

Welcome Remarks

by



Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia

Director General, ICWA

at

ICWA-SIS Dialogue 2013

on

“India’s Foreign Policy: Diplomatic Breakthroughs and Critical Gaps”

at

New Delhi

7 October, 2013

Hon'ble Chairman of the Inaugural Session, Shri M. Rasgotra, former foreign secretary; Shri G. S. Patnaik, Secretary to the Vice President, Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee, Acting Vice Chancellor, JNU; Shri Lalit Mansingh, former foreign secretary; Shri Ranjan Mathai, former foreign secretary; Dr. Girijesh Pant, Dean of International Studies, JNU; distinguished guests, young scholars, ladies and gentlemen:



(L-R) Dr. Girijesh Pant, Dean of International Studies, JNU, Shri Lalit Mansingh, former foreign secretary, Shri M. Rasgotra, former foreign secretary, Shri Ranjan Mathai, former foreign secretary and Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, DG, ICWA.

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all at a special event today. It marks the inauguration of a two-day National Conference on “India’s Foreign Policy: Diplomatic Breakthroughs and Critical Gaps”, jointly organised by ICWA and the School of International Studies of JNU (SIS). This is the first exercise of its kind with a promising future. It will be an intellectual feast of rich variety and high quality.

2. I should draw your attention to three noteworthy features of our event today.
3. Firstly, it represents a confluence, at the institutional level, of two vital institutions active in the study and research of International Relations – ICWA and SIS. The latter was part of

ICWA for many years. ICWA enjoyed a glorious time when the seminars held here by eminent scholars like Dr A. Appadorai, among others, attracted the sitting Prime Minister, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. Later, SIS was shifted to the nearby location at Ferozeshah Marg where many Indian Foreign Service trainees of my generation, including myself, had the wonderful opportunity to attend lectures by Professors Sisir Gupta, M.S. Rajan, Bimal Prasad, Satish Kumar and many other distinguished academics. ICWA and SIS are siblings which have helped each other in many ways. The bulk of our Research Fellows is composed of the alumni of JNU. We plan to sign an agreement today to forge increased cooperation between the two institutions. This will surely create new synergy and bring increased mutual benefit.

4. Secondly, I am especially pleased that this event takes place in the newly renovated auditorium of Sapru House. The real credit for this achievement goes to the President of ICWA, Shri Hamid Ansari, the Hon'ble Vice President of the Republic of India, who gave unstinted support to us in this project.

5. As you can see for yourselves, our contractor and consultant have performed superbly. I wish to thank them through Shri V.K.Gupta, Director General, CPWD and Shri Kunal Bose, Bose Brothers Architects. Our special thanks also go to my predecessor, Ambassador S. Devare, who initiated the project and to Shri Sarvajit Chakravarti, until recently Deputy Director General here, who nurtured the project through constant attention. We are also grateful to a large number of officials, experts and workers belonging to many organisations, including ICWA. Due to the paucity of time they will have to remain nameless on this occasion, but it does not diminish our gratitude to them.

6. Thirdly, our panel today consists of a special troika of retired foreign secretaries. This is important in itself. Taken together, they represent not only over 100 years of diplomatic experience, but also limitless wisdom and an incredibly rich treasure of knowledge and insights pertaining to the making and management of India's foreign policy. Two of them have had a very productive and busy post-retirement life, whereas the third, having enjoyed a few weeks of freedom, is being called to serve the nation again in an official capacity. We look forward to listening to their reflections.

7. With such an extraordinary panel, I need not take any more time to explain the conference theme. But I wish to state that foreign policy is becoming an increasingly complex and difficult venture. Undoubtedly, the Government has a big role to play in its making and implementation, but in our democratic polity its other constituents such the Parliament, business, civil society, media and, above all, strategic and academic community too need to make their contribution. I sincerely hope that the ICWA-SIS national conference will enable them to do so through its purposeful deliberations. I am also optimistic that foreign policy mandarins in South Block will pay heed to our voices and views as well as our advice and recommendations in due course.

8. Thank you very much for your attention.

