

MULTILATERAL MATTERS

OCTOBER 2011

LAUNCH OF RSIS CENTRE FOR MULTILATERALISM STUDIES

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In a few short years, multilateralism has evolved from a mere diplomatic concept to a convenient slogan and, finally, an unavoidable reality. Due to globalisation, no country acting alone today can effectively address many of the world's contemporary challenges and crises. The complexity and enormity of these challenges require collective multilateral action from the stakeholders involved.

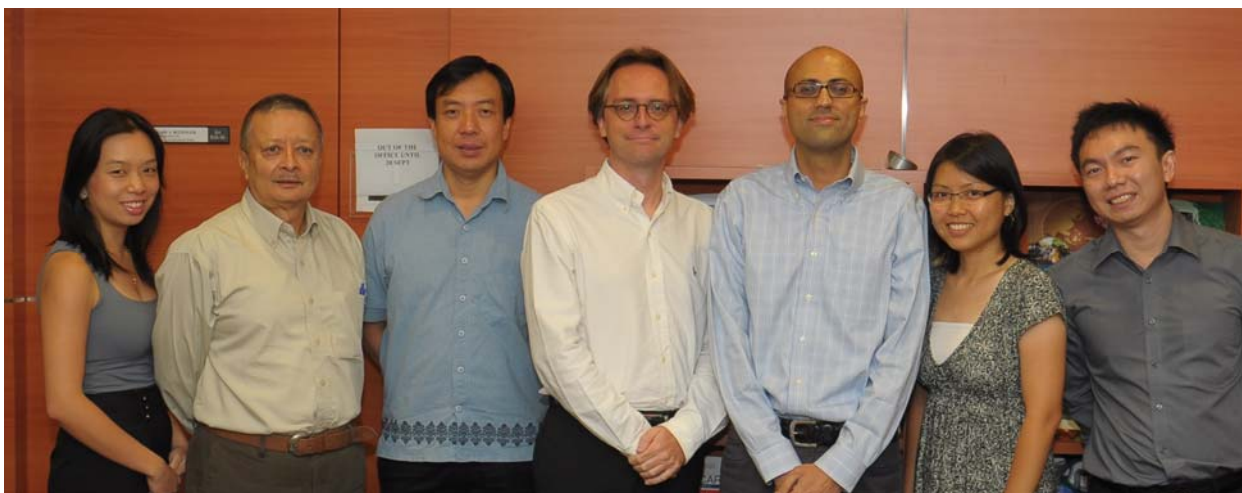
It is with this in mind that the RSIS Multilateralism and Regionalism Programme was established in 2002. Since then, the programme has consistently produced high-impact critically acclaimed work on behalf of international institutions, regional organisations and the Singapore government. For instance, the programme's work on preventive diplomacy received a special mention in the

ASEAN Regional Forum 2008 Chairman's Statement.

Building upon this track record and firm foundation, RSIS will be officially launching its own centre for multilateralism studies. Headed by Associate Professor Tan See Seng, the centre will conduct advanced, cutting-edge research on multilateral economic, political and security cooperation in the Asia Pacific and beyond.

Through this the RSIS Centre for Multilateralism Studies aims to be an international hub for academic scholarship and policy-relevant analysis on cooperative multilateralism of the highest quality.

**Ambassador Barry Desker
Dean, S. Rajaratnam School of
International Studies**



The CMS team (from left): Ms. Ong Suan Ee, Assoc Prof. Pradumna Bickram Rana, Assoc Prof. Tan See Seng, Assoc Prof. Ralf Emmers, Asst Prof. Bhubhindar Singh, Ms. Joann Saw, and Mr. Benjamin Ho

FEATURE STORY: ARF TURNS 18

FOREIGN ministers and senior officials from 27 countries met in Bali, Indonesia, from 16–28 July for the 18th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and post-ministerial dialogue.

Together with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the participants discussed a wide range of issues, from territorial disputes in the South China Sea to concerns about North Korea and its nuclear weapons’ programme as well as Myanmar’s human rights issues.

In her speech, Secretary Clinton reiterated U.S. plans to remain engaged within the Asia-Pacific region as well as for the various parties involved in the South China Sea claims to resolve their disputes in accordance with the norms of international law.

Likewise, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi expressed China’s commitment to promoting “practical cooperation” in the South China Sea and to use the ARF as a multilateral platform for enhancing mutual trust and strengthening regional cooperation.

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Delegates at the 18th ASEAN Regional Forum

WHAT THEY SAY:

We asked several experts on their take regarding the United States involvement within the Asia Pacific region:

“I think the **U.S. will continue to stay fully engaged in this region**. We will do so through a combination of maintaining strong and traditional bilateral relations and also through enhancing our participation in nascent multilateral [forums] including in the field of security. **Multilateral [forums] are important tools of diplomacy**, and if these institutions can be well established in the region they can be used to help resolve land or sea disputes without resorting to bilateral channels where often emotions can run higher.”

Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, Dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver, Former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs

“**I believe the U.S. will continue its active engagement in the Asia Pacific**. It has a vision and **Asia is very much part of that overall strategy**. It is likely to continue to build up strong bilateral defense ties with its allies while simultaneously strengthening its presence in the various multilateral groupings.”

Dr. Michael Wesley, Executive Director, Lowy Institute for International Policy

“The **U.S. foreign policy is alternated by isolationism and cooperation**. For the time being, we can project that America would continue its engagement with the rest of the world, ASEAN included. **But there is no guarantee that it would be permanent.**”

Professor Shen Dingli, Executive Dean, Institute of International Studies Director, Center for American Studies, Fudan University

Multilateral [forums] are important tools of diplomacy...they can be used to help resolve land or sea disputes without resorting to bilateral channels where often emotions can run higher —
Christopher R. Hill



Ambassador Christopher R. Hill giving a speech at a distinguished dinner lecture

SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS MEET TO DISCUSS WIDE-RANGING ISSUES

The 13th Asia Pacific Program for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO), organised by the RSIS Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), was held at the Sentosa Resort and Spa from 4–10 August 2011. 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 relating to regional and international security.

This year, a total of 58 officers from 28 countries representing Asia, Oceania, North America, Europe and Africa took part. Guest speakers who attended the programme include Indonesia's Defence Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, Ambassador Christopher R. Hill, Professor Sir Steve Smith and others. Besides the talks, the participants were treated to a variety of visits to places of interests in Singapore including the Changi Naval Base, SAFTI Military Institute and the Night Safari. Overseas officers were also invited to attend the National Day Parade on 9 August.



Keynote address by Singapore's Defense Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen



Participants at the 13th APPSMO

No one is expecting anything to happen overnight but it shows you the importance of this ASEAN setting and what we mean by ASEAN centrality —
K. Shanmugam

ARF TURNS 18

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Singapore's Foreign Minister K. Shanmugam also echoed the benefits of the ARF, pointing out that the annual event had completely redefined the concept of regional security. "No one is expecting anything to happen overnight but it shows you the importance of this ASEAN setting and what we mean by ASEAN centrality," said the minister.

This year's forum also witnessed a rare appearance by North Korea, who was represented by its foreign minister Pak Ui-Chun. Talks between North Korea and South Korea over the former's nuclear power programme were also conducted at the sidelines. It was the first non-secret meeting between the two governments in 31 months.

The ARF has become the primary forum for security dialogue in the Asia Pacific. The next meeting will be held in Cambodia in 2012.



South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan (L) talks to his North Korean counterpart, Pak Ui-chun, in Bali, Indonesia, on 23 July

NEWS AND COMMENTARIES/SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Tan See Seng, 'ASEAN Regional Forum at 18: Dealing with regional flashpoints', <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/22/asean-regional-forum-at-18-dealing-with-regional-flashpoints/>.
- 'The ASEAN talkshop and U.S. engagement', *The Jakarta Globe*, 12 August 2011. <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/commentary/the-asean-talk-shop-and-us-engagement/458733>.
- 'Asean at 44: Towards a solid community', *The Malaysia Insider*, 21 August 2011. <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/sideviews/article/asean-at-44-toward-a-solid-community-yoes-kenawas/>.
- Joey Long, 'The United States, Southeast Asia, and Asia-Pacific security', *Asia Policy* 12 (July 2011): 2–7.
- Hillary Clinton, 'Back in Asia—the US steps up its re-engagement', *Strategic Review* (August 2011): 120–127.
- Surin Pitsuwan, 'ASEAN strives to make some new connections', *Strategic Review* (August 2011): 140–146.
- Ralf Emmers (ed.), *ASEAN and the Institutionalization of East Asia*, London: Routledge, 2011.
- Ian Storey, Ralf Emmers and Daljit Singh, *The Five Power Defence Arrangements at Forty*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2011.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

International

- G20 Summit, 3–4 November 2011, Cannes, France
- 19th APEC Leaders' Meeting, 12–13 November 2011, Honolulu, USA
- 6th East Asia Summit, 19 November 2011, Bali, Indonesia

In Singapore

- MacArthur Dissemination Meeting on Non-Traditional Security and Regional Security Cooperation, 28–29 November 2011, Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore
- RSIS-APU Conference on "Engaging the United States: Asia-Pacific Responses", 1–2 December 2011, Traders Hotel, Singapore

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS) is a research entity within the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. The CMS team conducts cutting-edge research, teaching/training, and networking on cooperative multilateralism in the Asia Pacific region. The Centre aims to contribute to international academic and public discourses on regional architecture and order in Asia Pacific. It aspires to be an international knowledge hub for multilateral cooperation and regional integration.