



## CSS EVENT REPORT

### “INTERACTION WITH VIETNAMESE DELEGATION”

Speakers: Members of Vietnamese Delegation, Vietnam institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences

On the 10th of October 2023, the Centre for Security Studies had the privilege of hosting a Vietnamese Delegation, led by Dr. Nguyen Thanh Ha, at O.P Jindal Global University. The event was organised to foster international relations and promote cultural understanding between India and Vietnam. Dr. Nguyen Thanh Ha, who serves as the Director General of the International Cooperation Department at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), headed the Vietnamese delegation. The delegation included distinguished members:

- Dr. Pham Cao Cuong, Deputy Director-General in charge of the Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies at the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.
- Dr. Pham Thai Quoc, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Vietnam Journal of World Economics and Politics at the Institute of World Economics and Politics, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.
- Dr. Dang Thai Binh, Head of the Department of Economic and Development Studies at the Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies.
- Dr. Ho Thi Thanh Nga, a researcher at the Institute of Cultural Studies.
- Ms. Pham Thuy Nguyen, Researcher at the Department of International Relations and Integration Studies at the Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies.
- The delegation also included two members from the Vietnamese Embassy.

The session commenced with an expression of gratitude and an introduction of the delegation members by Vanshika Sirohi, Center Coordinator. In response, Dr. Nguyen Thanh Ha, on behalf of the delegation, expressed their thanks to the Centre for Security Studies (CSS) and O.P Jindal University for the invitation. He proceeded to brief the audience on the comprehensive security and bilateral relations between India and Vietnam. He also introduced Dr. Pham Cao Cuong, who provided an overview of the 'Vietnam Institute for Indian and Southwest Asian Studies' (VIISAS), a research institute specializing in India and Southwest Asia. VIISAS was established on July 5th, 2011, and Dr. Cuong highlighted its core functions, various departments, international conferences held since 2012, projects undertaken, and publications released by the institute. He emphasized VIISAS' growing partnerships with institutions such as the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), The Asian Confluence, and others.

Dr. Ho Thi Thanh Nga, an expert in the culture and history of Vietnam, underscored the historical and cultural significance of India-Vietnam relations, emphasizing their cooperation over the past 2000 years. She stressed the importance of 'culture' in fostering future relations between the two countries. Dr. Pham Thai Quoc, whose primary research focuses on the economics and politics of Vietnam, highlighted two critical elements that influence Vietnam's international standing: the 'Great Power Competition' involving world powers like the United States, China, Russia, the European Union, and India; and the economic and political challenges affecting the environment. He suggested ways Vietnam could strategically navigate this competition, including reducing imports from China and increasing imports from India and South Korea. He also discussed the 'China factor' as a binding element in India-Vietnam relations and drew parallels between the India-Pakistan issue on Kashmir and the China-Vietnam dispute in the South China Sea.

Dr. Pham Cao Cuong, speaking on the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam, emphasized three factors influencing Vietnam's foreign policy: the U.S.-China rivalry, India as an emerging global power, and the rise of India in the Indo-Pacific. He emphasized the potential for improved India-Vietnam trade relations and the need for closer cooperation on maritime security, given the strategic locations of both nations in the Indo-Pacific. He also recommended stronger collaboration in multilateral forums like ASEAN to promote trust and confidence.

These insights and remarks from the delegation were well-received, offering valuable perspectives on one of the most significant bilateral relationships in the Indo-Pacific. Following this, Dr. Pankaj Jha, CSS Director, Prof. Gitanjali Roy Sinha, Assistant Director, and Prof. Amb. Jitendra Nath Misra provided comments and posed questions. Dr. Jha suggested that Vietnam could potentially serve as a middle power, akin to 'Japan of Southeast Asia,' and raised questions about India and Vietnam's competition in export-related sectors. He also identified areas of potential collaboration between the two nations, such as space, microchips, agriculture, Artificial Intelligence, and defense. He stressed the importance of cooperation in areas like undersea warfare strategy and military information and communication. He concluded by questioning whether Vietnam had embraced the term 'Indo-Pacific' in place of 'Asia-Pacific.'

Prof. Amb. Jitendra Nath Misra pointed out the similarities between the Kashmir issue along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and Arunachal Pradesh and the South China Sea dispute between China and Vietnam. He asked the delegation about the impact of Vietnam's strategic partnership with the U.S. on its partnership with India and inquired why the second line of credit of \$500 million given by India for defense purposes had not been effectively utilized. He emphasized the crucial role of China in shaping the bilateral relationship between India and Vietnam.

Prof. Gitanjali Roy Sinha thanked the delegation for their insights on India-Vietnam relations and suggested several initiatives, including Vietnam becoming a prominent voice in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and promoting religious exchange through a Buddhism circle. She recommended a focus on areas like the Blue Economy, maritime security, and governance. She also echoed Prof. Jha's question about when Vietnam would adopt its own Indo-Pacific Strategy.

A presentation on India's achievements in the G20 was delivered by Aditi Hanninamane, Senior Research Analyst at CSS. The presentation highlighted the recent G20 leaders' summit held in New Delhi under India's presidency and its significance to ASEAN countries, including Vietnam.

Following this, the delegation answered the questions posed by professors earlier during which, Dr. Pham Cao Cuong stated that Vietnam has positively responded to the Indo-Pacific strategy as it upholds the principles of a rule-based order and freedom of navigation. He expressed Vietnam's willingness to be part of the QUAD mechanism if given the opportunity. The delegation concluded by identifying key challenges hindering India-Vietnam relations, such as high tariffs, taxations on exports, environmental issues, and trade-related concerns. They expressed interest in joining initiatives like BRICS and G20 but noted that hesitancy was a primary obstacle due to concerns about ideological and political subjugation. They also highlighted the potential for future educational exchange programs between the two countries to promote the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

The session concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Mehak Johari, Centre Coordinator, who expressed gratitude to the delegation for their visit and interaction with the students and faculty of O.P Jindal Global University. Mementos and tokens of appreciation were presented to all delegation members by Dr. Pankaj Jha and Prof. Gitanjali Roy Sinha. The delegation also gifted Dr. Jha a few books and a painting as a token of gratitude. The event concluded with a brief tour of the campus for the Vietnamese delegation.