

Foreword

Professor Møller's book is a timely and welcome contribution to our understanding of the global economy and what it means for Asian countries and their citizens. The book contains essays about global political economy written over more than 10 years. His essays deal with many aspects of global political economy. The title itself is interesting, telling us that economics and politics are not separate items, but in fact are like two sides of the same coin.

The global economy had and continues to have a strong influence in shaping the economic behavior of Asian countries. As Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand from 1997–2001 I had witnessed the deleterious effects of this influence. Trade, services, investment and the movement of labor — skilled and unskilled — determine the scope for economic growth, narrowing the room for maneuver of the Asian countries.

We have also seen how the Europeans tried to manage their problems through a strong and robust European integration policy even if, from time to time, we hear how difficult it was for them to act in their collective interests by suppressing their individual sovereignty. But there is no doubt that Europe today is a much safer and stronger region with a better economy than it would have been if the Europeans had chosen to maintain the old nation-state approach.

ASEAN has just celebrated its 40th anniversary. The results achieved by ASEAN are by no means ordinary. The most important of these is the increased trust that exists among the ASEAN nations.

This has in turn increased the prospects for integration even if ASEAN has a long way to go when compared to the European Union. It is, however, not a foregone conclusion that economic integration in Asia must follow the pattern set by Europe. Each part of the world has its own background, traditions, and experiences and faces its own distinctive challenges. As we map our course and destiny we can learn from successes and failures of the European experience in regionalism.

Professor Møller's book can help us to do that. He is a noteworthy scholar and practitioner. He is a Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and Adjunct Professor at both the Singapore Management University and the Copenhagen Business School. Prior to that he was, for over eight years, the State-Secretary in the Royal Danish Foreign Ministry, holding the portfolio that covered European integration, NATO, world trade and Denmark's relations with the US and Russia.

Many of his essays reveal new insights into the global system and how we can expect it to evolve under new circumstances. The relationship between the nation-state and the international community is currently undergoing tremendous changes. Many of the recent upheavals in the global economy are put under the microscope such as the sub-prime crises, the US economy, China and India and central bank policies. They offer valuable and frequently fresh views.

Professor Møller provides some interesting, even surprising and provocative, analysis about the new global paradigm unfolding before our eyes.

One of the most intriguing issues he has raised concerns climate change. Professor Møller offers several thoughtful essays about this problem and has given it a new dimension by comparing it to Malthus' theory about famine published 200 years ago. According to Møller, the world faces the prospect of a world of scarcities and he argues, persuasively, that the world does not face scarcities in some sectors only but in all sectors. In a way this is frightening, but the good thing is that this realization now opens the door for us to promote the right policies to reduce or eliminate negative impact on our societies.

Professor Møller is not asking us to agree or disagree with his analyses and conclusions. Indeed, what is important is that he has made us realize that in order to understand the globalized world and to manage the changes we need to start pondering about what is happening, why it is happening and what it means for us. This book is an excellent launch pad for our thinking, leading us towards our own conclusions and positions.

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