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Haze Yet Again Polluting the ASEAN Sub-region

By

Wan Portia Hamzah

Associate Research Fellow, ISIS Malaysia

For the more discerning citizens of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) who have been following the recurring transboundary haze pollution, 2015 was earlier being closely watched with hope and trepidation. With hope because Indonesia finally ratified the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (ATHP), after 13 years, and the region may finally see a breakthrough in solving the problem. The Agreement is legally binding and, at the time of crafting, indicated the pragmatic approach of ASEAN member countries in opting for a hard law — an international agreement — to the more often preferred soft law or cooperative and consensual discussion. The purpose of the ATHP is to gather information and gain a better understanding of what actions member states should take to mitigate the problem. It actually provides a collective framework for dealing with the forest burning and transboundary haze problem within the overall context of sustainable development. After all, the Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) of 1983 in Europe is one good example on how transboundary pollution has been successfully tackled. Hence, there is no reason why ASEAN cannot emulate the success of Europe.

But there was a feeling of trepidation because the ATHP is reportedly constrained by mechanisms that support the non-intervention norm or ASEAN Way. Assistance, for example, can only be given on mutual consent and subject to direction of the recipient state. Furthermore, the ATHP contains weak non-intrusive parameters ranging from requesting and receiving assistance, monitoring, reporting, exchanging information and conducting research to absence of enforcement and liability provisions. As it stands, ASEAN member countries reportedly cannot sue polluting countries which are responsible for transboundary pollution because of the principle of non-intervention. The Agreement clearly does not contain any rule on state liability to damage although, in general, the Agreement reaffirms the ‘no harm’ principle, which is similar to Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration and Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration. The latter states “... *sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their environmental and development priorities, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to*

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the environment of other States.” For the ATHP, any dispute between parties shall be settled amicably by consultation or negotiation.

It must also be noted that it is not uncommon for states to hold on to the doctrine of state sovereignty. In many environmental treaties, state liability has been rarely developed. Instead, witnessed more often today is the need to shift and channel transboundary environmental damage from state to civil liability. Interestingly, please note the ATHP and the LRTAP are similar — both impose few concrete obligations on the parties and are drafted to allow for interpretation. The LRTAP, in the same manner, recognises the ‘no harm’ principle and explicitly avoids the rule on state liability.



However, critics have continued to question the effectiveness of the ATHP — partly because the earlier Plans, Resolutions or Accords, beautifully crafted from as early as the 1990s by ASEAN for ASEAN to take action did not manage to stop the transboundary pollution. Why has it been so difficult to put a stop to this problem?

That the problem is linked to land use, land tenure and economic development in Indonesia has long been recognised. Large corporations or companies involved in logging activities and pulp and paper plantations often see palm oil as another opportunity to continue the business of land clearing and starting industrial tree plantations. Small-scale cultivators or local communities welcome the palm oil



A villager tries to extinguish a peatland fire on the outskirts of Palangkaraya, Indonesia on 26 October 2015. Source: edition.cnn.com.

... peatland fires are the most difficult to suppress and burning often continues underground. The smoke is high in carbon content ...

plantations with hopes of getting more jobs and generating higher income as smallholders.

Let us recap. Slash-and-burn, to aid soil health and control pests and diseases, has been practiced by Indonesian farmers for hundreds of years, but earlier fires were smaller in area and spread out over time. With the fires of the 1980s, the health and economic implications of the haze problem then were not properly appreciated. But from 1990s until today, 90 per cent of transboundary haze is associated with peatland fires.

ASEAN has about 25 million hectares of peatland or 60 per cent of global tropical peatland resource, of which 70 per cent is found in Indonesia. With depth ranging from 0.5 meter to 10 meters or more and consisting of incompletely decomposed soil, peatland fires are the most difficult to suppress and burning often continues underground. The smoke is high in carbon content thereby increasing the level of greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbating climate change.

While measures are being proposed at the ASEAN level, below are some of the perspectives raised during the uncountable hours of discussions and in the heaps of writing as well as steps needed to move forward:

Legal perspective

International law holds that a state is responsible for transboundary harm that results from activities on its territory, carried out by the state or within its control. The 1941 Trail Smelter case where Canada was held liable for damage done to American crops due to pollution from a smelting operation has often been quoted. However, there are difficulties, as discussed above, in applying the Trail Smelter case and it is unlikely that any of the ASEAN member states will impose state responsibility on Indonesia.

