



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Report

on

ICWA (India) and ICWA (Indonesia) Bilateral Symposium

at

Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia
21 May 2014

1. ICWA's External Partners Strategy, approved by the Governing Council of ICWA, accords priority to strengthen India's relations with other countries through a perceptive use of Track-II linkages. In order to accomplish this goal, the institution has, over the years, developed a considerable number of institutional partnerships with foreign think-tanks. While special attention has been given to South Asia, countries such as Indonesia also figure in the priority list.
2. During the 2013 Indonesia visit of the former prime minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Indonesian Council on World Affairs (ICWA) was signed in Jakarta on 11 October, 2013. Visit of the ICWA delegation was an effort to implement the agenda set for ICWA during Dr. Singh's visit. Thus, the ICWA (India) - ICWA (Indonesia) bilateral symposium was held on 21 May, 2014 in Jakarta.
3. In addition to the Opening and the Concluding Session, the symposium was divided into three sessions: Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy; Regional Strategic Development; and Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation. In his introductory remarks at the symposium, Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, DG, ICWA highlighted the fact that there couldn't have been a better time to hold the ICWA (India)- ICWA (Indonesia) bilateral symposium considering that that the general elections in India had just finished, while Indonesia was gearing up for the Presidential elections. At the time of speculations regarding political future of their countries, it was but natural for the think-tanks of India and Indonesia to mull over the possible scenarios in the two rapidly growing countries.
4. In his remarks, India's Ambassador to Indonesia, Ambassador Gurjit Singh, highlighted that to strengthen bilateral relationship, India and Indonesia need to work closely. He stated that to increase Indian investments in Indonesia, more coordinated responses are needed from the Indonesian side. He also expressed concerns regarding the delays from the Indonesian side in inking the bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

5. Ambassador Ibrahim Yusuf, Chairman of the Executive Board of ICWA, and Ambassador Isti Andayani, Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasised on greater interaction between the two sides on politico-strategic issues at both ‘track I’ and ‘track II’ levels. In that regard, they highlighted that ICWA delegation visit was one of the first implemented agenda points agreed upon during Dr. Singh’s visit.

6. Dr. Ikrar Nusa Bakti, Professor of Research Affairs sector Intermetic, Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI) and Ambassador Navrekha Sharma, India’s former Ambassador to Indonesia and ICWA delegation member, were the lead speakers for the first session entitled, ‘Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy.’ Dr. Bakti gave a brief outline of current political scenario in Indonesia, and also flagged major issues for the Indonesian foreign policy. He stated that in terms of foreign policy, not much is likely to change; Indonesia will maintain a strong and independent foreign policy; ASEAN will remain a cornerstone of Indonesia’s foreign policy and it will strive towards maintaining good neighbourly relations. He stated that Indonesia respects international economic and political regulations, and is also striving to strengthen its position at international forums. He reiterated that Indonesia will respect and maintain positive relations with the first few countries- Australia, Egypt and India, that supported Indonesia’s independence. In her speech, Ambassador Navrekha Sharma argued that for the first time since independence, India witnessed ‘Presidential style campaign’ during the 2014 general elections. The poll results have also led to the ‘end of the coalition era’ in Indian politics. She highlighted that apart from China and the US, East Asia and South Asia would be the focus of attention for the NDA government, led by Shri Narendra Modi.

7. The second session entitled, ‘Regional Strategic Development’ was divided into two segments. The first part was devoted to ‘Geo-Political Shift in East Asia: Perspectives of Indonesia and India’. Head of the ICWA delegation, Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia and Dr. Rizal Sukma, Executive Director, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), addressed the gathering. Presenting the Indonesian perspective, Dr. Sukma argued that the ongoing China-US rivalry is not in the best interest of ASEAN. He pitched for the “Pax

ASEAN” rather than “Pax Americana” or “Pax Sinica.” According to him, Indonesia’s two top priorities should be: to ‘calm the Seas’ by reducing the tensions in the South China Sea and; to consolidate the economic agenda at the regional and international levels. He added that ASEAN should remain committed to its core values such as non-intervention in others’ affairs and peaceful resolution of disputes. Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia presented a case for the Look East policy (LEP) 3.0, highlighting its salience in the foreign policy of India. He emphasised that East Asia Summit (EAS) has the potential to become the single most important forum for free exchange of views amongst the top leaders of the region. He stated that G-20 has the potential to strengthen the role of Asian powers at the international stage, considering its inclusiveness and robust agenda.

