

ASEAN/India political Cooperation:

How to strengthen a much need pillar?

Sophie Boisseau du Rocher

Asia Centre

Centre des Etudes de l'Asie

Paris

boisseaudurocher@gmail.com

Introduction:

assets to restore a risky neglect policy

- Political culture
- Historical coexistence (non-political attachments, Indian diaspora, good perception)
- Institutional rapprochements (20th Anniversary of ASEAN/ India Dialogue)
- Economic and security ties

An essential relation still lacking centrality

- **Why is it necessary to give a new impulsion ?**
Disappointment and frustration, competition with other powers
- **Global as regional geopolitics are undergoing tremendous change => call for concertation and dialogue** (interconnectedness without political vision, what kind of Asia do we want to build for our societies and transfer to the next generations ?, by default, the most vocal define it, the risky situation illustrated by the breakup of the Phnom Penh meeting)
- **Political, security and economic convergences**
- **A second rank relation** (no long-term strategy and planning, to spell out interests and stakes, prevailing domestic issues, lack of priority, not to antagonize with other partners)

Myanmar as a showcase of a limited political relation : are India and ASEAN really « Partners for peace, progress and stability » ?

- **Despite (or because ?) common perceptions and common goals** (a domestic affair not to be discussed in public, to engage the junta, to benefit an access to natural resources, to combat instability and to balance against chinese influence)
- **No common policy** (no change with Myanmar integration to ASEAN, simultaneous frustration with the junta)
- **Recent evolution: a call for rapprochement ?**

From Looking East to Acting ASEAN

« India's relation with ASEAN is a key cornerstone of our foreign policy and foundation of our Look East policy. We have attempted to anchor this with the larger context of Asia as an engine for global growth and prosperity »

External Affairs Minister S.M Krishna (July 2012, Phnom Penh meeting)

- **Despite difficult times for ASEAN** (the Phnom Penh crisis, the deadline for the implementation of a Community, the preservation of ASEAN's centrality)
- **India has to show solidarity, be creative, express its values and go beyond a utilitarian relation**
- **Some proposals** (soft power initiatives, people to people links and common ground on societal challenges, comprehensive security, engagement with a clear chart)

Thank you