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Thoughts on Major Powers in the Asia-Pacific Region

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It is clearly a time of change in both the dynamics and structures of inter-state relationships in the greater Asian region, and in the perception of the role of major powers in the region.

The rise of China and India, the role of Japan, and the resurgence of Russia, laid alongside the continuing dominance of the United States in the security field, are opening up new perspectives for inter-state relations within the region, and with countries outside the region. As well as changes in bilateral relations, the development of regional organisations is growing more active.

Looking from the Southwest Pacific, New Zealand has for many years sought to develop stronger relations with Asian countries and with Asia generally. This has included closer economic and trade ties; a richer and more substantive political dialogue; a contribution to security in the region, both bilaterally and regionally; and a growing recognition in New Zealand itself of the significance of Asia to its future.

For the first time in many years, the relative proximity to New Zealand of the Asian region is being seen as an advantage. New Zealand's traditional involvement with Southeast Asia continues to be important. The bilateral relationship with Japan is in good shape. The nature of New Zealand's relationship with China has changed considerably over the last 5 to 10 years (but

so have the relations of most states with China). Korea has grown as a trading partner, and the political relationship has deepened. India is of great interest to New Zealand, but the substance of the relationship is thin. Russia remains a Pacific power through its geographical presence in the region, but its relationship with New Zealand, reflecting Russia's foreign policy priorities, does not contain much substance. Finally, New Zealand's relationship with the United States has become more steady. New Zealand is seen by the US as a key partner in the South Pacific and, further afield, as a useful contributor to security initiatives which are important to the US (e.g., the presence of New Zealand forces in Afghanistan).

The traditional areas of relationship-building – political and security, economic and trade – are being supplemented by the growth in a range of cross-border issues which do not lend themselves easily to resolution at a bilateral level: energy security; international crime; climate change; movement of labour; and disease, to name some. Most recently, the international financial crisis has also shown that East Asia broadly defined will change as a result of events which started in the United States and spread to Western Europe.

Searches for solutions in these cases have led to an increase in discussion in the East Asian region, through new mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, as well as older mechanisms like the ASEAN dialogue structure. The development of the regional architecture is taking place in three areas: i) security; ii) economic and trade; and iii) attempts to build a broad-spectrum organisation (this appears to lie behind the Rudd initiative, for instance).

Two of the major powers in the region, India and Japan, want to become permanent members of the UN Security Council (UNSC), although neither of them can count on unstinting support around the region – i.e. there is no Asian consensus on their becoming permanent members.

Efforts by states in East Asia to create channels of dialogue and cooperation have led to the multiplication of multilateral meetings and groupings, with a varying range of members and differing rates of success in achieving objectives.

In **Southeast Asia**, ASEAN has celebrated over 40 years of existence. It has undertaken a regeneration of its own objectives through the launch of the ASEAN Charter, as it tries to build an ASEAN community. ASEAN has more extensive partnership relationships with other states than any other organisation in the broader Asia region. It is natural, therefore, that it sees itself at the centre of efforts to develop a community in East Asia. The series of engagements with outside partners include ASEAN Plus One relationships, as well the more significant ASEAN Plus 3 (China, Japan, Korea) model, and, in the last three years, ASEAN Plus 6.

In **South Asia**, the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was founded in 1985. (The United States and Australia have recently taken up observer status at the SAARC.)

In the case of **Northeast Asia**, the Six-Party talks have created both a mechanism to lead to a resolution of the problems on the Korean Peninsula – whatever the various national aspirations of the states involved – and also the possibility of an ongoing arrangement which would address wider security issues, and play a significant role in the area.¹

ASEAN has not been alone during the last decade in activity in Asia in attempting to define new intergovernmental patterns in the region. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has enabled Russia and China to involve the **Central Asian** states in a regional organisation. The Six-Party talks, as already mentioned, have involved those in Northeast Asia. The East Asia Summit (EAS) has created a new meeting of leaders for another group of countries. Various

¹ The joint statement of the Six-Party Talks issued on 13 February 2007 established a working group on a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism (NEAPSM).

trade negotiations, involving principally China and ASEAN with a range of states, have produced a series of agreements crisscrossing the East Asian region. The Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore has over the past 8 years provided a forum for discussion on security issues involving states both in Asia and beyond Asia. The recent decision of the ASEAN Defence Ministers to reach out to partners outside ASEAN is another indication of ongoing movement in regionalism in the security field.

