21ST ASIA PACIFIC PROGRAMME FOR SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS (APPSMO)

SECURITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

Event Report
29 July – 4 August 2019

RSiS | S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
SINGAPORE

Event Report

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Organised by:
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS)
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)
Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore

29 July – 4 August 2019
Village Hotel Changi
Singapore

This report summarises the proceedings of the conference as interpreted by assigned rapporteurs and an editor from RSIS. The participants have neither reviewed nor approved this report.

The conference adheres to a variation of the Chatham House Rule. Accordingly, beyond the points expressed in the prepared papers, no attributions have been included in this conference report.

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SUMMARY OF APPSMO 2019

The 21st APPSMO, organised by IDSS of RSIS, was held at the Village Hotel Changi in Singapore from 29 July to 4 August 2019. Since its inception in 1999, APPSMO has provided a unique and important forum for military officers and defence analysts to network and exchange views on a broad range of subjects related to regional and international security. APPSMO 2019 continued to facilitate defence diplomacy with the attendance of 55 military officers and defence planners from 25 countries representing Asia, Oceania, North America and Europe.

During the week-long programme, the participants attended a series of seminars and discussions that featured experts from the academic, policy and military communities. The theme for APPSMO 2019 was "Security Challenges and Opportunities in the Asia Pacific". Some of the key topics discussed included visions for the regional security architecture, the military's role in humanitarian emergencies, emerging technologies and warfare, competing norms and strategic implications, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and power dynamics in the region.

The participants visited the Regional Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (RHCC), Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). They were brought on a military heritage tour and attended a preview of the National Day Parade. APPSMO 2019 played an important role as an additional conduit of defence diplomacy by facilitating interaction among senior military officers in and beyond the Asia Pacific. It provided an opportunity for participants to foster better understanding of one another as well as the respective countries.

WELCOME REMARKS

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong
Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS; and
Director, IDSS
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Amb Ong Keng Yong began by warmly welcoming all participants to APPSMO 2019. He noted that APPSMO had been bringing senior military officers and defence experts together to discuss crucial challenges in defence and international relations in an academic setting for some two decades now. During this period, over a thousand participants and speakers from more than 35 countries had come together and learnt from one another through constructive debates in a conducive environment. Amb Ong observed that the development of a wide network of APPSMO alumni across the world through these interactions had in its own small way contributed to international peace and stability.

In introducing this year's APPSMO theme, "Security Challenges and Opportunities in the Asia Pacific", Amb Ong pointed out that while the topics were wide, particularly as the notion of security continued to broaden, the military would invariably take centre stage in all the discussions. Amb Ong was confident that this year's line up of speakers would help the military audience to make sense of their role in this fast-changing world. They would cover a broad range of topics including geopolitics, technology and non-traditional security. More importantly, given how most of the participants came from ASEAN or countries with vested interests in the region, Amb Ong noted that many of the presentations were focused on ASEAN. He hoped this interest in ASEAN would extend to informal

interactions between participants and speakers where they would learn more about Southeast Asia while getting to know each other better.

Amb Ong also pointed out that APPSMO 2019 had expanded to include other events held throughout the year. He highlighted the APPSMO Distinguished Alumni Speaker's Lecture series held before APPSMO, which saw distinguished Singaporean APPSMO alumni Mr Chan Chun Sing and Brigadier-General Ng Ying Thong delivering public lectures on defence-related issues. Amb Ong was optimistic that future speakers in the series would include prominent alumni from other countries to solidify the international APPSMO alumni network.

In closing, Amb Ong thanked Singapore's Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) for their continued support of APPSMO. He reminded the participants that APPSMO was ultimately what they each made it out to be. He hoped that each participant would make the most of the week-long programme in a way which would help them develop professionally, and wished them every success in that endeavour.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr Mohammed Maliki Bin Osman
Senior Minister of State
Ministry of Defence & Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Singapore

Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman opened his keynote address by warmly welcoming all participants to APPSMO 2019. He noted that the inaugural APPSMO was held in 1999, just two years after the Asian Financial Crisis (AFC) of 1997. Dr Maliki observed that AFC had a lasting impact on Asia, underscoring the connection between economy, politics and security. Amid the tensions resulting from the crisis, the late S. R. Nathan, then-Director of IDSS, started APPSMO as a summer camp for regional military officers to get to know one another better. Today, APPSMO has grown from strength to strength, evolving from a mere gathering of senior military officers to an important forum that discusses a broad range of security issues. Dr Maliki stressed that as the geopolitical environment became more complex, this opportunity for a diverse body of senior military officers and defence experts to interact with one another would become ever more critical.

Reflecting on Singapore and the region's history, Dr Maliki noted that security concerns, often marked by periods of hardship, were seen at every turn. The region was colonised in the 18th and 19th centuries, culminating in a clash between Western and Eastern powers during World War 2. The Japanese Occupation, Dr Maliki observed, was a particularly dark period for Singapore and the region. Japan's defeat, however, did not lead to peace. Instead, the

process of decolonisation in Southeast Asia intersected with the Cold War, seeing a new clash between communist and non-communist forces. These conflicts exacted a heavy cost on the people in the region.

A desire to free the region from being a proxy of the Cold War led to the formation of ASEAN in 1967. It was hoped that regional stability could be achieved by Southeast Asian nations working together rather than against each other. ASEAN continues to be a platform to keep regional peace and strengthen regional cooperation. Dr Maliki cited the examples of fora, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, and events, such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting, as ways to address common, enduring security threats, like transnational terrorism.

Dr Maliki stressed that greater cooperation, particularly in intelligence sharing, was needed to combat the evolving threat of transnational terrorism. He observed that while the so-called Islamic State had lost territory in the Middle East, its affiliate groups, like Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), had become even more sophisticated and active in Southeast Asia, using means such as legitimate businesses to fund their activities. Dr Maliki highlighted the strides the region has taken to counter such activities, pointing to the 2018 ASEAN Armies Information Sharing Workshop to counter chemical, biological and radiological threats and Our Eyes initiatives as examples.

Dr Maliki noted that other emerging transnational threats, such as those in the digital domain, also needed to be countered through greater cooperation. Hackers, who were not geographically bound, could act surreptitiously in the vast, open virtual space. He emphasised that Singapore's open economy was especially vulnerable to such attacks, especially for small and medium enterprises that had limited budgets for cybersecurity. These threats, however, were not unique to Singapore. Dr Maliki hoped regional countries could work together to counter these threats before they became larger problems.

Dr Maliki emphasised that regional countries needed to keep multilateralism and its spirit of cooperation alive, with a further deepening of regional cooperation in security and trade. Multilateralism, Dr Maliki observed, could be resilient to the challenges it faced. He pointed to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as an example. While there had been genuine concerns that TPP would collapse with the withdrawal of the United States, it was eventually sustained through collective actions by the remaining countries who saw its value.

Dr Maliki was optimistic that other multilateral initiatives would be similarly resilient to the challenges they faced. He pointed to confidence-building measures, such as the Guidelines for Air Military Encounters and Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea, emerging from the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus,

as practical measures which were enacted despite prevailing challenges. While he acknowledged that addressing security concerns through multilateralism had come a long way, Dr Maliki emphasised that continued effort had to be invested in deepening multilateralism, particularly when it came under stress, Doing so would allow the region to tackle security threats more effectively.

In closing, Dr Maliki wished all APPSMO participants a fruitful programme and good connections that they could continue to engage after the event.

PANEL I
VISIONS FOR THE REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

From left to right: ADM (Retd) Arun Prakash, Mr Alexander Gabuev, Mr Drew Thompson, and Prof Ralf Emmers (chair)

Admiral (Retired) Arun Prakash
Former Indian Navy Chief; and Distinguished Chair
Naval War College
India

ADM (Retd) Arun Prakash began his presentation by highlighting the challenges in defining what constituted the Asia-Pacific region. Referencing the adage "where you stand depends on where you sit", he argued that interpretations of the Asia Pacific, and the events occurring within, were often greatly influenced by one's geographic location. Prakash observed a shift away from the traditional understanding of geopolitics centred around the importance of the Eurasia landmass dominated by Russia, to an emerging one focused on China's integration of the East and West through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He highlighted the relative decline of US influence, with the rise of China and India as regional powers, and the increasing importance of maritime states as agents for the shift in focus. Prakash argued that these shifts had given rise to the notion of the "Indo-Pacific" as a replacement of the term "Asia Pacific". "Indo-Pacific" was a term popularised by the United States that had invited varied reactions, which Prakash opined had served to highlight both challenges and opportunities in understanding how the region was constituted.

