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Panel Discussion on *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/IL)*

The Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) organised a panel discussion on 30 October 2014 titled *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS/IL)*. The panelists were Associate Professor Dr. Farish A. Noor from the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and IDFR Distinguished Fellow and Mr. Ahmad El Muhammady from the International Islamic University Malaysia.

Dr. Farish Noor, who was the first panelist, spoke about the need to understand the reason behind the recent acts of violence conducted by the various militant or radical groups especially in Iraq and

Syria. He reasoned that the violence and militant uprising should be studied from the perspective of Ibnu Khaldun, the renowned Muslim scholar who said that radicalism, extremism and even terrorism, was due to colonisation. Among the other reasons that were cited by Dr. Farish Noor were frustration, anger, economic aspects, the failure of the ruling government and socio-political issues. These reasons forced the young and oppressed

to take up arms and fight against the oppressors, either the government or occupying forces. He also reiterated that the violence did not reflect the actual teachings of Islam, which propagates peace instead of violence. Thus, the world should not blame the religion because there is no correlation between the religion and the violence incurred. However, the West and especially the international media al-

some people started to join the group by expressing their support on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others. There were also reports of people who travelled to Syria to join the group, fighting alongside them as 'jihadists' and to eventually die as martyrs. The IS radicals manipulated the religious texts for their own agenda and made others believe in their desire to build the *Daulah Islamiyah* (the Islamic Caliphate).

The trend is worrying because the militants are able to reach a bigger and wider audience especially the younger generation who are more gullible and easily influenced by dreams of creating an Islamic

Caliphate in the Middle East and eventually the rest of the world.



ready had the preconceived idea that any aggression or extremism is due to Islamic militants or radicals and there is nothing Islamic about the IS.

Mr. Ahmad El Muhammady, in turn, spoke about how the IS militants exploited the social media to gain support, followers and sympathy especially from the young generation. The ability to spread their messages globally was demonstrated when

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Tan Sri Dato' Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan Distinguished Fellow of IDFR

Q: As the Chairman of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, would you like to share the vision of ISIS in 2015 onwards?

A: Our vision is to consolidate our status as the leading think tank in the country and strengthen our standing among regional think tanks and the policy community.

We intend to achieve our vision by intensifying our research and contributions in the policy areas most critical to Malaysia's national interest and comprehensive well-being. These include the areas of economic and social development, national unity, foreign policy and security, and the environment.

In the region we would like to play an even more prominent role in think tank and track two networks such as the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) and Network of East Asia Think Tanks (NEAT) besides sustaining and further developing bilateral dialogues with key countries important to Malaysia such as Indonesia, China, the United States and India.

Adequate expertise and how we best leverage upon our limited resources will be critical to achieving our objectives.

Q: Considering your past involvement in coordinating the project of Malaysia's Knowledge-Based Economy Master Plan, how do you think such a Plan can help bring the country closer to becoming a fully developed nation by 2020?

A: All developed economies are knowledge-based economies because it is in knowledge-based economic activity that greater wealth resides. The traditional factors of production like land and labour yield less wealth and income as economies move up the value chain. Knowledge itself becomes the most important factor of

production and skilled human capital the most vital resource.

For Malaysia to become a high-income economy, it has no choice but to hasten its transition from a production-based economy to a largely knowledge-based one. Among other things, it has to further reduce its reliance upon imported low-skilled labour and successfully implement its national education blueprint.

Q: Based on your experience and wisdom, what are the key tools in creating more able Malaysian diplomats?

A: Knowledge, language (especially English language) skills and socialisation skills. When our diplomats are better equipped in these three areas, they will have greater ability to shape foreign policy, conduct diplomacy and engage in negotiations.

Q: How do you see IDFR and the role it plays in contributing to Malaysia's foreign policy?

A: IDFR's primary purpose is training, not formulating foreign policy or executing it. The training of our diplomats is a serious business. Our diplomats will only be as good as the training they get, the education that

preceded the training and subsequent lifelong learning.

But good diplomats make for good foreign policy, both in policy formulation as well as implementation. And the teaching and training staff as well as students in IDFR provide ready resources for research and analysis of major issues and policy options. Perhaps these valuable resources could be tapped some more.

IDFR could also extend training in the rudiments of diplomacy and negotiations to officials in other government agencies such as trade, defence and environment in line with the requirements of total diplomacy as described below.

Q: What changes would you suggest in enhancing Malaysia's foreign policy?

A: I would like to highlight three areas within the context of a more active foreign policy.

First, to become more adept at conducting *total diplomacy* in a globalised environment where actors have multiplied and diplomacy has become more multi-faceted. Besides the foreign ministry, trade officials, defence officials and military chiefs,





track two institutions and even multinational companies now play significant roles in international affairs. It will be the task of the foreign ministry to mobilise, coordinate and deploy these actors and resources as best it can in furtherance of coherent foreign policy goals.

Second, to formulate and implement a more effective communication strategy in which Foreign Ministries often refer to as public diplomacy. The deficit in this area is huge not only for Ministry of Foreign Affairs but for the entire government machinery. Perception is (almost) everything. Unless the government takes this aspect much more seriously and is prepared to invest in it, Malaysia's foreign policy will not be as productive.

Third, a better crafted policy towards our largest neighbour, Indonesia. This policy will have to be based on a deeper understanding of this important country; the dispatch of our best diplomats there, always and not intermittently; the astute cultivation of key centres of power and influence and better media management at home and cultivation of the media in Indonesia.

Q: Would you mind sharing the biggest challenge that you have experienced throughout your career?

A: My biggest test was to perform and deliver in challenging circumstances when I was posted overseas.

Jakarta was then (1977-1980) relatively easy. There were fewer actors and constituencies to address, unlike now. The lines between Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta were strong and forged at the highest levels. Matters could be handled and resolved quickly and often to mutual satisfaction. There was goodwill aplenty between the two governments and peoples. And there was domestic political stability.

Bangkok (1980-1983) was different. There was never a dull moment for

diplomats and other sundry foreign operatives, especially those from Malaysia. There was the domestic political instability, the threat posed by the Communist Party of Thailand, the complications to security and bilateral relations caused by the Communist Party of Malaya entrenched in southern Thailand and the Muslim irredentist movements in the south.

To cap them all, there was the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia, presenting major political and security problems for the region. Thailand became the "frontline state" and Malaysia was heavily involved in political and diplomatic initiatives, including in the creation of the "Third Force" and the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK).

I learnt a lot during my stint in Thailand and I hope I managed to make a tangible if modest contribution to Malaysia's foreign policy interests and regional security while there.



Tan Sri Dato' Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan is Chairman of ISIS Malaysia and a Distinguished Fellow of IDFR. He is also Non-Executive Chairman, New Straits Times Press (Malaysia) Bhd; Member, Economic Council

Working Group; Member, Advisory Board, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission; Distinguished Fellow, Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS); Fellow, Institute of Public Security of Malaysia (IPSOM), Ministry of Home Affairs; Board Member, Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS); Member, Laureate Advisory Board, INTI International University and Colleges; Former Chairman, Malaysian National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP); and Board Member of Securities Commission Malaysia as well as Malaysia's Representative as Expert and Eminent Person, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).



Should Malaysia Reopen Batu Puteh?

Contributed by Dr. Mohd Hazmi Mohd Rusli, Dr. Lowell B. Bautista and Dr. Roman Dremluga

Introduction

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) awarded Batu Puteh (Pedra Branca) to Singapore in 2008. However, the sovereignty over the Middle Rocks, a maritime feature that is located about one kilometre from Batu Puteh was granted to Malaysia. This decision left a huge impact for maritime boundary delimitations in this region and incited mixed feelings among Malaysians, Singaporeans and the global community as a whole. Quite recently, the Sultan of Johor suggested for a special team to be established in making an appeal against the decision of the ICJ in 2008.

This article therefore discusses the potential legal and political implications should both Malaysia and Singapore agree to revive this case at the ICJ. This article concludes that while this suggestion may possess merits, it is nevertheless more feasible for Malaysia and Singapore to resolve the related disputes through bilateral negotiations so as to preserve the concept of good neighbourliness and to avoid unnecessary disputes in the future.

History

The Sultanate of Johor is one of the longest existing sultanates in Malaysia. Established in 1528, Johor rose to pre-eminence in the 17th century as a maritime empire in and around the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, stretching from Perak and Pahang to the north and Lingga Islands to the south.

Unlike other Malay states that were made vassals of the British Empire, Johor's sovereignty was acknowledged by the British Queen herself during the reign of Maharaja Abu Bakar in 1886. Johor remained an independent sovereign state at least until 1914 when it accepted a British adviser prior to its inclusion into the Federation of Malaya as a British protectorate in 1948.

Johor then became a member state of the newly independent Malaya in 1957 and in 1963, as part of modern Malaysia. Johor's sovereignty has been internationally recognised when the ICJ in 2008 acknowledged that Batu Puteh was never a *terra nullius* and historically was part of the Sultanate of Johor. Batu Puteh is located approximately seven nautical miles from the south-eastern point of the Johor coast and about 25 nautical miles from Singapore.



Map 1: The Location of Batu Puteh

It has been six years since the ICJ acknowledged the sovereignty over Batu Puteh to Singapore. Batu Puteh was not awarded to Malaysia as the ICJ was convinced that there was effective occupation by Singapore coupled with a letter issued by the then Acting State Secretary of Johor in 1953 relinquishing Johor's ownership over the island. While Middle Rocks (Batuan Tengah) remained with Malaysia, the sovereignty over South Ledge has yet to be determined by these two countries.

Reopening Batu Puteh

Recently, the Sultan of Johor, Sultan Ibrahim Ismail urged the Johor State Government to establish a special team in making an appeal against the decision on Batu Puteh. While this suggestion has its own merits, there are a number of implications to be considered.

Article 94 of the United Nations Charter requires that each member state

comply with the decision of the Court in any case to which it is a party. Article 60 of the Statute of the ICJ clearly states that 'the judgment is final and without appeal'. However, if dispute arises as to the meaning or scope of the judgment, the Court shall construe it upon the request of any State parties. In addition, Article 61(1) of the Statute of the ICJ allows State parties to make an application for revision within ten years if new evidence is adduced.

Temple of Preah Vihear Case

Temple of Preah Vihear is a classic example of a reopened ICJ case. Preah Vihear is an ancient Hindu temple that dates back to the Khmer Empire in the 11th century AD. Following a dispute between Cambodia and Thailand on the ownership of the temple, both countries agreed to have this matter resolved by the ICJ.

