

# 38<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

## ASEAN in a Fragmented Global Order

3 October 2023

Grand Ballroom, Level 3, Singapore Marriott Tang Plaza Hotel  
320 Orchard Road, Singapore 238865

### ABOUT THE 38<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

The global order is under threat of fragmentation due to the rise of protectionism, nationalism, and the intensifying Sino-US rivalry. The United States' preponderant position in the Asia-Pacific is increasingly challenged by a rising, assertive China. Globalisation gains in the last three decades are now at risk of economic decoupling, which can be felt in the form of supply chain dislocations, export bans, and attempts to near-shore or re-shore industries. With an increase in the number of non-state actors such as multinational corporations, international organisations, and civil society movements, the global order is experiencing a shift in the balance of power.

In the face of these challenges, ASEAN has maintained its central role as the primary forum for dialogue and cooperation in Southeast Asia. Through Community-building efforts, ASEAN has encouraged regional

cooperation and reduced socio-economic discrepancies in the region. ASEAN's inclusive approach towards regional cooperation has promoted regional stability and a rules-based order. These efforts may have helped manage the fragmented global order in the past, but is it still useful today? Can an increasingly disunited ASEAN continue to demonstrate its relevance in shaping the future of Southeast Asia, ensuring collective responses to regional challenges and strengthening the international rules-based order? The 38<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Roundtable seeks to unpack these questions with insights from regional thought leaders and experts.

The annual ASEAN Roundtable is a platform for leading scholars and commentators to examine key issues and challenges affecting ASEAN as a region and as an institution. The event is supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Supported by

*Timings in Singapore time*

8.30 am

Registration

9.00 am – 9.10 am

**WELCOME REMARKS**

*Mr CHOI Shing Kwok*

Director and Chief Executive Officer

ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

9.10 am – 10.00 am

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

**ASEAN's Role and Relevance in a Troubled World**

*Dr KAO Kim Hourn*

Secretary-General of ASEAN

**Followed by Q&A**

Moderator: *Mr CHOI Shing Kwok*

Director and CEO, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

10.00 am – 10.30 am

**Photo-taking and Coffee/Tea break**

10.30 am – 11.45 am

**SESSION I: FORCES OF FRAGMENTATION**

The region's geopolitical landscape is in flux with not only a more assertive China but also the growing role of the US in the Indo-Pacific region through initiatives such as the Quad and AUKUS. This session will examine how China and the US view, engage or compete with each other, and its implications on Southeast Asia. How is ASEAN positioning itself amidst the various concepts and aspirations of the major powers toward the region?

Moderator: *Dr William CHOONG*

Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **US' Policy Towards China**

*Mr Paul HAENLE*

Maurice R. Greenberg Director's Chair

Carnegie China

**China's Policy Towards the US**

*Professor ZHU Feng*

Executive Director, China Center for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea, Nanjing University

**Southeast Asia's Response Towards Major Powers**

*Professor Joseph LIOW*

Dean and Tan Kah Kee Chair Professor of Comparative and International Politics

College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

Nanyang Technological University

11.45 am – 1.00 pm

## **SESSION II: IS ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ASEAN'S ONLY RAISON D'ETRE?**

Southeast Asia is still recovering from the profound socio-economic impacts caused by the pandemic and grappling with the headwinds of an economic downturn and higher inflation. This session will discuss how ASEAN is faring in terms of putting regional economic integration back on track and how regional trade agreements including the RCEP, and other extra-regional agreements, such as CPTPP and IPEF, will work for ASEAN. It will also explore how digitalisation and the adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has the potential to be one of the new opportunities and impact the future of work for ASEAN.

Moderator: *Dr Jayant MENON*  
Senior Fellow, Regional Economic Studies Programme,  
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **Putting Regional Integration Back on Track**

*Dr Sanchita Basu DAS*  
Economist  
Asian Development Bank

**Improving the AEC's Resilience Against Economic Fragmentation**

*Dr Julia TIJAJA*  
Associate Senior Fellow  
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

**Digitalisation, AI and Future of Work in ASEAN**

*Dr Ming TAN*  
Founding Executive Director  
Tech for Good Institute

1.00 pm – 2.15 pm

**Lunch**

2.15 pm – 3.30 pm

## **SESSION III: MANAGING POTENTIAL REGIONAL FLASHPOINTS**

This session will examine key events and developments that have re-shaped Southeast Asia's political and security landscape in 2023. The region continues to face growing uncertainties with the disputes in the South China Sea, outbreak of hostilities in the Taiwan Strait, the situation in the Korean Peninsula, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis, amongst others. How should ASEAN position itself moving forward?

