(UN)PROBLEMATIC MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE
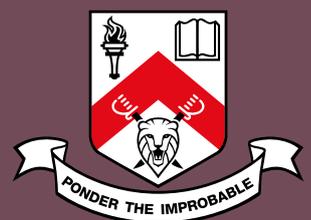
PONDER THE IMPROBABLE

(UN)PROBLEMATIC MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

REPORT OF A CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY
THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY (CENS)
AT THE S. RAJARATNAM SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (RSIS)

21 February 2008
SINGAPORE

Kumar Ramakrishna, Head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security, outlining the key issues of the conference

In his opening remarks, **Kumar Ramakrishna**, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, noted that in recent times, fears of social fragmentation along ethno-religious lines have compelled governments of multicultural societies to devise policies and strategies to ensure their nations' ability to cope with attacks on their social fabric. Drawing from the examples of Singapore, Australia and the U.K., as well as the works of scholars alike, "social resilience" has been touted as the key to keep these societies together in times of stress. Hence, the aim of the workshop is to generate discussions to operationalize the concept of social resilience in such multicultural societies.

To this end, Ramakrishna identified the following key questions that the workshop sought to address:

(i) To what extent is cultural diversity a source of division in society and are ethno-religious differences necessarily the most divisive?

(ii) What are other challenges to social cohesion that societies face?

(iii) All things considered, what makes for a "socially resilient" nation?

(iv) What aspects of the social fabric in particular need strengthening in societies today?

(v) What level of integration should societies be willing to live with and what best practices exist to help attain this?

(vi) What are the indicators that the "Holy Grail" of social resilience has been achieved?

Ramakrishna concluded that while it is unlikely that all the answers to these important questions could be generated, he hoped that the presentations and the discussions would throw up enough ideas to assist governments and communities—especially those in multicultural nations—in crafting effective and meaningful policy roadmaps towards greater levels of social resilience.

I. The Challenge to the Modern Japanese State

Haruko Satoh discussing the challenges to the notion of a unified Japanese national identity

Haruko Satoh presented on the Japanese case study. She argued that although Japan is often cited as an example of a modern monocultural state shielded from ethno-religious upheavals, it does not necessarily mean that Japanese society does not face any challenges to social cohesion. Instead, she contended that there is a need to critically assess the current efforts at perfecting the idea of a Japanese nationhood characterized by the compulsion to centralize control and treat Japanese society as homogenous, as perceived social stability based on sameness and equality has been found to be increasingly unsustainable. She noted that the Japanese are beginning to recognize the diversity within their society—geographically, historically, culturally and, in some sense, religiously—in a globalizing environment. This has influenced the relationship between state and society as the idea of the state and nationhood is being reconceived in the public mind.

Satoh traced the roots of the myth of a centralized homogenous Japanese society to the Meiji era where the leaders sought to create a modern state out of a feudal system. She argued that while modern Japan has sought—and achieved—success as a highly centralized state, this very same acquired habit to centralize is now turning out to be the bane of Japan's route to economic recovery and social and political revitalization, which requires a federal structure of governance. The fragile notion of a unified Japanese nation was attributed to an uneven national consciousness of the Meiji state that had no social underpinning based on history. Nonetheless, efforts by the Meiji leaders to forge the myth of a unified Japanese national identity around the family-state with the emperor as the divine father figure of the Yamato *minzoku* (Yamato ethnic tribe) did imbue in the national psyche patriotism, community and belonging. However, this state-sanctioned national image was abused by military leaders to steer the nation towards a war that led to total defeat, undermining its legitimating power as a consequence.

Satoh also noted that the myth of cultural homogeneity could not replace economic stability in preventing societal breakdown. Moreover, state-society relations are further complicated by the state's adherence to the conservative notion of a culturally homogenous Japanese society, resulting in its failure to recognize the diversity of cultures embraced by the populace with globalization. She also pointed out that there is a trend towards a revival of local cultural identities and traditions that pre-date the Meiji era. For instance, various regions are increasingly taking pride in distinguishing themselves vis-à-vis their unique culinary traditions.

