

Editorial Upon introducing its beverage to China in the fifties, Coca Cola asserted that the nation's tea ceremonies would soon give way to its beverage, uniform in quality and taste, efficiently distributed via vending machines. Since the fifties, we have experienced, enjoyed or suffered many such marketing campaigns, which contributed to the world's state of constant flux. As for the newsletter, it is not averse to change. Quite on the contrary. Reactions to our new design which was introduced in the previous issue have been mainly positive and we also welcome your reactions to this issue. Whereas Tanja Chute has recently left as newsletter editor, looking to the future we are pleased that Thomas Lindblad will join us as Insular Southeast Asia editor per 1 October. China's hosting of the 2008 Olympics, is a milestone event for commercial enterprise in China. As a topic for research, these Olympics and the Football World Cup earlier this year render this issue's theme 'Sports in Asia' quite timely. Theme editor, Wolfram Manzenreiter provides us with a collection of articles in a prismatic field of research. A field of research giving unique insights into the makings of society. To return to beverages and tea, we are no staunch supporters of tea ceremonies and prefer a world with both beverages and tea. Proven by the scope of research, events, concerns, and insights which we continue to touch upon, the IIAS Newsletter wants to be a platform for Asian Studies in the broad sense and I hope that in this issue we have once again succeeded in that respect. < **Maurice Sistermans**

ASEM 4: What may be expected?

In September 2002 the heads of state of ten Asian countries, and of the fifteen member states of the European Union, along with the president of the European Commission, will gather in Copenhagen, Denmark, for the fourth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). As the reader may remember, the ASEM process was set into motion in March 1996 in Bangkok at the instigation of Singapore and support of France. The official *raison d'être* given for this series of summits between Southeast and East Asian countries and the European Union was to 'launch a new and comprehensive partnership between these regions to complement Europe's strong ties with the United States and the growing web of relations between the latter and East Asia' (See: *ASEF: Connecting Asia and Europe 1997-2000; Singapore, 2000*).



Director's
note >

By Wim Stokhof

In Bangkok, the meaning of ASEM 1 was embodied in the meeting. In the following years ASEM developed into an interregional platform for consultation and discussion between Asia and Europe. Although the momentum was nearly lost due to the Asian economic crisis, in London (1998) it became increasingly clear that ASEM remained useful to both regions as a forum to stimulate dialogue at a range of levels.

The aims of ASEM are, of course, necessarily vague and somewhat ostentatious. Moreover, there seems to be little connection between the measures taken or the instruments chosen by the heads of state to obtain these goals. Basically, the whole ASEM process is still waiting for a crucial idea or concept that will boost its development. Until now, it has lacked vision and been less than pro-active: in London it had to

cope with the Asian Crisis; in Seoul (2000) it was drowned in the quagmire of North and South Korean politics; and in Copenhagen it will, of course, discuss security issues arising out of 11 September.

ASEM is said to have three pillars: the economic domain, the political domain, and 'the rest', in which civil society issues, culture, education, and research are heaped together.

Needless to say, ASEM is first and foremost an economically driven forum. This can clearly be seen from the plethora of meetings concerning trade, investment, finance, and business, as well as from the activities developed within this first domain: the Asia-Europe Business Forum, Trade Facilities Action Plan, Investment Experts Group Meetings, Investment Promotion Active Plan, the ASEM trust fund,² and the European Financial Expertise Network, to mention a few.

In the political domain the situation is less concrete: the Asian partners appear to be apprehensive whenever such topics as human rights and good governance are suggested for the agenda. At the third summit in Seoul, however, commitments were made to strengthen the political dialogue, giving special attention to human rights issues, and to address the global implications of such problems as the illegal trades in weapons, drugs, and workers and of regional and interregional migration.

It is difficult to perceive what has actually been done about these issues in the ASEM framework, in the ASEAN +3, in the EU or in the individual ASEM member countries.

No report linking the Seoul statements and intentions with what actu-

ally has been accomplished, two years later, is likely to be forthcoming.

In the third domain, a lot of fine work is being done by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in Singapore. Its mission and financial means, however, are limited. Indeed, ASEF cannot possibly handle all the activities which have sprung from the ASEM initiative. Starting as a dialogue between heads of state, it triggered actions and reactions from various groups within various civil societies in Asia and Europe (NGOs, unions, academics, parliamentarians, artists, etc.).