Moderator: *Dr Ian STOREY*  
Senior Fellow, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **Is A Code of Conduct in the South China Sea Viable?**

*Professor Jay BATONGBACAL*  
Director, Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea,  
University of the Philippines

**Impact of the Outbreak of Hostilities in the Taiwan Strait on the Region**

*Professor Kristy HSU*  
Director, Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center  
Chung-Hua Institution of Economic Research

**The Importance and Implications of Stability of the Korean Peninsula on Southeast Asia**

*Dr Yongwook RYU*  
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy  
National University of Singapore

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm

**Coffee/Tea Break**

4.00 pm – 5.15 pm

**SESSION IV: ASEAN IN THE AGE OF MULTIPOLARITY**

“Don’t Make Us Choose” has become a mantra among ASEAN circles and inevitably, ASEAN is increasingly forced to pick a side in the heightened Sino-US rivalry. If ASEAN does not work actively to enhance its own resilience, it will not be able to fend off these pressures. This session will discuss how ASEAN can navigate treacherous geopolitical waters in the new multipolar world order, and how it will reflect upon ASEAN’s leadership and centrality that is based on a consensus decision-making approach

Moderator: *Ms Sharon SEAH*  
Senior Fellow and Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre,  
ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

Panellists: **Is There a Growing Maritime-Continental Divide in ASEAN?**

*Dr Imelda DEINLA*  
Senior Lecturer, University of New England, Australia

**Is There a Role for Middle Powers?**

*Mr Richard MAUDE*  
Senior Fellow, Asia Society Policy Institute

**Can We Kill ASEAN’s Sacred Cow of Consensus-Decision Making?**

*Ambassador Bilahari KAUSIKAN*  
Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

5.15 pm – 5.30 pm

**Wrap-Up**

*Ms Joanne LIN*  
Co-Coordinator, ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute

## WELCOME REMARKS



**Mr Choi Shing Kwok** is Director and Chief Executive Officer of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and Head of the ASEAN Studies Centre at the Institute. Previously, he was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources from 2012 to 2017, and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Transport from 2005 to 2012. Prior to that, he held senior appointments in the Ministry of Defence and the Singapore Armed Forces. Mr Choi was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal in 2000 for his contributions to the Singapore Public Service.

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS



**Dr Kao Kim Hourn** took office as the 15th Secretary-General of ASEAN in January 2023. Dr Kao's career has focused on strengthening Cambodia's international relations, particularly in ASEAN, driving policy advocacy and promoting research, education, and development. He has served as a two-term Minister Delegate attached to the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia since September 2013. Prior to that, he had held senior positions in the Royal Government of Cambodia, including the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Dr Kao is a member of the Supreme National Economic Council, a senior fellow at the Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia, and a member of the Global Council of the Asia Society. He serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace and the Worldwide Support for Development, and a member of the Standing Committee of the Cambodian Red Cross.

Dr Kao has authored dozens of books and articles about Cambodia and ASEAN. He was awarded the Royal Order of Cambodia, the Royal Order of Sowathara, and The Grand Order of National Merit. He earned a B.A. in Asian Studies from Baylor University; an M.A. in Political Science, and another M.A. in International Studies from Ohio University; and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

## SESSION I: FORCES OF FRAGMENTATION



**Dr William Choong** is a Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute and the managing editor of the institute's Fulcrum commentary website, which publishes analyses on Southeast Asia and its wider environment. From 2013 to 2020, he was a Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow for Asia-Pacific Security at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, where he helped to organise the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. William had a lengthy career with The Straits Times, Singapore's main English-language newspaper, where he worked most recently as Senior Writer responsible for opinion pieces and editorials focused on defence, diplomacy and US policy in Asia. He wrote his Ph.D. at the Australian National University on US-China deterrence.



**Mr Paul Haenle** holds the Maurice R. Greenberg Director's Chair at Carnegie China and is currently a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the East Asian Institute, National University of Singapore. Since 2018, he has served on the board of directors of the National Committee on US-China Relations. Prior to joining Carnegie, he served as the White House China director on the National Security Council under former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama; White House representative to the US negotiating team at the six-party-talks nuclear negotiations (2007-2009); and special assistant to US National Security Advisors Condoleezza Rice and Stephen Hadley in the West Wing (2004-2007). Trained as a China foreign area officer in the US Army, he served in the US Embassy in China and the Republic of Korea, amongst other posts in the Pentagon. He had been posted to Germany, Desert Storm, Korea, and Kuwait before retiring from the US Army in 2009. Mr Haenle earned an M.A. in Asian studies from Harvard University and a B.S. from Clarkson University.



