



**EAI Seminar
commemorating the
Golden Jubilee of ASEAN-Japan Partnership**

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Summary Report

29 December 2023

Lam Peng Er (editor)

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Recommendations of the Government of Japan's Expert Panel for the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation

Oba Mie

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The year 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of friendship and cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan. As the government of Japan is keenly aware of the importance of Southeast Asia to its foreign policy, it established an expert panel to make recommendations vis-à-vis the ways that it can further its fruitful relationship with ASEAN. I had the privilege of serving as the Chairperson of the government of Japan's expert panel on the 50th year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation from May 2022 to February 2023.

This expert panel was composed of members from academia and business. We met once a month to discuss the future of the ASEAN-Japan partnership, and also held online meetings with experts from the ASEAN countries to hear their views. In February 2023, we submitted a final report that compiled our recommendations. The final report proposed three pillars to reinvigorate ASEAN-Japan relations, namely (1) shaping a free, open, rules-based and fair regional order; (2) building up the economic prosperity, sustainability and equity of societies; and (3) using mutual understanding and trust as a platform to renew the ASEAN-Japan partnership. While the contents of this report will be discussed herein, I will also be sharing my personal views on the ASEAN-Japan relationship.

First, I want to clarify my view of the significance of the year 2023. As the beginnings of ASEAN-Japan relations can be traced back to 1973, that makes 2023 the 50th year that Japan and ASEAN have enjoyed friendly and cooperative ties. The establishment of the ASEAN-Japan Forum on Synthetic Rubber in 1973 is said to be the beginning of the

partnership between ASEAN and Japan. The ASEAN countries of the time, including Malaysia, convened to address a dispute over the export of synthetic rubber from Japan. This first ASEAN-Japan forum in 1973 is momentous because the Japanese government had placed little importance on ASEAN as a regional organization after its founding in 1967. While the ASEAN-Japan Forum marked the starting point of ASEAN-Japan relations, it was more of a confrontation between Japan and ASEAN rather than a bilateral exchange between Japan and the individual Southeast Asian countries. Despite this rocky start, Japan and ASEAN were able to develop “friendship and cooperation” when Fukuda Takeo, then Prime Minister of Japan, made a speech in Manila in 1977 that outlined Japan’s new policy towards Southeast Asia. This speech later became the foundation for the Fukuda Doctrine. As the dispute over Japan’s export of synthetic rubber had strained relations between Japan and the Southeast Asian countries, the new foreign policy of the Fukuda Doctrine sought to improve Japan-ASEAN relations. Therefore, Japan can be said to have started reviewing its policy towards Southeast Asia in 1973.

Second, ASEAN and Japan should be promoters, not mere passive beneficiaries, of the free and open rules-based regional order. Today, it is in Japan’s interest to strengthen its new partnership with ASEAN. The intensifying strategic competition between the US and China as well as the shift in the balance of power in East Asia, have resulted in increased uncertainty in the region and produced a security dilemma for ASEAN as it exacerbates the upheaval of the existing liberal international order. Japan should not ask the ASEAN countries to take one side over the other as tensions between the US China relations rise. Instead, Japan and the ASEAN countries must work together to strengthen their strategic autonomy and promote the importance of maintaining and strengthening a free and open rules-based order. The most important area of cooperation in this regard will be maritime security. Japan has been actively strengthening its defence and security cooperation with the

ASEAN countries from the 2010s to the present-day, as seen in the Vientiane Vision defence cooperation initiative in 2016 and Vientiane Vision 2.0 in 2019. Both Vientiane Vision and Vientiane Vision 2.0 were meant as pathways through which Japan can step up the defence aspects of its relations with the ASEAN countries. By deepening defence cooperation through those initiatives, Japan was able to strengthen capacity-building cooperation in maritime law enforcement by providing patrol vessels to the Philippines and other countries. Japan has likewise concluded defence equipment and technology transfer agreements with five ASEAN countries.

Third, I want to emphasize that there are many areas where Japan and ASEAN should cooperate to build better societies for the maintenance of a rules-based and stable regional order. ASEAN-Japan cooperation must strike a balance between economic development, sustainability, and equity. There are many areas in which Japan can cooperate with ASEAN. Of these, cooperation in the areas of green transformation (GX) is the most important as it melds economic growth with environmental protection. In working together to achieve both GX and energy security, Japan and the ASEAN countries would not only be able to increase economic and social productivity but also promote digital transformation (DX) to stimulate innovation.

Fourth, it is vital for ASEAN and Japan to enhance their intellectual exchanges so as to construct multi-layered human networks. Societies in all the ASEAN countries are maturing and becoming more pluralistic due to economic development. Thus, it is necessary to build a multi-layered human network between Japan and the ASEAN countries. I want to share my personal views on this point. To build a multi-layered human network, it is crucial to first build relationships among the younger generation in ASEAN and Japan. It is not enough to promote intellectual and cultural exchanges between ASEAN and Japan. Matching opportunities between Japan and the ASEAN countries is also necessary, and this has to take

into consideration the career paths of the young generation of elites in ASEAN, especially in first world countries. As Japan reaches out to ASEAN in this respect, it should utilize the intellectual centres in the US, Europe, and Australia, where highly skilled human resources in the Asia-Pacific region are concentrated.

Furthermore, as ASEAN societies become more pluralistic, it is necessary to promote exchanges not only at the governmental level but also in the business world and among civil society. Japan should seek to promote exchanges with both the ruling parties and opposition ones in each ASEAN country, as well as with various Southeast Asian civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, and other research and educational institutions to maintain and strengthen partnerships with ASEAN in the future.

Japan's relationship with ASEAN is often framed by some Japanese elites in terms of how it can strengthen its ties with the region in the face of intensifying US-China rivalry. I personally believe that strengthening relations with ASEAN is important and necessary for Japan, regardless as to whether the US and China are at odds. I sincerely hope that the ASEAN countries will also recognize Japan as an essential partner and agree to deepen cooperation.

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The ASEAN-Japan Partnership: Marking Two Golden Jubilees

Lam Peng Er

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In 2023, the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan celebrated their fifty years of partnership which began with the establishment of the ASEAN-Japan forum on synthetic rubber. However, more memorable and meaningful is the forthcoming golden jubilee marking the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine and its three tenets: Japan will not act as a great military power in Southeast Asia; the former will establish a “heart-to-heart” relationship with this sub-region; and it will forge an equal partnership with Southeast Asia and support ASEAN as a regional organization.

Since then, Japan has translated this vision towards Southeast Asia into a reality. It overcame the negative legacy of Imperial Japan’s invasion and occupation of Southeast Asia (1941-1945) as well as the violent mass riots that erupted in protest of then Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei’s visits to Bangkok and Jakarta in 1974. Indeed, Japan has established a future-oriented relationship with this region that is mutually beneficial.

Consonant to the spirit of the Fukuda Doctrine (named after then Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo), Japan has contributed significantly to Southeast Asia in at least four areas beyond trade, investments, tourism, and cultural exchanges. First, Tokyo has generously offered official development assistance (ODA) to the region that is cumulatively valued at US\$128.5 billion.

Second, Japan assisted some ASEAN member states when they were reeling from the destabilizing 1997-1998 Asian Financial Crisis. Third, Tokyo has steadfastly supported ASEAN-centric East Asian multilateralism efforts, such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asian Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) for dialogue, confidence building and regional order. Fourth, Tokyo has pursued peacebuilding and human security in conflict and post-conflict areas, such as Cambodia, East Timor, Aceh (in Sumatra, Indonesia), Mindanao (in the southern Philippines) and Myanmar. No country in the world can match Japan's longstanding record in the consolidation of peace in Southeast Asia. Arguably, the "heart-to-heart" relationship between Japan and Southeast Asia is evidenced in the annual *State of Southeast Asia: Survey Report* conducted and published by ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. This elite survey has consistently revealed Japan as the most trusted power in Southeast Asia.

Notwithstanding the excellent relations between ASEAN and Japan, there is no room for complacency in their ties. A long-lasting, cordial, comprehensive and cooperative relationship will boost the capability of ASEAN and Japan to act autonomously amid the tricky strategic competition between the US and Chinese superpowers. Japan's close partnership with ASEAN should stand on its own merits. It should neither be contingent on the state of Sino-US relations nor sucked into the vortex of superpower competition.

Another reason why Japan should not take its partnership with Southeast Asia for granted is that it faces greater competition in wooing ASEAN in the present-day than it did in the past few decades. China stole a march on Japan by first offering a free trade agreement with ASEAN. As part of its charm offensive to the Global South, including ASEAN, Beijing launched its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Confucius Institutes, and united front outreach programmes. South Korea likewise sought to enhance its ties to Southeast Asia by initiating its New Southern Policy and later recalibrating it into the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative. Nevertheless, Japan can confidently strengthen its partnership with the ASEAN member states by offering quality

infrastructure development, diplomatic support (especially regarding the South China Sea imbroglio), capacity building for regional coast guards, and Japanese cultural soft power.

Beyond functional cooperation in areas such as free trade agreements, digitalization, humanitarian disaster relief, and environmental protection, Japan can do three specific things to strengthen and broaden its partnership with ASEAN in the next decade or two. First, Tokyo should work with the more affluent ASEAN member states to assist East Timor's socio-economic development and accession to the ASEAN regional organization. Second, Japan should support ASEAN's efforts vis-à-vis the civil war-like situation in Myanmar. Third but not least, Japanese state and society should treat Southeast Asian migrant workers in Japan well by respecting their human dignity and safety. Japan is facing an inexorable demographic decline and a rapidly ageing society. It needs more migrant workers from Southeast Asia to keep its economy humming and nursing homes running. By treating Southeast Asian migrant workers well in its own enlightened self-interest, Japan will strengthen the "heart-to-heart" tenet of the Fukuda Doctrine.

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Strategic Cooperation between Japan and ASEAN amid Great Power Rivalry

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Why is Japan Promoting Strategic Cooperation with ASEAN?

There are four reasons why Japan is actively promoting strategic cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). First, the Southeast Asian region is important to Japan. Geographically, the ASEAN countries are Japan's neighbours. Due to their geographical proximity, Japan has had close economic, trade and investment ties with the ASEAN member states, as evidenced in their numerous free trade agreements. Japan likewise has a vested interest in engaging politically with ASEAN. Ever since Japan became ASEAN's first dialogue partner in 1978, it has worked to implement its comprehensive strategic partnership in the region. Currently, Japan aspires to build up its many regional partnerships and play a greater role in the security of Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

Second, strategic cooperation with ASEAN is important to Japan's own security. Japan is currently facing a serious security challenge from a rising China in the East China Sea, while ASEAN countries face China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea. Tokyo needs to effectively collaborate with ASEAN to address this "China challenge".

