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Malaysia's New Minister of Foreign Affairs



It is with great pleasure that IDFR welcomes the appointment of The Honourable Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah as the new Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Honourable Dato' Saifuddin was sworn in as the Minister of Foreign Affairs before Seri Paduka Baginda Yang Dipertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V, together with twelve new Ministers and 23 Deputy Ministers, at the swearing-in-ceremony of the new Cabinet at

Istana Negara on 2 July 2018.

The Honourable Dato' Saifuddin was Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Higher Education from 2009 to 2013, and Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Cooperative Development from 2008 to 2009. He was also Chief Executive Officer of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation from 2013 to 2015, and has been Patron to the Malaysian Institute of Debate

and Public Speaking since 2013. The Honourable Dato' Saifuddin is a regular columnist with several newspapers, and has written several books on Malaysian politics, including *New Politics 2.0: Multiracial and Moderate Malaysian Democracy* (2017).

In his maiden press conference held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Minister reiterated the continu-

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New Malaysia's Foreign Policy – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Roadmap for Political and Economic Diplomacy

Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah

New Malaysia – a label now popularly used to describe the new Pakatan Harapan Government which took over administration following the 9 May elections – has been carrying out wide-spread reforms to clean up corruption and restore the people's trust in government. These reforms have been led by the seventh and current Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who was also the country's fourth Prime Minister, having served from 1981 to 2003.

Despite the corrective measures being implemented by *New Malaysia*, rest assured that there will be no major shift in the Ministry's foreign policy principles. Some "sacred" and fundamental principles will be retained (including among others, Malaysia's commitment to non-alignment and friendly diplomatic relations with all nations), while new emphasis and greater rigor will be placed on principles that were implemented in the past but sidelined under the previous administration. These include rejuvenating Malaysia's proactive role in ASEAN, continuing its "Look East Policy" (with added emphasis on education and human capital development), and revisiting the Langkawi International Dialogue and the South-South Cooperation. Malaysia will also extend regional-based focus to Africa and other developing regions – while not losing sight of relations with major superpowers.

New Malaysia will continue to strive for peace and stability through diplomacy with all nations regardless of ideology and political system, especially with its ASEAN neighbours and other like-minded developing nations. Apart from ASEAN, *New Malaysia* will also seek to rejuvenate its role in the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the United Nations, and other multilateral organisations – especially in efforts to end injustice and oppression, and uphold international law.

This is especially pertinent to new and emergent concerns like violent extremism, climate change, refugees, human trafficking, terrorism, international and financial crimes and cyber security. These have become global issues that need to be addressed in multilateral forums at global and regional levels.

Malaysia will also strive to regain its stature as a leading example of an inclusive and moderate, progressive Muslim-majority nation, predicated on principles of democracy, good governance, freedom, human rights and sustainable development.

Strengthening the Ministry

Also at the top of the list of priorities is the strengthening of the Ministry by building on and amplifying existing capacity. The Ministry will reorient itself as a force-multiplier in ensuring effective coordination of international policies of all ministries, agencies, business corporations and civil society organisations within the nation, towards progressing Malaysia's international affairs.

Greater Coordination with Other Government Ministries

The Ministry will do this by working with other ministries to enhance coordination and cooperation on issues with foreign implications. To this end, I have proposed the setting up of a Parliamentary Select Committee to address broad-ranging and complex foreign policy issues involving numerous domestic and international actors.

Measures will be put in place to strengthen and reorient public diplomacy. The Ministry will start by improving consular services and protection of citizens living abroad through long-term human capital development strategies aimed at producing world class diplomats. These will include multilingual

proficiency, conflict management, negotiation skills and peace building.

These measures will be amplified through the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) and the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), both of which are agencies aimed at development and research in diplomacy, international relations and the exchange of views at both the national and international levels – which will no doubt aid the Ministry in forming the best policies.

Strengthening Public Participation in Foreign Policy Making

We will also commit to setting up a consultative council within the Ministry, which will consist of experts from the private sector and civil society, former diplomats and ambassadors, academicians and experienced officers from within the Ministry itself. There is a wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom from non-government players involved in foreign policy which we must capitalise on.

These, together with other strategic micro-measures in the pipeline will build towards the Ministry's new vision of fostering a vibrant international studies community, enabling the free flow of ideas, dialogue and practices between government and non-government sectors for the good of Malaysia's international relations.

Foreign policy is increasingly embedded in domestic affairs, and a robust foreign policy must stem from a strong domestic base with the support and input of all players. These measures will solidify the Ministry's role as a force multiplier, enabling the country to punch well above its size and weight.

This article was first published in the *Jakarta Post*.

Daesh's Propaganda Online: Challenges and Counter Measures

Jasmine Mohamed Jawhar

Introduction

This article identifies the challenges in addressing *al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil al-Iraq wa al-Sham's* (Daesh's) use of the Internet and to propose several measures to counter the group's efforts in spreading their propaganda.

Propaganda materials distributed by Daesh through the intensive use of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram have been far-reaching and widespread throughout the globe. This has resulted in tens of thousands of individuals from all walks of life, including women and teenagers globally, travelling to Syria and Iraq to fight alongside Daesh. Additionally, such usage has also expanded the role of women, as religious restrictions would limit face-to-face interactions during the recruitment process. In light of this, online recruitment is more appealing for women recruiters. The intensive use of social media platforms has also allowed Daesh to appear bigger than what they are through the support of their sympathisers – with no direct links to the group itself, and also paved the way for tailored propaganda to be disseminated to their target audience effectively.