In 1962, the ICJ ruled that only the temple building belonged to Cambodia while the direct way to access the temple is from the Kantharalak district of Sisaket Province in Thailand. Following this decision, Thailand reacted angrily and announced that it would boycott all meetings of the then Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) having its headquarters in Bangkok. Mass demonstrations were staged in Thailand protesting the ruling.

After months of objections, the Thai government slowly backed down and decided to hand over Preah Vihear to Cambodia. The Phnom Penh government officially took possession of the temple in 1963 in a ceremony attended by 1000 people. As a gesture of good-neighbourliness, Cambodia allowed all Thais to visit the temple without visas and will not demand the return of any antiquities that may have been taken away from the site. On 7 July 2008, Preah Vihear was listed as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Site.

The 1962 decision of the ICJ left a loophole as only the temple belongs to Cambodia but not the land adjoining the site. This subsequently led to periodic outbreaks of violence and military clashes started to erupt in 2008 and continued up to 2010. The worst attacks occurred in 2011 when officials of both governments were negotiating the dispute, resulting in injuries and deaths on both sides.

Subsequent to a request made by Cambodia to remove Thai forces from that area, the ICJ, by a vote of 11-5 ordered the immediate withdrawal of their military forces. Ultimately, the ICJ, on 11 November 2013, ruled that the area around and below the temple belongs to Cambodia and requested the removal of Thai forces from the temple area.

The Preah Vihear case is a good point of reference on whether or not Malaysia should reopen Batu Puteh. Article 60 of the Statute of the ICJ clearly stated that decisions made by the ICJ are final and without appeal. Unless new evidence could be adduced, the question of whether or not Malaysia could reclaim Batu Puteh is undeniably out of the picture. When Preah Vihear was reopened, there was no questioning the Cambodian ownership of the said temple.

Political and Legal Implications

In 2008, the ICJ only awarded Batu Puteh to Singapore and the Middle Rocks to Malaysia without clarifying the ownership of South Ledge. This situation could be likened to Preah Vihear where the ICJ declared only the sovereignty over the temple to Cambodia, not the land adjacent to it. The 1962 decision resulted in a severed Thai-Cambodia diplomatic relations and this matter was only resolved much later in 2013.

The Malaysian-Indonesian dispute on Sipadan and Ligitan was decided in favour of Malaysia by the ICJ in 2002. This adversely affected the cordial

Malaysia-Indonesia *serumpun* relationship, straining bilateral ties between these two countries resulting in trust deficit. The Indonesian public in general, through its mass media, showed suspicion and resentment against Malaysia being a good neighbour within the Association of South-east Asian Nation (ASEAN). Malaysia was alleged to have unwarrantedly 'stolen' Indonesian islands. The same scenario was displayed by Malaysia's media against Singapore when Putrajaya lost Batu Puteh in 2008.

Bilateral Negotiations

Be that as it may, it is possible for Batu Puteh to be reopened but not on the question of the ownership of the island. The ICJ may deliberate matters left unresolved in the 2008 judgment particularly on the Malaysia-Singapore maritime boundaries between Batu Puteh and the Middle Rocks as well as the question of sovereignty over South Ledge. However, considering the negative aftermath portrayed in Preah Vihear, Sipadan-Ligitan and Batu Puteh, it is a better option for Malaysia and Singapore to resort to bilateral negotiations to review these unresolved issues.

While the ICJ may settle disputes between these two countries, it may not be a mechanism to stop future disputes. As Malaysia and Singapore are members of solidarity within ASEAN, it is therefore vital for these two States to uphold the spirit of good neighbourliness. Bilateral negotiations would undoubtedly consume more time, eventually creating a win-win solution for the States involved. Apart from that, the ICJ mechanism would only operate if consent from Malaysia and Singapore is obtained. Thus far, it is not entirely clear if both nations would want to go through the ICJ again.

Conclusion

It is beyond doubt that Johor possesses historical ownership over Batu

Puteh, a reason that may have influenced the Sultan of Johor to suggest for an appeal to be made against the earlier decision. The decision made by the ICJ in 2008 was final and Batu Puteh is now within the sovereignty of Singapore.

Nevertheless, Malaysia and Singapore could reopen this case just to allow the ICJ to decide on the unresolved matters and not on the sovereignty over Batu Puteh, particularly on sovereignty over South Ledge as well as the maritime boundary delimitations between these two States in that maritime area.

As third party resolution of dispute through the ICJ may entail a 'trust deficit syndrome' among State parties to the dispute as reflected in the aftermath of the ICJ cases of Sipadan-Ligitan and Batu Puteh, it is ultimately more favourable for Malaysia and Singapore to resort to bilateral negotiations that may eventually benefit both countries in the long run. Unless Malaysia could provide new evidence to allow application for revision of the case to be made, a question that Malaysia should carefully consider – should Malaysia reopen Batu Puteh?

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Keynote Address by Dato' Hamzah Zainudin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and a very good morning to all of you.

First and foremost, allow me to welcome all of you to today's event to mark the important occasion of the 38th international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people. Indeed, I feel honoured to be here as our assembly today is truly an expression of our compassion, unequivocal support and solidarity with the courageous people of Palestine.

By way of this gathering, we convey our solidarity with the people of Palestine in their noble and just struggle for their legitimate rights. By the same token, our presence here today also sends a strong message that it is in the interest of the entire international community that a lasting and peaceful solution is found to the Palestine-Israel conflict, resulting in a sovereign, independent and united state of Palestine living within secure and recognised borders with east Jerusalem as its capital.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Malaysia welcomes the designation of the year 2014 as the international year of solidarity with the Palestinian people by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012. Malaysia's engagement with Palestine officially started when the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) established its office in Kuala Lumpur in 1969. Upon the declaration of Palestine as a state on 15 November 1988, Malaysia was amongst the first few countries to give a full democratic recognition of Palestine as a state on the same date.

Hence, we view the United Nations' proclamation as recognition of the Palestinian cause and the inalienable

rights of the Palestinian people. Malaysia is heartened and pleased to note that recently, a number of European countries have begun to recognise Palestine as a state. The world has finally come to its senses. We hope the international community will continue to support Palestine's noble quest for freedom and self-determination in the name of justice and equality. We strongly believe that recognition of Palestine as a state by the international community will eventually provide an equal playing field for Palestine in its peace negotiations with the Zionist regime.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hardly two years since the last brutal military aggression by the Zionist regime on the people of Palestine in Gaza, the world was once again shocked and horrified by Israel's barbaric and merciless attack on Gaza in early July this year. The heartless assault under operation protective edge, lasted more than 51 days and claimed the innocent lives of at least 1,523 Palestinian civilians including 519 children and displaced more than 100,000 Palestinians in Gaza. The senseless and unlawful attacks also caused immeasurable damage to public infrastructure, including those that belong to the United Nations which are essential for the Palestinians living in Gaza.

The world knows that the latest Israeli assault was also the worst since operation pillar of defence in 2008 and operation cast lead in 2012. Sadly, the spirit of humanity was once again shattered and bruised as the Zionist regime massacred the people of Palestine in Gaza for the third time in a period of less than seven years. Malaysia expresses our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families and victims of Israel's hostilities. The government and people of Malaysia also condemn the inhumane attacks in the strongest possible terms.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, three months had passed since Israel's military attack on Gaza, but let us never forget that those precious lives lost during the hostilities were not terrorists, nor were they mere statistics for the international community to record and debate. These fallen angels were loved ones, family members and friends whose unfortunate fate was partly a result of the world's inaction and inability to intervene constructively to end Israel's crime against humanity.

For decades, Israel's brutality, disrespect and crime against humanity including violation of various international laws have been left unpunished, especially by the United Nations and the international community. In reality, the United Nations and the international community have all the mechanisms and instruments needed to end the Israel Zionist regime's occupation and oppression against the people of Palestine. In fact, this has been well documented when the world overcame colonialism six decades ago and apartheid regime in South Africa. Am I wrong to assume that Israel's continued occupation and ignorance to human rights and international laws is an insult to the United Nations' existence and purpose?

Ladies and gentlemen,

Malaysia calls on the international community to not only condemn Israel's illegal occupation of Palestine but to exert pressure on the Zionist regime to end its ruthless colonialization and segregation of Palestine within a well-defined timeline. I believe, being silent about this issue of humanity is akin to us complicating with the terrorist Zionist regime in the systemic genocide of the people of Palestine from their rightful land.

At the same time, the international community and in particular, the

Muslim world must be mindful and cautious of the Zionist regime's systematic judaization policies of Baitulmaqdis/al-Quds (Jerusalem) which houses the al-Quds al-Sharif and its holy sites, including the al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest mosque and first kiblah for Muslims. The recent Israeli intrusion of the sacred mosque has clearly illustrated the Zionist regime's agenda to alter the traditional arab-islamic character and demographic structure of Baitul Maqdis, including east Jerusalem, the future capital of the state of Palestine. Its desecration by Israeli forceful incursions and attempts to divide it through invalid Israeli laws constitute a serious insult not just to the Palestinians but also to the Muslim ummah and believers across the globe.

Hence, if the United Nations and the international community are really serious and committed in protecting the sanctity of human lives and combating terrorism in all its various forms, then, we must work together to end Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and hostilities against the people of Palestine. To many, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was perceived as the root cause or mother of all conflicts affecting the middle east region these days.

I believe all of you here would agree with me that the Palestinian-Israeli war, the longest ongoing conflict in modern history thus far, is also the costliest, particularly in terms of lives lost. Thousands of Palestinian lives have either perished or severely wounded, while many more are displaced and forced to seek refuge in foreign lands. Furthermore, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has not only threatened the middle east's security and stability, but more importantly, it has denied the people of the blessed region from realising its fullest potentials politically, economically and culturally especially for the people of Palestine.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Malaysia, despite being geographically apart from the Middle East region, has always placed Palestine close to our hearts. As the international community resumes its efforts towards rebuilding Gaza, Malaysia hopes that the Palestinian people would remain steadfast, persevere and united towards nation building. For this, I wish to reiterate the Government of Malaysia's support to the Palestinian unity government which was established on 2 June 2014 and commends the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas as well as all Palestinian factions for taking this brave action. Indeed, it requires great amount of courage, willpower and wisdom to put the aspirations of the people of Palestine first, before themselves and their own political gain. Moreover, this is a milestone on the path to an independent and sovereign statehood for the courageous people of Palestine.

