

## **Welcome Remarks**

**by**



**Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia**

Director General, ICWA

**at**

**Special Session of ARC-IV**

**‘Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific Region: Asian Perspectives’**

**at**

**New Delhi**

**March 21, 2013**

On behalf of the host institutions, I am delighted to welcome Sri Salman Khurshid, India's Minister of External Affairs amidst us. I am sure all participants and guests keenly look forward to listening to the Minister.

We are happy to note that this is the second time the Minister attends an event hosted by ICWA within a month. But, today he is on his first visit as Minister of External Affairs to Sapru House, this iconic building. We welcome him not only as EAM but also as Vice President of the Governing Council of ICWA. This institution has been playing a pro-active and purposeful role in helping India to understand world affairs and helping the world to understand and appreciate India's world view. The Parliament has bestowed on it the status of 'an institution of national importance.'

Minister Khurshid is widely known as a cerebral, experienced and dynamic political leader. He serves as a bridge between small town India and the country's activism and footprint in the highest power echelons around the world. He is erudite, articulate and always full of energy. He is an author and playwright, besides being a lawyer. He successfully handled a number of important ministerial portfolios before becoming the Minister of External Affairs in October 2012. He is a product of St. Stephen's College, Delhi and St. Edmund Hall, Oxford University. He loves theatre and reading, especially history and biographies.



*(L-R) Amb. Bhatia, DG, ICWA & Shri Salman Khurshid, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister at Special Session*

I need to say very little about the theme of the conference; I had my say at the inaugural session. But, let me flag two points here. Firstly, this conference, the fourth in ARC series, is being attended by 26 panellists and chairpersons from 12 countries. Secondly, three business sessions, held so far, were devoted to the sub-themes of 'Indo-Pacific Region as a Spatial Concept', 'Perspectives from Indian Ocean', and 'Perspectives from Southeast and East Asia.' They have proved thoroughly enriching, having succeeded in offering new insights about various

facets of the conference theme, namely ‘Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific region: Asian Perspectives.’

The Minister’s address will no doubt contribute significantly to our deliberations, and then we will be set to continue our dialogue on what he says as well as on numerous other aspects of the chosen theme in the succeeding sessions tomorrow.

Now, it is my privilege to invite the External Affairs Minister to deliver the Keynote Address of this conference.

