

Check Against Delivery

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IISS SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE
21st Asia Security Summit
Seventh Plenary Session
Re-Imagining Solutions for Regional Stability
(10 minutes)
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Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore
1130 hrs – 1300 hrs

Assalamu'alaikum and a very good morning.

Esteemed Guests;

INTRODUCTION

1. I am honoured to be invited to this prestigious 21st edition of the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD). It is a privilege to share the stage with **Dr. Ng Eng Hen** and the President of Ukraine, His **Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy**.
2. Thank you IISS (Pronounce: Double I, Double S) for inviting me today at this premier global dialogue.
3. Many speakers emphasised on the need for dialogue. We are agreeable. Through constant dialogues, we believe that binary views and zero-sum thinking will be mitigated to ensure peace and stability.
4. Accordingly, to nurture a norm of listening to others rather than living in a bubble and seeing things in black and white.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. **“Reimagining Solutions for Regional Stability”** as I’ve been asked to elaborate, requires careful thought because remedies are not without perils.
6. Being at the last plenary of the event, I try not to be repetitive. All esteemed speakers have tremendously debated our current regional and geopolitical climate.
7. To craft solutions is to grasp the predicaments. And today’s predicaments are persistently unpredictable. The uncertainties were cast by COVID-19, the Russia-Ukraine War, and Gaza atrocities; you name it because the list will keep going.
8. As President Zelenskyy is here with us, I wish to express Malaysia’s hope that the conflict will not further escalate and that peace will prevail.
9. Similarly, we must equally recognize the importance of working towards peace in Palestine.
10. This conflict has challenged our very conscience as human beings and tested our courage to confront and condemn acts of genocide.
11. Allow me to reiterate Malaysia’s view and position on this matter. As a country that has been pushing for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, we certainly welcome and support

any proposal that will help achieve the immediate and permanent ceasefire.

12. We note the recently announced 3-stage proposal by President Biden.
13. We believe that the Palestinians must be given the full right to self-determination and dignity, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to freedom of movement.
14. In this regard, I applaud the commitment expressed by **Bapak Prabowo** in his special address yesterday, that **the active and effective pursuit of a lasting solution must be supported by the whole international community.**
15. I wish to also echo the view taken by **the Australian Deputy Prime Minister** during the third plenary session, **that Israel must comply with the binding orders of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).**
16. In line with the obligations under the Genocide Convention, Israel must immediately halt its military offensive and any other action in Rafah.

Ladies and gentlemen

17. Let me continue on the challenges toward regional stability. In the context of emerging technology, threats are more dynamic on its weaponization ability. The systematic usage

of “unmanned aerial vehicle” (UAV) has been abused to further devastate the war.

18. Meanwhile, cybersecurity incidents staked a 600% increase in cybercrime since the beginning of the pandemic, and recorded a 350% increase of ransomware attacks around the world.
19. The next alarming trends are global warming and rising sea levels. It threatens our overall security in the long run by depleting our resources and disastrous natural catastrophes.
20. Near our homes, the tensions in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Straits potentially trigger armed conflicts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

21. Looking at the multitude of hurdles, how can we avert the obstacles for long-term stability?
22. Allow me to reimagine the solutions for a better future. It involves **Constructive**, **Comprehensive**, and **Complementary** outlooks.

CONSTRUCTIVE (Dialogue With All)

23. The first outlook is for a **Constructive** dialogue among countries, near and far, big and small, to take place regularly.

24. **Indeed, this step is critical to bridging the diverging interests, finding mutual grounds, and seeking favourable solutions.**
25. **In a transparent manner, constructive interactions breed confidence and trust. Leveraging informal and formal avenues will propel success.**
26. In 2025 when Malaysia chairs ASEAN, we will continue the tradition of being in the regional driving seat and preserving our centrality.
27. The centrality must be earned and respected by providing space and liberty to our Member States and our dialogue partners to communicate.
28. The convening power of ASEAN will provide an indispensable point for constructive dialogue.
29. We aim to provide a fertile ground for laser-focused solutions in 2025. Particularly on the pressing issues and ongoing negotiations concerning our region.
30. The ADMM and ADMM Plus, along with the Expert Working Groups (EWGs), will continue their prominent role in ensuring constructive dialogue in defence cooperation.

COMPREHENSIVE (Expansion of Collaboration Domains)

31. The second outlook is a robust initiation of **Comprehensive** cooperation across domains.

32. Marine pollution, natural disasters, maritime piracy, and cyber threats should be among our top agenda.
33. While we bolster the existing ASEAN-led mechanisms, looking beyond the current domains is pivotal to complement and add value to our existing architecture.
34. It is timely for us to depart from orthodox views on security by expanding our horizon on wider themes.
35. This includes, defence education and leadership, military and public health and welfare, cyber and digital space, environmental technology and food security, as well as disaster-risk management, which are all embedded in converging interests.
36. Globalization has immersed countries in an intricate web of multi-layered domains and competition. Suffice to say that while countries are normally more rational and mature in adopting a neutral paradigm, they will also be more open to exploring collaboration in other domains.

COMPLEMENTARY (Collaboration At Block-to-Block Level)

37. Finally, the cooperation established should be **Complementary** in nature through numerous layers and platforms.

38. Oftentimes, security architecture stamps exclusivity that impedes greater cooperation. Nowadays like-minded countries will form exclusive pacts to pursue similar interests.
39. However, we are hoping that such a partnership will not harbour further fragmentation. Divisive moves inflict a decisive blow to regional stability.
40. ASEAN will not merely enable node-based regional multilateral platforms, but also need-based mini-lateral and niche-based bilateral channels.
41. Cooperation over competition is a mantra for stability, at least for now. Although competition will harness formidable results, we have seen excessive competition morph into a detrimental rivalry.
42. The security pact that took place in the Asia Pacific region should complement each other's capacity and capability.
43. This region should prepare itself to manoeuvre the existing and emerging security partnerships that gradually shaped our regional dynamics.
44. In the current climate, significant collaboration with multiple blocs supersedes potential anxiety.
45. Premised on the importance of credible partnership at the block-to-block level for ASEAN, I will argue that collaboration between ASEAN and other collaboration packs or regional

blocks, instead of with individual countries, is worth exploring.

46. Such arrangement must be articulated with the emphasise to reap benefits from collaboration between pack to pack.

Ladies and gentlemen,

47. The 3C approach that I have elaborated on is essential to sustainable cooperation between ASEAN, our dialogue partners, and other like-minded countries and how we ensure regional stability.
48. It is important to note that ASEAN has thrived based on our neutrality and we will continue to be neutral. We should not be forced to take sides and will not take sides.
49. Regardless, Malaysia's position on any act to escalate conflicts in the region remains unchanged.
50. Now as we mature together, navigating the uncertainty is a routine that we cannot avoid. Nevertheless, we do admit that there is no quick or easy way to address uncertainties and for that, we should not take the one-size-fits-all approach.
51. Thus, again, I reiterate that being non-aligned is the best way possible while expanding multi-layered cooperation even with conflicting parties.

Ladies and gentlemen,

52. These past few days have been a contemplating period for me on how to frame holistic security outlooks. It is joyful listening to esteemed speakers, interacting with fellow friends, and having a thought-provoking audience.

53. Hope to see everyone again next year.

54. And in the name of inclusion and constructive dialogue, if I may, I suggest that we also invite a representative from Palestine.

Thank you.