For some, the security challenges remained the same. France was still concerned about North Korean nuclear issues, South China Sea territorial disputes and global terrorism. The United States however, declared the Indo-Pacific as the single most important region for the future of the United States, with China as a revisionist power that could impede freedom of navigation in the region. Consequently, Prakash observed that the United States had seemingly enacted a containment policy of China that included economic skirmishing, boosting defence spending and releasing forces for deployment to the Indo-Pacific region,

as well as persuading its regional allies to widen their commitment to regional defence. Others had taken a more cautious approach. Prakash pointed out that India did not see the Indo-Pacific as a new club or grouping, and stressed the importance of a rules-based order that allowed the freedom of navigation. He cited the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific policy document as an example of a safe approach, which stressed the continued importance of a free and open region despite growing China-US tensions, as well as the importance of ASEAN centrality by negotiating challenges in existing fora, such as the East Asia Summit or the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Prakash observed that China did not mention the Indo-Pacific in its defence white paper. He acknowledged China as the elephant in the room, with everyone conscious of its sensitivities and abilities. China's economic power loomed large in everyone's calculations, as its influence in that domain was expansive. It gave China a competitive advantage while constraining other's room to manoeuvre. Prakash offered China's holding of US treasury bonds as an example of this.

Next, Prakash turned his attention to the impact of reconceptualisation of the region on security, and whether existing regional security architecture structures would suffice. He argued that a new security grouping was unlikely given China's economic domination via trade, BRI and its rising military strength. He pointed to the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India as an example of how initiatives to form a new grouping could be shelved because of the fear of antagonising China. Groupings could only work if there was consensus. The deference to China would be a significant limiting factor in achieving that.

Prakash concluded his presentation on a more optimistic note. He argued that challenges could become opportunities. The maintenance of peace and security, he observed, was also in China's interest. If new security architecture were to be established, China would have to be included, with low-hanging fruits, such as counter-piracy, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, and climate change as focal points. Above all, while the Thucydides Trap loomed large in maritime Asia as new powers negotiated their relationships with existing powers, Prakash posited that regional fora, regardless of the form they took, as well as an expanded understanding of the Asia Pacific to include the wider Indian Ocean, would be the best foundation for any regional security architecture.

Mr Alexander Gabuev
Senior Fellow and Chair, Russia in the Asia-Pacific Program
Carnegie Moscow Center
Russian Federation

Mr Alexander Gabuev started his presentation by noting that many see Asia Pacific as a region of potential trouble, with "US-China tensions" becoming a buzzword. However, Gabuev also argued that tensions in the region should also be considered in relation to so-called "tier two" powers. Such powers included European navies operating in the South China Sea, as well as Russia in the Asia Pacific. To the latter point, Gabeuv observed that few have thought about Russia as a player in the region — a belief he argued should change. Recent developments such as the joint air patrols between Russia and China only marked the start of increased Russian involvement in the Asia Pacific.

Gabuev offered three reasons why Russia was becoming more active in the Asia Pacific. First, Russia was pivoting towards China to build a more robust economic partnership. Following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia had faced international sanctions. China therefore offered lucrative economic opportunities to alleviate them, which Gabuev suggests Russia was doubling down on. Second, he argued that Russia still thought of itself as a great power and wanted to be in the Asia Pacific because of national prestige. While Russian actions there were largely driven by pragmatic considerations, he believed one could not dismiss Russia's aspiration to be a great power again to erase the traumatic memory of the collapse of Soviet Union. Third, Gabuev opined that Russia saw China as a kindred spirit, similarly suspicious of a US-centred world order, and therefore sought alignment and cooperation in the Asia Pacific for their mutual benefit.

Gabuev noted that Russia hoped to be a diplomatic power with its own vision of Asia-Pacific regional-security architecture. He cited the example of Russia partnering with China to help move discussions on the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula forward. More broadly, Gabuev pointed to Russia's 2011 vision of comprehensive regional-security architecture as another example of Russian interest in the Asia Pacific. Although not well articulated, Russia's vision had several interesting characteristics. Firstly, it foregrounded the importance of acknowledging the "security dilemma", where any defence proposal by one country should not undercut another's security. Secondly, Russian ideas were largely based on their experience during the Cold War, with the belief that the peace, troubled as it may have been, was kept because of a multitude of treaties signed between the Soviet Union and the United States. Gabuev felt that Russia believed that peace in the Asia Pacific could be similarly kept, though he acknowledged there were fundamental differences between tensions in the Asia Pacific and the Cold War. Furthermore, he highlighted the reality that Russia did not necessarily abide by its agreements. Thirdly, Russia thought it could have a major role in the Asia Pacific simply because it was a permanent

member of the United Nations Security Council.Gabuev, however, noted that not many states saw Russia as a useful partner in the Asia Pacific. Finally, Russia did not like the concept of the Indo-Pacific because it came from the United States. Instead, it supported ASEAN-centrality. This antagonism could be problematic as the concept of the Indo-Pacific had already gained traction, and Russian President Vladimir Putin looked set to helm Russia for many more years.

Gabuev concluded his presentation with the observation that while Russia had ideas and expertise in specific areas to be a greater player in the Asia Pacific, it did not necessarily have the means to implement them in a practical manner which will allow it to be one.

Mr Drew Thompson
Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore, Singapore

Mr Drew Thomson prefaced his assessment of the US Indo-Pacific strategy by noting that the Trump administration was very different from previous US governments. He highlighted that this administration was objective, action-oriented and focused on achieving results. Notably, unlike typical bureaucrats and politicians, it was very risk tolerant. Thomson observed that the administration was willing to upset the order of things, including changing how the United States traditionally approached the Asia Pacific, to get results.

Thomson introduced the United States' Indo-Pacific strategy as its blueprint for a free and open Asian-Pacific in the face of a rising China by outlining its three pillars. Firstly, the United States sought to develop preparedness against China. Secondly, it desired the development of partnerships. Significantly, these could also include ones with China if they were in the United States' interests. Thirdly, it sought to create networks which would help reach a common objective of peace and security. To these ends, Thompson argued that ASEAN centrality is conceptually built into the strategy, with the United States constantly organising inclusive multilateral events. He concluded that the United States had invested significant effort in such engagements, and had brought many resources to the table.

Thomson offered three reasons why the US Indo-Pacific strategy has been designed with an eye on China. The first was ideological. He argued that President Trump saw China as a "revisionist power" bent on challenging the United States. The use of the term "revisionist" immediately set the United States against China, and this term did not sit well with the latter as it harkened back to the Cold War where the Soviet Union once referred to China in similar terms, souring Sino-Soviet relations. He opined that the United States' choice of this term stemmed from

the belief that China did indeed want to export its ideology. Thomson, however, also acknowledged that China shared similar thoughts of the United States, believing that the superpower too, wanted to change the world order in its favour. He concluded that the United States was not adopting a containment strategy.

The second reason Thomson proffered was economic. Americans have not seen the economic benefits of China's rise. In fact, its rise had hollowed out the US economy, impacting even the US military-industrial complex.

The final reason, according to Thomson, was the geostrategic challenge that China posed to the United States. He highlighted how Xi Jinping's endorsement of the New Asian Security Concept, where China saw an Asia for Asians with security that is maintained by Asians themselves, worried the United States. The United States, Thomson argued, considered this a provocative statement as it saw itself heavily invested in the region's security. Additionally, China's behaviour in the South China Sea stressed the exclusion of external powers, again challenging the United States which aspired to maintain the freedom of access to the airspace and seas there. Furthermore, China had challenged the United States' commitment to its allies and access to the region. The United States had consequently been forced to double down in the region as its reputation was at stake. In sum, the United States had invested significantly in the Asia Pacific and therefore believed it must be a regional power that is there to stay, to counter the geostrategic challenges posed by China.

