New Zealand and ASEAN Relations

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In its annual review of the global strategic environment, and this was published before Donald Trump's unexpected victory in the US presidential election, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) stated that "[t]he year to mid-2016 suggested that the global architecture was on the cusp of profound change." Contributing to this sense was the UK's vote to leave the European Union; the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and other financial and trade relationships which challenge the post-WWII Bretton Woods system; China's increasingly assertive behaviour in Asia and elsewhere; Russia's projection "of force into the Middle East for the first time" since the collapse of the Soviet Union; a US which had become cautious about "deep entanglements in the Middle East and … careful not to overplay its hand in Asia"; and a Europe trying "to manage internal difficulties and to address external challenges to its security, prosperity and values".[1] The prospects for 2017 did not look any better. This year, it was contended, is "likely to see more shifting of the geopolitical deck of cards, an extension of the strategic unease that set in last year, and the frantic drive by major powers in all regions to set new rules of the game and revive old ones."[2]

For some analysts, this sense of 'strategic unease' had already set in some time ago, along with concerns about the robustness of the prevailing, liberal, international order and how long it might continue to hold sway. Chester Crocker, for example, has argued that the "high-water mark" of post-Cold War liberal internationalism was reached in the mid-2000s and that since then the world has become increasingly adrift and disordered

* This paper was submitted on 30 April 2017.

[1] The International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey 2016. The Annual Review of World Affairs* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 7. A rather more sanguine view of the situation in Southeast Asia was apparent in the equivalent publication by ASEAN the year before. Although it was recognised that a range of both traditional and non-traditional security threats "continue to pose significant risks and may threaten the region's economic growth and prosperity", nonetheless there has been positive progress in the realm of political-security co-operation "with various ASEAN-led mechanisms already in place to effectively deal with emerging issues and circumstances." 'Effectively' would not be everyone's adverb of choice, however. *ASEAN Security Outlook 2015*, pp. 9 and 80, http://asean.org/?static_post=asean-security-outlook-2015 (accessed 21 April 2017).

[2] *Strategic Survey 2016*, p. 10.

due to what he refers to as "a toxic mixture of normative issues and power dynamics."[3] Brantly Womack has a similar start date in mind, and perhaps sums up the various changes and transformations most succinctly, when he contends that it is uncertainty which "is the key characteristic of international life since 2008."[4]

New Zealand is certainly cognisant of the changed strategic environment; both globally and regionally in the Asia-Pacific. In an address in Wellington last year, New Zealand's then Defence Minister, Gerry Brownlee, contended that "[t]he last 15 years has seen the international strategic environment become increasingly uncertain and unstable. If we ever were in a benign strategic environment we most certainly are no longer."[5] Brownlee's speech was given two months after the release of New Zealand's *Defence White Paper 2016* which itself recognised that "tensions in the region [i.e. Asia] … are now greater than they were five years ago, [and] are a cause for concern." The White Paper goes on to note increases in defence expenditure; changes in military posture; and a "shifting distribution of power" which has led to Asia being "the focus of a complex interplay of global interests."[6]

Similarly, in its latest *Strategic Intentions* document, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) recognises that whilst there are also positive aspects to the changing world (for example, "global interconnectedness" and "a global popular culture"), the relationships between major powers are undergoing a transition. Moreover, "the emergence of nationalist trends in some quarters will place multilateralism under pressure" and "[a]dherence to global rules-based architecture, rooted in values sympathetic to New Zealand's interests, is no longer assured."[7]

Of all the regional and global changes, it is those concerning shifts in the distribution of power and the nature of the relationships between major powers which lie at the heart of the contemporary strategic environment in the Asia-Pacific and are of greatest concern to New Zealand and the ASEAN states. Whilst these have not yet fundamentally affected the New Zealand-ASEAN relationship, they have certainly influenced elements of it and demonstrate the extent to which New Zealand and its ASEAN partners are like-minded states (even if their political systems and some of their values are not always alike).

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[3] Chester A. Crocker, "The Strategic Dilemma of a World Adrift", *Survival*, Volume 57, Number 1, February-March 2015, pp. 10 and 9.

[4] Brantly Womack, "Asymmetric parity: US–China relations in a multinodal world", *International Affairs*, Volume 92, Issue 6, November 2016, p. 1477. He chooses 2008 because of the global financial crisis which, he contends, marked the end of the post-Cold War era. *Ibid*., p. 1466.

