

GOH KENG SWEE COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE SEMINAR 2012

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**S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**
A Graduate School of Nanyang Technological University



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Goh Keng Swee Command and Staff College Seminar 2012

Smart Power: Transforming Militaries for 21st Century Missions

REPORT OF A SEMINAR JOINTLY ORGANISED BY
THE GOH KENG SWEE COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
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NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

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This report summarises the proceedings of the seminar as interpreted by the assigned rapporteurs and editors appointed by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this report.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hard power alone or more specifically military power is insufficient to address the complex security challenges of today. A cognisance of this strategic dilemma formed the wellspring from which the 'smart power' approach emerged. Raised to prominence by Joe Nye, Richard Armitage and Hillary Clinton, 'smart power' has become a defining element of the US National Security Strategy. Above all, the endorsement of 'smart power' by Hillary Clinton has enlivened the conceptual debate of what 'smart power' actually means and how 'smart' power is defined. More importantly, the shifts in global power relationships have changed the utility of military force as an instrument of national power - from a primary tool of coercion to one of the many 'power tools' in the tool-kit. As a corollary, the 21st Century roles of militaries will

be increasingly shaped by the need for an integrated approach to strategy – as exemplified by 'smart power'. In particular, for small military organisations with very limited resources, the attractiveness of a concept like 'smart power' is all the more apparent, especially if it means that these military organisations can thereafter maximise the strategic effects of their various instruments of national power. This seminar intends to build upon the extant corpus of literature on smart power and scrutinise the following key issues: how do we construct and shape smart power; how militaries can be effectively utilised in smart power strategies; and how do we transform militaries for 21st century-type missions that require an integrated approach.

OPENING REMARKS

COL Ng Wai Kit welcomed the speakers and participants to the 2012 Goh Keng Swee Command & Staff College Seminar. He highlighted that smart power, as a concept, is not new, but by virtue of their training and inclinations, a military audience would be more familiar with hard than soft power, which smart power is a combination of.

The military, however, can no longer only embrace hard power. The world is no longer strictly bipolar, and therefore "black and white," as was the case in Cold War. The present geopolitical environment is more complex with dynamic social and political forces interacting with each other in often unpredictable ways. While the military has traditionally been raised to deter, and if necessary, defeat other states, it is poor in fighting ideas which are transnational and fluid in nature.

There are limits to military power. Smart power therefore is a wider spectrum of national power that can be brought to bear to defend a state against such threats without relying on military coercion alone. COL Ng opined the instruments of smart power do not wholly lie in the government, but also involve resources available in the private sector and civil society. Resources may also not necessarily be tangible assets, but intangible ideas, for example, convincing ideas, or even a state's good reputation.

COL Ng concluded his opening remarks by encouraging everyone to see the two day-seminar as not just an opportunity to learn, but as the beginning of an on-going conversation on the nature of power in the twenty-first century.

KEYNOTE SPEECH



Mr Michael Matthiessen observed “smart power” is a challenging topic to discuss because it involves a myriad range of actors and ideas. Drawing on his experience working in the European Union, as well as his long diplomatic career, Mr Matthiessen, however, argued this challenge had to be confronted as change, and the need to adapt to changes, is par for the course when formulating and thinking about strategy. He cited his own career, which spanned the nuclear and conventional military deterrence of the Cold War, the fall of Berlin Wall without military action, the inability of Europe to deal with the breakup of Yugoslavia and the establishment of a diffused, comprehensive approach to European defence, as testament of the huge changes – often unexpected – that diplomats and military professionals will face.

Moreover, the recent experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya demonstrated the need to combine a variety of approaches, military and non-military alike, to deal with the security challenges of the twenty-first century. While initial operations there all looked successful, they still have not achieved the end state desired. There are few recent examples where the use of military alone was successful. The transformation to smart power is to recognize the limitations of the military. The globalised world is simply too complex for the military to work independently and there is a need to work jointly with other actors. Mr Matthiessen thus concluded all states, big or small, needed to be aware of smart power options.

Mr Matthiessen pointed to the EU as an example of how this transformation might look like. He noted the recently ratified Lisbon Treaty described a variety of approaches the EU would take in addressing security issues. There were elements of crisis management, peace-keeping, peace-resolution, stabilization and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) missions to address a wide-range of security issues, such as piracy, human, drug and gun trafficking, and failing states. The EU has since conducted these operations across the world, particularly in Africa. While not always as obvious as conventional military operations, all these tasks contribute broadly to Europe’s defence, in particular, to the fight against terrorism. Military power is now just one tool of many in the tool box, which includes development assistance, diplomacy, trade sanctions, mediation, and police actions. In some instances, they are not used individually, but are fused together into a new tool. Mr Matthiessen gave the example of the training of the Somali domestic land and maritime security forces where the task could not neatly apportioned, but had to be jointly tackled.

To facilitate the use of these tools, the EU has a single unified command, where officials from different agencies meet together for a collective response. Mr Matthiessen argued this unified command is vital as it allows a holistic framework to be adopted where all the elements that the EU has available can be effectively brought to bear against security issues. Mr Matthiessen, however, noted that civilians have to adapt to the military and not just vice-versa, as is what is typically expected. The organisational cultures and processes can be very different. Part of smart power therefore is getting all parties involved to work together towards the same end state, to design a chain of command which allows this. In this regard, he highly recommended regular exercises and simulations between agencies.

PANEL I

CONCEPTUALISING SMART POWER



Professor Giulio M. Gallarotti began by noting that the GKSCSC Seminar is an excellent example of soft power, where the civilian and military spheres are merged to achieve a common objective. He, however, took issue with the term “smart”. Prof Gallarotti argued that describing power in such a manner is misleading as it implies the existence of an opposite, “dumb” power. This creates two parallel universes of discussion which polarizes the debate. Power should instead be thought of as optimal to achieve maximum effect.