Thomson identified three challenges the United States would face in carrying out its Indo-Pacific strategy. Firstly, it would have to stick to its American values, while also recognising that these values could cause vulnerabilities. Secondly, the United States could face difficulties in recruiting partners who similarly see China as a challenge; many regional countries were not as convinced as the United States about the challenge supposedly posed by China. Finally, Washington would have to demonstrate credibility in honouring its commitments. The United States' withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, for example, undermined American credibility to its partners in a diverse region where building partnerships were already difficult. Furthermore, Thompson noted the legacy of inaction by previous administrations which had already coloured regional expectations of the United States.

Thompson concluded that the United States had no intention of turning the Asia-Pacific region into an American lake. That said, he also acknowledged that the United States had existing regional commitments and would be there to stay as it attempted to maintain the status quo in the face of a rising China.

THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

From left to right: Prof Yukiko Nishikawa, CAPT Sarabjeet Singh Parmar, Mr Muktar Farah, Dr Alistair Cook, and Dr Pascal Vennesson (chair)

Professor Yukiko Nishikawa
Graduate School of International Development
Nagoya University, Japan

Prof Yukiko Nishikawa spoke about the major trends and challenges in humanitarian civil-military coordination. The military had historically been involved in humanitarian situations, usually being the body that was best equipped to respond. What was new about the military's role in the current context was that the purpose for their engagements had changed, as well as the nature and scope of the military involvements. Firstly, ongoing efforts had explicitly sought to combine humanitarian, military, and other spheres of action under an over-arching political objective. Secondly, military forces have themselves increasingly undertaken a range of humanitarian activities in order to achieve strategic or tactical objectives. Nishikawa personally believed it was not a question of whether the military should be involved, but rather how.

Nishikawa highlighted that over the past two decades, humanitarian crises had increased in number and duration. Asia itself was witness to the largest number of people affected by natural disasters worldwide. Furthermore, climate change was likely to lead to extreme weather conditions, especially since carbon dioxide emissions were the most severe in this region. Asia was therefore a key flashpoint with regard to humanitarian emergencies arising from natural disasters. Additionally, the impact of man-made disasters should not be ignored, especially given their increasing frequency. While such incidences were more sporadic, they enhanced fear and heightened security concerns.

Moreover, civil-military relations in disaster-relief operations were affected by the spectrum of conflict, ranging from peacetime to combat. Coordination, which involved identifying an appropriate way to engage with the military according

to the scenario, was important and should not be confused with cooperation. However, if combat were encountered, coexistence between both civil and military bodies would take precedence over cooperation or coordination. This situational assessment was very important and security forces must undertake an in-depth analysis before committing to the operation. Furthermore, many countries shared borders with countries that were unstable, and so there was a need to consider the extent of combat risk. Other challenges that affected humanitarian civil-military coordination included the inconsistencies, diversities and divisions within the humanitarian community. This was further complicated by the different cultures, priorities, approaches, and operating modes of military and civilian organisations.

Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar
Executive Director
National Maritime Foundation, India

CAPT Sarabjeet Singh Parmar discussed the role of armed forces in humanitarian emergencies. He highlighted that many militaries have participated in humanitarian emergencies, and that the military's contribution was vital in three aspects — saving lives via the rendition of assistance particularly within the "golden hour", where medical care was administered within one hour of serious injury; mitigating the immediate effects of emergencies such as epidemics; and stabilising the post disaster situation, facilitating a return to normalcy. Furthermore, the traits that were inherent in the way militaries were organised and trained made them suitable for fulfilling the above tasks. Militaries were typically prepared to face eventualities, being trained for a variety of roles and to ensure speed of deployment when called upon. The general adaptability and versatility of military assets also meant that they could be quickly adapted for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) purposes. The military was thus the first to action in a humanitarian emergency, including providing transportation for civilian organisations.

Parmar next touched on the Indian Oceans Naval Symposium's (IONS) guidelines for HADR, highlighting their relevance for militaries participating in such operations. Firstly, the objective had to be clearly defined, including the duration of the mission. Secondly, there must be unity of effort, including by both military and civil bodies, so that efforts were not duplicated. Thirdly, security must be ensured, especially when operating within a hostile environment. Fourthly, restraint must always be maintained, avoiding provocation. Fifthly, the responding force must ensure the legitimacy of the mission, and this meant that it could only intervene upon the invitation of the host government. As for the sixth guideline, the responding force must maintain neutrality, assigning equal importance to all recipients of humanitarian aid. According to the seventh guideline, the response must be tailored to local requirements, while the

eighth guideline proposed that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be kept simple to reduce confusion. Finally, there must be flexibility to fluidly adapt to the situation. Other important pointers included respecting the sovereignty, national laws, customs and traditions, and religious sentiments of the host country. The duration of the deployment should also be mutually decided with the host country, with overall control of the operations being vested there.

Mr Muktar Farah
Officer-in-Charge (OIC), Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
United Nations

Mr Muktar Farah introduced the role and importance of United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord). Echoing Prof Nishikawa's comments, Farah highlighted that climate change and natural disasters were a reality and that military, civilian and governmental organisations must be prepared to respond. There were 1.7 billion people affected by disasters in the Asia-Pacific region alone, representing 84 per cent of all those affected worldwide. Sixty per cent of the people killed by disasters worldwide also come from this region. Farah stated that in a humanitarian emergency, there was minimally 96 hours of chaos and uncertainty, which was a critical time for decision-making. Water would most likely be the highest priority among other critical needs, and OCHA would not be able to fulfil all the critical needs on its own. It therefore had to make judicious use of the available resources.

Agreeing with CAPT Parmar, Farah felt that the military was an important contributor in humanitarian emergencies, having the requisite resources and manpower to assist. The military also had capabilities unique to itself, including heavy airlift, logistics and supply, air and port traffic management, engineering/heavy construction, technical assistance, consequence management, communications, relief (water production and utilities) and search and rescue. He believed that foreign military assistance was therefore critical as a first response, followed by the international humanitarian community (coordinated by OCHAS), and finally the local and national stakeholders who bore the main burden of providing humanitarian aid.

However, international response coordination was a big challenge. While OCHA has tried to bring different contributing organisations to the table to discuss and agree on how to deal with disasters, it was not always easy to arrive at a consensus. UN-CMCoord, along with essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military stakeholders to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency and when appropriate, pursue common goals, were important in addressing the coordination challenges. Key elements would include information sharing, task division, and planning. The basic strategies ranged from coexistence

to cooperation while coordination was a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.

Dr Alistair Cook
Coordinator, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme
Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), RSIS
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Dr Alistair Cook presented the ways in which the relevant stakeholders could move forward in navigating the humanitarian landscape. The humanitarian landscape was a multi-stakeholder environment, without a uniform community. In addition to the diverse and complex nature of humanitarian expectations, there were also limitations to cooperation. Full integration should therefore not be expected, and more emphasis would inherently be placed on information-sharing. For the affected state, there was a tendency to overlook the role played by its own military. There was also a need for localisation of operations, which meant bringing decision-making down to the lowest level of the affected community. There was also a need to understand humanitarian capacity and policy within countries.

Cook shared that militaries in the region were typically seen as first responders rather than as options of last resort. As highlighted by Mr Farah, the military had niche capabilities such as planning, logistics, specialist resources for infrastructure and engineering, and search and rescue that made it suitable for responding to humanitarian emergencies. However, there were gaps in needs assessment that must be resolved by civilian agencies. Cook highlighted that militaries would have to explore ways to better share information, if not necessarily all information. He noted that ASEAN was increasingly focused on promoting cooperation between Southeast Asian states, particularly on humanitarian responses. The mechanisms for natural disasters could also be used for other emergencies.

In terms of longer-term engagement, the Regional Consultative Group (RCG) on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination provided a rare platform for both civilian and military bodies to network and interact outside of a crisis situation. These working groups could include new agenda such as technology discussions. However, Cook felt that the community should consider reducing the number of such platforms rather than creating new ones. It would be imperative to find mechanisms where both civilian and military could share information, but not to the extent where the huge proliferation of information became indigestible. There were also insufficient spaces for training in humanitarian responses, especially between civilians and the military.