Consciously, we are aware that this internal solidarity and unity amongst the people of Palestine will not end the struggle. We are also aware that this is easier said than done but I say that a united and strong Palestine is definitely the only way forward for the people of Palestine in facing the more powerful colonialist Israel. Palestinians must seize this moment when some of Israel's long-time allies and friends have re-evaluated their conscience. The people of Palestine must walk hand-in-hand and stand side-by-side in solidarity and unity as one people with a common purpose. Israel on its part must also recognise the changing tides and work towards peace with the Palestinians. It cannot ignore the changing sentiments of the international community if indeed it is sincere in its profession of finding peace with Palestine.

I am not saying this will be easy. The road that lies ahead is full of challenges, obstacles and resistance but we appeal to our Palestinian brothers to stay on this course and put your differences behind. Rest assured that we,

Malaysians and like-minded citizens of the world, are fully behind you in support and solidarity in your struggles for your own country that is sovereign and independent. We are confident that the people of Palestine, regardless of their political affiliations knows what their ultimate goal is and will do whatever it takes to change the status quo. On this, the international community can only do so much to assist the people of Palestine but only a united Palestine will pave the way to end all the sufferings of the Palestinian people

Ladies and gentlemen,

I also wish to state that Malaysia believes that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region is achievable through moderation and peaceful means. Hence, we urge both Palestine and Israel to return to the negotiating table for direct peace talks as soon as possible. As I have mentioned before, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is by far, the longest and costliest in our time. And yet, after all these years which saw countless peace building and peace keeping efforts by the international community that costs billion of dollars, durable peace seems like utopia and impossible.

Therefore, it is fundamental for both Palestine and Israel to engage constructively to negotiate for peace. The international community cannot go on pumping in money to rebuild what has been destroyed by Israel. These are short-term solutions and there are already signs of fatigue shown by some donor countries. However, in order for the peace talks to culminate in meaningful and durable agreements that would bring lasting peace in the Middle East with the realisation of the two state solution, it is imperative for both Palestine and Israel to return to the negotiating table in earnest. And this is a question of choice. If at all, this is the only choice that must be made by leaders and by people of both sides

because this is the choice that will define the future that is secure for not just Palestine and Israel but for the region and beyond as it also serves as the beacon of hope that humanity can coexist in peace and harmony.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude my remarks, I wish to reaffirm Malaysia's consistent and unwavering support to the courageous and brotherly people of Palestine in their pursuit of just, legitimate goals and noble quest for self-determination, dignity and self-reliance. I also wish to state that Malaysia attaches great importance to its spe-

cial relationship with Palestine. Despite being a small nation, Malaysia has been one of the staunchest supporters of the Palestinian cause. Therefore, I would like to reassure Malaysia's continuous support and assistance to the state and people of Palestine, in various forms, within our own ability, capacity and means. Rest assured that Malaysia as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the term 2015-2016 will do its utmost to further the Palestinian cause, a cause which is close to the hearts of all Malaysians.

For now, we hope to see a unified Palestine govern by the consensus government that is inclusive and fair in

accordance with the concept of *Musyawarah*. We hope to see the realisation of the two state solution where an independent, united and sovereign state of Palestine with east Jerusalem as its capital existing side by side with Israel living in peace, harmony and mutual respect. We wish the people of Palestine, every success in your noble quest to achieve the ultimate goal – insya Allah.

Thank you.

HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah Lecture Series 2014



The Malaysian Medical Relief Society (MERCY Malaysia) in collaboration with IDFR organised the HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah Lecture Series at the Auditorium on 27 November 2014.

The highlight of the event was a lecture delivered by Mr. Yves Daccord, Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, titled *From Baghdad to Bangui, from Moscow to Kuala Lumpur: Is there still a role for humanitarian actors?* The lecture underlined the concerns about recent serious global conflicts and the security coverage of the humanitarian aid workers.

Mr. Daccord elaborated on the limitations of humanitarian response in a particularly difficult global environment, offered some historical perspective while giving his viewpoint on the way forward. He also argued that simply relying on "business as usual" is not sufficient to respond to today's humanitarian challenges. Humanitarian actors need to be much more innovative and resourceful, less dogmatic and insular, yet adhere more tenaciously than ever to the principles of humanity and impartiality, at a minimum, in order to respond in a relevant way to the greatest number of people, as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

Dato Dr. Ahmad Faizal Mohd Perdaus, President of MERCY Malaysia, in his Welcoming Remarks hoped that this lecture series would provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and best practices to create greater awareness and understanding on the key issues facing the humanitarian sector.

The event was graced by MERCY Malaysia's Royal Patron, His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah Al-Maghfurlah, the Sultan of Perak Darul Ridzuan. MERCY Malaysia has been under the banner of His Royal Highness and members of the Perak royal family since its establishment in 1999.

Panel Discussion on *Moderation: A Belgian and European Perspective*



On 25 November 2014, IDFR, in collaboration with the Embassy of Belgium, organised a panel discussion titled *Moderation: A Belgian and European Perspective*. The panel discussion was held to discuss how moderation through the implementation of the principles of democracy, good governance and rule of law can be the way forward to long-term peace and stability as well as how these concepts can be concretely applied to counter extremism at the regional and international level.

The main speaker for the event was H.E. Didier Reynders, Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs. The two discussants were Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation (GMMF) and Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, Distinguished Fellow of IDFR and President of the International Movement for a Just World.

H.E. Reynders began his presentation by stating that the world and the media focused on the occurrences happening in the Middle East but calls for change have been much more widespread. In many cases, citizens started to doubt the legitimacy of those that govern them or their capacity to answer their demands. These victimized citizens often rejected corruption and deep-rooted inequalities and want more justice and dignity. As time passed, the Western media welcomed the Arab revolutions that

called for justice, dignity and freedom. They were encouraged by this awakening of whole societies, by citizens' claims for universal values, that was previously so often presented as alien to non-western societies.

H.E. Reynders further stated that in international politics, the welcomed quests for democracy often turned into a call for stability. There is an assumption that a revolution by itself could address all the problems and quickly change the future of the whole country. H.E. Reynders found this assumption unacceptable and is of the view that deep transformation takes time and requires commitment and involvement from all parts of society. It is the lack of response to citizen's legitimate request that feeds their frustration and anger, and provides ground for extremism to grow. Studies have proven that corruption, unbalanced gender policies, economic inequalities, political instability and governance issues are decisive elements to be addressed in building peaceful societies.

H.E. Reynders also elaborated that moderation is about tolerance, trust and mutual understanding, and finds dialogue an important tool to resolve disputes. Moderation should not just be confined to religion alone but should be all encompassing to include other areas such as the economics, politics, culture and social dimensions. Moderation is also about protecting all components of the societies such as ethnic, religious and national minorities, which should by all means, not be considered a burden but an asset. Unfortunately, moderation is often silent, while extremism is heard. Media regularly echoes violence and extremism rather than announcing the small but powerful initiatives of the moderates. H.E. Reynders further emphasised that the duty of leaders is to give moderates a voice and place, and they should also raise their voice and support this call for tolerance and peace, be it through words or concrete actions. He concluded his lecture by stating that as leaders and as citizens,

it is our responsibility to be the voice and the hand of moderation.

The first discussant, Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah elaborated that as an organisation, GMMF practises several initiatives, namely, digital diplomacy, non-traditional traits, democracy and governance. It believes that moderation is how a society does everything and should be at the forefront of things.

He said that GMMF also believes that the duty of the international community, particularly the world leaders, is not only to support the voices of the moderate but more importantly, in some instances to support the pro-democracy moderates who want to uphold human rights, good governance and rule of law. In reality, this is not the case because in some instances, during the escalation of violent extremism, the moderates are often wiped out. Dato' Saifuddin emphasised the need to have more counter-narratives against terrorism; teaching others the real definition of certain alleged words associated with terrorism, such as *jihad*. Dato' Saifuddin suggested that the society can do more in exchanges between ASEAN and European countries, particularly in strategies and policies and transformation of institutions either political or economic and is of the belief that these exchanges are positive ways to ensure a lasting and sustainable peace worldwide.

The second discussant, Dr. Chandra Muzaffar, began his presentation by stating that an anatomy of extremism, violence and terrorism in West Asia focus on the Islamic State. According to Dr. Chandra, whenever one is to talk about religious conflicts, it never excludes the power dimension. The other dimension that Dr. Chandra mentioned was economics. Different religions have their own beliefs and stand in interpreting certain issues; with this being a fact, at a certain level, it can lead to misinterpretations. He further emphasised that it is very important to strengthen the rule of law, democracy and good governance in

all our society. With democracy in the picture, a society is prepared to accommodate diversities. With good governance comes the capability to fight corruption.

Dr. Chandra also explained that as portrayed by the Europeans, the strengthening of the rule of law, democracy and good governance by themselves is not enough. In the last two decades, two types of extremism have emerged in Europe. The first is the extremism reflected in the rise of the right wing parties in Europe who are extremists in ideological views. The second is extremism that involves

young people who are attracted to the Islamic State ideology. With the strengthening of the rule of law, democracy and good governance and the inclusiveness of economic just, stability can be upheld.

At the regional level, in West Asia and other parts of the world, there needs to be a regional mechanism to talk with one another and resolve conflicts between and across regions. At the global level, violence, terrorism and extremism are unavoidable because of the existence of global hegemony. Without a doubt, it is one of the major causes due to the fact that if the hege-

mony wants resources, then it chooses to invade other countries and because of this, people will react and they choose to react in a violent way. Hence, hegemony is a direct link to terrorism and violence. Dr. Chandra ended by stating that there are challenges to be faced and he hoped that society will continue to talk about this issue because as long as there is dialogue, despite all the differences, there may be a possibility to make a difference.



Forum on Nuclear Weapons: Still an Existential Threat to Humankind

A forum titled *Nuclear Weapons: Still an Existential Threat to Humankind* was held at the Auditorium on 15 October 2014. The speaker was Professor The Honourable Gareth Evans AC QC, Chancellor of Australian National University and former as well as the longest serving Foreign Minister of Australia. He is currently Co-Chairs of the International Advisory Board of the New York based Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, and is Convenor of the Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. The session was moderated by Tan Sri Hasmy Agam, Chairman of Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM).

Dato' Hussin Nayan, Director General of IDFR, in his Welcoming Remarks said that the importance of total elimination of nuclear weapons should consistently be at the top of the

international agenda. Malaysia, in this respect, has also been actively pursuing the cause for a nuclear-free world through participation in various multi-lateral platforms in the discourse on non-proliferation and disarmament.

