

Asia pacific essay

[Parts of the World, Asia](#)



Impact of Economic Development and regional security on International relations and Regionalism in the Asia Pacific

Introduction

The Asia-Pacific region covers countries found in Southeast Asia, East Asia, Oceania and Australasia . Sometimes Russia which is on the eastern coast of the Pacific Ocean is considered to be part of the region. This area has managed to achieve great economic development, which has made the East Asian countries' rapid economic growth to be referred as the “ Asian Miracle”. In addition, security has become a very critical issue for economic development of the region which has won the admiration of other countries. As countries in the region continue to experience economic growth, the issue of security is considered to be very important for regional stability and economic growth (Brzezinski, 2004). East and South East Asian countries have a very significant role to play in economic development and security in Asia Pacific and other parts of the world. As a result, efforts by Asian Pacific nations to promote security, regional stability and to increase economic development have affected international relations in Asia Pacific as well as regionalism. Since the 1980s, the economics of the heterogeneous region have prospered and this has increased economic and political interactions, trade and capital flow at a regional and global level. In this paper, how economic development and security concerns have affected international relations and Asia Pacific regionalism will be discussed.

Discussion

How economic development has affected international relations and regionalism in the Asia Pacific

In Asia Pacific, most governments consider economic development a priority. This has had great influence on how the countries relate with others at a regional and international level. The efforts by the countries to seek economic interdependence and growth in trade has played a major role in economic growth of the region (Axline, 1994). As a result, economic cooperation and trade relations between the United States and some countries in the region especially the East Asian nations has promoted good relations. The United States has been a source commodities as well as a market for exports from some Asia Pacific countries. For instance, the good relations between the US and East Asian countries has been promoted by the fact that the US offers a principal market for exports from these nations. Furthermore, the US can be viewed to be the cornerstone of international relations that affect economy at a global level hence the Asian Pacific countries enjoy the security and economic cooperation provided by the US. By adopting a more market oriented economy, Asia Pacific countries have managed to establish economic cooperation and trade relations between them and with other countries in Asia, Europe and America. Due to the some Asia Pacific economies that now competes with other developed countries in America and Europe, countries such as China has become very significant in international politics and global economy. As a result, it has become active in various multilateral discussions and settings. Due to China's great influence in the international system, it influences the relations between Asia Pacific nations and the rest of the world.

Asian Pacific countries have realized that developing good relations with other countries while maintaining peace and stability in the region is very important for economic development and security (Dutta, 1999). Therefore, these countries have continued to develop friendly relations with their neighbors and with the other great powers within and outside the region. For instance, China has been involved in efforts to improve state relations with India, Japan and Russia. This aims at achieving a peaceful rise in the region by accommodating and accepting its neighbors. Economic prosperity in nations such as Russia, Japan and China compliment military strength. The growth of Asia Pacific economies has reduced the great influence of superpowers such as the US in the region. China and Japan have been enjoying the benefits of burgeoning economic ties. However, there are some resolved tensions between these two great East Asian countries that are considered to threaten the stability of the region if they remain unresolved. As China's military strength increases and the presence of a threatening North Korea in the region becomes evident, the United States alliance with Japan has promoted strategic stability in the region and Sino-Japanese relations.

The recognition that a peaceful international environment is necessary for economic development has continued to encourage Asia Pacific nations to cultivate good relations with their neighbors and other countries in America and Europe (Gilpin, 2001). For instance, since the late 1990s, India has become an important participant of the political and economic affairs of the region. In 2000, a break through of India's relations with the US was witnessed when the two became strategic partners, an issue that has

continued to promote cooperation between the two. In addition, regionalism in Asia Pacific was affected by improved relations between China and India. When the two embraced CBMS along the border that has been disputed and made efforts to promote the growth of bilateral trade between them, cooperation between them has supported economic regionalism. The countries have also been compelled to develop good international relations in efforts to ensure there is regional stability and economic prosperity. This has given rise to a pattern of governance that emphasizes on economic cooperation at a regional and international level. Economic cooperation between Asia Pacific and European nations has resulted to good relations between Asia and Europe under the ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) frame work which was launched in 1996. The cooperation has also boosted peace and stability in Asia and Europe and this has created good relations.

Some long standing conflict ridden relationships have been put aside in favor of cooperation. The Asia Pacific economic regionalism affects the global trading system hence the regional economic arrangements that have been witnessed among Asia Pacific countries are promoted by the desire to achieve economic prosperity in the region (Brzezinski, 2004). In East Asia, the market is driven by “ open regionalism” which allows countries to export and import commodities to and from other countries. Regionalism in Asia Pacific is closely linked to economic development of the region and therefore industrialization has played a very significant role in Asian Pacific economic regionalism. Based on multilateralism and liberalization, most countries in the region have managed to have influence on the GATT/WTO system due to their rapid economic development and relevance in global economy. Due to

the export oriented strategy of development, regionalism in Asia Pacific emanates from economic cooperation between the countries.