Malaysia is not spared from the threat of Daesh. Terror cells have been created and terror attacks were planned and conducted based on directions by Malaysians abroad, including one based in Syria known as Mohammad Wanndy bin Mohamed Jedi (killed in April 2017). Wanndy was known to have recruited and communicated with a number of individuals through Facebook and relied on Telegram to securely communicate with his recruits. Through several of his Telegram channels, Wanndy was able to plan and direct attacks, including the Movida club attack in Puchong in June 2016 and a failed attempt to conduct a large-scale attack in the Klang Valley using a car bomb. He was also said to have directed several individuals in Malaysia to channel funds to Daesh fighters in Syria.

Challenges in Countering Daesh's Presence Online

Addressing the threat proves to be a challenge. Among these challenges is Daesh's ability to adapt to counter measures against them in the cyber realm. They often advise their supporters and followers on how to ensure safety while promoting their cause, and to avoid being targeted by authorities. As an example, in an online publication known as "The Media War upon the Islamic State: the Media Technique of Misleading the Masses", Daesh outlined the various ways mainstream media was said to be delegitimising the "Islamic State".¹ These included claims that Daesh are distorting events, casting doubt upon the strength of the fighters, exaggerating western strength, and blaming the fighters, particularly for the west's ill treatment of women and children, among others.

Another challenge is choosing the right messengers. Anyone can speak out but the loudest voice would be one that is credible and could resonate well with the target audience. Messengers within the government sector may face challenges in this area wherein those inclined to Daesh's propaganda may not view them favourably. In this regard, government agencies must reach out to more credible sources to become voices in countering terrorist narratives.

In addition, selecting the right audience is also a challenge, mainly when there is the issue of overlapping identities, particularly in the Malaysian context. This is where someone can be identified by his/her ethnicity, race and/or religion and has diverse backgrounds (historical, education and exposure to the society's values that he/she is living in). Addressing this issue would be beneficial especially in developing counter narratives that aim to stir passion and tolerance among one another. This is with the hope that they would be deterred from supporting or joining terrorist groups.

Another concerning issue is matching the rate and speed of terrorists' propaganda. One of the reasons for successful Daesh's online propaganda is that the disseminators are not the Daesh's core alone, but also include Daesh's media operatives. Anyone, including a Daesh supporter, follower or even sympathiser, who has no direct links with the group, could disseminate and spread Daesh's propaganda.

Recommendations

Despite challenges, efforts in combating the threat of Daesh online must persist. Authorities and relevant agencies need to continue to create and innovate actions against the threats posed by Daesh. In this regard, this article would like to propose a few possible measures in countering the group's propaganda and presence online.

Developing Religious and Non-Religious Counter Narratives to Promote Critical Thinking

The manipulation of religion could be seen as a powerful tool for Daesh to appear legitimate and righteous. Therefore, one way to challenge this is by mobilising religious movements via the cyber realm to refute claims based on religious grounds made by Daesh. However, several factors must be considered prior to establishing such a movement, including selecting the right individuals (messengers), as well as identifying and developing religious counter-narratives.

Selecting the right individuals to become messengers is important to ensure that the messages are getting across to the target audience effectively. These individuals should be selected from a local pool of existing credible imams and religious leaders as they would already have an adequate understanding of the local context, while recognising sensitivities among the audience. Therefore, they can develop tailor-made narratives



easier and at a much faster pace. Aside from local imams and religious leaders, it is also important to select and identify those with established rapport among the target audience or local communities to ensure credibility and authority. These include community leaders, youth leaders and educators.

At the same time, it is also equally important to equip these religious leaders and individuals at the community level with the necessary ICT knowledge and tools with proper training so that they could actively engage with their community not only via physical interactions but also in the digital realm.

Embedded within the religious narratives are the social, political and economic-based narratives employed by Daesh to further capture the attention of their target audience.

In this regard, counter-narratives with elements/images that highlight the negative impacts of Daesh's atrocities around the world could be employed to convince the masses of the misguided ideology of Daesh. Essentially, the idea behind revealing such images is to prompt the audience to question whether it is possible for an "Islamic State" to falter. Simultaneously, this approach is to cast doubt in the minds of the audience – by encouraging critical thinking – of the legitimacy of the

"caliphate", as suggested by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in his declaration of the establishment of the caliphate.²

Reinforced by

Relying just on developing counter-messages and selecting the right messengers alone would not suffice. Such efforts must be **reinforced** by accompanying measures, such as selecting the best platforms to disseminate the counter messages to yield desired results, and enhancing the technical know-how and capabilities of those involved in countering the threat.

One important aspect is to ensure that counter messages are being disseminated on active online platforms. This would allow readers to engage with the author directly whether through replying each other's posts or through private chats just like how a terrorist would do it as opposed to a static post. This is essential for users who want further information and to gain a better understanding of the posted counter messages, especially on religious-based counter narratives. This notwithstanding, careful consideration need to be put in place in choosing both the right reactive and proactive messengers, as they would require a sound knowledge of religion in order to embark on online debates on certain religious issues.

On the other hand, it is important to

note that Daesh and its supporters are able to adapt to counter measures and advancements in technology. It is then necessary for the authorities and relevant individuals involved in countering the threat of Daesh online to continue enhancing their technological knowledge and capabilities, including methods to effectively monitor terrorist narratives, as well as measuring the success of counter narratives through the various analytic tools available.

