



THINK TANK

News from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

RSIS Launches New Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies

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RSIS has launched a new centre that focuses its research and analysis on emerging security challenges in Asia. The Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies aims to raise awareness of the importance of a number of non-traditional security issues in the region and build regional institutional capabilities to respond to these challenges. Initially, the centre's work will focus on pandemics, climate change, energy security and nuclear energy. It will subsequently be extended to

include issues such as irregular migration, food security, trans-national crime and other areas.

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies grew out of the RSIS NTS programme. The programme first started in 1999 as a response to the security challenges brought on by the 1997 Asian financial crisis. Since then, the work of the programme has expanded from developing conceptual and methodological tools to understanding the causes of NTS issues,



Members of the NTS Network who attended the launch. Seated at the first row (from left to right) are: Dr. Miki Honda (Waseda University), Prof Carolina Hernandez (ISDS, Philippines), Prof Alan Dupont (CISS, University of Sydney), Amb Barry Desker (Dean, RSIS), Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim (Minister For the Environment And Water Resources, Singapore), Dr. Surin Pitsuwan (Secretary-General of ASEAN), Assoc Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony (Head, Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies, RSIS), Mr. John Fitzgerald (China Representative, Ford Foundation), Assoc Prof Rajesh Basrur (RSIS), Mr. Kwa Chong Guan (Head, External Programmes, RSIS). Seated at the second row are: Ms. Sofiah Jamil (RSIS), Prof James Tang (University of Hong Kong), Prof Chowdhury Abrar (RMMRU, University of Dhaka), Prof Han Feng (IAPS, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Dr. Nick Thomas (University of Hong Kong), Prof Yu Xiao Feng (Zhejiang University, China) Asst Prof Chang Youngho (RSIS), Dr. Alvin Chew (RSIS), Ms. Irene Kuntjoro (RSIS).



Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, guest of honour at the launch

how they are defined as security threats, how governments and non-state actors address them, and what policy responses have been and should be formulated to tackle them. The NTS projects thus combine theoretical innovation, an empirical research programme, and policy-relevant analysis and findings.

The centre is also the secretariat of the Asia-wide Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia), a network that brings together 14 research institutes and think tanks working on NTS issues across the Asian re-

gion. The centre will also host several visiting research scholars and visiting professors working on a range of NTS issues.

In officially launching the Centre for NTS Studies, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources of Singapore, Dr. Yaacob Ibrahim, called it a “timely initiative by RSIS to spearhead the study of non-traditional security issues within the region”. He is confident that the “centre will raise awareness of the importance of NTS issues such as climate change, energy security and pandemics, address the needs of governmental policies, as well as conduct incisive and illuminating research in this important field”. He also commended the centre’s leadership in the wider NTS Asia Consortium, saying that the consortium is not only “an intellectual hub for NTS but also part of the architecture for regional cooperation into these issues”.

Joining the Minister in the launch was ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, who delivered the keynote address. Dr. Surin, an advocate of the concept of human security, said that he was very glad the RSIS Centre for NTS Studies “is serving as the nucleus

of those evolving thoughts and conceptualization about non-traditional threats which are affecting and eroding our human security in the region”.

According to him, understanding NTS is extremely important in this new age of an integrated and globalized world where NTS threats like infectious diseases, climate change and natural calamities have a more severe impact on human lives across the world. As a result, he said, “one human insecurity somewhere, is a global insecurity everywhere”. In this regard, the work of the RSIS Centre on NTS Studies is a significant contribution to addressing new security challenges since it is these NTS issues that have eluded our traditional way of managing, controlling and understanding security.

Various activities and initiatives are in the pipeline for the Centre for NTS Studies as it aspires to reach out and further engage various sectors of society, including scholars, policymakers and civil-society organizations in the Asian region and beyond. RSIS, therefore, looks forward to this new leg of non-traditional security studies in the School.

Visits by Foreign Delegations

Visit by the Australian Command and Staff College



The delegation from the Australian Command and Staff College

On 15 May 2008, RSIS hosted a delegation from the Australian Command and Staff College. The delegation was led by CPT Richard McMillan and comprised officers from the different services of the Australian armed forces. The delegation was hosted by Mr. Tan Seng Chye, a Senior Fellow of the School. During the two-hour visit, Dr. Li Mingjiang, Dr. Sam Bateman and Mr. Kwa Chong Guan briefed the visitors on a variety of subjects, ranging from the emergence of China as a military and economic superpower to maritime security issues in Southeast Asia and the regional perspective on Australia’s engagement with the region. The discussion that followed was lively and stimulating, and is a testimony to the success of the visit.

