

# DIPLOMATIC VOICE

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## Diploma in Diplomacy 2017's Graduation Ceremony



A graduation ceremony was held on 22 January 2018 for 18 junior officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs upon completion of the 2017 Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) programme. The DiD programme, held from 4 July 2017 to 11 January 2018, aims to develop holistic diplomats by enhancing the officers' knowledge and skills in the field of diplomacy and foreign relations, and preparing them for their duties and responsibilities as Malaysia's representa-

tives to Malaysian Diplomatic Missions abroad.

The graduation ceremony commenced with welcoming remarks by Datuk Mohamad Sadik Kethergany, Director General of IDFR. In his remarks, Datuk Mohamad Sadik spoke on the importance of always maintaining an open and positive attitude and upholding the highest degree of integrity, which are in line with the directive of the Secretary General of the Ministry. At the end of

his Remarks, Datuk Mohamad Sadik shared the inspiring words of former US President Barack Obama: "Don't just get involved. Fight for your seat at the table. Better still, fight for a seat at the head of the table".

The guest of honour at the ceremony was The Honourable Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia. In his Address, Dato' Sri Reezal Merican, among

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## Dato' Seri Ramlan Ibrahim

Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia

Dato' Seri Ramlan Ibrahim has contributed a message based on his first year as the Secretary General.

### “WALKING THE TALK”

It has been just over a year since I assumed the post of Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 1 January 2017. I am grateful for, and honoured with the trust and support Foreign Minister Dato' Sri Anifah Aman and Deputy Foreign Minister Dato' Sri Reezal Merican Naina Merican have given me in carrying out my duties.

The Ministry marked 2017 with some significant achievements. We successfully pursued Malaysia's foreign policy interests on important issues such as Moderation and the plight of the Rohingyas. We successfully negotiated the safe return of the nine Malaysians from the DPRK. We witnessed significant progress in relations with our strategic bilateral partners such as the US, China and India. The breadth and depth of ties with our Southeast Asian brethren continue to be enhanced. Malaysia remained steadfast in pursuing its regional and multilateral interests on various platforms such as ASEAN, the UN and the OIC.

Having said that, I would nevertheless like to focus my thoughts here on the topic of the Ministry's organisational management.

The general mood at the Ministry now is one of positive transformation, constructive change and delivery enhancement. When I took the helm, I felt that it would be counterproductive to maintain the current course of business-as-usual. Renewed efforts on transformation had to be exerted so that the Ministry kept pace with the spirit and substance of Malaysia's Government Transformation Programme (GTP) and Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), as well as the rapidly evolving globalised world at large. When the country and the world are rapidly pacing onwards, the Ministry cannot be scrambling back to basics. I resolved to change this.

For effective organisational transformation to occur, I believe that the Ministry needs to adopt the desirable qualities of Servant Leadership. Under this man-

agement philosophy, the organisation's leaders achieve their purpose and mission while their subordinates own these achievements as theirs. The leader serves the people he leads. His subordinates are the end in itself rather than the means to an end. Let us focus on meeting the needs of those being led. Let us focus on work, not credit. Let us develop people for their best to surface. Let us emphasise coaching, mentoring and encouraging. Crucially, let us develop a sense of organisational pride and community. Servant Leadership is just one part, albeit a big one, towards the positive transformation of the Ministry.

The Ministry's higher management have and will continue to be receptive of sentiments from the ground. Such feedback contributes to the shaping of effective human resource and administrative policies. I have led a series of informal engagement sessions throughout 2017 at all levels. I am glad that the Heads of Department (HODs) have also held their own sessions with their subordinates. Rest assured that the constructive feedback gathered during these sessions are acted upon. An example of this was the ideas that contributed to the establishment of the Open Bidding System – which I will touch on later.

The greatest asset of the Ministry is its human capital. The Ministry needs to create the right enablers in which everyone competes and cooperates on equal footing. Equal opportunities must be created to harness their full potential. Our human assets need to be empowered. They have to be highly skilled, knowledgeable and professional. They need to fully equip themselves with technology and social media. They need to develop into effective Foreign Service operatives. Their professional and personal growth deserve close attention.

It may seem obvious but I cannot understate the importance of professionalism in the Ministry. We have to inculcate this essential and noble trait in our work and in our loyalty to the government of the day. If, for some reason, officers and staff find it challenging to support govern-

ment policies, they should be principled enough to reconsider their time in the service. Failure to do so and the real consequences will come to bear for them.

Hand in hand with professionalism is the requirement to constantly improve oneself. The Ministry continues to stress the importance of our officers pursuing postgraduate degrees at the Masters and PhD level, not only to better their promotion prospects but also for their professional development. The Ministry's training arm is working hard to tie in cooperation with institutions of higher learning to offer our people more study options, adding to the established IDFR's Diploma in Diplomacy and IDFR-UKM Masters programme. The groundwork has been done in 2017 and I expect IDFR to deliver tangible results in terms of course content and expansion in 2018. Another development to look out for in 2018 is JPA, IDFR and the Ministry's Human Resources Management Division collaborating to implement In-House postgraduate programmes for the Ministry's officers and staff.

In the second half of 2017, the Ministry implemented JPA's pilot Leadership Coaching and Mentoring programme. Under this programme, I mentored three officers. They have found the programme of significant value as they were able to gain valuable insights and experience into the day-to-day work of the office of the Secretary General and of higher management. The lessons learnt should prepare them in good stead for future challenges. Recognising the benefits of this programme, the HODs have also been tasked to take on their own mentees. I am comforted that the HODs' reports on this have thus far been encouraging.

A “Committee of Elders” has also been formed, comprising the three Deputy Secretaries General and myself. The purpose of the committee is to decentralise key decision-making on certain matters from the sole office of the Secretary General in order to promote transparency and objectivity. The committee is in a better position and composition to make objective assessments. For instance, the *Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang*



(APC) or Excellence Service Awards for 2017 was collectively determined by this committee. Moreover, this committee had in 2017, scrutinised the quality of the output such as reports from all Missions overseas in order to produce objective assessments of the performance of our Heads of Mission. The “Committee of Elders” will continue with their work in earnest in 2018.