Supported with

Such reinforcing measures should also be **supported** with actions in both online and offline domains in order to ensure a fluid and tangible approach in countering the terrorist propaganda.

One of the approaches is by proliferating counter messages to counter Daesh's propaganda. It was estimated that 90,000 pro-Daesh tweets, as well as social media responses, appear each day.³ This is a serious concern and, coupled with bureaucratic procedures, matching this rate by relevant agencies would be nearly impossible. Therefore, counter messages – both newly developed and existing ones – should continue to flood the social media on a daily basis, across different platforms.

Another approach is by continuing to develop and enhance strong legislation against the use of the Internet by terrorists to constantly reflect its changing nature, as terrorists are always looking for new ways to conduct its terror-related activities, including on the Internet. One aspect of strengthening legislation is with regard to monitoring social media and online communication platforms. Monitoring these platforms is crucial in order to detect, respond and deter any possible spreading of terrorist propaganda, radicalisation, recruitment, communications between individuals and known terrorist elements, activities of data mining, as well as other terrorists-related Internet usages.

Apart from that, empowering gate keepers such as parents, teachers and religious leaders are also crucial. These segments of society are the closest to

individuals who may be susceptible to terrorist propaganda online. Parents may be able to detect any possible changes in the behaviour of their children, while teachers, religious tutors and peers may be able to detect changes in their students' or friends' behaviours, whilst they are outside the confines of their home.

Additionally, engagement between the public and private sector is of utmost importance. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in essence could fill in the gaps both in the knowledge and skills relating to securing the cyber space. It is also useful to utilise the private sector and civil society groups to disseminate counter narratives in a bid to heighten credibility. Civil society groups, for example, can provide favourable sentiments, given their direct involvement with communities or individuals affected by terrorism, or any other forms of violent extremism.

Conclusion

The extensive use of social media platforms by Daesh has opened up the avenue for various players to spread Daesh's propaganda. This – coupled with the ability of Daesh to react to counter measures and their level of technical knowledge, among others – has complicated the effort to counter their presence both online and offline.

This makes it even more apparent that the responsibility to counter the threat of Daesh involves every stratum of society. It includes both online and offline efforts initiated by the government sector and the private sector, supported by strong legislations at the national level and by empowering gatekeepers, including parents, lecturers, religious teachers, community leaders, as well as enhancing PPPs, particularly with civil society. Such efforts must also be reinforced with continuous learning to keep up with the advancement in technology

and utilising the very same platforms on which terrorists operate.

Endnotes

¹ “The Media War Upon the Islamic State: The Media Techniques of Misleading the Masses”, Ansar Al-Khilafah Publication, December 2, 2015 (20 Safar 1437), <https://archive.org/details/the-media-war-upon-the-islamic-state1> (accessed June 5, 2016).

² “Khilafah Declared” in Dabiq: The Return of the Khilafah, June-July 2014, Issue 1, Al-Hayat Media Centre, pg 7.

³ Eric Schmitt, “U.S. Intensifies Effort to Blunt ISIS’ Message”, February 6, 2015, The New York Times, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/middleeast/us-intensifies-effort-to-blunt-isis-message.html?_r=0 (accessed June 3, 2016).

Ms. Jasmine Mohamed Jawhar is an Assistant Director with the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

China’s Arctic Policy and ‘Polar Silk Route/Road’

Vivian Louis Forbes

Introduction

Chinese-registered shipping companies, with official blessing from the Government of China in April 2016, will encourage maritime trade along the Northwest Passage via the Arctic Ocean, a route opened up by global warming. This route will cut travel time and save money in operations. The Government of China is increasing activity in the Arctic Polar region: it has become one of the biggest mining investors in Greenland and agreed to a free trade deal with Iceland. China’s Maritime Safety Administration, in April 2016, released a guide offering detailed route guidance from the ports along the northern coast of North America to the northwest Pacific Ocean. The rationale is that once this route is commonly used, it will have a direct impact on global maritime transport and a pro-

found influence on international trade, the world economy, capital flow and exploitation of natural resources in the region.

According to the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources, there was increasing number of ships attempting to navigate, in tough climatic conditions, along Russia’s Northern Sea Route without the assistance of an icebreaker. Arctic shipping reached a milestone during 2017, as over 9,000 tonnes of cargo was shipped to and from ports on the North East Passage. Most of the North West Passage is within Canadian claimed waters. By mid-October 2017, China’s polar research ship *Xue Long* (Snow Dragon) returned to Shanghai after completing an 83-day, 20,000-nautical mile journey through the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. It was the first ship from China to have navigated all three

major shipping routes through the Arctic Ocean, namely: the Central Arctic Route (Transpolar Sea Route in 2012); and the North East and North West Passages – perhaps a precursor for an official policy for the Arctic Region.

White Paper on Arctic Policy

On 26 January 2018, the Government of China published a White Paper on its Arctic policy, pledging cooperative governance and elaborating a vision of a ‘Polar Silk Road.’ Stating that it was a responsible major country, it was willing to cooperate with all relevant parties to seize the historic opportunity in the development of the Arctic Ocean and to address the challenges brought by the changes in the region. The Government’s Arctic policy is to jointly understand, protect, develop, participate and advance Arctic-related cooperation

in accordance with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) it conceived in October 2013.