Satoh concluded that while the notion of a unified Japanese identity has been somewhat undermined in recent times, it has also allowed the Japanese to rediscover and appreciate the diversity of their cultural heritage as strength in a globalizing world. Post-Cold War Japan has realized that it is not immune to global affairs and there is increasing pressure to decentralize the federal system. As the re-created social structural is beginning to collapse, it is about time to reconstruct the community. Its increasingly affluent society has created a differentiated social community and the key is to seek for a way to coexist, rather than harping on the need for an overarching national identity that may essentially be superficial.

II. Colonialism, Sinicization and Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong

Lee Kim-ming and Law Kam-yee examining the policies towards ethnic minorities in Hong Kong

Lee Kim-ming and **Law Kam-yee** examined the impact of colonialism, nationalism and neo-colonialism on the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. The ethnic minorities refer to new immigrants from Mainland China and other non-Chinese inhabitants and immigrants. They argued that, contrary to the government's claim that Hong Kong is a multicultural society, various indicators seem to prove otherwise. State governance is not sensitive to the needs of the minorities, whose options are limited to assimilation or marginalization, exacerbated by the general indifference of the public who perceive this as a problem exclusive to ethnic minorities. In this sense, the notion of multiculturalism in Hong Kong is limited as a descriptive term alluding to the mere existence of diverse ethnic groups, rather than the practice of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.

Lee and Law noted that Hong Kong's ethnic minority population is bifurcated along socio-economic status, with a small proportion from developed countries like the U.S. and Japan who command high salaries, and the majority who constitute lowly paid laborers from developing countries such as Mainland China, the Philippines and Thailand. The income disparity along ethnic lines is clear as the median income of Asians from developing countries is below the national average while that of ethnic groups from developed countries is significantly above it. The economic opportunities of non-white minorities are attributed to factors such as the language barrier and discrimination against their educational qualifications and pre-migration work experience. Moreover, except for the domestic help, they are spatially segregated in the most impoverished neighbourhoods.

Non-white minorities are also subject to cultural assimilation because of the lack of understanding among the majority population of minority culture and sensitivities. For instance, Pakistani women encounter great pressure to conform to the dressing norms of the majority, who perceive their traditional clothing as "backward" and "uncivilized". Those who are unable to converse in either Cantonese or English are also denied basic public services. The language barrier also deprives most of these minorities from government-funded education, perpetuating their bleak life chances in the job market in future. Despite being ethnically Chinese, Mainland Chinese migrants are not accepted by the Hong Kong Chinese. They are perceived by the Hong Kong people as ignorant, rude, dirty and greedy, and deserving of the hardship they experience. Such resentment is more pronounced in times of economic downturns like recessions. As such, they are generally subjected to the same treatment as the non-white population.

Lee and Law explained that the racial hierarchy reflected in the psyche of the Hong Kong Chinese is a result of colonialism and Chinese neo-nationalism. As a former British colony, the colonial mindset of white supremacy still persists, resulting in the regard of the "Whites" as the superior race, even above that of the Hong Kong Chinese people. Despite contributing to the economic success of Hong Kong, the non-white minorities are marginalized as their contributions are not acknowledged in the national narrative that saw the Hong Kong Chinese continuing the legacy of prosperity left behind by the British. This has been worsened with the policy of Sinicization after the handover whereby Hong Kong is subject to Chinese national laws that do not recognize ethnic minorities as nationals, depriving them of their rights.

Lee and Law concluded that with racial discrimination so entrenched in Hong Kong society, coupled with the weak bargaining power of the ethnic minorities, it is unlikely that a truly multicultural society based on respect and understanding of cultural diversity can be

Discussion

Panel one fielding questions from the floor (from left): Eugene Tan, Lee Kim-ming, and Law Kam-yee

Eugene Tan observed that it is obvious that both Japan and Hong Kong tend to view themselves as essentially monocultural societies and social resilience is not on both governments' agenda. In the case of Japan, the government and society are moving along different paths in their search for an ideal identity. He argued that the contested notions of the Japanese identity could be interpreted either as a manifestation of diversity or a reflection of division. He also highlighted a salient theme in the Japanese case study suggesting that states tend to build resilience by imposing a dominant homogenous identity that could ultimately undermine the social fabric.

