

The Shangri La Dialogue



The Shangri La Dialogue

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The Shangri La Dialogue
Context



Context

- “Asian security summit”
- September 11, 2001
 - Defence and security focus
- First Shangri La Dialogue: 2002
 - Organised by International Institute of Strategic Studies
 - London-based; offices in Washington, Singapore
 - Founded in 1958 with a focus on nuclear deterrence and arms control
 - Held in Singapore at the Shangri La Hotel

Context

- Modelled on the *Wehrkunde* conference series, since the 1960s the premier gathering on NATO security issues
- Funding:
 - major defense contractors and others from defense industry
 - Australian, Japanese, Singaporean and UK governments
 - Singapore government funding until 2011 & considerable costs associated with tight security

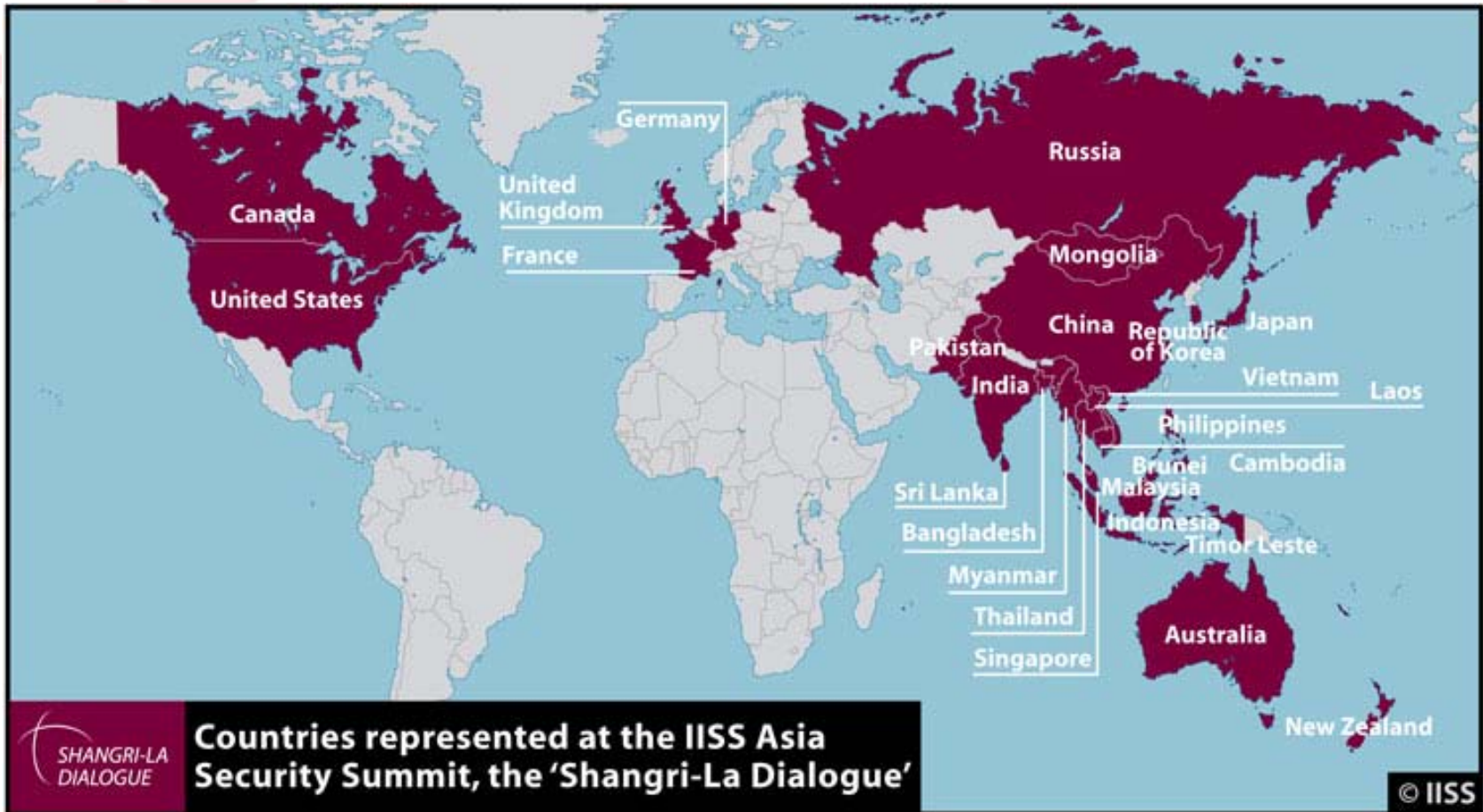
Context: regional architecture

- Track two: CSCAP
- Track one: ARF
- Shangri La Dialogue: *"a unique experiment in pan-regional defence diplomacy [that] has proved hugely successful... has helped to cultivate a sense of community... underpinned by easy communication and fruitful contact"*.
- But also emerging notions...the Rudd idea

