

Campbell Testimony on the Rudd Proposal (Unofficial transcript)

SENATOR WEBB: Are you familiar with the approach being floated by the Australians for a regional grouping in a larger context that might perform that same function?

DR. CAMPBELL: Yeah. I had a chance to meet with Prime Minister Rudd's representatives when they were through town. I've had a chance to talk with them about it. You know, everyone's got these ideas, the ASEAN+3. We've got APEC. We've got the ASEAN Regional Forum.

My concern is not in the multiplicity, the almost exponential rise in these venues, but more what these organizations are asked to do, and I know Asians hate to be contrasted with Europe and it's a very different set of circumstances and I appreciate that, but the diplomacy in Asia of a multilateral sort is still very shallow and if it's to be successful, it has to have deeper roots.

[On the] Australian proposal, and I'm out of government, I can't comment on it generally. I think the fact that there's a greater interest in finding appropriate forums, not just in Australia but in China, Japan, the United States, is a healthy thing and the key role of the United States is to harness that energy and to direct it in appropriate ways.