

37TH ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

Fifty-Five Years On: Is ASEAN Still Relevant In the Changing Global Order?

1 November 2022

Hybrid Event at Atrium Ballroom, Level 4, Raffles City Convention Centre,
80 Bras Basah Rd, Singapore 189560

ABOUT THE 37TH ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

In his seminal essay ‘ASEAN: Conception and Evolution’, former Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman astutely observed that “...in time to come, not only will ASEAN have to face the difficult task of creating and maintaining harmony among its members who have different views, different interests, and are of different stages of development...but ASEAN will also have to cope with the extremely complicated problems of dealing with hard-nosed opponents and interlocutors among the developed countries.” Fifty-five years later, DPM Khoman’s words ring true as ASEAN struggles with questions of maintaining relevance, unity and cohesiveness amid the changing global order.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has altered the global rules-based international order and has shaken the very foundation and principles of ASEAN. Still reeling from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the regional bloc is once again confronted with new geopolitical developments that have exacerbated existing tensions in the region, including an intensifying China-US rivalry and compounding internal divisions within the grouping.

ASEAN is the epitome of multilateralism in a diverse region. It has been praised for its institutionalisation of cooperation through a myriad of instruments, integration frameworks, and ASEAN-led mechanisms that have drawn major powers to support its centrality. But ASEAN must commence work

on the ASEAN Community’s Post-2025 Vision to strengthen ASEAN’s institutional capacity for regional integration and expand its community-building process. Institutional mechanisms for managing crises, regional affairs touching security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars, and adapting to the changing global order will become key priorities for the ASEAN community beyond 2025. However, is ASEAN still able to navigate through the complexities and be able to respond cohesively to the current and future challenges while maintaining its leadership role? How can ASEAN respond to the growing number of strategic powers in the Indo-Pacific that are apprehensive about the rise of China? Will ASEAN centrality and its mechanisms remain relevant and sufficient to meet the security objectives of its partners? Are ASEAN institutional bodies well equipped with the capacity to manage internal and external challenges?

Against this backdrop, the roundtable will examine the implications of key events on ASEAN, including the Russia – Ukraine war and the growing global bipolarity; the intensification of China-US rivalry in the Indo-Pacific; and the vision of ASEAN post-2025.

The annual ASEAN Roundtable is a platform for leading scholars and commentators to examine key issues and challenges affecting ASEAN as a region and as an institution. The event is supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Supported by

37TH ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

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Timings in Singapore time

8.00 am

Registration starts (for physical attendance only)

9.00 am – 9.15 am

OPENING REMARKS

Mr CHOI Shing Kwok

Director and Chief Executive Officer
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Mr Andreas Michael KLEIN

Director, Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

9.15 am – 9.30 am

KEYNOTE MESSAGE

Dr Vivian BALAKRISHNAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Republic of Singapore

9.30 am – 10.45 am

SESSION I: Playing the Great Game

The session will examine how ASEAN may navigate great power rivalry in the region, particularly amidst the growing number of Indo-Pacific strategies in the region, including the US, Japan, India, Australia, the EU, the UK, and the ROK. Will the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific be sufficient in guiding ASEAN in the region and retaining its centrality in the regional security architecture? How should ASEAN respond to the plethora of new initiatives? From the G7's Global Partnership for Infrastructure and Investment to the EU's Global Gateway Initiative and China's Global Security Initiative, what should ASEAN anchor itself to? How can ASEAN best articulate its priorities and maintain its centrality in the rapidly changing geopolitical order that is witnessing greater proliferation of minilateral groupings such as the Quad and AUKUS?

Moderator:

Ms LEE Sue-Ann

Senior Fellow and Coordinator, Regional Strategic and Political Studies,
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists:

ASEAN Adrift?

