

Panel: Regional Leadership in Southeast Asia: Can ASEAN Still Occupy the Driver's Seat?
(Orchid)

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The past two years have brought ASEAN to the forefront of discussions regarding regional security in the Asia-Pacific. In terms of external relations, China's increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea is prompting vocal protests from ASEAN member states, raising the question of whether they are attempting to balance or hedge against China. At the same time, the United States' various statements that it is "returning" or "pivoting" toward Asia raise questions about what kind of role it envisions for regional institutions like ASEAN. The ASEAN states walk a delicate line between engaging Washington and Beijing on the one hand and preserving their own autonomy on the other. Internally, ASEAN continues to confront the ongoing dispute between Cambodia and Thailand over the Preah Vihear temple and has stood behind Myanmar as it undergoes its rapid democratic reforms. How might the passing of the chairmanship from Indonesia to Cambodia and Myanmar shape relations, if at all? How might these internal dynamics affect ASEAN's relations with the United States and China?

** The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.*
