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**“...Foreign policy is increasingly becoming
world domestic policy.
We must adapt to this situation...”**

ผลกระทบของเอเชียที่แข็งแกร่งขึ้นต่อเยอรมนีและยุโรป

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บทความชิ้นนี้ เป็นสุนทรพจน์ของแฟรงค์-วอลเตอร์ ชไตน์ไมเออร์ (Frank-Walter Steinmeier) รัฐมนตรีว่าการกระทรวงต่างประเทศของเยอรมนี ในโอกาสครบรอบปีที่ 49 ของสมาคม Tönissteiner Kreis

ผู้เขียนได้เน้นย้ำการเสนอความคิดเกี่ยวกับความสัมพันธ์ของการเจริญเติบโตทางเศรษฐกิจ การแข่งขันอย่างยุติธรรมกับระบบตลาดแรงงาน และสถานที่การทำงานกับนโยบายสังคม ซึ่งกำลังถูกท้าทายด้วยปรากฏการณ์โลกาภิวัตน์ เพื่อส่งเสริมและสนับสนุนแนวความคิดดังกล่าวให้สอดคล้องกับกระแสโลกาภิวัตน์ ผู้เขียนได้เสนอแนวทาง 5 ประการสำหรับยุโรปและเอเชีย เพื่อพิจารณาในการร่วมมือกัน

กล่าวคือ (1) นโยบายของยุโรปต่อเอเชียควรจริงจังและเข้มแข็งมากยิ่งขึ้น (2) ต่างฝ่ายต้องเฝ้าระวังนโยบายของประเทศใหญ่ๆ เช่น จีนกับอินเดีย โดยเฉพาะนโยบายทางด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม เพราะนโยบายดังกล่าวสามารถมีผลกระทบในวงกว้าง (3) ยุโรปและเอเชียควรส่งเสริมการมีส่วนร่วมในเชิงยุทธศาสตร์ (4) ยุโรปควรเน้นการร่วมมือกับองค์การของเอเชียในระดับภูมิภาค (5) ทั้งสองฝ่ายจะต้องกำหนดระเบียบการของการเจรจาระหว่างกันให้ชัดเจน โดยเฉพาะมาตรฐานต่างๆ ที่ควรเห็นพ้องต้องกัน

THE IMPACT OF A STRONGER ASIA ON GERMANY AND EUROPE

Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Excellency,

Ladies and gentlemen of the Tönissteiner Kreis,

Anyone who has looked out over the skyline of a major Asian city comes back to Germany a changed person. And in saying this, I do not mean so much the impressive modernity of many East Asian countries, or the equally impressive transition taking place at the western Asian end of the Silk Road. Rather I mean the whole panorama, the "bigger picture" to which Asia opens our eyes.

Of all the regions in the world, Asia is the source of the most dramatic and, in historical terms, most enduring changes in our lives today – changes which have the power to call into

* The speech by Federal Foreign Minister of Germany at the 49th annual meeting of the Tönissteiner Kreis

question even our self-perception. The world watches the consistent growth of Asian economies with amazement. Should this trend continue, Asia will be home to three of the world's five largest national economies within this generation: Japan, China and India. Smaller Asian states are experiencing considerable economic momentum, too. Trade and investment between Asian partners have put an end to the previous one-sided orientation towards western markets. The logical result is that the gravitational centre of global economic development is shifting ever more towards countries of the Asia-Pacific region.

But Asia has clearly also gained greater political influence. It plays a confident role in defining themes and developments on the international stage, and is becoming active in regions where it previously had only minimal presence. What is more, and we could see this at the ASEAN Summit just recently: Asia may be growing slowly in political terms, but it is indeed growing noticeably closer together.

In light of globalisation, developments in Asia also have a direct impact on us, both politically and economically. I am not talking about the anti-globalisation hysteria sparked by a certain German current affairs magazine. On the contrary. What I am talking about is an enhanced perception of the relationship between economic growth, fair competition and the implications of labour market, business location and social policy. I truly believe that closer economic networking between Europe and Asia can bring political advantages for both sides, too. What is decisive is

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how we shape this network, so often insufficiently described with the buzz word "globalisation."

Allow me to elaborate in five theses the most important political challenges which face us in this respect.

First of all, we must strengthen European policy in Asia. Asia will not wait for Germany and Europe. If it is in our interests to influence developments in the region – and I have absolutely no doubt that it is – we must reach out to Asia.

