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STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION

The ASEAN Political-Security Community: A Flawed Project in Crisis Management

By Brian Oh Seng Leong



The ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), which was intended to be a pillar for regional peace and political stability in Southeast Asia, has fallen short in its response to the Myanmar civil war. Originally <u>established to</u> <u>promote a resilient, dynamic, and rules-based community</u> <u>built on shared values and norms</u>, the APSC has been hindered by ASEAN's traditional principles, leaving it poorly equipped to address crises that threaten not just individual members, but the entire region.

The ongoing Myanmar civil war has starkly exposed the limitations of ASEAN and the APSC, demanding a reevaluation of ASEAN's role as a regional stabiliser. The ASEAN Bulletin is published quarterly by the Centre on Asia and Globalisation at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. It seeks to bring together a key summary of current news articles, reports, events, and academic publications produced in English on the three pillars of the ASEAN Community - the ASEAN **Political-Security** Community (APSC), the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and the **ASEAN Socio-Cultural** Community (ASCC).



Centre on Asia and Globalisation +65 6516 7113 cag@nus.edu.sg 469A Bukit Timah Road, Tower Block 10, Singapore 269770 https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/cag This essay critiques the APSC's ineffective response in Myanmar, arguing that without significant reform, ASEAN's relevance and credibility will continue to diminish.

The Illusory Aims of the APSC

The APSC's mission to maintain peace and security through principles of democracy, rule of law, and good governance has remained largely symbolic. In practice, ASEAN's adherence to non-interference and consensus building has undermined its ability to realise these ideals when it matters most. This approach has faced challenges, limiting ASEAN's ability to effectively address glaring human rights abuses within its borders. The APSC's supposed commitment to regional stability is thus contradicted by its reluctance to act decisively when a member state's actions destabilise the ASEAN community.

Myanmar's Civil War: A Case Study in ASEAN's Failure

Myanmar's descent into violent turmoil following the 2021 coup highlights the APSC's inability to manage internal conflicts effectively. ASEAN's attempts at engagement have been largely dismissed by the junta, <u>further undermining the</u> <u>bloc's effectiveness and credibility</u>.

The <u>Five-Point Consensus</u>, ASEAN's primary strategy for addressing the Myanmar crisis through diplomatic means, has made little progress. Lacking enforcement mechanisms, ASEAN has been unable to apply any meaningful pressure on Myanmar's military leadership. Initial diplomatic <u>attempts</u> to isolate the junta, such as barring it from high-level ASEAN meetings, proved <u>shortlived</u>.

Far from fostering peace, the APSC's approach has allowed the Myanmar crisis to deepen, further <u>undermining trust in</u> <u>ASEAN's authority and ability to uphold</u> <u>regional stability</u>.

Systemic Weaknesses Behind ASEAN's Inaction

(1) The Curse of Non-Interference: The fixation on non-interference has severely limited ASEAN's capacity to respond effectively to the crisis in Myanmar. Originally intended to protect national sovereignty, this principle has now become an excuse for inaction in the face of a humanitarian disaster. While ASEAN has attempted a strategy of flexible and constructive engagement, the ongoing crisis highlights the limitations of this approach.

(2) Consensus as a Barrier to Accountability: ASEAN's consensus-based decision-making process, touted as a symbol of unity, has become a profound weakness. With member states divided on how to handle the crisis in Myanmar, ASEAN has been paralysed by its inability to reach a decisive, collective stance. This <u>lack of unity</u> not only hampers ASEAN's effectiveness but also allows more authoritarian regimes to avoid taking accountability. In Myanmar's case, ASEAN's approach has only <u>emboldened</u> <u>the junta</u>, with the assurance that <u>ASEAN</u> <u>lacks the capacity to impose consequences</u>.

(3) Absence of Crisis-Management

Tools: The APSC's glaring lack of crisisresponse mechanisms such as a peacekeeping force or enforceable sanctions, highlights its failure to adapt and address modern security threats. ASEAN's sole reliance on diplomatic channels has proven insufficient. Without the means to respond directly to security crises, ASEAN's ambitions for the APSC appear naïve and misplaced. The result is a hollow framework that leaves ASEAN <u>unable to defend its own community</u> in moments of crisis.

