



Indian Council of World Affairs
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Press Release

on

ICWA Delegation's Visit to China, September 1-6, 2013

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General, ICWA, led a seven-member delegation to China from 1 to 6 September 2013 to participate in the first Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) - ICWA dialogue, in Beijing and interact with other prominent think-tanks there and also in Shanghai. The dialogue was held on 2 September 2013 in Beijing.



Members of ICWA & CPIFA delegations

In his opening address, the DG, ICWA, expressed the necessity to promote an abiding understanding between the two countries through frank and friendly discussion and debate. He advocated “a deeper cooperation on complex issues such as borders, rivers, markets, people-to-people ties, creation of understanding and trust between two societies, and their place in the world”. Extending a warm welcome to the ICWA delegation, Ambassador Lu Shumin, Executive Vice President, CPIFA, expressed his pleasure at the holding of the first CPIFA-ICWA dialogue. He talked about Premier Li Keqiang's visit to India and his important speech at a function hosted by ICWA. He noted that China and India were ancient civilizations, major developing countries and emerging economies. Echoing similar sentiments, as expressed by DG, ICWA, he noted that co-hosting of a dialogue regularly would foster mutual understanding and mitigate differences.

Deliberations in the one-day dialogue centred on topics such as: (a) International Situation and the Reform of the Global Political and Financial System, (b) The Present Situation and Prospects of Asia-Pacific Political and Economic Development, (c) The Strategic Significance and Suggestions for China-India Cooperation and (d) The Role of Media in China-India Relations.

The strategic significance of bilateral relations was underscored by both sides. An important recurring theme of the current debate in China is the concept of ‘major country relationship’. The Chinese side explained that the concept is still evolving and it was not conceptualized only for the US, it could even be applied to India-China relations. Further, the Chinese side explained that the ‘major country relationship’ concept did not dilute China’s stand on multi-polarity.

The key issues raised by the Indian side included: (a) Chinese activity in POK, (b) Pakistan’s role as a hub of terrorism (c) Bilateral trade imbalance favouring China, (d) Issue of peace and tranquillity on the border, (e) India’s apprehensions regarding construction of dams on Brahmaputra river, (f) Issue of India’s security interests in South Asia, (g) Freedom of navigation and safety of sea lanes in the Asia Pacific region, (h) India’s candidature for a permanent seat at the reformed UN Security council and (i) Issues related to BRICS.



ICWA & CPIFA delegations with Dai Bingguo, former State Councilor, PRC

The issues flagged by the Chinese side included: (a) India’s relations with the US and Japan, (b) The issue of Tibet, (c) China’s changing policy in South Asia to accommodate India’s interests, (d) India and the Indian Ocean, (e) Need to give a push to BCIM initiative, (f) India’s stand on the South China Sea.

Both sides reiterated the need to hold regular interaction between the two institutions and among the members of the strategic community. It was commonly held that awareness about each other should be stepped up through outreach efforts and public diplomacy. The DG, ICWA, extended an invitation to the Executive Director of CPIFA to lead a delegation to India next year for the next round of institutional interaction.

During its visit to China, the ICWA delegation also interacted with prominent institutes, such as the China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, Beijing, and the Fudan University, Shanghai, and discussed significance of India-China relations from bilateral, regional and global perspectives.