Prof Kishore MAHBUBANI

Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute,
National University of Singapore

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific and the Way Forward

Dr Evan LAKSMANA

Senior Research Fellow, Centre on Asia and Globalisation,
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy

Implications of the QUAD on ASEAN's Relevance

Dr William CHOONG

Senior Fellow, Regional Strategic and Political Studies,
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

10.45 am – 11.05 am

Coffee/Tea break

11.05 am – 12.20 pm

SESSION II: Safeguarding ASEAN Economic Recovery Against Global Economic Uncertainties

ASEAN policymakers face difficult policy trade-offs to sustain economic recovery from the pandemic under global economic slowdown, rising inflation, and tightening global financial conditions. These downside risks are exacerbated by the Russia-Ukraine war. The IMF projected in its World Economic Outlook in April 2022 that the global economy will grow at 3.6 per cent in 2022 and 2023, 0.8 and 0.2 percentage points lower than projected in January 2022 prior to the Russia-Ukraine war. This session aims to explore ASEAN's geo-economic outlook over the next few years in three aspects. First, it assesses the extent to which the Russia-Ukraine war affects ASEAN economies and discusses possible policy options to mitigate the downside risks of the war. Second, it evaluates the existing regional economic cooperation instruments in ASEAN and discusses whether such instruments are sufficient to safeguard ASEAN economic recovery. Finally, this session highlights the importance of digital trade as a key driver of regional economic growth, and explores possible policy measures to address digital trade's impediments. Mitigating the negative impacts of the war, deepening regional economic integration, and promoting digital trade should strengthen economic recovery in the region.

Moderator: *Dr THAM Siew Yean*
Visiting Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **Assessing the Impacts of the Russia-Ukraine War on ASEAN Economies**

Ms Syetarn HANSAKUL
Analyst (Asia), Economic Intelligence Unit

Enhancing ASEAN Economic Integration under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

Dr Jayant MENON
Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Are Digital Economy Agreements the Way to Go?

Ms Alpana ROY
Singapore's Senior Economic Official to ASEAN and Director (ASEAN),
Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore

12.20 pm – 1.45 pm

Lunch

1.45 pm – 4.15 pm

SESSION III: ASEAN Community Beyond 2025

This session will discuss the maritime versus continental Southeast Asia divide which threatens to further deepen the internal fault lines within ASEAN, the place of Timor-Leste and critical issues that hamper regional integration. With high expectations of Timor Leste's eventual admission to the ASEAN family, where does it fit in the vision of an ASEAN Community? Could Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN help to re-orient its multilateral spirit? As ASEAN commences the work on ASEAN Community's Post-2025 Vision, it is timelier than ever to reflect and look beyond the horizon of 2025. What are the institutional realities and limitations of ASEAN today? How can ASEAN uphold its multilateral spirit to hedge the current global crisis? What are further opportunities to be leveraged to advance regional integration?

1.45 pm – 2.45 pm

First Panel: ASEAN Community Building and Challenges

Moderator: *Ms Joanne LIN*
Co-coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **ASEAN's Snafu: Institutional Limitations and Challenges**

Ambassador ONG Keng Yong
Executive Deputy Chairman, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies

Does Timor-Leste Have a Place in the ASEAN Community?

Prof Dewi Fortuna ANWAR
Co-Founder of Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI)

2.45 pm – 3.00 pm

Coffee/Tea Break

3.00 pm – 4.00 pm

Second Panel: ASEAN Post-2025

Moderator: *Dr Ian STOREY*
Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **Can the Maritime Versus Continental Divide be Bridged within ASEAN?**

Ambassador PHAM Quang Vinh
Former Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam

Aligning National and Regional Interests

Dr Marty NATALEGAWA
Former Foreign Minister of Indonesia

4.00 pm – 4.15 pm

Wrap-Up

Ms Sharon SEAH
Senior Fellow, Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

OPENING REMARKS



Mr Choi Shing Kwok is Director and Chief Executive Officer of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and Head of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the Institute. Previously, he was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources from 2012 to 2017, and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport from 2005 to 2012. Prior to that, he held senior appointments in the Ministry of Defence and the Singapore Armed Forces. Mr Choi was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 2000 for his contributions to the Singapore Public Service.



Mr Andreas Michael Klein is the Director of the Regional Political Dialogue Program Asia of the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAF) based in Singapore since July 2022. He has the experience of 22 years in the service of KAF in Europe and Latin America, among others he was responsible for the country programs in Macedonia (2000-2004) and Chile (2016-2022) as well as the regional program in the Baltic and Nordic countries (2007-2012). He holds a Master degree in Political Science of the University of Bonn, Germany.

KEYNOTE MESSAGE



Dr Vivian Balakrishnan is Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs. He previously served as the Minister-in-charge of the Smart Nation Initiative; Minister for the Environment and Water Resources; Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports; Second Minister for Trade and Industry; Minister-in-charge of Entrepreneurship; Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts and Minister of State for National Development. Before becoming a Member of Parliament in 2001, he was Chief Executive Officer of Singapore General Hospital. He became Medical Director of Singapore National Eye Centre in 1999. He studied Medicine at the National University of Singapore after being awarded the President's Scholarship in 1980.