The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, an important cooperation initiative of the Government of China, will bring opportunities for parties concerned to jointly build a 'Polar Silk Road' – via the Arctic Ocean Passages and facilitate connectivity, sustainable economic and social development of the Arctic Region, according to the policy paper. China will pay due regard to the interests of other countries and the broader international community, while pursuing its own commercial interests and national development.

Navigation in the Arctic Ocean

The Arctic Ocean is a body of water (and ice) of increasing importance for maritime transport. One of the principal effects of climate change on the Arctic Region will be to make the ocean more accessible to shipping by providing ice-free sea lanes for slightly longer periods each year. Significantly shorter travelling distances between Europe and Asia is possible via access to both the North West Passage through the waters north of Canada and Alaska, and the North East Sea Passage through the waters north of Russia. Shipping companies will naturally direct their ships on routes via the Arctic Ocean, especially during the summer months – perhaps July to early-October which is considered the period of ice-free Arctic sea lanes. This would be cheaper and quicker than transiting traditional shipping routes around the Cape of Good Hope or through the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, the Suez Canal and Strait of Gibraltar. This fact was discussed extensively in recent years.

For example, a typical voyage from the Port of Shanghai, PRC to Felixstowe Terminal, England, may take a container ship some 49 days to cover a distance of about 12,000 nautical miles (M) at an average speed of 10 knots, if it took the sea route through the South China Sea, the Straits of Singapore and Malacca, the Red Sea and Suez Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar and maybe made

stops at some of the ports along the route. For a ship plying the Northern Sea (Arctic Ocean) route between Yokohama, Japan and London, UK, the distance is about 7,200 M and via the North West Passage is about 8,600M. Alternately, taking the traditional routes via the Panama Canal (12,600 M) and Suez Canal (11,500M) and around the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa is nearly 14,800 M. For Chinese manufactured goods destined for markets in Europe and Northern America being transported on a ship using the Arctic Ocean routes would bring about a saving in money and time, in theory; and shaving some 5,000 nautical miles off the distance. There are obvious benefits in taking the Arctic Routes to save the distance travelled and hence fuel cost. However, the voyage is restricted to certain months of the year.

Maritime Concerns

The Arctic Routes are leading to new maritime concerns, especially in areas of increase transiting by the offshore oil and gas industry, cruise liners, military craft, tugs and barges, and fishing vessels. The questions posed are many in the context of safety of navigation in a region where previously marine navigation was minimal. Indeed, it is fairly safe to make a statement to the effect that much of the coastlines surrounding the Arctic Ocean had only been partially surveyed in the past, and reliance on nautical charts produced prior to the 1950s should be treated with utmost caution. It is not to say that the information contained therein and the quality of the charts of earlier periods was inferior. Indeed, they were valued by, and vital to, mariners who used them with the observance of good seamanship at all times and did not have to rely on electronic aids to navigation. It is just that the requirements placed on marine navigation are undergoing rapid change.

Ensuring that marine traffic moves smoothly is a growing concern for safety and also for the economies of the coastal states, the environment and perceived national security. Among the many agencies, institutions and organi-

sations and local authorities, four bodies that will no doubt have input to ensure and enhance safety of navigation will be the Arctic Council, the International Maritime Organisation, the International Hydrographic Organisation and their national associations, and the World Meteorological Organisation.

The Government of China supports peaceful settlement of disputes over territory and maritime rights and interests in line with such treaties as the *UN Charter* and the *1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* and general international law, and strives to reinforce cooperation with the Arctic States in maritime and air search and rescue, maritime early warning, emergency response, and information sharing along the polar sea routes.

'Polar Silk Road'

The Government of China hopes to work with all parties to build a 'Polar Silk Road' through developing the Arctic shipping routes. Chinese enterprises are encouraged to participate in infrastructure development for these routes and to conduct commercial trial voyages in line with the law for their commercial and regularized operation. Great importance will be placed on navigation security. The country has actively conducted studies on these routes and continuously strengthened hydrographic surveys to improve navigation, security and logistical capacities in the Arctic Ocean. Cultural and social issues have been studied.

The Government of China also has an interest in the development of the hydrocarbon reserves, the marine mineral resources and other non-fossil energies, fishing and tourism in the region, jointly with the Arctic States and the Arctic Council, while respecting traditions and cultures of the Arctic residents including the indigenous peoples, and conserving natural environment. The White Paper promised that more effort will be made to promote scientific research and environmental protection in the Arctic.

The Government of Canada is emphatic that no automatic right of transit passage existed in the waterways of the

Northwest Passage, although it welcomes navigation that complies with the rules and regulations of the nation. Canada has an unfettered right to regulate internal waters. Maritime experts opine that shipping companies would most likely be deterred by the unpredictable nature of Arctic ice, the total absence of infrastructure in the region, relatively shallow waters, lack of modern mapping and increased insurance costs.

The Polar routes would also be strategically important to China's development and economy. Melting sea ice has spurred more commercial traffic, and the Government of China wants to become more active in the Arctic, where it stresses important interests. However, Chinese-flagged ships, even merchant vessels, using the Northwest Passage could raise eyebrows in the US Administration. The Government of China is aware that Russia holds the key to much of its Arctic interests, including in regards to current and future shipping, so there is an awareness between the two governments in cooperating further in Arctic economic development.

