The EU as a Security Actor in Southeast Asia

Yeo Lay Hwee

INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU), despite its recent efforts in developing a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) (renamed Common Security and Defence Policy now that the Treaty of Lisbon has entered into force), is still seen first and foremost as an economic power. Perception studies carried out throughout the East Asian region reflect limited knowledge of the European Union. In most Southeast Asian countries, EU is most commonly associated with being a trade giant, an economic power, and an economically oriented actor rather than a security actor. The EU is perceived as an important economic actor, but geographically, politically and militarily distant.[1]

In Southeast Asia, the EU has a long-standing partnership with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). This group-to-group dialogue began informally in 1972, and was formalised in 1977 with regular senior officials and ministerial meetings. Dialogue with the European Community was sought because of economic reasons—the concerns over British membership into the Community and how this would impact the market access of primary exports from ASEAN countries. The British market was then one of the most important European markets for at least three of the five ASEAN member states. The dialogue was initially aimed at achieving greater market access and arriving at a price stabilisation scheme for ASEAN's primary commodities. However, with the formalisation of the dialogue

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[1] Natalia Chaban and Martin Holland, "Perspectives on the Role of the European Union: A Study of Asian Stakeholders Opinion for Six Countries" (Stockholm, International IDEA: 2009).

and the signing of the first cooperation agreement between the European Community and the member states of ASEAN in 1980, engagement between EU and ASEAN expanded to include development cooperation, broader trade and economic dialogue.

EU-ASEAN cooperation in the last thirty-plus years has expanded in scope and depth despite the various ups and downs in the partnership. Tracing the development of this long-standing relation and the pattern of cooperation between EU and ASEAN would give us a point of entry into assessing the relevance and importance of the EU as a security actor in this region. Also crucial to the understanding and appreciation of the role of the EU in the region is the security discourse that is taking place within Europe and Southeast Asia, and the development of ESDP within the European Union. The discussions that follow will attempt to bring all these different elements together and lay out the problems and prospects of the EU's role in security matters in Southeast Asia.

An Overview of EU-ASEAN Partnership

EU-ASEAN formal ties were established in 1977 and since then both regions have developed a comprehensive dialogue that encompasses both economic and political components. Development cooperation and trade underpinned the early years of partnership but by the early 1980s, regular political dialogue between the two organisations with regard to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan became a regular feature of the ministerial meetings. The two organisations supported each other's position and condemned both Vietnam and the Soviet Union for their violation of the sovereignty of neighbouring states.

Yet, by 1990, with the end of the Cold War, and the Western euphoria over a democratic wave sweeping through Central and Eastern Europe, ASEAN and EU were at loggerheads over human rights issues and the politicisation of aid and economic cooperation policies. Relations returned to a more pragmatic course with the release of the EU's first Communication paper on Asia. The 1994 European Commission's Communication on "Towards a New Asia Strategy" underlined the need for EU to strengthen its relations with Asia in view of the economic dynamism of the region, and ASEAN, being one of the most successful regional organisations, would serve as the gateway to a stronger and broader Asia-Europe

partnership.[2] EU-ASEAN relations could serve as a cornerstone because trade and investment between the two has grown steadily over the years.

"Towards a New Asia Strategy" revealed the fundamentally "economic-oriented" approach of EU towards Asia. Its opening statement made it clear that the "main thrust of the present and future policy in Asia is related to economic matters…" and the very first overall objective was "to strengthen the Union's economic presence in Asia in order to maintain the Union's leading role in the world economy." There was no mention of the EU as a security actor, though if we try to place security in the discourse prevalent in the Union then, one could see its objectives of contributing "to the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of the law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Asia" as a "security role" to be played by the EU.

The 1997-1999 Asian financial crisis, and the enlargement of ASEAN to include Myanmar in 1997, had a dampening impact on EU-ASEAN cooperation which had been poised to take off after the 1994 strategy paper and the launch of a new trans-regional dialogue process—the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). EU-ASEAN dialogue stalled for a few years, but was quickly back on track and further deepened because of various reasons. The increasing ties that ASEAN has forged with its Northeast Asian neighbours (China, Japan and South Korea) in the midst of the financial crisis put the Southeast Asian economies quickly back on the path of economic recovery and growth. A new sense of regionalism in East Asia emerged in the aftermath of the financial crisis as Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia came to realise the extent of their interdependence, and sought closer regional cooperation with the launch of many initiatives under the ASEAN plus three (APT) process. ASEAN also sought to deepen its own integration in the midst of all these changes.