Traditionally, higher and senior management evaluate subordinate officers – and for sound reason. Nevertheless, the Ministry has recognised the importance of senior officers being evaluated by their peers and subordinates. Towards this end, the Ministry has placed greater emphasis on 360 degrees assessment of its senior officers to present a more objective, fair and holistic evaluation of them. Additionally, psychological testing has been introduced to profile senior and mid-level officers. These innovative and non-traditional human resource tools, complemented by traditional forms of work performance assessment, help us in the professional development of officers, as well as succession planning of the Ministry and Missions abroad.

Training and mentoring to enhance the Ministry’s human assets are indeed vital. Of equal importance too is fostering the ideal environment in which our human capital may thrive. Such an environment comprises meritocracy, high morale, healthy competition and transparency. 2017 has seen, and 2018 will see the retirement of a large number of senior Foreign Service officers – leaving senior grade vacancies to be filled. Performers who let their work speak for themselves will be rewarded. We have witnessed this with the promotion of deserving officers based on merit and not on seniority in 2017. More will come in 2018. Sadly, we have also seen non-performing senior officers who feel that they are entitled to promotions by virtue of their years in service. I am afraid that this will no longer be the case. If they continue to be a liability to the Ministry, they have to accept that the government does not owe them a living.

The Ministry has continued to work hard in championing meritocracy, raising morale and promoting transparency. Taking on board feedback from officers and

staff, as well as best Foreign Service practices from abroad, one of the more exciting mechanisms the Ministry has introduced is the Open Bidding System for foreign postings. The system was developed in 2017 with the first batch of foreign assignments for open bidding introduced in early January 2018 – for M41/44 officers. The next phase will be open to M48/52 officers. The plan is to also eventually have executive officers and personal assistants pursue their foreign assignments via open bidding. The system is designed to enhance transparency, fairness, promote competition and self-improvement, and prioritise meritocracy. Excitement over this development is understandably palpable. The system will be continually improved from lessons learnt and constructive feedback.

While it is crucial to identify, develop and nurture talent at the Ministry, we must not shy away from separating the wheat from the chaff. The Ministry has upped its efforts in identifying the non-performing, the non-motivated, the destructive and abusive, as well as the corrupt within our midst. This process is ongoing but you and I have witnessed the early fruits of this necessary labour. Some have been recalled from abroad. Some have been retrained and counselled. The irredeemable have been transferred.

The focus on integrity and accountability will be carried on from 2017 to this year. The Ministry undertook its anti-corruption pledge with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission last year. Seriousness on this has been demonstrated with reports of mismanagement thoroughly investigated within the Ministry and at Missions abroad. Disciplinary and administrative action have been swiftly taken against culprits – as seen with some visible cases in 2017. The Deputy Secretary General for Management Services, Head of Integrity and Head of Internal Audit will continue to be fully empowered to investigate and take action on credible reports of wrongdoing in 2018.

Innovation and creativity are other key areas in which the Ministry has placed more weight on in 2017. We have carried out various programmes in line with the government’s NBOS initiative and we have also recently established a new Innovation Unit which reports directly to

the Secretary General.

As in 2017, the Ministry will continue to rationalise our resources. The ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat (AMNS) was the first department to be restructured early that year. This was done to optimise and streamline that department’s resources, as well as to introduce the flat-chart concept and lateral reporting. Other departments have followed such as the Bilateral and Multilateral Affairs departments, with positive results. We will also see concrete developments regarding the rationalisation of our Missions abroad in 2018. While we seek to rationalise and at times, right-size our resources, the Ministry will always ensure that results are in no way compromised.

Before I conclude, I wish to touch on an emerging and worrisome pattern emanating from some of the Ministry’s retired senior officers. These individuals have served the government for decades and received the facilities, entitlements and allowances of the Foreign Service throughout their careers for themselves and their families. However, upon retirement they have ostensibly chosen to turn against the government of the day. Their decision to ally themselves with the dissenting voices do raise questions regarding principles and ethics. The Ministry will address in closer detail and counter this trend in 2018.

2017 has indeed been an eventful and productive maiden year for me as Secretary General. Solid groundwork has been laid in 2017 for sustainable positive organisational transformation to press on in 2018. This year, the implementation of new projects such as the Open Bidding System will be accelerated. Planned projects and initiatives will continue to roll out. Important developments such as the rationalisation of Missions abroad will take firmer shape. The focus on enhancing English language competencies will be intensified. Meritocracy, transparency, integrity and human capital will always be championed.

Exciting times lie ahead for the Ministry and I call on all officers and staff to help me achieve exceptional success in 2018. 2017 was a year of planning and “talking the talk”. I now invite all of you to join me in 2018 as we focus on “walking the talk”.

# Combating Terrorism and Extremism: Beyond Religion and Moderation

Mohamed Jawhar Hassan

This forum is exploring the role of moderation and religion in combating the scourge of terrorism and extremism. It is focusing on terrorism and extremism that involve Muslims, in particular the terrorist groups Daesh and its affiliated groups and Al-Qaeda.

The understanding is that terrorist groups involving Muslims are driven by extremism and perverted teachings of Islam. The most vulnerable for radicalisation and recruitment in Muslim countries are those who are poor and oppressed. In non-Muslim countries it is the socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalised Muslims.

The strategy to confront this problem has accordingly been two-pronged. The first is “hard” or punitive. It comprises security measures to locate, apprehend and eliminate the terrorist groups and destroy their support structure. The second is “soft” or preventive as well as curative. It has focused on neutralising and countering the propaganda appeal of the terrorist groups, in particular the highly sophisticated online propaganda and cultivation methods of Daesh.

