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Regionalism

An Asian Conversation: Three Viewpoints

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INTRODUCED BY **Anthony Milner**

How will this region of the world be organised over the next decades, and how will Australia be positioned? The current discussion of regional institutions and regional architecture – which was stimulated by former Prime Minister Rudd's 2008 proposal of an Asia-Pacific community – is of far more than academic concern. It matters for Australia's future.

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Three Viewpoints: An Introduction

Anthony Milner

How will this region of the world be organised over the next decades, and how will Australia be positioned? The current discussion of regional institutions and regional architecture – which was stimulated by former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s proposal of an Asia-Pacific community in 2008 – is of far more than academic concern. It matters for Australia’s future.

On the face of it, the Asia-Pacific community idea was a straightforward, constructive proposal aimed at promoting the general welfare of the region. Kevin Rudd was proposing a “regional institution that spans the entire Asia-Pacific region” and is able to engage in “the full spectrum of dialogue, cooperation and action on economic, political and security issues”. That such a suggestion should come from Australia is in one sense not surprising. Australian governments, especially Labor governments, have a long history of contributing to the building of multilateral institutions, including the United Nations. In this region, Australia tried without success to promote the Asia and Pacific Council in the 1960s, and then played a key role in the founding of APEC (the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) in the 1980s.

These regional initiatives have been broad in geographic scope – and the phrase ‘Asia-Pacific’ conveys well a concept of this region that includes not just East Asian countries but also the United States, along with Australia, New Zealand and other countries around the Pacific. A region defined as ‘Asia-Pacific’ is one in which Australia and the Australia-United States alliance can fit comfortably. But it is partly because we define the ‘region’ in this way that Australian proposals meet regional opposition.

The clash between Prime Minister Keating and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir in the 1990s – in which the Australian leader launched the word ‘recalcitrant’ against his Malaysian counterpart, and an explosion of diplomatic fury followed – was at heart a contest over regional visions.

Australians tended to see Mahathir as a lone voice in the region, but the ‘East Asian’ vision which he advocated – a narrower regionalism that would be driven by Asian states – had many supporters, and gained strong momentum with the creation of the ASEAN + 3 (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, together with China, Japan, South Korea) process in 1997. The ASEAN organisation – itself a specifically ‘Asian’ venture initiated in 1967 – has been playing a central part in building this East Asian regionalism. Just how this alternative regionalism might develop is a topic of current discussion and debate in Asian countries – and even if Australia remains committed to the promotion of organisations, there are obvious advantages in being informed of these deliberations.

The three short papers that follow are based on presentations at a conference on the ‘Changing Global Strategic Landscape and its implications for Regional Architecture’ held in Bangkok in March this year.*

Written by distinguished specialists from China, Singapore and Thailand, the papers differ from one another in numerous respects (including style of presentation), and none of them is written in the combative rhetoric that immediately attracts the attention of Australian readers. But they all deserve to be read carefully by those concerned about developments in regionalism, and especially Australia’s future place in these

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*Organised by the Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with the East Asia Academic Cooperation Council (EACC) of Thailand.

developments. Among the messages or perspectives which I see as being conveyed in these papers are:

- an insistence that the region – and the globe in general – is in a period of serious transition, and the ‘changing global landscape’ (to use words from the conference title) will influence greatly what forms of regional architecture will begin to be predominant. The complexity of institutions that we see in the region today – the architectural messiness – is then the product of deeper, structural change. Zhu suggests that it will only be when one country displays leadership by attracting broad support that a “stable East Asian regional order” will be shaped.
- despite the ‘changing global landscape’, all the papers acknowledge the likely continuing role for the United States in the region, but they also communicate confidence in a rising Asia. It is not just a rising China. There is a sense of Asian empowerment here, of Asians taking the shaping of regional institutions into their own hands, and with some success. In Australia we often make the point that there is not one but many ‘Asias’, that the term ‘Asia’ disguises the real complexity of the region. But the idea of ‘Asia’ clearly has potency in the region, and we find evidence for this in the writing that follows.
- in the building of regional architecture, all the papers point to the successes of ASEAN. In Australia it has become common to criticise ASEAN for its failings, for instance, in handling the East Asian economic crisis of 1997–1998, the smoke haze that crossed the islands of Southeast Asia or the promotion of political reform in Burma/Myanmar. Such failings are often discussed by Southeast Asians themselves, but in Tan’s carefully-worded paper – to take one example – we see the insistence that since ASEAN was created there has been “no war or any other major conflict

