

# Geopolitics and International Order

A regional programme by FES Asia

In 2024, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Asia further expanded its regional programme on *Geopolitics and International Order*. Bringing together experts and thought leaders from across Asia, Europe and North America, we executed on foresight and scenario-building labs as well as information exchange activities that fostered constructive dialogue and built towards innovative solutions to address geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges.

## AT A GLANCE



In 2024, FES in Asia brought together and engaged over **200 stakeholders from 25 countries**. They represented a wide-range of backgrounds, including key thought leaders, policy makers, members of parliament, academics, and journalists. We also created the **FES Asia Newsletter** to update and engage with our network.



This year, we conducted the **Regional Lab** and **Inter-Regional Lab** in Bangkok, providing a platform for thought leaders and multidisciplinary experts from across **Asia, the Middle East and Europe** to jointly discuss about the pressing regional and global challenges. These dialogues focused on understanding the impacts of geopolitical competition and geoeconomic disruptions, while fostering collaborative approaches and finding convergence.



FES Asia and FES New York convened an **international symposium, Crisis of Liberalism: World Order in the Next Century**, to foster dialogue on the challenges facing the liberal order. Esteemed thinkers from diverse backgrounds engaged in closed-door discussions to explore pathways for inclusivity and a stronger rule-based system in an evolving global landscape.



Over the year, FES Asia organized three significant **dialogues in Beijing, Shanghai, and Vietnam**, in collaboration with country offices. These gatherings brought together international experts and local partners to exchange insights on key themes such as neighborhood diplomacy, regional cooperation, global governance, and addressing emerging challenges in a transitioning international order



FES Asia continued its series of **scenario-building labs** in collaboration with country offices and partners across the region. This year, three national labs were conducted in **Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand**, in partnership with the Executive Education Singapore Futures Team at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

## AT A GLANCE (continued)



FES Asia participated in a **roundtable** in **Mongolia**, “New Geopolitics/Geoconomics and Mongolia,” organized by FES Mongolia and the Institute for Strategic Studies, to discuss geopolitical competition and geo-economic shocks in the Indo-Pacific region. We also partnered with the Kuala Lumpur based think tank Research for Social Advancement (REFSA) in organizing a **roundtable** in **Malaysia** titled, “Strengthening Malaysia’s Position Amidst Today’s Geo-economic Development”.



Our **video series** published in **May** and **December** 2024 featured thought leaders from nine countries, exploring geo-economic challenges, global geopolitics across key regions, and Pakistan’s National Security Policy. Highlights include insights on **South Korea, China, Japan, Bangladesh, and Australia**, alongside in-depth interviews with **Dr. Yoon Young-kwan** and **Dr. Moeed Yusuf**.

## PLATFORMS FOR NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL EXCHANGE

### REGIONAL GEOECONOMICS LAB: ADAPTING DEVELOPMENT MODELS TO GEOECONOMIC DISRUPTION (24-26 April 2024)



The Regional Lab in Bangkok, held from 24–26 April 2024, convened multi-disciplinary expert groups from across Asia to examine the impacts of geopolitical competition and geo-economic disruptions on their countries. This interactive format and exercise sparked broader discussions on how nations can adapt their strategies and development models to navigate changing strategic environments.

## INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CRISIS OF LIBERALISM: WORLD ORDER IN THE NEXT CENTURY

(8-10 May 2024)



The symposium organized by FES Asia and FES New York from 8–10 May brought together 24 renowned thinkers from diverse countries, including Pakistan, the Philippines, the USA, Germany, India, the UK, Thailand, Vietnam, Canada, Japan, China, the Netherlands, and South Korea. This forum served as a vital space for exchanging ideas and addressing the global and domestic challenges threatening the liberal order. Through constructive, closed-door discussions, participants explored pathways to redefine inclusivity and strengthen the rule-based system amidst rising geopolitical and societal pressures.

## INTER – REGIONAL DIALOGUE: NAVIGATING THE GEOPOLITICS OF THREE THEATRES

(27-29 November 2024)



To assess the impact of geopolitical competition and geoeconomic disruptions, thought leaders from 20 countries participated in the FES Asia Track II Dialogue titled "**Navigating the Geopolitics of Three Theatres**" in Bangkok from 27–29 November 2024. The discussions deeply explored the interplay between the three main theatres of geopolitical contestation: Europe, the Middle East, and East Asia.

### FES ASIA STRATEGIC FORESIGHT NETWORK

The FES Asia Strategic Foresight Network (ASFN), founded in 2021, is a diverse, interdisciplinary network comprising thought leaders, policymakers, and experts from 20 countries across Asia. The platform fosters meaningful dialogue and exchange of perspectives on the future of Geopolitics and the International Order.



### DIALOGUES

Throughout 2024, FES facilitated three pivotal dialogues in Beijing, Shanghai, and Vietnam, in collaboration with its country offices. These events brought together international experts and local partners drawing from the FES Asia Strategic Foresight Network, to exchange insights on critical issues, including neighborhood diplomacy, regional cooperation, global governance, and strategies for tackling emerging challenges in an evolving international order. By fostering inclusive discussions, these dialogues aimed to strengthen partnerships and explore innovative solutions for regional and global cooperation.