DISTINGUISHED DINNER LECTURE: CHINA AND CHANGE – DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN IMPERATIVES

Professor Wang Gung Wu
Emeritus Professor, Australian National University; and
Chairman, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

Prof Wang Gung Wu reminded the audience that the China we knew today was the People's Republic of China. This was not always the case for China because it went through many changes. He pointed out that foreigners had different names for China, and that the Chinese in China did not call themselves "Chinese". There was an assumption that China had not changed over the centuries but this was untrue. Wang believed that modern China really started from 1949. The concept of change had been more profound throughout China's history. For instance, the most ancient Chinese text, the Book of Change, could be dated back 4,000 years or more, and change was something that characterised the way the Chinese thought about themselves. In fact, change was the norm in Chinese society and the Chinese have learned to anticipate and prepare for change. In the Chinese perspective, all conditions, environments, and even the world itself, would change. The Chinese used the concept of luck to prepare for change, attributing one's ability to avoid becoming worse off entirely to luck. Therefore, it was fundamental to the Chinese to be alert enough to embrace the opportunities and benefits that came with change.

For China, the line between domestic and foreign was very difficult to draw in today's world. Certain things were more domestic while others were more foreign. There were many pressures on China and its people. On the domestic front, the most important pressure was how to save the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CCP currently believed that as the only government with the expertise and organisational infrastructure to run the PRC, it had to save

itself to save China. Saving the CCP would probably be the most patriotic act that any member could think of because of CCP's historic role in China. The CCP saved China in 1949 and China prospered under Deng Xiaoping. Saving the CCP would be seen as saving China from the corruption that had reached even the top echelons of the party. Having seen the corruption that destroyed the CCP, Xi Jinping was compelled to deal with the corruption, as well as the astounding lack of checks and balances within the party. The CCP was "corrupt to its core", and in the eyes of the people, it had little credibility. Xi's predecessors never had enough power to control corruption. They acted like feudal lords who had control over the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which was essentially an inseparable part of the CCP. Corruption affected both entities. At the same time, the country was facing new pressures. Its economy was export-orientated, but the profits were not sustainable. China needed an economic reform so that its wealth could be shared with the people.

Wang noted that the Chinese word for "reform" was the opposite of "revolution". Historically, the Chinese Communist Revolution had set the performance baseline, but the system needed a reform to keep the revolution on track. The outcomes of a systemic "reform" were performance-based and if the system could not perform, the party would lose its legitimacy and credibility. Therefore, the current trade war was about how to respond to the United States because the Chinese were perfectly aware that the United States was the only country that could undermine their economy. However, the trade war may turn out to be a good thing for the Chinese because it forced them to reform their existing economic framework, which could eventually strengthen their economy.

China had to learn to control dissent. The Chinese were not unanimous in supporting the CCP. They realised that the CCP had nothing to do with Communism. Dissent was not new to the Chinese. Every dynasty in China had experienced protests and unhappiness, but very few rebellions ever succeeded because they were always localised and the government of the time had dealt with the dissent swiftly before they could spread. China was aware that local trouble would invite foreign intervention, which had the potential to disrupt growth in China. Wang questioned if the same idea might apply to Hong Kong. Hong Kong was slightly outside this framework. The Chinese accepted that there could be two systems as long as there was one country, and they did not want this to change at a time when things have gone wrong so that they could blame the other system (in Hong Kong). In other words, if China was not affected by what happened in Hong Kong, there would be no reason for China to directly intervene.

On the topic of external pressures, since the 19th century, China's economy had fundamentally changed from one that was continental to one that was international. To China, the international free market economy was a maritime economy. China was helpless to the changes that connected it to the maritime global economy in the 19th century as a result of interactions that started with the Japanese (piracy), British, and then the United States. The move to maritime-based trade made China realise the need for naval development to ensure freedom of navigation, and in a sense, to prevent the United States from monopolised control of the sea. However, China was a long way from having the naval capability to pose a challenge to anybody, least of all the United States. This was despite the prevalence of enemies, with economies that were heavily dependent on maritime trade, and who could attack China from the sea. The CCP realised that this was how China could change and respond to its new reality — a strategy that was related to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's future would be in maritime, and not continental trade. However, China still had continental enemies and it would need to manage both its continental and maritime threats. At the same time, China realised the importance of concentrating on infrastructure at present because it would be beneficial both economically and strategically.

It would be important to consider some of China's longer-term imperatives. China was aware that good governance required better laws. This had been the case since the Qin-Han period when legalism and laws based on harsh punishments formed the backbone of the state. The Confucians were brought in later to provide the rhetoric and soft power to mitigate the harshness of the law. The Confucians treated the law as an option of last resort. The Chinese loved to see a sense of justice, fairness, and transparency — even though they have never admitted so. In ancient China, the Emperor made the law and was above the law. As lawmakers, the CCP inherited this thinking. And while China's educated citizens have demanded greater participation in the running of the country in recent times, the CCP had been unwilling to take the risk. The challenge thus was how to implement better justice, fairness and transparency without undermining the authority of the CCP. Good governance must always be founded on a legal system that the people could believe in and be proud of.

The second issue was that China felt that it could never be fully secure because it saw an Anglo-American world order that could control the sea. What the Chinese could count on was to develop the BRI whereby a continental focus would be used to balance Anglo-American maritime dominance.

The third issue was the Chinese concept of progress. China in the 19th century had been very optimistic and serious with their idea of progress, which was based on science and technological advancement. The alternative was the Confucian ideas that sought to return China to the glorious past. This dilemma was putting pressure on the Chinese system. On one side was the PRC-centric perception of Marxism that, for Xi and the CCP, stood for progress represented by grants and investments into R&D. On the other side was the Confucian ideals that shaped China. Unlike the West, the pragmatic Chinese were not pre-occupied with philosophical ideology. They believed in systems and organisations, maintaining order, and ensuring continued progress. For the Chinese, change could continue to occur all the time, but the Chinese system would enable China to be well prepared for the accompanying challenges.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND WARFARE

From left to right: Prof Isaac Ben-Israel, Mr Tomáš Valášek, Dr Vasily Kashin, Ms Zoe Stanley-Lockman, and Dr Sinderpal Singh (chair)

Professor Isaac Ben-Israel
Chairman
Israel Space Agency, Israel

Prof Isaac Ben-Israel began his presentation by noting that the dominant technology of our era was computers that first came into being around the 1960s. He stressed that developments in the field were progressing so fast that it was hard to make predictions. He alluded to Moore's Law, which postulated that the processor speeds of computers would double every two years. Ben-Israel explained the unpredictability of upcoming threats was best dealt with by building an eco-system where people could be adequately prepared for these threats. He said 2010 was the turning point in the history of cyber-operations as it was the year where the Stuxnet attack was launched on an Iranian nuclear facility. He noted a number of points about the attack: that cyberwarfare was not just about networks or the use of information, as it was able to bring about physical damage.

Ben-Israel next contended that cyber-operations were the "dark side" of computer technology. Societies had become so dependent on computers that malcontents, such as criminals and terrorists, had exploited our dependence for harmful purposes. Cybersecurity was about minimising the dark side of computer technology. He alluded to the need to balance the tension between effectiveness of cybersecurity and data privacy. Ben-Israel also highlighted some shortfalls of artificial intelligence (AI). He cited the example of a picture of a panda being discerned as a monkey. Malcontents could make use of machine

learning to find out how AI protected our systems, and use that knowledge against us. Ben-Israel concluded by sharing Israel's Secured AI Initiative that sought to position the Jewish state as a top-five country in AI within the next five years. This programme comprised of three prongs: government, applications, and technologies.

Mr Tomáš Valášek
Director
Carnegie Europe, Belgium

Mr Tomáš Valášek presented on the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) on alliances and defence diplomacy. Firstly, he noted that countries usually fought a contemporary war with partner nations as this added legitimacy and enabled the burden of war to be shared. In most wars fought by alliances or coalitions in the West, only a few countries' national interests were genuinely at stake while the rest merely joined in for various reasons such as alliance commitments. Valášek delineated three factors that enabled the functioning of coalitions and alliances: (i) fair burden-sharing; (ii) constant political oversight over military operations; and (iii) a tight leash on the military. These factors could be undermined by the advent of AI. Many conflicts of the future would be fought by swarms of armed drones, guided by adaptable, self-learning algorithms in the absence of a human in decision-making. This would allow AI platforms to fight and make tactical decisions during wartime at unprecedented speeds. As a result, there would be no time for political micromanagement of military campaigns. Another issue was that with autonomy, authority could be delegated to the machines, and how they would actually behave in an operational situation could be anybody's guess despite their programmed algorithms.