In September 2015, five Chinese Navy ships sailed in international waters in the Bering Sea off Alaska, in an apparent first for China's military strategy. The

Polar Regions, together with the other oceans, the internet and space exploration, have become new but strategic areas where the Government of China is seeking to develop in the future. This nation is now seeking resources from all around the world – and Chinese investment is almost everywhere.

The White Paper appears to cap all these ambitions. The Government of China sees itself as a 'near-Arctic state', a stakeholder and 'an active participant, builder and contributor' when it comes to the scientific research, commercial development of the Arctic, and Arctic governance, according to the White Paper. The paper emphasizes China's respect for the international law frameworks and institutions governing the Arctic, its recognition of the legal jurisdictions of the Arctic states in their respective areas of the Arctic Ocean, and respect for indigenous peoples inhabiting the Arctic. In return, China expects mutual respect from the Arctic states and emphasizes that within the current framework of international law, China, as any other non-Arctic state, has the right for 'scientific research, navigation, overflight, fishing, laying of submarine cables and pipelines in the high seas and other relevant sea areas in the Arctic Ocean, and rights to resource exploration and exploitation in the area – that

is the water column and sea bed beyond national jurisdiction.

The Government of China has started constructing its second icebreaker, the *Xue Long II*, which is expected to commence its maiden voyage in 2019. Also, state-owned cargo shipping giant COSCO is planning to send six vessels along the Northern Sea Route to transport items including equipment, steel and pulp, amongst many other items and products. The White Paper stipulates China's commercial interest in the Arctic, including development of resources and shipping routes – the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative/BRI) is specifically referred to, thereby officially linking the BRI with the Arctic region. According to the White Paper, the BRI will bring 'opportunities for parties concerned to jointly build a 'Polar Silk Road'.

 *The words route and road are interchangeable; whereas the former would suggest the course taken by the ship; the latter offers the alternative of the Maritime Silk Road (BRI).

Dr. Vivian Forbes is Adjunct Research Professor at the National Institute for South China Sea Studies, Haikou and Adjunct Associate Professor at University of Western Australia, Perth.

Ambassador Lecture Series 1/2018

On 30 April 2018, IDFR hosted Her Excellency Victoria Marguerite Treadell, British High Commissioner to Malaysia for a lecture titled *UK Post-Brexit: Implications to UK-Malaysia and UK-ASEAN Relations*. Held under the Ambassador Lecture Series, it is a platform for ambassadors accredited to Malaysia to deliberate on topical issues of importance not only to the host country but also regionally and globally. It serves as a venue for the distinguished guests to highlight their respective government's views and policies which could be shared with the audience from the various government agencies and universities as well as foreign missions in Malaysia.

Her Excellency Treadell began her lecture by providing a background of Brexit and highlighted that British politics is at a critical juncture following Brexit. However, the High Commissioner assured the audience that her country is committed to the democratic process and Britain aims to reach the utmost deal with the European Union. Despite the recession hype on the economy following Brexit, Her Excellency Treadell remarked that UK's economic fundamentals remain strong and continue to prosper. She further added that Brexit may actually provide a perfect avenue for Britain to negotiate its own Free Trade Agreements with other countries.

Her Excellency Treadell also underscored the prospects of UK's relations with the wider world, with particular



attention to Malaysia and ASEAN in a post-Brexit world. Malaysia and the UK have had a long shared history whereby both countries have extensive cooperation in various fields, including defence, education and trade. Concurring with what was said by the Director General about the bilateral relations between the two countries during his Welcoming Remarks, Her Excellency Treadell stressed that some of the key pillars of the bilateral relationship predated Britain's membership in the EU and that the relationship has never been viewed through the prism of Britain's EU membership.

Her Excellency Treadell also affirmed that the UK aims to establish a stronger economics interface in the ASEAN region. As the policy of Global Britain ushers in, which reinforces UK's commitment to be more outward-looking and

globally engaging than ever before, the High Commissioner emphasised that this could be seen through the manifestation of new initiatives of cooperation and a higher level of engagement with the world.

The attendees comprised, among others, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Prime Minister's Department, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, National Professor Council, Malaysian Youth Council, Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Utara Malaysia, as well as Ambassadors and representatives from the Embassies of France, Italy, Germany, Spain and the European Union in Kuala Lumpur.

IDFR Lecture Series 1/2018

On 19 July 2018, IDFR hosted Professor Amitav Acharya, a renowned Professor of International Relations at the School of International Service, American University, Washington D.C. for a lecture titled *China's Rise and Asian Regionalism: Implications for ASEAN and Malaysia*. The lecture was jointly organised by IDFR and the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya, and in collaboration with the High Commission of Canada in Kuala Lumpur. Also in attendance was

H.E. Julia Bentley, High Commissioner of Canada to Malaysia and Professor Dr. Azirah Hashim, Executive Director of the Asia Europe Institute.

Professor Amitav commenced his lecture by explaining about the geopolitical landscape of the region in the past whereby no single major power that tried – including India, US and China – succeeded in creating and maintaining a viable Asian regional organisation.

They were unsuccessful due to reasons such as lack of capacity, legitimacy or commitment and also because of mutual counterbalancing.

China became an ASEAN dialogue partner in the early 1990s but it was then still a sceptical partner in the larger ASEAN-centred institutions. Professor Amitav noted that China has since shifted to become an active player, due to its growing capacity and confidence



manifested through Chinese diplomacy of transformation from “keeping a low profile” to “striving for achievements” and following President Xi Jinping’s doctrine of “China will lead”. Against this backdrop, Professor Amitav opined that “ASEAN First” policy should be advocated among the member states emphasising on Southeast Asian unity, autonomy and identity vis-à-vis China’s rise in the region.