Context: Participation

- Participation from chiefs of defence, heads of defence ministries, defence ministers
- A specific track one defence officials gathering (though cf. ASEAN defence ministers forum) but with some track two participation
- Strong military presence

Participating countries



Participating countries

- China's increased presence at senior levels noted in 2007 and 2008: a deliberate strategy to involve China.
 - Cf. perennial challenges Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) v. China in track one/two dialogues
- Senior representation by Viet Nam and Myanmar in 2008 for the first time; Viet Nam sent ministerial representation for first time in 2009
- 2009 – 1st time Russia sent senior officer from MinDef

Context: delegations

- Two levels of delegation:
 - Official country delegation (e.g. government officials, intelligence agencies, defence personnel)
 - 22 official delegations in 2002; 27 in 2008
 - Can attend breakout sessions and, if official, bilateral/multilateral talks
 - NZ's Minister of Defence (Goff) did not attend in 2008 – instead attended trade talks in Peru. Asia:NZ (a track two organisation) was part of official delegation in 2008
 - Largest NZ delegation in 2009 – incl. MinDef, DepSecDef, Chief, NZDF

Context: delegations

- Private capacity (e.g. invited scholars, think-tanks, members of IISS, defence contractors)
 - Cannot attend breakout session or bilateral/multilateral talks

Global events & threats

- 4 days before the 2009 Dialogue, North Korea conducted underground testing of a nuclear device, more powerful than the one it detonated in 2006 ; it also carried out a series of missile tests.
- “Although not among the 27 countries participating, North Korea’s indirect presence was unmistakable.” (Rolls, 2009)
- China’s increasing military spend
- Australia’s defence white paper

Context: regional architecture

- Kevin Rudd's Asia-Pacific community idea
 - Not warmly received in Southeast Asia, especially by the Singaporeans



Shangri La Dialogue
Content



Content

- Traditionally, *traditional* security
 - e.g. missile defence, defence diplomacy, new technologies, intelligence & terrorism (2004 SLD), WMD, Armed Forces and Counter-Terrorism (2005), Maritime Security (05 & 06), Counter-Insurgency (2006)
 - Dominated by military/defence
- Plenaries delivered by Ministers
- US in Asia = consistently opening plenary



Kevin Rudd, Australian Prime Minister

First time someone other than the Singaporean Prime Minister gave the opening address

Content

- APC – first proposed May 2008 in Sydney
- The APC 'could help to nurture a culture of cooperation and collaboration on security, including a culture of military transparency, helping to build confidence'
- A risk of 'strategic drift... Or, even worse, strategic polarisation' in the absence of the APC

Content

- Rudd is convening a 1 ½ dialogue to discuss APC idea
- “Other government speakers had their own views on the most desirable security structure for the region” – SLD report
- Minister Mapp – the best way forward was to build on existing institutions, particularly ARF.

Content

- Although several speakers spoke of the need for multilateral responses to deal with non-traditional security threats, these threats never attained the prominence which they currently enjoy in security studies literature or some other international fora. It was the military dimension of security which was uppermost and the potential threats posed by the military means possessed by other states which were pre-eminent. One was almost left with the impression at times that we were not so far removed from the days of the Cold War after all. (Rolls, 2009).

Content: 2009

- America's security role in the Asia-Pacific – important because of the impact of the GFC; new Obama administration; AfPak; Iraq
- The major powers and Asian security: cooperation or conflict?