The concept of multiculturalism is practically descriptive in Hong Kong, where minorities are still constantly being discriminated against and marginalized. Perhaps the best option ahead for Hong Kong is to start practising policies of inclusion. One might even consider mobilizing the bicultural elites to initiate change. He concluded with the observation that a strong national identity is needed in order for multiculturalism to be forged.

During the question-and-answer session, the following salient points were raised. First, it was observed that unfortunately in Hong Kong, resilience is defined in terms of economic growth and not in terms of social dynamics. Arguably, integration and assimilation will only generate counter-productive effects within the society. Hong Kong is no doubt a transit platform for the movement of global capitalism. However, mobility is a class factor and, in this case, the majority of the Hong Kong people and most of its minority are not mobile.

Second, considering the fact that economic growth is of such importance in Hong Kong, it was suggested that perhaps the relationship they are experiencing with Mainland China is one of resentment with the recent Chinese economic success rather than mere discrimination based on ethnicity. However it is difficult to reconcile this argument with the fact that the wealth of the Mainland Chinese is often owned by "invisible" individuals, yet those that are being discriminated against and socially excluded are the lower-class migrants. Essentially, the counter argument highlights the fact that the ethnic minority in Hong Kong is not homogeneous. It is important to be able to identify race, ethnicity and, most importantly, class to tease out the problem of social exclusion. Unfortunately, such identities are often being used instrumentally.

The third point pertains to the Japanese case study. As nationalism is a hugely contested idea, one is less optimistic that nationalism—or national identity, for that matter—would help Japan cope with the possible breakdown of its social structure. As its social fabric begins to unravel, Japan is stuck with a system they created that see Western ideas being pitted against traditional heritage. As an affluent society breeds a liberal economy, it also cultivates a sense of individualism. Unfortunately, it often takes a crisis to band a society together.

PANEL TWO
(Un)Problematic Multiculturalism

I. Multiculturalism in Malaysia: The Need for Local Knowledge to Grapple with Identity and Ethnicity

Shamsul A.B. assessing contending perceptions of multi-ethnicity in Malaysia

Shamsul A.B. presented his joint analysis with **Mansor Mohd Noor** of the Malaysian case study. Shamsul started with the observation that multi-ethnicity, rather than multiculturalism, is a more apt term to describe Malaysia's condition. This is because multiculturalism connotes a clear majority-minority situation while multi-ethnicity refers to competing small majorities, namely, the *bumiputera* (indigenous Malay population) versus the non-*bumiputera*, as is the case with Malaysia, which does not have a clear-cut numerical majority. He then contended that most academic studies and government policies on ethnic relations in Malaysia uncritically accept the ethnic divide as real without consideration of the variable reaction of its people based on rational choice. Hence the paper seeks to reconcile the extent to which the dominant notion of multiculturalism in Malaysia in both academia and government discourses gels with those perceived by the people.

Shamsul examined the nature of state-ascribed and self-ascribed notions of identity among Malaysians.

Based on their field study conducted within Malaysia, the cultural divide is real in that Malaysians do identify themselves along ethnic, religious and language lines. Non-negotiable identity markers vary across ethnic groups. For example, the Malays are open to negotiating most ethnic parameters except Islam but to the Chinese, the Mandarin language is a more important identity marker than religion. However, contrary to state assumptions, this is not necessarily problematic as it is comforting to know that the younger generation in particular do recognize the diversity within the nation and are aware of the sensitivity involved in their daily interaction with one another for the sake of social cohesion. Moreover, all racial groups generally regard political stability and bread-and-butter issues as more important than racial issues. Hence, in reality, people are often capable of rationally identifying one's identity and defining otherness in their own ways best suited for their way of life.

Shamsul pointed out that it might be necessary for the government to reassess the assumption that Malaysians are divided along racial lines which underpins state policies. Instead of harping on the differences, it may be useful to allow people to reach for an equilibrium at their own pace, and develop the common concerns and aspirations they currently share as Malaysians. This would require that the state stop actively promoting racial polarization and start letting the people think and choose for themselves, and to see diversity as an asset, not a divisive force. It is time to move away from the flawed concept of multiculturalism and start looking into the study of multi-ethnicity based on the reality of ground sentiments.

