



39 APR
**ASIA-PACIFIC
ROUNDTABLE**
Accelerating agency and action

The logo features a large, stylized '39' in yellow and blue, with a blue swirl inside the '9'. To the right of the '39' are two circular logos: one for 'ISIS MALAYSIA' and another for 'ASEAN-ISIS'. Below the '39' is the text 'APR' in large blue letters, followed by 'ASIA-PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE' in white bold letters, and the tagline 'Accelerating agency and action' in white.

30 June – 2 July 2026
Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur




Australian High Commission
Malaysia



Embassy of
Japan
in Malaysia



KONRAD
ADENAUER
STIFTUNG



Asia-Pacific Roundtable

The Asia-Pacific Roundtable (APR) is the signature international conference of the Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia. At its core, the APR is a Southeast Asian conference discussing key issues impacting on Asia-Pacific. It is one of the region's premier track-two gatherings, ranking among the world's top 20 strategic-security focused conferences.

Convened by ISIS Malaysia, on behalf of the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS), a network of leading Southeast Asian policy institutes and think-tanks, APR regularly attracts more than 300 thinkers who engage in lively, frank and constructive conversations on issues shaping the region's security, stability, sustainability and prosperity.

The APR brings together experts from across the region to explore the latest trends and developments. It aims to provide insights into how businesses and governments could navigate an increasingly complex strategic landscape.



ASEAN-ISIS

The ASEAN-ISIS network is an association of think-tanks registered with ASEAN. Formed in 1988, its members are Brunei Darussalam Institute of Policy & Strategic Studies (BDIPSS); Cambodian Institute for Cooperation & Peace (CICP); Centre for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) Indonesia; Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA) of Lao PDR; ISIS Malaysia; Myanmar Institute of Strategic & International Studies (MISIS); Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc (APPPFI) of the Philippines; Singapore Institute of International Affairs (SIIA); Institute of Security & International Studies (ISIS) Thailand; and Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV).

The network encourages cooperation among scholars and analysts to embark on policy-oriented studies and exchanges on issues affecting Southeast Asia's peace and security. It also serves as a platform for track-two diplomacy and enjoys a close relationship with ASEAN governments.



ISIS Malaysia

The Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia was established on 8 April 1983 with a mandate to advance Malaysia's strategic interests. As an autonomous research organisation, we focus on foreign policy and security; economics and trade; social policy and nation-building; cyber and technology; and climate and energy.

We actively conduct track-two diplomacy, promoting the exchange of views and opinions at the national and international levels. We also play a role in fostering closer regional integration and international cooperation through various forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies network, Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Network of East Asian Think-Tanks, Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks and ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue.

Programme

Tuesday, 30 June 2026

- 1700–1800 **Dinner registration**
Foyer, Grand Salon, Level 1
- 1800–2000 **Welcoming dinner and address**
The Honourable Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani
Minister of Investment, Trade & Industry
Grand Salon, Level 1
- 2000 **End**

Wednesday, 1 July 2026

- 0800–0900 **Registration**
Foyer, Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 0900–0930 **Welcoming remarks**
Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah
Executive Chairman
ISIS Malaysia
- Opening remarks**
Prof Antoinette Raquiza
President, Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc
2026 Chair of the ASEAN–ISIS network
- 0930–1100 **Plenary 1**
Rogue world order: power, principles and pragmatism
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 1100–1130 **Break**
Foyer, Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 1130–1300 **Plenary 2**
Sino–Indian tectonics in the Global South
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 1300–1400 **Lunch**
Grand Salon, Level 1
- 1400–1430 **Fireside chat**
Building middle–power agency
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 1430–1600 **Plenary 3**
Hard truths: probing into ASEAN’s mechanisms
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level
- 1600–1630 **Break**
Foyer, Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1630–1800 **39APR Caucus (by invitation only)**
Poolside Residence 301 & 302, Level 2

