

Rounding Up RSIS' 20th Anniversary Celebrations



(L-R) Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Associate Professor Alan Chong, Minister Chan Chun Sing, and Ambassador Barry Desker at the launch of the book

By **Stephanie Kim**

Held on 28 December 2016 at The Hive, Nanyang Technological University, the launch of the book *Forward Engagement: RSIS as a Think Tank of International Studies and Security in the Asia-Pacific* rounded up RSIS' 20th Anniversary celebrations.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, recounted how RSIS, which was first established as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies in 1996, had expanded and grown. Over the past two decades,

in response to the global and regional evolution of the security architecture, the School established five research centres and two research programmes. The significance of the work that RSIS carries out today is evidenced by the School's continued contribution to the discussion and dissemination of ideas pertinent to Singapore's prosperity and security.

Referring to RSIS as a "mixed economy", the book's editor, Associate Professor Alan Chong, shared how the various contributions in the book accurately reflected the School's range of interests. Underscoring RSIS' ability to continually gather experts in its role as a

"knowledge conductor", Assoc Prof Chong also highlighted RSIS' dual approach towards tackling current and future challenges.

Ambassador Barry Desker, Distinguished Fellow at RSIS, who moderated the panel discussion, added that RSIS' unique roles have enabled its capacity to influence on-going developments and future trends, contributing greatly to Singapore's position as a centre for ideas. Panel commentators Associate Professor Bilveer Singh, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security, RSIS; and Associate Professor Ang Cheng Guan, Head of Graduate Studies, RSIS; also attributed RSIS' success and development into one of the region's leading think tanks to the School's identity and sense of significance in what it is and wants to achieve.

Both commentators complimented the timeliness of the book, stating that it served as a meaningful record of the School's achievements, and was a good opportunity for RSIS to project ways in which it could further enhance its strengths going forward.

Amb Ong called on RSIS to continue pondering the improbable. For RSIS to enjoy greater success, it had to produce relevant research and make greater strides in establishing itself as a valuable centre for education.

The Guest-of-Honour at the book launch, Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Singapore, and Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress, also urged RSIS to maintain its practical orientation and continue its work in shaping conversations that helped to advance Singapore's interests. Mr Chan said that think tanks like RSIS need to maintain close ties with various government departments and assist in the consistent review of policies, to safeguard against groupthink, defy the odds of history and ensure Singapore's continued success.

The book, *Forward Engagement: RSIS as a Think Tank of International Studies and Security in the Asia-Pacific*, comprises 18 essays contributed by 23 of RSIS' faculty and research staff. Topics covered in the book range from cybersecurity and religion, to Singapore's regional diplomacy.

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Impacting the Region: Asian Militaries' Arms Acquisitions



A workshop session in progress

By **Richard A. Bitzinger**

On 18 November 2016, the Military Transformations Programme, together with the Maritime Security Programme, both in the Institute

of Defence and Strategic Studies at RSIS, hosted a one-day workshop on “Arms Racing in Asia: The Naval Dimension.” The workshop was held at the Holiday Inn Singapore Atrium and was organised back-to-back with the Maritime Security Programme’s conference on “Navies, Coast Guards, the Maritime Community and International Stability,” which was held from 16 to 17 November.

The workshop focused on the issue of recent arms acquisitions by Asian militaries, particularly maritime systems, and the impact that such proliferation might have on regional security. Papers presented at the workshop included: (i) Who is

selling arms to Asia (and why); (ii) The security dimensions of regional arms acquisitions; and (iii) How major powers, particularly the United States and China, view the proliferation of increasingly sophisticated weapons systems in the region. Special focus was paid to the proliferation of submarines, aircraft carriers, and unmanned aerial systems. Panelists speculated on the possible spread of extremely high-technology capabilities (so-called “third-offsets” systems) that could have an unknown effect on regional security and military balances. The workshop concluded with a panel discussion featuring experts on naval modernisation and arms proliferation.

Indonesia-Singapore Young Leaders Scenario Planning Workshop 2016

By **Chaula Rininta Anindya**

The S. Rajaratnam Endowment (SRE) and the Indonesia Programme at RSIS jointly held the Indonesia-Singapore Young Leaders Scenario-planning Workshop 2016 from 15 to 16 November 2016 at Capella, Sentosa, Singapore.

A similar workshop titled “The Future of Indonesia Beyond 2014: Prospects and Challenges” was held in 2008. It was designed to provide capacity building for Indonesia and Singapore’s future leaders, so as to help them envision a better future for Indonesia by equipping them with strategic mindsets in achieving such outcomes.

As Indonesia advanced beyond 2014, a new generation of young leaders had arisen to gradually take over the reins of governance and leadership positions. SRE and Indonesia Programme decided to capitalise on this trend by holding a similar scenario-planning workshop in 2016 to engage these new emerging leaders vis-à-vis a series of future-oriented scenario-planning exercises that envisaged the Indonesia and Singapore of 2040. Several prominent Indonesian young leaders graced the Workshop. They include Eddy Soeparno, Mandate Party, PAN; Philip Vermonte, CSIS Indonesia; Melvany Kasih, DKI Jakarta’s Governor Office; Iman Usman, Ruangguru.com;

COL Inf. Bambang Trisnohadi, Indonesia Army; and Lalola Easter Kaban, Indonesia Corruption Watch.

