

Opening Statement

by

Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia

Director General, ICWA

at

ICWA-CPIFA Dialogue

at

Sapru House, New Delhi

10 October 2014

Ambassador Peng Keyu, Vice President, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), distinguished members of the two delegations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

2. On behalf of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), it gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this India-China Track II Dialogue. A specially warm welcome is extended to the distinguished members of delegation from the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA).

About CPIFA

3. Let me first introduce our partner institution - CPIFA to this august gathering.



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA delivering his opening statement.

4. The CPIFA was founded in December 1949 at the initiative of the late Premier Zhou Enlai, the first of its kind devoted to people-to-people diplomacy after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The purpose of CPIFA is to establish and develop friendly relations and cooperation between China and other countries. The CPIFA Council consists of distinguished figures from all circles in China, including international activists, former senior diplomats and well-known scholars and specialists in international studies.

5. I am glad to note that Ambassador Peng Keyu is leading his distinguished delegation from China. Ambassador Peng Keyu is the Vice President of CPIFA since December 2011. He has served in the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and in Chinese Diplomatic Missions in New York, San Francisco, Kuala Lumpur and Lusaka. Among the delegation members of CPIFA, we are delighted to have amidst us distinguished Indologists, economists and strategic experts.

6. To this well-informed audience, I need hardly mention that ICWA is the oldest and prestigious foreign policy think tank of India. It is due to the hard work of its researchers, associates and supporters that the institution is evidently moving on an upward trajectory.



(L-R) Shri Nagendra K. Saxena, DDG, ICWA, Ambassador Peng Keyu, Vice President, CPIFA, Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, DG, ICWA and Mr. Mao Siwei, Former Chinese CG to Kolkata.

Past activities

7. As a backdrop, it is worth recalling that our two institutions – ICWA and CPIFA- signed an MOU on cooperation in April 2005. We have had a few activities under this MOU in the past. I am delighted to recall that, during my visit to China in November 2012, CPIFA readily agreed to begin a structured, institution-to-institution dialogue from the last year.

8. I recall with satisfaction our last visit to your esteemed institution, dear Ambassador, in September 2013 when I had the privilege to lead the delegation to the First CPIFA-ICWA Dialogue in Beijing which took place after eight years of signing of the MoU.

9. Our candid and cordial discussions with your team at that time proved to be a productive exercise. We reiterated the need to hold regular interaction between our respective institutions primarily because we are convinced that it would foster mutual understanding and mitigate differences.

10. May I also congratulate the leadership of CPIFA for commemorating 60th anniversary of the declaration of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence or Panchsheel in June 2014, in Beijing by inviting experts and scholars from Myanmar and India, including a team from ICWA.

Agenda

11. We have an agreed agenda. It might not cover every issue that we may wish to discuss, but certainly a fair number of key issues pertaining to global, regional and bilateral subjects would be discussed. I should touch on some of them very briefly.

12. Our bilateral relationship with China is undoubtedly one of the most significant relationships for India. China and India are ancient civilizations and, major emerging economies. With a population of one third of humanity, both India and China give priority to their domestic transformation. A peaceful and stable periphery, as well as a conflict-free world environment is

of utmost importance to both countries. They have entered into strategic and cooperative partnership in the 21st century.



Group photograph of the participants from India & China.

13. Regular summits at the highest political level have played a significant role in our bilateral relations. ICWA has had the privilege and honour of hosting address by H. E. Mr. Hu Jintao, President of the People's Republic of China in 2006, H. E. Mr. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in 2010 and Mr. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China in 2013 and H. E. Mr. Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China in this September.

14. During his Special Address hosted by ICWA on 18 September 2014, President Mr. Xi Jinping, noted that, "China and India should be closer development partners, growth leading cooperative partners and strategic global partners". Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has described the India-China ties as moving ahead from "Inch (India and China) towards Miles

(Millennium of Exceptional Synergy)” We need to explore the ways and means to achieve the special partnership and create conditions for deeper cooperation on complex issues such as borders, rivers, markets, creation of understanding and trust between our two societies, and the place of our nations in the world.

15. While addressing a conference on the diplomatic work with neighbouring countries in October 2013, in Beijing, President Xi Jinping has said that the four Chinese characters will be the key words for China’s neighbourhood diplomacy. These are the concepts of *qin* (closeness), *cheng* (earnestness), *hui* (benefit) and *rong* (inclusiveness). He also emphasized these concepts during his special address on 18 September 2014.

16. We need to explore and understand these concepts as well as China’s policy towards its neighbours. In what ways has China’s diplomacy with its immediate neighbours had an impact on its relationship with the key stakeholders in Asia? How can we mitigate differences and maximize India-China cooperation in bilateral, regional and global affairs? Further, is this time to strengthen the global quest for a veritable multipolar world and meaningful multilateralism that ensure greater synergy by improving mutual perceptions of our people? These and many other questions will be addressed by the experts assembled here today.

17. In the end, ladies and gentlemen let me express my confidence that this India-China Track II Dialogue would be candid and cordial. It is organised under the Chatham House rule. I am confident that it will take us in a positive direction. May I assure our Chinese guests that our side will do its best to secure this goal through our genuine goodwill and friendship towards CPIFA, and our great neighbor, the People’s Republic of China.

Thank you for your attention.