The Broader Impact on ASEAN's Credibility

ASEAN's lack of substantive action in Myanmar has repercussions far beyond the conflict itself. Critics increasingly perceive ASEAN as an <u>irrelevant</u> <u>organisation known for its rhetoric rather</u> <u>than results</u>. Its failure to meaningfully intervene in Myanmar has <u>compromised</u> <u>its credibility as a regional leader</u> in Southeast Asia. Meanwhile, external actors, such as <u>China</u>, have exploited the power vacuum left by ASEAN's inaction, with Beijing's support for the junta further complicating the dynamics of the Myanmar crisis. This inability to address internal conflicts not only undermines ASEAN's diplomatic standing but also jeopardises the future of the APSC.

Necessary Reforms for ASEAN's Survival

The APSC must reform to salvage ASEAN's reputation and ensure the longevity of the project:

(1) Redefine Non-Interference: ASEAN must recognise that in cases of severe conflict or humanitarian crises, rigid adherence to non-interference only perpetuates suffering and instability. Adopting a conditional approach and allowing ASEAN to act decisively when internal issues have regional consequences, could make the APSC more effective in promoting peace and security.

(2) Create a Human Rights Mechanism with Teeth: To strengthen its response to crisis, ASEAN should establish an independent body with the authority to monitor human rights and intervene in cases of gross violations. The situation in Myanmar and ASEAN's inaction highlights the need for developing more robust mechanisms to uphold enforceable standards on democracy and human rights.

(3) Develop a Regional Peacekeeping Framework: Establishing a peacekeeping force, even on a modest scale, would enable the APSC to respond directly to security crises. The lack of a military response mechanism, even in cases of a civil war within member states, illustrates a major gap in ASEAN's infrastructure and crisis management. While politically challenging, such a step is necessary if ASEAN hopes to gain credibility as a legitimate security actor.

Moving Beyond a Consensus-driven (4) Approach: ASEAN's inability to reach consensus on pressing issues like Myanmar has left it paralysed. By introducing majority voting on matters of urgent security and human rights concerns, ASEAN could sidestep the gridlock and take decisive action, while still respecting diverse perspectives. While there has been a precedent for the economic-based ASEAN minus X mechanism, it is insufficient for political decision-making and for demonstrating the political unity necessary for effective punitive measures. Its allowance for delayed action and member opt-outs undermines the goal of a united approach.

Conclusion

The Myanmar crisis has highlighted significant weaknesses within the APSC, with ASEAN's insistence on consensus and non-interference limiting its ability to address human rights abuses. This raises concerns about the organisation's capacity to fulfil its core mission. If ASEAN cannot respond decisively to a crisis of this magnitude within its own ranks, its ability to navigate broader regional challenges will be questioned. ASEAN's credibility and relevance now hinge on its willingness and ability to reform the APSC to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing and volatile region. Without meaningful reforms, the APSC risks becoming an empty promise—a project that was built on ideals but has neither the will nor the capacity to uphold them.

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FROM THE CAG TEAM

Implications of Trump 2.0 on the ASEAN Region–Trade Diversion

By Goh Zhuo Ying Justin



The trade war between the two superpowers-China and the United States (US), which began in 2018, has shown no signs of slowing. After winning a second term in the 2024 US Presidential Elections, President Donald Trump declared that he would impose a 60 percent tariff on Chinese goods on his first day of office, with the possibility of raising it <u>by a further 10 percent</u>. This is in-line with the <u>"America First" foreign</u> <u>policy</u> that Trump has advocated since his previous presidency.

ASEAN's Strategic Role Between Two Superpowers

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is uniquely positioned in the global economy due to its strong ties with both China and the US. China has remained ASEAN's largest trading partner <u>since 2009</u>, accounting for a total of <u>15.9</u> <u>percent of China's total foreign trade in</u> <u>2023</u>. Furthermore, all ten ASEAN countries have signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)-the world's largest multilateral free trade agreement, with China-and most have bilateral agreements with China to participate in China's One Belt One Road Initiative (BRI). In particular, Philippines and Vietnam are the second and third largest recipients of the BRI investment. At the same time, the US is the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment in ASEAN and was the region's second-largest trading partner. For the US, ASEAN is its fourthlargest trading partner, with majority of the ASEAN nations being a part of its Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) for Prosperity. As one of the major regions with strategic importance in the Global Value Chain (GVC), with vested economic interests in working with both superpowers, ASEAN has continued to precariously thread between the US and China. Hedging between the two superpowers, ASEAN has conscientiously sought to maintain its neutrality to ensure regional stability and avoided deepening geopolitical fault lines.