In addition, this workshop also invited notable young leaders from Singapore such as Jeremy Rabani, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Juliana Binte Mohammed Rasid, VP OCBC; Syed Zakir Hussain, The Strait Times; Law Heng Dean, Temasek International Pte Ltd; LTC Cai Dexian, Ministry of Defence; and Vikram Nair, Member of Parliament.

The Workshop was led by Dr Khong Cho-Oon, Chief Political Analyst at the Global Business Environment Team Shell International, while Anggito Abimanyu, an expert on the Indonesian economy, also provided assessments on various exercises.

The first day of the workshop featured scenario-planning exercises dealing with issues on Indonesia, Singapore, and Indonesia-Singapore relations in 2040. The final day focused mostly on regional issues in 2040, and their impact on both countries.



Participants at one of the scenario-planning exercises

A Dialogue on U.S.-Asia Relations with Michael Brown and Bates Gill



(L-R) Professor Michael Brown, Professor Joseph Liow and Professor Bates Gill

By David Han

The RSIS dialogue on “U.S.-Asia Relations: The Next Four Years and Beyond” took place on 12 January 2017 at Marina Mandarin Singapore. Professor Michael Brown and Professor Bates Gill spoke at the dialogue, with Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of RSIS, as the moderator.

Professor Michael Brown is Professor of International Affairs and Political Science at the Elliott School of International Affairs, The George Washington University; and Professor Bates Gill is Professor of Asia-Pacific Strategic Studies at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University. Both these renowned scholars are members of RSIS’ Board of Governors, and were in Singapore to attend the Board’s annual meeting.

Presenting first, Prof Brown said that it was too early to determine the actual content and scope of Trump’s policy towards Asia. The best-case scenario is that the Trump presidency would mature and adopt moderate positions on issues such as trade and alliances. Nevertheless, the outlook is grim and worst-case scenarios may include: (i) the breakdown of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA); (ii) befriending tyrants; (iii) possible use of nuclear weapons; (iv) expanding surveillance on citizens; and (v) undermining constraints on presidential powers.

Prof Brown added that Trump’s cabinet line-up consists of strengths and weaknesses. Internal conflict can be expected within the cabinet on matters such as economics and relations with Russia. Also, in spite of uncertainties, Trump has been consistent in (i) his position on

disengagement; (ii) the use of force; (iii) transactional view of U.S. alliances; (iv) mercantilist ideas on economy; and (v) favouring strongman leaders similar to Trump. Trump’s tactic of unpredictability has also unsettled allies and friends. Under President Trump, American soft power will diminish significantly. In turn, China would emerge as a greater soft power.

Prof Gill expressed four aspects to U.S.-Asia relations in the Trump era. Firstly, the U.S. faces very difficult challenges in Asia. President Obama did not address these challenges impressively. Some of these include (i) North Korea’s nuclear weapons development; (ii) deterioration in U.S.-Philippine relations; (iii) China’s emergence as a greater power in the region; (iv) China’s construction activities in the South China Sea to prevent ease of access and intelligence collection for the U.S. navy; and (v) failure of Obama and the

U.S. Congress to conclude the TPP agreement.

Secondly, Trump’s views and actions on various issues have raised concerns, given that he had questioned the value of alliances, attacked the TPP, and suggested slapping tariffs on China.

Thirdly, Trump’s cabinet selection has resulted in an ensemble of personnel with strong views that are alarming. Fourthly, there is much uncertainty regarding Trump’s presidency and its impact on Asia. These developments have given China the opportunity to take the lead on the international scene in areas such as promoting globalisation and managing climate change. Trump may resist such trends as he is not likely to play second fiddle to China.

Prof Gill highlighted that while China initially saw Trump as someone China could work with because of his business acumen, China is increasingly wary of Trump. He added that in Washington, the mood is generally negative towards China. He also believes that the U.S. is unlikely to change its One-China policy, although Trump may do some rethinking about it. Prof Brown remains positive that a major conflict between the U.S. and China is unlikely to happen, as cooler and wiser heads will prevail to maintain peace through diplomacy established over the past forty years. Both professors believed that the transition to the Trump presidency will not end existing U.S. economic and military arrangements with Asia abruptly. The fundamentals undergirding U.S.-Asia relations will continue to endure.

The Future of Pax Americana and the Role of Japan

By **James Char**

Professor Tosh Minohara, Professor of Japanese Diplomacy in the Graduate School of Law and Politics at Kobe University, delivered an RSIS Seminar on “The Geostrategic Transformation of Asia: The Future of Pax Americana and the Role of Japan” on 24 October 2016.

By contrasting present Chinese actions in East Asia with that of imperial Japan, Prof Minohara discussed the trajectory of the ongoing geostrategic shift in the region. Alluding to the Thucydides Trap, he elucidated on American fears regarding

China’s rise and the concomitant challenge to the status quo, international norms and rules.

