

Track II Network of ASEAN Defence and Security Institutions (NADI)**12th Annual Meeting on “ASEAN Defence Security Foresighting in the next 2 Decades” and Retreat****During 25th Feb – 3rd Mar 2019****At Holiday Inn Chiangmai Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand**

Session III: “Drivers that lead towards sustainable security”

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When speaking of security, we often take military force or balance of power into consideration; with the end state of achieving stability through containment. There is an alternative approach that focuses more on “sustainable security”.

The central focus of sustainable security is the recognition all consequences from conflicts (or insecurity) cannot be controlled. States must work and understand root causes to conflicts before implementing solutions instead of merely contain conflict situations that arises. Policies must work to address true reasons for conflicts. These can be done through a number of measures includes utilizing an integrated analysis of security threats and an application of preventative approach to responses.

Sustainable security requires analysis to make distinctions between trends and other security threats (for example, terrorism or organised crime). It requires focuses on the interconnected long-term drivers of conflicts (or insecurity). Major key drivers to conflicts include:

1. **Climate change:** the loss of infrastructure, resource scarcity and the mass displacement of peoples;
2. **Competition over resources,** including food, water and energy;
3. **Marginalisation:** the political, economic and cultural marginalisation of the vast majority of the world’s population.
4. **Global Militarisation:** the increased use of military force.

Asia is a region in transition and uncertainty. The political, economic and societal landscape power shifting, increased in polarity. Climate change and other long-term emerging threats to security are present trends within the ASEAN security dynamic.

They require regional responses and comprehensive and systemic approach that takes into account the interaction of different trends which are generally analysed in isolation by others.

Places particular attention on how the current behaviour of international actors and western governments is contributing to, rather than reducing, insecurity.

Secondly, Sustainable security takes global justice and equity as the key requirements of any sustainable response, together with, the progress towards reform of the global systems of trade, substantial steps towards nuclear disarmament and the control of biological and chemical weapons; and a shift in defence spending to the non-military elements of security. This requires balanced considerations for policies to address the long-term global drivers with the immediate security pre-occupations (foregoes) of ordinary people.

Sustainable security is inherently preventative in nature, in that, it addresses the likely causes of conflict and instability before the ill-effects becomes reality. It builds on elements from previous attempts to reframe thinking on security to include the concepts of common, comprehensive, human, just and non-traditional security. Many of these approaches can be addressed through national security policies.

While there are many immediate security concerns in the region, there are three principal drivers of insecurity over the medium to long-term: *Maintaining state integrity*, particularly against (i) internal instability, (ii) regional power shift; and (iii) environmental, and; Humanitarian disasters.

In Asia, while shifting power dynamic is, in itself, a potential source of uncertainty and instability, other factors such as terrorism, natural and manmade disasters and the potential impact of trade-war between major powers in the region; can ignite sources of conflict and insecurity.

Among the most serious challenges facing Asia are the numerous environmental and humanitarian disasters affecting the region. In addition, serious food and water security problems rises as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is predicting a shift in rainfall patterns and a decrease in freshwater availability in most of Asia (particularly for those states dependent on Himalayan glacier melt water).

Many drivers of the insecurities outlined above can be addressed. Mechanisms can be put in place to resolve the long-term causes, but there are impediments. These include the regional focus on sovereignty, the lack of inclusive and effective regional security architecture and the absence of a powerful, neutral country to take the lead.

Many of the post-colonial countries in the region are understandably reluctant to compromise their own sovereignty in any way, even if this creates difficulties in addressing pan-regional issues. Often, national security takes precedence over regional stability and global security.

Inclusive regional security:

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) does encourage such regional communication and has been successful in many respects.

Mechanisms could be developed to prevent the growth of insecurity and conflict in the longer term.

Specific initiatives could include:

- **Climate change:** Countries in the region that are not signatories to the Kyoto Protocol need to recognise that they too have a responsibility to aid stability and cut their greenhouse gas emissions and accept that economic development cannot come at the expense of social and environmental stability. The United States and other developed countries must negotiate a fair post-Kyoto agreement, which should include radically reducing their own emissions.
- **Regional architecture:** International institutions, such as, the United Nations, European Union, and other influential players both within and outside the region, should support the development of a strong, inclusive regional security architecture.
- **Power shift:** President Barack Obama's new administration should accept the rise of China and move from balance-of-power politics to policies of engagement and trust-building, particularly in the areas of trade, environmental protection and regional security.
- **Taking the initiative:** Given the lack of one powerful, respected and neutral country, Asian civil society organisations might draw together an independent, high-level panel of respected individuals, with a particular focus on preventive diplomacy and educating the public and governments on the seriousness of threats facing the region.

Over the next five to ten years, a radical shift towards sustainable approaches to security will be hugely important. A change in thinking could lead to an era of substantial progress in developing a socially just and environmentally sustainable regional order.

End.