

Public Diplomacy and Bridging in the Climate Change Debate: Assessing South Korea's Leadership Role in New Middle Power Forums

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Abstract

This 'me first' 'smart' diplomacy of new middle powers such as South Korea is now aiming to bridge developed and developing states within key global organisations. This is leading to potential strategic breakthroughs in the current climate change negotiation deadlock. At the same time, such acronym organisations are also disrupting more familiar regional and multilateral alliances. The paper critically assesses what is actually meant by the term 'bridging' given the new geopolitical and geo-economic dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region, and how this initiative affects South Korea's more proactive middle power role in the regional and global environmental debate. The paper discusses how this role is impacting upon and reflects potential challenges to traditional understandings of regional forums in the Asia-Pacific and some of the more traditional understandings and expectations of power in International Relations.

Introduction

Public diplomacy was originally defined as:

The influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of inter-cultural communications. Central to public diplomacy is the transnational flow of information and ideas.¹

It is often assumed that middle powers have more international credibility with the use of non-threatening public diplomacy as soft power, and yet there is also a tension with matching international roles with domestic policy for credibility. Middle powers promote niche diplomacy by creating new alliances as 'good global citizens' (Bisley 2009, 2011). Middle powers are often defined as to 'what they are not' within the architecture of the international system. During the Cold War, it was often assumed that the era represented the artificial iron curtain undercutting of more 'authentic' regional alliances based on history or culture. In the post-Cold War era of 'the rise of the rest' and new middle powers are also going beyond the limitations of geography by cementing new middle power alliances through national and 'imagining' autobiographies (Patience 2013).

These alliances are, despite the 'public' emphasis, often 'elite-led' and based on either technical

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¹ <http://fletcher.tufts.edu/Murrow/Diplomacy>.

‘win win,’ or solidarity ‘South-South’ or by revitalising old histories (‘silk roads’) which can counter-productively enflame historical prejudices and regional enmities. In this sense, national autobiographies and ‘destinies’ are being tightly controlled as ‘official’ elite-led narratives. In many respects, middle powers also have to care about the match between domestic policies and the way they promote these policies internationally as ‘global citizens’ with a need for soft power credibility. History revisionism is a particularly sensitive issue in the Asian region, as is how to identify and to define the region (and its borders) as East Asia (China orientated) or Asia-Pacific (US oriented) or Indo-Pacific (Australia and US) is often a manifestation of such narrative constructions. Indeed, right-wing nationalists in China, Korea and Japan now paradoxically all share a common macro view of revisionism of the post-war order as ‘inauthentic’.²

Public diplomacy has a targeted audience, using a set of resources and assets, and a chosen medium through which to diffuse the contrived message. In the Asia-Pacific region there are three perhaps broader dynamics, which are currently affecting the positioning and role of middle powers. First, what Kishore Mahbubani terms the great convergence(s) and emerging divergences. There is some dispute as to whether these divergences are a part of a dialectical but uneven convergence or a counter to a particular version of convergence. In this respect, regionalisation is viewed either as a resistance to a particular form of globalisation whilst still reinforcing and containing alternative models of ‘free trade’ as a decoupling from the Western processes and narratives. Secondly, whether middle powers might supplement or challenge regional processes/organisations and aim to create alternative middle power forums, often as a result of the limitations of regional forums (dominated by regional hegemon(s)) or as a result of an exclusion from multilateral organisations. Thirdly, whether the specific middle power alliances might, however, on particular issues such as climate change resilience, supplement, strengthen (or weaken) regional institutions and whether these processes themselves are impacted upon by specific middle power alliances as emerging powers.

In this paper we explain reasons for the rise of the new middle power alliance MIKTA. We discuss the strategic decisions, regional context and roles that have led to interest in MIKTA, from Korea, Indonesia and Australia. Moreover, this ‘KIA’ alliance within MIKTA has its own particular regional dynamics and the expansion to MIKTA (with Mexico and Turkey) therefore represents the ongoing issue of determining as to what counts as the legitimate borders of the Asia-Pacific, the Indo-Pacific or East Asia. The three states are all US allies, G20 members and regionally pivot around ASEAN. All three nations have, at the same time, ambiguous and paradoxical strategic tension with economic reliance on China. Korea and Indonesia are becoming key pivoting triangular diplomacy in the region and overseas particularly in the global South. All states have the strategic issue of deciding whether to expand or obstruct the existing regional organisations such as ASEAN, the East Asia summit and APEC, to build upon the existing structure, to complement such structures with other organisations, or to extend to a wider (but not necessarily) more inclusive structure.

There are also questions of how to interpret MIKTA in terms of the behaviour of the US and China’s response to the US reengaging its maritime outposts in a new Pacific arc (California-Guam-Hawaii) or its Japan-US-India axis and China’s response to what it sees as ‘concirclement’ in its near abroad. The paper considers the following questions. How and why does MIKTA fit into these regional dynamics? Does MIKTA solve any middle power dilemmas in the context of these regional dynamics? Does MIKTA represent a new form of middle power but paradoxically undermine the essence of middle power alliance building as a traditional power balancer? Do MIKTA states have credibility imbalances between domestic policy and international aspirations,

² <http://en.kf.or.kr/?menu=578>

or may they become a victim of their own success?

We discuss these issues in the context of context of climate change in terms of big power or middle power relations. Climate change conferences (Copenhagen 2009) are known for big power gridlock and big power fear of being the first mover and free-riding. Middle powers can therefore be more active but also remain vulnerable and perhaps less resilient. Green growth is seen by Korea and Mexico as a new development paradigm for developing nations with no trade off between development and the environment, and thus bypassing stalemates between the global North and South. The paper considers the role of the MIKTA nations. This new initiative aims at the cooperation in the field of global governance among these five countries which are all G-20 members and have similar characteristics with regard to peaceful and constructive approaches to international issues, their democratic political structures and their rapidly growing economies. This paper is organized as follows: First, we discuss middle and new middle powers debate and strategic issues affecting and encountered by emerging powers in Asia-Pacific. Next, we discuss Korea and Australia in MIKTA and the origins and reasons of MIKTA. Next, we discuss environmentalism in Asia-Pacific region. Then we discuss middle powers and environmentalism and contextualize domestic debate on green growth from South Korean, Indonesian and Australian perspectives.

Middle and New Middle Powers Strategic Dilemmas

Middle powers often act to catalyse new agendas and new ideas and act as non-threatening bridge facilitators between nations by getting cooperation and interest in a specific issue agenda and act as managers such as setting up new and appropriate institutions and regulatory frameworks. The middle powers have a regional influence and a growing global importance. Some influence in the respective regions by like-minded states with expectations that they will play a greater role and whose time has come and whose voices should and can now be heard. In Matthew's (2003, 3) view, "middle powers are developing beyond their conflicted historic role as lieutenants of the great powers and the selective champions of peace and justice, and entering creative high-impact partnerships with powerful coalitions of non-state actors." Jordaan (2003) argued that middle powers demonstrate a propensity to promote global cohesion rather than radical change in the world system. Middle powers display foreign policy behaviour that stabilizes and legitimizes the existing global order and organizations to embrace compromise positions in international disputes and the tendency to embrace good international citizenship. This is clearly an early stage but new middle powers have increasingly financial and human resources for attending to 'low politics' issues whilst simultaneously reflecting changing networks of power and public diplomacy which are challenging the hierarchy of low and high politics. At least, two critical and important emerging roles can be identified with new middle powers (Bisley 2011; Spero 2003).

Hugh White (2009) believes that a middle power is "a state that can shape how the international system works to protect its interests, even in the face of competing interests of a major power." Middle powers seem to be those states with the increasing resource capacity to both avoid suffering at the hands of the strong, though without necessarily being capable of (or want to be) coercing others (Watson and Pandey 2014). We acknowledge that any definition of middle power is contested. We also do not argue that traditional security concerns are declining instead we argue that the bridging roles of new middle powers have played pivotal role in dealing with non-traditional security issues such as climate change and other borderless problems. There are strategic issues.

Firstly, whether to stay regional and consolidate, or whether to generate a more proactively leapfrog approach beyond regional institutions and engage more with multilateral organisations

and agendas as a way of enhancing a regional status as ‘network bridge’ or pivot. This is clearly not an ‘either/or’ but does impact on a states’ strategic emphasis and calibration. The middle power may, as a result, miss out if it does not move multilaterally or alternatively may move too soon and thus extend finite domestic resources which may mean a loss in status with the regional smaller states and cause domestic credibility and public opinion issues. Smaller states may continue to balance or bandwagon the regional power and engage directly with the regional hegemon meaning the middle power loses its role as ‘bridge’ and mediator. In this respect, a middle power’s vulnerable bridge role is reliant on both bigger and smaller regional powers.

Secondly, middle powers may be shown by the regional hegemons as being too ambitious, breaking ‘solidarity’ with the smaller states whilst the bigger states may move and coopt through promises of ‘foot in the door’ so to speak. As with China this is particularly the case if the regional hegemon continues to promote itself as anti-imperialist and as having a ‘shared experience’ as ‘international victim’. A regional power also has the luxury in its relations with the developing nations of still defining itself as ‘still developing’ and quiet, and thereby distancing itself with soft power credibility from middle power vocalism and middle power first mover ‘urgency.’ Middle powers may be perceived as ‘too ambitious’ and, as a result, their motivations are promoted as quietly deceiving, or, as too vocal and uncultured. Bigger powers can also use this to present themselves as either paternal or as benign ‘equal partners’ with other regional states. A middle power ‘going global’ may also mean that even within the multilateral institutions they may become excluded and may end up with the worst of both worlds as being excluded from regional organisations and multilateral groupings, slipping through the gaps and thus requiring their own ‘middle power’ alliance building and solidarity.

Thirdly, unequal development inevitably may create geopolitically and geoeconomically contesting middle powers. The ‘bridging’ capability may emerge but may become stretched, used, or weakened. Despite high metrics such new powers are not necessarily able to absorb shocks and not resilient. For instance, economically, Morgan Stanley (2014) called certain states the ‘fragile five’ (including Indonesia) with ‘high and rising current account deficits that make them more dependent on foreign capital flows. These are the ‘low hanging fruit’ development limits where much needed reform is also a risk for incumbent elites (undermining their position and the economically successful model as well as opening up pent up frustrations with reform uncertainties. This, as in Korea, often leads to disputes on any reform externalities so from the Conservatives wanting to stop reform and liberals saying not enough reform has gone through) and yet legitimacy and growth is also undermined without any reform. Such inequality and instability requires the need for more ‘bargaining’ or ‘no questions asked.’ Middle class demands and protests can, on the one hand, also become more difficult for elites to handle in a social media age. However, new middle class are similar beneficiaries of the neoliberal technocratic reforms as those in government. In this respect, the middle class maybe easily coopted as equally fragile and susceptible to similar elite concerns and securitising of threats from ‘the left’ or from rising fundamentalism. The state can no longer outpace the contradictions with the lack of domestic consumption, increasing debt and low savings. Reliance on capital inflows may also be affected by the US ‘tapering’ and rise of interest rates in the West. Elites often respond through a mix of conservative populism and neoliberal policies, legitimising their rule that they are not ‘foreign backed’ by making the case that to modernise does not mean to Westernise. Thus, there is the emergence of the ‘illiberal democracies’ and issues of demographic deficits and fiscal crises.

Regional Dynamics

Conventional expectations are that middle powers will prefer to balance or hedge with a rising regional hegemon (Grieco, 2014). However, the issue of what counts as a regional state is becoming more problematic. The US was regarded as a global superpower ‘in the region’ and yet

now promotes itself as already an Asia-Pacific state. Similarly, Australia has gone through a historical process of seeing Asia as a region to 'be protected from' or by 'engaging with', but now there is an agenda of Australia being 'a part of Asia.' Historically the liberals (as in Korea) have usually been more open to these regional dynamics and less suspicious of China. The rising of continental China for many, does not fit into a classic realist worldview given that the US is still a relatively major military/economic power. Yet with rising material prosperity, there is a perception that new middle powers might also generate their own balance either with the 'next most powerful state' or the existing state as opportunistic strategies.

Australia was posed as a middle power in the Cold War literature since 1940s, there has been a wide range of studies in the recent years that aimed to confirm Australia as a middle power (Beeson, 2011). Australian policy makers such as former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2008) and former Minister of Foreign Affairs have also positioned Australia as a middle power. Thomson investigated Australia's population, economy, military spending and military size to conclude, "from a military perspective we're (Australia is) a middle power behaving like a middle power" (Thomson 2005, 10). The 2013 White Paper states that this is an era of an 'ongoing strategic shift to our region, the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean Rim, particularly the shift of economic weight to our region' (Australian Government 2013, 7-9) with Australia within 'a new Indo-Pacific strategic arc' which 'is beginning to emerge, connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans through southeast Asia' and thus 'predominantly a maritime environment with southeast Asia at its geographic centre.' Whether this is building on promoting ASEAN as a geographic centre or whether this is a language being used as a quiet threat to China, or as a recognition of China's growing influence (Medcalfe 2014).

Indonesia might eventually join the ranks of Asia's great powers. Regardless of just how far Indonesia will rise, its government and the will of its people will become increasingly influential in terms of its regional leadership and the values and norms Jakarta espouses. The rising Indonesia and its image as democratic and a more stable nation has contributed to a significant deepening of security ties with some other nations such as Australia and these nations may well grasp the opportunity to continue doing so as Indonesia rises.

Indonesia still has high poverty rates, increasing income inequality and corruption, which could constrain any assertive role in international forums (Santikajava, 2013). Questions may also be being raised against ranking Indonesia as a new middle power in terms of its military capabilities. However, the strength of middle powers draw not only on their actual military and material capabilities, but also their geographical positioning vis a vis other countries and their functional status in international relations. Gilley (2013) argued, "Indonesia is a classic middle power; it is a newly democratic and rapidly developing country with significant military and diplomatic capacities" and it can also play significant role in resolving the issues of Asia-Pacific such as South China Sea border disputes and an increasingly important role in the making of global governance of challenging issues that the international community has been encountering. Indonesia has assumed a prominent position in the international diplomatic arena by becoming a member of the G20 and by co-chairing the UN High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Korea has turned its geographical liability into a strategic opportunity and sees itself as in a position to mediate between the large powers. Korea also sees itself as a voice for small countries and a bridge to the West with its democratic system and alliance with the USA. The US has articulated its re-calculated interests and has been military partners of Japan and Korea in what Robert Kaplan recently called 'Asia's cauldron.' Korea has its strong diplomatic alliance with the US and a focus on relations with the three surrounding major powers Russia, China, Japan. Korea

has also made its diplomatic aperture to move beyond traditional regional security interests to non-traditional issues. Korea's has shown a capacity to play an important role in a wide range of global governance issues from financial stability to development cooperation and green growth (Snyder, 2013). In 2010, Conservative President Lee explicitly positioned South Korea as a middle power country stating: "Korea is well-positioned to talk about the problems of the global economy and present solutions to them. That is because we are a middle power nation that has successfully risen from being one of the poorest countries in the world."³

The South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yun Byung-se, in August 2013 noted: "The Park Geun-hye government, as a responsible middle power in the international community, wishes to give back the help we received in the past. As a trustworthy friend, it wishes to make meaningful contributions to maintain the peace and stability of the international community."⁴ Joseph Nye, in 2009, argued, "South Korea is beginning to design a foreign policy that will allow it to play a larger role in the international institutions and networks that will be essential to global governance" (Nye 2009). Free-trade agreements are mired by a patchwork of individual agreements. Both Korea and Australia are active participants in this. Indonesia is in a slow process moving ASEAN towards a free trade area. An ASEAN+6 format – which would include all three middle powers. That would remove the FTA-process from the current power play structure where FTA offers are part of a political charm offensive from Asia's big powers. Australia as a Pacific power continuously has to show its relevance in an Asian context. Indonesia even with new-found independent ambitions will continue to be anchored in ASEAN. Korea still gets bogged down in its immediate surroundings in the complicated relationship with its difficult twin brother, North Korea. For Kim (2014) middle powers build bonds and connect not as a spider network but more of a honeycomb pattern. Kim notes middle powers should not be judged by individual attributes but as to their structural position which also means that outcomes are not reduced to intentions. Questions raised are where do resources come from, what makes a resource particularly suitable at a particular moment. Thus participation in alliances itself creates resources as a 'structuration' to connect otherwise disconnected groups through brokerage and leverage, a centrality not based on geographical position, but on a positioning in a network. The middle power acts as connector, messenger, transformer and translator which can paradoxically mean both structurally conservative (the structure has given middle power prowess) but ability to generate a radical agenda on a different understanding of power.

Adding to the Mix: MIKTA

Amidst the flurry of diplomatic consultations that focused on Syria and Iran among other issues at the UN General Assembly in 2013, five countries that consider themselves as new middle powers and G-20 members have banded together in a little-noticed move to form a new consultative group to create a new acronym MIKTA. South Korea, according to its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as one of the founding members, has agreed with four other middle-power states to establish a joint consultation group as part of its drive to muster collaboration with peer countries. The agreement, signed in New York by South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se with his counterparts from Mexico, Australia, Indonesia and Turkey, calls for installing the cooperative organization MIKTA.⁵

The Ministers of MIKTA states have thus far participated in two working sessions. The first was devoted to discussing the benefits of dialogue among their countries. MIKTA foreign ministers

³ http://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2014/jb_mr_140414b.aspx.

⁴ <http://www.theyucatanimes.com/2014/04/the-foreign-ministers-of-mexico-indonesia-south-korea-turkey-and-australia-held-meetings-in-mexico/>

⁵ <http://defence.pk/threads/mikta-is-a-new-alliance-borning.280308/>

noted that the gradual transformation of the international system opens a window of opportunity for their countries to further develop their constructive and conciliatory role in tackling pressing international issues, including frequent consultations on situations that may affect international peace and security. This dialogue and their commitment can lead to strengthening their relationships and to establish better cooperation, including on global governance, trade and development cooperation post-2015 development agenda, cyberspace security, climate change, human rights and migration, as well as the need for UN Security Council reform. Furthermore, they agreed to enhance their dialogue on issues such as trade and development in international fora such as the United Nations and the G20 (Jonas, 2009).⁶

For the Mexican government, this type of high-level meetings is consistent with the goal of President Enrique Peña Nieto's administration to position Mexico as an actor with global responsibility. Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia have demonstrated their ability to have high growth rates and open economies that benefit from free trade and foreign investment. From a geopolitical point of view, they provide a bridge between neighboring regions. The ministers stressed their common interests and similarities, such as the fact that they all represent open economies that promote free trade and foreign investment; are large democracies with strong economies and the potential for rapid growth; and they have strong domestic markets, moderate inflation and populations with increasing purchasing power. Australia will convene a meeting for informal consultations among the leaders in November during the G20 Leaders Summit in Brisbane.⁷

One issue raised has been as to whether such a grouping might be enhanced through encouraging bilateral ties as a way of 'connecting the dots' or whether increasing bi-lateral ties within MIKTA would enhance more exclusivity and exclusion. As an Asia-Pacific based forum there were also issues as to how MIKTA would relate to the current China-US 'cool war' and US backed initiatives such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, as well as whether MIKTA would strengthen or weaken the role of ASEAN and whether China or the US would prefer a strengthened or 'divided' ASEAN. Whilst a proactive forum concerns have been raised that the bigger powers would use MIKTA as leverage in their own bi-lateral relations. According to the Turkish foreign ministry in one of the first pronouncements in October 2013:

These five countries, which are active actors in their regions, significantly contribute to regional and global peace and stability and pursue similar constructive approaches in the face of international challenges. This platform is considered to have the potential to make important contributions with a view to facilitating constructive solutions to regional and global challenges, increasing the efficiency of global governance and implementing the necessary reforms in global structures. During the first MIKTA meeting held at Ministerial level, it was agreed to remain in closer cooperation and collaboration within the G-20 and other prominent international organizations and platforms, to further develop bilateral relations among the five participating countries, to determine the concrete fields where cooperation can be advanced in the framework of the initiative and to work in these fields...the MIKTA platform could fill an important gap in the international arena and could facilitate the

⁶ East Asia Institute, "Middle Power Diplomatic Strategy of Australia and Policy Recommendations for South Korean's Middle Power" Roundtable Discussions for Middle Power Diplomacy No. 4, http://www.eai.or.kr/data/bbs/eng_report/201310151120412.pdf.

⁷ "Radio and Internet address to the nation by President Lee Myung-bak [translated transcript]", *Korea.net*, February 8, 2010, <http://www.korea.net/Government/Briefing-Room/Presidential-Speeches/view?articleId=91043>

solution of major contemporary issues thus contributing to global peace, stability and prosperity.⁸

Although the MIKTA initiative has achieved little attention this far, South Korean and Turkish press defined it “as an informal and non-exclusive group of 'middle powers', cooperating to address some of the diverse challenges of an increasingly complex international environment”.⁹ Australia, Korea, Mexico, Indonesia and Turkey are the world's 12th, 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th largest economies in GDP terms (World Bank 2014). With the exception of Mexico, each of the members spends around 2% of its GDP on defense according to The Military Balance 2013.¹⁰ All members are committed to democracy and the rule of law, and each is influential in their regions. Critics may of course question the generalization of the group as ‘middle powers’ as Australia is considered to be a classic middle power, and South Korea has been articulating itself as ‘dolphin’ instead of ‘shrimp.’ Indonesia is just emerging. Yet, South Korea appears to be getting on with the job, rather than becoming bogged down in label ‘middle powers’ and comments from Australian diplomats such as Bill Paterson imply that Australia would also be similarly pragmatic, unfazed by debates about how to describe its constructive approach to diplomacy.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, “Australia and the Republic of Korea (ROK, also known as South Korea) are strong economic, political and strategic partners with common values and interests. People-to-people links between the two countries are increasing and make a significant contribution to the relationship”.¹¹ It further notes that South Korea sees itself as that is well-positioned to play a pivotal role on global and regional issues, such as disarmament, environment, climate change and economic governance and it appreciates the benefits of working together with Australia, which it sees as sharing similar values and interests. In this context, South Korea and Australia have come together more recently as members of MIKTA an informal and non-exclusive group of influential countries cooperating to address diverse international challenges.

MIKTA’s Foreign Ministers recent meeting took place in Mexico from 14 April 2014 to 16 April 2014. Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop stated, “Following our productive meeting in New York in late September 2013, this meeting of our five nations will focus on areas of shared interest including trade and economic cooperation, governance and development. We are all significant economies and regional powers, and we have an increasingly prominent role internationally. I am pleased to have the opportunity to further strengthen cooperation and bilateral ties between the five nations” (Bishop 2014). The five Foreign Ministers of MIKTA adopted a joint communique on the outcome of two-day official and unofficial consultations. They stressed that the gradual transformation of the international system opens a “window of opportunity” for MIKTA countries with common interests and similarities to further develop their constructive and conciliatory role in tackling pressing international issues.¹² The joint communique “underlined their countries’ common interests and similarities in that they represent

⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Republic of Korea, “Remarks by H.E. Yun Byung-se Minister of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea 10th Annual Iftar Dinner August 1, 2013”, August 2, 2013, http://www.mofa.go.kr/webmodule/htsboard/template/read/engreadboard.jsp?typeID=12&boardid=14137&seqno=312638&c=&t=&pagenum=1&tableName=TYPE_ENGLISH&pc=&dc=&wc=&lu=&vu=&iu=&du=.

⁹ “Indonesia: A new ‘middle power’”, *The Jakarta Post*, October 30, 2009, <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/10/30/indonesia-a-new-middle-power039.html>

¹⁰ “(LEAD) S. Korea agrees with 4 nations to form middle-power group”, *Yonhapnews*, September 26, 2013, <http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/09/26/0301000000AEN20130926009400315.html11>.

¹¹ MIKTA: Where middle powers proudly meet”, *The Interpreter*, November 28, 2013, <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2013/11/28/MIKTA-useful-whether-middle-or-pivotal.aspx?COLLCC=229722228&>

¹² <http://news.mofa.go.kr/ene newspaper/mainview.php?mvid=1793&master=>

open economies that promote free trade and foreign investment; they are large democracies, and resilient economies with potential for high growth rates; they have strong domestic markets, moderate inflation rates and populations with rising purchasing power”.¹³

Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se emphasized that for MIKTA to develop into a more mature cooperation mechanism, its activity and role need to be increased in three aspects—usability, visibility and ability—to serve multiple purposes. Yun stated that South Korea would draw up and present a ‘vision document’ on the way forward for MIKTA and ‘operating guidelines’ for smooth operation of the mechanism. This leadership role of South Korea for launching MIKTA and its further development was highly appreciated by the members and unanimously agreed to appoint Korea as the next chair of MIKTA. Korea continues to play a leading role in accelerating the development of MIKTA, including hosting of a MIKTA Foreign Ministers’ meeting to be held in the first half of 2015.¹⁴ Australia views mutual interests and the willingness to battle shared challenges as key indicators of states that are ready to enter the ranks of middle power nations. These linkages are being forged as nations like Australia and South Korea have to navigate between the established powers and a new set growing powers. These nations find common goals in battling environmental problems, improving energy security, and safeguarding themselves from cyber attacks.

Korea and Australia have been partners since 1951 under the US security alliance system. After sixty years, the two nations have realized that their shared national interests extend beyond security commitments, which has led to the recent introduction of MIKTA, an informal network of middle powers, who intend to use their unique position to promote shared international norms. Australia believes that the current international practices and principles that have formed the basis of the international order are being challenged in unprecedented ways. For example, Australia sees one such challenge in the reduced effectiveness of multilateral organizations, which was recently exposed during the UN Security Council’s difficulty in creating a resolution against Syria’s use of chemical weapons. Australia believes that, through sharing ideas, middle powers can identify innovative solutions to existing challenges that each nation supports. Therefore, it took the initiative to gather together a group of like-minded nations, which resulted in MIKTA. Although Australia does not view all member states as identical, but, rather, nations who share a common approach as the network is intended to be a coalition of convenience to accelerate international attention on issues that are of a wider significance to the world but are often fall victim of various power manifestations because of the exclusive groups such as BRICS.

The international community has already accepted South Korea playing a catalytic role that propels middle power initiatives into becoming global norms on various issues of concerns including green growth initiative. Although South Korea’s foreign policy is middle power multilateralism, the US-South Korea security alliance and its strategic economic partnership with China are sensitive and maintaining them in balance is very important for country’s health and middle power branding. Yet, on certain issues that are crucial to a country’s national interests, multilateralism can be inefficient due to the difficulty in achieving a consensus, in which case bilateralism can be implemented for better effect. Effective bilateral diplomacy or diplomacy from the forum of MIKTA can create synergy effects that bolster multilateral middle power diplomacy. Despite more than a dozen ministerial submissions from the department on this issue,

¹³ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/joint-communique-of-the-ministers-of-foreign-affairs-of-mexico_-indonesia_-the-republic-of-korea_-turkey-and-australia-_mikta__en.mfa

¹⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, “Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey and Australia (MIKTA) Gather in Mexico for Their Foreign Ministers’ Meeting”, April 16, 2014, Source: <http://news.mofa.go.kr/enevnewspaper/mainview.php?mvid=1793&master=>

and real urging from the South Koreans, building a coalition of middle powers requires patience, quiet diplomacy and a deep intellectual engagement with foreign policy — things that neither Bob Carr nor Bishop has shown much interest in. However:

In the absence of a more sustained Australian leadership, there is a real risk that the G20 meeting this year will succumb to the forces of complacency and a lack of consensus. But harnessing the collective power of the MIKTA group to drive the agenda on global economic reform has the potential to deliver the kind of legitimacy and credibility that the G20 desperately needs. Neither the maritime exercises in the South China Sea nor the MIKTA meeting in Mexico have received much media attention in Australia. But these are both core issues for Australian foreign policy. And a more considered national discussion on the state of the Australia-Indonesia relationship is needed (Ungerer 2014).

Environmentalism in the Asia-Pacific

The Asia-Pacific region in the latest IPCC report is regarded as the most vulnerable region to climate change (IPCC 2014). The region is seen as being the ‘most impacted by climate change’ (ADB 2012: 19). Such negatively impacted countries as a direct and indirect result of climate change are the strategic Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean islands. These are seen by the ADB report as the ‘Canaries in the coal mine’ - the first witnesses of climate change, alerting the rest of the world to the humanitarian catastrophe to come.’ Such portrayals, however, can often confuse ‘exposure’ with ‘vulnerability,’¹⁵ The Asian Development Bank recently stated that:

With more than half the world’s population and two-thirds of its poor, the Asia and Pacific region has seen remarkable economic expansion over the past decades. But progress has come at a high cost to the environment and, as a consequence, to human development. Having become a main driver of the climate change crisis, the region jeopardizes its own development. If future production and consumption patterns remain carbon intensive...Asia’s developing countries will account for more than 40 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade (ADB 2014).

Tensions between rapid development and protecting or conserving the environment (and for what purpose) are shown as splits between middle income state governments and civil society, as well as reflecting the interests of the growing but economically vulnerable middle classes.¹⁶ Rising sea levels have not only raised a myriad of humanitarian issues but are a constant reminder as to the nature of ‘environmental security’ and sovereignty on issues of migration, ‘moveable territory’ and the strategic role of smaller maritime states such as the Pacific Island Forum (PIF).¹⁷

According to former Korean Prime Minister Han, Seung-soo, ‘green growth is the innovative and revolutionary development paradigm that enables economic growth while preventing

¹⁵ This is a distinctive description in contrast to the ‘Asia-Pacific’ or ‘Pacific Asia’ which also have geopolitical and geocultural connotations.

¹⁶ ‘Green Growth’ *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/node/21529015>

¹⁷ ‘Drowning Kiribati’ <http://www.businessweek.com/articles/2013-11-21/kiribati-climate-change-destroys-pacific-island-nation>: <http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2014/06/08/president-of-kiribati-anote-tong-on-climate-change-its-too-late-for-us-on-cnns-fareed-zakaria-gps/>: China and Korea promote ‘south-south’ relations but with Beijing more bilaterally and Korea as more of a ‘bridge’. Japan in 2009 ‘sold’ itself to the Pacific Island Forum as sharing ‘island solidarity’. Korea’s relationship with Kiribati has been fraught over Kiribati’s granting of passports to alleged North Korean spies and over South Korean fishing rights. Kiribati’s 2012 accession to Korea’s Global Green Growth Institute had allowed the institute to transform from an NGO into a fully fledged organisation based at Songdo, Korea.

environmental degradation and enhancing climatic sustainability. It calls for a conceptual shift to recognise that both economic growth and environmental protection can be achieved in parallel.’¹⁸ Han Seung-soo also argued that Park, Chung-Hee’s (1961-1979) quantitative ‘paradigm of growth’ was rightly replaced by ‘Lee Myung-bak’s paradigm of green growth at a critical juncture in the history of mankind’ and as a consequence, ‘Korea was one of the early movers in the right direction.’¹⁹ There is also the view as to whether green growth *necessarily* leads to growth *and* inclusive ‘green’ development or is merely being used to shore up BAU developmentalism through ‘green zones’ which enables ‘non-green’ aid to be further provided. The current Park, Geun-hye administration has called for a ‘green growth part 2’ model arguing that the previous green growth efforts had emphasised ‘growth’ (and Chaebol interests) rather than ‘creative economy’ or economic democratisation. In a wider context there has also been identified a ‘nexus’ between development and security and yet contested narratives both on what counts as security or what it is that is being ‘securitised’ (states, individuals or ‘life’) also impact practices of governability.

Climate change is often put in all-encompassing apocalyptic terms but which produce rather ‘mundane’ strategies of risk management of ‘mitigation’ and ‘adaptation.’ Yet the mundane can, of course, often obscure subtle forms of ‘green’ state hegemony. Climate change narratives have been of ‘liberating’ or ‘unlocking’ or ‘un-tapping and releasing’ market and developing country potential. The role of donors is seen as to help finance any short term ‘trade-offs’ during the ‘green growth’ transition. Green growth is, in this context, to promote the equitable and efficient use of resources so as to generate economic stability and economic growth. There has also been a fixing together of the 2008 financial crisis and climate change.

Crucially, the view from Korea is that it is the developed countries that want internationally legally binding pledges, whereas the developing countries want more domestically legally binding pledges. On the other hand, an alternative view is that the developed nations in fact are more wary of such binding agreements (particular large states with fears of free riding) and it is middle powers in the North and South who are more open to consensus. Korea is not bound by Kyoto and has used this to give its green growth more ‘credibility’ that it is by choice a ‘first mover’. The GGGI has also launched its office in Abu Dhabi’s Masdar City to initiate the UAE as a ‘regional hub’ for Korea. Former Mexican President Calderon pointed out that

I always depart from a false dilemma. During the last decade, nations and governments believed that it was not possible to achieve two goals at the same time, that growth and protecting the environment were incompatible. That is a false dilemma. It is possible to make economic growth and the protection of the environment compatible; it is possible to tackle poverty and, at the same time, to tackle climate change.²⁰

Korea is to increase its ratio of ‘green ODA’ projects to around 20% of its total ODA by the year 2020. Korea’s green ODA transfers now include value added carbon capture technology and carbon-neutral technologies. In 2010 South Korea set up the Global Green Growth Institute and hosted the second Nuclear Security Summit and the second GGGI summit in 2012 in Seoul.

¹⁸ Han Seung-soo ‘Our Future in Green Growth’

http://pmo.go.kr/pmo_eng/activities/speeches.jsp?mode=view&article_no=42619&board_wrapper=%2Fpmo_eng%2Factivities%2Fspeeches.jsp&pager.offset=140&board_no=40

¹⁹ Prime Minister Han Seung-soo ‘Keynote Speech’ <http://gggi.org/keynote-speech-building-sustainable-asian-community-through-green/>

²⁰ <http://www.accenture.com/us-en/outlook/Pages/outlook-journal-2013-interview-felipe-calderon-former-president-mexico-green-growth.aspx>

Building upon the accomplishments of the first Nuclear Security Summit in 2010 in Washington, it provided a chance for over 50 world leaders to further substantiate the first summit's endeavour to improve nuclear security (Chang 2012). South Korea's national strength and international reputation are based on its wide-ranging human resource capabilities and economic sector diversity, resulting in an enviable set of high metric indicators. South Korea's successful 'low expectations' and 'quietness' has been supplanted by choosing a more risky, proactive and more highly visible public diplomacy through the 'global Korea' policies. As Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Kim, Sung-han put it, South Korea "chose the path not of local Korea but global Korea.

As Vice Minister of MOFA Kim Sung-han (2012) put it, "One means of promoting middle-power diplomacy within the G20 is to create an issue-driven, informal, and flexible dialogue mechanism among members who are interested in such middle-power initiatives". Nonetheless, emerging nations can lose credibility and support from the developing nations if seen to have been 'bought-off'. However, the possibility of an inclusion into but isolation from global institutions can, perhaps, be one explanation for the recent creation of new and specific 'middle power' alliances such as MIKTA. These groups are often created at the informal 'side meetings' of the major conferences and are often results of states' self-recognizing of 'acronym' solidarity.

As South Korean Vice Minister Kim (2012) at MOFA remarked, the world "now works not hierarchically, but in a networked fashion. In this world, no one can dictate what others have to do." Exporting 'green aid' is also a reflection of the wider South Korean interest in 'green growth policy.' This policy has led to competition amongst the Asian donors and generating concern from institutions such as the United Nations Development Program that 'zero-sum' competition for recipient support is leading to aid project replications and resource-wasting 'green washing' of projects. Green growth is to build a market-based development model through the effective use of 'green' asset resources. Green growth, therefore, challenges the traditional argument from, broadly, many countries in the global South that the West wants to 'stop their growth.' Green growth is the view that this 'trade-off' is a 'false choice' and South Korea through its green growth initiative is breaking the impasse of development versus environment and bridging the standoff between global North and South. However, there have been concerns that South Korea's development has been rapid precisely as a result of traditional 'brown' development and that if brown development is necessary to cultivate green growth policies, then why should other countries introduce green growth before the endogenous and 'natural' economic development has occurred.

Realizing that the platforms of the UN system alone cannot meet Australian expectations in addressing global challenges as noted earlier, Australia is seeking other forums such as MIKTA to contribute to address global challenges.²¹ Australia seems to be determined to articulate its middle power diplomacy for global economic and environmental governance from various multilateral and bilateral forums. Regarding environmental issues, Australian government notes, "The plan for a cleaner environment is central to Australian Government's vision for a stronger Australia".²²

²¹ East Asia Institute, "The Fourth Roundtable Discussion for Middle Power Diplomacy: William Paterson, Ambassador of Australia to Korea", September 26, 2013, http://www.eai.or.kr/type/panelView.asp?bytag=n&catcode=&code=eng_event&idx=12509&page=1.

²² Department of the Environment, Australian Government, "Cleaner Environment Plan", www.environment.gov.au.

Although the Australian government due to the failure of the US ratification and its fear of losing economic competitiveness significantly delayed the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, a binding climate change regime for developed countries adopted in 1997, its international role on climate change issues has so far appeared to be affirmative but domestic role is mixed in nature and are based on seating of specific government. For example, Julia Gillard's government, a Labour Party coalition, was pro-climate change policies and worked efficiently to introduce carbon tax whereas the current Tony Abbott's government, a Liberal Party coalition, is determined to abolish carbon tax and institution of the Australian Climate Change Authority from July 1, 2014.²³ Yet Australian government claims, "We contribute to developing climate change solutions, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and adapting to the impacts of climate change". While agreeing to extend the Kyoto Protocol for second time in Doha 2012 and introducing climate tax in 2011 by Julia Gillard's government had indicated that Australia accepted its international responsibility by assuming leadership role in addressing global environmental problems, the Abbott's administration is gradually repealing these milestones.

On May 14, 2014, *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote, "Australia's (Tony Abbott's administration) climate change action has effectively ground to a halt with the budget revealing big cuts to research and renewable energy, moves that critics say sets policy back to the 1990s" (Hannam and Cox 2014). It elaborated that Abbott administration's budget papers clearly demonstrate that funds for climate change related programs would significantly shrink from Australian \$5.75 billion in the current fiscal year to \$ 1.25 billion by 2014-2015 and to \$ 500 million by 2017-2018. Greens leader Christine Milne said Prime Minister Tony Abbott never accepted the science of climate change and "They (Abbott's administration) are doing everything in their power to destroy action on climate change and shore up the vested interests of the coal-fired generators and the old order of Australia".

Historically recognized as a dominant economy and middle power in the Asia-Pacific region, Australia remains a powerful export-dependent economy particularly on mining resources. Internal politics around climate change policy are framed around the negotiation of tensions between the need for intensive development of the primary industry sector and ecological sustainability. The puzzle is whether Australia, being a member of the acronym MIKTA, is disrupting more familiar regional and multilateral alliances by 'bridging' the new geopolitical and geo-economic dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region and making a genuine contributions towards addressing climate change challenges or working towards just rhetoric on environmental sustainability and specifically on climate change. Julia Gillard's administration, to some extent, was working towards achieving environmental and climate change goals, Tony Abbott's administration is repealing and abolishing many of the most important environmental decisions made by earlier Australian governments led by Labour Party. As Australian *International Daily Newswire* from Canberra writes, "Step by step, the Australian Coalition Government, headed by Liberal Prime Minister Tony Abbott, is tearing down the climate change mitigation and adaptation measures put in place by previous two Labour governments".²⁴

Indonesia is not only one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG) but also the country that is severely affected by the effects of climate change. Indonesia, with its huge number of islands and vast coastline, has a very high coastal population—about 65% of the population of Java live in the coastal region. This makes them particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts

²³ Department of the Environment, Australian Government, "Repealing the Carbon Tax", www.environment.gov.au/topics/cleaner-environment/clean-air/repealing-carbon-tax.

²⁴ International Daily Newswire, "Australia's Abbott Government Dismantles Climate Safeguards", May 12, 2014, <http://ens-newswire.com/2014/05/12/australias-abbott-government-dismantles-climate-safeguards/>.

such as sea-level rise. Indonesia also has extensive forest area but at the same time encounters the threat of forest degradation and is prone to natural disasters (volcanic and tectonic earthquake, tsunami, etc.) and extreme weather events (long dry season and floods). It also has high levels of urban pollution, fragile ecosystems such as mountain area and peat land, with economic activities that are still very dependent on fossil fuel and forest products and has difficulties in shifting to alternative fuels.²⁵ President Yudhoyono in September 2009 committed Indonesia to reducing its CO₂ emissions by 26% against a business-as-usual trajectory by 2020. This could be one of the largest reductions committed to by any developing country, depending on how Indonesia decides to set its 2020 baseline emission level (Schwartz 2010). He committed to making even deeper cuts contingent on international financial support. Translating the commitment to action is now a significant challenge.

Indonesia has begun to plan and implement its GHG mitigation strategies but its industries are not making sufficient efforts to use energy more efficiently. The government, municipalities, industrial enterprises and civil society groups are carrying out new, systematically planned climate strategies, aiming to reduce GHG emissions, improve living conditions, make industrial energy use more efficient and help the country adapt to climate change.²⁶ The objective in formulating the Indonesian National Action Plan was to address climate change by keeping good policy coordination among various sectors essential to ensure the success of climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts.²⁷ In 2010 Indonesia established a \$1bn Green Investment Fund to boost economic growth, to reduce emissions and to achieve its goals of National Action Plan.²⁸ Among many efforts, it is working with Norwegian government to protect the forests that were on the verge of extinction from deforestation and forest degradation. In 2013, Indonesian government published a synthesis report on National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation, also known as (RAN-API), which notes:

Currently, most sectoral Line Ministries have developed climate change adaptation action plans. However, there are still many adaptation activities in these sectors that can, should, and must be synergized in its implementation with other sectors, so that the target of adaptation can be achieved and resilience to climate change impacts can be improved. This issue should be an integral part in the formulation of national and sectoral development plans, which is further used to develop an integrated and continuous adaptation actions plan.²⁹

Future of MIKTA: What does all this mean? Middle Powers and Environmentalism

Firstly, the impact of climate change has altered an understanding of state-centric national security threats. There is a new emphasis on risk, resilience, and robustness. Indeed, the Westphalian map itself is in danger provided rising waters, desertification, and the melting of the Arctic due to the impacts of climate change. Secondly, the concept of ‘bridge’ middle power undoubtedly implies a consensus orientated and non-threatening state having the resources to mediate and create common interests and consensus between developed and developing nations, as well as between states located regionally and within institutions. There is, however, the

²⁵ State Ministry of Environment, *National Action Plan Addressing Climate Change* (Jakarta: SME, 2007).

²⁶ GIZ, “Indonesia: Policy Advice for Environment and Climate Change”, <http://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/16736.html>.

²⁷ RIO+20, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012, “National Action Plan Addressing Climate Change”, <http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?page=view&type=99&nr=13&menu=20>.

²⁸ Republic of Indonesia, *National Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation (RAN-API)* (Jakarta: ROI, 2013), https://gc21.giz.de/ibt/var/app/wp342deP/1443/wp-content/uploads/filebase/programme-info/RAN-API_Synthesis_Report_2013.pdf.

²⁹ Global Green Growth Institute, “Indonesia”, December 1, 2012, <http://gggi.org/kalimantan-green-growth-planning/>

constant ‘bridge’ nation tension of whether to (intentionally or unintentionally) reinforce the existing international system (a system which has allowed new middle powers such a proactive role) or whether promoting a change or reform to the international system and international institutions might make a bridging role redundant at worse, or paradoxically, conservative at best. In this respect, the more traditional (and larger) regional middle power (emerging) nations may have more leverage to instigate a challenge to the current institutions even though they are often seen as more “threatening” by both developed and the developing nations.

For instance, former Mexican President Felipe Calderon argued that green growth is a broad based rejection of ‘false dilemmas’ and ‘false choices’ such as that between growth and protecting the environment. Green growth is regarded as an innovation from proactive emerging powers to create a knowledge platform of natural asset, which can be used as productive, measurable and capturing a nexus of natural capital, which can be priced and utilised and measured. Calderon noted that green growth can actually aid the low-income countries through ‘tackling poverty and climate change’ with a particular approach to a non-linear cause and effect of impact. President Lee (2012) also remarked at Rio in 2012 that green growth

is thinking outside the box to respond to climate change and environmental issues in such a way that the solution itself becomes a new growth engine and a new way of life, to help contribute to the world’s sustainable and balanced growth as a new paradigm that integrates both economic and environmental performance . . . The challenges that confront us are global in nature, and in turn, they require a global response . . . To this end, it is essential for us to act together with a sense of collective destiny.

Thirdly, many developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa at COP Durban, suspicious of Western donations, have all embraced South Korea’s initiative on the basis of South Korea’s own development experience and its technology untarnished by Western aid conditionalities. Although there is growing competition amongst all donors to ‘sell’ green aid, the South Korean narratives of ‘green growth’, ‘South-South’ solidarity, ‘shared experiences’ and ‘bridging role’ are being widely recognized and consolidating.

Fourth, middle powers do not have such concerns and thus have perhaps more incentives to act and to cooperate as ‘first movers’ and capture the moment. It is no coincidence therefore that new middle powers such as South Korea explicitly operate ‘me first’ initiatives as proactive middle powers not waiting for big power decisions of defections, realising this is a chance to set the agenda before the inevitability of other nations realising the need to sit at the table.

Fifth, the willingness to create a climate to ‘hand over’ responsibility by preferring to ‘listen to voices from the South’ (and thus ‘allowing’ developing nations the opportunities to ‘choose’ to develop) can obscure material structural impositions and reinforce neo-colonial elite paternalism through the ‘respect for diversity’ narratives. Moreover, generating a climate of ‘your choice’ also reinforces a more subtle form of state surveillance and unequal neoliberal narratives, which reinforce and obscure structural polarisations, which means that when development does not occur then recipient governments are subsequently ‘blamed’ for bad governance or irresponsible policy choices.

The Green Growth Knowledge Platform has pointed out that “Green Growth seeks to fuse sustainable developments economic and environmental pillars into a single intellectual and policy planning process, thereby recasting the very essence of the development model so that it is capable of producing strong and sustainable growth simultaneously (GGKP, 2013).” Green

growth aims to go beyond the ‘limits to growth’ model through an efficient use of the private sectors to break market ‘bottlenecks’. Green growth is not an attempt to provide resources to ‘compensate’ the developing world.

The focus for the UN is on setting even more ambitious climate targets and commitments to catalyse ‘decisive actions on the ground.’ Old middle power countries such as the UK, Australia, Norway, Denmark and Canada expressed their views at Rio+20 that South Korea is a now a credible nation with agenda impact because though South Korea does not have treaty obligations, it is still willing to lead by example. Indeed, at the 2007 Bali conference, following Kyoto, the settings were put in place to develop a structure for the verification of pledged climate change action and policies. However, developed nations were concerned that they would be penalised by any country reporting system because LDCs would have difficulty in providing the information due to poor infrastructure. Thus, any verification process in this situation delegated agreed, would be a role for the trusted and credible monitors who could also provide technological assistance. South Korea already does this through its ODA technical assistance. More importantly, South Korea is playing crucial role of being a ‘bridge’ nation through its Global Green Growth Initiative (GGGI).

Middle powers are creating new specific middle power alliances. Not a zero-sum but also aware of potential isolation from traditional regional groupings. Leapfrog or use these groupings for pondering over the issue of technology and creating new institutions. GGGI has been supporting green growth initiatives in Indonesia since 2010. By working closely with the central government and with the provincial governors of East and Central Kalimantan, GGGI has helped identify and prioritize green growth opportunities along a number of criteria related to both economic growth and greenhouse gas emission reduction potential. More specifically, GGGI has assisted with REDD+ Readiness, the development of provincial green growth strategies, and capacity building for local officials and others to implement and maintain green growth policies. Since 2012, the government of Indonesia and GGGI have been working together to develop a comprehensive program of activity that is aligned and fully supportive of achieving Indonesia’s existing vision for economic development planning, which is pro-growth, pro-jobs, pro-poor and pro-environment.

The Australian “government claims that internationalization of the GGGI serves Australia’s national interest in sustainable and low-emissions development by facilitating operations and partnerships with other international bodies, academic institutions and the private sector”.³⁰ The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) is the lead agency for Australia’s engagement with GGGI. AusAID noted that GGGI is different from other international organizations that deal with climate change because it provides technical assistance to its developing members on sustainable development, particularly in the coordination and financing of long-term national planning strategies (Hilton 2013). In 2013, Former Australian Ambassador Howard Bamsey has been appointed as the interim Director-General of the GGGI. He is expected to develop and consolidate the GGGI as the focal point of international green growth policy and development cooperation.³¹ Australian government states, “As a core partner to the Global Green Growth Institute, Australia is actively engaged in shaping the GGGI to meet its full potential”. The acronym forums such as MIKTA, KIA and GGGI comprise of Korea, Australia and Indonesia and three of these countries have made commitments to work together on various

³¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, “Former Australian Ambassador Howard Bamsey to lead Global Green Growth Institute”, Updated 21 October 2013, <http://aid.dfat.gov.au/HotTopics/Pages/Display.aspx?QID=1114>.

global problems including climate change. In terms of addressing, climate change these countries articulate their own national interests more than the global interest of reducing climate change. While the South Korean government by using its bridging role and Indonesian government by aspiring to reduce emissions significantly are working hard to achieve the common goals charted in GGGI, Australian government seems to be becoming a loggerhead.

Conclusion

Korea, Australia and Indonesia have been involved in GGGI and trying to ‘bridge’ the environmental negotiation deadlock between developed and developing countries. The middle power initiatives such as GGGI seems to be operating towards achieving its primary task of ‘bridging role’ through green growth initiatives but it is still not clear how far it would go and achieve its goals. The future of GGGI is critical provided it is not ratified by the parliament of South Korea and installation of climate denial Liberal party lead coalition in Australia. Although in the aftermath of the recent financial crisis, investors are often more comfortable with “business as usual” investments in a post-financial crisis era as there is a growing concern from many investors with the economic long term resilience and robustness of many of the emerging power economies, South Korea is pushing hard for the success of GGGI as well as the success of MIKTA.

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