



28th

ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE

2-4 JUNE 2014, KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA



CLOSING REMARKS

by

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BY YBHG. TAN SRI RASTAM MOHD ISA,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ISIS MALAYSIA
4 JUNE 2014

I first attended the Asia Pacific Roundtable as a mid-career diplomat in 1988. I was fortunate to have been acquainted with the late Tan Sri Noordin Sopiee whose great vision and vast intellectual capacity contributed to the birth and subsequent success of the APR. The format of the early roundtables was physically akin to being at a roundtable, where participants were able to maintain eye contact with everyone present. They were held at the ISIS building.

Last year I was invited to moderate one session at the 27th APR. Today I am pleased to stand before you to deliver the Closing Remarks for the 28th APR in my capacity as the Chief Executive of ISIS Malaysia.

When I assumed this post on 1 January 2014, the successful organisation of the 28th APR became one of my priorities. I fully recognised the capacity and capability of my colleagues at ISIS Malaysia to rise to the challenge especially with 27 years of experience behind them. Nevertheless, I challenged them to do better than before. I have been cognisant of the daunting task of organising a major conference of this nature, since I had been involved in organising several summits and international conferences in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before.

Indeed my colleagues have risen to the challenge. You would agree with me that by all standards, this 28th APR has been a resounding success. This year there are 399 registered participants. I could have inflated it up to more than 400. But I will not do so for the sake of credibility and transparency. If the number increases further in years to come we may have to rent a small stadium to hold the APR and the conference may need to be renamed the “Asia-Pacific Convention”.

This year we also have participants who are students of the Singapore Management University (SMU) and University of Southern California (USC) whose average age is well below the age of the APR. We also have the participation, as in the past year,

of young and prominent leaders from Australia and ASEAN under the A2ELP (Australia-ASEAN Emerging Leaders Programme). This is part of the process of rejuvenation that we are looking for in the APR. The wisdom accumulated over the last 28 years need to be passed down to the young people.

Over the last two days and evenings, we have listened to the Prime Minister's Keynote Address delivered by the Minister of Home Affairs. We also heard excellent presentations from the panelists and speakers and engaged in a lively, intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking discussion on a variety of issues of interest not only to us the participants but also leaders and policy-makers around the region. I am heartened that after two days, the attendance and interest remains high and the conference hall is still full of tired but attentive participants.

I believe this interest is due both to the recognition of the importance and usefulness of the APR as well as the good and appropriate mix of topics and issues being discussed at the 28th APR. Added to that, I would say, are the very high quality presentations and active discourse that followed. In that sense, our objective has been met.

If you were to look at the logo of this 28th APR, you may see that it represents many things that can illustrate the situation that prevails in the region: swirling winds of change and turbulence perhaps; yin and yang that could signify balance of sorts maybe; the 3C's that Amb. Ong Keng Yong spoke about, and the three prongs of collaboration between ISIS Malaysia, ASEAN-ISIS and our partners from the world over.

The success of the APR would not have been possible without the full cooperation of everyone involved. It is my pleasant duty to express our sincere appreciation and deep gratitude to them.

First and foremost I would like to thank the Hon. Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, the Prime Minister of Malaysia for his active encouragement to ISIS Malaysia and support for the APR process. I also thank the Hon. Dato' Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid

Hamidi, Minister of Home Affairs for delivering the Prime Minister's Keynote Address and officiating the opening of the 28th APR at the dinner on 2 June 2014.

I express my thanks to the role players, i.e. speakers, moderators and panelists for their immense contribution, intellectual input and expert opinion on the various issues at hand. I also thank all participants for your support, and participation; your comments and questions have helped to further stimulate our discussions.

I wish to pay tribute to our colleagues in ASEAN-ISIS for their continued commitment and support as well as their very helpful advice that enabled ISIS Malaysia to put together the programme for this 28th APR. Due to various reasons, the programme and list of speakers could not be finalised until last Monday, the day we began. This was to be expected.

I thank my colleagues at ISIS Malaysia for their tremendous effort and hard work in ensuring the success of this 28th APR. I especially thank Dr. Tang Siew Mun, ISIS Director for Foreign Policy and Security Studies and Tengku Sheila, ISIS Director for Public Affairs and Conference Services, and their respective teams for their commitment and dedication in making the 28th APR possible. They planned the conference, organised the logistics, issued the invitations, arranged the accommodation, meals and refreshment, and ensured that participants are happy and comfortable. The sleepless nights they endured have partly helped to prevent us from falling asleep at this conference.

I also thank the Management and staff of Hilton K.L. for their full cooperation. This opens the prospect for us to collaborate next year for the 29th APR. I hope they can give us a bigger discount.

Last but not least, I thank our sponsors and partners whose assistance and contribution have been of immense help in making this Roundtable a success: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung; UEM; Japan Foundation; New Zealand Foreign Affairs & Trade; Embassy of Japan, Malaysia; Department of State, United States of America; Bank Muamalat; Asia Foundation; and Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau.

I also thank the media, in particular our media partners: ASTRO AWANI, NSTP, Asahi Shimbun.

To everyone, thank you. To those who are from abroad, enjoy Kuala Lumpur while you are here and have a safe and pleasant journey back to your respective homes. I look forward to welcoming you at the 29th Asia Pacific Roundtable in 2015.