II. (Un)Problematic Multiculturalism: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Cohesion in New Zealand

Allen Bartley discussing New Zealand's approach to multiculturalism

Allen Bartley spoke on the challenges and opportunities presented by the changes to New Zealand's demographic composition. His analysis focused on the social policies pertaining to two groups of minorities — the indigenous Maori and non-white immigrants.

Contrary to sensational coverage in the media, Bartley contends that Maori political separatism is not a significant threat to social cohesion in New Zealand. Rather, the indigenous populations are well integrated into the political and social policy frameworks across all levels of government. For instance, the political and constitutional positions of Maori are protected by a range of state initiatives, including those concerning health, education, justice and the provision of social services. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs provides policy advice regarding and representing the interests of *Pasifika* communities in New Zealand to ministers, government officials and Pacific communities, and to monitor social policy outcomes for Pacific peoples.

Nevertheless, despite such high-level corporatist engagement with the state, many Maori and Pacific Islanders continue to be at the economic margins of New Zealand society, and feature prominently in a constellation of social problems. As recipients of high levels of social assistance, they were disproportionately affected by cuts to social welfare spending as a result of economic structural adjustments in the 1980s and 1990s, accentuating the relative income disparity between the Maori and Pacific peoples on the one hand and New Zealanders of European descent on the other. The relative high rates of Maori and Pasifika youths with low educational qualifications predispose them to social exclusion as the potential for them to gain access to the knowledge economy critical for economic mobility is limited. A serious consequence of this social exclusion is a disproportionate number of Maori represented in New Zealand's crime and imprisonment statistics.

Bartley went on to examine the integration of an increasing number of new immigrants of Asian descent. Historically, little attention was paid to this group of migrants mainly because New Zealand's immigration policies favoured migrants of European stock. Although the policy towards Chinese immigrants was eased somewhat after the Second World War, it was still limited to those who already had family in New Zealand. It was only in the 1970s, with emergent markets in Asia, which prompted New Zealand to restructure its immigration policies. The end of the discriminatory immigration policy saw an immediate jump in New Zealand's Asian population. However, this was met with some resistance from some who saw them both as an economic and cultural threat to New Zealand. Following this, many of these immigrants faced institutional and attitudinal barriers to gaining employment that commensurate with their educational qualification, leading to the younger generation looking to other countries for greener pastures. This in turn undermines the central imperative of the migration policy, which seeks to attract committed and economically active citizens.

Bartley concluded by suggesting indicators for assessing the behaviours and social and institutional conditions to secure greater cohesion across New Zealand's diverse communities. These include structural and institutional conditions and processes to enhance economic and social inclusion (e.g. those pertaining to employment opportunities, quality of housing, access to social assistance, experiences of racism and discrimination and political representation), and enhancing social capital at the community and individual levels (e.g. participation in civic institutions, satisfaction with educational opportunities, and participation in social networks and cultural and leisure activities).

III. Negotiating *Bangsa* and *Nasion*: The Dilemma of Multiculturalism in Indonesia

Hikmat Budiman examined the social conflicts arising from ethnic and religious difference in Indonesia. By tracing the development of the state's policies in managing cultural diversity and the pursuit of a unified Indonesian identity from the New Order to the post-*reformasi* era, he assessed the consequences on the ethnic minority communities.

First, Budiman examined the shift in the post-New Order era from a unified Indonesian identity towards a myriad of local identities. He provided a historical overview of Indonesian's nation-building process, beginning with Sukarno's vision of a unified Indonesia—akin to the legacy of the Sriwijaya and Majapahit empires of the past—for the people to rally against colonial rule. In this way, the cultural diversity of the archipelago was obscured and denied in order to attain a utopian future. Although Suharto's concept of *Pancasila* democracy formally acknowledged cultural diversity as a national asset, in practice, only state-sanctioned forms of ethnic and religious diversity are tolerated. Suharto's policy of SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Inter-group relations), which identified these issues as social taboos that should not be discussed in the name of maintaining national stability and unity, was a thinly veiled attempt at assimilation as it prevented discriminated groups, such as the Chinese, from resisting moves to undermine the practice of Chinese culture.

