



COVER-TO-COVER

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OVERVIEW OF RCSS EVENTS

This section of the RCSS Newsletter covers events that took place between February—March 2014. RCSS had several engagements with International partners including GPPAC, NESAC and the Peaceboat Hibakusha Project.

Across Generations: Building a Nuclear Free World Together

RCSS co-hosted this event with Peaceboat on 28 March 2014 at the Taj Samudra Hotel, Colombo. The partnership between Peaceboat and RCSS was enabled by the civil society peace network—the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC).

This event was part of the 7th Global Voyage for a Nuclear Free World, undertaken by Peace Boat, an international NGO based in Japan. To date, 150 Hibakusha (atomic-bomb survivors) have travelled around the world to appeal for a nuclear-free world through Peace Boat.

Presently, there is a growing interest in the “humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons”

at a global level. This has led to a strengthening of the movement towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 served to highlight the persisting threat of nuclear technology.

The theme of this Peace Boat voyage was “Across Generations: Building a Nuclear Free World Together. This event was aimed at “passing on” testimonies of nuclear warfare across generations, from elderly Hibakusha with vivid memories, to succeeding generations who have not directly experienced the horrors of nuclear warfare. Additionally, this interactive platform enabled Sri Lankans to not only hear these accounts first hand but to also contribute a Sri Lankan perspective to the dialogue on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.



Sakata Takanari addresses the gathering.



RCSS Staff at the Strategic Studies Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.



Members of the Peaceboat Hibakusha pose for a photograph with the participants at the event.



Proceedings at GPPAC Meeting at the Hague, The Netherlands

Understanding (R)EVOLUTION

The Strategic Studies Summit, titled “(R)evolution”, was organised by the Near East and South Asia, Center for Strategic Studies in the United States from 23-25 February 2014 bringing together participants for Asia and the Middle East. This year’s conference and working groups focused on the impact of shifts in political power when revolutionary agitations began with the grassroots movements demanding for regime change. The plenary and working groups were set up with the tough mandate of trying to identify whether the changes occurring in the various regions were organic and evolutionary in their progress or had revolutionary power that may completely unseat the existing power balance in the near future.

Afghanistan, Iran, the Arab Spring, maritime security in the Indian Ocean, Peace Keeping operations and post-conflict reconciliation were important thematic areas for the working groups. It must be noted that many GPPAC members and partners were invited to represent their organisations in this conference, including Dr. Mallika Joseph (RCSS), Dr. Suba Chandran (IPCS), Dr. Nishchal Pandey (CSAS), Mr. Shahab Enam Khan (BEI) and Ms. Mariam Safi. GPPAC South Asia continued to make use of such opportunities to link with networks within the region and ones that go beyond in order to make valuable institutional linkages to support the joint work done in the region.

RCSS participated in 4 of the 6 working group meetings which dealt with topics ranging from Peace-Keeping missions and reconciliation to specific contexts such as Afghanistan in transition and maritime relations in the Indian Ocean Region.



A panel discussion on the impact of political power shifts



Regional Liaison Officers at a discussion at The Hague, in The Netherlands

Planning GPPAC's Long Term Strategic Plan

RCSS participated at the Regional Liaison Officers’ (RLO) Meeting organized by the GPPAC Regional Secretariat from 18 – 21 February 2014 in The Hague, The Netherlands. This meeting offered an opportunity for RLOs from all 15 regions to come together to analyse long term reports and formulate plans for GPPAC.

The meeting reviewed the progress made by South Asia in establishing strong network presence in the region. Regional membership in GPPAC South Asia expanded further with new engaged partners from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives and India. Ideas to further strengthen the network were also discussed at this meeting. Additional time was provided for GPPAC South Asia to elaborate on the need for prioritise Afghanistan in 2014. The Global Secretariat also expressed its enthusiasm to support regional initiatives through campaigns on a global platform in 2014.

These meetings were combined with the Programme Steering Committee (PSC) meeting. This was a unique opportunity for PSC members to hear directly from RLOs about their work in their respective regions as well as articulate some of their expectations regarding the direction they hoped GPPAC will take over the long term. In addition to sharing strategies on obtaining funding, the eminent members of the PSC group also planned the Long Term Strategic Plan of GPPAC from 2016-2020 based on the plans submitted by the regions.

Publications by RCSS Staff

Apart from the day-to-day responsibilities, the Programme Staff of the RCSS actively contributes to the discourse on strategic studies and international relations.

