



# LUND UNIVERSITY

Is the World Ready for a Coherent ASEAN+3? : A multi-level analysis of epistemic policy actors' ideas

de Prado Yepes, Cesar

2003

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

de Prado Yepes, C. (2003). *Is the World Ready for a Coherent ASEAN+3? : A multi-level analysis of epistemic policy actors' ideas*. (Working papers in contemporary Asian studies; No. 1). Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. <http://www.ace.lu.se/publications/workingpapers/dePradoYepes.pdf>

*Total number of authors:*

1

## General rights

Unless other specific re-use rights are stated the following general rights apply:

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Read more about Creative commons licenses: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/>

## Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

LUND UNIVERSITY

PO Box 117  
221 00 Lund  
+46 46-222 00 00

# **Is the World Ready for a Coherent ASEAN+3?**

**A multi-level analysis  
of epistemic policy actors' ideas\***

**Cesar de Prado Yepes\*\***

**Working Paper No 1  
September 2003**

**Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies  
Lund University, Sweden**

**[www.ace.lu.se](http://www.ace.lu.se)**

\* Work in progress. Usual disclaimers apply.

\*\* Research Fellow at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University, 2002-2003.  
Currently Research Fellow at the Comparative Regional Integration Studies programme of the United Nations University, Bruges, Belgium, EU, [cdeprado@cris.unu.edu](mailto:cdeprado@cris.unu.edu).

## **WORKING PAPERS IN CONTEMPORARY ASIAN STUDIES**

General editor: Professor Roger Greatrex

Assistant editor: Nina Brand

### **Publications in this series:**

1. Is the World Ready for a Coherent ASEAN+3? / Cesar de Prado Yepes / ISBN 91-975093-0-2
2. Renegotiating Gender and Power: Women's Organizations and Networks in Politics  
–The China Women Mayors' Association / Qi Wang / ISBN 91-975093-1-0
3. Re-evaluating Preventive Diplomacy in Southeast Asia / J. Michael Tivayanond /  
ISBN 91-975093-2-9

This working paper is published by the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University. The views expressed herein, however, are those of the author, and do not represent any official view of the Centre or its staff.

ISSN: 1652-4128

ISBN: 91-975093-0-2

Layout: Petra Francke, Lund University, Information Office

Printed in Sweden by Lund University, Media-Tryck, 2004

© Cesar de Prado Yepes

## **Abstract**

This paper argues that the evolution of the ASEAN+3 regionalisation process since the 1990s may be clearly understood from the interplay of policy-influential intellectual actors analysed in a global, multi-level perspective. It first presents the analytical framework with two complementary concepts: a) epistemic policy actors (EPAs), basically think tanks, networks and similar ways where foreign policy debates are shaped in consultation with non-governmental actors; and b) multi-level geographic aggregation of the influence of states, world regions and global actors. The empirical analysis starts with the earlier regionalisation of ASEAN states, now reaching to Northeast Asia (Japan, China, and South Korea). It then moves to the ambivalent role of the US. Afterwards it analyses the role of inter-regionalism, first with Europe through the ASEM process, and then with other emerging world regions. Finally, the paper focuses on the promotion of the ASEAN+3 process in global intergovernmental and private-led organisations. Overall, the paper shows that elite actors at all levels of geographic analysis are vying to construct some form of ASEAN+3 regional process. The paper concludes highlighting important follow-up research questions.

# Contents

Introduction.....	1
The Analytical Framework.....	2
Initiatives from Southeast Asia.....	5
Initiatives from Northeast Asia.....	10
The US' Ambivalent Prospects in Pacific Asia.....	21
ASEAN+3' Balancing Inter-regional Processes.....	26
Promoting East Asian Regionalism through Global Venues...	37
Preliminary Conclusions and Ideas for the Future.....	45

## Introduction

The very diverse countries of East and Southeast Asia seem to be forging a common destiny under the terms ASEAN+3 or East Asian Community. This is patent when looking into the increasing number and regularity of high-level political dialogue meetings, sometimes substantiated with far-reaching written agreements, especially in economic areas.<sup>1</sup> The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) group, originating in 1967, started reaching with special impetus to North-East Asia in the 1990s, being noticeably successful towards the end of the decade in non-military issues. Malaysia formally requested in 1990 to create an East Asia Economic Group outside the newly created Asia-Pacific Economic Conference (APEC)<sup>2</sup> and closer to the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conferences, but it was turned down by the US and some other countries fearing US reaction, so the whole idea was scaled down to an East Asian Economic Caucus within APEC that formally never went very far. But neither the US' efforts to liberalise trade advanced much. Through the yearly gatherings APEC leaders presented a series of declarations and resolves, agendas and plans always aiming at broader and deeper trade and investment liberalisation, as well as economic co-operation. They even expressed a common aim to achieve a free trade area by the year 2020. Nevertheless, the few trade liberalisation agreements ever reached were not legally enforceable. APEC nowadays focuses on its original mission to enhance cooperative capacity building, even in security aspects of business transactions. Meanwhile, China implicitly sided with Malaysia in trying to keep the non-Caucasians in the Pacific at bay, and closer independent collaboration between North- and Southeast Asia started to come about with the help of the European Union (EU) mainly through the inter-regional Asia-Europe

---

<sup>1</sup> This process is usually called "ASEAN+3" because the political drive first came from the ASEAN countries, but the term "East Asia Community" is increasingly appearing as bigger Northeast Asian countries become more engaged in the process. The ASEAN Secretariat has created a small webpage on the issue ([www.aseansec.org/4918.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/4918.htm)) that complements information elsewhere in their website. More information is available from various countries websites, including Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/conference/asean3/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/asean/conference/asean3/index.html)). For an overview from the Special Assistant to the Secretary-General of ASEAN, see Chalermpanupap, Termsak (2002) "Towards an East Asia Community: The Journey Has Begun", *Presentation at the Fifth China-ASEAN Research Institutes Roundtable on Regionalism and Community Building in East Asia*, University of Hong Kong's Centre of Asian Studies, 17-19 October 2002, [www.hku.hk/cas/cap/programmes/card5/Papers/Termsak/termsak\\_chalermpanupap\\_paper.htm](http://www.hku.hk/cas/cap/programmes/card5/Papers/Termsak/termsak_chalermpanupap_paper.htm).

<sup>2</sup> After many years of discussions and low-key gatherings, APEC was first formally proposed and hosted by Australia in 1989, but under the intellectual encouragement of the Japanese government, as elaborated below. In APEC an increasing number of *economic* partners from the Asia and the Pacific discuss a number of economic development issues, and are served by a secretariat in Singapore ([www.apecsec.org.sg](http://www.apecsec.org.sg)). For a comprehensive analysis, see Ravenhill, John (2001) *APEC and the Construction of Pacific Rim Regionalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Meeting (ASEM) process that began in 1996<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, just after the financial crisis hit many Asian countries in 1997, Malaysia convened the first ASEAN+3 (the 3 being Japan, South Korea, and the People's Republic of China) Summit meeting. They have since 1999 become yearly gatherings of foreign affairs and heads of state increasingly galvanizing a growing number of ASEAN+3 general and sectoral meetings, often as complements to the regular ASEAN ones, and sometimes also complemented with special ASEAN+1 gatherings. To help consolidate all this high-level political activity, ASEAN+3 governments have been debating on how to create more permanent administrative institutions. In 2002 Malaysia even lobbied to set up an ASEAN+3 Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, although there was only an agreement for a bureau on ASEAN+3 affairs that would be "organically linked" to the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, and led by a deputy Secretary-General.<sup>4</sup> This was basically agreed within ASEAN alongside some landmark economic and security agreements and declarations pertaining mainly to Northeast Asian partners.<sup>5</sup>

## The Analytical Framework

While some researchers have studied the process of regionalisation taking into account key internal and external factors,<sup>6</sup> there is not yet a structured analysis

---

<sup>3</sup> For a rich source of materials, see the online ASEM Research Platform of the Leiden University's International Institute of Asian Studies, [www.iiias.nl/asem](http://www.iiias.nl/asem). For particularly comprehensive examinations, see Lay-Hwee, Yeo (2003) *The Development and Different Dimensions of ASEM*. Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Indonesia, Singapore and Thailand were not in favour for various reasons. For instance, Singapore argued it would be premature, as ASEAN first needs to consolidate, deepen and widen. See Channel New Asia online in English, 6 October 2003; The Star online in English, 9 October 2002; and the Korea Herald online in English, 10 October 2002.

<sup>5</sup> ASEAN and China ratified the non-binding "Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea", and a framework accord on economic cooperation toward the conclusion of an FTA within 10 years (similar to other agreements that ASEAN signed first with Japan and later with South Korea). Moreover, China also presented ASEAN countries in the Mekong River area with a general development plan, including capital assistance, for the river basin. For reference, see all the preferential trading arrangements in and around the region in Avila, John Lawrence (2003) "EU enlargement and the rise of Asian FTAs: Implications for Asia-Europe relations", *Asia-Europe Journal*, Vol 1, No. 2: 213-222 (p. 218).

<sup>6</sup> For a first approximation, see Webber, Douglas (2001) "Two Funerals and a Wedding?: The ups and downs of regionalism in East Asia and Asia-Pacific after the Asian crisis", *Pacific Review*, Vol. 14, N. 3: 339-372. For an insider view, see Lee, Jae-Seung (2002) "Building an East Asian Economic Community", *Les Études du CERi*, 87. Paris: Centre d'études et de recherches internationales. For constructivist debates, see Nabers, Dirk (2003) "The Social Construction of International Institutions: the case of ASEAN+3". *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*. No. 3: 113-136; Terada, Takashi (2003) "Constructing an 'East Asian' concept and growing regional identity: from EAEC to ASEAN+3". *Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, N. 2.; Hund, Markus (2003) "ASEAN Plus Three: towards a new age of pan-East Asian regionalism? A skeptic's appraisal". *Pacific Review*, Vol. 16, N. 3: 383-418; Okfen, Nuria (2003) "Towards an East Asian Community? What ASEM and APEC can tell us". CSGR Working Paper No. 117/03, [www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CSGR/wpapers/wp11703.pdf](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CSGR/wpapers/wp11703.pdf). For a broader set of analyses, see Liu, Fu-Kuo and Philippe Regnier, eds., (2003) *Regionalism in East Asia; Paradigm Shifting?* London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

of the main influences coming from different actors based in different parts of the multi-level world. Constructing a world region with so many issues at stake in the current global turmoil is a very big endeavour. If we accept the premise that we live in a complex interrelated world, we have to be coherent and realise that the rise of ASEAN+3 would very possibly be affected by a strategic concurrence of diverse actors that could be located anywhere, both within and outside the region-in-the-make.

To address the complexity of actors problem, one would ideally search ways to first analyse and then synthesise the inputs, interrelationships and outputs in foreign policy from the many kinds of non-governmental or private actors, including profit-oriented firms, independent NGOs, and more or less strong associations coming from civil society.<sup>7</sup> Getting to know how the true leaders' preferences are being formed in their executive offices receiving a myriad of influences is out of the question for any academic researcher preoccupied with current geopolitics in Asia; simply, there is very little information or will to provide it in most countries.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, political leaders in ASEAN+3 countries, who often are busy with a myriad of political tasks, have to receive some broad policy input from experts that broadly and continuously track general trends and specific interests, otherwise they would not be able to understand how the world is evolving nor bargain common solutions in a multi-level fashion. Indeed, given the limits of traditional governmental actors, there has been a growth of domestic and supranational networks and organisations offering public policy advice at various levels of governance. They are often called think tanks, policy communities, or policy research institutes.<sup>9</sup> International relations theory has not yet broadly agreed on their conceptualisation.<sup>10</sup>

---

7 The Union of International Associations, [www.uia.org](http://www.uia.org), produces an online database of tens of thousands of international organisations and NGOs. This does not include many relatively closed networks of individuals sharing some commonalities. Regrettably, international relations approaches do not talk much with comparative political theorists that define domestic interest or pressure groups as formal 'organizations which have some autonomy from government or political parties and ... try to influence public policy': Hague, Rod and Martin Harrop (2001) *Comparative Government and Politics; an introduction*. 5ed. Palgrave. (Chapter 10, based on Wilson, G. 1990 *Interest Groups*. Blackwell).

<sup>8</sup> Policy is often debated among informal networks. See the articles on Northeast Asia and Vietnam in Dettmer, Lowell, ed., (2000) *Informal Politics in East Asia*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>9</sup> There are several printed and online sources of that indicating a growing number in ASEAN+3 countries. For a curious old list of the most influential ones around the globe where one sees relatively few ones in ASEAN+3 countries, see The Economist, "The Good Think-Tank Guide", 21 December 1991 – 3 January 1992, complemented with "The Good Network Guide", 26 December 1992 – 8 January 1993. Actually, the most comprehensive and systematic directories available on-line are produced in Japan: see Japan's National Institute for Research Advancement (2002) *Think Tank Directory*, [www.nira.go.jp/ice/nwdtt/index.html](http://www.nira.go.jp/ice/nwdtt/index.html); and the Japan Center for International Exchange "Emerging Civil Society in Asia Pacific", [www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/emerging.html](http://www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/emerging.html). But private firms in Europe also provide some interesting databases: The London-based Europa Publications published in 1995 a very rich but conceptually confused *International Relations Research Directory* that has never



Now, one has to be selective. Although there are ever more of such networks and organisations, only a few reach actual decision makers in long-term foreign policy. Overall, I call both these competitively selected few networks and organisations with a clear policy objective epistemic policy actors (EPAs). *Actors* because they heavily influence governments. *Policy* because they influence actual policy, not just generate ideas that may never reach the general debates. And *epistemic* because they know what the trends are in foreign policy, which is not an easy task for most researchers and even more so for the average citizen. Haas calls many of these actors “epistemic communities”, each being “a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue area”.<sup>11</sup> Yet, I argue that overall EPAs are not a community, as their number grow and dynamically cooperate or compete according to their shifting interests. Community implies trust and general common purpose, rather than a structure to manage conflicting ideas. In contrast, EPAs are more like semi-private, evolving, ad-hoc parliaments where different ideas compete. In other words, EPAs are the more or less consolidated networks and organisations where often-competing ideas from academics, businesses, and even civil society are digested and a few successfully elevated to the governmental policy realm. EPAs’ ideas are necessary, but not sufficient cause to promote change. Much of their input may never turn into substantial output, but sometimes their ideas can make dramatic changes if taken up by governments.

I will use a multi-level paradigm to better structure the analysis of EPAs’ influence on ASEAN+3. Rüländ distinguishes five vertical levels of international policy-making: global, inter- and trans-regional, regional, transborder institutions at a subregional level, and bilateral state-to-state.<sup>12</sup>

The world system still largely relies on more or less independent and powerful states. Thus, one cannot neglect what the ASEAN+3 countries have

---

been updated, although some upgraded information is available in other regional databases available to online subscribers ([www.europaworld.com](http://www.europaworld.com)). Useful sources in the US include [www.politinfo.com/research](http://www.politinfo.com/research), and [www.accessasia.org/links/organizations/country](http://www.accessasia.org/links/organizations/country). Others include [www.asian-affairs.com/Frame/framethinktanks.html](http://www.asian-affairs.com/Frame/framethinktanks.html).

<sup>10</sup> See Stone, Diane (1996) *Capturing the Political Imagination; Think Tanks and the Policy Process*. London: Frank Cass.

<sup>11</sup> Haas, Peter (1992) Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination. *International Organisation*, Vol. 46, No. 1. Winter.