The Asian financial crisis also led to various political fallout, including the change in regime in Indonesia. The resignation of Suharto quickened the pace of democratic transition in Indonesia, and the social costs of the financial crisis resulted in a push for political reforms. The democratisation of the region opened up

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[2] Communication from the Commission, COM (94)314, "Towards a New Asia Strategy", 13 July 1994.

opportunities for new engagement. The events of September 11 and the threats of international terrorism, with the fear that Southeast Asia could become a second front in the war against terrorism, also provided the EU with new opportunities for greater involvement on non-traditional security issues of terrorism, piracy and money laundering.

The European Commission's Communication in 2003 in fact called for revitalising of EU's relations with ASEAN and the countries of Southeast Asia. This Communication identifies six strategic priorities of the EU towards ASEAN:

1. Supporting regional stability and fight against terrorism;

2. Promoting human rights, democratic principles and good governance;

3. Mainstreaming Justice and Home Affairs issues such as migration, organised crimes, and piracy;

4. Injecting a new dynamism into regional trade and investment relations;

5. Continuing to support the development of less prosperous countries; and

6. Intensifying dialogue and cooperation in specific policy areas.[3]

This new phase of EU-ASEAN relations was driven no longer purely by economics. The EU support of regional integration in ASEAN and political and security dialogue became an important component of the partnership. However, this does not necessarily imply that ASEAN sees the EU as a serious security actor in the region. This in part is because of the different conceptions of security.

How is Security Understood?

Security in Europe, particularly since the end of the Cold War, has been seen in a much broader context than the realist state-centric view of national security: territorial defence against threats from another state. Already in the late 1980s, scholars like Ole Waever

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[3] Communication from the Commission, COM (2003)399, "A New Partnership with South East Asia", 9.7.2003.

and Barry Buzan have developed a broader concept of security embracing what is known as "societal security". Security here is seen as intimately bound up with societal identity and cohesion, and is defined by Buzan as "about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent and functional integrity against forces of change which they see as hostile…"[4]

The end of the Cold War opened the floodgate to the "enlargement" of the concept of security—a concept that is no longer synonymous with military threats but all sort of "non-traditional security threats" ranging from environmental degradation to migration; a concept that is no longer state-centric, but included the individuals and the global community. In particular, the concept of human security emerged as a new policy initiative that appeal to those "who believe in human rights and democracy as the core trend in world politics".[5]

The 1994 UN Human Development Report was the first document to attempt a definition of human security with its two major components of "freedom from want" and "freedom from fear" and to launch the concept at the global level. Its all too-embracing definition of security to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security has been criticised by some as useless as a guide for academic research and policy-making.[6] It is also controversial because of its focus on the individuals, with the idea that the state can be a potential threat to its own people, and the likely erosion of the principle of state sovereignty.

In Europe, however, there is a push for the concept of human security to be accepted. As Mary Kaldor and her colleagues argued, "many Europeans crave a role for the EU on the world stage as a peace promoter in order to banish the demons of Europe's own conflict-ridden experience; they seek to extend beyond Europe's borders the zone of peace and stability which the integration project has helped to achieve; and they believe that the EU can use

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[4] Barry Buzan, "New Patterns of Global Security in the 21st Century", *International Affairs*, vol. 67, no. 3, 1991, pp 431-451.

[5] Arabinda Acharya and Amitav Acharya, "Human Security in Asia: Conceptual Ambiguities and Common Understanding", http://www.yorku.ca/robarts/archives/chandigarth/pdf/acharya_dehli.pdf

[6] Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2001, pp 87-102.

its transformative power to persuade others to move from war to peace to universalise its own norms and ethics. The adoption of an explicit human security approach would be a way to reiterate and reinforce these foundational ideals…"[7]

The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) adopted by the European Council reflects the concept of human security, and the EU high representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, said in 2004 that the EU adopt an explicit "human security doctrine".[8] The ESS adopts a holistic approach linking security and development, and its overall strategy based on preventive engagement and effective multilateralism seeks "to avoid conflict and crises in the first place by emphasizing core public goods—freedom from fear, freedom from want, democracy and human rights and social and economic rights."[9]