Pointing to the free exchange of views between European and Asian heads of government, the EC is quick to proclaim the ASEM process a success. Still, sceptics might point out that economic relations between Asia and Europe would have prospered without ASEM. In the second domain, less progress can be demonstrated. In the third domain - the most important dimension to my mind - many opportunities have neither been seen nor seized.

I believe in fact, that ASEM should concentrate on the third pillar. Indeed, there is a tremendous disparity of emphasis between the first and the third pillars in terms of activity. ASEM is in want of a common concrete goal: this goal can be found in the third domain. It is from this very diverse and varied storehouse that new joint activities are to be expected. Right now, the existence of ASEM is barely noticed by the people of ASEM member states.

If we would like to improve this situation and make our 'ASEM people' more aware of each other and of ASEM, we should not concentrate solely on

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The International Institute for Asian Studies is a postdoctoral research centre based in Leiden and Amsterdam. The main objective of the IIAS is to encourage Asian Studies in the Humanities and the Social Sciences (ranging from linguistics and anthropology to political science, law, environment and development studies) and to promote national and international cooperation in these fields. The IIAS was established in 1993 on the initiative of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, Universiteit Leiden, Universiteit Amsterdam, and the Free University Amsterdam. It is financed mainly by the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sciences.

Based in the Netherlands, the Institute acts as an (inter)national mediator, bringing various parties together for the enhancement of Asian Studies. In keeping with the Netherlands' tradition of transferring goods and ideas, the IIAS works as a clearing-house of knowledge and information. This entails activities such as providing information services, constructing an international network, and setting up international cooperative projects and research programmes. In this way, the IIAS functions as a window on Europe for non-Europeans and contributes to the cultural rapprochement between Asia and Europe.

Research fellows at a post-PhD level are temporarily employed by or affiliated to the Institute, either within the framework of a collaborative research programme, or on an individual basis. The IIAS organizes seminars, workshops, and conferences, publishes a newsletter (circulation approximately 22,000 copies), and has established a database which contains information about researchers and current research in the field of Asian Studies within Europe and worldwide. A *Guide to Asian Studies in Europe*, a printed version of parts of this database, was published in 1998. The Institute also has its own server and Internet site to which a growing number of Institutes related to Asian Studies is linked.

Since 1994 the IIAS has been appointed to run the secretariat of the European Science Foundation Asia Committee (Strasbourg). Together with the Committee, the IIAS shares the objective of improving the international cooperation in the field of Asian Studies (additional information can be acquired at the IIAS).

In 1997 the Strategic Alliance for Asian Studies was established: an international cooperation between the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Copenhagen, and the IIAS. The Institute of Asian Affairs (IfA), Hamburg, the European Institute for Asian Studies (EIAS), Brussels, and the Asia-Europe Centre (AEC) have since joined the Alliance. The Asia Alliance was set up to enhance research on (contemporary) Asia and to create networks in Asia and Europe with academic and non-academic institutions and actors.

Upon the initiative of the IIAS, and in close cooperation with NIAS, the Programme for Europe-Asia Research Links (PEARL) was established in Seoul in October 1998. It is a network of researchers from Asia and Europe, i.e. from the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meetings) member countries, representing leading Asian and European Studies institutes. PEARL believes that promotion of Asia-Europe research cooperation ought to be an integral part of the ASEM dynamics. The IIAS provides the secretariat for PEARL.

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time. This is why I told you that we felt very uneasy and became rather angry to Washington, when Mr Bush said any country who does not join America, ultimately is seen as joining the terrorists.

When Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy-Secretary of Defence in Washington, said that after bombing Afghanistan, Washington's target will be South Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, we felt that this was very unfair. My country happens to be very weak economically, and naturally his words really were like hits on our heads. We cannot fight back, simply because we don't control the international mass media. We cannot respond in kind. We are positive, we are not pessimistic. We have to stand up against this accusation. We have to stand tall vis-à-vis those people who throw dirt at our faces. And of course it takes time, but I believe that one day, when we have become much stronger, we can play an equal game with these strong and powerful countries. We must be patient.

Reforms

Now let me give you an overview of four years of the process of Reformasi. Nothing important really has changed. Basically, we are facing three big problems.

The first problem is how to maintain our national integrity, in the context of the regionalist movements that push their

Amien Rais and the audience during the discussion, 2002.



