

NO COMMUNITY WITHOUT COMMITMENT: TOWARDS FUNCTIONAL REGIONALISM IN EAST ASIA

REPORT OF THE SENTOSA ROUNDTABLE ON ASIAN SECURITY 2009



19–20 MARCH 2009
SINGAPORE



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S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES,
NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY
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1. Foreword	3
2. Executive Summary	4
3. Report of the Proceedings of the Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009	6
Session 1:	8
The “Architectural” Approach to Asian Security: Challenges and Prospects	
Lunch Distinguished Address:	11
<i>Dr. Balaji Sadasivan, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore</i>	
Session 2:	12
The Obama Administration’s Asia Policy: What Can East Asia Expect?	
Session 3:	14
Managing Economic/Financial Crisis: Prospects for Regional Cooperation in East Asia	
Session 4:	16
Managing Pandemics, Resource Competition and Climate Change: Prospects for Regional Cooperation in East Asia	
Session 5:	19
Functional Cooperation and East Asian Regionalism: Challenges and Prospects	
Conclusions and Recommendations	22
4. Appendix: The Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009: Roundtable Programme	28

This report summarizes the proceedings of the conference as interpreted by the assigned rapporteurs and editors of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this report.

This conference adheres to a variation of the Chatham House Rule. Accordingly, beyond the speakers and paper presenters cited, no other attributions have been included in this report.

Foreword

The Chinese saying, “May you live in interesting times”, pretty much sums up the regional experience of East Asia today. East Asians live in not only interesting but exceptionally trying times, where the mettle of their leaders and the fortitude of their societies are being put severely to the test. To merely survive the current global financial crisis is not at question here. Moreover, a host of grave concerns other than economic recession also vie for the attention of the region’s security managers. To emerge from the crucible not only standing but thriving and prospering – that is the crucial challenge that confronts East Asians today, a test they can finesse only if regional actors cooperate in a sustained and substantive manner.

The Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security was established in 2006 as a forum where policy practitioners, intellectuals and activists could deliberate on policy concerns germane to the security of East Asia. Hosted by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) of Singapore and sponsored by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) of Japan, the Roundtable has become a much anticipated annual event that continually draws key policymakers, academicians and analysts to idyllic Sentosa in Singapore. Held in March 2009, the third Roundtable builds upon the efforts of preceding roundtables, with this edition’s focus on the region’s embryonic but growing functional regionalism and its significant implications

for East Asia’s security architecture. As in the case of its predecessors, a series of actionable recommendations has been provided.

Sincere gratitude is due the following for their instrumental contributions, without which the Roundtable would not have been possible:

- Chairman Jiro Hanyu and President Akinori Seki of the SPF for their generous support and counsel;
- Pauline Liew, Eugene Tan and other RSIS corporate support staff, for their meticulous management of all Roundtable activities;
- RSIS graduate students Peter Krasnopolsky, Keith Flick and Diane Russel Ong Junio for their comprehensive notes of the Roundtable proceedings; and
- Akira Matsunaga and Lolahon Saiidova of the SPF for their expert advice.

Finally, my thanks to all Roundtable participants for the debates that so enlivened and enriched the proceedings and their commitment to making East Asia a safer and more secure place.

Tan See Seng

Convenor

The Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009

Executive Summary

In the debate on East Asia's emerging regional security architecture, what is often missed or glossed over is the embryonic functional regionalism that is fast developing in the region. Despite East Asia's rapid change from an under-institutionalized region in the immediate post-Cold War period, to the cluttered institutional landscape it boasts today, questions remain over whether East Asians can successfully manage the many transnational security challenges that presently confront its societies. Thanks to globalization, regional countries are increasingly compelled to broaden their national security agendas as well as, in some instances, redefine their understanding of security. Today, a range of non-traditional security (NTS) challenges vies alongside traditional interstate war for the attention of policymakers and security planners. No single state can manage these myriad security challenges alone; regional collaboration has become an unequivocal necessity. However, while East Asian governments acknowledge this axiom, they also continue to emphasize the importance of national sovereignty and non-intervention norms. Moreover, a lack of state capacity also complicates efforts at regional cooperation.

Against this backdrop, the Sentosa Roundtable 2009 deliberated the challenges and prospects of a functional approach to regional cooperation in East Asia. Broadly understood, it consists in interest and/or issue-based collaboration undertaken between states as well as between state and non-state actors. To the extent possible, cooperation is defined in functional or technical terms, thereby relieving it of political disruptions. Reflecting on the embryonic rise of functional collaboration among regional countries in various NTS dimensions (economic, environmental, health, energy, counterterrorism,

transnational crime, etc.) and the political and strategic implications such cooperation holds for the prosperity, security and stability of East Asia, the Roundtable delegates noted that contrary to theoretical expectations, functional cooperation undertaken by East Asian states on several NTS fronts revealed, somewhat unsurprisingly, the intensely political nature of those ostensibly technical enterprises. In that respect, notwithstanding the many constraints that currently stand in the way of a more robust regionalism in East Asia, existing functional cooperation underscores on the other hand the commitment of regional states to strengthening their region.

To that end, Roundtable participants offer a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing extant regional cooperation as well as establishing new cooperative arrangements, improving collaboration between state and non-state actors both in the domestic and regional contexts, and increasing national/local responses as well as responsibility in regards to NTS challenges.

Summary of Recommendations

Regional Cooperation

- East Asia should maintain and enhance its inclusive and participatory approach to regionalism.
- East Asia should maintain a flexible regionalism that can absorb crises and permit regional states a measure of strategic liveness.
- East Asian regionalism should be kept as a common space defined by some basic rules and values.
- Regional arrangements should make their decision-making processes as transparent as possible.

- Regional arrangements should be calibrated as redistributive mechanisms.
- Regional arrangements should be defined along thematic/functional lines, namely, ARF for specific areas of non-traditional security (NTS) cooperation, ASEAN+3 for economic and financial cooperation, APEC for economic and trade, and EAS for summit-level strategic dialogue.
- The ARF should be upgraded to a summit.
- Back-to-back annual meetings of the ARF and APEC should be held to facilitate regular participation by all member states, especially the US.
- East Asia should build upon recent achievements in security cooperation with America since continuity rather than change will likely define US Asia policy.
- China and the US should establish a new form of bilateral defence cooperation and unity that contributes to the wider peace, security and stability of the entire East Asian region.
- East Asians should cooperatively manage the security of their own region rather than depend solely on the US.
- Regional great powers, specifically China and Japan, should cooperate to facilitate East Asia's financial recovery.
- East Asia should build "mini-lateral" coalitions comprising smaller numbers of likeminded states (e.g., G20, P4/P7) that will facilitate cooperation on various NTS fronts.
- East Asia should push for the reconvening and successful completion of the Doha Round of world trade talks.
- The EAS should be given a bigger role in financial recovery.
- The IMF should revise its voting rights system and give East Asians bigger representation.
- East Asia should focus on human security, and reassess and recalibrate its regional norms and conventions for NTS cooperation, including towards preventive diplomacy.

Collaboration between State and Non-State Actors

- East Asia should enhance participatory regionalism by expanding its network of actors, both state and non-state, and enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration between intergovernmental and nongovernmental sectors.
- East Asia should enhance cooperative links between the global and regional dimensions.

National Responses

- Regional countries should include NTS issues in their national security agendas.
- Regional countries should focus on building national capacity and strengthening local mechanisms for dealing with NTS challenges.
- Regional countries should go beyond national security strategies that deal principally with immediate threats to include long-term, intergenerational challenges.
- Regional countries should develop economic models that balance export-oriented growth industrialization with the need for domestic infrastructure and demand, social safety nets, workforce re-education/retooling, environmental protection, etc.
- Regional countries and the US should employ "smart power" in their counterterrorism and/or counterinsurgency strategies by balancing the use of "kinetic" or hard/coercive measures with soft/collaborative/accommodative measures.
- Regional countries should balance between raising legitimate grievances against US foreign policy, on one hand, and not allowing the issue to get out of hand and adversely impact relations between themselves and the US, on the other.

Report of the Proceedings of the Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009

On 19th and 20th March 2009, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) hosted the third Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security in Singapore, sponsored by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation of Japan. An annual dialogue for exploring new ideas and approaches to the management of peace and security in the region, the Sentosa Roundtable deliberates the prospects, problems and pathways to security community in Asia. A key concern of the Roundtable involves the generation of actionable policy recommendations on regional cooperation which policymakers may find useful. Its participants include respected academics, policy experts, civil society activists as well as government officials, both serving as well as retired, from Asia and beyond.

Based on the assumption that long-term peace and stability in Asia will depend on regional contentment, rather than containment, Roundtable participants assess the evolution of the Asian security order towards a community of satisfied or contented regional powers. In particular, they deliberate on the drivers that make nations view international security as a positive not zero-sum game, which is key to achieving a state of mutual contentment. The first Roundtable examined the extent to which regional economic growth, interdependence and shared prosperity make countries less likely to resort to violence to achieve their political objectives or to alter the status quo through war. The second Roundtable debated the contribution of regional international institutions to reducing tensions and introducing a culture of restraint and a habit of dialogue that enable countries to trust each other more. The third Roundtable, just concluded in March 2009, focused on ongoing efforts to build regional security architecture in East Asia, a key building block for its ongoing evolution to an East Asian Community.