Valášek argued that the above-mentioned challenges could be mitigated. Firstly, governments could allay the fears of machines "misbehaving" by proactively explaining the risks and benefits of AI technology to their people and, just as importantly, to one another. Next, allied governments could address concerns about fair burden-sharing by carving out a role in autonomous warfare for nations that did not possess AI technology. For instance, such nations could play an important role in testing and verifying the underlying assumptions and algorithms, among other duties. States that have made the most technological advances in the field of AI could bear special responsibility in this regard.

Summing up, Valášek maintained that these were among the specific steps that allied governments could take to prepare for the impending world of AI. Otherwise, these governments would find it difficult to cope within the new and complex operating environment.

Dr Vasily Kashin
Senior Research Fellow
National Research University Higher School of Economics
Russian Federation

Dr Vasily Kashin explored the nexus between emerging technologies and strategic stability from the Russian perspective. He noted that Moscow was involved in a strategic competition with the United States and there would not be an easing of tensions for some time to come. He then outlined Russia's perceived threats, which included political warfare that involved manipulated information, as well as disruptive military technologies that could undermine strategic stability. Since 2002, the Russian government had moved a significant portion of its procurement budget to research and development (R&D), undermining existing combat capabilities such as the surface navy and strategic airlift. Priority areas that were singled out included missile defence, space warfare, and air defence. Kashin commented that defence spending was expected to stabilise at about 2.5 per cent of gross domestic product, and that 50 per cent of the defence budget would be spent on R&D — a quantum larger than that of the United States and other Western nations combined.

Kashin revealed that Russia had emphasised the importance of AI for strategic competition. Progress in machine learning technology expected to severely undermine strategic stability by increasing the vulnerability of the platforms most crucial for Russia in this regard: its mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles and strategic submarines. Command-and-control systems would also increasingly come under threat from AI technologies. Reviewing the implications of hypersonic weapons, Kashin noted that these would have a mixed effect on strategic stability. Their hypersonic speeds meant that the adversary would have a shorter warning time, and this could lead to nations adopting pre-emptive strike doctrines in response. Russia had been emphasising hypersonic technologies to hedge against advanced air-defence systems in the West. In turn, the threat of hypersonic technologies had raised the possibility of arms-control talks, although the current chill in American-Russian ties has made this unlikely.

Kashin concluded his presentation by mentioning other defence technologies that Russia had been pursuing. These included direct-energy weapons, quantum technology, electronic warfare, anti-satellite systems, as well as robotics.

Ms Zoe Stanley-Lockman

Associate Research Fellow, Military Transformation Programme
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, RSIS
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Ms Zoe Stanley-Lockman covered the obstacles and options pertaining to machine learning for defence stakeholders. She noted that AI was a general-purpose technology that affected all aspects of society and that complementary investments would be required in order to have its potential realised. She highlighted the three waves of development underpinning AI technologies, adding that we were currently at the second wave. The third wave was still quite far off, and until it arrived, AI systems would be relatively limited in terms of their capabilities.

Stanley-Lockman said that AI systems were only as good as the data they had been fed, and there were five dimensions to this: quality, diversity, depth, access, and quantity. She also drew attention to a term commonly used in computer science — GIGO, which was short for garbage in, garbage out — and how this affected the functioning of AI. As AI systems were resource intensive to operate, there was little evidence to suggest that robust AI-enabled capabilities were cheap to develop or implement.

Stanley-Lockman then addressed the question: How good is defence data? She argued that that: (i) some machine-learning techniques could be more useful than others; (ii) there was a need to consider the ownership of data; and (iii) the brittleness of AI systems made them sensitive and ill-suited to new environments. She rounded up her presentation by asserting that AI could change the character of warfare. What is important is that militaries were increasingly delegating control to machines, just as societal transformations were being enabled by technological innovations related to AI. She concluded that the impetus would depend on whether militaries around the world could have the organisational (cultural mindset, command-and-control structures, acquisition and personnel policies, etc.) and financial capital (data storage, computing power, datasets, bandwidth access, hardware, talent, funding, etc.) to strategically leverage AI.

PANEL IV
COMPETING NORMS AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

From left to right: Ms Teo Yi-Ling, Ms Tarah Wheeler, Mr Miguel Alberto Gomez, and Assoc Prof Kumar Ramakrishna (chair)

Dr Lyu Jinghua (Presented via video link)
Visiting Scholar, Cyber Policy Initiative
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
United States of America

Dr Lyu Jinghua explored the norms of responsible state behaviour in cyberspace during her presentation. Firstly, she discussed cyber-norms in the following areas: (i) internet governance; (ii) countering cybercrime; (iii) data protection; and (iv) legitimacy and rules of cyberweapons. She noted that there were profound differences between countries in these aspects, especially between Western nations and the likes of China and Russia. Lyu also touched on state involvement in cyberspace, commenting that state actors had been involved in most cyber-events of significant scale. She shared key documents pertaining to cyber-norms promulgated by various entities. Of note were the US' International Strategy for Cyberspace as well as the International Code of Conduct for Information Security drawn up by a grouping that comprised China, Russia, and a few Central Asian states. Similarly, the lengthily-named United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, or UNGGE, had come up with a landmark report on the issue in 2015.

Lyu cited that the United Nations General Assembly had established two entities to discuss the issue of cybersecurity during the 2019-2021 period: an open-ended Working Group and the Group of Governmental Experts. She emphasised that the key differences between them were that of approach and focus. Lyu expressed optimism about UNGGE, highlighting that accepting flexibility in

terms of cyber-norms would be more realistic and an open-ended agreement could be the first step in this regard. She also stressed that the private sector could play a bigger role in this realm, noting the call from Microsoft for a Digital Geneva Convention and other initiatives by private companies.

Lyu concluded her presentation by delineating a number of ideas that could become norms: (i) no intrusion into other countries' cyber-territory; (ii) no first use of cyber-offence; (iii) no cyberattack on specific targets; and (iv) no interference with damage control.

Ms Teo Yi-Ling
Senior Fellow, Cyber and Homeland Defence Programme
Centre of Excellence for National Security, RSIS
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Ms Teo Yi-Ling covered the topic of cyber-resilience and lessons from small states. She noted that Information and communication technology was facilitating critical economic and societal functions. This gave rise to the notion of an interconnected digital substrate that was vulnerable to failure and compromise. As a result, cyber-resilience had emerged as an integral aspect of a cybersecurity ecosystem.

While resilience building was undertaken by nations in different ways, they had the same fundamental on how well a population would be informed and educated about cyberthreats, and eventually, respond to it. Teo contended that there was a low awareness of cybersecurity among the Singapore public. She added that Singapore had a weak first line of defence, rendering all the best defensive hardware and software useless if the "peopleware" was lacking. "Rank and file" employees had to play their roles, in tandem with deploying the best available infrastructure, technologies and legislations.

Teo cited both Estonia and Finland, where a common history of managing relations with Russia had served to crystallise a national attitude of resilience. For Estonia, the 2007 cyberattacks was a testing moment and helped its people become experts in cyber-defence. The small Baltic state also had a cyber-defence unit made up of volunteers that was formed after the attacks. National education was key to fighting cyberthreats in Finland, where it formalised cybersecurity skills training as part of its national school curriculum. Teo added that industry support was another area to consider in countering cyberthreats. For instance, the Israeli government had published a document to help corporations raise their organisational resilience against cyberattacks.

Teo rounded up her presentation by discussing the notion of psychological resilience. There were ways to improve this aspect, such as stress-management strategies and psychological skills training. The qualities of cyber-network resilience should include networks that remained operative while under attack. Every element of resilience had to be addressed, and these included the resilience of cyber-defence teams.

Ms Tarah Wheeler
Cybersecurity Policy Fellow
New America, United States of America

Ms Tarah Wheeler kicked off her presentation with an exhortation that cybersecurity professionals would put their responsibilities to the people they represented at the forefront of their minds. In May 2019, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released a series of principles regarding best practices in digital security. The issue on the difference between the definitions of digital security and information security came up when she had a discussion with OECD's Head of Cyber Security Policy. One of the challenges was in coming up with a common definition of information security when nations had interpreted it in different ways. Wheeler noted that digital security was defined by its usage in cyberwarfare, which on its own (cyberwarfare) was already difficult to define.