Third, Japan supports the US Indo-Pacific strategy, which underscores the strengthening of an empowered and unified ASEAN as well as rule-based approaches to the East and South China Seas. Japan also cooperates with the US in reinforcing trilateral or

more efforts to contribute to ASEAN's capacity building in the maritime domain and enhance their maritime domain awareness.

Fourth, Japan needs support from ASEAN to materialize its own vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

Japan has been promoting its vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) that will foster stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The FOIP vision consists of three pillars: rule of law and freedom of navigation, reinforcement of connectivity, and commitment to peace and stability.

The FOIP enhances Japan's cooperation with the Southeast Asian countries because Tokyo considers it to be compatible with ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) in protecting and promoting rule of law and improving regional connectivity. Tokyo also strongly supports ASEAN unity and centrality. This is a whole-of-government approach and inevitably requires the cooperation of partners in the region, including ASEAN. The Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD) is playing a significant role in materializing the FOIP. As part of its plan to bring the FOIP into fruition, the MOD is setting specific objectives vis-à-vis the securing of sea-lanes, prevention of contingencies, and active engagement for peace and stability. To attain these objectives, the MOD is strongly promoting defence cooperation in various ways, such as through strategic dialogue, capacity building, joint exercises, and cooperation in defence equipment and technology exchanges.

Vientiane Vision

The Vientiane Vision is Japan's defence cooperation initiative with ASEAN. Inada Tomomi, who was Japan's Minister of Defense in 2016-2017, announced the Vientiane Vision at the

second ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting in Vientiane in November 2016. In 2019, an updated version of the Vientiane Vision was issued at the fifth ASEAN-Japan Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting. The updated, current version of the Vientiane Vision not only reflects more of the goals of the FOIP but also that of the 1977 Fukuda Doctrine, as it emphasizes "heart-to-heart", long-lasting cooperation based on equal partnerships. Furthermore, the updated Vientiane Vision focuses more on cooperation with ASEAN in multilateral terms to uphold its unity and centrality.

Multilateral Cooperation

To forward the FOIP and the Vientiane Vision, Japan has been promoting multilateral defence cooperation with ASEAN on a variety of platforms. To foster more multilateral strategic dialogues between Japan and ASEAN, a Japan-ASEAN Defence Vice-Ministerial Forum has been regularly held since 2009, and a Defence Ministers' Informal Meeting has been annually held since 2014. These activities certainly contribute to building strategic confidence and trust between Japan and ASEAN. Japan regards the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus as an extremely important mechanism for regional security, and has actively participated in the forum. Since the inauguration of ADMM Plus in 2010, Tokyo has been active in engaging in a co-chairmanship role in the forum's Expert Working Group (EWG). Japan co-chaired with Singapore in the EWG on military medicine, with Laos on humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HA/DR), and currently co-chairs an EWG with Vietnam on peacekeeping operations (PKO). Recently, it has been announced that Japan will co-chair an EWG with the Philippines on maritime security for the next term. Within the framework of Japan-ASEAN multilateral cooperation, various programmes have been conducted, such as inviting ASEAN officers to ride on a Japan Maritime Self-Defense

Force (MSDF) vessel and participate in a programme observing a disaster-relief operation exercise.

Bilateral Cooperation

Tokyo has been conducting bilateral strategic cooperation and strategic dialogue with each respective ASEAN country on multiple levels. Most notably, Japan has conducted foreign and defence ministerial meetings (so-called 2+2 meetings) with Indonesia and the Philippines in 2021 and 2022, respectively. These strategic dialogues not only contribute to information sharing but also deepen mutual understanding about regional security.

Since 2012, the Japanese MOD has been actively promoting capacity-building cooperation with ASEAN. The Japanese MOD has helped to build ASEAN's capacity in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, underwater medicine, ship maintenance, and aviation safety. Recently, the Japanese government embarked on a new defence cooperation mechanism known as Official Security Assistance (OSA). Through OSA, the Japanese government can provide its partners' militaries with defence equipment and support infrastructure development. The main target is clearly ASEAN. Japan has also conducted joint exercises and port calls with many ASEAN member states. For example, the Japan MSDF's Indo-Pacific Deployment (IDP) is a series of joint exercises conducted in the Indo-Pacific, and includes exercises conducted in Southeast Asia.

Japan's Approach towards the South China Sea

In the South China Sea, Japan is a stakeholder rather than a claimant. From Tokyo's perspective, the most important and salient points vis-à-vis the territorial disputes in the South China Sea are the continued adherence to the rules-based maritime order, maintenance of regional order, and the protection of the freedom of trade. Safeguarding a rules-based order

in the South China Sea would not only ensure the continuance of lawful maritime commerce without interruption but also adhere to Japan's FOIP vision. Japan's stakeholder interest in the South China Sea likewise has ramifications for its national interests in the East China Sea. Indeed, Tokyo has been active in diplomatically playing up China's excessive claims and assertive behaviour regarding its territorial claims at many international conferences, including ASEAN-related meetings. As part of its stance against Beijing's increased bellicosity, Tokyo has officially upheld the arbitral ruling issued in July 2016, which used the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to clearly refute China's excessive claims in the South China Sea. To strengthen alliance cooperation with Southeast Asian claimants in the South China Sea, Japan has conducted joint exercises with ASEAN member states in the areas of capacity building and transfer of equipment. Furthermore, Japanese MSDF vessels have been making regular visits to Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam.

Prospects and Constraints

In December 2023, a Japan-ASEAN Commemorative Summit was held in Tokyo to mark the golden jubilee of their friendship and cooperation. At the summit, a vision statement was issued, in which the two parties declared further development in security cooperation.

Although Japan and ASEAN have agreed to deepen their cooperation in security, there are concerns and factors that might constrain their cooperation. First, Japan has limited budgetary capacity. While the Japanese government is planning to increase its national defence budget by 50% in five years, the process will neither be easy nor steady regarding how tax increases and the budget distribution would be addressed. Japan should also take note that its increased national defence budget might antagonize China.

Japan's cooperation with the US in the future is also not a straightforward issue. The US presidential election in 2024 might herald a fundamental change in Washington's

engagement in the Indo-Pacific, including possible policy changes to the US's alliance with Japan and its cooperation with ASEAN. Growing disunity within ASEAN is another concern. ASEAN is far from united regarding issues pertaining to China and the political turmoil in Myanmar. This disunity might deepen as US-China strategic rivalry intensifies, or when the political situation in Myanmar is aggravated. Increased disunity among the ASEAN member states might pose a serious challenge to Japan's strategic cooperation with the regional body.

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Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance) and OSA (Official Security Assistance) to Southeast Asia

Kiba Saya

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This presentation tries to answer two questions. Firstly, what dimensions and projects of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) are positively recognized by its Southeast Asian partners? Secondly, how has Japan's security cooperation been recognized so far?

Security-Related Programmes expanded with “Various Assistance Menu”

Japan's special emphasis on security cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states in the past decade was launched by former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in 2014. At the 13th International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Shangri-La Dialogue, which is Asia's premier defence and security summit, he gave a keynote speech emphasizing that “rule of law” is particularly important for the Asia-Pacific region as it is a global centre for growth. Rule of law is important to the Asia-Pacific because it will allow the region to fully demonstrate its latent potential while ensuring its peace and stability. Additionally, he announced at this summit that Japan would combine the various options in its assistance menu as part of its outreach to the Asia-Pacific. These include: 1) strategic use of official development assistance (ODA) through the provision of patrol vessels, dispatch of experts, etc.; 2) support for capacity building in the region by the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the provision of defence equipment; and 3) seamlessly supporting ASEAN's capacity in safeguarding the seas through technology cooperation and the adherence to the “Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology” [sic].

Capacity-building programmes aim to improve the capabilities of recipient countries and help their military forces to broaden their roles, ensuring that they can further contribute to international peace and regional stability. The Japanese Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) began capacity-building exercises for the military forces in the Indo-Pacific in 2012. Since then, more than 700 JSDF personnel have been deployed as trainers, and about 5,400 foreign personnel have received capacity-building training. The programme focuses on non-combat military operations, such as Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR), defence medicine, engineering, peacekeeping operations, and maritime security.

The first transfer of defence equipment between Japan and an ASEAN country took place in 2023. In November 2023, the Mitsubishi Electric Corporation announced that it had delivered the first unit of an air surveillance radar system to the Philippine Air Force the previous month. The system, which was designed, manufactured and tested in Japan, had been ordered by the Department of National Defense of the Philippines in August 2020. As of November 2023, this is the first and only case in which a Japanese company had transferred completed defence equipment to a foreign government.

Apart from ODA, which aids the economic and social development of developing countries, Japan has decided to establish a new cooperation framework in 2023 called Official Security Assistance (OSA). Under the OSA framework, Japan would assist the capacity building of recipient nations' armed forces and other related organizations by providing materials and equipment as well as assistance for infrastructural development in accordance with these countries' security needs. This scheme became known as the new "National Security Strategy" and was approved by the Japanese Cabinet in December 2022.

There are, however, vocal Japanese voices that are opposed to such military-focused aid. Just after Prime Minister Kishida Fumio's November 2023 visit to the Philippines, an

editorial in the *Tokyo Shimbun* editorial dated 12 November 2023 wrote: “Prime Minister Kishida, who appears to be leaning towards military expansion, reached an agreement this month with President Ferdinand Marcos (the eldest son of the president at the time of the Fukuda Doctrine) to provide coastal surveillance radar systems worth 600 million yen. This is the first application of Japan’s official security assistance (OSA), which provides defence equipment and other supplies to like-minded countries. As a result, the principles of the Fukuda Doctrine that emphasized pacifism towards Southeast Asia have now become vague.”

Do the Southeast Asian countries worry about Japan’s military expansion? Does Japan’s security cooperation with the Asia-Pacific undermine the Fukuda Doctrine? The author’s recent research in the Philippines and Indonesia does not show any sign of apprehension from those countries.

Between 2021 and 2023, the author worked with sociologists and political scientists in the Philippines and Indonesia to conduct media analysis and elite interviews with bureaucrats and former bureaucrats in their respective administrations to gauge each country’s perception of Japan, the United States, and the People’s Republic of China. The project, funded by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, seeks to explore Japan’s security cooperation with Southeast Asia.

What Dimensions and Projects of Japan’s ODA are Positively Recognized by its Southeast Asian Partners?