Overview of the Roundtable



Roundtable in session

The focus of this third edition of the Sentosa Roundtable was on functional contributions to the building of East Asia's regional architecture. Much of regional policy discourse has hitherto been focused on the "emerging" security architecture – or, stated differently, institutional framework – of East Asia. A notable example is Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's proposal for an Asia-Pacific Community, which elicited less than enthusiastic responses from some regional quarters. Use of the architectural metaphor naturally calls to mind questions of structural design. In East Asia's case, such questions quickly threaten to raise doubts over the cluttered institutional landscape of the region. In the brief span of time since the Cold War ended, East Asia has transformed from an institutionally indigent region into one chockfull of institutions, many of whose agendas and roles remain vague and potentially competitive. In the view of some regional watchers, it is because of concerns such as these that caution against excessive confidence in East Asia's prospects in regionalism is warranted. Others however are optimistic that the region's institutions can and will complement each other.

That said, what is often missed in the debate on regional architecture is the growing adoption, by regional actors, of functional approaches to interstate cooperation in East Asia, especially in non-traditional security areas. Academic theories of functionalism and neo-functionalism describe regional integration as a process that begins from technical and noncontroversial policy areas and subsequently spills over into areas of “high politics”. In East Asia’s case, functional cooperation has principally involved ad hoc cooperative arrangements, oftentimes beginning at the level of the lowest common denominator, in non-traditional security concerns. In essence, this consists in issues-based cooperation that is predominantly driven by shared interests rather than values. Past examples include the South China Sea Workshops, which sought to defuse bilateral tensions and building mutual confidence among territorial claimants. Present-day examples include intra-regional collaboration in tracking and interdicting transnational criminal activities, monitoring and responding to financial crisis and pandemics, and the like. Without much fanfare, these oft-times mundane accomplishments in various issue-areas have contributed in ways big and small to East Asian regionalism.

Whether all this constitutes East Asia’s version of the *petits pas, grands effets* (“little steps, major effects”) strategy advocated by Jean Monet, the architect of early post-war European integration, remains to be seen. If anything, the deliberations of the Roundtable highlight the complexities and constraints that confront cooperative regionalist enterprises among East Asians. Yet this reality in no way diminishes the significance of regional developments and embryonic arrangements already underway in areas as varied as finance and industry, energy production, environmental and health security, and transnational criminal interdiction.¹ What all this suggests, at least in a preliminary way, is a growing albeit uneven congruence among East Asians, along specific interests and issues, that could prove fundamental to regional cooperation and community formation. Without this incremental congruence and commonality – and, crucially, the requisite political commitment of all East Asian stakeholders to functional regionalism – no community, not least the East Asian Community, would be conceivable much less achievable.

The Roundtable consisted of the following five sessions.

¹ See various chapters in See Seng Tan, ed., *Collaboration under Anarchy: Functional Cooperation and East Asian Security*, Report of the Study Group for the Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2008–2009 (to be published under the monograph series of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies).

The “Architectural” Approach to Asian Security: Challenges and Prospects

First, on challenges and prospects of the “architectural” approach to East Asian security, the participants debated the nature and extent of the regional institutional architecture. If anything, the security architecture of East Asia lacks the strategic coherence of the European Union. Needless to say, the enterprise of East Asian regionalism is an “essentially contested” one. Roundtable participants noted the rhetorical differences between academic and policy circles in their understandings of “architecture”, and the flexibility with which a strategic ambiguity of sorts offers to regional actors, both state and non-state, to the cause of East Asian regionalism. To facilitate more regular participation at regional forums at the highest levels, it was proposed that the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) be upgraded to a summit, and for back-to-back annual meetings of the ARF and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum to be held.



Dr. Akira Matsunaga of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Confusing Terminology

Participants alike agreed that the generous but conceptually imprecise use of the architecture metaphor in East Asian regionalism has proved confusing rather than enlightening. For example, it has been used variously as a noun, verb and adjective in the East Asian context. According to the session’s lead discussant, no meaningful security architecture has emerged in any real sense in East Asia, despite incessant allusions to such. Moreover, East Asians do not necessarily share the same understanding

and usage of the term “regional architecture”; as one delegate noted, the Chinese avoid using it presumably because it denotes for them the US alliance system. Quite the opposite, another participant noted that Americans use it because it denotes for them something more than alliances.

Moreover, some define regional architecture as values-based, as shown by the “league of democracies” idea propounded by American politicians such as Senator John McCain and academicians like Anne-Marie Slaughter (recently appointed director of policy planning for the US State Department). Others however argue that the architecture term should only be used to describe a functionally oriented environment, since architecture cannot exist for its own sake. The contested meaning of the architecture metaphor led one participant to suggest replacing it with that of networks, which arguably better reflects their functional character. In the same vein, it was noted that the network metaphor implies a loosely connected system with no central or supranational authority.

According to the session’s lead discussant, security architecture in East Asia is unlikely to materialize because of the following reasons.

First, security in Asia is fluid, and dependent to a great degree on economic cooperation.

Second, too many versions of the term architecture exist, as evidenced by the broad array of regional institutions with potentially overlapping agendas and roles. Achieving consensus among these parties will be a complex issue. In this regard, participants took note of a recent survey conducted by a leading US think tank, which recorded relatively high scepticism among security analysts regarding their perceived utility of regional arrangements to the security of East Asia. Survey respondents implied that the self-help approach and reliance on global institutions – the United Nations (UN) for security, the World Trade Organization (WTO) for trade, the World Health

Organization (WHO) for health, and so on – would likely predominate over regionalism. Another delegate noted that East Asia's inherent complexity and diversity militate against the prospect for a unified security architecture.

Third, the variety of institutions also encourages states to adopt an instrumentalist approach to such, rather than support and commit to them equally. Finally, the idea of a regional architecture presupposes an architect, in this instance the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which has been the driving force behind the creation of institutions such as the ARF, ASEAN+3, and East Asia Summit (EAS). However, there is concern whether this architect is itself sufficiently united in vision and commitment to see through the building of a viable regional architecture, especially given its lack of internal cohesion, perceived weakness of its charter, and the like. As one delegate put it, ASEAN may not be able to “hold the centre”.

Strategic Flexibility

Some participants did not think that conceptual ambiguity poses a serious challenge since it does allow for a certain policy flexibility which regional governments generally welcome. This partly accounts for the tacit preference for loose definitions of architecture. For example, contrary to the conventional belief among analysts that China has been put off by the abundance of institutions, one delegate noted that the official Chinese view is that China is learning to “walk with many legs”, meaning, China treats all available institutions as important and relevant since most if not all of them are, in a sense, predicated on the centrality of China. Different mechanisms offer better chances to address specific issues, and China would choose the best one for each. Another delegate agreed that a public goods approach should be adopted whereby the unique strengths and focus of respective institutions – for example, the ARF contributing to regional security, the APEC contributing to regional economic dynamism – is seen as an advantage rather than disadvantage. In this regard, a cluttered institutional landscape is not necessarily a bad thing as it enhances the strategic options of regional countries. As one participant put it, having something, no matter how inchoate, is better than having nothing.

Another delegate noted that East Asia is best served by a flexible rather than fixed architecture consisting in diverse regional arrangements for managing different issues. They could complement one another in advocating different issues. Another participant noted that institutional competition could be healthy. For example, the neglect of the ARF of Northeast Asian security concerns has partly contributed to the rising importance of sub-regional arrangements such as the Six Party Talks and the recent trilateral gathering involving the so-called “+3” countries, China, Japan and South Korea, at Dazaifu, Japan, in December 2008. While ARF proponents understandably find these competitive tendencies worrisome, the onus is on regional arrangements to prove their worth, as it were. In this regard, some participants saw Rudd's Asia-Pacific Community idea, no matter their feelings about it, as a useful “wakeup call to ASEAN”. However, this could mean that the efficiency of certain institutions would be enhanced relative to other arrangements.

Stability and Distributive Justice

According to one participant, the security environment of East Asia has generally been stable, predictable, and non-disruptive, but these positive effects have arisen thanks to the efforts of the smaller and/or weaker regional states, and not of the big powers. Because of war policy, economic weakness, lack of strategic restraint and weak sense of stakeholder responsibility, big powers have proved more destabilizing and unpredictable in recent times. On the other hand, China and India have a chance to be stabilizing powers, though they still lack the ability to set aside their own domestic needs and assume regional leadership.

What Asia needs is more economic growth, the condition for maintaining stability in Asia, without which serious social and environmental problems could arise. In contrast to the ongoing reliance on export-oriented industrialization for the US market, East Asia should emphasize domestic consumption. In this regard, the future of East Asia regional architecture is not necessarily about institutions per se, but whether and how regional arrangements are useful as redistributive mechanisms of wealth and power. Stated differently, whatever the architecture may look like, the real test is whether it could absorb regional crises of the sort afflicting the region today.

