Glancing at ASEAN from Back to the Future

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Abstract

The origin, the nature of ASEAN regional grouping and its prioritized Master Plan projects on ASEAN Connectivity are examined in this study. Originally born with an anti-communist-orientation in 1967, ASEAN intends to have One Vision, One Identity, One Community in 2015. Security threats were a main concern in the birth of ASEAN, but now it has become home for communist countries and intends to be One Community, based on three pillars, the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community. This essay attempts to analyze the nature of ASEAN from the past to the future, the positive and negative possibility of its dream to become a single community, from the security, economic and socio-cultural aspects. Security alliance, economic cooperation and all interconnectedness arise from fear, not brotherly love. Not only rivalry, China's hegemonic dominance on territorial disputes such as the Spratly Islands, in the South China Sea will make difficulties for ASEAN if China threatens one or two ASEAN members due to the weakness of the ASEAN Non –interference doctrine. Unlike the European Union which has strong backing from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), ASEAN's loosely-bound security seems unpromising and security threats can destroy the entire ASEAN connectivity.

This essay is merely a personal point of view from an individual ASEAN citizen, and does not represent nor reflect the views any institution or country.

Keywords: Institutional Mechanism, State-centric Elitists, Disparity, Interconnectedness

1. Introduction

This essay reviews the ASEAN journey in three Phases: (I) The birth of ASEAN (1967), (II) Post Cold War ASEAN (1991), and (III) Towards One Single Community (2015). The ASEAN Master Plan prioritized projects, territorial disputes, disparities and political, socio-economic gaps within ASEAN are examined.

2. Phase I. The Birth of ASEAN

During the intense Cold War period, fear of Communism spread into South East Asia leading to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which was founded in 1967 by five nations, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Philippines (ASEAN Secretariat, 2011). ASEAN was preceded by an organization called the Association of Southeast Asia, commonly called ASA, an alliance consisting of the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand that was formed in 1961. Later, ASEAN Declaration or Bangkok Declaration was the founding document of Association of

Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It was signed in Bangkok on August 8, 1967 by the five ASEAN founding members-Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand as a united front against Communist expansion in Vietnam and communist insurgency within their own borders. It states the basic principles of ASEAN such as cooperation, amity and non-interference. The date August 8 is now celebrated as ASEAN Day (ASEAN Charter, 2011). With the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the fall of Phnom Penh and Saigon to the communist forces in 1978, Vietnamese tanks moved up to the border of Thailand, prompting ASEAN's five founding members to make a crucial and courageous political decision to form extremely close cooperation with Cambodia from 1979. In 1991 the Paris Peace Accord on Cambodia was finally signed and that created bonds of friendship and trust among ASEAN states. Five ASEAN members had to try their best to persuade neighboring countries to become ASEAN members for closer cooperation due to the main concern of security threats. Brunei Darrusalam became a member in 1984, Vietnam in 1995 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2007), Laos and Myanmar (Burma) joined two years later on 23 July 1997. Cambodia was to have joined at the same time as Laos and Burma, but deferred due to the country's internal political struggle. The country later joined on 30 April 1999, following stabilization of its government (Carolyn L.G. and Mya Than, 2001).

In 1990, Malaysia proposed the creation of an East Asia Economic Caucus (ASEAN Secretariat, 1996) comprising the then members of ASEAN as well as the People's Republic of China, Japan, and South Korea, with the intention of counterbalancing the growing influence of the United States in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and in the Asian region as a whole (The Journal of Asian Studies, 64, 2 May 2005) (US Congressional Research Service Report, 2012). This proposal failed at the time, however, because of heavy opposition from the United States and Japan (Robert, E., 2005) (Richardson, M., 1994). Despite this failure, member states continued to work for further integration and ASEAN Plus Three was created in 1997. East Timor submitted a letter of application to be the eleventh member of ASEAN at the summit in Jakarta in March 2011. Indonesia has shown a warm welcome to East Timor. (Voice of America, 30 March 2011) (The Jakarta Post, 17 November 2011)

