



CISS WEBINAR REPORT

India-China Face-Off: Territorial or Strategic?

25th August, 2020
12:00 pm – 02:00 pm

Overview of the Webinar

The Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS) held a Webinar on “India-China Face-Off: Territorial or Strategic?” on 25th August, 2020. The webinar was chaired by Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, Executive Director CISS. He formally inaugurated the webinar by his welcome and introductory remarks. The guest speakers included Lt. Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi, Mr. Ahmar Bilal Soofi, Prof. Dr. Fazal Ur Rehman and Mr. Pravin Sawhney, while Mr. Riaz Khokar introduced the panelists and moderated the discussion. The main theme of Webinar was to discuss the current India-China border dispute in Ladakh’s Galwan Valley, and to analyze its impact on strategic and regional dynamics of South Asia. The presentations by the worthy speakers were followed by an interactive question answer session, in which different participants shared their thoughts and analyses regarding the webinar’s topic. This report comprises the salient points of the presentations and set of takeaways drawn from the discussion and question-answer session.





Opening Remarks by Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi - Executive Director CISS

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, I welcome all the participants, particularly the eminent speakers from Pakistan and India, who will be sharing their valuable insights on the various aspects of this important subject. From India, we have the privilege of having the well-known and highly regarded defence analyst, Mr. Pravin Sawhney, the Editor of Force magazine. Having heard his recent video presentations on this topic, it will be our great pleasure to hear him speak today on the subject and give us the Indian perspective. Then we have our own Pakistani speakers, General (R) Naeem Lodhi, Mr. Ahmar Bilal Soofi, Dr. Fazal ur Rahman, all three of them known for their expert insight into the topics that they would be speaking on. CISS is grateful to all the speakers for their acceptance of our invitation to participate in this discussion. Not the least, we greatly appreciate all the audience participants, who will be invited to take part in the interactive Q&A session after the presentations by the worthy speakers.

I will make a few remarks to begin with. In the first place, the history of the India-China border contestation is old and goes back a long time. For one, there is no agreed border between these two big neighbors and there is a reason for it. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the border between the two countries was based on treaties drawn up between the British Empire, the suzerain power of British India, and the weak Qing dynasty Emperors who gave away their rights over the area as desired by the British. After India became independent, it laid claim to the areas that the British India government had considered its own. Secondly, the terrain was inhospitable and often inaccessible, which supported a status-quo situation. However, when the People's Republic of China assumed power, it looked at this disadvantageous state of affairs, and re-claimed areas that were traditionally and historically Chinese territory, and in their view did not belong to India. Due to the differing perceptions of the border, no agreement could be reached and the matter was temporarily settled by agreeing upon a Line of Actual Control (LAC), which is in



effect to this day. The flip side of this arrangement was the fact that it was inherently prone to occasional border disputes. Fast forward to recent developments, two recent territorial disputes have occurred between India and China, leading to a conflict situation in Doklam in 2017 and recently in Galwan Valley in 2020.

One reason for the Galwan Valley dispute is Indian revocation of Articles 370 and 35A of its Constitution and the removal of special status of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, and its consequent incorporation of the state into the Indian Union as territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. This opened up a Pandora's Box. As this step violated UN resolutions on Kashmir – in which Pakistan is also a party, the annexation of Kashmiri territory and its incorporation into Indian territory entailed an unauthorized change of status of a disputed area, and hence considered by Pakistan illegal under international law. Secondly, it caused concern in China, as it does not consider Ladakh as Indian Territory, and claims ownership of the area under customary law, as manifesting in usage and tradition.

These border disputes are also due to the fact that conflict between China and India are not only territorial in nature but also have a strategic dimension. The burgeoning Indo-US partnership, the QUAD security grouping and rivalry in the Indian Ocean, are all aspects of this situation. It also has implications for Pakistan due to India's annexation of the Jammu and Kashmir. India's on going course appears to adopt a confrontational approach towards two nuclear armed neighbors. This standoff and the situation resulting there from has serious political and diplomatic implications for the strategic stability of this region.

I would request the worthy speakers to consider all these aspects of the subject and present their learned perspective on the issue. I wish all the participants a productive and fruitful session. Thank you.



