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Prof. B. R. Deepak Participated in the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) on 25-26 April, and the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations on 15 May 2019

Professor B R Deepak participated in the Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation (BRF) from April 25-27, 2019. The Forum was attended by 37 heads of the state and delegates from 150 countries and 90 international organizations around the world. At the end of the conference, it was revealed that 282 deliverables worth \$64 billion were signed sprawling into agriculture, science and technology, ecological protection, cultural exchange etc. spheres, thus taking the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) beyond the infrastructure connectivity projects.

international organizations during the first forum in 2017 have “taken roots” along the “six economic corridors” in various countries (newly signed China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) maintaining the tally at 6) , as China’s trade with the BRI countries exceeded \$6 trillion, implying that 50% of China’s GDP originates from these countries. Not only China, but various countries along the BRI including the participants from new entrant Italy (the first in the G7) and Switzerland etc., echo President Xi Jinping’s words that the “BRI is a common road of opportunities, a road towards prosperity.” The China club, as many have referred to it, is undoubtedly becoming more and more attractive to the countries across the globe.

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Editor:
Prof. B.R. Deepak



The Belt and Road Initiative is almost six years old and China has taken a stock of the ‘project of the century’ in terms of its geo-economics as well as politics. One thing which emerged clearly out of President Xi Jinping’s speech during the Forum on 26th morning is that China is convinced that the projects signed with 125 countries and 29



For the policy coordination and consultation, as well as to undertake various field research and projects pertaining to various facets of the BRI globally, a Belt and Road Study Network

(BRSN) has been established having top scholars from over 60 think-tanks and universities globally. Prof. Deepak was honored to represent the Centre for Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies in this Network.

India has boycotted both the summits (2017 and 2019) on account of sovereignty as China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) runs through the disputed Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

Prof. Deepak also participated in the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations where President Xi Jinping delivered an inaugural address on May 15, 2019



Prof. B R Deepak participated and presented a paper on area studies in India during an international conference on area studies in Peking University on 12th and 13th April.



Prof. Deepak argued that Area studies could be regarded as an extension of the continuation of

Orientalist scholarship in Europe, and projection of the American power around the globe after the Second World War, especially during the Cold War. The end of the Cold War was followed by the globalization and liberalization, where liberal order created by the US and supported by its allies was as obvious winner and threw new challenges to area studies. It is true that the globalization has produced shared experiences across regions and created transnational communities, however, the same has also created a dire need to understand the culture, society and language of the region than ever before. This argument has been supported by Barry Buzan and Peter Katzenstein who argue that the regions have not only retained their importance, but might also have acquired a greater salience as units of analysis and policymaking in the post-Cold War era. The importance of area studies, I believe have assumed criticality with the establishment of various regional blocks, initiation of projects like the 'Belt and Road' and Indo-Pacific that fits the inter and trans-regional paradigm of the area studies.

With area studies increasingly becoming important, the scholarship is busy arguing that area studies need its own specific theories as the international relations created, say the theories such as the "balance of power theory" of realism or the "democratic peace theory" of liberalism etc.. However, there is a counter view that argues that since the area studies is an amalgamation of several social science disciplines, area study scholarship may draw upon the theoretical strengths of each discipline, therefore, rather than striving for crating generic theories of area studies, they may make use of existing theories such as realism, liberalism, constructivism, Marxism, feminism, and post-colonialism, and devote their strength to "move area studies from a multidisciplinary to a trans-disciplinary endeavor, with the ultimate goal of achieving "area science." Schwartz suggests that the term "area studies" asserts no particular theory of society or theory of culture and no particular views of relations of society and culture to history or other areas of human experience. An area is, so to speak, a cross-disciplinary unit of collective

experience within which one can discern complex interactions among economic, social, political, religious, and other spheres of life. There are other perspectives, for example Tansman notes that Area Studies is a form of translation; “an enterprise seeking to know, analyze, and interpret foreign cultures through a multidisciplinary lens.” In order to truly understand a society, area scholars must study the language and culture in its individual context, which the rational choice theories cannot sufficiently provide.

Prof. Deepak took a stock of the transformation of China studies in India during different phases in history during his speech.

A Delegation from Guangdong Foreign Studies University Visited JNU on April 18, 2019

A delegation from Guangdong Foreign Studies University headed by their Vice chancellor professor Li, Dean of Afro-Asian Studies Prof. Duo and Secretary General of Guangdong Institute of international strategy, Professor Li Qing and Lu Lu held deliberations with JNU administration on April 18, 2019



Prof. B R Deepak appointed to the International Advisory Committee of the Hainan University, China

Professor B R Deepak was appointed as an advisor to the International Advisory Board of Hainan University. The Advisory Board held its first at the

Hainan University between 29 March and 1 April 2019. Other members of the board included professor Stephen Dahms, Wang Lihong, Carter Tseng, Ibrahim Mutalib, Feng Da Husan, Olivia Cheng, Howard Chen and Liang Haiming. During the meeting Prof. Deepak also delivered a lecture to the students of Hainan University. It may be noted that Hainan has been declared as a free trade zone, and in coming days could usher into a fulcrum of China’s engagement with the southeast and even South Asian connectivity.



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