



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

September 11, 2013

Press Release

on

Round Table Discussion on

“Whither Southeast Asia?”

with

Prof. V. Suryanarayan

(Former Member, National Security Advisory Board)

ICWA held a round table discussion with Prof. V. Suryanarayan on ‘Whither Southeast Asia?’ on 9 September 2013, which was attended by a number of scholars, former ambassadors and other dignitaries.

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, chairing the session, outlined the broad contours of the subject. He opined that the Southeast Asian region was in a state of flux. It should not go off the radar of the Indian strategic community, as any strategic, political, or, geo-political developments in the region would have an impact on India’s national interests.

Sharing a number of anecdotes, Prof. Suryanarayan pointed out that the present geo-political divisions of Asia in South, Central, East, or, Southeast Asia or, others are western constructs, representing their national interests, and we seem to have been following them blindly. The Southeast Asian region is our immediate neighbourhood, but, the western



Amb. Rajiv K Bhatia, DG, ICWA Chairing the Round Table Discussion



Prof. V. Suryanarayan speaking at the Round Table Discussion

paradigms of looking at things have made it intellectually a distant region. He emphasized the need for BIMSTEC to be expanded and made into a Bay of Bengal Community (BoBCOM). He shared the view with Ambassador Bhatia that there were problems within ASEAN, and therefore member countries of ASEAN should be studied in more depth individually, rather than as part of the ASEAN organisation collectively.

During the discussion, a number of pointed comments and questions were raised by the scholars as well as former ambassadors.