Speaker 1: Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi

Topic: India's Military Posture along the LoC and LAC

Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi initiated his remarks by thanking CISS and Ambassador Naqvi for granting him the opportunity to be part of such a distinguished panel. He described the scope of his presentation and said that the stand-off between India and China has been talked about a lot, so he intends to gloss over some of the reasons of this stand-off at international and regional level. Later, he shed light about what happened physically and possible implications of the situation – whether it's territorial only or have strategic effects?

Gen. Lodhi commented, as far as the international environment is concerned, we know very well that there is an Indo-US nexus for the containment of China. It is not hidden. It is very obvious. Both India and US have signed strategic treaties and some of them are very important, such as Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) that allows using each other's logistic insulations, and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) to enable the communication and interoperability between the two countries which requires a lot of coordination, equipment and other synchronization that is significant. Secondly, he mentioned the Indo-Pacific security arrangement in the name of QUAD and now QUAD plus. Japan, Australia, India and America and now three more countries have been added to it, that includes Vietnam, New Zealand and South Korea. It is obvious that same sort of competition is going on there also. So, understandably this creates tension between India and China for obvious reasons without going into details.

Gen. (R) Lodhi mentioned abrogation of article 370 and Ladakh becoming a union territory, while explaining the stand-off situation how it initiated and things became more critical. But more than these, the claims of India on Aksai Chin which they claimed as a part of Kashmir – an area with a strategic road that passes through Aksai Chin and joins Tibet and Xinjian – must have been very alarming for China.



In addition to these, there were threatening notes about CPEC. We all understand that CPEC is a flagship portion of China's BRI – some of us think that CPEC is very close to Daulat Beg, it's not like that but still India threatened Gilgit-Baltistan and CPEC passes through it so that is alarming for China. Also there were other factors, we call them salami tactics. Some infrastructure development from Indian side was going on quite imperceptibly. As the main road from Layup to Daulat Beg is concerned, Gen. (R) said that was still alright although it was very close to LAC. But then certain lateral are also being developed, maybe towards Galwan valley, so that would have also alarmed the Chinese. They were closely watching all these developments.

Gen. Lodhi said, that due to the combination of all these aspects, the current stand-off happened and China can move forward to some important places that includes Galwan valley and Pangong Lake. Geographically, all these locations are significant to oversee the aforementioned road and to manage control over this road which goes to the base Daulat Beg – which is only about 8 kilometers from Karakoram pass. Daulat Beg was initially a smaller base, a battalion base and later on converted into a brigade base. It also developed an airstrip afterwards and was further expanding. He also mentioned that Karakoram pass is on the border of China and India and it also leads to Siachin, from there onwards Indians can oversee the area of Skardu from where the CPEC road passes – although quite far away. So, these aspects were also the reason behind current situation.

On the question whether India-China border spat is territorial or strategic in nature, Mr. Lodhi said that there was not much of territorial exchange, about 8-10 kilometers coming down the valley and occupying certain heights is not strategic as far as the physical movement is concerned. I would call it tactical, or someone might label it operational but not more than that. But its impact could be strategic, because now Chinese forces can oversee this road and can interdict it with artillery fire or with other sources. So, that has brought a big change as far as the situation and this area is



concerned. More important is the buildup of the forces. If we look at the satellite images, we see that there is a small movement from China which may be called tactical or operational but it is backed up by very good preparations – behind the bases and we can see that a good number of forces are there.

With regard to the Pakistan, he said, it sounds good for Pakistan that some Indian forces will be locked in that area. The only thing Pakistan could be happy about is that now it would be very difficult for Indians to make any more ingresses into Siachin or towards Kargil, to think of attacking the routes going up to Skardu or to even make an attempt to threaten CPEC road. On the Indian PM Modi's statement that China's have not occupied our territory, Mr. Lodhi said that I do not blame him because I think there was a buffer zone between where the Chinese and Indian forces were staged or stationed. If some of that area, which was buffer initially, has now been occupied so one can say that Indian territory has not been occupied.

On the future prospects, he opined that both China and India would like to de-escalate however he anticipated that although Chinese may go back from other places, they will probably not leave the heights which they have occupied in Galwan valley or elsewhere, from where they can oversee the road and Daulat Beg base. However, they may enter into negotiations to settle such territorial matters.

He also addressed the question that what impact it has on the overall situation in Kashmir. In this regard, he talked about the recent meeting of Chinese and Pakistani foreign ministers and their joint statement. He observed that China tried to keep herself out by saying that Kashmir is a disputed territory between Pakistan and India, and they never mention themselves as a party. So, the Pakistani expectations that probably now the number of parties to the Kashmir's dispute will increase by China being a third party, that probably might not happen – at least not apparently.

