

THE SPECIAL ISSUE
ASIA-PACIFIC DIALOGUE:
ADVANCING COOPERATION IN A NEW ERA

COOPERATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

TRANSITION TO A NEW WORLD ORDER

INFORMATION AND ANALYTICAL GAZETTE,
THE CENTRE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA
AND OCEANIA IOS RAS



ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA

The Center for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences strictly adhere to the principle of maintaining the complexity of research by combining modern and traditional research cycles, focusing on domestic political development in Southeast Asian countries, their foreign policy and economic relations with partners

The Center serves as a hub for distinguished specialists, each bringing a wealth of expertise and practical skills to the table. These professionals combine deep academic knowledge with hands-on experience, addressing the evolving demands and priorities of contemporary science. The the Center aims to advance understanding in the field, promote cutting-edge research, and offer solutions that align with the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

INFORMATION AND ANALYTICAL GAZETTE

The purpose of the information and analytical gazettes is to analyze changes and major trends in Russia's relations with the Global South, especially Southeast Asia, and to develop practical proposals for priority areas of cooperation with partners in the context of Russia's intensified turn to the East.

A special issue is dedicated to the International Conference «Asia-Pacific Dialogue: Advancing Cooperation in A New Era». The event was held on October 19, 2023, at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

 seasia.ivran.ru

 sea@ivran.ru

 [seasia_ivran](https://t.me/seasia_ivran)

CONTENTS

ASIA-PACIFIC DIALOGUE: ADVANCING COOPERATION IN A NEW ERA	3
INDIA CAN BE A BRIDGE BUILDER IN THE INDO-PACIFIC	5
INDONESIAN «WIN-WIN POLICY» AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WESTERN «RULES» OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS	7
THE DIGITAL DIMENSION OF ASEAN-LED ECONOMIC REGIONALISM AMIDST THE US-CHINA TECHNOLOGICAL RIVALRY	8
RUSSIA - INDIA - CHINA TRIANGLE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION IN A NEW ERA	11
RUSSIA - ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION	14
PRIORITY AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES	16
FROM RELIGIOUS TO POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES: HISTORICIZING GEOPOLITICAL ENCOUNTERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN THE MODERN WORLD	19
THE CONTEST FOR SEA POWER AND THE FAILING NAVAL DETERRENCE IN EAST ASIA	27
THE RUSSIA-INDIA-CHINA-ASEAN COOPERATION MECHANISM AND A NEW WORLD ORDER	33

Distinguished Contributors

Dr. Vitaly Naumkin — Professor, President of the Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, Full Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Russia);

Hon. Amb. Anil Trigunayat — Member of the Indian Foreign Service, Fmr. Ambassador of India to Jordan, Libya and Malta (India);

Dr. Somen Banerjee — Senior Fellow, Maritime Research Centre, Pune (India);

Dr. Vicente C. Villan — Professor at the University of Philippines, Department of History, and a Faculty Fellow at the Asian Center, UP Diliman (the Philippines);

Tian Kang — Department of International Relations, Tsinghua University;

Dr. Prof. Dmitry Mosyakov — Head of the Center for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies RAS (Russia);

Dr. Prof. Evgeny A. Kanaev — Deputy Head of the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, Head of the Asia-Pacific Department of the Centre for Comprehensive European and International Studies (CCEIS), Russia.

Dr. Daria S. Panarina — Research Fellow at the Centre for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania, IOS RAS (Russia);

Aisylu R. Garaeva — Lecturer at the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs (School of International Regional Studies, HSE, Russia);

Dmitry O. Fedorenko — Graduate Master's Student, Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs (School of International Regional Studies, HSE, Russia);

Dr. Ksenia G. Muratshina — Junior Researcher at the Centre for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania, IOS RAS (Russia)

Dr. Ekaterina M. Astafieva — Senior Researcher at the Centre for Southeast Asia, Australia, and Oceania, IOS RAS (Russia).

ASIA-PACIFIC DIALOGUE: ADVANCING COOPERATION IN A NEW ERA

The world is undergoing intense political, economic, social, humanitarian, and ideological transformations. This process intensifies day by day and reverberates across almost every part of the globe. Faced with historical changes in the Asia-Pacific region, it has become necessary to intensify strategic initiatives, and the international scientific and practical conference «Asia Pacific Dialogue: Advancing Cooperation in a New Era» was an important step in that direction.

The unique event was held at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and in an online format, bringing together more than 20 representatives from academic and diplomatic circles in Russia, Vietnam, Indonesia, China, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Afghanistan.

The term «new era» evokes both a curiosity and a fundamental inquiry into the evolving geopolitical landscape. We are arguably witnessing not merely a shift in dynamics but a deep-rooted transformation in how nations, economies, and ideologies interact. The question at the heart of this evolution is: what defines this new era, and to what extent do we, as participants, actively shape its unfolding narrative? Are we facing a paradigm shift, or are we observing the emergence of a new, stabilized international order? The answers to these questions lie in examining the structural transitions toward a multipolar world order.

Before, the world order revolved around a single dominant power, notably during the post-Cold War period, when the United States had a largely uncontested position. Today, however, reality paints a complex picture, where power and influence are not concentrated within one state or region, but rather are distributed across multiple centers. This shift is evident in the gradual movement away from unipolarity towards a polycentric structure, which acknowledges the legitimacy and influence of various centers of power. The Global South represents 85% of the world's population and nearly 40% of global GDP, underscoring the shift towards a more distributed global influence with emerging economies playing crucial roles.

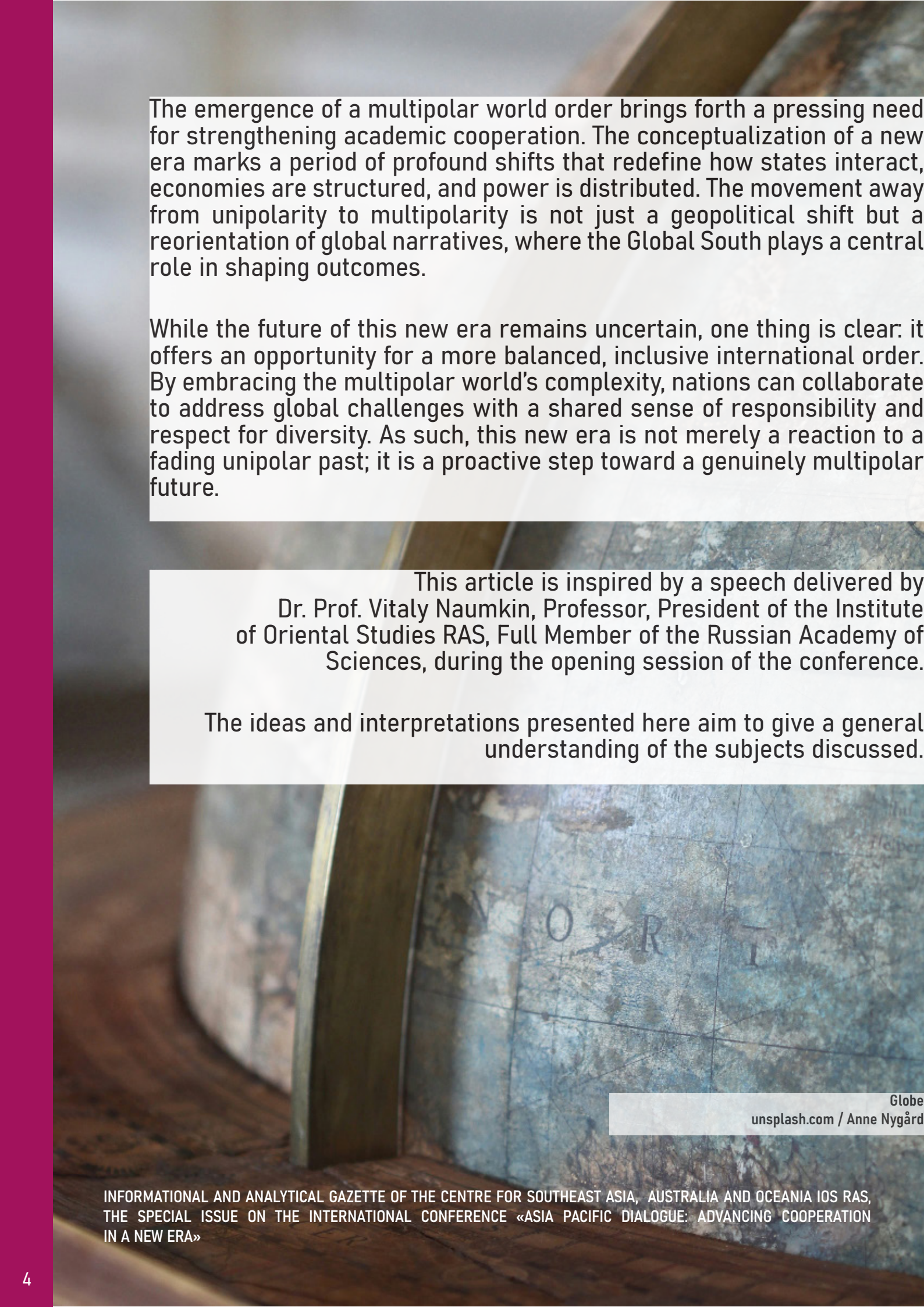
Central to this emerging multipolarity is the rise of the Global South, particularly regions like Asia,

