Remarks

by

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at the

The Fifth ICWA-CPIFA Dialogue

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Beijing, China

Ambassador Wu Hailong President, Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA),

Indian Ambassador to China - Mr. Gautam Bambawale,

Ambassador Ou Boqian, Vice President, CPIFA,

Ambassador Ashok Kantha,

Distinguished members of the two delegations, Ladies and gentlemen,

Greetings

I bring to you all warm greetings of the Indian Council of World Affairs, India's premier and oldest foreign policy think tank, We are grateful to CPIFA for its gracious invitation to us for this Dialogue as well as the hospitality extended for our visit to Beijing. We look forward to spending together an extremely productive and successful deliberations today.

I am glad to note that Ambassador Wu Hailong, President, CPIFA is leading his distinguished delegation from China. I thank you for inviting many well known Chinese experts on India for this dialogue.

Past activities

Our two institutions – ICWA and CPIFA had signed an MoU on cooperation in April 2005. We have had meaningful activities/dialogue in the past. Today we are going to commence our fifth structured dialogue which first started in November 2013.

Agenda

We have an agreed agenda. We wish to discuss a fair number of key issues pertaining to bilateral and multilateral aspect of India-China relations. Our relationship encompasses different dimensions – political, trade, economic and investment related, people-to-people contacts and others. We have also many points of interface both bilaterally and multilaterally. I hope we can touch on all these aspects during our discussion. The Wuhan spirit requires that we address our bilateral relationship comprehensively. If our governments can identify early takeaways and early harvestable points, they will add to the portfolio of our convergences. We look forward to our discussion in that spirit.

Our regional environment is evolving rapidly. We look forward to your assessments with regard to Afghanistan and Iran and the situation in the Arabian sea littoral states.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's keynote address at Shangri La Dialogue on June 1, 2018 clearly states India's role and contributions to peace, development and stability in the world. The keynote address underscores the importance of the Indo-Pacific region while emphasizing the significance of the Indian Ocean terming the Indian Ocean as the "life line of global commerce".

The speech underscores the significance of India-China relationship and the changing dynamics in the recent past. On India-China relations, the speech says:
"No other relationship of India has as many layers as our relations with China. We are the world's two most populous countries and among the fastest growing major economies. Our cooperation is expanding. Trade is growing. And, we have displayed maturity and wisdom in managing issues and ensuring a peaceful border."

"Centrality of ASEAN will guide India's vision for the Indo-Pacific Region and also it will guide India's cooperation for architecture for peace and security in this region. Another key point in the speech was about India's partnerships with other countries built on the basis of shared values and interests. It reaffirms India's *strategic autonomy* and commitment to playing an important role in the Indo-Pacific region. Also, it states that India is not building 'alliances of containment'"

Let me also stress here that this is perhaps most opportune time to improve and strengthen India-*China relations*.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping held their first 'informal summit' on April 27-28, 2018 in Wuhan. The objective of the Summit was "to exchange views on overarching issues of bilateral and global importance, and to elaborate their respective visions and priorities for national development in the context of the current and future international situation".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with President Xi Jinping in the Chinese port city of Qingdao on June 9, 2018, prior to the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. At Qingdao, Prime Minister Modi described the Wuhan summit "as a

milestone", President Xi described Wuhan as "a new starting point in our bilateral relationship".

This "Wuhan spirit" was evident when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with Chinese President Xi Jinping on 26 July 2018 at the sidelines of BRICS summit in Johannesburg.

Our leaders will also be meeting in the G-20 summit later this year. We look forward to the visit of the Foreign Minister of China to India in December.
ICWA has also played its part in strengthening India-China relations.

I recall that ICWA has had the unique distinction of hosting public lectures by Chinese leaders, namely President Xi Jinping, President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and Premier Li Keqiang.

Speaking in his address in New Delhi, hosted by ICWA on 21 May 2013, Premier Li Keqiang stated: "In its 70-year history, the ICWA has conducted productive studies on international issues and diplomacy."

During his Special Address hosted by ICWA on 18 September 2014, President Mr. Xi Jinping, noted that, "China and India should be closer development partners, growth leading cooperative partners and strategic global partners".

ICWA has also been assigned other major responsibilities as far as India-China relations are concerned.

The third India-China Think-Tanks Forum is scheduled to be held in India in December 2018. The Forum will be organized by the Indian Council of World Affairs, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The Forum is a bilateral platform established by a Memorandum of Understanding concluded between Ministry of External Affairs, India and Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to China in May 2015.

To conclude my remarks today let me quote PM Narendra Modi at the Shangri La Dialogue (June 2018) He said: "I firmly believe that Asia and the world will have a better future when India and China work together in trust and confidence, sensitive to each others' interests." This is the message which we need to follow in future. This will be a

key factor in strengthening the bilateral relations as well as maximizing cooperation in various fields for mutual benefit.

Thank you.

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