



FORWARD

Towards ASEAN Community - Centrality - Connectivity



OPINION

Putting ASEAN First

“Putting ASEAN first” as a principle has been compromised by ASEAN leaders. Newly elected leaders in Southeast Asia seems to not give much attention on how their policy affects or being affected by the regional circumstance. Looking back to the previous decade, unity of ASEAN used to be the major concern of the member states. Today, some leaders in ASEAN seem to put ASEAN behind their priority list. For example, in the first year of his

administration, Joko Widodo seemed to have less enthusiastic foreign policy gestures in working under ASEAN framework. Besides, the current choice of Duterte to work bilaterally with China to settle the post PCA-South China Sea dispute might complicate the long-process of achieving Code of Conduct proposed by ASEAN.

The question now is, how to bring back the spirit that unite the member states when they came up with the

idea of forming community in 2003? Recalling the significance of ASEAN among the member states is one of the answers. They must realize that ASEAN is the backbone of regional stability, which enable them to grow politically and economically. Furthermore, it will eventually contribute to boost their level of trust. However, such prescription is easier said than done. The initial step is that leaders of the member states have to grow political will and believe that ASEAN deserve to be put first. (KK)

NEWS UPDATE

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Moving to ASEAN Dynamic Community

2016 is a momentum for ASEAN to turn its vision of a dynamic ASEAN Community into reality. This has been taken as the theme of the 28th and 29th ASEAN Summit on 6-7 September 2016, hosted by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. On the occasion, ASEAN member states have issued some important documents on Integration Work Plan III, the transition from informal to formal employment, cultural heritage cooperation, education for out-of-school children and youth, HIV and AIDS, as well as joint statements on biological diversity, UN climate change convention, and a code for unplanned encounters in the South China Sea.

ASEAN leaders also adopted a new Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, which succeeded the 2010's. Connectivity itself is acknowledged as essential for achieving the ASEAN Community. This master plan expanded the three dimensions of physical, institutional, and people-to-people connectivity into five strategic areas of sustainable infrastructure development, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people's

mobility. This event is also a moment to commemorate 25 years of the ASEAN-China dialogue relations. ASEAN welcomed the China-initiated '*Lancang Mekong Cooperation*' as a new subregionalism in the Mekong subregion, together with the existing ADB-led '*Greater Mekong Subregion*' and the *ASEAN Mekong Basin Development Cooperation*.

Other subregional cooperation, IMT-GT and BIMP-EAGA, had also organized their 3rd Trade Expo, Conference, and Business Matching in Makassar, Indonesia on 14-16 October 2016. They raised "Strengthening the ASEAN Maritime Economic Corridor and Food Security" as the theme of the Trade Expo. This event brought together central and local government officials, businessmen, as well as civilians from Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. These two subregional cooperations are preparing the Implementation Blueprint 2017-2021 to succeed the 2012–2016 one, which will be synchronized with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025. (SNIR)

ARTICLE

Thailand's Royal Succession

Thailand's Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn was crowned the new King on December 1, 2016. He succeeds his charismatic father King Bhumibol Adulyadej who passed away on 13 October 2016. For the past seven decades, King Bhumibol had accompanied his people through both good and bad times in making Thailand a modern state. In ASEAN, the King will be remembered for his and his country's contribution to the region's rise from colonialism to one of the main drivers of the regional and global economy today. Thailand was the country where ASEAN was initiated.

The real difficulty facing Thailand and ASEAN is whether Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn whose public crowning ceremony will only take place in late-2017 after the cremation of King Bhumibol, will be able to match his father's stature and credentials. King Vajiralongkorn's ascension will presumably have a moderately positive impact on investor confidence,

which has dithered over uncertainties about the country's political future since the 2014 military takeover.

While the Thai monarchy may have limited formal powers, it holds the loyalty of the country's business elite and the military. Thailand's *Lèse majesté law*, based on Thai Criminal Code Section 112, protects the royal family from criticism or denigration.