Indonesia's own anti-burning law does exist and the penalties are not inconsequential. However, there is a conflicting application of rules such as Indonesia's Law 32 that allows burning in forests for traditional uses. This raises the



Heavy haze casts an apocalyptic glow over Tumbang Nusa, Central Kalimantan province, on 25 October 2015. Source: edition.cnn.com.

Instead of being reactive ... a more pre-emptive regulatory regime resulting in proactive measures being taken may be preferred.

questions of what are considered ‘traditional uses’ and who or which communities are allowed these practices. Some Malaysians, who are involved in small-scale oil palm plantation in Sumatra and Kalimantan, have raised this issue — the land *Hak Guna Usaha* is very often reduced to only 40 to 70 per cent for planting; the balance is claimed by the communities as their right and burning activities are very much the norm as allowed under the Indonesia’s Law 32. Thus, in addition to lack of enforcement because of Indonesia’s relative poverty and legal shortcomings, Indonesia also faces huge challenges with its decentralised democratic system.

Singapore’s Transboundary Air Pollution Act (TAPA) of 2014, where fines can be imposed on any local or foreign company responsible for haze pollution in Singapore, can only function with strong cooperation from Indonesia. Hence, the ratification of the ATHP by Indonesia was seen as crucial. Singapore is seeking cooperation from Indonesia and Malaysia on information sharing, such as concession maps, but there is a serious constraint because of the Public Information Disclosure Act in Indonesia and the Official Secrets Act in Malaysia. But members of the Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) saw a resolution on “Transparency in plantation concession boundaries” passed in 2014, making it compulsory for members to share concession maps or have their membership suspended or even terminated. The issue of making concession maps available is contentious and has been severely challenged both in Indonesia as well as in Malaysia.

Calls for Malaysia to take a similar approach — adopt a transboundary pollution act — must be seriously studied because of the implication, amongst others, on extraterritorial reach, which is often regarded as an infringement of the state’s national sovereignty. Instead of being reactive, such as the case for Singapore’s TAPA, a more pre-emptive regulatory regime resulting in proactive measures being taken may be preferred.

Economic perspective

Burning is cheap, quick and efficient. But the health, economic and diplomatic impacts of the haze as well as loss of biodiversity and agriculture productivity, destruction of natural and cultural capitals, disturbance of the natural hydrological cycles/microclimate and consequences for traditional livelihoods can be huge. The

cost of the 1997–1998 fires amounted between US\$4.5 billion and US\$9.3 billion depending on sources taken.

The framework recommended by one ASEAN scholar was the stakeholders' approach to cost-sharing and he argued that the cost of an effective fire prevention and control programme in Indonesia should be shared among the various stakeholders and other interested institutions both inside and outside the country. Interestingly, sharing the burden of costs associated with the development and implementation of an effective land fire prevention and control was analysed and Malaysia's and Singapore's efforts were used as case studies.

Moving forward, efforts by Malaysia (in Riau) and Singapore (in Jambi) must be reexamined so as to address the gaps and get full participation of the target groups, such as the smallholders and the large corporations in future initiatives. Their non-involvement was then associated to trust deficiency while involvement was perceived to reflect guilt.



Forest fires in Indonesia have caused record pollutants levels in Singapore. Source: Reuters/Edgar Su.

Scientific perspective

*... timely
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It is difficult to predict how long the haze will remain or how intense it will be. Many of the variables depend on the number of hotspots — burning activities resulting in haze. A top climatologist indicated that the El Niño–Southern Oscillation or ENSO (El Niño is associated with a dry phase) is more felt in Sumatra and Kalimantan and will be prolonged until March 2016. Will the haze then pollute until this period?

Since ENSO itself is a predictable event, the information is relevant in mitigating the risk of fires and recurrence of haze. Moving forward, research is crucial to study, for example, how ENSO interacting with anthropogenic climate change may change future drought characteristics. Science mediators have a role to use non-scientific language and communicate the information effectively. The public is more discerning and critical and the social media is a powerful tool and hence timely



Malaysia's landmark Petronas Twin Towers and other commercial buildings are shrouded in haze in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 14 September 2015. Source: Bernama images.

