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Former foreign secretary K. Raghunath (left) flanked by artist Balan Nambiar and National Institute of Advanced Studies director Roddam Narasimha, in Bangalore on Saturday

'South East Asian countries can form powerful common market'

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: "We need to get a balanced view of ourselves," said former foreign secretary K. Raghunath at a lecture on 'Managing India's Foreign Policy' at the National Institute of Advanced Studies on Saturday.

He pointed out that India's size vis-a-vis other nations in South Asia is a major stabilising element and India has a sense of responsibility towards her neighbours. However, this does not mean that she has to or should make concessions. There is a milieu to pursue an effective foreign policy.

Security means economic strength, political stability, development of science and technology, negotiating skills and survival skills. Surprisingly, the norm in international behaviour is irra-

tionality. Multilateral networks and linkages should be developed. He said: "If one is lonely, one is weak."

Countries need to be motivated to improve ties with others but the national interest should always be in the focus. Mr Raghunath said economic diplomacy is a composite skill and needs training and special skills.

He pointed out that the South East Asian countries can form a powerful regional common market. He said the Gujral doctrine is by no means a soft one and can be labelled a national doctrine.

The former foreign secretary pointed out that there are some elements in Pakistan who are bent on causing maximum damage to the India. Some specific decision making agencies who have completely outdated and bizarre policies towards India and are hard liners

are determining Pakistan's policies vis-a-vis India at the moment.

The business crowd and the cultural world, however, desires closer ties with India. There has been a trend towards greater cohesion with Pakistan, he observed.

He pointed out that in the US, non-governmental talents work to promote national causes and present a national view.

Regarding policy towards the USA he said that India can cooperate with that country particularly in the fields of science and technology and energy. The USA should take a sensible attitude with regard to International Property Rights.

Mr Raghunath said the India Website on the Internet run by the Ministry of External Affairs is a success.