<sup>12</sup> Rüländ, Jürgen (2002) “Inter- and Transregionalism: Remarks on the State of the Art of a New Research Agenda”. *National Europe Centre Paper No. 34; Paper prepared for the Workshop “Asia-Pacific Studies in Australia and Europe: A Research Agenda for the Future”*, Australian National University, July 5-6, 2002. [www.iias.nl/asem/publications/Rueland\\_InterAndTransregionalism.pdf](http://www.iias.nl/asem/publications/Rueland_InterAndTransregionalism.pdf). For more general reference, see any good textbook, for instance, Baylis, John and Steve Smith, eds., (2001) *The Globalization of World Politics; an Introduction to International Relations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press.

to say about their own regionalisation. They are among the most powerful states to shape their own behaviour. Nevertheless, the US nowadays is axiomatically the most powerful state around the world, on its own or by leading alliances it may quickly create, so one has to take into account its interests and actions regarding a broad issue like the regionalisation of ASEAN+3. Meanwhile, other countries are alone much less powerful to shape alone what happens in East Asia, so they tend to join or influence a number of shifting alliances, but increasingly in a regional form.

Many states are forming world regions that for some purposes may exert long-lasting influences. And if some world regions were indeed becoming more relevant actors and units of analysis to study the world system, then one would also increasingly encounter autonomous bilateral relations between them, albeit of variable intensity and regularity. This phenomenon, originally associated with the complex set of relationships the EU is forging with other parts of the world, has also become patent during the late 1990s, including Pacific Asia as briefly indicated above.

Meanwhile, states have for long formed intergovernmental regimes of norms, rules and, sometimes even crystallised in international organisations with more or less global reach. Many of these organisations are nowadays linked to the United Nations, but some are totally outside it, like the Bretton Woods economic ones (the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), or restricted ones like the G8 and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Finally, sub-state regions may also influence the world system, but I assume their influence, even across ASEAN+3 countries, is complementary but comparatively small for the purposes of this paper, so I will not deal with them.

Therefore, the geographic dimension of my working hypothesis is that there are pressures in a multi-level fashion at the state-level and above to enhance and shape the construction of the ASEAN+3 region. I will then look at the main bilateral state-to-state relations within the region, their regional, inter-regional, and global efforts.

## **Initiatives from Southeast Asia**

This section argues that the ASEAN process has managed to remain afloat and grow in intentions as a function of the increasing intellectual input it has received from a growing number and diversity of EPAs. Some are close to government, but other ones are more independent.

## The Evolution of the ASEAN ISIS group

The first and arguably still most relevant regional EPA focusing a broad range of strategic studies is the ASEAN Institutes of International Studies (ISIS).<sup>13</sup> The beginnings are traced to individuals familiar with each other through transpacific conference activities who held their first meeting in September 1984 in Bali initiated and organised by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).<sup>14</sup> They intended to be a parallel track on peace and political-security issues to transpacific economic gatherings elaborated later under the Japan heading. They formally launched the ISIS group at their 4<sup>th</sup> Conference in June 1988 in Singapore. At first, members of ASEAN-ISIS worked individually through their respective governments, but formalisation of institutional relationship began in April 1993 when they were invited to feed ideas to the ASEAN Senior Official Meeting (SOM), therefore consolidating its claim as the key epistemic community in the region. In parallel to the ASEAN process of enlargement, the ASEAN ISIS group has since then been broadening its membership, except to Burma/Myanmar, which they unsuccessfully discouraged ASEAN leaders from accepting as a member.

The ASEAN ISIS has also enlarged its intellectual remit in the overall promotion of the institutional regionalisation – albeit with links to key external partners – in a growing number of areas merged in the concept of cooperative and comprehensive security. It was first successful in prompting governments in 1990 to accede the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Later, it promoted the realisation of a Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone at the 1995 Fifth ASEAN's Summit (although no nuclear powers outside the region have signed it). But more significant was the launching of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994, which has managed to create measures of confidence building and preventive diplomacy, helped to establish an Asian arms register, and lead some governments, including China, to publish Defence White Books.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the ASEAN ISIS became a model for the Council Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific ([www.CSCAP.org](http://www.CSCAP.org)), which

---

<sup>13</sup> For a summary of the history of ASEAN ISIS, see the personal account from one of the original promoters in Hernandez, Carolina (1995) "Governments and NGOs in the Search for Peace: The ASEAN-ISIS and CSCAP Experience" Presentation Paper, [www.focusweb.org/focus/pd/sec/herandez.html](http://www.focusweb.org/focus/pd/sec/herandez.html). For a more recent and critical assessment highlighting the limited impact of ASEAN ISIS, see Rüland, Jürgen (2002) "The Contribution of Track Two Dialogue towards Crisis Prevention", *Asien*, Vol. 85: 84-96.

<sup>14</sup> The CSIS is located not far the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, and has been long led by Jusuf Wanandi, a driving force of ASEAN-ISIS.

<sup>15</sup> The ARF was based on a 1991 memorandum to establish an Asia-Pacific Political Dialogue, and replaced earlier Canadian and Australian initiatives to establish a Conference for Security and Cooperation in Asia (CSCA) that included human rights issues following the model of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

since June 1993 is the main EPA forum for the ARF.<sup>16</sup> CSCAP's input is naturally not enough to handle all possible conflicts in the region, but it has scored some successes, including a definition of preventive diplomacy adopted by the ARF. According to Rüländ, all this has had relatively limited value, as there is not yet (by 2002) an agreed Code of Conduct to prevent crises in the South China Sea or in financial markets, the non interference principle in domestic issues is still paramount, and NGOs from civil society keep being marginalized. Nevertheless, much has changed in the past year. Within the ASEAN+3 summit of November 2002 China signed a non-binding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties to prevent crises, members started criticising Burma/Myanmar for its internal actions, a third Peoples' Assembly/Forum initiated by several organisations, and a smallish Southeast Asia People's Festival, took place alongside, although it failed to meet the political leaders.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, ASEAN ISIS has also influenced in economic cooperation matters. It argued for ASEAN to join APEC and endorsed the East Asia Economic Caucus, which has for long existed in a de-facto fashion, and proposed the creation of an ASEAN Free Trade Area that became a qualified reality in 2003.

As Mahathir, Malaysia's prime minister, has declared its intention to step down in late 2003, some members of ASEAN ISIS thought he could now devote more time to the EAEG vision he originally promoted in APEC. Thus, they held the first East Asia Congress (EAC) in Kuala Lumpur on 4-6 August 2003, just before the 17<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Roundtable (unusually delayed from June because of SARS).<sup>18</sup> It attracted mainly a good number of leaders from EPAs in the region to present their ideas to the media, to diplomats stationed in Kuala Lumpur, as well as to many Malaysians. Mahathir's opening statement called on East Asian leaders to acknowledge that ASEAN+3 was

---

<sup>16</sup> CSCAP is like ASEAN ISIS relatively close to governments. Some of its nowadays 20 member committees are actually located in foreign ministries or related research centres, while a few are located in more academic centres and think tanks, and in the case of the European, Australian and North American committees. They are all served by a secretariat currently located in Malaysia's ISIS. For a relatively optimistic assessment of the CSCAP, see Simon, Sheldon (2002) "Evaluating Track II approaches to security diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific: the CSCAP experience", *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2: 167-200. For an older assessment, see Ball, Desmond (1999) "Multilateral Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Prospects and Possibilities." Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies Working Paper N. 2. Singapore, [www.idss.edu.sg/WorkingPapers/WP02.pdf](http://www.idss.edu.sg/WorkingPapers/WP02.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> See [www.burma.no/nyhetsarkiv/2002/november/021102\\_asean.htm](http://www.burma.no/nyhetsarkiv/2002/november/021102_asean.htm). Singapore and Indonesian members have helped convene so far two ASEAN's Peoples' Assembly/Forum: one in November 2000 gathered over 250 people, vetted by suspicious governments, alongside an Informal ASEAN Summit; the second in August 2002 gathered around 300 persons. See Centre for Strategic and International Studies (2003) *Challenges Facing the ASEAN Peoples; Report of the Second ASEAN People's Assembly*. Jakarta.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.geocities.com/eastasiacongress2003/](http://www.geocities.com/eastasiacongress2003/), and articles during that week appearing in the New Straits Times Online [www.nst.com.my](http://www.nst.com.my). I personally interviewed some of the participants after the Congress.

really the EAEG. Afterwards, the substantive sessions broadly discussed building an East Asia Community with regular Summits, promoting an Asia Monetary Fund (by Eisuke Sakakibara, who argued that trade, investment and finance should move in tandem, with the overall goal of avoiding foreign intrusion) and Free Trade Agreements, and enhancing sectors like health, tourism, education, or labour. The second EAC should be held in June 2004 in conjunction with the 18<sup>th</sup> ASEAN ISIS Roundtable, and would also tackle regional environmental, political and security cooperation.

Despite its arguably overall success and increasing focus on ASEAN+3, the ASEAN ISIS process as a source of rather innovative and independent advice seems to be reaching its limits as its small group of experts expands to deal with more countries and sensitive areas that fed directly to senior officials. For instance, they created in June 2000 a webpage ([www.aseanisis.org](http://www.aseanisis.org)) with very basic information on membership and objectives, but it was never updated in any way, so the hosts in Singapore close it down in the spring of 2003. Yet, an increasing number of alternative and complementary EPAs have appeared in the South- and Northeast Asia in the past two decades and have also contributed to promote various kinds of open regionalism in a multi-level fashion.

### **Growing Competition in ASEAN countries**

Within Southeast Asia<sup>19</sup>, particularly relevant are Singapore's leaders, who as a group epitomise the concept of a large EPA as they often rotate positions in government, academia, business, and think tanks. Much of that movement takes place in the outskirts of the National University of Singapore (NUS), where a growing number of domestic and multi-level policy, research and education institutions are being relocated in 2003. A key node is the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), directed by Ambassador Tommy Koh, the promoter of much of Singapore's multi-level policy, which includes the advocating of Asian values, being and first director of the ASEM's Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), and having a long experience in the US and the UN. IPS is about to move to a vibrant think-tank hub already hosting the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), the Civil Service College, the APEC secretariat, and ASEF. One of IPS' adjunct fellows is Prof. Tan Tay Keong, now working in a high-level position in the UN, and previously a member of the East Asia Vision Group (EAVG, see section on Korea below). Meanwhile, closer to the

---

<sup>19</sup> Nesadurai and Stone provide an overview of the main ones in Southeast Asia within a broader context, namely Asia-Pacific, and mention they were starting to reach to the EU, see Nesadurai, Helen and Diane Stone (2000) "Southeast Asian research institutes and regional cooperation", in Stone, Diane, ed., *Banking on Knowledge; the genesis of the Global Development Network*. London and New York: Routledge.

city centre is the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, [www.SIIAonline.org](http://www.SIIAonline.org), (where former ISEAS director just moved) which is very active both within the ASEAN ISIS group and in some extra-regional initiatives.<sup>20</sup> For instance, it is the Secretariat for the East Asia Development Network, created under the auspices of the World Bank's Global Development Network (see later section). Moreover, the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies (IDSS), became in 1996 Singapore's latest EPA. It is based at the Nanyang Technological University, which the government tries to lift so as to better compete with NUS and decrease the country's risks of stifling innovation in multi-level foreign policy. For instance, the IDSS recently became the Asian representative of the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies ([www.IISS.org](http://www.IISS.org)), whose activities could complement those of CSCAP and the ARF, but at a slightly higher level, as IISS' yearly Shangri-La Dialogues have managed since June 2002 to gather defence ministers, officials and scholars from the region and beyond (US, Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand) to discuss key security trends.

Malaysian leaders, always in competition with their Singaporean neighbours, are also promoting a growing number of EPAs.<sup>21</sup> Soon after coming to power in the early 1980s Mahathir wanted to bypass the inefficient bureaucracy so he created the Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) as a somewhat independent, but de-facto policy-planning department for the Foreign Ministry. Malaysia ISIS is not only a key founding member of ASEAN-ISIS. It articulated the East Asian Economic Grouping/Caucus concepts in the early 1990s. It convened in 1992 a Commission for a New Asia, an elite group of 16 eminent persons from the region countries, - including Australia and India -, that presented a year later a broad report titled "Towards a New Asia", kind of a manifesto for an Asian Renaissance. It is since the beginning the secretariat for CSCAP. And it hosts since 1987 (since 1991 on behalf of ASEAN ISIS) the annual Asia-Pacific Roundtable mentioned above, the main networking gathering for devoted regionalists. Meanwhile, the main universities, lead by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in Kuala Lumpur, have also created strategic research centres concerned with the regionalisation of ASEAN+3. The UKM's Strategic Studies and International Relations Programme has become the Secretariat of

---

<sup>20</sup> For a clear link between both ISEAS and SIIA, see an article by SIIA's director: Tay, Simon (2001) "ASEAN and East Asia; A New Regionalism?", in Tay, Simon et al., eds, *Reinventing Asean*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

<sup>21</sup> For a history of the main ones during the Mahathir period, see Khoo, Su-ming (1998) "Think tanks and intellectual participation in Malaysian discourses of development", in Diane Stone et al., eds, *Think Tanks across Nations; A comparative approach*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

the Asian Political and International Studies Association ([www.APISA.org](http://www.APISA.org)), although its first Conference rescheduled for late November 2003 is being held and organised in Singapore. Moreover, the University of Malaya hosts the [www.Asia-Europe-Institute.org](http://www.Asia-Europe-Institute.org) (AEI) as a preliminary step to have a full-fledged Asia-Europe University, Malaysia's visionary answer to Singapore's ASEF. The AEI started in 2002 to offer a masters' programme in regional integration in collaboration with European academic institutions.

Other countries within ASEAN region have relatively few EPAs due to histories of hierarchical command from royalty, the military or communist parties. Yet a small number, not necessarily constrained by their governments' leaderships, are appearing and joining not only ASEAN ISIS. Particularly active is the Philippines, whose relatively closeness to the West is reflected in the range of intellectual policy debates coming out from their public and private universities. The University of the Philippines hosts the Institute of Strategic and Development Studies, which is a group of researchers led by Professor Carolina Hernandez, a key founding member of ASEAN ISIS. It also hosts the Asian Center, the base of Prof. Aileen Baviera, a member of the EAVG. But Catholic universities have increased their interest in regional issues. For instance, Wilfrido Villacorta, the president of De La Salle University's Yuchengo Center, which came about with the help of Japanese funding, became the first Vice Secretary-General of the ASEAN Secretariat in charge of some ASEAN+3 issues.

## **Initiatives from Northeast Asia**

More important for the ASEAN+3 process is what happens nowadays in Northeast Asia. Surprisingly, China, Korea and Japan are downplaying their historical animosities and starting a new era of cooperation. Part of it is due to threats like nuclear proliferation, financial or health crises. There have been already been some years of informal consultation among EPAs to diffuse the tensions in the Korean peninsula<sup>22</sup>, but much of the current activity is taking place in collaboration with Southeast Asia.

---

<sup>22</sup> The Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue, started in 1994 between China, Japan, both Koreas, Russia and the US, coordinated at the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation of University of California, San Diego, that has paved the wave to the current multilateral dialogue of six countries. See [www-igcc.ucsd.edu/igcc2/neacd.html](http://www-igcc.ucsd.edu/igcc2/neacd.html).

## South Korea's East Asia Vision Group

Particularly active has been South Korea, who feels itself constantly pressured by two giants and a divided peninsula. The East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) was formed in December 1998 under the initiative of the South Korean government under President Kim Dae-Jung to become so far the closest to a preliminary constitutional effort to consolidate the ASEAN+3. A total 26 intellectuals (two by country) gathered several times before submitting in 2001 a landmark prospective report full of recommendations<sup>23</sup>. Then, again under Korean leadership, ASEAN+3 leaders agreed in November 2000 to convene an East Asia Study Group (EASG) of governmental officials to assess the EAVG recommendations, and the implications of an East Asian Summit. The EASG, established in March 2001, submitted its own report in Cambodia in November 2002 arguing that an East Asia Summit was both inevitable and necessary, and presented 26 recommendations generally ratifying the input of the EAVG<sup>24</sup>: 17 were short-term measures ready for implementation, often focusing in helping businesses, and 9 were medium to long-term measures, often addressing more social concerns requiring further study. ASEAN+3 leaders meeting in Cambodia in November 2002 warmly endorsed the outcome of the EASG.

