

A Review of 2025

**RSiS**

S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

RESEARCH • EDUCATION • NETWORKING

## Vision

To be the premier global graduate school and pre-eminent think tank in strategic studies and international affairs, offering unique Asian perspectives.

## Mission

RSIS is a global graduate school and think tank focusing on strategic studies and security affairs.

As a school, we foster a nurturing environment to develop our students into first-class scholars and practitioners.

As a think tank, we conduct policy relevant and forward-looking research in both national and international security, science and technology, society, and economic and environmental sustainability.

We respect, build and maintain enduring relationships with our stakeholders and our international networks. We embrace integrity and collaboration; and strive for excellence in our work.

## Values

### R.S.I.S

- ✓ Respect and Integrity
- ✓ Strive for Excellence
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Support Collaboration

### SELECTED ESSAYS

- The Untold Story of Wan Gang and the Success of China's Electric Vehicle Industry  
By Prof Tan Kong Yam
- The Emerging Fluid, Flexible Gx World Order  
By Warren Fernandez
- The Limitations of Third-Party Mediation: Prospects for the Iran Denuclearisation Talks  
By Dr Amanda Huan
- Uneven Renewable Energy Progress: The Role of State-Market Alignment in the Philippines and Indonesia  
By Dr Margareth Sembiring
- The CVE Defunding Scare: Implications for Singapore and ASEAN  
By Asha Hemrajani and Davis Zheng

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# Message from the Executive Deputy Chairman

## AMBASSADOR ONG KENG YONG

Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS,  
Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS),  
and Head, International Centre for Political Violence  
and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR)



It has been a very busy 2025 for RSIS. There were upheavals in the political, security, economic, and social domains – at the respective national levels as well as in the international arena. Politics and technological developments bring in unprecedented policy changes and responses as business, diplomacy, and people around the world reacted to the new way of doing things and moved to secure their respective interests involved.

In RSIS, we are all reminded of the wise words of Mr S. Rajaratnam, the late Minister for Foreign Affairs of Singapore after whom our School is named: if we do not hang together, we will end up hanging separately.

Though said at the founding of ASEAN – the Association of Southeast Asian Nations – in 1967, the words aptly describe how some might feel about the year 2025. As a school of international studies in a world-class institution, namely, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), RSIS must move relentlessly to keep up with what is happening around it. We need to move quickly, team up with those willing to work with us, and innovate as we go along.

During the year, we deepened our networks and convened with partners and counterparts through the organisation of programmes such as our flagship activities, and in particular, the third edition of the International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS).

In 2025, the theme of ICCS was "Cohesive Societies, Resilient Futures". ICCS is an international platform for multicultural dialogue, bringing together alumni and new friends to the community. Through these endeavours, we want to inspire conversations on how to forge stronger and more meaningful connections and relationships as we navigate an increasingly volatile and polarised world. It is a world where confidence in institutions is waning, cultural rifts are growing, and sectarian tensions are weakening social ties.

Societal polarisation is not an inevitable outcome of

diversity. But in order to pre-empt that, it requires intentional efforts by policymakers, community leaders, and academics to work in concert to tackle the challenges with openness, good faith, and collective interests. We can overcome these challenges – through the collective efforts of enlightened leaders and communities, all "hanging" together.

To support these efforts, RSIS has delved into social cohesion research, namely, the Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar 2025. This tracks the quality of social ties within each of the Southeast Asian countries, and consequently seeks to unpack the drivers that shape their state of cohesion. The longitudinal study was first conceptualised by RSIS and piloted in 2022. For the 2025 edition, the study included over 10,000 respondents in the region, stratified by age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and other economic indicators. The 2025 findings showed a high degree of trust between people from diverse ethnocultural background across the ten Southeast Asian countries. Nevertheless, there is room to enhance the quality of institutional confidence, particularly areas related to public consultation and perceived policy fairness.

The 2025 findings have set the stage for further analyses on the values of the norms practised in Southeast Asia, and the challenges in upholding societal norms that promote inclusion in the midst of widening global schisms against multiculturalism. RSIS has been engaging relevant parties and will delve into the analyses for useful learning points to advance research in social cohesion and multiculturalism.

2025 also saw the continuation of RSIS work in strengthening organisational excellence and partnership with like-minded institutions in and out of Singapore. RSIS refreshed its vision and mission in a concerted engagement of the School's management and staff in 2024. As RSIS progresses towards its 30th anniversary of establishment in 2026, it has stood firm on trust and reliability in delivering educational and research outcomes, and in convening networks of policy practitioners and scholars in a mutually rewarding journey of learning and sharing.

# Message from the Dean

## PROFESSOR KUMAR RAMAKRISHNA

Dean, RSIS  
Professor of National Security Studies  
Provost's Chair in National Security Studies



I am delighted to welcome you to a new year at RSIS. As we continue this journey together, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for your continued dedication to advancing excellence in education, research, and learning.

At the conclusion of the 2024-2025 academic year, 160 students graduated from the RSIS Master's Programmes, and eight students earned their doctorate degrees. In the 2025-2026 academic year, the RSIS Master's Programmes continue to attract a diverse and cosmopolitan student body, with 222 students from 21 countries enrolling in August 2025. Among them, 21 students were awarded scholarships and study awards, including the RSIS Scholarship, the Lee Foundation Scholarship, and Student Research Assistantships.

Our highly competitive and select PhD programme welcomed four new students from Singapore, Italy, India and the United States respectively in August 2025, and we look forward to their contributions to our academic community.

With our distinctive combination of graduate teaching and research expertise, RSIS is committed to enriching the educational journey of our students. They benefit from a synergistic integration of practical policy perspectives with academic concepts in their coursework, and have opportunities to participate in a wide range of conferences and events organised by RSIS. Additionally, visits from distinguished professors and global experts provide further insights into regional and international issues.

### Message from the Executive Deputy Chairman (continued...)

RSIS will remain agile and resilient. Collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders and like-minded institutions and networks in Singapore and abroad are all the more important in a turbulent, uncertain, novel, and ambiguous world. Hanging together, as the late S. Rajaratnam articulated, will enable us to manage a complex, rapidly changing, and often unpredictable reality.

One key trend that students in RSIS continue to be exposed to is the geopolitical and security impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other associated emergent technologies. Such technologies have become increasingly relevant not just on the battlefield but also in defining the contours of geopolitical competition between the great powers. RSIS remains committed to ensuring that its graduates stay informed and well-equipped to address these evolving issues.

We particularly value our collaboration with the University of Warwick through the NTU-Warwick Double Master's Programme, as well as our exchange programme with the Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University.

Beyond the Graduate School, RSIS has a longstanding tradition of educating senior officers of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). The Military Studies Programme is now a key strategic partner in the SAF's Professional Military Education, collaborating closely with the SAF-NTU Academy and various SAF schools. Over the years, RSIS has also extended executive education to officers in the security sector and practitioners in the religious and community sectors, providing valuable perspectives on national security issues.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the dedicated teams who have contributed to the success of these programmes, and to our students for their hard work and steadfast commitment.

At the same time, students in RSIS remain the live wire of the School's reach and success at home and abroad. The alumni of RSIS connect the world with the School and NTU. We look forward to our graduates staying in touch with RSIS/NTU and advancing its name and accomplishments. Thank you!

## Graduate School and Think Tank

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) is a global graduate school and think tank focusing on strategic studies and security affairs. Its five Research Centres and three Research Programmes, led by the Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman, and assisted by the Dean on the academic side, drive the School's research, education and networking activities.

The graduate school offers Master of Science Programmes in Strategic Studies, International Relations, International Political Economy and Asian Studies. As a school, RSIS fosters a nurturing environment to develop students into first-class scholars and practitioners.

As a think tank, RSIS conducts policy-relevant and forward-looking research in both national and international security, science and technology, society and economic and environmental sustainability. RSIS also produces academic research on security and international affairs. It publishes scholarly research in top-tier academic journals and leading university presses, and distributes policy research in a timely manner to a wide range of readers. Relevant RSIS research contributes to rule-making and norm-setting in cyber domain and digitalisation. RSIS works closely with other academic institutions and partners

including international and regional organisations, global think tanks as well as national agencies to conduct policy relevant research in various areas of interest.

RSIS researchers participate in deliberations at significant global and regional discussions on strategic and international affairs, such as the Council of Councils meetings (for which RSIS is the sole Singaporean member), Trilateral Commission Conferences, Shangri-La Dialogues and Halifax International Security Forums. RSIS researchers have also taken part in the Annual Baltic Conference on Defence (ABCD), Antalya Diplomacy Forum, Bled Security Forum (BSF), China-ASEAN Defense Think Tank Exchange (CADTE), China-ASEAN Dialogue, Doha Forum, Indian Ocean Conference, Korea-Singapore Forum and the Ulaanbaatar Dialogue on Northeast Asian Security.

## IDSS and Inauguration as RSIS

RSIS was set up as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) in 1996.

In 2007, IDSS was inaugurated as RSIS, named after Mr S. Rajaratnam in recognition of his contributions to Singapore as its first Foreign Minister.



*The Asia Pacific has its share of flashpoints that have the potential for creating regional instability, through triggering clashes of interests among the three big powers (China, Japan, and the US). These strategic developments and the existence of flashpoints around us will dominate the current dynamics of our strategic environment. The establishment of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies will enable scholars and students to research and test ideas on the impact and implications of this rapidly changing strategic environment for Singapore's security.*

### RSIS Board Chairman Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam

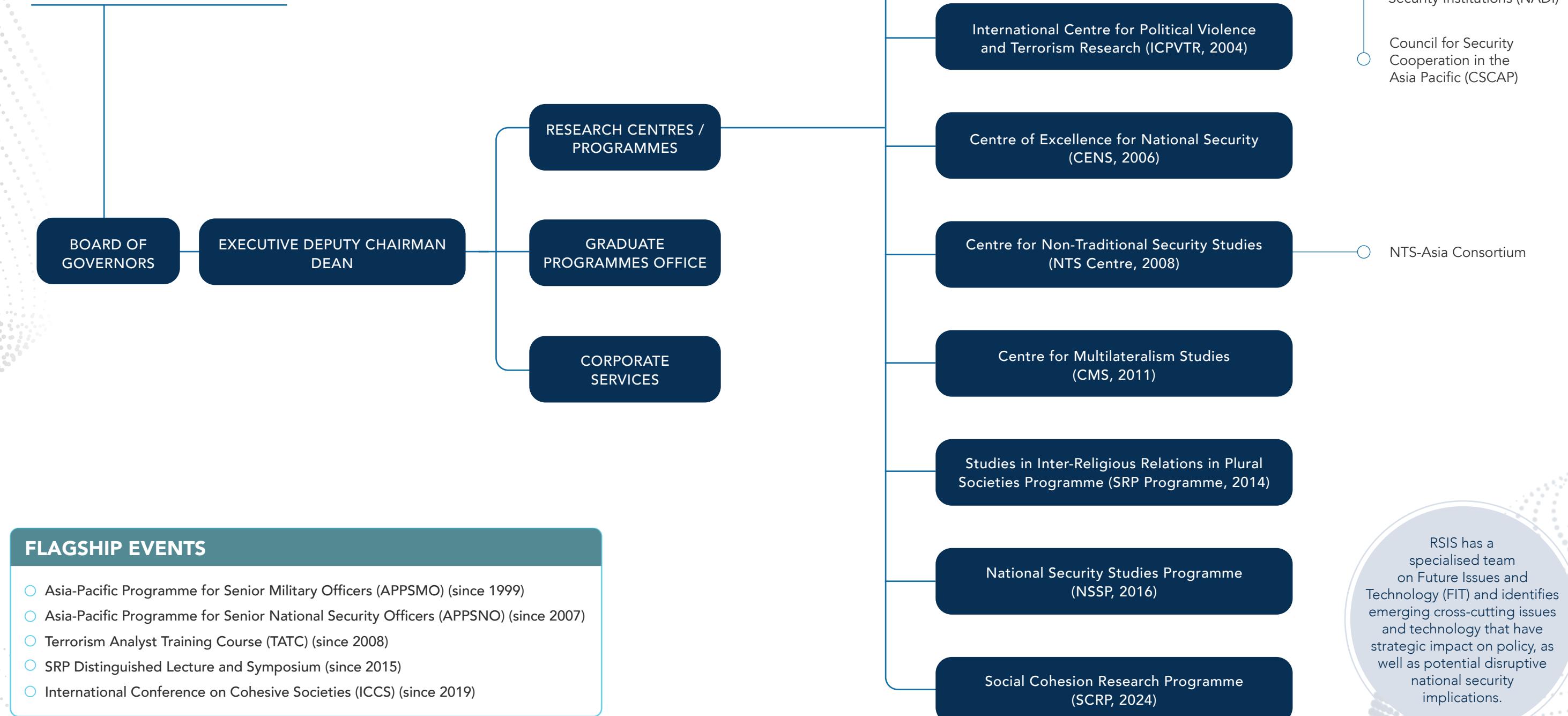
7th President of Singapore; and then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, at the launch of IDSS in July 1996



Dr Tony Tan's visit to IDSS, August 1999

## Organisation of RSIS

# RSiS



# Board of Governors

The Board of Governors sets academic and policy research objectives for the School. In addition to providing strategic directions for RSIS, the Board also institutes new programmes, reviews ongoing activities, and approves plans and budgets. The Board consists of Singaporean and international members.

## MEMBERS



**Dr Tony Tan**  
**Chairman**  
Honorary Patron and  
Distinguished Senior Fellow,  
Singapore Management  
University



**Ambassador Ong Keng Yong**  
**Deputy Chairman**  
Executive Deputy Chairman, RSIS,  
Director, IDSS, and  
Head of ICPVTR



**Professor Michael E. Brown**  
Professor of International  
Affairs and Political Science,  
Elliott School of International Affairs,  
The George Washington University



**Mr Chan Heng Kee**  
Permanent Secretary (Defence);  
Permanent Secretary (National Security and  
Intelligence Coordination), Prime Minister's Office  
(from 1 December 2025);  
Permanent Secretary (Special Duties),  
Prime Minister's Office



**Mr Albert Chua**  
Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs



**Dr Bates Gill**  
Senior Fellow in Asian Security, National Bureau of Asian  
Research, US; Senior Fellow, United Nations Institute for  
Disarmament Research, Geneva; Non-Resident Policy  
Fellow, Asia Society Australia; Senior Associate Fellow,  
Royal United Services Institute, London; Honorary  
Professor with the Department of Security Studies and  
Criminology, Macquarie University



**Mr Peter Ho**  
Senior Advisor,  
Centre for Strategic Futures,  
Prime Minister's Office



**Ms Chew Gek Khim**  
Executive Chairman,  
The Straits Trading Company Limited



**Professor Lam Khin Yong**  
Vice President (Industry),  
Professor of Mechanical and  
Aerospace Engineering,  
Nanyang Technological University



**Mr Pang Kin Keong**  
Permanent Secretary  
(Home Affairs),  
Ministry of Home Affairs



**Mr Peter Varghese AO**  
Chancellor,  
The University of Queensland



**Mr Leo Yip**  
Head, Civil Service;  
Permanent Secretary (National Security and  
Intelligence Coordination), Prime Minister's Office  
(till 1 December 2025);  
Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office



**Professor Stuart Croft**  
Vice-Chancellor and President,  
University of Warwick



**Ms Selena Ling**  
Chief Economist & Head,  
Global Markets Research & Strategy,  
OCBC



**Professor Kumar Ramakrishna**  
Dean, RSIS,  
Professor of National Security Studies,  
Provost's Chair in National Security Studies,  
Research Adviser to ICPVTR

# Awards

## National Day Awards

RSIS Board Member Mr Chan Heng Kee received the Meritorious Service Medal in 2025. Mr Chan is Permanent Secretary (Defence), Permanent Secretary (Prime Minister's Office)(Special Duties), and Permanent Secretary (National Security and Intelligence Coordination), Prime Minister's Office. The Meritorious Service Medal (Pingat Jasa Gemilang) is awarded to a person who has performed within Singapore, service of conspicuous merit characterised by resource and devotion to duty, including long service marked by exceptional ability, merit and exemplary conduct.



Mr Chan Heng Kee, member of the RSIS Board of Governors, receiving the Meritorious Service Medal from Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of Singapore.

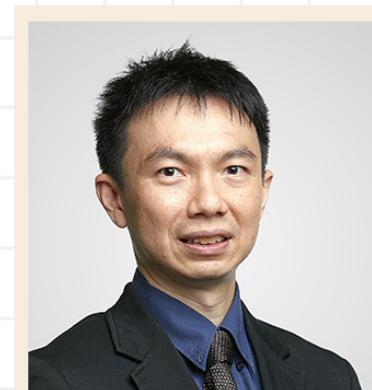
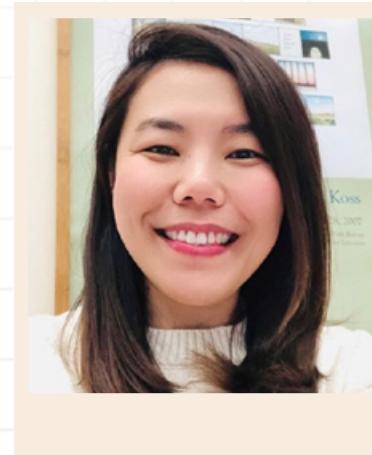
Photo: Ministry of Digital Development and Information (MDDI)

Professor Kumar Ramakrishna, Dean of RSIS, was awarded the Long Service Medal (Pingat Bakti Setia) for his years of service. The Medal may be awarded to any person who is of irreproachable character and whom the President is satisfied has completed at least 25 years' service in the service of any organisation, association or body rendering services in the field of education.