In his introductory remarks, Professor Evans mentioned that people are more concerned about the issues of the impact of nuclear weapons rather than climate change. He then elaborated on the four components of nuclear threats and risks; existing nuclear armed states, new nuclear armed states, nuclear terrorism and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In addition, Professor Evans spoke about the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Disarmament (ICN-ND) initiated by the Australian Government and its action agenda including nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

The forum also highlighted the fact that the pursuit of minimization to eliminate nuclear weapons policy should be the collective effort of various governments, pressure groups and more importantly, civil society. The agenda of nuclear-weapons free world would be futile if these important institutions do not work in tandem. The questions on the prospect of nuclear energy, risk management of nuclear weapons and the geopolitical conflict among the nuclear-armed states were also addressed.

The forum was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, policy makers, academicians, university students and representatives from various ministries and government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the media.

Economic Diplomacy Series 7/2014

IDFR organised the Economic Diplomacy Series 7/2014 titled *Where Do We Draw the Line? Maritime Boundary Issues in the Straits of Malacca* on 3

October 2014 in collaboration with the Centre for International Law and Siyar, UKM; Asian African Legal Consultative Organization (AALCO); Malaysian Ma-

ritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) and Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA).

The workshop involved several prominent academicians and practitioners. They are Professor Dr. Rahmat Mohamad, Secretary-General of AALCO in New Delhi; Associate Professor Dr. Wan Izatul Asma Wan Taalat from the Institute of Oceanography and Environment, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu; Associate Professor Dr. Wan Siti Adibah Wan Dahalan from the Centre for International Law and Siyar, Faculty of Law, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; and Dr. Hazmi Mohd Rusli from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. Dr. Sufian Jusoh, IDFR's Distinguished Fellow was the moderator.

Ambassador Aminah H. A. Karim, the Deputy Director General of IDFR delivered the Welcoming Remarks and set the tone for discussion by stressing the need to understand key concerns of maritime issues such as maritime claims, boundary delimitation, increasing threat of pollution and protection of marine life.

The workshop was an interactive session with diverse views and opinions shared on related issues of

maritime boundaries in the Straits of Malacca. H.E. Professor Dr. Rahmat Mohamad stressed the importance of understanding maritime disputes such as in the case of Pedra Branca or Pulau Batu Puteh to Malaysia and how it would benefit Malaysia in handling territorial disputes in the future.

The second speaker, Associate Professor Dr. Wan Izatul Asma Wan Taalat spoke on the roles of government and highlighted the way forward in the protection of marine endangered species in Malaysia for the extension of our economic development. She suggested that Malaysia work on an institutional reform for more effective governance.

Then, Associate Professor Dr. Wan Siti Adibah Wan Dahalan enlightened the attendees about chemical pollution from shipping in the Straits of Malacca. She explained the importance of the 2010 Hazardous and Noxious Substances Convention and Protocol which ensures adequate, prompt and effective compensation for damage to persons and property, costs of clean

up and reinstatement measures and economic losses resulting from maritime transport of hazardous and noxious substances.

The final speaker, Dr. Hazmi Mohd Rusli provided an in-depth knowledge on the history of maritime boundary delimitation in the Straits of Malacca and the issues of conflicting maritime claims among its claimant-states. He suggested that Malaysia work together with its closest neighbours, Indonesia and Singapore, in dealing with unfinished business amicably under the spirit of good-neighbourliness.

The workshop was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies, representatives from foreign missions, university students and IDFR officers. The half-day workshop was beneficial in highlighting the importance of maritime boundary issues in the Straits of Malacca.

Roundtable Discussion on *The Growing U.S.-ASEAN Partnership and Priorities at the East Asia Summit (EAS)*



On 27 October 2014, IDFR in collaboration with the Embassy of the United States, Kuala Lumpur organised a roundtable discussion titled *The Growing U.S.-ASEAN Partnership and Priorities at the East Asia Summit (EAS)*. The talk was delivered by Mr. Matthew Palmer, Director of Multilateral Affairs in the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

The Welcoming Remarks was given by Ambassador Aminah H. A. Karim, Deputy Director General of IDFR. Ambassador Aminah highlighted that the strong and cohesive relations among ASEAN member countries and between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, such as the United States (U.S.), are crucial towards achieving the goals of Malaysia's chairmanship and the future success of ASEAN.

Mr. Palmer spoke on the way forward in EAS and its challenges including development, security and economic prosperity. He also touched on the

current situation in the South China Sea. In regards to what the U.S. could offer ASEAN, he said that the U.S. is forming an improvement of ASEAN people's capacity building efforts more than the physical projects in the ASEAN region. The session was very interactive and educational.

In attendance were H.E. Joseph Y. Yun, the U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia, H.E. Air Chief Marshal (Rtd.) Herman Prayitno, the Indonesian Ambassador to Malaysia, other members of the diplomatic corps, officers from various government ministries, faculty members from several universities, representatives from NGOs and university students.

Human Rights Day 2014

On 10 December 2014, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia in collaboration with IDFR hosted the Human Rights Day 2014 (HRD 2014) with the theme, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957: An Appreciation*. HRD 2014 was aimed at creating greater understanding of the essence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and its relationship with the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957, in the promotion and protection of human rights.



The panel discussion on the above theme was moderated by Associate Professor Dr. Johan Shamsuddin Sabaruddin, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University Malaya. The panelists comprised Malaysian personalities involved in human rights issues; Professor Emeritus Datuk Dr. Shad Saleem Faruqi, Legal Advisor of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM); Dato' Malik Imtiaz Sarwar, Lawyer and Human Rights Activist and Associate Professor Dr. Khairil Azmin Mokhtar, Law Lecturer at the International Islamic University Malaysia (UIAM).

The discussion revolved around the linkages between the UDHR and the

Federal Constitution of Malaysia as well as the role of cultural diversity in the understanding and realisation of human rights in Malaysia. The event provided greater understanding on the relations between the UDHR and the Federal Constitution of Malaysia 1957 and enabled participants to appreciate the role of cultural diversity in the understanding and realisation of human rights in Malaysia. Although the panel discussants had divergent views on the human rights issues, nonetheless they agreed that discussion and dialogues on this important subject should be welcomed and held

in a very transparent manner to yield diverse perspectives and insights for the benefit of the masses.

HRD 2014 was attended by officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives from UN bodies, the academia, think tanks, non-governmental and civil society organisations as well as university students.



International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



A panel discussion on *Palestine: United for Peace and Statehood* was organised in conjunction with the International Day of Solidarity with the

Palestinian People on 4 December 2014 at the Auditorium.

The programme commenced with Welcoming Remarks by Dato' Hussin Nayan, Director General of IDFR who highlighted that Malaysia has remained steadfast in voicing out concerns towards Israel's international crimes against humanity by urging world nations to take action against Israel. He said that peace can only be achieved through discussions and dialogues, in line with our principles of moderation. This was followed by a Keynote Address by Dato' Hamzah Zainudin, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia.

The panel discussion was moderated by Tan Sri Dato' Seri Mohamed Jawhar Hassan, Chairman of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. The panelists comprised H.E. Dr. Anwar Hamdto Q. Al-Agha, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Embassy of the State of Palestine to Malaysia and Mr. Jufitri Joha, Vice President of Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (ABIM). The discussion was very constructive as the panelists highlighted a wide spectrum of troubling issues and suggested steps for Palestine and Malaysia as well as other nations to take for Palestine to achieve unity for peace and statehood.

Panel Discussion on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Relations

The year 2014 marks the 40th anniversary of Australia's dialogue partnership with ASEAN. To commemorate this event, IDFR in collaboration with the Australian High Commission, Malaysia organised a panel discussion with the theme, *Strengthening Regional Integration through Strategic Partnership*. The objective of the panel discussion was to chart the evolution of Australia's engagement with ASEAN, the importance of ASEAN-Australia relationship and to explore future directions together.

The panelists were made up of H.E. Ambassador Simon Merrifield, Australia's Ambassador to ASEAN, Ambassador Jojie Samuel, Deputy Director General, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia and Dr. Sufian Jusoh, IDFR's Distinguished Fellow, Senior Fellow and Director, Centre for International Law and Siyar, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Dato' Dr. Mohd Yusof Ahmad, Head of the Institute of ASEAN Studies and Global Affairs (INSPAG) Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) was the moderator.

H.E. Ambassador Merrifield as the first panelist delivered his presentation titled *Australia and ASEAN: The Path to a Strategic Partnership and Beyond*. He recalled the historical ties between Malaysia and Australia and how Australia played an active diplomatic role in obtaining international support for the formation of Malaysia in 1963. He also complimented ASEAN which is currently the second largest trading partner with Australia with a USD 92 billion two-way trade. Australia and ASEAN have worked hard together to create the right atmosphere in expanding trade and help to build each other's economy. He further elaborated on some of the technical assistance which they plan to offer to help build ASEAN's economy; Australia will support ASEAN's first consumer protection conference in Hanoi aimed at supporting research and dialogue on the consumer protection

agenda, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission will provide an intensive capacity building programme for ASEAN member states on implementing competition law led by Professor Allan Fels, an eminent Australian scholar and Australia will support the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN (ERIA) which will provide research and policy recommendations to ASEAN ministers and the secretariat towards ASEAN's economic community building. H.E. Ambassador Merrifield concluded his presentation by informing that the New Colombo Plan will be offered to all ASEAN member states to further their education in Australia and for Australian students to carry out their internship in any of the ASEAN countries.

The panel discussion continued with the second panelist, Ambassador Jojie Samuel who spoke on *The Strengthening of ASEAN-Australia Relations under Malaysia's Chairmanship of ASEAN 2015*. He began by announcing that Malaysia will officially assume the role of ASEAN chairmanship on 1 January 2015 and gave some background information about the chairmanship. The year 2015 will be a major milestone in ASEAN as the ASEAN Community will be realised. Malaysia's chairmanship is critical in ensuring that the priority measures and initiatives for the ASEAN community are in place and the integration process will seamlessly continue beyond 2015.

Ambassador Samuel then reiterated ASEAN-Australia's commitment to further strengthen relations by implementing the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-Australia Partnership (2015-2019) which covers a range of ASEAN-Australia cooperative endeavours in political, security, economic, trade and investment, socio-cultural, people-to-people exchanges, tourism development cooperation and educational issues. He concluded by saying that in order for this partnership to be successful, all member states should come out of their comfort zone and work together.

The final panelist, Dr. Sufian Jusoh, spoke on *ASEAN and Australia in the Era of the AEC: The Way Forward*. He started his presentation by sharing his personal experience when he was assigned to undertake the study of prospect of investment flow between ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand under the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Co-operation Work Programme (ECWP). He said that such a comprehensive study could not have been completed without financial assistance from the Government of Australia.