The most recent, and potentially significant step, is the decision of China, Japan and Korea to hold regular summit meetings outside the traditional meetings between the three countries which take place in the margins of other meetings. (Originally set for 21 September 2008 in Japan, the meeting has been postponed following the sudden resignation of Japanese Prime Minister Fukuda. A possible date is "before the end of this year." But, in an interesting demonstration of sensitivities between Japan and its two neighbours, Korea had already forced a postponement of the first meeting because of a territorial dispute with Japan.)

Against this changing and swirling background, the role of the six major powers, and their interaction with each other, are not easy to identify clearly. The six do not belong to any one organisation together. Russia and the United States do not belong to the East Asia Summit. China and Russia alone belong to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. India does not belong to APEC or the SCO, and is outside the Six-Party Talks. All of them, on the other hand, have dialogue status with ASEAN, which again emphasises the centrality of ASEAN in the development of regional architecture. The initiative of PM Rudd of Australia would bring all six within one organisation, but there is a fair amount of water to run under the bridge until that happens.

The above describes what one might call the formal status of the major organisations in place in East Asia. Bilateral relations continue to be pre-eminent in the thinking of countries in the region, particularly in the context of their relations with the major powers. Equally, the major powers, led by the United States, give priority to their bilateral relationships. In part, this reflects historical patterns of diplomatic behaviour; in part, it reflects the relative lack of coherence of regional organisations, ASEAN perhaps being an exception.

The rise of **China** dominates the region. The role that China plays and the place it sees for itself in the wider Asian region is of critical importance. China is aware of this, and has been at pains to set out its role as a contributor, not a destabiliser, repeatedly and clearly. China "always adheres to the path of peaceful development, which is a strategic choice made by the Chinese government and people based upon the reality of China and the trend of the times. This strategic choice is an embodiment of the harmonization of China's domestic and foreign policies and the harmonization of the interests of the Chinese people with the interest of the people in the world."²

With regard to the relationship with the United States, the evidence suggests that China wishes to see itself in a partnership with the US, but a partnership which enables China to pursue its goals of economic growth and re-integrated status in the international arena on its own terms. "Continue to view and handle China-US relations from a long-term and strategic perspective and maintain their right direction [...]. The Chinese government is sincere in developing the constructive and cooperative relations with the United States."³

The **United States** continues to see itself as an Asian presence. Robert Gates, the Secretary of Defense, speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2008, said: "the United States is a Pacific nation with an enduring role in Asia [...]."

² President Hu Jintao, speech at Waseda University, Tokyo, 8 May 2008.

³ Foreign minister Yang Jiechi, speech at Wilson Center, Washington DC, 30 July 2008.

America plays many roles in Asia; as an ally, partner, and friend; as a routine offshore presence; as a *resident power*" [our emphasis.] He went on to say: "We certainly share an interest in institutionalising various forums to deal with region-specific problems, and we intend to participate in their evolution." So, the United States is a "presence" in Asia, and intends to participate in institutionalising Asia. Just how the US intends to do that remains unclear, since it sits outside any regional organisation, and its engagement with ASEAN as an organisation has fluctuated.

Japan's view of itself in the region is that of the second richest country in the world, an indispensable factor in the construction of any greater Asian regionalism, balanced between its security relationship with the United States, and its response to the growth of China. On the first point: "The Japan-US Security Alliance, between the largest and the second largest economic powers, has become one of the most solid alliances in the world. [...] it should be seen as a regional public good, and being in a broader context than merely a bilateral alliance."⁴

On China, the Japanese Foreign Minister said at the same meeting: "We have witnessed the increased importance of China, politically, economically, militarily and a drastic change for the security of East Asia and the future of the world."⁵

Sergey Lavrov's article "Russia and the World in the 21st Century" (published in *Russia in Global Affairs* in August 2008) is striking in that the foreign minister talks exclusively about **Russia** as a European and Euro-Atlantic power. The only mention of Asia in the article is in regard to the "global economic and financial architecture", in which context China and India receive a mention.