In contrast, within ASEAN, where sovereignty is jealously guarded, security is still primarily viewed in the most traditional concept of national security. Security is viewed from the realist framework of deterrence and balance of power, and the member states placed a high value on state sovereignty and eschewed the principle of non-intervention. However, with the ongoing democratisation process within the region, and increasing role played by the epistemic community, civil society activists and non-governmental organisations, the concept of human security is finding its way into the security discourse in the region. More importantly, it is because of the many transnational challenges ranging from the Asian financial crisis, the environmental haze from burning forests in Indonesia, the terrorist bombings in Bali, the outbreak of SARS, and the Indian Ocean tsunami coming all within a short decade that catalysed the increasing acceptance of the human security discourse.[10]

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[7] Mary Kaldor, Mary Martin, and Sabine Selchow, "Human Security: a new strategic narrative for Europe", *International Affairs*, 83:2, 2007, pp 273-288.

[8] Andrea Ellner, "Regional Security in a Global Context: A Critical Appraisal of European Approaches to Security", *European Security*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2008, pp 9-31.

[9] Sven Biscop, "The International Security Engagement of the European Union – Courage and Capabilities for a 'More Active' EU". Report from the 1st European Strategic Forum, Warsaw 2006, http://www.irri-kilb.be/papers/06/sec-gov/Biscop_Report%20Warsaw.pdf)-2007

[10] Yukiko Nishikawa, "Human Security in Southeast Asia: Viable Solution or Empty Slogan?", *Security Dialogue*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2009, pp 213-236.

Yet, despite the increasing human security discourse, and the concept of a people-centred ASEAN being introduced in the push towards the building of an ASEAN Community by 2020, for many policy makers in ASEAN, human security is primarily understood as "comprehensive security". Comprehensive security, introduced already during the Cold War era in ASEAN, emphasises a holistic view of security that includes both military and non-military threats; yet, it does so in relation to the overall well-being of states.[11] In short, it is still a state-centric approach with the referent object being the state. The emphasis on human rights is also missing from the concept of comprehensive security.

Nishikawa argued that there is only limited acceptance of the human security concept in the region as policy makers are still "wary of the liberal interventionist connotations of the concept". This is particularly in member states where the legitimacy of the government is in question. Furthermore, the ASEAN way frames the order of relationship largely in favour of states, and hence human security concept has limited usefulness in ASEAN.[12]

In its relations with the EU, ASEAN has welcomed EU engagement in helping member states address non-traditional security threats such as countering terrorism, development assistance to alleviate poverty and close the development gap between the more developed and less developed ASEAN member states, humanitarian assistance, and most recently, peacekeeping in Aceh. The EU has also been active in promoting "regional integration" in Southeast Asia in light of ASEAN's own soul-searching since the Asian financial crisis. The inability of ASEAN to deal with the fallout of the financial crisis, and a host of other transnational challenges, has led to a serious rethink of the direction and the modus operandi of the organisation. The financial crisis also led to new thinking and new initiatives on region-building in Asia with attempts to create a broader East Asian community as manifested in the ASEAN plus Three, and ASEAN plus Six (EAS) processes. These together with the democratising process within Southeast Asia itself pushed ASEAN towards

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[11] David Capie and Paul Evans, *The Asia-Pacific Security Lexicon, 2nd Edition* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002).

[12] Nishikawa, pp. 232-233.

embarking on a more ambitious project of building an ASEAN Community with three pillars—the ASEAN Political and Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Sociocultural Community. And to show that ASEAN is indeed serious about its community-building efforts, a bold step was taken in 2005 to look into the drafting of an ASEAN Charter.[13]

It was during these few years that the EU actively availed itself as a model or at least as a subject for study and for lessons-drawing. EU also offered to strengthen the institutional capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat through its ASEAN Programme for Regional Integration Support (APRIS).[14] Since then, the EU's engagement and assistance towards Southeast Asia has focused on regional integration efforts. For example, in the Regional Programming For Asia Strategy Document (2007-2013), around €1.3 billion has been committed for development cooperation to support the creation of the ASEAN Economic Community.[15]

