

AsiaForum

The Asia Forum of Wellington

The Asia Forum Report For 2006

It has been a source of great encouragement over the last 10 years that distinguished, motivated and high profile individuals from abroad as well as from New Zealand have stepped forward to give of their time and skills to enhance New Zealanders' understanding of, and to help gain new perspectives on, Asia and Asian peoples. Asia Forum's objective is to stimulate informed debate and exchange of views on Asian issues, with an emphasis on off-the-record discussion.

Over the years Asia Forum has brought together people with scholarly and informed interest in contemporary Asian affairs to its monthly meetings. It has invited a number of distinguished individuals and drawn on a wide range of opinion leaders including members of the diplomatic, government officials, political, academic, business and private communities to share their perspectives on Asia with members. Since its launch in 1996 the Asia Forum has grown in momentum and received increasing participation from individuals and organisations. Asia Forum in many ways epitomises the continued effort and concern of New Zealanders in engaging with Asia and Asians. The Asia Forum complements, and cooperates with the NZ Institute of International Affairs, the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce, the education institutions in Wellington and business organisations. We also value the support and encouragement of the Asia NZ Foundation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the diplomatic community in Wellington.

Our 2006 programme continued the format of previous years with a range of high profile speakers from New Zealand and abroad leading the discussions. Most meetings were held monthly in the offices of leading law firms Bell Gully, Russell McVeagh, and the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, who generously provided refreshments and meeting facilities. Our gratitude also goes to Catalyst IT Ltd for hosting our website. Their hospitality, generosity and continuous support were much appreciated.

Highlights of the Year

Our major highlight for 2006 was the 10th Anniversary Seminar held on 26th July at Bell Gully followed by the Dinner in the Grand Hall at Parliament House hosted by the Speaker Hon Margaret Wilson. Asia Forum is grateful for the generous support from various individuals and organisations for this significant event.

Our other major highlight of the year was the acceptance by His Excellency the Governor General, the Honourable Anand Satyanand, of the position as Patron of Asia Forum during his term.

Since its inception 10 years ago, Asia Forum has been fortunate in having His Excellency as an active member and supporter. It is of great honour indeed to now have him in the position of Patron.

Vision for the Future/Looking Ahead

Asia Forum has been over the years led and chaired by Farib Sos on a voluntary basis. He has been assisted by a group of colleagues including Colin Bell, Douglas Day, Sokha Mey, and Tim Beal.

After 10 years of its existence, it is a great challenge to sustain and maintain the activities of Asia Forum. Asia Forum is keen to have further input and support from interested individuals and organisations to ensure its continued existence, as a viable entity in providing a platform for constructive discussion and a positive contribution towards New Zealand-Asia relations.

Asia Forum would welcome continuous funding from any individual or organisation that would assist in making Asia Forum a viable and sustainable entity for many years ahead.

Contribution

The Asia Forum has benefited greatly from the support of various organisations, notably and extensively from Belly Gully. However, there are certain running costs, especially pertaining to communications, which have to be covered. The Asia Forum is therefore seeking contribution from organisations or individuals who support our objectives and who wish to join with us in providing an opportunity for informed and stimulating discussion of contemporary Asian issues amongst opinion leaders.

Those interested in considering such a contribution should contact Farib Sos, whose contact details are shown below.



The meetings in 2006 were as follows:

(links to notices, speeches. etc are available from http://www.apri.ac.nz/Asia_Forum/previous.html)

David Taylor

Director, North Asia Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Tuesday 28 February

PENINSULA POSTING: THOUGHTS ON BEING ONE AMBASSADOR TO TWO KOREAS

John Austin

Executive Director, Asia:NZ Foundation

Tuesday 21 March

CHANGING ASIA – NEW IMPERATIVES FOR ASIA:NZ

Stephen Franks

Consultant and former ACT MP

Tuesday 11 April

IMMIGRATION 'CULTURAL FIT' CONCERNS: RACIST OR REALIST?

Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar

Director for Program and Research, The Habibie Center, Jakarta
and

Dr Greg Fealy

Research Fellow, Indonesian Politics, ANU

Tuesday 2 May

ISLAM IN INDONESIA: POLITICAL AND SECURITY DIMENSION

Dr Jung-taik Hyun

President of Korea Development Institute (KDI)

20 June 2006

PROSPECTS FOR AN ENHANCED ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KOREA AND NEW ZEALAND

26 July 2006

ASIA FORUM 10TH ANNIVERSARY SEMINAR AND DINNER

Grand Hall, Parliament House, Wellington, hosted by Madam Speaker, Hon Margaret Wilson

Kambiz Sheikh-hassani

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran

3 August 2006

CRISIS IN THE MIDDLE EAST: IRAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Tim Kearns

Christchurch teacher

21 August 2006

A KIWI TEACHER IN PYONGYANG

Peter Rider

Director of Information and Public Affairs Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, former New Zealand Ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar

20 September 2006

THAILAND AND HER EXTENDED CARETAKER GOVERNMENT

John Dauth

Australian High Commissioner

19 October 2006

ASIA AND THE UN: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

Dr David J Keegan

Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy

Wednesday 8 November

THE UNITED STATES, CHINA AND TAIWAN: WHAT DO THE ORACLE BONES PREDICT?

Dr Rizal Sukma

Executive Director of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies

Dr Bahtiar Effendy

Lecturer and expert on Islam

Mr Umar Hadi

Director of Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr Agus Sumule

Senior Lecturer at the State University of Papua and expert on Papua Issue

Thursday 16 November

INDONESIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WORLD'S LARGEST MUSLIM NATION

Details of the Asia Forum programme can be found at http://www.apri.ac.nz/Asia_Forum/

Executive Chair

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