[5] Gerry Brownlee, *Address to NZ Institute of International Affairs, Wellington*, 25 August, 2016, https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/address-nz-institute-international-affairs-wellington (accessed 21 April 2017).

[6] Ministry of Defence, *Defence White Paper 2016* (Wellington: Ministry of Defence, 2016), p. 10.

[7] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020*, p. 4.

These shifts in power distribution, and the character of major power relations, are not new of course: rather, there has been an intensification. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of China and the US and, to a lesser extent, China and Japan. When combined with increased military expenditure and arms procurement, often driven by concerns over maritime security and a limited degree of 'internal balancing' by some of the region's states, these shifts have heightened the security dilemma which is beginning to prevail.[8]

Once a security dilemma is in existence, it can be hard to escape from it in the absence of mutual understanding and effective regional institutions that can encourage openness and generate confidence. From New Zealand's perspective, two of the ASEAN-led elements of the regional security architecture – the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-plus (ADMM-Plus) – effectively function as confidence building measures as they "help mitigate the risk of regional conflict by bringing states together, entrenching habits of dialogue and encouraging practical military cooperation".[9]

Whether or not they are sufficient to mitigate the prevailing security dilemma, in view of the power struggle which appears to be developing, remains to be seen. However, from New Zealand's perspective, the ARF, ADMM-Plus as well as the East Asia Summit (EAS) are very much part of the ASEAN-led regional security architecture on which New Zealand sets great store.[10] Indeed, New Zealand sees ASEAN itself as being at the "core" of regional security mechanisms[11] and is fully supportive

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[8] The security dilemma concerns the impossibility of states being able to differentiate "between measures other states take to defend themselves and measures they may be taking to increase their capability for aggression." The effects of getting it wrong are so serious, however, that "the dictates of prudence pressure each state to adjust its military measures in response to a worst-case view of the measures taken by others." Thus, as each move is regarded as being a potential threat, "even a system in which all states seek only their own defence [i.e. they are security seekers] will tend to produce competitive accumulations of military strength." Barry Buzan, *An Introduction to Strategic Studies: Military Technology and International Relations* (London: Macmillan/ International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1987), p. 78. These reciprocal counter-responses … lead to increased regional tensions, diminished security and "self-fulfilling prophecies about the danger of one's security environment." Thomas J. Christensen, "China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia", *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999), pp. 49-50. As a result, one could expect to see the emergence of spirals of tension.

[9] *Defence White Paper 2016*, p. 40.

[10] In *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020* the EAS is described as "the premier leaders-led dialogue on regional security challenges". *Ibid*., p. 13. Interestingly, the MFAT document makes no reference to the ADMM-Plus when discussing how regional security and stability can be brought about, whilst the *Defence White Paper 2016* mentions the ARF and ADMM-Plus, but not the EAS.

[11] *Defence White Paper 2016*, p. 39.

of the notion of 'ASEAN centrality'.[12] In an important sense, ASEAN, and an ASEAN-centred regional security architecture, can be viewed as being closely linked to New Zealand's search for security and prosperity since they contribute to the regional stability on which New Zealand depends. As the *Defence White Paper 2016* notes, "New Zealand has a critical interest in the maintenance of security in the Asia-Pacific region as well as in growing and expanding its relationships."[13] Thus, "[m]aximising New Zealand's place in the political and security regional architecture" including the ARF and EAS "will be important" in the future.[14]

New Zealand's interest in a stable Asia-Pacific, and the contribution towards that which ASEAN can make, is not a new development precipitated by the global and regional changes noted above. The relationship between New Zealand and the Association effectively began back in 1975 when New Zealand became ASEAN's second Dialogue Partner (Australia was the first) and one of the first Dialogue Partners to hold summits, beginning in 1977.[15] At various points over the last forty-two years the importance of a "shared past" has been mentioned and the furthering of co-operation noted.[16] New Zealand's active participation in the ARF, ADMM-Plus, and EAS has also been recognised.[17]

From New Zealand's perspective, its participation in such fora, which lie at the centre of the regional security architecture, is vital if it is to have any say in the shaping of that architecture and, concomitantly, in the construction of a secure, stable Asia-Pacific region. As MFAT makes clear, if New Zealand's security is to be protected and advanced then it is essential that it is included in, and able to influence, the deci-

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[12] In her contribution to *ASEAN Focus*, the New Zealand Ambassador to ASEAN, Stephanie Lee, observed that "New Zealand has always firmly supported ASEAN's centrality in the regional architecture." Ambassador Stephanie Lee, "ASEAN and New Zealand after the first 40 years: Supporting Centrality and Integration", in *ASEAN Focus. Special Issue on ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*, January 2016, p. 22.