Nonetheless, the recent reduction in bilateral tensions between regional great powers has perceptibly enhanced prospects for regional stability, according to another delegate. For example, the political rivalry between China and Japan, which animated the debate over the ASEAN+3 or EAS as the appropriate regional vehicle for building the East Asian Community, has of late abated in view of significantly improved relations between Beijing and Tokyo. In that regard, the recent China-Japan-Korea trilateral summit was viewed as a positive development towards regional stability, possibly even a step in the direction of a new architecture for Northeast Asia. In this regard, a delegate noted that the architecture metaphor could serve as a useful diagnostic for mapping the shifting balance of power in East Asia.

Participatory and Inclusive Regionalism

Regionalism in East Asia needs to remain inclusive and open, a common space defined by some basic rules and values (e.g. the ASEAN Way). It was also noted that East Asia's institutional plurality allows for a greater number of states to engage on different issues. The role and relevance of non-state actors, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups, in shaping regional architecture was also discussed. In this regard, East Asia's institutional plurality is arguably a strength rather than weakness, since diverse regional arrangements would be required to deal with the myriad of functional security issues both traditional and non-traditional. The growing litany of human security concerns in East Asia (e.g., human trafficking, migrant workers) underscore the need for a human rights regime in East Asia at the regional level, although East Asian states are mostly unwilling to countenance such a prospect at this stage.

**Lunch Distinguished Address: *Dr Balaji Sadasivan,*
*Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Singapore***



Dr. Balaji Sadasivan,
Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Singapore

Dr Sadasivan noted that East Asia is presently engaged in the common search for a new regional architecture at a time when challenges confronting the region are unprecedented. Institutions that were designed in the past are not meant to address the current problems. On one hand, there is the financial crisis and other non-traditional challenges. On the other hand, mutual suspicions remain strong among East Asian states at a time when the rise of China and India has become the focus of attention.

The regional architecture of East Asia will be less structured and broader than in Europe of the Americas. Political frameworks will support but not replace bilateral relationships. The region's openness is its strength. East Asia is an integral part of global finance and trading networks. An open and inclusive regional architecture helps avoid conflict. The US is indispensable in the region and will maintain its presence for decades to come and cannot be left out of any architecture in the region.

Finally, Dr Sadasivan noted that though the recent Dazaifu trilateral summit between China, Japan and South Korea has been said to mark the potential marginalization of ASEAN, he begged to differ since ASEAN's neutrality vis-a-vis the great powers, growing economic integration, and robust responses to the financial crisis and other non-traditional security challenges have only strengthened the organization.

The Obama Administration's Asia Policy: What Can East Asia Expect?



From L to R: Dr. Kumar Ramakrishna, Dr. Joseph Liow, Amb. Barry Desker, Prof. Zhai Kun

In this session, the Roundtable participants debated the scope and substance of the Obama administration's embryonic policy towards East Asia, and tentatively concluded that building upon former president George W. Bush's Asia policy might not be a bad thing for the new president to consider. There is still much hope and expectations in the Obama administration and one thing to be concerned about is that the expectations about it would weight it down. It should be noted that President Obama inherited a significantly weakened US government amidst increasing concerns about the global financial and economic crisis. While the Obama administration has shown interest in rejuvenating America's Asia policy, recent developments in the region – North Korea's missile tests and leadership succession issue, testy relations between India and Pakistan after the November 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai, etc. – could prove challenging.

Economic Recovery as Top Priority

The participants were all in agreement that the key focus of the Obama administration would be on recovery of the US economy. According to a US delegate, the Obama team would likely rank foreign policy below economic crisis, healthcare reform, educational reform and global warming in terms of their importance. To the extent foreign policy matters at all, another delegate argued that developments

in Iraq and Afghanistan would constitute top priorities for the Americans. With economic recovery at the top of its agenda, it is unlikely that the Obama administration would continue the Bush administration's use of the APEC as a forum for deliberating terrorism, infectious diseases, security issues, supply chain and maritime security; rather, it would likely ensure that the APEC goes back to its original focus as a forum for economic issues. In that respect, it is equally likely that issues such as the WTO and climate change, among others, could be included in Washington's emerging agenda. At the same time, some participants highlighted the risk of the US becoming more protectionist and selective in its economic practices.

Exercising Smart Power

An issue that generated considerable discussion was the alleged propensity of the Obama administration to exercise "smart power" in its foreign policy and the implications of such for Asia. According to one delegate, President Obama would likely learn that power grows as and when it is exercised with prudence. How the appropriation of smart power could assist the Obama administration's management of widespread anger in the Islamic world towards US policies was a concern. In this regard, a participant noted that the Israeli-Palestinian issue would continue to appeal to the emotions of Muslims in Asia; how Asian leaders and societies balance between raising legitimate grievances, on one hand, and not allowing the issue to get out of hand and adversely impact relations between the US and themselves on the other, would prove a key challenge. Another participant noted that where US counterterrorism strategy vis-a-vis Asia were concerned, smart power could also be defined as balancing the reliance on "kinetic measures" with the incorporation of "softer measures". Finally, some delegates raised concern over the implied passivity of Asians inherent in the session's deliberations, asking what could Asians do rather than depend solely on the US in managing the security of their own region.

Living with China

The issue of China emerged on several fronts, but chiefly in terms of its rising military power, especially in the field of power projection (especially the growth of China's "blue water" naval capability), and the potentially daunting challenge this could prove for the Obama administration. In seeking to avoid confrontation that could engender grave consequences on a regional as well as global scale, a new form of defence cooperation and unity would be crucial for US-China relations.

Change Versus Continuity in US Asia Policy

The participants were equally in agreement that the Obama administration's Asia policy would more likely than not reflect continuity rather than change vis-a-vis its predecessor's. For example, one delegate noted that the groundwork for the commitment of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Asia and even ASEAN was laid down before the Obama administration came to power. In this regard, the Obama team has inherited a relatively successful Asian strategy, including an evident preference for "mini-lateral" forums, and the challenge for President Obama would be to build on those successes and strengthen the existing security order and architecture of Asia.

Nevertheless, although there was agreement that security cooperation in Asia is increasingly characterized by progressive multilateralism, delegates shared the view that bilateralism remains a primary instrument of US foreign policy. If anything, Northeast Asia would probably hold the most reservations about President Obama's policy since he is likely to continue his predecessor's hard-line policy against North Korea. Several participants noted that it would not be an issue for the US to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation and therefore join the East Asia Summit (EAS). That said, Asia, and especially ASEAN, may well have to contend with whatever additional elements and conditions the US Congress may tack on as part of US involvement in the EAS.

More practically, it would be difficult to expect President Obama's regular participation at the EAS since that could involve visiting Asia twice (in addition to APEC participation). In that regard, it was proposed that possible back-to-back meeting of the ARF and the APEC could be considered as a way to facilitate the US president's regular attendance. APEC meetings that are held in the west would likely not face the same constraint.

Managing Economic/Financial Crisis: Prospects for Regional Cooperation in East Asia



From L to R: Dr. Michael Green, Dr. Brendan Taylor, Dang Dinh Quy

The participants in this session assessed the impact of the current global economic recession on East Asia and emerging regional responses to it. Opinions differed in terms of whether the anticipated recovery would be “V-shaped”, “U-shaped”, or a “U” so flattened that it looks like an “L”. Indeed, so significant and complex is the crisis that, as one delegate noted, it should be analyzed as three distinct but interrelated crises, namely, a financial crisis, a trade crisis, and an employment crisis. For another delegate, the crisis consists of another set of elements, namely, a three-fold crisis of governance (especially the apparent failure of government regulators), of consumer confidence, and of orthodox economic theory (e.g., Washington Consensus versus Beijing Consensus). The question of political and/or performance legitimacy was also raised, and the potential socio-political impact the crisis could have on Asian societies and their governments. The potential leadership roles of key economies (America, China and Japan) as well as leadership on an issue-specific basis were discussed. The participants differed on the perceived role of the United States in facilitating recovery. One delegate even acknowledged (in jest, but only just) for the crucial need for an assist from a Higher Power.

Asia’s Economic Model: What Worked?

Participants were in agreement that regional economies most reliant on trade with the West were the ones that suffered the most. In other words, the export-oriented growth model that has well served the Asian region turned out the most problematic. On the other hand, as one delegate argued, Asian economies that depend mostly on production for domestic consumption (or “import substitution industrialization”), such as the Philippines, did not suffer as much at least in the short term. That said, other participants were not prepared to rule out the export-oriented model just yet; in their view, the model remains a powerful stimulator of domestic consumption. Another participant argued the necessity to locate the “middle ground” between the heavily criticized Washington Consensus and the so-called Beijing Consensus, which some see as the heir apparent.

Proposals on what would be required to move Asia towards economic recovery included the following. First, governments need to stimulate domestic demand and spending on domestic infrastructure, social safety nets, re-education of the local labour force, and so on. These points are especially salient for countries with greying populations, including Japan and South Korea, in contrast to countries that enjoy a “demographic bonus” – with younger populations comprising working adults – and which would likely experience continued economic growth. Second, regional markets ought to open up – including sacred cows such as Japan’s long-protected agriculture sector – although delegates conceded that political constraints are likely to militate against such a move. Third, recovery of the US and European economies needs to take place as soon as possible. Ultimately, an “Asian model” that is balanced – export-oriented, but at the same time equally focused on building domestic eco-friendly infrastructure and demand – may be needed.