When asked about the Indo-Pacific regional concept during the question and answer session, Professor Amitav explained that it is a strategic concept rather than a regionalist concept.

The lecture was attended by more than 100 representatives from various government agencies, embassies, think-tanks, universities and international organisations.

Workshop on APEC for Papua New Guinea Officials

IDFR and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry jointly organised an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) workshop for government officials from Papua New Guinea from 9 to 11 April 2018. The specialised training programme was conducted based on the agreement by the Prime Ministers of both countries during a bilateral meeting of the 24th APEC Economic Leaders Meeting. During the meeting, Malaysia had conveyed our willingness to assist Papua New Guinea’s capacity

building through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme.

Forty-nine government officials, who will be part of the APEC Summit 2018 team of rapporteurs, attended the three-day workshop held in Port Moresby, the capital city of Papua New Guinea. Among the topics covered were *Overview of APEC and Understanding Its Initiatives; Roles and Functions of Rapporteurs; Drafting Principles and the Role of Host in Preparation for the Drafting Session; Drafting Ministerial Statements*

and Leaders Declaration; Effective Writing and Note-Taking Skills; Theory and Elements of Transcribing; and Writing Practice on Salient Points. A simulation exercise of an APEC Ministerial Meeting was also held. The officials were also taught how to use a digital voice recorder, as well as editing and proof-reading related documents.

IDFR is pleased to be able to contribute to this initiative of cooperation and knowledge-sharing between Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

International Negotiations Workshop 2018

The objective of above workshop, organised from 25 to 27 June 2018, was to enhance the participants’ awareness on the various obstacles and challenges commonly encountered during the negotiation process and to pave the way for them to address these issues effectively. The workshop also enabled the participants to effectively examine their own strengths and gaps as negotiators and to further develop their negotiating skills.

Throughout the three-days, the participants were exposed to the scope, process, preparation and techniques of effective negotiations. These were done through simulation exercises and group discussions which provided room for dialogue among the participants. They were also exposed to negotiation styles related to international negotiations, where multiple rounds of formal and informal talks were conducted in order

for the participants to familiarise themselves with the different roles of each actor, and to the types of negotiators marked by different characters.

The workshop was attended by 23 participants comprising government officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of International Trade and Industry.

MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants 2018

Funded by the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), the above course was designed to enhance the foreign diplomats' knowledge in the various aspects of theories, practices and elements of diplomacy and international affairs.

Held from 25 June to 6 July 2018, 14 participants from Albania, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyz, Lao PDR, Oman, Qatar, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Vietnam underwent two weeks of training and covered various topics such as national and international security, economic diplomacy, media relations, counter terrorism and international negotiations.

Designed to be practical with lectures, discussions and simulation exercises, the course encouraged active participation and exchange of information among the participants. Throughout the course, they gained an understanding of Malaysia's experience in managing



its foreign policy, economy and development matters, and were exposed to various diplomatic skills such as public diplomacy, media relations, and negotiations. The participants also learned of Malaysia's involvement at the multilateral stage, and Malaysia's experience in planning for an inclusive development.

Under the introduction to state-level governance module, the participants were brought on a trip to the state of Selangor to discover the unique blend of culture in Malaysia as well as the working relationship between the state and the federal government.

MTCP: Economic Diplomacy Course for Vietnamese Officials 2018



Following the Joint Commission Meeting between Malaysia and Viet Nam on 27 July 2017, both countries agreed to undertake several activities to commemorate the 45th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Malaysia and Viet Nam. The activities include joint broadcast programmes by Radio Televisyen Malaysia and Vietnam Television; trade missions; seminars on business opportunities; and training courses. In this regard, IDFR was tasked to organise the Economic Diplomacy Course for Vietnamese Officials from 16 to 27 July 2018.

The course was attended by 15 officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diplomatic Academy of Viet Nam, Office of the National Assembly, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Science and Tech-

nology, Ministry of Planning and Investment, State Bank of Viet Nam, Academy of Policy and Development, and Chamber of Commerce and Industry. They were joined by four Malaysian officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation and Malaysian Investment Development Authority.

With the objectives of enhancing the officials' knowledge on economic planning and policies, negotiations, investment and trade, the changing

geopolitical, economic and strategic global environment, the course included classroom lectures, visits to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Malaysia Tourism Centre, and a visit to Melaka to give the officials a broader perspective at state level of Malaysia's strategic and development policies, and its multi-racial and multi-ethnic culture.

The course participants also benefitted

from the various round table discourses by Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Sulaiman Mahbob, Chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research; Professor Amitav Acharya, Distinguished Professor of International Relations at the American University, Washington DC; and Mr. Richard Record, a lead Economist at the World Bank Group.

The course was a success in further cementing the close relations and cooperation between Malaysia and Viet Nam.

Network of ASEAN-Russia Think Tanks Inaugural Meeting

With the aim of strengthening relations between ASEAN and Russia, the Network of ASEAN-Russia Think Tanks (NARTT) was one of the initiatives agreed upon with Russia at the Post Ministerial Conference Plus One Session in Manila, the Philippines on 6 August 2017.

