

Session: Indo-Pacific and LIO

Date/Time: April 25, 2018 / 10:45-12:15

Rapporteur:

Harry Dempsey, Asia Pacific Initiative

Moderator:

Simon Long, *The Economist*

Speakers:

James Choi, Embassy of Australia to the Republic of Korea

Vikram Doraiswami, Embassy of India to the Republic of Korea

Joseph Chin Yong Liow, RSIS, Nanyang Technological University

Mark Lippert, Boeing International

You Ji, University of Macau

Session Sketch:

Session 3 examined the Indo-Pacific strategic concept from the perspectives of Australia, India, ASEAN, U.S. and China. Simon Long began by emphasizing the important role Australia played in promoting the concept.

James Choi clarified that the Indo-Pacific Strategy is not aiming to contain China and that Australia’s preference is to define the goals in terms of a rules-based order, rather than the LIO.

Vikram Doraiswami explained how Indian strategic thinking has expanded from the Bay of Bengal to the maritime area spanning from East Africa to the west coast of the U.S. He spelt out his

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conception of a vision for the Indo-Pacific as a shared, inclusive global commons and underlined the deficit and need for security structures in the region.

Joseph Chin Yong Liow gave three reasons for and against Southeast Asian receptivity towards the Indo-Pacific strategy. The Trump administration’s commitment to the region through his embrace of the Indo-Pacific concept and principles of freedom and openness are ones that ASEAN members are willing to endorse. Reasons against included Southeast Asia’s strategic position remaining unaddressed and doubts that China can be persuaded that the Indo-Pacific strategy is not containment.

Speaking from the perspective of continuities and divergences from the Obama administration’s Pivot to Asia, Mark Lippert stressed that the Indo-Pacific is a continuation of a bipartisan legacy of foreign policy towards Asia, whilst praising new elements of emphasis in the strategy. However, he expressed doubts over the ability to implement the strategy.

You Ji gave two reasons for the new U.S. support of the concept and characterized the strategy as an act of sharp power aiming to contain China. He argued that it will encourage China to further militarize and engage in geoeconomic coercion of regional neighbors.

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