3. Phase II. Post Cold War ASEAN

As Kishore Mahbubani put it in his "Can Asians Think?", "the West won the Cold War, the conventional wisdom holds, not because of its military superiority but because of the strength of its social, economic, and political institutions". Hence, a new consensus has quickly developed that the West merely has to hold a steady course in the Post Cold War era. Consensus and Interconnectedness have become new strategies after the Cold War era. Many Asian scholars and leaders who are Western University graduates, including Harvard have been awakened, started looking back at the Asian Value debates in 1990s after post cold war. These Asian leaders have tried to find their own solutions for Asians and are no longer copying everything from the West. The Asian Values and Western Values debate occurred in the post cold war eras. Among the leaders, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamat, former Singaporean Prime Minister

Lee Kuan Yew, along with several other public intellectuals strongly supported Asian Values, saying "Repression in the name of right is unacceptable. There has been disagreement over "Universal Human Rights" since the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Some Asian leaders have pointed out that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Article 30: Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). Lee Kwan Yew vigorously denies that "democracy is a system so alien to Asian cultures that it will not work. Democracy is unsuited for Asia because of very different cultural values". (Asia's Destiny, 1994). Actually the Asian versus Western Values debate seems to be not so much about cultural values, but about political power struggle. (Human Rights, BBC World Service, Retrieved 15 March 2012).

Simultaneously, Globalization and Information Technology has forced the West and the East to assimilate more and many Asian scholars and leaders are dominated by Western political theories of Democracy and Western theories. Many top Asian leaders and students are produced by Western Universities, but they have tried to find innovative solutions differentiated from Western ways of thinking. For example, Chinese leaders are not adopting the Western political system and theory, but they are searching for pragmatic solutions to keep their society moving forward. They even accuse the West of demanding democracy before economic progress. To date, China has tried to ignore the Western political theory of democracy and human rights until after economic development. Asian and western values debates, good governance and good government became contemporary issues after the post Cold War period (Mahbubani, K., 2000). The then former Foreign Minister to Thailand Dr. Surin Pitsuwan in his key note speech at the conference, organized by ISIS Thailand and ASEAN ISIS said: "It is time that ASEAN got out of its wheelchair of economic dependency and stood on its own feet" (ISIS Thailand and ASEAN ISIS July, 2000). Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and such terms are controversial issues even among the ASEAN founding members.

Among many definitions, the most acceptable meaning of Good governance is "not associated with any single political system or ideology, but it is associated with the willingness and ability of the government to develop economic, social and administrative systems that are resilient enough to handle the challenges brought in the new economic era. One useful definition of good government includes political stability, sound bureaucracies based on meritocracy, economic growth with equity, fiscal prudence, and lack of corruption" (Mahbubani, K., p. 49, 1998, 2000). ASEAN's good governance and socio-economic records are discussed under the disparity and political, socio-economic part.

In 1992, the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) scheme was signed as a schedule for phasing tariffs and as a goal to increase the region's competitive advantage as a production base geared for the world market. This law would act as the framework for the ASEAN Free Trade Area. After the East Asian Financial Crisis of 1997, a revival of the Malaysian proposal was established in Chiang Mai, known as the Chiang Mai Initiative, which calls for better integration

between the economies of ASEAN as well as the ASEAN Plus Three countries China, Japan, and South Korea (Economic Working Papers, Asian Development Bank, 2002).

Aside from improving each member state's economies, the bloc also focused on peace and stability in the region. On 15 December 1995, the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty was signed with the intention of turning Southeast Asia into a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The treaty took effect on 28 March 1997 after all but one of the member states have ratified it. It became fully effective on 21 June 2001, after the Philippines ratified it, effectively banning all nuclear weapons in the region. (United Nations Treaty Series, 1981). Even though Post War ended, many serious problems and territorial conflicts remain despite enhancing regional cooperation and connectivity among the ASEAN blocs. Among many disputes, Spratly Islands dispute is taken as a sample case.

4. i. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea

The Spratly Islands dispute is a territorial dispute over the ownership of the Spratly Islands, a group of islands located in the South China Sea. States staking claims to various islands are: Brunei, China (People's Republic of China), Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan (Republic of China), and Vietnam. All except Brunei occupy some of the islands. The Spratly Islands are important for a number of reasons: the Spratly area holds significant reserves of oil and natural gas, it is a productive area for world fishing and commercial shipping, and coastal countries would get an extended continental shelf. But some states, like China (PRC), Taiwan (ROC), and Vietnam make claims based on historical sovereignty over the islands. Tensions over the islands has been high since March 14 1988 when the Vietnamese and Chinese Navies clashed, leaving more than 70 dead and two Vietnamese vessels sunk. The chief actor in the Spratly dispute is China. China has bolstered its claim to the Philippines territory of Mischief Reef, part of Spratly, by building a reinforced-concrete structure on the reef. The Philippines military in alliance with the US was an easy target. (Andrew Heys and Alan Tidwell, 1996)

