



IMAGINING THE FUTURE

12th Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions
Annual Meeting
Chiang Mai, Thailand

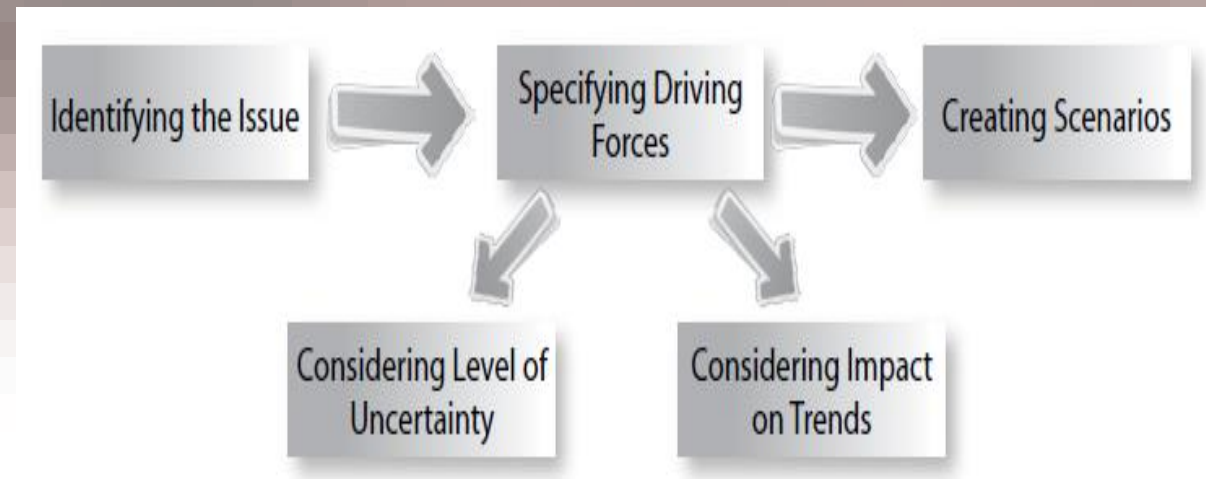
I. INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Image Source: weforum.org

Scenario-building exercise

Driving forces and key variables derived from the security concerns outlined in the following documents:

1. Defense Planning Guidance 2019-2024 of the Department of National Defense
2. Strategic environment information available in the National Security Policy 2017-2022



The Scenario-building process
(Fukuyama & Lempert, 2007)

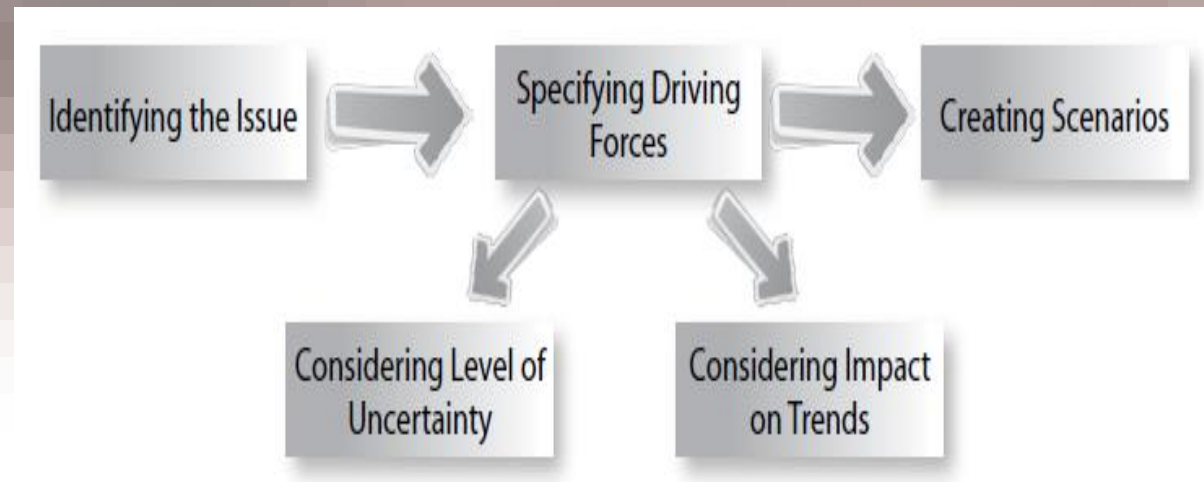


I. INTRODUCTION: THE NEED FOR IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Image Source: weforum.org

Scenario development

- For planning, crafting priorities and resources allocation
- Agenda setting for international cooperation
- For anticipating, monitoring and responding to threats, factors and trends
- To open doors for consultation and cooperation across geopolitical borders



The Scenario-building process
(Fukuyama & Lempert, 2007)



II. DRIVING FORCES AND TRENDS

1. US-China geopolitical rivalry
2. Core interests of regional powers
3. Military modernization and security dilemma
4. Competition on multiple fronts using multiple tools of national power



