3RD ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY CONFERENCE

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY
THE INSTITUTE OF DEFENCE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES (IDSS)
AND ASIAN AEROSPACE 2006 PTE LTD

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Mr Barry Desker, Director of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, giving his Welcome Address.

WELCOME ADDRESS

Mr Barry Desker, Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), delivered the Welcome Address at the 3rd Asia-Pacific Security Conference that was being held in conjunction with Asian Aerospace 2006. He stated that the conference presented an excellent opportunity for networking as well as for a serious exchange of views about the two most important security challenges facing the region.

Mr Desker mentioned that the first panel of the conference would discuss US strategic policy in Asia. He said that the US had been the world's only superpower since the end of the Cold War. But, how would the US react to the rise of China as a potential challenger to its influence in the region? And importantly, what would be the nature and style of the rise of China? Would it be accommodative of the status quo or would it seek to change it by replacing the US in the region? As for the second panel of the conference, Mr Desker said that the speakers would discuss the issue of transnational terrorism. The specific issues to be discussed would include the nature of the terrorist threat in Asia; its links, if any, with groups in the Middle East; and regional responses to these threats. The Distinguished Lunch Talk following the two panels would focus on the terrorist threat faced by Indonesia and how the Indonesian government was responding to it.

This new regional, political, and security environment had led the Government of Singapore to pay considerable attention to the emerging challenges to Singapore. The rise of new powers would lead to a new strategic equation, while the threat of terrorism had led to a renewed focus on homeland security. The continued pre-occupation with security concerns was a reminder that the end of the Cold War did mean an end to History. New challenges, he added, were now the focus of attention.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mr Teo Chee Hean, the Minister for Defence, giving his Keynote Address.

Mr Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Defence, Singapore, highlighted that the geopolitical landscape of the Asia-Pacific region had shifted quite significantly since the first APSEC Conference was held in 2002. The pre-eminence of the US was now being juxtaposed against the rise of the two biggest countries in the world, both in Asia – China and India. These two countries were now critical engines of growth not just for Asia, but for the world. China and India also ranked among the major users of the world's resources. Their large appetites for energy had led them to places as diverse as Sudan and Siberia to secure supplies to fuel their growth. The rate and scale of the growth of these two giants, given that they were occurring concurrently, was naturally giving rise to both strategic and economic consequences on a global scale. Mr Teo mentioned that China and India would also leverage on their 'soft power' to expand their access to markets and to other critical resources. With their rising economic power would come rising military capabilities and assertiveness. How they related to each other and how they engaged others would determine the security landscape in the Asia-Pacific region.

The rise of China and India was taking place against the backdrop of more complex realities. Japan had emerged from a decade of economic stagnation and was set to take on a more active geopolitical role. Japan possessed technology and advanced productive capabilities unmatched by any other country in Asia. Japan's fundamental strengths were being combined with a rising national confidence. The complex interplay of relations between the four key countries – the US, China, India, and Japan – both in bilateral pairs, trilateral and quadrilateral levels – and with the rest of the region was likely to make for increasingly complex regional dynamics. Furthermore, Russia was unlikely to sit aside in this emerging strategic environment, especially given the clout it could potentially wield using its energy resources. Over the next few decades, the Asia-Pacific would be the region where the big powers would actively compete for power and influence. Mr Teo stated that all states should work closely together to ensure that peace, stability and growth continued to prevail.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) could play a constructive role in this effort. Given its geographic location, sizeable economy, demography, and natural resources, ASEAN could and must play a role to shape the emerging regional strategic landscape. In this regard, it was imperative for ASEAN to broaden and deepen its integration, while adopting a pragmatic and outward-looking orientation to tap the dynamism of the major powers. ASEAN was now working on an ASEAN Charter, which would articulate a long-term vision for ASEAN and the role that it should play. ASEAN had been the driving force behind regional arrangements such as the ASEAN Plus processes, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the East Asia Summit. There was also an assurance for the major powers that an honest broker – ASEAN – sat in the driver's seat. The security architecture of the Asia-Pacific was still work in progress. However, regional arrangements would be important building blocks of the security architecture that must be developed so as to ensure peace and stability in the region in the years ahead.

Mr Teo emphasized that the goal was to work towards an open and inclusive security architecture that took into account, both the

region's diversity as well as the growing integration and interdependence among nations as a consequence of globalization. Issues such as energy security and security of the sea lanes required the cooperation of different nations to be addressed adequately. Aside from the ongoing work of multilateral groupings, new forms of cooperation were emerging on sectoral basis, for example, maritime security. In conclusion, Mr Teo mentioned that innovative approaches such as this were required to build a robust security architecture that could strengthen regional cooperation and enhance regional peace and stability.