A central focus of the counter terrorist narrative is the promotion of moderation and the true teachings of Islam to counter extremism and the corrupted versions of the allegedly “Islamic” injunctions pedalled by Daesh and similar groups. The counter-narrative is also employed in de-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes in countries like Malaysia, where the commitment to combat terrorism is total.

This strategy has chalked up some remarkable successes. Osama bin Laden is no more. Al-Qaeda lost its haven in Afghanistan and its infrastructure is severely crippled. Daesh has been routed from its citadel in Raqqa and has lost nearly all its territories in Iraq and Syria. It can no longer boast the territorial trappings of a caliphate. From an insurgent organisation that could engage with conventional armed forces as well as carry out terrorist acts against civilian

targets it has been reduced to a guerrilla force that is more akin to a typical terrorist organisation.

But the terrorist threat posed by Muslim groups remains grave in the volatile conflict zones of West Asia and Africa. Besides Muslim insurgent groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan and Boko Haram in Nigeria, what remains of the Al-Qaeda and Daesh are re-grouping and even recruiting afresh. The two organisations have become more decentralised in their structure, with cells and affiliates in several countries across Asia, Africa and Europe.

In the conflict zones of Syria, Iraq and Yemen they operate amongst other terrorist groups, guerrilla and insurgent movements, government forces and foreign military elements. Locations in the United States and Europe remain a priority target. Southeast Asian countries continue to serve as transit points, source for recruits and potential targets for terrorist attacks.

Extremism is even more pervasive. It is growing in many societies, Muslim as well as non-Muslim. Xenophobia and Islamophobia are on the rise in Europe and the United States. The large influx of refugees and emigrants fleeing the conflict zones of West Asia and Africa has contributed to this.

Both regional governments and foreign powers have contributed to the turmoil in the conflict zones. They have produced the largest humanitarian crisis since the last World War. Sixty-six million people have been displaced or become migrants. Virtually all are Muslims. Most are women and children.

Insufficient capacity; incomplete intelligence; poor coordination among security agencies within states; and trust deficits among some countries are a few of the reasons why the global counter-terrorism drive has not been as successful as desired.

But there are two more fundamental factors that have impeded progress.

The first is the reluctance to recognise and address the root causes. The root causes are skirted for fear that they could highlight one’s own culpability. Unless the root causes are addressed, it would be difficult to neutralise the threats in any sustainable manner.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, U.S. bases in Muslim lands and what it considered corrupt Muslim regimes were the root factors that bred and drove Al-Qaeda. It declared a holy war against the United States, and militants linked to it launched the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Daesh grew out of the anarchic conditions that followed the U.S. illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003. It drew most of its recruits and arms from the defeated Iraqi armed forces. It has evolved since to draw support and recruits from Muslims in many parts of the world. Outside the conflict zones, the largest number come from European countries.

The many violent conflicts in West Asia where foreign powers are also involved continue to be a magnet for Muslim fighters in the region and from abroad. U.S. military involvement and support for Israel in particular enrages the Muslim world.

One of the best researches into why Muslims become terrorists is that done by Dr Anne Speckhard, Director at the International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism. Dr Speckhard interviewed nearly five hundred terrorists, their families and close associates in nine countries and Western Europe. I quote from her findings:

“According to my research, those who reside in conflict zones are most often primarily motivated by trauma and revenge as well as frustrated aspirations. They most often have family members who have been killed, raped, tortured, imprisoned or otherwise unfairly treated. They may have lost their home, territory, jobs and resources and may be living under occupation. Often there are checkpoints and conflicts that keep

them from engaging in their studies or block them from steady employment."

"They are angry, hurt and easily resonate to a group that offers to equip them to strike back. They often want their enemy to feel the same pain they do and even if they know their terrorist act may be futile in every other way, they may be willing to even engage in a suicide attack in order to express their outrage, make the enemy suffer similarly, and sometimes even to end their own pain. If they are highly traumatised, a suicide mission may offer them psychological first aid of a short-term nature – they can honourably exit a life overtaken by psychological trauma, painful arousal states, flashbacks, horror, anger, powerlessness, survival guilt and traumatic bereavement. If the group is good at selling suicide they may even believe that they immediately go to Paradise, also earn Paradise for their family members, and that they will reunite with lost loved ones by taking their own lives in a suicide attack."

In Europe, which is outside the conflict zones, her research showed that "marginalisation", "discrimination", "unemployment", "underemployment", "frustrated aspirations" and "anger over geopolitics" were among the significant motivations depending upon the country and the context. The largest number of people who joined the terrorist groups, over five hundred, came from Belgium.

The quote below is from an article which appears in *The Conversation*, the Australian media outlet which carries articles from the academic and research community:

"Observers in the West who want to claim that Islam is to blame for IS and use it as further proof that the religion is inherently violent, ignore other root causes of the moment."

"These include the history of European colonialism in the area; US and European support for a number of ruthless Middle Eastern dictators; and the insta-

bility created by the American invasion of Iraq after the events of September 11, 2001."

"It's juxtaposed against these recent events that groups such as IS dream of reconstituting what they romantically imagine as the powerful Islamic caliphate."

"The fact is that religion's ability to neatly differentiate between "believer" and "unbeliever", and between "right" and "wrong", makes it a powerful ideology. In the hands of demagogues, religious discourses – used selectively and manipulated to achieve a set of desired ends – are very powerful."

The second fundamental factor that has impeded progress in the global counter-terrorism drive is actions that continue to be taken by various powers that further aggravate the environment that breeds terrorism and extremism. These actions are taken even as concerted efforts are being made to contain the terrorist threat.

If there is a watershed event that triggered the rise of Muslim militant and terrorist movements it is the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their land following the establishment of Israel in 1948. Before 1948 there were hardly any terrorist organisations composed of Muslims. Neither did they dominate the terrorism landscape in the manner they do now.