King Vajiralongkorn will thus "have to use the time to the crowning ceremony to earn the trust, prestige and respect of the public and gain from the legacy of his vastly popular father, who was seen as the moral and spiritual heart of the country," argued Ryan Aherin, senior Asia analyst at Verisk Maplecroft.

Indonesia and other members of ASEAN should be ready to assist Thailand in the process. A stable, peaceful and prosperous ASEAN will be difficult to materialize without the active and dedicated contribution of Thailand. (CPFL)

ASEAN Chairmanship under Duterte

The Philippines' President, Rodrigo Duterte is going to be the ASEAN Chair 2017. Under the Philippines' chairmanship, ASEAN will turn 50. This is one of ASEAN's biggest achievement. Is Duterte going to bring ASEAN to be more meaningful to the region? Or will he create more problems and challenges?

Duterte has shown his extreme policies regarding the extra-judicial killing against drugs users. This contradicts ASEAN's commitment to implement democracy and human rights. He also earned criticism from the global community about his policies to combat crimes and corruption in the Philippines. His style of leadership began when he was the Davao City Mayor for around 22 years. He converted Davao to be "the most peaceful city in Southeast Asia" in the favour of business sector.

The Philippines announced a regional commitment in changing and engaging the world. After obtaining the Chairmanship of ASEAN, Duterte stated that "...*We will pursue initiatives and enhance cooperation with global partners to ensure that ASEAN citizens live in peace, stability, security and growth, while maintaining ASEAN centrality, unity and solidarity for all times*". However,

there are questions whether Manila could take the role.

Duterte's international performance will face some challenges, especially on how Manila will chair ASEAN between the US and China global rivalry. Regarding the South China Sea dispute, the Philippines under the former President Benigno Aquino, supported by Washington, brought the case to the International Tribunal in 2012. Eventhough the Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling benefits The Philippines, Duterte choose to work bilaterally with China. This negates what ASEAN has been doing on resolving the dispute.

Despite of the dynamics, ASEAN leaders tend to seek power balance and keep the region peaceful and stable. For this purpose, the Philippines must also try to engage the ASEAN dialogue partners, including The US and China, to work together in maintaining peace, stability and creating more prosperity for the region. During the Philippines' chairmanship, ASEAN centrality must be comprehensively reinforced. The Philippines also has to remember that the implementation of democracy, human rights, good governance, rule of law and fundamental freedom must be the basis of regional commitment. (AE&PP)

ARTICLE

Indonesia-China Relations in the era of Joko Widodo: Economic Matters and Beyond

When President Widodo came into power in 2014, he inherited a well-established relationship with China. Widodo's Presidency continues a strong partnership established gradually after 1998. While economic imperatives still drive the bilateral relationship in 2016, there is a significant difference, especially the way in which both countries address their maritime vision in the bilateral relationship. The Joint Statement on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in March 2015 strengthened maritime cooperation. If, in the old "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership", maritime cooperation dealt only with navigation safety, maritime security, naval cooperation, marine scientific research and environmental protection, maritime search and rescue, fisheries as well as blue economy, the new maritime cooperation focused on trade, investment, and economic development. The new partnership connected Indonesia and China's maritime visions: the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) and Maritime Silk Road (MSR).

The rise of Widodo and the GMF vision aligned the interests of Indonesia with China as a basis for closer maritime cooperation. While the joint statement between two countries in March 2015 stressed translating "complementarity" between the GMF and MSR into "more concrete economic outcomes", the Natuna Sea incidents in 2016 suggest that Indonesia-China relations are more complex than just economic relations.

However, Widodo's main priority in infrastructure drives him towards

China, which has been apparent since the 2014 election debate. When asked about the South China Sea disputes and Indonesia's role, he replied that the issue involved other states, not Indonesia. During the 2014 debate, Widodo suggested that "Indonesia should carefully consider whether or not its involvement in the conflict will either jeopardize the relations with China or provide the way out of the conflict".