Prof Gallarotti suggested smart power is not a mix or a blend of fixed proportions, but an assembly of the different components of power according to need. The end desired thus determines the composition, and all components are dependent on one another to achieve success. Prof Gallarotti also reiterated smart power is not new. Soft power has always been a complement of hard power. He cited propaganda as a classic example, where winning the war of ideas and convincing the enemy to surrender without fighting has always been the ideal. He also pointed out soft power has not only been used during war, but also to justify the application of hard power in the first place, as was the case made for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Prof Gallarotti elaborated on the perspectives of hard and soft power. He suggested hard power consists of the material resources that make a country strong, for example the military, people, land, resources, economic assets and technology. More importantly, hard power is about extracting compliance in the vein of realist and Hobbesian thinking. Soft power, on the other hand, consists of the intangible assets that endear one country to another, for example, reputation. They can be obtained from adherence to international laws, norms and active participation in multilateral, respected international institutions. Domestic sources include one’s culture. Prof Gallarotti highlighted Saudi Arabia as an example of its Islamic ideological supremacy being a crucial source of its source power in the Muslim world. Soft power cultivates compliance instead of extracting it. The aim is convince the other to see and agree with a state’s perspective and national interests. In sum, hard power requires a state to apply constant pressure to get its way, whereas soft power allows a state to benefit without intervention as the other party aligns itself on its own free will.

Prof Gallarotti concluded by exploring the challenges in applying smart power, and his policy recommendations. He argued that in the first place, soft power goes against human psychology, where immediate action is favoured over the huge investment of time required to cultivate relationships. There is also a need to constantly review policies and adjust the mix, which bureaucracies are typically not open to as they are inherently inflexible. Furthermore, governments tend to think in terms of nominal military power rather than net smart power. Instead, Prof Gallarotti urged governments to use outcomes, not just resources available, as measures of influence. He highlighted the case of the United States which overestimated its power in the 1960s and 1970s because it perceived itself to be strong in resources. Yet it was fundamentally weak in the outcomes it sought to achieve. These desired outcomes should never be let out a government’s sight in its strategic and power calculations.



Assoc Prof Alan Chong began by acknowledging the definitions of soft power by the earlier presenters, and offered his own working definition. Soft power, according to him, is a long-term investment of structural power where outcomes cannot be expected to materialize over the foreseeable policy horizon. He reiterated that smart power was the appropriate mix of hard and soft power and it is this balance which debates often revolve around. For soft power to be effective, it has to have a communitarian base of support. In this regard, he suggested that soft power has three characteristics:

Soft power needs a communitarian base as an ideological showcase. Those projecting power need to be proud of who they are and present a common base that is widely agreed upon. Soft power must be rooted in the host community first. The citizenry must demonstrate a collective will or spirit as a vehicle for mobilizing the people's energies for some directed external purpose. This is often construed as provocative nationalism. Prof Chong, however, argued nationalism does not have to be jingoistic in that the objective is conquest in the traditional sense, but it can also be just a demonstration of self-assuredness which makes the state more attractive to others.

Prof Chong emphasized that all stakeholders need to contribute for soft power to work. This often requires an opportunity for the projecting power to exert its influence. The fulfilment of a need, either ideational or material, is often that opportunity, as is typically demonstrated in military information operations and HADR missions. For information operations to be successful, the military needs to seek out and understand the ideational gaps in the enemy's society so that it can target them and widen the opportunity to exert its influence. Prof Chong argued this often includes demonstrations of the stability back home to show what the power is trying to bring to the society it is trying to influence, as well as creating and spreading information which puts it in good light.

Prof Chong noted that natural disaster events are good opportunities for the application of soft power. These incidents create windows of opportunity that may nurture new relationships, or reduce an existing state of tension to and form the basis of a better, more favourable relationship, a phenomenon that some have termed "disaster politics." By welcoming others who have been displaced, the victims will see the military as friendly faces after a hugely disruptive event, allowing it to win over hearts and minds. Here, soft power lies on a spectrum which ranged from the basic provision of aid to extensive intervention to correct the damage caused by the calamity. Prof Chong concluded that the fundamental basis of soft power is to project a model society which is desirable so that those who a state wants to influence would own their own seek to join a "community like us".



Associate Professor Li Mingjiang welcomed the definitions on the conceptual basis of smart power by the previous speakers. He agreed it is a nebulous concept, and presented his own definition: the most efficient way of utilizing all power resources for the pursuit of a certain international objectives, premised on a cost-benefit analysis. More importantly, he pointed out that for smart power to work, the state's domestic politics must be stable. Prof Li suggested China's use of smart power in Southeast Asia demonstrates this.

Prof Li began his case study with a broad overview of China's strategic objectives in Southeast Asia, a region it considers its "strategic courtyard". Politically, it seeks to become the most influential actor in regional affairs. Strategically, it hopes to have no rival for its predominant position. Economically, it desires to be the centre of regional economic integration. To these ends, China has attempted a good neighbour policy, the so-called "charm offensive," of engagement, multilateral diplomacy, financial assistance and what it perceives to be a moderate security policy. Prof Li argued that China's achievements have been mixed. Although a strong strategic foothold

in Southeast Asia has been established, security ties have not improved and the US is still a dominant power in the region.

Prof Li suggested this was the result of the problems surrounding the resolution of the South China Sea maritime dispute. China is perceived to be expansionist and overly aggressive in asserting its claims. This, he noted, was because of China's ambivalence in its foreign policy owing to a lack of unity in domestic politics. In particular, whereas the foreign ministry has declared that China had no intentions of claiming all of the South China Sea, hardliners have consistently maintained that it is part of China. Prof Li suggested this stance pandered to Chinese nationalism as a way of unifying a diverse population. The foreign policy impact of this populist stance, however, is complicated and far reaching especially under international law, a fact that China does not always fully appreciate. With inconsistent stances and diverse views, he observed adopting a tough stance would be the safest way forward. This, however, has resulted in distrust of China amongst regional states.

Prof Li observed that while China has all the components of a sound smart power strategy in Southeast Asia, there are many weaknesses in its current approach. First, there is a divergence between socio-economic relations between China and Southeast Asia, which are good, and security ties, which are poor. He argued China needs to harmonize the two. This is the result of too forceful an application of hard power which has undermined China's regional strategic goal. Domestic politics primarily contributed to this hard-line stance. In sum, Prof Li concluded that there must be more coordination and consistency in the official stance from China.

