



ASEAN

Chairs:

Moulinrouge Kasper

Stuti Khandwala

Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the first step of the conference!

We, Stuti and Moulin, the co-chairs of MITMUNC's Association of Southeast Asian Nations, are very excited to have you in our committee. We are truly looking forward to how you deal with the problems we will touch upon in this conference, and come out with solutions that resonate with our purpose of helping the world be a better place in general, and upholding the best interests of the economic, social, cultural, political situation of the ASEAN member states to together forge their growth.

I am Stuti Khandwala, a freshman from India, on my way to trying to inculcate elements from as many majors as possible, but also delving deep into EECS and Bioengineering. I participated twice as a delegate in MUN in my high school, and know exactly how your mixed emotions are right now! I am a trained Indian Classical dancer, in the exec of MIT Biomakerspace, and an Undergraduate Association (UA) Sustain Gardener and Wastewatcher on campus. I love interacting with kids, and cannot wait to see you!

I am Moulinrouge Kasper, a freshman and also an international student from Tanzania. I have quite a bit of experience with MUN, having attended three international MUN events during high school, and I have always loved debating. I am totally looking towards an Economics major, and am involved with the UA Community Service outside classes.

We hope you find this background guide informative as a starting point for your research. However, please make sure to seek additional sources, particularly those pertaining to your specific country. Our committee will be much more interesting with a variety of perspectives!

When writing your position papers, remember to use your own words unless quoting, and as always, cite your references. Of course, please feel free to reach out to us at any time if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to reading your position papers and meeting you all at the conference!

Snow and sunshine,
Cheers:

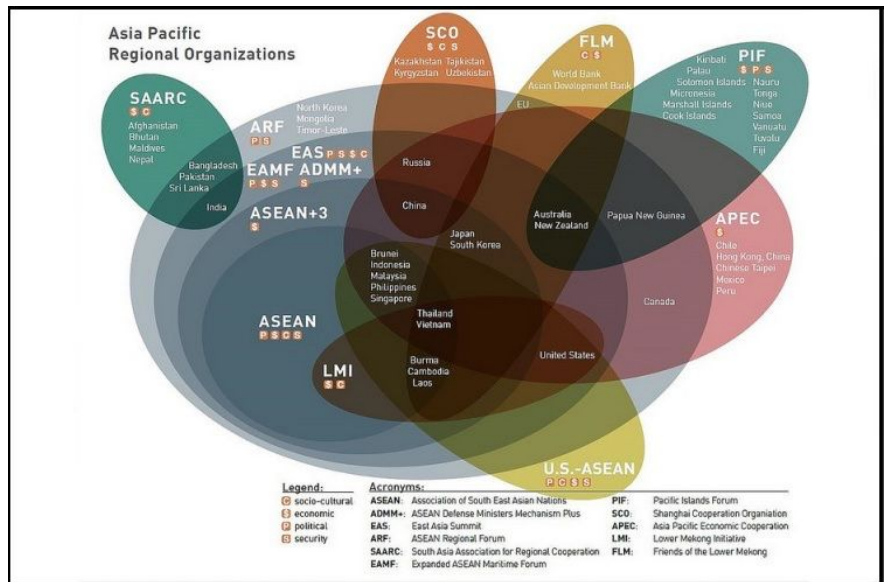
Stuti and Moulin
Chairs, ASEAN

Topic I: U.S.-ASEAN Alliances

Introduction

Crux: Deliberating on the current challenges to U.S.-ASEAN alliances, recent decreased U.S. participation, its effect on member countries, and possible ways of partnership revival

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) represents the sixth largest economy in the world, with the third largest population in the world. The participating countries—Brunei Darussalam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam—collectively constitute the United States’ fourth-largest trading partner and together, represent a market with a GDP of more than \$2.76 trillion and a population of 642 million people.



At a press conference in 2016, President Obama remarked, “The United States and ASEAN have forged a strategic partnership guided by key principles, including that ASEAN will remain central to peace, prosperity and progress in the Asia Pacific.” However, the U.S.-ASEAN partnership faces several emergent challenges, including disruptions in trade policy, adjustments in major economies, US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), Chinese territorial expansion, and a lack of organizational unity and infrastructure.

Personal relationships and tensions of the U.S. and the member states of ASEAN with non-member but influential giants such as China, North Korea, Japan and India affects all aspects of the ASEAN policy-making, economy, and foreign affairs, as well as stagnating roadblocks in other decisions.

