



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

March 11, 2013

Press Release

on

Visit of ICWA Delegation to Myanmar

A multi-think tank delegation led by Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs visited Myanmar from 4-8 March 2013. Ambassador Shyam Saran, former foreign secretary, was an important member of the ICWA delegation. The purpose of the visit was to have first hand information about the reform process currently underway in Myanmar and also to understand and evaluate its implications for India-Myanmar relations.



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia and Ambassador Nyunt Maung Shein, at the inauguration of ICWA – MISIS Seminar

The visit began with a day-long Seminar on ‘Change in Myanmar: Impact on India-Myanmar Relations’, at the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS), Yangon, an MoU partner of the ICWA. The deliberations at the seminar focussed on a number of issues spanning political, economic and security domains in the bilateral relationship.



ICWA delegation calls on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson, National League for Democracy

The delegation had a unique opportunity to interact with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Chairperson, National League for Democracy (NLD). Besides, the delegation called on a number of political leaders and government officials, including H.E. U Win Myint, Minister of Commerce, H.E. U Zin Yaw, Deputy Foreign Minister, H.E. U Thein Zaw, Chairman, National Races Affairs and

Internal Peace Implementation Committee of the Parliament and other government officials, businessmen, academics and members of the Indian community. The delegation also visited Mandalay and met with H.E. U Ye Myint, the Chief Minister of Mandalay.



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia with H.E. U Win Myint, Union Minister of Commerce, Myanmar

During these interactions and deliberations with a cross-section of the people, it emerged that India and Myanmar should not only acknowledge the shared historical and cultural ties, but strengthen bilateral relations and formulate suitable policy responses and implement programmes for the benefit of the people of the two countries. It was also observed that the time is now ripe for the two neighbours to strengthen the bilateral relations, particularly in the economic and development sectors as well as in the domain of connectivity so that the relationship gains further substance.

The delegation was also briefed by the Myanmar interlocutors about the ongoing political transformation in Myanmar. Many claimed that the reform process was now irreversible. The nation faced important opportunities and challenges on its way to the national elections, due in 2015. Others asserted that the reform process was at a nascent stage and would need to be nurtured carefully.



Ambassador Rajiv K Bhatia and H. E. U Thein Zaw, Chairperson Pyithu Hluttaw, National Affairs and Internal Peacemaking Committee.

At another level, it was stated that the intelligentsia should act as catalysts to bring the people of both countries closer together and also share their new ideas with the government and business communities. It was recognised that a pressing need exists for Indian businesses and industry to be proactively engaged in enhancing bilateral economic cooperation and contribute their optimum efforts to reach the desired potential.

The visit provided to the delegation a panoramic view of political, economic and social changes currently underway in Myanmar.

Above all, it has contributed significantly to establishing new links between academic and strategic communities of the two countries.



ICWA delegation calls on H.E. U Zin Yaw, Deputy Foreign Minister of Myanmar