Visit by Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mrs. Tan Ching Yee



Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, Head of ICPVTR, briefing PS MOE Mrs. Tan Ching Yee

Of late, the subject of terrorism and its implications for Singapore's multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious social fabric has become one of great interest in the community, especially schools in Singapore. Staff of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR) have been going to

schools to deliver talks and lectures to students and their parents on the dangers of terrorism, self-radicalization and the role of the Internet in proliferating extremist ideology.

In this light, on 29 May 2008, at the invitation of ICPVTR, Permanent Secretary of Education Mrs. Tan Ching Yee visited RSIS. The meeting—chaired by Dean Barry Desker—discussed the establishment of a strategic partnership between RSIS and the Ministry of Education (MOE) that would help teachers and students better understand the terrorist threat that Singapore and the region faces.

Dean Desker began the session by briefing the MOE delegation on new developments in RSIS and the work of ICPVTR. Of the centre, he highlighted its efforts to educate the public on counter-terrorism and counter-extremism. He also extended his invitation to schoolteachers with MOE to sign up for Master's programmes in RSIS.

Mrs. Tan noted that Nanyang Technological University was indeed proud of RSIS and the achievements and contributions the School has



Permanent Secretary of MOE, Mrs. Tan Ching Yee

made to the country. Mrs. Tan also congratulated ICPVTR on the efforts that it has made in countering terrorism and extremism in Singapore, the region and beyond. The depth of expert knowledge within the centre, especially its field research capabilities, was "eye-opening and impressive".

Since its inception, ICPVTR has endeavoured to work with the community to counter terrorism and extremism. The centre believes that the effective mitigation of this threat can only be achieved through working with the community. The visit by the MOE delegation is part of ongoing efforts made by the centre to engage with the community. After all, communities play an important role in countering terrorism.

Visit by the Thai National Defence Studies Institute

On 7 May 2008, General Kamon Saenissara led a delegation from the National Defence Studies Institute of the Royal Thai Armed Forces on a visit to RSIS. The officers that came with General Saenissara were Major-General Wisith Jeangprajak, Senior Colonel Surasit Thanatang and Colonel Terapol Sermsook. The Thai Defence Attaché, Captain (Navy) Panlop Tamisan accompanied the delegation.

Various RSIS staff briefed the visitors on topics relating to governance and administration, graduate teaching, networking and research. They were also given a briefing on the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) and the newly established Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (Centre for NTS Studies).

General Saenissara explained that the Royal Thai Armed Forces is establishing a Strategic Studies Centre, and that the delegation was here to learn from RSIS. The Thai centre would benefit ASEAN and not Thailand alone.

At the close of the briefing, General Saenissara thanked RSIS for providing valuable insights and for the hospitality given to them. He suggested future cooperation between the Thai Strategic Studies Centre and RSIS, and also extended an invitation to the School to visit the centre. Both sides exchanged mementos at the end of the visit as a sign of friendship between the two centres.



General Kamon Saenissara, Commanding General of the National Defence Studies Institute, Thailand

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Exploring Resilience



Guest of honour of APPSNO 2008, Prof S Jayakumar, arriving with Dean Desker (right) and Dr. Andrew Chew (left)

The Second Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior National Security Officers (APP-SNO) was held at the Sentosa Resort and Spa on 13–18 April 2008. Jointly organized by RSIS's Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) and the National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS) of the Prime Minister's Office, the programme provided a platform for practitioners and academics from the Asia-Pacific region and beyond to deliberate on a critical element of national security: resilience.

As noted by Prof S Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister for Law, in his opening speech, in the face of constantly evolving threats, national security strategies cannot rely on deterrence and protection alone. He felt that for a state to recover and rebound from a crisis, its citizens' psychological resolve and capacity should be strengthened. In this respect, the resilience of a society is reflected in the ability of security agencies and its people to overcome crises together.

In the course of the week, APPSNO participants were given an opportunity to think about the concept of resilience, how it was understood in theory and how it could be translated into realistic operational objectives. Distinguished speakers who came to speak on the topic in-



Lord John Alderdice (left), speaker at the Distinguished Lecture Dinner held at Raffles Hotel, with Dean Desker (Centre) and Dr. David Heyman, Director and Senior Fellow, Homeland Security Programme, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, America (right)



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in National Security

cluded Lord John Alderdice of the British House of Lords and award-winning science journalist, Ms. Laurie Garrett.

Under the umbrella of the topic of resilience, the issues covered included assessments of current security threats and best practices in consolidating resilience in the fields of counter-terrorism, health, strategic communication, business and culture.

