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Современные геополитические трансформации в субрегионе Юго-Восточной Азии в условиях формирующегося нового миропорядка

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Аннотация. Актуальность исследования современных геополитических трансформаций в субрегионе Юго-Восточной Азии (ЮВА) в контексте формирования нового миропорядка обусловлена их возрастающей значимостью в системе мировой политики. Эти трансформации имеют потенциал изменить фундаментальные основы архитектуры политических отношений в регионе. Для России данный регион представляет системный интерес, что обусловлено, во-первых, его ключевой ролью в реализации стратегической инициативы «разворота на Восток», и, во-вторых, его интеграцией в проект Большой Евразии, который является одним из приоритетных направлений внешнеполитического курса Российской Федерации. В рамках настоящего исследования ставится цель провести детальный анализ ключевых геополитических изменений в субрегионе ЮВА, обусловленных процессами формирования нового миропорядка. Для достижения этой цели необходимо выявить основные тенденции и факторы, влияющие на геополитическую динамику в регионе, а также оценить их возможные последствия для международной системы и региональных акторов. Особое внимание уделяется изучению роли России в этих процессах, её стратегическим интересам и возможностям для укрепления своего влияния в ЮВА. Также рассматривается взаимодействие России с другими ключевыми игроками, такими как Китай, Индия, США и страны АСЕАН, и их влияние на геополитическую конфигурацию региона. В статье выделяются особенности политических трансформационных процессов в Юго-Восточной Азии, геополитическое значение которой поступательно увеличивается. Данные процессы обусловлены формированием нового миропорядка, и в то же самое время сами формируют новую региональную политическую архитектуру. Таким образом, данное исследование направлено на углублённое понимание современных геополитических трансформаций в Юго-Восточной Азии и их влияния на глобальную и региональную политику, а также на выявление перспектив и возможностей для России в контексте этих изменений.

Ключевые слова: мировая политика, АСЕАН, новый миропорядок, политический процесс, региональное сотрудничество, Юго-Восточная Азия

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Research article

Modern geopolitical transformations in the sub-region of Southeast Asia in the context of the emerging new world order

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Abstract. The relevance of studying modern geopolitical transformations in the Southeast Asia (SEA) subregion in the context of the formation of a new world order is due to their increasing importance in the global political system. These transformations have the potential to change the fundamental foundations of the region's political architecture. For Russia, this region is of systemic interest due to its key role in the implementation of the strategic initiative of "turning to the East" and its integration into the Greater Eurasia project, which is one of the priority areas of the Russian Federation's foreign policy. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to identify the main trends and factors affecting the geopolitical dynamics in the region, as well as to assess their possible consequences for the international system and regional actors. Special attention is paid to studying Russia's role in these processes, its strategic interests, and its opportunities to strengthen its influence in Southeast Asia. The interaction between Russia and other key players, such as China, India, the United States, and the ASEAN countries, is also examined, as well as their impact on the geopolitical configuration of the region. The article highlights the features of political transformation processes in Southeast Asia, the geopolitical importance of which is steadily increasing. These processes are conditioned by the formation of a new world order, and at the same time they themselves form a new regional political architecture. Thus, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the current geopolitical transformations in Southeast Asia and their impact on global and regional politics, as well as to identify the prospects and opportunities for Russia in the context of these changes.

Keywords: world politics, ASEAN, new world order, political process, regional cooperation, Southeast Asia

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Introduction. The relevance of contemporary geopolitical transformations in the Southeast Asian subregion (*hereinafter referred to as SEA*) in the context of the emerging new world order is determined by its growing significance in global politics. At the same time, these transformations have the potential to alter the fundamental architecture of political relations in this subregion. For Russia, this region also has systemic significance, due, firstly, to its significant role in implementing Russia's "pivot to the East" policy and, secondly, to its role (more or less hypothetically) in the Greater Eurasia project. Thus, the purpose of this study is to identify key geopolitical transformations in the Southeast Asian subregion, driven by the formation of a new world order.

