

Networking in Sentosa: Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers 2011



The 13th Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO) was held at the Sentosa Resort and Spa from 4-10 August 2011. Organised by the RSIS Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), this year's APPSMO saw one of the largest attendances of military officers—59 in total from 28 countries representing Asia, Oceania, North America, Europe, and Africa. This was also the first time that new Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen officiated at the opening of APPSMO.

Since its inception in 1999, APPSMO has provided a unique and important forum for defence diplomacy, where defence officials and analysts network and exchange views on a broad range of subjects related to regional and international security. The 13th APPSMO continued to facilitate this

interaction. The military officers participated in a series of seminars and discussions that featured experts from the academic, policy and media communities. Distinguished speakers who delivered lectures included Professor Ir. Purnomo Yusgiantoro, Indonesia's Minister of Defence, and Ambassador Christopher Hill, Dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, and former US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Prof Purnomo spoke on prospects and challenges in Indonesian defence policy while Ambassador Hill assessed the trajectory of US foreign policy in West Asia and the Middle East after the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

There were panel discussions and single-speaker seminars on the following topics: New Dimensions in International

Security; Sino-US Relationship: Source of Stability or Instability; Centres of Power and Influence in the Evolving Regional Order (focusing on India, Japan and Russia); Defence Diplomacy in the Asia Pacific; New Vulnerabilities for Power and Systems in the New Public Information and Media Space; Post-Conflict Stabilisation Operations; Energy Security in the Asia Pacific Region; Civil-Military Relations (focusing on Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific and the Middle East); and Terrorism in South and Southeast Asia.

It was not all work however, as the participants were treated to a variety of outings including visits to the Changi Naval Base, SAFTI Military Institute, the Night Safari at the Singapore Zoological gardens, and a tour of Singapore. On Singapore's National Day on 9 August, the international

military officers were invited to attend the National Day Parade with Singaporeans.

Participants said they would remember APPSMO not only for the stimulating talks and discussions they had on topical security issues, but also for the relationships built with their fellow officers of Singapore and around the Asia Pacific and beyond. By facilitating exchange of ideas, discussions, and better understanding among senior military officers from around the world APPSMO 2011 has contributed to the development of stronger and mutually beneficial ties among the defence establishments and peoples in their countries.

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