We, the citizens of ASEAN, must build up trust and think in values term and put the values to work to achieve the ASEAN dreams.

information will facilitate better understanding and decision-making. The reactive mode and flurry of explanations on the differences in Malaysia's Air Pollution readings last year were perceived as not transparent or credible.

Innovative efforts are emerging with mapping software and tools. Technology is also being constantly upgraded and, while many of the technologies have yet to be applied on a wide scale, Indonesia and various international companies have attempted to use special sensors and drones to map burnscars so as to indicate a higher number of real fires.

Concluding remarks

It is important that in addition to regional and intergovernmental efforts, the private sector, finance sector, civil society and academia should collaborate where possible and contribute to sustainability standards and support regional cooperation.

A final point to be highlighted is the element of trust. Warren Buffet once said, "Trust is like the air we breathe, when it's present nobody notices. But when it is absent, everybody notices." Trust, according to a prominent Malaysian medical practitioner, allows us to function in times of uncertainty and there is a need to build that pool of trust. We, the citizens of ASEAN, must build up trust and think in values term and put the values to work to achieve the ASEAN dreams.

Time to Rewrite the US-China Relations Narrative?

By
Zarina Zainuddin
Analyst, ISIS Malaysia



From left: Yuan Peng, Steven Wong and Vikram Singh

Various aspects of US-China relations are often discussed in negative terms. It is perhaps a prolonged leftover from the Cold War 'Us versus Them' mentality, where the main two rival powers, namely the United States and the Soviet Union, were polar opposites in ideology and economic practices.

The United States is a democracy with a free market economy while the Soviet Union was a communist government with a central planning economy and as both countries vied for influence they divided the rest of the world into alliances. The fact that their economic systems differed on how they operated maintained the division between the two factions. Despite efforts of many developing countries to remain unaligned, in reality, very few could stay completely neutral.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the country's failure to reform its economy prompted the other communist countries, including China, to adjust their economic policies. In China's case, its effort met with success when it evolved gradually into a free market economy.

Japanese business practices created a massive supply chain within the East Asia region and, China, by opening its economy, inadvertently linked its economy to the path of economic globalisation. China's economy became increasingly integrated and interdependent with those within the region and the world at large.

Hence China presents a paradox. On the one hand, it is a communist power that is a natural rival to the political ideologies of the United States. On the other hand, its economy is fully engaged in a positive way with the United States and the rest of the global economy. The new realities of an increasingly globalised world offer plenty of opportunities to change the way rival powers interact with each other; from one that is often contentious to one that is cooperative. It is important for the United States and China to establish a habit of engaging in cooperation and consultation

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with each other, whether it is to react to a specific event or crisis or as part of a process in formulating policies. Cooperation and consultation can be the foundation for confidence and trust building between the two nations.

Cooperation as the new norm

Disaster relief and humanitarian aid are two of the most promising areas for potential cooperation. For most catastrophic events, a concerted effort involving cooperation by various countries is needed to effectively and efficiently tackle the problem, particularly if the event affects more than one country.

The Asia Pacific region is rife with natural and manmade disasters such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis and typhoons, as well as pandemic outbreaks and environment related problems such as trans-border pollution. The 2005 tsunami that wracked the region was a prime example of how cooperation between various countries can be effective in logistics and the timely dispensing of aid and medical assistance.

If there is a silver lining in the tragic loss of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, it is that the incident afforded many countries, including the United States and China, opportunities to cooperate and coordinate their resources during the search, rescue and recovery efforts. Despite some shortcomings, the MH370 incident provided valuable lessons for improving such coordinated efforts in the event that such cooperation is needed in the future.

Cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as energy (clean energy development) and environment (where the US Environment Protection Agency has established relations with various levels of government in China to confront issues such as pollution at the domestic level as well as managing climate change at the global level), should be emphasised and expanded to cover wider areas. Most recently, the successful conclusion of the historic Iranian nuclear agreement of 14 July 2015 between Iran and six major powers can be largely attributed to the close communication and collaboration efforts between the United States and China throughout the negotiation process.

