
Erik Lenhart**Derek McDougall: Asia Pacific in World Politics,****Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007, 371 pages, ISBN: 1588261948****Abstract**

Práca Dereka McDougalla „Asia Pacific in World Politics“ je analytickým úvodom do výskumu vzostupu dynamickej role ázijsko-pacifického regiónu v súčasnej svetovej politike. Sústreďuje v ňom na hlavných regionálnych aktérov Čínu, Japonsko a US. Rovnako sa zameriava aj na konflikty zahŕňajúce Taiwan a Kóreu, vývoj v Juhovýchodnej Ázii a vplyv Ruska a Austrálie v tomto regióne. V tretej časti sa zaoberá mierou vplyvu a štruktúrou medzinárodných organizácií pôsobiacich v ázijsko-pacifickom priestore. Profesor McDougall zahŕňa vo svojej práci širokú paletu tém: medzinárodnej bezpečnosti, medzinárodnej politickej ekonómie, ľudských práv, rozvoja, demografického vývoja, pašovania drog, organizovaného zločinu, otázky utečencov a životného prostredia. V analýze vychádza zo svojej staršej publikácie "The International Politics of the New Asia Pacific", určuje kľúčové udalosti vo vývoji medzinárodnej politiky v tomto regióne, ako aj domáce jednotlivých aktérov. Pokúša sa i v závere o predikciu vývoja v tomto dynamickom geostrategickom regióne.

Key words: Asia Pacific, China, Japan, USA, Korea, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, International Organizations, International Security, Human Rights

Derek McDougall is an associate professor in politics at the University of Melbourne. His numerous publications include Studies in International Relations and Historical Dictionary of International Organizations in Asia and the Pacific.

Asia Pacific in World Politics offers an introduction to Asia Pacific's dynamic role in contemporary world politics. The book is analyzing the international politics of the Asia Pacific region. This work focuses on the region's major state actors - China, Japan, and the US - as well as on the conflicts involving Taiwan and Korea. He then turns to the international politics of Southeast Asia, concentrating his focus on Indonesia and concludes with

discussion of Russia, Australia, regional international organizations (ASEAN and APEC), and the United Nations and its agencies.

As the global "centre of gravity" shifts from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia Pacific, the need to comprehend Asia-Pacific dynamics becomes fundamental to a fuller understanding of world politics. Thus, on the basis of its subject matter alone, the book under review fills an important niche on the personal and institutional bookshelf. Cogently written, it lucidly provides an excellent introduction to East and Southeast Asia. Therefore it is surely recommended to be a feature on many undergraduate course lists from the coming academic year itself. Indeed, the book has the "feel" of an introductory course on Asia Pacific International Relations.

The first positive feature of the book is its chapter plan. The introductory chapter defines the scope of the book, places the subject matter in a historical context and highlights the most important, historical, political, economic, social, and cultural features of the states and societies of the region. The six chapters that follow in Part 1 focus on the major powers in the region, the United States, China, and Japan: the first three lay out the respective national contexts in which the Asia-Pacific policies of the United States, China, and Japan have evolved, while the latter three focus on the cardinal bilateral relationships (Japanese-US, Sino-US, and Sino-Japanese). It also examines their objective and compares the actors in absolute terms of their military and economic projections in the region.

"China and Japan as the major regional powers will become increasingly more important. The US will remain as a significant factor in the international politics of the region, but its influence will decline compared with the present." McDougall also argues that the impact of India on the Asia-Pacific would also increase. He believes there will be a high degree of fluidity in the international politics of the region, rather than polarization. The North Korea could be an example for his argument where the external actors (Japan, PRC, ROK and Russia) prefer more consensual approach. The current Bush administration is known for the distaste to the current North Korean regime and it doesn't want to reward its blackmail strategies.

He predicts that Korea and Taiwan will remain as potential ‘flashpoints’ in the North-East Asia region, although the likelihood is that these conflicts will be contained. He also foresees possible intrastate tensions in South-East Asia but not necessary interstate conflicts. The possible area of conflict could be South China Sea due to various claims and especially by growing economic and military power of China.

The Asia-Pacific and East Asia in particular, will carry increasing political and economic weight in world politics. At a broader level he sees an issue for Australia in the balance it should strike between prioritizing its relationship with the US, and allowing for the development of relationships with the most significant East Asian countries. With the regional powers of China and Japan becoming more important and the US less so, Australia would need to give more attention to its regional relationships.