However, in the post-Suharto era, with increased decentralization of power to local authorities and the end to the SARA policy, there has been a trend towards the assertion of regional identity. This has resulted in complications as certain groups try to assert their cultural identities in the name of self-determination, often at the expense of other ethnic and religious groups in the same region. For instance, Aceh's attainment of autonomy has been hailed by some as a victory for democracy. However, the imposition of Islamic *shariah* has raised concerns over the implications for relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Acehnese. According to Budiman, this is partially attributed to the state's entrenched bureaucratic notions of regional cultural homogeneity. As a result of the formalization of religious identity as such, the rights of individuals with different values and identities have been undermined.

Budiman went on to identify the cultural strategies of some local minority groups in negotiating their local identity with the state-sanctioned one. Based on the case study of the *ToWana* in Central Sulawesi, he illustrated the manner in which local communities resist state efforts to assimilate them via means such as forced religious conversion and resettlement by choosing to voluntarily relocate into the forest instead of designated villages. However, the cost is poor access to public services such as health care and education. Other forms of resistance include the creation of contesting narratives and interpretations of religious teachings.

Budiman concluded by highlighting two issues that require attention. First, there is a need to acknowledge that uniformity is not a prerequisite for national unity. Secondly, national integration is only possible with the loyalty of the citizens to the nation and this can only be accomplished if the state is capable of improving the people's well-being, prosperity, freedom, security, and political and social rights.

IV. A Socio-Ecological System Approach to Multiculturalism and Resilience: The Case of Singapore

Daniel Goh evaluating the management of ethnic differences in Singapore

Drawing on the socio-ecological systems approach in sustainability science, **Daniel Goh** deviated from traditional analyses of multiculturalism as a political ideology or state policy by assessing Singapore multiculturalism as a complex and non-linear socio-cultural system providing for stable relations between evolving ethnic groups with regards to their political, cultural and economic lives. Correspondingly, the dimensions of the system are the level of minority political representation, the degree of intercultural interaction and relative inequality in the costs of ascribed identities. These three variables form a stability landscape with basins of attraction, namely, an assimilative system, a liberal multicultural system and a post-colonial system. This basin concept allows the mapping of a system's resilience when the stability landscape changes due to global events like the post-2001 War on Terrorism and when the internal dynamics driving the system change the system's position in the basin, for example, when the Singapore system shifted from a melting pot to a mosaic communitarian institutional emphasis in the 1980s. Hence resilience is not defined as the ability of a system to return to its original function after external disturbances but the capacity to reorganize while undergoing change relative to the stability landscape.

The stability of all three systems is predicated on the assumption that low inequality is the key attractor of socio-cultural systems because the equitable distribution of socio-economic resources and opportunities is fundamental to the stability of ethnic relations. This variable is moderated by the level of minority political representation and the degree of intercultural interaction. The assimilative system is characterized by low minority political representation and high intercultural interaction, while the liberal multicultural system is high on minority political representation but low on intercultural interaction.

Singapore is perceived to be a post-colonial multicultural society where social interaction is often managed and engineered. Such labelling is evident in the level of intercultural interactions, minority political representation and the inequality of cost that exist within the political, social and economic realms. Policies ranging from political representation, to schools systems, to housing allocation, were implemented prima facie to address the issue of inequality. Unfortunately, such reactive policy-making did not take into consideration the possible side effects that have resulted in high ascriptive cost to the minority.

Goh suggested that the best prescription for Singapore at this juncture might be to consider creating a new system that is based on higher minority representation, increased intercultural interaction and low inequality cost. To achieve that, Singapore should recognize the collective capacity of actors in the system to manage resilience. Rather than taking the securitization approach and trying to engineer its path, an adaptive governace approach should be adopted.

Discussion

It was pointed out that Singapore must recognize that change is inevitable and, in a complex system, individuals are deemed to be capable of self-organizing. However, such a process will only operate in optimum capacity in a democratic state. On the same note, the state should desecuritize social issues and manage its social system less.

Some observed that the democratization process might lead to fragmentation of the society. Having said that, this perceived fragmentation (often through verbal violent objection) might just be the organic and natural way of dealing with a problem within a dynamic society. Adaptability is the key to increasing the capacity of the individual, which will lead to the strengthening of the nation state.