PANEL 1

US Strategy in Asia

From left to right, MG (Retd) Peter Abigail, Dr Dino Patti Djalal, Mr Barry Desker, General Paul V Hester, and Professor Wang Jisi.

Mr Barry Desker, Director, IDSS, chaired the first panel on US strategy in Asia. He recalled that US policy toward Asia for the past five decades had been based on the concept of hub-and-spokes, with the US as the hub projecting its influence into the region by means of bilateral alliances with countries such as Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. This policy was built on two assumptions. First, the US required those alliances to contain the communist powers. Second, there was a history of weak regionalism in Asia and a multilateral approach might not have worked.

However, the situation today was very different. First, the Cold War had ended. And second, a greater sense of solidarity had risen among East Asian states. Growing levels of economic and political cooperation had encouraged this sense of regionalism. Today, a major factor driving East Asian regionalism was the rapid economic growth of China. Together with China, India was also progressively rising to prominence in Asian affairs. Given the new strategic environment, the old assumptions undergirding past American policy toward Asia had now come under review.

MG (Retd) Peter Abigail, Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Australia, began his presentation by mentioning that great powers strived to shape the international environment, while lesser powers strove to do as well as they could in that environment. Australian perspectives about US strategic policy in Asia were predominantly and unashamedly self-centred, which Canberra viewed through the prism of its national interests. Asia lay at the core of Australian economic prosperity, while the alliance with the US was the cornerstone of its security policy. The strategy of global engagement by the sole superpower could be characterized as: *fighting the long war against terrorism, while hedging against the emergence of a major conventional threat*. Australians saw the rise of China and the rise of Asia more generally as an opportunity, not a threat.

MG (Retd) Peter Abigail, Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

The continued engagement of the US in the affairs of Asia, and particularly in the management of flashpoints such as North Korea and Taiwan, was a critical element in the maintenance of stability. In that regard, the exclusion of the US from the East Asia Summit was an important concern. China was increasingly being viewed as the key Asian player determining whether the region would remain stable over the long term. China was expanding its influence through the use of soft power instruments such as diplomacy, aid, and a more accommodating approach to multilateralism. The military modernization underway in China could be viewed in at least two ways: (1) as a logical and legitimate endeavor by China to build itself as a complete power, with regional and global interests, and the capacity to defend the approaches to its territory; or, (2) as a thinly-disguised pursuit of force projection capabilities designed to support malign international intents. However, the attitude that the US Administration took towards China was perhaps the most important factor in regional peace and stability. Whatever path China might follow, Australia had a vested interest in ensuring that the US remained engaged as a regional balancer.

There were many other factors that would determine security outcomes in Asia over the coming decades. Some of the more obvious factors were the economic outcomes that countries would experience, the evolution of the political systems in various countries, the evolution of the strategic relationships that would evolve between the great powers of the region, the success or otherwise of multilateralism as a management approach for the handling of tensions, and the challenge of accommodating China's and India's greatness. In the long term, Asia-Pacific would become America's most important strategic concern, but that would probably not occur for some years and not for as long as America's immediate concerns were the war in Iraq and attempts to promote democratic reforms in the Middle East. MG Abigail closed his presentation with two questions: (1) Did America have the imagination to conceive the rise of China consistent with its own national interests? (2) And, could the more powerful nation, the US, put limits on the extent of its future strategic competition with China and manage such competition?

According to **Dr Dino Patti Djalal**, Special Assistant to the President of Indonesia for International Affairs/Presidential Spokesperson, Indonesia, there was a noticeable change in the language coming from Washington today. In a certain sense, there was less hubris in America's policy pronouncements of late. Moreover, the phrase "axis of evil" was no longer used today. In addition, China was no longer being referred to as a strategic competitor. However, it was not just the tone and phraseology that had changed; some of the relationships that the US was having with Asian countries had also changed. US relations with India were rapidly changing. They were now talking about a new 'strategic partnership', a term that was unthinkable a decade ago. US relations with Indonesia had also changed recently. The US government lifted restrictions that had been longstanding in the military-to-military ties with Indonesia. US relations with Japan were also changing as the two countries were forging closer strategic ties.

Dr Dino Patti Djalal, Special Assistant to the President of Indonesia for International Affairs.

There was a distinct possibility that the next few years would see a realignment of interests of all the major powers that would avoid strategic

collisions and lead to strategic accommodation. This was evident in some recent developments like the cooperation between America and China on the North Korean nuclear issue as well as their vote in the International Atomic Energy Agency to support bringing Iran to the UN Security Council. The proliferation of democracies in the Asia-Pacific and the emergence of transnational and non-traditional threats like natural disasters, terrorism, and the spread of infectious diseases were also realigning interests. Dr Djalal mentioned that this could very well lead to the 'geopolitics of cooperation'. However, he mentioned that the issue of Islam and the West was very important to South, Southeast and Central Asia in addition to the Middle East. There was a need to build stronger bridges between Islam and the West. It was also important to promote not just freedom, but also tolerance. The foundations of peace and stability in the international system, both within and between nations, would rest not just on the foundations of freedom but also on the foundations of tolerance.