Yet, the reality is that such an approach of the EU as a harbinger of regionalism that ASEAN can imitate has its limits. Instead of making ASEAN more rules-based and institutionalised like the EU, the ASEAN Charter seemed to have codified the old ASEAN way of consultation and consensus-based decision making and reaffirmed the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention. And this strong adherence to the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference remains a powerful obstacle to the full acceptance of human security in ASEAN. Without this full acceptance, the role of the EU as a security actor is somewhat ambiguous and uncertain in the eyes of policy makers in ASEAN. Policy makers still refer to the engagement of the EU and the desire to see stronger EU commitment to the region in the realist framework of balancing the influence of other major powers in the region. Such thinking limits ASEAN acceptance of the EU as a strategic security actor. The fact that the 2003 European Security Strategy neglected any mention of ASEAN and the rather lacklustre participation of the EU in the

[13] Yeo Lay Hwee, "EU-Asean Relations and Policy Learning", in Richard Balme and Brian Bridges, eds., *Europe-Asia Relations: Building Multilateralism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), pp 91-92.

[14] Ibid., p. 92.

[15] European Commission. Regional Programming for Asia: Strategy Document, 2007-2013, http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/asia/rsp/07_13_en.pdf

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) only served to reaffirm the limits of the EU's security role, and also the limits of its influence.

The EU in its relations with ASEAN and its member states faces a choice of strategy. Is it content to focus on soft security issues and economic interests or does it have the desire and ambition to enhance future influence by pitching itself as a counterbalance to China and the US in the region? Much of this would have to do with the development of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Defence and Security Policy.

From European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

For the first thirty-odd years of the European integration project, the role of the European Community and later, the European Union, in the world was based on an extension of its common policies, such as the Common Commercial Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy. In the diplomatic, political and security realm, member states of the EU retain relative autonomy. It was only in 1991 that the EU attempted to move towards framing a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Maastricht Treaty.

The crisis in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, however, showed up the weaknesses of the EU's CFSP—the lack of early warning and intelligence, and the lack of a defence dimension which would allow the Europeans to stage their own military operations in support of peace operations or crisis management. The December 1998 St Malo Franco-British Summit resulted in a joint declaration between the two. The Joint Declaration stated, "The EU must have the capacity for autonomous actions, backed up by credible military forces, the means to decide to use them and a readiness to do so, in order to respond to international crises…"[16] This paved the way for agreement in the EU for the emergence of a European Defence and Security Policy (ESDP).

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[16] Joint Declaration on European Defence (Declaration issued at the British-French Summit, St Malo, France, 3-4 December 1998, http://www.fco.uk/resources.en/news2002/02/joint-declaration-on-eu-new01795)

Considerable progress has been made in the realm of security and defence since the 1998 St Malo declaration. The Helsinki headline goal of being able to deploy a 60,000-strong corps in six weeks and sustain it on the field for a year in support of the Petersberg task was achieved in 2003. And in 2003, the European Union launched its very first ESDP mission in Congo. The EU also issued its first European Security Strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", which identified five key threats not only to European security but global security—terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crimes. Addressing these threats required the EU to "develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention."[17]

However, despite the ambitions of the ESS to transform the EU into a more pro-active security actor, and the developments of the ESDP, the EU still lacks the general consensus and political will to develop the capabilities and capacities necessary to be a conscious security actor. Several scholars (such as Menon, 2009 and Shepherd, 2003) also lament that the Union has failed to develop a strategic culture that "details and defines" a set of common interests and political rationale for ESDP covering issues such as when and where the EU should use force, and how they will be used. In short a comprehensive review of what should be the rationale, direction, utility and capabilities of the ESDP.

The Treaty of Lisbon that entered into force in December 2009 introduces some innovations that could potentially be of great implications for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, as well as its attendant European Security and Defence Policy (renamed Common Security and Defence Policy). These include the creation of the double-hatted High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who will also hold the post of vice-president of the Commission; the establishment of the External Action Service; expanding the range of Petersberg tasks; the introduction of Permanent Structured Cooperation in the field of military capabilities development; introduce "sub-contracting" to "coalitions of the able and willing"; and inclusion of a solidarity clause and provision for mutual assistance in the case of armed

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[17] European Security Strategy, "A Secure Europe in a Better World", Brussels, 12 December 2003, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf.

aggression. The European Security and Defence Policy is renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and is an integral part of the CFSP and can draw upon civilian and military assets to carry out missions outside the Union for "peacekeeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter".[18]

The new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy combines the role of the former HR of CFSP and the Commissioner for External Relations, and is also expected to exercise, in foreign affairs, the functions which had been exercised by the six-monthly rotating presidency. The creation of this post supposedly would lead to greater coherence, consistency and effectiveness of the EU external policy. Supported by the External Action Service (the equivalent of a European diplomatic corps) the new HR/VP not only conducts security and foreign policy on behalf of the Council, but has the right of initiative to submit proposals and call for extraordinary meetings on emergency matters.