It was noted that some still subscribe to the idea that social problems can and should be dealt with different solutions, depending on the targeted racial profiles. However, there is a need to understand that not all social problems are caused by racial differences and solutions should always be issue-specific and not race-specific.

Many were interested to know if there is in fact an ideal model or best practices that every government should adhere to in managing multiculturalism. The response is that, like any other models and best practices prescribed to any field of studies, these are at best guidelines consisting of pre-set dimensions that may not fit all conditions. Eventually, rational approaches based on recognition of the needs of the target community and society at large should be adopted.

Considering the current social condition in Indonesia, doubt has been cast on the possibility of creating a new national identity within the archipelagic state. Although the vast majority only seek to be equal and not be distinguished according to religion or ethnicity, much of the problem lies with this silent majority that will not react to disruptions and rifts caused by minority hardliners purporting to represent their particular interest groups.

Closing Remarks

Kumar Ramakrishna concluded with some reflections on the key issues raised. One of the clearer themes that came through the discussion of this workshop is that, multicultural policies need to be customized. Each nation is unique in its own context and there is no one-size-fits-all solution even if it is a common problem. While it is good to think of best practices, they need to be applied with due care as the political dynamics within each social context is different. With a strong advocate for space for individual preferences of identity to be expressed, the question remains with regards to how that can enhance the practice of social resilience.

Rapporteurs:
Jane Chan

Edited by:
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P R O G R A M M E

**(Un)Problematic Multiculturalism and
Social Resilience**

**Centre of Excellence for National Security
S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies**

**Seminar Rooms 2 & 3
21 February 2008, Thursday**

0830 - 0900   Registration

0900 - 0910   Welcome remarks by **Kumar Ramakrishna**, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

0910 - 0950   **Panel One: (Un)Problematic Monoculturalism**
Chairperson: **Yolanda Chin**, Associate Research Fellow, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

The Challenge to the Modern Japanese State
Haruko Satoh, Doctoral Candidate, Centre of International Studies, Cambridge University, United Kingdom.

Sinicization, Social Marginalization and Minority Groups' Resilience in Hong Kong
Law Kam-Yee, Associate Professor, Department of Asian and International Studies, City University, Hong Kong, and **Lee Kim-Ming**, Lecturer, Division of Social Sciences, City University, Hong Kong.

0950 - 1000   Comments by discussant
Eugene K.B. Tan, Assistant Professor of Law, School of Law, Singapore Management University, Singapore.

1000 - 1040   Q&A/ Discussion

1040 - 1050   Coffee Break

1050 - 1130   **Panel Two: (Un)Problematic Multiculturalism (Part 1)**
Chairperson: **Norman Vasu**, Coordinator, Social Resilience Programme, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Multiculturalism in Malaysia: The need for local knowledge to grapple with identity and ethnicity
Shamsul AB, Director, Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Malaysia and **Mansor Mohd Noor**, Chairman of Public Administration, College of Law, International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia.

(Un)Problematic Multiculturalism: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Cohesion in New Zealand
Allen Bartley, Senior Lecturer, School of Social and Policy Studies, University of Auckland, New Zealand.

1130 - 1140   Coffee break

1140 - 1220   **Panel Two: (Un)Problematic Multiculturalism (Part 2)**
Negotiating *Bangsa* and *Nasion*: The Dilemma of Multiculturalism in Indonesia
Hikmat Budiman, Executive Director, *Interseksi* Foundation, Indonesia.

A Socio-ecological System Approach to Multiculturalism and Resilience: The Case of Singapore
Daniel PS Goh, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore, Singapore.

1220 - 1320   Q&A / Discussion

Closing remarks by
Kumar Ramakrishna, Head, Centre of Excellence for National Security, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

1330 - 1430   **Lunch**

The Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS) is a research unit of the S. Rajaratnam School of international Studies (RSIS) at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Established on 1 April 2006, CENS is devoted to rigorous policy-relevant analysis of a range of national security issues. The CENS team is multinational in composition, comprising both Singaporean and foreign analysts who are specialists in various aspects of national and homeland security affairs.

Why CENS?