All major powers today – the US, China, Japan, Russia and India – were leveraging their soft power to spread their influence. Indonesia had also discovered the magic of soft power. Indonesia had a longstanding conflict in Aceh at the northern tip of Sumatra, which was recently hit by a tsunami in December 2004. This conflict had remained unresolved for almost thirty years. However, after Indonesia employed its soft power in the wake of the tsunami, it was able to end the conflict and produce permanent peace with the GAM rebels. Dr Djalal concluded by saying that although different countries had different resources and capabilities for soft power, the region would be much better off if more and more countries increased their influence through its application.

General Paul V Hester, Commander, US Pacific Air Forces, US Pacific Command, United States, highlighted that the word 'freedom' was at the top of the lexicon of the US. Open communication was becoming just as important to it. Open lines of communication prevented miscalculation not only in the economic arena, but also in the security arena. It also prevented the escalation of tensions from getting out of control. Open communication also provided an avenue through which states could articulate how their interests overlapped. The benefits of such an approach were particularly evident in the response to the December 2004 tsunami and the 2005 Kashmir earthquake.

General Paul V Hester, Commander, US Pacific Air Forces, US Pacific Command.

It has been said that the Pacific would be America's future in the 21st century. Already over a third of US trade partners were from the Pacific. This trade exceeded the trade America had with Canada, Mexico, and even Europe. In spite of 9/11, America was not withdrawing from the Pacific. America was involved in talks with its friends and allies in the region – Japan, South Korea, and Australia – to discuss their security perspectives and what missions were likely to be accomplished by each respective nation as they continued with their alliances with the US. There had been some discussion in the US Navy for a second aircraft carrier to be focused in the Pacific. However, it was likely that it would be home-ported in the mainland of the US, even though it would be focused toward the Pacific.

Some analysts claimed that the Cold War was over. However, according to General Hester, he would take an exception to that as vestiges of the Cold War still remained. According to him, North Korea was the most apparent example of

that. Tensions across the Taiwan Straits, the strategic objectives of China, Japan and India, and the relationships that these states develop with one another and the US would all contribute to the strategic environment in the region. General Hester asserted that 'containment' was not a part of the US lexicon today in its approach to any country anywhere in the world. Humanitarian issues, piracy in the Straits of Malacca, and terrorism were important issues that required states to cooperate and to work together. General Hester concluded his presentation by saying that fora like APSEC provided an excellent opportunity for open, direct and honest dialogue within the family of nations to solve problems together.

Professor Wang Jisi, Dean, School of International Studies, Beijing University, China, began his presentation by stating that unlike the situation in Indonesia, politics and the domination of the Communist Party were more relevant to China than civil-military relations. He mentioned that Condoleezza Rice had emphasized 'transformational diplomacy' in one of her recent speeches. Rice's focus was on democratization, freedom, and the need to shift some of the focus of US diplomacy to developing countries. In his State of the Union speech, President Bush also emphasized freedom and democracy in US foreign affairs. These were issues of concern for China as Beijing was worried about US political and social penetration of China. However, the level of concern today was very different from that expressed in 1989. China was more stable today than at any time in its recent history. The Chinese leadership also believed that the main threat to China's security came from domestic sources and a possible connection between domestic and international forces. However, he emphasized that the US could not shape China's political future.

Professor Wang also expressed some concern that in the latest Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), China was mentioned as the greatest potential military challenge to the US. He stated that neither was China the most important issue in US foreign policy today nor did it pose any

Professor Wang Jisi, Dean, School of International Studies, Beijing University.

immediate security threat to it. There were uncertainties in US policy towards China because different people saw different Chinas in their perceptions. On its part, China was interested in improving and stabilizing its relations with the US, while guarding against US political penetration of China or a possible regional containment led by the US. China was not willing or ready to challenge the international order. China was interested in creating a more harmonious society at home as well as a more harmonious society in the world.

Importantly, there were very few purely bilateral issues in US-China relations. Most of the issues related to the international society at large. The Chinese were concerned that the US might interfere with China's energy supplies, while there were concerns in the US that China's quest for energy in Africa, Middle East, and South America might be at loggerheads with US strategic interests in those regions. China was also worried about the so-called 'color revolutions' in Central Asia and the Caucasus as they might have an impact on China's domestic politics. In the Asia-Pacific region, there was very little for China to be gained by squeezing the US – economically, politically, or militarily – out from the region. Professor Wang Jisi concluded his presentation by mentioning that the US and Chinese economies were extra-ordinarily interlinked and interdependent today. Their economic links were having an impact on their domestic politics and economies.