While most of the participants agreed that there is the need for a concerted national response in the event of a security crisis, the question remained as to how this could be done in an effective manner. Challenges include the need for better threat assessments, clarification of roles in a crisis premised on both a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach, maintaining vigilance without raising alarm, and disseminating sensitive information.

Throughout the programme, the discussions were frank and robust. This was in itself a positive step towards forging a better appreciation of the complexities of managing national security in order to uncover solutions. In his address to the participants, Ambassador Barry Desker stressed that in the context of resilience and national security, "it's not how and how often you fall that matters, but the getting up again".



Mr. Peter Ho, Permanent Secretary (National Security and Intelligence Co-ordination) and Head of Civil Service (left) with Prof S Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister and Co-ordinating Minister for National Security



Assoc Prof Kumar Ramakrishna, Head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)



RSIS Colloquium on Public Health and Its Threats to National Security

How prepared are states when a pandemic breaks out? What are the measures in place when it happens? These were some of the questions that were raised by Laurie Garrett, an award-winning journalist and author of best-selling books such as *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance* and *Betrayal of Trust: The Collapse of Global Public Health*.

In the RSIS Colloquium on Public Health and Its Threats to National Security on 16 April 2008, Ms. Garrett addressed issues on globalization and the health problems that resulted from the phenomenon. She felt that as the world becomes more interconnected, such problems would occur with greater frequency. More alarmingly, she pointed out that gov-

ernments in their current state are ill equipped to deal with them as they would still deal with these problems through the traditional lenses where notions of security are based on ideas such as “containment” and “deterrence”.

She challenged such ideas because they are no longer relevant when it comes to health issues. Pandemics and diseases, to her, have “no direct relationships to guns, bullets or bombs”. She advocated for a repositioning of the way states define “national security” to include threats brought about by germs and diseases.

Ms. Garrett, who has studied and done field research on the H5N1 virus (commonly known as the avian flu), pointed out that the increase in travel and mobility of goods and people had been the primary causes of diseases spreading quickly to more areas. She has charted the spread of H5N1 and found out that in a short span of two years the virus has already travelled to 67 countries.

She warned that, in the event where the virus mutates to transmit from human to human, the cur-

rent global public healthcare system would not be able to cope with such an outbreak. This is especially so in this region because there is a lack of medical infrastructure here (with the exception of Hong Kong and Singapore) to cope with it. She also felt that the global talent-drain of medical workers away from poorer countries has increased the region’s vulnerability and decreased the capabilities of such countries to respond to such crises.

Moreover, conventional responses such as quarantine, culling and vaccination have not proved to be as effective as governments thought they would be. For example, the TamiFlu vaccine has resulted in serious side effects and, alarmingly, viruses are also becoming TamiFlu-resistant.

Ms. Garrett concluded her lecture with a proposition for dealing with pandemics. She felt that a timely response would be the way to handle an outbreak as prevention in this instance is much more effective than a cure. She urged “first-responder” countries such as Indonesia to be more pro-active and to come forward with information to the World Health Organization as soon as they detect a patient with H5N1. Any delay in reporting could be fatal and its results catastrophic.



Ms. Laurie Garette speaking to students of NTU at the RSIS Colloquium

The Warwick Commission Meets in Singapore

The Warwick Commission, an international panel comprising the world's leading experts in multilateral trade, gathered at Singapore's Fullerton Hotel on 4 April 2008 to discuss and analyse the impact of the first Warwick Report on "The Multilateral Trade Regime: Which Way Forward?"

The Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Mr. Lee Yi Shyan, in his keynote address, stressed the importance of the role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) acting as a guide to help emerging economies navigate their way around the complex environment of international trade. He said that the organization was responsible for establishing a fair system of trade, which is the way to guarantee stability and ensure that the international trading system is equitable for all members.

In helping the current trade regime improve and move forward in this direction, Mr. Lee felt that the Warwick Commission has been able to identify five key areas that could help improve multilateral trading regime. They are: (i) the growing opposition from industrialized countries for further trade liberalization; (ii) insufficient engagement from large economies; (iii) the lack of defined boundaries and broad agreement on WTO functions and objectives; (iv) a pressing need to ensure that the WTO's weakest members benefit from trade agreements; and (v) the need to foster greater transparency and non-discrimination in preferential trade agreements.

In his speech, Prof Richard Higgott, Director of the Warwick Commission, explained the commission's role in trying to bring together scholars and practitioners who can identify the systemic problems faced by the multilateral trade regime. He felt that the proposed recommendations of the Warwick Report could help advance the multilateral trading system in the future if they are included in the WTO discussion agenda.

