ASEAN and the Changing Geopolitics of Southeast Asia

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Outline of the Lecture

- ASEAN and its regional credentials
- The enlargement of ASEAN
- The institutional development of ASEAN
- The ASEAN Community initiative
- The ASEAN Charter
- ASEAN and East Asian geopolitics
ASEAN and its regional credentials

- Geopolitical structure before ASEAN
  - Confrontation between Malaysia and Indonesia in the 1960s
  - The threat of Vietnam in mainland Southeast Asia
  - Domestic instability and security problems

- The ‘ASEAN Way’
  - Consensual decision-making
  - Informal consultation
  - Respect of sovereignty
  - Non-interference
  - Renunciation of the threat or the use of force

- Enshrined in the TAC (1976)
The enlargement of ASEAN

- Original five ASEAN members (1967)
  - Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines
- First enlargement of ASEAN (1984)
  - Brunei Darussalam
- Second enlargement of ASEAN (1995)
  - Vietnam
- Third enlargement of ASEAN (1997)
  - The Laos, Myanmar
- Fourth enlargement of ASEAN (1999)
  - Cambodia
The enlargement of ASEAN
The enlargement of ASEAN: pros and cons

- A more diversified ASEAN
  - Maritime ASEAN → Maritime and mainland Southeast Asia
  - Anti-communism → Ideological neutrality (and irrelevance)
  - The economic gap between rich and poor members increased
    - The CLMV countries

- Myanmar: a burden or an asset?
  - Asset: ASEAN as a truly Southeast Asian organization; reaffirming the ASEAN’s commitment to non-interference
  - Burden: Military Junta in ASEAN negatively influenced the ASEAN’s relationship with the US and the EU

- Pre-accession coup in Cambodia
  - Coup in July 1997, the first PM Ranariddh fled the country
  - General election held in July 1998
  - A coalition government involved Hun Sen and Ranariddh was set up in Nov 1998, before Cambodia joined ASEAN
The institutional development of ASEAN

1967 Bangkok Declaration
- Annual ministerial meeting (AMM), regular and special meetings
- ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC)
- National secretariats in each member state

1976 Bali Summit
- ASEAN Secretariat (including the secretary-general) established

1977 Kuala Lumpur Summit
- Economic minister’s meeting: ASEAN Economic Committee

1992 Singapore Summit
- The ASEAN Summit
- ASEAN economic ministers’ meeting (AEMM)
- ASEAN finance ministers’ meeting (AFMM)
- Secretary-General strengthened
The ASEAN Community initiative

- The Bali Summit in 2003 signed ‘Bali Concord II’
  - To establish the ASEAN Community by 2020

- The ASEAN Community
  - A three-pillar structure
  - ASEAN Security Community (ASC) → ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)
  - ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)
  - ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)

- The deadline to achieve the ASEAN Community rescheduled to the end of 2015
The ASEAN Charter

- Goals: to confer legal personality and establish a new institutional framework of ASEAN
  - Signed in 2007 and enacted in 2008

- The Charter reaffirms the key principles of ASEAN, including the respect of sovereignty, non-interferences, peaceful settlement of disputes, etc.

- A new institutional structure of ASEAN based on the initiative of ASEAN Community
  - ASEAN Summit, ASEAN Coordinating Council, three ASEAN Community Councils, ASEAN Secretary-General, Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN, ASEAN National Secretariats
ASEAN and East Asian geopolitics

Geopolitics in East and Southeast Asia
- The commitment of the US
- The (economic) influences/assistance of Japan
- The rise of China
- Growing interests of other regional powers (such as India and Australia) in ASEAN
ASEAN and East Asian geopolitics

The Dialogue Partners
- The Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) mechanism
- Involving Japan, South Korea, China, India, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Canada, the US, and the EU
- Format: ‘ASEAN+10’ and ‘ASEAN+1’

The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Process
- The East Asian Financial Crisis led to the East Asian grouping of APT in 1997
- ‘East Asian Free Trade Area’ and ‘East Asian Community’ were initially stated as future goals
- The APT Summits and the APT Ministerial Meetings
The East Asian Summit
- Initially known as ‘ASEAN Plus Six’
- Proposed by the East Asian Study Group in 2002
- First summit held in 2005
- EAS founding members include ASEAN-10, China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia, and New Zealand

EAS enlargement
- Russia was invited as an observer in 2005
- The US and Russia formally joined the EAS in 2010
- The US President Obama attended the summit in 2011

‘The strength of the weakness’