Discussion

A participant pointed out that the US State Department had made a statement in 2005 expressing its intent to make India into a major world power in the 21st century. Significantly, the State Department further noted that it understood fully the implications, including the military implications of that statement. How was US strategy in Asia likely to be affected as it accommodated the rise of the Indian power? What role did the US see India as playing in the region? **General Hester** responded saying that for almost fifty years, US-India relations were seen through the prism of the Cold War during which India looked north towards Moscow. However, the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of the Indian economy had given a new boost to their bilateral ties. In terms of military ties, the two countries had ongoing, slow, but growing relations. The US Air Force had just visited India for the second time and completed a series of air exercises. This was an avenue through which the two sides were deepening their engagement. He added that as far as the strategic aspect of their relationship was concerned, it would be interesting to follow President Bush's trip to India in March 2006 to gauge the symbolic and substantial elements of their partnership.

A question was asked whether there was an element of containment in US policy towards China. Seen from a Chinese perspective, the US military presence in Japan and South Korea, in Central Asia, US engagement of Mongolia, and its network of alliances with Southeast Asia, looked like a strategy of containment of China. **MG Abigail** replied that it was easy to construct different scenarios of the relationship between the US and China. What was required was open and frank discussions between the US and China about one another's intentions. **General Hester** added that in terms of communication, there was a need for the two countries to send and receive delegations, including those consisting of military personnel, to freely discuss issues of concern. **Professor Wang** agreed on the need for more exchanges and visits between the US and Chinese militaries.

Why there was a lack of multilateral security arrangements in Asia was also discussed. According to **General Hester**, unlike Europe, Asia lacked interconnected landmass and shared land borders between states. That was a key factor that had enabled Europe to develop NATO. There was also a need to break down historical barriers between key Asian states for any true form of multilateralism to develop. **Professor Wang** mentioned that there was no overall security mechanism in Asia even though the US had security links with many countries in Southeast Asia, Japan, and South Korea. China was also interested in contributing to new arrangements like the Six-Party Talks, whether before or after the North Korean issue got resolved. Given the complexities involved, he wondered if it was more prudent to think about sub-regional arrangements first – in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and South Asia. **Dr Djalal** replied saying that the ASEAN Security Community which the region hoped to realize by 2020 offered a perfect example of a multilateral security arrangement in Asia. **MG Abigail** was of the view that sub-regional arrangements could serve as important building blocks. However, what was important was not a single organization in Asia that replicated the EU or NATO. A loose consolidation of states through APEC or the East Asia Summit and some of the sub-regional groupings would be a positive development.

In summing up the discussion, **Mr Desker** mentioned that interstate relations in Asia were giving analysts reasons to be optimistic. Broadly speaking, the four panelists had a positive outlook on the developments in Asia. This was in marked contrast to the environment in the immediate aftermath of the EP3 incident in 2001. He concluded the panel by saying that non-state actors were the main causes of concern today. They posed many different types of security threats that included transnational terrorism, pandemics of infectious diseases, and even natural disasters.

PANEL 2

TRANSNATIONAL TERRORISM

From left to right, Dr Gerard Chaliand, Professor Amitav Acharya, Mr Bruce Lemkin, and Dr Rohan Gunaratna.

Professor Amitav Acharya, IDSS, chaired the second panel on transnational terrorism. He began by saying that transnational terrorism was initially seen as a problem between the Middle East and the United States. It was only with the discovery of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) group in Singapore that the region woke up to the threat of international terrorism. The terrorism threat had facilitated better cooperation between Asia-Pacific countries. According to Acharya, despite the end of the conflict in Aceh and the peace process with Muslim rebels in the Philippines, the discord in southern Thailand and the recent 'cartoon' controversy show that extremism remains a threat to the region.

Dr Gerard Chaliand, former Director, European Center for the Study of Conflicts, Paris, France, began with his belief that the threat of transnational terrorism is exaggerated. He said that the number of victims of transnational terrorism is less than those from the September 11 attacks. Despite having declared *jihad* on the West, Russia, India and China, the terrorists have not been able to achieve their objective yet. They do not have any economic schema; just the use of violent means to build a Caliphate. According to Dr Chaliand, what they do not realise was that economic growth was the only way to lift the Muslim countries from their backwardness. In the future, they will be seen as no more than anarchists who attempted to transform the world.

Dr Chaliand addressed two critical questions – "has the war in Iraq made any difference to the battle against terrorism?" and "are the governments winning the battle for the hearts and minds?" He said that the war in Iraq has led to the rise of new *jihadists* and due to political slip-ups, the US is not winning in Iraq. But Dr Chaliand stressed that a defeat for the US in Iraq would mean a loss for democracy. He said that the different ethnic groups in Iraq have very different visions for the country's future.