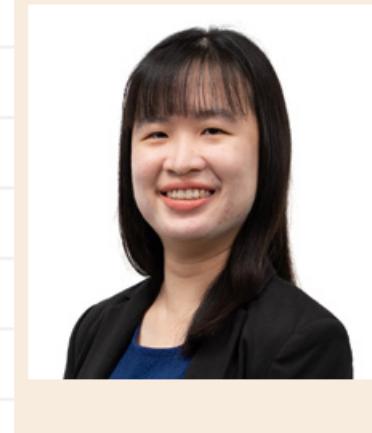


## Fellowships and External Appointments

Dr Wendy He, Research Fellow at RSIS, received the Global Encounters Fellowship at the University of Tübingen, a part of the College of Fellows, which convenes early-career scholars from around the world to pursue interdisciplinary research on pressing global challenges. At Tübingen, Dr He will test how generalisable it is in the context of climate diplomacy, examining how confidence and trust shape international cooperation. The 2026–2027 theme is "Making Peace with Nature". Only four postdoctoral fellows across the social sciences and humanities are selected globally for the highly competitive and prestigious fellowship.



Dr Benjamin Ho, Assistant Professor in the China Programme, received a ROK-ASEAN fellowship from the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The fellowship was to conduct research at the Korean National Diplomatic Academy from 1 September to 24 October 2025. The topic of his research was: Transactional Allies- ROK-ASEAN cooperation under Trump 2.0. During the time there, Benjamin also gave guest lectures at Yonsei University, Seoul National University, Kangwon National University and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.



Ms Wong Sook Wei, Research Analyst at RSIS, was selected for the 2025 Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) Short-Term Program for Young Fellows. The programme is designed to enable the researchers to deepen their understanding of Japan's territorial, sovereignty, and/or historical issues through activities including lectures by various experts and field trips to related areas. They are also expected to promote mutual exchange with researchers in Japan and to build enduring research networks.

# RSIS Flagship and Other Programmes

During the year, RSIS staff continued delving into their respective areas of expertise, and shared their findings and analyses through various publications and online platforms. RSIS scholars also published peer-reviewed books on their areas of research and op-eds in policy-relevant and other publications, and participated in forums and discussions with other think tanks and institutes.

RSIS staffs secretariats serving crucial roles in security dialogues and organises flagship programmes that aim to strengthen knowledge of and build community in national security and social cohesion.

## SECRETARIATS

RSIS continues to serve key roles in security dialogues and exchanges within the region. This includes serving as Secretariat for both the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP Singapore) and the Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI), as well as for the Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Asia Consortium. Through these roles, RSIS contributes actively to discussions on regional security, supports the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) with relevant inputs and timely ahead-of-the-curve policy recommendations, and helps to build the confidence of ASEAN think tanks and research institutions.

## COUNCIL FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN THE ASIA PACIFIC (CSCAP)

The Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) provides an informal mechanism for scholars, officials and others in their private capacities to discuss political and security issues and challenges facing the region. It also offers policy recommendations to various inter-governmental bodies, convenes regional and international meetings and establishes linkages with institutions and organisations in other parts of the world to exchange information, insights and experiences in the area of regional political-security cooperation. RSIS is the Secretariat for CSCAP Singapore.

Over 2025, CSCAP Singapore has taken part in several study group activities. In February, CSCAP Singapore participated in an informal preliminary meeting on Myanmar in Bangkok. The meeting explored

opportunities for CSCAP to contribute to regional Track 2 discussions on the Myanmar crisis, with discussions revolving around topics such as future trajectories for political settlement, humanitarian access, and ASEAN's 5-Point Consensus. Following formal approval for this Study Group by the CSCAP Steering Committee in June, the first meeting of the Study Group on the Situation in Myanmar (SIM) was held in Bangkok in September. CSCAP Singapore was represented by Dr Joel Ng and Dr Alistair Cook, both of whom served as panellists.

In March, CSCAP Singapore, in partnership with the RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS) and the Asia Centre for Health Security, convened the inaugural Study Group on Biosecurity and Health Security (BHSAP) meeting in Singapore. The event brought together 30 regional experts to examine emerging biosecurity challenges, pandemic preparedness, biotechnology risks, and governance and verification issues. Additionally, CSCAP Singapore, represented by Dr Alvin Chew, took part in the 12th Meeting of the Study Group on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (NPD) in Seoul in September. Participants reviewed current NPD dynamics and strategic risks and discussed topics ranging from the Ukraine war's impact on non-proliferation processes to nuclear energy trends in Southeast Asia.

In institutional fora, CSCAP Singapore participated in the 62nd CSCAP Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) in Kuala Lumpur in June. The SCM welcomed the Regional Security Outlook 2025 published by CSCAP Canada and agreed by consensus to extend CSCAP Malaysia's term as ASEAN Co-Chair. CSCAP Singapore reported on the circulation of the Co-Chairs' Report on the Study Group on the Safety and Security of Digital Infrastructure (SSDI) and the conclusion of the Memorandum for the Study Group on the Rules and Principles Underpinning the International Order (RPUIO), for which CSCAP Singapore acted as penholder. The Steering Committee also approved a Study Group on the Mekong River and the Greater Mekong Subregion (MRGMS), proposed by CSCAP Cambodia.

Looking ahead, CSCAP Singapore, alongside CSCAP Vietnam and CSCAP Korea, would co-chair the second meeting of the SSDI Study Group in Hanoi in late 2025. CSCAP Singapore would also hold an annual meeting



NADI Meeting on "Concretizing Defense Industrial Cooperation in the Height of Geoeconomic Confrontation", 17-20 June 2025

with its executive committee, participate in the 63rd SCM in Kuala Lumpur in December, and convene the second meeting of the BHSAP Study Group in early 2026. CSCAP Singapore will seek to continue constructively engaging in study group activities and regional security dialogues in the year ahead.

## TRACK II NETWORK OF ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY INSTITUTIONS (NADI)

The Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) is a Track II forum comprising defence and security institutions from the 10 ASEAN Member States (AMS), which supports the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) with relevant and timely ahead-of-the-curve policy recommendations. NADI is also a forum that builds confidence and familiarity among the ASEAN think tanks and research institutions. As the Secretariat for NADI, RSIS hosts the NADI website, which carries reports of the NADI meetings, workshops, and retreats. Over the last 18 years, NADI has contributed ideas and policy recommendations to the ADMM. In 2025, NADI institutions held four in-person meetings.

As the NADI Chair, the Malaysian Institute of Defense and Security (MiDAS), Ministry of Defence, Malaysia, hosted the 18th NADI Annual General Meeting on "ASEAN Unity for Security and Prosperity" from 28 April to 1 May 2025. Subsequently, the NADI Meeting on "Concretizing Defense Industrial Cooperation in the Height of Geoeconomic Confrontation" was held from 17 to 20 June 2025, hosted by the National Defense College of the Philippines (NDCP) and the Office for Strategic Studies and Strategy Management, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP-OSSSM). This was followed by the NADI Meeting on "Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Defence: Potential and Challenges for ADMM Cooperation", which was held from 26 to 29 September 2025, organised by the Strategic Studies Center (SSC), National Defence Studies Institute (NDSI), Royal Thai Armed Forces. Finally, the NADI Meeting on "Evolving Character of Warfare: Readiness and Adaptation" was held from 10 to 13 November 2025, organised by the Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (SHHBIDSS), Ministry of Defence, Brunei Darussalam.



## CONSORTIUM OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY STUDIES

RSIS is also the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia. A network of 31 institutions and think tanks across Asia, NTS-Asia is a one-stop platform for academic and policy exchange on developments on NTS issues and research across the Asian region. The Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre) staffs the secretariat.

The NTS Centre regularly updates the open-access NTS-Asia website with members' latest publications and activities. To facilitate outreach, the Secretariat sends out Newsletters and EDMs periodically, and has more recently launched a new podcast series called NTS Perspectives. The inaugural episode, released in late September 2025, featured Maj. Gen.



7th NTS-Asia Consortium Annual Conference, 8-9 May 2025



## RSIS Flagship Programmes

### Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO)

The 26th iteration of the Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO) held from 12 to 16 October 2025, discussed the theme "Multilateralism as a Bulwark in a Changing Global Environment". APPSMO began as the RSIS Summer Camp for senior military officers in 1999 under the auspices of IDSS. It has provided an informal forum for military officers from the Asia Pacific and beyond to interact on a pan-regional scale. It also enables senior military officers to meet and establish personal relationships as well as share knowledge about military and security developments that would be of professional interest to them. Through this process, participants could contribute towards fostering a dynamic yet stable environment conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

### Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior National Security Officers (APPSNO)

National security practitioners and experts from across the world participated in the 2025 Asia-Pacific



APPSMO 2025

Programme for Senior National Security Officers (APPSNO 2025), with the theme of "Emerging Technology Risks and National Security". The 16th iteration of APPSNO, organised by the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) at RSIS, held from 6 to 11 April 2025, served as a platform for participants to deepen their understanding of these risks and adopt proactive strategies to both harness the benefits of such technologies and mitigate the potential harms they may bring. APPSNO 2025 focused on the potential of new and rapidly evolving emerging technologies that have the ability to significantly reshape societies, economies, and governance structures; as well as the ability of hostile actors to leverage and exploit such technologies, posing serious risks to democracy, economic stability, and social cohesion.

### Terrorism Analyst Training Course (TATC)

ICPVTR hosted the 16th edition of its annual flagship capacity-building and networking programme, the Terrorism Analyst Training Course (TATC), in July 2025. Over five days, participants from local and regional government bodies, academic institutions and private sector organisations heard from 16 specialist speakers on topics ranging from country-specific threat assessments, to jihadists' use of social





APPSNO 2025

media, to weaponisable technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones and 3D-printed weapons. The keynote speaker, Mr Ali Soufan, founder of The Soufan Center and chief executive officer of The Soufan Group, delivered a pertinent and timely lecture on developments in global conflicts and associated impacts on terrorism, with the volatile Middle East developments as the backdrop.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON COHESIVE SOCIETIES

RSIS organised the the third edition of the International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS) on the theme of "Cohesive Societies, Resilient Futures". ICCS, supported by the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), was held from 24 to 26 June 2025.



International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS)

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore, opened the conference, with a keynote address by Sultan Nazrin Shah, Deputy Agong and Sultan of Perak, Malaysia, on the second day, and a closing address by Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Law and Second Minister for Home Affairs, Singapore, on the last day. More than 1,200 participants from over 50 countries – academics, policymakers, religious leaders, community practitioners, youth leaders – were involved in the plenaries, breakout sessions and skills workshops. More info on the conference is at [www.iccs.sg](http://www.iccs.sg)

RSIS presented findings from the Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar 2025 in June. The 2025 edition of this research builds on the 2022 pilot study. For 2025 edition, about 1,000 individuals were surveyed in each of the 10 ASEAN countries. The study utilises the Bertelsmann Stiftung Framework used widely to assess social cohesion (i.e. the state and strength of social bonds in societies). The key findings of the 2025 study are:

- 1) Social cohesion is generally positive in Southeast Asia;
- 2) Broad acceptance of cultural differences across ethnicities, religions and language groups;
- 3) Opportunities for Southeast Asian countries to promote institutional trust and perceived policy fairness.

RSIS is following up to partner with regional academics to analyse culture-specific challenges that affect regional social fabrics, identify drivers for cohesive norms, and uncover subgroups of interest. The full report is at [www.rsis.edu.sg/RADAR2025](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/RADAR2025)



Digital Defence Symposium, 22 to 23 July 2025

## NTS-ASIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The NTS Centre organised the 7th NTS-Asia Annual Conference on 8-9 May 2025 in Singapore. With the theme of "Changing Geopolitics and Impacts on NTS Challenges in the Asia-Pacific," the event brought together NTS-Asia members and experts across the region for fruitful discussions on a wide range of topics such as security in a shifting world order; climate, food, and economic security; community resilience, refugee protection, and resource distribution in the Asia-Pacific; and digitalisation, peacebuilding, and human security.

## DIGITAL DEFENCE SYMPOSIUM

RSIS and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE) co-organised the 3rd Digital Defence Symposium (DDS). Held from 22 to 23 July 2025, the theme of the symposium was "Securing our Common Digital Frontiers".

The symposium hosted more than 300 senior military and defence officials from 35 countries and international organisations, academic and think tank institutions, and industry experts. The symposium was opened by Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS, and featured a keynote address by Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, Chief of the Joint Capabilities Group of the Australian Armed Forces, three plenary discussions, and three concurrent thematic groups sessions over two days.

# RESEARCH

## Research Centres and Programmes

### Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman

The Executive Deputy Chairman (EDC) is the executive head of RSIS and is responsible for providing overall leadership to RSIS in professional, academic, and administrative matters, including think tank and policy research management.

- The Office of the EDC houses emerging issues that RSIS is incubating. This includes the Future Issues and Technology (FIT) cluster and the Digital Impact Research (DIR) team.
- The FIT cluster covers challenges and opportunities on the intersection of national security and science and technology. DIR deliberates on policy implications of digitalisation and effects on the economy and society.

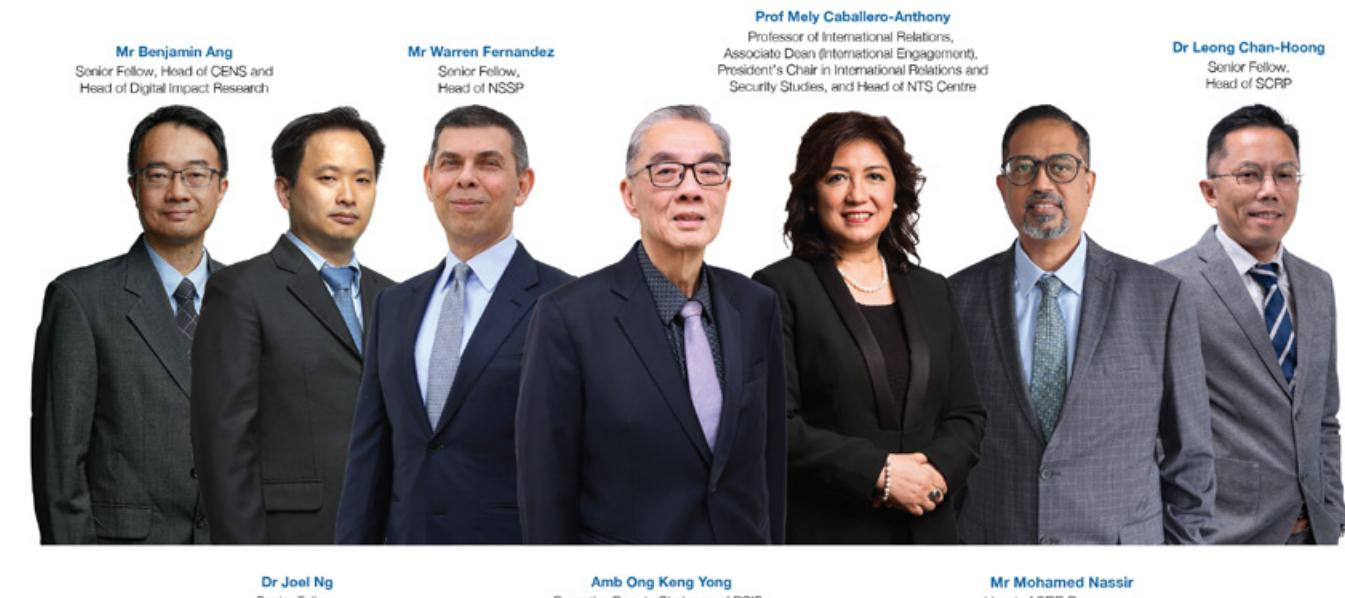
### Dean's Office

The Dean is the chief academic officer of RSIS. The Dean's Office is responsible for the administration of the RSIS MSc and PhD programmes. It oversees the recruitment and career progression of RSIS faculty, while exploring potential opportunities for academic research, student and faculty exchanges with reputable universities overseas that strike a good balance between academic rigour and policy relevance.

The Dean's Office also works closely with the Office of the Executive Deputy Chairman on a range of issues, including the career development of RSIS think tank track researchers as well as the identification of suitable distinguished visiting scholars to engage with faculty, researchers and students. Invited visiting scholars work on areas of pressing global and regional relevance, such as US-China competition, technology and geopolitics, counter-terrorism and extremism, international political economy, climate change, food security and a host of other topics of concern.

### Academic Research

Other than institutional research done at the respective research centres/programmes aimed at policy practitioners, RSIS faculty and researchers also engage in peer-reviewed academic research for an international scholarly audience. The range of academic research done in RSIS is wide – from the evolution of terrorism/extremism since 9/11, to digital religion, biosecurity governance in Southeast Asia, climate change mitigation, future maritime security environment, sea lines of communication, humanitarian futures, the geopolitical and security implications of emerging and disruptive technologies, amongst others.



### Institutional Research at Research Centres and Programmes

RSIS comprises five Research Centres and three Research Programmes.

#### Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS)

**IDSS** comprises ten research programmes, namely: China, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maritime Security, Military Studies, Military Transformations, Regional Security Architecture, South Asia, and the United States.

#### International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR)

**ICPVTR** is a policy-oriented research centre within RSIS, which conducts research and capacity-building programmes aimed at reducing the threat of politically motivated violence and mitigating its effects on the international system. The Centre integrates academic theory with practical knowledge, which is essential

for a complete and comprehensive understanding of threats from politically-motivated violence and terrorism. ICPVTR is culturally and linguistically diverse, comprising researchers, academic specialists, religious scholars, and language experts.

#### Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)

**CENS** is a research centre that studies, publishes, and speaks publicly on national security areas including cybersecurity, cyber conflict, disinformation, online harms, hybrid threats, foreign interference, economic interference, social resilience, radicalisation, and the impact of technology (including emerging technologies like artificial intelligence) on them, especially from the perspective of small states and non-western regions such as Singapore and Southeast Asia.

#### Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre)

**NTS Centre** conducts research and produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building the capacity to address non-traditional security (NTS) issues and challenges in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Centre addresses knowledge gaps, facilitates discussions and analyses, engages policymakers, and contributes to building institutional capacity in areas which include: Climate Security, Biosecurity, Food Security, Renewable Energy and Nuclear Safety and Security, Planetary Health and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. The NTS Centre brings together myriad NTS stakeholders in regular workshops and roundtable discussions, as well as provides a networking platform for NTS research institutions in the Asia Pacific through the NTS-Asia Consortium.

#### Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS)

**CMS** 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 and regional cooperation. The Centre's research agenda includes international and global forums, as well as expressions of cooperation on economic, diplomatic, and security multilateralism.

#### Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme

**SRP Programme** is dedicated to exploring the adaptation of communities in religious practices and doctrines within plural societies, and with its mission to develop expertise in inter-religious relations, focusing on effective conflict resolution mechanisms and models that promote peace and strengthen social ties.

#### National Security Studies Programme (NSSP)

**NSSP** was launched with the aim of conducting research into key episodes in Singapore's past, to draw lessons, both for today and the future. Its research seeks to address a range of national security challenges facing small, globalised, multi-racial city-states and generate policy-relevant research content for those in the field of, or with an interest in, national security. Apart from doing research and teaching on the Master's Programme in RSIS, NSSP researchers also share their insights with public officers and the general public at various forums.

#### Social Cohesion Research Programme (SCRP)

**SCRP** was established to advance the study of social cohesion. It seeks to engage in policy-oriented research, forge strategic partnerships, and develop leadership to inspire cohesive and resilient societies, both within Southeast Asia and beyond. With this mission in mind, SCRP aspires to promote social cohesion research and nurture research talent in this domain, create platforms for dialogue and problem-solving on issues related to interfaith relations and multiculturalism, and inspire collaborative approaches across societies towards the practice of social cohesion.

## Research Centre/Programme Activities During the Year

#### Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS)

The China Programme published its research in prominent peer-reviewed journals and authored commentaries with think tanks such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, as well as media outlets like Channel NewsAsia. In collaboration with the US Programme, it organised the 6th RSIS Trilateral Exchange, which facilitated frank in-depth discussions among scholars from Singapore, the United States, and China on recent developments in US-China relations.

The Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) Programme actively contributed to scholarly and policy discussions on humanitarian and disaster relief issues in Asia and served as the knowledge partner for the 10th ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management. It published two RSIS Policy Reports: *Southeast Asian Responses to the 2023 Kahramanmaraş Earthquakes* and *The State of HADR in Southeast Asia 2024: Militaries*. In collaboration with the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre (RHCC), the Programme co-hosted the 4th Humanitarian Futures Forum, bringing together more than 150 stakeholders to engage in dialogue aimed at improving strategic foresight and multi-stakeholder collaboration on humanitarian affairs. It also co-organised, with Changi RHCC, the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on HADR Conference on Disaster Relief in the Context of Climate Change.

The Indonesia Programme focused on Indonesian politics, security, and foreign policy in its research, teaching, and networking agenda. 2025 saw the publication of the book *Civil-Military Relations and Military Modernisation in Indonesia* (Palgrave Macmillan). The Programme produced three RSIS Policy Reports – two on political Islam and one on Indonesian naval development. It also hosted visiting fellows who explored President Prabowo Subianto's foreign policy towards the United States and China, as well as the new administration's defence and economic strategies. Commentaries by Programme staff appeared on regional and international platforms, including *The Straits Times*, *Berita Harian*, and *Channel NewsAsia*.

The Malaysia Programme published papers and commentaries, and organised regular events on key political and foreign policy issues in Malaysia. These focused on the Anwar administration's domestic and foreign policy preoccupations, including Malaysia's



RSIS Seminar by Ms Teo Nie Ching, 17 January 2025



RSIS Seminar by Dr Yohanes Sulaiman, 25 February 2025



RSIS Roundtable on "100 Days Later – Assessing the Impact of Trump 2.0", 6 May 2025

relations with the major powers and its ASEAN Chairmanship. The economy, race and religion, and state–federal relations remained key issues of interest. Its experts were regularly interviewed by regional media and invited to give lectures on developments in Malaysia.

The Maritime Security Programme covered a broad spectrum of issues related to developments in the maritime security environment through its research, teaching, and networking agenda. Together with the Republic of Singapore Navy, the Programme co-hosted the *9th International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC)* in May 2025. In conjunction with the *9th IMSC*, RSIS also hosted a series of Track 2 sidelines events, including a fireside chat with Singapore's Chief of Defence Force, Vice Admiral Aaron Beng, and workshops discussing maritime conflict and competition in the region, as well as emerging issues such as critical undersea infrastructure.

The Military Studies Programme (MSP) partners the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) in its Professional Military Education (PME) and Continuing Education (CE) Master's Programme. In 2025, MSP launched an NTU-accredited Landpower Studies module for army officers at the SAF's Goh Keng Swee Command and Staff College reflecting its commitment to continuously enhance the curriculum to meet the SAF's evolving needs.

The Military Transformations Programme (MTP) focused its research on mapping defence innovation and governance trajectories related to AI and autonomous weapons, as well as the cyber and outer space domains. It organised a Track 1.5 conference on the theme "Strengthening Governance: Arms Control in an Age of Disruptive Technologies" and a regional capacity-building workshop for officials on confidence-building measures for military AI governance. MTP also represented RSIS at key multilateral dialogue platforms related to AI and autonomous weapons.

The Regional Security Architecture Programme (RSAP) focused its research and publications on security and defence developments in the evolving regional dynamics and their implications for ASEAN. RSAP published peer-reviewed articles on a variety of topics, including ASEAN-led joint military exercises and East Asian regionalism, as well as commentaries related to the management of regional tensions and cyber threats. RSAP is a key participant in the Track 2 Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI) and actively engages defence research institutional counterparts in the region.

The South Asia Programme (SAP) covered academic and policy research relevant to security issues in South Asia, with a strong focus on India. SAP researchers participated in international conferences, workshops, and key regional gatherings such as the *Raisina Dialogue* and *Colombo Air Symposium 2025*. SAP engaged several research institutions, particularly those focused on India. It hosted joint workshops with IRSEM, Paris, on the topic "Middle Powers in the Indo-Pacific", and with ORF, New Delhi, on "India–Southeast Asia Relations" on the sidelines of ORF's Jakarta Futures Forum. It also published articles in leading media outlets, think tank publications, and peer-reviewed academic journals.

The US Programme focused on developments in US defence and security policies, as well as trade and economic policies under the second Trump administration, through webinars and its regular podcast series, *Engaging the Eagle – Exploring U.S. Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia*. Besides co-organising the 6th RSIS Trilateral Exchange in 2025, it also conducted regular exchanges with US think tanks, including through study trips to Washington, DC. The team published research articles, and also commentaries in *Channel NewsAsia*.

#### International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR)

#### Publications and Research

During the year, ICPVTR analysts published more than 30 articles, op-eds and book chapters across a range of reputable local and international platforms and media, journals and edited volumes. These included the *Studies In Conflict and Terrorism*, *Global Network on Extremism & Technology (GNET)*, *East Asia Forum*, *The Diplomat*, *The Jamestown Foundation*, *Routledge* and *World Scientific*.

These contributions explored critical topics of emerging interest within extremism studies, such as the evolution of terrorism in the face of technological advancements, the implications of disinformation and conspiracy theories on the violent extremism threat landscape, as well as developments pertaining to the proliferation of 3D-printed firearms.

Senior Fellow Dr Muhammad Haniff Bin Hassan published two books on Islamist thinking with local publisher Perdaus, titled *Ummah in the Qur'an via Thematic Tafsir: Reconciling Ummah Exclusive and Ummah Inclusive and Perhaps You Would Think*. Associate Research Fellow Rueben Dass' research on

"3D Printed Firearms: Global Proliferation Trends and Analyses," was published in peer-reviewed journal *Studies In Conflict and Terrorism*.

#### Partnerships

Fostering closer international partnerships remained a core focus of the centre's work. Notably, ICPVTR conducted a five-day course for a Middle Eastern security apparatus, focusing on the threat landscape and trends in Southeast Asia, as well as domestic rehabilitation strategies. The Centre also hosted government delegations and law enforcement officials from Australia and Malaysia.

The Centre continues to advance Singapore's role as a regional thought leader on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (P/CVE) by coordinating with ASEAN government stakeholders on ICPVTR initiatives such as the *Glossary of Extremist Content Online 2025*, prepared for the ASEAN Senior Officials Counter-Terrorism Policy Forum (SOCTPF). This project was presented to ASEAN, Australian and New Zealand political office holders in Sydney in September 2025.



Terrorism Analyst Training Course (TATC), 21–25 July 2025

#### Capacity Building

ICPVTR held the 17th edition of its annual flagship capacity-building and networking programme, the Terrorism Analyst Training Course (TATC), in July 2025. The theme was "Violence and Upheaval: Confronting Polarisation and Extremism in Global Terrorism". Over 60 participants from various security-related backgrounds around the region learned about terror-related threats, actors, and region-specific challenges to countering terrorism from a schedule of 16 specialist speakers, including keynote speaker Dr Daniel Byman,

Professor at Georgetown University and Director of the Warfare, Irregular Threats, and Terrorism Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Speakers also discussed pertinent thematic issues relevant to security, including tools and techniques to conduct open-source CT investigations, the evolution and weaponisation of emerging technologies, and strategies to counter extremist ideological indoctrination alongside frameworks for rehabilitation and reintegration.

ICPVTR organised 14 seminars, webinars, and joint workshops during the year, engaging internal and external speakers to share their insights on issues such as the future of transnational Islamist extremist movements, countering youth radicalisation, and the role of AI in CT.

ICPVTR's young and upcoming researchers continued to be sought after for their unique specialisations. Rueben Dass was invited by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) to co-chair one of their workstreams for 2026–2028, while Benjamin Mok was invited to join the Global Internet Forum on Counter Terrorism's (GIFCT) Independent Advisory Committee (IAC).

ICPVTR's analysts further enriched their research by undertaking field trips to the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand to engage with local experts. They also represented the Centre internationally by presenting at conferences in the UK, Italy, and Australia.

#### Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS)

In 2025, the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) continued to engage in strategic dialogue and policy-relevant research on national security through a portfolio of workshops, conferences, and publications, addressing the most pressing global threats and emerging challenges.

A cornerstone of this engagement strategy was the Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior National Security Officers (APPSNO), which convened high-level participants from across the region and beyond. The 2025 edition focused on "Emerging Technology Risks," featuring strategic panels on artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, biohazards, and supply chain vulnerabilities. APPSNO enabled senior officials to exchange insights on the intersection of technology and security, fostering a



DRUMS Conference, 28-29 October 2025

shared understanding of how innovation could both empower and destabilise national resilience.

CENS also hosted the DRUMS (Distortions Rumours Untruths Misinformation Smears) Conference, which brought together experts in digital forensics, information manipulation, online harms, foreign interference, and disinformation campaigns.

In response to the growing sophistication of hybrid threats, CENS organised the "Workshop on Addressing the Complexities of Hybrid Threats," a multi-domain event that tackled cybersecurity risks in critical infrastructure, geoeconomic coercion, algorithmic influence, and foreign cultural manipulation.

Together with the ADMM Cybersecurity and Information Centre of Excellence (ACICE), CENS co-hosted the 3rd Digital Defence Symposium, an event that brought together senior officials, researchers, and industry leaders to explore the evolving nexus between digital transformation and national security. The symposium focused on the theme "Digital Defence in an Age of Strategic Competition" and discussions addressed the strategic implications of emerging technologies, the weaponisation of information, and the resilience of digital infrastructure, with expert panels covering topics such as AI governance, cyber deterrence, and digital trust.

#### Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre)

In 2025, the NTS Centre contributed to the discourse of Non-Traditional Security through publications and policy-relevant analyses. Highlights included the Roundtable on Non-Traditional Security in a Changing Global Order on 7 April, and the 7th NTS-Asia Consortium Annual Conference, held from 8

to 9 May. On 4 August 2025, the 2nd Workshop on "Revisiting Economic Security in Southeast Asia" was organised in collaboration with the Centre on Asia and Globalisation (CAG) of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP).



RSIS Seminar by Prof Peter Frankopan, 21 October 2025

Publications by the Centre in 2025 included the journal article on "Nontraditional Security in a Changing Global Order", in *Asia Policy*, Volume 20, Number 3, and the publication on *Climate Security in the Indo-Pacific, Variations, Contestations and Convergence of Security Practices*, edited by Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony and Dr Alistair D. B. Cook.

#### Biosecurity

The Centre, with the Asia Centre for Health Security, released the publication on "Emerging Biosecurity Landscape in Southeast Asia-Updated Report", (Professor Mely Caballero-Anthony, Mr Julius Cesar Trajano, Dr Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros and Ms Jeselyn), based on regional fieldwork and literature reviews. In March 2025, it organised the 1st CSCAP Study Group Meeting on Biosecurity and Health Security. It also held a workshop on "Revisiting Biological Weapons Convention's Confidence-Building Measures: ASEAN Perspectives". The team published on AI-biotech, dual-use research, and geopolitics, and engaged in international biosecurity forums.

#### Climate Change and Security

The climate security programme produced timely commentaries on water insecurities and climate

security, climate action and peacebuilding mechanisms in ASEAN. The research team (Prof Anthony, Mr Trajano, Ms Jeselyn and Mr Adam Hansen), has been conducting a comprehensive report on climate risks to peace and security in Southeast Asia. Prof Anthony

presented on "Advancing Climate Security in ASEAN" at the PRAXIS conference organised by ISIS Malaysia in August 2025.

#### Food Security

The Food Security Programme (Dr Jose Ma. Luis. P. Montesclaros and Mr Kayven Tan) deepened its engagement with NTU's Food Research Ecosystem (FRE) and regional partners, recognising ASEAN's role in Singapore's food security. It collaborated on an SSHR Seed Grant to explore digital agriculture technologies for Southeast Asia. The programme co-organised a webinar with ISEAS on global food crises, joined the first NTU-FRE retreat, and participated in workshops on

regional food security resilience, organised by the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve, ADB (Bangkok), and the Centre for Asia and Globalisation.

#### Energy Security

The Centre led the formation of the Energy Research Cluster at RSIS earlier in the year. As part of the initiative, Dr Margaret Sembiring took part in a conversation on the ASEAN Power Grid through her participation in a panel discussion organised by the RSIS Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS) in February 2025. She was subsequently invited to give a presentation at a workshop on energy transition agenda and ASEAN Chairmanship organised by the Institute for Essential Services Reform in Jakarta, Indonesia in May 2025. To further drive the Centre's energy transition research agenda, Dr Sembiring, together with Dr Tamara Nair and Ms Danielle Lynn Goh, prepared a research proposal titled "Energy Transitions in Southeast Asia: Local Opposition and State Responses" for submission to the NTU SSHR2025 Seed Grant scheme in August. The centre organised the RSIS Seminar on "The Future of Energy Transition in Southeast Asia" in November 2025.

On nuclear security, Mr Trajano presented on nuclear energy plans in Southeast Asia at the CSCAP Nuclear Energy Experts Group meeting in Thailand in March, as well as on non-proliferation and nuclear security

concerns at the US-Singapore Nuclear Energy and Non-proliferation Dialogue in September. Mr Trajano also spoke on nuclear security in Southeast Asia at the Annual Meeting of the International Nuclear Security Education Network organised by the IAEA in Japan in November. He published a journal article on the impact of small modular reactors on nuclear governance in Asia in March by the International Journal of Nuclear Security.

### Planetary Health

Building on its seed grant, the Planetary Health programme advanced its research agenda in 2025, with its SSHR-TG proposal shortlisted by NTU. It engaged in key dialogues, contributing to the ASEAN Think Tank Series and presenting on planetary health and Track 2 diplomacy at the 7th International Conference on Public Policy (ICPP7) in Thailand. At the ASEAN Sustainable Urbanisation Forum 2025 (ASUF 2025) in Kuala Lumpur, Dr. Pey moderated a forum with distinguished speakers on the critical importance of integrating planetary health into the development of future cities. In October 2025, the programme hosted a roundtable on "Past as Prologue: Historical Lessons from "The Earth Transformed" for Contemporary Climate and Planetary Health Security.

### Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

The Centre continues to be actively engaged in the discussion on WPS, while drawing on its roots in human security, research in the centre also focuses on emerging security threats such as climate change and gendered impacts of digital technology. Key events organised by the centre include the RSIS Closed-Door Workshop on "Early Warning Systems in the ASEAN Women, Peace and Security Regional Plan of Action: Potential (and Pitfalls) in preventing GBV" on 8 October 2025, and a two-part RSIS Webinar on "25 years of Women, Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific" on 28 – 30 October 2025.

### Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS)

The Centre for Multilateralism Studies (CMS) research on diplomatic and security multilateralism focuses on inter-governmental mechanisms and Track 2 initiatives in defence diplomacy such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), BRICS and BRICS Plus organisations, the Shangri-la Dialogue, and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP).

In October 2025, the Centre released the book, "The Dragon's Emerging Order: Sinocentric Multilateralism and Global Responses," which looks into China's creation of new formats giving it a central role in regional and multilateral institutions. Edited by Dr Joel Ng, this book features chapters authored by the Centre's researchers as well as regional experts from around the world, each providing insights on how China's bid for centrality has affected its relations with countries in Southeast Asia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, the G20, G77, and BRICS.

CMS also published works in international political communication, multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific, as well as commentaries on the implications of the second Trump presidency to the rules-based international order and the regional security architecture; and the prospects of BRICS as a platform for Global South cooperation.

The Centre's research on economic multilateralism concerns issues of international trade, monetary, and financial integration in ASEAN and the wider region; tracing the advances in ASEAN's digital economy governance; and exploring the evolving linkages between various Asian sub-regions and with countries outside the region through multilateral trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). CMS also looks into developments in the centralised rules-based global economic architecture, including the G20, to ensure complementarity between global and regional initiatives.