The academic discourse includes studies by Russian and foreign authors devoted to the analysis of the problems of the formation of a new world order, as well as contemporary political processes in Southeast Asia. For example, V.N. Panin studied interstate cooperation in the modern system of international relations [10]. P. Parameswaran examines D. Trump's strategy in Southeast Asia in the context of the strategic confrontation between the United States and China

[7]. B. Ciputra examines the role of Indonesia in strengthening Asia's influence in a changing world [1]. G. Hayes analyzes the influence of US-Australian relations on the change in Australia's security policy, which is projected in the Southeast Asian subregion [2]. The works of P.K. Gien [3] and N.T. Toan [9] examine the strengthening of Vietnam and the features of its foreign policy in the context of the formation of a new world order. M.R. Irsyad analyzes the Chinese strategy in the territorial dispute in the South China Sea, which involves Southeast Asian countries (the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia) [5]. The work of T.S. Maini raises the important issue of changing Malaysia's policy in the matter of its accession to BRICS [6]. L.I. Ing examines the ASEAN policy, which is formulated and implemented in the context of growing confrontation in Southeast Asia between the United States and China, with the conditions for the formation of a new world order in which there will not be one leading power [4].

At the same time, the dynamism of political processes in the Southeast Asian subregion, as well as the high degree of uncertainty of the situation, necessitate further research on issues of political transformations in Southeast Asia in the context of the formation of a new world order, the basic principles of which are receiving greater practical manifestations.

Materials and methods. In preparing the research presented in this article, we utilized a systemic (analyzing political processes in the Southeast Asian subregion as a whole) and a situational (specifically, scoping out their local implications in individual countries) approach. Methodologically, the use of a civilizational approach in conceptualizing the characteristics of the emerging new world order, which, in our opinion, is based on the principles of this approach, also appears significant.

The research was based on project documents reflecting key political processes in the Southeast Asian subregion in the current geopolitical context, official statements by political leaders of countries and international organizations, and materials from analytical and expert centers and media outlets.

Results and discussion. The formation of a new world order is determined by a number of factors and related processes, through which it manifests itself, transforming the system of political relations both globally and regionally. The most important of these factors include: changes in the structure of international political relations; the shift of economic growth to other regions of the world; the increasing role of new centers of power in technological progress; and the escalation of regional conflicts.

Next, we will consider the identified factors and their projections onto the process of forming a new world order.

Changes in the structure of international political relations. The traditional system of international relations, which emerged after World War II as bipolar and transformed after the collapse of the USSR into a unipolar system based on Western dominance, is undergoing fundamental changes, and it is now possible to speak of its dismantling. This is manifested in the following circumstances: new centers of power (China, Russia, India, and Brazil) are emerging and beginning to pursue independent foreign policies.

This is leading to the creation of new coalitions, as well as the intensification of existing interaction formats not included in the previous architecture of the world order. The most illustrative examples here are the SCO and BRICS. Separately, it is worth noting the projections of Russian foreign policy aimed at building a "Greater Eurasia," in which the Southeast Asian subregion could assume significant significance. Moreover, certain institutional mechanisms for this have already been created, particularly, for example, in the customs sphere [12, 168].

To a significant extent, the formats of interstate cooperation are changing in the modern system of international relations [10, 432], which should also be linked to the formation of a new world order, which is based on the desire of states to defend exclusively their national interests, sovereignty, as well as the willingness of countries to change allies and alliances if this is required by pragmatic considerations of the policy being pursued.

The shift of economic growth to other regions of the world. Economic development has always acted as a factor of geopolitical influence. Countries have always sought to develop their own economies, develop infrastructure, and attract investment. Economic unions (or, at the local level, trade agreements) have always served as tools for strengthening positions on the international stage. These tools remain relevant in the current environment, but they are now being used by all players, not just the leading ones, reflecting the emergence of a multipolar world characterized by a high degree of variability in foreign policy relations. Systemically, Asian countries are already emerging as centers of economic growth, while the importance of Western countries is significantly diminished.

The growing role of new centers of power in technological progress. Technological advances are having a significant impact on international relations. Digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and energy, are changing the nature of competition between countries, with China now joining the ranks of leading countries, and India demonstrating significant achievements. In this area, Russia is making significant efforts to ensure its technological leadership in specific industries. The preservation and development of manufacturing competencies is illustrative, as exemplified by the microchip crisis, where neither the United States nor the EU were able to quickly organize production of this strategic commodity on their own soil. Changes in energy markets are also significantly important [11, 79]. For example, the Southeast Asian subregion faces the challenge of energy resource extraction in the South China Sea, which is currently complicated by territorial disputes involving China.

Intensification of regional conflicts. Conflicts in various regions of the world are growing in both quantity and quality. Their effective resolution, which depends on the cooperation of influential states and international organizations, is becoming increasingly difficult.

These factors give rise to the complex specifics of the emerging new world order, in which traditional relations and processes are gradually being replaced by new forms of interaction and competition.