NAART's first meeting was held in Moscow, Russia from 20 to 21 April 2018. At the invitation of Professor Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of the Moscow State Institution of Foreign Relations Univer-

sity, the Director General attended the meeting as IDFR is NAART's Focal Point in Malaysia. It was also attended by 18 other officials from the NAART Coordinators for ASEAN Member States, five officials from the Russian Federation and two from the ASEAN Secretariat.

Among others, the meeting discussed and adopted NAART's Terms of Reference as well as the scope of its future activities. The meeting also discussed the topic of *ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership in the Regional Security*

Landscape: Perspectives and Modalities of Joint Efforts, which included areas of counter-terrorism and transnational crimes, energy security, security of ICT and disaster management. Its findings and recommendations were submitted to the ASEAN-Russia Senior Officials' Meeting, held on 18 May 2018, also in Moscow.

The next NAART meeting will be held in Indonesia in 2019 under Indonesian and Russian co-chairmanship.

13th Annual Meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Training Institutions of ASEAN+3

The Director General participated in the above meeting held from 23 to 25 May 2018 in Beijing, China. Organised by the China Foreign Affairs University, the theme of the meeting was *Innovation in Diplomatic Training: New Challenges, New Methods, New Modes*. It was also attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Brunei, and Embassy of Brunei in Beijing; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, Royal School of Administration, National Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in China; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan; Korea Nation-

al Diplomatic Academy; Institute of Foreign Affairs, Laos; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar; the Foreign Service Institute, Philippines; MFA Diplomatic Academy, Singapore; Dewawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs, Thailand; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China and China Diplomatic Academy.

Datuk Mohamad Sadik was one of the presenters in the session on *Innovation in Diplomatic Training Modes*, where he spoke on e-diplomacy and cloud banks. The other sessions were on *New Challenges on Diplomatic Train-*

ing, Innovation in Diplomatic Training Methods and Construction of Diplomatic Training Cooperation Mechanism (Development and Construction of Joint Curriculum).

It was decided at the meeting that the 14th Annual Meeting will be held in Hanoi, Vietnam. IDFR looks forward to attending the meeting to share knowledge, experience and best practices with, and learn from the other members of the ASEAN+3. A training programme on crisis management will also be held in parallel to the meeting, to be attended by junior diplomats from all the participating countries.

Diploma in Diplomacy: Tea Chat Session with the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Stay true to your mission. Have the right attitude. Build a mini library. Take pride in well-polished shoes. These are just some of the advice shared by Dato' Seri Ramlan Ibrahim, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Secretary General with the Diploma in Diplomacy 2018's participants over a brief but engaging afternoon chat on 12 July 2018.

Welcoming the inquisitiveness from the participants when asked about his thoughts on the recent change of Government, Dato' Seri Ramlan said that time should be given for the new administration to consolidate the new power arrangement. With Tun Dr. Mahathir back at the helm of the country, resurgence of several foreign policy thrusts from his era as the fourth Prime Minister is expected, such as renewed emphasis on South-South Cooperation, especially Africa, Latin America and Central Asia; the Look East Policy;

as well as the revival of the Langkawi International Dialogue. The Ministry, he said, would have to play an important role in carrying out these foreign policy objectives and managing the shifts in emphasis.

Dato' Seri Ramlan reiterated his commitment to creating an environment within the Ministry where talents can thrive and flourish. High level of integrity and accountability is expected from all officers, as well as uncompromising pursuit of excellence in mastering the issues under their purview as well as global affairs. As a ministry of knowledge, he said that the Ministry welcomes the council of advisors as it values ideas and intellectual engagement that would contribute towards its work. Dato' Seri Ramlan also emphasised the importance of managerial skills and the right attitude when moving up the career ladder.

He further encouraged the participants to start building a mini library: "I cannot foresee someone in the Foreign Ministry who is not a book lover, or leave the service without a collection of books." An avid reader himself, Dato' Seri Ramlan also reminded the participants of the importance of engaging with the locals of the host country as books alone would not be sufficient in providing a deep understanding of the dynamics of the host country.

Towards the end of the session, Dato' Seri Ramlan also shared his experience as the negotiator during the bilateral diplomatic crisis between Malaysia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 2017, and credited the success of the negotiation to the team. He welcomed the proposal for a case study to be made on the subject so as to provide a useful reference and contribution to the Ministry's institutional memory.

Diploma in Diplomacy: Panel Discussion on New Malaysia and its Implications on Foreign Policy

New Malaysia, a popular label to mark the administration of the new government helmed by Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir has seen widespread reforms carried out to address the issue of corruption and restore the people's trust in

government. Amidst these changes, what will the foreign policy of *New Malaysia* look like?

In the quest to find the answer, the Diploma in Diplomacy participants organ-

ised a panel discussion titled *New Malaysia and its Implications on Foreign Policy* on 24 July 2018. The session gathered civil servants and policy experts to deliberate on the current direction and challenges of Malaysia's for-

foreign policy under the new government. The panellists in the two-hour session were Tan Sri Hasmy Agam, former Executive Chairman of IDFR and former Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations; Dr. Roy Anthony Rogers, Head of the International and Strategic Studies Department, University of Malaya; and Mr. Shahrman Lockman, Senior Analyst in the Foreign Policy and Security Studies Programme, ISIS Malaysia. The session was moderated by Ms. Audrey Sanggai Jemat, a Diploma in Diplomacy participant.

Having served under a number of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers in his illustrious diplomatic career, Tan Sri Hasmy welcomed the move towards constructive consultations with relevant stakeholders of foreign policy. He also applauded the government's decision to accede to the remaining six out of nine core international human rights treaties, among which are covenants on civil and political rights as well as elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.