In 2025, CMS published commentaries on the ASEAN Community Vision 2045 and new pathways of regional economic integration in Southeast Asia; global AI governance dialogues like the AI Action Summit; Indonesia and Thailand's accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and recent developments in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Throughout the year, CMS organised various workshops, seminars, and roundtables covering key issues facing multilateralism and the international order today. The seminar "Multilateralism in an Era of Transactional Realpolitik: Lessons for Asia" explored ways on how Asian countries could pursue practical cooperation despite the zero-sum logic of major powers' foreign policy strategies. Another seminar entitled "Regional Organisations amid Geopolitical Shifts: World Order and the Strategic Role of Small and Middle Powers" focused on how small and middle powers can play a more influential role in the



RSIS Workshop on "Understanding ASEAN", 23-24 January 2025

international order. Three days after the 46th ASEAN Leaders' Summit, CMS held a webinar entitled "Malaysia in the Hot Seat: Chairing ASEAN through an Interregnum" which analysed the Summit's outcomes, including the ASEAN Community Vision 2045. The annual CMS workshop on the topic "Managing Pressures and Transitions: ASEAN's Agency in an Unsettled World" featured three panel discussions each focusing on ASEAN's role in maintaining regional security, growing Southeast Asia's digital economy, and ensuring energy security amid challenging geopolitical headwinds.

In January, CMS conducted a two-day training programme entitled "Understanding ASEAN" which aimed to introduce ASEAN to early- and mid-career civil servants in Singapore. The course, held at the Civil Service College, included sessions on ASEAN's history; its role in fostering regional stability, facilitating regional economic integration in new and emerging sectors; and the contemporary challenges facing the region. An ASEAN simulation exercise was also conducted to immerse participants with ASEAN's organisational structure and principles in action.

CMS staff's views and opinions were regularly sought out by and appeared in regional and international media outlets such as Channel NewsAsia, The Straits Times, Agence France-Presse, Al Jazeera, Free Malaysia Today, and Channel 8.

### Studies in Inter-Religious Relations in Plural Societies (SRP) Programme

The SRP Programme remains a key contributor to the study of inter-religious relations in pluralistic societies

like Singapore. Through focused research, partnerships with religious communities, and public engagement, the Programme is committed to advancing this evolving field.

### Enhancing Singapore's Inter-Religious Sector

The SRP Programme aims to improve the inter-religious landscape through high-quality education. In the 2024/2025 academic year, four SRP Programme courses were offered as electives for the MSc programmes at RSIS. 74 MSc students, along with 13 participants from the Community Access Programme (CAP), enrolled in these courses. CAP, a pioneering initiative within RSIS, offers a platform for public service professionals, members of the religious community, and others to deepen their understanding of inter-religious relations and social cohesion.

### Knowledge Dissemination and Community Engagement

Since its inception, the SRP Programme has been committed to disseminating knowledge to the broader community beyond RSIS. This mission has been sustained through public seminars and webinars, symposiums, and the annual Executive Programme (EP). The 10th Executive Programme, held on 20-21 August 2025, was themed "Fragmented Fronts: Religion, Secular Ideologies & Challenges to Social Harmony". The event brought together eight distinguished speakers and four panellists from academia and industry, engaging over 50 participants representing policymakers, civil servants, and religious leaders.

10th SRP Executive Programme on "Fragmented Fronts: Religion, Secular Ideologies and Challenges to Social Harmony", 20-21 August



In addition to the EP 2025, the SRP Programme hosted a series of public seminars and webinars covering diverse themes pertinent to inter-religious relations, namely:

1. "Hindutva Outreach Across Contexts: India's Scheduled Tribes" - a hybrid seminar by Dr Elvin Xing
2. "Christian Thinking on Religious Others: New Models of Inclusion and Plurality" - a hybrid seminar by Prof. David Cheetham
3. "Towards a Papal Election" - a closed-door discussion jointly organised by SRP Programme & ARI-NUS featuring Dr Michel Chambon (ARI-NUS) and Dr Alan Chong (RSIS).
4. "Halal Consciousness and Social Integration: Bridging Communities Through Understanding" - a hybrid seminar by Dr Norshahril Saat

In addition, following the 2024 conference "The Vatican & Inter-Religious Diplomacy in Asia," co-hosted with the Asia Research Institute (ARI), SRP Programme and ARI staff have submitted an edited volume of academic papers for publication with ISEAS Publishing, including several chapter contributions from SRP staff.

### Contributing to Scholarship in Inter-Religious Relations

The SRP Programme contributes to scholarship through its peer-reviewed online journal, *Interreligious Relations (IRR)*. Now in its sixth year, the journal has published 32 articles since its 2019 launch. Supported by an international editorial board of 25 scholars, IRR addresses topics such as religious diversity, religious contextualisation, religious-secular interactions, religiously motivated violence, and peacebuilding.

### SRP Programme Research Streams

The SRP Programme advances several key research streams. Its study of halal consciousness in Singapore and the region, the rise of Christian nationalism and identity politics and the digital diffusion of Hindutva ideology collectively identify contemporary challenges to pluralism and social harmony and provide recommendations to mitigate potential risks.

### National Security Studies Programme (NSSP)

The National Security Studies Programme (NSSP), launched in April 2016, is aimed at studying Singapore's national security history, to draw lessons

from the past, reflect on how this shapes the present and might play out in the future.

Since April 2025, the team has been refreshed and its mission reimagined, with researchers embarking on a series of policy-relevant research projects, to be rolled out in the year ahead. The team has also worked to wrap up several major projects that have been in the pipeline.

While the programme continues to be focused on research related to the national security challenges facing small, multi-ethnic city-states in the context of today's global challenges, the team plans to strive to ensure that its research serves the needs of both the national security community, as well as the general academic and public audiences.

As part of this mandate, NSSP researchers have stepped up efforts to share their insights across various platforms, including the media, public seminars and various training courses. They have contributed to discussions on national security issues, including in major local media platforms such as *The Straits Times*, *TODAY*, *Channel NewsAsia* as well as the *RSIS Commentary* series.

Among the commentaries published were: Reasserting ASEAN's Relevance: The Road Ahead; The Day the Music Died at the Shangri-La as US Projects Hard Power; All Hands on Deck Amid Storms of Conflict and Change; The Art of a Deal in a Trump-Xi Summit?; Whither Asia in a Multipolar World of Trump 2.0?; Safeguarding Singapore: Addressing the Impact of Transnational Scamming Operations in Southeast Asia; and Singapore's Total Defence Day Remains Relevant More Than 40 Years On.

Two research papers titled, Possible Developments of the Israel-Hamas Conflict, Rethinking the Role of Middle Powers in Regional Security, were also published in 2025.

A major project that the team has been working on for some time, namely a Graphic Novel on Base 691, was completed. The team conducted focus group discussions on its draft in April and engaged with historians and educators to refine the novel's content and presentation. After several rounds of arduous editing, the project is expected to be published and delivered to schools around Singapore in early 2026.

Apart from teaching in the Master's programmes run by RSIS, NSSP researchers have participated in flagship events for national security practitioners such as the Special Forces Commanders' Conference and the Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers.

NSSP researchers also feature as lecturers at significant executive education platforms such as the National Security Milestone Programme for civil service leaders. In addition, NSSP researchers lectured in courses conducted at the Home Team Academy and SAFTI Military Institute.

In conjunction with the Civil Service College, NSSP helmed a well-attended seminar for public sector leaders in August, which featured former Foreign Minister George Yeo, speaking on the topic, "Navigating Global Complexities – Singapore's Strategic Position".

For the 2025 Distinguished Visitor Programme (DVP), NSSP hosted Prof Nobukatsu Kanehara from Japan, from 17 to 21 February 2025. He delivered a 90-minute "by-invitation only" seminar titled, "The Future of the Liberal International Order and Asia". In addition, he also spoke at two dialogues,

### Social Cohesion Research Programme (SCRIP)

It has been a productive year for SCRP in global networking, forging multi-agency partnerships, and producing high impact quality research output. More than eight public seminars and events were organised over this period, including the flagship International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS) 2025, from 24 to 26 June 2025. The programme has launched a series of podcasts titled "Tapestry of Cohesion", featuring distinguished academic leaders, community practitioners, and policymakers from diverse organisations. In the lead-up to ICCS 2025, the team published more than 12 high impact academic papers and commentaries on the various facets of multiculturalism, including critical reviews on the drivers that shaped social cohesion in plural societies.

### International Conference on Cohesive Societies (ICCS) 2025

ICCS 2025 is the most high-profile of SCRP's achievements. The flagship conference brought together more than 1,100 delegates from 44 nationalities residing in more than 50 countries. The event provided a platform for multicultural dialogue among diverse stakeholder groups in academia, policymaking, and practice. The topics discussed included what are the best practices to managing cultural diversity, expanding the mindshare of inclusion, social construction of multiculturalism, and what should be the role of the state and community in fostering cohesion. Unlike the previous iteration of ICCS, the 2025 conference incorporated a skills development segment to empower and equip diverse actors with practical toolkits to address professional challenges in their respective communities. The conference also featured findings from the second edition of the Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar, an assessment of social cohesion in each of the 10 ASEAN nation-states, leading to a related Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar workshop on 9 September.

### Global Exchange of Perspectives

SCRP hosted preeminent global scholars and public intellectuals. The renowned visitors and speakers included Professor Harvey Whitehouse, Director of the Centre for the Study of Social Cohesion at the University Oxford; Lord John Alderdice, member



RSIS Seminar by Professor Nobukatsu Kanehara on "The Future of the Liberal International Order and Asia", 20 February 2025

titled "Integrating Technology and National Security Policy" and "Strengthening Crisis Preparedness and Management in National Security". While in Singapore, he met with key policy officials. There are plans for more DVPs with top-tier national security practitioners from Asia in the year ahead.

Going forward, the NSSP will continue to roll out a refreshed line up of research papers on national security related issues, from race and religion, to misinformation and disinformation campaigns, among others, in the year ahead.



RSIS Seminar on "Fostering Inclusion: Barriers and Breakthroughs", 12 February 2025

of the United Kingdom House of Lords; Professor Katherine Marshall, Senior Fellow at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs; Professor Peter Frankopan, Director of Oxford University's Centre for Byzantine Research; and Sir Peter Gluckman, Distinguished University Professor at the University of Auckland and recipient of the 2016 American Association for Advancement of Sciences Science Diplomacy award.

### Strengthening Research Ties

The engagement has not been confined to the scholarly exchange of ideas. As part of the engagement leading up to ICCS 2025 and in preparation for the Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar report, members of the SCRP visited regional (i.e., Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia) policymakers, community organisations, and academic institutions to sharpen insights and knowledge of regional social dynamics. Delegates from RSIS, including Chief Operating Officer Benny Oon and members of SCRP research team, went on a study trip to the United Arab Emirates in February to strengthen ties on research and collaboration in social cohesion.

On 17 September, Dr Leong Chan-Hoong, Head of SCRP, delivered a public lecture on fostering social cohesion in neighbourhoods with diverse cultures as a distinguished Visiting Scholar at the International Christian University in Japan. On 12 November, at the invitation of Tokyo's National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, he presented the key findings from the Southeast Asian Social Cohesion Radar at the prestigious GRIPS Forum and discussed how the changing demographic trends and values affect multiculturalism and social cohesion.

### Future Issues and Technology (FIT)

FIT convened and brought together a diverse range of experts at events which highlighted the vast impact of technological geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific region:

1. RSIS workshop on AI and cybercrime,
2. RSIS seminar on SpaceAI,
3. RSIS seminar on the public's voice in technology governance,
4. RSIS seminar on fusion technologies,
5. RSIS seminar on AI trust amid US-China relations.

FIT also produced publications that offered diverse perspectives on the opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technologies in shaping global and regional dynamics:

1. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, "Charting ASEAN's Path to AI Governance Uneven Yet Gaining Ground," The National Bureau of Asian Research, 04 September 2025
2. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano and Benjamin Ang, "Soft but Ethical: The ASEAN Way to Data Protection and AI Governance," Safer Internet Lab, 21 August 2025
3. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, "Quantum Futures in Southeast Asia," RSIS Commentary, In Press
4. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, Seth Seet Kai, Ysa Marie Cayabyab, Edson Tandoc Jr., "Singapore Public's Trust on AI Amid US-China Dynamics," RSIS Policy Report, In Press
5. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, Seth Seet Kai, Ysa Marie Cayabyab, Edson Tandoc Jr., "Navigating Public Opinion on AI in Singapore: Awareness, Perceptions, and Vulnerabilities," RSIS Policy Report, In Press
6. Ysa Marie Cayabyab, "Space and AI: Shaping the Future of Food Security in ASEAN Space and AI: Shaping the Future of Food Security in ASEAN," RSIS Commentary, 29 August 2025
7. Keith Paolo Catibog Landicho, Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, "Disasters and Disinformation: AI and the Myanmar 7.7 Magnitude Earthquake," IDSS Paper, 1 May 2025
8. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, Ysa Marie Cayabyab, Dongyoun Cho, Clarissa Ai Ling Lee, Alexander Ling Euk Jin, "Science, Technology and Security: Quantum," Future Issues, 14 April 2025
9. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, Adhi Priamarizki, "Southeast Asia faces AI influence on elections," The Strategist, 2 April 2025
10. Karryl Kim Sagun Trajano, Iuna Tsyrulneva, Chee Yong Sean Chua, "AI in Space Technologies: A Singapore Case Study," 29 October 2024

## Research Grants

### NTU SSHR 2025 Seed Grant

The Social Science and Humanities Research 2025 (SSHR 2025) Strategic Plan harnesses the diversity of academia in NTU to position the university at the forefront of research in the fields of arts, social sciences, humanities, education, and business. A Working Group of faculty members from RSIS, with the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (CoHASS), Nanyang Business School (NBS), and National Institute of Education (NIE), identified six non-STEM interdisciplinary clusters to provide grounds for cross-field engagement and strategic dialogue across NTU: (1) Sustainability and Resilience; (2) Culture and Creativity; (3) Education and Transformation; (4) Leadership and Disruptive Innovation; (5) Human Behaviour and Technology; and (6) Language and Heritage. To allow researchers to identify and explore emerging and innovative topics that may contribute to the research directions of NTU, a new "Open Theme" has also been introduced since the grant call launched in June 2024 welcoming social sciences and humanities proposals that do not fall within the scope of the other six clusters.

Each of the thematic Clusters is led by a Cluster Lead who oversees an interdisciplinary team of Cluster members and is supported by a Cluster administrative support staff. Since January 2025, Dr Terence Lee Chek Liang (Senior Fellow of RSIS) has taken over as the Lead of Cluster 1 (Sustainability and Resilience). Supported by Ms Cheryl Chan, RSIS Dean's Secretary, Dr Lee leads the Cluster 1 members, including Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony, Associate Dean (International Engagement) and Head of NTS Centre, RSIS, in the pursuit of SSHR 2025 objectives for Cluster 1. In Cluster 3 (Education and Transformation) and Cluster 4 (Leadership and Disruptive Innovation), Prof Ang Cheng Guan, Associate Dean of RSIS, and Assoc Prof Li Mingjiang, Associate Dean (Academic Affairs), serve as members of these respective Clusters.

With the Dean's approval, five applications from RSIS researchers have been submitted in the SSHR 2025 Seed Grant call launched in June 2025. Three of these applications belonged to Cluster 1 (Sustainability and Resilience) while the other two belonged to Theme 5 (Human Behaviour and Technology). The results will be announced towards the end of the year.

### MOE AcRF Tier 1 Award

Asst Prof Benjamin Ho Tze Ern, Assistant Professor at the China Programme, was awarded the MOE Academic Research Fund (AcRF) Tier 1 (Call 1/2025) Grant on the project "Political Myths and Perceptions of International Order in Northeast Asia: China, Japan and South Korea". The project examined Chinese, Japanese and South Korean conceptions of a rules-based international order from a comparative angle. It studied specifically how political myths affect these states' preferences to what an idealised international order ought to be. Specifically, it will examine three interrelated myths relevant to the study of international order, namely the myths of "never again", "liberal leviathan" and "the idea of progress".

# Endowments and Endowed Professorships

## SPONSORS AND FUNDING

Over the years since its establishment, sponsors have contributed grants to support the activities of RSIS. They include The Ngee Ann Kongsi, Mr Peter Lim, the late Dr Lee Seng Tee, and in the earlier years, the National Trades Union Congress, the Lee Foundation, Singapore Totalisator Board, Temasek Foundation, and Temasek Holdings (Private) Limited. Major sources of funding include the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the National Security Coordination Secretariat (NSCS), which engage RSIS as a knowledge partner for research.

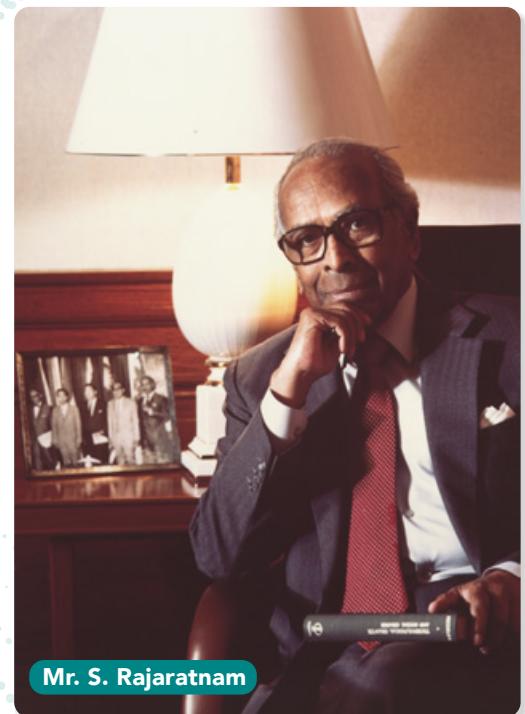
## THE RSIS ENDOWMENT FUND

RSIS launched the RSIS Endowment Fund on 31 March 2008 to engage world-class faculty and research staff to the School and award scholarships to talented students. It provides students with a wider choice of courses, higher levels of excellence in teaching, and increased research support. The RSIS Endowment Fund arose from a fund-raising effort after RSIS was inaugurated on 1 January 2007. RSIS held a fund-raising effort for the RSIS Endowment Fund, with the aim of \$40 million (including dollar-for-dollar matching grants from the Singapore Government). After the target was met, RSIS launched the Endowment Fund in 2008.