Africa, and Latin America, which have steadily grown in both economic and geopolitical stature. This transformation is not simply a shift in GDP or trade flows; it is a redefinition of the roles these regions play in global governance and international relations. Among these influential players, China, India, and ASEAN nations (Brunei, Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines) stand out as dominant forces.

China's rapid ascent has prompted discussions about the advent of a Sino-centric order. The Belt and Road Initiative, involving infrastructure investments in more than 140 countries, is an example of China's approach to expanding its influence through economic cooperation. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank further reinforces this strategy, with about 110 member countries. According to the World Bank, China's GDP accounted for more than 18% of the global economy in 2022, compared to 4% in 2000, signaling a strategic move towards establishing an alternative model of governance and economic development. In 2023, China contributed about one-third to global economic growth.

India's role within the new era presents a unique form of balancing that is emblematic of its strategic autonomy. India's participation in organizations like BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, UAE, Iran, Ethiopia, Egypt and Indonesia), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), and the Quad highlights its nuanced approach to foreign policy. India's GDP grew to \$3.7 trillion in 2022/2023. India's neutral stance on many international issues illustrates its commitment to an independent foreign policy, a characteristic feature of a multipolar approach.

ASEAN's emergence as one of the regional powerhouses illustrates the Global South's potential to reshape economic and political landscapes. In 2023, ASEAN's collective GDP reached \$3.7 trillion, with a population exceeding 670 million, making it one of the largest economic blocs globally. The region's centrality in global supply chains, particularly in electronics and manufacturing, has turned it into an essential node within world trade.



The emergence of a multipolar world order brings forth a pressing need for strengthening academic cooperation. The conceptualization of a new era marks a period of profound shifts that redefine how states interact, economies are structured, and power is distributed. The movement away from unipolarity to multipolarity is not just a geopolitical shift but a reorientation of global narratives, where the Global South plays a central role in shaping outcomes.

While the future of this new era remains uncertain, one thing is clear: it offers an opportunity for a more balanced, inclusive international order. By embracing the multipolar world's complexity, nations can collaborate to address global challenges with a shared sense of responsibility and respect for diversity. As such, this new era is not merely a reaction to a fading unipolar past; it is a proactive step toward a genuinely multipolar future.

This article is inspired by a speech delivered by Dr. Prof. Vitaly Naumkin, Professor, President of the Institute of Oriental Studies RAS, Full Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, during the opening session of the conference.

The ideas and interpretations presented here aim to give a general understanding of the subjects discussed.

Globe
unsplash.com / Anne Nygård

INDIA CAN BE A BRIDGE BUILDER IN THE INDO-PACIFIC*

There is no doubt that the Indo-Pacific is emerging into a new theatre of big power geopolitical and geo economic competition which is specifically underwritten by the Sino-US rivalry in this 21st century. It is also an ideological contestation as China refuses to subscribe to the very definition of the 'Rule of law' as envisaged by the western led liberal order. It is crafting its own initiatives and prescriptions for the new world order that is currently in an uncertain and painful transition. For example, its troika of Global Security Initiative (GSI) along with Global Development Initiative (GDI) and Global Culture or Civilizational Initiative (GCI) aim at redefining the underlying contours of the global governance along with its modified BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) that completed its 10th anniversary recently.


It is very likely that the global order or disorder is heading towards a Cold War 2.0 matrix dotted by multipolarity and mini- and multilateralism and strategic autonomy by many nations especially in the Global South led by India. As was witnessed during India's recent Presidencies of G20, SCO and BRICS it has the capability and moral longing to find a way which is driven by dialogue, diplomacy and peace and respect of Un charter while underscoring the template that: This is not an era of war'. While it believes in multi-alignments it has been averse to the ideas of an alliance mindset simply because the most populous country and soon to be the third largest economy with an exemplary civilizational heritage as well a history behind it in the form of NAM (Nonalignment movement) and the Voice of Global South cannot be subjugated and shackled in the gilded alliance architecture. But since she follows the 3 M mantra of Mutual Respect, Mutual sensitivity and Mutual interests within the ambit of "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" it has excellent credentials to be bridge builder amidst divergence of opinions and interests in the international discourse including in the Indo-Pacific.

It is also a given that India is a resident power in the Indian ocean and therefore has her strategic security and economic interests within the ambit of maritime focus. Besides from historic times she has been a maritime and trading nation. Power of the oceans is supreme but India considers them not as a personal fiefdom of a power but a global commons and availability of these to all nations and people in accordance with international treaties and regulations adopted and accepted by the world community. Large number of countries have come out with their own Indo-Pacific strategies as the competition becomes intense for power and resources. Most of these strategies are a mix of competing and converging interests

In 1903, US Secretary of State John Hay had expounded that "the Mediterranean is the Ocean of the Past, the Atlantic is the Ocean of the present and the Pacific is the Ocean of the future" It appeared prophetic and well propounded for strategists. Let's add Indian ocean to it and picture is complete in the modern context. Late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, while speaking at the Indian Parliament in April 2017 propounded the term Indo-Pacific with his 'Confluence of the seas' stating that 'The Pacific and the Indian oceans are now bringing about a dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and prosperity' underling the concept of 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific'. That freedom of navigation has come under stress due to the Chinese intransigence and aggression in its periphery of interest and influence with several hotspots including Taiwan and in the ASEAN. Hence the USA's focus on the region as a major challenge and opportunity to exert its ideology of influence and counter and contain the Chinese intransigence in support of Taiwan despite them still proclaiming one China policy. Roots of this competition are inherent in China breaking the US and western techno-economic barrier and the glass ceiling combined with its wolf warrior diplomacy. Asia is the compulsive pivot for the new economic order and India is a major player and a swing power.