Regionalism can have economic and geopolitical benefits to countries that are involved (Rivano and Hosono, 2001). However, regionalism is sometimes seen to be a mechanism for consolidating state power and a resistance to globalization. In cases where economic cooperation is the motive for regionalism, it can facilitate globalization. The Asia Pacific regionalism was initially encouraged by the creation of Japan's Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere (GEACPS) in 1940. The creation of Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (ASEAN) in 1967 together with the Pacific Basic Economic Council (PBEC) in 1968 also contributed to the formation of regionalism in Asia Pacific. The regional cooperation that aimed at promoting economic development has led to the working together of Asia Pacific countries and because the Asia Pacific regionalism was expected to facilitate high economic growth for the member states, intra-regional interaction has reduced the possibility of conflicts among the states in future. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has encouraged regionalism in Asia Pacific (Aggarwal and Morrison, 1998). The launching of APEC in Seoul in 1989 paved way for good international relations between states. Currently, APEC has adopted a more economic role and aims at broadening regional cooperation. For example, APEC has strengthened ties between East Asia and North America. In addition, closer economic relations between Australia, New Zealand and the ASEAN have been witnessed

For countries close to each other such as those in Asia Pacific, the need to make economic development diverse has made regionalism a good way of

developing close economic interests and exchanges. The regionalism has encouraged domestic reforms that improve economic growth. Together with multilateralism, regionalism is the two major components of international economic order. The 1997 currency crisis in Asia paved way for close financial and monetary cooperation after the countries in Asia Pacific realized that there was need for strong economic cooperation to prevent financial crisis. Efforts by Asian Pacific countries to promote economic cooperation by pursuing free trade Agreements (FTAs) with each other encourage economic regionalism and good relations with the trade partners. Under the ASEAN +3 framework, countries such as China, Korea and Japan have shown their interest in free trade agreements.

Asian Pacific regionalism has been considered to be important in global liberalization and economic policies that ensure there is increased economic growth (Svetlicic and Singer, 1996). International efforts to have economic cooperation have been witnessed. Through market integration, countries in the region need to realize economic benefits and to have their world wide trade opportunities increased hence the political governance of the countries have shown political will in strengthening policies that relate to economic prosperity. Since developing solutions to the various problems that relate to national development and human survival requires regional cooperation, regionalism in Asia-Pacific has played a role in providing solutions to the problems those countries in this region experience.

Impact of regional security on international relations and regionalism in the Asia Pacific

Security concerns in Asia Pacific have affected regionalism and international relations in the region. The rise of China and the presence of other great powers in the region has led to competition for power and control. For a long time, the United States has been a major force in the regions' politics. The US is concerned about the regional security in Asia Pacific due to its significance to international politics and America's security. The increasing military strength of China has seen many countries in the region acknowledge the impact that the rise of China has on the political economy and security of the region and the world. The strategic alliance between the United States and other resident states in the region promotes peace, security and stability in the region. For instance, Japan's need to maintain good Sino-Japanese relations has led to the development of an alliance with the United States which still remains as one of the world's super powers. The deep seated and unresolved tensions between countries in the region are viewed to be potential threats to the stability and security of the region and as a result, the countries have made efforts to ensure that conflicts that may lead to insecurity in the region are dealt with (Camilleri, 2005).

Due to the threat that terrorism poses to security at an international and regional level, Asian Pacific countries are now actively engaged the efforts to achieve peace and stability. By working together with other foreign countries such as the US and European nations to fight terrorism, the countries have developed diplomatic ties with America and European countries. Promising cooperation and prosperous relations between Asia Pacific and Europe have been established to ensure there is peace and security in the region. For instance, under the United Nations, the two work

together to maintain peace and stability at a regional and global level. Korean Peninsula and Taiwan which have been points of conflict in this region are encouraged to seek resolutions to the conflicts (Yahuda, 2004). The American led war against terrorism has provided countries such as China and Russia with an opportunity to work together. These countries to have put a side some of the long standing disagreements to forge cooperation that will end conflicts and fight terrorism.

After the cold war, countries in this region have been involved in nuclear tests. This issue has raised concern about security and stability in the region (Holton, 1998). For instance, India and Pakistan have in the past been involved in nuclear tests while the international community has criticized North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons. As the Asian Pacific countries try to deal with possession of nuclear weapons which is a threat to security, stability and economic development of the region, the US and the European community has raised concern about the Korean nuclear question. In addition, America and the EU have shown interest in working together with Asia Pacific countries to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The possibility of these weapons ending up in the hands of terrorist groups has made it necessary for nations to work together to oppose and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. China has become a great influence in the region and this has freed it from the military threat of the Soviet Union. Through Deng Xiaoping emphasis on transformation of China through economic reforms, rapid economic growth and opening up of China to the world, China's deepened integration within the international

community has paved way for good international relations and economic cooperation with the neighbors.

