

DIPLOMATIC VOICE

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Message from the Director General



Darul Ridzuan and IDFR's Royal Patron. IDFR is also coming up with a commemorative book which represents its journey for the last 30 years.

As we celebrate our first 30 years, we also look forward to our next 30 years. We will strive to build upon the outstanding achievements of previous years and strengthen our vision as a Centre of Excellence in diplomacy and international relations.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest appreciation to all our staff, past and present, for their hard work and dedication, our collaborators for their partnership, our stakeholders for their unstinting support for all our programmes and activities, and to everyone who has contributed to the success of IDFR's programmes and activities.

On behalf of the institute, I hope you will benefit from this publication. I also welcome you to celebrate this historic year with us.

Thank you.

Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid

I am pleased to present to you the first issue of the *Diplomatic Voice* for 2021.

This triannual publication was initiated in 2011 to reach out to diplomacy practitioners and those interested in the areas of diplomacy and international relations. It is a platform for knowledge sharing and is also intended to complement the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' outreach programme.

This year is a very special year for the institute as it celebrates its 30th anniversary. IDFR has come a long way since its establishment as a diplomatic training institute on

1 July 1991. To date, the institute has trained thousands of diplomats and diplomacy practitioners, in programmes under the ambit of diplomatic training, strategic analysis, negotiations, economic diplomacy and languages, among others.

The theme for this momentous year is *IDFR@30 – Shaping a New Generation of Malaysian Diplomats*. The highlight of the pearl jubilee is the Royal Address in July by His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfur-Lah, the Sultan of Perak

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**SHAPING A NEW
GENERATION OF
MALAYSIAN
DIPLOMATS**
1991-2021

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon (TPNW) and World Peace

Mohd Yusof Ahmad

World War II effectively ended when two atomic bombs, ironically nicknamed *Little Boy* and *Fat Man*, were dropped by the United States of America (US) on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945, respectively. Between 129,000 to 226,000 people, mostly civilians, perished from the blasts. More casualties followed from burns, radiation sickness and injuries in the post-blast phase. The final tally of lives lost from the man-made tragedy may never be known. The two proto-type nuclear devices were the first to be used as a weapon of war in human history.

During the Cold War, the Cuban Missile crisis between the US and former Soviet Union again brought the world close to the brink of a nuclear war. Fortunately, reason prevailed on both sides and disaster was averted. Anti-nuclear weapon advocates have warned that war between nuclear weapon states today could cause global catastrophe and destroy all of human civilisation. Estimates by researchers and scholars predict that nuclear war between the US and Russia today could see the immediate loss of tens of millions of lives followed by more casualties in the post-blast phase from radiation, climatic disruption and general socio-political, economic and even civilisational collapse. Even smaller-scale nuclear conflict, experts argue, could risk uncontrolled escalation leading to similar disaster globally given the

inter-connected feature of today's globalised world.

The unimaginable destructive potential of all nuclear war, all-out or limited, underlines the brutal reality that the nuclear option to resolve inter-state dispute, whatever the justification, is therefore extremely dangerous, immoral and unacceptable. Given the unprecedented destructive capacity of today's technologically advanced and sophisticated nuclear weapon, its use, many would agree, is anathema to all norms of civilised human behaviour.

Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, fortunately, the world has not experienced a repeat of its use in inter-state dispute despite the continuing prevalence of numerous inter and intra-state flashpoints driven by differences in political, economic, security, ethnic, ideological, religious, nationalistic and other factors. The welcoming scenario, notwithstanding, major nuclear weapon states like the US, Russia, China, United Kingdom and France (NWS), however, have continued to conduct qualitative research to enhance the efficacy of their respective nuclear asset. Expansion in membership and ongoing effort by others to join the exclusive nuclear club have only accentuated the risks of uncontrolled escalation, miscalculation and accidents that could trigger their eventual use in future conflict. Increased NWS confidence in waging controlled low-level nuclear wars at reduced

cost have added further complexity to the equation.

Efforts to avert such catastrophic possibility have led to a series of bilateral level US-Soviet nuclear arms control negotiation and UN multilateral level initiatives in the past decades resulting in several landmark accords. Hence the signing of the multilateral Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon (NPT) in 1968, bilateral Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in 1987, multilateral Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 and the bilateral US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) series in the 90s. START I, signed by the US and Russia in July 1991, saw both powers agree to reduce their nuclear stockpile to a more acceptable level to both sides.

The accord though encouraging was somewhat flawed. It did not include similar obligation from other NWS such as China, United Kingdom and France and new entrants to the exclusive nuclear club or call for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons owned by the NWS or other nuclear states. Observance of commitment made was also marked by allegations of non-compliance by both sides.