1800–1930 **Networking dinner**
Grand Salon, Level 1

1930 End

Thursday, 2 July 2026

0730–0900 **Registration**
Foyer, Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

0915–1030 **Keynote address**
The Honourable Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim
Prime Minister of Malaysia
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1030–1100 **Break**
Foyer, Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1100–1230 **Plenary 4**
Nuclear arsenals in the Asia-Pacific cauldron
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1230–1300 **Fireside chat**
Navigating Asia's economic future
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1300–1415 **Lunch**
Grand Salon, Level 1

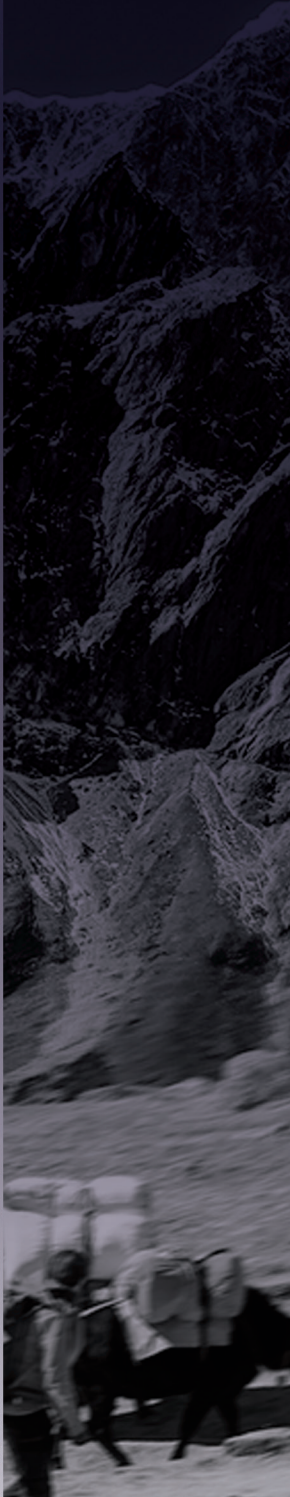
1415–1500 **Ministerial address**
HE Maxime Prévot
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1500–1630 **Plenary 5**
Critical minerals and supply chain upheavals
Grand Ballroom, Ground Level

1630–1645 **Closing address**
HE Dr Kao Kim Hourn
Secretary-General of ASEAN

1645–1700 **Closing remarks**
Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah
Executive Chairman
ISIS Malaysia

1705 End of 39APR





Keynote address

Thursday, 2 July 2026
0915-1030

The Honourable Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim
Prime Minister of Malaysia

A portrait of Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah, an elderly man with glasses, wearing a blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is standing with his hands clasped in front of him against a dark blue background.

Welcoming remarks

Wednesday, 1 July 2026
0900–0930

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah
Executive Chairman
ISIS Malaysia

Foreword

by Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

On behalf of the Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia and the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS) network, I am delighted to welcome you all to the 39th Asia-Pacific Roundtable (39APR).

The remarkable journey of the APR over the past four decades stands as a testament to the vision and conviction of the pioneers of the ASEAN-ISIS network. Conceived as a safe space for open, candid and policy-relevant dialogue, the roundtable has grown from a modest gathering of minds into one of the region's most respected platforms for strategic discourse.

The APR's enduring success and relevance reflect not only the value and diversity of the ideas that inspired its creation, but also a steadfast commitment to fostering understanding, building trust, advancing regional cooperation and encouraging regionalisation. As we reflect on how far the APR has come, we honour the foresight of those who believed that constructive engagement and thoughtful intellectual exchange would be key drivers of a more peaceful, resilient and cohesive Asia-Pacific.

The plenaries at the 39APR are organised around the theme, "Accelerating agency and action" – a natural and deliberate progression from the APR themes of the past two years, which reflected a geopolitical "interregnum" and subsequently, a period of strategic "recalibration" in the region. This year, we look forward to unpacking and better understanding the nuances of agency in the Asia-Pacific. After all, it would seem that Alexander Wendt was on to something when he observed that "anarchy is what states make of it".