The role of Russia will diminish in Asia Pacific and it will be active in Russian Far East and he argues that Russia will be involved as energy supplier in this region. In chapter on China his analysis goes deeper and Professor McDougall argues that the Russian competes with China and USA in Central Asia especially after 9/11. The involvement of the USA in this region because of War on Terrorism in Afghanistan made Russia and Chinese nervous since these powers considers this region as their traditional backyard¹.

The book is useful to give general overview on three major powers and their objectives in the Asia Pacific. There are monographs which could provide deeper details on each power or on the bilateral interactions; however, the advantage of „Asia Pacific in World Politics” is its broad and analytic approach in regional context. Author selects historical key events, which formed the following eras of each of the actors as one element of their political behavior. Each country of these has its specific domestic actors, which are also considerably responsible how these countries interact in Asia Pacific. Professor McDougall takes in consideration the public opinion, which also has on behavior of states in International Relations. For Japan and USA there is one common element that they are both liberal democracies and the public opinion is an element, which cannot be “guided” as easily as in authoritarian China.

¹ It is similar to Chinese activities in Latin America, which USA considers to by its traditional backyard.

Each of the power has its strategic goals in the region. In case of the USA the strategy is to uphold the balance in the region and either contain or engage China. He identifies the relation between China and USA as interdependent. They are interdependent both economically and in matter of international security. He identifies a possible point of confrontation which both parties are trying to avoid. He defines the position of USA toward Taiwan as “strategic ambiguity”. This issue is sensible to China which considers Taiwan as its territory and as a renegade province. Both USA and China want resolve North Korea issue peacefully and both consider it as a problem, which has impact on entire region. It has impact on Japan, which is perceived by USA and China differently. China fears that Japan can feel threatened by North Korea and could start its rearmament². USA would like Japan to share more of the burden of international security and some parties in USA want Japan to have similar relation with USA as UK has.

The goals of China in Asia Pacific region are to strengthen its position in region. It doesn't necessary mean PRC desires to dominate the region. China want also achieve reunification with Taiwan. PRC has reintegrated Hon Kong and Macao and Taiwan is the last territory as China proclaims, which needs to be reintegrated. China wants to overcome humiliation, which lasts since the Qing dynasty on loss of its territories. China needs Taiwan back not only satisfy its growing nationalism and the economic advantages such as enlargement of the EEZ. China wants to demonstrate that as regional power it controls it's all territory to be treated as an equal power.

Japan is trying to become a “normal state”. It is trying to redefine its position in the international system. Japan as a defeated aggressor after WWII has become to American zone of influence in the Cold War System. Japan failed to get a seat as permanent member of the UN Security Council, which was blocked by China. The Japanese war guilt resonates strongly in China and Korea even today³. The rising China is for Japan a threat and an opportunity⁴. Both Japan and China are very pragmatic in foreign policy. Japan is only “restricted” in its pragmatism by the USA.

² We can see recent Japanese constitutional changes and antimissiles tests as respond to this threat.

³ Only recently China commemorated 70th anniversary of the Nanjing massacre.

⁴ Japanese investors are relocating their investments from USA to China and other emerging economies.

The bilateral relations with USA are sometimes problematic for Japan. USA wants Japan to bear more of the global security burden and to open its agricultural market to the USA. There is a discussion in Japan whether to abandon or to continue Yoshida Doctrine. Japan has the technology and could obtain nuclear weapons easily. There is still Hiroshima syndrome and a long tradition of Japanese pacifism, however, there is also a new generation of Japanese who didn't remember WWII and is asking for more assertive posture of Japan. Professor McDougall argues that because of Japan is the world second economy (even though it is spending not much more than 1 per cent of its GDP on military) it has fifth largest military budget in the world according to the NATO statistics.

The South-East Asia is after 9/11 and Bali attack an interesting area in terms of international security for USA and Australia. With democratization in both Indonesia and Philippines these both states became more vulnerable to radical Islam groups and their separatists movements.

Professor McDougal's aim is to bring near very dynamic and interesting region of Asia Pacific to the academics and especially to students. Methodologically he is combining both realist analysis and also liberal approach on low politics. He is offering a broad perspective, which includes political, economic, historical and security features, cultural aspects and issue of human rights is also included.