Third-country cooperation between the United States and China is another avenue to explore. In recent years, the United States and China have begun to consider various cooperative ventures to assist countries in Africa, in the security and economic development fields. However, despite a strong momentum, the United States and China are still at the discussion stage and have yet to collaborate on a substantial programme, a situation that should be rectified as soon as possible.

Aiding the cooperation move are the efforts of a number of US and China think tanks and other non-government organisations (NGOs). Chief among the Track Two participants are the National Security and International Policy at the Center for American Progress and China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations. They are actively engaged in dialogue in trying to identify areas of cooperation between the two countries.

The two organisations have recently approached members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) through the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies network, co-organised seminars and forums in attempts to identify areas within ASEAN where the United States and China could cooperate and render assistance. Track Two efforts could play a vital role in building up trust and

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confidence between the two nations as Track Two processes typically involve a wider segment of society — the government, businesses, academicians, NGOs, and other stakeholders. Hence the Track Two processes could help build networks, improve communication and instill a consultative habit between the United States and China.

The United States and China have also played important roles to ensure a stable global economic growth through strengthening relevant institutions, including the International Development Association, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Fund, and World Bank, either through financial contributions or through reform initiatives. It is particularly timely for China to step up given that Europe is currently struggling to grapple with various internal problems ranging from the economy to refugee crises and terrorist threats.

Challenges within the region

There are a number of challenges facing the United States and China, which may hinder closer cooperation efforts (for example, domestic politics and demands from various stakeholders). One particular challenge is the existing rivalry between the two countries in East Asia and the Asia Pacific as a whole. While it is easier for the United States and China to cooperate in places where mutual interests overlap, such as the Middle East or Africa, it may not be so easy to do so in East Asia or Asia Pacific. East Asia is in China's backyard, where it may prefer to have a stronger influence.

East Asia is also a region of great interest for the United States mainly because it is now the main engine of global economic growth and a major source of capital and investment, where a massive labour force and consumer market reside. It is also growing in importance as the source of research and development, and technology and innovation. In short, East Asia and the Asia Pacific in general are fast becoming the centres of global trade and commerce. It is not surprising that major powers, established or rising, would want to stake their presence and exert a degree of influence within the region.

Hence as America unveiled its policy of rebalancing towards Asia, mainly as recognition on the part of Obama's administration of the region's growing importance to America's future wellbeing, many in China and the region see it as a bid to contain China's rise to power. Likewise, as China unveiled its One Belt, One Road strategy, it was met with similar scepticism and suspicion on the part of the United States and its allies.

As a consequence, there was a lack of enthusiasm towards each other's initiatives, even though the initiatives could contribute greatly to the welfare of the region. America endorsed the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) but it lacked participation from China and there was a lack of US support towards China's proposed Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The successful conclusion of the TPPA could present another challenge in the relationship between the two countries. China seems to be shifting its priority from its preferred rival agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and is pursuing the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) instead. The reality is that any trade agreement that falls short of the TPPA standards would be perceived as a second class agreement, and to have an Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)-wide agreement that adheres to the TPPA standards would be challenging, to say the least.



Participants at the forum held in Sheraton Imperial Kuala Lumpur

There are also the whole South China Sea issue and China's increasing activities in the area to take into consideration. Depending on the source, such activities can be perceived as China's attempts to ensure its access to resources and defend its maritime trade lanes or as China's attempts to flex its military muscles and extend its sphere of influence within Asia and beyond.

The somewhat aggressive activities of the Chinese in the South China Sea have alarmed a number of ASEAN countries, especially the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as China's historical rivals, Japan and Taiwan. China's actions have left the United States little choice but to respond by increasing its naval presence within the area as well as strengthening ties with East Asian countries. Such developments have created tension and fear of possible flashpoints in the region. Regular dialogues between the two major powers could go a long way to mitigate such tension.