The creation of ASEAN in 1967 has played a primary role in ensuring there is security and economic cooperation between Asia Pacific countries. In addition, the formation of the Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) was meant to facilitate economic growth and to reduce any prospect of conflicts in the region. Through strong intra-regional economic, political and social linkages, regionalism and good foreign relations have been achieved. Regional security in Asia Pacific has made it possible for countries to achieve a market driven and outward looking economic / trade strategy. Although the region has diverse political systems, the ability of the countries to achieve regional cooperation can be attributed to the interests of the countries to maintain peace & security. Due to the market that Asian Pacific region offers to commodities from developed countries such as the US and Europe, security in the region has encouraged foreign investment and cooperation which has in turn paved way for good international relations. Because APEC has made it possible for first order states that are outside of Europe to become members, the US which enjoys an economic leverage for being APEC and NAFTA member can develop good relations with Asia Pacific countries.

Western military alliances such as ANZUS, Five Powers Defence Agreement (FPDA) and the US-Japan alliance play an important role in managing potential regional conflicts in Asia-Pacific. The ANZUS has involved the US, Australia and New Zealand in security matters of the region. Furthermore, the need to promote security in the region had the FPDA allow Britain, New

Zealand and Australia to maintain military presence in Singapore and Malaysia. ASEAN is a regional forum that encourages Asia Pacific countries to maintain peace and cooperate. This has boosted regionalism in Asia Pacific. Furthermore, ASEAN is considered to be an instrument that facilitates multipolarity in the region. The enlargement of East Asian regionalism occurred in December 2005 in Kuala Lumpur so as to include Australia, India and New Zealand(ASEAN+3). Recommendations have being made that such forums should be used to handle regional issues such as security and conflicts due to the spread of nuclear weapons (Wesley, 2003).

Some countries in Asian Pacific have become members of organizations whose mandate is to make sure that issues that threaten regional security are dealt with. For example, the Shanghai cooperation organization (SCO) was formed to counter terrorism, separatism and extremism which threaten security in the Asia Pacific and the world. The organization which was founded in 2001 is an intergovernmental mutual-security organization. China which is very significant in Asian Pacific economy and security is a member. As a result, China has established good relations with other nations that are members of the organization or those that share principles and goalssimilar to those of the organization. For instance, China has managed to develop good relations and cooperation with other members (Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan). Due to the efforts by the organization to fight terrorism, relations with other nations at a global level have improved. For example, the current observers of the organization include India, Iran, Pakistan, Mongolia and Pakistan. The working together of the countries to promote security has encouraged stability and economic cooperation.

Furthermore, the organization has welcomed states that share similar principles and goals with it to establish mutually beneficial partnerships.

Conclusion

The creation of regionalism in Asia Pacific is considered to be beneficial to the people and countries in the region due to the geopolitical counterweight it offers to the European Union and NAFTA. The need to improve economic growth and promote regional security in Asia Pacific has promoted good international and regional relations between countries as well as economic cooperation through regionalism. All over the world, states seek to develop good relations with others in efforts to attain economic and political benefits. Some countries in the Asia Pacific region such as China and Japan currently play a major role in international politics and global economy. Security in the region is a critical issue because it promotes stability and an environment that is favorable for economic development. As a result, economic development and security have great impact on international relations and regionalism in Asia Pacific.

References

Aggarwal, V., and Morrison, C. 1998. Asia-Pacific Crossroads: Regime Creation and the Future of Apec. Palgrave Macmillan

Axline, A. 1994. Political Economy of Regional Cooperation. Continuum International Publishing Group – Pinter Publishers

Brzezinski, Z. 2004. The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership, New York: Basic Books

Camilleri, A. 2005. Regionalism in the New Asia-Pacific Order, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

Dutta, M. 1999. Economic Regionalization in the Asia-Pacific: Challenges to Economic Cooperation, Northampton: Edward Elgar

Gilpin, R. 2001. Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order, Princeton University Press

Holton, R. 1998. Globalization and the Nation-State, Palgrave Macmillan

Rivano, N., and Hosono, A. 2001. Regional Integration and Economic Development???? Palgrave Macmillan Publishers

Svetlicic, M., and Singer, H. 1996. The World Economy: Challenges of Globalization and Regionalization, Palgrave Macmillan Publishers

Wesley, M. 2003. The Regional Organizations of the Asia-Pacific: Exploring Institutional Change, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Yahuda, M. 2004. The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, Routledge, London