

**Remarks by Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah**  
**Chairman, ISIS Malaysia**  
**At the Welcoming Dinner of the 37th Asia-Pacific Roundtable**  
**18:00pm, 4 June 2024**  
**Hilton Kuala Lumpur**  
*(delivery time: 7-8 minutes)*

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The Honourable Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia,

His Excellency Dr Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary General of ASEAN,

Dr Yose Rizal Damuri, Executive Director of CSIS Indonesia and current Chair of the ASEAN ISIS Network,

Excellencies, colleagues, distinguished panellists, ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamu'alaikum, warahmatullahi wabarakatuh, and a very good evening.

1. It is my pleasure to greet all of you as we kick off proceedings for the 37th Asia-Pacific Roundtable with the Welcoming Dinner. This year, our welcoming dinner takes on a slightly more formal affair, as we are privileged to have Malaysia's Minister of Foreign Affairs with us, who will deliver the dinner address.
2. Allow me to briefly touch on the theme for this year's APR, "Crisis in an Interregnum". Our decision on this, reflects our careful but unvarnished assessment of the state of geostrategic affairs. The post Second World War global order and the architecture it generated to sustain that order and govern the interactions between nations, has come under immense pressures. Established rules and norms are being disputed, and not just by major powers.
3. Multilateral mechanisms, crucial to nations in Southeast Asia, are not seen as effective platforms, or perhaps worse, are seen to be undermined by the major powers who seem to be guided by a sense of acute rivalry at the expense of other stakeholders in the Asia Pacific.

4. To that end, guided by the theme, we have a full two days of conferencing ahead of us, with an eclectic mix of plenary and concurrent sessions. This year, we explore topics that include prospects of cooperation between major powers, even amidst their rivalries, geopolitical developments in the Middle East, the reframing of global climate discourses, and the role of AI in modern warfare.
5. I am pleased to note that aside from the Foreign Minister, we have also secured the participation of the Secretary General of ASEAN, Dr Kao Kim Hourn, who will be the main speaker in Plenary Session 2, which focuses on the past, present and future of ASEAN, tomorrow. Additionally, the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia, will once again deliver the Keynote on Thursday morning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. The longstanding success of this Roundtable is due in no small part to our long-term supporters and partners, including successive Malaysian Prime Ministers, who have participated in the APR in various capacities. ISIS Malaysia and the ASEAN ISIS Network is grateful for their belief in the APR process and continued support.
7. In that spirit, I would like to convey my thanks to all the role-players, instigators and speakers of the 37th APR, for their readiness to travel to Kuala Lumpur and share their time and expertise with us. I also thank all the delegates for their continued support of the APR process and active participation. Indeed, it is your presence and participation that is a crucial element in enhancing the richness of the discussions in this Roundtable.
8. I also extend appreciation to our partners: the Australian High Commission, the Delegation of the European Union to Malaysia, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, the Embassy of the United States, the High Commission of India, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade, the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, and the Embassy of Japan in Malaysia. Their contributions and assistance are instrumental in the successful convening of the APR.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. As I end my remarks this evening, it is now my pleasure to briefly introduce our dinner speaker, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs.
10. Better known to those of us who are based in Malaysia by his sobriquet, “Tok Mat”, Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan was appointed to his current role on 12 December 2023, after serving in the federal cabinet as Minister of Defence for one year. Prior to that, he is best known to Malaysians as one of the longest serving Menteri Besars (Chief Ministers) of the state of Negeri Sembilan, an office which he served for 14 years.
11. Before venturing into politics and public service, he had almost 3-decades of experience in the banking and corporate sector in Malaysia, climbing the ranks and serving in various capacities in several public listed entities.
12. His extensive corporate experience is no doubt one of the assets he brings with him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as together with Prime Minister Anwar, they take the lead in charting a revitalised, more proactive and re-focused foreign policy for Malaysia.
13. Dato' Seri, I am sure I speak for all here, when I say that we look forward to your remarks.
14. Without further delay, it is my pleasure to invite the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs to deliver the dinner address at the Welcoming Dinner of the 37th APR.

Dato' Seri, we welcome you to the stage.

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