Overall, the EAVG and EASG reports suggest that the ASEAN+3 process has broadened its intellectual inputs from EPAs and businesses but it remains largely a largely top-down design. The masses, as seen from the very limited references to civil society, are still largely left out from the elite intergovernmental process, although the elites hope to eventually be able to reach to them and incorporate them into the process. One of the 17 concrete short-term measures advanced by the EAVG and taken up by the EASG was to establish an East Asian Forum (EAF). Exactly, the proposal was to “[e]stablish an EAF consisting of the region’s governmental and non-governmental representatives from various sectors, with the aim to serve as an institutional mechanism for broad-based social exchanges and, ultimately, regional cooperation.” The EAF would consist “of representatives from government, business, and academic circles”, and “will be modeled as a Track II process with a view to encouraging dialogue and interaction, developing networking, and promoting an exchange of views and generation of ideas in

---

<sup>23</sup> East Asia Vision Group (2001) *Towards an East Asian Community; Region of Peace, Prosperity and Progress*. Report submitted on 31 October 2001 to ASEAN Plus Three Leaders, available in full at [www.aseansec.org/4918.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/4918.htm).

<sup>24</sup> East Asia Study Group (2002) *Towards an East Asian Community*. Report submitted on 2002 to ASEAN Plus Three Leaders meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 4 November 2002, available in full at [www.aseansec.org/4918.htm](http://www.aseansec.org/4918.htm).



the region.” Another short-term measure was to “[b]uild a network of East Asian think-tanks”, as they “can bridge between the academic community and political decision-makers. Think-tanks can give early warning to governments and civic social groups before the problems become serious. Focusing on analysis of important issues, they can concentrate on new political, economic, and societal trends that will be potential problems in the near future, and they are able to detect new problems in advance. In addition, think-tanks can come up with measures and policy alternatives to solve new problems to help decision-makers find appropriate solutions. Furthermore, think-tanks can function as opinion leaders by fostering favorable environments for decision-makers to adopt new policies to address problems because they are able to provide the public with in-depth studies on new policies and benefits to be produced by implementing such policies. Expanding globalization and deepening interdependence among East Asian countries have necessitated think-tanks in the region to establish a network to carry out their tasks more effectively because it becomes more and more difficult for a country to solve new problems without cooperation from other countries”. “It will be relatively easy to establish a network of East Asian think-tanks because ASEAN has experience in building the ASEAN ISIS and extending it through its network of institutions in Northeast Asian countries. Once a network of East Asian think-tanks is established, the network will make a great contribution to promoting political cooperation and deepening cooperative relationships among East Asian countries”. A first EAF is scheduled for December 2003 in Seoul, and if the above recommendation by the EAVG serves as its base, it will not be a radical change towards non-elite, more democratic regional construction in ASEAN+3, but it perhaps will set-up a precedent to begin a longer-term process of consultation and accommodation of more actors.<sup>25</sup>

Actually, this reflects the fact that many of the EAVG members had been working in the main EPAs in their own countries.<sup>26</sup> This is particularly noticeable in South Korea, which has a long tradition of relying on research institutions to analyse difficult policy initiatives.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the EAVG’s chairman was Professor Sung-Joo Han, who personally established the Ilmin International Relations Institute at the elite Korea University in Seoul.

---

<sup>25</sup> There is a lukewarm precedent in the ASEAN+3 Young Leaders Forum inaugurated in August 2000 in Brunei. In it, youth leaders, academics and government officials met to quietly exchange ideas on strategic and political issues.

<sup>26</sup> Naturally, many had institutional backgrounds in government and businesses positions, and only in one case, a Malaysian representative, declared having been involved in an NGO.

<sup>27</sup> Fifty-nine government research institutes with 18,000 researchers were to be rationalised into five at the end of 1998, and placed under the control of the prime minister; see Korea Times, 9 November 1998. In the end, the plan was only partially implemented and nowadays about a score of governmental research institutes remain active.

Professor's Han actually hosted in May 1984 a transpacific conference that spurred the events that led to ASEAN ISIS. Moreover, Han is a former minister of foreign affairs in good terms with the US, where he became ambassador under the new government of President Roh. Meanwhile, Lee Kyung-Tae, the other Korean member of the EAVG, currently ambassador to the OECD, has led in two of the most prominent economic international think-tanks of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy, the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, and the Korean Institute for International Trade. And Mr. Kim Ki-Hwan, the most prominent South Korean speaker at the first East Asia Congress in Kuala Lumpur, was head of the Korean Development Institute, the most influential of all of them.

That tradition of researching and consulting with affected actors is also very much widespread in Japan and, increasingly, in China, the two key countries in the ASEAN+3 regional process, as I will now elaborate in more detail.

### **Japan's Renewed Vision of Regional Leadership**

The US defeated Japan in 1945 and stopped its military aggressions in the region rationalised in a vision of leading an East-Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere. Yet, the US actually has since then not minded Japan co-leading economically in Asia as the second best flying goose. Indeed, it was the occupation forces that led to Japan's quicker post-war recovery and reorganisation so as to provide support for the Korean war, participate in the international recognition of Taiwan, and heal wounds through the reconstruction of Southeast Asia that included the disbursement of reparations aid funds. Ever since, Japan has been gradually strengthening its regional foreign policy in favour of leading an ASEAN+3 grouping, but at the same time being careful not to antagonise the US or its allies in the region.<sup>28</sup> Japan began a period of rapid economic development from 1957 till 1973 characterised by exports to the region. Only the political and economic shocks of the 1970s started a debate about a foreign policy more independent from the US, which included being tentatively closer to the PRC as Mao's regime was internationally recognised soon after the US did so, coupled with the Fukuda doctrine to promote regional friendship with the incipient ASEAN process.

---

<sup>28</sup> For an overall overview until very recent times, see Stockwin, J. A. A. (2003) *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of Japan*. London and New York: Routledge Curzon. For an overview of one of the most senior Japanese intellectuals in the issue, see Inoguchi, Takashi, ed., (2002) *Japan's Asian Policy: Revival and Response*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. For a broader synthetic textbook, see Glenn Hook et al., (2001) *Japan's International Relations: Politics, Economics and security*. Sheffield Centre for Japanese Studies/ Routledge Series.

Japan also wanted to spread more broadly the costs of Southeast Asian development, and both Japan and Australia feared growing trade disadvantages from the developments of the European Community, so they were frantic to keep regional open links with their more important trading partners in the Pacific, including the US. In this context, “[a]ll the major initiatives for the institutionalization of Asia-Pacific cooperation from the mid-1960s onwards came mainly from Japanese academics, who acted in close association with the Japanese government, and in collaboration with counterparts in Australia”.<sup>29</sup> All that activity by EPAs greatly helped the creation of APEC in 1989, timely proposed by the Australian government with the thawing of the Cold War, and well received by developing Pacific Asia economies (mainly ASEAN) as it was not formally coming from either Japan nor the US. Although eventually institutionalised with working groups, regular high level meetings, and a secretariat in Singapore, APEC grew during the 1990s with the increasing but very constraint input from a growing number of EPAs led by business and trade facilitation ideas not widely shared among Asian members.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Japan argued in favour of an informal East Asia Economic Caucus within APEC, not outside it, as Malaysia had originally envisioned. Finally, Japan teamed with Singapore to explore a bilateral Economic Agreement for a New Age Partnership that helped pave

---

<sup>29</sup> Japanese economist Kiyoshi Kojima proposed in 1965 to create a Pacific [Advanced Countries] Free Trade Area (PAFTA), which proved unsuccessful but led to a long series - first meeting in 1968 - of Pacific Trade and Development (PAFTAD) conferences of self-selected economists from academia and government promoting economic liberalisation. Meanwhile, Japan proposed to enlarge the Australia-Japan Business Cooperation Conference, and hosted in 1967 the first conference of the Pacific Basin Economic Council ([www.PBEC.org](http://www.PBEC.org)), an association of prominent business representatives from the same five industrialised economies originally envisioned by Kojima, and serviced by a small secretariat in Honolulu. The lack of governmental interest in PAFTA led Kojima to reformulate the proposal into the more functional (less institutionalised) Organization for Pacific Trade and Development (OFTAD), aided by the writings of Peter Drysdale and John Crawford, two Australian students of Kojima. OPFTAD was also unsuccessful but it generated momentum to create in 1980 another Australian-Japanese initiative, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council ([www.PECC.net](http://www.PECC.net)), a still active tripartite gathering of prominent government representatives, academics and business people. Ravenhill, *ibid*, p. 50 and subsequent.

<sup>30</sup> The only important advisory group that went beyond narrow business admonitions for more business opportunities (there is also a smallish Pacific Business Forum meeting in parallel to APEC Ministerial Meetings) was the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). Under the leadership of Fred Bergsten from the Institute of International Economics in Washington DC, leaders from members' EPAs gathered to successfully propose trade liberalisation only from 1992 until 1994, when their mandate was stopped for being increasingly vocal and specific in their recommendations. Nevertheless, diehards of the EPG formed in 1995 an APEC Business Advisory Council ([www.ABACOnline.org](http://www.ABACOnline.org)) that brings three experts per country and uses a secretariat in Manila, but overall it cannot provide the leadership that the EPG tried to sustain. Meanwhile, APEC's own small secretariat only engages in very limited research, sometimes in cooperation with PECC, whose members are very close to governments and therefore restrained in providing path breaking ideas. Thus, APEC is undergoing a crucial period of self-reflection. For a recent general assessment of the status quo and ideas to invigorate it coming from scholars from APEC Study Centres, see Feinberg, Richard ed. (2003) *APEC as an Institution: Multilateral Governance in the Asia-Pacific*. Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies.

the way for Japan's first-ever bilateral free trade agreement (signed with ASEAN in November 2002) and is nowadays actively debating promoting an East Asia FTA.<sup>31</sup>

What is more, Japan always wanted to promote a regional security concept broader than trade. It was instrumental in formalising the proposal for an ARF that originally came from the ASEAN-ISIS and, as a test for putting ideas into practice, became engaged in the peaceful transition in Cambodia. After the 1997 financial crisis created economic and political havoc through the region, Japan proposed an Asian Monetary Fund outside the IMF. Although largely unsuccessful at the time, Japan pledged a large amount of financial aid to the more affected countries in the region and brokered a regional financial insurance scheme, the Chiang Mai Initiative, in principle with similar conditionality criteria to those of the IMF. More recent activity includes the promotion of an Asian bond market, which should facilitate international financial investment less risky than that based on equity and derivatives.

As in the case of the intellectual debates since the 1960s that eventually helped create APEC, much of the consensus towards a multi-level policy that accommodates a rising ASEAN+3 is first reached in the growing number of research centres and discussion committees of various kinds formed at all levels. Japan's ministerial bureaucracy had traditionally attempted to lead that process to facilitate their subsequent implementation,<sup>32</sup> although the basic reform of central government ministries and agencies that took off in 2001 slightly increased the power of the Prime Minister's Cabinet, whose research section has started to promote more efficient policy-oriented consultative research groups bringing officials and external experts in contact.<sup>33</sup> Jun'ichiro Koizumi's first Cabinet had Ms. Makiko Tanaka as foreign minister, who tried forceful manners to promote more dynamism, transparency and

---

<sup>31</sup> For an inside story of the beginnings in the transformation of Japan's position, aided by the intellectual contributions from non government officials, see Munakata, Naoko (2001) "Evolution of Japan's Policy Toward Economic Integration", Working paper of the Brookings Institution, December, [www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/2001\\_munakata.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/2001_munakata.htm).

<sup>32</sup> Tanaka, a member of the EAVG, describes the relevant actors in Japan that manage the alliance with the US (and, by extension, much of its foreign policy), their policy preferences and resources. The Prime Minister is chosen by the leaders of the dominant factions in the ruling LDP party who also oversee the creation of his Cabinet. The Prime Minister's Cabinet, collectively answerable to the Diet, signs what has been agreed by their vice ministers, who in turn sign what has already been worked out in the relevant ministries. See Tanaka, Akihiko (2000) "The Domestic Context of the Alliances: The Politics of Tokyo", Working Paper of the Asia/Pacific Research Center. Stanford University. January, <http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/11376/Tanaka.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Its best example so far has been "The task force for Japan's foreign policy", which was composed mainly of Japan, US and Asian experts and, more recently, some experts on Europe. This is a way for the Prime Minister's cabinet to try to decrease the great influence of the ad-hoc consultative committees through which government ministries create and implement policy.

accountability in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). The move backfired but Koizumi replaced her with a milder-mannered woman named Yoriko Kawaguchi, who survived a Cabinet reshuffle that took place in September 2002. Nevertheless, the bureaucracy's intellectual move towards gradual ASEAN+3 regionalisation is not only seen on its website<sup>34</sup>, but it is also reflected in the intellectual input of its EPAs. The Global Development Network Japan (GDN), recently created under the auspices of the World Bank's Global Development Network, composed of the 16 research centres close to the most relevant ministries, and keen to broadly promote ASEAN+3 within a multi-level context.<sup>35</sup> This cooperative exercise also has the practical purpose of rationalising the work of the many public research institutes that appeared in the 1970s and 1980s when Japan seemed to be floating on money.

Not only the government, but also many of Japan's private-led EPAs specialising in foreign policy are nowadays streamlining their work by promoting a vision of a stronger ASEAN+3 within a multi-level context. For instance the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), created in the 1960s to promote exchanges with the US, has grown to incorporate a variety of multi-level intellectual and civil society activities that increasingly focus on the Asian region. The JCIE knows all the main Asian EPAs very well as it has surveyed all major research institutes, NGOs, and foundations in the region.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the JCIE is also the secretariat for the Pacific group of the Trilateral Commission and for the Asian side of Council of Asia-Europe Cooperation (both discussed below). Meanwhile, the domestic oriented Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), created in 1987 by former diplomat Saburo Okita, is rather small but it has developed a unique elite-democratic system of producing policy recommendations (PRs) that require the approval

---

<sup>34</sup> The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website on its relations with Asia provides links to many regional initiatives: [www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/).

<sup>35</sup> The members are: Asian Development Bank Institute (its Dean, Masaru Yoshitomi, was a member of the EAVG); Development Bank of Japan; Economic and Social Research Institute, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan; Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development; Institute for Monetary and Economic Studies, Bank of Japan; Institute of Development Economics; Japan Bank for International Cooperation; Japan External Trade Organization; Japan Institute For Overseas Investment; Japan International Cooperation Agency; The Japan Society for International Development; (the earlier mentioned) National Institute for Research Advance (created by the Economic Planning Agency and the Ministry of Finance; see its future mission in [www.nira.go.jp/newse/panel/chairman.html](http://www.nira.go.jp/newse/panel/chairman.html)); Norinchukin Research Institute Co., Ltd; Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Finance; Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry; United Nations University (it helped create in 2002 a Comparative Regional Integration Studies programme in Bruges, Belgium). The network has integrated most of its members' publications databases so they can be searched with a common web engine. See [www.gdn-japan.jbic.go.jp/](http://www.gdn-japan.jbic.go.jp/).

<sup>36</sup> Yamamoto, Tadashi, ed. (1995) *Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community*. Singapore and Tokyo: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Japan Center for International Exchange. See also the online version at [www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/emerging.html](http://www.jcie.or.jp/civilnet/emerging.html).

by a majority of its currently 95 Policy Council members. Since the first PR in 1988 largely focused on Asia's newly industrialised countries, several others have increasingly focused on the promotion of regionalism: PR11 of 1994 titled "The Future of Regionalism and Japan; PR19 of May 2000 titled "Economic Globalization and Options for Asia"; PR 22 of December 2002 titled "Building a System of Security and Cooperation in East Asia" exhorted in 15 points to having Japan aiming to lead in the long-term an open regional core within a broader, multi-level environment, dealing with multiple issues (it was approved basically unanimously)<sup>37</sup>; PR 23 of May 2003 titled "Japan's Initiative for Economic Community in East Asia" went on to specify 15 recommendations that included the creation in the short-term of an economic community, in the medium-term a customs union and, in the longer term, a common currency (it was approved by 72 non-drafting member of the Council). Complementing the PRs are occasional project reports, being the last one titled "Japan in Asia: What Should We Do? – Asia as a Political System", and outreach activities like the Global Forum of Japan (GFJ), that since its start in 1996 has been shifting its focus from Quadrangular partners (Europe and North America), to neighbouring countries in Asia-Pacific, sometimes in collaboration with ASEAN ISIS.<sup>38</sup> Actually, Mr. Ito presented both PR 22 and PR 23 in the first East Asia Congress in Kuala Lumpur.