⁴ Defence Minister Ishiba, speech at the Shangri-la dialogue, Singapore, 31 May 2008.

⁵ Ditto

This is not to say that Lavrov does not address the changes in international relations in his article. It is just that he devotes no time to discussing Russia's role in Asia, nor its relations with the major Asian powers. Looking beyond that important article, one finds detail elsewhere. President Medvedev said on 15 August 2008 in a message on the occasion of India's national day: "[...] a genuine mutual sympathy and age-old traditions of friendship between the peoples of Russia and India provide a solid foundation of multifaceted strategic partnership of our states. I am confident that the upcoming Russia-Indian summit in December this year will give our bilateral relations a powerful new impetus.'⁶

With regard to China, Russia forms part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. It is also a member of the Six-Party talks, and any mechanism for security in northeast Asia which derived from the Six-Party talks would include Russia. The bilateral land border issues between Russia and China have finally been settled, and trade between them over that border is advancing. The development of resources in Siberia is of extreme interest to China, Japan and Korea, although the current uncertainty about foreign participation in the Russian energy sector is an important factor, as is the question of dependence on Russia as an energy supplier (in the light of other developments in the Russian energy sector).

With regard to Japan, the question of sovereignty over the Kuril Islands continues to be unresolved, and particularly from the Japanese side, casts a distinct frost on the bilateral front.

With Korea, Russia seems to enjoy a good relationship – there are no territorial disputes and Russia's participation in the Six-Party talks is acknowledged on the Korean side (see below) as strategically very important.

Lavrov's article does dwell at length on the relationship with the US, but it is, so to speak, a Euro-Atlantic picture, rather than one which addresses Russian-US

⁶ The state visit of President Medvedev to India took place between 3 and 5 December 2008.

relations in the Asian region. Russia is, of course, a member of APEC, although it does not appear to spend a lot of effort in advancing its interests there. Russia has tried to join the EAS, but its approach has not met the welcome it would have hoped for.

In the case of **India**, its rise as an economic power is also startling. Although less prominent than China because it has not had the same effect on global trade as China's growth, India's economic development is also critical to its achieving its rightful place on the world stage, which includes an aspiration to be a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. India is also faced with ongoing tension in its relations with Pakistan, which is one of the potential flashpoints in the wider Asian region. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in a major speech in Beijing in January 2008:

"India's domestic and foreign policy priorities are closely linked. The primary task of our foreign policy is to create an external environment that is conducive for our rapid development. Our policy seeks to widen our development choices and give us strategic autonomy in the world. The independence of our foreign policy enables us to pursue mutually beneficial cooperation with all major countries of the world. The establishment of peaceful and cooperative relationships in our neighbourhood is an intrinsic element of our foreign policy. We realise that our destinies are linked by geography and history. Both India and China seek tranquillity and stability in our immediate neighbourhood and extended region. We recognise that the world is evolving and developing features of multipolarity. It is natural that major powers, bound together by economic interdependence, will seek to cooperate with each other to mutual benefit. India and China must be part of this cooperative framework. I look forward with optimism to the future and the role which India and China are destined to play in the transformation of Asia and the

world. This optimism is based on my conviction that there is enough space for both India and China to grow and prosper while strengthening our cooperative engagement. History shows that our two great civilizations, flourished for centuries, side by side, interacting and influencing each other.

The starting point is the recognition that India-China relations impinge not only on the welfare of the people of the two countries, but also influence regional and global trends.

We are at an exciting point in history when the centre of gravity of the world economy is moving towards Asia. Just as the world economy was largely about Western nations in the twentieth century, it could be largely about Asia in the 21st century. By the mid-21st century, Asia may well account for more than 50 percent of trade, income, saving, investment and financial transactions of the world.

We must ensure that India and China cooperate in creating a world of positive externalities and mutual prosperity, rather than one based on balance of power calculations and animosity. This involves India and China working together closely to ensure a global order in which our simultaneous development will have a positive influence not only on our own economies but also on the rest of the world.⁷

With ASEAN, India's engagement has been different. India sees it primarily as a civilisational engagement, and a re-establishment of the country's traditional position of influence culturally, politically and economically with Southeast Asia:

⁷ Manmohan Singh, China Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 15 January 2008

this is the “Look East” policy. The most visible achievement has been to increase bilateral trade (about US\$30 billion in 2007 up from US\$13.25 billion in 2004.)