Regional Leadership in Crisis Management

Participants also debated the role of key regional powers in providing leadership to the region in crisis management and resolution. The observation was made regarding the role of China, which by some accounts could well be central to the East Asia's recovery. The participants were more or less agreed against exaggerating China's role in the recovery process, which, in the light of the weakening of the US economy, has become more prominent. For some delegates, the Chinese economy essentially remains a producer for the US market, while its unmet potential for liberalizing its own market implies it is not ready to assume the role of regional (much less world) economic leader.

On the other hand, Japan could also play a crucial role in this respect, such as promoting foreign direct investment and closer collaboration with the Chinese and Indian economies; however, the inveterate challenge to liberalize its agricultural sector remains a major impediment against Japanese leadership. Other participants were unprepared to rule out the United States just yet, noting in particular the strong prospects for America in making a comeback, partly due to the continued reliance by other economies and international capital on the US economy as well as a potential infusion of funds into the recovery process from the expected withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. Moreover, the current fiscal deficits of major economies make it difficult for them to complement the International Monetary Fund in the latter's efforts to reverse the recession. Finally, a delegate argued that regional leadership does not have to be defined in terms of an overall leader, but different countries could take the lead on specific issues.

Regional Institutions in Crisis Management

Several delegates argued the strong possibility that international institutions could be more effective. This might include the need for the IMF to be revised, not least in terms of including greater Asian representation in its decision-making process. For example, East Asian countries, specifically members of the East Asia Summit (EAS), collectively constitute only 18 percent of the share of votes in the IMF. In this respect, it was proposed that voting rights in the IMF could be allocated in proportion to the size of members' GDP. The EAS framework could also play a greater role in financial recovery, such as in the area of bond initiatives. There may be opportunities for EAS to promote its issues in the G20, although it was also noted that the G20 has hitherto not really pulled its weight in taking responsibility to tackle the crisis. It was further proposed that the Doha round of world trade talks needs to be reconvened. Other frameworks, such as the P4 – the Trans-Pacific Partnership involving Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore – and the heralded P7 could also conceivably play a role in the recovery process. Finally, a participant suggested that more extensive Track II diplomacy could be put in place.

Managing Pandemics, Resource Competition and Climate Change: Prospects for Regional Cooperation in East Asia



*From L to R: Michael Richardson,
Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony, Dr. Chang Youngbo*

Fourth, the participants surveyed the host of non-traditional security challenges facing East Asia today, and the hitherto inadequate responses from the region's states and institutions. They noted the difficulties in managing the NTS issues because of the complex interrelatedness of those challenges with geopolitical considerations and financial constraints imposed by the current worldwide recession. They highlighted the urgent need for national initiatives, collective action among key regional powers, and financial backing from the North for the South. In that respect, climate change and other NTS challenges underline the continuous existence of the "North-South" divide. Delegates noted that the replacement for the Kyoto Protocol will be negotiated in Copenhagen in December 2009, but most were concerned that the current economic and political climate might not be entirely conducive to ensuring a good outcome in Copenhagen.

Severity of NTS Challenges

In contrast to other security issues, pandemics pose a more serious challenge because their consequences are more severe on a larger number of people. The lead discussant for the session noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that avian influenza could be the basis for the next pandemic, the costs of which would be very high. Because Asia has been the epicentre of the previous outbreaks, the awareness of the pandemic threat has facilitated regional cooperation aimed to divert the potential threat. But while there has been noticeable regional cooperation to face the pandemics, more needs to be done.

Regarding resource competition, so far in Asia it has been more about oil than water and food. There has not been any cooperation in energy. Neither India nor China, the region's largest energy consumers, is a member of International Energy Agency. Regional mechanisms for managing oil supply competition are weak and bilateral deals have limited effects. Most of the oil imports come from the Middle East. As the energy demand in Asia goes up, competition for energy sources is likely to intensify. Due to population growth, climate change and other factors, resource competition in Asia is likely to spread from oil to food and water. In that sense, global warming and climate change are likely to increase resource competition among Asian states.

While regional leaders are likely to focus on immediate threats posed by financial crisis, it is important for them to realize the importance of cooperation on supposedly distant threats such as energy, pandemics and climate change, which may become serious challenges to Asian security in the future. Emissions need to be cut to 15–20 percent below the level of 1990s. Rainforests in Malaysia and Indonesia need to be protected. Since fossil fuels' usage have such a negative impact on the environment, China and India need to stop using coal by 2020. (Oil and gas will eliminate themselves). Aerosol usage, highest in India and China, needs to be cut down. Asian cities, growing due to migration, become major sources of pollution. Public transportation needs to be improved to bring carbon emissions down. So far ASEAN cooperation on environment has not worked well.

Transnational Challenges, Multilateral Cooperation

Participants agreed that national solutions are often inadequate in addressing what are essentially transnational challenges, which therefore require transnational and/or multilateral responses. It was noted that pandemics and natural disasters tend to bind states together and arguably engender the collective motivation required for multilateral cooperation. Pandemics are definitely common threats not limited by state boundaries; hence they should foster cooperation between the countries.

For example, there has been cooperation between China and Japan and between Australia and Indonesia in combating the spread of infectious diseases. The SARS epidemic in 2003 provided an example of increased involvement of regional leaders and cooperation among ASEAN members as well as ASEAN's cooperation with China. Indeed, the response against the SARS crisis included collaboration of various government agencies, in many instances beyond the security sector.

East Asian states generally do not resist the idea of extra-regional participation in NTS cooperation. Indeed, the transnational character of many NTS challenges is compelling regional institutions to link up with global institutions (e.g., WHO, UN) to address those challenges. Additionally there has been an increase in bilateral cooperation both intra-regionally as well extra-regionally.

In this respect, the following steps were proposed by various delegates with an eye to moving functional cooperation forward. First, East Asian states must include the NTS issue in question – say, pandemics – in their security agenda. Second, gaps need to be filled in existing state mechanisms and infrastructures need to be strengthened.

Third, the enhancing the regional-global nexus also requires expanding the network of actors to include private and/or nongovernmental organizations that possess the expertise and resources for dealing with the said NTS issue. As one delegate argued, the track record in cooperation among state actors in areas such as haze in the Malay Archipelago or environmental degradation along the Mekong River has for the most part been poor; NGOs may do a better job at collaboration.

Fourth, a “multi-sectoral” approach to security – one that includes not just security agencies, but also other state agencies in the areas of agriculture, education, health, etc. – is absolutely vital in improving the chances for success in mitigating the challenge. Fifth, NTS issues such as climate change ought to be securitized (i.e., defined and treated as a serious security issue) and taken up at the highest levels (e.g., the UN Security Council) where there could be more realistic chances for successful resolution.

“Problem of Small Numbers”

One of the more intriguing challenges posed by NTS concerns is the fact that a significant part of the problem has effectively been created by a small number of players. For instance, where climate change is concerned, the so-called “problem of small numbers” is evidenced in the fact that an estimated 15 actors (i.e., mostly industrialized and large developing countries) account for something like 80 percent of the world's total emissions. The problem is compounded by the argument, made most vigorously by late developers (e.g., China, India) that they should be given the right to develop since their critics, especially industrialized countries with relatively low emissions (e.g., the EU nations), are by no means impartial accusers since historically Europe's emissions have been high. A plausible solution to the small numbers problem is simply to get the world's most egregious polluters/emitters to solve the problem they have contributed to collectively. Where Asia is concerned, big developers such as China and India may need to invest funds in order to solve the problem.

Immediate or Longer-term Threats

A concern raised was whether the NTS issue in question was regarded by regional actors as a challenge that required immediate attention. For example, East Asian states have no difficulty treating the threat of pandemics as very urgent, whereas climate change is often viewed, fairly or otherwise, as a long term or even intergenerational issue. NTS issues that fall in the latter category tend to be neglected by governments because they are more durable than governments themselves, especially democratic governments which are subject to the vicissitudes of political lifecycles. For example, the case of SARS in 2003 presented a clear and present danger and thus motivated immediate mobilization. And while some regional countries have established task forces to deal with avian flu, it is however noticeable in some cases that fatigue has set in due to absence of an immediate, clearly tangible threat. How governments can be motivated to expend resources for dealing with longer-term and possibly even intergenerational NTS challenges would no doubt become a crucial concern.

Need for Unilateral Responses

It was noted that the UN framework convention may not be useful in addressing climate change. In that respect, some delegates argued (as noted earlier) that it may be better for the 15 largest emitters to get together, negotiate and decide what to do. Leadership of such coalitions of the able if not necessarily willing is needed, however, since few if any of the main emitters are prepared to take unilateral action. As some noted, the absence of international efforts is often used as an excuse for not implementing domestic measures. But countries are free to place and enforce individual regulations. On the other hand, other delegates noted that while main emitters must come together, say, not unlike the G20 format, they argued that smaller countries need to participate to make it a broader institutional body.