The RSIS Endowment Fund remains open for contributions from well-wishers.



## THE S. RAJARATNAM PROFESSORSHIP IN STRATEGIC STUDIES



The S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies at RSIS was established in honour of Mr S. Rajaratnam's distinguished services to the nation. Mr S. Rajaratnam, born in 1915, was elected Member of Parliament for Kampung Glam in 1959 and continued to represent the constituency until his retirement in 1988. He became the Minister for Culture in 1959 and the Minister for Foreign Affairs in 1965 and, in the latter capacity, took on a second portfolio as the Minister for Labour from 1968 to 1971. He became Second Deputy Prime Minister (Foreign Affairs) in 1980, after which he was appointed Senior Minister until his retirement. He passed away in 2006.

The professorship was made possible by the \$2.6 million fund (excluding a matching grant from the Singapore Government) raised by a fundraising committee. The committee was chaired by Mr S. Chandra Das, former Member of Parliament for Cheng San Group Representative Constituency (1980–1996). Income generated from the invested funds helps maintain the professorship.

Inaugurated on 31 August 1998, the professorship brings on board internationally renowned scholars in strategic studies and related



fields who could help review and develop the curriculum, teach, initiate and undertake joint research projects with the academic staff, and give public lectures and conduct seminars. Other than widening its international network, RSIS could benefit from the knowledge and experience of eminent scholars appointed to the chair.

Under the S. Rajaratnam Professorship, Professor Hal Brands visited RSIS in August 2025. The Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) Professor Brand spoke on "The Eurasian Century and the Future of US Global Leadership" during his RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture.

Professor Geoff Till held the S. Rajaratnam Professorship during the year. He taught "Globalisation, Arms-Racing and Naval Development in the Asia Pacific" at the RSIS Graduate School during Trimester 2 of the Academic Year 2025/2026. Professor Till is the Emeritus Professor of Maritime Studies of King's College London and Chairman of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies. He was previously Dean of Academic Studies at the UK Command and Staff College and Head of the Defence Studies Department of King's College London. Since 2009, he has been a Visiting Professor in the IDSS' Maritime Security Programme.

## THE Ngee Ann Kongsi PROFESSORSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship in International Relations was established on 27 November 2007

through a donation of \$3 million from The Ngee Ann Kongsi and a matching grant from the Singapore Government. Income from the endowment is used to identify and nominate world class scholars in the area of international relations to teach and do research in RSIS, to help the School achieve its vision of being the premier graduate school of international affairs in the Asia Pacific.

Two professors visited Singapore under The Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship during the year. Professor Xiang



Lanxin, Professor Emeritus at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva; Zijiang Chair of International History at East China Normal University, Shanghai; and Distinguished Fellow at the Henry Stimson Center in Washington, DC, taught "The United States and Asia-Pacific Security Order" in the RSIS Graduate School. He

also spoke on "US-China Relations: How to Handle Trump" at an RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture while in RSIS from August to October.

Professor Wu Xinbo, Executive Dean of the Institute of International Studies, and Director of the Center for American Studies, Fudan University, spoke on "A Tale of Two Scenarios: The Evolution of the Asia-Pacific Regional Security Landscape" during his visit in October.

#### NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS (NTUC) PROFESSORSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

In 2007, the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) raised a total of \$2.5 million which, with additional funding from the Singapore Government and other sources, enabled RSIS to establish an endowed chair — the NTUC Professorship in International Economic Relations. The NTUC, set up in 1961, is the national federation of trade unions that works



and undertake joint research projects with the academic staff, give public lectures and conduct seminars.

Professor Tan Kong Yam, Emeritus Professor of Economics at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), with vast experience in economics, especially in relation to China, taught "Economics for International Political Economy" at the RSIS Graduate School during Trimester 1 of the Academic Year 2025/2026. He also gave an RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture on "Living with Xi and Trump: US-China Relations and the Implications for Southeast Asia" in August.



Professor Chris Hughes, Professor of International Politics and Japanese Studies in the Department of Politics and International Studies (PAIS), University of Warwick, visited RSIS in February under the NTUC Professorship. He gave an RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture on "Japan's Grand Strategy in The Era of Trump 2.0".

Dr Khor Hoe Ee, former Chief Economist of AMRO (ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office), taught "International Economic Institutions & International Economic Policies" under this professorship during Trimester 2 of the Academic Year 2025/2026.

with trade associations, social enterprises, and other enterprise partners to create better lives for workers here in Singapore.

Income from the endowment enables RSIS to appoint internationally renowned professors who can help review and develop the curriculum, teach, initiate

#### PETER LIM PROFESSORSHIP IN PEACE STUDIES

The Peter Lim Professorship in Peace Studies was launched on 9 June 2014 during the inauguration of RSIS' SRP Programme.



The professorship was established through a gift of \$3 million from Mr Peter Lim and a matching grant from the Singapore Government. Mr Lim, a well-known Singaporean philanthropist, hoped that his donation could bring together distinguished scholars and thought leaders to study how Singapore can further preserve and promote the existing harmonious relations amongst its different communities, so that the nation will continue to enjoy peace and harmony. The endowment enables the SRP Programme to appoint a professor who can lead the programme in researching and teaching peace studies.

#### VISITING SCHOLARS

Other visiting scholars during the year included the following:

**Professor Nobukatsu Kanehara**  
NSSP's Distinguished Visiting Professor,  
17-25 February 2025

**Dr Makio Miyagawa**  
Adjunct Senior Fellow, RSIS, 8-12 July 2025

**Dr Marty Natalegawa**  
Distinguished Visiting Fellow,  
1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

Dr Abdullah Saeed, Sultan of Oman Professor of Arab and Islamic Studies and Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor at the University of Melbourne, Australia, last held the endowed chair.

#### S. T. LEE DISTINGUISHED ANNUAL LECTURE

RSIS also holds the S. T. Lee Distinguished Annual Lecture, where world-class distinguished scholars and policymakers are invited to speak to a Singapore-wide audience on key strategic issues. Established in 2007, the S. T. Lee Distinguished Annual Lecture series is funded by an endowment established from a generous personal donation by the late Dr Lee Seng Tee, a well-known Singaporean philanthropist, and with a matching grant from the Singapore Government. Dr Lee was a well-known benefactor of educational establishments both local and overseas, including NTU Singapore.

Professor Peter Frankopan, Professor of Global History, Worcester College, University of Oxford, gave the S. T. Lee Distinguished Annual Lecture in October 2025. Professor Frankopan, who is also the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Director of the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research, spoke on "Multipolar Asia and the Reconfiguration of Global Power". During his visit, Professor Frankopan also met RSIS Centres/Programmes and held roundtables with them.

**Dr Duvvuri Subbarao**  
Visiting Senior Fellow, RSIS, 23-29 March 2025

**Ambassador Loro Horta**  
Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to China, 2-8 March 2025

# Selected Essays

## The Untold Story of Wan Gang and the Success of China's Electric Vehicle Industry



by  
Prof Tan Kong Yam

### Policy Evolution

Direct purchase subsidies ended in 2022, replaced by the dual-credit system, mandating EV production quotas for automakers. To sustain momentum, China introduced a trade-in programme, offering up to 20,000 yuan per EV purchase. Initially temporary, the programme was extended into 2025 after drawing over 4 million applicants and retiring 2 million old vehicles.

### The Critical Role of Wan Gang

China has transformed itself into the world's leading electric vehicle (EV) power. In 2024, Chinese consumers purchased more than 11 million EVs, constituting nearly 65% of global sales, and EVs made up almost half of new cars sold domestically. China produced about 58% of the world's EVs in 2023 and exported 1.28 million units in 2024. This dominance is the product of strategic government support, supply chain integration, fierce domestic market competition, and rapid technological innovation.

### Policy and Government Support

#### Early Subsidies and Incentives

From 2009 to 2023, the Chinese government invested over US\$230 billion into the EV sector. Consumers benefited from purchase subsidies and large tax exemptions, most recently a 520-billion-yuan (US\$72 billion) tax break covering 2024–2027. Non-monetary incentives, such as licence plate privileges in major cities and exemptions from driving restrictions, further encouraged adoption.

#### Infrastructure Expansion

By September 2024, China had installed 11.4 million charging points, including over 3.3 million public chargers. This scale ensures widespread accessibility and reduces range anxiety. Infrastructure continues to expand with ultra-fast chargers, highway networks and smart charging integrated with the grid.

Though Wan was not a member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Premier Wen appointed him as minister of science and technology (2007–2018) and placed Wan and his EV strategy at the heart of national strategy, driving programmes like the 863 Plan and the Medium- and Long-Term S&T Plan (2006–2020). Wan managed to secure subsidies, pilot projects, and R&D funding for batteries and charging. His advocacy led to EVs being designated as a strategic emerging industry in 2010.

Even after stepping down as minister in 2018, Wan remained influential as vice chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), an organ of the CCP, until 2023. He continues to advise on EV policy, backing the dual-credit system and trade-in programmes. Without his foresight and leadership, China's EV sector would likely not have received the sustained support that propelled it to global leadership.

### Manufacturing and Supply Chain

#### Scale and Cost Advantages

China's EV industry enjoys economies of scale, producing nearly 60% of global EVs. This, combined with lower labour costs and streamlined processes, gives Chinese EVs a 20–40% cost advantage over their Western counterparts.

#### Vertical Integration

Firms like BYD exemplify vertical integration: producing batteries, motors and chips in-house. Vertical integration lowers costs, reduces supplier dependence and shields against price wars. BYD's structure allows it to cut prices while maintaining profitability, unlike many of its competitors.

#### Raw Material and Battery Chain Control

China dominates battery supply chains by:

- Processing two-thirds of global lithium, nearly 80% of cobalt, and essentially all-natural graphite;
- Producing 90% of cathode and nearly all anode materials;
- Manufacturing over 80% of global EV battery cells.

This control ensures cheaper battery packs – 30% less per kWh than Western equivalents – and provides China with both industrial and geopolitical leverage.

### Technological Innovation

#### Battery Technologies

China leads in lithium iron phosphate (LFP) adoption, powering approximately 75% of new EVs by 2024. LFP is cheaper, safer and sufficient in range. Companies like CATL and BYD innovate with Blade batteries and fast-charging LFP cells that add 400 km in 10 minutes.

China also invests heavily in next-generation batteries:

- Solid-state batteries, with 6 billion yuan allocated to accelerate commercialisation;
- Sodium-ion batteries, which promise ultra-low cost for small EVs;
- Research into lithium-sulphur and silicon anodes, positioning China at the forefront of global innovation.

#### Smart and Connected Cars

Chinese EVs function as "smartphones on wheels". Automakers integrate proprietary operating systems,

chips and AI assistants, often in partnership with companies like Huawei or Xiaomi. Features include OTA (over the air) updates (of software), voice control, facial recognition, and seamless integration with China's digital ecosystem (WeChat, Alipay, Baidu Maps).

#### Autonomous Driving

Companies like Xpeng, Baidu and NIO invest in self-driving technologies. Xpeng's XNGP system offers highway and urban driver-assist features. Chinese firms leverage massive driving datasets and lidar/vision systems, supported by permissive domestic regulations. By 2025, several models are offering hands-free navigation in selected cities, advancing China's role in the global autonomous race.

### Market Trends and Challenges

#### Adoption and Variety

China leads in EV adoption: nearly 50% of new car sales in 2024 were electric. More than 300 models are available on the Chinese market, covering every segment from \$5,000 microcars to luxury sedans. EVs are expanding rapidly beyond first-tier cities, reaching smaller towns and rural buyers.

#### Price Wars and Overcapacity

Fierce competition among approximately 100 EV makers has triggered price wars. Tesla and BYD repeatedly slashed prices, with BYD's Seagull now selling for under 56,000 yuan (US\$7,800). Margins have collapsed, leading to government warnings against "reckless price-cutting" and "involution". Consolidation is expected, with weaker start-ups likely to exit the market or merge with other players.

#### Global Expansion and Trade Barriers

China became the largest auto exporter in 2023. Brands like BYD, SAIC's MG, and Geely have been expanding in Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America. However, geopolitical frictions are rising, with:

- EU anti-subsidy investigation and tariffs of 10–38%;
- US tariffs up to 100% on Chinese EVs and the US Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) rules excluding Chinese batteries from subsidies.

To adapt, Chinese automakers are localising production abroad. BYD is building plants in Hungary, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Brazil, Mexico and Thailand; NIO is expanding in Poland. Over 18 projects are under way in Europe alone, bypassing tariffs and boosting local integration.

## Outlook

### Domestic Targets

China aims for new energy vehicles (NEVs) – comprising hybrids, fully electric EVs as well as fuel cell EVs – to reach 48% of sales by 2026 and 58% by 2027, milestones it is already on track to surpass. Some analysts predict 70–80% market share by 2030.

Its policies will emphasise:

- Expanding ultra-fast and rural charging networks;
- Accelerating solid-state battery commercialisation;
- Promoting sustainable industry consolidation.

### Global Impact

By 2030, Chinese automakers could capture one-third of the global auto market. Their strengths – low cost, fast cycles and advanced features – are forcing foreign car manufacturers to accelerate EV adoption. Strategic alliances between Chinese and foreign manufacturers (e.g., Volkswagen–Xpeng, Stellantis–Leapmotor) suggest a future of both competition and collaboration.

### Technological Frontier

China will continue to lead in:

- Battery breakthroughs (solid-state, sodium-ion);
- Smart mobility ecosystems integrated with digital platforms;
- Autonomous driving fuelled by vast data and government-backed infrastructure.

## The Emerging Fluid, Flexible Gx World Order



by

Warren Fernandez

The main challenges it encounters will be geopolitical trade frictions, domestic overcapacity and brand trust abroad. Still, China's EV ecosystem has already reshaped global standards, making clean, connected, and, increasingly, autonomous mobility the global norm.

### Conclusion

China's EV rise is the product of strategic policy, supply chain dominance, rapid technological progress and bold visionaries like Wan Gang. Having turned EVs from a niche technology into a mass-market reality, China is now setting the pace for the global auto industry. Its next challenge will be balancing domestic consolidation with global expansion amid rising trade tensions, while continuing to lead in the technologies that will define the car of the future.

Professor Tan Kong Yam is Emeritus Professor of Economics, Nanyang Technological University. He taught at the RSIS Graduate School in Academic Year 2024/2025 as the NTUC Professor of International Economic Relations, RSIS.

and peace. Kissinger probably never imagined such a person inhabiting the White House.

Eager to remake the world, President Trump has sallied forth into uncharted waters, with the rest of the world in tow. There are neither maps or signposts, nor a clear idea of the destination, let alone any plan for how to get from here to there. The risks of such a trip ending up somewhere unfamiliar, and quite different from what was intended, are high and rising.

What then lies ahead? There has been much talk of an emerging multipolar world. Yet, "visions of multipolarity are also polarised", as the Munich Security Report 2025 aptly notes. "This makes it increasingly difficult to adapt the existing order peacefully, avoid new arms races, prevent violent conflicts within and among states, allow for more inclusive economic growth, and jointly address shared threats like climate change."

### Welcome to a Gx World

It might therefore be useful to ponder just what some permutations for a new world order might be, and what these entail, namely:

**G "0"** – a state of nature, where each country acts in its own interests, with the strong doing as they please and the weak suffering what they must. Eurasia Group President Ian Bremmer has written of GZero world, in which no single power has the inclination or ability to shape global events.

**G "1"** – like the unipolar order that the United States led for several decades, benignly for the most part, but which it is now busy undoing. But, as the United States retreats, China seems to have neither the ability nor willingness to take over as the sole global hegemon.

**G "2"** – a bipolar world, such as during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, with rival powers competing on some fronts but collaborating in areas of common interest to keep the system stable and avert conflict.

There was hope in the 1990s and early 2000s, that China might emerge as a responsible stakeholder in a rules-based order. In other words, China would follow the path of Germany or Japan, growing richer and stronger, but remaining part of an interdependent system and deferring to the United States as the indispensable leader of the global order.

It was on this basis that US leaders welcomed China into the World Trade Organisation in 2000. Free trade, it was believed, would liberalise China, with economic development driving political and social change,

leading to Francis Fukuyama's "End of History", the apogee of ideological evolution.

As David Shambaugh notes in *Breaking the Engagement: How China Won and Lost America: "America has long sought to change and liberalise China; this had been constant for two and a half centuries. When China sought to 'learn' from America and conformed to American expectations, however imperfectly, the two countries got along; when China stood up for its own interests and pushed back against America, relations soured."*

Few Asian leaders suffered from this delusion. Indeed, Singapore's founding Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew often warned that while bringing Beijing into the global trade order was good for China, and the world, it was naïve to assume China would become a Western liberal democracy. Instead, China would develop in its own way, continuing to value stability and the collective interests of society, rather than embracing liberal values of individual rights and freedoms. A rising China would also inevitably seek reforms of international institutions and norms that had been framed when it was weak.

Wisdom lay in the prevailing powers managing China's transition in as smooth and equitable a fashion as possible. Unfortunately, Lee's message was drowned out in the so-called "Asian values" debate of the 1990s and dismissed as little more than an attempt to uphold authoritarian tendencies. A more historically and culturally nuanced understanding of how the Sino-US relationship would evolve might have averted, or lessened, the deep sense of betrayal now widespread in Washington.

**G "3"** – a world carved up into multiple spheres, with each regional hegemon managing affairs within its realm while working to maintain order among them. A less globally minded United States might accede to such an arrangement with China and Russia, some say. But it is unclear how such a triumvirate would relate to one another. As equals? Or within some hierarchy of subordinates, with the United States insisting on having the final say? It is not self-evident in Beijing or Moscow why this should be so. Nor is it likely that other countries would acquiesce to falling under the sway of these regional hegemons, begging the question: how many poles might there be within a sphere?

Witness Europe, where countries such as Britain, France, Germany and others have rushed into a defensive huddle, a classic posture of hegemonic denial, ramping up defence spending and collaboration. The challenges for Asia will be even more acute, given the fraught histories among its nations and heavy reliance

on the United States as the neutral balancer in the region.