Phenomenon of Trade Diversion

Amid greater scrutiny of Chinese companies by the US, a new trade diversion phenomenon, '<u>Singapore</u> <u>washing</u>' has emerged. Though this phenomenon is associated with Singapore, it extends to other supposedly more "neutral" countries around the world that have adopted hedging foreign policies and not aligned with either the United States or China, such as Mexico and Hungary. This also extends to ASEAN and the rest of its member states, which have actively positioned themselves as a politically neutral and inclusive region, serving as a bridge between East and West.

'Singapore washing' involves Chinese companies such as ByteDance, Shein, and BYD setting up shops in these "neutral" nations. Through having an intermediary country, Chinese companies are able to distance themselves from their home country and appear to have a different "economic nationality." This allows them to bypass trade policies that have specifically targeted them based on their actual country of origin.

In fact, the total exports from ASEAN to the US have been rising since the trade war between China and the US started in 2018. From 2018 to 2020, ASEAN's share in the value of US imports rose by 2.6 percent, correspondingly by the same margin of which China's share with the US had decreased[MC1]. During the same period, there was also an estimated 16.5 percent rise in trade between ASEAN and China, from USD 587.87 billion in 2018 to USD 685.28 billion in 2020. Research by Coxhead has largely attributed this link to the reshoring policies that have displaced production and investment away from China to its regional trade partners.

Potential Implications of Trade Diversion on ASEAN in Trump 2.0

While trade diversion has been ongoing for many years, this would likely be exacerbated in Trump 2.0. <u>Research by</u> <u>Moody</u> has suggested that President Trump's new proposed tariffs, if reelected, would be a complete repudiation of US trade policy since World War II, and that countries such as China would not hesitate to impose tit-for-tat measures to the US, possibly triggering a global trade war.

The previous US Trade Representative during the 2018 Trump administration, Jeffrey T. Gerrish had mentioned that a key priority for the US lies in "rebalancing" the significant trade deficits with many of the ASEAN members. Reflecting the sentiments and concerns of trade relations with the ASEAN countries, it could potentially have other wider implications on geopolitics if the target group continues to expand. With the likely implementation of new tariffs in Trump 2.0, it is expected that President Trump would also impose similar measures on many ASEAN states, particularly those which have high levels of trade deficit with the US. For example, the US may simply increase tariffs on countries such as Vietnam and Thailand-where there has been a rise in trade surpluses in recent years due to the trade diversion from China.

Policy Implications for ASEAN

Indeed, we are at a pivotal moment given President Trump's re-election, and the lessons from history can better prepare us to navigate a more complex trade landscape moving forward. Against this backdrop, there are a few takeaways for ASEAN as a region:

(1) ASEAN should continue to maintain neutrality in its trade policies, rather than align with either superpower. This could be done through economic diversification and actively negotiating, updating, and expanding trade agreements such as the RCEP and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This would allow ASEAN to reduce its reliance on any single partner and enhance its economic resilience.

(2) ASEAN should strengthen its position as a critical hub in GVCs by fostering innovation, improving its infrastructure, and investing in the development of its workforce. This can ensure that ASEAN can continue to maintain its GVC competitiveness in the long-run as a dependable and high-value manufacturing region.

(3) ASEAN should place more emphasis on the Rules Of Origin (ROO). ROO are laws, regulations, and procedures used to determine the country of origin of an imported product, which could affect the appropriate tariffs charged. Currently, ROOs may differ from country to country as each country has the autonomy to design its ROO. However, overly complex and overlapping ROOs would create a "spaghetti bowl of trade rules," making it more difficult for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to access global markets and thrive.

Ultimately, the evolving trade landscape poses both challenges and opportunities for ASEAN as a whole. By leveraging its strategic position, maintaining neutrality, and investing in long-term competitiveness, ASEAN can navigate the complexities of the US-China trade conflict while securing its role as a critical player in the global economy.