PANEL I
QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

A member of the audience queried how the smart power concept came about. The panellists responded by pointing out the emergence of smart power was the result of a failure of hard power. This was in turn the result of an over reliance on hard power because of complacency. This was particularly the case with the US, who expected hard power to achieve more than it could deliver simply because it had extensive hard power resources. Yet there are weapons of the weak that can undermine the state, as the US experienced. Hard power alone also does not guarantee security as it can fail spectacularly, as the collapse of the Soviet Union despite its extensive nuclear arsenal demonstrates. Smart power is also not a matter of choice for small powers who have limited resources and need to be creative and efficient in using what little they do have.

Another member of the audience asked Prof Li what forms of Chinese hard power in the South China Seas has been counter-productive. Prof Li replied that while the Chinese

military actions have, in the larger scheme of things been muted, perception is still reality. China may not have deployed an armada of ships or engaged in hostilities, but it is still widely perceived to be a provocative and a bully. This is reinforced by bellicose statements by senior government officials.

The final question enquiry addressed the balance of smart power between the US and China was presently occurring in the South China Sea. Prof Li replied that this was naturally the case as smart power competition in this day and age requires all resources to be harnessed. This Chinese interest has provided the US with the perfect window of opportunity to apply soft power in the region by legally and intellectually challenging China's actions in the region. In a sense, the US is waging an ideational smart war of attrition by coming out in support of Southeast Asia and deepening the relationship with them, an expansion of its virtual "communitarian-base."

PANEL 2

IS SMART POWER FOR REAL?



Professor Pascal Vennesson explored how military power has evolved in international politics. Military power has roles in “hard”, “soft” and “smart” power while serving as a link between both hard and soft power applications. Additionally, military power affects policy even as strategic theory evolves. Hence, Prof Vennesson investigated the utility of military power, the soft/smart power debate in grand strategy and the implications for military professionals.

Prof Vennesson noted that military power still retains a prominent position amidst the range of resources available to governments and is seen as a set of capabilities rather than a tool for achieving kinetic war objectives. However, the utility of military force has been limited by

increased costs, nuclear weapons, the declining value of geographical conquest and normative sentiments against war while the added dimension of cyberspace means that even if the military physically prevails, it might subsequently be defeated via information warfare attacks. Additionally, military power should be reserved as a deterrent and rarely used so as to preserve its psychological effect. Hence, when all these are considered, military power should not be deployed in isolation but in conjunction with soft power.

On the issue of soft/smart power and the military, Prof Vennesson emphasised that apart from peacetime soft power generation in the form of officer exchanges and international assistance programmes, the military could also promote soft power in wartime via the exact manner in which operations are conducted. He argued that military power must mesh with diplomacy and economic and psychological power within national strategy in support of political objectives. Hence, the exclusive use of hard power in total war is outmoded as the latter form of war is rare in contemporary times, thereby placing less emphasis on the science of war in the pursuit of military victory. Instead, military professionals should recognise that warfare is only but one instrument within smart power and that the employment of force must be calibrated to the objectives set in order to achieve a favourable outcome.



Dr David Capie spoke on the topic of smart power and how it seems to drive US strategy in Southeast Asia. First, Dr Capie explored the definition and rationale for smart power, the dimensional aspects of soft power, the US's employment of soft power in ASEAN and whether smart power was real. He defined smart power as a combination of hard and soft power with hard power being tools of coercion and payment while soft power comprised mechanisms of attraction. Smart power is a strategy that "underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships and institutions at all levels".

As enunciated by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, smart power is the appropriate use of diplomatic, economic, military, political, legal, and cultural tools, or combination of tools, making diplomacy the vanguard of foreign policy. Next, he explained that smart power was adopted in order to reorient the overly militarised foreign policy of the second Bush administration, bring about more balance in the use of foreign policy tools, respond to the decline of US power including economic power and cope with international challenges like terrorism that are beyond unilateral solutions.

With respect to the inward and outward facing dimensions of smart power, Dr Capie elaborated that smart power was partly an organisational response to

the compartmentalised nature of the US foreign policy bureaucracy which would unify diplomacy, development and defence. Specifically, information sharing would improve and state resources could be more accurately assigned to goals. For instance, the links between the US Departments of Defence and State have increased with greater numbers of diplomatic and military personnel assigned to military and diplomatic settings respectively. However, the outward facing dimension of smart power justified itself via the realisation that US foreign policy goals could not be unilaterally achieved and that it could only do so by assisting development, helping to provide global public goods and by winning the narrative through the use of social in addition to mass media.

Dr Capie noted that US smart power efforts in our region has forged closer ties with allies and partners such as Australia and Singapore, and established new relationships with Vietnam and Laos while even erstwhile adversaries like Myanmar are being engaged. Additionally, American involvement in regional forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the East Asian Summit (EAS) increased in tandem with defence diplomacy like the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) activities.

However, despite foreign policy changes, evidence of a new approach resembling soft power and positive reception from ASEAN countries, Dr Capie argued that the reorientation of US foreign policy could still be made irrespective of smart power as a term. In other words, the combination of soft and hard power is nothing new and the political enunciation of smart power is inconsequential. Also, causality was questioned because it could have been that growing Chinese hard power made US soft and hard power more palatable. Lastly, it was stated that smart power was dependant on US leadership and pertinent issues included US lead smart power sustainability along with America's willingness to share smart power leadership with a rising China.



Dr Michael Raska spoke on the conceptualisation of smart power, limitation of smart power, and the application of smart power and strategic policy implications. He argued that the concept of smart power has been framed as soft and hard power resources combined, which could then be used as a strategy for achieving national imperatives. Additionally, soft and hard power could also be classed as defensive and offensive in nature.

He noted that the rationale for smart power was premised upon contemporary issues such as terrorism, asymmetric threats, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) and low intensity conflicts. These issues had to be dealt with in addition to conventional warfare, thus weakening the salience of sole dependence on hard power. Moreover, there is now a diffusion of power between state and non-state actors. Hence, no state enjoys absolute preponderance and smart power is needed to maximize national potential even as states grapple with undefined threats, the limits of hard and soft power and increasing resource constraints.