**Gx** – Considering the above, perhaps the most likely framework might be a more fluid and flexible one of shifting coalitions of the willing, coming together on specific issues of common interest. As Hal Brands notes in his book *The Eurasian Century: Hot Wars, Cold Wars and the Making of the Modern World*, such an order will “approximate variable geometry – arraying free world nations into multiple smaller grouping that exert decisive influence in crucial areas, from semiconductor supply chains to undersea warfare. If Nato was the model for alliance building in the 20th Century, AUKUS is the model for the twenty-first.”

Some examples of such multilateral groupings include the Quad security arrangements, the expanding BRICS grouping, or the 14-member Future of Investment and Free Trade (FIT) Partnership, initiated by Singapore, of small- and medium-size countries seeking to uphold a rules-based trade order. In an interview with the *Financial Times*, India’s Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar hailed such flexible arrangements as the way forward: “You have comfort, you have commonalities. It’s more like a club. The treaty-based concepts are typical of the old order. The new order is something more flexible.”

While such arrangements would be agile and adaptable, it is yet unclear how countries would correlate and collaborate, both within and among, the various rival groupings that might emerge.

### Events, Dear Boy, Events

Global orders do not emerge according to theoretical design, nor always go according to the best laid plans. The horrors of the First World War created the impetus for setting up a League of Nations, but that did not prevent the world plunging again into a devastating second global conflagration.

History ebbs and flows, twists and turns, rarely unfolding in straight lines. There are always the proverbial events, as a British prime minister once noted, springing shocks and surprises. The 20th Century saw conflicts and wars, hot and cold. The transition to a new order in

this century is likely to be no less turbulent, protracted, and unpredictable.

Many uncertainties lie ahead. Ageing leaders in autocratic states such as Russia, China, Iran or North Korea, with no clear indication on who might succeed them or how. Rising polarisation, and the drift towards electoral extremes, in the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany. Looming tension in the Taiwan Straits or the South China Sea that could spark flare-ups which spiral beyond the control of states and leaders. Emerging technologies and the consequent demand for chips, energy or rare earth minerals that could fuel conflicts.

How these and other developments play out, and how leaders and their electorates respond, will be critical in shaping the world order that emerges, willy nilly. As Brands rightly warns: “There is no guarantee that history takes the path of progress. ... Don’t assume that the awful costs of great-power conflict will deter everyone from waging it.”

Given the current geopolitical context, a Gx world seems the most likely prospect for the years ahead, with countries, big and small, seeking to exercise some agency to shape their shared destiny on issues of common concern. This muddling through reflects a pragmatic and agile approach of accepting the world as it is, rather than the way we might wish it to be.

Still, the key questions that remain are whether such a fluid and flexible global order could be stable or durable, and, more importantly, up to the task of tackling the critical challenges of our times – from the rise of AI to the climate crisis – without the backing of, and collaboration among, the major powers of the day. Such a world order is likely to be fraught with instability, risks and uncertainties.

Warren Fernandez is Senior Fellow at RSIS, and Head of its National Security Studies Programme (NSSP).

## The Limitations of Third-Party Mediation: Prospects for the Iran Denuclearisation Talks



by

Dr Amanda Huan

When Iran’s nuclear programme makes headlines, the narrative is often framed as a clash between Tehran and Washington. This framing overlooks, however, the real test that the negotiations represent: whether third parties – be it states or institutions with direct or indirect stakes in the dispute – can wield enough influence to steer bitter rivals towards compromise.

The Iran case is particularly instructive as it involves not just the United States and Iran, but also a constellation of other actors including the EU3 (i.e. Britain, France and Germany), China, Russia and the European Union itself that have stepped into the fray as mediators. Their interventions illustrate the full suite of what I refer to as types of mediative power: expert knowledge, rewards, coercion and networks. The Iran case also demonstrates why even the most carefully balanced multilateral diplomacy can deliver only fragile outcomes.

### The Core Dyad: The United States and Iran

At its heart, the Iran nuclear dispute is a bilateral standoff. The United States fears Iran’s enrichment capabilities will enable it to build a nuclear bomb while Iran insists on its right to develop nuclear energy, perceiving nuclear capabilities as a safeguard against an existential threat in what it considers a tense geopolitical environment. Decades of mistrust made direct compromise almost impossible and the deadlock, coupled with the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the two sides, opened the doors for third parties to step in to mediate.

### The Third Parties: Stepping Into the Breach

The EU3 first engaged Iran in the early 2000s, when the United States refused direct dialogue. Their motivation for doing so was apparent: to prevent

nuclear proliferation in Europe’s neighbourhood and avert regional conflict. There was some initial success in the form of the 2003 Tehran Declaration but the Iranians restarted the nuclear programme in 2005. Later on, China and Russia also intervened, partly to prevent Western domination of the negotiation process, but also to protect their own energy and security interests. The European Union, acting as an institutional convenor, provided a platform for talks when the UN Security Council was paralysed. More recently, other Gulf states such as Oman and Qatar have sought to mediate between the dyad.

Conspicuously absent from the talks were Iran’s neighbours such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. Their deep antagonism towards Tehran risked spoiling the negotiations and worsening tensions, yet their exclusion from the formal process left them resentful and suspicious of any deal reached without their consultation.

### Mediative Powers in Action

How did the various third parties try to move the negotiations forward? They sought to exercise their influence through four types of mediative power:

#### Expert knowledge power

The European third parties provided their technical expertise to design appropriate safeguards and monitoring mechanisms for Iran’s nuclear programme, along with realistic timelines. By grounding the discussions in verifiable procedures, they reframed the negotiations away from ideological differences and towards practical compliance.

#### Reward power

Relief from ongoing sanctions was a key incentive offered to Tehran. The European Union was Iran’s largest trading partner and they held significant financial leverage over Iran. Other incentives that were provided included the prospects of (re)integration into the global economy, access to frozen assets, and expanded trade.

#### Coercive power

The United States, European Union and other states also used sanctions to devastating effect on Tehran.

The restrictions on oil exports and the financial sector pushed Iran to the negotiating table. The implicit threat of military action also hung in the background.

#### Network power

China and Russia leveraged their positions as UN Security Council permanent members to shape collective pressure on Iran while restraining US unilateralism. Their ability to invoke wider institutions – especially the United Nations – extended their leverage on the negotiating parties.

#### Impact of Mediative Powers

Through the varying use of the different mediative powers, the intervening parties managed to guide negotiations to the creation of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in which Iran accepted that it would limit nuclear enrichment and accept inspections in exchange for sanctions relief. The JCPOA was hailed as a diplomatic triumph and a rare case in which the great powers were able to align to manage a nuclear crisis. In practice, however, the JCPOA was an intermediate agreement in that its terms were time-bound and its foundations shaky.

The transient nature of the agreement was proven with US President Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdraw from it and re-impose sanctions. In response, Iran scaled back its compliance. The collapse of the JCPOA exposed a key vulnerability of third-party mediation: agreements are only as durable as the domestic politics and interests of the most powerful actors. Third parties and their use of mediative powers can help foster conditions for deal-making, but unfortunately cannot guarantee the survival of a deal.

Between 2021 and 2025, under the Biden administration, the JCPOA underwent several rounds of indirect negotiations, failed revitalisation efforts, and a steady erosion of compliance. The third parties, namely the EU3, sought to keep the deal alive by serving as interlocutors and offering variations of sanctions relief but to no avail; rifts emerged within the EU3 as they began to differ in their approaches to the discussions and these hurt their credibility as mediators. Russia and China continued to serve as buttresses against Western pressure as they blocked efforts at the UN Security Council to re-escalate sanctions and also provided economic incentives to Iran. Other states also intervened in this period, namely Oman and Qatar; both could leverage their perceived neutrality to mediate. Unfortunately, their influence was limited mostly to convening power: they could only bring both the United States and Iran to the negotiations table; they could not broker a deal to resolve the crisis.

With Trump's second term of office commencing in 2025, the United States took a harder stance, which resulted in a de facto collapse of the original framework by mid-2025. No final deal could be reached, primarily due to concerns over guarantees against another US withdrawal and the scope of sanctions relief. The third parties' influence was ultimately limited and they could not override the domestic interests of the two key disputants.

There are several factors that make the negotiations particularly challenging. First, excluding neighbouring states such as Israel and the Gulf Arab states, for whom the Iranian nuclear programme posed an existential threat, risked rendering the deal unacceptable to them, or worse, provoking actions that could undermine it. Their exclusion, however, enhanced the functionality of the talks by allowing discussions to concentrate on the technical dimensions of the programme rather than being encumbered by long-standing historical grievances. The Six Party Talks on the North Korean nuclear threat is a good example of negotiations that were hampered by the inclusion of hostile neighbours. At multiple points during the negotiations, Japan derailed the discussions by bringing up its own historical grievance against North Korea. Japan threatened to sit out the talks or not accede to any deal. This stance hampered the progress of the Six Party Talks.

Second, despite the best efforts of the third parties involved, they could not override the decades of mistrust that characterised the US-Iran relationship. Third, although the third parties were like-minded in wanting to restrict or end the Iranian nuclear programme, they had different motivations for doing so, which complicated their approaches to the situation and at times undermined the collective influence of the third parties. For instance, the EU3 sought stability and non-proliferation while Russia and China used the talks to advance their own global standing. These differing motivations led to a lack of coherence in their mediative approaches, which limited their influence.

#### Conclusion

Ultimately, the Iran case demonstrates both the promise and limits of third-party mediation. While third parties can pool their mediative powers to broker agreements where bilateral hostility would otherwise produce stalemate, the overall effectiveness of mediation is still dependent on timing and context. While initial sanctions relief via the JCPOA had led to Iranian cooperation, without political continuity on the part of the United States, Iran had little reason to trust that commitments would hold. This has subsequently had a chilling effect on the negotiations as concerns persist over the longevity of any deal.

The Iran case has thus served as a stress test for how the international community manages high-stakes security crises. The JCPOA demonstrated that even bitter adversaries can be nudged towards compromise when third parties act in concert. Its subsequent unravelling, however, illustrated the fragility of such arrangements in the face of competing domestic politics and interests. What lesson does the Iran case hold for future mediators? The answer is sobering: third parties can open doors, but they cannot hold them open forever.

Dr Amanda Huan is Research Fellow at the Social Cohesion Research Programme (SCR) at RSIS.

## Uneven Renewable Energy Progress: The Role of State-Market Alignment in the Philippines and Indonesia



by

**Dr Margareth Sembiring**

Southeast Asian countries are expanding the use of renewable energy as part of the global agenda to transition to low-carbon energy sources. Yet, progress has been uneven in the last 15 years, with some countries advancing far ahead of others.

The Philippines and Indonesia are a case in point. Both are fossil fuel-dependent countries, highly vulnerable to natural disasters and face rising energy demand from large populations and growing economies. While both countries share the same incentives to accelerate renewable energy expansion for the dual purpose of meeting energy needs and mitigating climate change, their trajectories have differed significantly, with the Philippines outpacing Indonesia much faster. Given that financing and technological hurdles are a common feature in developing countries like the Philippines and Indonesia, the key to the divergent pathways arguably lies in the extent to which the state and the market have aligned around the renewable energy expansion agenda.

#### The Philippines' Privatised Model

In the Philippines, the energy sector has been led primarily by the private sector since the passage of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) in

2001. This reform was a reversal from the state-run model of the Marcos era and received widespread support from within the government and society, drawing on the country's long tradition of private sector involvement in electricity generation prior to energy sector nationalisation in the 1970s. Under EPIRA, the relationship between state and market was restructured. The state, through the Department of Energy, assumed the role of regulator and planner, while private companies became the main providers.

The reform, primarily designed to remedy the energy crisis of the 1990s, subsequently became an institutional gateway for renewable energy expansion. The privatisation rules that were originally written to increase the performance of the country's fossil fuel-based energy generation were later applied to renewable energy source development too. Yet, the push for renewable energy was not a product of market competition and efficiency gains that are expected of privatisation reform. Instead, it was driven by the state's long-standing conviction that indigenous renewable energy sources would have a critical role to play in the Philippines' energy security – a position conceived following the global oil crisis of the 1970s that exposed the country's vulnerability to energy import dependence.

Through various incentives and mechanisms introduced under the 2008 Renewable Energy Act, such as the feed-in tariff (FiT), renewable portfolio standard (RPS), and green energy option, privatisation created space for the state and the market to get aligned on the renewable energy expansion agenda. However, significant gaps remained. First, there were long delays in the implementation of the provisions. RPS, for example, was launched only in 2020, 12 years after the law's enactment. Similarly, the green energy option was implemented only in 2021. Such delays

generated uncertainty for investors and effectively filtered the market, given that only companies with the means to manage the risks associated with renewable energy expansion could confidently enter the market. In the Philippines, such companies are typically linked to the country's oligarchs. Second, privatisation failed to drive down prices, as would be expected from market competition. On the contrary, electricity prices in the Philippines, which were already among the highest in Asia prior to EPIRA, remained among the highest in Southeast Asia following the passage of the law. Thus, while privatisation provided the platform, renewable energy expansion has yet to perform to its full potential.

### Indonesia's State-led Model

On the other hand, in Indonesia, the energy sector is dominated by the state, notably through the state-owned electricity company Perusahaan Listrik Negara (PLN). The state-led model is a legacy of the nationalisation of Dutch electricity companies following Indonesia's independence in 1945 and is reinforced by Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution, which designates the state as the main steward of natural resource utilisation. The long history of the state controlling the energy sector limited the effects of privatisation attempts made in response to the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. This was evident in strong public opposition and the Constitutional Court's 2004 decision to repeal the 2002 Electricity Law, which would have privatised the energy sector.

While a strong state presence in the energy sector is expected to drive policy and investment towards future-oriented industries like renewable energy, Indonesia has instead demonstrated a leaning towards fossil fuel stickiness. Successive energy plans reflect this pattern, with the most recent one signed in September 2025, revising down the renewable energy target from 23% by 2025 to a lower floor of 19% by 2030, thereby preserving fossil fuel's dominant share in the country's primary energy mix until then. This approach shows continued fossil fuel reliance, driven by rents and energy security considerations, institutionalised since the Soeharto era in the late 1960s.

This trend does not mean that the state is unaware of the benefits of expanding renewable energy sources. On the contrary, its recognition is reflected in the 2007 Energy Law and in the numerous pledges made at the international level. However, in practice, renewable energy sources remain a secondary priority, considering their relatively minor roles in the country's rent generation and energy security goals. In other words, the state's default response to energy-related

issues has been to rely on what is familiar and proven to work, namely, fossil fuel use. There is thus little synergy between the state and the market around the renewable energy agenda despite private companies expressing interest in developing renewable energy sources. Consequently, Indonesia's progress has been sluggish and the share of renewable energy sources in the national energy mix has been persistently low despite the country's abundant potential.

### The Way Forward

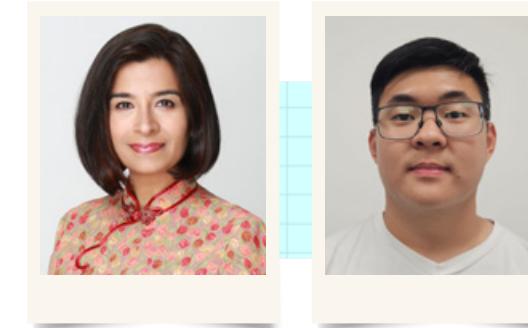
At this juncture, it is evident that although the Philippines' privatised energy sector has facilitated renewable energy expansion, both countries fall short of expectations. In the Philippines, privatisation has not amounted to efficiency, whereas in Indonesia, state-led coordination has not steered the country towards an upgrade to renewable energy sources.

Against this backdrop, both countries could consider focusing on the following three priorities. First, they need to strike a better balance between the state and the market. In the Philippines, this means strengthening state capacity to coordinate and send clear, consistent signals to the market by reducing delays and increasing regulatory efficiencies. In Indonesia, it calls for opening more space for private sector participation to allow the mobilisation of new capital and expertise towards making renewable energy sources more integral to the country's energy security and development priorities. Second, procurement processes must be made more credible. Instruments such as auctions, contracts and permits need to be bankable and transparent, thereby increasing market confidence in the state's commitment to renewable energy expansion. Third, both countries need to consider enacting stronger legal mandates to ensure the durability of their renewable energy development agendas, making it resilient to political cycles and leadership changes.

For Southeast Asia as a whole, the experiences of the Philippines and Indonesia show that renewable energy adoption depends not only on mobilising finance and technology, but, more importantly, on forging an enduring alignment between the state and the market on the agenda.

Dr Margareth Sembiring is Research Fellow in the Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies (NTS Centre), at RSIS.

## The CVE Defunding Scare: Implications for Singapore and ASEAN



by  
**Asha Hemrajani and Davis Zheng**

In April 2025, the Trump administration sparked alarm across the cybersecurity community worldwide when it announced that funding would cease for the global registry called the Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) programme that is managed by the MITRE Corporation.

Cybersecurity vulnerabilities are flaws in computer systems that can be exploited for malicious purposes, reaping millions of dollars on the dark web.

Although the US government reversed the decision soon afterwards, the scare exposed the danger of global dependence on a single registry and raised concerns amid shifting geopolitical tensions.

The episode also reflected a broader pattern of declining US support for shared cybersecurity infrastructure following the expiry of US federal cyber threat-sharing laws and funding cuts to national coordination bodies.

### The Issue at Hand

The MITRE Corporation is a non-profit entity that operates R&D centres for the US government, covering areas such as cybersecurity, homeland security, aviation and defence. Its CVE programme is a critical resource used worldwide by government agencies, armed forces, critical infrastructure operators and private enterprises to keep track of new vulnerabilities discovered in software, firmware and hardware, ranging from the Windows operating system to 5G telecommunications networks, and to patch flaws in their systems.

Vulnerability researchers submit proof of vulnerability to MITRE directly or to one of the CVE Numbering Authorities (CNAs) around the world, which include

the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore. The CVE programme is available online for anyone to use, enabling IT systems administrators, for instance, to quickly act on severe vulnerabilities that may be present in their environment before threat actors can exploit them and siphon off data or, worse still, bring critical or enterprise systems to a halt.