History

The United States began engaging with ASEAN as a dialogue partner in 1977, and has cooperated with ASEAN ever since. The United States was the very first non-ASEAN country to name an Ambassador to ASEAN in 2008. In June 2010, the United States became the first non-ASEAN country to establish a dedicated Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta, and in 2011, the first resident Ambassador to ASEAN was appointed and assumed her duties in 2014.

The United States Mission to ASEAN partners with ASEAN and related stakeholders to advance U.S. interests in a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Southeast Asia that respects the rule of law, upholds the dignity of its people and actively addresses regional and global concerns. The partnership of the United States and ASEAN focuses on five areas including economic integration, maritime cooperation, emerging leaders, opportunity for women, and transnational challenges.

The U.S. and ASEAN have redoubled their cooperation on many issues. Political and security discussions have focused on the role of the United States in maintaining peace and stability in the region, the South China Sea disputes and the threat of terrorism. Economic engagement has seen the successful establishment of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement. U.S.-ASEAN development cooperation has also focused on capacity building efforts in technology, education, disaster management, food security, human rights, and trade facilitation.

Efforts and mis-efforts under this umbrella:

Since 2006, the U.S.-ASEAN Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) has boosted fiscal ties and investment between the U.S. and ASEAN nations. Trade with ASEAN in goods and services supports over 370,000 jobs for the United States. The United States is also cooperating with Southeast Asia on multiple fronts extending beyond just trade: disaster management, education, governance, anti-trafficking, and nuclear non-proliferation.

The United States has launched various constituent programs focused on economic, technological, and educational integration between member states, such as the Fulbright U.S.—ASEAN Visiting Scholars Program and the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) launched in 2013. YSEALI seeks to build the leadership capabilities of youth in the region, strengthen ties between the United States and Southeast Asia, and nurture an ASEAN community. YSEALI focuses on critical topics identified by youth in the region: civic engagement, sustainable development, education and economic growth.

In 2016, U.S.-ASEAN Connect (“Connect”) was launched, a new U.S. Government’s strategic framework for economic engagement with ASEAN and the member states, was launched. Organized around four pillars – Business Connect, Energy Connect, Innovation Connect, and Policy Connect – the initiative provides strategic focus to ongoing and future U.S. economic activities in the region.

In 2017, President Donald Trump fulfilled a campaign pledge by signing an executive order to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The 12-nation trade deal was a linchpin of former President Barack Obama's Asia policy.

The 7th ASEAN-United States (U.S.) Summit was held in Bangkok, Kingdom of Thailand on 4 November 2019. The Chair’s statement highlights some valuable recent steps and commitments. U.S. also sponsored the Indo-Pacific Business forum at around the same time, same place.


Outline

- Exact challenges that the U.S.-ASEAN ties face
 - Withdrawal of U.S. paving way for China - South China Sea issue
 - Explicit change in scenario post involvement of President Trump
 - His 2017 Asia tour
 - U.S.-centered motives
 - Skipping the ongoing ASEAN plus Three summit
- Countries
 - Which countries will be present
 - Country blocs
 - IMP! Effect on individual member states of ASEAN - left for research by delegates
- Current suggested revival of ties (in sources)
 - Chair's statement from 7th ASEAN-U.S. Summit
- Possible policy changes that could mitigate the problem (in sources)
- What we have to achieve on the whole on as a committee
 - ASEAN motto

Exact challenges that the U.S.-ASEAN ties face

1. CHINA:

- a. With regards to the current state of affairs in Asia, experts from the Council on Foreign Relations notes that, "Beijing is increasingly using not only assertive militarization of regional waters but also economic coercion" to assert its dominance on surrounding United States allies.
- b. China claims the South China Sea as its sovereign territory, but those claims overlap with those of other Asian governments. The United States has no territorial stake but has periodically sailed Navy ships through areas of the sea that China considers off-limits.
- c. On 18 November 2019, a spokesman for the Chinese ministry of defense, Col. Wu Qian said the U.S. should "stop intervening in the South China Sea and stop military provocations."
- d. In 2012, the 10 states failed to issue a joint statement for the first time in the group's history because the nations couldn't agree on how to deal with China's claims.
- e. While the United States says it does not take sides in territorial disputes, it has sent ships and planes near contested islands, calling them "freedom of navigation" operations. In 2018, it sent one of its nuclear-powered aircraft carriers into Vietnamese waters for the first time since the end of the Vietnam war. China followed with what it called the largest naval display of its kind.
- f. China's growing clout is unnerving some Southeast Asian countries. For one, Indonesia, the group's largest economy, is now lobbying ASEAN to patrol its waters.

