relation to both its inspiration and architecture. Whilst construction of the mausoleum was effectively finished in 1643, work continued on other parts of the project for another decade.

Thursday, 20 October: Agra Retreat

We started the day in working groups discussing the following topics.

Group 1: Does the European Union have limited takers today?

Group 2: Hillary Vs Trump: Are we witnessing farcical democracy?

Group 3: Rejection of the Tribunal ruling – Is Chinese exceptionalism here to stay?

It became apparent during the group discussions on these important topics that there is a significant level of intersection between these important issues. The ongoing challenges presented by these issues will no doubt be the subject of much academic debate on an ongoing basis.

Friday, 21 October: Dilemmas of Democracy

This day of the Forum focused on *Dilemmas of Democracy* with Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs in India, as the Chair.

There was a panel discussion on *Religion and democracy - are they compatible?* We had the privilege of hearing from the following panelists:

- Shazia Ilmi, Spokesperson BJP
- Tufail Ahmad, Director of South Asia Studies Project at the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Washington DC
- Yael Wissner-Levy, Political Speechwriter and Communications Consultant, Israel
- Manfred Lahnstein, Former Federal Minister of Finance, Chairman of Board of Trustees, ZEIT Stiftung Ebelin and Gerd Bucerius, Germany

It was clear that there were very divergent views on the role of religion in the modern state.

In the afternoon, we participated in a workshop entitled *We Are All Refugees. We Are All Refugees*. It is underpinned by the notion that each one of us has some personal connection to the refugee experience; we might have been refugees ourselves, or our ancestors were refugees at some point in history. In the face of growing xenophobic discourses and entrenched narratives about refugees globally, relating to that notion can form a productive basis for empathetic listening, for recognizing difference and for cultivating understanding and a more compassionate debate about the enormous challenges of accepting so many new refugees in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

We then prepared for the debating club with the following topics: Group 1: The

EU project is doomed to fail

Group 2: Religion is incompatible with modernity

Group 3: China's rise is peaceful and good for the Asia-Pacific

Group 4: The United Nations needs to be disbanded

I was nominated to be a speaker in the debate from Group 2. We allocated various research tasks to group members and discussed which areas to cover in the time available.



Saturday, 22 October: Mitigating the Threat of Terrorism and Global Economic Interdependencies

This day of the Forum focused on *Mitigating the Threat of Terrorism* in the morning and *Global Economic Interdependencies* in the afternoon with Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs in India, as the Chair for both.

The morning focused on the issue of *Mitigating the Threat of Terrorism*. The panel discussion began on the *New Dimensions of Terrorism: Why Cannot States Prevail?* The following panelists spoke on the issue:

- C. Christine Fair, Associate Professor, Security Studies Program, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University, USA
- Sushant Sareen, Senior Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation, India
- Raghu Raman, President, Risk, Security and New Ventures, Reliance Industries Limited, India

There was a very lively discussion between panelists and delegates in relation to the challenges presented by terrorism.

We undertook a simulation exercise called *Balance of Terror*. This is a strategic game of policy with two teams (State vs Terrorist). The state has to protect its citizens (stability) but cannot overreach and lose the support of the people (legitimacy). In contrast, the terrorist must grow its organisation (mobilisation) while protecting existing members (security). This exercise provided a valuable insight into the challenges the modern state has in combating terrorism.

The second half of the day focused on *Global Economic Interdependencies* with a panel discussion *Future of Growth* with the following panelists:

- Renato Flôres, Professor, Fundação Getulio Vargas, Brazil
- Sony Kapoor, Managing Director, Re-Define, UK
- Akshay Mathur, Director, Research and Analysis, and Fellow, Geo-economic Studies, Gateway House, India
- Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist, HSBC Securities and Capital Markets, India

There was a lengthy discussion surrounding the opportunities for superannuation funds and pension funds in the developed world to invest in infrastructure in developing countries. There were differing views as to why this was not currently happening to a significant extent.