SESSION I



Ms Lee Sue-Ann is Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute where she is Coordinator of the Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme. She also directs the Media, Technology and Society Programme. Sue-Ann graduated from the National University of Singapore with an honours degree in Political Science and from Harvard's Kennedy School with a Master of Public Policy. Her research interests include topics such as the rise of China and its strategic implications, technology as the emerging key arena for big-power competition, and the continued salience of identity politics as a divisive factor in political discourse.



Professor Kishore Mahbubani, known as a veteran diplomat, student of philosophy, and author of nine books, is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore. Professor Mahbubani has dedicated five decades of his life to public service. He is also a former President of the UN Security Council (Jan 2001, May 2002) and the Founding Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (2004-2017). Professor Mahbubani writes and speaks prolifically on the rise of Asia, geopolitics and global governance. His books and articles in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Financial Times* and *Foreign Affairs* have earned him global recognition as “the muse of the Asian century.” He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in October 2019. His latest books, *Has China Won?* and *The Asian 21st Century*, were released on 3 March 2020 and January 2022.



Dr Evan A. Laksmana is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. He was previously Senior Researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Indonesia and the Wang Gungwu Visiting Fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. His research has appeared in *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, *Asian Security*, *Asian Politics & Policy*, *Defense & Security Analysis*, *Asia Policy*, *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, and others. He earned his PhD in political science from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs as a Fulbright Presidential Scholar.



Dr William Choong is a Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, and the managing editor of the Institute's Fulcrum commentary website, which publishes analyses on Southeast Asia and its wider environment. From 2013 to 2020, he was a Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, where he helped to organise the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. William had a lengthy career with The Straits Times, Singapore's main English-language newspaper, where he worked most recently as Senior Writer responsible for opinion pieces and editorials focused on defence, diplomacy and US policy in Asia. He wrote his PhD at the Australian National University on US-China deterrence.

SESSION II



Dr Tham Siew Yeap is Visiting Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, and Emeritus Professor at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). She was formerly Professor and Director at the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS), UKM. Her research interests cover trade in goods and services, including SMEs in e-commerce, foreign direct investment (FDI), and Belt and Road initiatives, as well as related ASEAN issues. She has a PhD in Economics from the University of Rochester, USA.



Ms Syetarn Hansakul is an analyst responsible for the coverage and forecasts of Japan, Thailand, and Cambodia at the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU). Before joining the EIU, Ms Hansakul was senior economist at Deutsche Bank, covering Asia Pacific macroeconomics and country risk. She published several articles on Asian topics under Deutsche Bank Research. She started her career at the Bank of Thailand, and was a Visiting Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute during the mid-1990s. Ms Hansakul holds a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School, Tufts University. She is a recipient of the King's scholarship and the Bank of Thailand scholarship.



Dr Jayant Menon joined the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute as Senior Fellow to continue his work on trade and development in the Asian region, following his early retirement from the ADB in 2020. His last post at the ADB was Lead Economist in the Office of the Chief Economist. He began work life as an academic in Australia, spending almost a decade at the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University, one of the leading centres for computable general equilibrium modelling. He has worked at several academic institutions, including the University of Melbourne, Victoria University, the American University in Washington, DC and the ADB Institute in Tokyo. He has served as a Board Director of CDRI, Cambodia, and on the Advisory Board of the University of Nottingham, Malaysia. He holds adjunct appointments with the Australian National University, University of Nottingham, UK and IDEAS, Malaysia. He has authored/edited 15 books, 40 chapters in books and 80 articles in peer-reviewed journals.



Ms Alpana Roy oversees the ASEAN Division in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and is Singapore's Senior Economic Official to ASEAN. At MTI, she is responsible for advancing ASEAN's economic integration, and ASEAN's ties with external partners, including various ASEAN-related Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) where she has served as Chief Negotiator and Deputy Chief Negotiator. Ms Roy's prior appointments include advancing Singapore's economic relations with the Americas, Southeast Asian countries, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and serving as Counsellor (Economic) at the Embassy of Singapore in Washington, DC. She was also involved in Singapore's FTAs with the United States, Panama, Peru, Costa Rica and the TransPacific Strategic Economic Partnership (P4). Prior to this, she served in Singapore's national trade promotion agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ms Roy was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) National Day Award in 2018.

