

****This is an edited transcript which was prepared by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). The introductory remarks by Professor Chan Heng Chee are available in video format on the IPS website: <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/ips>.****

Panel III: Singapore and the Region

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I feel very privileged to be chairing this session today on Singapore and the region because both of our speakers are the leading strategic thinkers of the region. I have with me Dr Marty Natalegawa, former Foreign Minister of Indonesia from the years 2009 to 2014 in the government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Now, Pak Marty is a career diplomat. He was Ambassador to the United Kingdom and then Indonesia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, where he served till 2009 and returned home to be Foreign Minister. But since leaving his position, he has been appointed to the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation. Now what is important is that, recently, Dr Marty published a book titled, *Does ASEAN Matter? A View from Within*.

Now, I have here on my right, Mr Bilahari Kausikan, whom you all know as a career diplomat. He served as Ambassador to the Russian Federation and then as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. He had been with the foreign ministry for a long time, where he became Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He was my boss. He was also my student — I taught him in the university. Bilahari became Ambassador-at-Large after he stepped down as Permanent Secretary. He has since finished his stint as Ambassador-at-Large, and is now Chairman of the Middle East Institute, at the National University of Singapore. Bilahari's most recent book is titled, *Singapore is not an Island: Views on Singapore Foreign Policy*.

Both these writers-diplomats, given what they have written, are really well equipped to discuss and speak on Singapore and the region, and what is happening in the region. This morning, we had a robust discussion in the first session "Singapore and the world" and then we had a very interesting discussion on "Singapore and international

economics.” I think some of the themes of Singapore and the world will be reflected in this session.

We all know that Southeast Asia is the theatre of great-power rivalry. It is where the big economic ideas, economic trends, and social trends are sweeping over and reshaping our world. It is an area where a lot of things are happening. What sense do we make of what is happening? In a sense, this is an area which will see disruption. It will not be business as usual, but the disruption does not only come from external forces such as the United States, China, and globalisation. It is also coming from within the region, because Southeast Asia is a region with heterogeneous societies and great diversity. It is a region where race and religion are always salient sources of conflict - be it Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore or Vietnam. It is a place of rising nationalisms. It is also a place of creeping protectionism and a place that is coping with globalisation. Above all, it is a region of rising expectations, with young populations and a growing middle class.

How do we collaborate and how do we cooperate in such a region? And how do we deal with the rise of China, and the disputes and tensions between the United States and China? I hope the two speakers will address these topics head-on.

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