



Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Lakshmi Karlekar, Registration Number: 2170145, PhD Scholar at the Department of International Studies, Political Science and History, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 20 June 2025 at 2.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **The United States-China Rivalry in Central Asia in the 21st Century: Regional Responses**
- Discipline** : **International Studies**
- External Examiner - I** : **Dr Shantesh Kumar Singh**
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 16 June 2025


Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

The disintegration of the “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” in 1991 created a vacuum in the Central Asian Republics. The geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Central Asia has made it possible for the two superpowers “China and the United States” to concentrate their attention on the region’s economy. Central Asia is an abode to the wealth of oil, gas, uranium, coal and it is situated on the vital trade route connecting the West and the East. China, which is founded on a desire for strength, has to regain its dominance in its own backyard. This has been encored in the form of the BRI initiative, pipeline politics and the construction of nuclear reactors. These act as key instruments of influence dwindling in the security matters concerning that of Central Asia. It gives China an easy pathway to procure resources, leading to the exploitation of the Central Asian Region’s abundant natural mineral resource wealth, endowing financial aid, and debt trap diplomacy. On the other spectrum, the democratic propeller, the United States, intervened in Central Asia in 2001 post 9/11 to counter the terrorist forces and wants to now get a strategic hold of the area. The security policy of the US deals with creating a preponderant influence for procuring and fulfilling its energy demands in Central Asia. This has time and again tempted the United States and China into a long rivalry for supremacy in Central Asia. The study entails qualitative and quantitative analysis built with theoretical constructs based on the existing conceptual models.

Keywords: *Geopolitics, Geostrategy, Geoeconomics, Energy Security, Power Rivalry, Trade War, Multivectorism, Non-Renewable Energy, Natural Resource Endowments*

Publications:

1. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** Tripathi, Anurag; Joy, Jofin. (2024). 'Maritime Big Play strategy': Solidifying the Role of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific Region. *Malque Publishers: Multidisciplinary Science Journal*. <https://malque.pub/ojs/index.php/msj/article/view/7074>
2. Tripathi, Anurag; **Karlekar, Lakshmi**. (2024). Influence of the Idea of Kievan Rus on Putin’s Populist Policy. In: Chacko Chennattuserry, J., Deshpande, M., Hong, P. (eds) *Encyclopaedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9859-0_87-1-
3. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** Tripathi, Anurag. (2024). Resurgence of Populism in Central Asia: Revival of a New Identity. In: Chacko Chennattuserry, J., Deshpande, M., Hong, P. (eds) *Encyclopaedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century*. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9859-0_422-1
4. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** MJ Vinod; Joseph Chacko Chennattuserry. (2023). The Federal Dynamics of Indian Foreign Policy Issues, Concerns and Trends. In Ed Volume- *Cooperative Federalism in South Asia and Europe*. New York and London: Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003461197-10/federal-dynamics-indian-foreign-policy-vinod-lakshmi-karlekar-joseph-chacko-chennattuserry>
5. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** Vinod, MJ. (2024). The Oil Wealth Paradox in the Niger Delta. *Economic and Political Weekly*. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2024/52/letters/oil-wealth-paradox-niger-delta.html#:~:text=As%20Africa's%20top%20oil%20producer,Imo%2C%20Ondo%2C%20and%20Rivers>
6. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** HM, Greeshma. (2025). Strategic Interests in the Arctic: A Comparative Analysis of China and India. *Innovations Journal*. Issue 3, Vol no. 80, pp 1339-1356.
7. **Karlekar, Lakshmi;** Roy, Trisha. (2025). Balancing Growth and Sustainability: Gabonese Timber Forests as the Key to Economic Diversification under President Nguema’s Leadership. *Roundtable Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2025.2499908>