[13] *Defence White Paper 2016*, p. 10.

[14] *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020*, p. 2.

[15] ASEAN Secretariat's Information Paper, *Overview of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations*, p. 1, http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2015/November/ASEAN-Australia/Overview%20ASEAN-New%20Zealand%20DR_as%20of%205%20November%202015%20-%20Clean.pdf (accessed 27 April 2017). For a history of the founding of New Zealand-ASEAN relations, see Malcolm McKinnon, *New Zealand and ASEAN: A History* (Wellington: Asia New Zealand Foundation, 2016).

[16] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, *New Zealand's ASEAN Partnership: One pathway To Ten Nations*, July 2013, p. 3. This document is also referred to as *Opening Doors to ASEAN*. See also *Joint Declaration for ASEAN – New Zealand Comprehensive Partnership*, Ha Noi, 22 July 2010, p. 1, https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/_securedfiles/Aid-Prog-docs/ASEAN/ASEAN-Joint-Declaration.pdf (accessed 27 April 2017); and Brook Barrington, "New Zealand – ASEAN 40th Anniversary", *New Zealand International Review*, Volume 40, Issue 4, July/August 2015, p. 2.

[17] *Overview of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations*, p. 2.

sions which are made in these fora.[18] In essence, New Zealand sees ASEAN and the ASEAN-led regional security architecture as being at the centre of the rules-based regional order. As a small state, New Zealand has always placed a premium on international order because "it provides protection by disciplining the exercise of national power through international law, custom and convention, and accords the same rights to all countries regardless of their size."[19] There is little in this statement that would be disagreed with by anyone in the various ASEAN capitals. Indeed, in *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* the members commit themselves to realising "[a] rules-based community that fully adheres to … [the] principles of international law" and a "region that resolve differences and disputes by peaceful means, including refraining from the threat or use of force and adopting peaceful dispute settlement mechanisms".[20] For ASEAN, the basis for this regional order is provided by its Charter and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC); the importance of both of which has been regularly recognised by New Zealand.[21]

Also viewed by New Zealand as contributing to a rules-based regional order, specifically in relation to the territorial disputes in the South China Sea in which four ASEAN members have claims, are the 2002 ASEAN-China Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the putative Code of Conduct (COC). While adopting the position of all outside parties that it does not take a position on the claims of the states involved, New Zealand has consistently emphasised the importance of the dispute being settled peacefully. In the wake of the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling on the case "In The Matter Of The South China Sea" in July 2016, Brownlee made it clear that New Zealand "opposes actions that undermine peace and erode trust" and that it is supportive of the "rights of states to access dispute settlement mechanisms in managing complex issues."[22]

Another area of commonality between New Zealand and ASEAN in terms of a regional security order is New Zealand's support for ASEAN's Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ); ensuring the effective implementation

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[18] See *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020*, p. 17.

[19] *Defence White Paper 2016*, p. 20.

[20] The ASEAN Secretariat, *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together* (Jakarta: ASEAN Secretariat, 2015), p. 14.

[21] See, for example, *Joint ASEAN-New Zealand Leaders' Statement on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations: Advancing our Strategic Partnership towards greater mutual benefit and prosperity*, p. 1, http://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/ASEAN-NZ-Joint-Leaders-Statement-FINAL-clean-1.pdf (accessed 28 April 2017).

[22] Brownlee went on to say that New Zealand is also supportive of the rights of those states "to have the outcomes of such processes respected" and to express the hope that now the tribunal has reached its conclusions "the parties can use it as a basis to work together to resolve their differences." He concluded his comments on the subject by injecting a note of realism acknowledging that the problem was likely to continue "to test the international legal system." Brownlee, *Address to NZ Institute of International Affairs, Wellington*.

