

Welcome Remarks

by

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at
Release of the book

'China: Confucius in the Shadows'

at
Sapru House, New Delhi
1 May 2015

Hon'ble Sri M. Hamid Ansari,
Ambassador Chandrashekhar Dasgupta,
Smt. Poonam Surie,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen



A warm welcome to you all here at the Auditorium of Sapru House. I extend a special welcome to the Vice President. To those who have come to this complex for the first time, I should mention that the renovation of Sapru House, especially this priceless facility, has been possible due to the invaluable support and guidance of the Hon'ble Vice President.

2. At the outset, I wish to congratulate Smt. Poonam Surie for her noteworthy success in producing her third book. We are delighted that she chose to associate herself with us this time. Consequently, this book project became a part of ICWA's research and publication programme. I also thank KW Publishers Pvt. Ltd. for their excellent role in producing this book in a time-bound manner.

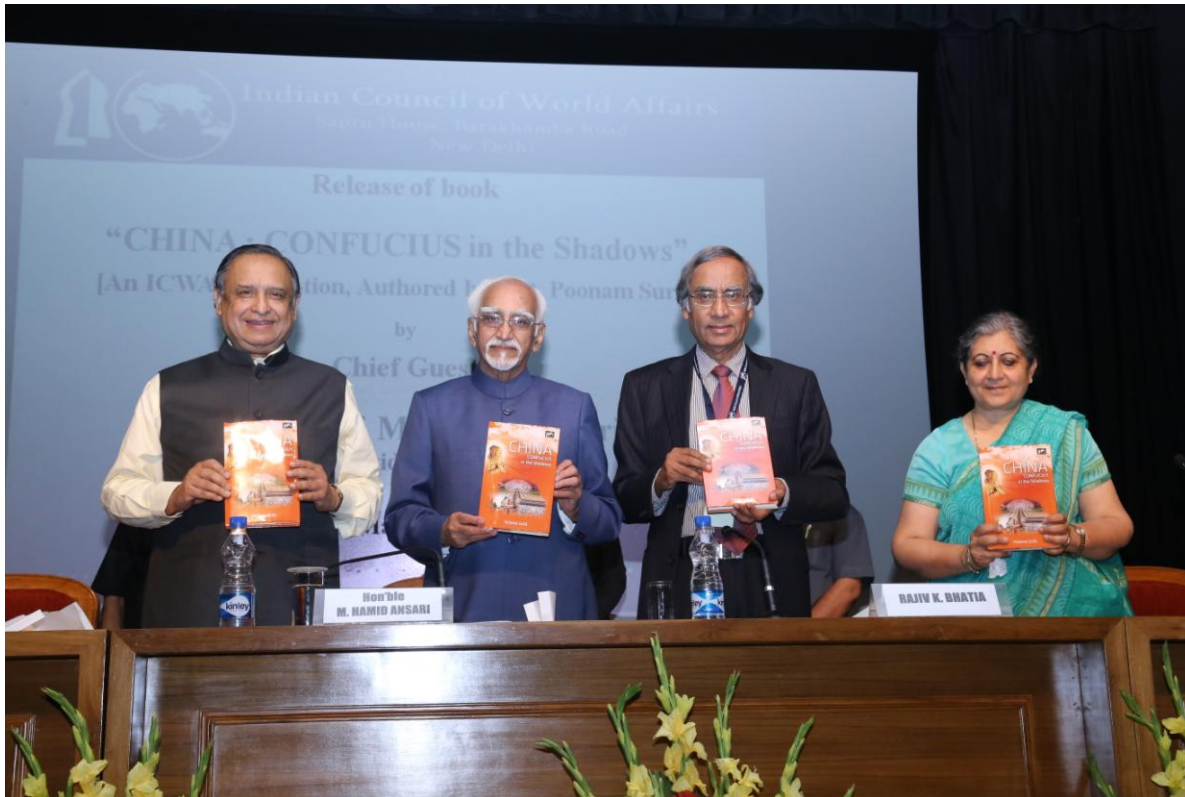
3. I see a sizeable number of Sinologists in the audience today. Their presence here reflects their interest in studying China and in supporting someone who is deeply devoted to the subject.

4. Although China is a nation of immense importance to India and the world, it may be



argued that those outside the small circle of Indian experts, tend to show inadequate awareness about the diverse facets of the Chinese polity. Our discussions often seem to be marked by a mix of half-baked knowledge, if not ignorance and prejudice, as well as 'the 1962 Syndrome.' The author

aptly cites Confucius who said that understanding what the future holds requires grasping the lessons of the past. By this yard stick, it is indeed essential that, as she puts it, 'we must understand where China has come from and what has shaped it.'



5. What the book by Smt. Poonam Surie does is to delve deep into the psyche of the Chinese people and its leadership. It tells us about their history, traditions, beliefs and the lasting impact of various systems of thought – Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Communism. Drawing liberally from poetry, art, paintings, personal observations during her travels in China, and her countless conversations with ordinary people and scholars, the author presents a panorama of glimpses of contemporary China. 'Change is in the air', she pin- points, highlighting that this makes the country both 'very interesting and unpredictable.'

6. The book shows that China is experiencing a revival of Confucianism and traditional culture as citizens' unrest and frustrations grow. She argues that Confucius evokes much interest today because going back to China's value systems and seeking national identity

was considered important, once China recovered from the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. The present leadership feels that resurrecting Confucius, with his emphasis on promotion of social harmony, could help it to deal with the problems of transition, corruption and rising inequities. 'Confucian thought and values definitely lurk in the shadows of the Chinese landscape', she asserts.

7. In my view, the USP of this book is that it has dealt with a serious subject in a charming and reader-friendly manner. This book is meant both for the expert and the general reader.

8. May I add a few words here about ICWA's China study and outreach programme, which has scored several notable successes in recent years. In the past three years, the institution arranged over a dozen interactions with Chinese think tanks. It hosted public lectures by the President and the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China. Our Core Group on China, led by Ambassador C.V. Ranganathan, produced a much-acclaimed book entitled 'The 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China', and it is now getting ready to finalise its second book devoted to the analysis of Chinese foreign policy. Hopefully, it will complete the trilogy by planning the last book on India-China relations in all their



facets. More books by our researchers are in the pipeline. In this context, Srimati Surie's book is a most welcome and valuable addition to the growing corpus of our recent publications.

9. Once again, our warm congratulations to the author! I hope – nay I am sure – that she will continue to read, reflect and write, with her characteristic clarity, commitment and passion. Once you are affected by this bug, you can never be free from it!

10. Thank you very much for your attention.

11. May I now invite the author to address you?