Perhaps it is equally true to say that "agency and action are what states make of them".

In this endeavour, we hope to take a deeper look at a number of strategic issues that will inevitably shape the region in the years ahead – the role of power, principles and pragmatism in international relations;

Sino-Indian dynamics in Global South mobilisation; and the future of ASEAN-led mechanisms amid growing strategic strain. We are also eager to revisit the discussion on nuclear arsenals in the Asia-Pacific after a brief hiatus, while contributing further to the growing discourse on critical minerals and the volatility of global supply chains.

I am deeply grateful to our role-players for taking the time to join us in Kuala Lumpur. Their expertise, experience and diverse perspectives will undoubtedly enrich our deliberations and make valuable contributions to the discussions ahead. I am confident that their participation will help foster the frank and constructive exchange of ideas that has long been the hallmark of the APR process.

I extend my deepest appreciation to Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad bin Haji Hasan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, for their commitment to this conference. Their presence and engagement with participants not only enrich the quality of our deliberations but also underscore the APR's continued role as a platform for intellectual exchange, policy reflection and the generation of ideas to address the shared challenges confronting our region.

I would be remiss if I did not extend my heartfelt gratitude to our partners, whose steadfast support and foresight continue to sustain and strengthen the APR process. They include the Australian High Commission, BOAO Forum for Asia, the Delegation of the European Union, Embassy of the United States, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Embassy of Japan, Embassy of the Republic of Korea, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade.

I wish everyone productive and enjoyable discussions at the 39APR.



Opening remarks

Wednesday, 1 July 2026
0900–0930

Prof Antoinette Raquiza

President
Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc
2026 Chair of the ASEAN-ISIS network

Foreword

by Prof Antoinette Raquiza

It is my great honour to welcome you, on behalf of the Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress Foundation, Inc of the Philippines and ASEAN-ISIS network and its secretariat, the Institute for Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia, to the 39th Asia-Pacific Roundtable (39APR), convened in Kuala Lumpur, a city long associated with the region's efforts to manage diversity, bridge differences and sustain dialogue in times of regional and global change.

It is a fitting setting for our discussions at a moment when the region is confronted with one existential crisis after another and a contested global order that is undergoing structural realignment due to strategic geopolitical and economic pressures as well as the growing uncertainty over the norms and rules that had underpinned cooperation.

For the countries of Southeast Asia, these global tensions manifest in concrete ways: through economic disruptions, a crippling energy crisis, environmental stress and the growing risk of escalation of conflict within and between countries – all of which narrow the policy space and complicate national choices. Maintaining regional unity and resilience has, therefore, become as much a strategic imperative as it is a developmental one.

Against this backdrop, the role of ASEAN becomes both more demanding and more consequential. As a collective platform, ASEAN is expected not only to preserve cohesion amid diversity but also to sustain strategic relevance in a regional and global environment where power politics is intensifying, and multilateralism is under strain.

The conversations planned for this roundtable and this year's focus on accelerating agency and action speak of a shared recognition of the need for the ASEAN community to arrive at a common and informed understanding of international pressure points and the vulnerabilities of regionalism and to use this shared analysis to enrich and deepen the bases of ASEAN unity of purpose. For the region to emerge stronger, it is imperative to surface and promote Southeast Asian

perspectives and experiences towards developing our region's distinct contributions to the evolving global order.

It is, therefore, appropriate that several of our discussions turn inwards as well as outwards. The willingness to examine ASEAN's own mechanisms – honestly and without complacency – is not a sign of institutional fragility, but maturity. It reflects an awareness that in a period of heightened global tension, institutional relevance cannot be assumed, it must be continually earned.

Over the next two days, our exchanges will engage issues where the stakes are unmistakably high: strategic competition, economic resilience, escalation of risks and the narrowing space between principle and pragmatism. I invite you to approach these discussions with candour, humility and imagination – recognising that while clear solutions may be elusive, the quality of our collective reflection remains a strategic asset. It is in that spirit that I warmly welcome you.