Normative Change

Finally, delegates agreed that regional norms must be calibrated if functional cooperation in NTS issues is to be successful. Indeed, states are already under pressure to open up, which contradicts principle of non-intervention.



Dr. Tan See Seng welcoming delegates at the opening dinner

Functional Cooperation and East Asian Regionalism: Challenges and Prospects



From L to R: Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee, Amb. Ong Keng Yong, Amb. Koji Watanabe, Dr. David Capie, Dr. Kim Young Ho, Dr. Ralf Emmers, and RSIS research assistants Diane Russel Ong Junio and Peter Krasnopolsky

Finally, the Roundtable participants reflected on the prospects for and the utility of a functional approach to regional cooperation. According to the chair of the session, functionalism is based on the idea of incrementally bridging gaps between states by building relationships on several issues. Some participants noted that functional cooperation has been going on for some time now in East Asia. According to a delegate, trade among East Asian economies has already reached high levels, close to the levels of the European Union and higher than the NAFTA. Participants also noted the distinctive role of crisis as a motivator of East Asian cooperation. The process of regionalism is therefore neither linear nor exempt from conflict and costs. While participants acknowledged the intrusion of “negative” politics – or “spill back” (as one participant put it) as opposed to the neo-functional concept of “spill over” – they also hinted at the inherently political process of identifying and enhancing technical areas of cooperation and keeping unhelpful elements, such as debilitating nationalist sentiments, out. In sum, the crucial challenges enumerated above could well be addressed by way of functional cooperation, which arguably depoliticizes concerns and issues by treating them as technical considerations.

Crisis and Discontinuity

Several delegates noted the significant role of crises and discontinuities as the key driver of regional cooperation in East Asia. For some, the genesis of Asia-Pacific regionalism took place in the late 1980s partly in response to the impetus in North America for NAFTA and developments in European regionalism. East Asian regionalism – specifically in the form of the ASEAN+3 – emerged in response to the 1997-1998 financial crises in East Asia itself. Indeed, many saw institutional developments in ASEAN as responses to crises, real or perceived.

However, other participants, without disagreeing with the preceding observation, argued that the rise of East Asian regionalism can also be traced back to the systematic efforts by regional actors, specifically designed for engaging external partners and focused on functional cooperation. According to one delegate, the activities in ASEAN and ASEAN-based wider regionalisms are meant to develop a sense of belonging and would eventually contribute to regionalism. In this regard, ASEAN+3, ARF, and APEC all promote a sense of belonging and cultivate regionalism. Likewise, another delegate believed that while, to a certain extent, crisis galvanizes efforts for functional cooperation, it however cannot bring about cooperation without the requisite building blocks already in place. Hence while it is appropriate to refer to East Asian regionalism as crisis-driven, such a view must also account for existing regional frameworks and mechanisms, without which regional responses to crisis would likely not have been as robust and systematic.

Core Areas of Functional Cooperation

Participants agreed that the core areas of functional security cooperation are predominantly in the non-traditional rather than traditional dimensions, although some felt that spill-over into high politics has been taking place in a preliminary way. A participant identified growing functional cooperation in maritime security, disaster relief, and the like as areas of NTS cooperation. Indeed, the same participant noted that although the current economic crisis would likely constrain national capabilities in managing NTS challenges, it could however make it more desirable and feasible for states in such circumstances to seek to functionally cooperate with other states because of the gravity of the NTS challenges that confront them.

Nevertheless, other delegates were less convinced about the viability of functional cooperation on NTS issues as a contributing factor to East Asian regionalism. For one delegate, while some progress has been made, there are clearly limits to NTS cooperation in East Asia as evidenced by the expectation gap between ambitious plans and roadmaps on one hand, and actual output on the other. NTS issues in the region tend to become politicized despite their ostensibly technical nature, thereby making cooperation difficult. Noting that while regional crises rightly provide the opportunities for more robust regional responses on NTS issues, that same delegate further noted that East Asia has however not seized those opportunities.

Other participants highlighted the Mekong region in Cambodia and climate change as areas where East Asian states have failed to move towards functional cooperation when they could and should have. Another delegate argued that a plausible difficulty lies in the gap between theory and reality: on one hand, neo-functionalism defines functional cooperation as involving low politics; on the other hand, NTS issues are not necessarily low politics, not least where East Asian governments are concerned.

Human security was identified as an area of functional cooperation which regional states could look into. On cooperation in the South China Sea, ASEAN has made proposals on functional cooperation, especially on the issue of the environment, but the problem, according to some participants, lies with China as it cannot agree on anything due to its insistence that it owns the whole area.

Institutions of Functional Cooperation

It was noted that the East Asia Summit (EAS) has been identified by ASEAN leaders as a good channel to address regionalism and functional cooperation activities. One delegate noted that East Asian states are concerned that nationalist sentiments and parochial interests have hampered regional progress, and as such see the EAS as a potentially useful framework for addressing such concerns. He also noted that while some constituencies want to see the EAS move into areas of cooperation and activities similar to those conducted by the ASEAN+3, the majority of ASEAN leaders are however concerned that such a direction would minimize the importance of the EAS, which would serve better as a forum for strategic dialogue on crucial security issues such as Myanmar and North Korea.

The EAS was also seen as distinct from APEC, which is designed specifically for economic cooperation and a platform to promote open regionalism and strengthen the rank and place of the Asia-Pacific region in the global economic structure. In this respect, some delegates were concerned that APEC has of late been "hijacked" for non-economic purposes especially following the 9/11 terror attacks, and argued for returning the forum to its original purpose. Another delegate suggested that East Asian institutions should concentrate their efforts on financial cooperation.

Participants saw the ARF as a useful mechanism for developing more functional cooperation in NTS issues such as disaster relief management. The inability of the ARF to deal with traditional or hardcore security challenges was noted, with the following reasons cited: sheer size of the ARF (27 member countries) representing widely diverse strategic perceptions, ideologies, political systems, economies and developmental levels, and so on. Given the difficulty in progressing towards preventive diplomacy especially where hard security areas are concerned – one participant and former ARF official recounted his experience in attempting to deal with issues such as the North Korean conflict, tensions in the South China Sea, nuclear proliferation, issues between China and Taiwan, etc., all without success – it makes more sense therefore to focus on NTS issues. One delegate proposed that the ARF should identify more clearly what is common among all its members, the specific benefits of cooperation that could be accrued, and to seek cooperation among a small number of countries.

The question of excessive institutions and their possibly overlapping agendas was raised. Others believed that over time these concerns would be sorted out by the institutions themselves. A delegate felt East Asia should be congratulated for its rapid institutionalization in such a short span of time. Others proposed that venues such as the Shangri-La Dialogue could be used as sites for developing functional cooperation.

The ASEAN Way of Functional Cooperation

Participants noted the significance of the ASEAN Way in shaping the structures and conventions of East Asian regional institutions as well as the manner in which functional cooperation in the region has hitherto been carried out. The limitations of the ASEAN Way, especially the stress on state sovereignty and non-interference, were viewed by some as key hindrances to enhancing functional cooperation in East Asia. For example, it was noted that ASEAN has not been as successful as it could have been in economic integration largely due to its failure at meeting the challenges brought about by rapid enlargement. The lack of cohesion and coherence

within ASEAN between the older members and new ones (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) have hindered regional progress. In response, one delegate argued that the ASEAN Way has erroneously been treated by many pundits as an all-encompassing doctrine for governing and determining the behaviour of ASEAN member states, when in fact it is but a recourse which members could but not necessarily invoke.

One delegate noted that the ASEAN Way is problematic partly because of it makes the decision-making process in regional functional cooperation undertaken by East Asian institutions somewhat opaque. The link between the region's institutional arrangements, on one hand, and their functional outputs on the other, is transparency, without which countries such as the United States may not treat East Asian regionalism with the importance it properly deserves. By making the decision process transparent, the delegate argued that the level and quality of functional cooperation would be enhanced and that East Asian institutions would as such be challenged to do more. Another participant agreed on the need for transparency but argued that ASEAN, despite the need for improvement, should nevertheless be credited for it is still the best forum in the region. That said, there was consensus that in comparison to European regionalism, East Asian regionalism would take longer to progress because there remain greater levels of diversity, deep differences and a general feeling of mistrust among Asian countries.



RSIS team taking a well deserved break, from L to R: Diane Russel Ong Junio, Pauline Liew, Henny Pudiyawati, Josephine Ng, Cindy Goh

Conclusions and Recommendations

Where East Asia is concerned, functional cooperation has taken place and continues to take place in a variety of dimensions and ways. As an academic concept, functional cooperation is understood as a process that begins from technical and noncontroversial policy areas (“low politics”) and subsequently spills over into areas of political-strategic significance (“high politics”). What the Roundtable deliberations highlight is an invariably more complex picture, with areas in East Asian security which presumably offer the greatest prospect for technical collaboration – non-traditional security (NTS) issues – oftentimes turning out to be already fairly political. Their politicized character clearly complicates attempts at building and enhancing interstate collaboration in specific issue-areas.