Content: 2009

- Building a security community in the Asia Pacific? (but no-one ever asked: what is a 'security community'?)
- Military transparency and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific
- Winning counter-insurgency campaigns (Sri Lanka, Philippines, Pakistan, Myanmar)
- Strengthening defence diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific

Content: 2009

- New military technologies: how useful?
- Towards a NEAsian security dialogue
- Enhancing maritime cooperation and confidence-building
- Contributing to peace-support operations
- Modernising armed forces in lean times
- Enhancing energy and food security

Content: 2008

- But *increased emphasis on non-traditional security*
 - Climate change
 - Food & energy crisis
 - Humanitarian emergencies
 - Cyclone Nargis & Myanmar's & ASEAN's response
 - Sichuan earthquake
 - New governments in Japan & Australia; American elections; political instability in Malaysia and Thailand

Content

- *Increasingly* used for bilateral meetings
 - unique opportunity; ministerial lunches
 - Plenary sessions “background noise”/cover
 - *Straits Times* cartoon: an empty central table with several animated conversations in the background
- Number of breakout sessions doubled in 2008 (from 3 to 6)
- Added an extra plenary (from 5 to 6)
- Heavy media coverage in the region



The Shangri La Dialogue
Criticism



Criticisms

- Not led by Asians, but held in Asia
 - Who sets and controls the agenda?
 - Strong trans-Atlantic presence
 - That a European institute has taken what many saw to be the “next step” for the ARF has created reticence among some Asian governments (see Ball et al, 2005:27-8)
 - Has little support by key track two players in Asia
 - Not cognizant of regional sensitivities
- Seen to overshadow the ASEAN-ISIS Asia Pacific Roundtable (a track two event)

Criticisms

- China's involvement problematic
 - Future of SLD questioned in 2004 after Beijing refused to participate fully due to a disagreement about Taiwanese involvement
- Too narrow a focus on traditional security

Criticisms

- Too heavy an involvement by private defence industry
 - Why are they sponsoring the SLD? A cover for arms selling?
- Too exclusive

Criticisms

- Who does *not* attend?
- Too status oriented
- Very little track two presence (though it is a track one event)
- Are Ministers the best people to present? Inevitably, political rhetoric/grandstanding and empty words. (This has only been the case since 2006; prior to that academics and others were plenary speakers).

Criticisms

- Only ostensibly track one & two
 - No extensive interaction between the two tracks because of tight security around high profile participants (e.g. Def Secs Rumsfeld & Gates)
 - Track one participants are invited only
 - Key track two participants from the region do not attend/do not support SLD

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Criticisms

- “[The] success [of the Shangri La Dialogue] also seems to raise some questions about the ongoing salience of ASEAN’s supposed diplomatic culture in facilitating cooperation. For all the talk about the importance of indigenous norms and the role of the ‘ASEAN way’, the IISS is a London-based institution with only a small presence in Asia. How then has an outsider come to manage one of the most successful regional meetings in Asian security? And what does this mean for the future of Asian security institutions in the ‘Asian Century’?” – Capie and Taylor, in press

About Asia: NZ

- Established in 1994 by the then National Government (Burdon/McKinnon)
- Publically and privately funded
- 20 staff in Wellington and Auckland

About Asia: NZ

- 3 key outcomes 2008-2011:
 - Contribute to NZ's increased economic development
 - Build NZ's relationships and profile in the region
 - Prepare NZers to increase their engagement with Asia

About Asia: NZ

- Five key areas of work
 - Business: Action Asia
 - Culture: Festivals and Grants
 - Media: Awareness and Grants
 - Education: Awareness and Young Leaders
 - Research and Policy: think-tank research and track two engagement

Asia: NZ and track two

- Building track two capability in New Zealand
 - Track two register
 - Track two newsletter
 - International relations research grant
 - Young Leaders Network (NZ & with Pacific Forum, Hawaii)

Asia: NZ and track two

- Delegates at Asia Pacific Roundtable and Shangri La Dialogue
- Commission track two research (e.g. Ball et al, 2005)
- Track two dialogues 2008 – Viet Nam, Japan, China, ASEAN/Australia/NZ trilateral
- Track two commentaries online
- In 2009, dedicated track two web-page

Questions

- How important is the SLD?
- How effective is the SLD?
- Should the SLD continue beyond 2011?
- What might some of the challenges be for the SLD going forward?
- How appropriate is it for the SLD to be organised by a European institution?
- How can track two participation effectively work within and alongside the SLD?
- To what extent do the difficulties of connecting tracks one and two at the SLD speak of a broader challenge with track two dialogues and participation?
- What role should the US have in tracks one and two in Asia?
- What role should NZ have in tracks one and two in Asia?



QUESTIONS?

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