The key characteristics of AEC is to be a single market and production based, a highly competitive economic region, a region of equitable economic development and a region fully integrated into the global economy. Some of the areas that Australia had been investing in ASEAN are; financial services, education, ICT, manufacturing, mining and mining services as well as oil and gas. According to the survey carried out by Dr. Sufian, ASEAN is on par with Australia in terms of obtaining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and when AEC comes into effect by the end of 2015, it is expected that ASEAN will be able to draw in more FDIs, reduce non-tariff barriers and lead a higher degree of regulatory coherence among ASEAN member states. In his concluding remarks, Dr. Sufian mentioned that in order for the AEC to be successful, ASEAN needs to work on their priority sectors and maintain a close integration with Australia as well as adopt their best practices.

This programme was attended by ambassadors, high commissioners, government officials, academicians, representatives of think-tanks and committee members from the Malaysian Australia Business Council.



Panel Discussion on *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*



HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah Lecture Series 2014



Panel Discussion on *Moderation: A Belgian and European Perspective*



Forum on Nuclear Weapons: *Still an Existential Threat to Humankind*



Economic Diplomacy Series 7/2014



International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People



Panel Discussion on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-Australia Relations



Human Rights Day 2014



Workshop on International Negotiations for Mid and Senior Level Officers



MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for Senior Officials from the Government of Timor-Leste



MTCP: English Language Course for Diplomacy



MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants 2/2014



Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses under *Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia di Luar Negara (SPKM)*



The fifth and sixth series of the Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses under *Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia di Luar Negara (SPKM)* were conducted from 13 to 17 October 2014 and from 3 to 14 November respectively. Forty-nine participants from grade 38 and below attended the fifth series, while 48 participants from grade 41 and above attended the sixth series. Participants for both courses came from various ministries and agencies, including, the Ministry of Foreign Af-

fairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources, Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Prime Minister's Department, Federal Territory Islamic Religious Council, Immigration Department of Malaysia, Majlis Amanah Rakyat, National Anti-Drugs Agency, Public Service Department of Malaysia, Royal Malaysian Police and Tourism Malaysia.

Throughout the course, the participants were introduced to sessions related to administration, management, security, finance, auditing, consular matters and protocol at Mission. A cooking demonstration was also held for the spouses at Berjaya University College of Hospitality. They were taught on how to prepare and present Malaysian dishes using various techniques and tips.

The participants were privileged to have a session with Ambassador Zainol Rahim Zainuddin, the Director General of Policy and Strategy Planning Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who spoke on *Malaysia's Foreign Policy* and to listen to Puan Fatimahwati Abd. Rahman, Secretary of the Ladies Association of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (PERWAKILAN), who shared her vast experience on the roles and responsibilities of spouses while abroad. Other interesting modules include *Cross Cultural Awareness, Grooming and Social Etiquette, and Fine Dining Theory and Practicum*.

The certificates of completion were presented to the participants by Mr. Syed Bakri Syed Abd Rahman, the Director of Training, on the last day of each series.



Workshop on Etiquette, Protocol and Event Management for the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS)

IDFR conducted a Workshop on Etiquette, Protocol and Event Management for a group of officers from the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS), Malaysia from 27 to 28 October 2014. The two-day workshop was attended by 31 officers from various agencies under the MYS.

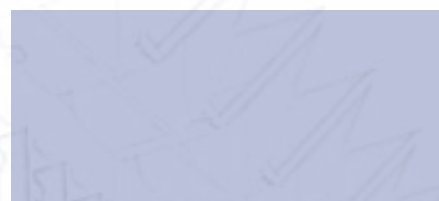
The workshop was organised upon request from the MYS. The specially tailored workshop aimed at equipping the participants with basic knowledge on managing meetings at the international level and providing an avenue for the participants to improve their skills in appropriate procedures, protocol arrangements and social etiquette in managing international events.

The MYS officers underwent this workshop to prepare themselves to

host several Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) events in 2015 in conjunction with Malaysia's chairmanship of ASEAN next year. Therefore, the topics covered in the workshop were; *Malaysia's Role as ASEAN Chair 2015, Introduction to ASEAN Summit 2015, Introduction to International and ASEAN Protocol, Cross Cultural Awareness and Communication, Event Management's Administrative Programme and Arrangement, The Roles and Functions of Floor Manager, Liaison Officers, Usherettes and Protocol Officers, Language and Communication Skills, Personal Grooming and Etiquette and Sharing*



of Experience Session in Handling Events.



Workshop on International Negotiations for Mid and Senior Level Officers

A workshop on International Negotiations for mid and senior level officers was held from 2 to 4 December 2014. The workshop was attended by 18 officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Defence, Department of Chemistry Malaysia, Malaysian Investment Development Authority, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation, Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, University of Malaya and IDFR.

The workshop's main objectives were to expose the participants to the key principles underpinning successful negotiations, explain the role of culture in negotiations and the foundation of intercultural communication, familiarization with bargaining tactics and ways to respond to them and specific individual reactions to negotiations and mediation situations.

Throughout the three-day workshop, participants were given in-depth training on how negotiations were conducted,

techniques dealing with complexities, intercultural communication styles, trade negotiations in delegations and multilateral negotiations.

These were done through interactive lectures and simulation exercises. Additionally, negotiation styles within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were given focus to prepare the participants for Malaysia's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2015. The speaker, Mr. Wilbur Perlot from the Clingendael Academy of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, is a specialist in multilateral negotiations in the European Union (EU) and also in intercultural communication.

The topics, covered throughout the workshop were *How Negotiations Work, Conflict Handling Mode, Dealing*



with Complexity, Cultural Communication Styles, Coming to Consensus, Trade Negotiations in Delegations and Multilateral Negotiations. All these modules had debriefing simulations which the participants found particularly helpful as it gave them an insight into actual events in addition to learning the process and procedures for the roles of chairs and countries.



MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for Senior Officials from the Government of Timor-Leste



On 4 March 2011 in Jakarta, Timor-Leste officially submitted its formal application to join ASEAN. To enable Timor-Leste to eventually attain the membership status, Timor-Leste has been undertaking various preparatory efforts, which included measures to further increase their understanding of ASEAN.

As a result, the Diplomatic Training Course for Senior Officials from the Government of Timor-Leste was conducted from 10 to 16 December 2014, at IDFR. The programme was specially tailored by the Institute to address the request of the Government of Timor-Leste in gaining understanding into the ways Malaysia undertook its

ASEAN integration process. In attendance were 14 senior officers from various ministries and departments of Timor-Leste, which included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Self Employment Department and Department of Arts and Culture.

During the seven-day programme, a wide range of topics were covered which included *Human Rights: From Malaysia's Perspectives, Malaysia's Social Security and Welfare, Strengthening Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Malaysia, Malaysia's Chairmanship of ASEAN 2015, The Future of ASEAN and Cross Cultural Communication: In the Context of ASEAN, Government Transformation Plan and Economic*

Transformation Plan, Human Capital Development and Environmental Policies in Malaysia. The participants also attended the Human Rights Day 2014.

Apart from the substantive elements, the participants also visited the Parliament as part of the introduction to Malaysia's governance system. They were also introduced to Malaysia's State Governance system through a visit conducted to the state of Perak. While there, they received introductory

briefings on the history, economics, cultural and political aspects of Perak from the Perak Economic Planning Unit and the Northern Corridor Economic Region.

Overall, the aim and objectives of the programme were met. The participants unanimously expressed their appreciation for all the arrangements made and they were confident that the programme was an opportunity and a window for the professional development of individuals and Timor-Leste as

a whole. It is our hope that the experience and knowledge gained will assist them in preparing to become a new member of ASEAN.

MTCP: English Language Course for Diplomacy



IDFR conducted the MTCP: English Language Course for Diplomacy 2/2014 from 27 October to 7 November 2014. The two-week programme was attended by 19 participants, namely, from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cote D'Ivoire, Georgia, Iran, Jordan, Lao PDR, Mauritania, Mauritius, The Philippines, Seychelles, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Malaysia.

ing, reading comprehension and writing.

In line with the main objectives of the programme, the Training Division with the cooperation of the Language Division arranged and conducted interactive and contemporary modules such as *Active Listening, Writing Diplomatically: Sentence Structure and Applying Grammar, The Sound of*

The main objective of the programme was to raise participants' awareness and understanding of the nature and diplomatic issues of English. As such, the programme was tailored to further improve participants' proficiency in the use of English in the area of diplomacy and international relations, specifically in the four skills

English Language: Pronunciation, Presentation Skills and Public Speaking and Speech Drafting.

In addition, the participants were privileged to experience state level governance when they spent a few days in the city of Johor. They also had the opportunity to experience Malaysian culture during visits to Kuala Lumpur Craft Complex, Petronas Twin Tower and the city tour around Kuala Lumpur.

Overall, the programme received positive feedback from the participants in terms of the quality of the modules offered, credibility of speakers and the smooth running of the programme. The participants' feedback helped to strengthen such training programmes in the future from the substantive, relevancy and implementation aspects.

MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants 2/2014

IDFR, through the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP), organised a three-week Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants from 3 to 21 November 2014.

Twenty-one participants took part in this course, comprising country representatives from various regions around the world, including East Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa, Central Asia, Latin America and

Southeast Asia. From Malaysia, there were four local participants; two from the Prime Minister's Department and two from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia.



provided useful insights to the other participants.

One of the highlights of the course was a four-day visit to Sabah with the objective of understanding the mechanisms of the state level governance of Sabah as well as its relations with the Federal government. The participants also learned about racial harmony and the ethnic diversity of Sabah and Malaysia by visiting the Mari-Mari Cultural Village. They also experienced the flora and fauna and the natural resources of Sabah while visiting Kinabalu Park and the Borneo Marine Research Institute of Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

The course was seen to be a two-way interactive communication between Malaysia and the countries represented. All in all, the participants found the course and experience in Malaysia beneficial and memorable. The lessons learned during the programme were ones that each of them would carry close throughout their lives as future diplomats.

The programme was packed with a series of substantive sessions related to Malaysia's foreign and domestic policies, Malaysia's roles and influence on the international platform as well as knowledge sharing by Malaysian diplomats. During their stay in Kuala Lumpur, the participants had the opportunity to visit the Malaysian Parliament and Putrajaya, with the objective of having a better understanding of the federal government administration. Other study visits that were organised were, among others, to KL Tower, Kraftangan Malaysia, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) and Malacca.

