NTS ALERT

NTS Alert no. AL13-04, September 2013

Click here for the PDF version.

In conversation with Ibrahim Gambari: The practice of peacemaking

By J. Jackson Ewing and Lina Gong

Ibrahim Gambari (centre), as Joint Special Representative for the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), visits a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in North Darfur in January 2012.
Credit: UN Photo / Albert Gonzalez Farran.

On 18 June 2013, Dr J. Jackson Ewing sat down with Professor Ibrahim Gambari to discuss his views on resolving conflicts and building sustainable peace in the 21st century.

Professor Gambari's familiarity with these subjects is extensive and personal, having served as Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Angola; Joint African Union-UN Special Representative for Darfur; Special Adviser on the International Compact with Iraq and Other Issues for the UN Secretary-General; and Under-Secretary-General of the UN Department of Political Affairs among other postings.

He has devoted time and energy to resolving conflicts and promoting peace, security and development in multiple regions throughout the world, and his insights from these experiences provide unique and timely vantage points from which to consider current challenges.

New challenges in peace negotiations

J. Jackson Ewing and Lina Gong *are, respectively, Research Fellow and Research Associate with the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore.*

Recommended citation: J. Jackson Ewing and Lina Gong, 'In conversation with Ibrahim Gambari: The practice of peacemaking', *NTS Alert*, no. AL13-04 (Singapore: RSIS Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies for NTS-Asia, 2013).

This is a publication of the Centre for Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), for

JJE: *While recognising that all conflict resolution efforts are unique, are there any broad-based changes or new characteristics to peace negotiations that you have witnessed over the last two decades?*

the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia).

IG: Yes. The first is the link between peace and justice, which has grown more important than ever before. The second is the imperative of addressing the root causes of conflicts. When you look at recent conflicts deeply, developmental aspects become very prominent. The third aspect of conflict resolution that has changed over time is the role of 'spoilers' in the peace process.

Let me illustrate these one by one. First of all, justice is an imperative on the pathway to peace. Now, the ICC, the International Criminal Court, wasn't there before. It has so far tended to concentrate on indicting sitting African leaders. Nonetheless, the court – as a new invention – is a good one because it addresses the issue of impunity. You cannot have peace if there is no justice, and if people don't feel a sense of closure, a feeling that those who are guilty of or accused of egregious violations of human rights are brought to justice. So you have the ICC pursuing that track. At the same time, if you are going to resolve a conflict, and one of the parties to the conflict may be, as in the case of Darfur, an indictee of the ICC, how do you engage with an indictee of the ICC who is part of the solution to the conflict, and also part of the peace process? It is extremely difficult to strike the right balance.

My own experience and position is that you don't have to choose between peace and justice; rather you can sequence them. You can phase them. For example, you can say, 'At this point, what is the most important emphasis that will bring us closer to peace?' The UN, on its part, has given strict instructions to its Envoys on what is and is not acceptable in terms of the necessity of dealing with an indicted war criminal. I just mentioned the example of Darfur, but you could say the same of Liberia and the case of Charles Taylor. There was a time that nobody wanted to touch him. Right now he is in the Hague being tried. But if he hadn't been taken out of Liberia by prior arrangement involving the African Union, ECOWAS [*Economic Community of West African States*] and Nigeria, if that aspect of his past had not been sequenced to follow rather than to precede peace process, there may have been no peace, no election, and Liberia would not be where it is today.

The second challenge concerns addressing the root causes of conflict. Take Darfur again. It's fundamentally about water in a sense; you have environmental degradation, rapid urbanisation and increasing population going on all at once. The most important resource in Darfur is water, and there is not enough of it and it is poorly distributed. This has bred tension between nomads and farmers, who tend to belong to different ethnic groups. Specifically, the nomadic peoples are primarily Arabs, and sedentary and farming peoples are non-Arabs, Africans. They are competing for the same scarce resources, and therefore prone to be in conflict over them. If you want to address the issue of peace, and if you want to bring peace closer, you have to address root causes such as these.

That's why, at one point, when I was Head of the African-UN mission, the UNAMID [*African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur*], we organised a large International Conference on Water for Peace. We have seen land for peace famously proposed in the Middle East, now here we see similar approaches taken with water. I've also argued that we cannot wait till peace has broken out all over Darfur before we pursue reconstruction and development issues, because you want to demonstrate to those communities and areas where fighting has stopped that there is a peace dividend, and this may have positive spillover effects in other areas where conflict continues.