Dr. Roy Anthony Rogers summarised Malaysia's foreign policy in a simple acronym: M.A.P.S. – which stood for moderation, active, pragmatism and sustainable. He opined that fundamental elements of Malaysia's foreign policy would remain and would not change drastically in the foreseeable future, among which is Malaysia's commitment



towards ASEAN, the UN, the OIC and NAM. Malaysia also has the potential to become a middle power and is already recognised as one by some quarters.

Dr. Roy suggested that the new government also consider non-traditional security issues such as haze, terrorism and digital diplomacy as other areas to be focused on in the implementation of foreign policy.

Mr. Shahrman highlighted several key strengths of Malaysia's foreign policy which include maintenance of long standing and enduring principles such as ASEAN as Malaysia's cornerstone; a friend to all nations irrespective of their

political system; involvement in the non-aligned movement; and commitment to the Muslims globally. He added that *New Malaysia's* foreign policy would be highly personified in Tun Dr. Mahathir's previous concepts in dealing with foreign affairs, and also in Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah's agenda as the new Foreign Minister. Mr. Shahrman also elaborated on a few key challenges such as adapting previous policies in contemporary time, and resource constraints.

The question and answer session was lively as the panellists discussed issues on Malaysia-China relations, human rights, and Malaysia's leading role among developing countries.

Update on IDFR's Strategic Partnership with Local Universities

In its continuous efforts to collaborate with local universities in areas of academic excellence opportunities, IDFR is pleased to update that it has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Universiti Utara Malaysia. It has also finalised negotiation with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, and the MoU is poised to be inked soon. IDFR is also in discussion with Universiti Teknologi MARA to elevate the current arrangements with the university to jointly offer

Master and Ph.D programmes to Malaysian Foreign Service Officers as part of their ongoing pursuit of knowledge enhancement and academic excellence.

The Special Projects Division, which is taking the lead on the abovementioned efforts, has also endeavoured to strengthen its human resources. Mr. Raja Saiful Ridzuwan has officially taken over the Director's seat from Puan Hajah Norani Ibrahim upon her mandatory

retirement on 24 June 2018. The Division wishes to thank Puan Hajah Norani for her utmost dedication, commitment and above all, contribution in setting up the Division and operationalising it with the backdrop of the various challenges and difficulties, and will miss her leadership dearly. Her vision and wisdom has allowed the Special Projects Division, which started from a modest beginning, to become a significant Division in IDFR.

IDFR Bids Farewell to its Director of Special Projects



Puan Hajah Norani Ibrahim, IDFR's Director of Special Projects, retired on 24 June 2018 after 37 years of service. Having served IDFR since 2013, Puan

Hajah Norani played an important role in driving the transformation exercise at the Institute. Her vast experience from previous positions such as a Director in

the Economic Planning Unit under the Prime Minister's Department contributed immensely to the Institute's success in many ways.

IDFR recognises and appreciates the valuable knowledge that Puan Hajah Norani had shared and the positive qualities that she had instilled in us, and thank her for all her time and effort in helping to shape IDFR towards a transformed learning institute. She will be remembered for the great things that she has done not only for IDFR but for every staff that have had the opportunity to work with her. Indeed, her exceptional qualities have inspired many of us.

Although her departure saddens us, we are happy that she is finally getting the rest she truly deserves, after all her years of hard work in serving the nation. IDFR wishes Puan Hajah Norani all the best and she will definitely be missed by all of us.



Carry out your mission with professionalism, honour, commitment and integrity; set a good example for others to follow; and engage with all actors in all areas at post. Always remember that, as promised by the Government of the day, Malaysia must be known for its integrity, not corruption; defend and protect the country's borders from external invasion, trafficking and smuggling; lead efforts to resolve the Rohingya and Palestinian crises; and promote Malaysia's role in international institutions. Our foreign policy is a continuity of long-standing core values, such as neutrality and non-interference, and diplomatic negotiations for conflict resolution.

Excerpt of Secretary General of the Ministry, Dato' Seri Ramlan Ibrahim's Remarks on 18 July 2018 at a dinner in honour of Newly-Appointed Malaysia's Heads of Mission

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ity of Malaysia's current foreign policy principles. He added that the Ministry will place more emphasis on efforts to ratify several human rights conventions, which is consistent with the manifesto of Pakatan Harapan, and improvements to the implementation of the

United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals 2030.

The staff had the honour to meet with The Honourable Dato' Saifuddin when he visited IDFR on 19 July 2018. During a briefing on the Institute's programmes by the respective Head of Centres, he

shared his expectations of IDFR, which include the setting up of a Board of Studies.

IDFR also had the pleasure to welcome the new Deputy Foreign Minister, The Honourable Dato' Marzuki Yahya, to IDFR on 7 August 2018.

News Contributors

Barathi Muniyandi, Escopper Zumilla Anak Michael Jawa, Haliyath Zahiyah Kamal Mustaffa, Haris Syarwani Razali, Imran Ariff Mohammad Amin, Muhammad Afif Norzan Shah, Muhammad Hafiz Bahar, Nik Luqman Wan Zainoddin, Noraini Nong, Nur Atikah Anuar, Raja Saifful Ridzuwan, Sarah Zahirah Ruhama, Sidney Kho Wui Sing, Syed Ahmad Naufal Syed Isa