Rogue world order: power, principles and pragmatism

Plenary 1

Wednesday, 1 July 2026

0930-1100

The world order is no longer simply contested – it is fragmented, interest-led and driven by power rather than rules. Multilateral frameworks are strained as major powers assert influence through pressure, alignment and selective norm breaking. In this evolving landscape, influence is exercised not only by those with overwhelming power but also by small and middle powers that can navigate ambiguity, build coalitions and shape outcomes at the margins. Is multilateralism adapting or being sidelined in today's geopolitical environment? What is the future of multilateralism in this complex geopolitical landscape and who has the capacity to influence its direction? How can agency be exercised balancing principles and pragmatism when rules are weakened and predictability erodes?



Instigator



Peter Varghese

Chancellor
University of Queensland
Australia

Varghese chairs the Australian Public Policy Institute, sits on the boards of CARE Australia and North Queensland Airports. He also chairs Asialink’s advisory council and is on the governing board of the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He is a director of the organising board for the 2028 ICC Men’s T20 World Cup. He is a former secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; high commissioner to India and Malaysia; and director-general of the Office of National Assessments.

Speakers



Dr Ken Jimbo

Professor of International Relations
Keio University
Japan

Jimbo is a managing director of programmes at International House of Japan, Keio University. He is concurrently an adjunct senior research fellow at Canon Institute for Global Studies. He is a former adviser to the Japan Ministry of Defence and National Security Secretariat. His research interests lie in international security, Japan-US security relations and Japan’s foreign and defence policy. His writings have been published by RAND Corporation, NBR, Pacific Forum, CSIS, *Japan Times*, *Nikkei* and *Sankei Shimbun*.



Dr Dawisson Belém-Lopes

Professor of International and Comparative Politics
Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG)
Brazil

Belém-Lopes is a research fellow of the National Council for Technological and Scientific Development in Brazil while serving as UFMG’s dean for institutional data governance. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles covering international institutions, Latin American politics and Brazilian foreign policy. He is a former visiting academic at the University of Oxford’s Latin American Centre.



Dr Chong Ja Ian

Associate Professor of Political Science
National University of Singapore

Chong is a non-resident scholar at Carnegie China, Carnegie's East Asia-based research centre on contemporary China, where he examines US-China dynamics in Southeast Asia and the broader Asia-Pacific. His research focuses on the externalities of major-power competition, nationalism, regional order and state formation. He is also investigating how states react to sanctions on third parties by trade partners and the characteristics of foreign influence operations. He is the author of *External Intervention and the Politics of State Formation: China, Indonesia, Thailand, 1893-1952*.



Angeline Tan

Analyst
ISIS Malaysia

Tan is an analyst in the Foreign Policy and Security Studies programme at ISIS Malaysia. Her 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 towards Southeast Asia and the implications of US-China's tech rivalry on the region, particularly in the semiconductor sector. She contributed to *Focus in Continuity: A Framework for Malaysia's Foreign Policy for a Post-Pandemic World* published by Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021. She was a visiting research fellow at the Japan Institute of International Affairs in 2023.

Sino-Indian tectonics in the Global South

Plenary 2

Wednesday, 1 July 2026

1130-1300

The rise of China and India has reshaped Asia's strategic and economic landscape, with the nature of their strategic competition a central factor in regional stability and development. The re-emergence of Global South discourse has seen distinct efforts laid down by both Beijing and New Delhi to mobilise regional partners towards tackling shared challenges and the delivery of public goods. China's approach to Global South mobilisation has been a bid to address Western disillusionment by pitching itself as an "alternative to the West" while India's approach has been to cooperate with the Global North, leveraging on its potential as a "bridge to the West". What are the factors shaping evolving China-India dynamics and how do they impact on how both actors perceive the Indo-Pacific and beyond? How would these in turn affect and influence Southeast Asia's agency, strategic choices and engagement with both?



