

Embassy of
Japan
in Malaysia



JAPAN-ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

Geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts:
impacts and implications on multilateral
and bilateral relations

30 January 2024 | 1400hrs-1700hrs
Auditorium, ISIS Malaysia





JAPAN-ASEAN ROUNDTABLE

Geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts: impacts and implications on multilateral and bilateral relations

In 2023, Japan and Asean marked 50 years of diplomatic relations. Japan's assistance has been pivotal in the development of Southeast Asia but current challenges are testing the resilience of their ties.

Geopolitical shifts, including major-power rivalry, the Ukraine-Russia conflict and the South China Sea dispute, pose security concerns. As a growing economic bloc, Asean prioritises economic cooperation to alleviate geopolitical tensions and adapt to trends like de-dollarisation.

The roundtable analyses the impact of geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts in Japan-Asean relations. It explores strategies to enhance political-security cooperation, assesses Japan's role in supporting Asean's economic competitiveness and highlights the progress of Japan-Asean initiatives.

Programme

12:30-14:00 **Registration & Lunch**

Venue: Lobby, Block B

14:00-14:10 **Welcoming remarks**

Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Chairman

Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

14:10-14:20 **Remarks**

HE Takahashi Katsuhiko

Ambassador

Embassy of Japan in Malaysia

14:20-15:00 **Keynote address (followed by a moderated Q&A)**

HE Kiya Masahiko

Ambassador of Japan to Asean

15:00-15:10 **Refreshments**

Venue: Auditorium, Level 2

15:10-17:00 **Geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts: impacts and Implications on Japan's multilateral and bilateral ties with Asean**

The year 2023 marked the 50th anniversary of Japan-Asean diplomatic relations, with the Fukuda Doctrine being the foundation of the ties. Over the decades, Japanese assistance had brought development and prosperity, contributing to the peace dividend throughout Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, both Japan and Southeast Asia are now facing challenges, which are testing the resilient ties. The shifting security landscape and new geoeconomic realities have influenced policy

directions, raising questions about the long-term relations.

Cooperation and a commitment to free, open, rules-based regional order underpin Japan-Asean relations. However, geopolitical shifts and risks, including major-power rivalry, Ukraine-Russia war and tensions in the South China Sea, are perceived differently by Japan and Asean member states. These are shaped by diverging security concerns and domestic interests. What are these divergences and how will they affect the Japan-Asean relationship in the long run? How can both sides work to bridge these gaps and enhance political-security collaboration?

As a growing and significant economic bloc, Asean has focused on economic cooperation to mitigate geopolitical tensions. However, trends like de-dollarisation and de-risking are forcing Asean to navigate its economic strategies. How does Japan view economic trends in Asean? What role can Japan play to support and align with the bloc's economic competitiveness?

Japan and Asean marked the 50th anniversary with an upgrade of bilateral ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and a Commemorative Summit. What are the highlights? What is the progress of the AOIP four-point cooperation? Are they enough to address geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges while strengthening relations?

Moderator:

Angeline Tan

Researcher

Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Discussants:

Assoc Prof Dr Kei Koga

School of Sciences

Nanyang Technological University

Singapore

Dr Geetha Govindasamy

Senior Lecturer

Department of East Asian Studies

Universiti Malaya

Calvin Cheng

Fellow

Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia

Assoc Prof Dr Fumitaka Furuoka

Asia-Europe Institute

Universiti Malaya

17:00

End

Profiles

Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Chairman

Institute of Strategic & International Studies
(ISIS) Malaysia



A lawyer by training, Prof Faiz has extensive experience in public policy and research, and the corporate sector. He has served as special adviser to the Selangor government, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ministry of International Trade and Industry. He is the founding dean of Selangor Business School (UNISEL) and the author of books on jurisprudence, public policy and strategic management. He remains actively engaged in the public, economic and foreign policy spheres, both at a Track 1 and Track 2 level.

HE Kiya Masahiko

Ambassador of Japan to Asean



Amb. Kiya joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1987 and served in various capacities in countries ranging from Nigeria to Belgium. He has also worked in the Defence Ministry and as former consul-general of Japan in Sydney, Australia. He is the author of "Why Should we Act for International Cooperation? Looking beyond Humanitarian and National Interest Considerations" and "Challenges of Japan's Policy towards the United Nations - A Practitioner's View".

HE Takahashi Katsuhiko

Ambassador
Embassy of Japan in Malaysia

Prior to his appointment as ambassador to Malaysia, Amb. Katsuhiko was attached with Japan's embassies in Iraq and Saudi Arabia and served at the permanent mission to the United Nations. He was also director-general of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Angeline Tan

Researcher
Institute of Strategic & International Studies
(ISIS) Malaysia

Angeline's research covers East Asia's international relations, with a particular focus on China. She is interested in China's foreign policy, Japan's strategic approaches to Southeast Asia and the impact of the US-China tech rivalry on the region. She contributed to "Focus in Continuity: A Framework for Malaysia's Foreign Policy for a Post-Pandemic World" published by the Foreign Affairs Ministry in 2021. She was a visiting research fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) in 2023.



Calvin Cheng

Fellow

Institute of Strategic & International Studies
(ISIS) Malaysia

Calvin's research interests include economic growth and development, labour markets and the design of social-assistance programmes. He has looked at the impacts of the US-China trade conflict on the Asia-Pacific region and the design of cash-transfer initiatives. Calvin has collaborated on projects with federal and state governments, multinational development organisations and civil society organisations, focusing on digitalisation of small and medium enterprises and infrastructure development in Asia-Pacific.



Dr Fumitaka Furuoka

Asia-Europe Institute
Universiti Malaya

Assoc prof Furuoka has lived in Malaysia since 1987. From 1991 to 1999, he worked as a senior assistant at the Consulate-General of Japan in Penang. He then moved to academia and has taught economics for 25 years at three Malaysian public universities – Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Malaya. He specialises in Asian economy, with a focus on Japanese foreign direct investment and official development assistance in Asean.



Dr Geetha Govindasamy

Senior Lecturer
Department of East Asian Studies
Universiti Malaya

Dr Geetha is an expert on East Asian international relations, teaching courses related to East Asian regional affairs. She teaches, researches and publishes on inter-Korean issues and East Asian international relations. She was a participant in the Study of the United States Institute exchange programme and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, academic exchange.



Dr Kei Koga

School of Sciences
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Assoc prof Koga heads the Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme. Concurrently, he is a non-resident fellow at the National Bureau of Asia Research (NBR), the US; and a member of the research committee, Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS), Japan. He has published on East Asian/Indo-Pacific security, US and Japanese foreign policies, the US-Japan alliance and Asean.



Notes



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