The New START, signed in April 2020, and recently reaffirmed by the new US administration under Joe Biden, has raised hope of renewed commitment to disarmament ideal by the US and

Russia. However, experts have also warned that ongoing qualitative improvement efforts by all sides could undermine the quantitative reduction commitment under the treaty terms. India, Pakistan and Israel's subsequent entry into the nuclear club have also inspired other prospective aspirants, the most recent being North Korea and Iran. The development represents a major setback for the global anti-nuclear and TPNW movement. The real possibility of these devices eventually falling into the wrong hands in the future has raised concern about issues of use, abuse and unintended collateral consequences among non-nuclear weapon states in the global community.

On the positive side, the disarmament accords have reduced somewhat, at the bilateral level, the numerical count of the American and Russian strategic nuclear arsenal. Other commendable movements would include decisions by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to join the NPT, South Africa, Libya, Argentina, Brazil, South Korea and Taiwan voluntarily shelved their nuclear weapon programmes and, after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Iraq forced abandonment of her nuclear ambition.

These positive developments, however, do not obviate the danger facing humanity in the event of war between and among NWS. Data estimates by SIPRI Yearbook 2020 put the total number of nuclear weapon owned by the NWS and the club's new members at 13400 at the beginning of 2020. More than 90 per cent of these belong to Russia and the US, followed by France

(290), India (150), Pakistan (160), UK (215), China (320), Israel (90) and North Korea (30-40). Aside from this, China too has smaller number of tactical nuclear devices not subjected to any existing treaty limit. India, Pakistan and Israel never signed the NPT and North Korea has resumed its nuclear programme after withdrawing from the NPT in January 2003. Iran too has restarted its uranium enrichment programme after the former Trump administration's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in May 2018.

Viewed against this backdrop, the ratification of the TPNW by 50 member states of the UN, including Malaysia, is a significant milestone to rid the world of nuclear weapon. The TPNW initiative, which grew out of the NPT Review Conference in Vienna in 2010, saw the setting up of UN Working Groups in 2015 to advance the cause for banning nuclear weapon world-wide. The development sparked numerous initiatives across the globe involving governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) pushing for a ban on nuclear proliferation to non-nuclear states and the elimination of the weapon among the five recognised NWS states, namely, the US, UK, Russia, China and France. The Treaty was adopted at the UN on 7 July 2017 when 122 member states, including Malaysia, voted in favour. Malaysia and Honduras became the 46th and 50th state to ratify the Treaty in September and October 2020, respectively.

In Malaysia, the TPNW agenda received robust official endorsement. Active regional support for its cause started even

earlier via the ASEAN framework. The KL Declaration on ZOPFAN in 1971 and the SEANWFZ treaty in Bangkok in December 1995 were early initiatives consistent with this objective. The latter Treaty forbids ASEAN member states from developing, possessing or having control over nuclear weapons, thus effectively making the ASEAN region a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. Unfortunately, none of the recognised five NWS have signed the Treaty protocol, which called for their respect and non-violation of the Treaty.

At the civil society level, Malaysian support for the TPNW agenda was championed by such NGO groups as International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Malaysian Coalition Against Nuclear (MyCAN) and *Anak Malaysia Anti Nuklear* (AMAN). ICAN, a coalition of 468 NGOs advocating a ban on nuclear weapon, conducted grass-root campaigns in collaboration with international counterparts to promote awareness and support for the TPNW agenda.

The NWS and the new members of the club have remained opposed to the TPNW. Their decisions to restart and step up their respective nuclear programmes indeed present a major impediment to the positive momentum gained by the TPNW agenda as a legally binding document under international law. Given the current scenario of increasing global uncertainties marked by continuing military competition among NWS and their unwillingness to give up their entrenched nuclear advantage, the increased proliferation impulse among new aspirants is not likely to stop. A more serious commitment to the cause of TPNW by all other states, especially the NWS, is

thus critical, if dire consequences to humanity is to be averted in the future.

The existence of nuclear weapon has become an unnecessary but reversible man-made risk to all countries. In an age of multiple crisis flash points and competing nuclear actors, resorting to nuclear arms diplomacy to deter adversaries or use as leverage in inter-state dispute negotiation is

no longer a tenable option.

The elimination of all nuclear weapon is imperative for the future of global peace, security, and stability. Failure to rein in the nuclear impulse could unleash a nightmare scenario many thousand times more horrific than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tragedy where all will be losers. The cost of failure of a nuclear-based deterrent diplomacy is too

high and too dangerous for all humanity. Against this backdrop, acceding to the TPNW as a core pillar of the global disarmament agenda is not only rational but also deserving of the unequivocal support of all peace-loving states, including the NWS.

Dato' Dr. Mohd Yusof Ahmad is one of IDFR's Distinguished Fellows and was Director General of the institute from 2002 to 2004.

IDFR Celebrating 30 Years of Training Diplomats

Azhari-Karim

Ensuring our diplomats are diplomacy-ready has made up the core training activity at the Malaysian Foreign Ministry's training arm, the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) that is celebrating its 30th anniversary come July this year.

In the 70s and 80s the erstwhile IDFR, operated under two different names, initially as part of the government officers training centre, the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) and ran under the name of the Centre for International Relations and Strategic Studies and later, the Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy. Between these two, the Foreign Ministry was enabled to train our diplomats in the art and science of diplomacy.

