

# **Twenty years of Political-Security Aspects of ASEAN–India Relations : Issues and Challenges**

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Paper presented at  
International Conference to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of ASEAN-India Cooperation  
20-21 September, 2012  
Bangkok

# Introduction

- Since India became dialogue partner of ASEAN, the aspect of political -security relations transcend an important arena of discussion.
- Dialogue Relations : transcended in Summit, Ministerial Meetings, Senior Officials Meetings and Meetings at expert level.
- So important are----ARF, PMC, EAS , MGC & BIMSTEC

# Aim of the present article

- Discussion of Non Traditional Security Concerns of India- ASEAN Relations.
- SIX IDENTIFIED ISSUES :
  - Terrorism
  - Nuclear Question
  - Energy Security
  - Food & Health Questions
  - Human Rights
  - Migration

# CHINA FACTOR BEHIND INDIA- ASEAN COOPERATION

- Chinese support for Myanmar's naval facilities
- Suspected Chinese satellite in the Indian Ocean
- Gradual welcome of India to Indonesia & Singapore's proposal to bring Australia and New Zealand in EAS : Aim was to dilute 'Chinese Dominance' in regional architecture.
- Gradual Indian interest towards convergence of interests between India & ASEAN.
- Result was growth of Non traditional Security cooperations.

# NTSC : TERRORISM

- Terrorism has been a major impediment on the realization of regional stability goal. It imposes direct threat to the security of the community and hinders economic development.
- Terrorism is not new in Asia, in fact Asia is considered as the hub of terrorists. Terrorism already exists centuries ago in different forms and methods; however, there is a growing virulence and strong connections to trans-national organizations such as Al Qaeda that makes terrorist groups stronger through time.
- Southeast Asia is considered to be the base of operations and attack targets by Islamic radical extremist groups

## 2001 Declaration & Vision 2020 of ASEAN

- The 2001 Declaration calls for the cooperation among the front-line law enforcement agencies of ASEAN in combating terrorism.
- The September 11 attack on the US, which ASEAN strongly condemned, is considered as a direct challenge to ASEAN's goal of attaining peace, progress and prosperity within the region and the realization of ASEAN Vision 2020.

# Prospective Areas of India- ASEAN Cooperation in combating Terrorism

- There is potential for cooperation between ASEAN and India because they have a common desire to fight terrorism as each has been facing terrorist threats in their respective domains.
- ASEAN's Indonesia could serve as India's bridge towards the Muslim community while India's experience in dealing with minorities could be an example to ASEAN states thereby letting each other learn from the other's experience

# NTSC : NUCLEAR ISSUE

- Background History of India's Nuclear Policy :
- Aftermath of India gaining its independence in 1947, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru and his Congress government launched their very first nuclear program to exploit their natural thorium reserves in response to the rapidly increasing demand for electricity.
- The decision to develop the complete nuclear fuel cycle led India to acquire the technical capability to build nuclear weapons. The defeat of India in the 1962 war with China triggered India's urge to pursue its nuclear ambitions.
- The weaponization of India's nuclear capabilities was further authorized by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1980s which was sparked by the acts of Pakistan in forwarding its efforts in acquiring nuclear weapons and the nuclear threats imposed by Islamabad.

# NTSC : Food & Health Questions

- India's Health Policy :
- In India, the first National Health Policy was formulated last 1983 and the need to reformulate the health policy was carried out last 2002
- Main objective of the revised National Health Policy 2002 is to achieve an acceptable standard of good health among the general population of the country and has set goals to be achieved by the year 2015.

# NTSC : NUCLEAR ISSUE

## Background History of ASEAN's Nuclear Policy :

- ASEAN always stand for nuclear non –proliferation. Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty known as the Treaty of Bangkok, which entered into force on March 1997
- ASEAN's Declaration on Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN).
- So, India's possession of nuclear weapons, is very much contradictory to ASEAN's traditional stand

# What may the future ?

- ASEAN's insistence on non-proliferation could be a starter in the continuing NPT dialogues for India. ASEAN may eventually "influence" and "socialize" India into adopting more of ASEAN's peaceful ways for coexistence with potential belligerent neighbors.
- Off course it is a big point of debate.

# NTSC : ENERGY SECURITY

- Energy is a vital input in modes of production for economic development. And thus, there is a need for energy security defined as the continuous availability of energy in varied forms in sufficient quantities at reasonable prices, to fuel economic growth.

# Indian Scenario

- India, however, is facing a serious challenge as energy consumption incessantly increases as India gears towards rapid economic growth.
- As the second fastest -growing energy market in the world, there is a need for India to maintain its annual growth rate of 8 percent to achieve its goal of totally eliminating poverty in the country.

# India's Energy Policy

- India eventually developed an integrated energy policy to ensure its energy security .
- Measures include the improvement of the investment environment in energy reactors, enhancement of energy efficiency and saving, enhancement of domestic hydrocarbon reserves' exploration, building strategic oil reserves, reduction of energy poverty, and responding to the issues of climate change and sustainable development.
- In support of these measures, further actions were already taken such as the continuous construction and installations of trans-national pipelines and securing oil-navigation sea routes.

# India- ASEAN Cooperation Possibilities

- India's response towards sustainable development actually goes in harmony with the Regional Energy Policy and Planning in ASEAN for Sustainable Development which puts premium in achieving a clean and green ASEAN. ASEAN thereby aims at ensuring the protection of the environment, the sustainability of its natural resources, and the high quality life of its peoples.
- In this regard, activities such as gas extraction and pipelines installation of India to address its energy concerns, cannot fully guarantee the achievement of sustainable development that the ASEAN highly gives importance to.