- g. Still, the dynamics of ASEAN's internal and external relationships with countries are continually evolving. Although the Philippines had fought China in an international legal case about the South China Sea, Duterte has pursued stronger ties with Beijing.
- h. Some ASEAN countries like Vietnam are also reaching out to new allies. Additionally, Australia held its first special summit with the group in March 2018, during which Indonesian President Joko Widodo openly endorsed Australia possibly joining the ASEAN.¹
- i. Cambodia and Laos are increasingly vassal states of Beijing, Cambodia also being the one to not agree in passing the 2012 statement. They refrain from taking steps that would go against China so as to not sever their strong connections.
- j. Chinese power is also blunting ASEAN member countries' ability to respond defensively. Despite a 2016 ruling from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea declaring Chinese territorial aggression in the region and as illegal, no country has stepped forward to enforce the verdict. Chinese soft power is visible through its influence on ASEAN; the failure of the bloc to oppose China's naval actions is emblematic of internal strife and external influence. At the November 2017 ASEAN summit, national leaders failed to come to a consensus and release a joint statement condemning Chinese tactics as aggressive or illegal. This is in large part because Chinese economic ties with smaller member states allow Beijing to constrain ASEAN policies that contradict Chinese aims.
- k. The United States' decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was severely damaging to U.S.-ASEAN relations and the economic security of Southeast Asia. The TPP was a crucial measure to counter China's use of coercive tools to reprimand nearby nations that oppose its regional hegemony.


Without the TPP, the United States' allies will have less protection from Beijing's influence. Political leaders in Southeast Asia viewed the TPP as a representative of American commitment to the region, and were unprepared for its demise after the election. Without the TPP, ASEAN states are more likely to dispute America's willingness to defend their security and sovereignty following Trump's decision to withdraw.
- l. As countries increase their economic engagement with China following a receding U.S. presence, the potential for greater Chinese influence only increases in the future.

¹ <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/26/asean-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-globally-important-group.html>

China is now in a stronger position to develop infrastructure in Asia as part of its One Belt One Road Initiative and to negotiate its Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. Both of these will increase China's geo-economic leverage over its neighbors at America's strategic expense. In sum, the current U.S.-ASEAN partnership is weakening due to diminishing regional American commitments and growing Chinese influence.

2. PRESIDENT TRUMP:

- a. The sole reason to include Trump's actions and possible behind-the-stage motives is to help address what his actions have caused. It is not to criticize any of his personal traits or thoughts, nor his leadership skills, but rather on how changes to existing Trump-defined or supported U.S. policies would help bolster ASEAN's goals.
- b. As of November 4, 2019, President Donald Trump has invited Southeast Asian leaders to a "special summit" in the United States early next year after skipping their ongoing annual summit in Thailand. In the current summit, in a pointed adherence to diplomatic protocol, seven of the ten Southeast Asian countries sent their foreign ministers instead. Last year, Trump sent Vice President Mike Pence to the annual ASEAN summit and related meetings. This year, both he and Pence were busy campaigning during the meetings, wrapping up Monday in the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand's capital.
- c. Trump's absence from the meetings allowed room for China and other regional powers to raise their own profiles. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the leaders who met with their ASEAN counterparts during the summit.
- d. Despite the apparent downgrading of the ASEAN gathering by Trump, U.S. businesses and government were seeking to emphasize the American commitment to the region with a privately-led conference attended by about 1,000 business and government officials.
- e. "The Trump administration is extremely engaged in and fully committed to this region," U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross told the meeting. In his own comments at the meeting with ASEAN leaders, Robert O'Brien, the national security adviser, made a swipe at China, saying Beijing "has used intimidation to try to stop ASEAN nations from exploiting their offshore resources, blocking access to \$2.5 trillion in oil and gas reserves alone. These tactics go against the rules of respect, fairness and international law."
- f. An analysis on the 2017 trip can be found here:
<https://time.com/5006936/donald-trump-china-vietnam-philippines-korea-japan-ap-ec-asean/>

Countries

MEMBER STATES: Bound by the general spirit of ASEAN, to be taken care when putting country specific problems and solutions. All of them want more U.S. involvement. Check which nations are directly affected by the South China Sea or Indo-Pacific Maritime trade. Individually allude to major export/ source of import/ help during financial crisis etc.