Cyberwarfare was diffuse as it was covert, giving rise to the problem of attribution. Hence, proxies were one of the main features in cyber-offensives as they enabled non-attribution. It took much more time to attribute a cyberattack than to carry it out, and that was why cyberattacks were such a devastating tool, Wheeler stressed. While cyberwarfare was generally considered a non-kinetic weapon, it could kill physically when used to target key infrastructure, such as dams and power plants.

Wheeler rounded up her presentation by elaborating on the responsibilities of both cybersecurity professionals, and the society at large. The former should endeavour to explain cyberthreats to the people in simplified terms, and moved away from the traditional notion that a "real" war was fought directly between two groups of people. Proxy wars were commonplace, and cyber-wars were a new version of such warfare. In terms of cybersecurity, the cybersecurity community should ensure that the world's population did not progress from ignorance to complacency or helplessness. Incidences of cyberattacks helped to further the understanding of current vulnerabilities, which would allow the cybersecurity community to better protect the society and the future.

Mr Miguel Alberto Gomez
Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies
ETH Zurich, Switzerland

Mr Miguel Alberto Gomez presented on the challenges to maintaining norms in cyberspace, with a focus on state actors. He noted that academics and policymakers alike were claiming that cyber was revolutionising interstate relations, with notions like "cyber-9/11" and "cyber-Pearl Harbor" often being brought up after major cybersecurity incidents. He highlighted that the trend of cyber-operations in the past 20 years was one of reaction rather than consistency. Moreover, cyber-operations had met with questionable success, with only a small proportion of attacks resulting in concessions from the states being targeted.

Cyber-operations today had four main features: (i) they were regionally bound; (ii) they were contextualised by existing rivalries; (iii) there was a withering attribution problem; and (iv) they were of limited strategic utility. There was a normative restraint in cyberspace due to various factors, including the inherent technological and organisational limits associated with cyberattacks, and the fact that deniability was no longer as feasible as it used to be. Overall, there were stable interactions in cyberspace, and they mimicked the dynamics of covert intervention. Limiting the scope and damage of operations would signal both restraint and commitment to norms.

According to Gomez, there were cognitive impediments to cyber-stability. These included pre-existing beliefs, mirror-imaging (assuming the adversary thought and acted like oneself), domain conceptualisation (limits set for cyber-operations), and strategic and organisational preferences (such as the political aversion to deploying conventional military force and the relative cost efficiency of cyber-operations) that set actors on specific courses of action. Adherence to implicit norms during periods of "cyber-conflict" might be at risk given emergent concepts such as "forward defence" and "persistent engagement". Both concepts were central to the current cyber-strategy of the United States, but they were not unique. While emergent concepts might impinge on implicit norms that had ensured stability thus far, the following measures could mitigate this problem: (i) confidence-building measures; (ii) expert/non-expert exchanges; and (iii) greater public awareness and education.

NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

From left to right: Dr Benazir Ahmed, Colonel James Liew, and Dr Alistair Cook (chair)

Dr Benazir Ahmed
Director General
Rapid Action Battalion Forces
Bangladesh

Dr Benazir Ahmed began by sharing his own perspectives on Non-Traditional Security (NTS) challenges. Despite the paradigm shift that the world had gone through since the Second World War, 9/11 was a tremendous shock to the world order when it happened in 2001. In the present era, threats to human security had grown in magnitude, notwithstanding NTS challenges, like natural disasters (wildfires, tsunami, earthquake, drought etc.), that had been around for a long time. Furthermore, there were challenges unique to the present times, such as transnational terrorism, info-security, climate change, and transnational crime, all of which added new dimensions to the notion of national security.

There were also other problems, such as resource depletion and the inability of certain countries to uphold the rule of law, and allowing violence to take to the streets. Defending and protecting national borders might not necessarily guarantee national security in the future. Because the idea of security had become very dynamic and would change over time, the pertinent question was what constituted security today. The upsurge of NTS issues presented an unprecedented challenge to the international, regional and national security architecture, and no country was immune from those threats.

At the same time, local problems could have global impacts. Citing the example of India, Dr Ahmed highlighted that if the local militancy were to spread in India, the region would be adversely affected. The complexities of the current situation had led to a diversion from the tradition notions of security. As there was an absence of overarching global security architecture, Ahmed suggested that a suitable response would require a holistic, and possibly collective, approach. The military would also have to adapt to face these emerging threats.

Colonel James Liew
Deputy Chief Guards Officer; and
Director, Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
Coordination Centre
Singapore

Dr Ahmed and **Colonel James Liew** addressed questions from the audience, covering a range of topics that included how NTS challenges had shaped military thinking, when the military should be involved, when responsibilities should be passed to civilian authorities, how NTS should be defined (climate change, cyber/AI terrorism, space and its freedom of use, return of the nuclear era, etc.), what analytical tools were available to facilitate planning for NTS challenges, and how water and food issues were affecting deliberations on NTS given the blurring of lines between traditional and non-traditional security. Taken as a whole, the interactive session was fruitful in that numerous points were shared and ideas were exchanged. The session concluded with the reminder that militaries ought to be prepared for everything and not be caught off guard.

ASEAN AND POWER DYNAMICS IN THE REGION

From left to right: Dr Nguyen Vu Tung, Prof Joseph Liow, Prof Steve Tsang, Assoc Prof Thitinan Pongsudhirak, and Amb Ong Keng Yong (chair)

Dr Nguyen Vu Tung
President
Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam
Vietnam

Dr Nguyen Vu Tung spoke on three main themes: the centrality and continued relevance of ASEAN, and the challenges the region would likely face in the future.

Nguyen started by making the point that ASEAN covered the entirety of the Southeast Asian region since its enlargement in the late 1990s, with Timor-Leste, currently an observer in the regional organisation, being considered for membership. The various partners of ASEAN, including the United States, India, South Korea, Russia and China, recognised the ASEAN centrality. Not only was there recognition of ASEAN as a diplomatic entity, these partner states had posted ambassadors to the ASEAN Secretariat, ratified ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), and participated in the various ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). In doing so, these partner states were acknowledging the importance of ASEAN in their strategic relations.

Regarding ASEAN's continued relevance, Nguyen highlighted the lack of a compatible substitute for ASEAN within Southeast Asia, as well as in the wider context of Asia Pacific or Indo-Pacific. ASEAN's continued relevance lied in three main factors. Firstly, ASEAN's continued relevance was founded upon its own success over the past fifty years. Secondly, based on the institutionalist approach, ASEAN would continue to remain relevant as the conditions right

now, with the intensifying competition between the United States and China, were similar to the Cold War conditions during ASEAN's formation. Thirdly, ASEAN's continued relevance is predicated upon its member states' pressing need for the region to remain stable not only to continue their respective nation-building efforts, but to build a strong ASEAN Community. Nguyen was confident of ASEAN's continued relevance for the long term.

Nonetheless, Nguyen acknowledged that ASEAN was not free of problems despite its long-term prospects. He emphasised the nature of ASEAN as a multilateral institution that exemplified the shortcomings and limits of multilateralism. Unlike the European Union (EU), ASEAN would remain a collective of small and medium economic powers, where member states would prioritise their own national interests over those of ASEAN. Despite these limitations, Nguyen iterated that the great powers recognised the peace building and diplomatic roles ASEAN played in the region, which by itself, would ensure ASEAN's continued relevance in the future.

Nguyen concluded that as a multilateral body, ASEAN would take a very strong position in pushing the principles and rules that would enhance the rules-based system in the region, rather than to take sides in the regional great-power dynamics.

Professor Joseph Liow
Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics
Research Adviser, RSIS; and
Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Prof Joseph Liow made three observations on the theme of the panel. Firstly, despite continued doubts about the Trump Administration, there was also increased clarity. China-US competition and rivalry would both deepen and widen. In this regard, US discourse would generally shift from managing China's rise to a form of containment. This would change the objective of the relationship with China, and move it from resolving issue-specific bilateral problems to tackling broad-ranging strategic disconnections. Such a change is not partisan, it affected many sectors of societies as well.