In 2006, the "newly-minted" IDFR opened for training of diplomatic officers in its current premises which formerly housed the Foreign Ministry. The Ministry had moved to its own complex of offices situated in the heart of the new

Administrative Capital, Putrajaya.

Upon reflection, in many ways, what has stood out in all these years could be explained in three words: diversity, consistency, and reliability.

Diversity – From the word 'Go' the Ministry has adopted a philosophy of training based on 'diversity of approach'. Officers were encouraged to take up language courses other than English. Interest was also generated among officers to attend diplomatic training programmes at Oxford University, Oxford, the School of Political Science in Paris, the Defence College in Jakarta, Indonesia, and the EU-ASEAN Diplomacy Training Programme hosted by the Philippines. At the same time officers were nominated to further their studies in universities at home and abroad and at their postings overseas.

At INTAN, the Ministry had also introduced an Overseas Orientation Programme for the spouses of our

diplomats. This included subjects such as *Diplomatic Etiquette and the Art of Fine Dining, Public Speaking and Culture*.

Notably, upon the advent of multilateralism, regionalism, and liberalisation in diplomacy during the late 80s and early 90s, and with Malaysia's proactive international role in the United Nations and other related organisations, IDFR began offering training programmes with linkups to similar training outfits in Australia, the United Kingdom and the EU in Geneva, Switzerland, Austria, Indonesia, and Singapore.

For countries in ASEAN, Africa, South America, former Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Indian sub-continent and the Pacific, Malaysia began to conduct through IDFR a multilateral programme on Diplomacy under the Government-established Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) with various courses that included *Strategic*

Analysis, Economic Diplomacy and Cultural Diplomacy.

Consistency – This entails both the Ministry and IDFR taking the necessary steps over the years to streamline the institute's activities and programmes with emphasis on managing standards, achieving recognition, and benefitting the diplomats and the country. The *Diploma in Diplomacy* programme for junior diplomats has this as its objectives. Participants from other Government Ministries and Departments that have their work focussed on external developments have also joined the programme.

Added value has been introduced by engaging lecturers and specialists from the different disciplines and sub-skills required in the diplomacy of today. Linkages and networking opportunities with local and foreign universities as well as the private sector in the field of research and

consultancy have expanded IDFR's activities beyond the country.

Reliability – This asserts the interest of IDFR to become a Centre of Regional Training and Research and Consultancy in Diplomacy and related areas for the region as well as for the Asia-Pacific spread. Working relationships with several diplomatic training institutes have further attested to the institute's high standing and credibility among diplomatic training, research, and consultancy institutions at home and abroad. The four main centres: Political Studies and Economic Diplomacy, Languages and Cultural Diplomacy, Competency Enhancement, and Leadership, Negotiation and Public Diplomacy and additionally, a group of competent researchers and lecturers appointed from the academic community, have all combined to assist IDFR in its programme development and the

strengthening of its research and consultancy competencies.

Looking ahead, with the present and new challenges in global diplomacy, the Ministry and IDFR will take comfort in that they have recourse to draw upon the devotion and strength of the contributions of the four ICONS that have served the cause of Diplomacy, King and Country throughout their illustrious diplomatic careers in the Government: Tan Sri Razali Ismail, the late Tan Sri Zain Azraai, Tan Sri Ajit Singh and the late Tan Sri P. G. Lim.

Dr Azhari-Karim is a former Malaysian ambassador. He can be contacted at azhari@drazharikarim.com. An earlier version titled *Diplomacy Institute Equipped to Tackle Current, Future Challenges* was published by *The New Straits Times* on 9 March and the above is an expanded one by the writer.

The 1982 Convention: Partially or Wholly Successful?

Vivian Louis Forbes

Introduction

The *Third United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, 1982, (the 1982 Convention) came into force on 16 November 1994, twelve months after the deposit of the 60th Instrument of Ratification with the Secretary-General of the UN (Article 308).

The Convention crystallised international law of the sea and brought high hopes for all peoples of the world that it would be a major contributor to the maintenance of peace, justice, and progress of humanity, as well as to the

conservation of the living (Article 61) and mineral resources.

The intention of extended national maritime jurisdiction would benefit new fields of activity, including increased utilisation of ocean space and for the harvesting of marine biotic and exploitation of mineral resources. However, extended national maritime jurisdictional zones has partly been instrumental in creating disputes between littoral states of semi-enclosed seas. Examples abound. However, this article does not set out to name States parties (or others) involved in the issues

raised herein. Rather, it alludes to the issues and the implications of fully implementing the provisions of the 1982 Convention by all States and thereby minimise disputes and the need for compulsory arbitration.

The 1982 Convention established a Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), an International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), and an International Seabed Authority (ISA). Each of the afore-mentioned organisations is in demand to advise on and manage disputes between States parties that have

arisen with the inception of the 1982 Convention. There are other avenues for dispute resolution.

