

Biography

Asad-Ul Iqbal Latif is a visiting research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore. He works on Singapore's political and strategic relations with China, India and the United States. ISEAS published his book, *Between Rising Powers: China, Singapore and India*, in August 2007; it is being reprinted. His second book, *India in the Making of Singapore*, is due in October 2008.

Dr. Latif graduated with honours in English from Presidency College, Calcutta, and received his master of letters degree in history at Clare Hall, Cambridge University, where he was Raffles (Chevening) and S. Rajaratnam Scholar. He was a member of the President's Committee of the Cambridge Union Society, the university debating club, and a member of the Editorial Committee of the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*.

Dr. Latif was a Fulbright visiting scholar at Harvard University's Weatherhead Centre for International Affairs in 2006. At Harvard, he completed a monograph, *Three Sides in Search of a Triangle: Singapore-America-India Relations*.

A journalist for 25 years before joining ISEAS in 2005, he worked at *The Statesman* in Calcutta, *Asiaweek* in Hong Kong, and *The Business Times* and *The Straits Times* in Singapore. He was also a Jefferson Fellow at the East-West Center.

Background

China's rise -- or "peaceful development" -- is a given in contemporary international affairs. Beijing notes that the demands of economic modernization, if nothing else, ensure its commitment to world peace. How do other countries view its rise? For the United States, for example, is China destined to be an economic partner and a strategic rival? Is the new assertiveness in Japan's international posture a desire to pre-empt a sharper Chinese sphere of influence from emerging in East Asia? Does Europe take a rather benign view of China because they are not playing on the same "turf"? Is the Chinese charm offensive in Southeast Asia working? In the coming decades, will the Westphalian order prevail in Asia, or will it give way to a Pax Sinica that witnesses a replay of the ancient tributary system? This roundtable seeks to bring together six to seven participants from various regions to address these issues.

Discussions Questions

1. China says that the best proof of its desire for peace is that, economically, it benefits the most from peace. Do roundtable participants think that this argument is a fair indicator of China's peaceful intentions?
2. Do participants view China as a *status quo* power or as a revisionist power?
3. Thirty years into the normalization of Sino-American ties, how would participants define U.S. policy toward China?
4. What do participants make of China's soft power, particularly the charm offensive that it has unleashed in Southeast Asia?
5. Do participants think that U.S. policy toward Taiwan contributes to, or that it detracts from, a viable, long-term U.S. policy towards China?