Against China

- Indonesia- the largest economy in the ASEAN States, and a thriving democracy with significant regional autonomy. It is located on one of the world's major trade routes and has extensive natural resource wealth. General supporter of improving economy, against China.
- Vietnam
- Thailand
- Philippines- Had formulated the law against China
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Brunei
- Singapore- Might have good suggestions owing to how organized that nation itself is

Against going against China

- Cambodia
- Laos

NON-MEMBER STATES: They have extensive involvement in different ways

- China- Requires a lot of defending, because maximum countries are opposite. Try using those member states in your favor for countering
- Japan- Lot of U.S. Japan talks centering Shinzo Abe, might be useful in pro-U.S.
- United States of America- Greatest load, explanations for actions, changes in policies from Obama's time to Trump's time. Might help having two representatives with differing views.
- North Korea- Basically U.S. fears its nuclear power and is trying to gather support from ASEAN countries to get together to fight it.
- India- Try searching for how the Indian PM acts as a centre point for talks with Trump and with the ASEAN countries. Should be interesting!

To Discuss

Bring up the two issues one by one, i.e. China and Trump-time policies.

We have to come up with useful changes to (1) U.S. government foreign policies (note that while ASEAN itself cannot make policy changes for the U.S. government, it can make suggestions or encourage further discussion with the U.S. at a later summit), (2) goals/ direction/ organizational structure/ implementation methods of various policies under the different U.S.-ASEAN bodies like Connect, (3) Specific roles of U.S. under the three pillars of ASEAN, (4) How to tackle China's non-obedience to further the ASEAN motto.

Motto: (Among other clauses) To accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations. To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

One important further reading resource:

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/southeast-asia-2019-four-issues-watch>

Suggested sources:

https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/2811-after-tpp-challenges-for-united-states-asean/#_edn8

<https://www.instagram.com/usmission2asean/>

asean.usmission.gov

<https://asean.usmission.gov/chairmans-statement-of-the-7th-asean-united-states-summit/>

https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/2811-after-tpp-challenges-for-united-states-asean/#_edn8

<https://time.com/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/26/asean-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-globally-important-group.html>

https://publicpolicy.wharton.upenn.edu/live/news/2811-after-tpp-challenges-for-united-states-asean/#_edn8

<https://time.com/tag/asean/>

asean.org

<https://www.asean-bp.com/country-profiles/indonesia/>

Topic 2: ASEAN Smart Cities Network

Overview

Crux: Discussing efficiency of the existing blueprints or action plans for smart, inclusive, and sustainable urbanization and formulating concrete future plans under the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)

On March 28th, the ASEAN leaders had first established the ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN). This initiative was brought forward to stimulate and plan for sustainable and urban development amongst the ASEAN countries. The main goal of the ASCN is to improve the lives of their people using various technologies as a stimulant for this change, as well as ensuring that rapid growth and development within these cities will not cause any significant adverse effects in their communities. ASCN aims to achieve this development in accordance with the ASEAN charter agreement that puts great emphasis on the value of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The ASEAN Member States (AMS) had to appoint three cities to be “pilot cities” that the ASCN will work on – expected until 2025 – with the cities’ respective representatives. The 26 chosen cities are: Bandar Seri Begawan, Battambang, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Makassar, Banyuwangi, DKI Jakarta, Luang Prabang, Vientiane, Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching, Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Yangon, Cebu City, Davao City, Manila, Singapore, Bangkok, Chonburi, Phuket, Da Nang, Hanoi, and Ho Chi Minh City. Member cities and their National Representatives will come together to explore potential complementarities, share best practices, develop individualized action plans for smart city development from 2018 to 2025 (“ASEAN Smart Cities Network”).

The plans to be developed within the pilot cities have been developed by their representatives in a joint 5-day workshop held in Singapore and may hold remnants of an already existing development plan in their respective cities. They are defined as “City-Specific Action Plans for Smart City Development” and each member city will have to apply these plans within the desired time from 2018 to 2025. These plans will have to follow the “ASEAN Smart Cities Framework” that was jointly prepared by all the member cities and their National Representatives. The framework works as guidelines for the development in the member cities to follow and will be made in respect to the ASEAN charter and the member city’s local and cultural restraints meanwhile trying to reduce any interference with their government’s national development.

ASEAN Smart Cities Framework

This framework was made by the appointed National Representatives to direct development within member cities and was claimed to identify the main aspects of the ideal ASEAN Smart City by ”i) identifying strategic outcomes; and ii) outlining key urban systems, focus areas, and enablers. This framework seeks to complement existing national development plans or help to build new ones.”

The ideal ASEAN smart city is one that integrates technological and non-technological change within their cities that tackles urban challenges and works to continuously improve their people’s lives. Furthermore, a smart city is one that only facilitates sustainable change due to the potential negative effects that a city’s economic growth could impose on people’s lives. Sustainable

development according to the International Institute of Sustainable Development is a development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. ASCN expects to come up with a solution that will meet present and future challenges with their member cities (“Sustainable Development”).