When Japan is mentioned in major newspapers in the Philippines and Indonesia, it is overwhelmingly in connection with ODA. More specifically, media outlets in the Philippines and Indonesia mostly focus on Japanese ODA’s positive impact in their countries’ infrastructure in the areas of water resources management, energy, public transport as well as the provision of patrol vessels from the Japan Coast Guard to their respective nations. While

the Japanese government's promotion of "quality infrastructure" was not mentioned, the scale and usefulness of the infrastructure and the provision of "large vessels" have strongly impressed the elite respondents interviewed.

How is Japan's Security Cooperation Recognized?

The elites in the Philippines and Indonesia are also keenly aware of the existence of Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan, the many legal restrictions on the JSDF's overseas activities, and the fact that Japan has gradually expanded its defence cooperation since the Abe administration. In the Philippines, there are calls for Japan to participate more fully in the annual US-Philippine joint exercise known as Balikatan. Indeed, policy elites in the Philippines have observed that Japan's external communication in the security field is relatively limited compared to the United States and China. Filipino and Indonesian elites and bureaucrats have described Japan as "an ally" and "friend" that is "reliable" and "trustworthy". They are likewise of the opinion that it is unfair to compare Japan to the US and China because of the limitations to its military and its dependence on the US for defence.

A notable discovery in this research is that few of the Filipino and Indonesian policy elites understood the exact difference between ODA projects for civilian institutions and Japanese MoD projects. Few understood that the assistance to their respective coast guard agencies comes from ODA rather than a defence cooperation programme from the MoD. All security-related projects were seen as similar and consequently welcomed as new opportunities rather than threats.

Some Filipino and Indonesian policy elites also opined that the definition of "security" will differ for each country because policymakers decide what constitutes "security". For instance, a respondent recognized Japan's efforts in the Mindanao peacebuilding process as security cooperation even though the assistance was rendered

through civilian agencies, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese Embassy, and Japan International Cooperation Agency. Some other respondents expressed the view that Japan's support of the Southeast Asian governments' endeavours to ensure peace and order in urban cities is "security cooperation".

Recommendations

These responses from the policy elites in Southeast Asian countries imply that Japan still needs feedback from various and multi-layered counterparts.

Japan must depart from the usual practice of "quiet feedback" if it wishes to enhance its security cooperation with the Asia-Pacific. Both Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and MoD have made steps in this direction by fostering honest communication with various policy elites, think tanks, and social scientists. However, they continue to maintain low profiles over new schemes of security cooperation to avoid criticism from the Japanese public. Instead of doing so, Japan should explain the change in its security policies to its public without fear.

Both Japan and its Southeast Asian partners should keep being open to the region's various security needs. Doing so would allow Japan's civilian efforts to develop more flexible and inclusive cooperation based on local security needs.

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Japan's Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia

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This presentation seeks to address the complex landscape of Japan's diplomatic engagement in Southeast Asia spanning from the early 1990s to the present, and to explore the transformative role of Japan's peace and security. To showcase those aspects, my presentation is composed of three parts:

- (i) A summary of Japanese peacebuilding diplomacy in Southeast Asia in the post-Cold War era will provide an overview, and Cambodia and East Timor will be examined as examples of successful Japanese peacebuilding in which conflict was transformed into peace.
- (ii) A description of the present status of Cambodia and East Timor to show the different paths they have adopted and their respective relations with Japan.
- (iii) A summation of the findings to highlight prospects and issues ahead for Japan and Southeast Asia.

Japan has played an important role in post-conflict peacebuilding and regional security by reinforcing diplomatic relations with conflict-affected Southeast Asian countries, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Myanmar in the post-Cold War era. In doing so, Japan has contributed to security cooperation in the region in accordance with the diplomatic direction of its Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept.

Japan remained uninvolved in international conflicts during the Cold War era. By the 1980s, however, Japan was an economic superpower and it accordingly sought to fulfil its responsibilities for international peace through diplomacy. Aligning itself in a new diplomatic

direction in the late 1980s, the Japanese government embarked on a quest to engage in conflict resolution through diplomacy to create a new order that transcended the policies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Thus, the Japanese government started its peacebuilding diplomacy in Cambodia. Since then, Japan has expanded its peacebuilding diplomacy in Southeast Asian countries to encompass Cambodia, Aceh in Indonesia, East Timor, Mindanao in the Philippines, and Myanmar. Japan has likewise sought to strength its peacebuilding endeavours through ASEAN-based assistance by conducting seminars and research.

The peacebuilding process in Cambodia was a fraught one, as Japan had to undertake a series of back-channel diplomacy to get the four factions involved to agree to share power. The power-sharing proposal forwarded by Japan was eventually adopted in the Final Act of the Paris Conference on Cambodia in 1991. Moreover, in 1992, Japanese Self-Defense Forces were dispatched to support the upcoming Cambodian general election through the provision of logistics and infrastructure repairs by enacting the so-called Peacekeeping Operation (PKO) law. During this same period, Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted a Ministerial Conference on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia, and a total of US\$880 million was pledged. Since then, Japan has been a top donor in Cambodia until 2010, when China replaced it. Japanese official development assistance (ODA) to Cambodia was perceived to be reinforcing relations among the Indochina countries, and this input of overwhelming financial resources led to the shift from bilateralism to regionalism.

On the other hand, the case of East Timor (now known as Timor-Leste), is an instance of Japanese peacebuilding that has been refined to specially deal with the global war on terror. To assist in the 30 August 1999 referendum where the East Timorese would vote for independence or merger with Indonesia, Japan dispatched three civilian peacekeepers to the

United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) and provided humanitarian assistance through UN agencies. Additionally, Japan dispatched personnel to assist the district administrator of Cova Lima under the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) after the referendum had voted in favour of independence. A senior official from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was also sent to UNTAET to carry out humanitarian assistance and emergency rehabilitation as a Deputy Special Representative, and a JICA study team conducted a needs assessment survey for East Timor's reconstruction and recovery.

After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, the Japanese government dispatched its Self-Defense Forces to East Timor to aid the UN's peacekeeping operations (PKOs) and the UN Transitional Administration in support of the US military's efforts to ensure international security. To that end, Japan's Self-Defense Forces collaborated with JICA and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to maintain and repair roads and bridges in East Timor. This three-way collaboration consequently became the prototype for the All-Japan approach. Japan's seamless assistance in East Timor reinforced the regional security cooperation between Japan and Australia as US allies.

After Japan's peacebuilding efforts in Cambodia and East Timor, some measure of stability returned to the two countries. In the present-day, both Cambodia and East Timor have come a long way from their former conflict-ridden states. Cambodia has since achieved steady economic development and improved its human development status.

However, Cambodia's political development is still lacking due to the domination of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) over the country following the dissolution and banning of the main opposition party in 2017 by court order. The prolonged political dominance of the CPP has led international assessments by Freedom House, the V-Dem Institute, and the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) to categorize Cambodia as "not free" on account of the

autocracy and authoritarianism in the country. In response to the US and European countries' criticisms that Cambodia has been backsliding in democratic values, the CPP government has reinforced its partnership with China. This is evident in Cambodia's foreign policy as well as in the ODA and investment it receives from China. The Cambodian's government heavy favouring of China can also be seen in the way in which it takes Beijing's side in the South China Sea territorial disputes. However, in doing so, Cambodia is obstructing cohesive action and decision-making by ASEAN.

To mitigate tensions in Southeast Asia wrought by Cambodia's alignment with China, Japan has increased its ODA to the country in the past few years. The former Indochina countries are of growing geopolitical importance to Japan because they collectively form the Southern Economic Corridor, and increased connectivity in the Mekong region would boost trade between them and Japan. As a result of Japan's renewed interest in building peace in Cambodia through developmental aid, the two countries have agreed to upgrade their bilateral relations to a "comprehensive strategic partnership".

East Timor, on the other hand, faced incidents of political turmoil after it gained full independence in 2002. Even so, it achieved some measure of economic development and has attained the status of a lower-middle income country as of 2015. In the present-day, it is still undergoing a fiscal transition to increase its fiscal sustainability.

Politically, however, East Timor has successfully built a new democratic state despite political polarization and intense competition between its two most prominent leaders. As the population in East Timor remains committed to constitutional democracy, Freedom House, the V-Dem Institute and the EIU have favourably assessed the country as a thriving, free and liberal democracy. East Timor is the second most democratic country in Southeast Asia after Malaysia.

Given East Timor's location in the first and second island chains of China's strategic military defence lines, China has expanded its influence over the country in the same way that it had been doing in other Southeast Asian countries. The East Timor government has availed itself to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and signed contracts for infrastructure development with over 20 Chinese state-owned companies. As a result, regional cooperation between East Timor, Japan and other countries in the Indo-Pacific has been strengthened. This can be most clearly seen in East Timor's promotion of defence cooperation with Australia and Japan. Indeed, the governments of Japan and East Timor signed an agreement in September 2023 whereby Japan's Self-Defense Forces would help to train the Defence Forces of Timor-Leste.

In conclusion, Cambodia and East Timor have successfully transitioned from conflict to peace. Along the way, Japan's proactive pacifism has reinforced its diplomatic ties with conflict-ridden countries, enhanced regional stability, and created more cooperation opportunities. The changes to the balance of power in international politics have affected bilateral and multilateral diplomatic relations as well as domestic politics, which in turn have strengthened Japan's engagement in regional security. Japan, the US, Australia and other like-minded countries uphold democratic principles in economic terms through ODA and in political terms by adhering to the rules-based international order. In Japan, this can be clearly seen on the central foreign policy values under its FOIP concept. However, it must be acknowledged that Japan must strike a careful balance between the democratic principles of its FOIP vision and its inclination to tolerate non-democratic countries.

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Indonesia's Perception of Japan: Legacy of the Fukuda Doctrine and the Changing Socio-Political Landscape of Southeast Asia

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Japan as the Most Trusted Partner, For Now

At the 50th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan relations in 2023, Japan sits solidly as the most favoured partner of the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), at least in the eyes of their people. Different surveys conducted by different institutions clearly display this trend.

The latest *State of Southeast Asia Survey*, published in February 2023, shows that Japan is still the most trusted partner in the region, with 54.2% of respondents expressing their confidence in the country. A more recent survey by the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI) and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA), published in December 2023, shows a similar trend whereby Japan comes out on top in several polls. Specifically, 68.64% of respondents answered that Japan was “most trustworthy”; 42.33% named Japan as the “most dependable country”; 66.38% cited Japan as the region’s “most respectable and credible partner”; 53.60% deemed Japan to be the “most loyal partner and supporter of ASEAN’s initiatives and mechanisms”; and 53.02% named Japan as the region’s “go-to partner for quality investments”.

However, this view of Japan as ASEAN’s most trusted partner should not be taken for granted. The FPCI-ERIA survey also indicates that China is becoming increasingly important to Southeast Asia. When survey respondents were asked to name the country that would be

the region's "most relevant partner in the future", China came out on top despite widespread concerns over its perceived hegemonic ambitions.