4. ii United States Intervention in the South China Sea Dispute

United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced on July 23, 2010 in Vietnam that the U.S. had a "national interest in... respect for international law in the South China Sea" and supported a regional solution to the dispute. This was seen as a victory for Vietnam, (ASEAN-EU Relations Report, Retrieved 1 March 2012) because it had been seeking to negotiate the status of the Paracels multilaterally through forums like ASEAN, while China prefers bilateral negotiations (Bernard, E., Dawson, McNamara, D., 1998). "Small country" claimants such the Philippines were "secretly pleased... to have a friend in court", i.e. the United States, an opinion in the The Manila Times, despite the Philippine Government criticizing the intervention (ASEAN Secretariat, 23 July 1999) Chinese foreign minister Yang Jiechi said that Vietnam's invitation to the United States to mediate was "an attack on China" (US Senior Officials Dialogue 2011 Joint Statement, 20 September 2011). South China Sea Dispute remains unresolved.

5. Phase III. Towards One Single Community (2015):

From master plan on ASEAN Connectivity, some prioritized projects include:

- A. Physical Connectivity
- B. Institutional Connectivity
- C. People to people Connectivity

A. Physical Connectivity includes

- 1. Completion of the ASEAN High Way Network (AHN) Missing Links and Upgrade of Transit Transport Routes. (Land Transport)
 - 2. Completion of the Singapore Khunming Rail Link (SKRL) Missing Links (Land Transport)
 - 3. Establish an ASEAN Broadband Corridor (AB) (ICT)
 - 4. Malaka-Pekan Baru Interconnection (IMT-GT: Indonesia) (Energy)
 - 5. West Kalimantan-Sarawak Interconnection (BIMP-EAGA: Indonesia) (Energy)
- 6. Study on the Roll-on/roll off (RoRo) Network and Short Sea Shipping (Maritime Transport)

B. Institutional Connectivity includes

- 1. Developing and Operationalizing Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) for Pprioritised and Selected Industries. (Free Flow of Goods)
- 2. Establishing Common Rules for Standards and Conformity Assessment Procedures (Free Flow of Goods)
- 3. Operationalise all National Single Windows (NSWs) by 2012 (Free Flow of Goods / ASEAN Single Window)
- 4. Options for a Framework Modality towards the Phased Reduction and Elimination of Scheduled Investment Restrictions/ Impediments (Free Flow of Investment)
- 5. Operationalisation of the ASEAN Agreements on Transport Facilitation (Transport Facilitation)

C. People to People Connectivity includes

- 1. Easing Visa Requirements for ASEAN Nationals (Movement of People Tourism)
- 2. Development of ASEAN Virtual Learning Resource Centres AVLRC (Culture)
- 3. Develop ICT Skill Standards (ICT)
- 4. ASEAN Community Building Program (Culture, Education)

6. Analysis of the ASEAN Master Plan of Prioritized Connectivity

Most of the ASEAN Master Plan prioritized connectivity to enable reaping of the benefits of comparative advantages from economic the front. However, this Master Plan does not consider enhancing economic security for the majority of ASEAN citizens. ASEAN's first two priorities of Physical Connectivity and Institutional Connectivity are all meant for transportational links, trade, goods and service flow for business purposes. With more openness, more and more investment will flow into developing ASEAN countries where cheap labor and cheap raw

materials will be comparative advantages. Compared to Thailand, with minimum daily wage of baht 300, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar are a lot cheaper and they might all open up more investment flow into their countries respectively. Skilled labor may still prefer a country like Thailand, but Thailand might face shortage of unskilled labor. Unfair treatment to the migrant workers from the neighboring countries who are taking only the jobs Thais are unwilling to do so, will result in moves to places of better opportunities. If only Thailand gives opportunities to unskilled labor fair treatment such as those dealing with basic human rights, training such as operating tractors and machines such workers will be loyal to Thai industries. Otherwise, other Multinational Corporations will tap unskilled laborers for their production bases in the neighboring countries.