**Professor Zhu Feng** is Dean of the School of International Studies and Executive Director of the China Center for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea at Nanjing University. He publishes extensively on China-US relations, regional security in East Asia, and maritime security in the West Pacific. His recent books include *China-Japan Security Cooperation and Defense Communication: The Past, Present, and Future* (co-edited with Prof Akiyama Asahiro, Tokyo: Aiji Press, 2011), and *America, China and the Struggle for the World Order* (co-edited with Prof G. John Ikenbery and Prof Wang Jisi, MacMillan, 2015). Professor Zhu obtained his Ph.D. in International Politics from Peking University in 1991. The China Center for Collaborative Studies of the South China Sea is one of the leading think tanks in China, which is specialising on diplomatic and security exploration of lingering South China Sea disputes.



**Professor Joseph Liow** is Dean of College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he is also Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics, and Professor and former Dean at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He held the inaugural Lee Kuan Yew Chair in Southeast Asia Studies at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, where he was also a Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Program. Professor Liow's research interests encompass Muslim politics and social movements in Southeast Asia and the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the Asia-Pacific region. He has authored and co-authored numerous publications and is a frequent media commentator on international affairs. Professor Liow holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science. His most recent books are *Islam and Political Power in Indonesia and Malaysia* (Cambridge University Press Element Series 2022) and *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of Southeast Asia*, fifth edition (Routledge, 2022).

## SESSION II: IS ECONOMIC INTEGRATION ASEAN'S ONLY RAISON D'ETRE?



**Dr Jayant Menon** joined the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute as Senior Fellow to continue his work on trade and development in the Asian region, following his early retirement from the ADB in 2020. His last post at the ADB was Lead Economist in the Office of the Chief Economist. He began work life as an academic in Australia, spending almost a decade at the Centre of Policy Studies at Monash University, one of the leading centres for computable general equilibrium modelling. He has worked at several academic institutions, including the University of Melbourne, Victoria University, the American University in Washington, DC and the ADB Institute in Tokyo. He has served as a Board Director of CDRI, Cambodia, and on the Advisory Board of the University of Nottingham, Malaysia. He holds adjunct appointments with the Australian National University, University of Nottingham, UK and IDEAS, Malaysia. He has authored/edited 15 books, 40 chapters in books and 80 articles in peer-reviewed journals.



**Dr Sanchita Basu Das** joined the Asian Development Bank in 2018, and is currently an Economist at the Regional Cooperation and Integration Division of the Economic Research and Development Impact Department at ADB. She contributes to the division's flagship publications, knowledge products and analytical studies, and participates in various policy forums, including G20, ASEAN and ASEAN+3. Her core research interests include regional cooperation initiatives and related issues, such as trade, logistics, industrial corridors, tourism, digital economy, and institutions. She has published in numerous international journals, authored/edited books and book chapters, and written for media. Prior to joining the ADB, Sanchita was the Lead Researcher for Economic Affairs at the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, and concurrently a Fellow of the Regional Economic Studies Program, Coordinator of Singapore APEC Studies Centre, and a co-editor of the *Journal of Southeast Asian Economies* (JSEAE) at ISEAS. She earned her Ph.D. in International Political Economy from Nanyang Technology University, Singapore.



**Dr Julia Tijaja** is an ASEAN, trade, and global value chain specialist with 18 years of international public policy experience. From 2015 to 2021, she was Director of ASEAN Integration Monitoring at the AEC Department of the ASEAN Secretariat, where she worked on key ASEAN initiatives, including the AEC Blueprint 2025 Mid-Term Review, RCEP negotiations, ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, and ASEAN Consolidated Strategy on Fourth Industrial Revolution. Dr Tijaja holds a Ph.D. in Development Economics from the Open University, UK, an M.Sc. in Economics for Development from the University of Oxford, and a B.Sc. in Economics with Politics from Queen Mary, University of London. She is currently an Associate Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute.



**Dr Ming Tan** is founding Executive Director of the Tech for Good Institute, a non-profit founded by Grab to catalyse research and collaboration on social, economic, and policy trends accelerated by the digital economy. She is concurrently a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Governance and Sustainability at the National University of Singapore. Her interests lie at the intersection of technology, business and society, including sustainability and innovation. Dr Tan obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees from Stanford University and her doctorate from Oxford.

## SESSION III: MANAGING POTENTIAL REGIONAL FLASHPOINTS



**Dr Ian Storey** is a Senior Fellow at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. At ISEAS, he specialises in regional security issues with a focus on Southeast Asia’s relations with the major powers and maritime security, especially the South China Sea dispute. He is the co-editor of the academic journal *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. Prior to ISEAS, Ian held academic positions at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Hawaii, and Deakin University, Australia.



**Professor Jay Batongbacal** is a scholar with degrees in Political Science and Law from the University of the Philippines, as well as Master of Marine Management and Doctor in the Science of Law, both from Dalhousie University, Canada. He has worked extensively on maritime affairs since 1997, including as legal advisor to the Philippine government before the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf and the International Maritime Organization. He is currently a full Professor of the University of the Philippines College of Law, serving concurrently as Executive Director of its Graduate Studies Committee and Director of the U.P. Law Center - Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea.