The sessions held throughout the course were interactive and substantive, in that it provided a platform for Malaysia to share its knowledge and experiences in various aspects and for the participants to share their experiences and national aspirations of their respective countries. Among the sessions were on *Global Movement of Moderates (GMM)*, *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, *Malaysia's National Blue Ocean Strategy* and the sharing session with Ambassador Aminah Hj. A Karim, Deputy Director General of IDFR. The participants also made their respective country presentations, which

Effective Writing Skills 2/2014

The second series of the Effective Writing Skills 2014 course was held from 4 to 7 November. This course aimed to assist participants in writing competently and accurately through drafting, writing and editing the writing of others. The participants learned through interactive lectures, group discussions and presentations.

The participants were from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia, Department of Standards Malaysia, National News Agency of Malaysia



(BERNAMA), Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) and Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia.

Basic Conversational Malay Course 2/2014

The second series of the Basic Conversational Malay course was organised from 2 September to 18 November 2014. The course covered the Malay sound system and how Malay words are pronounced. It also covered basic vocabulary for everyday communication and the construction

of simple sentences and the ability to listen and understand speech in various situations. The focus was also on everyday communication needs as well as expressing ideas and feelings verbally and in writing. The course was attended by 16 participants from the Australian High Commission, Embas-

sy of Argentina, Embassy of Czech Republic, Embassy of Italy, Embassy of The People's Republic of China, Embassy of The Republic of France, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Public Lecture on *Inventive Quotient: Empowering Geniuses within an Organisation*

On 17 October 2014, several officers from IDFR attended a public lecture titled *Inventive Quotient: Empowering Geniuses within an Organisation* organised by the National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN). The lecture was delivered by Professor William Maxwell from the University of Advancing Technology, Tempe, Arizona. The lecture was attended by officials from the public sector and IDFR was represented by Ms. Farah Dibah Abu Hanipah, Ms. Ernitasimbolon Erwan and Mr. Imran Arif Mohammad Amin.

Professor Maxwell's research focuses on child development and increasing human intelligence in over fifty nations. In his lecture, Professor Maxwell shared his insights on his research projects over the years

related to child development and increasing human intelligence. He highlighted the main points which were the family tree of the *Genius Principle*, *The Principles History*, *Explanations and Implications* and also the application of the *Principle in Creating a Genius*. He also showed examples of his IQ-raising game, Inventive Quotient and how it was developed and tested on 435 pupils in 17 classrooms done in Suva, Fiji under the supervision of 34 teachers.

Professor Maxwell also went into the detailed aspects of what makes someone a genius in his or her own way. He emphasised that geniuses were not born but to be one, each of them had to fulfill the three most important characteristics; being time-sensitive, environment-sensitive and mentor-

sensitive in order to accomplish their full potential. He stressed the importance of having a mentor and gave examples such as Mozart, Da Vinci, Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking, who all had the common trait of having mentors of their own. In addition to that, Professor Maxwell also mentioned that a child's parents play the most important role especially in the early years as parents will always in most cases be the child's first teachers and role models.

The lecture ended with question and answer session.

Executive Talk: *ASEAN Community 2015: Challenges and Opportunities*

On 5 November 2014, the Malaysian Institute of Defence and Security (MiDAS) organised an executive talk on challenges and opportunities in the ASEAN Community 2015 at Renaissance Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The speaker was Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, former Secretary General of ASEAN and also Visiting Professor at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, United Kingdom.

The programme commenced with welcoming remarks by Lieutenant General Datuk Dr. William Stevenson, Chief Executive of MiDAS, followed by

the talk. Dr. Pitsuwan spoke about the opportunity that ASEAN has to offer to the world especially in terms of trade and investments in an integrated socio-cultural community with more than 600 million diverse people, societies and cultures. Furthermore, from a



political and security angle, ASEAN is seen as a cohesive, peaceful, stable and resilient region, with established rules and shared values and norms, where member states share responsibility for comprehensive security and which constantly strives to stay dynamic and outward looking.

Dr. Pitsuwan also stressed the fact that as ASEAN is a threat to no one, its position is unique as it could draw major global powers like the United States, the European Union and Russia for dialogues and discussions using its ASEAN +3, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the dialogue partners' frameworks. Individual Asian

powers like China and India are not in a position to replicate this unique achievement.

In his view, the two major challenges confronting ASEAN are the issues on the Rohingyas and the South China Sea. ASEAN should continue to work together to try to find peaceful ways to resolve these two complex issues.

As one of the founding members of ASEAN, Malaysia has always been at the forefront in advancing ASEAN as a cohesive regional organisation. Dr. Pitsuwan elaborated on Malaysia's historic role in advancing the concept of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and

Neutrality (ZOPFAN), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), as well as the ASEAN Charter. Therefore, Malaysia is uniquely positioned to lead ASEAN as its Chairman in 2015 when ASEAN will move towards an ASEAN Community. He believes Malaysia will do well in its leadership role in representing ASEAN to the world.

Amongst the attendees at the event were representatives and officials from various ministries and government agencies and NGOs. IDFR was represented by Mr. Syed Bakri Syed Abdul Rahman, Major (Rtd.) Mohd. Ridzuan Mohd. Shariff and Ms. Farah Dibah Abu Hanipah.

Workshop on Etiquette, Protocol and Event Management for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

IDFR organised a workshop on etiquette, protocol and event management for the Peninsular Malaysia Forestry Department (JPSM), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia from 18 to 20 November 2014. The three-day workshop aimed to equip the participants with the basic knowledge on Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) of event management as well as the roles and responsibilities of Liaison Officers, Usherettes, Floor Managers and Rapporteurs. As requested by JPSM, the workshop was specially tailored to meet the needs of the participants in learning more about handling international events.

The objective of the workshop was to enhance the knowledge of JPSM officials who would be involved in the Welcoming and Protocol Committee for the Meeting of Malaysia-Singapore Joint Committee on the Environment (MSJCE) and the Annual Exchange of Visits (AEV) to be held from 24 to 25 November 2014. As such, the topics covered in this workshop were *Introduction to International and ASEAN Protocol, Event Management, Roles and Functions of Floor Managers, Liaison Officers, Usherettes and Protocol Officers, Roles and Functions of Rapporteurs, Personal Grooming and Etiquette and Fine Dining Theory and Practicum*. In addition, the partici-

pants were brought on site visits to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and the Intercontinental Hotel, Kuala Lumpur to familiarise them with the location as well as procedures involved at both places.

On the whole, the participants gained invaluable knowledge on etiquette, protocol and event management from prominent resource persons from the Ministry and IDFR in preparing them for the two events.

International Seminar on Malay Civilisation

An international seminar on Malay Civilisation (*Seminar Antarabangsa Peradaban Melayu*) was organised by Lembaga Peradaban Melayu (ADAB), Yayasan Karyawan and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka in collaboration with IDFR at the Auditorium from 19 to 20 November 2014.

The seminar with the theme *Raja dan Rakyat Berpisah Tiada* was intended

to reidentify the relationship between the King, the people and the Malay states under the Malaysian Constitution, especially the democratic sovereignty inherited through the Malay civilisation.

The Welcoming Remarks was delivered by Tan Sri Dato' Mohd Yusof Hitam, Chairman of ADAB, followed by presentation of papers by experts

in the area of Malay Civilisation. Among them were Professor Datuk Dr. Zainal Kling, School of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia; Professor Dato' Dr. Idris Zakaria, Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia; Professor Datuk Dr. Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, Department of History, University of Malaya; Professor Madya Dr. Wan Zailan



Executive Officer of Malaysia Airlines and Dato' Dr. Affifudin Omar, Pro-Chancellor of Kolej Universiti Insaniah were speakers at the seminar.

The presentation of papers was spread

Sultan Kedah). In her Address, Her Royal Highness said that "Perlembagaan Malaysia ditulis berlatarbelakangkan tamadun dan peradaban Alam Melayu. Maka itu, saya melihat pertemuan kita ini bukan sebagai satu pertemuan akademik tetapi juga satu pertemuan budaya. Budaya Melayu yang berevolusi dari zaman silam hingga ke hari ini. Evolusi inilah yang meletakkan keabsahihan atau legitimacy kepada institusi-institusi ketatanegaraan kita."

The event was beneficial as the participants were able to share their knowledge and enhance their understanding of the Malay civilisation. The participants were made up of representatives from government agencies and non-governmental organisations, academicians and university students.

Kamaruddin Wan Ali, Department of Aqidah and Islamic Thought, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya; Professor Madya Dr. Hj. Hashim Hj. Abdul Hamid, Academy of Brunei Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam; Professor Madya Dr. Shamrahayu Abd. Aziz, Centre for the Studies of Syariah, Law and Politics, Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia (IKIM); and Professor Dr. Nurhayati Rahman, Universitas Hasanuddin, Makassar. Tun Mohamed Hanif Omar, Chairman of PEWARIS-ADAB; Tan Sri Dato' (Dr.) Abdul Aziz Abdul Rahman, legal practitioner and former Chief

over two days and was chaired by Tan Sri Dato' Mohd Yusof Hitam; Datuk Aziz Deraman of Yayasan Karyawan; Dato' Dr. Awang Sariyan of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka; Adjunct Professor Dr. Dato' Ghazali Dato' Mohd Yusof, also of ADAB; and Dato' Md Hussin Nayan, the Director General of IDFR.

The seminar was officiated on the second day by Her Highness Dato' Seri DiRaja Tan Sri Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz binti Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Tunku Panglima Besar Kedah (*Ahli Jemaah Pemangku*

Reflections: My Oman

Contributed by Mimi Kaur Ramday

Posting Order

I was summoned to the office two days before I was to leave for a week-long official work to Papua New Guinea. The day was eventful; my father was scheduled to undergo an early morning operation and I was to be by his side when he woke up. After dropping my parents off at the University Malaya Medical Centre (UMMC) and leaving my father in the good hands of his better half, I drove to work and waited anxiously for the 10.30 am appointment.

The morning went by in a flurry of activities in the Protocol Department and all I could think of was the impending appointment. This is the moment all diplomats would experience on a regular basis throughout their diplomatic journey; to be informed of their post-

ing order. Finally, 10.30 am came and I was already waiting to be called to meet the Deputy Secretary General. Ten minutes later and my life would never be the same again; I have been assigned to the Embassy of Malaysia in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman and was to leave in three months' time.

The initial euphoria was shared with all my loved ones, while colleagues and senior officers congratulated on the good news. Some shared horror stories about their first postings while others shared tips and exchanged notes on preparing, starting and surviving life abroad. For these valuable advice, I can never thank them enough especially advice given by senior diplomats and supporting officers who once served in the Sultanate. In addition, I did my own research on the country I am going to call home for at

least three years and was happy to discover that Oman shares some similarities to Malaysia.

