

**Dean's Welcome Remarks at the 4th Annual Convention of the Consortium
of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia)
25 November 2010, 9.00am, Traders Hotel, Singapore**

Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir,
Professor John Fitzgerald,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, it gives me great pleasure this morning to welcome you to the 4th Annual Convention of the Consortium of Non-Traditional Security Studies in Asia (NTS-Asia). It is indeed wonderful to see both familiar and new faces attending this year's Convention.

The importance of non-traditional security, or should I say, NTS, issues has without a doubt been increasing over the years, and has developed along two paths. Firstly, the occurrence of NTS threats, such as natural disasters, pandemic outbreaks and tensions arising from the scarcity of resources – such as water, energy and food – have been more frequent regardless of a country's geographical terrain and level of economic development. The scale of the threat, however, is likely to increase in the event of insufficient or ineffective management of the needs of communities and individuals.

Secondly, global attention to NTS issues has risen given the fact that they are increasingly featured and discussed in international forums. In the inaugural Singapore Global Dialogue hosted by RSIS, panellists including former United Nations officials Ramesh Thakur and Sashi Tharoor as well as former US Ambassador to Iraq, Christopher Hill, and former Japanese Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka, gave their candid views on the emergence of transnational threats. What is clear through these various deliberations is that these non-military threats to security require immediate and well-coordinated responses.

The lack of multilateral cooperation only serves to highlight the importance of NTS studies – a research area that emphasises the need for multi-sectoral and multi-level collaboration, with communities and individuals as the reference point. The mainstreaming of NTS research by the NTS-Asia Consortium therefore has and continues to play a critical role in building the region's capacity to address these challenges. With the growing interest in NTS issues, the Consortium is an Asian network that plays an important role in advancing the study of these issues, and brings together scholars and practitioners from around Asia and beyond. It is indeed wonderful to see that the Consortium which in 2007 began as a network of 14 founding research institutes and think-tanks in Asia has progressively expanded its outreach, to now include six additional member institutes whose contributions and participation are highly valued. On a personal note, RSIS is pleased to have taken the lead on these initiatives.

The growth of the NTS programme would not have been possible without the generous support of the Ford Foundation. In this regard, I would like to thank the Ford Foundation – represented here by Professor John Fitzgerald, Representative for the Ford Foundation in China – for facilitating the creation of this growing epistemic community.

We are also happy to have with us, our keynote speaker, Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir, who is no stranger to the work on gender and HIV/AIDS in this region. On behalf of RSIS, we thank you, Datin Paduka Marina, for accepting our invitation.

Finally, let me express my sincere appreciation to all our network members for participating in this year's Convention, and the continuing support that you have shown for the development of NTS studies in Asia.

Thank you.