Wim Vreeburg

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business and state; in addition, we should first develop mechanisms for interregional communications between all kinds of groups of civil society and next, introduce several consultative forums for ASEM: a workers platform, a NGO platform, an ASEM research platform, and so forth. It is in these forums that decisions should be shaped. Through these platforms, ASEM member states will be informed in a more relevant and nuanced way, and will be able to make wiser decisions on a regional, national, and global scale.

I have gloomy expectations about Copenhagen. In Europe there is a clear tendency towards a new rightwing parochialism and chauvinism. This can be seen in the official policies expressed by the individual European member states. There is still no real consensus on either foreign policy or security in the EU, and most countries still prefer to handle their relations with Asian countries on a bilateral basis. The EC and the individual EU members are still unwilling to provide ASEM with a solid administrative basis - a first prerequisite for sustainable success.

By the same token, the Asian coun-

tries still show a great timidity to really engage in a political dialogue. Neither side seems to be prepared to pay more than lip service to the idea of a social dimension in ASEM. Asian as well as European member states are hesitant to give room to civil society groups: granting such groups a place is perceived as unnecessarily complicating (think, for instance, of the problem of legitimacy). Some believe that an already slow process will be further stymied, and that it may prove to be difficult to curb their influence. Some even fear that civil society groups could take over the ASEM process. Moreover, the financial implications of such an expansion of the third pillar are substantial. No country or constellation of countries will be prepared to finance this new dimension.

To my mind, this is to be regretted. It is from this third domain that new ideas for Asia and Europe will be created! <

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Notes >

- 1 In the terminology of ASEM, East Asia comprises Southeast Asia as well as Korea, Japan, and China.
- 2 Recently renewed in Seoul - so much for 'equal partnership, setting aside any donor - recipient relationship'.

own political dream to have a referendum or, some day, to have their own mini states, like in Papua, Riau, East Kalimantan and, of course, Aceh.

Secondly, we have been doing our best to have an economic recovery. But so far, so bad. We called the gentlemen from the IMF to bail out our economy, but the IMF did not deliver. The IMF is a necessary evil: we do need the IMF but at the same time we do not want to be dictated directly by the IMF. We cannot get rid of the IMF, so we have to be a good boy. If the IMF doesn't succeed, then we have to have our own formula to get rid of the economic and financial crisis.

And then last, but not least, I am very deeply concerned that my government has very itchy hands to sell all the healthy government enterprises to foreign companies. Sukarno and Hatta, rising up from their graves, will be, very angry seeing the Indonesian people now, who inherited a beautiful country and very rich natural resources and who are behaving stupidly. They do not make progress and are even selling out the beautiful country. For example: big cement factories. Even some Pertamina [the state oil company] officials were talking to me: 'Pak Amien, probably in 2006 Pertamina will also be sold out to foreign hands'.

Before I leave this podium I want to say something that is more optimistic than pessimistic. I believe that Indonesia will not only survive, but will be much more successful in the future. Let's look at our modern history. We proclaimed our independence in August 1945 and then in 1947 the Dutch forces came back to invade us. And then in 1948, when we were crawling to stand up again, there was a very bloody communist coup d'état in Madiun. One year later, in 1949, again the Dutch forces came back to Surabaya, to Yogyakarta, to other places to recolonize us. Then in 1956 and 1957 there were many rebellious movements in both Java and the Outer Islands. And then in 1965, there was an abortive coup d'état committed by the communist party. But our country, praise be to Allah, survived again and again, up to now. So, if we are facing now multi-dimensional problems of an economic, political, and social nature, again with the creativity of our leaders and the togetherness of our people we will survive again.

'Round-table'

Following the à l'improviste presentation above, six selected scholars were given the opportunity to ask questions. The term 'round-table' used in the announcement was somewhat misleading, because Amien Rais stood on a rostrum and the six scholars - Martin van Bruinessen, Nasser Abu Zaid, Freek Colombijn, Thomas Lindblad, Fridus Steijlen, and Kees van Dijk - were seated on the left and the right. Despite the encouragement by one of the six questioners to speak freely as a detached academic, Rais continued to give answers like a politician. He scored his political points with unequivocal standpoints and skilfully eschewed the unwelcome pitfalls in the posed questions. Since there was no time for follow-up questions, Rais could get away with it. Although some people in the audience might be disappointed by the lack of debate, one could admire his mastery of the situation.

