

Summary

National Seminar

"A Review on Indonesia's Leadership Priorities in ASEAN in the Politics-Security Pillar"



On February 8, 2023, at 13.00-16.00 (Jakarta Time), The Habibie Center (THC) and Komisi Ilmu Sosial - Akademi Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (KIS-AIPI) held a national seminar entitled, "A Review on Indonesia's Leadership Priorities in ASEAN in the Politics-Security Pillar." This seminar aimed to socialize Indonesia's role and examine the priorities and challenges Indonesia's 2023 chairmanship in ASEAN would meet in providing various alternative solutions to maintain regional political stability and security. This seminar was the first in a series of seminars that will be held three times in 2023.

The seminar took place at Ruang Serbaguna Lantai 4, the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia. The total number of participants who attended offline was 125 people, while 128 people attended via Zoom. In addition, as of February 12, 2023, the number of seminar views on the THC and KIS-API Youtube channels totaled 549 views.

The seminar was opened with remarks from Prof. Dr. Satryo Soemantri Brodjonegoro, the Chair of AIPI. The keynote speech was delivered by H.E. Sidharto R. Suryodipuro, the Director General of ASEAN Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and the closing speech was delivered by Mr. Mohammad Hasan Ansori Ph.D., the Executive Director of THC.

The speakers in the seminar were Prof. Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, M.A. (Member of KIS-AIPI, Chair of THC's Executive Board, and BRIN Research Professor), H.E. Yuyun Wahyuningrum M.A. (Indonesian Representative to the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR)), Prof. Hikmahanto Juwana, Ph.D. (Rector of Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani, Professor of International Law at Universitas Indonesia), and moderated by Prof. Mayling Oey-Gardiner (Chair of KIS-AIPI).

Prof. Dr. Satryo Soemantri Brodjonegoro began his opening remarks by reviewing President Joko Widodo's appointment as the chair of ASEAN in 2023 at the closing ceremony of the 40th ASEAN Summit in Cambodia. The summit inaugurated Indonesia's assumption of the ASEAN chairmanship in 2023, with the theme "ASEAN Matters: Epicenter of Growth." With regard to the theme, Dr. Satryo emphasized that Indonesia's role in ASEAN had always been accompanied by innovation and promoted various significant initiatives for ASEAN. However, various regional issues would pose challenges for Indonesia. Prof. Satryo mentioned the human rights crisis in Myanmar, the negotiation of the Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, and the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) as challenges in Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN. He also emphasized Indonesia's important role in addressing instability in Myanmar. Furthermore, he expressed his hope that this national seminar could offer a discussion on Indonesia's role in ASEAN in 2023, especially with the various issues that would be discussed. Lastly, he also hoped that participants would actively participate and share their opinions in the forum.

As the keynote speaker, H.E. Sidharto Suryodipuro emphasized that the seminar could become an opportunity for dialogue and synergy among academics and policymakers in strengthening Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN in 2023. He reviewed the historical context of ASEAN's formation and how Indonesia has always offered strategic solutions when ASEAN was at a crossroads. However, there would be many external and internal challenges that Indonesia and ASEAN would face—financial crisis, climate change, Myanmar crisis, and many more. Indonesia's theme, 'ASEAN Matters', came from the fact that in the sixth decade since ASEAN's founding, ASEAN had not only been shaped by its member states, but also shaped them. Furthermore, the theme would encompass three pillars; 'ASEAN Matters' would affirm Indonesia's commitment to keeping ASEAN relevant in addressing global dynamics; 'Epicentrum of growth' reflected that ASEAN had always prioritized economic growth—wherein Southeast Asia had become an important spot in the global economy, and the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) which would encourage concrete cooperation.

Mr. Sidharto concluded his speech by emphasizing the role of all stakeholders in maintaining stability and creating regional prosperity. ASEAN members must be able to prepare a long-term grand vision until 2045, as that year would mark the 100th year since the end of colonialism in Asia. Thus, ASEAN members' success or failure would be entirely within their own responsibility. Indonesia must also ensure that various ASEAN priorities could be prioritized as it bore great expectations as the chair of ASEAN in 2023.

Moving on to the presentation session, the first speaker, Prof. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, raised a question stemming from the theme of Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship in 2023: "Why is ASEAN important?" She emphasized that ASEAN's role had been integral in maintaining regional peace and stability, especially in avoiding conflict in Southeast Asia. ASEAN's contribution to peace and stability could take three forms: first, the existence of a regional Code of Conduct (CoC) that would ensure that any violence is resolved peacefully; second, ASEAN must remain an independent body; and lastly, the implementation of a nuclear-free zone for ASEAN members must be maintained. In addition, he discussed the high expectations that came with the position of the ASEAN chair, especially with Indonesia's various achievements in recent times, such as when Indonesia hosted the G20.