That said, despite various impediments in the form of nationalist sentiments, invocations of non-intervention and the lack of state capacity, East Asian states and societies do not disregard the importance of functional regionalism not only for managing a growing host of diverse security challenges confronting their region today, but equally for the inculcation and diffusion of shared values that could hold the region together through challenging times. Hence, no East Asian Community is likely conceivable much less possible unless and until the requisite political commitment to maintaining and enhancing functional cooperation among East Asian states exists among the region’s stakeholders.

The recommendations proposed by various participants of the Roundtable are grouped according to the following three classifications, namely, regional cooperation, collaboration between state actors and non-state actors, and national (or, as some put it, “unilateral”) measures which individual states could or should adopt. Importantly, the following proposals are not to be taken as the collective position of the Roundtable; rather, they highlight several of the ideas deliberated by the participants.

Regional Cooperation

- *East Asia should maintain and enhance its inclusive and participatory approach to regionalism.* Although globalization has its discontents, not least the susceptibility of East Asia to the impact of the worldwide financial crisis and other global challenges, its emphasis on “open regionalism” offers regional countries more advantages than disadvantages on the whole. More vibrant trade between East Asia and the world is needed to help the region overcome the economic debacle and get back on its feet.
- *East Asia should maintain a flexible regionalism that can absorb crises and permit regional states a measure of strategic liveness.* Despite the lack of conceptual coherence in the region’s articulations of and efforts at building regional architecture, East Asian states and external stakeholders such as the US nonetheless find the consequent ambiguity in this instance relatively useful as it provides them a measure of flexibility in their strategic options.
- *East Asian regionalism should be kept as a common space defined by some basic rules and values.* Arguably, the value of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and the tacit diplomatic convention of the “ASEAN Way” to East Asian regionalism is in their provision of a set of elemental rules and norms by which regional countries can engage one another in the various multilateral settings of ASEAN-centred regional arrangements. Understandably, rules and norms evolve as and when regional arrangements adopt new practices that will enhance their members’ abilities to better manage a growing host of security challenges. But even if East Asian regionalism were to go beyond the ASEAN Way, the logic of preserving it as a common space with basic rules and shared values remains apt.

- *Regional arrangements should make their decision-making processes as transparent as possible.* East Asian regionalism continues to learn from other regions and their best practices. Transparency in decision-making has become a global norm that East Asia can ill afford to ignore. This does not imply that regional institutions should henceforth do away with longstanding conventions that still have some utility. Nevertheless, no meaningful regional efforts at functional cooperation are likely possible unless and until transparency is accepted, incrementally and increasingly, as an appropriate regional norm. The growing albeit uneven acceptance of regional surveillance mechanisms, self-reporting and other preventive diplomacy-oriented measures in the wake of the 1997 Asian financial crisis and the 2003 SARS crisis, are examples of an ongoing though slow regional transition towards greater transparency.
- *Regional arrangements should be calibrated as redistributive mechanisms.* The ASEAN+3 and its foreign currency reserve pool, the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), which has just been enhanced with an emergency liquidity fund of US\$120 billion in May 2009, are good examples of regional arrangements established in response to the need for redistributive mechanisms following the 1997 Asian financial crisis. The challenge for East Asia is to strengthen the ASEAN+3/CMIM while at the same time ensuring that its other regional arrangements also assume a redistributive function.
- *Regional arrangements should be defined along thematic/functional lines, namely, ARF for specific areas of non-traditional security (NTS) cooperation, ASEAN+3 for economic and financial cooperation, APEC for economic and trade, and EAS for summit-level strategic dialogue.* Sub-regional security concerns could be taken up by the relevant sub-regional arrangements, e.g., ASEAN for Southeast Asian issues, Six Party Talks for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, etc. With economic recovery at the top of its agenda, it is unlikely that the Obama administration would continue the Bush administration's use of the APEC as a forum for building a counterterrorism response.
- *The ARF should be upgraded to a summit.* The ARF lags behind its regional counterparts in terms of its perceived contributions to the well being of the region. A key disadvantage of the ARF relative to other regional institutions is that it is only a ministerial-level gathering. By upgrading it to a summit-level meeting, the ARF will grow in visibility and strategic relevance.
- *Back-to-back annual meetings of the ARF and APEC should be held to facilitate regular participation by all member states, especially the US.* Practically speaking, a summit-level ARF will only succeed if it is able to secure the regular participation of the leaders of the big powers, not least the US. Given the near-similarity in the memberships of the ARF and APEC, holding the annual meetings of these 2 regional forums consecutively at the same location will help ensure regular participation at the highest levels.
- *East Asia should build upon recent achievements in security cooperation with America since continuity rather than change will likely define US Asia policy.* In contrast to its Middle East policy, the Bush administration's Asia policy was for the most part thoughtful and constructive. It is unlikely that President Obama's Asia policy would significantly deviate from that of his predecessor. Secretary Clinton's visit to Asia built upon the strong legacy left behind by President Bush. Since it is unlikely that the Asia policy of the Obama administration will significantly deviate from that of its predecessor, East Asian countries will do well to take advantage of the policy continuity between the 2 administrations, and strengthen regional security.
- *China and the US should establish a new form of bilateral defence cooperation and unity that contributes to the wider peace, security and stability of the entire East Asian region.* Both Beijing and Washington should take advantage of the relatively strong relationship and goodwill that the Bush administration had previously established with China. President Obama has shown a readiness to reach out to countries previously deemed recalcitrant by Washington, including Iran. Sino-US ties could benefit from further enhancement in the form of bilateral defence cooperation, although this does not imply that East Asia should therefore be ruled by way of a Sino-US strategic condominium.

- *East Asians should cooperatively manage the security of their own region rather than depend solely on the US.* The global economic crisis has led, unhelpfully, to suggestions that the US should from henceforth be kept out of the region since it was the source of the crisis. The reality is that East Asia is still in many ways reliant upon the US economy, on one hand, and the US as security provider on the other. What will facilitate the region's prosperity and security will be a shift away from sole dependence on the US as the key security guarantor of East Asia's well being, and greater participation and contribution by East Asians in this regard in cooperation with the US. Likewise, responsibility for financial recovery has to come partially if not principally from indigenous sources as well.
- *Regional great powers, specifically China and Japan, should cooperate to facilitate East Asia's financial recovery.* Following from the preceding recommendation, if regional countries are to assume responsibility for the well being of their region, then it holds that leading powers of East Asia – the United States, to be sure, but more properly China, Japan, and possibly even India – should take the lead in cooperating to facilitate the region's economic recovery. Indeed, one of the key lessons of the 1997 Asian financial crisis was the importance for regional stakeholders to act, lest responsibility for the region is forfeited to international financial institutions especially the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose imposition of harsh measures on the region's sick economies led inadvertently to the collapse of the Suharto regime in Indonesia at the close of the 20th century. There is clearly a role for the region's economic powerhouses to play in East Asia's recovery, and it likely begins with Sino-Japanese cooperation to provide the requisite financial assistance. In this respect, the trilateral meeting between China, Japan and South Korea at Daizafu, Japan, in December 2008, which understandably caused some consternation among ASEAN proponents for fear that the process among the "+3" countries could mean ASEAN's relegation in regional affairs, could in fact be crucial to facilitating coordination between the Chinese and Japanese for just such a purpose.
- *East Asia should build "mini-lateral" coalitions comprising smaller numbers of likeminded states (e.g., G20, P4/P7) that will facilitate cooperation on various NTS fronts.* Given that most if not all regional institutions remain tethered to a lowest common denominator approach to regional cooperation, it is likely that the best prospective frameworks for cooperation on NTS issues will be mini-lateral coalitions – a concept which originated with the US – on specific issues and concerns. Importantly, these coalitions of the willing should not be seen as replacements of existing regional arrangements, but as complements to the bigger institutions.
- *East Asia should push for the reconvening and successful completion of the Doha Round of world trade talks.* No complete recovery, for Asia and indeed the world, is likely possible without getting the WTO process up and running again. The inescapable fact is that 3 key stakeholder countries of the region (China, India and the US) were involved in the collapse of the Doha Round in July 2008 due to disagreements over agriculture. The APEC meetings of 2009, to be held in Singapore, would be the obvious place for East Asians and likeminded states to collectively push for the reconvening and hopefully successful completion of the Doha Round.
- *The EAS should be given a bigger role in financial recovery.* The EAS comprises some of the world's leading economies, such as China, Japan and India. As a summit-level dialogue process, the EAS, a still nascent and yet to be tested framework, could be deployed, alongside the ASEAN+3 in a complementary role, to facilitate East Asia's economic recovery.
- *The IMF should revise its voting rights system and give East Asians bigger representation.* Given the present state of the US and European economies relative to those of East Asia, and a voting rights system that privileges the Western states over the rest, it makes good sense that East Asian powerhouses, who are expected to play key roles in facilitating the world's economic recovery, should logically be acknowledged through having a greater say in the decision-making process of the IMF and international financial institutions in general.