For Dr Chaliand, there is no global *jihad* today as incidents of terrorism across the world remain uncoordinated. He highlighted that there are places like the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, the Horn of Africa, Yemen and Bangladesh where there are militant activities. There are also connections within some African countries as well as between the southern Philippines and some Indonesian islands. According to Dr Chaliand, the Shamil Basayev group in the Caucasus remains the most the most lethal and structured organization. Dr Chaliand also stressed that the power of the internet in the psychological warfare should not be underrated. He said that the internet helped terrorist groups to communicate and recruit across the world. Given that news disseminates quickly through the internet, a chemical attack for instance is more likely to be one of mass panic than mass destruction.

Dr Gerard Chaliand, former Director of the European Center for the Study of Conflicts, Paris.

For Dr Chaliand, the worst news was that a new generation of terrorists is rising, especially in Muslim countries and Europe. He cited statistics on the number of fighters from European countries going to Iraq to prove his point. In conclusion, Dr Chaliand said that the current counter-terrorism strategy is working and is more coordinated than before. It is 'proactive politics' that is absent.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, Head, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, IDSS, Singapore, began by saying that the most acute development since the September 11 attacks was the shift in the terrorism epicentre from Afghanistan to Iraq. Al-Qaeda, since its birth in 1988, wanted to be in the frontline of worldwide Islamic movements. And it was because of this that Al Qaeda launched its attack on September 11 against America's most representative landmarks. For Gunaratna, Al-Qaeda intended to use the September 11 attacks to rally *jihadi* groups against the West. While they did succeed in some countries, they failed to drum up support from the Islamic community at large. Instead, it was the US invasion and occupation of Iraq that had led to the radicalisation of the Islamic community.

Dr Rohan Gunaratna, Head of the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, IDSS.

Gunaratna highlighted that the most renowned terrorist network today is Abu Musab al Zarqawi's Tawhid Wal Jihad which had been renamed as Al-Qaeda Committee for Mesopotamia. He said that the Zarqawi-led group had a presence in more than 60 countries. Zarqawi had managed to set up support cells in Europe and was expanding its base in North America. Left unchecked, Zarqawi might build a similar network like Al-Qaeda. Gunaratna said that the US had made a serious error by going into Iraq. But he stressed that it would be a greater error to withdraw. The American strategy was to slowly allow the Iraqis to be in charge of their own security. The Americans would then support the Iraqi forces in containing the insurgency. The challenge ahead was whether the Iraqi security apparatus could match the capacity of the insurgents.

Turning to Europe, Gunaratna said that there were more than 350 *jihadists* from Europe who were going to Iraq. When they returned to Europe, it would be similar to when extremists returned from Afghanistan to their host countries. He said that *jihadists* today were learning skills in Iraq and there had been a transfer of technology, experts and funds from Iraq to the rest of the world. Speaking specifically about the threat of terrorism in the Asia-Pacific region, Gunaratna highlighted that the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia had decreased because of the conflict in Iraq. Many *jihadists* who might have come to this part of this world were now in Iraq. But the war in Iraq was inciting support for extremism in this part of the world and governments needed to take notice of this development. Although many groups in Southeast Asia had expressed an interest in contributing to the *jihad* in Iraq, he said that there was no evidence yet that they have done so.

Gunaratna mentioned that the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) group was now increasingly targeting Western targets and interests. He said that local groups targeting distant targets showed that the *jihad* groups had the same vision as Al-Qaeda. They not only wanted to fight against local Muslim governments but also the US, which they believe was shielding their corrupt Muslim leaders. He also highlighted that the military was unable to deal with such changes and hence governments needed to look beyond 'operational

counter-terrorism' towards 'strategic counter-terrorism'. Gunaratna said that the strength of Al-Qaeda had decreased in recent years and praised Pakistan's efforts in fighting terrorism. Along with Pakistan, Gunaratna highlighted the importance of Indonesia in the fight against terrorism. He said that a number of groups were at different stages of maturity in the country and only with external assistance could Indonesia effectively combat these groups.

Gunaratna went on to describe the tactical cooperation between Al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). He said that Al-Qaeda helped JI develop an anthrax programme but this was thwarted due to the US invasion of Afghanistan. He also cited the assistance provided by JI to Al-Qaeda during the September 11 attacks where two of the hijackers were in Malaysia and flew from Bangkok to the US. The third example provided was a joint Al-Qaeda and JI operation which was to strike against targets in California. He described how a series of arrests in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand helped thwart this attack.

In conclusion, Gunaratna said that local *jihadi* groups were now increasingly behaving like Al-Qaeda and that the current war in Iraq was causing many of these groups to work together. He saw a culture of global *jihad* that was emerging and that was why governments needed to understand the Muslim community better. He said that the war against terrorism could not be fought with military weapons and that it was important to focus strategically, and for Western governments to work with Muslim governments as well as Muslim non-governmental organisations.