- Rajasingam, A 2014, 'Irresolute on Colombo', *The Indian Express* 13 March. Available from <<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/irresolute-on-colombo/>> [13 March 2014]
- Rajasingam, A 2014, 'Afghanistan: Young voices need to be heard', *South Asia Monitor* 21 March. Available from <<http://southasiamonitor.org/detail.php?type=sl&nid=7616>> [21 March 2014]
- Goodman, J 2014 'Why Lanka figures large in Britain's foreign policy', 23 March. Available from <<http://www.sundaytimes.lk/140323/sunday-times-2/why-lanka-figures-large-in-britains-foreign-policy-89878.html>> [23 March 2014]

RESOURCES

This section of the RCSS Newsletter annotates some of the key publications in the areas of security studies, conflict resolution/management. The electronic versions of these publications can be accessed through the links provided herewith. Furthermore please refer to the RCSS Library Portal at www.rcss.asia for annotations/ full texts of publications in the fields of international relations and security studies. You may also contact Ms. Kamani Perera, the librarian of the RCSS via librarian@rcss.org for further assistance.

National Security Decision-Making in India

By Dr. Larry M. Wortzel.

Year of Publication: 2013

This publication can be accessed from <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/monographs/Monograph27.pdf>

Central Asia: Democracy, Instability and Strategic Game in Kyrgyzstan

By P. Stobdan

Year of Publication: 2014

This publication can be accessed from http://www.idsa.in/system/files/book_CentralAsia.pdf

Killing Animals, Buying Arms

By Johan Bergenas

Year of Publication: 2014

This publication can be accessed from http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/killing_animals_buying_arms_WEB.pdf

Japan's Foreign Policy Challenges in East Asia

Edited by Yuki Tatsumi

Year of Publication: 2013

This publication can be accessed from http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Japans_Challenges_in_EA_FINAL_WEB.pdf

The West and the Muslim Brotherhood after the Arab Spring

Edited by Lorenzo Vidino

Year of Publication: 2014

This publication can be accessed from http://www.fpri.org/docs/West_and_Muslim_Brotherhood.pdf

Deterrence Stability and Escalation Control in South Asia

By Michael Krepon & Julia Thompson

Year of Publication: 2013

This publication can be accessed from <http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/monographs/Monograph27.pdf>

The Chinese People's Liberation Army and Information Warfare

By Dr. Larry M. Wortzel.

Year of Publication: 2014

This publication can be accessed from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/download.cfm?q=1191>

Opportunity Out of Necessity

By Yuki Tatsumi with contributions from Mathew Leatherman

Year of Publication: 2013

This publication can be accessed from http://www.stimson.org/images/uploads/research-pdfs/Opportunity_out_of_Necessity-WEB.pdf

AFGHANISTAN IN TRANSITION: THE LEGACY OF PRESIDENT HAMID KARZAI

By Jack Goodman



History was made when the President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai arrived in Colombo for an official two-day State visit in March 2014. It was the first of its kind by an Afghanistan leader in Sri Lanka. He was greeted with all the pomp and ceremony to befit the occasion. Traditional Sri Lankan drummers and dancers lined Galle Road, as President Karzai drove to meet the President of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa. The two leaders then held bilateral talks at the Presidential Secretariat. Four Memoranda of Understanding in Health, Sport, Employment training and Education were signed to boost strategic relations as a result of this tête-à-tête

Much of President Karzai's political legacy has already been written, contested, debated, criticized and applauded. It was an inevitable consequence for the person who held the reigns of power in Afghanistan during such a tempestuous passage of its history. A unique and complex narrative was predetermined for Karzai.

The President was joined by other notable dignitaries that included Afghanistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Zarar Ahmad Osmani, and Sri Lankan Minister for Mass Media and Information Dr. Keheliya Rambukwella.

The Afghanistan people still search for peace, said President Karzai to an audience of journalists and figures from civil society. "They should see peace, progress, the

fulfillment of their aspirations and the enjoyment of their rights", he added.

It was President Karzai's only state visit to Sri Lanka, his third overall. But it will be his last as leader. The year ahead will bring great political and security upheaval in Afghanistan. He steps down in April and the country will elect a new President. They will also contend with a major withdrawal of Western troops.

Afghanistan's post-withdrawal security policy has been high on the President's agenda in recent months. He used the media interaction in Colombo as a forum to reiterate his stance on the proposed Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States.

If signed, an American military presence in Afghanistan will remain after the official withdrawal of troops. President Karzai said Afghanistan would only sign the agreement if the United States joined an official Peace Process with the Taliban. Mr. Karzai stated that his country's immediate request of the United States is peace.

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Perhaps seeking a guarantee from the US to join the Peace Process, remaining steadfast, is Karzai's attempt to take back control of his own political legacy at the point of his departure. For the sake of posterity to provide one abiding memory of his image that shapes and influences the collective consciousness of the Afghan people and the international community.

The future of Afghanistan's political and security landscape will face momentous challenges as 2014 continues. Political agendas will change during life after Karzai. States of flux that South Asian policy makers and strategists will keep firmly in its sights.

Jack Goodman, a UK based researcher on South Asian Affairs, currently interning with RCSS was present at the press conference held by President Hamid Karzai during his state visit to Sri Lanka in March 2014.