

## Europe and Asia : what is common and what is alien

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It is a great honor that the Organizers of this Symposium extended to me an opportunity to participate as a presenter. I have been keeping interest in (1) Soviet and Russia's energy development, (2) Promotion of economic relations between Japan and the USSR, Russia and the CIS and (3) Regional cooperation (economic community in Northeast Asia) for more than 40 years.

I will introduce to you two of my viewpoints on "multi-lateral economic cooperation".

1. On how a conflicting and hostile relationship could turn into one base on co-operation, eventually resulting in closer regional integration, we can refer to the experience of France and Germany and their decision to jointly set up the multi-lateral European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. This formed the basis for the formation of the European Union as everyone knows.
2. Regarding the role of energy resources, the gas pipeline that was created, linking West Germany and the Soviet Union, is worth remembering as it was a large-scale and long term (20-30 years) deal that was struck in the atmosphere of the "East-West Confrontation". In this case, both sides needed to commit a large amount of trust towards each other. West Germany had to trust that the Soviet Union would never shut-off

the gas supply, while the Soviet Union had to trust that the West Germans would continue to buy Soviet gas.

Here, gas played a role as a clamp between these two countries.

At that time, West Germany, facing with widely prevailing recession, was seeking market for their machinery and steel products and, on the other hand, the Soviet Union was trying to look for its gas supply market to acquire hard currency which was indispensable for itself and for the allied nations.

Even taking into consideration such a fact, the deal would not have taken place if there was no mutual trust. In my opinion, this "Contract of the Century" reduced the "East-West" division between the two sides of the World, accelerated the ruins of the Berlin Wall, helped to facilitate the demise of the Soviet Union and became one of the most significant factors in the construction of the present World Order.

I would like to recall that this business agreement preceded a peace treaty between the both countries by half a year. "The Business lead the Politics"

My concerns:

1. In the region of Northeast Asia, there are resource rich countries and resource poor countries as well on the contrary. My interest is whether the countries in this region would be able to work closer among themselves the way France and Germany did in the formation of the ECSC.

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2. The second point is about “complementarity”, that is, mutually complementary relation. There obviously exists a complementary effect as to energy resources. As I explained above, some countries in this region are surplus of energy resources and the other – thirsty for it strongly. But, this fact doesn’t mean the existence of “complementarity” in the full meaning. What exists now is merely “complementarity” in a physical sense.
3. And then thirdly, what factors are indispensable for producing “complementarity” in a real sense? Let us return to this one of the most important key points later.

To address the questions I mentioned above, I would like to analyze the present situation of Northeast Asia. I have been studying Northeast Asia for a long time and engaged in various activities, relating to its cooperation.

Northeast Asia is exceptional because it has no regional cooperation framework. I do not deny that there exist multilateral consultation forums, but most of them are nothing but places to chatter. There is no sign of formulating a mutual binding multilateral institution. Far from it in fact, there is even a dispute over the international name of the sea located in the center of Northeast Asia. That sea looks like angry waters with swirling hatred and distrust.

None of the countries in Northeast Asia are energy self-sufficient except Russia. Thus, the idea of a Northeast Asia Energy Community which would tap into the Russian Far East as a major energy supply source could be a basis for regional cooperation. This proposal has been attracting a lot of positive attention and many international conferences have been organized to discuss this idea. This Symposium is also one of them. However, no progress has been observed in reality.

I have tried to interpret the situation in my own way.

The fact that intergovernmental cooperation is strictly an issue of governmental competence is the first essential point. The initial premise is recognition and action at the governmental level. The ECSC was established at the government level and so was the Gas Pipeline deal between West Germany and the Soviet Union.

The second important point is the existence of advocates. The ECSC was initiated by the top leadership of the countries concerned, proposed initially by the French foreign minister. The “Gas-Pipe deal” was implemented as a result of political decisions made by the heads of West Germany and the Soviet Union, namely Willy Brandt and Leonid Brezhnev.

Another important factor is the existence of a visionary country/statesman worthy respect and awe and appropriate for a leader in the region who might commit his determination to find ways to cooperate and promote confidence-building. Wealth or weapon is a matter of less importance.

Nobody would argue against the benefits cooperation might bring or the disadvantage enmity causes. Everyone agrees that pipelines and power transmission lines would not only transfer oil, gas and electricity, but also deliver reciprocal trust. If so, why has momentum towards cooperation not been generated in this region?

Some say that Europe and Asia are not the same: their heritage, culture, social history and so on are different; and this explains why Europe is successful in their regional cooperation endeavors while Asia is unable to do so. As for myself, I believe that regardless where we live, the heart we have is one and the same.

Northeast Asia has its own problems when it comes to regional cooperation and it could be said that there are some lessons to be learnt from the European experience. Instead of feeling resigned, we should strive to change the negative attitudes and perceptions that hinder the potential of Asia.