

ASIEN 10 (Januar 1984)

Abstract

Atlantische Gegenwart - Pazifische Zukunft? Anmerkungen zur wirtschafts- und außenpolitischen Orientierung der USA

Willy Kraus, Wilfried Lütkenhorst

Starting from the assumption of an undoubtedly increasing importance of the Pacific Basin in economic and in political terms the article deals with the position of the USA as an Atlantic as well as a Pacific superpower. After a synoptic view on the various concepts of a closer Pacific economic cooperation currently under discussion an analysis is presented of the USA's trade interdependence with Western Europe on the one side and the Pacific Basin on the other side. It emerges that the share of Western Europe in US foreign trade has declined from 29% to 23% between 1965 and 1980 whereas the Asian-Pacific region (excluding Canada and Latin America) has been able to increase its share from 17% to 26%. This trend has been accompanied by an internal structural change favouring the West coast states of the USA as location for growth industries. The article finally turns to the impact of these developments on the USA's political decision-making process. Some evidence of a stronger 'Pacific orientation' may be found which should, however, not be overemphasized at the moment. Until now a coherent long-term policy towards Asia and the Pacific is still lacking in the USA. The 'Pacific option' could, however, be the more attractive the stronger the traditional axis USA-Western Europe is exposed to economic and political tensions.