Mr. Lodhi concluded his remarks by saying that although the events are still unfolding and nothing sure can be speak about, but the situation is expected to settle down as



status quo. That also gives some safety to Pakistan as far Siachin, Kargil and CPEC is concerned. However if India – as they assert – attack Azad Kashmir, then Pakistan will be in a very good position to respond very strongly and very effectively because of the factors I mentioned in my presentation.

Speaker 2: Mr. Ahmar Bilal Soofi

Topic: International Law and its Violations: Legal Perspective

Mr. Ahmar Bilal Soofi said that it was an honor to be part of this illustrious panel. He stated that from international point of view what is happening on Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China partly is a concern for Pakistan because the development of the last year on 5th August have clearly tipped the balance in terms of “lawfare offensive” on the part of Indian side, whereby they have not only hollowed out Article 370 and 35A but also have laid a territorial claim on the territories on the Pakistani side. So, in that sense it is clearly a legal offensive, but on the Chinese side is a constant status quo on the way forward to determine the title relating to the territorial overlapping claims.

While presenting an overview of the issue, Mr. Soofi elaborated that for the last fifty years plus, India and China are unable to come to certain consensus neither agree on a venue nor agree on the terms of reference for determining the overlapping claims. This is a very typical situation. So, what India and China have been doing in almost all three sectors (central, eastern and western) was to freeze these claims. They have been entering into periodic agreements for maintenance of boundary i.e. for ensuring there is no smuggling of wildlife, there is no other transfer of arms or any other contrabands, and insisting other side on livestock movement but that is just like managing a dispute. So, whether it's a 1993 agreement, 1996 agreement or the recent 2013 agreement – all indicate that they are managing the border the way it exist.

So, this kind of tension which we have been witnessing now was due. It had to happen sooner or later, it had to spill beyond mere management of the claim relating



to the territory. I think time has come where India and China need to have a discussion on the way forward for determination of the claims. It is a very formal exercise it cannot be done diplomatically, through seminars or through issuing statements, because each statement issued by China and India issue asserts their claims and the way they look at it.

Now the legal basis that China has, is a completely different set of facts starting from McMahon Line. On the other hand, there is an Indian version where they rely on certain maps to argue that this area belongs to us. Mr. Soofi mentioned, I have seen such matters – which are essentially of overlapping claims – are better settled in ad-hoc arbitration by experts, by referring to some global experts. It could be through international arbitration.

He added, while India and China have parked the absolute settlement of the territorial dispute for the last 50 years and they have been going down the route of mismanaging it by entering into periodic agreements relating to use of force, wildlife, smuggling of goods and so on, which is the regulatory aspect of the border. But actually the title determination – which place belongs to whom – is the true exercise in which the title has to be determined. Unfortunately neither side can determine this on its own and we now see that tension is coming up to a certain level, whether we are talking of Pangsong Lake or Western sector or Nepal, where all these regional countries have their own version and each is in conflict with the other's version.

He further elaborated that there is a historic and legal context to this matter but the problem with this kind of situation is that it cannot be sorted out through statements, diplomatic channels or any other seminars or track-2 discussions. It has to be sorted out technically. A lot of matters which have gone to whether International Court of Justice or ad-hoc arbitration or specialized experts are commissioned – whereby both the sides or all other associated sides put across to that tribunal the legal evidence of the exercise of the executive authority, that a state has been doing in a certain



area and that executive authority exercise eventually determines the title. So, whether it was Rann of the Kutch arbitration between India and Pakistan, in which both Pakistan and India presented proofs and evidence i.e. the tribes who used to go there to take their goats and cattle for grazing had greater link to Pakistan, even the language they spoke was used as a legal evidence.

Mr. Soofi opined that both India and Pakistan and these regional countries need to make an effort to identify a forum where all these territorial claims can be laid for adjudication. That venue could be ICJ where all these countries can lay their evidence from the last 70 years to demonstrate that this area belongs to us. Alternatively, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) could form a special tribunal for fact finding or determination, because the principles relating to the determination of territorial sovereignty are pretty well laid down in multiple cases in International Law.