Dr Raska explained that smart power policy is influenced by external constraints such as a state's relations to other state actors and internal constraints such as limited resources and bureaucratic rivalries while theoretical limitations manifested themselves in the contradiction between soft and hard power since both might negate one another under specific situations. He argued that the weakness of smart power's hard and soft components could be understood as the political risks of the misuse of military force and limited military effectiveness in fighting ideas for hard power and the difficulty of controlling power projection through the modern media and failure to resolve protracted conflicts for soft power.

Moreover, the drawbacks of smart power become more apparent when the inner workings of the state and even counter insurgency strategy is analysed. With the complex web of government agencies overseeing the military, diplomacy and even financing for both soft and hard power, different institutional operating styles, different interests and even the struggle for intra-governmental power will hinder the effective meshing of hard and soft capabilities to constitute smart power. As for counter-insurgency, the highly complex structure of the Afghan campaign makes effective smart power deployment difficult since it is hard to prioritise and coordinate the targets and application of smart power.

Finally, Dr Raska stressed that all power is relative and limited since the sources of power can change over time and that the efficacy of one basis of power may be successful only in certain cases. All power is bounded by the state's capacity to translate its resources into viable policy options and outcomes.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

A participant queried whether the current US foreign policy in Asia could really be characterized as soft power rather than smart power since it appears to be an exercise of the former rather than the latter. Another question looked at what measures could be implemented to prevent a premature reversion to the use of hard power when the effects of soft power were delayed.

In response, Dr Capie argued that even if no substantial change in US strategy had taken place, the rise of China and the distaste amongst regional states of its hard power displays makes US soft power more appealing, hence the perception that American soft power is more prominently practiced. Prof Vennesson opined that in relation to the Bush administration, the Obama administration has exhibited many policy shifts away from hard power towards the practice of smart power. Hence, the implication is that American policy is holistically smart rather than soft. Concerning the second question, his advice for policymakers was that they should be cognizant of the cycles between hard and soft power application while remembering that even if hard power produced quicker results, the outcomes tended to be short-lived. Dr Raska suggested that policymakers should be clear about their foreign policy objectives when deciding the soft/hard power mix in smart power. With reference to the purported stress on US soft power, he remarked that perceptions about Chinese and US power varied widely and so an accurate judgement could not be made.

Two questions revolved around the query of whether military force could contribute to soft power and the

reasons how and why if the answer was positive or negative respectively and how smart power could be located within deterrence theory to shape or change an adversary's mind. In response, Prof Vennesson and Dr Raska argued that military power could certainly generate soft power within the context of peacetime through military to military diplomacy and HADR and even in wartime via adherence to international humanitarian law which would create a positive and honourable image for the military. Moreover, smart power can be used for deterrence since smart power is about enhancing a state's total capability and transmitting the knowledge of this enhanced capability to others. Thus, adversaries can be duly informed that one has greater strength than the power confined to the military.

A participant asked how soft power and its efficacy could be measured. The response from Dr Capie was that its efficacy can be detected via policy changes of other states which are aligned to one's own goals without the application of coercion or payments. However, if quantifiable measurements are required in order to derive cost/benefit ratios to justify spending on soft power instruments vis-à-vis hard power mechanisms, this is hard to do. Dr Raska noted that all measurements of soft and hard power are inaccurate because the utility of power is relative and dependent on the context to which they are used. Lastly, Prof Vennesson pointed out that the notion of measurable military power and outcomes is less relevant today due to the multi-dimensional nature of modern warfare, to the point where even heavy defence spending might fall short of the intended military efficacy.

WINNING THE NARRATIVE WAR WITH SMART POWER



Dr William Mitchell highlighted that the character of the battlespace has changed and that systems of system analyses (SoSA) approach was required to help manage the complexity of the relationship between the cognitive and physical demands down to the unit level. According to Dr Mitchell, the rapid flow of information in the modern battlefield meant that action-reaction processes in the military were becoming more multi-faceted. As a result, military objectives were now dependent on the speed in which knowledge and information can be translated into application actions in the battlefield.

Noting that the military which best manages inter-subjectivity would be victorious, Dr Mitchell pointed out the various competing battlefield narratives. They were: the institutional vs. mission/theatre narrative; abstract concept or expressed statements and multi-actor vs. single actor narrative. These narratives, according to Dr Mitchell, were change agents and that the situation is always fluid.

Comparing a commander's intent to a narrative structure, Dr Mitchell added that this "battle of narratives" would be the defining factor of 21st century warfare and that military operations and counteractions would have to be framed by these narratives. Furthermore, in any given operation, physical actions must support the strategic narrative, as must the discourse surrounding those actions. As such, operation planners must be able to work within the context of narrative led operations, where the authority

and expertise to destroy, must be accompanied by the authority and expertise to shape the discourse surround that destruction.

Professor Christopher Coker began by noting that militaries risk fighting 21st century war with 20th century rules. Highlighting that while the character of war have changed with the introduction of technology, the nature of war had not changed and that ethical questions continue to persist. Alluding to the US army's Abu-Ghraib abuses, Prof Coker commented that it was difficult for armies to "sustain the narrative" if ethical principles are not being observed.

According to Prof Coker, the use of "Smart technology" in war has also brought with it other questions. Citing the use of drones for instance, Prof Coker pointed out that while drones have provided their users with greater oversight, they have also resulted in less insight. Also, technology is not "value free" and as such, how technology is being put to use is of paramount importance. Furthermore, noted Prof Coker, a piece of technology might be tactically effective but strategically useless. As such, the use of social media that has 'networked' the battlespace in new and ever more complex ways can be both advantageous and disadvantageous to militaries, depending on how these are being used. Countries which are able to differentiate themselves from others especially from terrorists whose own discourse is one-dimensional and immoral will have a greater ethical base to frame their own conduct of combat.

Finally, Prof Coker prescribed the use of non-lethal weapons in war as an objective for militaries as these weapons do not kill but instead neutralize the enemy. Commenting that one wins a war "not by fighting but by getting the enemy to stop fighting", Prof Coker observed that it was more important to get an enemy to surrender instead of killing them. Highlighting that in today's wars, those who "tell the narrative" are often far away from the frontlines, Prof Coker said that it was important to recognize the character of war and death. Prof Coker concluded with the following: "Death is the most precious thing which has been given to man. That is why the supreme impiety is to make bad use of it."