Even though Indo-Pacific is a natural area of strategic interest for India it believes in the inclusivity of these global commons without excluding China despite her own bilateral and border issues even as Beijing refuses to abide by various agreements signed between the two countries. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while speaking at the Shangri La Dialogue in 2018 in Singapore reemphasized and redefined the geographical scope of the concept and extant from Americas in the East to Africa in the West with nearly eight sub regions. It encompasses all coastal countries, island nations and the hinterland. He also spoke of the globally recognized principles and regulations of openness, inclusiveness and non-exclusion, the centrality of ASEAN which is an integral part of India's Act East Policy. He underscored the need for non-targeting of specific parties implying China of course. But as the water flows down in the Ocean both Beijing and Moscow began to look at this concept and the ensuing QUAD (USA, Australia, Japan and India) supposedly a security grouping with suspicion and focused more on USA's strategic Sino-centric containment policy.

*HON. AMB. ANIL TRIGUNAYAT — MEMBER OF THE INDIAN FOREIGN SERVICE. HE HAS SERVED IN THE INDIAN MISSIONS IN COTE D'IVOIRE, BANGLADESH, MONGOLIA, USA, RUSSIA, SWEDEN AND NIGERIA, LIBYA AND JORDAN. MR. ANIL TRIGUNAYAT IS ALSO A DISTINGUISHED FELLOW AT THE VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.

The image shows the national flag of India, known as the Tiranga, waving on a white flagpole against a clear blue sky. The flag consists of three horizontal stripes of equal width: saffron at the top, white in the middle, and green at the bottom. In the center of the white stripe is a navy blue wheel with 24 spokes, known as the Ashoka Chakra.

National Flag of India
unsplash.com / Saradasish Pradhan

Indian Prime Minister has often claimed that QUAD is the force for the global good. Since New Delhi did not subscribe to the containment idea per se or strategy of encirclement and wanted it be participatory in accordance with the extant rules of Free and Open Indo Pacific (FoIP) and freedom of navigation as against the practice of enforced suzerainty by big powers, it focused more on economic and other global challenges in which India can play a more constructive role. These areas included combatting health impacts of Covid and other pandemics with warning and curative collaboration i.e. health security for all; shared challenges in cyber space, critical technologies, counter-terrorism, quality infrastructure development and investment and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as well as maritime domains. Since the economic impacts of the pandemic and disruption of supply chains were highly destabilizing, India along with its partners looked at the possibility of providing a partner in the alternate reliable global and value supply chains as she had done during the height of the pandemic through the 'Vaccine Maitri' as against the Vaccine apartheid which was lauded by the Global South. No doubt there will be competition but healthy one is always welcome. In this domain too India sought to build bridges with emphasis on dialogue, diplomacy, cooperation and inclusion rather than conflict and negative and mutually destructive competition.

Russia is India's singular special and privileged strategic partner with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Putin personally invested in defining the contours and depths of this 'beyond the hype' relationship which is amply clear from its expanse across strategic sectors including defence, security, space and civil nuclear cooperation.

But like Moscow, India also has to maintain and ensure its overall security through other consequential partnerships based on convergences and congruences these could in fact help further intensify India-Russia relations across the bilateral to regional to multilateral spectrum. An understanding of India's security needs is a major part of this. Moscow need not look at India's Indo-Pacific strategy from the US lens and strategic perspectives alone.

Most analysts believe that India seems to have benefited from the Indo-Pacific enterprise and concept in several ways. Firstly India has become the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific as a result of its strategic location and economic strength which has helped it integrate into the Pacific unlike previous strategic and security and economic groupings like the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) and EAS (East Asia Summit). Secondly, it has provided India with viable options in so far as Chinese expansionist ambitions are concerned. Thirdly It enables to recapture its primacy in the maritime domain through collaborations with navies of the friendly countries for her safety, security, economy and defence. Fourthly, it helps India project and serve global welfare through various regional and global initiatives. Finally, it also provides India with certain deterrence capabilities against disruptions while emerging as a major HADR power and provider proven time and again. Indian Foreign Minister Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar maintains that the concept of Indo-Pacific is a rejection of the spheres of influence and a reiteration that the world cannot be frozen for the benefit of a few. He further added that the Indo-Pacific was an indication of a future not a throwback to the past and only those harboring a Cold War mindset will see such intentions.

INDONESIAN «WIN-WIN POLICY» AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO WESTERN «RULES» OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICS*

Indonesia, the largest country in Southeast Asia, has emerged as a unique case study for researchers examining the intersection of domestic stability and foreign diplomacy. The nation's "win-win policy" represents a political philosophy rooted in compromise and consensus. It aims to resolve conflicts without absolute victories or defeats, fostering dialogue and cooperation instead of confrontation. Indonesia's success in applying this principle both domestically and internationally positions it as a significant player in global and regional politics, particularly within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Domestically, Indonesia's political landscape is shaped by a commitment to stability and inclusivity. This framework is anchored in the collaboration between the ruling elite and opposition forces, which together navigate the complexities of nation-building. By emphasizing power-sharing based on mutual realities, Indonesia minimizes societal tensions and fosters unity. This approach has allowed the country to sustain its democratic institutions while accommodating the diverse cultural, ethnic, and religious identities that define its population.

The essence of Indonesia's domestic policy lies in its ability to reconcile differences through consultation and shared governance. This process, which can be described as a form of "political engineering," ensures that no single entity dominates the political sphere, reducing the risk of polarization and conflict. This stability has been crucial in positioning Indonesia as an informal leader within ASEAN and a model of governance for other nations in the region.

Indonesia has extended its win-win policy into the realm of international diplomacy. Its foreign policy ethos rejects the binary notions of victors and vanquished, promoting instead a philosophy that views absolute victories as precursors to further conflicts and revanchism. Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN exemplifies this approach, particularly in its role in integrating former socialist states like Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos into the organization without requiring drastic ideological or political transformations.

This approach contrasts starkly with the European Union's integration process, where former socialist countries underwent significant overhauls to align with Western standards. By allowing these Southeast Asian nations to join without such stringent preconditions, ASEAN, under Indonesia's influence, has bolstered its unity and reinforced its standing as a significant player in global politics. Indonesia's aspirations to act as a global mediator were vividly demonstrated in June 2022 when President Joko Widodo undertook a mission to reconcile Western nations, Russia, and Ukraine amid

their ongoing crisis. Although this mission faced significant obstacles, particularly from the United States, it marked a historic moment for Indonesia as it ventured beyond its traditional sphere of influence. This diplomatic initiative highlighted Indonesia's ambition to export its win-win philosophy globally. The attempt to mediate between major powers illustrated a bold effort to position Jakarta as a proponent of peace and dialogue, reflecting its belief in the universality of its political principles.

The win-win policy offers a refreshing alternative to Western approaches characterized by sanctions, pressure, and unilateralism. By focusing on dialogue and consensus, Indonesia advocates for a more just and equitable framework for resolving conflicts. However, the policy is not without its limitations. The idealism inherent in the win-win approach may struggle to gain traction on a global scale, where power dynamics and geopolitical interests often dominate decision-making.

Despite these challenges, Indonesia's philosophy carries significant potential. The principles of mutual respect and consensus offer a glimmer of hope for a more harmonious international order. While it may not replace dominant Western narratives, the Indonesian model provides an alternative that deserves greater attention.

Indonesia's win-win policy embodies a distinctive political culture that prioritizes harmony and stability, both at home and abroad. This philosophy offers a valuable blueprint for conflict resolution and international cooperation. While its adoption as a global trend remains uncertain, Indonesia's consistent advocacy for consensus underscores the importance of exploring diverse approaches to governance and diplomacy.