On 10 December 1982 it may have been reasonable, if perhaps somewhat optimistic, to hope that the 1982 Convention would establish a

...legal order for the seas and oceans which will facilitate international communication and will promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilisation of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection, and preservation of the marine environment.

(*Preamble*, of the 1982 Convention)

The Preamble noted, however, that the problems of ocean space are closely inter-related and needed to be considered. One major problem is that of interpretation, or misinterpretation, of the legal, scientific, and technical terminology incorporated in the provisions of the Convention. For example, what constitutes: an island, rock, and reef (Articles 6 and 121); legal and natural bay (Article 10); natural and legal continental shelf (Articles 76 to 85), for the purposes of establishing maritime jurisdictional zones of a coastal and island State? There is a debate as to what, if any, is the maximum permissible length of a straight baseline (Article 5) from which datum, the breadth of the belt of the territorial sea is measured (Article 3).

Nearly Four Decades Later

However, after 39 years of non-compliance continues to be a

problem, deflecting from the 1982 Convention's ability to achieve its stated goals. Due to word limitation of this article, it is not possible to attempt here any comprehensive or detailed survey of non-compliance with the 1982 Convention. Suffice to mention a few varying and persisting examples of non-compliance.

States parties to the 1982 Convention are bound to the dispute-settlement procedure. Between 1982 and 2021, the International Court of Justice handed down its judgement in 37 cases, with eight cases pending; ITLOS offered its advice on seven cases; and the Permanent Court of Arbitration was involved in 12 cases on terrestrial and maritime boundary issues.

Three States parties still claim a territorial sea with a breadth more than the 12 nautical miles as permitted by Article 3; however, there are as many who claim a width of less than is permissible. Some States parties have drawn straight baselines in ways that do not meet the requirements of Article 7, even on the most generous interpretation of the admittedly imprecise provisions of that Articles 5, 47 and 48.

The concepts of Innocent Passage (Article 52), Freedom of Navigation, Rights of Archipelagic Sea Lanes passage (Article 53), and Freedom of the High Sea (Article 87) have been challenged by user states in the seas of Southeast Asia and other regional seas. This is due to continuing non-compliance by State parties and others to the 1982 Convention with many of the provisions therein. Such non-compliance is a matter of serious concern for all the

reasons suggested hereunder. It could – and should – be addressed by States parties making more use of Part XV, Settlement of Disputes; by considering retaliation and countermeasures; and by developing compliance mechanisms for other treaties that indirectly help to promote compliance with the Convention. In some cases, assistance in capacity building may also be appropriate.

The concept of Marine Scientific Research: its conduct and promotion (Section 3, Articles 245 to 257, inclusive) is of major concern to small island developing states and to littoral states of semi-enclosed seas.

There are 168 parties to the 1982 Convention, at least one-third of whom are in breach of at least one significant provision of the 1982 Convention. Such a degree of non-compliance undermines the integrity and legitimacy of the Convention. Furthermore, non-compliance provokes disputes, denies States parties some of their rights, threatens good order at sea, and harms the marine environment.

Twelve States parties have included security as one of the matters in respect to which they claim to exercise jurisdiction in their contiguous zones, contrary to Article 33. A few States parties have sought to delimit an exclusive economic zone and continental shelf from uninhabitable rocks, contrary to Article 121(3). Furthermore, some States parties have transformed reefs and sand cays into artificial islands, thereby seeking extended maritime jurisdiction, as evident within the South China Sea basin and further afield.

A considerable number of flag State parties are in breach of their obligation under Article 94 to exercise effective jurisdiction and control in respect of the seaworthiness of ships having their nationality, as revealed by the record of inspections and detentions of unseaworthy ships carried out by port States under various regional *Memoranda of Understanding* (MoU) on port State control. Such States include those on the blacklist of flag States, and possibly even those on the grey list, published each year by the Paris and Tokyo MoUs.

The reports on the state of world fisheries and aquaculture demonstrate that for many years nearly 50 per cent of fish stocks are over-exploited. This indicates that some coastal States parties are in breach of their obligation under Article 61(2) to ensure that the maintenance of the living resources of their EEZs is not endangered by over-exploitation. Some States parties are in breach of their obligation under Articles 117-119 to conserve the living resources of the high seas. Furthermore, it has been estimated that as much as 40 per cent of the total global marine fish catch is taken illegally and a substantial percentage of marine habitat is damaged.

A few States parties are in breach of their obligations under Article 194(5) by failing to take the necessary measures to protect and preserve rare or fragile ecosystems, for example, by permitting fishing using explosives in the vicinity of tropical coral reefs or by permitting bottom trawling on seamounts and areas of cold-water coral reefs in their EEZs, as was the practice in the seas of Southeast Asia.

Due to the significance placed on accessing jurisdiction over the North Pole and given recent violations of the norms of the 1982 Convention, some experts see risks of noncompliance with any recommendations from the CLCS that would negate a country's submission. And there are concerns as to what constitutes 'historic waters' and 'our adjacent seas'; however, there is provision for 'historic bays'.