Prof Minohara acknowledged that the U.S. does not dominate like it did in the 1950s. He also emphasised that the hedging behaviours by ASEAN nations as well as Japan’s negotiations with Russia, were all evidence of the wane of Pax Americana.

As for Japan’s role in the region, Prof Minohara noted that the strong political leadership under Abe has since led to the country’s evolving strategic identity.

Prof Minohara suggested that, in seeking to expand its sphere



Professor Tosh Minohara

of influence to include the Asian continent and Western Pacific, Beijing seeks to become a regional hegemon and economic power capable of exercising profound influence on regional states. Still, a number of

policies, including the spreading of liberal democracy and the strengthening of regional security alliances, may avert any future Chinese transgressions and encourage its respect of international law.

Roundtable on Nuclear Safety Cooperation in ASEAN

By **Julius Cesar Trajano**

RSIS, in collaboration with the Energy Market Authority, organised a roundtable on “Nuclear Safety and Cooperation in ASEAN” at the Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) on 28 October 2016.

The roundtable panellists included Dr Olli Heinonen, RSIS’ S. Rajaratnam Professor of Strategic Studies and Senior Associate at Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs of Harvard University.

The roundtable discussed post-Fukushima nuclear safety and emergency preparedness in the Asia Pacific, and examined the growing regional cooperation on nuclear energy governance in Southeast Asia. The lessons of

the Fukushima nuclear accident were revisited, with a special focus on new measures to enhance nuclear safety as well as emergency preparedness and response.

The panellists reiterated that each state operating nuclear power is responsible for nuclear safety and hence needs to be prepared for radiological accidents and emergencies. However, as the consequences, both radiological and beyond, are transboundary in effect, all states have a role to play in the preparation of contingency plans and the development of a cooperative approach towards a chain of emergency, response and recovery activities.

The panellists also deliberated on the importance of regional cooperation and the role of



Roundtable panellists at the Singapore International Energy Week

regional networks such as ASEANTOM in strengthening nuclear safety cooperation as well as emergency preparedness and response in Southeast Asia.

With the increasing interest in nuclear power in the

region, panellists stressed the importance of capacity-building in the region. This will allow member states to make use of technologies that will facilitate the implementation of nuclear projects in a safe and sustainable manner.

Olli Heinonen on Enhancing Nuclear Safety Cooperation in East Asia

By **Julius Cesar Trajano**

Dr Olli Heinonen, RSIS' S. Rajaratnam Professor of Strategic Studies and Senior Associate at Harvard University's Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, delivered a seminar and a lecture during his stay with RSIS from 22 October to 5 November 2016. He addressed the topic of "Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Nuclear Safety in the Asia Pacific" on 25 October 2016 during the seminar at RSIS, and spoke on "Regional Norms for Cooperation on Nuclear Safety and Radiological Emergency in Southeast Asia" during the RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture on 2 November 2016 at the Marina Mandarin Singapore.

In both his talks, Dr Heinonen asserted that nuclear power development has been pivoting from Europe and the United States towards Asia, with China, South Korea, Pakistan and India building additional nuclear reactors. In Southeast Asia, Vietnam had initially scheduled to open its first nuclear power plant by 2028, but recently decided to scrap this plan. On the other hand, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia are carefully studying the nuclear option. In this regard, regional issues and cooperation on nuclear safety and security, as well as nuclear emergency preparedness and response in the Asia Pacific, particularly in Southeast Asia, need to be bolstered.

Dr Heinonen emphasised that each country is responsible for nuclear safety and security, while the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) sets global safety and security standards and is prepared to assist each of its member states to comply with

such standards. The world's nuclear order requires states to not only adhere to the latest IAEA legal instruments and the IAEA codes of conduct on safety, security, and safeguards, but also demonstrate their full compliance with their requirements. However, there is no existing international regulatory framework that will monitor and ensure the compliance of all member states. The global nuclear safety and security framework does not only include the IAEA and its member states, but also the cooperation among operators, vendors, regional organisations, NGOs, and the media. These are all crucial in maintaining global nuclear safety and security order.

Dr Heinonen added that the development of small modular reactors and floating nuclear power plants might offer alternative power supply to energy-scarce small states and islands in the future. However, they would also require amending the Joint Convention on Nuclear Safety, which currently only covers land-based Nuclear Power Plants. Proponents and vendors

of small and floating reactors need to convince potential client states that they are safe to operate. Nonetheless, in the context of Southeast Asia, Dr Heinonen claimed that these kinds of reactors might be used to energise small and isolated islands. However, it may still take many decades before these reactors can be commercialised and get licenses.

In view of the lessons learned from the Fukushima nuclear accident, Dr Heinonen discussed the importance for every country in the region to come up with emergency preparedness and response plans. Regional issues such as nuclear safety and radiological emergency entail regional responses. Nuclear incidents can range from accidents with localised radiological impact to large-scale nuclear terrorist attacks, or nuclear disasters with transnational spillovers. Joint emergency training drills are key elements in emergency preparedness. It is important for all stakeholders such as the military, police, emergency response units, nuclear operators, local and national governments, NGOs, media, and the local communities to

get involved in the emergency drills. These drills should cover all possible nuclear accident scenarios to be able to test the existing capabilities and procedures on nuclear emergency response.

