

20TH ASIA SECURITY SUMMIT
THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE

THIRD PLENARY SESSION
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GENERAL (RETD) PRABOWO SUBIANTO
MINISTER OF DEFENCE, INDONESIA

Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Ladies and gentlemen, it's exactly 11:30, so we are beginning our third plenary session. The theme is Resolving Regional Tensions, and we have a very distinguished panel from three different parts of the world, and I will ask them in a moment to speak in the order in which they appear on our agenda. We're really honoured and delighted to have General Prabowo, the Minister of Defence of Indonesia, who is attending his second IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, but he also attended one IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain. By the way, this year's Manama Dialogue will take place between the 17th and the 18th of November in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

And given the growing relationships between the countries of the Middle East and those of Asia, we all look forward to having a strong representation of Asians to our 19th IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain. Minister Prabowo also attended the First IISS Riyadh Defence Forum on 5 March 2022, which we held in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and we look forward to strengthening our links there. And for the second time at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, Lee Jong-Sup, the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Korea, the challenges in East Asia and the Korean Peninsula have been referred to already a number of times this morning, and given, especially some of the ambitions announced by the DPRK recently in relation to testing its rocket and satellite technology.

It's vital that we had early on in this Shangri-La Dialogue the Minister of National Defence for the Republic of Korea. And attending his first IISS Shangri-La Dialogue, Josep Borrell Fontelles, the High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission. We did have some years ago Federica Mogherini come, and we had some years before that Catherine Ashton come, so it's a delight for us to have the High Representative with us here, so you will have a Southeast Asian perspective and East Asian perspective, and a European perspective on the challenges in resolving regional tensions. But may we first begin with Minister Prabowo. The floor and that podium is yours. Thank you very much, sir.

General (Retd) Prabowo Subianto, Minister of Defence, Indonesia

Dr Chipman, distinguished participants of this year's session of the Shangri-La Dialogue. First of all, it is indeed a great honour for me to once again be invited to speak in this important assembly of distinguished leaders in the defence and security fields of not only the Indo-Pacific region, but also from all over the world. We see today in this meeting many ministers, many leaders, many defence and security officials, not only from this region but from the Americas, from Europe, from the Middle East. This shows how important events like this Shangri-La Dialogue has become. I totally agree with some previous speakers that consider meetings like the Shangri-La Dialogue to be important platforms for the exchange of views, personal contacts, discreet conversations, private meetings, which are all important ways to defuse tension, overcome misunderstandings, and create a confidence-building environment.

We all, I think, agree that this world, that our earth, has become a small planet. And we are, all of us, facing common global threats to our security and our livelihood we have, together, just overcome. We have just managed to mitigate the near-disastrous COVID-19 pandemic. Even at this time, experts in the medical fields and the field of microbiology warn us not to lessen our guard against these global biological threats. My friends in the medical field warn me that there are now new mutations of the original COVID-19 virus appearing again.

Distinguished friends, participants, these are but a few examples of the universal threats that we will face in this small planet of ours. Also, experts warn us that we face, in the near future, in this 21st century, crisis in energy, in water, and of course, in food supply and food security. It is imperative for us to overcome our geopolitical rivalries, our territorial disputes through dialogue, negotiations, and

win-win solutions. The Asian tradition of compromise is, I think, not really only an Asian tradition. Historically, compromise is the only way that communities and societies can prosper.

Distinguished friends, the adagium that might makes right actually is not an eternal adagium. When there's a mighty power, there usually will come a mightier power in the neighbourhood. That is the history of mankind. The history of mankind teaches us that compromise and coexistence is the only viable route to prosperity. Therefore, in the context of tensions in our part of the world and in the Indo-Pacific region and also in other parts of the world, I myself, actually have a more optimistic outlook. Let us be very open.

The security situation in the Indo-Pacific, especially in Asia, in East Asia, is one dominated primarily by tensions rising from the rise of China to become, again, a great world power. And this is interfaced with the United States' role as a preeminent global power. History teaches us when a rising great power meets a preeminent global power, tensions do arise and the historical record shows many of these conflicts result in open conflict, kinetic conflict. However, this rivalry, some have suggested, has turned into a new Cold War. It is being called the Second Cold War.

