

Team Solidarity: FEDERATION OF ASIA (FA)

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Membership

Region and Criteria

As the term “Asian Union” itself shows, the membership of the Asian Union should be opened to all countries in the Asian Continent regardless of their region. However, to be accepted, the country must satisfy two sets of criteria: economic and political.

Economically, a new member state must have a certain level of economic capability. To be more specific, the state must have a functioning market economy that is able to compete with other member

states, so that all member states would benefit from trading with each other. Economic criteria is especially important in order to not repeat the mistake the European Union has made. We do not want to experience financial crisis like the EU that occurred from the economic capacity gap between the member states.

Politically, a new member state must abide by the procedures of democracy within the institution, regardless of its domestic political system. In other words, the country must abide by the voting procedures and respect its result. This is to ensure that the council members can negotiate and make decisions based on a democratic frame, without one country dominating.

Although we acknowledge the need for Asian integration, at the same time, we also acknowledge the fact that it is too idealistic and difficult to integrate the 51 Asian countries¹ simultaneously. For this reason, we propose a starting point: South Korea, China and Japan. The reason for starting from the Northeast Asian region is because of two major factors. Firstly, these countries have high interdependence with each other especially in trade. Japan and South Korea are second and third individual countries in terms of trade with China.² Japan in particular has been the largest trading partner with China for five consecutive years from 2007, with the trade volume of US\$149.5 billion.³ Furthermore, South Korea is Japan's 2nd largest trader in Asia, with US\$62.4 billion.⁴

Secondly, the three states are geographically close to each other, and therefore share similar, important problems, the main example being security matters regarding North Korea. All three countries have an interest in solving the issue of North Korea nuclear weapon, and "the governments of the region, and particularly China and South Korea, may continue support on a bilateral basis as a hedge against North Korea's collapse or as inducements in the context of the nuclear talks."⁵

Expansion

Once the single market has been formed among South Korea, Japan and China, we hope to expand the membership of the Asian Union to other countries. A new member will be included after the negotiation among South Korea, Japan and China to decide whether the applying country satisfies the two criteria set. When a new member state joins, that member state will also be given the voting power as a council member to negotiate the inclusion of another member.

¹ "Total population (both sexes combined) by major area, region and country, annually for 1950-2100 (thousands)", *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN

² *Statistical Communiqué on the 2011 National Economic and Social Development*, National Bureau of Statistics of China http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/newsandcomingevents/t20120222_402786587.htm (accessed October 17, 2012).

³ Liu Junguo, "China Becomes Japan's Largest Trading Partner for Five Consecutive Years," *People's Daily China*, <http://english.people.com.cn/90778/7735801.html> (accessed October 17, 2012).

⁴ Daniel Workman, "Top Japanese Trade Partners in 2010," <http://suite101.com/article/top-japanese-trade-partners-in-2010-a363316> (accessed October 17, 2012).

⁵ Haggard, Stephan, and Marcus Noland. 2009. "A security and peace mechanism for Northeast Asia: the economic dimension." *Pacific Review* 22, no. 2: 119-137. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 19, 2012).

Structure of the Organization

The main decision making body of the Asian Union will be the Asian Council, comprised of heads of member states. The Asian Council will have the final decision making power, overseeing the departments, and executing the policies made. There will be four departments under the Council, each comprised of experts in that field from different member states. The five departments are: economy, natural resources, culture and education, and security and foreign policy.

These departments will come up with policies, and those policies will be put to a vote among the experts, who will be given different representation in accordance with their strength in that specific field. For example, the expert from China will have a greater say than the expert from South Korea in the Department of Economy. Then, that policy will be put to a vote among the Council members to be approved, and these council members will be given equal voting power. However, these departments would not be constructed all at once, but developed through different stages.

Phase 1: Economic integration

Integration among China, South Korea and Japan will begin from an economic integration, where they negotiate an FTA with political ramifications. Therefore, the Department of Economy will be formed, who will normalize the setting for trade negotiations, determining rules and regulations for the member states. Furthermore, the department will strive to achieve further economic integration and come up with new policies throughout different phases. These policies include providing subsidies to developing countries to enable them to satisfy the economic criteria and thereby join the Asian Union.