## **P.R. China's Regional Road to Modernisation**

Nowadays, the prospects of the ASEAN+3 process depend less on Japan's projection in the region, and ever more on China's ongoing domestic development and accommodation to the regional and global system. China's historical Sino-centric view of Asia and the world has been shattered during the past two centuries by the many and often dramatic domestic changes and the overall rise of industrial countries in the West and in Pacific Asia.

Nowadays, the long-term potential for a renewed global centrality of China lingers in the minds of many of its leaders, but in the shorter-term it is more important for them to more humbly work with their neighbours and the rest of the world to solve China's many and great development domestic problems. While the West has paid attention to China's global foreign economic policy leading to joining the WTO and public relations kudos by

---

<sup>37</sup> It was drafted by a group lead Akihiko Tanaka, a prominent international relations professor and member of the EAVG.

<sup>38</sup> In Japan there are many other small private-led EPAs paying increasing attention to the region. For instance, the Institute for International Policy Studies ([www.IIPS.org](http://www.IIPS.org)) founded in 1988 by former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, publishes the *Asia-Pacific Review* where prominent EPA leaders write usually in favour of Pacific approach to Asian regionalisation.

being selected to host the 2008 Summer Olympic games, China's overall foreign policy towards its neighbours has discreetly moved from an antagonistic handling of recurrent and dialectical low-intensity conflicts to an increasing accommodation and even collaboration with most of them.<sup>39</sup> China particularly engaged in the region through the 1990s after showing signs of repentance from the 1989 Tian'an'meng student crackdown. It began more regular and seemingly friendly bilateral high-level meetings with Japan, sanctioned by a first-ever visit by the emperor in 1992. Relations with South Korea also grew in intensity after the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations that same year. Meanwhile, China's broadening range of cooperation projects with Southeast Asian countries reflected its becoming a full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN in 1996, the joining of the ASEAN+3 summits that started in 1997 and, more recently, the signing of path-breaking economic and security declarations with ASEAN in November 2002.

Despite some recent changes, much formal power still resides in members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau (or the Politburo Standing Committee, PBSC) and a few other top-level managers of the Communist Party's institutions located in the *Zhongnanhai* compound just North-west of the Tian'an'men square. In November 2002 the 16<sup>th</sup> Communist Party Congress **Central Committee** approved the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of leaders focused on controlled development and openness<sup>40</sup>. The PBSC was enlarged from seven to nine members roughly divided into two factions, one led by the new Premier Hu Jintao, a diligent protégé of late Deng Xiaoping, and the other led by Zheng Qinghong, an energetic protégé of Jiang Zemin, the previous Premier and still a powerful figure in the background in command of the armed forces.

First signs in 2003 indicated that Zheng was behind a long-term project of political transformation with great international implications. Zheng is a

---

<sup>39</sup> For an overview of the dialectical transformations in China's aspirations for the region from Mao's time until soon after the Tian'an'men crisis, see Hinton, Harold (1994) "China as an Asian Power", in Thomas Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds. *Chinese Foreign Policy; Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Clarendon. Kim, Samuel (1998) *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millenium*. Westview Press. For more recent developments, Pollack, Jonathan and Richard Yang, eds., (2000) *In China's Shadow: Regional Perspectives on Chinese Foreign Policy and Military Development*. RAND. See also official websites that give basic information, including the news agency Xinhua, [www.xinhuanet.com/english](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english) and [www.xinhua.org](http://www.xinhua.org) in Chinese.

<sup>40</sup> For what is supposed to be the most reliable 'insider' description of the selection process and expected characters of the new generation of PBSC members and assistants, see Nathan, Andrew and Bruce Gilley, eds. (2003) *China's New Rulers; the secret files*. London: Granta. For overviews of the expected results, see Brodsgarrd, Kjeld Erik (2002) "The 16th Party Congress in China: A Note on Personnel Changes", *The Copenhagen Journal of Asians Studies*, Vol. 16: 138-149. Fewsmith, Joseph (2003) "The Sixteenth National Party Congress: The Succession that Didn't Happen", *The China Quarterly*, Vol. 173: pp. 1-16. For basic official information, see the website [www.16congress.org.cn](http://www.16congress.org.cn) of the China Internet Information Center.

former head of the party's organisation department that was known for taking responsibilities from the previous foreign minister, Tang Jiaxua, as well as for occasionally favouring intellectuals and dissidents and for having publicly argued for local-level democratic elections to elect party leaders. For instance, following Zheng's faction ideas, Shenzhen, the city next to Hong-Kong, famous for having been China's first special economic zone in the 1980s and for the first strain of SARS in 2003, was to soon become China's first special political zone to test the possibility of separating and checking powers, thus giving away from the almost absolute *de jure* monopoly of the Party.<sup>41</sup> Meanwhile, Hu Jintao also became active internationally. In its first overseas trip in June 2003 he took part in the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation regional summit in Russia, and, for the first time ever, in the G8 meeting in France on the theme of "North-South Dialogue?". After his return to China, the international press aired Party efforts to present large-scale constitutional reforms promoting intra-Party democracy to be approved in the next legislature's annual session of the Central Committee.<sup>42</sup>

Given the large amount of issues at stake in China, PBSC members must necessarily rely on advisors for most complex decisions. Much intellectual capability was obliterated during the Cultural Revolution but since the late 1970s party leaders have been nurturing EPAs. In the newest, post-Tian'an'meng generation of research sections and affiliated institutes of Party organs analysing international issues the influence of the Central Committee's China Institute of Contemporary International Relations is decreasing relative to the Foreign Ministry's China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), where ambassador Shi Chunlai has been acting as senior advisor since 1999, soon before he became one of the two Chinese members of the EAVG. Meanwhile, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) is the main semi-independent establishment specialised in longer-term views for the Party.<sup>43</sup> CASS has been particularly influential in promoting the enthusiastic participation of China into the ASEAN+3 process, and the director of the CASS' Institute for Asia-Pacific Studies, Zhang Yunling, has been particularly

---

<sup>41</sup> Financial Times, 13 January 2003.

<sup>42</sup> Financial Times, 12 June 2003. Wall Street Journal, 13-15 June 2003.

<sup>43</sup> For a general description of the research centres feeding policy analysis to the party elite, see the first five articles of the September 2002 issue of *The China Quarterly* devoted to "think tanks" in the public security, international relations, civilian foreign power, military, and economic spheres. Murray Scot Tanner, "Changing Windows on a Changing China: The Evolving "Think Tank" System and the Case of the Public Security Sector". David Shambaugh, "China's International Relations Think Tanks: Evolving Structure and Process". Bonnie S. Glaser and Phillip C. Saunders, "Chinese Civilian Foreign Policy Research Institutes: Evolving Roles and Increasing Influence". Bates Gill and James Mulvenon, "Chinese Military-Related Think Tanks and Research Institutions". Barry Naughton, "China's Economic Think Tanks: Their Changing Role in the 1990s".



active as he was the other country representative to the EAVG, and is actively engaged in many conferences in the region on the subject. In addition, CASS has recently established a Center for Regional Security Research<sup>44</sup>. Given so much intellectual backing for his policies, there is no wonder that the Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, was eager to promote closer ASEAN+3 relations and “implement without delay the Final Report of East Asia Study Group adopted at last year’s 10+3 summit”.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, following the recommendations of the EASG, a network of East Asian think-tanks is about to take shape centred in China and in September 2003 the CIIS is hosting its first coordination meeting.

It is expected that China will gradually continue to open up intellectually and politically, creating its own competitive model but that partially draws from its regional neighbours. Indeed, a rapid blossoming of intellectuals with international ramifications was encouraged towards the end of Jiang Zemin’s mandate.<sup>46</sup> During that time, Zheng was creating a complex intellectual doctrine to broaden the Party’s policy process to the “Three Represents”, that is business people and bankers (both globally-minded), as well as large owners, often party members at the regional level, which is nowadays the intellectual base of his faction’s modernisation policies.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Beijing Xinhua in English, 18 October 2002.

<sup>45</sup> “Foreign Minister Says China Attaches Great Importance to East Asian Stability”, Xinhua in English, 17 June 2003.

<sup>46</sup> PBSC member Li Tieying addressed a high-level international symposium on the social sciences that included the heads of the *Union Académique Internationale*, the International Social Science Council, the European Association of National Academies of Sciences and Humanities, and the Social Science Research Council of the US; see Xinhua in English, 2 November 2000. CASS reinforced the international academic exchanges in 2001 expecting to upgrade its research level and international reputation; Xinhua in English 14 January 2002. China decided to promote the main social science academic authorities in the 2001-2005 five-year plan; Beijing Xinhua in English, 17 January 2001. Li Tieying admonished in CASS to implement Jiang Zemin’s instructions regarding the need to promote the social sciences; Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service in Chinese, 10 August 2002. CASS established a theoretical and strategic Center to Study Modernization; Beijing Zhongguo Xinwen She in Chinese, 20 August 2002. Jiang Zemin further admonished for the social sciences to develop; Xinhua in English, 16 October 2002.

<sup>47</sup> “The Central Propaganda Department, the Central Organization Department, the Central Policy Research Center, the Central Party School, the Central Party Literature Research Center, the Ministry of Education, the State Press and Publications Administration, and the Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) called a forum in Beijing on 10 June to discuss the publication of the “Outline for Studying the Important Thinking of the ‘Three Represents.’””, in “Central Party Organs Meet To Discuss Publication of Study Outline”, Beijing Xinhua Domestic Service in Chinese, 10 June 2003. To better promote his ideas Zheng also backed the creation of a think-tank on political reform at the Central Party School in Beijing (he was appointed its dean in December 2002); Financial Times, 13 January 2003.

This should mean the gradual enhancement of the National People’s Congress, which has always been the rubberstamper of decisions taken by the Standing Committee, and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, [www.cppcc.gov.cn](http://www.cppcc.gov.cn), a lukewarm effort to consult more broadly within respected members of academia, business, and the professions that are not necessarily Party members.

## The US' Ambivalent Prospects in Pacific Asia

Ever since a unique US-led alliance stopped the Japanese imperial ambitions in Asia and the Pacific the regionalisation of a Pacific Asia has been very dependent on the US's projection in the region and the world. After the US-led allied occupation of Japan finished in 1952, the US decided to maintain a large military presence in many countries in Asia and the Pacific, which was instrumental in creating and upholding variable bilateral alliances largely to contain the advance of Soviet and Chinese-backed communism, first in Korea, and later in Indochina and neighbouring countries. The US global set of multi-level hub-and-spoke geopolitical policies was somewhat relaxed during the early post Cold-War years to focus relatively more on geoeconomics.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the Clinton administration joined the security discussions in the ARF, and became more engaged in the APEC process from 1993 as a particularly interesting venue to actively promote the idea of open economic regionalism that would lead to greater market access in difficult Asian markets and, possibly, to an earlier conclusion of the GATT's Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. The WTO eventually got going, but APEC never got as far as the US wanted. Most Asians, primarily ASEAN countries backed by Japan, succeeded in keeping APEC as an incremental process led by discussion and cooperation, so it did not become very institutionalised or legalized while seeking concrete results as the US was pressing for sometimes backed by Singapore and Hong-Kong. Thus, the late Clinton administration downplayed APEC and focused more in helping bilaterally finalise China's accession to the WTO. More recently, the current Bush administration dealing with foreign policy started to point the finger at China and North Korea, but since September 2001 it became more engaged in Central Asia and the broader Middle East. That may change again when the Bush and future administrations pay more attention to the regional developments in ASEAN+3.<sup>49</sup>

### Policy ideas after the Cold War

It is not easy to influence US administrations when regarding foreign policy as there are many policy ideas trying to reach the permanent and ad-hoc advisory

---

<sup>48</sup> Ikenberry, G. John (2002) "America's Liberal Grand Strategy in the Asia-Pacific", in Inoguchi, Takashi, ed., *Japan's Asian Policy: Revival and Response*. New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>49</sup> For some prospective realist scenarios of rather difficult comprehensive regional cooperation, not because of particular US designs, but because the factors shaping the geopolitical evolution of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are still largely present, see Buckley, Roger (2002) *The United States in the Asia-Pacific since 1945*. Cambridge University Press.

councils of the executive White House and legislative Congress, which naturally pay particular attention to the behaviour of potential voters. Thus, when wanting to consult more broadly, the administration has traditionally relied on the expertise of prominent research centres in elite universities around the country, or in think-tanks usually based in Washington.<sup>50</sup> Many of the newer ones are ideological platforms, but the Council of Foreign Relations ([www.CFR.org](http://www.CFR.org)) has a long history of successful intermediation in sustaining debate between a broader world of policy ideas and the federal government, thus serving as a useful indicator of the rationalisation of the cacophony of policy proposals trying to influence the government. The CFR is an elite membership organisation that still tends to synthesise much of the available mainstream bipartisan intellectual ideas to convert them to clearer policy proposals. Although the CFR's beginnings, dating from the inter-war period, were very much in favour of international institutions, after WW.II it began leaning towards a realist perspective to forge shifting alliances that help contain Communism at the expense of longer-term, multilateral commitments through international agreements and organisations. Actually, the US' global mission after WW.II was intellectually based on the general principle of containment of Soviet-backed communism, which was first aired in 1947 in an article titled "[t]he Sources of Soviet Conduct" written anonymously by George Kennan, a US diplomat stationed in Moscow, for the journal [www.ForeignAffairs.org](http://www.ForeignAffairs.org), the flagship publication of the CFR.

Moving forward to the last decade, there have been contrasting debates at the CFR and *Foreign Affairs* about crafting coherent policies towards Asia and about the prospects regionalisation in Asia, but they seemed secondary to the geoeconomic strategy for a post Cold War evolving order that the Clinton administration promoted with the creation of the National Economic Council (NEC)<sup>51</sup> to complement the National Security Council (NSC) created in the 1950s during the height of the Cold War. In this context, security strategies for the Pacific in the 1990s were sustained by some EPAs like the Pacific Forum of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies ([www.csis.org/pacfor](http://www.csis.org/pacfor)), Rand Corporation ([www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)), or the [www.EastWestCentre.org](http://www.EastWestCentre.org). Meanwhile, US' market opening interests in APEC relied in the input of many business associations, while broader

---

<sup>50</sup> For a history of think-tanks in the US, see Abelson, Donald (1998) "Think tanks in the United States", in Stone, Diane et al., eds. *Think Tanks across Nations*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

<sup>51</sup> Chaired by Prof. Tyson, known for strategic trade policy ideas: Tyson, Laura D'Andrea (1992) *Who's Bashing Whom? Trade Conflict in High-Technology Industries*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for International Economics.

attempts to create US policy towards Asia never made it to the headlines.<sup>52</sup> Only when relations with Japan were loosening in the early 1990s, Joseph Nye, prominent Harvard academic and former democrat Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, teamed with republican Richard Armitage to produce a bipartisan “Armitage-Nye Report” to reaffirm the bilateral security alliance<sup>53</sup>.