Two other important innovations that could have implications for the EU as a security actor is in the provisions for allowing the implementation of a mission of group of member states willing and capable of such a task on behalf of the Union and entrusted by the Council and the establishment of permanent structured cooperation in defence.

All these new provisions, new structures and the streamlining of functions and working methods open up opportunities for EU to become a more coherent actor on world stage. Yet, because CFSP and CSDP remains essentially inter-governmental in view of its sensitive nature, without full convergence of interest and political will, the EU's role as an international security actor would still be circumscribed no matter how much the institutions and procedures are revamped. The EU's ability to project power and play a pro-active role in international security depends more on political will than institutional design. The European Security Strategy has called for an active, capable and coherent EU security policy and for a common strategic culture in Europe. But the reality is that unless EU member states are able "to articulate a clear and coherent

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[18] European Parliament, DG External Policies of the Union, Briefing Paper, "The Lisbon Treaty and its implications on CFSP/ESDP", Feb 2008, DGExPo/B/PolDep/Note/2008_014.

European strategic interest with which European public opinion would be able to identify with", the EU would not be seen as a serious security actor of consequence.

THE EU AS A SECURITY ACTOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Southeast Asia is a region where traditional security issues remain a preoccupation of policy makers. The fact that most of the states in Southeast Asia have been colonised gave rise to certain sensitivity towards any signs of pressure or preaching by external powers. Domestic developments hampered by the diversity in ethnicity, culture, language and religion, led policy makers to be wary of external interference from other states in the region, and differences in political system and levels of economic development accentuate fears and suspicions among states in the region. These account for the staunch adherence to the principle of non-interference as the principal norm in inter-state relations.

The EU's relations with ASEAN in the early decades were dominated by trade concerns. The evolution of the EU's relations with ASEAN seems to have contributed to the persistent impression among Southeast Asian countries of the EU as primarily an economic power. For several decades, the EU, preoccupied with its own internal integration and distracted by challenges in its own backyard, accorded low priority to its relations with ASEAN. Hence, for most Southeast Asians, the EU is only a distant power and insignificant as a security actor. The major security player in the region despite the Vietnamese war is still the United States. Just as the US provided the security umbrella for Europe with the Atlantic Alliance, the security in Southeast Asia is underpinned by the various bilateral security ties between the US and various Southeast Asian countries.

In the immediate post-Cold War period, the propensity for the EU to see itself as a security actor, in the image of a provider of human security concerned with human life and dignity, and with an equal emphasis on freedom from want and freedom from fear, did not resonate in Southeast Asia. Clashes over human rights and Asian values, over Myanmar and incidents in East Timor, and over trying to impose conditionalities on trade and development cooperation, epitomise the differences.

Opportunities for the EU to become more involved in "soft" regional security issues in Southeast Asia presented itself in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis and particularly in the post 9/11 era. The pervasive sense of insecurity—from widespread economic insecurity to socio-political fallout—that the crisis created, and the threat of international terrorism saw the EU's widening security engagement in the region—from addressing the social costs of the financial crisis, to a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorism, to supporting ASEAN integration and tackling climate change and environmental challenges.

In 2003 (after the Bali bombing) and in line with the EU's identification of key threats to international security, the EU and ASEAN made the fight against terrorism a key priority in their cooperation. In their Joint Declaration on Cooperation to Combat Terrorism, a comprehensive strategy which is multi-faceted in approach and comprising different dimensions to tackle the root cause of terrorism was emphasised.

The focus on non-traditional security threats (which is still state-centric in approach and dominated by government-to-government/official cooperation) rather than from a human security angle is a compromise framework that could see the EU becoming more and more involved in the "security" of Southeast Asia. The pragmatic approach by the EU to do what is possible, and focus on the "freedom from want" dimension of its security doctrine has see an increase in the EU's soft security role in the region, culminating in the rather successful Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) in Indonesia.