Recent research warns that with automation today, notably with the use of AI, security flaws can be exploited with such speed that the time between the disclosure of a CVE and its weaponisation could be drastically shortened. Adversaries can now use AI systems to scan, test and exploit new vulnerabilities in mere hours. This trend magnifies the consequences of instability or underfunding in repositories such as MITRE's CVE list.

The significance of the CVE programme has been heightened following recent campaigns by threat actors such as UNC3886, the China-linked cyber espionage group that tried to attack critical infrastructure in Singapore and countries in North America, Southeast Asia and Oceania. UNC3886 is known to exploit vulnerabilities across typical enterprise computer platforms such as VMware and Fortinet to conduct malicious acts, ranging from deploying backdoors to obtaining credentials for deeper access – acts that underscore how quickly cyber defenders must act.

Other incident-sharing gaps have begun to emerge in the United States. The lapse of the federal cyber threat-sharing law during the current US government shutdown means that agencies have temporarily lost a legal framework to exchange attack data across sectors. Another example is the end of US federal government support for the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), a non-profit centre for sharing cyber threat intelligence among US state and local governments. This decision will strain local and state capabilities to sustain shared vulnerability awareness.

The CVE system is arguably one of the most critical pillars of cybersecurity, even though it is much underrated. Not having this list to refer to is akin to not having access to a list of unique identifiers, such as the registration numbers of vehicles. Law enforcement

and traffic police would not be able to keep track of vehicles in the absence of a registry, and drivers can take advantage of the fact. For enterprises, government agencies and critical infrastructure operators, the risk of losing confidentiality, integrity and the availability of their systems could increase.

By allowing any organisation to access the registry of publicly disclosed cybersecurity vulnerabilities at no cost, the CVE programme removes information asymmetry (where one party possesses more or better information than another in a transaction), thereby improving the overall cybersecurity defence of not just the United States but of the world at large.

### The Way Forward

President Donald Trump's broad strokes federal cost-cutting efforts have resulted in funding uncertainty for programmes such as the CVE. Had the Trump administration failed to reverse its initial defunding decision, it would have had dangerous implications for every organisation that utilises the CVE programme. Organisations without their own vulnerability research capabilities would have been at risk since vulnerabilities found would have had no way of being disclosed publicly.

Several ideas to keep the CVE list going have been suggested. Some believe that the list should not come under the purview of a single government but rather a global organisation, such as the United Nations, and managed by multiple countries. However, this is unlikely to work well as the CVE programme is a multistakeholder undertaking that relies heavily on commercial enterprises and private individuals to contribute their research, rather than on governments alone.

Another suggestion is for the registry to come under the purview of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), a global organisation for internet standards, protocols and operations. However, parking the programme under another non-profit international organisation has disadvantages, such as cost and administration.

Meanwhile, the European Union has taken matters into its own hands. The EU Vulnerability Database (EUVD) was launched in May 2025 by the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) to reduce its

reliance on the MITRE CVE programme. It is designed to be a publicly accessible database. It is part of the European Union's effort to strengthen its cybersecurity sovereignty and reduce reliance on external threat intelligence ecosystems.

### Implications for Singapore and ASEAN

The volatility of US government support for cybersecurity functions underscores the need for the rest of the world to develop regional cyber resilience capabilities of their own.

Due to Singapore's small size, it is unlikely that the country can develop the capability to create its own comprehensive database with sufficient data to be useful solely based on its national vulnerability research output. Singapore would still have to rely heavily on international databases such as ENISA's EUVD and the US CVE programme to supplement its own defences.

A possible alternative measure for ASEAN would be to adopt a decentralised model to create redundancy. Singapore could be one of several countries that host or maintain a cooperative decentralised database, similar to the EUVD, mirrored across ASEAN partner countries, ensuring constant uptime and reducing the maintenance burden on participating nations. Such an approach would allow for confidence-building measures and capability development among ASEAN member states.

Given that funding for the US MITRE CVE database has only been committed until March 2026, the future of the database has been left hanging. Even if funding is renewed, the situation must be monitored closely. Singapore should explore alternative solutions to the MITRE CVE as it is a critical resource for the nation's cybersecurity needs.

*This essay was first published in RSIS Commentary.*

Asha Hemrajani and Davis Zheng are, respectively, Senior Fellow and Research Assistant in the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS), at RSIS.

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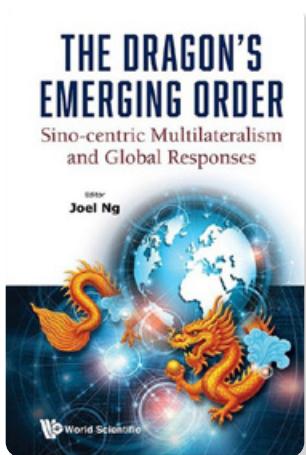


Events

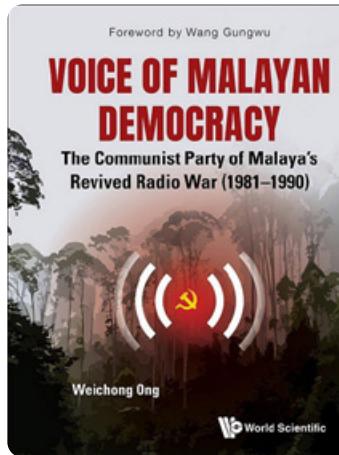
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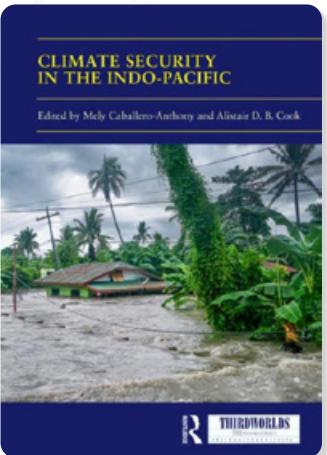
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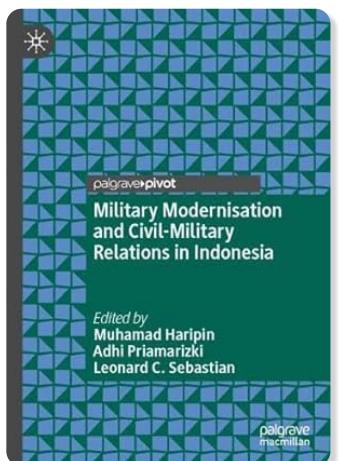
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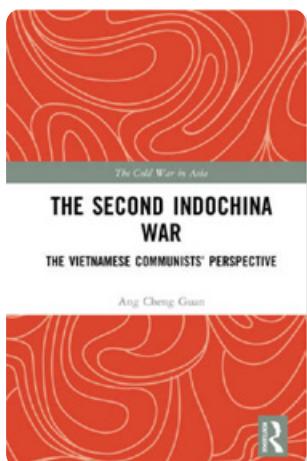
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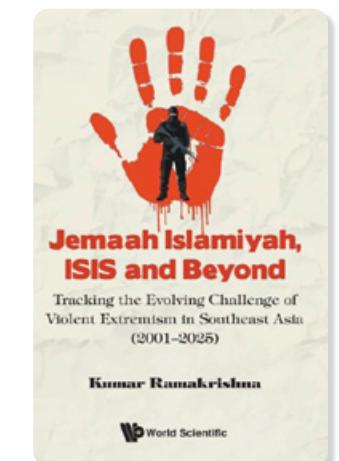
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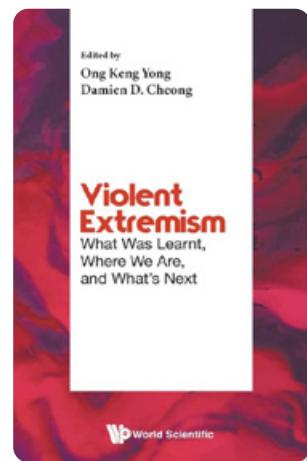
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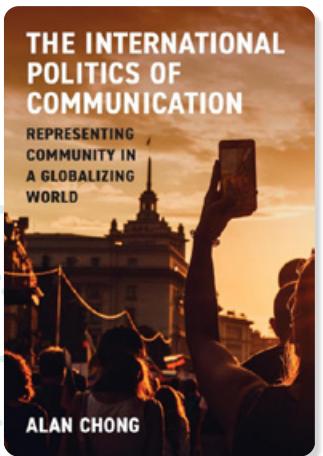


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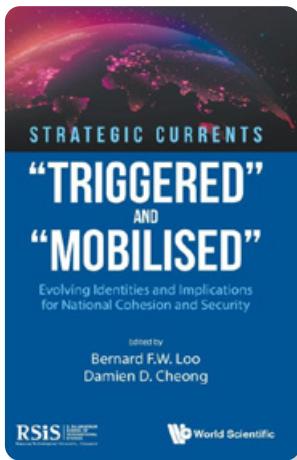
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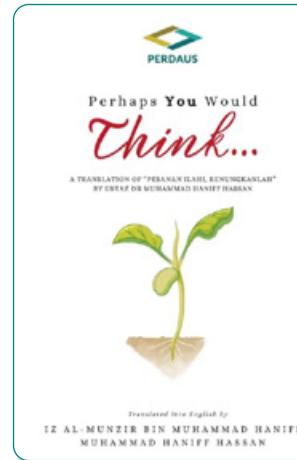


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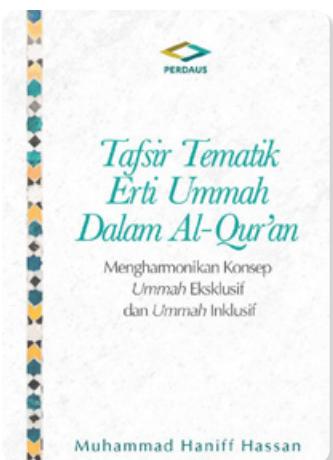
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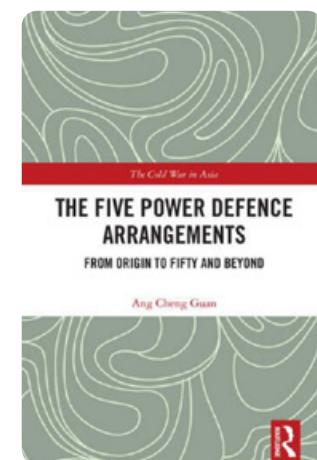


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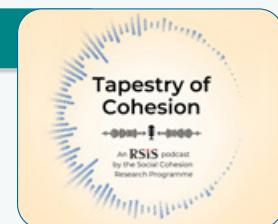
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### Tapestry of Cohesion

*Tapestry of Cohesion* is a podcast by the SCRP at RSIS that explores the critical issues shaping social cohesion in today's world. Through insightful conversations with experts across disciplines, we examine the challenges and opportunities of building more inclusive and resilient societies.



### NTS Perspectives

*NTS Perspectives* is a podcast by the NTS Centre at RSIS. We speak with experts from Asia-Pacific and beyond to share their views on pressing non-traditional security issues, ranging from climate change, food security, the energy transition, biosecurity, planetary health and Women, Peace and Security (WPS).



# EDUCATION

## Graduate Education

The graduate school offers Master of Science Programmes in Strategic Studies, International Relations, International Political Economy and Asian Studies. As a school, RSIS fosters a nurturing environment to develop students into first-class scholars and practitioners.

### Master of Science (MSc) Programmes

For the new academic year (AY), RSIS MSc programmes continued to attract a cosmopolitan student body with a wide range of educational, professional, and cultural backgrounds. Close to 250 students from 21 countries enrolled in RSIS MSc programmes in AY2025/2026. Twenty one students received scholarships and study awards, , four Lee Foundation Scholarships, a Bakrie Foundation Scholarship and and sixteen Student Research Assistantships.

### Doctoral Programme

RSIS' PhD programme has a diverse and cosmopolitan student body comprising twenty nine doctoral candidates, including 4 new PhD students who joined in August 2025. The students are of 11 different nationalities hailing from countries across Asia, Europe and North



RSIS Convocation, 23 July 2025

America. Some of these students are integrated into both RSIS institutional and individual faculty research programmes which enrich learning experiences whilst supporting a broad-based collegial research effort.

### Convocation

The RSIS class of 2025 comprising 160 master's students graduated on 23 July 2025 during a convocation ceremony at the Nanyang Auditorium on campus as well as at the RSIS Alumni Dinner that same evening. Five Master Programme students, who distinguished themselves through their outstanding academic achievements, received academic awards during the ceremony.

Ambassador Ong Keng Yong, Executive Deputy Chairman of RSIS and Prof Kumar Ramakrishna, Dean of RSIS, congratulated the graduates. In their respective messages to the students, the two encouraged them to



RSIS Alumni Dinner, 23 July 2025

remain resilient and remain connected with the RSIS family.

Mr Eddie Lim, President of the RSIS Alumni Association, welcomed the graduates to the RSIS



RSIS Student-Staff-Alumni Mixer, 18 January 2025



Alumni Association and shared the social platforms they could join to be part of the growing RSIS alumni family.

#### Outreach and Engagement

RSIS engaged with the students in class and socially as well. RSIS hosted its second student-staff-alumni mixer on 18 January 2025. The event, attended by around 100 people, gave an additional opportunity for current students, staff, and alumni of RSIS to meet, connect, and engage with one another as part of the RSIS family. They also connected on the field when RSIS staff and students pitted their wits and athletic prowess on the football pitch on 26 April 2025. The annual RSIS Student-Staff football match ended with a win for the staff, after an action-packed game. More than a game, it was an opportunity for our RSIS community to come together and strengthen bonds through friendly competition.

RSIS continued to strengthen its outreach initiatives for quality enrolments and engagement with its growing alumni network. These included information-

sharing sessions, Masterclasses on key international affairs topics to showcase RSIS teaching, as well as participating in leading postgraduate education fairs in Singapore and overseas. GPO leveraged various online platforms to engage prospective students and will continue to strengthen its outreach by engaging relevant organisations on the value of RSIS' professional graduate education. The RSIS alumni network also bears testimony to the value of the MSc Programmes, adding to a growing community steeped in knowledge of international relations and strategic geopolitical issues.

The Graduate Programmes Office also organised the China Study Trip in 2025. The trip offered the MSc students a unique experiential opportunity to gain firsthand insights into China's evolving political, economic, social, and technological landscape. Through engagements with academics, policymakers, and industry experts, as well as site visits and cultural activities, students explored China's domestic dynamics, its interactions with the region and the world, and its evolving roles in global politics, the international economy, and regional order-building.

RSIS Student-Staff football match, 26 April 2025



China Study Trip

## Meet the Faculty



**Prof Kumar Ramakrishna**  
Dean of RSIS,  
Professor of National Security Studies  
Provost's Chair in National Security Studies  
Research Adviser to ICPVTR



**Prof Ang Cheng Guan**  
Associate Dean of RSIS  
Professor of the International  
History of Southeast Asia



**Prof Mely Caballero-Anthony**  
Associate Dean (International Engagement)  
Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies  
President's Chair in International Relations  
and Security Studies



**Assoc Prof Li Mingjiang**  
Associate Dean (Academic Affairs)  
Head of Graduate Studies



**Asst Prof Sarah Teo**  
Deputy Head of Graduate Studies  
Coordinator of PhD Programme



**Dr Terence Lee**  
Coordinator of MSc (Asian Studies)  
Programme



**Asst Prof James Char**  
Deputy Coordinator of  
MSc (Asian Studies) Programme



**Dr Su-Hyun Lee**  
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**Asst Prof Zhang Hongzhou**  
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**Asst Prof Jaehan Park**  
Coordinator of  
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**Dr Yang Zi**  
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**Asst Prof William James**  
Deputy Coordinator of  
MSc (Strategic Studies)  
Programme



**Ms Geanina Bujoreanu**  
Senior Manager,  
Graduate Programme Office

## Milestones

IDSS launched  
its first academic  
programme, the  
Master of Science  
in Strategic Studies,  
with ten students

1998

IDSS  
welcomed its  
first doctoral  
student

2002

2003

2004

2008

2010

IDSS launched its second  
master's programme,  
the Master of Science in  
International Relations

IDSS launched the  
Master of Science in  
International Political  
Economy

RSIS introduced  
the two-year  
NTU-Warwick  
Double Master's  
Programme

## New MSc Cohort



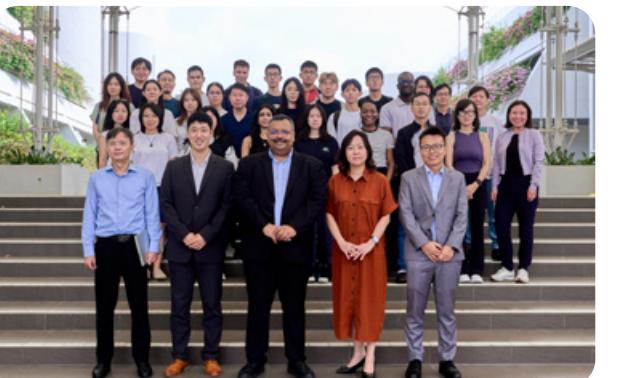
MSc (Strategic Studies)



MSc (Asian Studies)



MSc (International Relations)



MSc (International Political Economy)

## Awards & Honours



**Pang Ridong**  
International Political Economy  
The Lion Group Gold Medal

“ My time at RSIS was a transformative journey. Surrounded by passionate classmates and dedicated faculty, I found a space where policy ideas met real world relevance. The intellectually rigorous environment pushed me to challenge assumptions and explore unfamiliar perspectives. RSIS not only sharpened my analytical thinking but also broadened my understanding of nowadays International Political Economics landscape.

I am especially grateful for the friends and mentorships that will stay with me long during and after graduation. ”



**Hajek Tadeas**  
Strategic Studies  
The United Overseas Bank Gold Medal



**Liang Jixin**  
Asian Studies  
The Rajabali Jumabhoy Foundation Gold Medal

“ It has been an enriching experience in RSIS. The lectures provided us with the theoretical framework of how we can interpret world affairs, while the class discussions provided opportunities for students from all over the world to provide their diverse viewpoints. These insights are valuable in my policy work, where having a nuanced and multi-dimensional perspectives is essential.