Instigator



Akhil Ramesh

Chief Research and Development Officer
Pacific Forum International
United States

Akhil leads Pacific Forum’s research and development, with a focus on building new projects and partnerships at the intersection of supply chains, critical technologies and Indo-Pacific security. Prior to his current role, he was the founding director of its India and Indian Ocean security programme. His work focuses on the increasing intersection of economic, trade, technology and national security policymaking, with particular emphasis on supply chain resilience, critical minerals, and emerging technology ecosystems.

Speakers



Dr Lan Jianxue

Director of Department of Asia-Pacific Studies
China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

Lan is an associate research fellow at CIIS in Beijing. His experience includes a diplomatic posting at the Chinese Embassy in India, where he served as deputy head of the political section. His primary research focuses on China-India relations, South Asian affairs, Asia-Pacific regional cooperation and China’s neighbourhood policy. He is a frequent commentator on Sino-Indian relations for major domestic and international media outlets and is the editor of *China-Russia-India Cooperation Towards the Future*.



Dr Jabin Jacob

Director of Centre of Excellence for Himalayan Studies
Shiv Nadar University
India

Jabin concurrently serves as an associate professor at the Department of International Relations and Governance Studies, Shiv Nadar University, Delhi. His research interests include Chinese domestic politics; Sino-Indian border areas; Indian and Chinese worldviews; and centre-province relations in China. His latest publications include a co-edited volume *In the Open and Behind the Scenes* and a guest-edited special issue on “India’s China Challenge” for *India’s World*. He is currently a Taiwan fellow at the National Chung Hsing University, Taichung.



Dr Bhagya Senaratne

Independent Scholar
Sri Lanka

Senaratne is the inaugural director of education at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies. She is the first BRI postdoctoral fellow of Global Asia at the Centre for Global Asia, New York University Shanghai, and a former senior lecturer at Sri Lanka's Defence University. Her interests intersect foreign policy studies, Chinese foreign and security policies towards South Asia, Indo-Pacific studies, politics and security of small and medium states and maritime security. She is the author of *From Friendship to Dependency: Analysing Sri Lanka's Foreign Policymaking Towards China*.



Dr Gong Xue

Assistant Professor
S Rajaratnam School of International Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore

Gong is deputy coordinator of the China programme at S Rajaratnam School of International Studies. Her research focuses on China's economic foreign policy, regionalism and governance. She also studies China's state-business relations and overseas investment behaviour. Her works have appeared in *Journal of Contemporary China*, *World Development*, *Political Science Quarterly* and *European Journal of International Security*, among others. She has two co-edited books on China's Belt and Road Initiative. She is a non-resident scholar at Carnegie China.



Assoc Prof Dr Nguyen Thi Lan Anh

Vice-President
Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV)

Lan Anh serves as dean of the International Law Faculty at DAV. She is also vice-president of the Asian Society of International Law and an arbitrator to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Her work focuses on maritime security, international dispute settlement and regional legal cooperation. She serves as a legal adviser to several expert groups within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and contributes to Vietnam's legal engagement in multilateral settings, including its term as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Fireside chat

Wednesday, 1 July 2026

1400-1430

Building middle-power agency

Partnerships among middle powers are becoming an increasingly important source of stability, influence and resilience in a more contested geopolitical environment. As rivalry among major powers intensifies and multilateral institutions face greater pressure, middle powers can help shape regional and global outcomes by combining their diplomatic, economic, technological and security capabilities. Where can they work together more effectively and how can they turn cooperation into collective action? What levers can they use to strengthen strategic autonomy, support multilateralism and promote a more balanced, inclusive and predictable international order?

Moderator

Thomas Daniel

Director
Foreign Policy and Security Studies
ISIS Malaysia

Speaker

HE Danielle Heinecke

High Commissioner of Australia to Malaysia



Heinecke is a senior career officer with Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and was appointed high commissioner-designate of the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur in December 2023. She is a former first assistant secretary, Pacific Melanesia Division, and served in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea.