in the region”. With respect to broader region building, two of these papers spell out the way in which ASEAN has been first strengthening its own community, then developing an East Asian structure, and finally experimenting in the extensive ‘Asia-Pacific’ context. Prapat and Tan present the ASEAN vision in terms of a series of concentric circles. In a keynote address at the Round Table in Kuala Lumpur on June 8, Prime Minister of Malaysia Najib Razak used precisely this imagery in presenting his own view of how regional architecture ought to develop. Tan specifically lays out the idea of ASEAN Plus, that is ASEAN and up to eight of its dialogue partners, as the new regional architecture.

- what these papers mean by ‘regional community’ clearly reaches beyond security and economic cooperation. Prime Minister Rudd captured this understanding of community when he referred in 2008 to the need for a “genuine and comprehensive sense of community” in the region. But the point is often overlooked in Australian discussions of regional architecture, which do focus on security and economic issues. Prapat actually insists that the “most important factor in the development of a successful regional community” is the sense of “common identity”; Zhu writes of the need to make progress in “understanding our common destiny” and “nurturing our sense of community” to help the development of the “regional cooperation process”.
- although the strengthening of regional architecture is taken seriously in all three papers, none expresses support for Australia’s ‘Asia-Pacific community’ proposal. To the extent that it is discussed directly, Zhu refers to the Australian idea as coming from “outside the region”; Tan says it sidelines ASEAN, and is thus unacceptable; and Prapat judges that it envisages too big

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a region, does not possess a “common identity”, and lacks “legitimacy and support from many countries in the region”.

- although much stress is given to the need for East Asian – and to some extent Southeast Asian – ownership of the region’s architecture, there is a willingness expressed in all these papers to find ways to engage other countries with an obvious stake in East Asia. As an ASEAN Dialogue Partner since 1974 and an invited participant in the first East Asia Summit in 2005 (as well as a trading and security partner with many Asian countries) Australia possesses a strong basis for seeking participation in this alternative regionalism.

These papers do not, of course, represent the full spectrum of opinion about architecture across the Asian region, but they do help us understand why it has been so difficult to advance Australia’s latest proposal. It cannot be concluded that our efforts will fail: the story of APEC and our contribution to the founding of the ambitious security organisation, the ASEAN Regional Forum, are reminders of what careful Australian diplomacy can achieve. But the appointment of a new Prime Minister provides an obvious opportunity for reflection. Whether we now press ahead with the Asia Pacific community venture or focus more sharply on the task of positioning Australia with respect to East Asian regionalism, we need to listen carefully to the conversation of the Asian region. The papers that follow provide just one opportunity to do so.

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A Chinese Perspective

Zhu Liqun

This paper looks at the balance of engagement in international and regional architecture. I use the term ‘balance of engagement’ in order to grasp the essence of the current structure of East Asia. Why balance of engagement, not of power? Because the main feature of today’s situation in East Asia is not a play of power politics, but mainly cooperative, sometimes competitive, interaction among multi-players. This new development in East Asia is very much consistent with new features in the international system as a whole.

The International Context

I wish to make three points. The first concerns three new features developing in the international system; the second is about the implications of these features for East Asia and its regional architecture; the third is about the approach China should take to regional architecture building.

Let me start with the three new features: the first concerns power shift. We have seen in the last 10 years that quite a few developing countries are rising together: China, India and ASEAN in Asia; South Africa in Africa; and Brazil and Mexico in Latin America. The fact that so large a number of emerging powers rise together is unprecedented in human history. It suggests we are now entering a multi-polar world. Power might not be evenly distributed in this multi-polar system, but it will inevitably bring about changes in international order, and the transition toward a new world order is already well under way. The power shift creates more opportunities for developing countries to participate in international decision-making processes. One example of this

positive evolution of current international institutions is the way the G8 turned into a G8+5, and then further evolved into a G20.

