

Outcomes

of the Webinar on “US-Southeast Asian Relations under Joe Biden”

Friday, 2nd April 2021 from 08:30 – 10:30 a.m. (Cambodia Time) via ZOOM and Facebook Live



On Friday 2nd April 2021, the Asian Vision Institute (AVI), in collaboration with The Asia Foundation, organised a webinar on “**US-Southeast Asian Relations under Joe Biden**” via ZOOM and Facebook Live Streaming. The Webinar participants included Cambodian government officials, diplomatic corps, university students and lecturers, representatives from national and international organisations, think tanks, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders in Cambodia, Southeast Asia and the US.

The Webinar discussed the Asia Foundation’s recent report on “**Urgent Issues in US-Southeast Asian Relations for 2021**”. The panelists discussed challenges facing the region in security, economy, trade, infrastructure, climate change, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the escalating rivalries between the US and China. They suggested that the US should (1) recognise the importance of Southeast Asia and ASEAN as an actual player, not simply a piece on the U.S.-China chessboard, (2) forge a new initiative to promote secure and resilient US-ASEAN supply chains and seek ASEAN’s cooperation in reforming the WTO, and (3) negotiate digital trade agreements with ASEAN countries.

Besides, the Webinar proposed practical policy recommendations to improve US-Cambodia relations. They include improving bilateral economic relations, energy cooperation and people-to-people connectivity, and especially the US’s support of Cambodia’s ASEAN Chairmanship in 2022. The discussion centred on the US’s investment projects in the energy sector in Southeast Asia and Cambodia, particularly those of clean, natural gas, solar, wind, and geothermal energies.

At the end of the Webinar, the panelists expressed their personal views of the recent political situation in Myanmar, which has rendered a crisis for the whole Southeast Asia. As the ASEAN Chair for next year, Cambodia may be able to provide good offices and/or mediation to the crisis in order to restore full peace and security within Myanmar and the whole region.