Thailand can consider 2 options, (1) enhancing the skilled labor manpower to be more competitive (2) giving fair treatment to the unskilled workforce of migrant workers to keep their production growing. Otherwise, both skilled and unskilled labor will move out from Thailand and many foreign firms and industries will pirate their efficient workers easily. For Thailand to be the hub of ASEAN community connectivity, the country should try to win the hearts of ASEAN people by enhancing both Thai nationals and foreign skilled and unskilled labor workforce human resource and capability. Strong nationalism with racial discrimination approach will make eligible skilled and unskilled foreign workers from Thailand leave their second home in a brain drain to a third ASEAN country.

When we look into the third link, People to People Connectivity, it can be seen that economic benefits are sought through movement of tourism. Easing visa applications is only for the tourist industry in tapping money. In reality, most ASEAN countries are now exercising tougher and tougher visa and immigration policies based on strong nationalism and xenophobia for fearing of losing their power status. If ASEAN really intends to build a real ASEAN Community, the first thing to do is to overhaul the immigration procedures to get rid of unnecessary regulations. Along with the growing terrorism and crimes conducted by some foreign tourists, at the same time foreign workforce working in Thailand for many years without having any crime records are unfairly treated as if they are criminals when scrutinized in the immigration process. Legally holding one year work permits, skilled workers are subject to a fine of 2000 baht if they fail to report every 90 days even if 8 days late, or wait the entire day with big crowds in queue to lodge a "Ninety" day report, only at the Changwattana immigration office. Such a procedure may definitely affect Thailand's productivity since foreign workers also contribute to Thailand's economy. The 90-day report should be eased to allow reporting at nearby immigration offices instead of rather than at only place, Chaingwatana, thus wasting valuable working time. A Computerized Immigration Assessment System should be prioritized and developed before distributing tablet computers to students. Utilizing tablet computers as text books can have another negative effect. Students who are heavily dependent on calculators become weaker in Mathematics. Likewise, when technical problems occur in the tablets, digital generations may not be able to write even basic alphabets as they use only the touch screen and lack practice in writing anything manually. When digital technology has technical problems, everything may have

to start again from zero. In contrast, students from neighboring ASEAN countries who use traditional learning methods may be better off in terms of Math and English which are very important subjects for future generations.

However, what seems to be positive for people to people connectivity is prioritized connectivity in terms of culture and education. This means development of ASEAN Virtual Learning Resource Centers, Develop ICT Skill Standards (ICT), and ASEAN Community Building Program (Culture, Education) (Master Plan of ASEAN Connectivity ASEAN Secretariat 2010). If ASEAN Connectivity really opens channels for think tanks, academicians, political scientists, media professionals, it will be better for ASEAN citizens instead of business-minded politicians selling their national resources as if they are business products.

The ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee ACCC) was also set up according to the ASEAN Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity by leaders at the 17th ASEAN Summit in October 2010. ASEAN External Relations from June 2010 to May 2011 include: ASEAN-Australia, ASEAN-Canada, ASEAN-China, ASEAN-European Union, ASEAN-India, ASEAN-Japan, ASEAN-Republic of Korea, ASEAN-New Zealand, ASEAN-Russia, ASEAN-United States, ASEAN-Pakistan, ASEAN-APT, East Asian Summit (EAS) ASEAN Education Ministers Meeting, ASEAN-Germany, ASEAN-Gulf Cooperation Council; ASEAN-Europe Meeting; ASEAN-Asian Development Bank (ADB); ASEAN-MERCOSUR; and ASEAN-UNESCO (ASEAN in the Global Community Annual Report, 2011). From these hundreds of meetings, it is not sure how well the ASEAN Community can benefit. ASEAN has been notorious for being a talk-shop, an opportunity for state leaders to display unity and harmony by such activities as playing golf and singing ASEAN tunes. There seems to be no records which document efforts to implement institutional mechanisms for welfare systems.

Despite officially hailing a single Economic Community based on competitive advantages over one another, there appears to be bilateral free trade agreements under the disguise of one single market, creating a loophole for ASEAN leaders, allowing deviation from a single community. The Master Plan prioritized projects do not touch upon political security nor economic security of ASEAN citizens.