He concluded by anticipating that what we are witnessing right now can spiral out of control in terms of creating a serious threat to international peace and security for the entire region and for the entire world. To avoid that we should make an effort, Mr. Soofi recommended that this matter should be adjudicated upon from a judicial venue or a venue which entertain the evidence, material, documentations and state practice from the Indian and Chinese side.

Speaker 3: Mr. Pravin Sawhney

Topic: India-China Stand-Off: Indian Perspective

He started his speech by saying that the event of 5th August 2019 had a cascading effect geopolitically and militarily. But before explaining this, he said that key thing was the present military situation between India-China. He believed that both disengagement and de-escalation is an extremely difficult proposition today because the situation is very complex. As the earlier relations between India-China will not work further but it should not be a zero-sum game also, so both sides need to



consider seriously a “principled engagement”. He recommended this solution to diffuse the situation although he believed it will be very temporary because the situation is very complex.

On the geopolitical implications of this current situation between the two countries, he asserted, there are geopolitical regional implications if not global implications, but certainly implications for India-US relations. Since the problem started – after three months now – there is distance between India and Nepal, problem between India and Bangladesh and not very certain relations between India and Bhutan, and all these cater serious implications for India. Furthermore, the debate about the Quad and especially Indo-Pacific strategy, which has been led by the Donald Trump administration, will also suffer – not a setback but a review – because the projected possibility does not seem to be happening as there is lot of muscle flexing that the PLA has managed to successfully do.

He added that another thing that will get effected in my opinion is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as well as the CPEC, they both will get hastened up with very serious implications for India. Another significant implication is the political engagement between Pakistan and China that has become regular, intensive and very open in the last three months. Also the military interaction, called interoperability is hastening up now between the two countries. The joint statement after the visit of Qureshi meeting Wang Yi, needs to be read very carefully in India because it is sufficiently serious matter. He shared his observation that with all India’s neighbors now realizing that it is better to get closer in the BRI, I see the digital Silk Road and Space Silk Road. The Digital Silk Road is the key element of the BRI or CPEC, infrastructure is good and required, but China has a lead right now and it will definitely add to that lead by creating E-commerce. By doing so they will bring a digital revolution in all the small countries. The BeiDou Navigation system – being the global system – activated this year with complete 35 satellites, shows the arrival of the fourth industrial revolution. It is the age of the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Chinese will get lot of data which



is the oil for AI. Through this benefit they will have the first mover advantage in all these countries' industries, where I expect automation and robotics to come in the next 5-10 years. He linked these points with prosperity and said that if India is unable to do a principal engagement with China then there is a possibility to see ourselves marginalized for trade and commerce in our own neighborhood.

While talking about the biggest complexity as far as the current situation, he said that everything has come out in the open. For instance, India says it has a border with the China which is 3488 km and China as back as December 2010 had declared that our border with India is only 2000 km, so the missing 1488 km is Ladakh. British India never had a demarcated border with China and today also there is no border – what we had was a Line of Actual Control. So there is a big problem in the Line of Actual Control that India is advocating and what Chinese is insisting upon. All this makes the situation complex.

On the interoperability he elaborated that it has four elements; 1) the need for a commonality of equipment, 2) need for an assured operational support to that equipment, 3) the identification of an enemy and dovetailing having common doctrine 4) joint training. As far India and US are concerned, nobody has gone even beyond stage 1, which is commonality of equipment, even that stage has problems because something we buy from the Russians the Americans object on that and also the secrecy clauses are coming in. Therefore if you get defense equipment from both US and Russia – who have their own positives – it is very difficult to match them up. So this interoperability to me seems a very far cry which I don't think will happen any time soon.

He concluded by recalling that Admiral Harry Harris came to New Delhi a decade ago and he was kind enough to give me time for formal interview and long chat, I asked Admiral what are you actually looking at, he said “we are looking at common joint patrols”. Now that is interoperability because joint patrols counts in same equipment,



communications, common doctrine, support and trading, and joint combat so that is not happening at all for sure. This interoperability is going on since 1992 when the Americans after the demise of the Soviet Union first proposed it to the Indian side so they were very keen on it but now they will be having a second thought after Ladakh.