This development symbolises the way the post-war international order established by major western powers has evolved into a new world order underpinned by institutions shaped by both major powers and emerging powers. I see this new development rather positively, simply because it brings more democratic ingredients into the current international system.

The second factor is a deepening interdependence between nations, which calls for more regulations as well as global and regional governance for taming power politics and coping with global issues. Globalisation and the information revolution have brought us closer together than ever before: people, goods, ideas, money, threats and opportunities are moving at a global level and at increasing speed. What happens half-way round the world affects our security and prosperity. Globalisation implies that most national goals are now tightly intertwined and thus the calculation of mere self interest is not easily achieved.

Consultation and coordination are needed, and we therefore need more institutions – formal and informal – to nurture common interests and to pool together expectations. Although global management is still largely in the framework of the Westphalia state system, this system has difficulties in coping with cross-boundary issues, and we have thus seen great progress in institutionalisation and cooperation. The major supply/demand gap in global governance will, of course, bring more opportunities for institutional building to cope with global issues.

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The third factor is the new security and strategic environment, which we all know has changed since the Cold War period. There is still a need to relieve mistrust, but the list of today's security concerns includes climate change, pandemics, terrorism, non-proliferation, piracy and failed states – all issues that bring us together, because none can be solved by a single country. In such circumstances, security affairs cannot be viewed simply from a realist point of view – focusing on the struggle for power between nation states. Another factor demanding a new mindset and mechanism is that, today war among major powers is becoming unthinkable.

Considering these three features of the developing international system – a more complicated, more democratic, more institutionalised system – there is reason for optimism. But what are the implications for East Asian regional architecture?

The Regional Context

In my view, the three new features at the international level are also influential at the regional level. A power shift has also taken place in East Asia, with the transition from a Cold War polarisation into a multi-polar structure, in which regional powers and powers from outside the region are interacting within the region. Regional powers are developing their own regional strategies, and powers from outside the region are also increasing their role in shaping the direction of regional order: for example, the US has vowed to come back, Australia has been advocating 'Asia-Pacific' community building, and India has its own eastward policy.

These initiatives highlight the emerging multi-polar power structure in East Asia, but this does not necessarily mean that we are going to see a play of power politics. We can speak of a constructive multiplayer engagement, or of a structure becoming more a balance of engagement. There is some competition, but also more consultation, communication, and cooperation. The process of power transition in this region is certainly more peaceful than other such transitions in global history.

Examining the way deepening interdependence has influenced regional architecture building, several regional processes have been developed with different functions to cope with regional affairs: apart from ASEAN integration, mention should be made of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), APEC, ASEAN + 3, the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN + 1, as well as many sub-regional cooperation projects.

Together these processes convey a different picture of East Asia compared with 10 years ago. The level of institutionalisation and socialisation in the East Asia community may not be the same as in Europe, but East Asian people have made great progress in understanding our common destiny and nurturing our sense of community. This improvement in the security environment, in turn, helps the development of the regional cooperation process, and of open regionalism.

These developments, however, do not deny the existence of continuing dilemmas and puzzles in the region. One question that still needs to be answered is: can we build a stable regional architecture through East Asia community building? Europe has been successful in this, but in Asia we currently have several modes of regional cooperation.

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Advancing Regional Architecture

In deciding on the most suitable mode, it can be said that dependence on military alliances or on a concert of big powers, are both outdated ideas. So how the major powers can position themselves is still an open question.

Given that diversity is an essential feature of East Asian regional cooperation, and the multi-polar system is well under way in the region, regional architecture may well involve a long process of mixed and complicated structuring. We have several propelling forces and parallel pathways which might not join together within a unified process or a single regional organisation, in the European Union (EU) manner. Faced with different processes, no set model can be assumed to lead to a regional community. This is what the term “balance” means.

Keeping every process moving forward, therefore, is more meaningful than arguing which single way we should take. Community building is a practical task, and the ‘community of practice’ should be based on local reality, using pragmatism as a guiding principle, and making learning, communication, consultation and dialogue the first priority. This is what “engagement” is all about.