This event was followed by other landmark events that ignited fresh waves of militant and terrorist activity. They include the illegal occupation and continuing annexation of Palestinian territory by Israel beyond the 1967 border; Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979; Iraq's invasion of Iran in 1980; the U.S. attack on Afghanistan in 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003; the contest for regional supremacy between Saudi Arabia and Iran; the Arab Spring that began in 2010 which quickly turned into the Arab Winter; and the Syrian civil war that broke out in 2011. Major powers

outside the region aided and abetted or were directly involved in these conflicts.

American policies and actions in West Asia have become even more interventionist in recent months. The recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on 7 December last year outraged not only Muslims but most of the world. Palestine has been threatened with further coercive measures. Intervention in the domestic affairs of Iran has become blatant.

These actions have further fuelled Arab, Iranian and Muslim anger. They worsen the ecosystem in which terrorism and extremism thrive.

The present counter-terrorism strategy has to be enhanced significantly if the scourge of terrorism among Muslims and to the rest of the world is to be eradicated effectively and sustainably. The existing hard and soft security measures are of critical importance. However they require to be situated within a more comprehensive and holistic approach that seeks to foster an environment in which terrorism will have no appeal and becomes irrelevant.

The mounting humanitarian catastrophe and bloodshed cry out for urgent action. West Asia has to be transformed from a region of sustained turmoil to a region of sustainable peace. This calls for a frank appraisal of the drivers of discontent, hostility and conflict at home and between countries in the region, and for the states concerned to address them squarely.

It also calls on foreign powers to desist from being very much a part of the problem even as they endeavour to help contain the terrorist threat.

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 Tan Sri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan is former Chairman and Chief Executive, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. These are his personal views.

# The Fourth Industrial Revolution and its Impact on International Relations

Norraihan Zakaria

## Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, also referred to as 4IR is affecting every layer of society. Relations and interactions between and within state or non-state actors too are no exception. 4IR will require everyone to unlearn and relearn the way things are perceived and conducted in world politics. If the previous industrial revolutions are marked by certain inventions – steam engine in the first, electricity in the second and computer in the third – the cornerstone of 4IR is the digital revolution. The founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, Professor Klaus Schwab characterizes 4IR as a revolution that has much more ubiquitous and mobile internet in compact but more powerful and cheaper sensors (Schwab, 2017: p. 7). Contrary to some views, he posits that 4IR has already begun and is not an extension of the Third Industrial Revolution. Instead, it is fusing the physical, digital and biological realms altogether. The velocity and scope of 4IR combined with emerging technological trends in Automation, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning, and Robotics, among others, will fundamentally metamorphose the entire field of International Relations. These impacts need to be assessed so that states' readiness to face the future could be gauged.

## What to expect in 2025?

Professor Schwab highlighted 23 specific technological advancements or tipping points that would hit mainstream society in less than ten years (Schwab, 2017: p.121-172). Among the tipping points are by 2025: the first implantable mobile phone is available in the market; the first government to utilize Big Data as sources for its census; the first AI machine on a corporate board of directors; the first 3D-printed car in production; the first 3D-printed liver transplant; the first artificial memory implanted in human brain; and the first human with genome intentionally altered is born. By

2025, driverless cars constitute 10% of the total number of cars on US roads, 90% of the world population have regular access to the internet and free unlimited storage, while 80% of them have their digital presence imprinted on the internet.

## Impacts on International Relations

4IR combined with these groundbreaking technologies that are steering the hyper-connectivity between people and people, people and things, things and things at an exponential pace and beyond physical borders have five paramount impacts on international relations.

**First, the diffusion of power from nation-states to individuals or loose networks of individuals will be accelerated.** When powerful supercomputers in the form of smartphones are in almost everyone's pocket, virtually anybody could exert influence that would have been unthinkable in the past. Julian Assange of the WikiLeaks saga portrays how an individual is able to humble down a powerful state, the US government, by publishing thousands of secret files on Afghanistan, Iraq-war log, diplomatic cables and hacking the emails of a presidential candidate (Thuburn, 2018). Edward Snowden's intelligence exposé on internet and phone surveillance is another instance that demonstrates how an individual micro-action could be detrimental in destabilizing foreign relations of a nation-state. Whether it is on transparency, manipulation or disinformation of foreign policies, international relations are no longer under the sole purview of the nation-states.

**Second, ubiquitous internet permits international relations to global scrutiny.** President Trump's announcement on recognising Jerusalem as the capital city of Israel and ordering the move of US embassy from its current location in Tel Aviv to the holy city sparking worldwide outrage is a pertinent example.

Solidarity-with-Palestine protests are seen on the streets of Beirut, Jakarta, Istanbul and Kuala Lumpur. The fulminations of Trump's declaration are also shown in multiple social media platforms including by New Zealand singer-cum-songwriter, Lorde and US model, Bella Hadid. The US President's slur on tweeter, the claim of having a bigger and functional nuclear button than the North Korean leader too has been criticized as 'spasm of a lunatic' (CNBC, 2018). Beside public scrutiny, prompt and immediate feedbacks are often demanded on 24/7. Nation-states who fail to live up to public expectation are seen losing the control. Thus, 4IR will constantly be challenging the centrality of nation-states as the rational actors that determine what is good or bad for mankind.

**Third, the international border of a nation-state will be more porous.** Manufacturing, accommodation, food services, agriculture, transportation, warehousing and retail trade are among the most anticipated sectors to be severely hit by rapid cutting-edge advancements. PwC UK claims that by the 2030s, US risks 38% of its jobs to automation whereas Germany with 35%, UK with 30% and Japan with 21% (McKenzie, 2017). Automation is also believed to affect 56% of the total labour market in ASEAN-5: Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam (McKenzie, 2017). The replacement of human jobs with automation, Robotics or AI reduces huge labour costs and eventually slows down Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) from coming into the 'cheap-labour' nations. With thousands of worldwide jobs affected, job seekers are expected to turn to online labour platforms for potential and future employments. Workers get hired to work for companies which are based in other states without leaving their own countries. The porosity of borders enables virtual workers to cross in-and-out international frontiers without valid visas or working permits and in the absence of immigration or customs

clearance. Hence, having multiple jobs and job hopping would be the 'new normal'.