Speaker 4: Prof. Dr. Fazal Ur Rahman

Topic: India-China Border Dispute: Chinese Perspective

Dr. Fazal Ur Rehman thanked Ambassador Naqvi for providing the opportunity to share his thoughts on the subject. He started his speech by talking about the timeline that how this development has evolved. While elaborating this aspect he recalled last August when the Indian parliament abrogated Article 370, which resulted in a lot of protest not only from Pakistan but the Chinese also got alarmed about the status of Ladakh – as they have very vital and deep strategic interest in the legal administrative status of these areas. So this was the starting point of the current dynamics we are witnessing in the region. In the past, he said, there have been issues of infrastructural development which resulted in protestations, concerns and the apprehensions on both sides of the boarder, but the construction of the road network by India aggravated these concerns. By June this matter turned into a physical conflict between the soldiers of the two countries.

Secondly, he drawn attention to the timings of this India-China face-off – the momentum of the situation started developing at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic. Before explaining the timings factor he talked about different regional developments. While talking about the US factor in India-China latest confrontation, Mr. Rahman said that China was already facing a grave challenge in its relations with US, akin to cold war like situation, which is further evolving, expanding and deepening. He also talked about the aspect of US withdrawal from Afghanistan and opined that the US presence in the region is likely to be replaced by the Indian strategic outreach in the region. In view of the Indian strategic interests, New Delhi is getting close to US so



that in the absence of US it can manage the regional affairs. Similarly, he added, the developments taking place in the South China Sea region are posing a threat in the region. In view of all these developments the question arises that why the two sides especially the Indian side has chosen this time? India might have considered it an opportunity, thinking that China is under tremendous pressure in this pandemic situation thus it is the right time for Indians to push China in order to get them agreed for deciding upon the boundary issue or for resumption of meaningful dialogue. Although the dialogue has been taking place for years but without any concrete result. Also, there have been some confidence building measures (CBMs) taken by two sides in order to maintain a kind of stability on Line of Actual Control (LAC) and not disallow things that threatens the peace and security of the region.

Dr. Fazal recalled that in the last one or two months we are seeing the situation from worse to bad, he referred to the statement of the Indian Army Chief that if the diplomacy and negotiations failed then there could be a military option to solve the problem. He anticipated that if this kind of resilient stance persist from the Indian and the Chinese side then it will be becoming really difficult for the two countries to reconcile at this point and time. However, there is definitely a need for meaningful engagement and if that doesn't take place then there is a possibility that this could become a trigger point – not a major conflict but something with regional implications.

Furthermore, he added, another important aspect which is related to this situation is heightened sentiments of both countries against each other, so at popular level you see resentment and anger. He said, if you see the Indian talk shows the way they portrait China and the way they want to deal with this situation, it will become increasingly difficult for the political leadership and the decision makers of both countries to make a step towards meaningful engagement. On the other hand, the nature of warfare is changing and all these infrastructural built-up which is being constructed on both sides of the border can be dismantled without the physical



engagement within no time. So the decision makers of both the countries should keep such aspects in mind while they are dealing with the situation.

Third aspect, Dr. Fazal explained, is that we are not really well aware of the impact of Post Covid-19 – economic, regional and global situation. Both the states have been effected by this pandemic and the economies of both the states have suffered at great level, whereas the possibilities of the speedy recovery is not evident especially in the case of India as China has largely been moving on a recovery track quite swiftly. So considering all these things, Indians are trying to follow the footsteps of Americans and trying to disengage economically with Chinese companies as visible by the case of Tik-Tok, cases of IT companies and Telecommunication companies. So such cases are going to hurt both countries in a negative way and consequently will also create bigger and deeper situations in South Asia especially in Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan as they are already on the verge of being drifted towards China. Subsequently, all these developments are going to create more problems and frustration especially in India. It would be very difficult for the Indian leadership to tackle these kind of domestic pressures and the external pressures that will be effecting the geopolitical environment of the region.

Takeaways from Questions and Answers Session

Main points that emerged from the discussion are as follows;

- Gen. (R) Lodhi said Chinese have been showing a lot of patience as far as the resolution of dispute is concerned and Indians do not have the capacity to escalate. China will also not escalate because it will not get any benefit by escalating. Also if India joins the regional initiatives i.e. CPEC and rearrange their affairs with China – by not playing to the American designs – then things will improve between the two countries.