The Evolution of Indonesia's Perception of Japan

Indonesia's perception of Japan has fluctuated throughout history due to the multiple factors affecting their interactions at the domestic and international levels. Japanese people have been in Indonesia prior to Japan's military invasion of the Dutch East Indies in 1942. Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, Japanese people and the cheap goods produced in Japan were commonplace in Indonesia. This was because Japan had been rapidly industrializing at the time and possessed the capacity to manufacture high-quality goods to compete with the European countries that had previously dominated the Asian market.

By forging an alliance with England, Japan was able to enter the market built by the European colonial system. Japanese commodities that became everyday items for the people in the Dutch East Indies included bicycles, cotton and mori cloths, umbrellas, tricycles, mosquito coils, and monosodium glutamate (MSG). Japanese penetration into the Asian market further expanded when European exports to Asia were disrupted by the outbreak of World War I in 1914. Indeed, Japan quickly filled the gaps in the disrupted supply chains throughout the years of the First World War in 1914-1918. While Japan's worsening domestic economic situation in the 1920s briefly led to a reduction in its market share in Asia, Japanese economic expansion in the Dutch East Indies rebounded in the 1930s due to the sharp devaluation of the yen, which made Japanese goods cheaper and more competitive. Consequently, Kosuke Mizuno of Kyoto University's Center for Southeast Asian Studies noted that Japanese shops in Java in the 1930s were known as "Saerah", an abbreviation for "Sae tur murah" or good and cheap.

When Japanese forces invaded Indonesia on 10 January 1942 to seize control of the colony from the Dutch, the Indonesian nationalists of the day saw an opportunity through which the country could eventually gain independence. However, the forced labour or “romusha” regime implemented during the Japanese occupation was deeply unpopular, so much so that Sukarno felt tremendous guilt for allowing it to happen. Although Sukarno initially supported the romusha programme and worked to recruit labourers for the Japanese authorities to demonstrate the Indonesian people’s willingness to cooperate with them, this was done only to gain concessions for the Indonesian nationalist cause. While it did result in the Japanese authorities granting permission for the nationalist anthem, *Indonesia Raya*, to be played at public events, Sukarno soon saw that the Japanese had little interest in preserving the lives of the labourers who were exploited and forced to work in hazardous conditions with inadequate food, shelter and medical care. By the time he regretted the mistreatment of Indonesians in the romusha programme, many Indonesian forced labourers had already died from malnourishment and diseases like malaria and dysentery.

The relationship between Indonesia and Japan revitalized towards the end of Sukarno’s tenure as President of Indonesia and accelerated after Indonesia’s regime change in 1965. The liberalization of the Indonesian economy under Suharto opened the doors for the inflow of Japanese goods and investments. In the 1970s, this had led to some sectors of the public reacting vociferously to the perceived increase in Japanese economic influence in Indonesia.

When Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited Jakarta in January 1974, a huge protest erupted in the city. The Indonesian government suppressed the protest violently, leading to the tragic occurrence known as “Malapetaka Lima Belas Januari” or the Malari incident. While speculations still abound as to the true causes of the Malari incident, known in English as the “Catastrophe that occurred on 15th January”, the protest and subsequent tragedy

showed that increasing Japanese economic influence was viewed as controversial at the time. Due to the widespread perception of inequality in foreign investments, the Indonesian government had to adjust its economic policy and establish some protectionist measures to empower local entrepreneurs. Cooperation with Japan, however, continued.

In response to this violent development in the region, Japan introduced the Fukuda Doctrine. According to Lam Peng Er in *Japan's Relations with Southeast Asia: The Fukuda Doctrine and Beyond*, the implementation of the Fukuda Doctrine improved Japan's image in the region. It set up some normative visions to guide Japan's diplomacy in the region. Accordingly, it emphasized the renunciation of power politics, stressed the importance of a heart-to-heart relationship with Southeast Asia, and forwarded the notion of an equal relationship with ASEAN. Such norms, consistently followed by Japan, aligned with the Southeast Asian countries' efforts to consolidate ASEAN and its values as the region's institutional framework. This alignment resulted in a win-win situation for ASEAN and Japan. As ASEAN successfully placed itself at the centre of regional Southeast Asian architecture, Japan became its most trusted partner. Thus, in the present-day, we see the relationship between ASEAN, its member states and Japan still holding strong.

Changing Socio-Political Landscape of Southeast Asia

I argue that Japan's position as the Southeast Asian countries' most favoured and trusted partner is contingent on its history with the region. It is shaped by their historical experiences in the pre- and post-WWII eras as well as the development of national and global dynamics in the 1970s, in which both Japan's Fukuda Doctrine and the consolidation of ASEAN as the region's institutional centre played important roles.

While it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the evolution of Indonesia's perception of Japan in a more comprehensive manner, the table below summarizes the main domestic and international dynamics affecting their relationship throughout history.

Because Indonesia's perception of Japan is based on the latter's history in the region and the latter has had a fraught wartime history with Southeast Asia, Indonesia's present-day positive view of Japan should not be taken for granted. The future development of their relationship will depend on how Indonesia and Japan act in this changing geopolitical landscape.

	Early 20th Century	1942-1945: Greater Co-Prosperity Sphere	1945	1950s-1960s: Reparation	1970s-1990s: Fukuda Doctrine	1990s-2000s	2000s-Present
International	Rise of Pan-Asianism; "Yellow Peril"; Japan's industrialization, WWI	WWII	End of WWII, vacuum of power in Netherlands East Indies	Post-WWII international and regional orders; Cold War; Japan-SEA-US relations	Post-WWII international and regional orders; Cold War; Japan-SEA-US relations; rise of ASEAN	End of Cold War; "The End of History" with the Asia-Pacific transitioning to the concept of East Asia; ASEAN Centrality	Increasing Great Power Rivalry, rise of the notion of the Indo-Pacific
Domestic	Emergence of nationalist movements	Tactical opportunity, independence from Dutch colonial rule	Independence	Revolution, Parliamentary Democracy, Guided Democracy	Development as priority	Liberalization, Democratization	Developmentalism; Fragmented state; Strategic autonomy

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Assessment of the ASEAN-Japan Partnership: A Malaysian Perspective

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The ASEAN-Japan partnership in general has been progressing well and is on the right track. This is a trend that will continue in the foreseeable future as the relationship will move towards greater “equality” and away from the “donor-recipient” relations that the two parties had decades ago. With the catchphrase “Golden Friendship, Golden Opportunities”, it is believed that the areas of cooperation will continue to be guided by, but not be limited to, the five principles of Japan’s Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) diplomacy laid down by Prime Minister Abe Shinzo in 2013 at the 40th anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

Following this, at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit held in Tokyo that same year, leaders of both ASEAN and Japan adopted the Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, as well as its implementation plan. The plan declared that Japan and the ASEAN member states would promote cooperation based on four pillars, namely partners for peace and stability; partners for prosperity; partners for quality of life; and heart-to-heart partners.

Japan and ASEAN are truly partners for peace and stability as ASEAN appreciates Japan’s support for ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asian Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus). Under this pillar, practical defence cooperation between ASEAN and Japan has been pursued to ensure the rule of law; strengthen maritime security;

and assist ASEAN's organizational responses to regional challenges, especially in non-traditional security threats such as natural disasters and transnational crimes.

Japan is ASEAN's fourth-largest trading partner and second-largest external source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) among all of ASEAN's dialogue partners in 2022. Japan and ASEAN are dedicated to being partners for prosperity, as evinced by their joint conclusions of several bilateral economic partnership agreements and investment agreements. This was acknowledged and celebrated at the 29th ASEAN Economic Ministers and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan (AEM-METI) Consultation in August 2023. ASEAN and Japan have also concluded the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP), which covers trade, investments, competition, intellectual property, and movement of people. Japan has likewise consistently supported the establishment of an ASEAN community, and promoted public and private sector support to strengthen ASEAN connectivity as well as community development.

ASEAN connectivity is one of the key priorities under the "partners for prosperity" pillar. It is an ASEAN initiative to enhance the economic cohesiveness of the region by facilitating the smooth flow of logistics and people through the development of cross-border infrastructure (such as railways and roads) as well as common institutional arrangements like customs procedures. During the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2019, Japan announced the Initiative on Overseas Loans and Investment for ASEAN to financially support these initiatives. The Japan-ASEAN Connectivity Initiative was subsequently launched at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2020 to strengthen ASEAN connectivity in both hardware and software. The almost two trillion yen input into this initiative aimed to improve Japan-ASEAN connectivity by focusing on land, sea and air corridor connectivity projects.

While ASEAN has achieved remarkable growth, it continues to face various problems and challenges related to the environment, urbanization, healthcare, and natural disasters.

Japan is aware of this and has stepped up to help ASEAN by sharing its experiences in dealing with these challenges. In so doing, Japan has ensured that ASEAN is better equipped to overcome these issues and achieve a better quality of life.

To demonstrate that it is ASEAN's partner for quality of life, Japan has assisted in disaster prevention in Southeast Asia by supporting the capacity-building efforts of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre). ASEAN on the other hand, can utilize the knowledge of Japan in health and medical care, including the expansion of basic healthcare services, infectious disease control, emergency life-saving procedures, and improved treatment of non-communicable diseases.

Finally, the heart-to-heart partnership between Japan and ASEAN can be seen in the Asia Center within the Japan Foundation. The Asia Center, which focuses on youths in Japan and ASEAN, can play a crucial role in deepening ties and mutual understanding between the two parties in the future. These efforts and initiatives are also in line with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

However, the current international environment is coloured by much uncertainty due to the US-China rivalry and the ascendance of China. Consequently, these developments present both Japan and ASEAN with multiple challenges. Although Japan was the world's largest official development assistance (ODA) provider in 1991-2000 and recipient countries (including Southeast Asian ones) have praised Japan's assistance, Japanese ODA, its role, and influence have now been eclipsed by growing Chinese influence and presence in the region. Even Southeast Asian countries are placing more emphasis on their economic partnership with China. For instance, Malaysia has had an influx of massive Chinese investment through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), trade missions, and Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's recent visit to China. This means Chinese infrastructure projects in Malaysia are larger in scale, wider in scope and built at a faster speed. As a result, the

Malaysian government and public have focused more on the country's economic partnership with China than Japan.