Dr Heinonen highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and the role of regional networks such as the ASEAN Network of Regulatory Bodies on Atomic Energy (ASEANTOM) in strengthening nuclear safety cooperation, as well as emergency preparedness and response in Southeast Asia. There are vehicles to share best practices, know-how and resources through the IAEA, and, in particular, within the ASEAN framework. Dr Heinonen stressed the importance of capacity building in the region to allow member states to make use of technologies that will facilitate the implementation of nuclear projects in a safe and sustainable manner.

During his stay with RSIS, Dr Heinonen also participated in the Roundtable organised by RSIS as part of the Singapore International Energy Week 2016 held at the Marina Bay Sands Expo and Convention Centre.



(L-R) Dr Olli Heinonen with his wife, Ms Yvonne Yew, and Mr Eddie Teo, Chairman of RSIS' Board of Governors, at Dr Heinonen's Distinguished Public Lecture

Australia's Submarine Acquisition



Rear Admiral (Ret.) James Goldrick addressing to the seminar attendees

By Collin Koh

Rear Admiral (Ret.) James Goldrick, Adjunct Professor, UNSW at Canberra (ADFA); Adjunct Professor SDSC, Australian National University; and Professorial Fellow, ANCORS, University of Wollongong; delivered a

seminar on “Australia’s Submarine Acquisition” at RSIS on 14 November 2016. He kicked-off with a broad overview of the history of the British Far East naval defences before the Second World War, highlighting some key issues for context.

First, submarine operations were commonplace in

colonial Southeast Asia prior to the Japanese invasion in 1941. Second, the South China Sea, being one of the probable theatres of submarine operations in times of conflict, was well surveyed by both the British and Japanese before war broke out. Third, RADM Goldrick pointed out that the British and Dutch had well-developed submarine warfare strategies, and the latter scored some noteworthy successes when the Japanese invaded.

It was in that historical context that RADM Goldrick highlighted the role played by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) submarine fleet, in support of the Commonwealth war efforts. He also explained how these subsequently translated into the development of Australia’s post-1945 and contemporary submarine strategy. By taking

into consideration the evolving geopolitical and technological contexts, Canberra had to adapt their submarine programmes to suit those operational requirements.

A myriad of factors, such as fiscal, technical and operational imperatives, pushed Canberra to select the French DCNS design. He added that the RAN had also learned lessons from the previous *Collins* class submarine programme, which therefore necessitated a more forward-looking, long-term approach to building a sizeable yet sustainable new-generation submarine force. RADM Goldrick concluded his seminar by stressing the importance of building a sizeable (not just a token) force of submarines, in the face of persistent submarine proliferation patterns in the Asia Pacific region. Thus, countries will continue to be torn in between these competing priorities as they seek to build credible submarine fleets.

Joint Workshop by RSIS and the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies

By Collin Koh

The Maritime Security Programme in the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, RSIS, and the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies (IFS) co-organised a third workshop under the “Asian Navy Watch” project with a theme on “Navies, Coast Guards, the Maritime Community and International Stability”. The two-day workshop was held from 16-17 November 2016 at the Holiday Inn Atrium Singapore.

The broadening of maritime safety and security challenges worldwide, and nation states’ growing interest in the global commons, have given rise to the gradual proliferation of



Dr Collin Koh speaking during the workshop

maritime law enforcement (MLE) agencies. In particular, there has been both horizontal and vertical proliferation of such “white hull” agencies in the Asia Pacific region. Mainstream perception held that such “white hull” forces, because they were lightly

armed, were less destabilising compared to their “grey hull” navy counterparts. Yet, in the Asia Pacific region, MLE forces, heretofore commonly labelled as coastguards, have been on the forefront of action in the recent maritime disputes, especially in the South China Sea.

Unlike previous workshops, the collaboration was motivated by the intent of examining this nexus through a cross-regional comparative approach, to more holistically make sense of this “white hull” proliferation in both the Scandinavia and the Asia Pacific regions. Thereby, they drew useful lessons on the potential technical, operational and strategic implications.

The workshop compared the broader contexts between the Asia Pacific and Arctic/Northern Waters, thereafter leading to an examination of the roles played by not just navies, but also the coastguards and the maritime industry. The discussion looked at various country case studies on the navy-coast guard nexus, comprising those in the Southeast and Northeast Asia sub-regions, and dedicated a segment on Arctic coastguard cooperation. This was concluded by a discussion on crisis stability at sea, and maritime confidence building measures in general.

The Changing Geopolitics in Eurasia



Dr Farkhad Tolipov (right) with Assistant Professor Hoo Tiang Boon, Coordinator of the MSc (Asian Studies) Programme at RSIS

By **Hoo Tiang Boon**

Dr Farkhad Tolipov, Director of *Bilim Karvoni* [Knowledge Caravan] in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, spoke on “The Changing Geopolitics in Eurasia” at an RSIS Seminar

on 31 October 2016. Sharing his analysis of the evolving geopolitical landscape in Eurasia, Dr Tolipov’s talk focused on the dramatic shifts that had occurred in this vast political geography from the time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. The

“frozen” idea of Eurasia would be swiftly reincarnated in political, intellectual and public discourses following this collapse. It was a more “ambiguous” post-Soviet Eurasia, both as a concept and a polity that had emerged.