of which (and its attendant plans of action) is part of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) Blueprint 2025 contained within *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*.[23] In the *Plan of Action To Implement The Joint Statement for ASEAN – New Zealand Strategic Partnership 2016-2020*, New Zealand and ASEAN have made a commitment to "[s]upport the implementation of the Treaty … as an effective instrument in promoting and strengthening nuclear non-proliferation and note the ongoing efforts of State Parties to the Treaty … and the nuclear weapons states [NWS] to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the signing and ratification of the Protocol to that Treaty."[24] Given its long-standing, principled, opposition to nuclear proliferation and support for nuclear disarmament, New Zealand could try to lobby the NWS to sign the protocol. New Zealand certainly welcomes the commitment made by the ASEAN members in the APSC Blueprint 2025 to "[p]romote an enhanced role" for the Treaty and its State Parties "in relevant multilateral fora and frameworks on disarmament and non-proliferation, including the Review Conferences of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons [NPT]".[25] The *Plan of Action 2016-2020* specifically mentions the desire of New Zealand and ASEAN to further co-operation relating to disarmament and arms control as well as the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) through the ARF and the United Nations (UN).[26]

Also listed in the *Plan of Action* are a number of Non-Traditional Security (NTS) issues in which co-operation between the two parties can either be enhanced or explored. These include Counter-Terrorism; the humanitarian aspects of landmines and "other explosive remnants of war issues in the region"; Transnational Crime (TNC); cyber security; maritime security; and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (which is actually listed under the sub-heading of Socio-Cultural Cooperation).[27] That a range of NTS issues have been identified as areas of political-security co-operation in the *Plan of Action* is not surprising. ASEAN has attached increasing significance to NTS over the last decade or so and it has been an area in which New Zealand-ASEAN co-operation has been deepening recently.

This co-operation has occurred through specific bilateral mechanisms, for example, the ASEAN-New Zealand Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism as well as under the auspices of the EAS, ARF, ADMM-Plus,

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[23] *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*, p. 44.

[24] *Plan of Action To Implement The Joint Statement for ASEAN – New Zealand Strategic Partnership 2016-2020*, p. 2, http://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2015/November/27th-summit/statement/PoA%20to%20Implement%20the%20Joint%20Statement%20for%20ASEAN-NZ%20Startegic%20Partnership%20....pdf (accessed 28 April 2017).

[25] *ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together*, p. 44.

[26] *Plan of Action 2016-2020*, p. 3.

[27] See *Ibid*., pp. 3, 4 and 7.

and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum.[28] That much of this co-operation has revolved round maritime security and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief/risk management is indicative of the fact that, from New Zealand's point of view, the most important security challenges it faces are Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and, sadly, natural disasters in which it has particular expertise. New Zealand, it has been argued, could work very well with ASEAN on IUU fishing based on its own experiences in the Southern Ocean.[29]

The Association's importance to New Zealand lies not just in the realm of security co-operation in its various forms. The economic dimension of the relationship has become of increasing significance; particularly in recent years. That ASEAN should be important to New Zealand in trade terms is unsurprising given that so much of its foreign policy is (and has always been) driven by a trade agenda.

In the year ending December 2016, total two way trade between New Zealand and ASEAN as a group was some NZ$14.4bn (up from NZ$13.1bn in 2011). When compared with individual countries, ASEAN was ranked as New Zealand's 5th largest trade partner for exports and 4th largest for imports. In addition to the trade in goods and services, ASEAN visitor and migrant numbers are also important and have increased in numbers too: the former from 142,000 in 2015 to 185,680 last year and the latter to 10,247, up from 10,135 in 2015. As a percentage of permanent migrants to New Zealand, those from ASEAN equalled 8.1% in 2016.[30]

Underpinning, and helping to expand, the trade relationship has been the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (AANZFTA) which was signed in 2009 and entered into force on 1 January 2010. Overall, it is thought that the AANZFTA has helped to increase New Zealand's trade with ASEAN by 25% since 2010.[31] Despite this increase, however, there is a feeling in New Zealand that the FTA has not been quite as beneficial as had been hoped. Not only have concerns been expressed that exporters are failing to make the most of the advantages the agreement offers, New Zealand's Trade Minister, Todd McClay, has contended that they "also face an increasing number of non-tariff barriers … such as import quotas, subsidies, customs delays and technical barriers".[32] Recognition of some of these sorts of difficulties is apparent in the commit-

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[28] For details of some of these areas, see *Overview of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations*, p. 2 and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)*, https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/south-east-asia/association-of-south-east-asian-nations-asean/ (accessed 28 April 2017).

