



CITATION FOR MR BILAHARI KAUSIKAN OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Citation Reader: Ms Michelle Teo

It is my pleasure this evening to announce the recipient of the 2024 Outstanding Service Award – Mr Bilahari Kausikan.

I am especially honoured to be able to pay tribute to Bilahari for his leadership of and commitment to the Middle East Institute. When Bilahari first accepted the Chairmanship in 2017, I asked him why he had agreed when he was so highly sought after for much higher profile organisations.

Having known him since the start of my career in the Foreign Ministry, his answer didn't surprise: he felt it important to re-set the direction and focus of the Middle East Institute, and he wanted to ensure that we spoke with a voice both credible and relevant.

This has proved prescient: the Middle East today is as complex as ever. Old issues manifest in new forms, making the challenges even more demanding. More than ever is the work of the Institute important in considering the contemporary Middle East and in offering insights both thoughtful and thought-provoking.

A career diplomat with more than 37 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bilahari has, over the years, built a reputation as a masterful strategist, a thoughtful analyst, a loyal Singaporean, and above all, a man whose views have always been candid, his approach pragmatic.

A published author, Bilahari has written and spoken extensively on the complexities of geopolitics, diplomacy, and developments in Southeast Asia, North Asia and the Middle East.

MEI has benefited from his wide global and national recognition. Under Bilahari's watch, the stature and reputation of our Institute has been enhanced. Our publications now make an impact. Our opinions are taken into consideration. Bilahari retired this year from the Institute but remains with the Institute as an Honorary Fellow.

He has been a true leader for the MEI team, always available to everyone, honest and insightful in his many discussions with the research team, and clear and precise in his guidance to the Board and the administrative team. The team and I thank you, Bilahari.

Please join me in congratulating Mr Bilahari Kausikan on receiving the Outstanding Service Award.

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