7. Disparities and Political, Socio-Economic Gaps within ASEAN

Wide and growing disparities within ASEAN are not promising for the effectiveness of the future ASEAN Community. In terms of political development, ASEAN citizens rank among the bottom half of global citizens in selecting government and engaging in freedom of expression. In terms of "political stability and absence of violence", disparities within ASEAN countries are very wide. According to an ESCAP report (2007), from 1996 to 2006 World Governance Indicators, Brunei Darussalam (92.8) and Singapore which is not a democratic country (94.7) were politically very stable in 2006, in contrast with the Philippines (11.1), Indonesia (14.9) and Thailand (16.3). However, Thailand and Philippines do well in "voice and accountability" due to extensive freedom of expression and media freedom. The lowest rankings were Lao People's Democratic Republic (6.3), Vietnam (8.2). Myanmar ranks amongst the bottom five percent of all countries on

all good governance dimensions and it is even last on "voice and accountability", according to the data availability in percentage by key indicator and ASEAN Members, 1990 -2006. (World Bank, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996-2007, http://www.info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007). In terms of rule of law, the best ASEAN country in 2006 is Singapore with a ranking of 95.2, whereas Indonesia (23.3), Lao s(17.1) and Myanmar (3.8) have very low percentile ranks. (Daniel Kaufman, Aart Kraay and Mastruzzi, Governance Matter IV: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators 1996-2006, World Bank, July 2007 (WPS4280). p.32)

On income disparity among ASEAN nations, the percentage of population living under \$2 a day from 2000-2008 (Human Development 2009) is Cambodia at 57.8 percent, Indonesia at 54.6 percent, Lao PDR at 76.9 percent, Malaysia at 7.8 percent, Philippines at 45 percent, Vietnam at 48.4 percent, and Thailand at 11.5 percent. Data from Myanmar is not accessible but Singapore presents well at zero percent. Myanmar's data limitation might cause major constraints in development process. In terms of economic benefits from migration to ASEAN countries clouded by concerns over social costs and unintended consequences of migration policies, there is no solid administrative framework for managing migrants and ASEAN Migration Policy has yet to be enhanced. There are ASEAN agreed documents on migrant issues, but ASEAN leaders do not mention international instruments developed specially for migrants, such as International Convention on the Protection of Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families which entered into force on July 1 2003. The Philippines is the only country that has ratified the Convention, while Cambodia and Indonesia have signed (United Nations Treaties Series, Vol. 2220, No. 39481). ASEAN decision makers should understand the important pros and cons of migration, poverty and development in shaping future ASEAN Community. International Labour Organization has calculated that GDP per capita differential between Singapore and Cambodia is 25 percent in 15 years, and a reduction of 50% will occur in 34 years. (UNESCAP Executive Summer, 2007). The labor productivity of Singapore was by far highest in the ASEAN region, more than double that of Malaysia and almost three and a half times that of Thailand, the second and third best performing on the scores. The contrast of of Singapore and Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia is even starker, the labor productivity in 2005 of the Vietnam is 10 percent, Myanmar 9 percent and Cambodia 6 percent respectively (UNESCAP Executive Summary, Bangkok 2007).

8. Analysis on ASEAN from its inception to the present and future

ASEAN from its inception, as an elite group, focused on states only, not people. The need for NGOs and civil society to be included in ASEAN summits has been critical in shifting the development paradigm towards ASEAN Community. ASEAN in the recent past, human rights issues, and demands for democratic reforms seems to be a threat to certain governments, especially those of communist and socialist origin. Including civil society in the ASEAN Forum is still a controversial issue in ASEAN.

Kraft (2001) posits in "Unofficial Diplomacy in Southeast Asia: The Role of ASEAN ISIS" that "NGO networks have organized conferences, symposia, and protest actions framed within

the security or development context, but their conferences and symposia are censored by certain governments and vice versa, the civil society tends to see governments as their opponents" (P.136). ASEAN institutional mechanisms are still limited in handling people-centered issues. Kavi Chongkittavorn raises the role of NGOs in ASEAN in an article in the Nation, writing that "civil society in other countries also face similar challenges because the governments in power continue to view them as threats or trouble makers with links with hostile foreign governments or organizations providing funding". ASEAN governments try to deny citizen rights to form and join civil groups as well as limit their operations and activities. In a recent ASEAN forum in Cambodia, as the chair of ASEAN, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen displayed his finest brinksmanship in handling the engagement with the ASEAN-based civil society organizations at the recent ASEAN summit in Phnom Penh by selecting hand- picked people and separating NGO from the elitists. Within ASEAN, Cambodia was not alone as Vietnam used a similar approach during its 2010 chair, separating independent and government-sponsored non-government organizations but with greater emphasis on the latter. (Chongkittavorn, 2012). Such vivid examples prove that for ASEAN to achieve One Vision, One Community, One Identity seems to be just a dream conjured by state-centered elitists. To create a true ASEAN Community, ASEAN elitists need to allow input from diverse ranges of people. Concrete institutional mechanisms for ASEAN Elitists has yet to develop from the top down policy making structure. Widening socio economic gaps within members has made it more difficult to coordinate policy direction on common grounds. With different paces of development, shaping ASEAN Community and decision making by so-called ASEAN elite groups depends on the presidential level. ASEAN country leaders must understand the real threats to their country as well as the region as a whole.