An East Asian regional community will not be attained through hard power and unilateralism, but by continuing constructive engagement among the different powers, and by following strategies that win support from all East Asian countries. If a country can employ a strategy that attracts broad support, that country will increase its potential to become a leading power. In this sense, leadership is still a key to shaping a stable East Asian regional order.

The Position of China

Finally, a few words on China’s policy toward the East Asia Regional Cooperation: for China, East Asia Community building is a long-term process and gradual steps should be taken to achieve it. China has been supportive of ASEAN leadership, and of an inclusive and open regionalism in which America and other powers are welcome to play an active and positive role. China regards the ASEAN plus 1, ASEAN plus 3, and other channels as effective mechanisms for community building in the region. So China will stick to the existing channels, but will also explore all kinds of models possible to promote cooperation.

China has striven to develop long-term, stable, friendly, cooperative relations with every country in the region. China firmly believes that if China can rise, it will rise with Asia. So Asia, especially East Asia, is the place to which China attaches most importance. China, I believe, will give much to East Asian cooperation processes, and to the construction of an East Asian Community – a real community, based on the political will to cooperate with the countries involved.

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A Singaporean Perspective

Tan Seng Chye

In recent years there have been significant changes in both the global and the regional strategic landscapes. The main changes are the rise of China and India, the United States' re-assertion of its presence in Asia following the election of President Obama, Japan asserting its right as a 'normal' state and its desire to be on equal status with the US in the US-Japan security alliance, the financial and economic crisis in 2008/2009 (which seriously affected the US and Europe), the US-India strategic partnership, the China-US strategic partnership, and President Obama's new policy approaches to Middle East issues.

At the regional level, the ASEAN Charter – introduced in 2008 to enhance ASEAN as a more rules-based organisation – can strengthen ASEAN's role as a bridge for the two rising Asian powers. ASEAN will continue to be recognised as a significant, stable regional organisation – and one which can help the major powers engage with and interact with each other, in the context of the ASEAN Dialogue Partnerships, the ARF, and the ASEAN +3 and EAS.

All these new developments have resulted in a shift in political and economic influence to Asia, and affect the new power balance emerging in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in East Asia.

While the previous US Administration had paid lesser attention to Southeast Asia, the Obama Administration has re-affirmed that the US is back in Asia, indicating that it would continue to assert its presence and role in the region. The US is also engaging China, as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) which are its strategic allies. Being the global superpower, the US has substantial political, economic and security interests in East Asia. Though the US has been

weakened by the recent financial and economic crisis, it nevertheless remains in relative terms the pre-dominant global power, and will be so in the foreseeable future despite recent pronouncements about its decline.

The United States' long-held 'hub and spokes' policy will continue to be important to its strategic and security interests in the Asia-Pacific region as well as westwards to India and the Indian Ocean. Its security relationship with Japan and ROK will be maintained – despite the Japanese new posture of engaging China, developing closer relations with Southeast Asia and seeking a more equal status in regards to the US-Japan security alliance. The US will also strengthen its relations with its allies like the Philippines and Thailand, and supportive countries like Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam. With India, the US has a strategic partnership, to ensure its presence in East Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Japan, as indicated, will also want to re-assert its engagement with Southeast Asia, strengthening its presence and influence there, and will not leave the region to China's domination. Japan is enhancing as well its engagement with India.

Though India is now a strategic partner of the US, it will not become a US ally because of its independent foreign policy and its desire to improve relations with China. Although India is a rising power, India's engagement with Southeast Asia has been gradual and is unlikely in the foreseeable future to pose any serious challenge to (or rival) China's, the United States or Japan's influence in the region.

The rise of China is the most significant development. The remarkable growth in its economic strength and influence regionally and globally is to be seen in

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its trade and investments, economic and technical assistance programmes, quest for natural and other resources (in many countries including Southeast Asia, Africa, South America and Australia) and substantial trade with the US. China's military modernisation and its rising military power – particularly naval power – has raised some concerns as to whether China will become hegemonic. Recent counter-piracy efforts have enabled China to gain some presence in the Indian Ocean and the East coast of Africa. China is unlikely to be able to rival the US in any serious manner in the foreseeable future, particularly in Southeast Asia – but the US will have to take into account China's interests where China has developed substantive relations with the regional countries. China will be against any United States' attempt to contain China or hinder its growth.