The above climate of policy debates was largely reflected in the transformation of academic research. Overall, geoeconomics put pressure against Asian and related area studies. These maintained limited funding, usually coming from intelligence organisations living on geopolitics, while other, greater sources of funding exerted special pressure on area studies to cross-fertilise with other academic disciplines in a more global, thus less geographically defined, context.<sup>54</sup> Hall argues that, given the above context, a more nationalistic Japan has easily been able to delude the US policy intellectuals of its intentions to lead Asia, first economically, which is happening in a de-facto fashion and, later, more broadly.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, one could argue that within the foreign policy elite some had long been preparing the intellectual basis for longer-term, multiple geostrategic containment. Indeed, the CFR published in 1993 with much fanfare the Clash of Civilisations thesis by Samuel Huntington<sup>56</sup>, which in essence argues a very creative interpretation of the recent evolution of world politics in which the Transatlantic (mainly) Christian West *is* (many critics read he meant *should be*) united and to face potential conflicts with other world civilizations based on religion, thus conceptually separating Shinto Japan, Confucian China, Korea and Vietnam, Buddhist Southeast Asia, Tibet and Mongolia, the Islamic group from West Africa to Indonesia, the Hindu subcontinent, Catholic Latin America, Orthodox Eastern Europe and Russia,

---

<sup>52</sup> A bipartisan group of leading US scholars specialised in Asia and Pacific issues proposed in 1996 to give the US a coherent strategy and a clear-cut set of policy priorities that would reverse the erosion in power and prestige of the US in East Asia. They argued for striving towards a peaceful, open and prosperous East Asia, engaging China, and adjusting security treaties with Japan and Korea. See “A United States Policy for the Changing Realities of East Asia; towards a new consensus”, Asia/Pacific Research Center, Stanford University, [www.ciaonet.org/wps/okd01/](http://www.ciaonet.org/wps/okd01/).

<sup>53</sup> The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership, INSS Special Report, [the Nye-Armitage Report] (Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, October 11, 2000), pp. 1-12. {[www.jiaonline.org/specialreports/](http://www.jiaonline.org/specialreports/)}. For some of the information regarding the process of designing the report I have to thank Ellis Krauss, University of California, San Diego, and Richard Samuels, MIT.

<sup>54</sup> Cummins, Bruce (1999) *Parallax Visions: Making Sense of American-East Asian Relations at the End of the Century*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Chapter 7 “Boundary Displacement: The State, the Foundations, and International and Area Studies during and after the Cold War”, pp. 173-204.

<sup>55</sup> Hall, Ivan (2002) *Bamboozled! How America Loses the Intellectual Game with Japan and Its Implications for Our Future in Asia*. Armonk, New York and London: M. E. Sharpe.

<sup>56</sup> Online visitors are constantly reminded that new online subscribers get for free this “prescient essay”, “the X article of the post-Cold War World”, when subscribing online.

and Sub-Saharan African based on mixed animism.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile, Brzezinski, former National Security Advisor, seemed to build on Huntington's extreme cultural ideas, and proposed a global strategy for the US to maintain its dominant security position over a Eurasia chessboard of cultural regions<sup>58</sup>. He argued in favour of the US to manage the (mainly ethnic) conflicts and relationships in Europe, Asia (where the rise of China is just a potential regional issue) and the Middle East so that no rival superpower could arise to threaten the US' interests and well-being. Despite this ominous argument, he also claimed that the US is the first and last comprehensive superpower of the world system, and hoped that eventually other parts of the world would be brought in line with the US system to help achieve global governance.

### **The Bush administration's actions and legacy**

Nowadays, under the current Bush administration, there are strong intellectual pressures to consolidate a new type of unilateral global foreign policy in favour of intervention and pre-emptive military attacks against selected states (first seen in Afghanistan and Iraq, but the pressure is mounting in the region), and general containment of any possible alliance of external and internal factors that may be evilly working against the US' self-declared benevolent designs. Thus, the NSC has recently been reinvigorated and complemented by a Homeland Security Council<sup>59</sup> while the NEC has fallen into disarray as its prominent economists resigned in protest against Bush's ways of handling the country's mounting economic problems. Much of that recent unilateral pre-emptive geopolitical doctrine is credited to a few 'neo-conservative' officials and advisors allying with nationalists in the Department of Defence (DOD)<sup>60</sup>. Those ideas were forged in previous republican administrations and in new ideological platforms like the [www.NewAmericanCentury.org](http://www.NewAmericanCentury.org), and sometimes wrote their ideas in the CFR, but as an internal back-up platform they created the DOD's Defence Policy Board of highly respected former government officials, retired military

---

<sup>57</sup> See Huntington, Samuel (1993) "The Clash of Civilisations?", *Foreign Affairs*, Summer. Huntington later published a book upgrading the thesis, and in some articles he moved to acknowledge a long-term trend towards multipolarity: Huntington, Samuel (1999) "The Lonely Superpower", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April.

<sup>58</sup> Brzezinski, Zbigniew (1997) "A Geostrategy for Eurasia", *Foreign Affairs*, September/October.

<sup>59</sup> See Newmann, William (2002) "Reorganizing for National Security and Homeland Security", *Public Administration Review*. September. Vol. 62, special issue. And the National Security Project of the Brookings Institution, [www.brookings.edu/fp/research/projects/nsc/nsc.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/fp/research/projects/nsc/nsc.htm).

<sup>60</sup> See *The Economist*, 14-21 February 2003, and 26 April 2003, pp. 37-39. Financial Times 6 March 2003, "America's democratic imperialists: how the neo-conservatives rose from humility to empire in two years", p11.

officers, and academics expanded its original strategic defence scope to influence shorter-term overall US policy.<sup>61</sup>

Evidence on the overall geopolitical result of the unilateral policies of the Bush administration is still inconclusive. After its take-over of Iraq, the US and its vocal allies have lost much trust around the world, and have further disrupted the transatlantic partnership to an almost breaking point<sup>62</sup>. Although it has stepped up its presence in Southeast Asia to deal with groups labelled as evil or terrorists, the US is now taking a different attitude of engaging big powers to be able to create new alliances to better intervene in and around that complex part of the world.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, it has decided to rely on diplomacy to confront the nuclear menace coming from North Korea while not putting too much pressure towards China regarding democracy, human rights or the defence of Taiwan, and has stopped openly criticising Japan's economic situation.<sup>64</sup> Regarding ASEAN+3, it is taking a back-seat wait-and-see approach, a situation that the CFR wants to raise to a more public debate with two recent articles regarding the political and trade dimensions of such an approach, which may require adaptation.<sup>65</sup>

These actions in Asia show that the Bush administration is perhaps paying greater attention to alternative ideas like those coming from Profs. Nye and Kupchan, academics with close relation to government and a record of influential writing in *Foreign Affairs*.<sup>66</sup> Nye argues that the US should continue promoting a more encompassing (with multilateral institutions),

---

<sup>61</sup> Membership available in an independent and critical website:

[www.cooperativeresearch.org/organization/profiles/defensepolicyboard.html](http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/organization/profiles/defensepolicyboard.html).

<sup>62</sup> Kagan contrasts the militarist US (so powerful that should be less arrogant and pay more attention to the concerns of the rest of the world) and idealist European (possible thanks to the US) world views. Kagan, Robert (2003) *Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*. London: Atlantic Books. "Power and Weakness", *Policy Review*, June/July 2002, Stanford: Hoover Institution, [www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html](http://www.policyreview.org/JUN02/kagan.html). Meanwhile, Martin Wolf, columnist at the Financial Times, left the 2003 Bilderberg (Transatlantic) elite meeting in Versailles thinking that a divorce between the US and Europe "could easily become unstoppable". Financial Times, 21 May 2003. P.15. "A partnership heading for a destructive separation". Nevertheless, the US may be now trying harder to create a suitable world of poles following values of freedom. See, Remarks by Condoleezza Rice at the IISS, London, 26 June 2003, The White House's Office of the Press Secretary.

<sup>63</sup> The National Bureau of Asian Research ([www.nbr.org](http://www.nbr.org)) provides yearly reports sponsored by the DOD. And the [www.EastWestCenter.org](http://www.EastWestCenter.org), in conjunction with ASEAN ISIS and EPAs in Northeast Asia provide yearly Asia-Pacific Security Outlooks.

<sup>64</sup> A CFR task force on the Chinese Military released a report in May 2003 highlighting the relative weakness of China during the next two decades so as to counter alarmist ideas in the Bush administration. Another task force argued in favour of committing to negotiations with North Korea, including multilateral engagement.

<sup>65</sup> The first paints a picture of a diminishing role of the US in a rising Asia led by China, although a war in Korea could change it all: Abramowitz, Morton and Stephen Bosworth (2003) "Adjusting to the New Asia", *Foreign Affairs*. July/August. The second is more critical to current US policy that allows world trade regionalisation at the expense of the WTO: Gordon, Bernard (2003) "A High-Risk Trade Policy", *Foreign Affairs*. July/August.

<sup>66</sup> Nye, Joseph (2002) *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone*. Oxford University Press. Kupchan, Charles (2002) *The End of the American Era: US Foreign Policy and the Geopolitics of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Knopf (especially pp. 274-282).

peaceful and prosperous world system without unilaterally abusing on the military front, as in the current global information age the US is the only superpower in military terms, but in economic terms faces strong competition from Europe and Asia, and in other issues faces many threats from a number of transnational sources. Meanwhile, Kupchan argues for the need of the US to start constructing without arrogance a prosperous multi-polar world bound by open institutions and norms now it can do it relatively easily, in a way it may like, otherwise it may eventually become harder and prone to clashes. Regarding China, he argued that it may require some constraining, “[b]ut to assume that China is already an adversary requiring rigid containment would be equally unfounded – and likely would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.” It is too early to tell, and the US can afford to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Moreover, Washington should welcome regional integration that promotes reconciliation and rapprochement, as the region will ultimately need a self-sustaining order.

## **ASEAN+3’ Balancing Inter-regional Processes**

Inter-regionalism has recently become another prominent geopolitical feature in the construction of the ASEAN+3 process. Its identity was first outlined in its relations with the EU, but it has later been enhanced with additional dialogue and cooperation processes with Latin America and other parts of Asia.

### **ASEM and Asia-Europe rapprochement**

A peaceful Europe led by the European Union (EU) has grown since the 1950s mainly on economic and trade bases, so the external projection of its economic and trade policies is much more homogeneous and influential than in other areas.<sup>67</sup> EU foreign policy in security and defence (as well as in social and cultural issues) remains a rather fragmented intergovernmental process, although the member states are now strongly debating ways towards quicker, stronger harmonisation.<sup>68</sup> It all still relies on a cumbersome set of checks and

---

<sup>67</sup> Actually, ASEAN+3 is not that unique in being an elite-driven regionalisation process. The early history of European cooperation was also much driven by a small elite of bureaucrats, politicians, and intellectuals from various backgrounds often meeting in committees, hoping to advance long-term broad federalist visions. See Pascaline, Winand (2001) “Le Comité d’Action pour les Etats-Unis d’Europe de Jean Monnet”, in *Vingt ans d’action du Comité Jean Monnet 1955-1975*, preface de Jacques Delors, Notre Europe, Problematique europeenne, No. 8, May.

<sup>68</sup> The megaportal of the EU is <http://europa.eu.int>. Following on the request of the Council of the European Union meeting in December 2000 in Nice to broaden the debate of the European construction to the average citizen, a European Convention on the Future of Europe (<http://european-convention.eu.int>) was set up to work from 2002 to draft a Constitutional Treaty to transform the

balances led by the European Council's intergovernmental mechanisms, only partly rationalised with the creation in 1999 of the Higher Representative, and counting on the support of the European Commission's six Directorate-Generals involved in external relations, divided according to geographical and functional objectives. Meanwhile, the European Parliament and other supranational foreign policy actors are still very secondary in the whole process. Nevertheless, the EU's intergovernmental foreign policy does have some influence in distant parts of the world, as the case ASEAN+3 shows.

Soon after the US started to actively engage itself in Asia through APEC, the EU and Asia started fostering mutually closer bilateral and inter-regional relations in a broader range of issues.<sup>69</sup> The tune was already set by improving EU-Japan relations, which led in 1991 to *Den Hague* Declaration full of good intentions in many fields, some of which became substantiated during the 1990s in bilateral and multilateral venues.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, EU-China relations entered into a temporary decline in 1989, and EU-ASEAN relations concentrated in minor economic cooperation and development issues. Yet, the European Commission pushed for a broad-based process of increasing dialogue and cooperation towards Asia with the "New Asia Strategy" of 1994.<sup>71</sup> The goal was to accord a higher priority to relations in economic, political and social terms as a key to its perceived world economic role and to complement and enhance the existing variety of Europe-Asia relations.

An economic rationale for the Strategy was the fact that the EU was not allowed to participate even as an observer in the APEC process, more relevant

---

Union's institutions and enhance their prerogatives to accommodate the largest intake of new members. It was presented to the Council meeting of Thessaloniki in June 2003, which agreed to have it as a base for further intergovernmental work, to start in October, possibly leading within a few months to a final European Constitution that may enter into force towards the end of the decade. The expected enhanced external dimension of the Union is reflected in the European Convention's drafting of a common foreign and security policy (Article I-15) whose execution would be led by a Foreign Minister in collaboration with the president of the Commission (Article I-27), but overall following the principle of unanimity and not prejudicing NATO obligations of some states (Article I-40). Nevertheless, the draft Constitutional Treaty allows for enhanced cooperation of a group of EU member states (Article I-43). This has tentatively started to happen in some security aspects in the spring of 2003. On the wake of the UK support for the US-led change in Iraq, five EU members, Benelux, France and Germany decided in late April to create a military command that could eventually rival Nato. But on May 3<sup>rd</sup> an informal summit of foreign ministers from the EU plus accession countries agreed to get a common doctrine to tackle Security and Defence and requested the higher representative to present a document in the June 2003 Summit that would include recommendations for joint efforts to combat terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons, development policies, aid to third countries, and reestablishment of democratic regimes. More information is available in the newly created European Foreign Policy Research Network ([www.fornet.info](http://www.fornet.info)).

<sup>69</sup> For the only comprehensive overview until the mid 1990s, see Maull, Hanns et al., eds., (1998) *Europe and the Asia Pacific*. London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>70</sup> See Gilson, Julie (2000) *Japan and the European Union; a Partnership for the Twenty-First Century?* MacMillan Press.

<sup>71</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council COM(94)314 final "Towards a New Asia Strategy", Brussels, 13.07.1994.



once it became clear in 1993 that the US was going to be more active in it to accelerate the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations, partially stalled by the French-led EU's position not to liberalise the agricultural sector. Yet, the whole process paved the way in the EU for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), a unique inter-regional dialogue and co-operation process first formally proposed in 1995 by the Singaporean Premier Goh Choh Tong during his visit to France, where he found warm support for the idea. As much of the foreign policy of the EU is still intergovernmental, and so will be much of that of the ASEAN+3 countries for the foreseeable future, ASEM was designed as an intergovernmental, flexible dialogue and action on broad political, economic and social issues involving the 15 member states of the EU (co-ordinated by the European Commission) on one side, and ten Asian countries (co-ordinated by two, rotating countries, one from Southeast Asia, the other from Northeast Asia). Heads of state meet biennially since its first summit (ASEM-1) in Bangkok in March 1996, and an increasing number of ministers and senior officials meet in between, usually more regularly, to substantiate the broad range of economic, political and cultural proposals agreed in the summits, and to elaborate new ideas to be presented for future gatherings. ASEM-2 in London, on the wake of the 1997 financial crises, concentrated on addressing economic and financial problems. ASEM-3 in Seoul was again broad-based, and even started to pay attention to security issues, especially in the Korean peninsula. And, on the wake of the US's reaction to September 11, the ASEM-4 in Copenhagen enhanced leaders' attention to a broader range of security issues.