An important reason for this ambiguity connects to the great power dynamics that had come to define the strategic backdrop of the Eurasian region. One such dynamic relates to the complexity of the Russia-China relationship. Dr Tolipov argued that the idea of a strategic division of labour between Russia and China in Eurasia, where states turn to the former for security and the latter for economics, is a “stereotype”. He noted that while China has emerged to become a major economic partner of many

Eurasian states, these states also have a range of other trading partners, thus, their economies are not fully reliant on Beijing. Nevertheless, Dr Tolipov suggested that China’s One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative is generally viewed in positive terms within Eurasia. Indeed, some Eurasian states are competing hard among themselves to be a key transit route of the OBOR.

This internal regional competition is another reason for the formation of the more “ambiguous” Eurasia. It is a consequence of the post-Soviet unravelling that has stirred new national consciousnesses, as well as led to new rivalries over border issues and water sharing.

The Policy and Politics of Singapore as an International Financial Centre



Dr Woo Jun Jie

By **Aedan Mordecai**

On 15 November 2016, the Centre for Multilateralism Studies, RSIS, held a seminar on “The Policy and Politics of

Singapore as an International Financial Centre”. Dr Woo Jun Jie, Assistant Professor at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS), Nanyang Technological University, described how Singapore

managed to become one of the premier global financial centres in modern times. He also highlighted the challenges that the industry will face in the future.

There are many reasons why Singapore is often ranked as the most important financial centre in Asia, along with Hong Kong and Tokyo. Originally, Singapore’s roots in the financial industry stemmed from its position as a major trading hub during British colonial times, which necessitated the insurance and banking services to be located in a convenient location. Singapore’s financial industry’s recent development owes much to the government’s targeted policies. The government has actively incentivised foreign firms to

relocate to the city-state with tax breaks and subsidies, while also providing the necessary infrastructure to enhance the efficient use of office space and ensuring comfortable living conditions for professionals.

Coupled with its relative political and regulatory stability, Singapore has become the premier destination for financial firms in the region.

However, Singapore’s loftiness is not guaranteed in a highly competitive industrial environment. Dr Woo highlighted that the ability of the labour pool to meet the specialised demands of the financial industry will be key to its future health. Having a healthy supply of skilled labour is made particularly challenging by the rapidly changing nature of the financial industry, which is underpinned by the proliferation of Financial Technology (FinTech).

SRP Scores with its Second Executive Programme



Assistant Professor Mohamed Bin Ali from the SRP Programme speaking to the participants of the 2nd SRP Executive Programme

By Nursheila Binte Abdul Muez

The Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme organised its second Executive Programme from 7-11 November 2016 at Sheraton Towers Singapore. The programme was themed

“Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding”, and brought together 55 public service officers, as well as members of religious and community organisations. The aim was to provide them with a deeper understanding of the critical role that religion plays in society, and in relation to extremism and peace.

Through presentations by SRP faculty members, as well as local and overseas scholars, participants explored concepts such as religious authority, community identity, extremism, fundamentalism and violence associated with religion.

Dr Matthew Walton from Oxford University spoke about Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar while RSIS’ Professor Rajesh Basrur discussed Hindu nationalism in India. Professor Madawi al-Rasheed, Visiting Research Professor at the Middle East Institute, provided an analysis of current events in the Middle East and their impact on Muslim communities worldwide.

Professor Hamid Barra from Mindanao State University in the Philippines and Lieutenant-General (Ret.) Syed Ata Hasnain from India, provided participants with valuable insights and practical tools on peacebuilding, using the

examples of Mindanao and Kashmir.

Speaking on Singapore, SMU’s Provost, Professor Lily Kong, and NUS Professor Kenneth Dean, discussed the deep roots of Singapore’s multicultural history and complexities related to sacred spaces.

At the start of the programme, the participants were assigned case study discussions on specific religious issues in Singapore, which they were to present on the last day. Commenting on their presentations, Head of the SRP Programme, Ambassador Mohd Alami Musa said: “Participants managed to relate what they learnt to the intricacies of the cases discussed. This is evidence that the programme delivered knowledge that was useful to their professional work”.

Whither Post-Islamism in Malaysia?

By Rashaad Ali

YB Nurul Izzah binti Anwar, Member of Parliament, Malaysia, delivered an RSIS Seminar titled “The Prospects of Post-Islamism in Malaysia” on 16 December 2016. The event, which was moderated by Professor Joseph Liow, Dean of RSIS, is part of the

Muslim Societies in Southeast Asia seminar series, and was attended by various members of the public and the academia.

YB Nurul Izzah provided a brief historical context of Islamic political thought in Malaysia, from old religious institutions influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, to contemporary groups seeking to chart

progressive trajectories by including various “secular” topics into their religious discussions.