Now, in this again, there have been differences of opinion, particularly with some Western countries that believe that you should not even talk about reconstruction and development while war is still going on. I beg to differ. I am glad that the Qataris, who have been sponsoring the peace process in Darfur, have bought this idea. In April 2013, a big Donor Conference on Reconstruction in Darfur which took place in Doha raised 3 billion US dollars. I'm afraid very little of this new money came from the traditional donors. So it was more the Qataris themselves and the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and non-traditional donors such as Turkey and the Arab Development Bank that brought resources to the table. I think this is an indication of my approach. Incidentally, even though I had left as Head of UNAMID, I was invited to that conference. I felt flattered that they recognised my role in pushing for development-based approaches despite the enormous opposition from some powerful outside players.

The third aspect I want to discuss is the role of 'spoilers' and this has become a lot more significant in any peace process. There are different types of 'spoilers'. You have those with limited objectives, some with broader national and international objectives, and those who really don't want any peace at all. How do you deal with them? What are the sticks and carrots that you might use to reduce the potential influence of 'spoilers'? I feel sad that, in the case of Darfur again, which was my last experience in peacemaking and peacekeeping, there were many important actors who played the role of 'spoilers' who were not compelled to join the peace process in a meaningful way.

It is a problem, that the international community has not rallied around how to deal with 'spoilers' in peace processes. The international community has to be willing to identify them, and once identified, to really take the necessary steps, for the sake of the people who are suffering. At this point there are cases in which, because of their affiliation, key groups with the ability to undermine peace are not engaged with effectively. That's not good enough. More should be done – for the sake of peace, and in the case of Darfur, for the sake of the people who have suffered for so long.

Rising role of NGOs

JJE: *Are the roles of NGOs [non-governmental organisations] and civil society changing or expanding? What are the key avenues of*

influence for these groups in peacebuilding processes?

IG: I think these roles are growing. For the most part, NGOs could be agents of change. Let me again use examples from Darfur. You have a situation where, at the height of the conflict in Darfur, there were over 300,000 people dead, according to UN figures. But more importantly for the role of NGOs, 2 million were internally displaced – out of a total population of 7 million – in scores of IDP [*internally displaced person*] camps. That is a huge number. Although the peacekeepers had the role of facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need, they did not have the needed humanitarian materials. It was the NGOs and the humanitarian community as a whole that provided for the basic needs of the people in the camps. NGOs and some Western countries behind the NGOs spearheaded the delivery of food, clothing, education and health assistance that was vitally important.

By the time I left Darfur, the number of people in the IDP camps by some estimates had gone down to about 1.3 million, which is not bad. One of my self-proclaimed standards for how well we were doing as peacekeepers was to see these numbers further reduced. There were people in the camps born there who were now 6 years, 7 years old. To me, this is sowing the seeds of future disasters and conflicts, because that's the pool from which to recruit the extremists, people who are disillusioned and who know nothing of this life beyond turmoil. I am really pleased that number has gone down drastically.

Even then, there are also problems. In the case of Darfur, there is Jebel Marra, an area between the north and south of the region which is very hilly and was not accessible for about a year because the armed movements and the government were constantly engaged in military operations. I succeeded, as Head of the UN mission, in opening this area. I physically went there myself, accompanied by troops and close protection. I had to negotiate my going there with the government so they would suspend their activities while we were there. I brought NGOs and the humanitarian community with me. Three months later they had not supplied any relief materials. They said, 'We cannot go there and supply but rather need an assessment mission'. That annoyed me. I asked, 'What more assessment do you need?' If you haven't supplied these communities for a year, at least the starting point is to bring what used to be supplied the previous year. So the humanitarian aid relationship was not without its problems.

On the peace process itself, the role of NGOs is more complicated, because they often tend to become advocates for the armed movements. In effect, they take sides, so the UN or any Mediator can have very difficult relationships with the NGOs because the role of the mediation is to reconcile sides. In a sense, the NGOs complicate the situation. They are a thorn in the flesh of the serious peace negotiator. Of course, they also remind us of how to deal with the interests of the armed movements.