#### **Fourth, the domestic and international political domains are blurring.**

The issues surrounding virtual or online workers could accentuate the blurring of these two realms. In the case of virtual workers, online platforms are not the real employers. Who then safeguards the workers' entitlements, pensions, basic rights or minimum wages? Which labour laws are applicable to them: their countries of origin or the countries where the companies are based? Are virtual workers subject to certain taxes? If so, who collects them? The current model of employment which houses the employer-employee relationships under a domestic territory could not accommodate the issues associated with virtual workers. In 2016, two UK drivers won a lawsuit against UBER claiming that their basic rights of sick pay, holiday pay and a guaranteed minimum wage were denied (Johnston, 2016). The groundbreaking decision signifies a monumental victory not just for the two drivers but 40,000 UK drivers who are no longer classified as self-employed workers, but as employees of UBER (Johnston, 2016). As the domestic-international political lines are blurring, collaborations between state and non-state actors that supersede the traditional dichotomy become mandatory.

#### **Fifth, the scope of power politics will be further widened.**

The classic claims of Thucydides, 'power is the final arbiter' and 'might makes right' still prevail in today's International Relations. The scope of power politics nonetheless, has been expanded to consolidate military might, economic dominance, political supremacy and AI advancements. The span of power politics cuts across land, sea, space and cyber space. Machines or robots that have human-like abilities are often perceived as make-believe in movies. However, the convergence of machines with human capabilities has finally arrived with 4IR.

Tomorrow's wars are not just fought by drones but by machines with human cognitive ability and intelligence. The future of arms race will be in the domain of AI. As Russian President Vladimir Putin aptly puts it, the development of AI brings huge opportunities and unpredictable threats but "whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will be the ruler of the world" (Meyer, 2017).

#### **Recommendations**

No single nation-state is capable of facing the magnitude of these prime impacts alone. Nation-states have to adapt and lodge several key action plans to cushion the tsunami-like-effects of 4IR:

#### **Regular dialogues with major stakeholders are a must.**

As broached by TN50, the era of the government knows everything has ended. Policymakers ought to be in the lead to engage with the players in industries, businesses, education sectors, non-governmental organisations, think-tanks, researchers, societies and informed individuals so that the depth of the impacts could be assessed and plans to address them could be drafted.

#### **The stakeholders' dialogues should be venturing more into the opportunities rather than fearing from it.**

4IR is not merely about risks. Despite the anticipation of vast job losses, major breakthroughs in health sciences, Robotics, AI too help to improve the quality of millions of lives.

#### **Heavy investments in education ought to be among the top priorities to prepare the readiness of the people in embracing massive unemployment.**

Teaching, learning and training for every layer of society must integrate the agenda of 4IR. Therefore, some skills that were acquired in schools, colleges or universities before should be replaced with new needed specific skills.

#### **Nation-states need to utilize Big Data**

**to decipher, monitor and determine the behaviours and values of individuals or loose networks of individuals.** This vital information could assist nation-states to face potential threats, manage future crisis and tabulate certain de-radicalization programmes.

#### **Conclusion**

Everybody will be impacted by 4IR regardless of which generation one belongs to. Despite the colossal challenges, the seed to embrace these impacts needs to be implanted today rather than tomorrow.

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## Malaysia-Lao PDR Bilateral Relations at an All-Time High

Johan Arief Jaafar

Malaysia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic established diplomatic relations on 1 July 1966. Over the past 51 years, Malaysia places importance to its very close and friendly relations with the Lao PDR.

On the bilateral front, His Excellency Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith undertook his first Official Visit to Malaysia since his appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR from 16 to 18 March 2017. While in Malaysia, His Excellency Saleumxay had the opportunity to visit IDFR. Besides training our Malaysian diplomats, the Institute has also trained Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) participants from Lao PDR.

The year 2017 also witnessed the Official Visit to Malaysia by His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR from 9 to 10 May 2017 accompanied by several Ministers including His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith. It was also His Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith's first Official Visit to Malaysia in his capacity as the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR since his appointment in April 2016.

Emphasis of the Visit was on efforts to expand economic cooperation as well as to promote regional and international understanding on issues of mutual interest. Among the highlight of the Official Visit was the Malaysia-Lao PDR Business Forum held on 9 May 2017 which was attended by more than 400 participants representing 200 companies which indicated strong interest from the Malaysian business community to invest in the Lao PDR.

During the Official Visit of His Excellency Dr. Thongloun, the MoU on Science and Technology Cooperation was signed between Malaysia and the Lao PDR. The Official Visit also concluded on a very high note when His Excellency Dr. Thongloun had an Audience with His Majesty Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V at Istana Negara.

In terms of foreign investment, Malaysia is ranked as the fourth largest foreign di-

rect investor in the Lao PDR with Malaysia's investments valued at over USD1 billion through 103 registered projects. In 2016, Malaysia's bilateral trade with the Lao PDR recorded an increase of 74.5 per cent amounting to USD31 million compared to USD17.7 million in 2015.

Malaysian companies have also continued to flourish in Lao PDR. For instance, Savan Pacifica Development Co. Limited, which is the concession holder that operates the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) of Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone, Savan Park (Zone C) has managed to attract 55 license investors to establish their businesses there at the investment value of USD132 million. Several additional Malaysian companies have reportedly also shown interest to invest in Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone after the Malaysia-Lao PDR Business Forum.

With the first ever dry port in Lao PDR operating in Savan Park, it would facilitate transportation of goods and materials linking seven countries by land, namely Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar and China.