As of 2022, China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner for 14 consecutive years and its largest foreign investor in the manufacturing sector for six consecutive years. The Malaysian government is extremely receptive to the BRI, as seen in its participation in several mega projects under that cooperation framework. These economic incentives have also contributed to Putrajaya's accommodative attitude towards Beijing's soft power activism in Malaysia. For example, despite the public's deep concerns over Beijing's influence in the country, the Malaysian government continues to allow Beijing to establish new Confucius Institutes across the nation for the sake of preserving its economic partnership with China. Similar patterns can be observed in Putrajaya's low profile South China Sea policy that downplays issues related to China's assertive behaviour in the territorial dispute.

Nevertheless, there is room for both ASEAN and Japan to work closely together due to the convergence of their interests and concerns in the region. They do not need to launch a new large-scale initiative with a glamorous name to do so. Instead, Japan and ASEAN should focus on strengthening and expanding their existing collaborations to ensure that these collaborations have the capabilities to yield desirable results.

The outlook of Japan-Malaysia relations is also positive. When Prime Minister Kishida Fumio met Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur in November 2023, both sides affirmed cooperation over energy and cemented a deal that ensured a stable supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Malaysia to Japan. In 2022, LNG accounted for a major portion of Malaysia's exports to Japan, comprising 31% of its total exports to the country. Japan, on the other hand, agreed to accelerate its adjustment to the Official Security Assistance (OSA) designated for four countries, including Malaysia, by earmarking 2 billion yen for the fiscal year through March 2024.

Additionally, the two countries have agreed to promote joint training exercises between the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and Malaysian military, as well as between their coast guard agencies. A branch of Tsukuba University, a public university in Japan, is planned to be open in Malaysia in September 2024 through the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIT). Thus, the overall assessment of ASEAN-Japan and Malaysia-Japan relations is rather positive from Malaysia's perspective. Both relationships have the potential to move forward steadily and grow stronger in the foreseeable future.

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A Filipino Perspective of Philippine-Japan Relations

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As the decades-long Philippine-Japan relations are constantly evolving, it would be difficult to provide a “Filipino” perspective. While it is tempting to depart from the goings-on between Manila and Tokyo, I think it would be helpful to begin with an anecdote of my visits to Mindanao. In the course of my research trips to Mindanao, I was surprised to find the locals not only sharing their pleasant experience of working with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) but also discussing migration, the Nikkeijin integration, the Battle of Mindanao, the Sumifru banana plantation and Sumitomo Corporation’s unfair labour practices and human rights abuses there, and the American military personnel stationed in Japan who travelled to Mindanao to train and assist in the aftermath of Typhoon Pablo.

Mindanao best captures the essence of Philippine-Japan relations. It is simultaneously a periphery to the capital and an essential component of Japanese historical and contemporary interactions with Southeast Asia, demonstrating that relations with Japan go beyond capital cities. The Philippines and Japan share a comprehensive, multi-layered relationship of mutual trust built on political, economic, cultural and historical interactions between governments and peoples. This relationship is irreducible to geopolitics, even if these two countries share security interests and are both entrenched in the US alliance system in the Indo-Pacific.

A typical puzzle of Philippine-Japan relations is how friendly ties can exist between the two countries despite the Philippines’ past anti-Japanese sentiments. This puzzle is best addressed through something I saw in Mindanao: Philippine-Japan relations can withstand

the test of time because they consist of a consistent interplay of factors ranging from formal diplomatic agreements to ordinary interactions among the Japanese and Filipinos. A survey published in March 2023 showed Japan as the most trusted foreign country in the Philippines, with 55% of Filipinos considering Japan a country they “greatly trust”. This is notable because the same survey shows that only 45% of Filipinos trusted the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) greatly and 39% of Filipinos said they greatly trusted the US.

At this point, it would behove us to ask why the Filipinos place this enormous trust in Japan. Official development assistance (ODA) continues to be the primary factor contributing to the positive perception of Japan among Filipinos. The tensions in the South China Sea also make Japan a desirable maritime security partner. The 2023 Pulse Asia survey showed that 52% of Filipinos wanted to boost defence and security cooperation with Japan, making it the Filipinos’ second choice of a defence partner after the US, which had 84% of respondents in favour of improved security relations. This favourable outlook results from joint efforts on the Japanese and Filipino sides to confront the changing regional security environment.

The most recent example of this occurred during Prime Minister Kishida Fumio’s visit to the Philippines in November 2023. During his meeting with Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the two leaders signed the Official Security Assistance (OSA) to reaffirm their strategic partnership and commitment to the rules-based international order. There are also ongoing negotiations between the Philippines and Japan on the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA).

While the defence cooperation efforts between the Philippines and Japan are rooted in their status as American allies as well as their shared resistance against Chinese territorial claims, their relations go beyond these drivers. Japan and the Philippines also act as autonomous agents. For example, instead of alienating former President Rodrigo Duterte,

who had ruffled Washington's feathers, Prime Minister Abe Shinzo referred to his Filipino counterpart as his "dear and cherished friend". Abe subsequently bolstered this friendly overture by committing one trillion yen in ODA and private sector investment, including financial support for Duterte's controversial war on drugs, disaster prevention in the Philippines, the rehabilitation of Marawi following the government's battle against militants affiliated with the Islamic State, and the Bangsamoro peace process – human security areas in which Japan has been active for decades.

Arguably, it is in Mindanao where Japanese foreign policy is most felt. As Lam Peng Er noted some years ago, Mindanao is a "litmus test" for Japan in integrating peacebuilding as one of the key pillars of its foreign policy. Japan's longstanding involvement in Mindanao has been a strong anchor for peacebuilding since it began in 1990, with locals appreciating its bottom-up, non-linear approach.

Perceptions are also about people-to-people interactions. The Filipino migrant community in Japan is the fourth largest. Cultural and educational exchanges are also significant conduits for Philippine-Japan relations. This is evinced in the numerous programmes sponsored by the Ministry of Education and Japan Foundation, including the Teacher Training and Student scholarships. Japan is also Filipinos' third most desired country to visit after the end of the COVID-19 lockdowns. We cannot take the positive state of Philippine-Japan relations for granted, as perception is as much about diplomatic efforts as the experience of visiting the country and interacting with its people.

Diplomacy has done much to transcend the historical trauma between the two countries. Although the task of repairing the historical trauma between the Philippines and Japan has been arduous and continues to remain unfinished, developments in the past decades have shown that both countries are willing to compromise and work together. Both countries have worked on the status of Nikkeijin in the Philippines, for instance. I think it is important

to remember that many reconciliation efforts occur outside negotiations between governments. There are many Filipinos who developed feelings of goodwill towards Japan after Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko visited the Philippines in 2016 and touched the people with their humility in expressing the importance of Japan not forgetting the wartime damage it inflicted on its own people as well as the people in Asia and other countries.

Japanese Prime Minister Kishida might be right that Philippine-Japan relations have reached a “golden age”, a term he borrowed from former Filipino President Duterte. Nevertheless, both countries must remain conscious as to the challenges that lie ahead. There are three main challenges to the further progression of Philippine-Japan relations.

First, as US allies, how can the Philippine-Japan strategic partnership ensure each other’s autonomy as less powerful states? On the one hand, Japan’s revised National Defense Strategy (NDS) aligns with the US Indo-Pacific strategy as it considers the threats posed by China and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). On the other, President Marcos’ flexible foreign policy strategy is about “seeking friendship” with all. Can both countries help each other to assuage China’s concerns over their status as US allies? After all, China is more of an immediate reality for Japan and the Philippines than for Washington, whose view of China is more existential.

Second, will the shift towards China affect other aspects of their comprehensive partnership? It might be that resources are either too concentrated on one issue or spread too thinly to cover existing and future areas for collaboration, especially in human security. Japan is also extending its defence wings to the European Union (EU). Can this affect how Japan deals with the ASEAN and the Philippines?

Third, how will Japan’s values-oriented diplomacy stand up to the challenging security environment in the region? Japanese ODA appears to be emphasizing its national

interests while promoting values, particularly democracy. To what extent can this implicate Japan's relations with ASEAN and the Philippines?

These challenges notwithstanding, opportunities for further developing Philippine-Japan relations also lie ahead. From a geopolitical aspect, the Philippines can work with Japan to perform a delicate balancing role. As key allies, they can influence American foreign policy towards the region. There is also an opportunity for them to jointly adopt a comprehensive approach to the South China Sea disputes. This means covering defence and security projects that could empower local communities affected by China's escalating territorial claims.

Lastly, in line with Japan's goal to promote cooperation in the Global South, the Philippines and ASEAN could play a significant role in building bridges between countries with shared colonial histories, socioeconomic needs, and representational lack in the international domain. In this regard, the Philippines and Japan could reach out to and work with the BRICS intergovernmental organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Indeed, Japanese ODA has shaped the perspectives of many Filipinos, giving them a positive impression of Japan. However, there is also an often-unspoken fact. The Philippines has likewise played a significant role in constructing a favourable image of post-war Japan. This is where Japan's public diplomacy efforts, such as peacebuilding, infrastructure development, and disaster management, have produced tangible and life-changing results. Seeing both countries rely on each other evinces the Fukuda Doctrine's notion of heart-to-heart understanding.

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Golden Jubilee of ASEAN-Japan Relations: A Singaporean Perspective

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan are two critical actors in Singapore's foreign policy strategy. Singapore is a founding member of ASEAN and continues to view the organization as a critical platform through which strong regional cooperation, peace and stability can be fostered within the region and beyond.

Singapore has developed a robust political, economic and security relationship with Japan since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1966. Japan signed its first bilateral economic partnership agreement with Singapore in 2002, known as the Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Singapore for a New-Age Economic Partnership (JSEPA). This was Singapore's first economic partnership agreement with a major trading partner. This agreement sets a solid foundation for both countries to develop strong economic relations.

In 2022, Singapore was Japan's top Asian investor and third-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI). Politically, Singapore and Japan have deepened their collaboration on various challenges, such as the promotion of free trade, disarmament and non-proliferation, environmental issues, the unrest in Myanmar, and others. Singapore and Japan have likewise collaborated on defence issues, with the two countries signing an enhanced memorandum on defence exchanges in 2022 and the Agreement on the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology in 2023.

Singapore's foreign policy interests are further served by the joint efforts to upgrade ASEAN-Japan relations. Commemorating the golden jubilee of ASEAN-Japan relations is a nothing short of a milestone. It displays the maturity of relations between ASEAN and Japan. The establishment and adoption of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership is an indication of the growing maturity of the relationship. Indeed, Japan comes closest to being a role model external partner for ASEAN.

From a Singaporean perspective, ASEAN-Japan relations are in a good place. Both share many common features. Japan has been steadfast in its support of ASEAN centrality and unity, which has been crucial in addressing common regional challenges and engaging with external partners beyond the region. In this regard, Japan has been a reliable partner to ASEAN for five decades, supporting ASEAN-led mechanisms such as ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus. ASEAN and Japan also share common interest in upholding an open and inclusive regional architecture. Japan's strong support for the ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) is critical to achieving this goal.