**Professor Kristy Hsu** is the Director of the Taiwan ASEAN Studies Center at Chung-Hua Institution of Economic Research. Her research interests cover ASEAN regionalism, regional economic integration, international trade policy and law, trade and development issues as well as gender issues. She studies and advises on Taiwanese government’s trade policy and external affairs. In recent years, she has focused on FTA study, US trade policy and US-China strategic competition and supply chains related issues. She currently serves as Adjunct Senior Research Fellow to the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, Consultant to Taipei City Government, Expert Advisor to Overseas Community Council of Executive Yuan, Senior Advisor to the Taiwanese Chambers of Commerce in Vietnam, among others. Kristy obtained her J.D. from the School of Law, Soochow University, Taiwan, and B.A. in Department of Foreign Literature and Languages of National Taiwan University, Taiwan.



**Dr Yongwook Ryu** is an Assistant Professor at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP), National University of Singapore. He specialises in International Relations, with a focus on East Asia. His research interests include foreign policies of China, Japan, Korea and ASEAN as well as broad regional and global issues. His current research examines the effect of national identity on foreign policy and international relations, Chinese economic statecraft, Sino-Japanese relations, and Korea-Japan relationship. Prior to joining the LKYSPP, he taught at the Australian National University and Yonsei University, and held visiting posts at Beijing University, Tokyo University, Hitotsubashi University, and National Taiwan University. He earned his Ph.D. from the Department of Government, Harvard University.



## SESSION IV: ASEAN IN THE AGE OF MULTIPOLARITY



**Ms Sharon Seah** is Senior Fellow and concurrent Coordinator of ASEAN Studies Centre and the Climate Change in Southeast Asia Programme at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Prior to academia, Ms Seah spent 15 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and the National Environment Agency. Her research interests are in ASEAN, multilateralism, rule of law, and climate change. Ms Seah graduated with a Master in Public and International Law from the University of Melbourne in 2018. She is co-editor of *50 Years of ASEAN and Singapore* (World Scientific: 2017) and editor of *Building a New Legal Order for the Oceans* (NUS Press: 2019) for Tommy Koh. She is also the lead author of *The State of Southeast Asia Survey Report* and the *Southeast Asia Climate Outlook Survey*.



**Dr Imelda Deinla** researches ASEAN's pathway towards regional integration, particularly the development of its legal framework and rule of law. She has written *The Development of the Rule of Law in ASEAN: The State and Regional Integration* where she discussed differences and convergence of member states' rule of law history and practices, and how this has shaped a predominantly soft legal regime. She has published extensively on judicial politics, women judges, and judicial independence in the Philippines, as well as on the link between security and hybrid justice in post-conflict Mindanao. Her other research interests are in democracy's contemporary challenges such as misinformation, public attitudes, crime and justice, and electoral violence. Dr Deinla is Senior Lecturer at the University of New England in Australia, and was previously Associate Professor at the School of Government, Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines. She obtained her political science and law degrees at the University of the Philippines and postgraduate studies at the University of New South Wales, Australia.



**Mr Richard Maude** is Executive Director of Policy at Asia Society Australia and a Senior Fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute. He is a former senior Australian government official with 30 years' experience in foreign policy and national security, and has served in Singapore, the United States, and Malaysia. Mr Maude was Deputy Secretary, Indo-Pacific Group, in the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Australia's senior official to the East Asia Summit (2018-2019). He was head of the whole-of-government taskforce which supported the preparation of the Australian Government's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, and Director-General of the Office of National Assessments, Australia's peak intelligence agency (2013-2016). Prior to this, Mr Maude was the senior adviser on foreign policy and national security issues to Prime Minister Julia Gillard (2010-2013).



**Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan** is Chairman of the Middle East Institute, an autonomous institute of the National University of Singapore. He has spent his entire career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During his 37 years in the Ministry, he served in a variety of appointments at home and abroad, including as Ambassador to the Russian Federation, Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, and as the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry. Raffles Institution, the University of Singapore and Columbia University in New York all attempted to educate him.

## WRAP-UP



**Ms Joanne Lin** is the Co-coordinator and Lead Researcher in Political-Security Affairs at the ASEAN Studies Centre, ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore since November 2021. She has over 15 years of work experience in the Singapore public sector, regional and international organisations, think tanks, and NGOs. She has previously served at the ASEAN Secretariat from 2015 to 2021 and was the Assistant Director and Head of the External Relations Division under the ASEAN Political-Security Community Department. Her research includes ASEAN institutions and external relations, as well as political-security developments in ASEAN.