The first 100 days

Three months later, during the month of Ramadhan, I arrived with my family in tow at the modest Muscat International Airport, Sultanate of Oman. The date was 19 July 2014 and the most significant memory of that auspicious day was the soaring 40°C temperature that greeted us on the tarmac. We were put up at the City Seasons Hotel and spent our weekend by enjoying the beauty and serenity of Muscat during its height of summer with the hope that the cooler weather will come soon!

The first three months was the hardest. As my better half was only with me

for the first two weeks, adjusting to life without my pillar of support was a little bit too hard in the beginning. Whilst I was busy adjusting to a new workload at the Embassy, the children were also getting used to a new environment at the British School of Muscat (BSM). During the initial phase, the 7.30 a.m to 2.30 p.m working hours at the Embassy was indeed a 360 degree change from the life I used to lead before. The afternoon was spent lazing around in the house as most shops are closed from 12.30 p.m to 4.30 p.m

The children were so used to leading a hectic life in Malaysia attending piano, religious and tae-kwon-do classes as well as daily family get together that they were at a loss due to the sudden spare time in Muscat. I, too, experienced a bit of a culture shock in terms of the time I have at hand. Having served in the Privileges and Immunities Unit in the Protocol Department where activities are around 24/7, time was not to be taken lightly and here I am in Oman, where time crawled and stood still to my heart's content.

Adapting to Change

On a personal level, I found the Omani work culture very classic to that of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. For one, they put such high value to their siesta hours that even calls to the Duty Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during those hours will be answered with either a "bad time" or "bed time"! Everything seems to crawl on a slow pace in Oman and it humbles me to the core especially when the need arises to deal with the locals. This relaxed manner towards work is even reflected in the way they walk; very demure and unhurried with no worries in the world.

I also found that once you have established friendship and built rapport with your Omani counterparts, your requests would have a better chance of a prompt response. However, getting to know them on a first name basis is sometimes difficult as some of them are not proficient in the English language

and thus, would not be able to entertain your calls. Since answering phone calls is probably not in their work scope, I taught myself to be persistent and not give up. Nonetheless, after months of continuous engagements with various officers at the Ministry, I befriended many efficient officers who have made my daily work smooth and manageable.

Being in a Muslim country made it easier to obtain *halal* food and eating out was never a problem. The Omanis are very friendly and humble, and often go all out to help their Muslim brothers and sisters in time of trouble. The fact that Malaysia is highly regarded by the Omanis made Malaysian professionals highly sought after in many established companies in Oman. Although I am often mistaken for a Filipino, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Korean except for a Malaysian, they would gladly enlighten me of their admiration for Malaysia once it was made known to them that I am Malaysian.

Similar to Malaysia, Oman too is a melting pot of various races and religions that originates from many nationalities. As Oman's population is made up of 44 per cent expatriates; majority of them from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the level of tolerance between the expatriates and locals is understandably high. Under the charismatic leadership of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Al Said, who has ruled Oman for the past 44 years, Oman has progressed rapidly from where it was before the post Qaboos era and is a preferred country for expatriates to seek employment.

Enjoying Life in Oman

Over time, activities started to take shape in the form of organising and hosting various meetings and events especially as a member of the ASEAN Committee in Muscat (ACM) working group and coordinator for the Deputy Head of Missions Group in Muscat (DHM). Apart from that, I was also assigned as the honorary secretary of the Oman-Malaysia Golf Tournament

(OMGT) in addition to supporting various activities by the highly active PERWAKILAN Muscat and activities conducted by the ASEAN Ladies Circle (ALC) in Muscat.

These responsibilities were on top of the core business of ensuring Malaysia's interests are well taken care of in Oman. Being the Second Secretary cum Head of Chancery is also a challenge as the HOC's work encompasses all spectra of work in the Embassy which varies from maintaining the plants, ensuring on-time payments, keeping track of the Government's assets to keeping harmony amongst the local staff at the Embassy. The welfare of Malaysians in Oman was also given utmost priority and sometimes goes beyond the official obligation.

Fast forward to a year and a half later and I am sitting on my jaded swiveling office chair reminiscing about my diplomatic journey in Oman to be read by others. I cannot express enough how fortunate I am to be posted to this land of legendary beauty and paradise of natural diversity. Despite the long merciless summer and the brief winter months, the experience I have gained especially from the serving ambassadors and their spouses as well as from all the individuals I encountered on a daily basis is priceless.

There are still many things to learn and explore in Oman and experiences from the journey would certainly be put to good use in my future endeavours. The life I have in Oman has certainly given me a different perspective of what life is all about and taught me that though work is necessary for survival, what matter most is family. I may have come to Oman as a stranger but I will definitely leave the Sultanate of Oman as family.



Mimi Kaur Ramday is Second Secretary/Head of Chancery at the Embassy of Malaysia in Muscat.

The 7th Caspian Basin Studies Programme

By Lim Hui Chin



Organised by ADA University, the 7th Caspian Basin Studies Programme was held from 18 to 27 November 2014 in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan. There were 17 of us from 16 countries, namely, Romania, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Iraq, the People's Republic of China, Malaysia, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Serbia, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Argentine Republic, the State of Qatar, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Bulgaria, Spain and the People's Republic of Bangladesh. The participants were mostly junior/mid-career diplomats and the rest of us were officers/researchers of the training/research institute of our respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs.

When I reached Baku, two things struck me: first, its splendid architecture but more significantly, the streets were remarkably "spotlessly clean." Indeed, Baku which I later discovered is "God's town" for many was said to be the main reason for its people to take responsibility for its cleanliness.

On 19 November 2014, the programme started with the Opening Ceremony which was officiated by Mr. Fariz Ismailzade, the Vice Rector for Government, External and Student Affairs of ADA University. After a short introductory session, we were given talks on *The History of the Caspian Basin*

Region and The Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In between the talks, we were treated to different traditional Azerbaijani sweets.

After lunch, we went on a guided city tour. I would say that the tour was one of the most fun-filled activities of the programme though we had to walk for about three hours. Amazingly, we did not sweat at all thanks to the wonders of autumn. We spent the afternoon looking around several places of interest such as the Martyrs' Lane, Eternal Flame Memorial, Baku Turkish Martyrs' Memorial, Baku Bay, Baku Boulevard, Parachute Tower, Flame Towers and the Old City, enchanted with their splendid architecture, legends and history.

This was followed by the reception hosted by ADA University, where invitations were also extended to our respective embassies. We were honoured by the presence of our respective Ambassadors and I was especially glad to meet our Ambassador, Dato' Roslan Tan Sri Abdul Rahman at the reception.

On 20 November 2014, we had talks on *Caspian Economics on the Path to Diversification: Economics Transformation and Development Strategy*; the country presentation on the Republic of Azerbaijan; and *Trade and Transportation Networks in the Caspian Region*. We were truly amazed by the

significant economic growth and prosperity of the Republic of Azerbaijan over recent years due to its oil industry. The overall achievement of the Republic of Azerbaijan so far was all the more impressive given it is a relatively young country which only gained independence in 1991 and experienced widespread devastation wrought by the Soviet Union and Armenian aggression in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

We later paid a visit to the Heydar Aliyev Centre. The architectural design of the Centre was brilliant – the overall building was white in colour to signify bright future and the shape of the Centre was designed to look like the infinity sign (∞) to signify endlessness. Taken together, they signified that the bright future of Baku will last for all eternity, or so we were told. The Centre had a fascinating collection of exhibits ranging from sculptures, gifts presented to the Head of the Republic of Azerbaijan such as porcelain, ornate dishes, to the cars that were used by the late Heydar Aliyev, the former President of the Republic of Azerbaijan during his tenure from 1969 to 2003. The Centre's excellent design would certainly amaze first-time visitors not only because of its stunningly beautiful look but also the wow factor created by the auditorium's design features – its narrow entranceway as well as its huge and magnificent area inside which can accommodate up to 900 people. The visit spurred our interest to know more about this country.

On 21 November 2014, there were talks on the *Security Issues and Foreign Policy Priorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan*; *Conflicts in the South Caucasus*; *The Legal Status of the Caspian Sea* and *How Others See the Caspian Basin: A Strategic Crossroads between Cultures and Regions*. We were able to obtain information on the interplay of power politics in the Caspian Basin Region as well as the environment variables on which the states in the region see threats and opportunities.

More fun-filled activities were in store for us during the weekend. After having breakfast in a beautiful town called Ismayilli on a rainy Saturday morning, we left for the lovely city of Sheki in the northwestern part of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The autumnal scenery along the way was breathtakingly beautiful. In Sheki, we visited the Palace of Sheki Khans which was the Summer Palace of kings of ancient times. We stood with our mouth opened when we were told that not a single nail was used during its construction. Though small, the workmanship and the inner design of the Palace were truly remarkable and it was a pity we were forbidden to take pictures. After a short stop at a silk and carpet shop where we had the opportunity to touch a handmade carpet worth AZN5000 (about RM23000), we visited the Albanian Church in Kish, Sheki where we saw collections of historical artifacts such as ceramics and ornaments as well as the eerie medieval human remains.

We spent the night in Gabala and the next day, the cable car tour which was scheduled in the morning had to be called off because of adverse weather conditions. Though it had been drizzling throughout the weekend in both Sheki and Gabala, we still had fun. All in all, our visit to both Sheki and Gabala was very enchanting, enlightening and rewarding.

Moving on the following week, the programme continued with talks that included *Issues Facing Independent Azerbaijan*; *Islam in the Republic of Azerbaijan*; *The Republic of Azerbaijan as Secular State*; and *the Special Guest Series*. We were honoured by the presence of the Ambassadors of Russia, Iran and Turkmenistan in our class who were willing to share their thoughts on the foreign policy priorities of their respective countries. The talks were then followed by a dinner hosted by Ambassador John Maresca, Advisor to the Rector on External Affairs of ADA University and former US Ambassador.

The next day, we learned about the *Positive Externalities of the Energy Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan*; *Geopolitics of Caspian Energy*; and *SOFAZ: Managing the Wealth of the Nation*. The talks enhanced our understanding of the energy diplomacy, energy policy, energy security of The Republic of Azerbaijan, and the like. We also had the opportunity to visit the Sangacahal Oil Terminal in the afternoon. As expected, we were asked to hand over our smart phones temporarily during the visit as the authority wanted to make sure that nobody took pictures of the oil terminal.

On 26 November 2014, which was the last day of the Programme, we went on a visit to the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs. After visiting the Museum of the Ministry, we met with Ambassador Elman Abdullayev and Mr. Hikmet Hajiyev, the spokespersons of the Ministry who graciously shared their views and experiences regarding life as a diplomat and shared with us some pointers and tips. It was indeed a fruitful and meaningful visit.

