

EuroSEAS 2021

Roundtable

Southeast Asia caught between great power politics

Due to its geographic location as well as its geopolitical and geo-economic importance, Southeast Asia plays a crucial role in the grand strategies of the United States, China, Japan and India. China launched its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, both the United States and Japan responded with their Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategies. India upgraded its Look East to an Act East Policy. All four great powers endorse the regional centrality of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Nevertheless, ASEAN recognized the strategic challenge that the increasing great power rivalry can undermine its ability to steer the institutional development of Southeast Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific. Therefore, ASEAN responded with its own Indo-Pacific strategy. Therein the Association stresses the need for an inclusive regionalism, deeper multilateral cooperation and upholding its regional centrality.

The aim of this roundtable is to bring together international experts with different disciplinary backgrounds to discuss ASEAN's ability to promote a peaceful and stable, rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific. Addressed will be the following questions: Does ASEAN's inclusive regionalism remain an adequate means to balance the interests of the great powers in the realms of economics, connectivity and security? Or does ASEAN, due to the power asymmetries in the Indo-Pacific, merely react to the policies and the behavior of the great powers? Will China- and US-centered collaboration formats emerge, forcing the Southeast Asian nations to choose sides? How do ASEAN and its members respond to the power rivalry between the United States and China specifically in the South China Sea?

Convener:

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Participants:

Dr. Filip Kraus

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Dr. Richard Turcsanyi (all Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University Olomouc)

The other participants from outside the Czech Republic will be named at a later stage, when we will have more information about possible travel restrictions in September 2021.