The evolution of the regional architecture is not central to India’s aspirations. We have already mentioned that it is not a member of APEC. In a recent statement of India’s position,⁸ the creation of a harmonious and prosperous community of nations in East Asia was identified as a “long-term goal”, in which “the emergence of the Asian economic community and need for regional security” were described as “strategic goals to promote regional peace and stability.”

Korea’s diplomacy is centred on five key priorities, of which working towards stabilising the situation on the Korean Peninsula is the most important. This is seen not only as ensuring peace and leading eventually to Korean re-unification, but also as strengthening cooperation among the countries in the region.⁹ Korea participates in the Six-Party talks, and in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Outside the immediate region, Korea has interests in APEC, the EAS, and ASEAN Plus 3. On the economic front, the FTA negotiations with both ASEAN and the US have concluded, and are continuing with India (the Korean objective is to complete the negotiations this year.)

It is clear that Korea is increasing its diplomatic effort across Asia, both bilaterally and through the development of the Plus 3 summit (and associated foreign affairs ministers’ meetings).¹⁰ Both with regard to ASEAN and the EAS Korea has expressed support for ASEAN integration and sufficient endorsement of the EAS to keep it moving ahead (although one feels that Korea is not convinced that the

⁸ Communiqué following the visit of the Lao PDR President to India, 30 August 2008.

⁹ Key diplomatic tasks, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website, Seoul

¹⁰ Korea and China share the view that tripartite cooperation between Korea, China and Japan is also very important to peace, stability and prosperity in Asia. For that purpose, both countries agreed to regularly hold three-nation summit and foreign minister talks. (A press release on 27 May 2008 from the Korean President’s office at the conclusion of his bilateral meeting with President Hu Jintao).

EAS will necessarily lead to something substantive.)¹¹ The significance to Korea of the Plus 3 grouping should not be underestimated either politically or economically: 20% of the world's economy is comprised of China, Japan and Korea. By 2020 this could be 33%. The Korean government has advocated a trilateral FTA which it would hope to link to its own FTA with the US.

At their bilateral meeting in Beijing in late May, Presidents Lee Myung-bak and Hu Jintao agreed to elevate their bilateral relations from the existing comprehensive and cooperative partnership to a "strategic and cooperative partnership". Korean officials said that under the new strategic partnership agreement, the two countries would widen bilateral cooperation beyond two-way diplomacy, politics, economy, culture and environment to cover global diplomatic and future-oriented issues.

The relationship with Russia, outside the Six-Party talks, focuses on the economic. When he met his Russian counterpart in Singapore on 23 July 2008, the Korean Foreign Minister noted that his President would be visiting Moscow later this year. Both sides subscribed to a statement that said they "shared a common view that the development of Far Eastern Siberia would greatly contribute to the promotion of the substantial cooperation between Korea and Russia, as well as the settlement, peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia."¹²

Korean views on its relations with the other major powers were given in a speech by then Foreign Minister Song Min-soon in Seoul on 25 January 2008. He said:

¹¹ Foreign Minister Yu "expressed his opinion that the comprehensive cooperative body in the East Asian region will develop into complementary cooperation and contribute to the formation of an East Asian community [press release from his office on the outcome of EAS foreign ministers' meeting, Singapore, 22 July 2008].

¹² MOFAT website

“Despite some differences in socio-political systems, we hope that China will play a bigger and more constructive role in building a regional community. I expect that China, under the flag of “Peaceful Development”, will firmly share a common vision of cooperation with other countries. Japan is a nation sharing with us many common values such as liberal democracy, the market economy and respect for human rights. It is our hope that Japan will enjoy more respect from its immediate neighbours and then from the international community by freeing itself of the shackles of history. In this way it will also expedite the formation of an institution for regional cooperation in Northeast Asia. In addition, the active roles of the US and Russia are crucial in the process of establishing cooperative order in this region. They are expected to keep the unswerving positions as intra-regional players of the region, not extra-regional powers.”

