

Introductory Remarks

by

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia

Director General, ICWA

at

**Panel Discussion on book titled
'The EU-India Partnership: Time to Go Strategic?'**

at

Sapru House, New Delhi

January 8, 2013

His Excellency Joao Cravinho, Ambassador of the European Union to India and Head of Delegation,
Delegates from Member States of the European Union,
Editors of book,
Distinguished Panelists and Ladies and Gentlemen.

1- It gives me immense pleasure to welcome all of you to this panel discussion on a joint publication of Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS) titled, **“The EU-India Partnership: Time to Go Strategic?”**. The book was launched at the fourth India-EU Forum on 23 October 2012 in Brussels. This panel discussion is intended to reach so as to wider audience in India and encourage further discussion on India-EU relations.

2- In its pursuit for bilateral and multilateral dialogue to promote India’s relations with other countries, the ICWA has signed 35 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with institutions across the world, including five with European research institutions and think tanks. Our academic engagement with EUISS is special. The ICWA and EUISS launched India-EU Forum on Effective Multilateralism in 2009. It is a multi-stakeholders’ dialogue process for enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the two institutions through the promotion of friendly, cooperative and collaborative institutional relations. One of the main objectives of the Forum is to promote and support the activities that contribute to better understanding and relations between India and the EU. Significantly, our interaction with EUISS has been held regularly and for this I would like to commend Dr. Luis Peral for his contribution.

3- India and the EU share historical linkages, enlightened intellectual and cultural interactions, comprehensive and mutually beneficial political relations and economic and defense partnership. Both India and the EU have major stakes in the changing world order. Their relations at the global level and bilateral levels are multifaceted and diversified. Both partners have benefitted from the economic and development cooperation.

4- This book titled, “**The EU-India Partnership: Time to Go Strategic?**” attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of India-EU relations and suggests ways to give it a strategic dimension. Though the EU recognizes India as its ‘strategic partner’, the book notes that the partnership is yet to be genuinely ‘strategic’. The book has covered various themes of India-EU relations, i.e. trade, security, environment, non-traditional security issues, Indian Ocean region (IOR) and energy security; and provides valuable suggestions for enhancing the bilateral partnership.

5- Thematically, the book consists of four parts. Part I focuses on economic cooperation between India and the EU and explores opportunities for cooperation on security issues. The chapter on India-EU economic relations notes that economic relations form the ‘core’ of India-EU partnership. India-EU trade has crossed Euro 100 billion in 2011 and there is immense potential for further improvement. India and the EU are negotiating a FTA, which may be signed before the annual Summit scheduled in 2013. The FTA can increase bilateral trade in quantitative terms.

6- Part II of the book examines bilateral trade and investment agreements, energy cooperation, trilateral cooperation between India, Europe and Africa, and India-EU cooperation within the framework of G-20. Although this section underlines the potential for investment and trade between India and the EU, it also points out persisting differences on a number of issues such as tariff reforms, WTO issues, data sharing and so on. The chapter on India-EU energy cooperation notes that India’s renewable energy market also offers huge business opportunities for European companies. The chapter on trilateral cooperation between India, EU and Africa argues that India and EU can work in tandem to facilitate inclusive development in Africa. African continent has huge deposit of natural resources that can be beneficial for economic growth of both India and the EU.

7- Part III analyses cooperation in the areas of non-traditional security issues, such as terrorism, security sector reform, state-building and climate change. India-EU cooperation is also needed to counter international terrorism. Both entities can cooperate in information sharing, curbing terror financing, terrorism, etc. In the current scenario, the book rightly observes that Afghanistan is yet

to be stabilized. The ISAF has already decided to end its Afghan mission and complete the transfer of security to the Afghan National Security Forces by the end of 2014. Thus, India- EU cooperation is critical to ensuring security and peace in Afghanistan.

8- The final part of the book highlights the importance of IOR for India-EU partnership. It notes that almost 90 per cent of global is carried by sea. Considering the importance of the Indian Ocean in terms of trade, security, global and regional dynamics, the book suggests that India and the EU can cooperate to counter piracy and counter terrorism, search and rescue operation, disaster relief management, etc.

9- Overall, I would say, the book is informative; analyzes current global and regional political and strategic trends, and has assembled a great deal of information in the relevant theoretical perspectives in a lucid form. The uniqueness of the book lies with problem-solving and solution-oriented approach to India-EU relations. This book is insightful and a valuable contribution to the knowledge on India-EU relations.

Thank you.