Liow noted the caveat that the US tactical playbook was still being disputed in terms of how and what the best approach was to address international disputes. In this regard, President Trump held many of the cards, with a lot of the decisions revolving around him. President Trump was transactional and not an ideologue, so possibilities remained for some kinds of deal with China. However, there

were ideologues in the Trump Administration that could complicate the picture. Additionally, China President Xi Jinping was under pressure as well. His visions of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), "Made in China 2025", and other results from the 19th Party Congress in 2017 were being challenged by the ongoing US-China trade war and other developments. President Xi's recent call for a new "long march" was suggestive of the pressures he was facing following his triumph at the 19th Party Congress.

Liow's second observation was that ASEAN was caught in the middle in a number of situations. Firstly, although some ASEAN member states had benefitted from the redirection of trade due to the ongoing US-China trade war in the short term, the trade war is generally not good for everyone in the long term. Secondly, in the South China Sea disputes, ASEAN risked becoming marginalised in the discussions, with the conflict taking on a more prominent US-China dimension, and with increasingly higher stakes. Thirdly, a lot of Southeast Asian states were already exposed to and reliant on imports of Chinese technology. An example was the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN), which was reliant on the synchronisation of e-commerce platforms using Chinese technology.

Liow noted that an ASEAN being caught in the middle would lead to the perennial question of choice between aligning with either Washington or Beijing, for which ASEAN should consider three possible outcomes. The first was not choosing a side. In this regard, the "Thucydides Trap" was interesting from the Southeast Asian perspective. Since Sparta and Athens were drawn into war because of their alliances with small states, how today's small states in the region aligned themselves would thus be critical in precipitating the outcome. Second, if the great powers forced small states to choose, that would be revealing of their intentions, especially in terms of being an impartial provider of stability and prosperity for the region. Third, not choosing sides did not infer not taking a stand on issues. All states should take a stand on issues, be it international law, sovereignty or other important matters.

The third observation was what Southeast Asia could and must do. Liow emphasised four ideas. Firstly, to seize the day. With regard to trade redirection in the US-China trade war, there remained opportunities for growth in certain Southeast Asian economies afforded by the current trade situation where factories were relocated from China to ASEAN states. Nonetheless, there were challenges to this situation, of which three stood out: whether Southeast Asian states had the (i) required infrastructure or (ii) skilled labour to host new manufacturing facilities, and (iii) whether the United States would shift its tariff attention to the Southeast Asian states that were benefitting from this situation. In line with Liow's second observation, a possible stratagem was thus to lie low and stay off the US radar. However, this would not be an easy task with the United States scouring and calling out states that it thought was ripping

it off. Thirdly, Liow recommended that ASEAN should go back to the basics in terms of ASEAN diplomacy. He recalled the ASEAN diplomatic role in the 1980s leading up to the 1991 Paris Peace Accords (Comprehensive Cambodian Peace Agreement). In the 1990s, ASEAN played an active role in providing a regional platform for managing great powers (the ASEAN Regional Forum). In the 2000s, ASEAN was at the forefront of initiatives, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS). ASEAN thus had the experience, the capacity, and today, the interest, to work together to mitigate the effects of great power dynamics. The fourth idea was the importance of ASEAN's unity of purpose, which in earlier days had enabled ASEAN's survival through balancing of national and regional interests. ASEAN would find common ground in the current breakdown in the Sino-US relationship, which was not in the long-term interest of all the member states.

Professor Steve Tsang
Director, School of Oriental and African Studies China Institute
University of London
United Kingdom

Prof Steve Tsang focused on China and the power dynamics in ASEAN. He raised three main issues: the rise of China, the decoupling of China and the United States, and how ASEAN should respond in light of these two realities.

Tsang remarked that the rise of an assertive China did not start during President Xi Jinping's tenure. China had informed the world of its intentions long ago, but the rest of the world chose to misinterpret it. Deng Xiaoping's maxim of China biding its time meant that when China was ready, it would "roar". President Xi simply decided that China's moment had arrived. Nevertheless, Tsang emphasised that this did not imply China had a masterplan for regional or global domination, only that the Chinese government expected the rest of the world to pay due respect, especially at its frontlines, such as Southeast Asia and Asia Pacific. Tsang stated that China had no interest to play someone else's games. The more assertive China wanted to play by its own rules.

Secondly, Tsang highlighted that the region needed to get used to decoupling. In his opinion, it was not helpful to use terms like the "Cold War" or "de-globalisation" in the context of the politico-economic relationship between China and the United States. The Cold War was a very specific situation unlike what was happening today. Unlike the USSR, China was the single biggest beneficiary of globalisation, and it had no choice but to respond to President Trump's tariffs. Tsang highlighted the process of general decoupling across the board, which saw a structural shift in economic ties, academic exchanges, the exchange of ideas, and other ways that the United States and China engaged with each

other. He stressed that in China, Western concepts like democracy, civil society or universal values were no longer applicable following President Xi's rise to power. China under President Xi was now powerful and confident enough to chart its own course towards a new era. Although it was not President Xi's intentions to decouple China's economic ties with the United States, he was already preparing for it, and was able to take it in his stride when President Trump started the trade war. Decoupling would only continue, according to Tsang.

Thirdly, Tsang advised ASEAN to offer something more concrete with regard to ASEAN-China relations. Whilst ASEAN had a very wide spread of expertise with China, a lot of its analysts were trained in China, and could be biased. A more neutral training venue would be required, not to demonise China but to objectively understand the positive and negative aspects of China. Furthermore, ASEAN diplomats training in a neutral venue as a cohort would build stronger ties with each other to deal with problems outside the influences of the decoupling China and the United States.

Associate Professor Thitinan Pongsudhirak
Director, Institute of Security and International Studies
Chulalongkorn University
Thailand

Assoc Prof Thitinan Pongsudhirak began by stating that the region is in the middle of a paradigm shift from the Asia-Pacific era to the Indo-Pacific era. While Asia Pacific was mainly about prosperity, with China benefitting more than any other country, Indo-Pacific was focused on security. The United States took the shift to Indo-Pacific very seriously, employing a whole-of-government approach to review the situation. According to Thitinan, militaries across the Indo-Pacific region would find themselves playing a much more critical role in maintaining peace and stability. He jested that APPSMO could be eventually renamed IPPSMO.

Thitinan highlighted that ASEAN centrality was not what it used to be, and could no longer be taken for granted. He gave the example of North Korea failing to turn up at the recent ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting in Thailand. While ASEAN used to be the go-to platform for regionalism — such that it acquired a collection of acronyms, like the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) — ASEAN could no longer assume its former de facto go-to-role because of divisions within ASEAN itself, with Cambodia firmly in China's camp, and a wavering Philippines under Duterte. ASEAN had become fragmented.

Thitinan stressed that while the decoupling between the United States and China was not just about trade or technology, it would likely remain non-military in nature. The divisions were already quite clear in certain sectors, for example, Facebook and Google in the United States against WeChat and Baidu in China, and decoupling policies, such as the United States limiting visas for Chinese students and restricting Confucius Institutes versus China limiting rare earth exports to the United States. Thitinan stated that this was not the first time the United States had faced such threats. In a similar circumstance during the Cold War, Washington adopted a principled approach against its adversary. The difference today was that President Trump was dragging China down to his level in a resentful rather than principled approach that had caused the region to be worried.