In many ways, Indonesia's efforts serve as a reminder that alternative paradigms, even those originating from the Global South, can contribute meaningfully to addressing the complex challenges of the modern world. Whether through ASEAN or broader international platforms, Indonesia's leadership in championing a win-win approach stands as a testament to the enduring power of compromise and dialogue in shaping a more peaceful and inclusive future.

*DR. PROF. DMITRY MOSYAKOV — HEAD OF THE CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA STUDIES, INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES RAS, MOSCOW, RUSSIA.

THE DIGITAL DIMENSION OF ASEAN-LED ECONOMIC REGIONALISM AMIDST THE US-CHINA TECHNOLOGICAL RIVALRY*

The ASEAN-led multilateral economic initiatives with ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to 2025 and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) as top priorities are a solid foundation for both ASEAN cooperative security system and ASEAN's international credentials. Mindful of this factor, the association aims to develop its multilateral dialogue formats and strengthen its centrality there.

Performing this task, the association has to respond to the digital transformation of economic and business practices, both in and beyond Southeast Asia. Examples of ASEAN's efforts, both completed and in progress, include the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap on Digital Transformation, the Framework for Promoting the Growth of Digital Start-up Ecosystems, a Guideline on AI Governance and Ethics, ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025 and the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement, to mention just a few most notable initiatives.

At the same time, the association in encountering serious challenges. From a visionary perspective, the association does not clarify how its key prospective project, namely, the ASEAN Economic Community, will be supported digitally. Specifically, it is not clear whether a single market or a single production base in Southeast Asia will be substantiated by a parallel project – a digital single market and production base. More specifically, is it reasonable to substantiate digitally individual pillars of the AEC 2025 rather than the AEC 2025 as a whole. If it is, which directions will be most appropriate? Finally, what instruments and enablers in addition to those that already exist will ASEAN need to cope with this task?

More fundamentally, ASEAN has to re-organize, or at least seriously revise, many of its already operational initiatives, as their terms of cooperation lag behind the actual practice. It relates to specifying terms of cooperation in trade in goods and in services. In the digital format, the line between them becomes blurred. In addition, taxation, cross-border movements of professionals, confidentiality, choice of cloud services, restrictions on online advertising and other digitalization-related issues require revising major ASEAN-led initiatives.

This bears increasing relevance amidst the rise in protectionism, including techno-nationalism, in the priorities of many ASEAN states and ASEAN's extra-regional partners. This factor not only undermines cross-border trade and investment in Southeast Asia, but also narrows MSME possibilities to attract investment and, most importantly, curtails innovations.

Getting to specifics, the ever-increasing digitalization poses serious challenges to both ASEAN and its community-building efforts, including the AEC 2025. Several points are noteworthy in this regard.

From an infrastructure perspective, the ASEAN states lack resources to develop the 5G internet. Except for Singapore, the average revenue per user (ARPU) in Southeast Asian states is lower than in other countries with 5G connections. Moreover, 5G-based objects are energy consuming, and not all ASEAN member states can efficiently respond to this demand. Lastly, data security concerns are on the rise, as the 5G internet allows its providers to retrieve information relevant not only to commercial confidentiality but also to national security of the recipient countries. As of 2020, Altiostar, Cisco and Qualcomm (the US), Datang Telecom, Huawei and ZTE (China), Ericsson (Sweden), Nokia (Finland) and Samsung (South Korea) were main 5G providers in Southeast Asia. If so, the ASEAN member states operate within the digital eco-system formed and developed by other actors, which considerably increases their vulnerability.

Apart from infrastructure, the regulatory dimension is of immense significance, as Southeast Asia is a highly diverse area from the legal point of view. Take, for instance, Vietnam and Indonesia, where data localization-related restrictions are strong (for foreign providers of online services, the establishment of a local branch or a local data center is obligatory). In its turn, Singapore's prioritizes "data adequacy requirements": cross-border data transfers are allowed if they meet Singapore's domestic standards of data protection. In other Southeast Asian states, considerable variety in data transfer requirements is noticeable.

*DR. PROF. EVGENY A. KANAEV — DEPUTY HEAD OF THE FACULTY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL STUDIES HSE), HEAD OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC DEPARTMENT OF THE CENTRE FOR COMPREHENSIVE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CCEIS);

AISYLU R. GARAEVA — LECTURER AT THE FACULTY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS (SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL REGIONAL STUDIES), MANAGER OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT CENTRE;

DMITRY O. FEDORENKO — GRADUATE MASTER'S STUDENT, FACULTY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

For the association, the problem is exacerbated by three regulation-related challenges. First, the digital transformation of Southeast Asia's companies (embracing their corporate, business and functional strategies) are evolving very quickly. As a result, not only the digitalization-related legal norms are conspicuously lagging behind the actual practice, but also pressure on regulators increases. Second, the media convergence comes into play: the Internet, mobile communications, TV services etc. become closely intertwined. It results in a convergence of markets that have traditionally been regulated separately. Third, commercial activity in the Internet raises many open-ended legal questions (proxy-servers, transactions through third countries etc.).

A boom in central bank digital currencies (CBDC) exacerbates the problem. In October 2023, Southeast Asian countries were between the research and the proof of concept stages. In this regard, the factor of China and India increasingly matters. Beijing has ambitious plans for the digital renminbi, aiming, among other outcomes, to increase the scale and efficiency of cross-border payments and, therefore, to give an impetus to the renminbi internationalization. In its turn, India focuses mostly on programmable payments (or direct benefit transfers for specific purposes), facilitating remittances and providing its micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises with lending opportunities. Be as it may, implementing their digitalization-related programs, the ASEAN member states have to take into account the already operational digital renminbi and digital rupee, in the PRC case enabled by powerful e-commerce platforms.

In order to arrive to more nuanced understanding of difficulties that ASEAN has to overcome, it is imperative to focus on its digitalization-related competences. Cybersecurity is an opportune case study. In Southeast Asia, companies mostly do not possess relevant competences to address cybersecurity threats. The latter are numerous and include business e-mail compromise, phishing, ransomware, e-commerce data interception, as well as different types of the Internet of Things (IoT) malware like DDoS Botnets or DNS Changers, to mention just a few. In 2022, the number of cybersecurity threats against Southeast Asia's corporate sector eliminated by Kaspersky increased by 45%. In the future, this threat is likely to increase in relevance, as digitalization will gain momentum, and the tertiary sector of ASEAN member states, enabled by ATISA, will become more sophisticated, innovative and productive.

Addressing those challenges from an external perspective a brief outline of differences between the Globalization 1.0. and the Globalization 2.0. is relevant. While globally agreed upon rules and standards of economic cooperation were the foundation upon which the Globalization 1.0 was premised, this component is completely missing in its 2.0 version.

While the Globalization 1.0 was built around global value chains (GVC) and, by extension, on trusted relationships between economic and business actors, now trust is a virtually non-existent and, by implication, a very expensive asset. To hedge risks, supply chains are shortened, "friend-shored" or nationalized. Importantly, GVC were formed in a long period of international stability, while nowadays elements of confrontation in regional and global politics are increasing. Lastly, climate change issues crucially influence the whole value chain, as GVC have traditionally had harmful environmental consequences.

From an external perspective, the influence of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework Agreement (IPEF) and the Digital Silk Road (DRS) is looming all the larger in ASEAN's priorities.

