

New Asean Security Challenges

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Two important messages:

- 1. Asean is a middle power that can mitigate any great power from usurping the region.**
- 2. Asean is a bedrock for multipolarity.**

Asean and the West

Western perceptions

- ▶ Asean is weak
- ▶ Asean has no military might
- ▶ Asean easily manipulated
- ▶ Asean is divided
- ▶ Asean talks only
- ▶ Asean way, no way
- ▶ Asean institutions no mandates
- ▶ Asean has no NGOs/CSO engagement

Regional perceptions

- ▶ Asean is nimble, resilience
- ▶ Asean has convening/convincing power
- ▶ Asean can be influenced
- ▶ Asean tolerates differences
- ▶ Asean consensus, slow but sure
- ▶ Asean aims low, yields high
- ▶ Asean boosts sovereignty/interest
- ▶ Asean engages communities

Challenges before 24 Feb 2022

- ▶ The end of Cold War
- ▶ The terror attacks
- ▶ The US-China rivalry
- ▶ The Covid-19 pandemic
- ▶ The Climate change/sustainable development
- ▶ Regional hotspots: South China Sea, Myanmar, Korean Peninsula, Taiwan Straits, etc.

Challenges after 24 Feb 2022

- ▶ Energy crisis
- ▶ Food crisis
- ▶ Inflation/ higher cost of living
- ▶ Fertilizer crisis
- ▶ Refugees outflows
- ▶ Potential nuclear war
- ▶ AI and digital conflicts
- ▶ Decoupling of supply chains/ too intertwined

Essence of Indo-Pacific Strategies

- ▶ 12 different frameworks competing for areas of cooperation and influence
- ▶ From the region: AOIP, Japan, ROK, India, Bangladesh
- ▶ From the West: France, US, Netherlands, EU, Germany, Canada, Australia
- ▶ Except the regional frameworks, the Western ones are basically up against China—different in tones but not the real intention
- ▶ AOIP will link up with all strategies especially in four areas of priorities: maritime cooperation, sustainability, connectivity and economic affairs (infrastructure and investment)
- ▶ Indonesia will host the First Asean Indo-Pacific Forum during the 43th summit (early September) back to back to the East Asia Summit
- ▶ China supports the AOIP areas of cooperation, but did not like “Indo-Pacific” geographical location, prefer “Asia-Pacific”
- ▶ Russia rejects all frameworks as part of the “indivisible security” concept

Asean new and old hotspots

- ▶ South China Sea disputes
- ▶ Myanmar's crisis (redux)—existential threat
- ▶ Taiwan Straits crisis)—existential threat
- ▶ Rohingya refugee/ Bay of Bengal
- ▶ Mekong's new strategic competition
- ▶ Impacts from climate change
- ▶ Transnational crimes (human, narcotics, arms smugglings)
- ▶ Cyber security and disinformation

Asean tackles global disruption

- ▶ Relying on all Asean-led mechanism especially East Asia Summit, Asean Region Forum, Asean Defence Ministerial Meeting Plus, **Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free-zone***, Zone of Freedom, Peace and Neutrality, Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, Code of Conducts on South China Sea (2024)
- ▶ Strongly support UN systems and international liberal order (different shades
- ▶ Supporting Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)—Indo-Pacific stakeholders are members
- ▶ Stay on the side line, ready to assist if needed (Indonesia and Singapore are bolder in taking initiatives i.e. on Myanmar, the Ukraine-Russia war
- ▶ Mainstreaming AOIP, jump start with infrastructure and existing projects
- ▶ De-risking is okay, but not decoupling with the bloc's No. 1 trading partner, China
- ▶ Engaging all dialogue partners but adopt “strategic equilibrium” with the US, China, India, Australia and plus-three partners

***China will sign the SEANWFZ in Sept 2023**

Thank you
chezutinbatte
komkhun krub
terima kasih
orh-khun
cam-on
Xie xie
Kobjai lai