Current Institutions

The existing institutions or dialogue relationships – ASEAN +1, the ASEAN +3 relationships, the EAS and the ARF, as well as the ASEAN Dialogue Partnerships – enable ASEAN to play a central role as a driving force in region building. These institutions and dialogue relationships can be considered as concentric circles around ASEAN but are of different shapes and sizes. The ASEAN +3 and ASEAN +1 relationships with China, Japan and ROK have been substantial, and the ASEAN +3 relationship in particular is an important institution for functional, economic and political cooperation among these East Asian countries.

The ARF has a large geographical scope and its members have diverse interests and concerns. It nevertheless engages a range of regional and major powers in confidence building, and this is a stabilising factor for the ASEAN region. In recent times, the ARF has also embarked on preventive diplomacy as well as simulation exercises on non-traditional

security issues like humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Since ASEAN's establishment in 1967, there has been no war or any major conflict in the region. The existing institutions and ASEAN's dialogue relationships have contributed to its political, economic and social progress and a peaceful and stable environment in the region. This augers well for ASEAN's future.

Due to the changes in the global strategic landscape, however, new proposals for regional architecture like Japan's East Asia Community proposal and former Australian PM Rudd's Asia-Pacific Community (APC) have emerged from outside ASEAN. Japan's proposal is still unclear in its scope and membership, and its idea of an EU type of community for East Asia would likely be unacceptable to most regional countries – in particular, ASEAN – in view of the need to take into account the sensitivities and diversity in ethnicities, cultures, religions and systems of governments in East Asia. The idea of a supranational organisation would not be acceptable to the regional countries, due to the likely dominance in such an organisation of the larger powers in the region and the probable diminishing of ASEAN's centrality.

The APC has not been clear in its purpose, geographical scope and membership. If the APC's intention is to confine its scope to the Pacific and involves the so-called 'G8' which included only the Northeast Asian countries, Indonesia and India, it would sideline ASEAN. The APC appears to be an organisation to engage the Pacific countries from the US to those in the Western Pacific rim. That such an architecture may not be acceptable to the US is suggested by recent cautious statements from US officials. The APC would not be acceptable to ASEAN.

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The Idea of ASEAN Plus

In 2006, ASEAN established the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) which was a significant development in defence and security cooperation among the ASEAN countries. Since then it has built confidence and closer security cooperation among the ASEAN countries. The ADMM has recently adopted the ADMM-Plus idea which may be inaugurated in the near future. This will be a significant development as it will include the major powers with significant interests and relations with ASEAN. The Plus countries should be ASEAN Dialogue Partners, have substantive relations with ASEAN and have signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). The ADMM-Plus countries are likely to include most of ASEAN's Dialogue Partners. Unlike the ARF which has too large a geographical scope – and a membership too diverse in their interests and concerns - the ADMM-Plus would be more focused on ASEAN, engaging the regional powers and certain external major powers in security and political discussions for regional peace and security.

The present East Asian regional architecture consists of the ASEAN +3 (APT) (concerned with economic and functional cooperation) AND the East Asia Summit (EAS) (political, security, and other strategic issues in the wider East Asia region). Due to the changing strategic landscape, however, the regional architecture may need to be adjusted to reflect the growing interests of certain major powers. In this respect, to maintain the importance and centrality of ASEAN's role – which is accepted by the major powers – ASEAN needs to engage those major powers that have strong and substantive interests in and relations with the region. The ASEAN-Plus idea can serve this purpose. The selection of the Plus countries will be important. In line with the criteria for the selection of the ADMM Plus X countries, the number of Plus countries for the ASEAN Plus X countries will likely be eight.

In parallel with the ADMM Plus X countries, an ASEAN Plus X countries structure could be the new regional architecture for the discussion of political and security cooperation, economic and other strategic issues. The ASEAN Plus X Summit could be held back-to-back with the APEC Summit, so that leaders of the major powers are able to attend both events, when the APEC Summit is hosted in Asia.

