

## **A \$100m fund for the pursuit of peace**

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Asia-Pacific nations must develop new ideas, framework and regional institutions to foster peace and security.

To get the ball rolling is a US\$68-million (\$100-million) grant from one of America's largest private philanthropies — the John D and Catherine T MacArthur Foundation.

The money, to be given out over seven years, will go towards establishing an Asia Security Initiative, aimed at bringing together 27 institutions from around the world to develop solutions that will help policymakers tackle problems such as climate change, environment, human security, energy security as well as internal conflicts.

Launched here on Friday, the largest beneficiary is the **S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** — one of the core institutions selected to lead the research clusters.

The school, which exists to develop a community of scholars and policy analysts at the forefront of Asia-Pacific security studies and international affairs, received US\$2.5 million, bulk of which will go to the RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies to spearhead research.

Speaking at the official launch, RSIS dean Barry Desker said that the initiative is "a significant endorsement of the importance of Asian security issues and recognition of its considerable implications for the world at large".

The grant will also give RSIS access to "cutting-edge research to respond to challenges that affect both the well-being as well as the security of states and societies in the region", he added.

Other institutions involved include China's Peking University, which will oversee the regional security cooperation cluster, and Seoul's East Asia Institute, which will supervise a group focusing on north-east Asia.

The institutions were selected after an exhaustive two-year search to identify regional leaders in the field of security studies.

The foundation will help build long-term capacity to conduct policy research.