[29] Confidential comments provided in a Track II briefing which the author participated in.

[30] StatsNZ, *ASEAN – New Zealand trade, investment, and migration: Year ended December 2016*, http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/industry_sectors/imports_and_exports/trade-investment-migration-factsheets.aspx (accessed 28 April 2017).

[31] Radio New Zealand News, "South East Asia FTA to be reviewed", 17 October 2016, http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/business/315869/south-east-asia-fta-to-be-reviewed (accessed 4 April 2017).

[32] Todd McClay cited *ibid*.

ment in the *Plan of Action 2016-2020* to "[c]onclude AANZFTA's built-in agenda areas, including rules of origin, non-tariff measures … and services and investment".[33] New Zealand is also conducting a review of the FTA which will form part of a "comprehensive review" by all parties occurring this year.[34]

With regard to wider regional economic integration, under the *Plan of Action* New Zealand and the ASEAN members have also committed themselves to "[p]ursue and implement a modern, comprehensive, high-quality and mutually beneficial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership [RCEP] agreement … [that] offers significant improvements on ASEAN +1 FTAs".[35] This very much fits in with one of New Zealand's strategic objectives listed in *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020* which is to increase market access for New Zealand and further regional economic integration. Indeed, trade and regional economic integration are regarded as the "key to New Zealand's future prosperity" and thus implementing the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and successfully concluding a RCEP "are priorities."[36] Now that the US has withdrawn from the TPP, and it is not clear yet whether or not the remaining signatories will be able to press ahead in the US's absence (as New Zealand is in favour of), the RCEP will assume greater significance for New Zealand. The slow progress towards its successful conclusion is an obvious source of concern therefore.

From the preceding discussion it can easily be inferred that New Zealand and ASEAN relations have become much denser since New Zealand became a Dialogue Partner back in the 1970s. The development of the relationship has been marked, and furthered, by various statements, meetings and plans. These include the *Joint Declaration for ASEAN-New Zealand Comprehensive Partnership* issued in Ha Noi in 2010; New Zealand's *ASEAN Partnership: One Pathway to Ten Nations* strategy released in July 2013 (the first NZ Inc strategy aimed at a whole region); the *Joint ASEAN-New Zealand Leaders' Statement on the 40th Anniversary of ASEAN-New Zealand Dialogue Relations* (which was issued in November 2015 following the 40th Anniversary Commemorative Summit and elevation of the relationship to a Strategic Partnership); and, of course, the *Plan of Action 2016-2020* which is intended to "implement the shared ambition for a deeper, stronger, and mutually beneficial … relationship with a focus on areas where ASEAN and New Zealand have expertise and mutual interests."[37] In addition to some of the areas of political-security and economic co-operation already discussed, the *Plan of Action* also refers to socio-cultural cooperation

[33] *Plan of Action 2016-2020*, p. 5. The *Plan of Action* also covers economic co-operation at the micro-level with New Zealand committing itself to transferring know-how and expertise so as to further commercial opportunities which can aid economic development in the ASEAN members. *Ibid*., pp. 5-6.

[34] "South East Asia FTA to be reviewed".

[35] *Plan of Action 2016-2020*, p. 5.

[36] *Strategic Intentions 2016-2020*, p. 14.

[37] *Plan of Action 2016-2020*, p. 1.

including education and leadership. Co-operation in this sector is meant to "[p]romote stronger people-to-people connections, and build greater awareness of ASEAN-New Zealand relations for current and future ASEAN and New Zealand leaders" and is part of the People Strategy; one of the two key strategies to increase cooperation.[38]

The *Plan of Action 2016-2020* will provide the framework for functional co-operation between ASEAN and New Zealand over the next few years and ensuring the full and effective implementation of the measures outlined in the plan will be a major part of the relationship. From Wellington's perspective, it is essential that the *Plan of Action* "delivers a step-up in shared ambition and a more mature level of reciprocity from ASEAN."[39] Hitherto, the relationship has sometimes appeared asymmetrical with New Zealand (and its Trans-Tasman partner, Australia) being expected to be the provider of aid, finance, and expertise whilst the Association and its members are the recipients or beneficiaries of it.