Mr Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs (Air Force), US, began by emphasising the threat of global terrorism and how full cooperation was necessary from all who felt vulnerable. To counter this danger, Air Force-to-Air Force relationships were important. He cited examples from the recent tsunami tragedy in Aceh, the earthquake in Pakistan as well as Hurricane Katrina in the US.

Mr Bruce Lemkin, Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs (Air Force), US.

Lemkin stressed that the military alone would not win the fight against terrorism. There was a need to maintain operability, support and training in order to build relationships between the US and its Asia Pacific partner countries. Lemkin also highlighted the significance of using diplomacy, law enforcement, border control, immigration, commerce, finance and intelligence in the fight against extremism. According to Lemkin, terrorists shared a perverse ideology and wanted to destroy all forms of open society and replace it with their oppressive structure. He emphasised that this was not a clash of cultures or religions but one of accepting each others' differences so that everyone could live in any manner they chose.

Turning to Iraq, Lemkin said that the war in Iraq had made a huge difference in the war against terrorism. The readiness of the coalition-of-the-willing partners to endure in Iraq showed their commitment to the fight against extremism. The US would persevere in Iraq until a successful transition to democracy took place in the country. Lemkin also said that the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime had shown that it was possible for diverse groups of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to live in harmony under a democratic system. Victory in Iraq would signify not just a defeat for Al-Qaeda but also for terrorists around the globe. But he conceded that the war in Iraq had also shown that the battle against terrorism might last nearly a generation as the terrorists sought to annihilate all of civilised society.

Lemkin identified four ways to achieve success against terrorism: a cohesive strategy to defeat terrorist organisations; funding, support and refuge to be denied to the terrorists; underlying causes which the terrorists were exploiting to be abated and lastly, we needed to defend the citizens of our countries. Some success had been achieved, primarily in keeping weapons of mass destruction (WMD) away from them and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) initiative was a case in point. He said that the primary focus of fighting terrorism would still remain to deny terrorists' access to WMD.

Turning to the Asia-Pacific region, Lemkin said that air and space power could be used by governments to deny terrorists refuge, movement and resources. The war against terrorism would involve cutting off all financial support for terrorists. Lemkin also discussed the role of soft power that could be utilised by the air force. Referring to the tsunami in Aceh and hurricane Katrina in the US, he said that these disasters reflected the importance of airpower in bonding relationships between air force personnel and populations. He highlighted that the professionalism, commitment and kindness of the military personnel involved had helped in winning over the hearts and minds of people.

In conclusion, Lemkin stressed that governments had to be proactive when dealing with the terrorist threat. A reactive strategy was flawed and we needed to focus on preventing people from succumbing to terrorist propaganda. Terrorism had to be dealt with at its roots if it was to be destroyed. He stressed that no one country could fight terrorism on its own – global partnerships were necessary where everyone could adapt to changing terrorist tactics and circumstances. He stressed that there might be periods where the terrorist threat might have receded but it was important for us to be vigilant and together, we could win this global war on terrorism.

Discussion

A participant asked about the recent controversy over the publication of the cartoons of Prophet Mohammed. **Dr Chaliand** said that the incident had been exploited by Iran and groups like Hamas. Although the republishing of the cartoons in France was a bad idea, one must see it from the position that the West believed in the freedom of speech and expression. He also stressed that the states should not be apologising for any behaviour of its newspapers. **Dr Gunaratna** added that terrorism was a manifestation of radicalisation and that newspapers needed to be responsible when it came to publishing sensitive issues. This dearth of responsibility was seen in Europe and it was important for the West to understand that such events could have ripple effects across the globe. If not, we risked alienating the Muslim community. **Mr Lemkin** added that globalisation had changed the consequences of such actions and the media needed to be educated on such effects. He said that one needed to be responsible and tolerant of other cultures. He stressed that President Bush wanted a world where democracy reflected their local cultures and not necessarily a replication of the American model.

A question on whether Al-Qaeda was disengaging with its regional affiliates was asked. In reply, **Dr Gunaratna** said that the strength of Al-Qaeda had diminished in recent years and due to this, its ability to provide support to regional groups had been weakened. But Al-Qaeda was still very powerful ideologically. He said that although the JI mainstream group led by Abu Bakar Ba'syir had renounced violence, the factions led by Noordin Mohammed Top and Abu Fatih still shared Al-Qaeda's vision. He stressed that this split within JI should be exploited by governments to engage with groups which had opted for a non-violent stance. Strengthening mainstream Muslim organizations should be a priority for governments at these strategic moments.