- *East Asia should focus on human security, and reassess and recalibrate its regional norms and conventions for NTS cooperation, including towards preventive diplomacy.* Financial malaise vies alongside climate change, resource scarcity, pandemics, natural disasters and a host of other non-traditional security challenges confronting East Asia, all of which combined will in all likelihood exact a heavy toll on human security in the region. Significantly, these are not hypothetical scenarios over which East Asian security managers can mull at their leisure; after all, the region has in recent times been buffeted by a litany of ills. However, while regional epistemic communities and policy networks are full of chatter about human security and regional cooperation on NTS, few concrete policies and actions have been undertaken by regional states, many of which still fret over the prospect of interference in each other's domestic affairs. There is as such a dire need for East Asian governments to reassess and recalibrate existing norms and conventions so as to further regional cooperation on NTS issues, including human security. Part of the recalibration process should include moving the region towards accepting preventive diplomacy as a norm rather than some remote ideal.

Collaboration between State and Non-State Actors

- *East Asia should enhance participatory regionalism by expanding its network of actors, both state and non-state, and enhancing multi-sectoral collaboration between intergovernmental and nongovernmental sectors.* The transnational complexity of NTS issues is such that no single state can successfully deal with the myriad challenges on its own. To say that multilateral cooperation is needed is to state the obvious. At the domestic level, even more obvious is the need for collaboration between governments and non-state actors among its domestic constituents. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary developments that have taken place in East Asia is the growth of participatory regionalism, which has seen the growing albeit uneven accommodation by regional governments of the involvement of NGOs and civil society groups in areas long considered the exclusive preserve of the former, such as regional security. In particular, non-state actors have played a key role in securitizing NTS issues such as environmental degradation, health threats, and human and societal insecurity caused by economic crisis, and they indirectly help to broaden their governments' national security agendas. The growing acknowledgement and accommodation by states of non-state actors is best seen in the expansion of multi-sectoral collaboration between governmental and nongovernmental, both domestically as well as regionally, in managing NTS challenges. A good example is the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) process, which recently adopted a paper on "ASEAN Defence Establishments and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Cooperation on Non-Traditional Security", at its annual meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, in February 2009. This underscores the willingness of ASEAN defence officials to acknowledge the contributions of civil society actors in NTS issues, and to cooperate with them. Another example is the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, which brings together defence officials and security intellectuals, is a good example of this in the East Asian context.
- *East Asia should enhance cooperative links between the global and regional dimensions.* Just as functional cooperation along the domestic-national-regional axis is crucial, so too cooperation along the regional-global axis. The contributions, extant or potential, of regional organizations to international security and stability have been officially acknowledged by the UN. Likewise, regional cooperation in East Asia in meeting crucial security challenges have benefited from cooperative links between the regional and global dimensions. A good example is the newly enhanced Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) liquidity fund of the ASEAN+3, which complements the IMF rather than, as some fear, replaces the latter. Another case in point is the UN peace missions in Cambodia and East Timor, which had sizeable Asian contingents among the blue helmets. Likewise, the viral epidemics that struck East Asia were ably managed due to collaboration between the WHO and regional governments.

National Responses

- *Regional countries should include NTS issues in their national security agendas.* Despite the purported propensity of East Asian countries to view and define security in comprehensive and holistic terms, not all regional states have fully integrated NTS issues into their national security agendas. Put differently, non-traditional issues and sectors have not been fully securitized in the East Asian region yet. But unless and until regional governments take NTS challenges seriously by incorporating them into their respective security calculus, it is unlikely East Asia will see much meaningful NTS cooperation. In this regard, East Asian governments are urged to unilaterally adopt local measures to deal with NTS challenges. An example of this is the speed with which China has been ramping up its commitment to alternative energies, in response to the challenge of climate change.
- *Regional countries should focus on building national capacity and strengthening local mechanisms for dealing with NTS challenges.* Even if East Asian governments include NTS issues in their national security agendas, little will be accomplished unless they have the institutional capacities and relevant mechanisms for dealing with those challenges. It is therefore imperative that regional countries focus their energies on constructing the requisite capabilities. In this regard, the assistance provided by states in aid of their regional neighbours who lack those capabilities is an undeniable necessity. An example of this is the assistance provided by the Japanese Coast Guard to enhance the maritime capabilities of littoral states in the Malacca Straits in their fight against sea piracy.
- *Regional countries should go beyond national security strategies that deal principally with immediate threats to include long-term, intergenerational challenges.* Policymakers often lack the time and attention span to focus on security concerns and threats beyond immediate ones. The problem is compounded by the fact that the lifecycle of democratic governments is at most 4–6 years, assuming they do not get re-elected. And even if they win re-election, it is likely their energies and attention are spent in the battle for re-election. This makes it difficult for states to go beyond immediate threats to include long-term, intergenerational challenges that could last decades. This is not to imply that longstanding authoritarian regimes automatically do better at meeting long-term NTS challenges, as evidenced by the failure of the Myanmar military regime to mitigate ravages wrought by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008. Whichever the case, the long-term intergenerational impact of various NTS challenges on East Asian societies calls for regional countries to be sufficiently self-disciplined in devising long-term strategies to deal with NTS problems.
- *Regional countries should develop economic models that balance export-oriented growth industrialization with the need for domestic infrastructure and demand, social safety nets, workforce re-education/retooling, environmental protection, etc.* The current financial crisis has shown that sole reliance on the export-oriented growth model, which worked well for Asian economies throughout the latter part of the last century, is insufficient protection for domestic populations against recessionary pressures. Nor is the solution to be found solely in import substitution industrialization. East Asian economies need to keep producing and trading. But they will also need to build domestic infrastructure, grow domestic demand for products, develop viable safety nets for their own populace and retool their labour force, adopt measures to protect their environment, and so on. Put differently, an “Asian model” that combines the best practices of the Washington Consensus and Beijing Consensus may be needed.

- *Regional countries and the US should employ “smart power” in their counterterrorism and/or counterinsurgency strategies by balancing the use of “kinetic” or hard/coercive measures with soft/collaborative/accommodative measures.* The threat of terrorism and/or insurgency continues to vex East Asia, particularly parts of Southeast Asia. Lessons from the US war in Iraq highlight the risks posed by reliance on “kinetic” strategies that inadvertently cause more harm than good in the long run. The counterinsurgency-based Petraeus Doctrine (named after the current head of US Central Command, Gen. David Petraeus), which ostensibly has become the US Army’s organizing principle, argues that force-based approaches need to be balanced with diplomacy, development assistance, community outreach and the like. In this regard, the American experience is congruent with those of East Asians engaged in counterterrorism/counterinsurgency, who likewise favour a balanced approach.
- *Regional countries should balance between raising legitimate grievances against US foreign policy, on one hand, and not allowing the issue to get out of hand and adversely impact relations between themselves and the US, on the other.* US foreign policy under the Bush administration provoked the ire of East Asian societies, especially those with substantial Muslim constituencies. Among other things, the war in Iraq and aspects of President Bush’s proclivity towards unilateralism generated anti-American sentiments that now shown signs of abating given the international popularity of President Obama. However, given the lightning rod that US foreign policy has evidently become, some East Asian countries may continue to raise grievances against the US, which will need to be balanced against keeping ties with Washington on an even keel, particularly if East Asia values continued deep engagement by the US in the region.

Appendix: The Sentosa Roundtable on Asian Security 2009: Roundtable Programme

Day 1 – 18 March 2009

		09:45	<i>Session 1</i>
All day	Arrival and check-in		The 'Architectural' Approach to Asian Security: Challenges and Prospects
19:00	Welcome drinks and dinner (By Invitation Only) @Poolside		Chair DR RALF EMMERS, Head of Graduate Studies, RSIS

Day 2 – 19 March 2009

			Panelists
08:30	Registration		DR. BRENDAN TAYLOR, Lecturer, Strategic Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University (lead discussant)
09:15	Introduction DR. TAN SEE SENG, Roundtable Convener		PROF. CAROLINA HERNANDEZ, University of the Philippines
09:20	Welcome AMB. BARRY DESKER, Dean of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)		PROF. ZHAI KUN, Director, Division of Southeast Asian Studies, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR)
09:30	Address DR. AKIRA MATSUNAGA, Director, Pan-Asian Fund, Sasakawa Peace Foundation		PROF. SOH CHANGROK, Dean, Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS), Korea University DR. MICHAEL GREEN, Senior Adviser and Japan Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Washington AMB. JØERGEN ØRSTRØEM MØELLER, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