ASEAN countries typically utilise a hedging strategy when dealing with rival powers. Malaysia, in particular, is a prime example of such a strategy. During Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad's administration, despite the former prime minister's anti-West rhetoric, Malaysia still cultivated a strong relationship with the United States. More recently, despite the verbal strife between China and Malaysia due to the MH370 tragedy, Sino-Malaysian relations have been unaffected. For Malaysia, aside from security considerations, friendly and strong ties with various countries, big or small, help smooth the path towards export success. Good ties with the United States and China also ensure, to some degree, Malaysia's relevance to both countries.

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The hedging behaviour among ASEAN countries may actually be a good thing as it prevents ASEAN from taking sides and this could lead to more stability in the region. Hedging gives a country a degree of leverage when dealing with major powers, so it would be interesting indeed to see how ASEAN countries react to a united US-China front.

All in all, ASEAN is likely to welcome limited cooperation between the two major powers especially if their cooperation benefits ASEAN as a whole. It is also likely to fear strong US-China bilateral relations as this may render ASEAN irrelevant. Nonetheless, ASEAN is likely to be more welcoming of strong US-China ties if it could be included in the process — if confidence and trust building exercises between the

United States and China were to take place within ASEAN processes or within other processes where ASEAN's presence is strong.

The involvement of other regional countries in the consultation and dialogue process will help lessen their fear of the two major powers colluding.

Conclusion

The world has experienced unprecedented peace and a prolonged period of economic prosperity although many challenges remain. There are opportunities for shaping a new era, where global powers such as the United States and China deal with each other in more constructive ways — consultation, dialogue, and cooperation. In order to change the narrative of US-China relations, it is vital to increase the degree of comfort between the two countries and to deepen ties beyond the two national leaders.

Additionally, a simultaneous two-pronged approach would be ideal where: (i) the United States and China enhance bilateral relations with each other at various segments of society via Track Two processes; and (ii) consultation and dialogue among the two countries were to take place in a multilateral setting, such as the East Asia Summit or the APEC meeting, to ensure that big and small powers are part of the process. The involvement of other regional countries in the consultation and dialogue process will help lessen their fear of the two major powers colluding. Ultimately the world would benefit from improved relations between the United States and China.

This article highlights issues from an ISIS International Affairs Forum on 'The United States and China in Southeast Asia: Strategies for Collaborative Engagement', by Mr Vikram Singh, Vice President, National Security and International Policy, Center for American Progress (CAP), and Dr Yuan Peng, Vice President, China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICR), on 6 August 2015.

The End of American World Order and China's Rise: What it Means to Asian Security

By
Nurul Izzati Kamrulbahri
Researcher, ISIS Malaysia



From left: Elina Noor, Amitav Acharya and Steven Wong

Many are predicting the collapse of US dominance in the future. However controversial it sounds, to some, the end of the American world order is no longer a far-fetched notion. The United States has long defended its status as a world hegemon and provided public goods, which consist of two broad categories — military and financial. But what happens if a hegemon is challenged? How do we identify the characteristics or signs of a hegemon being challenged?

Multiplex cinema vs multiplex world order

The unique multiplex world order mechanism is an analogy to explain how the world is now perceiving and accepting the concept of power. By using the basic concept of a multiplex cinema, the world is now provided with more options in terms of ideology and political preferences.

When one walks into a multiplex cinema, one is presented with a variety of movie choices — different genres, different casts, different cinematographies and such. In today's world, people are no longer being forced to choose only a single idea that is already in front of them. Information constraints may limit one's choice. Nevertheless, with the emergence of technology and social media platforms, the public is now considered as an important actor with a role in shaping worldviews. Many are sharing information at a rate one could never have imagined 20 years ago.

A multiplex world consists of multiple actors, multiple variations of scripts (in this case, the ideas and ideologies), complex linkages, and a decentralised world; a non-hegemonic atmosphere of shared leadership. After the many episodes of global financial crisis, the world saw nations come together for a common solution. The Group of Twenty (G20) is one fine example of how interdependence benefits the system of a multiplex world order. Under the G20, nations of different political ideologies, such as China, the United States, or its allies, are able to see eye to eye while serving their own interests.

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China as a successful hegemon?

Four basic elements are needed in order for a state to establish a successful hegemony: (i) power projection; (ii) public goods; (iii) regional legitimacy; and (iv) an attractive ideology. In calibrating China's ability to project itself as the next successful world hegemon, some have argued that China is lacking regional context in their discourse of power projection. In an era of interconnectedness, eliminating one's regional role as an important power-shaping catalyst would be unwise to any aspiring hegemon like China.

