



FORWARD

Towards ASEAN Community - Centrality - Connectivity



OPINION

50 Years Indonesia and ASEAN

An “integrated” Southeast Asia was heralded by General Suharto on August 16, 1966, in connection with the Jakarta Accord to resolve the Indonesia’s confrontation with Malaysia. Later this settlement started the establishment of a cooperation network among the Southeast Asian nations towards the formation of ASEAN. This new formation was an extension of Maphilindo, initiated by Dr. Thanat Khoman on August 8, 1967. Thirty-nine years later, it is further developed by the idea of building ASEAN Communities in the Bali Concord II, 2003. The process was legalised by the ASEAN Charter in 2007.

The integration of Southeast Asia led up to regional resilience to prevent external intervention that could

generate “balkanisation of this region” (S.Rajaratnam, 1967). This resilience should be developed on the inalienable principle of sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference, deliberation and consensus. Those principles are engraved as The ASEAN Way.

ASEAN then further develop its sphere of influence engaging its strategic partners through external cooperation frameworks, such as ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit. The later is a proof of ASEAN significance which can bring big powers in one table.

The crucial question is can ASEAN - with all that it has hitherto accomplished - uphold itself as the fulcrum of geopolitical stability and the linchpin of its core strategic interest in the wider Asia Pacific region through

the East Asia Summit? Can Indonesia, which Kishore Mahbubani regarded as ASEAN’s natural custodian, uphold and further nurture the ASEAN First and ASEAN Centrality principles and remain the driving force in its deliberation in the East Asia Summit?

ASEAN ‘s main apprehension in the future is to pull its act together and delve into its institutional memory to avoid being “balkanised” by bigger powers. Recently, the fracture among ASEAN members has been seen on cases such as South China Sea dispute. It is Indonesia that should “re-integrate” ASEAN again. Each and every ASEAN member country must have better and bigger bargaining power in acting together to manage the major powers. (CPFL)

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NEWS UPDATE

Bringing ASEAN Closer to the People

Commencing the golden jubilee of ASEAN, the 30th ASEAN summit was held in the Philippines on 26-29 April 2017. In his chairman’s statement which heralded “Partnering for Change, Engaging the World”, President Rodrigo Duterte re-emphasized the commitment to bring the region closer to the people. The key words are clear and bold that what he meant as to achieve full and active participation will be related to tasks such as deepening people’s awareness, installing sense of community and harvesting tangible benefit.

In order to pursue the idea of bringing the region closer to the people, the summit also signed the ASEAN Declaration on the Role of the Civil

Service as a Catalyst for Achieving the ASEAN Community Vision 2015. Although getting less highlight than the chairmain’s statement, however this declaration contains important aspect that will serve its purpose in activating civil service as an agent to deliver “the community feeling” to the society. The second point of this declaration contains supports for raising professional standard and capability as well as encouraging collaboration among community of professional. These two factors are significant in order to ensure the civil servant will be able to spread the message on ASEAN more effectively and also build network among ASEAN member states. Therefore the bond will strengthen vertically and horizontally. (KK)

ARTICLE

Terrorism Threat in ASEAN Region

The Marawi crisis in the Southern Philippines has signaled the rising threat of terrorism in Southeast Asia. The armed conflict started on May 23, 2017 between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the collaborative Islamic militant groups of Maute and Abu Sayyaf, caused nearly 200,000 civilians fled the Marawi City. It was reported that around 400 militants in Marawi involved in the fight against the Philippines army and the death toll caused by the conflict has risen up to 300 casualties. To end the crisis, Duterte government declared martial law on the whole Mindanao area for 60 days. After four weeks of undersiege, the Philippines army has secured 90% of Marawi city.

The fear of the upcoming attack by terrorist group with ISIS (Daesh) connection, has been caught on other ASEAN member countries. The potential of the return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) from Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines who joined ISIS in Syria has raised the concern of many people in Southeast Asia to the threat of terrorist attack. Since the terrorist group in Iraq and Syria degraded due to the loss of territory and rank members, this can be resulted in a growing return of Southeast Asian fighters.

Terrorism in Southeast Asia is an important issue that can not be neglected. Aaron Connelly, from the Lowy Institute, explained that there are three factors which can enhance small terrorist networks in Southeast Asia. First, declaration by a group affiliated to ISIS in the Southern Philippines that can not be reached by central government law in Manila. Second, recruitment of new ISIS supporters that infiltrate or was infiltrated in the Malaysian army. Third, reawakened of 'jihad' spirit among prisoners that had been released from Indonesian jails.

