

ASEAN Regional Forum
5th Inter-Sessional Meeting on
Maritime Security
Seoul, South Korea 18 – 19 April 2013

Opening Remarks for DAS Fuchs (As Prepared for Delivery)

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'd like to thank our host South Korea along with our co-chair Indonesia for all the work done in preparing this conference.

We look forward to continuing this work together again next year as we further develop the maritime security pillar of ARF and advance the work plan on maritime security.

I'd like to start off by saying that, throughout the entire history of the United States, we have been a maritime nation. And for a large part of our history, we have also been a Pacific nation with ties to Asia. As President Obama has underscored, much of the history of the 21st century will be written in Asia. The United States, as a member of the Asia-Pacific community of nations, is committed to strengthening the security and economic architecture necessary for ensuring regional stability. We recognize that it is the region's waters that connect us together, and it is in all of our interests to promote peace, stability, and respect for international law. The United States is doing our part to help promote maritime security in the region – from taking the necessary steps to join ReCAAP to launching with the Philippines the Expanded ASEAN Seafarers Training program.

We all must do our part to build activities and programs that enhance maritime cooperation in the region.

The ARF reaches a significant milestone this year with its 20th anniversary, and the United States looks forward to working with all ARF participants to increase this forum's relevance and impact.

In the past twenty years the ARF has engaged in many confidence-building efforts. However, the ARF must now begin advancing its preventive diplomacy capacity as outlined in the ARF Concept and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy paper, in order to help realize ARF's strategic potential as an action-based, solutions-oriented regional security body.

The need is clear. As tensions mount in areas like the South China Sea, and the potential for conflict increases, the need for ARF to become more relevant and capable is evident. This means moving beyond just confidence building measures, and towards preventive diplomacy and the resolution of conflicts. We should aim to think creatively and act boldly, and continue to expand the scope and scale of our cooperation in maritime security.

In particular, we should focus on fostering cooperation amongst civilian maritime fleets and maritime law enforcement bodies. As we know, maritime tensions in the region are increasingly fueled by civilian fleets and maritime law-enforcement activities. That is why last year the U. S. Department of State co-hosted the Maritime Security ISM with the United States Coast Guard, South Korea, and Indonesia, and for the first time included civilian maritime agencies. We know the vast potential for greater cooperation among our civilian maritime fleets to tackle

issues from environmental protection, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, to search and response, and ship-profiling. We know the value of getting civil maritime professionals in the same room to talk about common challenges. Last year was a good start in getting the right people into the same room so that we can forge habits of cooperation and build common understandings of the problems we face and solutions to resolve them. My hope is that we will do our part, over the next two days, to help advance ARF toward these goals, particularly within the maritime domain.

I welcome the work we are doing here and hope you will join with the co-chairs in giving this your full concern and attention over these next two days.