II. DRIVING FORCES AND TRENDS

1. US-China Geopolitical Rivalry

- An important, if not the central, driving force in the Indo-Pacific region
- Southeast Asia as the arena of major power competition
- Navy capabilities as the primary instrument to exert strong presence and secure interest in the Indo-Pacific



II. DRIVING FORCES AND TRENDS

2. Core interests of regional powers

- Varied expectations and complex confluence of interests influence the future of security in the Indo-Pacific
- Individual and collective interests of Southeast Asian states, and other parties (Japan, North and South Korea, India and Taiwan)



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II. DRIVING FORCES AND TRENDS

4. Competition on multiple fronts using multiple tools of national power

- Benign or aggressive incentives behind countries' actions and postures
- Use of multiple tools of national power to serve core interests
- Military postures, diplomatic moves, informational and cultural initiatives, and economic maneuvers to drive agenda in the region

III. PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

1. Sunshine and Roses: Best-case scenario
2. Status Quo: Neutral-ground scenario
3. Edge of Oblivion: Worst-case scenario



1. SUNSHINE AND ROSES: BEST-CASE SCENARIO

- Flourishing of international cooperation and successful management of disputes using generally accepted international norms
- Rules-based order is still the main geopolitical feature of the next two decades
- The US and China will continue to compete with each other but will uphold the rules-based order and will not risk rocking the boat



1. SUNSHINE AND ROSES: BEST-CASE SCENARIO

- Military modernization among countries in the region will proceed hand-in-hand with military cooperation between and among states, despite longstanding disputes
- Diplomatic negotiations on how to solve and manage disputes in the region will reach significant milestones, further simmering down tensions
- Multilateral and minilateral platforms of cooperation will intensify



2. STATUS QUO: NEUTRAL-GROUND SCENARIO

- Tense relationship among major powers in maritime areas
- Perception that rules-based order rests on shaky ground, and there is wariness about what exactly will replace such order.
- Adversarial, but not violent diplomatic and defense posturing between the US and China



2. STATUS QUO: NEUTRAL-GROUND SCENARIO

- Combative rhetoric between US and China
- ASEAN to continue to gain successes in non-traditional security (NTS) cooperation
- ASEAN will avoid taking action on sensitive geopolitical issues involving external powers
- Regional powers (Japan and Korea) will compete with China for influence in Southeast Asia



3. EDGE OF OBLIVION: WORST-CASE SCENARIO

- Continued erosion of the rules-based order
- Increased likelihood of low-level violent confrontation among major and middle powers
- Increased likelihood of low-intensity clashes in maritime zones between navies, coast guards, and paramilitary forces
- Negative impact on peace efforts in the Korean Peninsula and community-building in ASEAN because of heightened tensions between the US and China



3. EDGE OF OBLIVION: WORST-CASE SCENARIO

- Countries in Southeast Asia will encounter serious division and divergence of interests on sensitive geopolitical issues
- Multilateral platforms and international organizations will suffer from a credibility deficit
- People-to-people interactions, economic relations, cultural exchanges, and cyber interactions will be tense and hostile



III. PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS

Image Source: nextgov.com

1. Sunshine and Roses: Best-case scenarios
2. Status Quo: Neutral-ground scenarios
3. Edge of Oblivion: Worst-case scenarios
4. **Cloudy Future: An outlook beyond 10 years**





4. CLOUDY FUTURE

- Driving forces, trends, and scenarios in the first 10 years will set the stage for the scenarios in the second 10 years
- Scenarios will assume new character
- Rise of artificial intelligence (AI) will bring uncertainties not only in the economic sphere, but also in military operations and intelligence gathering





4. CLOUDY FUTURE

- AI will raise questions on accountability, command and control, and the laws of armed conflict
- Less incentive to go to war or dwell in longstanding conflicts because of regional economic interdependence
- Increased competition between the US and China on air and space arena



IV. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

1. Given its norms and *modus operandi* in the field of multilateral diplomacy, how can ASEAN confront these plausible scenarios while keeping its relevance and effectiveness?
2. How can ASEAN and ADMM promote thoughtful conversations between and among Track I and Track II personalities and institutions regarding major-power contestation in the region?



IV. QUESTIONS TO PONDER

3. Amidst sensitive disputes, how can AMS harness functional cooperation measures towards solving sensitive issues?
4. How can ASEAN promote deeper engagements among AMS' agencies and forces in the region in such a way that ASEAN strengthens the rules-based regional order?



A blue flag is shown waving against a clear blue sky. In the center of the flag, there is a circular inset. This inset contains a red field with a yellow emblem consisting of vertical stripes that curve inward at the top and bottom, resembling a stylized 'S' or a traditional symbol. The text 'THANK YOU!' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the top of the flag, and the Thai word 'ขอบคุณ' is written in white Thai script across the bottom of the circular inset.

THANK YOU!

ขอบคุณ