Concerning the IPEF, its most important shortcoming is clear: it is not a classic FTA, since it does not guarantee its participants the market access. Its pillars (trade, supply chains, clean economy and fair economy) are mostly declarations on intentions rather than clear and purposeful policy directions. If so, an effective multilateral governance of digital issues in the IPEF framework remains problematic. To put it in context, the IPEF is significantly inferior to the RCEP from, for instance, an e-commerce perspective.

The question came into a sharper focus after N. Pelosi's visit to Taiwan in August 2022. Prospects for a re-organization of semiconductor supply chains and related downstream activities, even under a very conservative scenario, include negative both immediate and second-order effects (as Taiwan and TSMC account for 92% of the world's most advanced chips production and 70% of the world's smartphone chipset production respectively). As a result, producers of components in vertically integrated GVC in technologically advanced industries, part of which is Southeast Asia, will encounter semiconductor shortage and disruptions of downstream electronic assembly networks. As regional production and technological networks remain major drivers of East Asian economic and business success stories (both have been achieved by the Japanese and the South Korean producer GVC and since recently the Chinese consumer GVC), their reorganization, however modest and long lasting it might be, will produce a disastrous effect on regional economic activity. The more so since in 2022 China owned two most popular online marketplaces worldwide, Taobao and Tmall, with 701 billion and 663 billion US dollars respectively.

Apart from negative implications for GVC per se, including those scattered across Southeast Asia, the collateral global damage will include export disruptions or, at least, delays, spiking inflation, decreasing domestic consumption and, by implication, social turbulence. As Southeast Asia is directly involved in global economic processes (in 2022, ASEAN's GDP for 3.6% of global GDP, while ASEAN-related forecast for 2024 and 2025 is higher than the global average – 4.7% and 5.0% vs 2.8% and 3.0% respectively) the ripple effect will extend to countries of Southeast Asia, as well as to ASEAN's prospective planning.

Concerning the Digital Silk Road, it reveals strategic intent, as it is linked to other PRC flagship initiatives like “Made in China 2025”, “Internet Plus” or “MCF” (military-civil fusion). Commonality of purpose and a synergy between China's government and corporate sector open up tremendous economic and business opportunities.

Building its infrastructure objects, China supports them with its software. Expanding ICT export allows the PRC to strengthen its positions in international industrial cooperation. Concurrently, China aims to reorganize the industrial, corporate and, most importantly, technological map of the BRI area, part of which is Southeast Asia. Chinese e-commerce mega-platforms and, since recently, the digital renminbi are important supplementary instruments for performing this task. Simultaneously, digital standard setting looms large in the PRC's international priorities: the afore-mentioned programs are complemented by “China Standards 2035” aimed at developing China's domestic manufacturing potential, increasing its share in the global patent system and expanding its presence in global standard setting organizations.

To conclude, several points are noteworthy. It is far from clear how the rising techno-nationalism, both in and beyond Southeast Asia, will influence on its digital transformation. Arguably, it will exacerbate the inequality problem from both an intra-country and an inter-country perspective.

Another troublesome for the association trend is the regionalization of the digital renminbi, as China has a strong advantage over its Southeast Asian neighbors. Coupled with a politicization of current global and regional trends, this factor provokes responses from American IT powerhouses that have strong positions in technologically advanced sectors of ASEAN member states. The chain effect will include negative implications for ASEAN's AEC-related plans, as well as to its leading role in the RCEP.

Finally, the divided internet (smartly described it, the “Splinternet”, or a digital area “where products, users and data are enclosed in separate pools by regulatory schemes”) as the aftereffect of the US-China technological rivalry undermines ASEAN's competitiveness. Digital support for multilateral initiatives inherently requires a strong unifying rather than a dividing agenda. Regrettably, it runs counter to the current digitalization-related trends.

Looking forward, the American and the Chinese digital ecosystems will probably coexist in Southeast Asia, although with growing frictions. Based on the evidence thus far, ASEAN's room for maneuver is likely to remain limited at best from a substantial and, more importantly, an instrumental perspective.

REFERENCES

1. ASEAN: Regional Economic Outlook. New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Market Intelligence Report. August 2023. P. 1. URL: // <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/assets/Trade-General/Trade-Market-reports/ASEAN-Regional-economic-outlook-August-2023.pdf>
2. Kanaev E.A. The RCEP E-Commerce Chapter: Implications for the ASEAN Economic Community. Yugo-Vostochnaya Aziya: aktual'nyye problemy razvitiya, 2023, T. 3, № 2 (59). Pp. 11–21. URL: // <https://sea.ivran.ru/f/sea2023n359p11-21.pdf>
3. Kaspersky. Online attacks against SEA businesses up 45% in 2022. Digwatch. April 27, 2023. URL: // <https://dig.watch/updates/kaspersky-online-attacks-against-sea-businesses-up-45-in-2022#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20online%20threats,329%25%20increase%20in%20web%20threats>.
4. Martinus M. The Intricacies of 5G Development in Southeast Asia. // ISEAS Perspective. 2020. Iss. 130. P. 4. URL: // https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_130.pdf
5. Most Popular Online Marketplaces Worldwide in 2022, Based on Gross Merchandise Value. Statista. 2023. URL: // <https://www.statista.com/statistics/885354/top-global-online-marketplaces-by-gmv/>
6. Most Popular Online Marketplaces Worldwide in 2022, Based on Gross Merchandise Value. Statista. 2023. URL: // <https://www.statista.com/statistics/885354/top-global-online-marketplaces-by-gmv/>
7. Updates on the ASEAN Economic Community. ASEAN Economic Integration Brief. 2023. № 13. P. 8. URL: // https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/AEIB_No.13_July2023_final.pdf
8. Vest C., Kratz A., Goujon R. The Global Economic Disruptions for a Taiwan Conflict. Rhodium Group. December 14, 2022. URL: // <https://rhg.com/research/taiwan-economic-disruptions/>
9. Xiang N. Metaverse – the Latest Chapter of the Splinternet? // East Asia Forum. June 6, 2022. URL: // <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/07/06/metaverse-the-latest-chapter-of-the-splinternet/>

RUSSIA - INDIA - CHINA TRIANGLE: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION IN A NEW ERA

INTRODUCTION

The world order created 78 years ago after World War II is less relevant today due to the shift in economic power to the East. Representation in the IMF, the World Bank or the UNSC are glaring cases of these ossified institutions. The Global South wants a say in how they are governed. However, the West seems to be caught in its perpetual hegemonic trap, endlessly imposing its worldview.

Alexander Dugin, a far-right Russian philosopher, believes the post-modern liberal order cannot evolve or assimilate alternative political philosophies. It, therefore, needs a major political overhaul. However, scholars like Robert Gilpin, Paul Kennedy and Graham Allison have argued that great wars mostly precede such systemic changes.

The current trajectory of the world order looks rather grim. The visible divide between the West and the Rest has already commenced a Cold War 2.0 of sorts, and proxy wars have become the new normal. A German and American political analyst, Jessica Berlin, believes that the liberal international order (LIO) has reached its «League of Nations» moment. Under these conditions, is it possible to create a new order without sliding into WWII?

Against this backdrop, this report hypothesises that a transition to a peaceful world order is possible. The present trends indicate that a new world order will be a Poly-Minilateral one. Multiple mini-laterals will spawn opportunities for engagements between major powers and create the necessary checks and balances against adventurous revanchism.

This report suggests that the Russia-India-China (RIC) is one of the minilateral capable of carving a new order. So, this report intends to explore five questions.

- First, why could RIC be crucial for a stable World Order?
- Second, what is the salience of RIC nations in the Asia-Pacific?
- Third, how could RIC influence the security architecture of the Asia-Pacific?
- Fourth, what are the challenges before the RIC to congeal an order-making bloc?
- Fifth, can RIC be resuscitated?