Significant violation occurs when a State party refuses to participate in the dispute-resolution proceeding initiated by another party to the dispute. This is tantamount to very clear disrespect for international law. Such disregard for an international treaty can have broad impacts on various multilateral bodies and negotiation processes and bring about wider distrust and noncompliance where one or more States are viewed as violating the borders of a sovereign territory.

The deep sea-bed mining provisions seem almost irrelevant: the supposed virtues of a free exploitation approach are obviously impossible to implement; the supposed virtues of a cartel-control model of economic development are obviously overstated. If the States members of the ISA really have an interest in humankind, then States can participate in modifications of the regime to suit the needs of humanity. Of the other provisions of the 1982 Convention, some might be useful to non-ratifiers and they can continue to be cited as persuasive of the law, even if not formally binding.

Measured Success

There are 168 States parties to the 1982 Convention; 150 States

have agreed to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention; and 91 States to the Agreement relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. The CLCS has received 88 sets of submissions – unilateral and a few joint proposals – of which 35 have received recommendations by March 2021. The ISA has signed 15-year agreements with 21 contractors for exploration of polymetallic nodules, polymetallic sulphides and cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts in the international seabed area (the AREA).

Summary

Some States may seek to downplay the significance of non-compliance with the 1982 Convention by arguing that a certain level of non-compliance is to be expected in any legal system: if it is kept within reasonable confines, there need be no undue concern. However, there is risk of disrespect for agreed multilateral procedures. Some coastal States have not accepted the 1982 Convention because of opposition to some aspect of the provisions of the 1982 Convention without any serious adverse repercussions. Naturally, failure to act on the treaty has drawn regular critiques from many quarters. The 1982 Convention must be accepted as a whole or rejected.

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Keep the Flag Flying: Malaysia's diplomat in the UN

Mohd Hafiz Othman

I have been asked many times why I wish to become a diplomat – a profession that, while rewarding, comes with many challenges and at times demands personal sacrifices. But all the requisites can only be sustained by one attribute: passion. Being a diplomat offers you the ability to promote and protect your country's interests, a unique way to demonstrate your patriotism abroad. And regardless of the assignment, each of us can do our part to make our nation and the world a better place.

Guided by these ideals, like many others in the Ministry, I strive to deliver to the best of my ability. I was blessed that while serving the country as a diplomat to the United Nations (UN) in New York, I also had the opportunity to serve in the UN in numerous capacities. In 2018-2019, I was seconded to the 73rd President of the UN General Assembly (PGA) as the Political Coordinator and Senior Advisor, upon the latter's request. In February this year, I was elected by UN Member States as the Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organisation. The election followed the endorsement by the Asia Pacific Group (APG) Ambassadors in New York to represent the continent as the Vice-Chair for the 2021 session.

Having served as the Political Coordinator and Senior Advisor to the 73rd PGA, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa (former Foreign Minister

of Ecuador) was a privilege but also a huge responsibility. It is for a simple fact – the General Assembly is the most representative organ of the UN and the world's most deliberative and inclusive forum in which all 193 member states meet under the condition of equality. The General Assembly resolutions, decisions, and recommendations also reflect the weight of world opinion. From tackling the root causes of conflict to establishing human rights treaties and adopting the Sustainable Development Goals – General Assembly's deliberations have and will continue to improve and protect the lives of millions of people around the world.

It is no secret that working in the PGA's Office provided the occasions to participate in the engagements between the PGA and many prominent figures. From world leaders to celebrities like Angelina Jolie and BTS (UN goodwill ambassadors) and climate activists like Greta Thunberg – the goal was simply to make the UN fit for purpose and relevant to all people.

Be that as it may, my main task was to lead the Political, Legal, and Humanitarian cluster of the Office. Among others, the team and I prepared speeches, recommendations, and advice for the PGA on a daily basis. We also organised official events and meetings mandated by Member States through the General Assembly resolutions, including her own initiatives. During my tenure

there, the Office facilitated the deliberation of 178 agenda items of the General Assembly – with the adoption of 347 resolutions and 106 decisions. We convened 20 high-level events, 108 formal plenary meetings as well as dozens of informal meetings. A total of 17 inter-governmental negotiation processes took place during the session. The PGA also undertook 22 official and working trips in 30 countries. As the trip leader, I accompanied the PGA for her official visits to Pakistan and Oman in 2019. I also represented the PGA at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting in Caracas, Venezuela, in 2019.

And most recently, I served the UN as the Vice-Chair of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organisation. This Committee considered all proposals concerning the question of the maintenance of international peace and security in all its aspects in order to strengthen the role of the United Nations, including strengthening the relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organisations or arrangements in the peaceful settlement of disputes. I also presided over the Working Group on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes – which is very much the heart of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.



