

APPSMO 2018

By Ian Li

The 20th Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO 2018) was held at Singapore's Village Hotel Changi from 5 to 11 August 2018. Organised by the Military Studies Programme of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), RSIS, APPSMO 2018 was attended by more than 50 military officers from over 20 countries, spanning Asia, North America, and Europe.

This year's APPSMO represented a significant milestone for the programme, which has over the past 19 years contributed significantly to the fostering of closer ties and working relationships among defence officials, military officers, and strategic studies analysts within the region and beyond, and become an established instrument of regional defence diplomacy.

Dr Ng Eng Hen, Singapore's Minister for Defence, delivered the keynote address at APPSMO 2018, whose theme was "ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Security Order". Mr Bilahari Kausikan, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, delivered a Distinguished Lecture titled "ASEAN's Role in the Changing Asia Pacific Security Order", while Dr Tony Tan, former President of Singapore and the chair of RSIS' Board of Governors, was the guest of honour at the programme's opening dinner.

Over one week, APPSMO participants attended a series of panels addressing issues such as the challenges and trends in regional security, the shifting geopolitical landscape and its implications for the Asia Pacific security order, the future of war and strategy, terrorism and its impact on Southeast Asia, cyber and information threats, and the building of regional defence cooperation and confidence building measures.



In addition to RSIS researchers and faculty members, panel speakers from Singapore included Mr Matthias Yeo, Chief Innovation Officer and Board Advisor, Fund Singapore Pte. Ltd, and Dr Li Nan, Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore.

As part of the programme, participants visited the Changi Naval Base, 2PDF/IDTI at Clementi Camp, Microsoft, and various military heritage sites such as Fort Siloso and the former Ford Factory.



I am gratified that APPSMO has flourished and continued for 18 years as a premier networking platform for the armed forces of the countries which are participants in the ASEAN Regional Forums (ARF).

Mr S R Nathan 

Founding Director of IDSS (1996 – August 1999) and
6th President of Singapore (September 1999 – September 2011)
From the book *The APPSMO Advantage: Strategic Opportunities*, 2016



The programme has fostered better understanding and mutual cooperation among various military establishments and policy agencies in a practical way that promoted defence diplomacy among the countries involved.

Ambassador-at-Large Ong Keng Yong 

Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS

From the book *The APPSMO Advantage: Strategic Opportunities*, 2016

APPSMO 2018 brought together a list of distinguished speakers

Dr Amy Searight

Senior Advisor and Director, Southeast Asia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies, USA

Professor Evelyn Goh

Shedden Professor of Strategic Policy Studies, Australian National University, Australia

Vice Admiral (Ret'd) Yoji Koda

Advisor, Japan Marine United Corporation, Japan

Professor Anthony King

Chair of War Studies, The University of Warwick, UK

Dr Manoj Joshi

Distinguished Fellow and Head, National Security Programme, Observer Research Foundation, India

Professor Pascal Vennesson

Military Studies Programme, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

Ms Maria Ressa

Chief Executive Officer, Rappler News, The Philippines

Professor Rohan Gunaratna

Head, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

Mr Matthias Yeo

Chief Innovation Officer and Board Advisor, Fund Singapore Pte. Ltd., Singapore

Dr Michael Sulmeyer

Director, Cyber Security Project, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, USA

Dr Shashi Jayakumar

Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security & Executive Coordinator, Future Issues and Technology, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore

Mr Bilahari Kausikan

Chairman, Board of Directors, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Dr Euan Graham

Senior Fellow, Lowy Institute, Australia

Dr Jusuf Wanandi

Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Foundation

Captain (Dr) Gurpreet Khurana

Executive Director, National Maritime Foundation (NMF), India

Professor Kim Young Ho

Director-General, Research Institute for National Security Affairs, Korean National Defense University, Republic of Korea

Dr Li Nan

Senior Research Fellow, East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore, Singapore

Professor Tan See Seng

Deputy Director and Head of Research, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore