



INFRASTRUCTURES AND CONNECTIVITY IN ASIA - PACIFIC : THE CASE OF MAINLAND ASEAN COUNTRIES

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- ◎ **Future growth must be quality growth:**
 - ◎ Secure;
 - ◎ Culture -based; and
 - ◎ Environment friendly
- ◎ **Some Asian countries are growing out of subsistence, but very much less and less so.**
- ◎ **Top on the list of secure growth:**
 - ◎ Food Security ;
 - ◎ Education for all ;
 - ◎ Universal Healthcare; and
 - ◎ Energy Security

- ⊙ **Growth must be driven by commerce, i.e., trade and investment**
- ⊙ **ASEAN-based commerce can now be relied upon as a growth driver, a new paradigm shift:**
 - ⊙ **Rising income;**
 - ⊙ **Better utilization of resources;**
 - ⊙ **Allowing market forces to work, etc.**
- ⊙ **New and additional means of connectivity will enhance ASEAN commerce.**

- ⊙ **Commercial infrastructures of the original ASEAN 5+1 were built to serve the Western- oriented commerce.**
- ⊙ **Businesses with North-east Asia could be served by these infrastructures, i.e. the main seaports and airports, all well equipped with the needed out-of and into border facilities.**
- ⊙ **Now more and more trade is cross border trade, particularly trade among the mainland ASEAN countries.**
 - ⊙ **For example, for Thailand, trade with the immediate neighbor countries was US\$ 37 Bn out of US\$ 462 Bn, or 8.3%, in 2011, 78% of which was cross border trade. And this trade has been growing at double-digit rate.**

- ◎ **So, even with poor connectivity, physical infrastructures as well as other complicated procedure, trade still flourished.**
- ◎ **Cross-border trade could also be relied up on for trade beyond border.**

Through cross –border trade, a country like Thailand could reach trade destination beyond border such as Vietnam, Southern China, Singapore, Bangladesh, and India.

- ◎ **Attempts have been made to build more physical infrastructure for better connectivity. For example, the third Thai-Lao bridge over the Mekong river was opened symbolically on 11/11/2011, the Armistice Day. The fourth bridge in the Northern Thailand and Lao PDR is about to be built. And there is a project to connect the Eastern Seaboard of Thailand to Tavoy in Myanmar.**
- ◎ **The grand scheme for connectivity among mainland ASEAN countries plus China has been built on the ADB-sponsored concept of economic corridors including East-West, North - South, and South - South. Parts of these corridors are now in operation.**

- ④ **And with the rapidly opening of Myanmar for commerce, the economic corridor concept is becoming a real commercial proposition.**
- ④ **I have learned that while physical infrastructures always take time to be built, but with a certain known timeframe, the institutional infrastructures for cross-border trade may take even longer to be implemented, and with often unknown timeframe. This could delay the real connectivity .**
- ④ **Why is this so?**
 - ④ **I believe it is because of the history of our relationship, particularly after the Second World War when we were mostly engaged in nation building in one form or another, economically, socially and politically.**

- ◎ **Many of us were driven apart by different ideologies, and especially by the Cold War.**
- ◎ **Now, we must look at this period only as a blip in the long history of our relationship, and learn more about the periods of our common interests.**
- ➡ **We must learn more about our past.**
- ◎ **By doing so we will find we have so many things in common, some good, some not so worthy.**
- ◎ **This knowledge and understanding about ASEAN are crucial for better connectivity.**
- ◎ **With modern ICT technology, the learning process has been very much facilitated.**
- ➡ **We only need the will to do so!**