To deal with terrorism threat, ASEAN, as a regional entity in Southeast Asia should take effective measures. Some analysts argue that there was lack of consensus in ASEAN to response on terrorism issue. Thus, there was only initiative from member countries, like the meeting of three ASEAN countries leaders from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines to discuss counter terrorism joint actions as a response to Marawi case. Critics said that since the establishment of ASEAN was not built on a solid institutional foundation like the European Union, therefore, a long and enduring stability in ASEAN was still something to look for. In this sense, the seizure of Marawi city should be take into account seriously by conducting a regional approach under the spirit of ASEAN to combat terrorism, not rely solely on member countries initiatives. (IK)

Belt & Road Initiative in Southeast Asia

One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative has two significances for China. First, culturally, China will involve in more interactions with the world and boost its influence abroad. To do so, China has built hundreds of Confucius Institute and Chinese-Language study classes in the OBOR area. Second, economically, it will increase the flow of capital, product and people through the region. Row of regions from Europe to Southeast Asia will be adhered to the mainland China.

Southeast Asia is one of China's outskirts in her OBOR in which China viewed those as the integrated region. There is a great transformation in Southeast Asia's perception on China. Historically, Southeast Asian nations saw China as a threat from the North with its eagerness to export revolutionary credo to neighboring countries.

Nowadays, China and mainland Southeast Asian nations involve in Greater Mekong Subregion, cooperating in economic development. They adopt Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Southeast Asia in which China hold its access to this sub-region to easily mobilize its capital, product and

people. For China, GMS is a successful example on how China intervene in Southeast Asian nations. Until now, there is still a question whether this mechanism will create dependence or interdependence relations. Furthermore, GMS also implies two sides of impacts. Positively, it increases physical connectivity among GMS members, including a land-locked Laos. Negatively, it might impact the ASEAN integrity as it strengthen the unity of mainland Southeast Asia and bring them closer to the northern counterpart: China.

To anticipate the negative impact, ASEAN needs to urge a connectivity development program between mainland and archipelagic states. ASEAN can use its sub-regional cooperation initiatives such as GMS, IMT-GT, and BIMP-EAGA, which the last two contain maritime characteristics. By integrating their economic corridors development programs and linking their land and maritime based project, ASEAN can holistically build connectivity between mainland and archipelagic Southeast Asia, creating a stronger and integrated position of ASEAN to collaborate with China's BRI (ARR).

ARTICLE

Note from Cross-Border Journeys: Prospects and Challenges in Achieving People Centeredness

Editor:
Khanisa and Sandy Nur Ikfal R.

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Anggih Tangkas Wibowo

Publisher:
Research Center for Politics
Indonesian Institute of Sciences
Jl. Jend. Gatot Subroto 10
Jakarta 12710

Website: <http://politik.lipi.go.id>
Email: politik@mail.lipi.go.id

ASEAN RESEARCH GROUP (ARG) TEAM MEMBERS

Dr. Adriana Elisabeth
(*International political economy*)

Dr. Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti
(*International migration*)

Dr. M. Riefqi Muna
(*International security*)

Dra. Awani Irewati, MA
(*Border studies*)

Drs. Agus R. Rahman, MM., ME
(*International economy*)

C.P.F. Luhulima
(*Regional political economy*)

Ratna Shofi Inayati, MBA
(*Regional studies*)

Indriana Kartini, S.IP., MA
(*International Politics*)

Lidya Christin Sinaga, S.IP., MA
(*International Politics and Disaster study*)

Sandy Nur Ikfal Raharjo, M.Si (Han)
(*Border studies*)

Khanisa, MA
(*ASEAN and Diplomacy*)

Hayati Nufus, S.Hum
(*Junior researcher, Chinese studies*)

Fauzan Farhana, SH
(*Junior researcher, International law*)

Pandu Prayoga, S.IP
(*Junior researcher,
International political economy*)

In the Chairman's statement on the 30th ASEAN Summit 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines stated that in commemorating ASEAN's golden anniversary, full and active participation of all ASEAN citizens is looked forward to deepen people's awareness and to install a sense of community. This issue is a big problem since based on ASEAN Secretariat Study in 2015, three out of four people in ten ASEAN capital cities have lack of basic understanding on what ASEAN is. It will become a prominent barrier to realize a people centered ASEAN. To observe more, ASEAN Research group at LIPI has travelled across borders in mainland and archipelagic Southeast Asia region from 2015-2017.

Thanks to economic corridor programs from Greater Mekong Subregion and IMT-GT, border crossing infrastructures in the mainland Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia are generally in a good condition. The road is well connected, the bridges over the Mekong River are properly staked and the public transports such as buses, trains, and boats are continuously operated. Also the border checkpoints are adequately functioned. People that the team met in Vietnam and Laos, from the shopkeepers to the hotel operators, are enthusiastic in regard to ASEAN. Even in Hat Yai, a town far from Bangkok, there are ASEAN Market for lower class and ASEAN Plaza for middle class consumers.

Despite the satisfaction about how ASEAN has been received, the team still faced challenges on language and currency differences. It was hard to understand what bus conductor said in local language, while in reverse they did not understand English. The gap of currency value is also an issue, as the Thai Baht can be used in Vietnam-Laos border area, while Vietnam Dong is not accepted in the Laos-Thailand border area.