As the ASEM process is not near becoming a counterbalancing force to the global military policies of the US, but it rather focuses on the promotion of otherwise fuller Asia-Europe relations at the Community and member state levels, the US policy intellectuals are actually not much concerned with the details of the whole process<sup>72</sup>. Yet, ASEM seems to be relentlessly promoting both bilateral and bi-regional cooperation, epitomised by the high-level interaction. The EU-Japan bilateral relationship was further enhanced in 2001 with a Joint Action Plan for the next ten years, and the earlier Asia Strategy was updated with a new Communication expecting to strengthen the EU's presence in Asia by focusing on six dimensions: political and security; trade and investment; poverty reduction; promotion of democracy, good governance and the rule of law; building partnerships and alliances on global

---

<sup>72</sup> Personal discussions with US academics in the past few years confirm my perception. Moreover, the only academic piece on ASEM coming focusing on the US gives additional weight: see, Bobrow, Davis (1999) "The US and ASEM: Why the Hegemon Didn't Bark", *Pacific Review*, Vol 12, No. 1.

issues; and promotion of mutual awareness and knowledge.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, upgraded EU-China relations have led to regular and increasingly substantial summits since the first one in 1998 on the margins of ASEM-2, and low key EU-ASEAN relations have begun to improve in the 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting in January 2003; moreover, in July the EC was proposing a Trans-Regional EU-ASEAN Trade Initiative, as well to deepen cooperation in non economic issues. Furthermore, many ASEM members have started to reorient their foreign policy to pay somewhat increasing attention to their other region, sometimes even enacting comprehensive foreign policy strategies.<sup>74</sup>

But what is of particular interest to us now is that the ASEM process has been very instrumental in the creation of an ASEAN+3 identity. Simply, the ASEAN+3 is basically the Asian side of the ASEM process.<sup>75</sup> And it has been in the many ASEM preparatory meetings that key ASEAN+3 government representatives got used to multi-level meetings on their own.<sup>76</sup> There are meetings at the levels of country, sub-regions (Southeast and Northeast Asia), and region (Southeast and Northeast Asia) before meeting with European counterparts. The multi-level dynamics are clearer in the following table prepared by the European Commission. In addition, one may easily notice that the seven original members of ASEAN, plus Northeast Asia form the core of an increasing number of regional and inter-regional processes.

---

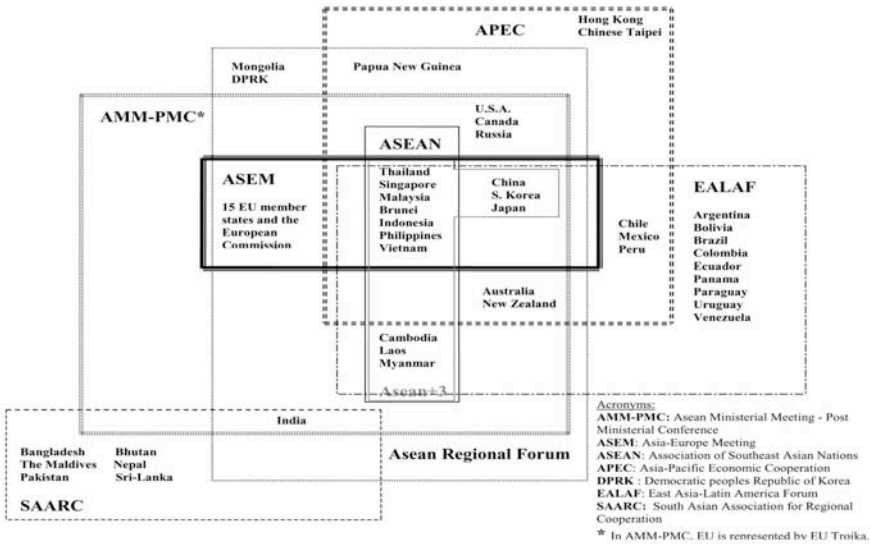
<sup>73</sup> See COM(01)469 final "Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships", Brussels, 4.9.2001. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/w36/3.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/w36/3.htm).

<sup>74</sup> A personal perusal of the foreign ministry's public information websites shows that most European ASEM countries have become much more engaged in the region, and some have even created, or largely updated, broad-based strategies towards Asia (Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Sweden). Similarly, Asian ASEM partners have shown increasing attention towards Europe. Details were posted in March 2003 in the ASEM Research Platform, [www.ias.nl/asem](http://www.ias.nl/asem).

<sup>75</sup> The seven members of ASEAN at the time, plus China, Korea and Japan; or basically, ASEAN+3 minus Burma/Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia, the least relevant (or most problematic) countries (as in the case of Burma/Myanmar is, which its human rights record has for long precluded the EU to agree on holding meetings with a full ASEAN at the highest possible level). ASEM-5 in October 2005 in Hanoi will address the issue of enlargement. The EU accession countries from Central and Eastern Europe would most likely be allowed to join ASEM. Similarly, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma/Myanmar (if the domestic situation improves), would also join.

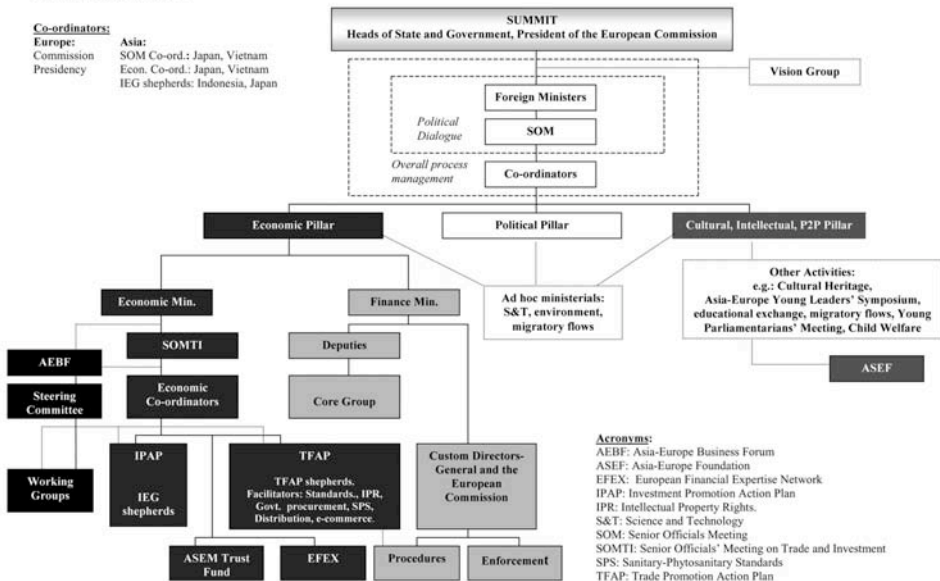
<sup>76</sup> There is no bibliography describing these intra-Asian dynamics yet, although the point is reiterated in the writings of the Commission's official in charge of following the ASEM process during the past few years: see Reiterer, Michael (2002) *Asia-Europe; Do They Meet?; Reflections on the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)*. Singapore: Asia-Europe Foundation.

### ASEM in the regional context



A clear indication that ASEM and, therefore, an ASEAN+3 with inter-regional projection, is here to stay in some form or another is the growing number of EPAs that have risen in and around it advancing policy ideas to keep the whole process going forward, as the following table (also widely disseminated by the Commission) of ASEM's three pillars structures shows:

### The ASEM Structure



On top of it all was the ASEM Vision Group, proposed by the South Korean government in ASEM-1, which from February 1998 till March 1999 gathered personalities that had moved between academia, business, government and civil society to produce a comprehensive report with twenty-nine recommendations to generally improve cooperation in political, economic, and social fields.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, somewhat outside the margins of ASEM, the leaders of about a dozen think tanks in Europe, Asia (all described above already), and even Australia strengthened their informal links to form the Council for Asia-Europe Cooperation ([www.CAEC-asiaeurope.org](http://www.CAEC-asiaeurope.org)) to provide additional, but more independent and constant input to the ASEM process.<sup>78</sup> CAEC's task forces produced a variety of non-controversial reports for each ASEM summit that include issues like finance, population and earth resources. It was particularly active until ASEM-3, but it still produced reports on social policies, migration, and peace creation to feed into the ASEM-4 summit. Moreover, two of the European members are now part of the steering committee of the Waldbroed Group on the European (and Euro-Atlantic) Coordination of Security Policies vis-à-vis the Asia-Pacific convened by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs ([www.swp-berlin.org](http://www.swp-berlin.org)); it was created in 1998 as an alternative and open dialogue process, but it was renamed in 2001 with the incorporation of the US into the process (meanwhile, its online information has become restricted).

The second pillar, focusing on economic and financial matters, has been progressing with the help of EPAs. As ASEM is largely intergovernmental, business actors are much less active than in APEC. Yet, the Singaporean government also keeps trying to promote them through an Asia-Europe Business Forum that has agreed on a low-key ASEM Connect initiative ([www.asemconnect.com.sg](http://www.asemconnect.com.sg)), and the convincing of INSEAD, Europe's most global and reputed business school, to set up in 2000 a regional Asia campus in Singapore.<sup>79</sup> Rather than from business groups, the evolution of ASEM's second pillar has received the input of a "Task Force for a Closer Economic

---

<sup>77</sup> Kim and Chang, Korea's largest law firm, was the secretariat for the ASEM Vision Group. See [www.mofat.go.kr/aevg.htm](http://www.mofat.go.kr/aevg.htm).

<sup>78</sup> CAEC is partially an outgrowth of a CSCAP Europe that convened a large conference in 1995 at the European University Institute in Florence; and while its European secretariat has been moving from London to Paris, the Asian secretariat has always remained at the Japan Center for International Exchange.

<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile, the government of Malaysia unsuccessfully tried to convince the Lausanne-based Institute of Management Development, another globally reputed school, to set a regional campus in Kuala Lumpur. Personal communication from Prof. Jean-Pierre Lehman, November 1998. Nevertheless, the IMD first hosted the Swiss-Asia Foundation, and later the [www.EvianGroup.org](http://www.EvianGroup.org) that bring various thinkers to deal with economic governance.

Partnership”, first meeting in May 2003 in the [www.RealInstitutoElcano.org](http://www.RealInstitutoElcano.org), a new bipartisan Spanish EPA, which serves as the task force secretariat while it delivers its report to economic ministers.

More importantly, under ASEM’s third, cultural/intellectual, pillar is the intergovernmental Asia-Europe Foundation ([www.ASEF.org](http://www.ASEF.org)). It was proposed by the government of Singapore in ASEM-1 and first directed from 1997 to 2001 by Singaporean Ambassador Tommy Koh, who largely designed the broad ‘track 1.5’ platform that by mid-2003 has brought over 7000 intellectuals, students, media experts, culture-related and other opinion-makers to discuss and cooperate in a regional and inter-regional fashion.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, the number of intellectual initiatives is expected to noticeably grow as the leaders attending the ASEM-3 summit agreed to establish and expand information and research networks, a task partially entrusted to ASEF. Meanwhile, the Malaysian government proposed in ASEM-2 the creation of an Asia-Europe University, that by now has only grown into an Asia-Europe Institute at the University of Malaya.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the ASEM process has also enticed a reorientation and increasing cooperation between academic and policy research centres in Europe. For instance, the [www.Asia-Alliance.org](http://www.Asia-Alliance.org) was formed in 1997, and nowadays includes academic research centres in Leiden, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Paris and Madrid (others may soon join) as well as a policy one, the European Institute for Asian Studies (the EIAS), largely financed by the European Commission in Brussels.

Furthermore, the EIAS and the German Foundation Friedrich-Ebert, with funding from the European Commission, co-organised a consultative forum on ASEM IV in Brussels in May 2002 to see the possibilities of creating an ASEM social forum. This type of activities could mean a rapprochement with the Asia-Europe People’s Forum, which is since 1996 a growing network of international civil society organisations with contact points in Amsterdam-based Transnational Institute and Bangkok-based Focus on the Global South both much connected to the so-called anti-globalisation movements. In the occasion of ASEM summits they have prepared various alternative gatherings attracting hundreds of people to discuss various issues in parallel conferences, being the last one the [www.asem4people.org](http://www.asem4people.org), with access to many critical reports.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Hwee, Yeo Lay, and Asad Latif, ed. (2000) *Asia and Europe; Essays and Speeches by Tommy Koh*. Singapore: ASEF.

<sup>81</sup> In Asia, European Union studies are picking up with the creation of several EU study centres. And an ASEAN University network is being created in 2003 ([www.aun.chula.ac.th](http://www.aun.chula.ac.th)); based in Bangkok may grow into an ASEAN+3 project if it follows the recommendations of the EAVG.

<sup>82</sup> Additional intellectual input to promote social and political issues comes from some the foundations sponsored by the German political parties. For instance, the Asia-Europe Dialogue

Overall, intellectual dialogue among ASEM-related EPAs is promoting increasing cooperation in many fronts. Nevertheless, to continue being effective in more politically charged geopolitical issues, both sides would have to grow and better organise themselves in a multi-level fashion. The EU side has been doing so, and one expects it to continue as the whole EU process manages to grow despite the magnitude of the task of convincing more people at home and abroad, particularly in the US, of its benign character. Meanwhile, the ASEAN+3 side would have to arrange for a more formal cooperation in its external dimension, a task for an enlarged ASEAN secretariat. One would expect that the growing number of think-tanks and university networks consolidating around ASEM would facilitate further collaboration.

## Reaching to key Developing Areas

Soon after the moderate success of the ASEM process in bridging the ends of the Eurasian landmass in a multi-level way for a broadening range of issues, the Asian side started to further promote itself through other inter-regional schemes. Here again, Singapore has been active in promoting many of them, but other Asian countries have also taken the initiative in other cases. And, once more, the input of EPAs is increasingly being requested to promote their effectiveness.

Under the advice of Singapore's ISIS, the governments of Singapore proposed in September 1998 to the government of Chile (the Singapore of South America, in terms of trade openness) a multi-issue interregional process with Latin American countries that led in 1999 in Singapore to the first official (not ministerial) meeting of the Forum for East Asia – Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) or, in Spanish, the *Foro (de Cooperación) América Latina y Asia-Pacífico* ([www.FOCALAE.net](http://www.FOCALAE.net))<sup>83</sup>. It brought together 15 industrial Asia-Pacific countries (ASEAN+3, as well as Australia and New Zealand) and the 12 permanent members of the Rio Group<sup>84</sup>. And, in March

---

([www.ASED.org](http://www.ASED.org)) backed by the German Alliance 90/The Green Party's Heinrich-Boell-Foundation promotes alternative policies mainly through occasional reports. And the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation ([www.KAS.de](http://www.KAS.de)) of the Christian-Democrat party funds various activities of the ASEAN ISIS. <sup>83</sup> Information is also available in the Chilean's ministry of foreign affairs ([www.minrel.cl/focalae](http://www.minrel.cl/focalae)). As its functions were not fully defined at the beginning, its denomination was unclear. At first there was an alternative denomination that stressed its cooperative nature; thus, the first meeting was actually referred to in Spanish as the "*I Foro América Latina y Asia del Este*", and the website [www.FALAE.org](http://www.FALAE.org) was active only for a short period of time until 2001. For a summary of its origins, see [www.chile-hoy.de/internacional/080300\\_FALAE.htm](http://www.chile-hoy.de/internacional/080300_FALAE.htm).

<sup>84</sup> The Rio Group is a mechanism for permanent political consultation and co-ordination. Created in 1986 by eight countries, by early 2001 its twelve permanent members were trying to increase their regionalisation efforts.

2001, the Rio Group had in Santiago de Chile had three complementary ministerial summits: first they met among themselves, then with EU representatives, and later with the Asia-Pacific representatives within FEALAC/FOCALAE. Here again, EPAs in the region-to-be are paying more attention in providing policy advice not only to promote trade openness, but also to look for closer, broader types of inter-regional collaboration. And so, the Chilean Pacific Foundation ([www.funpacifico.cl](http://www.funpacifico.cl)) and its main patron, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted in October 2000 a first academic seminar. Moreover, the first ministerial agreed to have increasing inputs from think-tanks, and a Symposium for Intellectuals from East Asia and Latin America (SIEALA) was held in Tokyo in February 2002<sup>85</sup>. Even the broader Latin America academic research community is particularly interested in providing inputs in time for the second FEALAC/FOCALAE that will take place in Manila in January 2004.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the many difficulties, ASEAN+3 countries are also finding ways to reach to South and West Asia in a broad inter-regional fashion. India was under Britain the core of an Asian empire, but its decolonisation process led by non-aligned and leftist intelligentsia with links to Britain and the Soviet Union focused on breaking the traditional political and social hierarchies but it left many economic problems unresolved. These are now addressed in more liberal fashion by a more nationalist political landscape that is somewhat moving from the former Soviet Union and the non-aligned movement orbit to increase cooperation with the US camp, which hopes it would help its desires to balance China and Pakistan.<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, India seems to vision itself very much as a peaceful non-aligned regional and world power so it also deals directly with other world powers when it sees fit. Thus, it has recently warmed up to its rival China (both premiers met for the first time in June 2003), and ASEAN (it signed a FTA in November 2002 at the time of the ASEAN+3 meeting); meanwhile, relations with Japan, usually friendly but very limited, were somewhat improved with higher-level visits since the 1990s. In this landscape, EPAs in Singapore and beyond have been active promoters of multilateral processes that engage India. A first effort was the

---

<sup>85</sup> The Co-Chair's summary is available in [www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/fealac/summary0202.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/latin/fealac/summary0202.html), but the list of participants is not included.