The contemporary geopolitical significance of the Southeast Asian subregion is linked to its dynamically growing, multifaceted potential. Important in this regard is the fact that it is part of the Asia-Pacific region, which is objectively the most significant in the global geopolitical space. The current stage of the formation of a new world order is characterized by changes affecting the entire system of international relations and encompasses the Southeast Asian subregion. Geopolitical transformations in this subregion are driven by the following key factors: growing regional significance, which is multifaceted; changing balances of power influencing the Southeast Asian subregion; the emergence of new threats and challenges; and intensification of multilateral interaction.

Growing regional significance. Overall, the Southeast Asian subregion and its individual countries are gaining increasing importance in the international system, driven by its geographic location, economic resources, and ongoing economic growth and prospects for further expansion.

In this regard, this subregion is the focus of attention for leading global players such as China, the United States, Russia, and Japan. At the same time, we note the intensive penetration of other countries, such as Australia, into the region. Overall, these processes are significantly intensifying competition for influence in this subregion. At the same time, individual examples of the leading global players' foreign policy implementation reflect the specific nature of the current stage of Southeast Asia's development in the context of the emergence of a new world order.

A similar example is the ASEAN summit, which took place in late October 2025 in Malaysia. This event is notable for its attendance by US President Donald Trump ahead of his talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The US attempted to reshape the Southeast Asian subregion and project its foreign policy success onto negotiations with China. Neither the first nor the second US foreign policy objective was achieved. However, China and ASEAN signed

an updated free trade agreement during the summit. The issue of Vietnam, which is significant for Russian foreign policy, is particularly noteworthy. This country, with which Russia has the closest relations in Southeast Asia, has demonstrated a clear rapprochement with Western countries in recent years, posing a challenge to Russian foreign policy. The 2025 summit failed to significantly strengthen US-Vietnam relations, demonstrating the overall uncertainty and unpredictability of political processes in Southeast Asia.

In this regard, it should be noted that the manifestation of independence in relation to competing major powers has occurred before in the policies of the Southeast Asian states; however, in the last few years, their traditional principle of refusing to choose between the United States and China has begun to be realized in conjunction with the more complex process of forming a new world order [7]. Thus, if previously the Southeast Asian countries simply pursued a policy of avoiding excessive rapprochement with one of these two powers, at present their integration into Southeast Asia has significantly increased, individual Southeast Asian countries (Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia) are demonstrating their own significant geopolitical ambitions, and competition (confrontation) between China itself and the United States is intensifying, one of the arenas of which is inevitably the Southeast Asian subregion.

The shifting balance of power influencing the Southeast Asian subregion. The growing economic potential of China and India is creating a new context for relations between countries in the subregion. The influence of these major powers encompasses regional politics, economics, security issues, and trade. A prime example is the implementation of China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative, which fosters and strengthens regional economic ties and develops regional infrastructure. This initiative, clearly underpins the political and economic structuring of the Southeast Asian subregion within the framework of the "Chinese project."

It should be emphasized that ASEAN is one of the key economic partners of the United States and ranks fourth in terms of trade volume. Bilateral trade between the United States and ASEAN reached \$475 billion in 2024 and \$271 billion in the first half of 2025. US foreign direct investment in ASEAN in 2023 amounted to \$74.4 billion, making the United States the largest extra-regional investor in ASEAN [4]. These ties are strong and show a tendency to strengthen, which is due to the intensifying confrontation between the United States and China. However, the aggressive US tariff policy and its attempts to use secondary sanctions to force countries to abandon cooperation with Russia increase uncertainty and increase geopolitical and geoeconomic risks. For ASEAN, these consequences are obvious: American foreign policy causes serious economic and political problems.

China, in turn, remains ASEAN's largest trading partner, and the breadth and depth of integration with it continues to expand. In the first half of 2025, the total volume of exports and imports between ASEAN countries and China reached \$429.8 billion, an 18.7% increase compared to 2024, with industrial goods accounting for approximately 90% of this total. From 2019 to 2024, ASEAN countries' imports from China grew by 63.1%, with three-quarters of these being manufactured and intermediate goods [4]. This deepening interdependence creates conditions for increased efficiency and effectiveness in the socio-economic development of Southeast Asian countries, but it also strengthens China's geopolitical and geo-economic influence on ASEAN.

Accordingly, it seems plausible to conclude that China and the United States are the leading external players in Southeast Asia, but other actors seeking to strengthen their positions are also making inroads. Furthermore, the position and policies of both the United States and China in Southeast Asia are undergoing significant changes.