WHY RIC COULD BE CRUCIAL FOR A STABLE WORLD ORDER

Firstly, RIC can potentially preserve a multipolar order in many parts of the globe against external hegemonies or proxies. China's and India's support of Russia during the ongoing Ukraine conflict is an excellent example of supporting a multipolar Europe.

Secondly, RIC can create an inclusive world order. Recent expansions of the SCO, BRICS and G20 were undoubtedly a result of the nudge and vision provided by Russia, China, and India. The Global South is often vocal about its dissatisfaction with the old Western order and looks up to RIC.

The third reason why RIC will be crucial is that the three can bring their unique capacities, constituency and consensus to the table.

SALIENCE OF RUSSIA, INDIA AND CHINA IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC

First is the Military-Industrial Complex and Human Capital of Russia. Russia has single-handedly held off NATO and the collective West in the most intensive great power proxy war since the 1940's. This would be an impossible feat without a formidable military-industrial complex and impossible to sustain without science, technology, innovation and human capital. Russia is also an energy-surplus country and an agricultural powerhouse.

Second is India's JAM trinity for implementing SDG and Climate goals. India's Jan-Dhan (the J of the JAM) or Zero-Balance Savings Account, the unique identity or Aadhar (A), and the Unified digital Payments Interface (UPI) for instant mobile (M) payment ensure that social benefits reach the poorest without pilferage. There have been 10.56 bn UPI transactions in September 2023, amounting to \$243 bn, including with foreign countries. India is also on its way to meeting UNFCCC targets of reducing emissions intensity by 45% from the 2005 level by 2030. Thus, India offers affordable tools and governance models for the Global South on SDG and Climate change. India is also one of the fastest-growing economies, a food surplus country and the largest producer of generic drugs. The soft power of Indian diplomacy, diaspora, and democracy gives it an enviable trust and legitimacy worldwide.

*DR. SOMEN BANERJEE — SENIOR FELLOW AT THE MARITIME RESEARCH CENTRE, PUNE, INDIA. HE HAS AUTHORED TWO BOOKS, MARITIME POWER THROUGH BLUE ECONOMY AND SEA OF COLLECTIVE DESTINY: BAY OF BENGAL AND BIMSTEC. HIS OTHER PUBLICATIONS CAN BE ACCESSED AT SOMENBANERJEE.COM. EMAIL: JNU.BANERJEE@GMAIL.COM.

RIC's third salience is the economic power of China. China is an economic giant and a significant leader in the infrastructure and tech sectors. For example:

— The BRI has touched a staggering 147 countries and 40% of global GDP .

— TikTok, is one of ASEAN's most prominent e-commerce platforms, rivalling Instagram and Snap Chat .

— Chinese E.V. giant BYD has filed 16 times more patents over the past 20 years than Tesla .

— Out of 23 technologies analysed by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), China leads research in 19. The U.S. leads in the remaining four technologies .

— Despite Japan's opposition, Britain has invited China to its global artificial intelligence (AI) summit in November, 2023. It means that without China, it would be difficult to regulate A.I .

In his recent book Techno-Feudalism, Yanis Varoufakis, the Greek economist and politician, illustrates how the owners of big tech companies like Amazon, Google, Twitter or X and Facebook have become the world's feudal overlords. Only China has been successful in protecting itself from such Western tech-feudalism .

Thus it can be seen that together, Russia, India, and China bring substantial capacities. They also combine the constituency of nearly 25 per cent of the world population. Finally, they enjoy the consensus of the Global South.

HOW COULD RIC INFLUENCE THE REGIONAL SECURITY ARCHITECTURE OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC?

A regional security architecture (RSA) should be evaluated in five domains:

First, what macro-structure would RIC like to create in the Asia-Pacific? There is a considerable gap between the rhetoric of a multilateral order under ASEAN centrality and the aspiration of multipolarity. RIC needs to resolve this. A multipolar order that excludes the ASEAN and Pacific Island Forum (PIF) in the Asia-Pacific would be tenuous.

Second, what should be the unifying mechanism? Should it be a comprehensive security focusing on all aspects of development and growth, or should it be a balance of power? The U.S. is undoubtedly engaged in a balance of power architecture focused on China, which the smaller states in the Asia-Pacific like to circumvent.

Third, what variable geometries does RIC have to compete with already existing within the Asia-Pacific? These include the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the QUAD, US-Hub and Spoke, the ANZUS, and the U.S. Compacts of Free Association (COFA) with the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, and Palau.

The introduction of RIC will further thicken the plot. India could play a pivotal role by simultaneously belonging to many of them, creating the quintessential bridge between opposing blocs and defusing the precipitation of crisis into confrontation, conflicts or combat.

Fourth, what should be the primary function of the RSA? Should it be crisis management, NTS, or power projection? Power projection appears to be the real motive of some major stakeholders.

Fifth, RSAs are usually differentiated from institutions like the East Asia Summit or ADDM Plus. However, this gives institutions no control over the emerging RSA. How do we marry the RSA with institutions to make it more inclusive for resident states?

For RIC to develop a web of deep roots in the Asia-Pacific, RIC-led RSA has to evolve as a strategic alignment between Russia, India, China, ASEAN and the PIF.

WHY HAS RIC NOT EMERGED AS AN ORDER-MAKING BLOC AFTER 18 FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS?

RIC was a strategic grouping created in the late 1990s under the leadership of Yevgeny Primakov, the Prime Minister of Russia from 1998 to 1999, as «a counterbalance to the Western alliance .» There have been Summit meetings and 18 Foreign Ministers meetings. Yet, the prospects of RIC appear very bleak. Three stumbling blocs before RIC to emerge as an order-making bloc in the Asia-Pacific are:

— **One**, is short-term disruptions. The pandemic had exposed the hollowness of the WHO, the U.N. and the West.

The Western ineffectiveness during COVID appears to be the last straw of LIO's demise. Ironically, it was RIC nations that came to the rescue of the Rest. Even with a per capita income of just \$2000 and 1.4 bn people at home, India shared medicines and pharmaceutical products with over 150 countries worldwide . Russia even provided protective gear and ventilators to New York, despite the mutual recrimination that has characterised U.S.-Russia relations . China provided close to two billion doses of vaccines to over 120 countries and international organisations .

On Ukraine, there is considerable convergence between the three. But that is might not true in other situations. Russia, India and China have voted differently in the UNSC on many occasions in the past.

— Second, De-risking and De-globalisation.

After decades of success, globalisation is said to be on the retreat. Companies are diversifying supply chains and relocating business from nearshoring to friend shoring. For example, many European customers have shifted their source of car microchips away from China. Similarly, the Ukraine conflict has forced Europe to shift its dependence on energy and critical raw materials away from Russia. Yet, India stood firm with Russia despite Western opprobrium.

However, the Western de-risking strategy could put India in the opposite camp compared to Russia and China. China has been the focus of Western de-risking concerning information technology, energy, and biotech. Primarily to:

- Maintain the United States as the world's technological leader.
- Slow the progress of the Chinese military development.
- Reduce overreliance on China for critical goods.

— The third reason for disjuncture within the RIC are the UNSC reforms, border disputes, trade deficit, terrorism, and the interpretation of International Norms. These issues might look insurmountable for nay-sayers and discourage any initiative for rekindling the RIC.