<sup>86</sup> The Latin American Association for Studies of Africa and Asia (ALADAA) hosted at the *Colegio de Mexico's Centro de Estudios de Asia y Africa*, will have in November 2003 its next triennial Congress on the topic of regionalisation. See [www.colmex.mx/centros/ceaa/aladaa/index.htm](http://www.colmex.mx/centros/ceaa/aladaa/index.htm).

<sup>87</sup> The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a very low key and rather unsuccessful effort by small countries around India to diminish its overwhelming economic weight. For good recent overviews on India's foreign projection, see Cohen, Stephen (2001) *India: Emerging Power*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press; and Mohan, C. Raja (2003) *Crossing the Rubicon; the Shaping of India's New Foreign Policy*. Penguin India.

Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation<sup>88</sup>. Tracing its origins to a 1995 meeting in Mauritius that brought together Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore and South Africa (countries with noticeable Indian diasporas), it nowadays has 19 members (China, Japan, the UK, France, and Egypt are dialogue partners). It also has since 1997 its tripartite EPA of government, business and academia leaders promoting open regionalism and, since 2001, a High Level Task Force to address the very limited results of the whole process. Meanwhile, India has also been unsuccessful to promote strong links with Southeast Asia, being Burma/Myanmar more a barrier than a bridge. Nevertheless, the India-ASEAN Eminent Persons lecture series launched in 1996 by India has grown since 2003 to an India-ASEAN+3 format as distinguished opinion makers formed a New Asia Network of think tanks focusing on closer economic cooperation between, Japan, ASEAN, China, India and Korea (JACIK), which is basically ASEAN+3+1.<sup>89</sup>

An even broader effort started in June 2002 as the Thai government launched in the royal town of Cha-Am, the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) that brought together ministers from 17 countries in East, Southeast, South Asia, and even some Arab states members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to discuss the diffusion of tensions and possibilities of economic and cultural cooperation.<sup>90</sup> The idea was first raised during the First International Conference of Asian Political Parties held in Manila in September 2000, and later welcomed within ASEAN leaders. The ACD is so far a top-down intergovernmental process with very input from more independent intellectuals, and those few who aired an opinion in Thailand were critical of the whole exercise.<sup>91</sup> There has only been so far “a preliminary study on potential areas of Asia-wide cooperation”, produced entirely by the International Studies Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, raising issues of physical linkages, people/human linkages and cooperation, economic linkages and cooperation, but it does not elaborate much on how to successfully achieve them. Nevertheless, the incipient ACD process has at least managed to bring Japan and China together, as well as Thailand, in most of the activities generally agreed. This is not the case for most other countries of ACD; for instance, Singapore has so far only shown an interest in being

---

<sup>88</sup> See overview at [www.dfat.gov.au/trade/iorarc/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/trade/iorarc/).

<sup>89</sup> For the India-ASEAN dialogues, see [www.ris.org.in/fost\\_9a](http://www.ris.org.in/fost_9a). For the upgrade, see Delhi Consensus, International Conference on “Building a New Asia: Towards an Asian Economic Community”, New Delhi, 10-11 March 2003. [www.ris.org.in/asianeconomiccommunity\\_delhiconsensus.html](http://www.ris.org.in/asianeconomiccommunity_delhiconsensus.html).

<sup>90</sup> See the Thai foreign ministry official website information: [www.mfa.go.th/web/975.php](http://www.mfa.go.th/web/975.php).

<sup>91</sup> Matichon in Thai, 23 June 2002.



involved in one area of cooperation that focuses on SMEs. My preliminary conclusion for the ACD is that as Bangkok hosts several regional offices of the United Nations System it may become a vehicle to promote them with the help of the largest Asian economic powers.<sup>92</sup>

Inter-regionalism is becoming a reality as states seek more multi-level possibilities to better address their needs or interests. This could be both a window of opportunity for peaceful and prosperous engagement and an additional source of world instability. So far, it has proved rather peaceful in the EU. And the inter-regional efforts around ASEAN+3, which only now are becoming noticeable, seem also not to be raising much intellectual debate against them, which may be seen as a very positive sign. Yet, if ASEAN+3 keeps promoting inter-regional relations with other world regions based on countries that have some potential to antagonise the US, and perhaps the EU, the situation may change.

Among the various that merit watching, in terms of intellectual ideas with foreign policy consequences is the Russia-led Commonwealth of Independent States ([www.CIS.minsk.by](http://www.CIS.minsk.by)). Russia has recently been mending its problematic relations with Northeast Asia as it would like to increase energy and industrial exports and develop transport links while expecting to receive foreign direct investment to develop the Russian Siberia and the Far East regions.<sup>93</sup> For that, a multi-level strategy seems welcome. Russia's relations with Japan improved in 2003 as tackling the Kurile Islands problem was decoupled from economic cooperation. Russia joined both the ARF and APEC in the late 1990s, and it has shown an interest in joining ASEM (as an Asian member, to be closer to that side!). Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect that the CIS could become an additional vehicle for Russia's new international economic strategy. CIS was created on the wake of the dissolution of the URSS in 1991, and although throughout the 1990s was rather low key, it is nowadays intensifying efforts to advance a free trade area among its members. Meanwhile, the Shanghai Five group that since 1996 first brought together China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to discuss regional security and development threatened by endemic instability, has achieved some successes and has broadened in 2001 into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with the inclusion of Uzbekistan, and in May

---

<sup>92</sup> Perhaps it is also a way to help revitalise the seemingly moribund Arab League. Arab officials representing 22 countries met in Cairo in June 2003 to begin a six-month study to determine its future, badly split in the build-up to the US-led invasion of Iraq (Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain in favour). *Financial Times*, 16 June 2003.

<sup>93</sup> See, Chufurin, Gennady (2003) "Russia's economic and strategic interests in North-East Asia", *Asia-Europe Journal*, Vol 1, No. 2: 251-262.

2003 it agreed to set a secretariat in Beijing towards the end of the year and to promote an antiterrorist initiative managed by Kazakhstan.<sup>94</sup> If such processes converge with ASEAN+3 it would be natural to expect that EPAs will appear to help.

## **Promoting East Asian Regionalism through Global Venues**

In a multi-level world, many regional issues have a global component, so this section will concentrate on the global level affecting the construction of the ASEAN+3. I start with global intergovernmental organisations within or outside the United Nations, often restructuring under the leadership of Japanese officials. Yet, as these organisations have limited prerogatives to address global issues, I will pay particular attention to key private-led EPAs lobbying to provide some multi-level public goods, which further indicate their greater weight into the ASEAN+3 regional process as a means to solve current global governance limitations.

### **Intellectual input into the U.N. System and related organisations**

The United Nations ([www.UN.org](http://www.UN.org)) is not a world government, but only a limited, but increasingly complex, structure created in 1945 through which the nowadays 191 member governments try to promote peace and security, develop friendly relations, cooperate in solving international problems and in promoting respect for human rights, and be at the centre for harmonising the action of nations. As allied victors of W.W.II designed the structure, Asian's leadership was largely limited to China (first Taiwan, but since 1973 meaning the PRC). Yet, Japan joined in 1956 and by the 1980s became the largest regular financial contributor (the US has often refused to pay its dues on time). Thus, Japan became more assertive in influencing it, more recently in a regional fashion.

Within the UN, world regions (including Asia) are de-facto rising in importance in non-security issues. In legal terms, all kinds of autonomous regional arrangements are in principle allowed in the UN Charter (articles 52-54). In practice, security ones have never really materialised within a Cold War power politics context or in its aftermath. Overall, the UN Security Council, which still includes the original five permanent members with veto

---

<sup>94</sup> See the documents in English in <http://missions.itu.int/~kazaks/eng/sco/sco01.htm>.

powers (the US, France, the UK, Russia, China), but not Japan or other state or regional powers, is not as useful as many of its designers had hoped for it. That is especially so in Asia, where military stability depends on US-led alliances and the restraint of China, Russia and other nuclear powers. Yet, if a large-scale military conflict emerges in such a complex area, being Korean peninsula and the Taiwan straits two plausible scenarios, the end result may most likely require a broad-based and unique alliance in solving it and, possibly, a major restructuring of the UN's security prerogatives giving greater weight to Asian powers. Moreover, since the late 1990s there has been a more successful movement to promote a Japan-led regionalism in the United Nations System ([www.unsystem.org](http://www.unsystem.org)) of international organisations that focus on economic, social, and sustainable development issues.<sup>95</sup> Much of that has taken place through EPAs that these organisations have helped create.

Within the World Bank the Japanese government keeps raising the issue of Asian mode of development that argues for a greater role for the developmental state than the US and other countries may find adequate. In 1991, Japan financed the World Bank's "East Asian miracle" report, which caused much controversy, and was generally dismissed later in the decade on the wake of the financial crisis.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, since 2001 the government of Japan has sponsored a new round of reports similarly arguing the inherent good potential of a mixed public-private system of economic governance for growth, albeit in need of some revisions in the financial, corporate, judicial, and social to become more innovative.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, the World Bank's former intellectual leader, Joseph Stiglitz, trying to help it refocus to overcome the 1990's growth crisis (it is tackling too many disparate issues with limited resources) by turning it into a "knowledge bank" based on the regional

---

<sup>95</sup> The UN System brings together several functional and regional commissions, a good number of specialised agencies, and various programmes and funds, all linked through the UN's Economic and Social Council. Meanwhile, the EU has its own active presence in the UN outside the regional commission for Europe: see [www.europa-eu-un.org](http://www.europa-eu-un.org). Nothing like that has yet happened with ASEAN+3 countries. The UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific ([www.unescap.org](http://www.unescap.org)), located in Bangkok, has very limited prerogatives and resources to coordinate the functional activities of other commissions and institutions. Nevertheless, it is being enhanced within the ASEAN+3 region under the Executive Secretary from South Korea Kim Hak-Su. For instance, a centre for agricultural engineering opened in November 2002 in Beijing.

<sup>96</sup> World Bank (1993) *The East Asian Miracle; Economic Growth and Public Policy*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>97</sup> World Bank (2001) *Can East Asia Compete?*, provided an overview of the issues. World Bank (2002) *Innovative East Asia: The Future of Growth*, is the second and main volume in the series, providing detailed analyses of the problems and policy prescriptions. By the way, the social character of the World Bank influenced the EU to commit in ASEM-2 in 1998 to create in it an ASEM Trust Fund project to present the European experience in social policies to the most affected Asian countries. See the overall result in Marshall, Katherine and Olivier Butzbach (2003) *New Social Policy Agendas for Europe and Asia; Challenges, Experience, and Lessons*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, [www.worldbank.org/eapsocial/asemsocial](http://www.worldbank.org/eapsocial/asemsocial).

coordination of intellectual ideas that foster policies for development.<sup>98</sup> Within this Global Development Network ([www.GDNet.org](http://www.GDNet.org)) Japan created its own chapter (already described) to complement the East Asian Development Network ([www.EADN.org](http://www.EADN.org)), which brings together nowadays 32 members from the rest of the ASEAN+3 countries (plus Fiji and Hong Kong) with Singapore's ISEAS serving as the regional coordinator.

Complementing the World Bank's activities in Asia and the Pacific is the Asian Development Bank ([www.ADB.org](http://www.ADB.org)). Headed by a Japanese since its inception in 1966<sup>99</sup>, the ADB has long been promoting different types of broader or narrower regional cooperation within Asia and the Pacific islands. For instance, ADB reorganised in early 2002 and created a Regional and Sustainable Development Department headed by another Japanese. Moreover, Japan is following the example of the World Bank and established in December 1997 the ADB Institute ([www.adbi.org](http://www.adbi.org)) to help turn the ADB into a knowledge bank. The Institute is located in Tokyo and first headed by one of Japan's two members of the EAVG. Among the Institute's strategic initiatives is the design of intermediate financial market structures in post-crisis Asia. One actual way was through the Asian Policy Forum, whose third set of policy proposals focused on the sequencing of China's financial market liberalisation. Its seven points recommended a series of domestic reforms, as well as the promotion of a managed, semi-open exchange rate system.

Japan's efforts to promote "Asian modes of development and governance" in a regional fashion include Africa. The Tokyo International Conference on African Development ([www.TICAD.net](http://www.TICAD.net)) process, started in 1993 by the Japanese government, brings in the collaboration of several actors, including the United Nations Development Fund, the Global Coalition for Africa, the World Bank, and the UN/DESA/OSCAL Office of the Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries. TICAD-I led to the First Asia Africa Forum organised in 1994, which subsequently led to the Bandung Framework for Asia Africa Cooperation. TICAD II was held in 1998, and TICAD-III in September 2003, where the Asian mode of development will be more assertively advertised.

Any crisis is a good opportunity for closer regional cooperation. After the financial crisis of 1997, Tokyo campaigned for an Asia Monetary Fund to complement the role of the IMF. The US and other countries did not accept

---

<sup>98</sup> Stone, Diane, ed., (2000) *Banking on Knowledge: The Genesis of the Global Development Network*. London, Routledge.

<sup>99</sup> The World Bank is always headed by someone from the US while the IMF is headed by a European. Japan had been arguing for an ADB for a number of years to channel its development aid, but it was only allowed to start as the Johnson administration saw it as a good vehicle for regional peace.

the proposal, but Japan now hosts the IMF's regional office for Asia and the Pacific to monitor regional developments and assess progress and issues in regional integration and cooperation. Moreover, Japan promoted in 2000 the creation of the Chiang-Mai initiative, an intra-Asian fund to moderate real shocks of future liquidity crises with conditionality principles acceptable to the IMF. Moreover, the SARS crisis that was first identified in Southern China has had a catalysing effect in promoting a multi-level coordination of efforts to resolve it in the ASEAN+3 region. The World Health Organisation ([www.WHO.org](http://www.WHO.org)), headed since mid 2003 by Jong-Wook Lee, a South Korean medical technocrat, is also promoting a policy of decentralisation to regions and countries, while promoting partnerships with other organisations. While preparing for the transition of its leadership, it has devoted much energy to stamp out SARS and has been instrumental in setting the first ASEAN+3 ministerial meeting.

The rise of East Asians in specialised agencies focusing on information, communication, education and culture is also noticeable. The International Telecommunications Union ([www.ITU.org](http://www.ITU.org)) is since 1998 headed by Yoshio Utsumi, former Vice-Director General of Japan's Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, which in 1997 tried to promote an Asian Telecommunications Standardisation Institute in Bangkok<sup>100</sup>, and in January 2003 hosted the first Asian Regional Conference to prepare for the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society, where representatives from 47 countries, 22 international organisations, 54 private sector entities, and 116 NGOs, endorsed a declaration emphasizing broad-based social aims and the unique features of the region.<sup>101</sup> Meanwhile, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ([www.UNESCO.org](http://www.UNESCO.org)), since November 1999 headed by Japanese ambassador Ko'ichiro Matsuura, has indicated plans to decentralise UNESCO include the creation of regional bureaux and activities; it had even signed an agreement with ASEAN in 1998. Moreover, Tokyo hosts the United Nations University (UNU) that coordinates over a dozen centres and programmes around the world. The UNU Asia Pacific Initiative, ([www.unu.edu/api/](http://www.unu.edu/api/)) has recently created to support the development of a New Media Studio to promote online multimedia broadcasting at the UNU, expecting to function as a regional node in a

---

<sup>100</sup> It was not successful at the time but the initiative led to the creation of an Asia-Pacific Telecommunity APT Standardisation Program ([www.aptsec.org/ASTAP](http://www.aptsec.org/ASTAP)) to harmonise the ones coming downstream from the ITU. For more information, see my doctoral thesis, European University Institute, [www.iue.it](http://www.iue.it), Florence (2002).

