



Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa

Chairman
Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia

Tan Sri Rastam Mohd Isa is chairman and chief executive of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. He holds a bachelor of social science (Hons) degree from University Sains Malaysia, a master of arts degree in International Relations and Strategic Studies from the University of Lancaster and a certificate of diplomacy from the University of Oxford.

Tan Sri Rastam is a former senior Malaysian diplomat. He was high commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, Ambassador of Malaysia to Bosnia Herzegovina, Ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Indonesia and Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations in New York. He retired as secretary general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 2 September 2010.

Tan Sri Rastam is chairman of the Malaysian National Committee for the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), chairman of the Malaysian National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). He is also CSCAP Co-Chair (2015-2017).

Presentation: Creating a Virtuous Cycle between Trust and Cooperation in the South China Sea: Lessons from the Search for MH370

The search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 represents an interesting case study on the relationship between cooperation and trust among nations. It has demonstrated how countries are able to put aside their differences in pursuit of a common cause. But the search has also highlighted how trust deficits can limit the scope and effectiveness of cooperation. The prospect of militarisation and further reversals of the status quo in the South China Sea represent serious challenges to peace and stability in Asia. These developments underscore an urgent need to promote a virtuous cycle between cooperation and trust between all countries that shape the regional strategic environment. Greater emphasis should therefore be placed on mutual assurances, greater transparency, and towards producing a Code of Conduct (COC), which should eventually include all countries with legitimate interests in the South China Sea.