According to **Professor Ahmed Hashim**, there is no one single battle in the Middle East, but many wars and many competing narratives taking place at the same time. Two of the major narratives are Al-Qaeda vs. United States and Israel vs. Hezbollah. Citing the current Syrian regime as a case in point, Prof Hashim noted that President Bashar al-Assad was using a narrative war to combat the Syrian opposition by terming them as “Al-Qaeda terrorists”.

Defining a narrative as a “system of sequentially organized story”, every aspect of the narrative was

necessarily interrelated and dynamic and that a narrative is often action-oriented in nature. Today, narratives have interwoven themselves into hard power as seen by the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah war where the latter used technology to shape the narrative of the conflict. Furthermore, noted Prof Hashim, the Hezbollah narrative coheres well with most domestic and the international audience thus allowing Hezbollah to shape perceptions of the battlefield as well as to gain military and political support from the Islamic world.

Prof Hashim also cited Osama bin Laden as another leading figure of shaping the Middle East narrative. Prof Hashim observed that Osama bin Laden presented the narrative of perceived iniquities of American policy in the Middle East. Other aspects of the narrative also include: unfair US treatment of Palestine compared to Israel, UN sanctions and Iraqi civilian deaths and the perceived US’ crusade against Muslims all over the world. The US emphasis on hard power, instead of soft power or smart power has resulted in a failure in public diplomacy and had not produced mutually assured dignity in the Middle East, according to Prof Hashim.

PANEL 3

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

A question concerning the US narrative in the Middle East queried whether the problem stemmed from the failings of the liberal democracy program or was it the result of the US’ inability to achieve its aims. According to Dr Mitchell, it was not possible to separate the tactical-strategic and with the proliferation of social media, one country’s actions can be interpreted by others to mean something quite different. Prof Hashim commented that the Middle East wanted justice, not just democracy and it was not helpful for the US to play the role of an “armed missionary”. Furthermore, among the mainstream population in the Middle East, the US support of authoritarian governments was hypocritical and politically schizophrenic. Prof Coker added that consistency is an important factor in the transmission of a narrative and that people hate both

injustice and hypocrisy. Noting that the US’ promotion of liberal internationalism was a problem, Prof Coker noted that war conducted on such principles can be very dangerous.

A participant asked whether it was possible to win the narrative with smart power in the case of the conflict between South Korea and North Korea. In response, Dr Mitchell commented that one cannot possibly win or lose a narrative war as the narrative was not a static concept, but a dynamic story that was subjected to change. On the Korean conflict, it was mentioned that the narrative was being constructed a long time ago as a police operation and not a military operation and as such, it was difficult to change the trajectory of this narrative.

DEFENCE DIPLOMACY IN SMART POWER



Mr Eddie Lim began by noting that the deployment of foreign service officials alongside the military is evidence of the increasing complexity of military operations. However, Mr Lim pointed out that not every nation can rely upon this expertise. For instance, smaller nations may not have enough resources to deploy these officials to assist the military. In other words, for small and medium nations, military personnel could be tasked to deal with diplomatic issues even if they are not professionally trained in the fine art of diplomacy.

Mr Lim noted that defence and military diplomacy serve the same purpose, but both are different in nature. He defined defence diplomacy as the globalizing instrument of national power to achieve national imperatives in the area of national security. Thus, defence diplomacy revolves around whole of the government approaches – agencies and departments that seek to achieve national aims, goals and imperatives. On the other hand, military diplomacy is about mobilizing military assets to enhance relations. Mr Lim further noted that if defence diplomacy is all about winning a narrative, then military diplomacy is about putting words into action.

According to Mr Lim, this is where smart power comes into play. Smart power is a nation's implementation all of necessary assets and skills at its disposal to achieve policy goals. Smart power is about winning the diplomatic narrative, telling the ideal story. If one is desire to tell the ideal story, governments are likely to call upon the military in light of the contemporary security environment.

Through various activities, military diplomacy helps to narrate the ideal story. First, military diplomacy dispels an image of the military as just an instrument of war. Second, it enhances the image of professionalism in armed forces and to contribute to diplomatic goals through multilateral and bilateral exercises, and helps to foster confidence with other stakeholders.

Lastly, it encourages cooperation between militaries, especially in the areas of education and training. Mr Lim argued that in a complex and technologically advanced world, the challenges that military professionals face are greater than ever before. It will not be easy for those military professionals to grasp the intricacies of diplomacy while trying to improve their own military expertise. Nevertheless, it is important to broaden the perspective of military professionals to tackle contemporary challenges.



COL Robert Breen began by noting that smart power creates new challenges for traditional interoperability and joint operations paradigms. An increasing number of civilian actors need to achieve consensus and a degree of interoperability, both among themselves and, where possible and permissible, with the military. At the same time, the military has to nurture and maintain more sophisticated relationships with other agencies of the government as well with local and international humanitarian aid agencies.

In his view, civil-military cooperation becomes a crucial factor for the success of humanitarian operations. However, the challenge for civil-military operational level interoperability is planning to conduct activities in conjunction with joint operations. COL Breen used his country's effort as the prime example to explain his argument. According to him, the Australian government has established a deployable Australian Civilian Corps (ACC) to enhance its response to national, regional and international crises, sometimes to conflict zones. The ACC initiative is managed by the Australian government's aid agency, AusAid, in cooperation with other Australian government agencies. Interoperability will depend on finding a way for both the ACC and other civilian aid agencies, complying with international humanitarian law and principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and transparency to work in conflict zones with the military.

One dimension of the concept of interoperability could be exemplified in Open Standards for Information Technology (IT). Using the IT industry's experiences as an illustration, COL Breen argued that such an open-concept framework will enhance interoperability between civilian and government aid agencies and the military. In doing so, all of the stakeholders will be able to participate in balanced consultations and enhance impartiality for more effective collaborative processes. Such favourable conditions will in turn build trust amongst these organisations.