There is another downside, which is that for fund-raising they have to tell donor countries, usually in Europe, that things are bad and getting worse. To me, that affects their credibility because they send reports to their headquarters which are not always consistent with the situation on the ground. So, yes, they are the conscience of peacemaking and peacekeepers. But they tend to exaggerate the bad and downplay the good. For example, they often criticised me for giving the figures that show that some IDP camps in Darfur are empty and the number of IDPs is contracting. This will mean less funding for NGOs. And then you have organisations such as Save Darfur (which is based in the US) and, with regard to Myanmar, exile groups from Myanmar in London, the US and Bangkok. They want the UN Special Envoy to take sides and condemn the government. You cannot be successful as a mediator if you are not seen as impartial by both parties.

I've compared my relationship with NGOs while engaged in peacemaking in Darfur, Myanmar and Angola, without trying to be sexist, to dealing my wife: it is difficult to live with her but impossible to live without her. That's my attitude to NGOs. It's a very difficult relationship but it is impossible not to have them, because of their largely positive contributions in addressing the real needs of victims of violence and war. They are advocates for the weak and for those whose voice needs to be heard or heard more loudly.

Myanmar, conflict and development

JJE: *Myanmar seems to be a classic case of the convergence between development and conflict dynamics. Having been involved in the early reform processes there yourself, are you surprised by the ongoing developments in Myanmar? How do you see the country's prospect for taming insurgencies and civil strife?*

IG: There are several parts to that question. Let me begin with your premise and the nexus between development and conflict – which is true. It is difficult because I was given the very mandate as Special Envoy by the General Assembly, and my mission fell under the rubric of the human rights situation in Myanmar. So the focus was narrowed by the mandate. I realised very early on, however, that if all you want to do is to hit the authority on the head for violations of human rights, and call for the release of political prisoners, including especially the most prominent political prisoner at that time, Aung San Suu Kyi, then there is not much to converse about with the Authorities. You, as Envoy, cannot make the most difficult issue the only issue for discussion.

So I tried very hard to at least initiate a conversation and dialogue. Recognising the importance of human rights and democratisation, I broadened the conversation by including linkages with development and humanitarian challenges. You cannot influence people or government if you cannot talk to them. That was one of the problems faced by my predecessor Razali Ismail. For two and a half years, he was not allowed into the country. So, when I was allowed in, I knew I couldn't stay long if all I wanted to talk about was Aung San Suu Kyi. My approach did not find much favour from some quarters in the West, but it ensured that I had the ear of the regime.

This became important in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis, when as part of my conversations with the regime, we were able to gain some access for those providing humanitarian assistance. However, I was not directly responsible for the big break; it was the Secretary-General himself who had to go there. But it was a big break. Initially, the Authorities were very suspicious. They felt that the response of the West might be a cover for regime change. But we contributed, in my view, to calming some of these fears and helping with the humanitarian situation. ESCAP [*UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific*] also pushed for this approach. Noeleen Heyzer, then Executive Secretary of ESCAP, and Professor Joseph Stiglitz, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, actually pushed the line. These efforts extended the conversations in Myanmar on economic reform. My approach paved the way for these kinds of conversations that the rest of world is now having in Myanmar.

I was not totally surprised by the changes because they had their own Seven-step Roadmap to Democracy. I was absolutely convinced that the only way you can really engage with the Authorities is not to try to replace their Seven-step Roadmap, but to broaden it, to make it much more inclusive and to speed it up. When I first met the Authorities, I told them, 'I'm not coming to replace your Seven-step Roadmap. But we have to deepen it, broaden it and quicken it,' because at the rate the Roadmap was going, it was too slow. At the time, they were still on the first step and I asked them, 'Are we planning on going forward for the next 40 years? If so, we will all be dead by the time of the third step!' However, I was convinced that once the Authorities were persuaded, they would continue along the reform path in some way. And they were persuaded. Once I got down to engaging with them and also emphasised that my mandate as Special Envoy, in the context of the Secretay-General's 'good offices' role, was from the General Assembly, they appeared satisfied. This was largely because the Authorities did not want their country to become a subject of Security Council deliberations and Resolutions.

Once they moved, I was convinced that the end result would be that there will be an elected parliament and change to civilian rule. They are not yet a full-fledged democracy. The military still retains a quarter of the seats in parliament. Not only that, the commander-in-chief of the armed forces is nominated by the military and cannot be easily fired. Key ministers and leaders on issues such as defence, border areas, and internal affairs are still in the hands of military, but still, major steps have taken place.

The development aspect still has to be further addressed, however, because that's essentially the root cause of the fighting with all ethnic nationality groups. These armed groups are fighting for resources, power-sharing, devolution of central control and the like. These issues have to be addressed.