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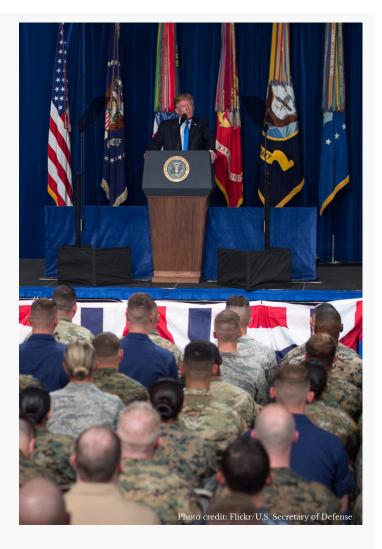
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FROM THE CAG TEAM

Southeast Asia in Trump's Alliance (Dis)order: Security (Un)certainties and Options

By Barbora Valockova

One of American President Donald Trump's longstanding policy stances, which he has held since at least 1987, is that US' allies ought to pay their 'fair share' for the security assurances they receive. How will Trump's perception of allies as free riders who tie US hands affect Southeast Asia's geostrategic positioning under his second term? This essay investigates ways in which Southeast Asian countries can tackle uncertainties stemming from the risk of US retrenchment. It argues that if Trump follows its transactional and isolationist foreign policy approach, US partners in Southeast Asia are likely to mitigate the effects of US retrenchment. This is because there are limits to how much the US can retrench, and even if the US withdraws some of its security commitments and Southeast Asia moves closer to China, the region still maintains the ability to constrain China's assertiveness.



What Trump 2.0 Means for Global Order and Southeast Asia

A key implication of Trump 2.0 is that the old hegemon-the US-is retreating and the rising global power-China-is not yet ready to take over, which leads to a paradigm shift of having no clearly defined leader in world politics. How exactly this will play out for Southeast Asia will depend on the interplay of a number of factors. In his first term, Trump had showed apathy towards Southeast Asia. However, drawing on his experiences from the first term, he is likely to focus more confidently on countering China, which will inevitably impact Southeast Asia as the region seeks to maintain a balance between the US and China. Furthermore, Marco Rubio, appointed as secretary of state, Mike Waltz, named as national-security adviser, and Peter Hegseth, appointed as defence secretary, are all China hawks. These factors combined with Trump's contempt for alliances, point towards heightened US-China tensions, potential renegotiation of alliance terms, and a greater emphasis on countering Chinese influence. US engagement in the Southeast Asian region may also be shaped by several institutions including Congress, the State Department, and the US Indo-Pacific Command.

Potential Security Scenarios for Southeast Asia

Taking the above factors into consideration, there are several plausible scenarios for Southeast Asia, ranging from US neglect to being caught up in a China escalation as a worst-case outcome.

Scenario 1: Partial US Retrenchment amidst Restructured Alliances

While Southeast Asia is not a priority for Trump, the region's strategic importance will still necessitate some level of engagement to protect trade routes and US economic interests in the region. A complete withdrawal would alienate regional allies and allow China to gain greater influence over critical areas of global commerce and security. Therefore, one possible outcome is that Trump's administration may focus on reinforcing existing alliances while simultaneously reducing overall military commitments. This could manifest through the US placing greater emphasis on joint military exercises with key US Asia-Pacific allies such as <u>Australia and Japan</u>, while reducing rotational deployments and military presence in Southeast Asia.

Scenario 2: A Shift Towards Bilateral Engagement

A second scenario involves a pivot towards bilateral engagement where Trump negotiates individual agreements with the Southeast Asian nations based on their strategic importance to US interests. This approach could lead to tailored security arrangements that would ensure that key players with maritime claims in the South China Sea like Vietnam and the **Philippines** remain aligned with US objectives against China. The other Southeast Asian countries would face two options: either bear the costs to maintain US security commitments or accept that such commitments might become conditional on their willingness to help the US isolate or confront China. Bilateral arrangements, however, could lead to fragmentation within ASEAN as member states may prioritise and pursue individual deals rather than collective security arrangements.

Scenario 3: Power Vacuum Filled by Middle Powers or China

If the US significantly retrenches from Southeast Asia, middle powers like Japan, in collaboration with South Korea or the European Union (EU), could attempt to fill the resulting vacuum. Alternatively, China might seize this opportunity to expand its influence further in Southeast Asia through economic investments and military partnerships, potentially driving US partners closer to China. During a potential US-China escalation, if US pressure and demands to Southeast Asia become too onerous, this strategy could backfire. Dependence on the US for security could become too costly or uncertain, jeopardising Southeast Asian countries' relations with China. As a result, these countries might reject Trump's terms and increasingly look for alternative security partners.