10:45	Tea Break (@ Grand Salon Terrace)	15:45	Tea Break (@ Grand Salon Terrace)
11:00	Q&A (Session 1 continued)	16:00	<i>Session 3</i> Managing Economic/Financial Crisis: Implications for Asian Security and Prospects for Regional Cooperation
12:00	Lunch (Working Sandwich Lunch) Distinguished Address DR. BALAJI SADASIVAN, Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Singapore		Chair DR. RICHARD CARNEY, Assistant Professor, RSIS
14:00	<i>Session 2</i> The Obama Administration: Implications for Asian Security Chair DR. JOSEPH LIOW, Associate Dean, RSIS (lead discussant) Panelists LT. GEN. (RETD) V. R. RAGHAVAN, Director, Delhi Policy Group AMB. BARRY DESKER, Dean, RSIS PROF. FRANÇOIS GÉRE, President, Institut Francais d'analyse Strategique DR. MALCOLM COOK, Programme Director for East Asia, Lowy Institute for International Policy MR. DANG DINH QUY, Deputy Director General and Director, Institute for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam PROF. ZHAI KUN, Director, Division of Southeast Asian Studies, CICIR DR. KUMAR RAMAKRISHNA, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), RSIS		Panelists PROF. TAN KHEE GIAP, Assoc Dean, Graduate Studies Office, Nanyang Technological University (lead discussant) PROF. ROBERTO S. MARIANO, Dean, School of Economics, Singapore Management University PROF. VINOD AGGARWAL, Director, Berkeley APEC Study Center (BASC), University of California, Berkeley DR. DEBORAH ELMS, Head, Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade and Negotiations, RSIS DR. DENIS HEW, Senior Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies DR. CHAP SOTHARITH, former Director, Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace PROF. SHUJIRO URATA, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University Q&A
		17:45	End of Day 1
		19:00	Dinner (By Invitation Only) -@ Poolside

ROUNDTABLE PROGRAMME

Day 3 – 20 March 2009

		11:00	<p><i>Session 5</i></p> <p>Functional Cooperation: The Way to East Asian Regionalism?</p> <p>Chair DR. YEO LAY HWEE, Director, European Union Centre, NUS (lead discussant)</p> <p>Panelists DR. MICHAEL GREEN, Senior Adviser and Japan Chair, CSIS Washington AMB. ONG KENG YONG, Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Singapore MR. DANG DINH QUY, Deputy Director General and Director, Institute for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies, Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam AMB. KOJI WATANABE, Senior Fellow, Japan Center for International Exchange DR. DAVID CAPIE, Senior Lecturer, Victoria University of Wellington MR. RODOLFO SEVERINO, Head, ASEAN Policy Centre, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies DR. KRIPA SRIDHARAN, Adjunct Associate Professor, National University of Singapore</p> <p>Q&A</p>
09:00	<p><i>Session 4</i></p> <p>Managing Pandemics, Resource Competition, Climate Change: Implications for Asian Security and Prospects for Regional Cooperation</p> <p>Chair AMB. K KESAVAPANY, Director, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies</p> <p>Panelists MR. MICHAEL RICHARDSON, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (lead discussant) DR. MELY CABALLERO-ANTHONY, Head, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, RSIS DR. CHANG YOUNGHO, Assistant Professor, RSIS and School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NTU DR. MALCOLM COOK, Program Director for East Asia, Lowy Institute for International Policy DR. MATTHIAS ROTH, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, NUS DR. SHREEKANT GUPTA, Associate Professor, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy</p> <p>Q&A</p>		
10:45	Tea Break (@ Grand Salon Terrace)	12:45	<p>Closing Remarks DR. TAN SEE SENG</p>
		13:00	Lunch (@ The Terrace Restaurant)

Participants

- 1. Dr. Balaji Sadasivan,**
Senior Minister of State for Foreign Affairs,
Singapore
- 2. Prof. Vinod Aggarwal,**
Director,
Berkeley APEC Study Center (BASC),
University of California, Berkeley
- 3. Ms. Chitrachawee Aroonrungsant,**
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Royal Thai Embassy
- 4. Prof. Sanjaya Baru,**
Visiting Professor,
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- 5. Dr. Richard Bitzinger,**
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- 6. Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony,**
Head,
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RSIS
- 7. Dr. David Capie,**
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Victoria University of Wellington
- 8. Dr. Richard Carney,**
Assistant Professor,
RSIS
- 9. Dr. Chang Youngho,**
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- 10. Dr. Malcolm Cook,**
Program Director for East Asia,
Lowy Institute for International Policy
- 11. Mr. Dang Dinh Quy,**
Deputy Director General and Director,
Institute for Strategic and Foreign Policy Studies,
Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam
- 12. Amb Barry Desker,**
Dean of RSIS
- 13. Dr. Bill Durodie,**
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- 14. Dr. Stefanie Elies,**
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- 15. Dr. Deborah Elms,**
Head,
Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade and Negotiations,
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- 16. Dr. Ralf Emmers,**
Head of Graduate Studies, RSIS
- 17. Prof. François G re,**
President,
Institut Francais d'analyse Strategique
- 18. Dr. Michael Green,**
Senior Adviser and Japan Chair,
CSIS Washington
- 19. H.E. Mr. Nadapol Gunavibool,**
Ambassador,
Royal Thai Embassy
- 20. Dr. Shreekant Gupta,**
Associate Professor,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

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- 21. Mr. Kemal Haripurwanto,**
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- 22. H.E. Mr Martin Harvey,**
High Commissioner,
New Zealand High Commission
- 23. Prof. Carolina Hernandez,**
University of the Philippines
- 24. Dr. Denis Hew,**
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- 25. Mr. Yang Razali Kassim,**
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- 26. Amb. K Kesavapany,**
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- 27. Dr. Kim Young Ho,**
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- 28. Mr. Kwa Chong Guan,**
Head of External Programmes,
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- 29. Ms. Guo Jing,**
Third Secretary,
China Embassy
- 30. Dr. Lee Lai To,**
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National University of Singapore
- 31. Dr. Li Mingjiang,**
Assistant Professor,
RSIS
- 32. Dr. Joseph Liow,**
Associate Dean and Associate Professor,
RSIS
- 33. Prof. Roberto S. Mariano,**
Dean, School of Economics,
Singapore Management University
- 34. Dr. Arpita Mathur,**
Associate Fellow,
Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, India
- 35. Dr. Akira Matsunaga,**
Director, Pan-Asian Fund,
Sasakawa Peace Foundation
- 36. Amb. Jøergen Ørstrøm Møeller,**
Visiting Senior Research Fellow,
Institute of Southeast Asian Studies
- 37. Prof. C. Raja Mohan,**
Professor,
RSIS
- 38. H.E. Mr. Hussin Nayan,**
High Commissioner,
High Commission of Malaysia
- 39. Amb. Ong Keng Yong,**
Director, Institute of Policy Studies,
Singapore
- 40. Lt. Gen. (Retd) V. R. Raghavan,**
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Delhi Policy Group
- 41. Dr. Kumar Ramakrishna,**
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- 42. Mr. Ike Reed,**
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- 43. Mr. Michael Richardson,**
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- 44. Dr. Matthias Roth,**
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National University of Singapore
- 45. H.E. Mdm Sin Serey,**
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Royal Embassy of Cambodia
- 46. Mr. Rodolfo Severino,**
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- 47. Ms. Susan Sim,**
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RSIS
- 48. Mr. Daljit Singh,**
Visiting Senior Fellow,
ISEAS
- 49. Prof. Soh Changrok,**
Dean,
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- 50. Dr. Chap Sotharith,**
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Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
- 51. Dr. Kripa Sridharan,**
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National University of Singapore
- 52. Prof. Tan Khee Giap,**
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Nanyang Technological University
- 53. Dr. Tan See Seng,**
Associate Professor and Head of Research,
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), RSIS,
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Security 2008–2009
- 54. Dr. Brendan Taylor,**
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- 55. Amb. (Retd) Tan Seng Chye,**
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- 56. Ms. Tsao Ching Hua,**
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- 57. Prof. Shujiro Urata,**
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- 60. Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee,**
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- 61. Prof. Zhai Kun,**
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Relations (CICIR)

About The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)

The **S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)** was established in January 2007 as an autonomous School within the Nanyang Technological University. RSIS' mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia-Pacific. To accomplish this mission, RSIS will:

- Provide a rigorous professional graduate education in international affairs with a strong practical and area emphasis
- Conduct policy-relevant research in national security, defence and strategic studies, diplomacy and international relations
- Collaborate with like-minded schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence

Graduate Training in International Affairs

RSIS offers an exacting graduate education in international affairs, taught by an international faculty of leading thinkers and practitioners. The teaching programme consists of the Master of Science (MSc) degrees in Strategic Studies, International Relations, International Political Economy and Asian Studies as well as The Nanyang MBA (International Studies) offered jointly with the Nanyang Business School. The graduate teaching is distinguished by their focus on the Asia-Pacific region, the professional practice of international affairs and the cultivation of academic depth. Over 150 students, the majority from abroad, are enrolled with the School. A small and select Ph.D. programme caters to students whose interests match those of specific faculty members.

Research

Research at RSIS is conducted by five constituent Institutes and Centres: the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies, and the Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade & Negotiations (TFCTN). The focus of research is on issues relating to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and their implications for Singapore and other countries in the region. The School has three professorships that bring distinguished scholars and practitioners to teach and do research at the School. They are the S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies, the Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship in International Relations, and the NTUC Professorship in International Economic Relations.

International Collaboration

Collaboration with other Professional Schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence is a RSIS priority. RSIS will initiate links with other like-minded schools so as to enrich its research and teaching activities as well as adopt the best practices of successful schools.

For more information on the School, visit www.rsis.edu.sg



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