The Chinese have wisely realised this because of their particular interests in Myanmar's future. They share 2,400 km of border with Myanmar, and they have helped to check some of the excesses of conflicts that have spilled over into their country. I am guessing that one of the reasons that they have not actively engaged with the opening up of Myanmar is because they realise the kind of resources that Myanmar needs is likely to be provided by the West – through the private sector as well as governments – and this is actually already happening. So I think that the link between reforms and development in Myanmar is very key.

My own recommendation, which I have said publicly, is that Myanmar should really go along the path of political and economic reforms. They are not yet there, but they are on the right track. They have to speed up the processes of political and economic reform, so that ultimately the people of Myanmar will be able to benefit. I've also suggested that Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, should consider changing their name to National League for Democracy *and Development*, because ultimately that's what will get them the support of the people, that's what will address their real needs. That is the way to go, in my view.

China and peacebuilding

JJE: *China appears to see conflict resolution efforts, at least in part, through a development lens – as you've just described in the case of Myanmar. They have been involved in the mediation efforts in countries in your former portfolio, such as Myanmar and Sudan. They helped persuade leaders of Sudan to accept UNAMID. On the other hand, they have been criticised for vetoing or threatening to veto UN Security Council Resolutions and providing arms and support to regimes at war with elements with their own populations. So you have this two-sided coin when considering China's role in peacebuilding. How do you see this role? And do you see any shifts in China's approaches to peacebuilding?*

IG: These are very important and timely questions because I think Syria is the worst demonstration, in recent times, after Rwanda, of the failure of the five permanent members of the Security Council to agree on stopping a conflict. I would strongly make an appeal to both sides, the UK, US and France on one side, and China and Russia on the other, to put the interests of the people who are in conflict first. All efforts must be made to stop the fighting, so that the killings are stopped and the displacements are stopped.

To go back to the approach of the Chinese, let me take Myanmar first. It seems developmental, but not in a direct route. Their major concern is stability. They want stability for two reasons. Firstly, when some of the fighting gets out of hand, you will have negative spillover effects such as refugees and displaced people going across the border. The second reason is that some of the richest ethnic minority groups in Myanmar are Chinese. They obviously know if things get out of hand, they would be obvious targets; there have been cases of this in Southeast Asia before. So, that's a real concern for them.

The main reason for saying that their approach to development is not the direct route is that without stability, you cannot have development.

Somebody once said that international capitalism is a coward. Except in the extractive industries, where as long as they can still take out the oil and gas, there will be economic presence, capital investments tend to avoid uncertainty and instability. In terms of investment in non-extractive industries, such as tourism, agriculture and sectors that would really develop Myanmar, stability is the key. Goh Chok Tong, the Singaporean Emeritus Senior Minister, came back recently from a visit to Myanmar. He said very frankly that stability is the key. How Myanmar authorities manage the conflict in the border areas, particularly the fate of Rohingyas, is becoming a real issue. If these issues cannot be calmed, investment may really be adversely affected.

In the case of Sudan, the Chinese approach is also to try to foster stability. Their activities there are still limited to the extractive industry – oil and gas (even though China now has peacekeepers in Darfur). They have a very good engineering component in UNAMID which drills wells, helping to address the issue of water as a source of conflict. However, they do not play a large role in non-extractive industries in Sudan. But they want stability and believe the peacekeeping mission and the role I played in facilitating the peace agreement was the right one. They were very supportive.

When it comes to the question on disagreements among the P5 [*the five permanent members of the UN Security Council: the US, UK, France, Russia and China*], Syria, sadly, is a victim I believe of what happened in Libya. I can't speak for the Chinese or the Russians; they are very competent to speak for themselves. But as an outsider looking at it and as somebody who has worked for 23 years in the UN and 10 years as an ambassador of my own country, including two years as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and twice President of the Security Council, May 1994 and October 1995, the dynamics I can see is that there is pressure for consensus inside the Council, and consensus among the P5 can be very difficult to achieve. That consensus was achieved in Libya when the Security Council acted under responsibility-to-protect and humanitarian intervention principles; call it whatever you want. It authorised the use of necessary means to protect the civilian populations in Benghazi.