The presentation of the Certificates of Participation by Ambassador Hafiz Pashayev, the Rector of ADA University and Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at the closing ceremony in the afternoon marked the end of the programme. The last event of the day was the farewell dinner hosted by Ms. Aygun Hajiyeva, the Director of ADA University Executive Education. The atmosphere at the dinner was both pleasant and sad as we had to say our goodbyes amid our growing friendship.

All in all, I had benefited immensely from participating in the programme, with new found friends as well as knowledge and experience gained. I left for Malaysia with plenty of wonderful memories of the country as a whole and ADA University in particular, and am looking forward to a return visit. Thank you to everyone who played a part in my being able to attend this programme.

Johor Student Leaders Council (JSLC) Young Diplomats' Programme

By Navineish Nair s/o Rajan

On 16 December 2014, the Johor Student Leaders Council (JSLC) Cohort 5 had a great session with an internationally recognised entrepreneur and one of Malaysia's youth icons, Mr. Michael Teoh Su Lim. The session was held during JSLC's Young Diplomats Programme held at IDFR from 15 to 19 December 2014.

Mr. Michael Teoh spoke to the

newly-elected Johor Student Leaders on the topic of *Global Mindset*. He spoke about his life and experiences to instil volunteerism in the future leaders' mind and hearts, and to expose them to success, energy and global mindset and their relationship. Mr. Teoh also touched on *Transformational Global Leaders* which is very important for the leaders of the next generation to take note of.

As he talked about people and how to get everyone involved, Mr. Michael Teoh shared his experience in Kenya and Columbia where he carried out massive voluntary projects. He and his team saved lion cubs in Kenya to help breed the declining number of this species. In Columbia, he managed to recruit a team of local people to build homes for the people living in the slums.



Mr. Teoh also spoke on global movements to success. This was about attaining 'people-scale', calculating and analysing impacts on ecosystem and communicating the bigger picture of impact globally. To help illustrate these movements to the young diplomats, he shared his personal movement on making a change in the local political scene. He recruited a mass of people around the world to tweet a

short message or complaint to their local leaders to bring change for the better. That movement was a success and it hit the most popular tweet of the day. Mr. Teoh was later invited to speak on this achievement at the United Nations.

When asked about the Johor student leaders, Mr. Teoh said, "I am so impressed with this team of future lead-

ers for their proactiveness and their intellect. For sixteen-year-olds, they are acting in such a mature manner and being very visionary especially in bringing changes in political issues not only in Malaysia but also at the United Nations. I am really looking forward to working with them in the future".

The advisors of Johor Student Leaders Council (JSLC) were also happy with the session and that their future leaders get to learn from the youth icon and better expand their network.

The Johor Student Leaders Council (JSLC) is the only Student Leaders Council of a state in the whole of Malaysia. The 20 student leaders are the cream-of-the-cream as they went through a series of selections; a physical endurance camp and an interview by a panel of judges from globally recognised institutions such as the Iskandar Regional Development Authority and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.

My Internship Experience at IDFR

Contributed by Nur Aqilah Mohd. Subari

Life is like a box of chocolates – you never know what you are going to get.

You will not know the filling until you taste it. You may pick one with a filling you do not like. However, if you are lucky, you get one that you love. These chocolates are like the things we get in life. My experience as an intern at IDFR was like eating a box of chocolates. It was full of surprises and with different fillings but at the end of each bite, I could taste the sweetness.

On 14 July 2014, my two course mates from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) and I arrived at IDFR to start our internship programme. As we walked into the IDFR building, I felt butterflies fluttering in my stomach. There were so many thoughts about this place playing in my mind. The three of us were then introduced to Mr. Melvin Cheah Chee Aun, the Assistant Director of the Corporate and Management Services Division who assigned us to

three different divisions. I was assigned to the Training division.

I would describe my experience at IDFR under the Training Division in two words; interesting and challenging. Here, the pace of work is fast and everything should be done as soon as possible. I had the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge acquired during my three-year studies in International Affairs Management. Basically, I assisted the officers and staff in managing various training programmes, namely, *Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home-Based Staff and Spouses under Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia (SPKM)*, *MTCP: Strategic Analysis Course for International Participants*, and *the Diploma in Diplomacy*. I was also tasked to prepare reports of the various programmes. I also had the opportunity to interact with international participants from around the world and meet a well-known journalist, Mr. Kamarul

Bahrin from Astro Awani in person. I was also given the opportunity to attend international conferences, public lectures, seminars and a special visit to Istana Negara to accompany young diplomats during a module on *Palace Protocol* which I would say is a once in a life time experience. By being involved in everyday events, I learned the importance of teamwork and leadership.

As days passed by, I soon came to the end of the internship programme. Upon reflection, I know that I made some silly mistakes but I managed to overcome them. More importantly, I was able to enhance my knowledge on current global, regional and domestic issues. All these things taught me how to think out of the box, view issues from different angles and enhance my soft skills. I feel so fortunate and blessed to be part of the IDFR family and am thankful that I chose IDFR as my "box of chocolates."

What They Say...



Aimable Ndayirukiye
Ministry of External Relations and
International Cooperation Burundi
(Participant of the MTCP:
English Language Course for Diplomacy
2/2014)

This course is very informative and we learnt several important issues such as language for negotiations, writing and reading skills. I felt this course let everyone be acquainted with the various people from different countries and cultures and most important, it created a healthy international relationship. It improved communication skills of the participants, building strong diplomatic relations and bonding. We also got a better understanding of Malaysian living styles as well as the cultural and traditions of Malaysia. Another important area was about cross cultural communication when we are living abroad.

"It was very useful and helped me understand the current situation of Malaysia's progress in terms of economy; general parliament roles and government. I will apply what I've learnt and share it with my fellow colleagues at the office. I would propose this course to my colleagues in the future and plan to do it in my country. This course was so special because it provided class and academic interaction. It builds networking and improved my English proficiency. Lecturers here were very friendly and open-minded in terms of sharing their experiences. It was also a very beneficial and informative course. IDFR is really a professional institute. I learnt how the speakers make a conversation and communicate with international participants. I had been given an opportunity to join Human Rights Day programme which presented by great panelists."



Sildonia Maria Sarmento
Chief of Staff, Secretary of State for
Institutional Strengthening (SEFI),
Timor-Leste
(Participant of the MTCP:
Diplomatic Training Course for Senior
Officials from the Government of
Timor-Leste)



**Commander Mohd Faizal
bin Hamzah AMN. PPS. PPA.
psc.**
Royal Malaysian Navy
(Master Student of MA Soc Sci (Strategy
and Diplomacy) IDFR-UKM)

I felt this course was a valuable course and allowed me to get a good grasp of how strategy and diplomacy can be applied in foreign affairs as well as in my present career as a naval officer. The course was well taught and organised by UKM and IDFR. The lecture notes were extremely detailed and the websites like UKM libraries, UKM journal online database and IDFR WebOPAC library also provided additional information that helped me to comprehend the materials. Even for those with diplomatic background, this is an excellent course that teaches you the application of strategy in the diplomatic world. I really enjoyed this course. The number of subjects offered was just right and I would recommend this class to anyone who is interested in strategy and diplomacy. This is not just an important course; it is a critical course.

Best Wishes

To our new colleagues, who recently joined the IDFR family

Mohd Hail Aniff Mohamad Fauzi
Eminder Kaur Kawan Singh
Farhana Mohamed Nor
Haslinda Mustaffa
Siti Norfirdaus Sulaiman
Jamaliah Jaafar
Roszaini Che Tee
Issammuddin Sayuti
Hawari Hashim

To our colleagues, who left us with pleasant memories

Dr. Rosli Hj. Hassan – end of contract
Zuraini Harun – transferred to Prime Minister's Department
Mohd Syamsul Arifin Md. Daud – transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia
Ahmad Kham Abu Kassim – transferred to Kuala Lumpur Federal Territory Education Department

To our colleague who recently took the vows of matrimony

Nor Azura Mior Daud

To our colleague who recently had a 'visit from the stork'

Hanriyani Sahmawi

Upcoming Courses/Events at IDFR

Arabic Level XII	12 January-14 December 2015
Arabic Level VIII	13 January-4 June 2015
Arabic Level I	14 January-5 June 2015
Workshop for Liaison Officers for MITI Series 1	19-20 January 2015
Orientation Course for Rapporteurs in Preparation for ASEAN Chairmanship 2015 Series 1	19-21 January 2015
French Level II	19 January-22 April 2015
French Level VI (Part 2)	20 January-23 April 2015
ASEAN 2015 Workshop for Liaison Officers Series 2 (Kota Kinabalu)	23 January 2015
French Level VIII (Part 2)	23 January-17 April 2015
Workshop for Liaison Officers for MITI Series 2	26-27 January 2015
Spanish Level IV	2 February-15 June 2015
Basic Conversational Malay Level II	5 February-21 April 2015
Say it Right 1/2015	9-11 February 2015
Diplomacy and International Relations Module for PTD Cadets	9-13 February 2015
Spanish Level I 1/2015	10 February-23 April 2015
Orientation Course for Rapporteurs in Preparation for ASEAN Chairmanship 2015 Series 2	11-13 February 2015
EDS 1/2015: <i>The ASEAN Economic Community: Making the AEC a Success</i>	12 February 2015
Diplomacy and International Relations Module for PTD Cadets	23-27 February 2015
MTCP: Diplomatic Training Course for International Participants 2015	23 February-13 March 2015
Workshop on Public Diplomacy and Media Skills	24-26 February 2015
IDFR Lecture Series 1/2015: <i>Recent Security Threats and Freedom of Expression</i>	25 February 2015
Pre-Posting Orientation Course for Home Based Staff and Spouses under Sistem Pentadbiran Kerajaan Malaysia di Luar Negara (SPKM) 1/2015 (Grade 41 and above)	2-13 March 2015
Cross-Cultural Awareness and Communication Course for Malaysian Airlines Systems (MAS)	3-5 March 2015
IDFR Lecture Series 2/2015: <i>Women in Negotiation</i>	5 March 2015
Asia-Europe Public Diplomacy Training Initiatives	10-12 March 2015
EDS 2/2015: <i>ASEAN and Economic Diplomacy: Promoting ASEAN as a Single Investment and Trade Destination</i>	12 March 2015
Effective Presentation Skills 1/2015	16-19 March 2015
IDFR Lecture Series 3/2015: <i>Malaysia's Role and Agenda in the UN Security Council (UNSC)</i>	25 March 2015
ASEAN Ambassadors Lecture Series 1/2015	31 March 2015

* Subject to changes

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