



**Indian Council of World Affairs**  
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road  
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## **Press Release**

**on**

## **ICWA-KNDA Dialogue**

**(at Seoul, 17 November 2014)**

A four member Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) delegation headed by ICWA Deputy Director General, Nagendra Saxena, visited Seoul and held talks with the Korean National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA) of Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) on November 17, 2014. The delegation discussed security situation in the Asia Pacific and exchanged views on emerging security architecture in the region with the South Korean experts. During the presentation and discussion on this theme, the Indian and South Korean participants agreed that a number of issues, such as energy security, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, Cyber warfare, extremist tendencies, territorial disputes, commerce and trade are complicating the security situation in this region. They also expressed concern over the escalation of tension in the South China Sea and East China Sea. They also observed that a power play between an assertive China and the US, which has announced its rebalance strategy for the Asia-Pacific, is likely to ensue for a longer period.

The ICWA-KNDA participants also discussed the emerging economic architecture in the region. It was pointed out that with a number of Free Trade Agreements being signed both at the bilateral and multilateral levels, the region is becoming more economically integrated. However, the US and China are also competing to gain pre-eminence in this sphere too. While the US is negotiating a high level free trade agreement, the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) that excludes China, China has mooted a Free Trade Areas of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP) during the 2014 APEC summit. FTAAP has given a new twist of architectural competition between the US and China regarding the future of economic integration in the Asia Pacific. The Korean participants were of the view that China, by proposing FTAAP, a larger and inclusive economic architecture, intends to dilute the American leadership in the region.

During the ICWA-KNDA bilateral dialogue, the participants also discussed various ways to strengthen the Korea-India bilateral partnership. It was noted that the strategic partnership that was signed between the two countries needs to be upgraded and made more substantive by institutionalizing a regular summit level interaction between the leadership of the two countries in line with the India-Japan summit meeting. It was also highlighted that the Indians and South Koreans have almost identical stance on various global issues, such as climate change, disaster management, regional integration, development assistance, and financial crisis. Against this backdrop, it was suggested that both the countries should cooperate more in international forums. This will transform their bilateral strategic partnership into a global partnership. Indian participants felt that it is the time for India and South Korea to resolve their differences over India's quest for a Permanent Membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC). It was argued that while India appreciates ROK's position for increase in the non-permanent seats, the fact that only one Asian country has permanent membership of UNSC is not conducive to achieve a multi-polar Asia.

It was pointed out by the South Korean side that there are very few direct flights between India and South Korea, which impede people to people contact between the two countries and, in this context, they suggested to increase direct aviation links between them. The Korean participants felt that there is vast scope for greater cooperation between the Korean and Indian industries. They said that Korea has great potential to become a successful partner in realizing the "Make in India" policy launched by Prime Minister Modi.

The visit by ICWA's delegation to South Korea was part of its academic outreach activities aimed at strengthening India's relations with Asian countries through the perceptive use of Track-II linkages. The ICWA delegation consisted of Ambassador Nagendra K. Saxena, Deputy Director General ICWA; Ambassador (Rtd.) Skand Tayal, former Indian ambassador to South Korea; Dr. Shamshad A. Khan, Research Fellow, ICWA; and Dr. Jitendra Uttam, Assistant Professor, Department of Korean Studies, School of International Studies (SIS, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)).

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