Consequently, the "complementarity" between the GMF and MSR visions seem to be merely an entry point of China's involvement in infrastructure projects in Indonesia. While for China possible "complementarities" centre on gaining greater access to Indonesia's infrastructure projects, gaining access to Chinese funding, especially from the Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank and the Silk Road Fund, is in Indonesia's interest. The Jakarta-Bandung HSR project was the first infrastructure project awarded to China under President Widodo. While it is not in line with the priority on maritime infrastructure, the President held on to the project, despite controversies and different domestic responses.

Indonesia should not perceive "the complementarity" between the Chinese MSR and its GMF only through the lens of Indonesia's economic benefit. It requires a more coherent and comprehensive strategy towards China, driven not only by economic calculations since China's intention go well beyond that. (LCS)

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ACTIVITIES

Research Activities

The broad scope of issues is one of the challenges for Indonesia in implementing the Global Maritime Fulcrum vision. Indonesia needs to have a clear understanding first, on what actually the vision means. After a year of analyzing materials and discussions, ASEAN Research Group has completed its study on “ASEAN Maritime Security from the Political Economy Perspective of Indonesia”. This research further investigates problems that actually lie behind the complexity of maritime policymaking and why Indonesia’s maritime vision have a strong connection with ASEAN dynamics.

Other ARG’s research also manages to successfully continue their compelling study on how sub-regionalism works in ASEAN. Following the success of the Mekong region study in the previous year, this year’s study of Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle is deeply appreciated by many stakeholders. The findings of this study enrich public knowledge on sub-regional intergovernmental bodies, which has not been done by many, especially in Indonesia.

Aside from research, the ARG researchers also actively involved in academic and public policy activities.

For example, Dr. Tri Nuke Pudjiastuti is one of the key academic representatives that have been joining the discussion on the continuation of Bali Process Forum that deals with forced migration issue.



ARG researchers participating in “Australia-Indonesia Dialogue: Asian Century Futures Initiative” Nov. 15, 2016.

Dr. Riefqi Muna and Dr. Adriana Elisabeth also significantly contributed in Australia-Indonesia Dialogue: Asian Century Futures Initiative conducted by LIPI and Griffith Asia Institute. Meanwhile, Sandy Raharjo also had the opportunities to join BIMP-EAGA&IMT-GT Meeting in Makassar. Lastly, ARG also initiates a study commemorating 50 years of ASEAN which is planned to be finalized by August 2017. (KK)

BOOK REVIEW

Understanding ASEAN for Young Generation



Original Title:
KITA DAN ASEAN: Ayo Berlari Bersama! (We and ASEAN: Let’s Run Together!)
Author: Faudzan Farhana and Hayati Nufus
Year of Publication: 2016
Publisher: Penerbit Pustaka Pelajar

The implementation of ASEAN Community has been started on January 1st, 2016. In order to achieve its “community” state, ASEAN needs to transform its state-oriented to people-oriented approach. This requires broad participation of people from each member state in ASEAN Community pillars (political and security, economic, and socio-culture). However, even though the idea to build such community has been initiated since 2003, there is still a gap of knowledge between the ASEAN institution and their member states’ people. A survey conducted by ASEAN Research Group of LIPI in 2015 confirms that Indonesian people’s understanding on AEC is still low, let alone the other two pillars. This book is written concerning the aforementioned situation.

To internalize ASEAN among its people, it’s better to start with young adult generation who will live in the Community era. Therefore, the book is written in easy to understand language, yet still inviting the reader to gain more knowledge about ASEAN from other sources. This book consists of two interrelated chapters. The first comprehensively discusses about the establishment and the development of ASEAN as an international organization before moving towards the ASEAN Community. Meanwhile the second chapter discusses further about the ASEAN Community with its three pillars and how it will affect people’s daily life. Although it is primarily targeting young people, this book is still relevant for anyone who wants to know about ASEAN. (FF)