# NTSC : FOOD & HEALTH QUESTIONS

## India's Health Policy :

- In India, the first National Health Policy was formulated last 1983 While the NHP-1983 aimed to achieve the goal the goal of 'Health for All' by 2000 through the provision of comprehensive primary health care services
- The main objective of the revised National Health Policy 2002 is to achieve an acceptable standard of good health among the general population of the country and has set goals to be achieved by the year 2015.

# NTSC : FOOD & HEALTH QUESTIONS

- ASEAN's Health Policy :
- ASEAN, on the other hand, on its 5th Health Ministers Meeting back in 2000, envisioned that by 2020, health should have been at the centre of development and ASEAN cooperation in health should have been strengthened to ensure that the peoples are healthy in mind and body and living in harmony in safe environments.
- There have also been a number of efforts from the ASEAN to make sure they reach their goals on health development. Some of ASEAN's existing specific Plans of Action that they wish to implement included a Medium-Term Plan of Collaboration on Health and Nutrition,

# Similar/ Close Aspects of ASEAN – India Health Policies

- 1. A National Program for the Elderly
- 2 National Institutes of Ageing, eight regional centres, and a department for geriatric medical in one medical college/tertiary level hospital in each state have been proposed.
- 3. Other important provisions for the health sector included the cut-down of excise/custom duties on the Anti-AIDS drugs and some other bulk drugs. 4.
- The Mid Day Meal Scheme has been extended also to the upper primary classes.

# Similar/ Close Aspects of ASEAN – India Health Policies

- 1. ASEAN implement included a Medium-Term Plan of Collaboration on Health and Nutrition, Work Programme on Community-Based Care Programmes for the Elderly,
- 2. Plan of Action for Strengthening Disease Surveillance, Medium-Term Work Programme on Tuberculosis Control,
- 3. Medium-Term Work Programme to operationalise the ASEAN Regional Programme on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control, and
- 4. Technical Cooperation in Pharmaceuticals, Phase V.

# What can be done on collaborative basis ?

- Both ASEAN and India share the same priorities, principles and values when it comes to health. That is why it is inevitable for the two entities to engage with each other and tackle health issues. In a Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Food and health aspects
- More collaborations on Medical Tourism.
- More collaborations to fight malaria, polio, disability, promotion of traditional medicines, yoga, ayurveda etc. etc

# NTSC :Human Rights

- ASEAN Attitude & Policy to Human Rights :

The ASEAN has always promoted human rights and this is very visible in its Charter. According to Article 14 of the said Charter, "In conformity with the purposes and principles of the ASEAN Charter relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, ASEAN shall establish an ASEAN human rights body..."

- The Working Group for the ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism was established and in 2000, it submitted a draft agreement for the establishment of an ASEAN Human Rights Body.
- ASEAN adopted the Terms of Reference for the ASEAN Human Rights Body last July 20, 2009 which the Foreign Ministers agreed to name as the ASEAN Inter- Governmental Commission on Human Rights.

# NTSC :Human Rights

- Indian Policy on Human Rights:
- India, on the other hand shares the same priority on the issue of human rights as ASEAN does.
- The country also has its own commission addressed to protect the human rights of its people. It is known as the National Human Rights Commission.
- in 1993, the Protection of Human Rights Act was created and it was also amended last 2006.

# NTSC : Migration

- India's policy towards migration :
- The major migration policy that governs India is the Emigration Act of 1983 which monitors foreign passages and the safety of only unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Alternatively, the objective of the new policy is "to prevent human smuggling and to facilitate movement of Indians for both employment and studies." The policy also focuses on key areas such as "preparing the migrants before they leave, controlling and monitoring the licensing of agents and brokers, safeguarding the migrants' rights in countries of temporary residence, maximizing their remittance potential, and facilitating reintegration upon their return."

# NTSC : Migration

- ASEAN, Migration & Cross Border Movements
- On the other hand, ASEAN has emerged as a major area for cross-border movements of labour in the last two decades. That is why the ASEAN initiated a Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers in 2007. The declaration aims to promote the welfare of migrant workers by furnishing sending and receiving states with their obligations on labour migration.

# What can we do ?

- If the ASEAN and India addresses migration issues and incorporate these issues into their partnership, both of them will benefit because these people-to-people exchanges help integrate the region closer together and thus, it can further strengthen the ASEAN-India linkage
- A prudent migration policy can improvement the human trafficking scenario.

# Conclusions : Better Asia- Pacific

- ASEAN and India both for pragmatic and idealistic reasons have chosen to cooperate further and deepen their relations. More activities that emphasize shared commitments to responding to non-traditional security threats should be done. They must also be prepared to harmonize their respective human rights and nationalistic and regional goals so that conflicts do not occur. A better and deeper relationship between ASEAN and India is ultimately to the benefit of the greater East Asia and the Asia Pacific region and it would ultimately lead towards a stable and peaceful Asia.

# Some Recommendations

- ASEAN countries and India need to find common ground in approaches to globalisation issues.
- ASEAN countries could benefit from India's institutional support and joint research projects in existing and future political- security cooperation partnerships.
- The ASEAN-India Framework Agreement can lead to further increases in peace and tranquility in the regions.
- India should not subject development of economic relations to political changes. It should try to minimise bureaucratic hurdles that challenge multi-lateral arrangements.