In August 2004 the Strategic Framework for National Security outlined the key structures, security measures and capability development programmes that would help Singapore deal with transnational terrorism in the near and long term.

However, strategizing national security policies requires greater research and understanding of the evolving security landscape. This is why CENS was established to increase the intellectual capital invested in strategizing national security. To this end, CENS works closely with not just other RSIS research programmes, but also national security agencies such as the National Security Coordination Secretariat within the Prime Minister's Office.

What Research Does CENS Do?

CENS currently conducts research in three key areas of national security:

• Risk Assessment/Horizon Scanning

- The art and science of detecting "weak signals" emanating from the total security environment so as to forewarn policymakers, the private sector and the public about approaching "shocks" such as terrorism, pandemics, energy crises and other easy-to-miss trends and ostensibly distant events.

• Social Resilience

- The capacity of globalized, multicultural societies to hold together in the face of systemic shocks such as diseases and terrorist strikes.

• Homeland Defence Programme
- The security of land-based, aviation and maritime transport networks and increasingly, the total supply chain vital to Singapore's economic vitality.
- Health, water and food security.
- Crisis communications and management.

How Does CENS Help Influence National Security Policy?

Through policy-oriented analytical commentaries and other research output directed at the national security policy community in Singapore and beyond, CENS staff members promote greater awareness of emerging threats as well as global best practices in responding to those threats. In addition, CENS organizes courses, seminars and workshops for local and foreign national security officials to facilitate networking and exposure to leading-edge thinking on the prevention of, and response to, national and homeland security threats.

How Does CENS Help Raise Public Awareness of National Security Issues?

To educate the wider public, CENS staff members regularly author articles in a number of security and intelligence related publications, as well as write op-ed analyses in leading newspapers.Radio and television interviews have allowed CENS staff to participate in and shape the public debate on critical issues such as risk assessment and horizon scanning, multiculturalism and social resilience, intelligence reform and defending critical infrastructure against mass-casualty terrorist attacks.

How Does CENS Keep Abreast of Cutting Edge National Security Research?

The lean organizational structure of CENS permits a constant and regular influx of Visiting Fellows of international calibre through the Distinguished CENS Visitors Programme. This enables CENS to keep abreast of cutting edge global trends in national security research.

For More on CENS
Log on to http://www.rsis.edu.sg and follow the links to "Centre of Excellence for National Security".

The S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) was established in January 2007 as an autonomous School within the Nanyang Technological University. RSIS's mission is to be a leading research and graduate teaching institution in strategic and international affairs in the Asia Pacific. To accomplish this mission, it will:

- Provide a rigorous professional graduate education in international affairs with a strong practical and area emphasis

- Conduct policy-relevant research in national security, defence and strategic studies, diplomacy and international relations

- Collaborate with like-minded schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence

Graduate Training in International Affairs

RSIS offers an exacting graduate education in international affairs, taught by an international faculty of leading thinkers and practitioners. The teaching programme consists of the Master of Science (MSc) degrees in Strategic Studies, International Relations, International Political Economy, and Asian Studies as well as an MBA in International Studies taught jointly with the Nanyang Business School. The graduate teaching is distinguished by their focus on the Asia Pacific, the professional practice of international affairs, and the cultivation of academic depth. Over 150 students, the majority from abroad, are enrolled with the School. A small and select Ph.D. programme caters to advanced students whose interests match those of specific faculty members.
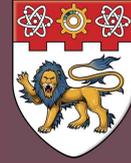
Research

RSIS research is conducted by five constituent Institutes and Centres: the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS, founded 1996), the International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research (ICPVTR, 2002), the Centre of Excellence for National Security (CENS, 2006), the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in ASIA (NTS-Asia, 2007); and the Temasek Foundation Centre for Negotiations (2008). 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 School has three professorships that bring distinguished scholars and practitioners to teach and to do research at the School. They are the S. Rajaratnam Professorship in Strategic Studies, the Ngee Ann Kongsi Professorship in International Relations, and the NTUC Professorship in International Economic Relations.

International Collaboration

Collaboration with other professional Schools of international affairs to form a global network of excellence is a RSIS priority. RSIS will initiate links with other like-minded schools so as to enrich its research and teaching activities as well as adopt the best practices of successful schools.