Difficulty in closer cooperation in ASEAN in its inception was due mainly to security threats. The Spratly Islands dispute among ASEAN countries with China as chief aggressor remains unsolved. Bilateral territorial disputes between the border area of Cambodia and Thailand remain unsolved. ASEAN way of refraining from interfering does not work, unlike EU which has strong backing from NATO. (Institutionalized NATO-EU Strategic Relationship, November 2011).

On the security front, it is expected that US, China and Japan will remain major powers, but struggling for power status in a more complex connectivity. ASEAN Community appears not to be in readiness for war but seems to be preparing for the prosperity arising from cooperation; nonetheless, ASEAN may secretly be engaged in weaving webs of interconnectivity through ASEAN blocs, bilateral agreement in all aspects. "China shows vested interest in engaging two major powers, the US and Japan, especially with the possibility of extending relations to Taiwan. But in contrast with China's One China Policy, the US-Japan Defence Alliance for Taiwan is certainly unacceptable to China. US Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act which is contrary to One China Policy. On the other hand if US and Japan alliance breaks up, Japan has to continue alone and it might definitely choose a nuclear option again." (Foreign Affairs, Volume 75, Number 5 September/October 1997)

ASEAN has to engage the West, especially the United States as a World Police or as the powerful and unique decision maker at the highest level in the world. An example is the US's

objection to early Chinese membership of World Trade Organization (WTO), while China's emerging economic power eventually dominates and spreads around the world in trade. However, the Chaingmai Initiative to include Japan, Korea, and China as ASEAN Plus Three has aimed to counter balance US dominance in ASEAN (The Journal of Asian Studies, 64, 2 May 2005).

9. Conclusion

ASEAN was born from fear of security threats. Now and then, ASEAN still will be making alliances, increasing cooperation to build a single community for the same reasons. The ASEAN way of Constructive Engagement Doctrine, Non Confrontational Approach, Non Interference in the National Sovereignty of other member countries will remain the same. The major tools will be enhancing cooperation to become an ASEAN Community. At the same time, different political cultures and systems, different paces of economic development, aggressive territorial possession and strong nationalism and competition among member countries still occur and remain. The challenges for ASEAN leaders are to educate their decision makers to learn Western political theories.

ASEAN has to constructively engage members and extensively make alliances with its dialogue partners and all prevailing blocs from other parts of the world in all arenas, so as not to float or sink one country alone whenever security threats and economic crises prevail. Hence, the would-be ASEAN community can do what Kishore Mahbubani said, "float and sink" together. Security alliances, economic cooperation, interconnectedness, all these are crucial in this contemporary digital world and all this has arisen from fear, not brotherhood love.

In the guise of the ASEAN Single Market in Economic Community, each country has been secretly conducting closed door bilateral free trade agreements in many ASEAN meetings and this is a paradox. Likewise, ASEAN Security Community may swing in the wind of changes towards more favorable major powers, forming bilateral alliances, trilateral alliance, forming complex security blocs woven like a web, perhaps preparing for the mixed and borderless Cyber-Digital-War or Cyber-Nuclear Third World War in the future.

To what extent the ASEAN Community can unite, to what extent ASEAN leaders can empower its people to participate in problem solving at regional level, whether Asian Values can be a magic power to maintain One Vision, One Identity, One Community or not is the next chapter for ASEAN to readjust its multifarious rules and regulations for ASEAN Community. It is hopeful that ASEAN Vision is not just a power struggle of ASEAN leaders, but ensures that 590 million citizens live in peace and harmony, overcoming all security threats from political, economic and socio-cultural spheres.

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