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A Thai Perspective

Prapat Thepchatree

The hot issue being discussed in many diplomatic and academic forums in the region is the so called ‘regional architecture’ issue. The fundamental question is: what structure, system or institution should be the core of regional architecture in East Asia or the wider region? In Europe there are overlapping institutions, such as European Union, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and European Free Trade Association, but we are all aware that EU is the core. For the East Asia or ‘Asia-Pacific’ region the question of which structure or institution should be the core is less easy to answer. Before attempting to do so, we must define what is ‘regional architecture’. For me, the definition of regional architecture is broader than the term ‘institution’: it can be represented by the terms ‘regional order’, ‘structure’, ‘system’, or ‘institution’.

Core Criteria

What, then, might be the criteria for determining the suitability of each system or institution for becoming the core of regional architecture? I have come up with four criteria. First, with respect to membership and geographical scope, the system or institution that should be the core must be comprehensive or inclusive in membership. This means that important regional countries must be members of that institution. The system or institution must have a geographical scope that covers the whole region. At present there is still a big debate concerning what we mean by region. Does it mean ‘East Asia’ or ‘Asia-Pacific’? A further consideration is that the institution or system must not be too large or small. It should have optimal size. I would also like to add that it should have ASEAN as one of its members.

Secondly, as to the scope of cooperation, this too should be comprehensive – covering all issues, including new challenges in the region. The type of cooperation I am referring to, it should be said, needs to be meaningful and concrete, thereby benefitting the whole region.

The third criterion concerns community: the core system or institution should have the potential to develop into a regional community. The institution should have a common identity – which, in my view, is the most important factor for the establishment of a successful regional community. The core institution must have interactions among members that are intensive in all areas, including social and cultural, as well as political and economic cooperation. There can be a tension or trade-off here, however, between common identity on one hand, and inclusiveness on the other. That is, if the institution is to be inclusive, it risks losing common identity. Alternatively, if it is to attain a common identity, it may have to be more exclusive.

The fourth criterion is that the system or institution must have legitimacy and support from the countries in the region.

Candidate Systems and Institutions

When we survey the competing systems and institutions (and proposed new institutions) in the region, how does each of them fare in terms of these four criteria? Which one is most suitable to be the core of regional architecture in East Asia?

The first is the unipolar system, with the US as the core. It is described as a ‘hub and spokes system’, where the US is the hub and its military allies the spokes. The hub and spokes system emphasises bilateral military alliances, and is supplemented by multilateral systems. The first of

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the latter is the subregional forums. Currently, the US is seeking to establish a regional FTA in the new framework called Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The US has also set up other subregional forums, such as trilateral cooperation, six-party talks, and the Lower Mekong Initiative. Another important multilateral system is APEC.

This United States unipolar system does not pass the four criteria. First, the membership of the unipolar system is exclusive and ASEAN is not the main actor in that system. Secondly, cooperation under the unipolar system is focused only on the issues that concern the US. Another drawback is that this unipolar system would not be able to evolve into a regional community. Lastly, the unipolar system lacks legitimacy and support from many countries in the region.

The second system to consider as the core of regional architecture is the multipolar system. Like Europe in the 19th century, the focus of this system is on playing the 'balance of power' game among major powers – in this case the US, China, Russia, Japan and India. Such a multipolar system, however, could not be the core of regional architecture because its membership is not inclusive, and ASEAN is not an actor in that system. The multipolar system is also prone to conflict rather than cooperation, and would be unable to develop into a community. In addition, it lacks regional legitimacy and support.

The third possible model for regional architecture is the 'Concert of Asia' – similar to the Concert of Europe in the 19th century – under which major powers would cooperate in the management and maintenance of peace in the region. The so-called 'G8 of Asia' – which would comprise Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the US – could not, however, be the core of regional architecture, because

its members are exclusive and ASEAN has no role to play. Also, the areas of cooperation would be concentrated on issues that interest the major powers. Such a 'concert' would not be able to evolve into a regional community, and would lack legitimacy and support.