As quoted in Lao PDR's English newspaper, *Vientiane Times* on 7 September 2017, in the Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone alone, some 4,163 people have been employed, of whom 4,069 are Laotians. This has certainly benefited Lao PDR and the local community in Savannakhet province.

Another Malaysian company, Mega First Corporation Berhad is involved in the construction of the Don Sahong Hydropower Project located in Champasak Province (bordering Cambodia). The project is scheduled to be completed by December 2019 and expected to generate 260 Mega Watt of electricity upon completion.

Energy cooperation is another vital element in the bilateral cooperation between Malaysia and Lao PDR. The signing of the Energy Purchase and Wheeling Agreement involving Lao PDR, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore during the 35<sup>th</sup>

ASEAN Ministers on Energy Meeting in Manila, the Philippines from 25 to 29 September 2017, would pave the way for Malaysia to purchase up to 100 Mega Watt of electricity from Lao PDR, which would be transmitted through Thailand by 2018. The multilateral power trade arrangement is in the initial stage of the ASEAN Power Grid initiative, which is a flagship project under ASEAN Vision 2020. The project is aimed at enhancing energy security in ASEAN through the establishment of a network of interconnections between the ASEAN Member States.

In view of the changing global financial landscape, the Lao PDR sees its graduation from the LDC status by 2020 as an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness and success of its public policies and economic performance. As such, the 8<sup>th</sup> National Social Economic Development Plan (NSEDPP) 2016-2020 was formulated to assist in the graduation of Lao PDR from the LDC status.

Malaysia has indeed contributed to the efforts of Lao PDR to graduate from its LDC status by providing assistance to the country, especially on capacity building for human capital and resource development through the MTCP and Malaysian Defence Cooperation Programme (MDCP). To date, more than 2,000 participants have attended the MTCP and MDCP courses conducted by various Ministries and Agencies in Malaysia.

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Mr. Johan Arief Jaafar is the First Secretary at the Embassy of Malaysia in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Prior to that, he was in the OIC and Regional Cooperation Division at the Ministry and a Long Term Delegate during the 70<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, 2015. He wishes to take this opportunity to humbly express his appreciation to all senior officers who have guided him at the Ministry.



## Knowledge Sharing Session on *Making Sense of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*

According to Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum and author of *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* book, the world is on the verge of a technological revolution. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, he said, is characterized by a fusion of technologies and he provided examples of dramatic changes happening around us – ubiquitous, mobile supercomputing. Intelligent robots. Self-driving cars. Neuro-technological brain enhancements. Genetic editing.

In order to enhance the knowledge of junior and mid-level officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the topic, IDFR organised a special knowledge sharing session on 26 January 2018 at the Ministry. The session, titled *Making Sense of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*, was led by Mr. Rushdi Abdul Rahim, Senior Vice President of the Malaysian Industry-Government Group for High Technology and Editor-in-Chief of *my-Foresight*, Malaysia's national foresight magazine.

According to Mr. Rushdi, the Fourth Industrial Revolution is driven by exponential advancement in technologies, including artificial intelligence and robotics, space technologies, biotechnology, neurotechnology and the In-

ternet of Things. As a result, among others, technology will be ubiquitous – for example, technology will have ingrained itself into every sphere of human technology; smarter – e.g, technology will understand the data that they are processing; social – for instance, humans will form emotional attachments to technology; and combining in new ways – namely, devel-

opment of new and novel applications of usage. In the future, we will see the rise of machines such as robots, which in terms of productivity, will be cheaper, faster and more efficient. Large number of work will also be at risk of being replaced by automation. In Malaysia, the semi-skilled workers will be most at risk.

Some countries are already preparing for these changes. According to Mr. Rushdi, France, for example, plans to end sale of gas and diesel cars by 2040. India plans to sell only electric cars by 2030. Twenty five per cent of buildings in Dubai should be 3D printed by 2030.

Currently how the transformation will unfold is still unclear. However, to quote



Professor Schwab again, “the response to it must be integrated and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders”.

Mr. Rushdi added that among the challenges with regards to the public sector will be adaptive and innovative culture and value, leadership in a digital and complex world, and optimising talent of people.

The session also drew the interest of Raja Dato' Nushirwan Zainal Abidin, Deputy Secretary General (Bilateral), Dato' Mohd Ashri Muda, Chief of Protocol, and several other senior officials of the Ministry.

## Special Lecture on Malaysia-Africa Relations

On Wednesday, 28 February 2018, a special lecture titled *Malaysia-Africa Relations: Significance to Malaysia's Interest* was organised for officers of IDFR. The speaker was Ambassador Dato' Abdul Aziz Harun, Director of the Centre for Languages and Cultural Diplomacy, who delivered his insights on various aspects of Malaysia-Africa Relations.

Dato' Abdul Aziz is a seasoned diplomat with first-hand knowledge of Africa. He had served as First Secretary in Lagos (now Abuja), Nigeria. He was then

made Undersecretary of the Administration and Security Division and later, became Undersecretary for Africa Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his lecture, Dato' Abdul Aziz enlightened the audience with the general overview, history and background of Africa which is the world's second largest continent in the world after Asia with a total land area of approximately 11,724,000 square miles, and highlighted, among others, the economic and political issues affecting the African

continent such as poverty, endless conflicts, terrorism, war and political violence.

He then touched on the relations between Malaysia and Africa which was formally established after Malaysia's independence in 1957. Our earliest diplomatic Missions in Africa were in Cairo in 1958 and Lagos in 1965. In general, Malaysia's engagement with Africa has largely been under the umbrella of South-South Cooperation, and also the Smart Partnerships through the



Langkawi International Dialogue and the Southern Africa International Dialogue.