Hard truths: probing into ASEAN's mechanisms

Plenary 3

Wednesday, 1 July 2026
1430-1600

The formation of ASEAN and its subsequent expansion have been central to peace and stability in Southeast Asia while providing an inclusive platform for major powers to engage with the region. Today, intensifying geopolitical competition and mounting pressures on ASEAN-led processes are testing whether its existing mechanisms remain fit for purpose. Which ASEAN mechanisms still deliver strategic value and which have become ritualistic exercises? Which are most in need of an honest review or recalibration and is ASEAN politically prepared to confront its own institutional inertia? Has the expanding web of ASEAN-led mechanisms strengthened coordination or diluted focus and capacity?



Instigator



Dr Evan Laksmama

Shangri-La Dialogue Senior Fellow
International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)
Singapore

Evan leads the Southeast Asian security and defence programme at IISS and edits the *Asia-Pacific Regional Security Assessment* launched annually at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue. He held senior research positions at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy of the National University of Singapore and Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Indonesia. His research on civil-military relations, strategic policy and Southeast Asian security has appeared in various journals.

Speakers



Dr Charmaine Misalucha-Willoughby

Professor of International Studies
De La Salle University
The Philippines

Misalucha-Willoughby is a senior editor of *Asian Politics & Policy* at Wiley and co-editor of *Bandung: Journal of the Global South*. She serves on the editorial board of the *Review of International Studies* and sits on the board of trustees of Foundation for the National Interest (Philippines) and the advisory board of La Trobe Asia (Australia). Her areas of specialisation are alliances, maritime security, security cooperation and critical international relations theory.



Dr Jittipat Poonkham

Associate Professor of International Relations
Thammasat University
Thailand

Jittipat is associate dean for academic and international affairs and director of the international studies programme at Thammasat University. He is the Thai representative to the ASEAN Regional Forum Expert and Eminent Persons. He is also an adjunct fellow at the International Studies Centre – the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs' think-tank. His research interests include international relations theories, geopolitics and great-power politics, Indo-Pacific power dynamics and Thai foreign policy. He is the author of *A Genealogy of Bamboo Diplomacy: The Politics of Thai Détente with Russia and China*.



Andrew Mantong

Researcher
Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)
Indonesia

Andrew's work focuses on Indonesian foreign policy, ASEAN regionalism, and the evolving interplay between security and economic statecraft. He has produced extensive analyses on ASEAN's institutional development, Indonesia's strategic posture, great-power rivalry, middle-power collaboration and the nexus between non-traditional security and domestic politics. He has served as a consultant for ASEAN, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other agencies of Indo-Pacific and European countries, contributing to work on conflict prevention, regional security architecture, critical minerals supply chains, diplomatic posture strengthening and economic security.



Dr Alfred Gerstl

President
Central European Institute of Asian Studies (CEIAS)
Slovakia

Gerstl is a specialist in geopolitics and international relations in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in Southeast Asia. He serves as a senior adviser at the Austria Institute for European and Security Policy; an associate professor at Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic; and lecturer at University of Vienna. He is currently leading a research project on the relations between ASEAN and the European Union. He is co-editor of a new Southeast Asia yearbook published in German and English.

Nuclear arsenals in the Asia-Pacific cauldron

Plenary 4

Thursday, 2 July 2026

1100-1230

Ongoing modernisation and expansion of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are placing immense strain on an already fragile regime of safeguards and control measures. The possible resumption of nuclear-weapon testing adds challenges. What is driving these developments and what are their impact on Asia-Pacific? Is nuclear deterrence a credible strategy for preventing conflict between nuclear-armed states or does it increase the risk of nuclear escalation and weapon use? How can non-NWS navigate these tensions, shape conversations on escalation management and regional cooperation, without undermining broader global non-proliferation norms?