In addition to highlighting the importance of ASEAN and Indonesia's role, Prof. Dewi explained the external challenges that Indonesia faces as the ASEAN chair. First, the rise and aggressive policies of the PRC in the South China Sea, Taiwan, East China Sea, and the Indo-Pacific region had increased tensions. On top of that, the rising tensions and rivalry between the United States and the PRC, along with the emergence of minilateralism in containing the PRC, must be taken into account. Besides external challenges, Indonesia would also have to address internal challenges—the Myanmar crisis, economic and socio-cultural differences among ASEAN members, and ASEAN's limitations as an institution. While there would be many challenges, some priorities would need to be addressed. External priorities include the completion of a South China Sea Code of Conduct which should be consistent with the provisions of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the strengthening of an inclusive and ASEAN-led regional architecture to maintain ASEAN centrality, as well as clear and relevant measures to implement the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) for dialogue partners in the Indo-Pacific. Meanwhile, internal priorities that could also be considered, included activism in helping to overcome the political crisis in Myanmar. Prof. Dewi emphasized that Myanmar's position in ASEAN should also be considered and suggested sanctions against Myanmar for violating ASEAN's values. In addition, resolving the conflict would require a long-term roadmap.

To conclude her presentation, Prof. Dewi discussed the importance of reviewing the ASEAN Charter, strengthening solutions to the ASEAN institutional crisis, and enhancing ASEAN's role at the global level.

Furthermore, the second speaker, H.E. Yuyun Wahyuningrum, M.A., further evaluated the development of the conflict in Myanmar and Indonesia's role in efforts to resolve it. Ms. Yuyun

began with an explanation of the Five-Point Consensus (5PC) which was agreed upon in April 2021. The consensus includes the cessation of all forms of violence in Myanmar, dialogue between related parties, the appointment of special envoys, the distribution of humanitarian assistance by ASEAN, and visits by special envoys by ASEAN to meet with all parties in Myanmar. Ms. Yuyun also mentioned the important achievements made by ASEAN in addressing the crisis from 2021 to 2023. Meanwhile, as of February 2023, the following conflict developments had been recorded; nearly half of Myanmar's population lives in poverty, 1.5 million people fled the country, 671 incidents of violence against health care facilities (OCHA Report), 2,954 people were killed, 17,668 people were arrested, and 13,829 people were still in detention (AAPP Report). These developments showed that the situation in Myanmar remained fragile and crisis-ridden, affecting development in ASEAN.

Furthermore, AICHR had played an important role in responding to the Myanmar crisis. At AICHR's 33rd meeting, AICHR expressed its interest to assist Myanmar with any activities that could be assigned by ASEAN Foreign Ministers. The ASEAN Human Rights Dialogue was attended by all parties involved and the Indonesian representative to AICHR had suggested a more human rights-based approach in implementing 5PC.

Finally, Ms. Yuyun outlined Indonesia's policy direction and role in efforts to resolve the crisis: prioritizing humanitarian assistance, continued improvement on the 5PC implementation plan, and finalizing President Joko Widodo's proposal to send high-ranking Indonesian officers to meet the junta for a general-to-general talk. Open dialog with all parties in Myanmar would also be very important in building effective solutions and could be done through the use of various mechanisms and instruments under ASEAN.

Moving on to the last speaker, Prof. Hikmahanto Juwana raised the issue of 'The Development of Code of Conduct (CoC) Negotiations in the South China Sea (SCS) and Indonesia's Policy Direction and Role in Resolving the SCS Dispute'. The CoC itself would be a provision on the behavior of countries in the South China Sea and how to build cooperation in the South China Sea. The CoC would also aim to avoid incidents between countries in the South China Sea or resolve them peacefully. Finally, the CoC ensures maritime security and freedom of sailing in the South China Sea.

ASEAN members and the PRC had agreed upon the Declaration of Conduct (DoC) since 2002. However, the CoC had yet to be decided upon and all countries involved were involved in the 'first reading' stage. According to Prof. Hikmahanto, continuing the CoC negotiations after 2 years of the pandemic had been a challenge. Moreover, there are debates regarding the legally binding nature of the CoC, the territorial waters it would be applied to, and which countries must comply with the CoC. In addition, the current atmosphere would not be conducive for negotiations; PRC had been aggressive from time to time—their assertiveness had been demonstrated by a desire to control natural resources in the nine-dash line and deployment of its military power. In addition,

geopolitical rivalry between the US and PRC had been increasingly tense, and there had also been disagreements among ASEAN members.

To end his presentation, Prof. Hikmahanto emphasized that Indonesia would never recognize PRC's claim over the nine-dash line and must ensure that armed conflict does not occur in the South China Sea and Southeast Asia. Indonesia's chairmanship in ASEAN would be the right momentum for Indonesia to continue working on the CoC agreement. Lastly, Indonesia would have an important role as an honest peace broker for conflicting countries in the South China Sea and must prioritize inclusive dialogue.

The presentation session was then followed by a question and answer session. Ten participants gave questions and comments related to the development of the Myanmar situation, conflicts in the South China Sea, challenges and opportunities in Indonesia's chairmanship in ASEAN, and human rights enforcement in both Indonesia and ASEAN.

The seminar was closed with closing remarks from Dr. Mohammad Hasan Ansari, the Executive Director of THC. As a think tank that promoted democratic values and the promotion of human rights, THC encouraged the resolution of various political and security issues in ASEAN within the framework and mechanisms that promote democracy and human rights values. The Habibie Center would be committed to accompanying Indonesia in ensuring that ASEAN would remain an important organization for the ASEAN community.

Finally, Dr. Mohammad Hasan Ansori hoped that the seminar would bring ideas and visions that would help Indonesia in creating opportunities and explore what ASEAN could do under Indonesia's chairmanship this year.