Given these three trends, Thitinan subsequently tackled the question of what ASEAN could do, which would be a very tough job considering that ASEAN was divided. He highlighted specific challenges, including whether ASEAN would become marginalised in the Korean peninsula if North Korea exit the ARF framework, and the legitimacy of the South China Sea Code of Conduct under an influential China that could divide ASEAN at will. The only thing in ASEAN's favour was the lack of competition for ASEAN centrality. ASEAN remained the only buffer, broker and bridge for great powers in the region. Thus, to maintain ASEAN's relevance, Thitinan suggested that the ASEAN Secretary-General's office be reformed and helmed by a charismatic Secretary-General, rather than a rotating diplomat, who could bring ASEAN forward into the Indo-Pacific era.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

1200 - 1700 hrs   **Arrival and Registration of Participants**

1600 - 1800 hrs   **Ice-Breaker Event**

1900 hrs   **Welcome Dinner**

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Tuesday, 30 July 2019 (Day 1)

0930 - 0935 hrs   **Welcome Remarks**
Ambassador Ong Keng Yong,
Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS; and Director, IDSS

0935 - 1020 hrs   **Keynote Address**
Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman,
Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

1020 - 1100 hrs   **Group Photo-Taking and Tea Break**

1100 - 1245 hrs   **Panel Session I**
Topic   : Visions for the Regional Security
                    Architecture

Speakers   : **Admiral (Retired) Arun Prakash**
                    Former Indian Navy Chief; and
                    Distinguished Chair, Naval War College,
                    India

                    Mr Alexander Gabuev
                    Senior Fellow and Chair, Russia in the
                    Asia-Pacific Program, Carnegie Moscow
                    Center, Russian Federation

Mr Drew Thompson

Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Chairperson : **Professor Ralf Emmers**

Dean, RSIS; and President's Chair in International Relations, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

1245 - 1345 hrs **Lunch**

1445 - 1645 hrs **Visit to Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre and Information Fusion Centre**

1845 hrs **21st APPSMO Opening Dinner and Alumni Dinner**
Guest-of-Honour : Major-General Kelvin Khong

Chief of Air Force, Singapore Armed Forces

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Wednesday, 31 July 2019 (Day 2)

0830 - 0930 hrs **Introduction by Participants**
(Australia / Brunei / Cambodia / Canada / France)

0930 - 0945 hrs **Tea Break**

0945 - 1130 hrs **Panel Session II**
Topic : The Military's Role in Humanitarian Emergencies

Speakers : **Professor Yukiko Nishikawa**

Graduate School of International Development, Nagoya University, Japan

Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar
Executive Director, National Maritime
Foundation, India

Mr Muktar Farah
Officer-in-Charge, Regional Office for Asia
and the Pacific, United Nations Office for
the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Dr Alistair D. B. Cook
Coordinator, Humanitarian Assistance and
Disaster Relief Programme; and Research
Fellow, Centre for Non-Traditional Security
Studies, RSIS

Chairperson : **Professor Pascal Vennesson**
Professor of Political Science and Head of
Research, IDSS, RSIS

1130 - 1215 hrs Lunch

1215 - 1330 hrs Syndicated Discussion

1445 - 1700 hrs Visit to Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)
Attire   : Office Attire
(Long-sleeved shirt without necktie)

1830 hrs   Distinguished Lecture
Topic   : China and Change: Domestic and Foreign
Imperatives

Speaker   : **Professor Wang Gungwu**
University Professor, National University
of Singapore; Emeritus Professor,
Australian National University; and
Chairman, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Chairperson : **Mr Eddie Lim**
Senior Fellow and Head of Military Studies
Programme, IDSS, RSIS

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0830 - 0930 hrs   **Introduction by Participants**
(Germany / Indonesia / Italy / Japan / Republic of Korea)

0930 - 0945 hrs   **Tea Break**

0945 - 1130 hrs   **Panel Session III**
Topic   :   Emerging Technologies and Warfare

Speakers   :   **Professor Isaac Ben-Israel**
Chairman, Israel Space Agency, Israel

Mr Tomáš Valášek
Director, Carnegie Europe, Belgium

Dr Vasily Kashin
Senior Research Fellow, National
Research University Higher School of
Economics, Russian Federation

Ms Zoe Stanley-Lockman
Associate Research Fellow, Military
Transformation Programme, IDSS, RSIS

Chairperson :   **Dr Sinderpal Singh**
Senior Fellow and Coordinator of South
Asia Programme, IDSS, RSIS

1130 - 1215 hrs   **Lunch**

1215 - 1330 hrs   **Syndicated Discussion**

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0830 - 0930 hrs **Introduction by Participants**
(Laos / Malaysia / Myanmar / New Zealand / Pakistan / The Philippines)

0930 - 0945 hrs **Tea Break**

0945 - 1130 hrs **Panel Session IV**

Topic : Competing Norms and Strategic Implications

Speakers : **Dr Lyu Jinghua**
Visiting Scholar, Cyber Policy Initiative, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, United States of America

Ms Teo Yi-Ling
Senior Fellow, Cyber and Homeland Defence Programme, Centre of Excellence for National Security, RSIS

Ms Tarah Wheeler
Cybersecurity Policy Fellow, New America, United States of America

Mr Miguel Alberto Gomez
Senior Researcher, Center for Security Studies, Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich, Switzerland

Chairperson : **Associate Professor Kumar Ramakrishna**
Head of Policy Studies and Head of National Security Studies Programme, RSIS

1130 - 1215 hrs **Lunch**

1215 - 1330 hrs   **Syndicated Discussion**

1400 - 1500 hrs   **Interactive Session**

                    Topic   : Non-Traditional Security Challenges in the 21st Century

                    Speakers : **Dr Benazir Ahmed**
Director General, Rapid Action Battalion Forces, Bangladesh

Colonel James Liew
Deputy Chief Guards Officer; and Director, Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre

                    Chairperson : **Dr Alistair D. B. Cook**
Coordinator of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Programme and Research Fellow, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, RSIS

1515 – 1615 hrs   **Introduction by Participants**
(Saudi Arabia / Singapore / Sweden / Switzerland / Thailand)

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Saturday, 3 August 2019 (Day 5)

0800 - 0845 hrs   **Briefing on the Malayan Campaign**

1000 - 1400 hrs   **Military Heritage Tour and Lunch**
                    Attire   : Smart Casual (Short-sleeved shirt / polo and slacks)

1730 - 2100 hrs   **National Day Parade Preview Show**

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0830 - 0930 hrs   **Introduction by Participants**
(Timor-Leste / United Arab Emirates / United Kingdom /
United States of America / Vietnam)

0930 - 0945 hrs   **Tea Break**

0945 - 1130 hrs   **Panel Session V**

Topic   : ASEAN and Power Dynamics in the
Region

Speakers   : **Dr Nguyen Vu Tung**
President, Diplomatic Academy of
Vietnam, Vietnam

Professor Joseph Liow
Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative
and International Politics; Research
Adviser, RSIS; and Dean, College of
Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences,
Nanyang Technological University,
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Professor Steve Tsang
Director, School of Oriental and
African Studies China Institute,
University of London, United Kingdom

**Associate Professor Thitinan
Pongsudhirak**
Director, Institute of Security and
International Studies, Chulalongkorn
University, Thailand

Chairperson : **Ambassador Ong Keng Yong**
Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS;
and Director, IDSS

1130 - 1330 hrs   **Presentation of Certificates followed by
Farewell Lunch**

SPEAKERS

(in chronological order of speaking)

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Admiral (Retired) Arun Prakesh
Former Indian Navy Chief; and Distinguished Chair
Naval War College
India

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Senior Fellow and Chair, Russia in the Asia-Pacific Program
Carnegie Moscow Center
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Mr Drew Thompson
Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
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Professor Yukiko Nishikawa
Graduate School of International Development
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Captain Sarabjeet Singh Parmar
Executive Director
National Maritime Foundation
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Mr Muktar Farah
Officer-in-Charge, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
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Dr Alistair D. B. Cook
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Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Professor Wang Gungwu
University Professor, National University of Singapore; Emeritus Professor,
Australian National University; and Chairman, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute
Singapore

Professor Isaac Ben-Israel
Chairman
Israel Space Agency
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Mr Tomáš Valášek
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The **Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS)** is a key research component of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS). It focuses on defence and security research to serve national needs. IDSS faculty and research staff conducts both academic and policy-oriented research on security-related issues and developments affecting Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific. IDSS is divided into three research clusters: (i) The Asia-Pacific cluster – comprising the China, South Asia, United States, and Regional Security Architecture programmes; (ii) The Malay Archipelago cluster – comprising the Indonesia and Malaysia programmes; and (iii) The Military and Security cluster – comprising the Military Transformations, Maritime Security, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) programmes. Finally, the Military Studies Programme, the wing that provides military education, is also a part of IDSS.

For more information about IDSS, please visit www.rsis.edu.sg/research/idss.

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The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** is a think tank and professional graduate school of international affairs at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. An autonomous school, RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. With the core functions of research, graduate education and networking, it produces cutting-edge research on Asia Pacific Security, Multilateralism and Regionalism, Conflict Studies, Non-traditional Security, Cybersecurity, Maritime Security and Terrorism Studies.

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