In response to a remark that the war against terrorism was about 'brain warfare', **Mr Lemkin** agreed that the fight against terror was multi-faceted and military power alone would not bring

about victory. He said that the transnational nature of the threat had made it essential that governments used all types of warfare in dealing with it. He said that perceptions were very important and citing the recent uproar over cartoons of the Prophet, he said that governments needed to realize that information travelled fast across the world. **Dr Chaliand** also added that it was important to speak the language if countries wanted to communicate clearly to people of other cultures.

A participant wanted to know why Muslims were treated differently compared to the Jews in Europe or the African-Americans in the US. **Dr Chaliand** replied that the perception in European society that Muslims were different was mainly due to two factors. The first involved the role of the woman – where in most Muslim countries, especially in the Middle East, they did not have equal rights as the men. And the second was regarding the separation of politics and religion which was not possible in Islam. However, he stressed that with time and through education, these perceptions would change and both sides will be more tolerant of each other.

Replying to a query about the consequences of a US defeat in Iraq, Gunaratna said that the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the defeat of the Soviets in Afghanistan had allowed *jihadists* to declare victory over the West. He said that if the US withdrew from Iraq, it would allow the terrorists to exploit the event and allow them to recruit more fighters towards their cause. **Dr Chaliand** also added that Russians did not lose to the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan. But the episode was exploited by the terrorists. They would attempt to do the same in Iraq if the US withdrew.

Concluding the panel, **Professor Acharya** highlighted three key points from the discussion. He said that the war in Iraq had changed the characteristics of terrorism and a defeat for the US there would mean a loss for the rest of us. He also pointed out that although Al-Qaeda was weak, a culture of global *jihad* was emerging. Lastly, he highlighted that both hard and soft power were important in the fight against terrorism.

DISTINGUISHED LUNCH TALK

Professor Dr S H Muladi delivering the Distinguished Lunch Talk.

Professor Dr S H Muladi, Governor, LEMHANAS RI (National Resilience Institute), Indonesia, began by saying that the end of the Cold War had given rise to optimism that there would be decreases in defence spending and increased focus on issues such as health, education and poverty alleviation. But this sanguinity was short-lived as terrorist and criminal organizations began to exploit improved transportation and communication networks. While the number of terrorist acts was decreasing around the globe, the lethality of these attacks was increasing. He said that this was due to the re-introduction of religion as the main cause for violence; one which allowed people to kill for a cause. He highlighted that transnational networks had emerged over the years which had allowed for funding and ideology to spread across borders.

Professor Muladi also identified the problem of defining terrorism. He said that the United Nations had grappled with definitional issues since the 1970s and since there was no consensus, most actions were focused on the symptoms of terrorism such as hijacking, bombings and terrorist financing. He stressed that a comprehensive strategy was required to

deal with the roots of the terrorism problem. Elaborating on the wide-ranging strategy, Professor Muladi said that the United Nations had developed a framework to deal with the problem of international terrorism. It included dissuading terrorism by preventing its facilitators and by promoting social and political rights as well as democratic reform. It also involved the use of education and public debate to counter radical ideology that espoused terrorism as a religious dictum. The development of better cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts on the global scale was also important. Other than a legal framework, intelligence sharing and financial controls were also critical. State capacity was also critical in dealing with the threat as were the control of hazardous materials and the defence of public health.

Turning to the Indonesian experience with terrorism, Professor Muladi highlighted that for many years, violence in the country was limited to Aceh, Timor Leste and Irian Jaya. It was the Christmas bombings in 2000 and the arrest of JI members in Singapore that finally brought the threat of terrorism to the attention of the public. JI had its roots in the Darul Islam movement and wanted to establish a transnational Islamic caliphate in Southeast Asia. The first Bali bombing as well as the Australian Embassy attacks had shown that Australians were the primary target of the group. But with efforts by the Indonesian government and assistance from the international community, JI had been fragmented.

Professor Muladi stressed that despite these successes, the threat of terrorism still remained. One of JI's leaders, Noordin M Top was still at large. The intensifying conflict in Poso and Sulawesi also remained a cause for concern as the government needed to tackle the ideology and the root causes of terrorism. Initially, the Indonesian government viewed the terrorism threat as purely one of law enforcement. It was only recently that Indonesia had begun to take a more holistic approach. He highlighted that Indonesia had been supporting ASEAN and international efforts to deal with the threat. But he cautioned that Indonesia would take time to adjust to the new security environment.

Professor Muladi highlighted some of the efforts taken by the Indonesia Government to deal with the terrorism threat. He cited a number of Presidential decrees which showed how the current government was dealing with the peril and yet remaining loyal to democratic norms. He said that the Indonesian Government was also looking to engage with the public in dealing with the problem and to alleviate issues like poverty and regional conflicts that might be exploited by the terrorists.