Instigator



Karla Mae Pabeliña

Director
Centre for International Relations and Strategic Studies
The Philippines

Pabeliña is an associate fellow of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network and part-time lecturer at Ateneo de Manila University. She is a recipient of the US State Department's international visitor leadership programme; UN Office for Disarmament Affairs women scholarship for peace; and the United Nations fellowships on disarmament. She is actively involved in track-two dialogues on non-proliferation and disarmament in Asia-Pacific through the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.

Speakers



Dr Manpreet Sethi

Distinguished Fellow
Centre for Aerospace Power and Strategic Studies
India

Manpreet has worked on nuclear energy, strategy, missile defence, arms control, and nuclear risk reduction and disarmament. She is a regular lecturer at the National Defence College and other establishments of Indian armed forces, police and foreign services, and various colleges and universities. She is member of the Science and Security Board; Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, which sets the Doomsday Clock; co-chair of Women in Nuclear-India and UN Watch Tower Initiative on Science and Technology Monitoring.



Dr Julia Macdonald

Director of Research and Engagement
Asia New Zealand Foundation

Macdonald is a research professor at the University of Denver's Josef Korbel School of Global and Public Affairs, and a senior fellow in the Centre for Strategic Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. Her research focuses on nuclear politics, autonomous weapons and Indo-Pacific alliances. She is co-author of *The Hand Behind Unmanned: Origins of the US Autonomous Military Arsenal*. She has worked for the New Zealand Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, leading work on its first national security strategy, and Ministry of Defence.



Dr Jeon Kyung-Joo

Chief
Korean Peninsula Security Research Division
Korea Institute for Defence Analyses

Jeon has conducted extensive research on North Korea's military and political issues, Republic of Korea-US extended deterrence cooperation and Korean defence planning, much of it commissioned by the Ministry of National Defence. She currently serves as an adjunct professor at Korea University and has served as a member of the policy advisory boards for the Office of National Security, National Crisis Management Office, National Unification Advisory Council and Ministry of Unification.



Prof Christian Rieck

Associate Professor of War Studies
Universität Potsdam
Germany

Rieck teaches and coordinates the war studies MA programmes at the University of Potsdam. He is an expert on European defence and German foreign relations, with a particular focus on defence and development policy. He is also a non-resident senior fellow at the Global Governance Institute in Brussels and a visiting fellow at the United States Studies Centre, University of Sydney.

Fireside chat

Thursday, 2 July 2026

1230-1300

Navigating Asia's economic future

The idea of an "Asian century" once reflected confidence in the region's economic promise, driven by deepening interdependence, open markets and sustained economic dynamism. Today, that confidence is increasingly under pressure as supply chain disruptions, technological fragmentation and the growing securitisation of trade reshape the region's economic architecture. The geo-economic repercussions of the Iran conflict, for instance, exposed how external shocks can reverberate across Asian economies with speed and consequence. Against the backdrop of mounting strain on global governance, how resilient are existing regional frameworks in managing economic volatility? Can Asia sustain integration amid growing pressures of fragmentation and strategic decoupling? What forms of collective coordination are needed to safeguard stability, growth and confidence in an uncertain global environment?

Moderator

Arividya Arimuthu

Senior Fellow
ISIS Malaysia

Speaker

HE Zhang Jun

Secretary-General
Boao Forum for Asia



Zhang was appointed to the present post in April 2024. He has worked in the Department of International Organisations and Conferences; and General Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, serving as deputy director, director, counsellor and deputy director-general. In 2008, he was appointed as ambassador of China to the Netherlands and permanent representative of China to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. He was the first director-general of the Department of International Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has also served as assistant foreign minister. Between 2019 and 2024, he served as the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations. He has headed the Chinese delegation to numerous UN, G20, BRICS, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and World Economic Forum meetings.