Regardless of the various issues affecting the continent, Dato' Abdul Aziz remarked that the African continent has made an impressive economic progress since the last decade. He also highlight-

ed Malaysian companies' investments in Africa, which include Petronas, UEM, IRIS and Sime Darby Plantation. He added that Malaysia's main exports to Africa include electrical products, machinery, palm oil and refined petroleum products, while Africa's top exports to Malaysia are agriculture products, including cocoa beans, minerals, fruits

and natural rubber. According to Dato' Abdul Aziz, the bilateral trade between Malaysia and Africa is expected to surge in the future due to Malaysia's growing influence and presence in the continent.

Dato' Abdul Aziz ended his lecture by sharing about the "5-year Plan with Africa" proposed during the Africa Business Day 2016 by the Minister of International Trade and Industry, which will be led by MATRADE and the Dean of the African Foreign Heads of Mission. The objective is to increase the growth of annual trade between Malaysia and the African region from 10% to 15%; to increase imports from Africa; and to double the trade volume between Malaysia and the African Continent from US\$8 billion in 2015 to US\$16 billion by 2021. Dato' Abdul Aziz also suggested for both Malaysia and Africa to have periodic meetings and visits at various levels and for Malaysia to establish trade agreements with key countries or largest economies in the African continent in order to boost trades and investments.

## *SPKM: Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses 1/2018*

Highly competent and professional home-based staff are extremely crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of service delivery at Malaysian Missions and its related agencies abroad. For this reason, IDFR recently organised the first series of *Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia (SPKM): Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses* for the year from 5 to 14 February 2018. The course was offered to officers from Grade 41 and above and their spouses to assist them in enhancing and developing their diplomatic skills and knowledge.

The course was attended by officers from the Prime Minister's Department, Malaysian Armed Forces, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Immi-

gration Department of Malaysia, Malaysian Nuclear Agency, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Tourism Malaysia, Majlis Amanah Rakyat, Malaysian Palm Oil Board, and Malaysian Investment Development Authority.

Among the modules conducted were *Malaysia's Foreign Policy; Cross Cultural Awareness; Grooming and Social Etiquette; Consular Work at Mission*, as well as *Administrative and Security Matters at Mission*. Two new modules were also introduced: *Malaysian Culinary Arts* and *Enhancing Personal Security*.

The objective of the *Malaysian Culinary Arts* module was to guide the participants on how to cook several authentic Malaysian dishes and to plate them in

a presentable manner. Organised specifically for the spouses, the cooking class was led by Chef Florence Tan and it was held at Rebung Restaurant on 7 February 2018. Chef Tan demonstrated to the participants on how to prepare an appetizer – *pie tee*, two main dishes – *gerang assam* fish and spicy creamy prawns with pineapple, and a dessert – *kuih seri muka*. They were also given tips on how to cook certain dishes using limited ingredients, as they may not be able to find all the ingredients needed in the country that they are posted to.

The *Enhancing Personal Security* module, which was held on the same day, started with a talk by Inspector Gurmeet Singh A/L Sukhdav Singh from



the Royal Malaysia Police. Among the topics covered were on personal safety aspects during overseas assignments and safety precautions that need to be addressed when dealing with emergency situations. This was followed by a martial arts demonstration by Sergeant Nozlan Osman, Corporal Sebastian Anak Luni and Corporal Charles Bin

Patrick. The participants really enjoyed learning the various techniques to defend themselves in cases of emergency.

The closing ceremony for the course was held on 15 February, and the certificates were presented to the participants by Encik Aiyub Omar, Director of the Centre for Leadership, Negotiation and Public Diplomacy

“With the skills and knowledge in diplomacy and international relations learned from the course, I am now more confident in discharging my duties at post. Thus, further enhancing my professionalism.”

**Dr. Siti Najila Mohd. Janib**  
Science Attaché at the  
Embassy of Malaysia, Vienna

## IDFR's Strategic Partnership with Local Universities

Since its establishment in 1991, IDFR has endeavoured to excel not only in the area of training but also providing analytical insight into foreign policies issues which have direct or/and indirect impact to Malaysia. This is consistent with IDFR's mission to strive towards transforming the Institute into a renowned foreign policy think tank vide extensive research and publications. In achieving these missions, IDFR has embarked on forging strategic partnerships with local universities, *inter alia*, as a platform to catapult academic excellence in training and field of research.

Currently, IDFR has established formal collaborations with two

local universities, namely Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The Memorandum of Agreements (MoA) on the collaborations were signed in 1999 and 2017 respectively.

The IDFR-UKM strategic partnership was in fact the first collaboration between the Institute and a local university. The partnership is focused on cooperation in offering a joint Master Degree in Strategy and Diplomacy, where participation for this programme, albeit open for all, provides opportunity for Ministry of Foreign Affairs' mid-level diplomats to pursue their academic excellence.

The newest collaboration with local universities is with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM). The Memorandum of Agreement was signed between IDFR and UiTM in November 2017. The scope of strategic partnership is not only focused on providing academic excellence but has been widened to include mutual understanding in cultural and scientific thoughts as well as personnel exchange. This MoA has further strengthened IDFR's quest to become a renowned think tank specialising in foreign affairs. This was envisioned in the terms of reference of the MoA where both sides shall not only embark on research and analytical



studies but shall also take initiatives to protect the intellectual properties of those studies for future benefits of both sides.

IDFR is currently progressively pursuing strategic collaborations with other local universities. Discussions have been initiated with Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS),

Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). Scope of the collaborations shall be centred on providing academic excellence opportunity for serving diplomats, academic cooperation in organising courses, mainly the Diploma in Diplomacy (DiD) for the Ministry's junior diplomats, Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP),

internship for the universities' students at IDFR and organising intellectual forum, discourses and seminars.