ASEAN and Japan have developed robust economic relations. Over the last 50 years, Japan has contributed to the economic development and prosperity of ASEAN at various stages of the region's development. This has included investing in ASEAN's development and industrialization, contributing to ASEAN's goal of becoming an economic community, addressing economic inequalities within ASEAN, promoting regional economic integration through the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), and other areas. As a step forward, Japan has proposed the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-Creation Vision, which provides a framework to further elevate economic collaboration by utilizing each other's strengths. It is a vision that Singapore supports.

Despite reaching their golden jubilee, work for ASEAN and Japan cannot stop here. It requires further efforts from both parties to ensure that their partnership continues to flourish. There are many areas through which the ASEAN-Japan relationship can further grow.

In economic terms, ASEAN is focused on the next stage of its economic integration in new growth areas, especially in the establishment of digital and green or sustainable economies. Japan has relevant expertise and capabilities in both areas. It would be important and beneficial for Tokyo to strengthen economic cooperation with ASEAN in these areas through various means, such as capacity building.

In political terms, both Japan and ASEAN should deepen their shared interest in upholding an open and inclusive regional architecture. This can be done not only through the support of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), but also through the implementation of joint practical initiatives to support this vision. Both Japan and ASEAN should explore new ways through which they can implement tangible cooperative projects under the AOIP's four priority areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, UN Sustainable Goals 2030, and economic and social areas of cooperation.

In strategic terms, the long-standing concern about “choosing sides” amidst the growing tensions between the US and China remains an issue, particularly since it has been further complicated by Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Collectively, these challenges have the potential to upend the status quo that has benefitted both ASEAN and Japan.

While Japan may have chosen a side, ASEAN is in no position to do the same. There are varied opinions within ASEAN, as each country is faced with their own domestic contexts and subjected to different pressures from the larger powers. Pushing the ASEAN countries to take sides could lead to an outcome that may not be in Japan's interests. Instead, both ASEAN and Japan should work on deepening their shared interests to achieve common

prosperity and development. Japan has understood this for the last five decades, and should continue to apply this principle.

It is important for ASEAN that Japan and the US engage in managed competition with China without excluding it from the regional architecture. The creation of an alternative regional architecture to the ASEAN-led one that excludes China is a problem for ASEAN, as it hastens the road to a Cold War-like divide. It is in ASEAN's interests for Japan to maintain stable relations with China while simultaneously encouraging the United States to engage China in initiatives that could promote regional prosperity.

Working towards these goals is important for regional security and stability. From next July 2024, Singapore will be the country coordinator for ASEAN-Japan relations. This will provide Japan with a further chance to expand ASEAN-Japan cooperation with a like-minded partner.

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A Thai Perspective on the Golden Jubilee of ASEAN-Japan Relations: Towards 4S Cooperation

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As 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Japan, it is a good time to reflect on what has been achieved and the way forward. Japan's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia is arguably its most successful. Despite anti-Japanese product campaigns and protests sporadically occurring in the region in the 1970s, such antagonism has been gradually replaced by Southeast Asians' appreciation of Japan. Since the mid-1980s, citizens of Southeast Asian countries have shifted away from anti-Japanese sentiments to more favourable perceptions of Japan.

In the present-day, Southeast Asians' appreciation of Japan can be seen in many ways. According to the annual *State of Southeast Asia* survey reports conducted by the ASEAN Studies Centre at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Japan has continually scored as the most trusted major power among Southeast Asian opinion leaders since 2019. The prevalence of Japanese food and pop culture in the region is a good testament to Southeast Asians' positive perception of Japan. Furthermore, Japan is also the top tourist destination for the people of the ASEAN member states.

How did Japan win the hearts and minds of Southeast Asians? The answer lies in the Fukuda Doctrine that was promulgated in 1977. The Fukuda Doctrine emphasized heart-to-heart relationships as the "necessary condition" for improved relations between Japan and Southeast. To enhance its image in Southeast Asia, Japan stepped up its cultural exchanges, youth programmes and scholarships, and increased official development assistance (ODA) in the region to facilitate the construction of key infrastructure projects, such as roads, ports,

airports, and power plants. At the same time, Japan's pop culture, particularly manga, anime, television series, and J-pop came to permeate the region, as television sets became increasingly available in the region.

Yet, it was the massive Japanese investment in the latter half of the 1980s that created the "sufficient conditions" for friendly relations. Japan and the Southeast Asian countries came to be increasingly connected through economic interdependence from the mid-1980s onwards, which helped generate trade and employment for local companies and people. After the Asian Financial Crisis hit several ASEAN countries in 1997, ASEAN-Japan relations were elevated to a new level when the Japanese government and private sector injected more support into the region. Through the New Miyazawa Initiative, Japan provided loans to various Southeast Asian countries and helped to boost the ailing ASEAN economies. Japanese companies also aided the ASEAN countries by injecting more capital into pop-up joint ventures and shifting their export strategies into high gear. Accordingly, several ASEAN countries emerged as large exporters of many products. Thailand, for example, became a major global automobile exporter, while Malaysia became a major exporter of electronics.

In the 2000s, Japan and ASEAN came to be tied together more firmly through economic partnership agreements that not only went beyond free trade agreements (FTAs) but also featured other cooperative schemes encompassing trade facilitation measures and human resource development in particular industries. It should be noted that Japan also engages with the ASEAN countries through multiple actors, including companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, Japan has been able to build up stable and trustworthy relations with Southeast Asia.

What is next for ASEAN-Japan relations? How can we chart the future of the ASEAN-Japan partnership? The answer lies in 4S cooperation, namely in services, soft power, social transformation, and security.

First, services represent a promising area in ASEAN-Japan relations. On top of investment in manufacturing industries, which ASEAN countries still expect from Japan, recent trends have shown increasing investment in services, including food, retail, and finance. As the middle class in Southeast Asia continues its rapid expansion, ASEAN will become a larger market for Japan. Indeed, the middle class in the ASEAN member states are expected to reach an estimated 334 million by 2030. ASEAN is an important market for Japan because it is the third-fastest growing economy in the world, having achieved a growth rate of 5.5% in 2022. This represents an opportunity for both Japan and ASEAN in terms of growing consumption. Indeed, there is a lot of Japanese and Southeast Asian fusion regarding food culture and consumption in everyday life. Japanese beef bowls in Thailand, for example, are served with Thai spices and seasonings. Japanese green tea in some parts of the region is served with milk like Thai tea.

Second, soft power, in terms of cultural and entertainment content, can be a good area for cooperation between Japan and ASEAN. Girl groups modelled after the Japanese all-female idol musical group AKB48 have gained popularity in ASEAN countries. Further co-creative endeavours should be promoted, such as joint productions of movie and television series, and the joint creation of boy bands and girl groups. The inclusion of Southeast Asian elements will bring diversity to Japan's pop culture exports and appeal to wider audiences. It seems that both the world's economic centre of gravity and the soft power exercised by the world's major players have shifted from the West to the East. This accounts for Japan's growing focus on Southeast Asia.

Third, social transformation can be another area of cooperation for ASEAN and Japan. Several ASEAN countries are increasingly facing ageing societies, low birth rates, rural depopulation, and juvenile delinquency. Japan, as a forerunner in Asia, has been coping with various instances of social transformation for more than three decades. These

experiences place Japan in good stead as it can share good practices and lessons learnt with the ASEAN member states. Mutual learning of their respective methods of coping with social transformations is also possible.

Last but not least, Japan can cooperate more with ASEAN on security issues. Due to Japan's excellent record of cooperating with ASEAN on many security issues—including disaster relief, combating piracy, peace-keeping operations, and peace and development (in Mindanao)—Japan should focus more on non-traditional security (NTS) areas, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), climate change and environment security, cyber security, defence technology, and maritime security. Collaborative endeavours on maritime security would not only improve Southeast Asia's sea-borne law enforcement and improve the region's maritime domain awareness but also uphold the Law of the Sea Convention.

Japan has come to play a constructive role in ASEAN's cyber security in recent years through the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC). It is difficult to imagine the Southeast Asian countries establishing such a centre with the other great powers. That Japan can do so is testament to the high level of trust it has among the ASEAN countries.

Japan's official security assistance (OSA) can also aid ASEAN in other security areas, especially considering the growing rivalry between the US and China. As the ASEAN countries wish to maintain good relations with the US and China, they have avoided taking sides. To maintain ASEAN's neutrality amid increased US-China tension, the Southeast Asian countries could enter into security cooperation endeavours with Japan, and possibly the European Union. In this way, Japan can serve as an alternative security partner for ASEAN outside of the US and China.

Additionally, ASEAN should cooperate with Japan in ameliorating and resolving the ongoing problems in Myanmar. Such a move would be timely as it is possible Japan would need to deploy peacekeeping missions to Myanmar in the future. After all, Japan had successfully taken part in peacekeeping operations in Cambodia in the 1990s.

In conclusion, through 4S cooperation, ASEAN and Japan can continue to foster and improve their healthy relationship for prosperity and peace for the next ten years and beyond.

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Assessing the ASEAN-Japan Partnership from a Vietnamese Perspective

Hoang Thi Ha

Co-coordinator, Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme,

ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore

At the bilateral level, Japan stands out as one of Vietnam's most productive, comprehensive and trustworthy external relationships. It is firmly based on the three key components guiding the partnership between Japan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely "mutual trust, mutual benefit and shared principles". Both countries recently agreed to elevate their bilateral ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, which effectively placed Japan on par with China, Russia, India, South Korea and the US at the highest level of Vietnam's foreign relations.

Vietnam and Japan also enjoy robust political trust at the highest leadership levels as well as strong mutual empathy and goodwill among their respective publics. The number of annual high-level exchanges between Vietnamese and Japanese leaders is the highest among all the ASEAN member states since 2015. This can be seen in the table below.

2015	Official visit to Japan by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong
2016	Official visit to Japan by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc
2017	Visit to Vietnam by Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo
2018	State visit to Japan by President Tran Dai Quang
2020	First overseas visit by Japanese Prime Minister Suga Yoshihide to Vietnam
2021	Official visit to Japan by Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh
2022	Official visit to Vietnam by Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio Vietnamese President attended the state funeral of the late Prime Minister Abe Shinzo

	in Japan
2023	Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh attended the G7 Summit and met with his Japanese counterpart Official visit to Japan by President Vo Van Thuong

Japan's Contributions to Vietnam's Economic Development

Japan has been playing a pivotal role in Vietnam's economic development since the latter undertook economic reforms and sought to integrate with the rest of the world in the late 1980s. Similarly, the multi-directional diversification of Vietnam's external relations has resulted in the country courting Japanese investment. Japan has made four significant contributions to Vietnam's economic development.