ASEAN’s approach to the changing geo-political landscape is to keep the organisation at the centre of the evolving architecture – “ASEAN in the driving seat”. The following is from the statement made by the Foreign Minister of Singapore on 24 July 2008 at the passing of the chairmanship of ASEAN from Singapore to Thailand:

“With the rise of China and India changing the polarity of the world, we must make sure that the political, economic and security architecture of the region takes into account the interest of ASEAN. Over the years, ASEAN, in a peaceful, non-threatening way, has helped to bring countries in the region together. We have been able to do this through enlightened diplomacy and by offering our hand of friendship to all the major powers. We must never lose this position. We must take an active interest in regional and global affairs and play a role which is helpful to others. We ensure the centrality of ASEAN in the evolving regional architecture, not

by force or assertion but by the openness and neutrality of our position and by our usefulness to others.”

The above represents a governmental view of where each major power positions itself in East Asia and how they view their relations with each other. The situation is dominated by the relationship between the United States and China, both of which see the strategic importance of accommodating each other's interests. The position of India shows less determination about being part of the East Asian region, and more concern about its own development and its relationship with the United States and China. Russia is acknowledged publicly as part of the future regional architecture by only one country, Korea. Korea's principal objective is to see that its security is preserved in the face of uncertainty on the Korean Peninsula, and that its relationships with both China and Japan contribute to its economic growth. Finally, Japan, beset by continuing governmental instability, has championed a wider grouping (the EAS) in the region than the narrower grouping (ASEAN Plus 3), which has been the primary objective of Korea and China. Japan's footprint and reach in Asia in trade, aid and investment terms continue to be massive.

In Southeast Asia there has been criticism of the United States' lack of concentration on the region (put another way around, of the US's attributing a lower priority to the region than to others), and its attachment to a security-related agenda where Iraq and Afghanistan absorb its energy. (And increased US aid in the region has gone largely to Indonesia and the Philippines to help them in their programmes against terrorism.) The absence of the Secretary of State from the annual ARF meetings in 2005 and 2007 has not gone unnoticed, nor did the postponement of the US-ASEAN Summit in 2007. Take, for instance, this

comment by three experienced Asian commentators (Tommy Koh, Han Sung-joo, and C Raja Mohan):

“Although the United States has been *the* regional power in Asia since the end of World War II, there is now some uncertainty about the relevance of US power given the current regional dynamics.”

The report went on to point out:

“Even if the United States was firmly committed to an East Asia community and wanted full membership, Asian countries may or may not welcome US participation [...] Nonetheless, even if the United States never joins the EAS, Asian nations must still engage with the US as a dialogue partner.”¹³

In some ways the US, having not declared its hand on how it wants to fit into the regional architecture, has led to a situation where certain countries can start to think about regional organisations without US membership. Fence-sitting may not be a valuable nor a viable posture for the incoming administration in Washington.

In the security field, the form of the architecture is very unclear. The longest serving organisation is the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which, despite some achievements in confidence-building and preventative diplomacy, does not lend itself easily, either by its processes or its membership, to being more central to the debate. The ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus concept is still in an early stage, and will need careful stewardship to bring participants together. The Shangri-La Dialogue offers a forum for security discussions, which all players find useful, but it is a conference not an organisation.

The predominance of the United States in the security field is acknowledged by everyone, including China and Russia: to the point that no country appears to

¹³ “Asian Views of America’s role in Asia 2008: an Overview”, The Asia Foundation, August 2008.

envisage regional security architecture without the full presence of the United States. For a number of countries in the region, of which Japan and Korea are the most significant, the bilateral security relationship with the US is critical. This relationship was directed originally against the Soviet Union, but in recent times all three sides have worked to make it more relevant to the evolving regional situation. And one should not neglect that the United States has given a form of security guarantee to Taiwan, which creates its own tension for relations with China.

There is the possibility that in Northeast Asia a new regional security organisation will grow out of the Six-Party talks [see above.] But it seems likely that it would be limited to that region (although both Canada and Australia have expressed interest in joining any formal organisation that evolves from the working group), and would not necessarily be the building block of a wider East Asia security organisation. At present, the SCO provides a mechanism in Central Asia, but again it is unlikely that other countries would be looking for it to extend its mandate to East Asia as a whole.

