East Asian Regionalism and Japan’s Role

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EAST ASIAN REGIONALISM AND JAPAN’S ROLE

- East Asian regionalism is at a turning point and Japan’s role is crucial.
- Japan has been an active player in establishing and nurturing many regional institutions – APEC, ARF, ADB; it failed in its attempt to establish an Asian Monetary Fund (reappeared as the Chiang Mai Initiative – one of the most robust institutions in Asia)
- Japan again emerges as a key player and future regional architecture may depend upon which way Tokyo turns.

THE POLITICS OF REGIONALISM

- Japan’s alliance with the US and Washington’s commitment to re-engage the Asia Pacific.
- China–Japan rivalry and China–US strategic tensions

REGIONALISM NOW

- APEC is nearly defunct
- Mushrooming of bilateral FTAs/PTAs
- ASEAN in the driver’s seat
**PROPOSALS ON THE TABLE**

- Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – (Australia’s top regional priority; Japan has expressed interest; China is not part)
- Northeast Asian Free Trade Agreement (comprising Japan, China and South Korea)
- East Asian Free Trade Area (EAFTA); ASEAN+3 (China’s preference)
- Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA); ASEAN plus 6 (Japan’s preference); East Asia Summit (EAS): US and Russia as members adds difficulty.

**2012: YEAR OF POLITICAL TRANSITION**

- South Korea – national assembly and presidential elections; US presidential election; China leadership change; Japan revolving door PMs

**JAPAN’S KNOWLEDGE IN AUSTRALIA**

- Substantial decline in knowledge; fewer Japan academics (including professors) in universities
- No Australian government-funded dedicated Japan studies centre like for China (ANU) and India (Melbourne University)