Firstly, Japan is Vietnam's largest provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA), accounting for over 30% of the aid that Vietnam receives. Japan is the most preferred and most substantial partner in infrastructure financing in Vietnam. The Japanese brand of infrastructure is popular in Vietnam not only because of its well-known excellent quality but also because of Vietnam's strategic trust in Japan.

Secondly, Japan is the second-largest partner in labour cooperation, hosting over half a million Vietnamese people, who now constitute the second-largest foreign community in Japan. This "people" dimension is poised to take centre stage in both the Vietnam-Japan bilateral agenda and the broader ASEAN-Japan framework, as the issues of providing relevant training and the protection of the welfare of Southeast Asian labour in Japan are gaining traction.

Thirdly, Japan is the third-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) for Vietnam, with almost 5,000 projects and an accumulated stock of over US\$70 billion at the end of 2022. Japanese investments have played a key role in linking the ASEAN economies

in the regional production networks across a range of manufacturing sectors from electronics to automobiles.

Fourthly, Japan is Vietnam's fourth-largest trading partner after China, the US and South Korea, as it commands a total trade volume of approximately US\$50 billion. Compared to the 1990s and 2000s, Japan has more competitors in the region now, as evinced by China and South Korea's economic interest in Southeast Asia. While Japan's economic and soft power in the region still holds up, it has to identify new drivers of growth to keep this power going.

Japan's Soft Power in Vietnam

Apart from substantial economic engagement, Japan's soft power in Vietnam is remarkably prominent. Vietnamese consumers favour "made in Japan" goods above all else. Opinion polls conducted by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (as a public survey) and the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (an elite survey) underscored the substantial support and admiration that Vietnamese respondents have towards Japan.

Out of all the ASEAN countries, Vietnam expressed the highest levels of trust, admiration and support for Japan. Many Vietnamese see Japan as a trustworthy friend and welcome Japanese companies that wish to set up factories in their localities. Significantly, the historical legacy of Japan's World War II occupation of the country has not impeded the robust ties between them. This is in sharp contrast to uneasy and sometimes fractious relations Japan has with its Northeast Asian countries due to its wartime past.

Vietnam's Perception of Japan

At the multilateral level, Vietnam views Japan as one of ASEAN's most crucial dialogue partners. Aside from deepening their bilateral ties, the two countries have also closely

cooperated in many regional frameworks, such as the ASEAN-Japan forum, ASEAN Plus Three (APT) forum, and the East Asia Summit (EAS). Vietnam strongly advocates for the deepening of the ASEAN-Japan comprehensive strategic partnership. This is grounded in the fact that most of Japan's initiatives with ASEAN always positions Vietnam as a key beneficiary and recipient. Regardless as to the aim of Japan's ASEAN programmes—whether it is to narrow the development gap among the ASEAN countries, foster synergy between the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept or engage in the ASEAN-Japan Connectivity Initiative—Vietnam stands to gain significantly from these collaborative efforts.

Japan and Vietnam are also working together on security issues. This can be seen in the joint statement issued during Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong's visit to Japan in November 2023, where both sides affirmed they would “strengthen *consultation* and *mutual support* at regional mechanisms and fora on defence and security in which both sides participate”. The strong language of this joint statement demonstrates the deep strategic trust between the two countries. Vietnam sees Japan as a like-minded partner that is committed to upholding a rules-based regional maritime order.

The late Abe Shinzo's Three Principles on the Rule of Law at Sea aligns with Vietnam's interests in the South China Sea, whereby states ought to (i) clarify their claims based on international law, (ii) eschew the use of force in asserting its claims, and (iii) settle disputes through peaceful means.

Hanoi and Tokyo have often jointly expressed their concerns over China's escalating assertiveness in the South China Sea. Tokyo perceives China's actions as a threat to the freedom of movement on vital sea lanes and deems China's actions in the South China Sea to be no different from its coercive tactics in the East China Sea. Hanoi may likewise draw parallels between China's actions in the East China Sea and the territorial disputes in the

South China Sea. After China announced an Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea in 2013, Vietnam and Japan jointly advocated for the “freedom of navigation and overflight” at the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit. This principle of “freedom of navigation and overflight” has been reiterated jointly by Japan and Vietnam in subsequent ASEAN statements on the South China Sea.

Japan’s Changing Stance towards Vietnam?

Japan’s security stance is undergoing transformation due to the changing regional geopolitics following the resurgence of China, Chinese assertion of its claims in the East and South China Seas, and the escalating competition between the United States and China. Concrete steps are being undertaken to gradually overcome its constitutional limitations and transcend the pacifist sentiments among the Japanese public. This shift is evident in the release of three security documents in 2022.

As Japan positions itself as a more substantial security actor, it could inject new momentum and strategic depth into its security partnerships with Southeast Asian counterparts, including Vietnam. First, under the Proactive Contribution to Peace policy and the Official Security Assistance (OSA) programme, Japan has been stepping up its support for the enhancement of maritime capabilities among Southeast Asian littoral states through training and capacity building, equipment transfer, and technology cooperation. Vietnam has received Japanese support in coast guard and submarine crew training as well as six used patrol boats, with six more new vessels to come under an ODA arrangement. Hanoi welcomes enhanced maritime security cooperation with Japan, both bilaterally and through ASEAN-led mechanisms. Following the Philippines and Malaysia, Vietnam stands to be the next participant in Japan’s OSA as well.

Vietnam's Position in ASEAN

Vietnam is also the most forward-looking country within ASEAN in terms of embracing the Indo-Pacific construct, as is evident in its various bilateral joint statements with Japan. Hanoi has not shied away from “free and open” discourse, especially when it comes to the rules-based international order, respect for international law, national independence and sovereignty. As the ASEAN Chair in 2020, Vietnam played an instrumental role in the adoption of that year’s ASEAN-Japan Summit joint statement which affirms that “the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept share relevant fundamental principles in promoting peace and cooperation”.

Beyond the normative dimension, Vietnam’s embrace of the Indo-Pacific has a realist balance-of-power motivation to counterbalance China’s growing maritime ambitions, particularly in the South China Sea. The country’s foreign policy establishment exhibits a more receptive attitude towards non-ASEAN minilateral arrangements such as the Quad (comprising India, the US, Japan and Australia) and AUKUS (comprising Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States). Although Vietnam also pays perfunctory respect to the AOIP and ASEAN centrality, Hanoi is more interested in leveraging the Indo-Pacific for its own security interests.

Japan and Vietnam’s Economic Security

Lastly, we come to the topic of economic security, which has gained prominence in the economic policy of Japan and other advanced economies in recent years due to the US-China strategic competition and COVID-19 supply chain disruptions. Economic security was emphasized in the Vietnam-Japan joint statement on the elevation of their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership for peace and prosperity in Asia and the world in November 2023. In that statement, both countries expressed their commitment to facilitating

the diversification of Japanese companies and the upgrading of supply chains in Vietnam to enable Vietnamese business to participate more substantially in Japanese-led global supply chains. Recent RETRO surveys indicated that Vietnam is the second favourite destination for Japanese investment, with 70% of Japanese companies in Vietnam planning business expansions. Going forward, it is crucial to monitor two parallel trends that may intersect or even collide at some point, namely (i) the ongoing regional economic integration driven by various ASEAN-based free trade agreements (FTAs), including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP); and (ii) the friend-shoring of critical supply chains to certain select Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam.

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Appendix A

Keynote Address by His Excellency Ambassador Ishikawa Hiroshi, Embassy of Japan in Singapore

(29 November 2023)

Professor Bert Hofman, Director of the East Asian Institute,

Distinguished speakers,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. I am very excited to be here with the leading scholars from ASEAN countries and Japan as well as the wider audiences gathering virtually. It is a great honour for our embassy to be a sponsor for this seminar. First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the East Asian Institute for your organizing the event. I would also like to thank all of the distinguished speakers and guests for your active participation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The final big event of the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, that is the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo, is coming soon. The Summit will also be an important milestone for Japan's diplomacy as a whole.

Looking back over the past one year, Japan launched several key diplomatic initiatives.

- In December last year, the Government of Japan adopted the new National Security Strategy that set forth the measures to reinforce the comprehensive defense architecture, including the introduction of the Official Security Assistance (OSA) framework.
- In March, Prime Minister Kishida announced Japan's new plan for a "Free and

Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” that expands cooperation for FOIP with four pillars.

- In May, Japan hosted the G7 Hiroshima Summit where we engaged with the so-called “Global South” countries as well.
- And in September, ASEAN and Japan established the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Prime Minister Kishida also announced the “Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative”.

As shown by these events, Japan has been strengthening our diplomatic efforts with a view to leading the international community in the direction of cooperation rather than division and confrontation. And I believe ASEAN-Japan partnership is a precious asset for our endeavour. I would like to elaborate on this from three perspectives.

First, the ASEAN-Japan partnership is based on mutual trust.

Japan is very proud to become a dialogue partner with ASEAN in 1973, ahead of the rest of the world. Since then, especially after the Fukuda Doctrine in 1977, we have forged our “heart-to-heart” connections through people-to-people exchanges in various areas.

We can see one example in the number of ASEAN people studying Japanese language. According to the survey by the Japan Foundation in 2021, nearly 1.2 million people from ASEAN countries study Japanese language in schools and other institutions. This accounts for over 30% of the world in total. It would be striking to note that the same survey in 2003 showed the number was about 200,000, accounting for about 8% of the world. During the recent 20 years, ASEAN people studying Japanese increased more than five times and it is faster than any other regions in the world.

Another example is the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP). Since 1974, more than 45 sails were conducted with more than 12,000 youths from ASEAN countries and Japan. Through the over 50-days program mainly on a ship, they promoted friendship and mutual understanding. Japan highly appreciates youth exchanges by

this Program and others which have created strong bonds among us over generations during the past half century. In this regard, I am delighted to share that, on 3 November, the Government of Japan decided to confer the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays to Mr Tan Soon Hoe — former President of Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP) International Singapore for his contribution.

Sense of affinity with Japan shared by ASEAN people is a strong base of our mutual trust. Without it, political and economic partnerships would not be sustainable in a real sense. Japan will continue to make our efforts for further enhancing people-to-people exchanges with ASEAN.

Second, the ASEAN-Japan partnership is supported by mutual benefit.

While Japan has long supported ASEAN's economic development through trade, investment and official development assistance, the vibrant and dynamic economy of ASEAN has also contributed to Japan's sustained development. In Singapore, Japan is one of the earliest investors after its independence in 1965 and has been involved in its industrialization and infrastructure development. Beyond individual countries, Japan has supported ASEAN economic integration through various aspects, especially strengthening its connectivity.