From the point of view of the Chinese and the Russians, this Resolution was subsequently abused and it was handed over almost completely to NATO. The next thing they knew there were bombings, rebel support, regime change and eventually the killing of Gadhafi. For the Russians and Chinese, their reaction to the last action which they authorised in the Security Council is to say 'never again'. If the Western countries want to intervene in Syria, they will now have to do it on their own, without the Security Council's backing and legitimacy and without burden-sharing. The consequences are clear. In the case of Iraq, the US was perfectly within its national right or national interest to go to Iraq. But then without the Security Council Resolution; look at the costs of over 4,500 dead and trillions of US dollars spent, because we cannot share the burden with those who did not authorise the operation. I am afraid Syria in fact is paying for what the Russians and Chinese see as a misapplication of the Resolution of the Security Council over Libya.

But I want to return to where I started. Everyone, including Russia and China, should really put the suffering of the people of Syria first and work together to really stop the fighting and start the political process – principally for the sake of the people of Syria who are already suffering, but also because the consequences for the region, if the war continues, are very serious. It is already a combustible region and this is just adding additional sparks. It is already happening and it could get out of hand.

Prospects in ASEAN

JJE: *My last question is about the evolution of ASEAN's conflict mediation efforts in recent years. You've argued that ASEAN should learn some lessons from the African Union. What are some of these lessons and do you see ASEAN being more active in regional peacebuilding efforts in the future?*

IG: Yes, there are lessons for ASEAN to take from the African Union at both normative and practical levels. First, there are two aspects at the normative level. In the Constitutive Act, the legislative basis of the African Union, it is stated that any country that massively violates the human rights of its own people has lost the right to claim non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. Most countries join international organisations, or they find it attractive to do so, whether it is a regional organisation or UN, because of Article 2, Sub-section 7 of the UN Charter that guarantees non-interference in the internal affairs of member states.

However, the African Union has said that it will not be indifferent when there are massive violations of human rights in any member state. That's new. It is taking the responsibility to protect quite far. They will intervene if a situation of massive violations of human rights occurs. We learned that lesson from Rwanda, where the world stood by while 800,000 were killed in one month by the most direct and primitive means. General Romeo Dallaire, who was the Force Commander of the UN mission [*UNAMIR, UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda*], said, 'If I had had 5,000, 6,000 troops, I could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives.' The tragedies in Rwanda did permanent damage to his psyche and he could hardly recover from that. What did the UN do at that time? Downsized the mission, and at the time of greatest need. So African countries realised that we could not rely on the world to do this and we have to do it ourselves.

The second aspect of normative development is the principle of non-acceptability of change of government by non-constitutional means. The African Union has said that if a member state changes the government other than by constitutional means, they will be kicked out of the African family. This is not just theory. They have kicked out at various times Madagascar, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, and most recently, the Central African Republic. This has discouraged even strong military forces in some African countries which would likely have intervened in the past. I can even suggest that in my own country, Nigeria, a lot of things happening currently would have in the past led to military intervention. But now they know if they do, the first thing to happen to their country is suspension from the organisation.

The third lesson comes from NEPAD – the New Partnership for African Development. The African Union has set up what they call the APRM – African Peer Review Mechanism – which remains voluntary but is growing in importance. NEPAD is an arm of the African Union, and deals with issues of economy, development and so on, somewhat similarly to ECOSOC, the UN Economic and Social Council. While the APRM is voluntary, there are not less than 33 members, maybe more, which is not bad, out of a total of 53 African countries. They subject themselves to peer review in three areas: economic governance, political governance and corporate governance. This is not meant to punish anybody but to ensure best practices. For those who are not doing so well, what lessons they can learn from those who are doing better. But it is a very intrusive process. Experts would go talk to trade unions, NGOs, civil society groups, the governments and others to see how well a country is doing in terms of economic, political and corporate governance. Those are the three normative and practical lessons for ASEAN from the African Union.

Another lesson is the African Union's actual deployment of peacemakers. The largest peacekeeping mission in the world, UNAMID, was staffed mostly with African troops.[1] The budget was almost 1.8 billion a year. Somalia, meanwhile, is a fully African mission – the African Mission in Somalia. The mission supports the Somali government, the first functioning one in years, and has combated Al Shabab when traditional UN peacekeepers were not able or mandated to take such actions. The mission has helped the government to take control of the capital and a major port city. It gives hope to the people of Somalia and brings a broken country back together. Those who have been there say it is thriving.

With regard to piracy off the coast of Somalia, there was not even one such case in the year 2012. For piracy to function, you need the mainland. The mainland is getting better and thus it discourages piracy. The African Union mounted the ongoing mission in Somalia largely independently, with the European Union and the UN only involved in the sense that they are helping pay the bills, and with logistics and finance. The troops are largely from the African Union. Even in Mali, the majority of troops are African, despite the existence of the UN umbrella.