However, COL Breen stressed that the hierarchical nature of the military puts many civilian organizations ill at ease. Moreover, the military's attention to operational security makes it difficult for civilian organizations to assist in military operations. Despite this enduring problem, he pointed out that establishing the effective working relationship with civilian actors will achieve a greater mission success. Thus, it is essential to maintain an effective level of interoperability among government's agencies, civilian aid agencies and military.

To sum up his presentation, Col. Breen suggested that in terms of smart interoperability for joint operations, it is essential to include civilian actors: not just government agencies and departments, but also civilian aid agencies. Just as the IT industry has developed Open Standards for its collaboration and cooperation, Open Standards could be adopted to enhance civil-military collaboration and cooperation that could lead to a higher level of interoperability to joint operations.



Mr Bernard Miranda drew heavily from his previous operational command experience with Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) in the Gulf of Aden. He began his presentation by highlighting the difference between maritime community and the community of land. Mr Miranda emphasized that no one country will ever be able to keep peace and stability at sea on its own. Thus, it is very crucial to develop and maintain effective international collaboration. He stressed the importance of military-to-military relations in traditional ways like bilateral or multinational military exercises, exchange programs, conferences and meetings. At the same, he also pointed out that it is important for military professionals to socialize with their foreign counterparts as well.

Based on his multilateral operational experience, he highlighted some of the important qualities that helped him with his mission – patience, flexibility, imagination and adaptability. Each military has its own set of Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), training regulations in peacetime. Due to unforeseeable circumstances, however,

a commanding officer needs to make necessary changes during an operation. In other words, Mr Miranda pointed out that it is crucial for a commanding officer to be flexible, imaginative and adaptable enough to think beyond SOPs. He also highlighted the importance of reaching out to other military partners in order to collaborate with them effectively. Building goodwill and friendship is vital for all of participating militaries to transcend differences and minimize friction.

Mr Miranda pointed out the importance of thinking flexibly in an Operation Other than War (OOTW). Military organizations must exercise restraint and perseverance in order to successfully complete such mission. It is not difficult to plan for such missions, although he asserted that some form of preparation is still required. For example, it is essential for military organizations to conduct simulations with people from the policy office, legal service. Training is another important step before embarking such mission; it is crucial to have a good, solid training plan to go through the Rules of Engagement (ROEs) with all participating personnel. However, it is of utmost importance to have a clear plan of the end state of such mission. Mr Miranda, in his conclusion, emphasized that one must have a clear picture of when to pull out, and what are the indicators to make the final decision to withdraw from the mission.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

A participant requested for the panellists' view on whether defence diplomacy is actually a military version of soft power. Mr Lim again pointed out that military diplomacy is the subset of defence diplomacy. In his view, defence diplomacy is not just the purview of a nation's defence establishment. It is a partnership of various governmental bodies which fits into the state's national strategy in order to achieve and attain policy goals. The military in military diplomacy helps achieving those national aims.

The next question was about the inherent dilemma and tension that the military faces in smart power strategies, because it is an institution that is often identified with hard power. The panellists were also asked about how military would be perceived by the public even though the intent of the mission is to help those who are suffering from either conflicts or natural disasters. Mr Miranda stressed that the willingness to share everything at one's own disposal is a way to win confidence of the people who are affected by conflicts and natural disasters. Moreover, the willingness to engage the other participants in the mission is a good way to shore up confidence between domestic and international partners. Mr Lim emphasized that military organizations are the institutions that have the necessary skills and capabilities to function in challenging environments. While military organizations are the

embodiment of hard power, they are able to contribute their capabilities in a broad range of non-combat tasks such as HADR. This could soften the traditional image of military organizations over time.

Another participant queried about defence diplomacy and the whole government approach towards it. The panellists were also asked about the readiness of military organizations to respond to potential conflicts and natural disasters. COL Breen provided the example of the Australian government and its decision to establish a civil-military command in Canberra. He stressed that the creation of this organization is not just only to improve joint capabilities within the Australian Defence Force (ADF), but also to enhance the ADF's operations with its civilian counterparts as well. COL Breen argued that joint efforts involving civilian actors and military can be improved if civilian organizations acknowledge that they are a part of the entire national toolset. Mr Lim noted that the decision to undertake non-traditional missions is a responsibility of the nation's policymakers rather than the military leadership. However, he also pointed out that the SAF's high readiness and extensive capabilities offer the Singaporean government an effective instrument to deal with potential conflicts and natural disasters.

SMART POWER AND THE MANAGEMENT OF US-LED ALLIANCES AND COALITIONS IN AN AGE OF HYBRID WARS



Assistant Professor Evan Resnick noted the recent emergence of hybrid warfare, in which a highly skilled and well-armed adversary simultaneously and synergistically combines both conventional and unconventional tactics within the same battle-space. Such adversaries would be present in highly contested zones, and could adopt a range of different modes, operating either as a singular unit or as separate units.

Prof Resnick argued that the US faces unique difficulties in mustering formal alliances and informal coalitions against foes resorting to hybrid strategies. He elaborated that alliance cohesion is measured by the durability and extent that the different entities resembled a unitary actor in terms of war aims, shared resources, and coordination of activities. As challenging as it is for alliances and coalitions to establish high levels of cohesion in conventional wars, this task was considerably more arduous in hybrid wars that place a high premium on military coordination and intelligence-sharing amongst the allied States.

Prof Resnick explained that hybrid wars exhibited five attributes that distinguish them from conventional wars and complicate the task of alliance and coalition management. First, they lack clear front lines with which

to gauge military progress and success. Second, they tend to be long and protracted. Thirdly, hybrid warfare is invariably a defensive strategy that is employed against an attacker in the defender's territory during a war of aggression. Fourth, hybrid wars typically entail exceptionally high risks of civilian casualties. Finally, they involve the execution of terrorist attacks by the defenders that are aimed at eroding popular support in the attacking States.

Prof Resnick felt that these attributes collectively limit the capacity of the US to use "smart power" for the purposes of maximising the cohesion of the alliances and coalitions it leads into hybrid wars. He explained that while coercive hard power and bribery were useful, they were less important in maintaining alliance cohesion. Soft power attraction was a more important key in keeping alliances together in an offensive war of opportunity and choice, for which the national security interests of the attackers were not in peril. The failure by the US to maximise its soft power with its allies during the offensive military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan thus provided a partial explanation of why the coalition was frayed.