She outlined various definitions of concepts of Islamism. This was because the understanding of Islamism and Islamic leadership within the context of Malaysia tended to gloss over issues of corruption, kleptocracy and transparency. This is done in favour of the perceived religiousness of leaders, although said issues should be just as important as an individual’s piety.

YB Nurul Izzah also sought to differentiate between Islamism and Muslim democrats, and the need to provide an alternative to the dominant and largely conservative “Malay vs. non-Malay” narrative that

is found in mainstream Malaysian society. Many factors contribute to this polarisation, which is further fueled by political agenda. However, the unfortunate outcome of this narrative, aside from the overall hijacking of “political Islam”, is the divide that continues to widen among the Malaysian people.

The ensuing Q&A session yielded further questions on the state of political Islam and Islamic parties in Malaysia, especially considering the emergence of two new parties, namely the National Integrity Party and former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed’s Bersatu. YB Nurul Izzah provided the audience with an update of the state of Malaysian politics, ranging from the renewed political importance of East Malaysia to strategies for the impending general election.



YB Nurul Izzah binti Anwar with Professor Joseph Liow

RSIS–AHA Centre Policy Discussion on the World Humanitarian Summit

By **Helena Huang Yixin**

RSIS co-organised the “RSIS–AHA Centre Policy Discussion on the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS): Implications for the Asia Pacific” with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre). Held on 14 November 2016 at the Le Meridien Hotel, Jakarta, the policy

discussion was organised in commemoration of the fifth anniversary of the AHA Centre in Jakarta.

The meeting served as a platform for a substantive discussion regarding the progress of humanitarian reform and opportunities in the region towards realising a robust and effective humanitarian system. Participants benefitted from the insights and experiences

of experts from across the Asia Pacific when they discussed the implementation of the WHS Core Responsibilities. In a regional context for the next decade, they also discussed possible ways forward to advance the goals set out in the Agenda for Humanity.

The 40 experts involved also addressed the challenges and complexities, which will be faced by ASEAN in the road

ahead. The most important observations from the event were the need for a greater policy focus to bring together the three ASEAN Communities — ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) — and the further development of a multi-stakeholder environment to make humanitarian assistance on disaster management more effective in the Asia Pacific.



Speakers of the RSIS–AHA Centre Policy Discussion

APR2P-NTS Centre Joint Seminar

By **Lina Gong**

RSIS’ Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre) jointly organised a seminar with the Asia-Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (APR2P) on 7 November 2016. Dr Surin Pitsuwan, former ASEAN Secretary-General was the Guest-of-Honour. Dr Pitsuwan spoke on “High-Level Advisory Panel’s (HLAP) Report on Mainstreaming the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) in Southeast Asia: Pathway Towards a Caring ASEAN Community”.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, moderated the seminar while Associate Professor

Mely Caballero-Anthony, Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre); Professor Alex Bellamy, Director of APR2P; and Mr Philip Green, Australia’s High Commissioner to Singapore; gave the opening and welcoming remarks.

It was Dr Pitsuwan who established the High-Level Advisory Panel on the Responsibility to Protect in Southeast Asia in 2013. This was at the behest of Mr Adama Dieng, the UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. The HLAP comprised five eminent persons from Southeast Asia, with Assoc Prof Caballero-Anthony and Prof Bellamy as the Secretariat.



Dr Surin Pitsuwan

The HLAP Report was launched in September 2014 in New York, and was received by Mr Dieng and Dr Jennifer Welsh, the UN Secretary General’s Special Adviser on RtoP. The report outlined recommendations

on how ASEAN can promote the RtoP. This seminar is part of the outreach activities to disseminate the findings and recommendations of the HLAP Report in the Southeast Asia.

Dissecting the South China Sea Territorial Disputes

By **Shawn Ho**

The Regional Security Architecture Programme in the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies at RSIS organised a roundtable titled “The South China Sea Territorial Disputes: A Multilateral Perspective” on 1 December 2016 at the Grand Copthorne Waterfront Hotel, Singapore. The roundtable gathered together 25 experts from the region and beyond.

The roundtable sought to further the understanding of the South China Sea territorial disputes in two different ways: (i) by looking at the various multilateral approaches (both ASEAN-led and non-ASEAN-led) and bilateral approaches that have been utilised to manage



Associate Professor Bhubhindar Singh, Coordinator of the Regional Security Architecture Programme, speaking at the roundtable

the issue; and (ii) by examining the disputes in a holistic manner that encompasses the politics/security, economics and environmental dimensions involved. The roundtable consisted of three panels on the following topics: (i) “Multilateral/ Bilateral Approaches in the

Politics and Security Domains”; (ii) “Understanding the South China Sea Disputes from a Multilateral Economic Perspective”; and (iii) “Marine Environmental Protection”.

The roundtable covered a variety of issues, from the

impact of the 12 July 2016 Arbitral Tribunal Ruling involving the Philippines and China, to the Duterte Administration and incoming Trump Administration’s possible respective policies on the South China Sea disputes, and the role of the Philippines as Chair of ASEAN in 2017 as ASEAN marks its 50th anniversary.