The professors are all very experienced in their respective fields. They are truly passionate in mentoring and sharing their knowledge which challenged us to think critically and supported our own development. ”

“ My experience at RSIS was intellectually enriching, rewarding, and enjoyable from start to finish. The professors brought a wealth of regional and global expertise, and their guidance encouraged critical thinking and engagement with real-world issues.

Moreover, being part of a diverse student body from across the world offered a wide range of perspectives, while the school's focus on Asia-Pacific affairs provided invaluable insight into one of the world's most dynamic regions. ”



**Hansen Adam Erik Xavier**  
International Relations  
The Liow Keng Teck and Dorothy Liow Gold Medal



**Tanwar Yashika**  
M.Sc. (International Relations)  
Tay Seow Huah Book Prize

“ There is no better place to engage with issues in the Asia-Pacific than Singapore, and RSIS, being one of Asia's leading graduate schools in international affairs, is a remarkable place to pursue international politics in the region. Additionally, since RSIS also functions as a think tank, it provides invaluable opportunities to engage with policymakers and scholars, providing a more grounded and practical approach to real-world issue.

These factors, along with its esteemed faculty, were instrumental in influencing my decision to pursue graduate studies at RSIS. ”



**Dr Zhang Hongzhou**  
Assistant Professor,  
Deputy Coordinator of MSc  
(International Political Economy)  
2025 Teaching Award

## 2025 Teaching Award Winner

“ It's an honour to receive the Teacher of the Year award. Teaching is a privilege - one that allows me to engage with bright, curious minds every day. I'm deeply grateful to my students, colleagues, and mentors whose support and engagement make this work so meaningful. ”

## Special Awards



**Eveline Tahir**  
MSc International  
Political Economy  
Recipient of the  
LKYSPP Case Writing Competition  
2024/2025 Distinction Award  
(top prize)



**Eveline Tahir, Parag Dass,  
Taufeeq Khan, Joel Tan**

Team Spice Pacific, comprised of IPE (International Political Economy) scholarship recipients from the academic year 2024-2025

Runner-up in the International Trade and Food Security Policy Hackathon

“ I am truly happy and grateful to receive this award.

My time at RSIS has been incredibly formative. The International Political Economy courses have equipped me with analytical tools to think critically about global and regional policy issues — not just from an academic perspective, but also through a real-world, policy-relevant lens.

This case study was a personal project that I worked on intensively. I entered the competition with the intention of producing a high-quality piece of writing while using the opportunity to deepen my understanding of Indonesia's industrial development, particularly in the nickel sector.

I am deeply grateful to RSIS for awarding me a full research-based scholarship, which made this academic journey possible. I would especially like to thank Professor Dipinder Singh Randhawa, under whom I had the privilege of working throughout the year. His mentorship greatly deepened my interest in industrial policy, and he also supervised the writing of my case study. His insights, encouragement, and constructive guidance were invaluable, and I am honoured to have learned from him. ”

Our proposal explored an innovative trade-based approach to food security: redirecting food lost in trade and supply chains into sustainable biofuel production. This approach seeks to create a market for farm output otherwise lost to landfills, while freeing up land that would otherwise be used for fuel crops.

We are especially grateful to RSIS, as all of us are IPE scholarship recipients from the academic year 2024-2025. This achievement would not have been possible without the generous support and opportunities we have received from the school. We see this not only as a personal milestone but also as a testament to the strength and impact of RSIS' graduate programmes. ”



Dr Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (right)  
with Prof Kumar Ramakrishna, Dean of RSIS

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) presented RSIS alumnus Dr Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (MSc Strategic Studies, 2006) with the Nanyang Distinguished Alumni Award 2025 in November, in recognition of his distinguished contributions to defence, public service, and national development. Dr Yudhoyono, Coordinating Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, Indonesia, has built an exceptional career in defence, national development, and public leadership.

In 2018, Dr Yudhoyono returned to RSIS to deliver the RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture "Unleashing the Potential of Young Indonesians: Opportunities and Challenges in a Vibrant Democracy," reaffirming his deep and ongoing relationship with NTU Singapore as well as his commitment to thought leadership and public service.

# NETWORKING

## RSIS Outreach: Building an Ecosystem of Global Reach

RSIS Outreach seeks to enhance RSIS' role as a global think-tank and school for graduate education by focusing on four key pillars: (i) Global Networks, (ii) International Programmes, (iii) Executive Education Programme, and (iv) Public Education Programme.

### Global Networks

As a member of an ecosystem of like-minded institutions researching key and current issues, RSIS works with local, regional and global partners across various platforms. These issues include geopolitics, international political economy, and non-traditional security. In recent years, RSIS has enhanced its research in cybersecurity, military transformation, the implications of Artificial Intelligence and understanding the grey zone in international relations.

RSIS's global networks span three broad categories: (i) academic and research institutions, (ii) foreign official representation such as embassies/missions, and (iii) private enterprises. Our partners include institutions from Southeast Asia, East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

Within this milieu, RSIS collaborations have yielded policy publications, research and networking events, and academic exchanges. One such collaboration is between RSIS and the National Resilience Institute of the Republic of Indonesia (*Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia – Lemhannas RI*), focusing on collaboration through academic exchanges, joint research activities and publications. RSIS also works closely with the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV) through regular dialogues and knowledge-sharing initiatives, further strengthening mutual understanding and policy-relevant scholarship.

### International and Local Programmes

Since 2018, RSIS has been a strategic partner of the Doha Forum, a global platform for dialogue, bringing together leaders in policy to discuss critical challenges. RSIS has provided speakers and moderators at the Forum, creating the opportunity to engage with leaders, academics and institutions in the Middle East.

In 2025, RSIS hosted the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik - SWP) for the 7th RSIS-SWP Dialogue, a platform that offers a unique opportunity for two think-tanks from Asia and Europe to discuss issues of common interest.

It was also part of the panel on "Multilateral Cooperation in Northeast Asia" at the 10th Ulaanbaatar Dialogue (UBD) on Northeast Asian Security, where over 200 participants from international think tanks, academia, and governments gathered. The dialogue addressed regional challenges such as peace, stability, and economic development through multilateral



Prof Kumar Ramakrishna (second from left), Dean of RSIS, at the RSIS-SWP Dialogue, 1 October 2025

engagement. Such programmes underline the significant role RSIS plays in the ecosystem of research and academic excellence.

Within Singapore, RSIS was a knowledge partner of the inaugural Singapore-International Disaster & Emergency Management Expo (SIDEX), a conference and exhibition on disaster management and emergency response. RSIS shared with SIDEX the research done on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and the relationships between government and NGOs on HADR efforts.

As part of our strategic engagements, RSIS hosts a number of long-term visiting scholars from partner nations. Currently, we have visiting research fellows from France, Japan and the United States.

### Executive Education Programme

Executive education has been a part of RSIS' mandate since its inception as the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) in 1996. It is an important part of institution-building and professional development. The academic and research strength of RSIS and its constituent Centres and Programmes revolve around smart-networking and outreach innovations which a well-organised and well-positioned executive education eco-system will facilitate. The changing

world necessitates lifelong learning and preparedness. As a think-tank in a world-class university, RSIS has constantly evolved, and this includes commitment to executive education.

Building on its expertise in this area, RSIS extended its Executive Education Programme in 2023 to cover the private sector by designing a dedicated executive programme for a multinational corporation headquartered in Singapore. RSIS senior faculty provided insights and perspectives on regional and current issues and their implications on regional economies. Through the lens of applied research, RSIS brings a unique approach to understanding the dynamic intersections between geopolitics, enterprise and industry issues.

### Public Education Programme

As Singapore's leading think-tank and graduate school of international relations and geopolitics in Singapore, RSIS receives requests from educational institutions and local government/private entities for RSIS experts to speak on current affairs. Through the Public Education Programme, facilitated by RSIS faculty and experts, RSIS engages Singaporeans on defence and security issues.

RSIS partnered with the Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) to host a learning journey for educators from Singapore's Ministry of Education in 2025. Themed "Navigating AI, Cybersecurity, and Guarding Against Digital Deception in Singapore," participants gained deeper insights into the digital risks facing Singapore and highlighted the importance of awareness and collective resilience.

In addition, RSIS gave national education talks at schools and government organisations, further broadening outreach and engagement across different segments of the local community. For instance, as part of St. Nicholas Girls' School's Emerging Asia module, RSIS experts shared perspectives on security and defence issues, covering both regional security and non-traditional security topics such as misinformation and disinformation.

## Annex A

The people behind RSIS are scholars and researchers who delve into geopolitical developments and areas of their expertise, and teach at the Graduate School, as well as corporate service staff who give critical support to RSIS and ensure its smooth operation.



**Scan the QR Code**  
to know more about  
the RSIS leadership  
and staff

### Long Service Award

- **Mr Zulkafri Bin Hai**  
Admin Officer
- **Mr Tng Eng Cheong**  
Senior IT Specialist

### Long Service Award

- **Dr Benjamin Ho**  
Assistant Professor, China Programme, IDSS
- **Mr Scott Lai**  
Head of Events

### Long Service Award

- **Dr Tamara Nair**  
Senior Associate Fellow; Head of Research Integrity and Data Management Unit;  
Coordinator of Projects (Women and Children in ASEAN Community)
- **Dr Montesclaros Jose Ma. Luis Pangalangan**  
Research Fellow, NTS Centre
- **Dr Paul Hedges**  
Professor of Interreligious Studies and Associate Dean (Scholarly Ecosystems)
- **Ms Dymples Leong**  
Associate Research Fellow, CENS
- **Ms Chiam Shin Shing**  
Centre Manager, NTS Centre
- **Dr Alexander Arifianto**  
Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Indonesia Programme, IDSS
- **Mr Adrian Chong**  
Corporate Communications Manager



RSIS Day 2025

## Annex B

As of 28 November 2025

### Research Articles In Journals And Other External Publications

RSIS scholars continue to publish their research in books and other publications. RSIS researchers' analyses and perspectives are also published in top-tier academic journals and leading university presses, and other publications. This Annex lists some of the articles published during the year.



**Scan this QR Code** for the full listing.  
[www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/staff-publications/external-publications-for-the-year/](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/staff-publications/external-publications-for-the-year/)

#### Books

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## Annex C

### RSIS Publications

RSIS produces policy-relevant research for policymakers, thought-leaders, and practitioners, and shares analyses and perspectives on geopolitical, security, and related issues. This Annex gives a sampling of the RSIS publications produced during the year.



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### RSIS Policy Reports

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- Jose Ma. Luis P. Montesclaros, Jeselyn and Mely Caballero-Anthony, *A Critical Infrastructure Approach to Mitigating Future Pandemics in Southeast Asia*, October 2025
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- Prashanth Parameswaran, *Analysing ASEAN Chairmanships in Perspective: Malaysia in 2025 and Future Leadership Outlook Amid Vision 2045*, June 2025
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- Think Tank: News from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies — RSIS. Available at [www.rsis.edu.sg/think-tank](http://www.rsis.edu.sg/think-tank)

# Annex D

As of 28 November 2025

## RSIS Distinguished Public Lectures, Conferences, and Other Events

RSIS brought together renowned scholars, researchers, policymakers and practitioners at events organised throughout the year on key developments in the region and the world. This Annex lists a sampling of the events held during the year.



Scan this QR Code for the full listing.  
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### S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies

- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Hal Brands**, Henry A. Kissinger Distinguished Professor of Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), on "The Eurasian Century and the Future of US Global Leadership", 21 August 2025
- RSIS Seminars by Professor Hal Brands on:
  - Understanding the New Cold War: US-China Relations under Trump and Beyond, 26 August 2025
  - The Past, Present, and Future of American Strategy in the Indo-Pacific, 19 August 2025
- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Geoffrey Till** on "Grey Zone Operations at Sea: Threat or Opportunity?", 14 January 2025. (Professor Till also taught in RSIS during Academic Year 2025/26.)

### The Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship in International Relations

- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Wu Xinbo**, Professor and Dean, Institute of International Studies, and Director at the Center for American Studies, Fudan University, on "A Tale of Two Scenarios: The Evolution of the Asia-Pacific Regional Security Landscape", 9 October 2025
- RSIS Seminars by Professor Wu Xinbo on:
  - Pursuing Pragmatic Multilateralism in a Multipolar World, 7 October 2025
  - The Chinese Approach to Trump 2.0: Assessment and Prospects, 2 October 2025
- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Xiang Lanxin**, Professor Emeritus, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID), Geneva, Switzerland, on "US-China Relations: How to Handle Trump", 23 September 2025. (Professor Xiang also taught in RSIS during Academic Year 2025/26.)

### NTUC Professorship in International Economic Relations

- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Tan Kong Yam**, Emeritus Professor of Economics, NTU, on "Living with Xi and Trump: US-China Relations and the Implications for Southeast Asia", 5 August 2025. (Professor Tan also taught in RSIS during Academic Year 2025/26.)
- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by **Professor Christopher Hughes**, Professor of International Politics and Japanese Studies, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Warwick, on "Japan's Grand Strategy in The Era of Trump 2.0", 18 February 2025
- RSIS Seminars by Professor Christopher Hughes on:
  - The Political Economy and Future of Japan's Defence Industry, 20 February 2025
  - Japan As a Global Military Power: New Capabilities, Alliance Integration, Bilateralism-Plus, 14 February 2025

### The S. T. Lee Distinguished Annual Lecture

- Lecture by **Professor Peter Frankopan**, Professor of Global History, Worcester College, Oxford University, on "Multipolar Asia and the Reconfiguration of Global Power", 23 October 2025
- RSIS Roundtables by Prof Peter Frankopan with the respective RSIS Centres/Programmes on:
  - Past as Prologue: Historical Lessons from "The Earth Transformed" for Contemporary Climate and Planetary Health Security, 21 October 2025
  - Interfaith Cooperation in History? Lessons from the Past", 16 October 2025
  - The Silk Roads: Lessons in Religious Diversity and Cohesion from the Heart of Central Asia, 14 October 2025

### Other Distinguished Public Lectures/Seminar

- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by HE Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of Timor-Leste on "Timor-Leste and ASEAN: A New Chapter in the Region's Story", 15 July 2025
- RSIS Distinguished Public Lecture by Dr Marty Natalegawa, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, RSIS, on "[Dis]-United Nations?: Multilateralism in the Age of Fragmentation", 3 June 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Professor Nobukatsu Kanehara, Distinguished Visiting Professor of NSSP, on "The Future of the Liberal International Order and Asia", 20 February 2025
- RSIS Distinguished Public Dialogue by the RSIS Board of Governors Members on "Trump 2.0: US Policy Towards Southeast Asia and the World", 9 January 2025

### Conferences and Other Events

- RSIS Webinar on "Navigating Great-Power Competition: Malaysia's Role in Semiconductor, Rare-Earth and Data-Centre Value Chains", 3 December 2025
- RSIS Seminar on "The Future of Energy Transition in Southeast Asia", 19 November 2025
- RSIS Conference by Military Transformations Programme, IDSS, on "Strengthening Governance: Arms Control in an Age of Disruptive Technologies", 11-13 November 2025
- CENS Conference on DRUMS: "Information Manipulation and Interference against Technological Advancements, Shifting Global Power Dynamics and Ongoing Conflicts", 28-29 October 2025
- RSIS Webinar on "25 years of Women, Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific", 28 October 2025
- Humanitarian Futures Forum, 27-28 October 2025
- 26th Asia-Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO 2025) on "Multilateralism as a Bulwark in a Changing Global Environment", 12-16 October 2025
- Inaugural RSIS Regional Terrorism Research Exchange (RTRX) on "Terrorism in Transition: New Challenges in a Declining Threat Environment", 9-10 October 2025
- RSIS Seminar on "One Year of Prabowo Presidency: Progress, Challenges, and Directions"
- RSIS-SWP (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) Dialogue 2025 on "State of Multilateralism in the International System Today", 1-2 October 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Dato Dr Ilango Karuppannan, RSIS Adjunct Senior Fellow, on "Malaysia's Foreign Policy under Anwar Ibrahim: Continuity or Disruption?", 10 September 2025
- RSIS Workshop on "Cohesion Unpacked: Country Spotlights from the SEA Radar 2025", 9 September 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Mr Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Bin Wan Ahmad Kamal on "The 13th Malaysia Plan: Blueprint for Progress or Political Wallpaper?", 3 September 2025

- CENS Workshop on "Navigating Global Security Threats: Terrorism, Radicalisation, and Emerging Technologies", 25-26 February 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Dr Yohanes Sulaiman on "Hegemonic Denial as a Grand Strategy of Middle Powers: The Case of Indonesia", 25 February 2025
- RSIS Workshop on "Economic Statecraft in US-China Tech Competition: Domestic Policies, Bilateral Interactions, Regional Responses, and Global Implications", 21 February 2025
- RSIS Workshop on "Understanding ASEAN", 23-24 January 2025
- RSIS Conference on Regional Maritime Security Outlook 2025, 22-23 January 2025
- RSIS Seminar on "Our Shared Legacies and the Future of Multiculturalism", 21 January 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Ms Teo Nie Ching, Deputy Minister of Communications, and Member of Parliament for Kulai, Johor, Malaysia, on "Malaysia's Approach Towards a Safer Internet", 17 January 2025
- RSIS Seminar by Mr Iis Gindarsah Pondering on "Indonesia's Foreign Policy Direction Under Prabowo: Continuity and Change", 16 January 2025



6th RSIS Trilateral Exchange on "The Future of Engagement", 27-29 August 2025



RSIS Conference by Military Transformations Programme on "Strengthening Governance: Arms Control in an Age of Disruptive Technologies", 12 November 2025

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*We thank everyone  
who has contributed to this Annual Review.  
Thank you to all who have extended support  
in various ways all these years.*

*Ponder the Improbable* 

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