And in this so-called new Cold War, as in all wars, whether hot or cold, the danger of catastrophe is always near, especially in this age of ours; this age of advanced science and technology, of artificial intelligence, quantum leaps in new discoveries, in new technologies. In this age, any confrontation of force can very quickly result in a dangerous descent to disaster. I've been told by experts in Indonesia, even if Indonesia is not involved in any open conflict, if there is a nuclear war, the difference between those directly involved and Indonesia is we will die a slower death, but we will suffer as well.

However, I am of the opinion that the leaders of the two leading powers in this great rivalry are actually wise leaders. I am of the opinion that they are aware of the burden they have on their shoulders. I am sure they must feel the weight of this burden. They are also very aware of the great history of their nations and their civilisations. China has a long and great history, maybe the longest recorded history of mankind. China has been, and will surely continue to be a great civilisation. The United States is also part of the Western civilisation. This Western civilisation has given humankind renaissance and enlightenment, science, new discoveries that have improved the livelihood of humankind.

Both these great civilisations, the Chinese civilisation and the Western civilisation at present now being led by the United States, have contributed to the great advance and progress of humankind. Therefore, I am convinced that the leaders of both China and the United States, and the West, will resolve these conflicts through compromise, cooperation, and with humanism, resulting in a peaceful resolution of their differences. I am confident that through leadership and wisdom, great statesmanship will prevail amongst the leaders of these great powers. Perhaps I can be considered one of the eternal optimists, but I do not deny that I am an optimist, because the only alternative to an optimistic view is one that I do not dare to consider. This is, I think, not only my hope, but the hope of many around the world.

I would like now also to address the conflict in Europe: that is, Ukraine-Russia conflict. I address this because I see many of our European friends present here in this forum. Yes, the Shangri-La Dialogue has been in the past focused primarily on the Indo-Pacific region, but the presence of so many of our friends from Europe testify to the fact that security in the Indo-Pacific is affected by security and the situation in Europe and vice versa. As I said, our planet has become smaller. What happens in Ukraine affects the livelihoods of all the peoples of the world. The price of energy has gone up; the price of food has gone up. This has resulted in much suffering for many peoples of the world.

Therefore, I would like to put forward the proposition that is not out of context for us to try to contribute to the resolution of the Ukraine-Russia conflict. I therefore would like to take this opportunity to urge, to recommend with utmost urgency for our brothers in Ukraine and in Russia to come as soon as possible to a secession of hostilities. I propose that the Shangri-La Dialogue find a mode of declaration urging both Ukraine and Russia to immediately start negotiations for peace. This declaration should be voluntary from all participants here representing their various countries.

But I propose the general outline of the peace plan as follows. First; a ceasefire in place. That is, a secession of hostilities in place at present positions of both conflicting parties. Two; withdrawal 15 kilometres each from the forward positions to a new demilitarised zone. Three; the United Nations monitoring and observer force to be immediately formed and to be immediately deployed along this new demilitarised zone. Five; the United Nations should organise, carry out, and execute a referendum in the disputed territories to ascertain, objectively, the wish of the majority of the inhabitants of the various disputed areas.

And I would like to declare at this present moment that Indonesia is prepared to contribute military observers and military units under the peacekeeping auspices of the United Nations. These steps, I think, have proven in history to be effective. Let us not here put blame on any side. There are always two versions to any conflict. Both sides feel strongly of their righteousness. But for the security of the world, for the safety of the innocent, we have to achieve secession of hostilities as soon as possible.

I refer to historical examples. In Korea, a big and massive conflict was resolved by a secession of hostilities and a demilitarised zone. Yes, the conflict in Korea has still to be resolved permanently. However, for at least five decades, we have had some sort of peace, which is much better than the massive destruction and the killing of many innocent people.

Distinguished participants, I do not know if my proposals can be accepted, but at least let us try to put forward some concrete recommendations, so that meetings like the Shangri-La Dialogue will have more substance, more meaning, and can prove to be a platform that can contribute to the diffusion and de-escalation of armed conflict. Once again, because our planet has become smaller, it is more imperative for us to achieve peace. Thank you.

Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Thank you, Minister Prabowo, and you open up lots of things for discussion. And it is unambiguously the case that everyone, I think, in this room will agree with your principal proposition that peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area are intimately connected to peace and security in the Indo-Pacific zone.