Many participants agreed that it was still too early to make conclusions regarding President Duterte’s foreign policy strategy, despite his various statements. Nevertheless, whatever path he chooses will have a significant impact on the trajectory of the South China Sea territorial disputes and on ASEAN, especially with the Philippines taking on the chairmanship of ASEAN in 2017.

Human Security Through the Eyes of Dr Sorpong Peou

By **Sangeetha Yogendran**

Dr Sorpong Peou delivered two RSIS Seminars with the first titled “Human Security: An Evolving and Contested Concept” and the second titled “Human Security through Formal Trials?” on 29 November and 1 December 2016 respectively. Dr Peou is Visiting Senior Fellow with the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme at RSIS’ Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre); Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at Ryerson University; and a member of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies.

In the first seminar, Dr Peou introduced the highly contested concept of human security, noting that individuals were the reference point for human security, instead of the more commonly known state-centric view of security. Noting the difficulty of defining human security, Dr Peou referenced the development-based approach articulated by the United Nations Development Program. Such an approach poses a challenge to other concepts of security, such as national security, collective security, common security and comprehensive security. Dr Peou framed human security as freedom from suffering and fear, and as being obtained through forming groups, states, and protection mechanisms.

In his second seminar, he noted that global legalism is one of the pillars of human security, and the legal protection of human security through, for example, international legal bodies and tribunals. Dr Peou also discussed human security’s relationship with the responsibility to protect, and how human security has often

been seen as the responsibility to protect. He noted that this responsibility to protect leads to the responsibility to rebuild. However, the threat of force is contested and has not been applied systematically, highlighting the need for a greater focus on prevention.

Dr Peou argued that the development-based approach is an inadequate one. Thus, he highlighted the importance of protecting people against physical violence, in the forms of armed conflict, most serious crimes, and natural disasters.



Dr Sorpong Peou speaking at his first seminar on 29 November 2016

Building Resilient Cities – Urbanising Cities the Green Way

By **Rini Astuti**

The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre) at RSIS, and the Institute of Geography, University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany, collaborated to organise a workshop on “Resilient cities” on 23-24 November 2016. Held at D’Kranji Farm Resort, the 1.5-day workshop brought together forty participants, including members of academia, government officials, urban practitioners and professionals.

The workshop’s objectives were to facilitate dialogue and exchange of ideas, identify country and city-specific topics, promote mutual learning, and formulate potential joint projects relating to resilient cities and

their various dimensions, i.e. green urban infrastructure, sustainable livelihoods, and food and nutrition security.

It brought together knowledge and experiences, particularly in the Singapore and German contexts. Discussion themes included green city concepts

and infrastructure, dynamics of the just city, the right to the city, urban food and nutrition security and new urban food technologies and innovation.

During the workshop, 11 speakers contributed their thoughts about the developing framework of just and resilient

cities. They addressed questions on how to develop and elaborate a bottom-up approach in ensuring the inclusion of the most disadvantaged and marginalised social groups in urban development.



Professor Paul Teng, Adjunct Senior Fellow, RSIS, speaking at the workshop

Policy Options for Dealing with North Korea

By **Michael Raska**

On 8 December 2016, the Military Transformations Programme in the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, RSIS, hosted a seminar by Ms Jana Hajzlerova, Director of the Czech-Korean Society and PhD candidate at the Charles University in Prague. Ms Hajzlerova spoke on the topic “In Search for New North Korea Policies: Remembering the Past — A Way towards the Future?” exploring policy options for dealing with North Korea.

Ms Hajzlerova argued that based on sanctions and military pressure led by the U.S. and coupled with South Korean unification policies, current



Ms Jana Hajzlerova

North Korean policies failed to address the geopolitical reality surrounding the Korean peninsula, and most importantly China’s interests. The very

idea of a North Korean policy characterised by a broader consensus between great powers and the international community was misleading. Countries, motivated by their national interests, would always seek ways to elude sanctions.

An alternative strategy, according to Hajzlerova, would be to shift the North Korean question away from the large structures of the international

community, such as the UN, towards either individual countries or local regional platforms. These alternatives were not hindered by the diversity of interests, but would rather build their policies based on shared historical experiences.

The on-going Scandinavian models of engaging North Korea through training and capacity building had some effect, but brought no real change in North Korea’s foreign policies. Conversely, other countries might be better suited to develop their respective policies to de-isolate Pyongyang.

The historical legacy of close links, contacts, and experiences of post-socialist states in Central Europe such as the Czech Republic, suggested that 1.5 track diplomacy could provide new opportunities for cooperation and confidence building measures. Such an engagement might prove “face-saving” for a regime in Pyongyang that was in desperate need of exit ramps.

2016 RSIS Staff Get-together: A Day on a Farm

By **Jenny Tan** and
Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

RSIS held its annual Staff Get-together at the D’Kranji Farm Resort on 25 November 2016. The half-day event began with an *Amazing Race*, where 10 groups competed to gather clues and answers from around the resort. It was one of the rare times that professors were seen running about a farm.

This was followed by *prawning*, where teams angled for prawns and competed for the biggest catch. This required patience, teamwork, and guts — unhooking the prawns while at the same time avoiding their pincers. The winning team caught up to 400 grams of prawns!