Reflections

The pull of New York City is universally understood. A city that never sleeps – packed with iconic monuments, yellow taxis, and *halal* carts that you can find in almost every corner. But for me, it is the UN that arouses diplomats like myself. New York City is, in fact, home to the largest diplomatic missions in the world with 193 Permanent Missions and more than 100 Consulates – a melting pot of cultures, characters, and talents. Similarly, the UN is an avenue where diversity of backgrounds, gender, aspirations, and aptitudes are embraced and celebrated. At the PGA's Office, I also benefited from a greater understanding of Member States' dynamics and challenges in deliberating critical global issues.

In leading the diverse team at the PGA's Office, I advocated for

inclusive participation of relevant stakeholders in negotiations and decision-making processes. It is also indispensable to be respectful of others' views and treat their opinion as your own, regardless of their rank or position. While recognising the fact that it not always possible to accommodate all concerns, attempts must be made to reach the broadest possible agreement – a bedrock of diplomacy and international relations.

Diplomacy is also about exchanging ideas and information among nations and peoples to foster mutual understanding. Furthermore, it is about making friends, including with those who do not entirely share your views or positions. Irrespective, it is vital to present your arguments in a respected manner. My colleagues who were also seconded to the PGA's Office and with whom I often

had constructive and professional arguments are now among my good friends in New York. As a matter of fact, this relationship grew and often translated into their countries' support to Malaysia's programmes or initiatives, such as the Malaysia-led Joint Statement on Global Ceasefire last year. To put it simply, personal ties and networks, combined with credibility and persuasion, are the heart of the diplomacy process.

I made the point that the UN has coloured my life and shaped my personal and professional growth. On that account, I strongly encourage others to grab the opportunities when they become available.

Mr. Mohd Hafiz Othman is presently a Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations, New York.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the Forum section are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect that of the institute.

Commencement of the *Diploma in Diplomacy Programme*

IDFR welcomed the new cohort of one of its flagship programmes, the *Diploma in Diplomacy* (DiD), on 2 November 2020.

The DiD programme consists of five modules, namely, Diplomacy and International Relations; Diplomatic Skills; Management Services; English Language and Foreign Language and Culture. The programme is a comprehensive learning platform for the officers to inculcate the right attitude, mindset, and values to better equip themselves for the roles and responsibilities in the Foreign Service in the new era.

Twenty-one officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Department were chosen to attend the six-month programme, which features a new format: a combination of two months of on-the-job training at the Ministry and a full-time four months' learning programme at IDFR. For the on-the-job training, the officers are expected to assist



their assigned Divisions with substantive and logistics tasks which are then documented in their weekly report.

Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the officers have responded well

by participating and engaging proactively throughout the programme.

They are approaching the tail end of the programme and their graduation ceremony is expected to take place on 19 May.

Ambassador Lecture Series 1/2021

On 8 March, IDFR organised the first *Ambassador Lecture Series* for 2021. The speaker was His Excellency Charles Hay MVO, British High Commissioner to Malaysia. The lecture, titled *Brexit and its Implications for Southeast Asia*, was conducted on Google Meet and was attended by 50 officials from various ministries and government agencies, academicians, and members of the diplomatic corps.

His Excellency Hay began his lecture by highlighting the reasons for the UK leaving the regional bloc which include the sentiments that the European Union has become too inward thinking and the constant constraints towards UK's trade policies. He added that the rising debate on the question of sovereignty in the Brexit referendum was cast in terms of power, competence and ultimately, freedom to legislate. However, he

reassured the participants that the UK sees Brexit as an opportunity to foster new trading relationships and to revive older trading partners, particularly with Southeast Asian countries, bilaterally and through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) platform. His Excellency Hay added that the UK government has taken steps to cooperate with ASEAN following its bid to become the regional organisation's Dialogue Partner.

As a Dialogue Partner, the UK can enhance practical cooperation on various policy issues with ASEAN. He said that the countries in ASEAN represent 40 billion pounds of trade with the UK, equivalent to 75 per cent of UK's total trade over the last decade.

His Excellency Hay explained that since the Brexit referendum took place, the UK government has put forward its plans to seek accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which

Malaysia is part of. Malaysia remains the second biggest trade market with the UK and the UK government is keen to attract Foreign Direct Investment from potential investors.

His Excellency Hay also underscored the fact that Brexit will not affect the partnership in the education sector with Malaysia. In fact, the UK government has introduced an educational scheme which will enhance greater relationship between both countries. He explained that approximately

80,000 Malaysians are currently studying for UK tertiary qualification while 30,000 Malaysian students are pursuing their higher education in the UK itself, and at least half a million Malaysians are alumni of UK universities.

In conclusion, His Excellency Hay emphasised that the new policies of the government will foster initiatives of cooperation and a greater engagement globally in particular with Southeast Asian countries in trade and investments as well as security and defence.



Memorandum of Understanding between IDFR and the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy

ternational economic relations, regional issues, consular issues, and political science; and any other

er areas of cooperation in the field of training for diplomats that will be jointly decided by the two institutions.

