

**31<sup>ST</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE**  
***“The Future of the Asia-Pacific: Issues and Institutions in Flux”***

**Welcoming Remarks by Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa,  
Chairman and Chief Executive  
Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia**

**Welcoming Dinner  
Hilton Kuala Lumpur  
22 May 2017**

The Honourable Dato' Dato' Sri Hajjah Nancy Haji Shukri,  
Minister in the Prime Minister's Department

The Honourable Datuk Seri Panglima Wilfred Madius Tangau,  
Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation

His Royal Highness Prince Norodom Sirivudh, ASEAN-ISIS Heads, Members of the Board of Directors of ISIS Malaysia, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of ASEAN-ISIS and ISIS Malaysia, I have the honour and privilege to welcome you to the dinner to mark the opening of the 31<sup>st</sup> Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR). I would like to especially express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Hon. Dato' Sri Hajjah Nancy Haji Shukri and the Hon. Datuk Seri Panglima Wilfred Madius Tangau for talking time off from their busy schedules to grace the occasion this evening.

2. As in the past few APRs, we had been anticipating the presence of the Hon. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia. The Prime Minister conveys his regrets for not being able to come this time. He has had to travel to the Arab-Islamic-American Summit in Saudi Arabia. He conveys his best wishes. We are all aware of how supportive the Prime Minister has been all these years for the APR in particular and for regional dialogue in general. We look forward to his message to this 31<sup>st</sup> APR in his keynote address, which will be read by the Hon. Dato' Sri Hajjah Nancy.

3. In the last 30 years, the APR has grown from strength to strength to serve as a clearing house for new ideas and the incubator of policy recommendations, while

carrying on the advocacy of cooperative solutions and open conversation. These candid discussions, free of official restraint, take place during the organised sessions and on the margins of the conference.

4. The growing number of participants over the years indicates continuing and growing interest in the topics discussed. This is also an important recognition of APR as an important forum for generating ideas and intellectual exchanges. This year, the 31<sup>st</sup> APR welcomes participants from some 26 countries.

5. As with previous iterations of the APR, the 31<sup>st</sup> APR will consider some of the most pressing security issues concerning the region from a comprehensive perspective. This is what distinguishes the APR from some of the other security- and defence-focused forums in the region.

6. The APR has been able to urge policymakers to ensure that dialogue and cooperation, rather than rivalry and contestation, remain the key guiding principles for international relations. This year's APR hopes to further that goal, particularly in light of the many new developments and change and uncertainty in the international arena.

7. The theme of the 31<sup>st</sup> APR is "The Future of the Asia Pacific: Issues and Institutions in Flux." The APR this year convenes six plenary sessions and four concurrent sessions spread out over two days. It will discuss great-power dynamics and military modernisation. It will also look at emergent issues like tensions in cyber space, irregular migration, cooperation in and on the Mekong, the future of strategic trade arrangements, and the power of populism.

8. We are very pleased this year to have greater participation from the private sector, an especially important partner in the debate about the role of technology and national security.

9. We will also have a special panel examining Asian views of America in Asia as well as concurrent sessions dedicated to unfolding events in Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia.

10. Given the importance of ASEAN to the region and the celebration this year of ASEAN's 50th anniversary, it would be remiss to not deliberate on the role and way forward of one of the most successful organisations of its kind in the developing world. ASEAN continues to move forward with its Vision 2025 – the challenge for

policymakers is to ensure a more vibrant, connected and united ASEAN Community that transcends beyond the region's elites to its people.

11. It is precisely because ASEAN is so important to us in Malaysia and this region that earlier today, we convened – and some of you attended – the “ASEAN 50|50 Symposium: Projecting The Future Of A Community,” where the prospects and challenges of ASEAN in the next 50 years were deliberated at length not just by the council of the wise but also by the next generation of leaders of the region. We were honoured to have YB Brigadier General Khairy Jamaluddin, Minister of Youth and Sports, deliver the Keynote Address at the opening of the Symposium.

12. Similar events involving seminars, symposia and conferences on ASEAN are being planned by ASEAN-ISIS member institutions in the next few months to commemorate ASEAN's 50th anniversary.

13. I extend heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our sponsors and supporters: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Malaysia, UEM Group, the Embassy of Japan in Kuala Lumpur, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, The Asia Foundation, Bank Muamalat, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau, and Hilton Kuala Lumpur. Their generous contributions and assistance have once again made it possible for us to successfully convene this year's Roundtable. I also thank our colleagues in ASEAN-ISIS for their unwavering support for the APR process.

14. Let me introduce the Honourable Dato' Sri Hajjah Nancy Haji Shukri, our Guest of Honour tonight. She is a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department. Since 2008, she has been a Member of Parliament for the Batang Sadong constituency in Sarawak, representing Parti Persaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB). She was appointed Minister following the 2013 General Elections.

15. Dato' Seri Hajjah Nancy previously served as a Political Secretary to the Chief Minister of Sarawak. Before joining politics, she was an owner of a business consultancy and was active in various non-governmental organisations, including the Sarawak Federation of Women's Institute. She is a law graduate from Hull University and has an MBA from Ohio University.

16. The Honourable Minister will now deliver the Prime Minister's Keynote Address.