Thanks to its bilateral policy, Germany has a good position in Asia. But only by intelligently combining bilateral relations and concerted European action can we exploit the potential for an active and visible European policy in Asia.

For a long time – perhaps even too long – Europe has not been one of Asia's prominent political partners. This applies to the fields of security and stability in particular. Colonial connections aside, political encounters with Asia up until the end of the last century were relatively few and far between. Europe's political significance and influence continues to be somewhat underestimated in Asia.

We have now begun to address and eliminate these shortcomings. I might point to the successful initiation of negotiations on partnership and cooperation agreements with a number of Asian countries, discussions on new trade agreements, the launching of strategic and energy-related dialogue, participation in Asian organisations and our intensification of contractual ties with, for example, the ASEAN community. Trade

agreements carry special political symbolism here, implying as they do political as well as economic interests.

Until recently, Europe was the only major stakeholder in Asia not to have trodden this path. And with good reason; as our highest priority was and remains establishing agreement within the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We will continue to hope for this agreement while addressing the question of bilateral agreements more pragmatically where they make sense – and goodness knows this is not always the case. This approach offers us new opportunities in Asia. Already today, it is clear how interested our Asian partners are in what the EU has to offer. We are establishing ourselves as a natural partner to Asia over the whole range of relevant political and economic matters.

My first thesis is thus that we must use the European dimension of our relations with Asia to become politically and economically more effective.

My second point comes back to my initial idea, i.e. that "size matters." Maybe some of you here also played the car version of top trumps when you were young. The question was always which car had more cubic capacity and which had more horse power. Children playing "country top trumps" today would probably discard the European cards straight away or swap them for Asian ones. The Chinese card would be particularly coveted: the largest monetary reserves in the world, the largest coal industry, the highest steel production – and the list could go on. But the same applies to the dark side of globalisation: China's

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environmental record, its hunger for energy. China already consumes twice as much energy as the second largest industrialised nation on earth – Japan.

Half of Asia's energy demand stems from the development of transport. The consequences for health and infrastructure in Asia's megacities can be easily predicted. When we consider that standard levels of per capita consumption in almost every growth-related area in Asia currently represent just a sixth or a tenth of those in the west, it is clear what we will have to reckon with in future. As consumption levels in Asia catch up with those in the west, critical developments will become ever more acute. The political implications of these "size" developments represent one of the greatest challenges of our future.

Let me make my position clear: Just as I am opposed to anti-globalisation hysteria, I am equally opposed to resigned talk about a growth apocalypse. We are not simply helpless in the face of these developments. It is nevertheless apparent that the next 20 or 30 years will be decisive in terms of how we use our planet. It would be impossible to address in this speech the challenges which face us in this respect in any comprehensive way. I will thus limit myself to a few cursory remarks:

The pursuit of western standards cannot and should not be criticised. It is important to remember this, as the challenge from Asia is often portrayed as a deliberate attack or a targeted threat. It is clear that the policies of nation states the size of India or China will have global dimensions. Decisions taken in these

countries have a direct impact in other areas of the world – as I said, size matters. This applies as much to climate policy as to the use of resources.

Our contacts with these states today are no longer a matter of bilateral relations, but a question of our common future. And this interaction is in no way a one-way street. This is why we want dialogue and joint action in all significant policy areas. Our interest is in sustainable development at national, regional and international level. If we are all to benefit from solutions, we must make sure that we develop these together. If we want Asian countries to play a responsible role on the international stage, then we must play a responsible role in Asian development. We must reach out to Asia in this respect too.

Thirdly, and this is the logical conclusion: we must promote and, above all, more clearly define the extension of strategic partnerships. We have three main tasks in this respect: firstly, ensuring stable development within the countries and the smooth integration of India and China into the regional and international political context, accompanied and supported by an enhanced partnership with Japan. Secondly, shaping economic development in Europe and Asia to mutual advantage. This means above all securing the basic conditions for fair competition and sustainable economic activity. Thirdly, defining security and cross-sector tasks at regional and international level. The focus here should be on strengthening the United Nations and implementing multilateral solutions.