<sup>101</sup> See [www.wsis-japan.jp/documents/tokyo\\_declaration.html](http://www.wsis-japan.jp/documents/tokyo_declaration.html).

networked virtual organization composed of partner universities, research institutions, NGOs and businesses.

The rise of Asia's trade and investment regionalisation is always present in the new World Trade Organisation ([www.WTO.org](http://www.WTO.org)). It only recently started meriting the label of worldly as after many years of negotiations it admitted China and Taiwan in November 2001 as *economic* members number 142 and 143. While various types of liberalisation moratoria are allowing a smoother transition of China into the global trading system, and further liberalisation progress within the WTO is encountering many pressures from governments and civil society everywhere, ASEAN countries rushed into the 2002 ASEAN+3 summit to form a mesh of bilateral free-trade agreements with China, Korea and Japan to prepare the way for the EAVG proposal for an East Asia Free Trade Area. This regionalising objective, alongside the trade developments in the EU, is one of the spurs to agree on greater liberalisation within the WTO.

As economic and social issues become more regional within the UN and Bretton Woods organisations, the restricted intergovernmental organisations of powerful economies have been broadening to East Asia. In the wake of financial and political crises of the early 1970s, government officials of the group of seven largest industrialised, market oriented, democracies in North America, Europe and Japan have been meeting since the early 1970s in restricted (albeit enlarging) gatherings to discuss and try to coordinate a joint-leadership position in a world system with many international organisations, regional and bilateral arrangements.<sup>102</sup> For instance, the June 2003 G8 meeting held in France ([www.G8.fr](http://www.G8.fr)) had for the first time China's premier, the newly designed Hu Jintao, as well as representatives from other developing countries into what has been labelled G21. Nevertheless, the usefulness of the restricted intergovernmental meetings is questioned by leading policy notables coordinated by a leading EPA in the US with recurrent pleas prompting government leaders for greater action to maintain an open trading regime in a more peaceful environment.<sup>103</sup> A number of the G8's economic development declarations are fed into the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([www.OECD.fr](http://www.OECD.fr)), which has also been broadening to East Asia in the recent years; governments set its agenda but it regularly consults

---

<sup>102</sup> The number after G reflects the actual number of current participants, which may vary according to the issue discussed. For a recent guide to its origins, characteristics, role, agenda and major debates, see Hajnal, Peter (1999) *The G7/G8 System; Evolution, Role and Documentation*. Ashgate; and Hodges, Michael et al. (1999) *The G8's Role in the New Millennium*. Ashgate.

<sup>103</sup> See the "Letters of Transmittal to the Leaders of the G-8 Member Countries" available at the Institute of International Economics website, [www.IIE.com](http://www.IIE.com).

economic and social actors. Japan joined in 1960s, South Korea in 1990s, and the OECD's Centre for Co-operation with Non-members has an Asia and China unit, which launched in 1995 a China programme that has dealt with over 120 dialogue and cooperation activities.

### **Transnational Private-lead Epistemic Policy Actors**

But as the influence of the UN system and other multilateral efforts is rather limited to advance consensual governance modes, a number of private-led EPAs have been raising to promote ideas for change. Those led by ideas of economic liberalisation and democratic governments tend to have their bases in the US and Western Europe, but they are adopting a greater regional configuration promoting a vision for a rising Asia which is quite close to that of the ASEAN+3. Of the growing number of private EPAs with global reach, I will mention two of them that seem to be particularly influential in the world system: the Trilateral Commission and the World Economic Forum.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, they have are being joined by indigenous competitors in ASEAN+3 countries. Meanwhile, an emerging global civil society arguing for greater social equity has emerged in both developed and developing countries in the West, and is also paying increasing attention to Asia.

The Trilateral Commission ([www.Trilateral.org](http://www.Trilateral.org)) has since the late 1990s broadened to ASEAN+3. Created in the early 1970s by an alliance of banking, EPAs and government in the US, the Trilateral was at first an organisation of private citizens from North America, Western Europe, and Japan with links to governments and businesses at the highest level.<sup>105</sup> Not much analysis is publicly aired about its inner workings but it regularly requests independent expert reports on global and regional issues, having published four specifically on East Asia: one published in 1985 dealing with security problems in the region, another from 1988 focusing on transition aspects, a third one dated 1997 focusing on community building and, a fourth one, released in 2001, on how Asia can fit in the international system. An overall analysis of the evolution of the four reports indicate a trend away from security concerns and towards searching ways to integrate the region in the largely Western-led international system of norms, which can bring absolute benefits to both East Asian and Trilateral countries provided "adjustments can be carried out smoothly". A natural accommodation became

---

<sup>104</sup> The number of private initiatives is growing in the West, but most, like the [www.ClubofRome.org](http://www.ClubofRome.org), or the new [www.CommissionOnGlobalization.org](http://www.CommissionOnGlobalization.org), or the [www.globalpublicpolicy.net](http://www.globalpublicpolicy.net) project (recently upgraded to an institute), have yet to reach to Asia in a substantial way.

<sup>105</sup> For an overview until the end of the Cold War, see Gill, Stephen (1990) *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*. Cambridge University Press.

reflected in its membership, which in November 2000 extended its active Japan group (always centred in Tadashi Yamamoto's JCIE) to form a Pacific Asian one. So, it nowadays has about 100 regular members, many of them from Japan, but a growing number from other ASEAN+3 countries with relevant positions in the EPAs mentioned in this paper. For instance, Han Sung-Joo, Director, Ilmin International Relations Institute, and former chairman of the EAVG, is currently a Trilateral's Pacific Asia Deputy Chairman. Naturally, Tommy Koh from the IPS as well as some leaders of ASEAN ISIS institutes are represented. And there are also nowadays nine members from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan under a special, preliminary category labelled "Triennium Participants".<sup>106</sup>

The World Economic Forum ([www.WEForum.org](http://www.WEForum.org)) is more open than the Trilateral Commission, so it is broader in scope and membership, less US-led, and more concerned with actual, short-term problems. Naturally, it has also been very attentive, and perhaps instrumental, to the rise of ASEAN+3.<sup>107</sup> The WEF grew out of the conferences organised in the 1970s by Klaus Schwab, a professor of business policy at the University of Geneva. By now it attracts funding from about 1000 member global companies to allow many relevant personalities from government, business and beyond to discuss pressing world problems not only in global summits (generally in snowy Davos), but also in other gatherings more focused on particular issues, key countries or world regions, including East Asia since the early 1990s. In the WEF's East Asia Economic Summit of 1994, Singapore's Goh Chok Tong and Lee Kuan Yew spoke forcefully of a dynamic and economically growing East Asia and the importance of strengthening links with Europe in a global triangular context, an idea agreed with French Prime Minister Balladur also present at the meeting. Soon after, Goh Chok Tong went off to Europe where he first formally proposed to the French government what soon became the ASEM process. Ever since, Singaporean leaders have kept advancing similar regionalisation ideas in subsequent regional meetings, last one exceptionally taking place in October 2002 in Kuala Lumpur (the capital of a quite prosperous and peaceful, largely Muslim, country). Yet, in the KL meeting the WEF agreed to have Singapore's Economic Development Board as its virtual secretariat for future East Asian Summits, and to convene alternative summits in Singapore (others would continue to be hosted in Hong Kong, with occasional exceptions). Moreover, about 60 New Asian Leaders (NALs)

---

<sup>106</sup> Data dated 27 March 2003 swiftly provided upon request by email apparently by the Trilateral Commission.

<sup>107</sup> The main details not mentioned in the WEF website come from a telephone interview with Frank-Juergen Richter, WEF's Director for Asia, June 2003.



selected by the WEF took part in a retreat in June 2003 entitled “Blueprints for a New Asia,” where they agree to establish a 5-6 person interim steering committee to better structure the NAL group. The NALs also discussed other ongoing projects which include: continued public discussion of ideas through Asia’s regional and international media; a student internship program taking place through NALs respective organizations, to foster regional understanding; and a pan Asian survey of ideas to take place in the next three months. Moreover, it launched the idea of establishing in South Korea in 2004 a research institute to develop “Asian Integration Model” similar to one of the European Union.<sup>108</sup> Overall, the future vision of the WEF for the Asian region is optimistic: China is on the move, ASEAN has awoken, and Japan seems ready to move again.<sup>109</sup> And much more progress is expected in the October 2003 Summit that is taking place in Singapore as is focusing on Asian integration.

Moreover, the WEF idea has given rise to indigenous complementary initiatives in the region. The World Knowledge Forum ([www.WKForum.org](http://www.WKForum.org)), created in 2000 by Dae-Whan Chang, president of the Korean Maeil Business Newspaper and TV group, meets in Seoul every October just after the WEF’s East Asia economic summit. And sparked by ideas put forward by Australian, Japanese and Philippine leaders in September 1998, the Boao Forum for Asia ([www.boaoforum.org](http://www.boaoforum.org)) first gathered a large variety of decision makers from 26 countries from Iran to Australia in China’s Hainan island in February 2001, to create a non-governmental, not-for-profit international organisation. Both fora are open to inputs and outputs to the rest of the world, although the Asian region is their main concern so it is becoming closer to the ACD.

After the financial and economic crises and the increasing uproar of transnational civil society movements since the late 1990s, the WEF has broadened its scope to invite social leaders. In addition, in 1998 Klaus Schwab and his wife Hilde even founded the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, which so far it has had an African and an Indian summit. Yet, it is expected a greater attention to East Asia as grass-root social movements with partially different goals have started to follow a similar multi-level strategy to more elite private EPAs, and have become more active in Asia. The International Committee of the yearly World Social Forum and the Brazil Organising Committee (host to them since 2001) decided that from

---

<sup>108</sup> The Korea Times, 21 June 2003.

<sup>109</sup> Frank-Juergen Richter and Pamela Mar (2002) *Recreating Asia: Visions for a New Century*. World Economic Forum - John Wiley & Sons.

2002 onwards there would be regional, continental, and/or thematic Forums across the globe to better catalyse social energies where most needed ([www.forumsocialmundial.org.br](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br)). Thus, an Asian Social Forum took place in Hyderabad (India) that has helped prepare for the 2004 World Social Forum that will be held in Mumbai, India's economic capital ([www.wsfindia.org](http://www.wsfindia.org)). How the ASEAN+3 develops to accommodate civil society in the region will be of paramount importance. If the ASEAN's People Assemblies, now taking place next to ASEAN+3 summits, do not accommodate the broader demands of civil society, they may encounter a global bottom-up challenge hard to meet by current political and EPA leaders.<sup>110</sup> If ASEAN+3 manages that broadening process smoothly, it might then well prove a viable regional forum.

## **Preliminary Conclusions and Ideas for the Future**

ASEAN+3 (or East Asian) political leaders have been meeting regularly since the mid 1990s to promote closer regional collaboration. That in itself is a major achievement for such a diverse group of countries having a long history of disregard or animosity. But what is really interesting is to see that those high-level meetings seem to signify a more substantial desire to facilitate long-lasting links among many other actors.

I have been arguing through the paper that ASEAN+3 political leaders have been relying on a growing array of epistemic policy actors (EPAs) organising in a global multi-level perspective. Thus, their analysis provides good indications of the evolution of the regionalising policy process. I broadly defined EPAs as elite think-tanks, non governmental institutions and networks that bring together a broad range of public and private interests to create foreign policy that directly influence the highest level. And I chose a multi-level framework with states, world regions and global organisations interacting in and across all levels.

The paper started analysing the evidence within the main countries in the ASEAN+3 region before moving to the input of the rest of the world. Several active individuals leading think-tanks or academic research centres formed the ASEAN ISIS network, which grew in influence as it became an insider to the

---

<sup>110</sup> One of the key organisers is the Bangkok-based Focus on Global South ([www.focusweb.org](http://www.focusweb.org)), which co-organises in the fringes of the ASEM process the ASEM Social Fora ([www.asem4people.org](http://www.asem4people.org)), active in promoting Asian gatherings. The Focus helped catalysed representatives of organisations and movements opposed to the US's designs for Iraq, and in May 2003 they held a meeting in Jakarta and produced the Jakarta Consensus presented in Evian during the G8 meeting.

process of ASEAN development. Yet, other research centres in the region, noticeably in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, are forming complementary, but partially competing, regional networks of EPAs. More importantly, countries in Northeast Asia have put their reticence aside, and have become very active members of regional cooperation. Japan tries not to show a direct lead in any of them, but South Korea took the leadership in creating an East Asian Vision Group, whose policy recommendations have become the first visible proto-constitutional effort in the ASEAN+3 region picked up by an intergovernmental East Asian Study Group, whose final report was elevated to the ASEAN+3 leaders meeting in November 2002. One of its recommendations was to create an East Asian group of Track II think-tanks, an issue that China now seems interesting in leading. Given the overall thickening of intellectual input into the process coming from all the key players in the region there is hardly any doubt that it will continue growing. That, of course, does not mean it may be an easy process. Rather, such a momentous vision will quite possibly slowly take effect while following a bumpy road of successes and failures by a growing number of competing EPAs.

Some of that navigation will continue to be influenced by a growing number of external EPAs. Therefore, I focused on what the available evidence indicates are the main sources of global influence potentially affecting ASEAN+3. I first focused on the US, unquestionably the main country in the current world system, and I found that in principle its EPAs are not opposed (some actually seem to be particularly proactive in a low key fashion) to regional arrangements in East as long as they serve to promote a broader political dialogue and more open trade. Moreover, there are signs that an incipient debate about the merits of the ASEAN+3 process is taking place in the policy-making circles. And given the decreasing esteem of the US unilateral actions abroad it would be hard for the US to attack an incipient ASEAN+3 that so far is showing signs of non-military collaboration and, indeed, may find ways to decrease the tension in the many flashpoints across the region.

Afterwards, I looked at the potential complementary and balancing influences coming from other parts of the world, where smaller or weaker countries tend to organise in a regional form. The role of the EU in the construction of ASEAN+3 through ASEM has generally been neglected, but it is not only clear but also growing in scope. It is not per se a balancing act to APEC and other trans-Pacific relations, although one may envision a long-term potential occasional competition in those areas where Europe-Asia

rapprochement increases in substance. ASEM's inter-regional success has prompted leaders of the ASEAN+3 movement to try further interregional processes, already noticeable with Latin America, through FEALAC/FOCALAE, and other parts of Asia, including the ACD. They are still very minor compared to the ASEM process, but all together seem to add weight to the visions of an ASEAN+3 region with a common foreign policy.

Lastly, the paper moved to the global level. Firstly, it showed that Japan keeps exerting intellectual pressure to promote its government-steered vision of regional development in intergovernmental organisations like the World Bank, and there are signs of doing so in other ones. Afterwards, and more importantly given the fact international organisations within or outside the UN system are far from forming a global government, I focused on some key private-led EPAs with global reach. Both the Trilateral Commission and the World Economic Forum have recently become particularly active in the Pacific or East Asia region and are serving as important platforms for influential intellectuals and decision makers to advance in their regional visions.

Overall, my theoretical hypothesis seems vindicated. There are influences by EPAs in all the levels of governance studied in the construction of the ASEAN+3 region. Now, the results of the paper, albeit in need of further refinement, may well be a good base to start asking a number of additional questions. Among the obvious ones are the following based on the two analytical variables of this paper. Firstly, on multi-level geography: How is the relative influence of each level evolving? Will world regions rise over states in global governance? What will be the role of the US in the rise of ASEAN+3 and other world regions? Secondly, on the diversity of policy relevant actors: How will the regional EPAs evolve? Will they become clearly defined and functionally complementary groupings? Finally, can we now aim for a general evolutionary theory of the inputs and outputs of the non-governmental actors I loosely defined as EPAs or, given their fluidity, is it still necessary to engage in thicker descriptive work?

\*\*\*\*\*