Click below hyperlinks for more information:

[Beijing: Neighborhood Diplomacy, Regional and Global Governance](#)  
(23-27 June 2024)

[Shanghai: China and the Asia-Pacific Region in a Transitioning International Order](#)  
(26-28 August 2024)

[Hanoi: Building Partnerships to Ensure Economic Security and Development](#)  
(16-19 October 2024)

## FES STRATEGY AND FORESIGHT LABS

In 2024, the FES Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia, in collaboration with FES country offices and the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy Executive Education team, successfully organized three National Labs in Thailand, the Philippines, and Pakistan. These forums brought together thought leaders and experts from each of these countries to identify and analyze key geopolitical and geoeconomic megatrends shaping their respective nations over the next 5–10 years. And through that explore possible scenarios facing their countries with a view to exploring strategic options.

### Thailand National Lab (3-5 May 2024)



### Philippines National Lab (4-6 June 2024)



### Pakistan National Lab (8-10 September)



## ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

### New Geopolitics / Geoeconomics and Mongolia (9 January 2024)



On 9 January 2024, Marc Saxer, Director of FES Asia (Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia), delivered an insightful keynote speech on geopolitical competition and geoeconomic shocks in the Indo-Pacific region at the geopolitical roundtable discussion, “New Geopolitics / Geoeconomics and Mongolia,” held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The event was jointly organized by FES Mongolia and the Institute for Strategic Studies. Participants engaged enthusiastically in a debate about future challenges and opportunities with panelists from the Economic Policy and Competitiveness Research Center and the American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS).

### Strengthening Malaysia’s Position Amidst Today’s Geoeconomic Development (18-19 August 2024)



On 18-19 August 2024, a one-day dialogue in Malaysia convened prominent thinkers, strategists, economists, and political scientists to explore Malaysia's strategic positioning amidst global geoeconomic shifts. The discussions delved into megatrends such as the technology war and escalating trade tensions, assessing Malaysia's trading strengths and strategic responses through diplomacy, industrial policies, and other tools to ensure sustained economic growth. With contributions from experts across international relations, security, economics, and industry, the dialogue provided critical insights to guide Malaysia's strategic outlook in an increasingly complex global landscape.

## VIDEOS

This year, our video series features thought leaders from nine countries across two major events. The first series delves into geoeconomic challenges, disruptions, and their impact on nations and people. The second, focuses on how key players navigate the geopolitics of three theatres—East Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Additionally, a highlight video with Dr. Moeed Yusuf examines Pakistan’s first National Security Policy, emphasizing connectivity, development partnerships, and geopolitical challenges.

### Interview series: Adapting Development Models to Geoeconomic Disruption



### Interview series: Navigating the Geopolitics of Three Theatres



### Exclusive interview: Adapting Pakistan’s Development Models to Geoeconomic Disruption





### **Map of the geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific**

The geopolitical map of the Indo-pacific looks very different if looked at from the perspectives of Beijing or Washington. Our map visualizes the main fault lines and potential flash-points.



### **Adapting development models to geoeconomic disruptions: Reflections on Singapore's development**

Singapore, a major beneficiary of globalization who is heavily invested in both China and the West, is being threatened by the potential bifurcation of the global economy. Dr Yeo Lay Hwee points out Singapore's approach in thinking ahead about how to mitigate the fallout from the fragmentation of the economy into separate blocs as it explores new development models and growth avenues.



### **Binary or zero-sum discourse risks ignoring the realities of the development of countries like Malaysia**

"There is no clear consensus of whether the ongoing trade war results in a net negative for Malaysia." In the midst of this uncertainty, Harris Zainul proposes nuanced approaches through which Malaysia can be a beneficiary of the ongoing trade wars and its negative effects on development of Malaysia as a big palm oil exporter.



### **Interview: Adapting the South Korean development model to geoeconomic disruptions**

Prof. Kim Heungchong answered the questions surrounding the way forward of South Korea in the face of geoeconomic disruptions.



### **From a security to developmental state: Pakistan's adaptation to geoeconomic disruptions**

"Pakistan's economy is deeply intertwined with both US and China: divorce from either camp would be tantamount to cutting off a limb," Moeed W. Yusuf explores why and how Pakistan has come up with a strategy to position itself as a hub of regional connectivity and to force all major powers to find benefit in supporting a stable Pakistan.



### **What does the Global South want?**

Sarang Shidore points out that the great powers are unable to see the new realities of the vast middle, mainly because the Global South remains an enigma they do not understand.





### **India and the Three Theatres**

C. Raja Mohan highlights the interconnectedness of global tensions across East Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, and explores India's strategic position to benefit from these dynamics through strong partnerships and pragmatic policies.



### **Connecting the Geopolitics of Three Theatres: A perspective from Vietnam**

Dr. Nguyen Thanh Trung reviews the growing global instability, with intensifying conflicts in Ukraine, the Middle East, and East Asia, alongside a decline in global cooperation.



### **Unpacking the Geopolitics of Three Theatres: A perspective from the Middle-East**

Dr. Gil Murciano shares his views on how the growing multipolarity could transform regional cooperation and conflict resolution as countries adapt to global uncertainty and reassess traditional alliances.



### **Between Hammer and Anvil** (German language)

In the competition between the USA and China, South Korea is striving for a balance. Chaesung Chun shares the perspective from Seoul about the future of the international order.



### **New Global Situation** (German language)

Satoru Mori explores Japan's adjustment of its foreign policy in response to China's ambitions, although it relies on the support of the Trump administration.

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the oldest political foundation in Germany, is committed to the advancement of socio-political and economic development in the spirit of social democracy, through civic education, research, and international cooperation.

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Office for Regional Cooperation in Asia

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