As to whether or not ASEAN will pursue more robust peacebuilding activities, I am not very optimistic. I've only been here in the region for six months, but I don't see any push by ASEAN to move in the direction of much more proactive peacemaking, let alone peacekeeping. In the African Union, you have countries willing to commit their own resources: Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Algeria and Libya pay 75 per cent of the budget of the African Union, and a few others such as Senegal, Kenya and Uganda use their own national resources to support African-led peacekeeping.

In West Africa, you have ECOMOG – the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group – which went into Liberia and Sierra Leone. Most of the troops there are Nigerians and they have suffered a lot of casualties. In January 1999, Nigeria lost 800 soldiers in one month and they are still in peacekeeping. Which other country in the world would lose that many and still be in peacekeeping? The US lost 17 or so soldiers in Somalia and then said never again would any American serviceman die in any conflict in Africa, and they've pretty much kept to it. If you look at Liberia where you'd think America has the moral responsibility to settle the conflict,[2] when they succumbed to pressure to act, they merely stationed naval ships off the coast. Most of the real work was done by Nigeria and ECOMOG. You have to have one or a few countries willing to take the lead and commit their resources and troops as well as provide political commitment.

Unfortunately, I don't see that in ASEAN. Maybe my stay is too short to reach a conclusion. But it is not obvious, at least in my six-month stay at RSIS [*S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies*]. But I hope that at least they can move on the normative front and also do what the UN has done in terms of mediation. I think I am probably the first non-Western person to hold the position of Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs at the UN in its new configuration (in 2005, 2006 and part of 2007).

While in that position, one of the things that I am proud that I left as a legacy is the creation of the Mediation Support Unit. Before that, UN Special Envoys had to rely on their own devices and received very little support. Now, the Mediation Support Unit has grown and they have a roster of experts in mediation. My logic was simple. If you want to do peacekeeping, you have peacekeepers who are trained and on stand-by. If you want to do humanitarian work, you have people who are available, trained and have skills. But when it came to mediation, conflict resolution and peacemaking, there was no stand-by capacity of trained mediators. So I felt that it was time to start that. I am very happy that it has grown and is working very well. Now in Darfur, whenever there is an issue of constitution-making or specific power- and wealth-sharing formulas, you can call on the team. The Unit would send out a team to help the Special Envoy anywhere in the world upon request.

If ASEAN can at least move in the direction of more active peacebuilding, it would be a positive development. The region faces various issues, such as in Myanmar. Conflicts in Myanmar may also spill over to other areas. Even Malaysia and the Philippines have issues, despite the presence of peace agreements. Sometimes I get the impression that some ASEAN leaders think, 'We don't need to do that because we are not Africa.' But peace is indivisible. Threats to peace can occur anytime, anywhere, even if they are not happening now. You have to be prepared. These are the steps that I hope ASEAN might consider taking, in the interest of the people of this region.

Notes

1. As of 31 May 2013, UNAMID had 19,148 total uniformed personnel, 14,085 troops, 342 military observers, 4,721 police (including formed units), 1,073 international civilian personnel, 2,924 local civilian staff and 448 UN Volunteers.

2. The US and Liberia have a complicated history dating back to the latter's founding. See: Roland P. Falkner, 'The United States and Liberia', *The American Journal of International Law* 4, no. 3 (1910): 529–45, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2186239

^ To the top

About the Centre:

The Centre for NTS Studies, based in the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), was inaugurated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Secretary-General Dr Surin Pitsuwan in May 2008. The Centre maintains research in the fields of Climate Change, Food Security, Energy Security, Health Security, as well as Internal and Cross Border Conflict. It produces policy-relevant analyses aimed at furthering awareness and building capacity to address NTS issues and challenges in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. The Centre also provides a platform for scholars and policymakers within and outside Asia to discuss and analyse NTS issues in the region.

The Centre is the Coordinator of the ASEAN-Canada Research Partnership (2012–2015) supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. It also serves as the Secretariat of the initiative.

In 2009, the Centre was chosen by the MacArthur Foundation as a lead institution for its three-year Asia Security Initiative (2009–2012), to develop policy research capacity and recommend policies on the critical security challenges facing the Asia-Pacific. It is also a founding member and the Secretariat for the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia).

More information on the Centre can be found at www.rsis.edu.sg/nts.