Question: Do you think that the attack on Afghanistan, starting on 7 October, has a negative effect on pluralism in Indonesia?

Rais: Here and there, now and then, there are some offensive, xenophobic statements made by Muslim teachers in the mosque. But, I can assure you that they are only very small, insignificant pockets. When the Taliban regime collapsed after the American attack, I think all people in my country were happy and excited. Why? Because to us, Taliban is a very bad advertisement for Islam. It is anti-Islamic. Islam does not prohibit a woman to be educated. Islam does not order women to stay in the houses, covering all of the body except the two eyes. And Islam does not teach us to grow our beard whereby the beard becomes a sign of religiosity and piety. The wonderful, noble teachings of the Prophet were reduced absurdly by the Taliban.

Some Muslims, especially the youth, were suddenly admiring Mr Bin Laden when America bombed Afghanistan. Maybe, they don't know exactly who Bin Laden is. But they wear a T-shirt with Bin Laden's feature as a means of political protest against the status quo. I asked a student: 'Why are you wearing this Bin Laden T-shirt?' He said: 'I just want to follow my friends. I don't know exactly who he is. But at least I am becoming somebody by cycling around the town using his T-shirt'.

Some young people in my country were talking of cutting off from Amien Rais, Megawati, and Abdurrahman Wahid and to take full leadership of the Muslim community in Indonesia. Let me ask them, 'Who are the next leaders?' They said, 'We don't know'. In Indonesian 'pukul dulu, putusan

belakanga", hit first and then 'the post-hitting problem' could be solved later on. But most of young people are moderate.

Question: Why did General Hendropriyono say that Al Qaeda agents were present in Indonesia? Was this a way of joining the American coalition, and to get the army closer to America in order to get military aid again? And to bring a new military regime?

Rais: Hendropriyono said later that he was mistaken. In your country, the general would be dismissed because of giving false information. But, in my country this happens. I don't believe the possibility that the military comes back in Indonesia. The top ranks of the military are aware that it is time to re-establish our democratic parliamentary system.

Question: Will Indonesia stay a secular (Pancasila) state or become a Muslim state?

Rais: Pancasila [the state philosophy of 1945 that acknowledges Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism] is our state philosophy and we consider it irrevocable and final. Some time ago, I was told by my colleagues from Saudi Arabia or from other Muslim countries, 'Rais, why you said that you do not make Islam the basis of your state? Why, if eighty-seven per cent of Indonesians happen to be Muslims?' Why? Because our founding fathers did not want to offend non-Muslims in my country, or to make Islam the subject of political controversy. Pancasila has been tested by our history. Some Indonesians said to me, 'Pak Amien, maybe if Lebanon would have had a kind of Pancasila there was no civil war.' Yes, maybe so. We believe that under the umbrella of the Pancasila we can develop our respective religions in quiet, harmonious tolerance.

Question: What about the relationship with Israel, a state which is a terrorist state against innocent people?

Rais: I am happy to say that up to now Indonesia does not have any diplomatic relationship with Tel Aviv. America, which is pro-Israel, does not have international leadership. I am proud that Indonesian people still stick very dearly to the preamble of our constitution, which says that Indonesia will never ever make any relations with an imperialist state, whatever it is called.

Question: In your columns in the weekly DeTik you write that the present government does not care about the ordinary people, but only nurses corporate and foreign interests. Will such words not stir up a lot of emotions, which make the country ungovernable?

Rais: We cannot afford to have a change in presidency. The world sees us as a stupid nation. In five years, we have had



Nasser Abu Zaid during the discussion

four presidents. I think this is absurd. This is ridiculous. That is why there is an unwritten consensus among the politicians in Jakarta, that we have to guarantee that the present Megawati government must survive until the year 2004. But at the same time, of course, we still have to make criticism to Megawati. Because if we just stay idle, it is not right at all.

This is a secret between me and her. Basically if I see very grave problems, I phone one of her adjutants to give me time to talk directly to the president. This is what I did last month when I was very concerned seeing the number of unemployment rise. So I use my double method. I am giving public statements, because it is a need in our transparent democratic system. But on the other hand if I want to talk more directly, I just talk to her directly. But usually she is saying to me, 'Pak Amien, I am not going to. Last night, I saw you criticized me on TV, but I cannot do what you expect. I am always slow and consider all the dimensions of the problem before

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