The emergence of new threats and challenges. While traditional problems persist for this subregion, new threats are emerging, requiring intensified mechanisms for cooperation, response, and coordination between countries in the subregion and external players. These new threats are economic, political, and social in nature. A striking example of these emerging threats is the escalating confrontation between China and the Philippines over disputed territories, the

threat of Japan's remilitarization, and the projection of its influence (these threats are generated by external factors). Symptomatic in this regard is the border military conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, which reached its climax in the summer of 2025 and was resolved through the mediation of Malaysia. Significant distinguishing features of this conflict are: firstly, it has a long history and is of a prolonged nature (the last open escalation occurred in 2008); Secondly, its actualization in the spring-summer of 2025 is associated with the weakening of "international control" (the weakening of the restraining factor of international law, relative political uncertainty in the region, etc.); thirdly, it was successfully resolved by "local efforts" (mediation by Malaysia, a Southeast Asian country, along with Indonesia, one of the two leading members of ASEAN); the sharp intervention of the external player, the United States and, above all, personally D. Trump, who politically replayed the situation in such a way that he declared himself a peacemaker.

Next, we will examine in more detail the current situation in the South China Sea, which broadly encompasses territorial disputes between Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam. Key elements of the dispute concern the Spratly Islands (Chinese name: Nansha), the Paracel Islands (Chinese name: Xisha), and the Scarborough Reefs. In this study, we examine this aspect of the dispute, as China is involved.

So, the dispute is over small islands - the Spratly Islands (Nansha) The dispute over the Paracel Islands (Xisha) is not simply about territorial claims. The area around these two islands is of critical strategic and economic importance, as more than a third of global maritime trade passes through it. Control of this area could increase China's geopolitical and geoeconomic influence, as well as its ability to control key logistics routes. Furthermore, this area contains significant natural resources (oil and gas, for example), which China is keen to secure. Furthermore, China seeks to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific region and position itself as a major maritime power, which is crucial in its standoff with the United States. Conversely, if China is forced out of this area—for example, if the Philippines (the United States' closest ally in Southeast Asia) were to establish full control over the disputed islands—this would threaten to severely restrict China's access to the South China Sea for its military vessels.

Thus, over the past two decades, the Southeast Asian subregion has been confronted with a conflict that is latent in nature but has a high potential for escalation, which does indeed occur periodically. As M.R. Irsyad notes, this tension arises from China's actions, which fall within the "gray zone" and are being implemented gradually and systematically. This strategy is used by China as a key tool for pursuing its territorial claims without the use of its official or regular forces in the South China Sea. The "gray zone" represents one of the most important factors influencing the formation of a new security space in the Indo-Pacific region [5].

Intensifying multilateral cooperation. Regional organizations, such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), are being established and strengthened, improving and intensifying diplomatic and trade relations between countries in the subregion. ASEAN plays a key role in shaping the regional economic and security system.

Thus, current geopolitical transformations in the Southeast Asian subregion are occurring in conjunction with the emerging new world order, characterized by the strengthening role of regional centers of power, the emergence of new threats and challenges, and a shifting global balance of power between developed and developing countries. These processes reflect the construction of a new geopolitical reality, which requires the application of new, highly adaptive approaches and the development of effective solutions to maintain stability and ensure the development of this subregion.

Conclusions. In conclusion, we note that the formation of a new world order is significantly transforming the system of political relations both globally and regionally. Moreover, the variability of regional specifics is increasing significantly, which generally corresponds to the trend toward regionalization of political processes, which has largely become a response to the globalization trend that has dominated the last thirty years, manifested in the form of globalism. These two circumstances mean that the emerging new world order will be

significantly more turbulent compared to the past thirty years, with a significantly increased risk of armed conflicts between leading states, both directly and indirectly (proxy conflicts will be persistent). This will dictate heightened demands on the quality of state foreign policy, particularly its regional dimension. The Southeast Asian subregion will, in all likelihood, become one of the most complex in the future architecture of the new world order.

In this process, Southeast Asian countries are distinguished by a desire to pursue a more independent foreign policy and defend their sovereignty (albeit sporadically). This is due to the fact that they currently have significantly greater resources to pursue such a foreign policy. Furthermore, some countries here, particularly Vietnam, are attempting to strengthen their positions by intensifying the confrontation between China and the United States. Furthermore, the general narratives of a multipolar world resonate strongly in Southeast Asia.

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