REFERENCES

1. Agathe Demarais, What Does 'De-Risking' Actually Mean? Foreign Policy, 23 August 2023, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/23/derisking-us-china-biden-decoupling-technology-supply-chains-semiconductors-chips-ira-trade/>
2. Alexander Dugin, The Fourth Political Theory, Eurasian Movement, 2012.
3. Cui Jianchun, Adaptation is the Key Characteristic of China's Policy against COVID-19, Chinese Embassy in Nigeria, 10 January 2023, http://ng.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zngx/cne/202301/t20230110_11004793.htm
4. Dylan Loh, TikTok's rise in ASEAN spells trouble for U.S. rival Snapchat, Nikkei Asia, 22 September 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Technology/TikTok-s-rise-in-ASEAN-spells-trouble-for-U.S.-rival-Snapchat>
5. James McBride, Noah Berman, and Andrew Chatzky, China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative, Council on Foreign Relations, 02 February 2023, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>
6. Jessica Berlin, https://x.com/berlin_bridge/status/1712160373585973750?s=20
7. John Ikkenberry, A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order, Yale University Press, London, 2020.
8. Kaoru Takatsuki, China leads high-tech research in 80% of critical fields: report, Nikkei Asia, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/China-tech/China-leads-high-tech-research-in-80-of-critical-fields-report>
9. Kishore Mahbubani, The Global South: A new North Star, The Straits Times, 16 October 2023, <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/the-global-south-a-new-north-star>
10. Kylie Atwood, Russian coronavirus aid arrives in New York, CNN, 01 April 2020. https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/coronavirus-pandemic-04-01-20-intl/h_4b44f0a964a219c84a107328712cacc4

RESUSCITATION OF RIC

Many short-term shocks continue to surprise us. The COVID-19 pandemic has not faded totally. In the middle of the ongoing Ukraine conflict, yet another confrontation has erupted in Gaza after the Hamas attacks. However, what makes our world truly hard to understand and grasp in totality is that we are also experiencing simultaneously long-term structural shifts. These include the rise of China and India, the broader return of Asia, the relative decline of the West and the resurgence of the Global South. It is these long-term structural shifts, not the short-term shocks, which will shape our future.

Amidst changes, a resuscitated RIC could play a crucial role in providing an alternate, stable, and poly-minilateral order premised on win-win diplomacy. For RIC to emerge as an order-making block, Russia needs to «Act East». However, Russia's endeavour has greater chances of success if it anchors the eastern pivot on ASEAN centrality and PIF.

India engages with the Asia-Pacific region in variable formats. Even though the region and issues remain constant, the depth and width of its engagement vary with the nature of partnerships. India's multilayered engagements at the India-ASEAN forum, India-FIPIC (Pacific islands), and QUAD offer some valuable insights for Russia's «Act East» and RIC.

11. Martina Di Sano, Vanessa Gunnella, Laura Lebastard, Deglobalisation: risk or reality? The Ecb Blog, 12 July 2023, <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/blog/date/2023/html/ecb.blog230712-085871737a.en.html>
12. Ministry of External Affairs, India, Remarks by Foreign Secretary at the Launch of the Publication on 'Indian Diplomacy and COVID Response', Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, 21 April 22, <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/35216/Remarks+by+Foreign+Secretary+at+the+Launch+of+the+Publication+on+Indian+Diplomacy+and+COVID+Response+Indian+Council+of+World+Affairs+New+Delhi>
13. Naoshige Shimizu, BYD outpaces Tesla 16-fold in patent filings, Nikkei Asia, 21 September 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Electric-cars-in-China/BYD-outpaces-Tesla-16-fold-in-patent-filings>
14. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, Russia-India-China Trilateral Grouping: More Than Hype? The Diplomat, 05 July 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/russia-india-china-trilateral-grouping-more-than-hype/>
15. Sarita Chaganti Singh, India succeeds in reducing emissions rate by 33% over 14 years – sources, Reuters, 09 August 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-succeeds-reducing-emissions-rate-by-33-over-14-years-sources-2023-08-09/>
16. Tapanjana Rudra, UPI Transactions Cross 1,000 Cr Mark For Second Consecutive Month In Sept, Inc 42, <https://inc42.com/buzz/upi-transactions-cross-1000-cr-mark-for-second-consecutive-month-in-sept/>
17. William James, Britain invites China to its global AI summit, Reuters, 19 September 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-invites-china-ai-summit-2023-09-19/>
18. Yanis Varoufakis, Techno-Feudalism & the Death of Capitalism, Singularity University, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWuosALmRjo>

RUSSIA – ASEAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

Russia and ASEAN have been developing dialogue partnership since 1996. Among the dimensions of their ties, a meaningful area of joint work that has been promoted not widely enough in media, but rich in potential and possible to be intensified in a mutually beneficial way, is the defence and security cooperation.

So far, a number of consulting mechanisms between the partners have been formed and embodied. These are the meetings between the ministries of defence (both within the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and on bilateral basis, between the senior officials of the ministries of internal affairs, between the senior officials of the national security services, between the national humanitarian and disaster relief services, and, in addition, Russia-ASEAN Dialogue on cyber security. The main issues, discussed in these frameworks, include the drug trafficking countermeasures, the transnational crime counteraction, the anti-terrorist activities, the cyber security, and the humanitarian and disaster relief.

Here are several examples of the most recent steps in the practical implementation of Russia-ASEAN defence and security ties.

In 2021, the first Russia-ASEAN naval exercise took place. Alongside the coast of Indonesia's Sumatra island the partner states' naval ships held a training in order to elaborate the interoperability in providing the security of civil navigation and of economic activity, both out at sea and in a harbour.

In 2023, Russia-ASEAN tabletop exercise took place in Myanmar in August. Moreover, ADMM-Plus exercise (with the participation of the ASEAN countries and India and China as well) was organised by Russia in Primorsky region in September. The aim of both joint trainings between the military of the partner countries was to achieve the interoperability in anti-terrorist activities.

Currently, Russia is the co-chairman (together with Myanmar) of the ADMM-Plus expert working group (EWG) on counter-terrorism during the working cycle that had started in 2021 and is planned up to 2024. Earlier, Russia had co-chaired the ADMM-Plus EWG on military medicine together with Thailand in 2014–2017 and another EWG, on humanitarian mine action, in 2017–2020 together with Laos. In addition, Russia has developed and continued humanitarian demining activities in Laos up to present stage

on bilateral level and extended significant support to this country in dealing with the problem of the unexploded ordnances (UXO), including the UXO clearance and the training of the local military personnel in this sensitive security area.

Furthermore, in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia and ASEAN enhanced their already-existing cooperation in countering the new types of contagious diseases. Actually, such cooperation had been suggested by Russia much earlier, as long ago as in 2018, when President Vladimir Putin had proposed it to the leaders of the ASEAN countries during Russia-ASEAN summit in Singapore. Russia can share its experience in this field, especially in the training of professionals. In 2019, Russia-ASEAN partnership had witnessed the first time when Russia had organised the first courses for the epidemiologists from the ASEAN countries in Vladivostok. The most recent stage of this programme was realised in 2022: throughout the year, Rospotrebnadzor (Russian state authority responsible for epidemiological activities) conducted five training seminars for the colleagues from the ASEAN countries. These seminars were attended by more than fifty epidemiologists, who therefore completed the advanced training course.

One more dimension of Russia-ASEAN cooperation is the environmental security. The two sides are developing their dialogue in opposing the newest environmental challenges, which are currently being faced, in fact, by the whole humanity. In 2022, Russia – ASEAN Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund has finalized the production of a series of a video manual on waste water treatment, and officially released the result of the joint efforts. This manual is designed for training purposes, and placed online. It is accessible to everybody, and can be used free by any education institution.

