



Agenda

Asian Mediation Retreat 2008

15 - 17 March 2008, Beijing

Saturday March 15

19.00 Welcome reception followed by the Opening Dinner at 19.45

Sunday March 16

9.30 – 11.00 Asian mediation - Solving conflict through dialogue
With an opening speech by The Honorable He Yafei, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs

How are dialogue and engagement defined in the Asian context, and what role do they play? How does mediation differ from other forms of engagement or diplomacy? Which conflicts in Asia have been addressed and resolved through dialogue? How, and by whom has dialogue been initiated, led or facilitated in the region? Have there been instances in which it seemed more appropriate than in others?

11.30 – 13.00 Big power negotiations and the challenge of reconciliation

What is the relationship between power and conflict resolution? Does the relationship between the different powers involved change the dynamics of a process? To what extent does the emergence of alliances change the calculations of the parties? How do big power negotiations differ from mediation efforts? How do they relate if they are conducted in parallel? How do breakthroughs or set-backs in one setting affect the progress in others? To what extent is it beneficial for actors to overlap or coordinate?

13.00 – 15.00 An ASEAN Perspective on China and her moderating and mediating role
Lunch keynote address by Dr Surin Pitsuwan - Secretary-General, Association of Southeast Asian Nations

15.00 – 16.30 Two parallel sessions:

Energy politics and conflict

What are the political implications of the pursuit of influence and access to energy resources for the emergence, prolongation or resolution of conflict? What realistic leverage do actors have to influence ruling elites/ individuals in particular countries. How do energy politics affect relationships, cooperation and agreement between and within Asian countries? What does this mean for the prospects of resolving current conflicts in the region? Could modern energy diplomacy have a positive impact on ending conflict? Or do new foreign policy instruments prolong and encourage conflict? What role - if any - is there for mediation and dialogue?

Engaging the extremist fringe

This session will explore the different facets and strategies of engaging extremists through dialogue. What makes dealing with extremists so particular? What are the political and practical challenges of engagement? What are policy makers expecting from their counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency policies? Are these expectations

realistic? What can we learn from past and current experiences? Are there indicators to assess whether a group will respond positively to dialogue? What are the risks involved, and how can they be mitigated?

18.00 – 18.45 The Mediation Studio

Kavi Chongkittavorn, Assistant Group Editor with the Nation Media Group Thailand, discusses the current and future prospects for Asian mediation with Ali Alatas, Chairman of the Advisory Council of the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

19.30 Dinner hosted by Ambassador Ma Zhengang, President, China Institute of International Studies

Monday March 17

9.30 – 10.30 Sustainable peace

What issues need to be addressed in a peace process and how can their implementation be ensured to make peace sustainable? What are the political realities of accommodating different interests and integrate former warring parties into the political fold? What degree of outside support is necessary and appropriate? How to obtain it and from whom? Why is it at times difficult to uphold the momentum for implementation or put provisions into practice? What can be done if parties do not have the capacity to deliver and/ or enjoy new arrangements?

11.00 – 12.30 Mediation and security in fragile states

What are the regional implications of fragile states? Does an acceptance of the status quo risk further deterioration? How to reconcile long term objectives with the short term imperative of stabilisation? How can outsiders address the internal instability and political complexities of fragile, but sovereign states? Is there a role for mediation?

12.30 – 13.00 Closing remarks