Following this, everybody took a breather in the Bird’s Nest Museum, where they learned more about this Chinese

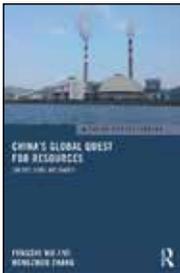
delicacy, and sampled atypical products like durian bird’s nest coffee and bird’s nest dark chocolates. The last activity was a potting exercise, where staff were taught to put together a pot of plant to bring home.

Rounding up the day’s activities was a dinner buffet, during which Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, presented Long-service Awards to 33 staff members. Two staff members qualified for the 20-year service award, namely, Dean Joseph Liow, and Dr Ang Cheng Guan.



RSIS staff at the annual get-together

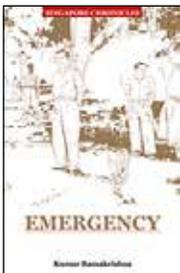
STAFF PUBLICATIONS



China’s Global Quest for Resources: Energy, Food and Water

Edited by Fengshi Wu and Hongzhou Zhang. Routledge: 2017. ISBN: 9781138943278

The world’s key resources of energy, food and water, which are closely connected and interdependent on each other, are coming under increasing pressure, as a result of increasing population, development and climate change. In the case of China, following its recent economic surge, energy, food and water are already nearing the point of shortage. This book considers how China is working to avoid shortages of energy, food and water, and the effect this is having internationally. The book concludes by discussing in comparative perspective China’s outward resource acquisition activities and the consequent policy implications.



Singapore Chronicles – Emergency

Kumar Ramakrishna. Institute of Policy Studies and Straits Times Press: 2016. ISBN: 978-981-4747-09-7

This book examines the origins of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) in the inter-war years and its subsequent development against the wider backdrop of the Cold War. The CPM, in its quest to set up a Communist Republic of Malaya and Singapore, mounted a violent rural insurgency in Malaya and later shifted to urban subversion of the burgeoning anti-colonial left-wing movement in Singapore. Contemporary Singapore’s emphasis on law and order cannot be understood without reference to its long twilight struggle with the CPM, a conflict that ended only in 1989.



Forward Engagement: RSIS as a Think Tank of International Studies and Security in the Asia-Pacific

Edited by Alan Chong. World Scientific Publishing Company: 2016. ISBN: 978-981-3208-46-9

In many ways, the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a microcosm of the Singapore brand of government. The DNA of Singapore’s policymaking is its forward-looking nature. S. Rajaratnam’s trademark is taking the long view while Lee Kuan Yew articulated his wish for leadership foresight and the admiration for ‘helicopter quality’ candidates in policymaking. This was how RSIS’ mission began under the stewardship of the late President S. R. Nathan. RSIS began (as IDSS — i.e., the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies) in 1996 as a form of policymakers’ clairvoyant on security matters. To date, it is Singapore’s ‘frontline’ think tank on Asia Pacific security, counter-terrorism, inter-religious dialogue and non-traditional security threats.

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Nanyang Technological University

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www.rsis.edu.sg

EDITOR

Mervin Kok
iswlkok@ntu.edu.sg

Contributors

Aedan Mordecai
Chaula Rininta Anindya
Collin Koh
David Han
Helena Huang Yixin
Hoo Tiang Boon
James Char
Jenny Tan
Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros
Julius Cesar Trajano
Lina Gong
Michael Raska
Nursheila Binte Abdul Mueez
Rashaad Ali
Richard A. Bitzinger
Rini Astuti
Sangeetha Yogendran
Shawn Ho
Stephanie Kim

UPCOMING EVENTS

13 FEBRUARY 2017

RSIS SEMINAR BY LORD ALDERDICE ON “IS EXTREMISM INHERENTLY VIOLENT?”

15 FEBRUARY 2017

NTS CENTRE WORKSHOP ON ASSESSING THE TECHNOLOGICAL TURN IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION POLICY DISCUSSION

17 FEBRUARY 2017

RSIS SEMINAR BY LORD ALDERDICE ON “BUILDING COHESION IN INTRACTABLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES: SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS”

20 FEBRUARY 2017

CENS SEMINAR BY PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN JOPKE ON “THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SECULAR STATE”

27 FEBRUARY 2017

CSCAP NUCLEAR ENERGY EXPERTS GROUP MEETING

1 MARCH 2017

SINGAPORE LAUNCH EVENT BY THE ASIA FOUNDATION ON “AMERICA’S ROLE IN ASIA IN 2016: ASIAN VIEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ASIA AND US INTERESTS IN THE REGION”

8 MARCH 2017

RSIS WORKSHOP BY MARITIME SECURITY PROGRAMME, IDSS, ON “THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE MARITIME ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA”

22 MARCH 2017

RSIS-NMF WORKSHOP ON “INDIA-ASEAN MARITIME COOPERATION: OUTLOOK FOR 2017”

3-7 APRIL 2017

11th ASIA-PACIFIC PROGRAMME FOR SENIOR NATIONAL SECURITY OFFICERS (APPSNO)