8. The latter part of the session focused on ‘India-ASEAN Cooperation and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)’, in which Mr. Raza Pahlevi, Deputy Director for Inter and Sub-Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Trade and Dr. Shankari Sundararaman, Professor of Southeast Asian Studies and Chair of the Centre for Indo-Pacific Studies, School of International Studies, JNU, presented their views. Both the speakers emphasised on the need to make the RCEP more effective. It was stated that the role of India and China will be of immense importance in realising the RCEP.
9. The third session was on ‘Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation’, in which Ambassador Ibrahim Yusuf and Ambassador Navrekha Sharma presented their views. There was a consensus on the need for India and Indonesia to synergise their policies. Ambassador Yusuf stated that India should focus more on Indonesia within the purview of its Look East policy, while Indonesia should adopt ‘Look West policy’ so that it could complement India’s Look East policy. Ambassador Navrekha Sharma emphasised on the need for ‘perception management’ in India-Indonesia relations. She also underscored the need for Indonesia to increase investments in India.
10. The latter part of the session was devoted to ‘Bilateral Defence Cooperation and Maritime Security Issues’ and ‘Cooperation in Multilateral Fora’. Vice Admiral (Retd) Pradeep Kaushiva, Director, National Maritime Foundation, and Dr. Rahul Mishra, Research

Fellow, ICWA, represented the ICWA delegation during the session, while the Indonesian counterparts included Mrs. Ina Hagniningtyas, Director for Trade, Industry, Investment and Intellectual Property Rights, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Mohammad Hery Suripudin, Head of Centre for Policy Analysis and Development on Asia Pacific and African Region, Policy Analysis and Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both sides agreed that though a lot of cultural, trade and maritime convergences drive India and Indonesia closer, the two sides need to work systematically to reap mutual benefits at IORA, G-20, WTO and RCEP. Highlighting the importance of IORA, Vice Admiral (retd.) Kaushiva stated that planning for disaster response under the IORA umbrella would also allow Indian and Indonesian navies to work in conjunction. This would avoid a front-ending of military cooperation that diffident political leaderships may consider premature or too high-profile for comfort. Speaking on India and the WTO, Dr. Mishra stated that the success of the Bali Ministerial meeting has provided a window of opportunity to the WTO member countries. However, the concerns of developing countries such as China, India and Indonesia must be addressed before moving on to the next level. Mrs. Hagniningtyas also emphasised on the concerns of the developing countries in the agricultural sector, which has been a contentious issue between the developing and the developed world.

11. The symposium ended with the concluding remarks given by Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia and Ambassador Ibrahim Yusuf. The heads of the two institutions agreed that a book comprising all the papers presented would be produced soon as a joint publication, with head of ICWA (India), Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Ambassador Ibrahim Yusuf, ICWA (Indonesia), and Dr. Rahul Mishra, Research Fellow, ICWA, as its joint editors. It was also agreed that ICWA (Indonesia) would send a delegation to Delhi within a year to hold the second round of the dialogue.
12. During the visit of the delegation, meetings were also held with Centre for Policy Analysis and Development on Asia Pacific and African Region, Policy Analysis and Development Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mr. Y. Kristiarto S. Legowo, Secretary

General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Bayu Krisnamurthi, Vice Minister of Trade; and Dr. A.K.P Mochtan, Deputy Secretary-General for Community and Corporate Affairs, ASEAN Secretariat.

The Report is prepared by Dr. Rahul Mishra, Research Fellow, ICWA.