Phase 2: Further economic integration and Creation of Asian Identity

The formation of a single market will be pursued, and in order to focus on the issue of energy, which is critical nowadays, the Department of Natural Resources will be formed. This department will aim to promote cooperation among the member states to harness abundant energy in different nations, so that they can be utilized properly. At the same time, in order to minimize the nationalistic barriers and to maximize economic profits, the Department of Culture and Education will be formed, with the ultimate goal of fostering "Asian Identity." The department will provide a curriculum that incorporates different perspectives on Asian history, and as more number of students receive such education, there will be non-nationalistic perspectives on Asian history. Lastly, cultural festivals will be held to exchange different cultures and to create a place for them to come together.

Phase 3: Promotion of Security Cooperation

With strengthened Asian identity and thus more affiliation towards the Union, Department of Security and Foreign Policy will be formed. The aim of the Department is to unify the member states' position towards other states, so that there will be consistency in how they interact with states outside the Union. Also, promotion of security cooperation will be another main goal of the Department. Such cooperation will be task-oriented, meaning that countries will promote military cooperation when a need has arisen, such as North Korean provocation.

Ultimate Goal: Federation of Asia

Ultimately, we hope to achieve a Federation of Asia, a system that is similar to that of the USA. The Asian Council will work as the Central government, while each member state will maintain its own sovereignty and rules of law to self-govern itself.

Needs and Feasibility

Asia has numerous untapped potential markets and a population of nearly 4 billion people⁶. Thus, an integrated system and market will result in economic prosperity for the member countries. Clearly, economic interests is the reason we need Asian Union and why its formation is feasible.

Phase 1: Economic Integration

For starters, the impending Free Trade Agreement between China, Japan and South Korea can be used. The FTA is expected to have significant benefits⁷, and we can reasonably expect more benefits as more countries join. However, to prevent the impact of political fluctuation on the FTA, the three countries will sign an agreement to gather and try to normalize trade relations in the event of such political fluctuation. This will be possible because the private sectors will be wanting their monetary interest to be protected and thus push their government to sign it. In fact, "it was the corporations, their investments, and their trade that forged the preponderant ties"⁸ until now and thus further cooperation can be promoted by the private sector.

The FTA also has the capability to integrate other Asian states as well. Indeed, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao stated that "The establishment of an FTA will unleash the economic vitality of our region and give a strong boost to economic integration in east Asia"⁹. Especially with the subsidy provided to

⁶ "Population of Asia," Explore DIA, <http://exploredia.com/population-of-asia-2011/> (accessed October 19, 2012).

⁷ Du Xiaodan, "S. Korean Expert: Fta Will Benefit China, South Korea and Japan," CCTV News, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/newsupdate/20120512/104484.shtml> (accessed October 19, 2012).

⁸ Pempel, T. J. 2007. "Northeast Asian Economic Integration: A Region in Flux." *Asia-Pacific Review* 14, no. 2: 45-61. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 19, 2012).

⁹ Chris Buckley and Sui-lee Wee, "East Asian Powers Agree On Trade Pact Talks," Business, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-13/business/sns-rt-china-summit-update-3-pix-tvl4e8gd02v-20120513_1_trade-pact-free-trade-investment-treaty (accessed October 19, 2012).

developing countries, more countries will be encouraged to join and thus economic integration among Asian countries will be possible.

Phase 2: Further economic integration and Creation of Asian Identity

Once the communities experience economic development, while immune to political turbulence, the private sector will continue to pressure for further economic integration and eventually form a single Asian market.

At the same time, the Department of Culture and Education will be formed to provide a curriculum that incorporates different perspectives on Asian history. As more number of students receive such comprehensive education, scholarly discourse will be promoted, and thus discussions on history will be less nationalistic, but more objective. The anticipation is that the objective discourse in the higher academic sector will trickle down onto more basic forms of education such as elementary school. Lastly, cultural festivals will be held with the purpose of exchanging cultures and strengthening Asian Identity.

Phase 3: Promotion of Security Cooperation

With the strengthened Asian Identity, political and security cooperation will become possible. When a threat arises against members of the Union, military cooperation will be invoked for that particular provocation. For example, the Asian Union will cooperate against the threat of North Korea. Furthermore, the member states will reach an agreement in their foreign policies, to maintain consistency in how they interact with states outside the Union.

Ultimate Goal: Federation of Asia

Ultimately, the Asian Union will reach a federation of Asia. This federation is needed because the member states require a central body to control and regulate the political and economic integration. Furthermore, with progress in economic and political integration without breaching domestic sovereignty, formation of such organization is highly feasible. Countries will not be reluctant to form such federation when their sovereignty and rules of law are respected.

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