HE Maxime Prévot

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Belgium

Ministerial address

Thursday, 2 July 2026
1415-1500

Prévot has been active in politics for 25 years. In 2004, he became the political director of the French-speaking centrist party, then known as the Centre démocrate humaniste (CDH). He has been an MP since 2007 while serving for five years as alderman in Namur, the capital of Wallonia. Between 2014 and 2017, he served as vice-president of the Walloon government and minister of social affairs and health, public works and heritage. In 2019, he took over as CDH president. After the May 2019 elections, he moved into opposition and initiated a renewal of the party. This led to the founding of a new centrist party in April 2022: Les Engagés, which is open to prominent figures from civil society. The party achieved a resounding victory in the June 2024 elections and has since been part of all governing coalitions. Prévot assumed his present posts in February 2025.



Critical minerals and supply chain upheavals

Plenary 5

Thursday, 2 July 2026

1500-1630

Global critical mineral supply chains are being increasingly shaped by geopolitics, industrial policy and national security, moving away from market-led globalisation towards strategic realignment. Do emerging export controls, strategic stockpiling and friend-shoring signal an imminent bifurcation into parallel supply ecosystems? What geoeconomic consequences will this shift create for producers and importers? How will this tilt the balance of power in global markets? Which domestic, regional and international policy tools can strengthen resilience while preserving competitiveness and value creation?



Instigator



Dr Kai Ostwald

Director of the Institute of Asian Research
University of British Columbia
Canada

Ostwald holds the HSBC Chair in Asian Research and is an associate professor at the University of British Columbia, jointly appointed in the School of Public Policy & Global Affairs and Department of Political Science. His research focuses on political economy, governance, geopolitics and development in Southeast Asia, as well as Canada's engagement with the Indo-Pacific. He is a senior fellow at the Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada and an associate senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute. He advises Canadian and international organisations on governance, regional security and economic partnerships.

Speakers



Hayley Channer

Director of the Economic Security Programme
United States Studies Centre
University of Sydney
Australia

Channer works at the intersection of economic policy and national security, trade and tariffs, industrial policy, critical mineral supply chains, and public-private partnerships. She is a former Department of Defence official working across strategy, policy and industry as well as with defence science and technology. She held visiting fellowships with the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University and East West Centre in Washington DC. She regularly convenes government, industry and academia to bridge gaps between stakeholders to arrive at policy solutions.



Marc Mealy

Executive Vice-President of Research
US-ASEAN Business Council
United States

Mealy is the chief policy officer at the council, where he manages the production of information products, and coordinates research and advocacy efforts. He also serves as the in-house lead on international trade policy. He has more than 30 years' experience in international trade and economics, starting as an international economist with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). He later joined the foreign service and went on to manage some of USDA's largest commodity trade finance and food assistance programmes in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe.



Dato' Sia Hok Kiang

Chief Executive Officer
Malaco Mining Sdn Bhd
Malaysia

Sia is an economic geologist and mining entrepreneur who pioneered ionic adsorption clay rare earth research and development in Malaysia. He also serves as managing director at Malaco, focusing on building Malaysia as a sustainable global supply hub for purified heavy rare earth elements. His research is centred on the direct separation of rare earth oxide from mine concentrates produced from a green and sustainable mining method without the need for mixed rare earth carbonate precipitation.

HE Dr Kao Kim Hourn

Secretary-General of ASEAN

Closing address

Thursday, 2 July 2026

1630-1645

Kao is the 15th ASEAN Secretary-General. Prior to assuming the position in January 2023, he served in various capacities in the Cambodian government, including minister delegate to Cambodia's prime minister in charge of foreign affairs and ASEAN. He is a former secretary of state of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and ASEAN senior officials' meeting leader. He played a key role in crafting the ASEAN Charter, as Cambodia's representative to the High-Level Task Force on Drafting the ASEAN Charter. For more than three decades, he has focused on strengthening Cambodia's international relations, particularly in ASEAN, driving policy advocacy and diplomacy, promoting education and research, having authored dozens of books and numerous articles on ASEAN and Cambodia.



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