The forces of globalisation drive the partnerships in the economic and trade sphere. China's phenomenal growth and its rapid integration into the global trading scene have affected every economy in Asia, and further afield. China has replaced the United States as the main trading partner for Japan and Korea, as well as most Southeast Asian countries. The build-up of foreign reserves, largely denominated in US dollars, has shifted a vast amount of global wealth to Asia, a new phenomenon which has not been seen before in the post-Bretton Woods world, and the consequences of which are still to show. The current economic and financial crisis, from which at first some people thought that Asia would be protected because the Asian economies had "decoupled" from the United States and Western Europe, has had a recessionary impact across Asia. The

consequences for this are not yet clear, although it is clear that Asian states will play a more important role in future in any governance models in the international financial institutions. It is also likely that Asian economies, which have had strong growth rates over the last decade, may pull through the crisis sooner than OECD economies.

The slow pace at which the global trade liberalisation negotiations in the WTO have proceeded has led to a growth of bilateral and regional trade agreements. It needs to be remembered that APEC, for instance, was the first organisation to be established spanning the Asia-Pacific with the specific goal of achieving trade liberalisation. It has lost its way in that field, but has been a valuable meeting place for leaders from its member countries, and has created a pattern of intergovernmental consultation across the region. Membership is currently governed by a moratorium, but this will be addressed in 2010, when the question of India's membership, in particular, will need to be addressed. APEC also stands out because Taiwan and Hong Kong have separate membership – a state of affairs which is unlikely to be repeated in any new regional organisation.

The work which ASEAN has led in bringing about a series of ASEAN-partner free trade agreements has made a significant difference to the pattern of trade liberalisation in the region (the "noodle bowl" effect). With the conclusion of negotiations with Australia and New Zealand, and with India, there will be a pattern of agreements covering all the EAS members. This should lead over time to rationalisation between these various groupings, and opens up the possibility of achieving a CEPEA, the aim of Japan.

What conclusions do we draw about the roles of the major players?

1. The presence of China in every calculation. There is no country in Asia whose national interests are not affected by China. In many cases coming to terms with China is a new experience.
2. The same argument applies almost equally to the United States. We say "almost" because there is evidence that the role of the US in the growth of some Asian economies is declining (as China's is rising). In most cases dealing with the United States is not a new experience, but it is an evolving experience. The new administration in Washington will have to decide whether the US wishes to be more involved in regional diplomacy than is currently the case. The expectation of most Asian countries is that the US will have to attach greater priority to the region.
3. Japan continues to be an enormous force in the economic/financial fields across Asia. It is the largest investor, the largest aid donor, and, in some cases, the largest trading partner. Japan's policy execution is hobbled by the lack of government stability and leadership and by its relationships with its near neighbours. The importance of getting the Japan-China relationship "right" is key.
4. Korea seeks to be more active, both diplomatically and economically, in the region. Its economic power is growing rapidly, although it has been hit harder by the current crisis than some of its neighbours. It looks to the advantage of greater cohesion with Japan and China in northeast Asia.
5. India is still looking in at the region from outside, although its toes are in the water. It prefers to play bilateral rather than regional cards. Its

economic links into the wider East Asia region are still not commensurate with India's economic growth.

6. Russia is the least active of the external players. Its inclusion is accepted in respect of Northeast Asia, but not so sure in the newer structures developing in East Asia.
7. The construction of regional institutions that include all the possible players is not an easy task, nor is it likely to be all-embracing. There will be a number of different institutions in operation in tandem, with differing memberships.
8. Whether future organisations are Asia region only, or Asia-Pacific (the original APEC construct) is not yet defined. There is no clear agreement on this concept at this time.
9. The continuation of economic growth across Asia will continue to put pressure on governments to organise themselves regionally, particularly against the failure of Doha. As an example, the "noodle bowl" of FTAs creates distortionary pressures on all economies.
10. Regional security pressures remain. The most obvious are the Korean Peninsula, the Indo-Pakistan relationship, and cross-Straits tension. Myanmar remains an issue, both for ASEAN to which it belongs, and for others.
11. Regional architecture changes presage global architecture changes. This can be seen in several areas, for instance: the transfer of wealth to Asia; the increasing role of China in many multilateral institutions; and the ambitions of Japan and India to get UN Security Council permanent membership.