AGDA, or formerly known as the Emirates Diplomatic Academy, was launched in 2014 to support the mission of the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Like IDFR, the academy has become the driving force in the ministry's efforts to educate, inform and qualify the UAE's current and future diplomats and government leaders to represent the country on the global stage. AGDA provides a unique learning experience that comprises a blend of region-

specific programmes, thought leadership and access to the finest diplomatic minds while aspiring to become the leading foreign policy, executive training, and research centre in the Middle East.

Diplomats from the UAE have attended programmes hosted and conducted by IDFR such as the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme, the Ambassador Lecture Series and other intellectual discourses which have directly benefitted them.

IDFR and AGDA both recognise the existing friendly relations between the two countries and believe that this cooperation would serve common interests and contribute to the enhancement in the fields of training of diplomats of both countries.

10 March marked a historic day for the Governments of Malaysia and of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the field of diplomatic training. It was the day the two governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Field of Training of Diplomats. The MoU between the Government of Malaysia, represented by IDFR, and the Government of the UAE, represented by the Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy (AGDA), was part of the deliverables during the official visit by the Prime Minister to the UAE from 9 to 11 March. The areas of cooperation include the field of international relations, international organisations, international law, in-

Orientation Course for Heads of Mission and their Spouses 2021



The *Orientation Course for Heads of Mission and their Spouses* (HoMC) was held from 15 to 21 March. Fourteen officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and 12 spouses attended the course.

The HoMC is comprehensively designed to prepare the officers and their spouses for the challenging tasks ahead as Heads of Missions, especially in the ever-changing environment where the role of ambassadors representing the country can be a monumental task. Additionally, the course is also aimed at providing them with a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities at Mission as well as equipping them with the relevant knowledge and skills in international diplomatic practices.

Six lecture sessions were covered by senior officials from the Ministry: Dato' Nadzirah Osman, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Multilateral Affairs, who spoke

on *Topical Global Issues Impacting Malaysia's National Interests*; Datuk Rahimi Harun, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Management Services, on the topic of *Leadership Begins at Home*; Dato' Ahmad Rozian Abd. Ghani, Director General, ASEAN-Malaysia National Secretariat on *Moving Forward with ASEAN Post COVID-19*; Ambassador Shahril Effendi Abd Ghany, Director General, Department of Policy Planning and Coordination on *Strategic Plan, Key Performance Indicators and Key Government Initiatives*; Dr. Adina Kamarudin, Director General, Department of Maritime Affairs on *Negotiation Tools for Heads of Mission*; and Mr. Azri Mat Yacob, Undersecretary, Communications and Public Diplomacy Division who spoke on *Malaysia's Public Diplomacy: How to Do More with Less*.

The course also featured lecture sessions by Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman, Director

General of the Public Service Department; Dr. Norhana Endut, Assistant Governor of Bank Negara Malaysia; Tan Sri Othman Hashim, President of the Association of Former Malaysian Ambassadors; Dato' Abdul Majid Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Malaysian Investment Development Authority; Tan Sri Dato' Soh Thian Lai, President of the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, and Dato' Hisham Hamdan, Executive Director of Khazanah Nasional Berhad, among others.

The course included a working visit to Pahang to expose the participants to the development in the state, and the state's crafts and heritage sphere which can be promoted abroad as an investment opportunity for foreign investors. They were also feted at dinners hosted by Dato' Sri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail, Chief Minister of Pahang, and Dato' Sri Dr. Sallehuddin Ishak, State Secretary of Pahang.

Cultural Diplomacy Roundtable Discussion 2021

On 1 April, IDFR, through the Centre for Languages and Cultural Diplomacy, organised the above intellectual discourse. This very first discourse, which was held for two days, aims to establish the fundamental direction of cultural diplomacy practices in Malaysia.

The roundtable saw the participation of practitioners and thinkers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, as well

as distinguished academicians from Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia. The discourse also aims to discern the *Dasar Kebudayaan Malaysia*, to determine the guidelines for the ministries in their cultural diplomacy practices, and to identify the essential elements to be adapted in training by the institute in the area of cultural diplomacy.

Among the highlights of the discussion were the ministry's policy on soft power, Malaysia's stance on culture and identity, the importance of culture in Malaysia's international relations practices, and training plans for diplomatic officers and other targeted training participants.

The centre hopes that this exercise will enhance its effort to optimise the strength of cultural diplomacy in diplomatic practices.

DiD's Cooking Demonstration

Six foreign languages are offered under the current DiD programme, namely, Arabic, French, German, Mandarin, Russian and Spanish.

As part of the foreign language module, a cooking demonstration followed by lunch was organised by the officers on 6 April. It served as a platform for them to put into practice the language they have learned thus far and to better appreciate the culture behind their respective language. The event also provided an opportunity for the officers to demonstrate their creativity in terms of promoting

cultural diplomacy.

The event was graced by Dato' Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Dr. David Krivanek, Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Germany, Mr. Maxim Salnikov and Mr. Pavel Verzilov, Second Secretaries of the Embassy of the Russian Federation, and Ms. Anaïs Deschamps, Head of Education of the Embassy of France.

