

**The 39<sup>th</sup> Williamsburg Conference**  
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Panel Discussion

America and Asia:  
Emerging Concerns and Competition

Remarks by  
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Introduction

1. As an alumnus and former co-convenor of the Williamsburg Conference, I am very pleased to be back and to share this panel with two old friends, Nayan Chanda and Shaukat Aziz, and a new friend, David Carden. I am also pleased to speak under the chairmanship of my good friend, Simon Tay, who represents the best of Singapore's second generation of public intellectuals.
2. In the 10 minutes allocated to me, I wish to make three points.

Terima Kasih Pak Obama dan Ibu Hillary

3. First, I wish to say a big terima kasih to Pak Obama and Ibu Hillary on behalf of the ASEAN family. No previous US President or Administration has ever given to Southeast Asia and ASEAN the high priority which the Obama Administration has. This is due, in part, to the fact that President Obama is the US' first "Pacific" President but also the one and only President who is able to speak Bahasa and who had spent part of his childhood in Indonesia. I must also praise Secretary Clinton for having honoured us with her presence at every important ASEAN meeting.
4. Under President Obama's leadership, the US has acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (2009). We have held two ASEAN-US Leaders' Meetings (AULM), in

Singapore in 2009 and in New York in 2010. This year, we will be holding the third AULM in Jakarta, back-to-back with the East Asia Summit.

5. The AULM is not just a photo opportunity or a talk shop. At the second AULM, the Leaders identified three areas of cooperation: education, trade and forestry. In addition, work is being done on an ASEAN-US Plan of Action, for the period 2011 to 2015.
6. The US-ASEAN relationship is substantive, multi-faceted and mutually beneficial. The US used to be ASEAN's no. 1 trading partner. It has now fallen to no. 4, behind China, EU and Japan. The US and ASEAN should work harder to increase the two-way trade between us. The US should also seize the new opportunities for investment which ASEAN economic integration will proffer.
7. ASEAN looks forward to welcoming the US and Russia to the East Asia Summit. We thank the US for continuing to support ASEAN's centrality in the EAS and other regional groupings. We are confident that the US will play a positive role in the EAS.

### Peace in Asia

8. Second, I wish to emphasize the importance of peace to Asia's future. Asia's rise will be derailed if there is no peace in Asia. As a member of the ASEAN family, I must confess that I am embarrassed by the recent border skirmishes between Cambodia and Thailand. ASEAN's credibility is at stake. I thank Indonesia for playing a proactive role in silencing the guns and mediating the dispute. I hope the two parties will accept, without further delay, the emplacement of Indonesian observers on both sides of the border.
9. I wish also to express my concern that 65 years after the end of the Second World War, a historic reconciliation has not yet taken place between China and Japan. I also worry about the deficit of trust between China and India and between India and Pakistan. Most of all, I worry about the future of China-US relations. We, in ASEAN, fervently hope that the present cooperative relationship between them will not degenerate into a new Cold War. China and US share more convergent than divergent interests. It

makes no sense for them to become adversaries. It makes better sense for them to cooperate where their interests coincide and compete where they do not. I hope the American people will not view the rise of China as a threat to American security and prosperity.

### Regional Economic Integration

10. Third, I wish to refer to regional economic integration. There are three parallel processes of regional economic integration: (i) ASEAN+3; (ii) East Asia Summit; and (iii) APEC. The East Asia Free Trade Agreement (EAFTA), the Comprehensive Economic Partnership of East Asia (CEPEA) and the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) are all mutually reinforcing and possible pathways towards a future Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP). We should be ambitious and advance all three so as to maximize the benefits for the region. The US, along with seven like-minded countries, has been actively engaged in the TPP negotiations. At the same time, ASEAN Leaders had decided that EAFTA and CEPEA should be examined in parallel. EAS members also agreed that the momentum for CEPEA would not be impacted by EAS expansion this year.
11. Let me now say a few words about the so-called messiness of our regional architecture. I have been asked whether we still need ASEAN+3 when we have the East Asia Summit. I have also heard talk about the desirability of reducing APEC to the ministerial level and making it report to the EAS. I would point out respectfully that APEC and the EAS do not have identical membership. I would also point out that APEC is a success story. Intra-APEC trade is as high as intra-EU trade. It is also the only institution which links the two sides of the Pacific Ocean. I would point out that each component of the present architecture evolved at a particular moment to serve a specific purpose. Taken together, the architecture has served us well. In conclusion, I would say that we should heed the American folk wisdom: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
12. Thank you.

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