In parallel with the abovementioned initiatives, IDFR has also conducted continuous restructuring process to facilitate its strategic partnership with these local universities as well as other think-tanks. The establishment of the Special Projects Division to spearhead all IDFR's transformation initiatives befitting the purpose of ensuring apposite planning and efficient implementation. The Division is also tasked to incubate discourses in unconventional niche areas of studies and research, namely counter-terrorism, illegal immigrants, non-traditional security threats, ocean and space technology, climate change and aerospace technology. These are amongst subject matters which embody the ongoing Fourth Industrial Revolution gradually gaining tract in the development planning of the nation. Hence, to transform IDFR into a think-tank, quality and excellence are prerequisite requirements which command fullest and uncompromised attention.

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## Future Diplomats Peacegame 2017

It was my great honour to represent Malaysia as one of the participants at the inaugural *Future Diplomats Peace-Game 2017* in Abu Dhabi on 1 and 2 November 2017. Since 2013, the *Foreign Policy* magazine annually convenes leading minds in public governance, international affairs, business and media to "game out" ways to resolve conflicts and issues in the most peaceful manner and without inflicting war.

Believing in the importance of engaging with the next generation of foreign policy makers, this time *Foreign Policy* invited 27 participants from different parts of the world to brainstorm and explore creative ways of maintaining peace in the face of rising threats. The partic-

ipants were mostly junior diplomats at their respective Foreign Ministries and the remaining few were senior students of international affairs from world-renowned institutes. It was even more humbling for me as I was the only representative from the Southeast Asian region.

Considering the rising vulnerabilities concerning cyber security, the subject was chosen as the theme for *Peace-Game 2017*. This was also due to the fact that the corresponding international legislation and shared norms are still lacking at the moment.

On the first day, the participants were briefed by the experts on the funda-

mentals of cyber security and its intensifying threats. The sessions centred on the technical aspect, the existing international framework in addressing the threats and case studies on major cyber-attacks in recent history. It was astounding to note that most of the attacks occurred not because the perpetrators were equipped with advanced capabilities but more so because the victims failed to adhere to the minimum level of defensive mechanism. This was particularly the case when Sony Pictures was hacked by the Guardian of Peace in 2014 and led to the personal communication among the employees to be leaked on the internet.

The second day proceeded with a sim-



ulation whereby the participants were paired and given the role to represent a country or the UN or the EU (I was paired with the participant from Morocco to represent the EU). A scenario was then given by the moderator and the objective was to produce an outcome that would be favourable to all while contributing to the international framework in dealing with cyber-attacks. The disastrous effect of the attack against Saudi Arabia's oil infrastructures and the loss of lives (*the scenario*) triggered us to discuss and eventually agreed with the resolution of having a non-binding UN-led international framework which

would oblige affected states to share the necessary information with the view of preventing future attacks from taking place (*the outcome*).

Despite the limited duration of the programme, I found the experience to be very enriching. With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the further advancement of technology would only expand the cyber space and it would be matched with threats of greater magnitude. As cyber security is expected to take centre-stage at the international fora in the immediate future, it would be a tremendous advantage for diplomats

to equip themselves with a certain level of knowledge on cyber security, particularly considering that nation-states are likewise, expected to engage and negotiate actively in addressing imminent cyber threats and achieve common objectives.

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 Mr. Muhammad Azhari Azmi was a participant of the Diploma in Diplomacy 2017 programme.

## *Strategic Analysis Course for Malaysian Participants*

The Centre for Political Studies and Economic Diplomacy recently concluded its first training programme for 2018. The *Strategic Analysis Course for Malaysian Participants* was held from 13 to 16 March 2018.

The course was designed to enhance the participants' knowledge on strate-

gic thinking and security analysis, as well as to expose them to the changing political, security and strategic environments of the modern world.

The programme was attended by 23 officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister's Department, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interna-

tional Trade and Industries, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Science Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Higher Education, Public Service Department, Royal Malaysia Police, Royal Malaysian Air Force, Royal Malaysian Navy, Royal Malaysian Customs Department, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Malaysian Nuclear Agen-



cy, Malaysian Investment Development Authority and IDFR.

Among the topics covered in the course were *Critical Thinking Tools for Strategic Analysis*, *Blue Ocean Strategy*, *Traditional Security Issues and Challenges*, *Risk Analysis* and *Cyber Security Digital Analysis*.

The course received positive feedback from the participants, and they look forward to applying what they have learned in their daily work.

*Continued from page 1*

others, stressed on the importance of being “physically, mentally and emotionally strong to brave various situations”. He also told the officers to continuously equip themselves with “the relevant skills and the latest tools to engage effectively with other countries and stakeholders” and to “seize the initiative to pursue other avenues for further self-development”, including to pursue post-graduate studies. In addition, Dato’ Sri Reezal Merican indicated his high expectation that the officers would be able to execute their duties “with vigour and integrity, towards protecting and furthering Malaysia’s interests at the international stage”.

This was followed by the presentation of diploma to all the officers by the Deputy Foreign Minister. Five special awards – the Minister of Foreign Affairs’ Award (Overall Best Student); Deputy Foreign Minister’s Award (Best Leadership); Secretary General’s Award (Best in Substantive Matters); Director General’s Award (Best in Report Writing); and Special Award (Best Event Manager) – were also bestowed on selected officers as recognition of excellence in various areas. The recipient



for the Minister of Foreign Affairs’ Award was Ms. Zuliera Zariz Azman Aziz; Deputy Foreign Minister’s Award was Mr. Norafizan Mustafa; Secretary General’s Award was Mr. Syed Nizamuddin Sayed Khassim; Director General’s Award was Mr. Muhammad Azhari Azmi; and Special Award was Ms. Azizah Abd Aziz.

This year, for the first time, the graduates of the DiD programme donned their official

Administrative and Diplomatic officers’ ceremonial attire, for the ceremony.

The ceremony was also attended by Dato’ Seri Ramlan Ibrahim, the Secretary General, Heads of Department and other senior officials of the Ministry, former diplomats, representatives from the diplomatic corps, lecturers, and also parents and spouses of the officers.

## News Contributors

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