The Exploration of Archipelagic Southeast Asia was done through observing connectivity among Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, and the Philippines. This area of IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA was dominantly connected through air and land routes. The development of regional low coast carriers such as AirAsia, Firefly, Mas Wings, and Express Air support the link among cities across islands. Moreover, land-based transport serve cross-border route such as Pontianak-Kuching and Bandar Seri Begawan-Kota Kinabalu. Since these four countries' areas are regarded as more developed in ASEAN, they have more choices on places to go. There are direct flights from Bandar Seri Begawan to Dubai, London, and Shanghai but there is no flight to Pontianak which is geographically closer. As well as there are direct flights from Kota Kinabalu of Malaysia to various cities in China, but there is no direct plane to Balikpapan. People there know about ASEAN Community, but some of them did not economically and socially depend on it. Meanwhile, maritime connectivity is not rapidly developed. Medan-Penang Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) ferry was no longer operated, as well as the plan of Dumai-Melaka Ro-Ro ferry was repeatedly postponed.

The journey above implies three important issues. First, building citizen awareness on community feeling is critical to build People-Centered ASEAN. Second, raising awareness through connectivity development should be triggered by economic and social interdependency among others. Third, it is important to rethink the discourse of single currency. Pushing the idea further, ASEAN can also enhance (English) language proficiency among ASEAN citizens especially those who work on public service area. Such efforts can accelerate people centered-community. (SNIR)

ACTIVITIES

Research Activities

Continuing their maritime focus, this year the ASEAN Research Group (ARG) is examining Transnational Crimes at Sea in the region. The maritime border between Indonesia and Malaysia is used as a sample location noting the frequent incidents of various transnational crimes at the sea such as drugs, illegal goods and people smuggling. Field observation in Medan and Tanjung-Balai Asahan reveals the complex interconnectivity between those crimes and the relations among stakeholders.

Still under maritime framework, the other ASEAN Research Group is specifying their discussion on sub-regional maritime engagement. This year its research titled “the role of BIMP-EAGA in developing ASEAN Connectivity”. BIMP-EAGA is a sub-regional body in Southeast Asia which members are Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and The Philippines. As three of its members are archipelagic states, maritime arrangement within this framework is supposed to be significant to serve a greater interest in the region.

Other than the main researches, members of ARG also actively engage with stakeholders from the government and public. For example, they became speaker in the preparation of IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA Task Force in National Border Management Agency and joined a Meeting with BIMP-EAGA Business Council earlier this year.

Also, in the start of 2017, three ARG’s seniors had an opportunity to share their views on maritime issues in Dialogue Series on International Maritime Security Issues from Indonesia and Japan Perspectives. Dr. Adriana Elisabeth explained the importance of having better strategy in maritime diplomacy; Awani Irewati emphasized crucial needs for stakeholders to form a solid plan on maritime border resource management; while Dr. Riefqi Muna gave an overview on strategic issues regarding regional maritime security. (KK)

BOOK REVIEW

The Need for Strategy and Road Map on Indonesia’s Foreign Policy



Original Title:
Grand Design Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia (2015-2025)
Author:
Adriana Elisabeth (Editor)
Year of Publication: 2016
Publisher:
Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia

Indonesia needs to reorganize its foreign policy orientation and diplomatic strategy. The country must determine the priority of interests and choices of strategic issues in the context of its foreign relations. Indonesia’s foreign policy must be a reflection of domestic policies to achieve national interests. Meanwhile, these policies also must take into account regional and global developments. Therefore, Indonesia under the administration of President Joko Widodo needs to have guidelines and strategies for foreign relations and diplomacy in order to respond to the regional and international dynamics and to increase Indonesia’s role to create a peaceful and prosperous world. The books of “Grand Design of Indonesia’s Foreign Policy (2015-2025)” and “The Road Map of Indonesia’s Foreign Policy (2015-2020)” are coming as there is a need to sharpen the direction of its foreign policy and diplomacy.

The Grand Design of Indonesia’s foreign policy establishes the national visions and key elements that will be achieved through

diplomacy in accordance with the national interests and Indonesia’s international contributions. The 2025 National Vision of Indonesia’s foreign policy includes four objectives: to guarantee a secure, prosperous and democratic Indonesia; to create an archipelagic and maritime-oriented vision; to build a sustainable and green civilization as well as to construct a science and technology-based of Indonesia. To achieve the visions, Indonesia’s foreign policy should refer to key elements namely the active and free principle, a green and inclusive diplomacy, democracy and human rights, leadership, also the development of strategic issues and international actors. Meanwhile, the Road Map document focuses on the importance of inclusive and sustainable economic diplomacy to achieve national interests, in particular, to improve the welfare of the people. Three aspects that should be the foundation and goal of Indonesian economic diplomacy are inclusiveness, environment, and sustainability. (ANA)