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 Dr Tony Tan, former President of Singapore and the chair of RSSI’ 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 threat, 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 Clement 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
9th 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
  Senior 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 Defense 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
- Dr Euan Graham
  Senior Fellow, Lowy Institute, Australia
- Dr Jusuf Wanandi
  Senior Fellow, CSIS Foundation
- Dr Lin Nian
  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