Available Security Strategies for Southeast Asian Countries

Given the listed scenarios, how can Southeast Asia navigate a potential US retrenchment? Acknowledged for their pragmatic foreign policies and hedging acumen, Southeast Asian countries can use a combination of strategic options. Strategy 1: Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Cohesion

Southeast Asian countries can enhance cooperation through ASEAN frameworks to discuss security concerns and present a unified front against external pressures thus supporting the region's strategic autonomy and regional stability amongst geopolitical shifts. This would bolster their negotiating power with both the US and China--strengthening ASEAN centrality. Enhancing ASEAN unity and consensus-building mechanisms is critical, because it can prevent US-China tensions from spilling over further into Southeast Asia and help maintain China's restraint in the South China Sea. As the 2025 ASEAN chair, Malaysia will therefore have a daunting task of upholding ASEAN's cohesiveness.

Strategy 2: Diversifying International Partnerships

ASEAN should strive to establish stronger partnerships with like-minded powers, such as Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, and the EU. Leveraging ASEANled mechanisms can provide a useful platform for fostering multilateral dialogue and collaboration. At the same time, deeper security cooperation can also be accomplished through frameworks such as the <u>Quad Plus</u> to align interests, achieve shared objectives, and preserve the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Southeast Asia thus does not have to only rely on traditional alliances but can also use a diversified diplomatic approach capitalising on both multilateral and minilateral cooperation to reinforce its security posture.

Strategy 3: Improving Defence Capabilities

Finally, Southeast Asian countries can boost their resilience by <u>modernising their</u> <u>armed forces</u> and building their domestic production capabilities. They can also seek technology transfers from partners such as Japan or South Korea. Beyond hardware improvements, the region should increase capacity-building initiatives to strengthen maritime domain awareness and its operational ability to respond to future security challenges.

To conclude, Southeast Asian countries can effectively navigate the uncertainties of Trump's potential retrenchment by adopting proactive strategies to safeguard their security interests. In particular, Trump's second term will be a litmus test for ASEAN-led multilateralism. However, US retrenchment poses a double-edged sword, as regaining lost trust from such a strategic region will not be easy.

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NEWS ARTICLES & COMMENTARIES

ASEAN POLITICAL-SECURITY COMMUNITY

News Articles

Thailand calls regional talks on war-torn Myanmar frank but short on agreement

Voice of America, December 20

Several ASEAN Foreign Ministers participated in informal talks hosted by Thailand on the Myanmar crisis, agreeing on the "need to step up" efforts while maintaining the five-point consensus as the "main reference" for addressing the issue.

Malaysia PM appoints Thai heavyweight Thaksin his adviser on ASEAN

Reuters, December 16

During Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN chairmanship, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim will rely on an informal advisory team, which will include former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

President Prabowo says he will safeguard sovereignty in South China Sea

The Jakarta Post, November 14

A joint statement by China and Indonesia on joint development plans in disputed South China Sea areas sparked backlash, prompting Prabowo and his administration to address public concerns regarding the agreement.

Progress on key issues remains slow as ASEAN summit concludes: Analysts

Channel News Asia, October 11

While significant progress was made on the economic front, headway on difficult issues for the bloc including the South-China Sea disputes and the Myanmar crisis—remained elusive during the biannual Asean summit last October.

Selected Commentaries & Publications

Anwar's pick of Thaksin as adviser could be good not just for Malaysia, but ASEAN as a whole

Channel NewsAsia, December 20

By James Chin, Professor of Asian Studies at the Asia Institute Tasmania, University of Tasmania.

Thakshin's connections in key countries like Myanmar and Cambodia, as well as his ability as an informal advisor to "transcend the restrictive red tape of established bureaucracies and procedures", might prove useful for ASEAN.

Asean and the principle of nonintervention

RSIS Commentary, November 12

By R. M. Michael Tene, a senior Indonesian diplomat.

While many observers often blame ASEAN's principle of nonintervention for its inability to effectively address the Myanmar crisis, setting aside the principle of non-intervention is unlikely to effect any meaningful change, and will set a precedent that will undermine trust among ASEAN member states.

Media Discussions



What are the implications of the 2024 US presidential election on Southeast Asia? Centre on Asia and Globalisation, December 12

NEWS ARTICLES & COMMENTARIES

ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

News Articles

Southeast Asia quarterly economic review: Mixed growth

McKinsey & Co, December 20

GDP growth in Southeast Asia remained robust for the third quarter of 2024, with Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand experiencing accelerated growth, while Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines saw a slowdown in momentum.

Thailand joins other Asian nations in battle against cheap Chinese imports

Voice of America, December 18

Thailand is joining Indonesia and Vietnam in protecting domestic manufacturers against low-cost manufactured goods from China that are flooding markets across Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asian nations battle to become the region's top AI hub

CNBC, December 14

All ten ASEAN member states have published national AI strategies and are seeking to pull ahead in the AI arms race by leveraging their own strengths, even as they came together to release an AI ethics framework in February 2024.