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I would now like to move onto a fourth thesis, which is connected to the previous three, but states furthermore that if we need to strengthen the European approach, if "size matters" and if strategic partnerships are to define our future, we Europeans must also intensify cooperation with regional organisations in Asia. And as strange as it may sound, we must do this precisely because Europe is a successful model. Asian development testifies to this. For like Europe, and thanks to the example of the European Union, Asia today can be considered more as an area of dynamic networks than as an assortment of bilateral relations. This is why we must strengthen partnerships with regional organisations, secure membership and observer status in new structures in Asia and use these positions to play an influential role in Asian issues.

Already in southern Asia, the EU is applying for observer status in the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation). It has strengthened its participation in the Asian Regional Forum, a key player in terms of security-related issues. With the 30 year anniversary of EU-ASEAN partnership this year, we will significantly build on and extend political and security policy ties. This is particularly important as the last ASEAN Summit saw the community agree on an ambitious charter project for intensified integration – a project which will bring stability and security to South East Asia.

We must promote open regional organisations in Asia and support democratic states. Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand remain our points of reference. The EU must

cease to view the continent from afar and adopt a creative internal perspective. Only in this way will we be able to "take a seat at the table" in Asia.

This creative perspective means first and foremost making a contribution to security in the region. I would like to mention two areas of danger. First of all, there is energy security, and more generally, the issue of access to vital raw materials. You are all aware of my opinion here, namely that we must stop natural resources from becoming the currency of power in the 21st century. Secondly, and I will dwell on this point a little longer, there are dangers arising from the aggressive nationalism, fundamentalism and xenophobia present in many regions in Asia – a region containing at least three nuclear powers.

Europe will not be able to be a partner to Asia in the long term without making a contribution to security in this area. This means comprehensive development aid, advisory projects, promoting multilateral regulations and civilian conflict management. Here we need to be more pro-active. Europe does not need – with regard to Asia in particular – to hide its light under a bushel: it plays a leading international role in defining standards in the area of "soft power," such as benchmarks for good governance, social equality, environmental protection, energy efficiency and sustainability. We have a duty to present and promote the European model with confidence, in Asia as well as in Europe. We can and should extend our security identity in Asia beyond the "hard power" possessed by the US in particular. This approach

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has already proved successful, for example in Aceh/Indonesia last year. We should continue to take on responsibility wherever this makes sense.

In conclusion, I would like to expound a fifth thesis, namely that we must define the rules of dialogue. This means engaging China and other Asian countries and ensuring their commitment to responsible international action and respect for international standards. This goes for the observance of human rights as well as for a responsible policy in Africa. I am quietly confident that this will be successful. China itself has made progress recently, seeking inclusion in multilateral structures. Deficits nevertheless remain, for example in its human rights record at home and its structuring of aid programmes abroad.

But neither are we – and I would like to make this quite clear – beyond reproach. We should use the planned exchange to agree on the aims and principles of our policies. What do we want in Africa? What standards should govern the donating of international aid? After all, in Asia we are dealing with states which are economically successful without being democratically sound. Neither is this a new phenomenon – Germany in the 19th century serves as just one example. This is all the more reason to hold fast to the concept of the rule of law and the political values of democracy and human rights in general. We cannot shirk these issues. Rather we must increase our efforts to engage in confident and indeed critical dialogue with our Asian partners.

Development in Asia has changed the basic conditions for our foreign policy. And confronted with the uncomfortable realities of today's world, it is in our own interests not to pull the German blanket over our heads.

Our future is out there in the world. Foreign policy has for a long time now meant more than classical diplomacy, and today extends to a range of internal policy areas, from the environment to the economy. China's and India's environmental policy in the next few years will play a fundamental role in deciding whether our grandchildren come to know Germany's highest mountain as a snow-covered one, or whether all of the ice will have melted by this time. To put it succinctly: Foreign policy is increasingly becoming world domestic policy. We must adapt to this situation. Our way of thinking here in Germany needs to become more international, and we must embrace problems and cultures which have affected us little up to this point. This applies not only to politicians, but to companies and managers, trade unions, education ministers, teachers and pupils, and initiatives and associations like your own.

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Note

The Tönissteiner Kreis was founded in 1958 by leading German business associations, the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany and the Federal Government. The organisation is a non-partisan network of decision-makers from science, public administration, business, trade associations and politics aimed at promoting political dialogue and preparing young leaders for international responsibilities. It is supported by the Federation of German Industries, the Confederation of German Employers' Associations, the German Academic Exchange Service, the German Association of Chambers of Industry and Commerce and the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities in Germany.

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