Also present at the event were key trade negotiators and government officials such as Ambassador See Chak Mun, former Lead Trade Negotiator for Singapore and now Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Patrick Low, Chief Economist of the World Trade Organization; and Dr. Deborah Elms, Deputy Head (Graduate Studies) and International Political Economy Coordinator at RSIS.

The workshop in Singapore was the first of a series planned in key cities around the world as part of the Warwick Commission's efforts to generate discussion on this global issue. The event was jointly organized by the University of Warwick, which created the Warwick Commission, and RSIS.



The Minister of State for Trade and Industry, Singapore, Mr. Lee Yi Shyan, delivering the keynote address



Ambassador See Chak Mun, former Lead Trade Negotiator for Singapore and now Senior Advisor in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore

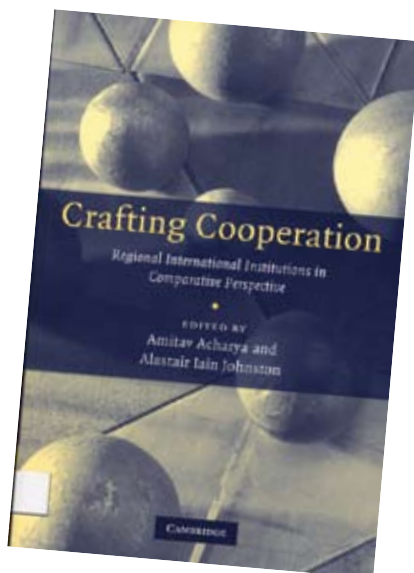


Dr. Deborah Elms, Head of the new Temasek Foundation Centre for Trade and Negotiations as well as Coordinator of the International Political Economy Programme at the School

Crafting Cooperation: Regional International Institutions in Comparative Perspective

Amitav Acharya & Alastair Iain Johnston, Cambridge University Press, 2007

Regional institutions are an increasingly prominent feature of world politics. Their characteristics and performance vary widely: some are highly legalistic and bureaucratic, while others are informal and flexible. They also differ in terms of inclusiveness, decision-making rules and commitment to the non-interference principle. This is the first book to offer a conceptual framework for comparing the design and effectiveness of regional international institutions, including the EU, NATO, ASEAN, the OAS, the AU and the Arab League. The case studies, by a group of leading scholars of regional institutions, offer a rigorous, historically informed analysis of the differences and similarities in institutions across Europe, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The chapters provide a

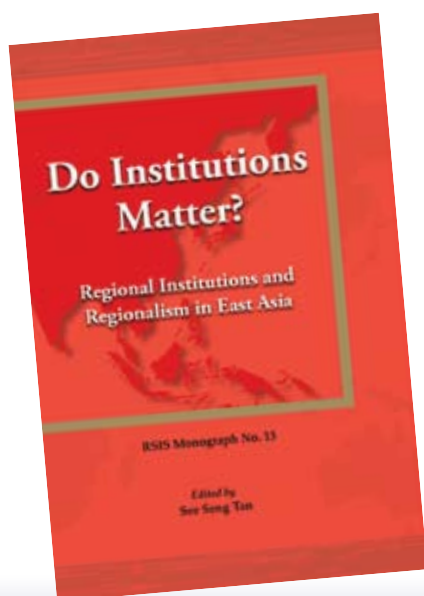


more theoretically and empirically diverse analysis of the design and efficacy of regional institutions than heretofore available.

This book is the outcome of collaboration between the Harvard University Asia Center, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard, and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

**RSIS Monograph No. 13
Do Institutions Matter? Regional Institutions and Regionalism in East Asia**

Edited by See Seng Tan, RSIS, 2008



What are the prospects of transforming the Asian region into a security community where regional states commit to peaceful relations and the avoidance of war with one another? Do regional institutions and the ongoing process of institutionalization in East Asia contribute to the quest for the security, peace and stability of the region? And how?

These are some of the questions that this monograph addresses, through assessments of the specific issues under consideration by the Sentosa Roundtable Study Group in its preparation for the second Sentosa Roundtable. The group assessed the relevance of regional inter-governmental institutions—the ASEAN Regional Forum, the ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit and so forth—to regional security, stability and community building in East Asia, among other issues.

3–10 August 2008
10th Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO 2008)
The Sentosa Resort & Spa, Singapore

13–14 October 2008
International Risk And Horizon Scanning Symposium
Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore

13–14 November 2008
“The People’s Liberation Army in the New Century” Conference
Traders Hotel, Singapore

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