- Mr. Sawhney said that the event had a cascading effect for India, which is now facing problems in its external relations with all its neighbors. He noted that India had been marginalized by China in its neighborhood owing to “lack of principled engagement with its neighborhood.” He noted that one of the outcomes of the event would be the speeding up of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is the flagship project of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. He feared that this could have serious repercussions for India.
- As far as the Raffaele and S-400 are concerned, Mr. Pravin said that one weapon platform never makes a difference at the operational level of war. In the current complex battle space, the combination of different things matter that includes the training, numbers, connectivity/data links and electromagnetic spectrum. However, Gen. Lodhi argued that the induction of these platforms will make a difference in the future.
- Mr. Pravin also said that in three months of India-China standoff, the word nuclear has not been used yet. Between India-China and Pakistan-India, the real deterrence is at the operational level of war because our nuclear weapons are not for war-fighting. As the war between India and China did not happen in the recent stand-off, it means that at the conventional level, the PLA already had a deterrence. He further said that the new technologies; i.e. cyber weapons, Artificial intelligence, will be the new deterrence in the future.
- Mr. Soofi said Chinese side have been consistent in terms of taking a position related to the map and they have been relying on the argument of “better executive control”. If fight is initiated from Chinese side it means that there is a legal assertion of that claim.
- Dr. Rahman commented that a lot of pressure has been accumulated by US and its allies on China lately. As India is presenting itself as a strategic partner of US so the Chinese are trying to secure its periphery and trying to secure its borderland, however China may remain open for a meaningful discussion.
- On the involvement of Pakistan in India-China standoff, Dr. Rahman recalled that, Pakistan-China just had a second round of strategic dialogue and both countries



discussed the regional security situation. He elaborated that both states have been calibrating their positions and policies which are mutually beneficial and serves the mutual interest of two countries. However, for the larger peace and stability of the region, it is in our interest to see this situation being diffused. Gen.(R) Lodhi added that there should not be any conspiracy theory on Pakistan as the situation did not arise due to Pakistan, however the standoff is not good for China or India but it is not bad for Pakistan. CPEC has got more security and another big power has entangled into the Kashmir issue.

- On the India-US relations, Mr. Pravin said that the relations between the two countries are evolving and the next administration in US will further determine them. For US, the concern is not about its relations with India but with China. Joe Biden, if elected, will focus on US relationship with China although the partnership would stay. On the other hand, although BJP wants closer relations with US, but possibility of better ties with Russia is also there, which will be in India's interest. He elaborated that the freedom of navigation is limited to the South China Sea and the Western Pacific, it has not really come into the Indian Ocean so India really has no role to play as this freedom of navigation is primarily done by the Americans. Gen. (R) Lodhi added on the subject that China-US competition will continue in the Indian Ocean region so US will try to keep their relations intact with India although they must have been disappointed by India for not playing the desired role in the Afghanistan and against China in the latest crisis.
- On the question regarding the prospects for horizontal escalation along the other contested areas of India and China following the Doklam and Ladakh crisis, Mr. Pravin said that Doklam and Ladakh are different as both broke out for different reasons and I do not see anything happening in the Arunachal Pradesh because operations are done to gain certain military objectives and political aims to be fulfilled.
- On the terms or condition where China might disengage/de-escalate with India, Mr. Pravin said that I do not see this happening soon because both countries have taken firm positions. Mr. Lodhi said that there will be a long haul between India and China



as both countries will stay engaged in the long term although further escalation to this crisis will not take place.

- Gen. (R) Lodhi said that it will be in Russian interest to facilitate détente between India and China. As they have deep relationship and economic interests with both the states, although Russia is keenly examining India's closer relationship with US and would like to distance the two. Mr. Rehman said that platforms like SCO can be instrumental in facilitating the engagements between the two members of the organization. He also said that there are limits to India-US strategic partnership, India might not want to pay any price for US favors and also US is frustrated with what India has been promising and delivering.

Coverage of the Webinar Event and Press Release

CISS webinar on 'India-China Face-off: Territorial or Strategic?' was well covered by the following newspapers:

1. **Express Tribune**
<https://tribune.com.pk/epaper/2020-08-27/3>
2. **Dawn**
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1576601>
3. **The News**
<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/706474-indian-expert-believes-china-marginalised-india-in-region>
4. **Associated Press of Pakistan, the official newswire**
<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/china-marginalized-india-in-region-indian-st-1012426.html>
5. **Press release text on CISS website**
<https://ciss.org.pk/press-release-ciss-webinar-on-india-china-face-off-territorial-or-strategic/>
6. **CISS webinar full length source**
https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=azLzx_jhlyw