In definition, global public goods are goods with benefits that extend beyond borders and generations. Because of China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and bad record in addressing the worsening air pollution level in most of its big cities, China's ability to provide trustworthy global public goods is very much questionable. The same could be said concerning China's efforts to provide the global community with an attractive ideology. Undeniably, there is doubt on how the global community would react and be open to embrace the concept of communism or even Confucius-ism. Yet, there was only a brief moment during the Cold War when China was eager to export its ideology beyond its borders. Dating back to the time of the Great Cheng Ho, China has always been open to import other ideologies and has not been very persuasive in influencing others to follow its model.

China may never be self-sufficient or aspire to self-sufficiency for all sorts of reasons, but mainly because of the extensive trade and security relationships that lie across the web of interconnectedness between states today.

Irrelevancy of the Westphalian model

However, some scholars are arguing about the vulnerability of interdependence by referring to Germany prior to World War II. Although European countries were dependent on each other politically and economically, World War II still occurred. The Westphalian model and the Concert of Europe may no longer work in the 21st century.

Furthermore, massacres and atrocities were committed during World War II due to the absence of concerned institutions like the United Nations, or other international organisations and non-governmental organisations, which could serve to maintain peace and security during the time. Indeed power play in contemporary international relations can no longer be compared to Europe's experience or even Asia's history. The interests of various actors differ as borders become more invisible — thanks to the advancement of technology that enables greater and faster connectivity.

ASEAN in a multiplex world order

Should the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) attempt to find ways to deal with the US rebalancing in the region and China's continuing interference in the South China Sea, the Association must focus on managing its members' pressing domestic issues beforehand. Great power rivalry is not the main problem for ASEAN. ASEAN should fully utilise the sub-institutions it has created — unity is the main key for ASEAN to move forward. Rivalry between the two major powers in the region should never force ASEAN to take sides. Nonetheless, ASEAN should be wary of the equal consequences of too much rebalancing versus little rebalancing.

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... states are seeking to maintain legitimacy through cooperation and friendships and to create networks that will make any hard-power based decisions a tough one to make.



Participants of the forum

In the 21st century where people's voices echo louder among politicians and policymakers, governments could never afford to risk their level of dependability to their citizens by eliminating cooperation with other nations. With better dynamics, paradigm shift, independence of institutions, democratic politics and a state of equilibrium in today's society and system, states are seeking to maintain legitimacy through cooperation and friendship and to create networks that will make any hard-power based decision a tough one to make.

We had the privilege of hosting Professor Amitav Acharya, professor at the School of International Service in American University, Washington, DC, and UNESCO Chair in Transnational Challenges and Governance, at our ISIS International Affairs Forum on 12 August 2015. The issues highlighted in the above article were gathered from Professor Amitav's talk.



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The Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia was established on 8 April 1983 as an autonomous, not-for-profit research organisation. ISIS Malaysia has a diverse research focus which includes economics, foreign policy, security studies, nation-building, social policy, technology, innovation and environmental studies. It also undertakes research collaboration with national and international organisations in important areas such as national development and international affairs.

ISIS Malaysia engages actively in Track Two diplomacy, and promotes the exchange of views and opinions at both the national and international levels. The Institute has also played a role in fostering closer regional integration and international cooperation through forums such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT). ISIS Malaysia is a founding member of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) and manages the Council's Secretariat.

As the country's premier think-tank, ISIS Malaysia has been at the forefront of some of the most significant nation-building initiatives in the nation's history. It was a contributor to the Vision 2020 concept and was consultant to the Knowledge-Based Economy Master Plan initiative.

Editorial Team

Dato' Steven Wong
Joann Saw

Design

Razak Ismail
Jefri Hambali

Photography

Jefri Hambali
Halil Musa

Published by

Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

No 1, Persiaran Sultan Salahuddin

PO Box 12424, 50778 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

T: +603 2693 9366

F: +603 2691 5435

E: info@isis.org.my

W: www.isis.org.my



Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) Malay-



ISIS_MY