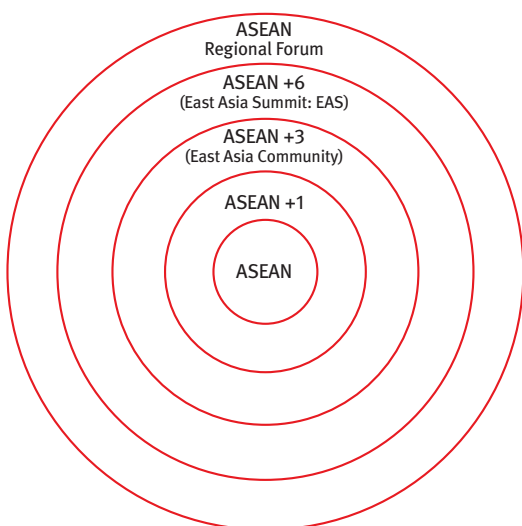
The fourth model is APEC and APc. Recently, Australia has been trying to push the idea of setting up an 'Asia-Pacific Community' or APc. In the case of both APEC and APc, even though their memberships would be inclusive and their geographical scope comprehensive, their cooperation would not be seen as meaningful and concrete. This is a big problem. More seriously, both APEC and APc are too big, which makes it very difficult for them to evolve into regional communities in the future. They both lack a common identity – and also lack legitimacy and support from many countries in the region. Many countries are opposed to the idea of setting up APc.

The fifth and final model for regional architecture is ASEAN and the ASEAN-related forums, such as ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, ASEAN+6 (or the East Asia Summit, EAS), and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Using the four criteria to analyse ASEAN, I find that ASEAN has passed all four. Membership of ASEAN and ASEAN-related forums is inclusive. Even though ASEAN has ten member countries and ASEAN+3 has thirteen countries – which may be seen as exclusive – ASEAN also has the EAS, which can expand to include important members in the region. The EAS in this sense is inclusive. The membership of the ARF is also inclusive, having 27 member countries, covering the whole geographical area of the region. The geographical scope of ASEAN also covers the whole Southeast Asian region. ASEAN+3 and the EAS incorporate the East Asian region. The ARF covers the wider region. ASEAN is also

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comprehensive in areas of cooperation. Interaction among ASEAN members is intensive in all areas, and ASEAN has a common identity. As a result, ASEAN has been accepted, having legitimacy and support from many countries, and ASEAN + 3 is seen to have a lot of potential to evolve into an East Asian community.

According to my analysis, then, ASEAN is the most appropriate institution to become the core of the regional architecture. Also, the following is the strategy I would propose to strengthen ASEAN as the core. First, conceptualise ASEAN as the strong core of regional architecture by thinking of concentric circles, with ASEAN as the innermost ring. Secondly, affirm ASEAN's role as the strong core of regional architecture by intensifying cooperation within ASEAN itself, by successfully setting up an ASEAN community by the year 2015. This community – as currently planned – will be based on three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community, and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.



Thirdly, enhance ASEAN+1 by intensifying ASEAN's relations with dialogue partners and major powers with the goal of achieving equilibrium concerning ASEAN-US, ASEAN-China, ASEAN-Japan, ASEAN-India, etc.

Regarding the ASEAN+3 framework, ASEAN should develop ASEAN+3 into an East Asia Community. The first steps would be to set up an East Asia Economic Community and an East Asia Free Trade Area.

As for the EAS, ASEAN should use it as the mechanism to make ASEAN-related institutions more inclusive, gradually adding new members into the process. We could start with the US and Russia. That would transform ASEAN+6 into ASEAN+8. In the future, the EAS would be open-ended in terms of membership: in that sense, it would be ASEAN+x. As already mentioned, however, we should be aware of the big trade-off between inclusiveness and common identity. If the EAS is expanded by adding new members, it will become more inclusive, but at the same time gradually lose common identity. We should not expect that EAS will be able to evolve into a regional community in the future.

Regarding the ARF, which should continue to be an ASEAN project, its strength is that it already has 27 member countries – which makes it inclusive, covering almost the whole area of the wider region. A weakness of the ARF is that the scope of discussion is limited to security issues, and is expanding only slowly. We should also upgrade ARF cooperation from the level of confidence-building measures to the levels of preventive diplomacy and the development of conflict-resolution mechanisms – and even into the area of economic cooperation. ASEAN, in fact, should explore the possibility of upgrading the ARF to the level of a summit.

We should be aware of the big trade-off between inclusiveness and common identity. If EAS is expanded by adding new members, it will become more inclusive, but at the same time gradually lose common identity.