Sunday, 23 October: Debating Preparations and BSS-AFGG Reunion

This day began with preparations for Debating Clubs with my group. Certificates were distributed before we had a walking tour exploring the presidential palace (Rashtrapati Bhavan).

The Rashtrapati Bhavan is the official residency of the President with a total of 340 rooms. It has beautiful gardens stretching across the 330 acre estate and grandeur architecture. It was a magnificent sight to behold.

That evening we had an address entitled *Indian Opportunity in the Asian Century* by Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Government of India. He spoke about the activities and policies of the government, particularly in the areas of monetary policy, aviation and sanitation. He then took questions from the floor and some lively debates ensued on a variety of domestic and international topics.



Monday, 24 October: BSS-AFGG Reunion – 2016 and AFGG 2016 Debating Sessions

The day started with a panel discussion entitled *Climate Change Governance* with the following panelists:

- Arunabha Ghosh, CEO, Council on Energy, Environment and Water
- Janet Salem, Programme Officer, United Nations Environment Programme
- Chandrashekhar Dasgupta, Member, Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, India
- Shishir Priyadarshi, Director, Development Division, WTO
- Geraldine Ang, Policy Analyst, Green Investment, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), France

It was clear from the views of the panelists, that the issue of governance in climate change is contested and that there are various models available. Delegates then had the opportunity to attend a concurrent session with the choice of either *Relevance of BRICS in the evolving geo-economic architecture* or *Holding up half the sky: Women in power*.

In the afternoon, the debating sessions commenced. I was very fortunate to be one of two speakers from my team. A very lively debating session ensued and we were fortunate to be voted by those in attendance as the winning team amongst the eight teams who participated.

In the evening there was a panel discussion entitled *Battleground Europe: Democracy, Religion and the New Cold War: Panel Discussion* with the following panelists:

- Oana Popescu, Founder and Director, Global Focus Centre, Romania
- Eberhard Sandschneider, Professor for Chinese Politics and International Relations, Otto-Suhr-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
- Hans-Lothar Domröse, Retired General, Federal Armed Forces, Oldenburg

- Stephan G. Richter, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, The Globalist USA. It was very interesting to hear about developments in Europe first hand.



Tuesday, 25 October: Valedictory Session and Magic Bus Community Tour

The final day of the Forum concluded with a Valedictory Session on the *Future of Globalisation: Indian Perspective* presented by Amar Sinha, Secretary (ER) of the Ministry of External Affairs in India and on *Managing Security and Migration in the South East Mediterranean Region* presented by Dimitris Paraskevopoulos, Secretary General of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece.

We then received an address from the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee. It was very interesting to hear directly from the President of India as he covered the work of the government and the ongoing challenges that India faces.

The afternoon concluded by a Magic Bus Community Tour which was one of the highlights of the visit. The Magic Bus Indian Foundation uses the power of sports to impart essential life skills in children and youth from marginalised communities and enables them to become active and contributing members of society with dignified livelihood options and jobs. We received an overview and orientation from Bidisha Fouzdar, Director of Magic Bus, before travelling to the community for a *Sports for Development* session. It was great to be able to meet with the coordinators and some of the young people who participate in the program and to play some soccer. There are certainly many talented young people who participate in the program.



Conclusion

The opportunity to attend the Asian Forum on Global Governance 2016 enabled me to gain valuable skills and have interesting experiences that I will be able to transfer to my work as a Member of the Queensland Parliament. The Forum was an exceptional opportunity to learn and debate issues facing Australia in today's rapidly changing world with experts and other young professionals around the world.

The speakers were excellent, the topics were stimulating and I would recommend this to any future young professional considering attending the Forum. I want to thank the Observer Research Foundation, ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius and the Australian Political Exchange Council for facilitating the opportunity to attend this Forum as a delegate representing the Labor Party and Australia.