Prof Resnick said that this was exacerbated by the protracted nature of these hybrid conflicts, where given that there were few other metrics of success and failure besides temporal duration and wartime casualties, the US-led offensives were increasingly viewed as failures. He added that the negative knock-on effects on domestic support within the US and its coalition partners must also be acknowledged, as evidenced by the increased public opposition to these campaigns. As a policy recommendation, Prof Resnick suggested that US decision-makers must ensure that such wars are rare, amply justified on both moral and geopolitical grounds, limited in scope and aims, and minimally reliant on the deployment of US and allied ground forces.



Associate Professor Heng Yee Kuang spoke about the ostensibly counter-intuitive relationship between soft power and the military instruments of hard power, but highlighted that deploying certain military assets in non-kinetic ways could help increase a country's smart power.

Prof Heng stressed that the resources often associated with hard power behaviour can also produce soft power behaviour depending on the context and how they are used. Indeed, a tangible hard power resource such as a military unit can produce both command behaviour (by winning a battle) and cooperative behaviour (by attracting) depending on how it is used. In particular, sea power is a malleable national resource that can win battles (hard power) or win hearts and minds (soft power) depending on the target and what the issues are. An example of naval forces becoming a smart power asset was when the US used its awesome might to carry out relief operations in Aceh in Indonesia after the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2005.

Another example of the US blending 'hard' (Carrier groups) and 'soft' (disaster relief) power was Operation Tomodachi (12 March – 4 May 2011), which involved a total of 130 aircraft, 12,510 personnel and over 15 naval ships, but was unequivocally viewed as providing assistance and non-threatening. Coercive hard power and attractive soft power can therefore co-exist together, and bring about 'smart' power gains. They include: achieving better public opinion and more friendly sentiments amongst foreign audiences; greater inter-operability not just in disaster relief but also 'military emergencies; reaffirming the alliance links by appearing as a reliable ally; and alliance maintenance by assuaging fears of abandonment.

Prof Heng said that the US Pacific Partnership, which begun following the 2004 tsunami after the US realised the success of its relief missions, was undoubtedly a Smart Power strategy. By providing humanitarian supplies as well as medical, dental, engineering and veterinary aid to remote areas, the US visibly demonstrated its commitment to the region. This served the smart power goals of strengthening alliances and enhancing inter-operability with key allies and partners; fostering development and public health; and 'public diplomacy' and outreach.

Prof Heng pointed out that the US is not alone in adopting a Smart Power strategy. Examples of non-kinetic Japanese military ops and 'smart power combo' include blending Japanese pop culture and "*kawaii*" icons with military assets used for development activities in Iraq. This projected a friendly, non-aggressive image to target audience, and helped to 'win hearts and minds' and avert casualties. China is also trying 'smart' power with own hospital ship, Peace Ark, to appear as assisting and not threatening. It deployed to the Gulf of Aden on "Mission Harmony 2010" in Sep 2010, where it provided free medical care and training in Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, the Seychelles and Bangladesh. In 2011, it deployed to the Caribbean on "Mission Harmony 2011", where it provided free medical services in Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, and Costa Rica. The first Chinese operational naval mission to the area, it not only provided the PLAN with experience in logistics and long-range deployments, but also enhanced China's image as responsible power. This is a clear example of the Chinese attempting to integrate 'hard' and 'soft' power goals, thereby maximizing the strategic and messaging value.

Prof Heng concluded by saying that Smart Power as a strategy is not without its limitations. Firstly, not all types of military assets can be made to appear less 'threatening'. Secondly, it is unclear how self-sustaining and long-term initiatives like the US Pacific Partnership can be when it comes to developmental goals. Thirdly, annual visits that last only a few days may not translate into real presence and influence on the ground.



Professor Thomas Mahnken dealt with the question of how governments, and in particular their military components, can transform hard and soft power so that they can be used most effectively. He noted that there are practical difficulties in pursuing such innovation, as well as organisational resistance towards doing new things. Indeed, there is an inherent tension in organisational change because innovation is primarily about revolution and transformation, whereas organisations are usually about predictability and stability. As a corollary, it is important to realise that not everything concerning the organisation should change. There are some elements in an organisation that can and should innovate, but there are others that need or should not. Prof Mahnken then addressed three questions: What is military innovation? Why should military organisations innovate? Finally, how do military organisations innovate?

Prof Mahnken noted that military innovation can be understood in terms of scale, technology, novelty, complexity, and the actors involved. He distinguished military innovation that referred to changes within and between the various armed services, from defence innovation at the Defence Department level and national security innovation at the strategic level. He clarified that, as it was more of a strategy, 'Smart Power' lies firmly at the level of national security innovation.

Explaining why military organisations should innovate, Prof Mahnken suggested that it was firstly because opportunities are presented that may potentially improve the efficiency and effectiveness of military operations. More often, however, innovations occur due to the presence of threats that defies conventional solutions. Failure to change will therefore inevitably lead to failure of the organisation. The key is then to identify the new threats that demand such military innovation.

Prof Mahnken noted that military innovation occurs at three levels – leadership, resource, and culture. At the leadership level, he stressed that successful military innovation requires the support and commitment of the (highest possible) civilian and military leaders. At the resource level, it was important to avoid the 'competence trap', which is often exacerbated by the willingness to follow orders and 'can do' culture of the military. At the level of culture, Prof Mahnken noted that organisational culture can be either a barrier or an enabler, and that time was required to change the existing organisation if it is to innovate effectively. Alternatively, there is the possibility of simply creating a brand new organisation.

Prof Mahnken concluded by asserting that "US soft power is everywhere" – although the question is whether the US government can harness it. The US also has considerable hard power and capacity. As such, not only is it harder for a big superpower to change course, it also has less impetus to do something that feels unnatural. As small and medium powers have less capacity, it is therefore more likely to encounter opportunities and find reasons to innovate.

