



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

May 29, 2013

**Press Release**

on

**ICWA-MGIMO Conference**

on

**“New Contours of India-Russia Special and  
Privileged Strategic Partnership”**

The Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) jointly organized a conference on “New Contours of India-Russia Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership” in Moscow from May 21-22, 2013. Deliberations in the one- and-a-half day conference dealt with various issues pertaining to India-Russia bilateral relations,



*Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, DG, ICWA speaking at the Conference*

the role played by the two countries in the changing international milieu, partnership in multilateral institutions at global, regional and sub-regional levels, prospects and challenges of cooperation on regional issues.

The Indian delegation, led by Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, Director General, ICWA, included Joint Secretary, and a Research Fellow from ICWA, academics and members of the strategic community. The Russian side was also represented by reputed academicians and specialists having links with policy making circles.

In his opening address, the Director General, ICWA, elucidated the continuing significance of the bilateral partnership. The conference, a track II initiative, aimed at examining the convergences and divergences as well as the future prospects of their bilateral

“special and privileged strategic partnership”. The two countries’ relationship with other major players like US, China, EU and Japan, etc., had a bearing on the bilateral relations. The bilateral relationship had to evolve, keeping pace with contemporary global realities. The DG underscored that the bilateral relationship needed to enhance the existing level of cooperation to “meet its optimal potential”. Bilateral trade required utmost attention to rejuvenate the relationship. His suggestion to incorporate the representatives from business and industry in the ICWA-MGIMO dialogues in future was widely accepted. He also highlighted the need to enhance public awareness about Russia in India.

Echoing similar sentiments, Professor Anatoly Torkunov, Rector, MGIMO, illustrated that the bilateral relationship had a deep historical legacy. The congruence of national interests of India and Russia made the partnership significant. Geopolitical interests made it imperative for the two countries to cooperate, said the Rector. Addressing issues like Russia’s and India’s role in global political and economic systems, strengths and lacunae in the relationship would give impetus to the partnership, which some view as “stagnating”, while others feel that the partnership may be made more relevant in response to contemporary realities.

It was generally accepted that replicating the successful BrahMos model for joint cooperation would be rewarding. The two countries’ views on many global issues converged. Multilateral fora like SCO, RIC, G20, BRICS provided opportunities for engagement. It was highlighted that Afghanistan offered immense scope for engagement between India and Russia.

There was a need to supplement government to government process by incorporating the private sector, civil society and youth into the relationship. The elites in both countries also needed to refocus on the long-standing historical relationship and make it more dynamic and relevant. It was pointed out that the new immigration policy of Russia would attract Indian professionals, making them a robust pillar of the bilateral relations.



*Director General, ICWA and Prof. Anatoly V. Torkunov, Rector, Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), signing a ICWA-MGIMO MoU on Cooperation, 2013-2018.*

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Both sides reiterated the need to hold regular interaction between the two countries, both at government level and among the members of the strategic community. It was commonly held that awareness about each other should be generated through outreach efforts and public diplomacy. On the sidelines of the conference, a MoU on Cooperation was signed between the two organization.

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