For appetizer, the guests were served *burritos* and chinese dumplings prepared by the Spanish and Mandarin team, respectively.

The soup was a French onion soup prepared by the French team. The main dish, *kabsah ad-dajaj*, which is a spiced rice dish served with slow-cooked chicken and diced vegetable salad, was prepared by the Arabic team. For dessert, the guests were served *zimtstrudel*, which are German cinnamon swirls, prepared by the German team and *blini*, which are Russian pancakes, prepared by the Russian team. The German team also prepared *butterbier*, a special, homemade, non-alcoholic drink.



To further complement the dining experience, instrumental music from all six languages were played in the background throughout the event. In addition, the officers also presented a brief history of their

dishes as they were serving the food.

Everyone enjoyed the colourful and vibrant event with beautifully decorated booths and flavourful

food prepared by the officers. For the officers, the event resulted in an enhanced appreciation of the culture of the foreign language they are learning as well as the other foreign languages.



DiD's Defending National Interests Module

A simulation exercise in Defending National Interests (DNI) was conducted for the DiD officers from 7 to 9 April.

The module focused on the officers' skills in effective communication, media handling and English proficiency that have been acquired from the programme. Through a mock press conference, the officers defended and promoted Malaysia's interests on wide ranging topics covering bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues. The officers also circulated the draft press releases to the panellists prior to their press conference. In addition to communication skill, the officers were also assessed on their analytical thinking, knowledge on the chosen topic, clarity in expressing ideas and stewardship

of their presentation.

During the three-day module, the officers had the opportunity to conduct their press conferences with the participation of esteemed panellists, namely, Mr. Brian Cracknell, Lead Consultant; Dr. Azhari-Karim and Dato' Tajul Aman Mohammad representing the Association of Former Malaysian Ambassadors, Dato Mohd Zamruni Khalid, Mr. Zul Izwan Hamzah, Information Services Executive from the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, senior journalists from the Malaysian National News Agency, IDFR's Distinguished Fellows, and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and IDFR.

In general, the officers fared well

in their mock press conferences. They showed maturity and composure in handling difficult questions from the panellists. They also showed increased competency in communication and analytical thinking skills which are important in handling the media effectively. With the enhanced knowledge and skillset learned from the module, IDFR hopes that the officers will continue to hone their skills in becoming versatile Malaysian diplomats of the future.

Note:

IDFR would like to express its utmost appreciation to all the panellists for taking the time off from their busy schedule to participate in the Defending National Interests module.

News Contributors

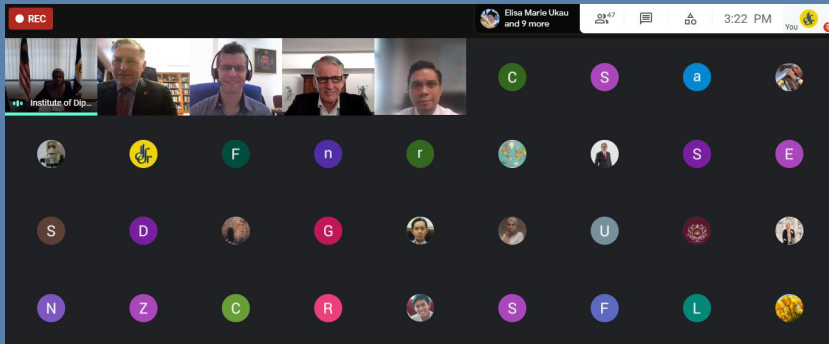
Adrina Zulkarnain, Cornelia Chin Sew Ling, Efy Evita Chalilina, Ezrin Balqis Abd Lataf, Haliyath Zahiyah Kamal Mustaffa, Nurul Nadhirah Muslal



Datuk Rahimi Harun, the Ministry's Deputy Secretary General, Department of Management Services, doing a walkabout of IDFR, 4 March



Dr. Norhana Endut, Assistant Governor of Bank Negara, receiving a memento from Dato' Nadzirah Osman, the Ministry's Deputy Secretary General, Department of Multilateral Affairs, at the HoMC, 18 March



Among the participants of the first *Ambassador Lecture Series*, 8 March



The spouses from the HoMC learning about the *tenun* Pahang process, 20 March



Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman, Director General of the Public Service Department, delivering his lecture at the HoMC, 17 March



Tan Sri Othman Hashim, President of the Association of Former Malaysian Ambassadors, at the DiD programme, 25 March



The attendees at the Dinner Talk by Dato' Sri Muhammad Shahrul Ikram Yaakob, the Ministry's Secretary General, 25 March



Online preparatory meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Training Institutions of ASEAN countries, 6 April



Knowledge sharing session by the Library and ICT Section, 26 March



A DiD officer at the DNI module, 8 April



Two of the panellists at the DNI module, 9 April



Participants of the *Cultural Diplomacy Roundtable Discussion 2021*, 1-2 April



Courtesy call on the Director General by H.E. Diego Velasco Von Pilgrimm, Ambassador of Chile, 14 April