

Contending Perspectives: Southeast Asian and American Views of a Rising China

Conference Report

Dates: August 22–24, 2005

Venue: Pan Pacific Hotel, Singapore

Key Speakers: Ahmad Md. Magad, Chairman of Government Parliamentary Committee for Finance Trade and Industry
Admiral Thomas B. Fargo USN (ret.), CEO, Trex Systems International, Inc.
Dr. Evelyn Goh, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (convener)
Dr. Sheldon W. Simon, Arizona State University (convener)

Summary: In addition to two keynote speakers, this two-day event featured three panels, each with four specialists (two from the United States and two from Southeast Asia), that examined the following topics:

1) China's decade-long rapid economic growth and its effect on the region's export-led economies, 2) Beijing's increasing political influence and its effect on the diplomatic landscape in Southeast Asia, and 3) China's military modernization and its emergence as a major power in Asia.

The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS) and The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) hosted this conference in collaboration with the U.S. Army War College and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, U.S. Department of State.

Key Findings:

- Uncontestedly the most favored scenario for China development is continued authoritarian rule and strong economic growth.
- U.S. reaction to a growing China is an important factor. Southeast Asia generally perceives the rise of China as an opportunity rather than a threat, although the nations are divided on the extent to which they individually interact with the PRC.
- China military modernization is unable to contend with U.S. capabilities, but may pose a greater challenge to the United States and used to achieve energy security.

Additional Information:

- Agenda
- Conference notes
- Keynote speech (Admiral Fargo, CEO, Trex Systems International, Inc.)
- Conference papers
- Project description

These materials are available from NBR's Southeast Asia Studies Program (mwills@nbr.org).