Having said this though, New Zealand will have no qualms about continuing its long-standing commitment to strengthening the Association; assisting in its community-building efforts; and helping with the integration of the less wealthy members (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam). These are all aspects which are regularly referred to in the various statements as well as plans of action. As ASEAN displays an increasing level of divisiveness, often related to the situation in the South China Sea, anything which New Zealand can do to support the Association's cohesiveness will be important.[40] As in the past, there may also be occasions when the domestic politics of individual ASEAN members conflict with the values New Zealand holds (for example, the military coup in Thailand in 2014 and the violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar in 2016) so New Zealand will need to make sure its responses to such developments do not affect the relationship with the wider region.

Not only will New Zealand in the future need to support ASEAN community-building, it will also need to reiterate its support for, and commitment to, the idea of ASEAN's centrality in the regional security architecture as well as the inclusive nature of the ASEAN-led fora. Amidst shifts in the balance of power and challenges to the existing international rules-based order, there now appear to be challenges to the ASEAN-led regional security architecture emanating from Moscow and Beijing.

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[38] Ibid. The other is the Prosperity Strategy which supports "ASEAN's and the region's economic development, as well as regional economic integration". Ibid.

[39] Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *New Zealand Mission to ASEAN*, https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/countries-and-regions/south-east-asia/indonesia/new-zealand-embassy-and-mission-to-asean/new-zealand-mission-to-asean/ (accessed 3 March 2017).

[40] Kishore Mahbubani attributes some of this divisiveness to China's behaviour which, he contends, is actually counter-productive. See Kishore Mahbubani, "Asean still the critical catalyst for China's future", *The Straits Times*, 22 November 2016, http://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/asean-still-the-critical-catalyst-for-chinas-future (accessed 28 April 2017).

Whilst, as Daljit Singh has observed, China has moved away from its earlier position of seemingly wanting to reconstruct the region's security architecture and make it more exclusively 'Asian', the approach outlined in its new White Paper *China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation*, which was issued in January this year, sees the EAS, ARF and the ADMM-Plus at the bottom of the list of its preferred mechanisms. Those at the top are the ones from which the US is excluded (i.e. ASEAN +1 and ASEAN Plus Three).[41] This would not be in New Zealand's interests. Any opportunity to reiterate New Zealand's commitment to ASEAN centrality should be taken; whether in bilateral discussions with China or at meetings such as the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue or the Xiangshan forum, for example. An opportunity to increase the high-level political and security dialogue, the goal of which is referred to in the *Plan of Action*, and perhaps also to do another stocktake of the relationship as well as set new goals, could be provided by the holding of an ASEAN-New Zealand Summit. Provision for this is included in the plan itself.[42] Since the first ASEAN-Australia Special Summit is to take place in 2018 in Australia, such a summit between New Zealand and ASEAN, which could be held in New Zealand, would not be setting a precedent.

Ultimately, of course, however important ASEAN and ASEAN centrality is to New Zealand and its security and prosperity, in the current uncertain strategic environment New Zealand cannot rely on them alone. It will also have to continue to participate in (and expand where possible) the other bilateral, mini-lateral, and multilateral relationships which together comprise the existing regional security architecture. As Singapore's Defence Minister has said, at a time of uncertainty when "the status quo has changed" all like-minded countries who "share the same platforms" need to co-operate whether in the ADMM-Plus or the Five Power Defence Arrangements.[43]

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[41] Daljit Singh, "China's White Paper on Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region and Chinese Grand Strategy", *Perspective*, Issue: 2017, No. 2, pp. 6-7.

[42] The actual wording is: "Dialogue could also include ASEAN-New Zealand Summits as appropriate and as mutually agreed". *Plan of Action 2016-2020*, p. 2.

[43] Dr. Ng Eng Hen, cited "Singapore, New Zealand hold inaugural defence ministers' meeting", *ChannelNewsAsia*, 16 January 2017, http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/singapore-new-zealand-hold-inaugural-defence-ministers-meeting-7563208 (accessed 30 April 2017).

East Asia to *New Zealand in World Affairs IV 1990-2005* and is currently working on a book on New Zealand's relations with South Asia. Research interests include ASEAN, the emerging East Asian regional security architecture, arms procurement, non-traditional security issues and New Zealand-Asia relations. Mark is a regular participant for New Zealand in the Track II process of political, economic and security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region and has been a Non-Government delegate to several Shangri-La Dialogues (most recently in 2105). He is a Fellow of the New Zealand-India Research Institute, a Senior Fellow of the Centre for Strategic Studies: New Zealand and a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).