SESSION III - FIRST PANEL



Ms Joanne Lin is Co-coordinator of the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. She has over 15 years of work experience in the Singapore public sector, regional and international organisations, think tanks, and NGOs. She has previously served at the ASEAN Secretariat from 2015 to 2021 and was the Assistant Director and Head of the External Relations Division under the ASEAN Political-Security Community Department. Her research includes ASEAN institutions and external relations as well as political-security developments in ASEAN.



Ambassador Ong Keng Yong is Executive Deputy Chairman of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore since November 2014. Concurrently, he is Ambassador-at-Large at the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs, non-resident High Commissioner to Pakistan and non-resident Ambassador to Iran. Ambassador Ong also serves as Chairman of the Singapore International Foundation (SIF). Ambassador Ong was High Commissioner of Singapore to Malaysia (2011-2014). He served as Secretary-General of ASEAN based in Jakarta, Indonesia, for five years from January 2003. He was Singapore's High Commissioner to India and concurrently Ambassador to Nepal from 1996 to 1998. From September 1998 to December 2002, he was Press Secretary to the then Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Goh Chok Tong. From 2008 to 2011, he served as Director of the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore.



Professor Dewi Fortuna Anwar is a member of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (AIPI), a Research Professor at the Research Center for Politics-National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Habibie Center (THC). In 2010-2017 Dewi served as a Deputy Secretary to the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia. Dewi was a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), NTU, Singapore in 2017-2018, and a Distinguished Visiting Professor at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University in 2007. She has written widely on Indonesia's foreign policy, and ASEAN regional political and security issues. She obtained her PhD from Monash University, Melbourne, while her M.A. and B.A. (Hons) were from SOAS, University of London.

SESSION III - SECOND PANEL



Dr Ian Storey is a Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. At ISEAS, he specializes in regional security issues with a focus on Southeast Asia’s relations with the major powers and maritime security, especially the South China Sea dispute. He is the co-editor of the academic journal *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Prior to ISEAS, Ian held academic positions at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii, and Deakin University, Australia.



Ambassador Pham Quang Vinh worked in Vietnam’s foreign service for over 38 years, focusing on Vietnam’s multilateral diplomacy and Vietnam’s relations with Southeast Asia and the United States. Until today, the longest-serving ASEAN SOM Leader for Vietnam (2007-2014), and as Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of the region, Ambassador Pham was instrumental in Vietnam’s policy and participation in ASEAN at a crucial time, which included Vietnam’s Chairmanship of ASEAN in 2010. During his tenure as Ambassador to the United States, he worked extensively – through the Obama and Trump presidencies – to promote Vietnam-US relations, with successive visits to Vietnam by both Presidents (2016, 2017) and the first-ever visit by a Party General Secretary of Vietnam to the US (2015). Ambassador Pham had frequent and extensive interactions with the media and the young in his home country. He was accorded Vietnam’s highest diplomatic rank of Senior Ambassador.



Dr R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa served as Foreign Minister of Indonesia (2009–2014). He was Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the UN (2007-2009) and Ambassador to the UK and Ireland (2005-2007). He is a member of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Board on Mediation, UNSG’s Advisory Board on Disarmament, and UN Institute for Disarmament Research’s Board of Trustees. Dr Natalegawa authored *“Does ASEAN Matter? A View from Within”* (2018), and is cited as “one of the most respected foreign policy and international security thinkers of his generation, both within Indonesia, in Southeast Asia, and in the broader Asia-Pacific region”. He is presently a member of the International Academic Advisory Committee of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies; Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) ‘s Southeast Asia Advisory Board; Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Leaders Network (APLN) for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament; Jeju Forum’s Global Advisory Committee; amongst other senior positions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS



Ms Sharon Seah is Senior Fellow and Coordinator of ASEAN Studies Centre and the Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Prior to academia, Ms Seah spent 15 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and the National Environment Agency. Her research interests are in ASEAN, multilateralism, rule of law, and climate change. Ms Seah graduated with a Master in Public and International Law from the University of Melbourne in 2018. She is co-editor of *50 Years of ASEAN and Singapore* (World Scientific: 2017) and editor of *Building a New Legal Order for the Oceans* (NUS Press: 2019) for Tommy Koh. She is also the lead author of *The State of Southeast Asia Survey Report* and the *Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey*.