PANEL 5

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION

In the final question and answer session, a participant queried whether smart power is a useful tool in deciding partnerships between nations. The panel agreed that the positive effects from exercising smart power properly translates into attraction – other nations would be interested to enter into a partnership. On the same topic, his fellow colleague wondered if culture should be a factor in building partnerships. Prof Resnick replied that when threat levels are high, democracies have been observed to form partnerships more easily.

Another participant queried whether the notion of Smart Power erodes traditional hard power approaches. Prof Heng said that it is more about refocusing what the military can do and how it can assist to promote and achieve a country's soft power agenda. There is always the risk of over-correction. However, OOTW missions help train personnel, test doctrine, improve coordination, and facilitate networking. As a result, there are clear hard power gains.

The next question posed presented a scenario where the US might be disinclined to conduct hybrid wars, and if other nations should take more responsibility in such situations. Prof Resnick responded to this query by arguing that the US should avoid fighting hybrid wars, but it must be ready to engage in such operations if it is in the national interest and there is a clear geopolitical imperative. In this regard, alliances are important for the US, especially in times of financial austerity. Presenting another viewpoint, Prof Mahnken added that one does not choose which wars to fight, but one must prepare even for the types that are better avoided because the choice may not exist.

Finally, a participant noted that if leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin, and asked if either one of these would be easier to change. Prof Mahnken replied that a skilful leader will use the organisational culture to innovate. An example is the introduction of helicopters in the US Army, where the idea was sold to the cavalry as the modern alternative to the horse.

CLOSING REMARKS



Colonel Ng Wai Kit said that the 2012 GKSCSC Seminar had witnessed robust conversations and provided useful perspectives. He believed that everyone had come away from it with a much clearer understanding of 'smart power'. He noted that there was general agreement that the world has changed and that military power alone will not solve the world's problems. While hard power can still

win wars, it is less certain that it can secure the peace. Wars are no longer just fought on the battlefield, but on the non-linear battlespace. There is now a greater need to also 'win nicely', 'win hearts and minds', and 'win the battle for the narratives'.

In this regard, the military is the nexus between hard and soft power, and it will have to play a dual role that increasingly encompasses soft power activities. COL Ng however pointed out that this is not a novel point. Indeed, the SAF Mission Statement already refers to the enhancement of Singapore's peace and security "through deterrence and diplomacy". 'Smart Power' is therefore not a wholly new concept. COL Ng then shared his two main takeaways from the seminar. Firstly, 'smart power' is not a resource or capacity. The military is the resource and at most a potential capacity for power, and ultimately "context is everything". Secondly, 'smart power' is not power itself. Rather it is a strategy to combine hard and soft power.

PROGRAMME

Day One: 18 October 2012 (Thursday)

Venue: Officer Cadet School Auditorium, SAFTI MI

0900 – 0905 **Opening Remarks**

*COL Ng Wai Kit, Commandant GKS CSC,
AFTI MI, SAF*

0905 – 0915 **Keynote Speech:**

*Mr Michael Matthiessen, EU Visiting Fellow,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy*

0915 – 1045 **Panel 1: Conceptualising Smart Power**

Chair: Assoc Prof Bernard Loo

Smart Power: what it is, why it's important, and the conditions for its effective use

Prof Giulio Gallarotti, Wesleyan University

The Communitarian Bases of Soft Power & its Implications for Information Operations and HADR

Assoc Prof Alan Chong, RSIS

Strategy, Domestic Politics, and Smart Power in China's Policy towards Southeast Asia

Assoc Prof U Mingjiang, RSIS

1045 – 1115 **Coffee Break**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1100 – 1245 **Panel 2: Is Smart Power for Real?**

Chair: Assoc Prof Alan Chong

Changing Utility of Military Power in International Politics

Prof Pascal Vennesson, RSIS

Smart Power and US strategy in Southeast Asia

Dr David Capie,

Victoria University of Wellington I

Limits of Constructing Smart Power

Dr Michael Raska, RSIS

1245 – 1345 **Lunch**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1345 - 1515 **Panel 3: Winning the Narrative War with Smart Power**

Chair: Asst Prof Ong Welchong

Shaping the Narrative in Real and Virtual War

Dr William Mitchell,

Royal Danish Defence College

Why the Ethical Dimension Matters

Assoc Prof Alan Chong, RSIS

Ethical Realism: Why Small States Should Have Ethical Foreign Policies

Prof Christopher Coker,

*The London School of Economics
and Political Science (LSE)*

The Battle of the Narrative in the Middle East

Assoc Prof Ahmed Hashim, RSIS

1515 – 1545 **Coffee Break**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1545 – 1745 **Syndicated Group Discussion for Participants**

(SAFTI MI Tour for Overseas Speakers)

1800 – 2000 **Dinner Reception**

Venue: Officers' Mess, SAFTI MI

Day Two: 19 October 2012 (Friday)

0900 – 1030 **Panel 4: Role of Militaries in Smart Power Strategiest**

Chair: Asst Prof Ong Weichong

Defence Diplomacy in Smart Power

Mr Eddie Lim,

Centre for Operational Learning, SAFTI MI

Interoperability and Joint Operations

COL Robert (Bob) Breen PhD, Australian Command and Staff College (ACSC)

Conventional Navies in Unconventional Operations

Mr Bernard Miranda, National Maritime Security System, Singapore

1030 – 1100 **Coffee Break**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1100 – 1245 **Transforming Militaries for Smart Power Strategies**

Chair: Prof Pascal Vennesson

Smart Power and the Management of U.S.-led Alliances and Coalitions in an Age of Hybrid Wars

Asst Prof Evan Resnick, RSIS

The Non-Kinetic role of the Military in Smart Power Strategies

Assoc Prof Heng Yee Kuang,

Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Innovation and the Military Organisations

Prof Thomas Mahnken,

U.S. Naval War College

1245 – 1345 **Lunch**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1345 – 1545 **Syndicated Group Discussion for Participants**

(Army Museum Tour for Overseas Speakers)

1545 – 1615 **Coffee Break**

Venue: Officer Cadets' Mess, SAFTI MI

1615 – 1745 **Plenary Presentation**

Chair: Assoc Prof Alan Chong

1745 – 1800 **Closing Remarks**

COL Ng Wai Kit,

Commandant GKS CSC, SAFTI MI, SAF

End of Seminar



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