Additionally, the framework addresses the need for competitive markets within the member cities in order to avoid the price inequalities caused by monopolies in the market economies. Monopolies are a threat to workers since they have little option of working elsewhere, especially if the skills required for the job are niche in the market. Monopolies also have the power to raise prices unfairly if there is no anti-monopoly law in place to prohibit this. Monopoly power within Asia is not uncommon due to high barriers of entry within the market for foreign companies such as Apple and Uber in China. In China, there has been a 20% increase in fares by the Didi Chuxing app after Uber left in 2016 and in Southeast Asia, there is fear that Grab’s new monopoly power (after Uber left the market) will allow them to do the same (“The Dangers of a Grab Monopoly”).

It is also expected that the ASEAN smart city will consider income inequalities when it comes to provision of goods and services that are deemed necessary for a good life in today’s modern era which includes access to food, clothes, education, health care, shelter and security. This means that the HDI – measure of average achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and have a decent standard of living – per head within the member should have a significant increase by 2025.

The key urban systems, focus areas and enablers described in the framework are produced to meet the “strategic outcomes” discussed above. They are to be adopted by each member city in accordance with their respective cultural and local guideline while obeying the governing laws of the country. Urban systems would describe governing and maintenance to meet the ASCN expectations in present and future time as well as during stints of different political and economical environments. Focus areas describes the adamant needs of the people and the member cities that require a solution which may be infrastructure i.e proper buildings to withstand harsh tropical rainstorms in Malaysia and Indonesia. Enablers would be the partners, business and technologies that the member cities would require to implement the project.

City Specific Action Plans Adopted on 22nd May 2018

These plans were created and adopted by the National Representatives of each member city, consultancy agencies and conglomerates that attended the ASEAN Smart Cities Governance Workshop in Singapore. There was representation from all the 26 “pilot cities” and drafts of “priority” plans were composed throughout this 5-day event. These “priority” plans are what each National Representative in the ASCN has deemed to be of most importance to their respective city and thus the drafts drawn out will vary from country to country and city to city.

A draft drawn out for Siem Reap, a reputable tourist destination, had targeted the city’s lack of security for tourists and drainage system (Siem Reap Province Travel Guides.) An important focus area for this was to not only make the city more sanitary and secure for its habitants but also for tourists visiting the area. This could lead to more open jobs in tourism within the area, overall

increase in average income of people in the area and so on. This plan, however, may not work as effectively in a city like Battambang that does not have as many tourist attractions.

Effectiveness

The city specific action plans drawn out at workshop in Singapore were set to deal with the most pressing issues in the member cities and to handle the issues in a “sustainable manner”. It is imperative that we analyze the respective cities to conclude whether the drawn out plan was really addressing the most pressing issues in the city.

Banyuwangi has a large population of fishermen who not only use fish as a resource for revenue but also a sustenance to survive as it is one of the most abundant food produced in the area since most of the land is bordered by the ocean. However, the volume of fish produced in the region has decreased and according to a research paper by the University of Jember in Indonesia due to lack in sustainable fishing resources from environmental pollution (Diartho). However, the draft drawn up in the workshop had targeted the growth of “tertiary sector” skills in the city, overall investment in the city and their data and communication systems. It is uncertain as to whether these would be the most suitable and fastest method of improving the lives of the locals in the area.

Map:



Suggested sources:

“ASEAN Smart Cities Network.” ASEAN | ONE VISION ONE IDENTITY ONE COMMUNITY, <https://asean.org/asean/asean-smart-cities-network/>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2019.

“Sustainable Development.” IISD, 18 Jan. 2018, <http://www.iisd.org/topic/sustainable-development>.

“The Dangers of a Grab Monopoly.” The ASEAN Post,

<https://theaseanpost.com/article/dangers-grab-monopoly>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2019.

Diartho, Herman Cahyo. “Empirical Studies the Sustainability of the Subsector Fisheries on the Coastal of Regency Banyuwangi (Perspective of Sustainable Development).” *American Journal of Economics*, vol. 9, no. 5, 2019, pp. 223–31.

Siem Reap Province Travel Guides - Cambodia Travel Guides | Tourism Cambodia.

<https://www.tourismcambodia.com/travelguides/provinces/siem-reap.htm>. Accessed 18 Nov. 2019.

PDF link that contains City Specific Action Plans (2018-2025):

<https://asean.org/storage/2019/02/ASCN-Consolidated-SCAPs.pdf>