The AMM is the first ESDP mission in Asia, and was seen as a "role model" for future civil ESDP missions. The important role that the EU played in this extensive operation and the cooperation with ASEAN was held up as a success story of the multilateral approaches in the EU's foreign and security policy.[19]

Despite this success in Aceh, the image of the EU as a security actor still does not register strongly in many of the Southeast Asian

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[19] Felix Heiduk, "ESDP in Asia: The Aceh Monitoring Mission in Indonesia", in Muriel Asseburg and Ronja Kempin, eds., *The EU as a Strategic Actor in the Realm of Security and Defence: A Systematic Assessment of ESDP Missions and Operations*, available at http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/common/get_document.php?asset_id=6631

countries. Again, this partly has to do with the way many Southeast Asians conceptualise security from a much more traditional and state-centric angle. However, with increasing democratisation, and as Southeast Asians themselves are questioning ASEAN's norm of non-interference, and as civil society activists and scholars push for a broader understanding of the concept of security, the value of EU as a "soft" security actor would come to be more and more appreciated.

In a recent consultation that the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) did in the Southeast Asian region concerning the EU's role in democracy building, there was a distinct call for the EU to be much more engaged in the region. Many civil society activists and non-governmental organisations want the EU to "devise multi-track engagement strategies with multiple actors and through multiple entry points".[20] In short, the EU should not only engage with the region from a purely inter-regional and official channel, but need to intensify its cooperation and partnership with different actors if it is to raise its profile as a key actor in Southeast Asia. However, this may not be shared at the official level, as most ASEAN member states, including the democratic ones, may not be entirely comfortable with rule of law, democracy and human rights as the basis for EU's engagement with ASEAN. Or, even for that matter, an engagement policy underpinned purely by the concept of human security.

It is also not clear if the EU would be up to its challenge in devising a comprehensive strategy of engaging Southeast Asia on security issues. The same questions that surfaced when examining the EU's CSDP as a whole would also be relevant in this context. What are the EU's interests and objectives in Southeast Asia— are they material in view of the close trade relations? ASEAN is after all the sixth largest trading partner of the EU and the EU is ASEAN's first overall trading partner. Or are they normative, with the export of its regional integration model being the most important objective?

Other geopolitical factors may also conspire to keep the EU as a "peripheral" security player in Southeast Asia. The reality of geopolitics and the influence and interests of several major powers

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[20] A Report of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Democracy in Development: Global Consultations on the EU's role in democracy-building.

in Southeast Asia, from the pre-eminent United States, to China and Japan and possibly also India to the general shift in power from the Atlantic to the Pacific, meant less interest from Southeast Asia toward the EU. The growing dynamism of East Asia, which serves as the key driver of regional economic and political developments, further limits the EU's influence in the region.

CONCLUSION

The EU has raised its foreign and security ambitions with the CFSP and CSDP. Yet, in Asia, particularly Southeast Asia, it seems content to leave most of the "hard strategy and security contribution to the United States".[21] This could perhaps be explained by the low priority of this region to the EU in general since the European Security Strategy is focused on the EU's immediate neighbourhood and near abroad. The strategy called specifically for the strengthening of strategic relationships with key Asian actors—Japan, China and India—but was silent on the role of ASEAN in Southeast Asia. Hence, even with the long-standing partnership between the EU and ASEAN, and the increased cooperation on soft security issues, such as counter-terrorism and climate change issues, in the last few years, the security role of the EU is unlikely to see any significant thrust. The changes in the CFSP/CSDP structures and procedures made possible by the Lisbon Treaty are unlikely to have any impact on EU-ASEAN security relations. Despite the successful Aceh Monitoring Mission in Indonesia, the EU is unlikely to undertake joint strategic action in Southeast Asia in the foreseeable future. The EU's security role in Southeast Asia would likely continue to be passive, and ad hoc, and the EU would remain as a distant power without the ambition or desire to deepen its influence.

Dr. Yeo Lay Hwee is Director, European Union Centre and Senior Research Fellow, Singapore Institute of International Affairs.

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[21] Francois Godement, "Europe-Asia: The Historical Limits of a 'Soft' Relationship", in Richard Balme and Brian Bridges, eds., *Europe-Asia Relations: Building Multilateralism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), pp 27-46.