Now, ASEAN embraces regional supply chains that support Japan's renowned manufacturing. The stock of Japan's foreign direct investment to ASEAN countries in the manufacturing sector has continuously expanded, and accounts for more than 15 trillion JPY as of 2021, which is equivalent to 20% of the world. At the same time, the growing middle class with purchasing power in ASEAN countries provides a promising market for Japanese products, including Japanese food. Besides, more than 1 million people from ASEAN countries are now studying and working in Japan, and supporting Japan's economy and society.

Finally, the ASEAN-Japan partnership is robust with shared principles.

All of us have benefited from the free and open international order based on the rule of law as well as peace and stability of the region for our own growth and prosperity. But these are not given conditions. Constant efforts are necessary to uphold and strengthen them. In this respect, ASEAN has been instrumental by its undertakings to lead multi-layered regional cooperation mechanisms. Japan strongly supports ASEAN centrality and unity and continues to promote cooperation.

From this viewpoint, in the new plan for a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”, Japan announced a new contribution of 100 million US dollars to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) to support initiatives to further enhance connectivity. In September, we announced the Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative. In addition to ongoing transportation infrastructure development cooperation that is worth 2.8 trillion JPY, Japan will promote soft infrastructure cooperation through capacity-building projects for 5,000 individuals over the next three years in various areas, such as digital, maritime cooperation, supply chain resilience and others.

Japan is also enhancing our cooperation with ASEAN in defense and security areas. Under the newly introduced Official Security Assistance framework, we have just recently signed the first program with the Philippines that will provide coastal radar systems to the Armed Forces of the Philippines. With Singapore, we signed the Agreement concerning the Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology in June this year.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The upcoming ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit will adopt a new joint vision statement and its implementation plan, thereby setting out a vision for creating a sustainable and prosperous new era together.

With mutual trust, mutual benefit and shared principles, the ASEAN-Japan partnership will continue to be a driving force to address our common challenges and create new opportunities. Our region is facing climate change, ageing society, technology governance and other emerging challenges that may necessitate societal and economic changes all of us have yet to experience. In Singapore, one of the regional bases for business innovations, I have been witnessing potential collaborations in emerging sectors such as green transformation, health care and digital economy. I hope that such innovative approaches from private sectors, coupled with the ASEAN-Japan cooperation and other bilateral and regional initiatives, will create new impetuses for our growth and prosperity while providing practical solutions to our socio-economic challenges. And, as Singapore will be the ASEAN country coordinator for Japan from summer next year, I would like to keep close communication with Singaporean colleagues and play a constructive role in it.

With this expectation, I am very much looking forward to gaining insights from the discussions today. Thank you.

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Appendix B

EAI Seminar Commemorating the Golden Jubilee of ASEAN-Japan Partnership: Programme

Seminar organized by

East Asian Institute (EAI), National University of Singapore (NUS), Singapore

Sponsored by

Embassy of Japan in Singapore

Details:

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

9.00 am to 12.10 pm (Singapore Time)

Via Zoom

About the seminar:

The year 2023 marks the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. This seminar will assess the achievements and challenges of this partnership in the past five decades. It will also anticipate future challenges and opportunities in the effort to strengthen ASEAN-Japan partnership for mutual benefits and a more stable, vibrant and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The seminar gathers a stellar cast of Japanese and Southeast Asian scholars who will offer multiple perspectives on this enduring and future-oriented partnership.

Programme

9.00 – 9.05 am (Singapore Time)	Welcome Remarks Prof Bert HOFMAN Director, East Asian Institute, NUS
9.05 – 9.15 am	Keynote Address His Excellency Ambassador ISHIKAWA Hiroshi Ambassador, Embassy of Japan in Singapore

9.15 – 10.30 am ***Panel 1 - Assessing ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation***

Moderated by Prof Bert HOFMAN

Director, East Asian Institute, NUS

(Time allocation: 12 minutes for each speaker)

1. **Recommendations of the Government of Japan's Expert Panel for the 50th Anniversary of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation**

Prof OBA Mie

Kanagawa University

2. **Assessing Two Golden Jubilees: ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation and 1977 Fukuda Doctrine**

Dr LAM Peng Er

East Asian Institute, NUS

3. **Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance) and OSA (Official Security Assistance) to Southeast Asia**

Assoc Prof KIBA Saya

Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

4. **Strategic Cooperation between Japan and Southeast Asia amid Superpower Rivalry**

Prof SHOJI Tomotaka

Regional Studies Department, National Institute for Defense Studies

5. **Japan's Peacebuilding in Southeast Asia**

Prof TANIGUCHI Miyoko

Miyazaki Municipal University

Q & A

10.30 am – 12 noon ***Panel 2 – Assessing ASEAN-Japan Partnership: Southeast Asian Perspectives***

Moderated by Prof SHOJI Tomotaka

Regional Studies Department, National Institute for Defence Studies
(Time allocation: 12 minutes for each speaker)

6. **A Filipino Perspective**
Dr Carmina Yu UNTALAN
OSIPP, Osaka University
7. **An Indonesian Perspective**
Assoc Prof Shofwan Al Banna CHOIRUZZAD
Universitas Indonesia
8. **A Singaporean Perspective**
Assoc Prof Bhubhinder SINGH
RSIS, Nanyang Technological University
9. **A Malaysian Perspective**
Dr Nur Shahadah JAMIL
University of Malaya
10. **A Thai Perspective**
Prof Kitti PRASIRTSUK
Thammasat University
11. **A Vietnamese Perspective**
Ms HOANG Thi Ha
ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

Q & A

- 12 noon – 12.10 pm ***Closing Remarks***
Dr LAM Peng Er
Principal Research Fellow and Head of Korea Centre,
East Asian Institute, NUS

End of Seminar

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Biographical Profiles of Speakers and Moderators

(in the order of the programme)

Prof Bert HOFMAN is the director of the East Asian Institute and Professor in Practice at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, both at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Before joining NUS in 2019, he worked at the World Bank for 27 years, including as country director for China and chief economist for East Asia. He also worked at the Kiel Institute of World Economics, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and ING Bank. He has extensive experience in advising governments on economic development issues. He has also published widely on fiscal policy, decentralization, debt, trade and Asian economies.

His Excellency Ambassador ISHIKAWA Hiroshi is a career diplomat with 35 years of experience in the Japanese Foreign Service. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador of Japan to Singapore, Ishikawa was deputy minister in the Foreign Minister's Secretariat. He had also served as director-general of the Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department, director of the First China and Mongolia Division, director of the First North America Division, and director of the National Security Policy Division. Ambassador Ishikawa had also served in overseas postings to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations as well as the Embassy of Japan in China.

Prof OBA Mie is a professor at Kanagawa University. She obtained her MA and PhD in Advanced Social and International Studies from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. Her major is international relations and the politics of East Asia and the Asia-Pacific. She specializes in the development of regionalism in this region as well as theories of regional integration and regionalism. She was an Academic Associate of the Program on US-Japan Relations at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs in 2006-2007. She has written several articles and books, including "Towards an Equal Partnership", *East Asia Forum*, Vol. 15, No. 3, 2023; "Japan's Quest for an Autonomous Role in East Asian Regionalism: Strengthening its US Alliance and Balancing China's Rise" in *Japan's Foreign Policy in the 21st Century: Continuity and Change*, edited by Lam Peng Er and Purnendra Jain, (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2020); "Further Development of Asian Regionalism: Institutional Hedging in an Uncertain Era", *Journal of Contemporary East Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2019; "TPP, RCEP, and

FTAAP: Multilayered Regional Economic Integration and International Relations”, *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2016; *Higashi Ajia no Katachi: Chitsujokeisei to Togo wo meguru niche-bei-cyu-asean No Kosa* [The Making of East Asia: Order, Integration and Stakeholders] (Tokyo: Chikura-Shobo, 2016); *Jusoteki-Chiiki toshiten no Ajia: Tairitsu to Kyozon no Kozu* [Asia as a Multilayered Region: Co-existence in Conflicts] (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 2014); and *Ajia Taiheiyo Chiiki Keisei heno Dotei: Kyokai-Kokka Nichi-Go no Aidentiti Mosaku to Chiiki-Shyugi* [The Invention of the Asia-Pacific Region: A History of Regionalism and Search for Identity by Japan and Australia as Liminal Nations] (Kyoto: Minerva Shobo, 2004). Additionally, she received the 21st Ohira Masayoshi Memorial Prize in 2005 and the 11th Nakasone Yasuhiro Incentive Award in 2015. Until February 2023, she served as the chairperson of the Government of Japan’s Expert Panel on the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

Dr LAM Peng Er obtained his PhD from Columbia University and is a political scientist. His publications have appeared in international journals such as *Pacific Affairs*, *Asian Survey*, *Asian Affairs*, *Japan Forum*, and *Government and Opposition: An International Journal of Comparative Politics*. Lam’s latest single-authored book is *Japan’s Peace-Building Diplomacy in Asia: Searching for an Active Political Role* (New York and London: Routledge, 2009). His other notable single-authored book is *Green Politics in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1999). He has also edited numerous book compilations, such as *South Korea’s New Southern Policy: A Middle Power’s International Relations with Southeast Asia and India* (London and New York: Routledge, 2023); *Contemporary Korea-Southeast Asian Relations: Bilateral and Multilateral* (London: Routledge, 2022); *Japan’s Relations with Southeast Asia: The Fukuda Doctrine and Beyond* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); and *Japan’s Relations with China: Facing a Rising Power* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006). He is currently an executive editor of the *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* (a journal of the Japan Association of International Relations published by Oxford University Press), *Asian Journal of Peacebuilding* (published by Seoul National University’s Institute for Peace and Unification Studies,) and *East Asian Policy* (an open access journal of the National University of Singapore’s East Asian Institute).

Assoc Prof KIBA Saya is an associate professor at the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies. Her major fields of interest are Southeast Asian studies, civil-military relations, and security sector governance.

Prof SHOJI Tomotaka is the director of the Regional Studies Department at the National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS) in Tokyo. He has been working as a researcher at NIDS since 2002. His areas of expertise include security and international relations in Southeast Asia. He received his PhD in international relations from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. His recent papers in English include “ASEAN Political Security Community: Development of Multilateral Cooperative Frameworks and Further Challenges” (*Security and Strategy*, Vol. 3, January 2023), and “Nexus of the East and South China Seas: A Japanese Perspective” in *Maritime Issues and Regional Order in the Indo-Pacific*, edited by Leszek Buszynski and Do Thanh Hai (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

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