Southeast Asia prepares for Trump's tariff threats Deutsche Welle, November 8

Southeast Asian nations, heavily reliant on the US as a key export market, are concerned about the potential impact of blanket import tariffs that the US might soon impose under President Trump. However, they were not surprised by the outcome and are expected to adapt to the new reality swiftly.

Selected Commentaries & Publications

ASEAN's 2025 Chair: Navigating Tricky (Economic) Shoals

Fulcrum, December 12

By Kristina Fong Siew Leng, Lead Researcher for Economic Affairs at the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

As ASEAN member states face greater economic uncertainty during a Trump presidency, strengthening economic integration mechanisms within the region becomes more crucial than ever.

China's overcapacity may become a Southeast Asia problem if Trump's tariffs materialise

Channel NewsAsia, November 21 By Shay Wester, Director of Asian Economic Affairs at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

More Chinese goods are expected to flood Southeast Asian markets if Trump imposes tariffs on Chinese exports. While this could lower prices for consumers in in the short-run, it may adversely impact the region in the medium to long term.



wide economic divide Centre on Asia and Globalisation, October 29

NEWS ARTICLES & COMMENTARIES

ASEAN SOCIO-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

News Articles

ASEAN+3 to share experiences in facing challenges of ageing populations

Asia News Network, November 12

ASEAN, alongside China, Japan, and South Korea, are set to exchange policies, best practices, and technology to deal with an ageing population within the ASEAN+3 framework.

Asean nations to collaborate on cross-country survey on families in region

The Straits Times, November 6

ASEAN member states will collaborate to share data on families and develop a cross-country survey, which will help create family-centred policies tailored to the unique context of the region.

Asean welcomes new Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community

ASEAN, November 1

San Lwin, a diplomat from Myanmar, will assume the position of Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) for the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). He will oversee the implementation of projects under ASCC, focusing on "the implementation of projects under ASCC that focus on forging a common identity and building a caring and sharing society within the region."

Laos, Vietnam Strengthen Cultural and Social Cooperation

Lao News Agency, October 10

Lao's Tourism Minister and Vietnam's Labour and Social Affairs Chief met to reaffirm ties between the two countries. During the meeting, they acknowledged the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community's achievements, while recognising that much more needed to be done in areas such as human resource development, education, combating human trafficking, and child labour.

Selected Commentaries & Publications

Understanding the Cultural Strategy of ASEAN

Asian Confluence, December 9

By Sampa Kundu, Consultant, ASEAN-India Centre, RIS, New Delhi and Visiting Fellow, Asian Confluence.

ASEAN's various socio-cultural initiatives highlight its recognition of the region's cultural diversity and demonstrate its efforts to leverage culture as a tool for promoting inclusive, sustainable development.

Digital culture bringing China and ASEAN closer

China Daily, October 26

By Sun Jiashan, Associate Researcher at the Central Academy of Culture and Tourism Administration.

Digital culture, including popular Chinese video games like *Black Myth: Wukong*, short-form video apps like TikTok, and Chinese TV dramas such as *Story of Yanxi Palace*, holds the potential to bridge cultural gaps and foster stronger connections between ASEAN countries and China.



ASEAN Labour Ministers' Meeting Commemorates its 50th Anniversary Asean Secretariat, December 2

Our team



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OTHER CAG PUBLICATIONS

- Southeast Asian elites resist a China-led regional order by Selina Ho and Terence Lee (East Asia Forum, January 21, 2025)
- Expanding Southeast Asia-Kazakhstan Dialogue: Strategic Imperatives by Barbora Valockova (Fulcrum, January 17, 2025)
- *Elite Perceptions of a China-Led Regional Order in Southeast Asia* by Selina Ho and Terence Lee (Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, 2024)
- *[CSA series]* What are the implications of the 2024 US presidential election on Southeast Asia? (Centre on Asia and Globalisation, December 12, 2024)
- ASEAN in Practice: Episode 6 Minding the Gap: Addressing ASEAN's wide economic divide (Centre on Asia and Globalisation, October 29, 2024)
- *The Future of Multilateralism in Southeast Asia* by Byron Chong (Asian Peace Programme Policy Brief, September 13, 2024)
- ASEAN in Practice: Episode 5 Under Pressure: ASEAN's Environmental Challenges Ahead (Centre on Asia and Globalisation, September 9, 2024)





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