Dr Muladi also said that the Indonesian Government was also improving cooperation with its international partners. It was increasing vigilance over critical infrastructure in the country and to improve the legislative framework to deal with the terrorism threat proactively. In the future, the Indonesian Government would also be focusing on radicalisation that existed in some Muslim schools through the distribution of books espousing a more moderate ideology. Efforts would also be made to reintegrate militants into mainstream society and to use them as vehicles to increase the awareness of the terrorism threat in the country.

In conclusion, Professor Muladi said that the threat of terrorism today was transnational. Hence, only a transnational response could counter the problem. This called for increased cooperation between like-minded countries to attack the extremists. He stressed that only a sustained effort would bear fruit and bring an end to extremism in this world.

Rapporteurs:
Manjeet S Pardesi
Harish S P

PROGRAMME

ASIA-PACIFIC SECURITY CONFERENCE 19-20 FEBRUARY 2006

Opening Dinner, 19 February 2006

Welcome Adress:
Mr Barry Desker
Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Opening Address:
Mr Teo Chee Hean
Minister for Defence
Singapore

Conference, 20 February 2006

Conference Theme: "Asia-Pacific Security: Enduring Concerns"

Panel 1: US Strategy in Asia

Chairman:
Mr Barry Desker
Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Panelists:
Major General Peter Abigail (Retd)
Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute
Australia

Dr Dino Patti Djalal
Special Advisor to President for International Affairs
Indonesia

General Paul V. Hester
Commander, Pacific Air Forces
United States of America

Professor Wang Jisi
Dean, School of International Studies
Peking University
China

Panel 2: Transnational Terrorism

Chairman:
Professor Amitav Acharya
Deputy Director and Head of Research
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Panelists:
Dr Gerard Chaliand
Former Director, European Center for the Study of Conflicts (*Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique*)
France

Dr Rohan Gunaratna
Head, International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research
Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Mr Bruce S. Lemkin
Deputy Undersecretary for International Affairs
Office of the Secretary of the Air Force
United States of America

Distinguished Lunch Talk

Speaker
Professor (Dr) S. H. Muladi
Governor, LEMHANAS RI (National Resilience Institute of Indonesia)
Indonesia

ABOUT IDSS

The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) was established in July 1996 as an autonomous research institute within the Nanyang Technological University. Its objectives are to:

- Conduct research on security, strategic and international issues.
- Provide general and graduate education in strategic studies, international relations, defence management and defence technology.
- Promote joint and exchange programmes with similar regional and international institutions, and organise seminars/conferences on topics salient to the strategic and policy communities of the Asia-Pacific.

Constituents of IDSS include the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR), the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) and the Asian Programme for Negotiation and Conflict Management (APNCM).

RESEARCH

Through its Working Paper Series, *IDSS Commentaries* and other publications, the Institute seeks to share its research findings with the strategic studies and defence policy communities. The Institute's researchers are also encouraged to publish their writings in refereed journals. The focus of research is on issues relating to the security and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and their implications for Singapore and other countries in the region. The Institute has also established the S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies (named after Singapore's first Foreign Minister), to bring distinguished scholars to participate in the work of the Institute. Previous holders of the Chair include Professors Stephen Walt (Harvard University), Jack Snyder (Columbia University), Wang Jisi (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Alastair Iain Johnston (Harvard University) and John Mearsheimer (University of Chicago). A Visiting Research Fellow Programme also enables overseas scholars to carry out related research in the Institute.

TEACHING

The Institute provides educational opportunities at an advanced level to professionals from both the private and public sectors in Singapore as well as overseas through graduate programmes, namely, the Master of Science in Strategic Studies, the Master of Science in International Relations and the Master of Science in International Political Economy. These programmes are conducted full-time and part-time by an international faculty. The Institute also has a Doctoral programme for research in these fields of study. In addition to these graduate programmes, the Institute also teaches various modules in courses conducted by the SAFTI Military Institute, SAF Warrant Officers' School, Civil Defence Academy, and the Defence and Home Affairs Ministries. The Institute also runs a one-semester course on '*The International Relations of the Asia Pacific'* for undergraduates in NTU.

NETWORKING

The Institute convenes workshops, seminars and colloquia on aspects of international relations and security development that are of contemporary and historical significance. Highlights of the Institute's activities include a regular Colloquium on Strategic Trends in the 21st Century, the annual Asia Pacific Programme for Senior Military Officers (APPSMO) and the biennial Asia Pacific Security Conference. IDSS staff participate in Track II security dialogues and scholarly conferences in the Asia-Pacific. IDSS has contacts and collaborations with many international think tanks and research institutes throughout Asia, Europe and the United States. The Institute has also participated in research projects funded by the Ford Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It also serves as the Secretariat for the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP), Singapore. Through these activities, the Institute aims to develop and nurture a network of researchers whose collaborative efforts will yield new insights into security issues of interest to Singapore and the region.

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