As we can see, the scope of Russia-ASEAN defence and security cooperation is rather wide, diverse and comprehensive. Russia and ASEAN pay attention both to the traditional and the newest, non-traditional security challenges. The whole spectrum of the threats for regional and international security is on their agenda and a matter of their concern. This is also reflected in Russia-ASEAN Joint Plan of Action for 2021–2025, that was adopted at the fourth Russia-ASEAN summit in 2021. According to the Plan, the two sides agreed to intensify their interaction in all aspects of their defence and security partnership.

*DR. KSENIA G. MURATSHINA – PHD IN HISTORY, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW AT THE CENTER FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA STUDIES IOS RAS. HER AREA OF ACADEMIC INTEREST INCLUDES THE STUDIES OF THE EXTERNAL ACTORS' POLICIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OCEANIA, AND OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS' ACTIVITIES. DR. MURATSHINA IS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE EXPERT NETWORK OF THE RIAC.

Now let's have a look at the most promising areas of cooperation, which can be further developed primarily in the nearest future.

The first one would be, certainly, to enhance the whole process of the multilateral dialogue and the practical cooperation on combating traditional and, especially, non-traditional challenges: the anti-terrorist measures track; the activities countering piracy, drug trafficking and human trafficking; the consultations on cyber security issues; the activities countering the newest healthcare challenges; the joint multilateral environmental projects. Russia pays a lot of attention to sharing its experience of anti-terrorist and other non-traditional security measures with its partners. The exchange of experience will let all of us combat the security challenges in a more efficient way.

Secondly, if we take in focus the defence cooperation, it is now acquiring a completely new light. Russian armed forces are now raising their professional skills in a non-stop mode and in the most practical way, as they are struggling against the modern Nazism of the Ukrainian and Western origins. Russian Army is a combat army with the up-to-date battle experience. In contemporary world, only the states, which are powerful enough, can secure their sovereignty from the dictate of the Western colonial thinking, and act as independent entities, protecting their interests and their people against different forms of radicalism. Russia is interested in and eager to encourage and enhance the defence potential of our partners – of the friendly countries which we work with and have built mutual trust together. Our partners from the ASEAN countries can increase their defence potential and study the specific features of the modern defence activities, thanks to Russia-ASEAN defence cooperation. Bilateral issues, such as arms exports, are discussed tête-à-tête with the partner countries. However, multilateral capacity building and military education projects constitute a separate, large, future-oriented, viable and prospective area of cooperation. Already, this year, during the Russia-ASEAN exercises in August, Russian officers have held the training seminars for the ASEAN military officials on the role of the unmanned aerial vehicles and radio-electronic warfare in modern conflicts, as well as on the organisation of the humanitarian aid for civilians and the work with refugees. All of the above-mentioned clearly represent the issues from the newest defence experience.

Thirdly, what can also be named a very meaningful direction of Russia-ASEAN prospective cooperation, is that the two sides could join their efforts in order to elaborate a unified international legal basis to combat the non-traditional threats, and, then, to promote this issue at the international level. The most urgent is to codify the international aspects of the cyber security area. Cyber security challenges are persisting in the world, but the international community clearly lacks common view and common legal basis to withstand them.

Fourthly, another area for Russia-ASEAN joint work could be the development of the legal mechanisms and views regarding the environmental hazards. The elaboration of the international, or at least regional, or interregional environmental law is becoming more and more vitally needed, as the countries have to cope with the transboundary water and air pollution, with the illicit wildlife trafficking, with deforestation, and try to oppose the climate change.

The fifth joint action, which would also be practical and necessary for both sides, would be to deepen the ties between the humanitarian and disaster relief services of Russia and the ASEAN countries. This would provide the exchange of experience and allow the partners to develop the joint measures against natural disasters, which, regrettably, are becoming more and more frequent and require joint answers from the neighbouring states and regions.

And, sixthly, it is necessary to emphasize that ASEAN would considerably benefit from expanding the exchanges and elaborating practical cooperation in the above-mentioned areas (as well as in other aspects of mutual interest) with Russia not only on bilateral basis, but also in multilateral formats with the Commonwealth of the Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and BRICS. The development of the organisation-to-organisation or organisation-to-forum dialogues would allow to build a common security space in Eurasia, involving several regions together. The formation of such dialogues and the elaboration of mutually beneficial approaches should constitute a meaningful aim on the agenda of Russia-ASEAN political, economic, defence and security, and cultural contacts, both in Track 1 and Track 2 consultations.

PRIORITY AREAS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES

Russia and the Philippines have always had exceptionally friendly diplomatic and political relations, and in recent years they have been actively developing in many directions. As Chairman of the Federation Council Valentina Matvienko noted at a meeting with the Chairman of the Senate of the Congress of the Republic of the Philippines Franklin M. Drilon back in 2015: “We consider the Philippines as a very important, promising partner of Russia in the Asia-Pacific region. We stand for intensifying political contacts at all levels. We note the strengthening of bilateral parliamentary contacts.” The impetus for the mutual strengthening and expansion of trade relations and partnerships in other sectors significant for both countries was the diversification of the Philippines’ foreign policy during the presidency of Rodrigo Duterte, who promoted a policy of expanding contacts with world powers and searching for new potential partners for the Philippines, including Russia. During 2016–2021 High-level meetings were held repeatedly between representatives of the governments of our countries, a number of important agreements were concluded, and various economic initiatives were launched.

However, due to the fact that establishing strong economic cooperation, increasing trade turnover between states from year to year and expanding areas of mutually beneficial cooperation is a labor-intensive task and takes time, both Russia and the Philippines need to make more efforts to become truly large partners to each other. In addition, 2 years of the pandemic, and then complications in the foreign policy situation in the world currently, have largely slowed down the implementation of many already existing initiatives.

Nevertheless, as in 2015, we can and should now talk about priority areas of bilateral cooperation between countries, and it is gratifying to see that over the past year the movement in this direction has been very noticeable. Many vectors of cooperation remain relevant on an ongoing basis: energy, agriculture, telecommunications, medicine, woodworking. A promising direction is also Russia’s participation in the implementation of infrastructure projects, including the construction of railways and the modernization of Philippine ports. In the energy industry, Russia is primarily interested in organizing supplies of liquefied natural gas to the Philippines, and the Philippines, for its part,

is interested in purchasing petroleum products such as diesel, gasoline, and kerosene from Russia. As part of the country’s infrastructure development program, the Philippines may be interested in Russia’s participation in construction projects. The Philippines’ purchase of construction equipment, power engineering products and other complex goods from Russia could also be beneficial for both parties. Russia pins some hopes on the development of nuclear energy in the Philippines. Rosatom has unique solutions for low-power nuclear power plants, in which Philippine partners have shown interest. An additional advantage of our country is the availability of floating nuclear power plant technology, especially given the geography of the Philippines as an island nation. On the Philippine side, Russia may be interested, in addition in traditional agricultural products and in electronics products: semiconductors and other components. So Russian-Philippine economic relations certainly have a future. And in the current situation, when there is a disruption in traditional supply chains, as well as a sharp rise in prices for critical goods, which negatively affects the state of the national economy, Russia can act as an alternative supplier of products of interest to the Philippines. Such undertakings have a chance to become a good start for increasing trade turnover between countries. In the meantime, Russia is in the third ten on the list of foreign trade partners of the Philippines, so there is still a lot of work to be done in this area. Among the latest achievements in this area, one can note the opening of the Trade Mission of the Russian Federation in the Philippines in 2022. This year, the Trade Representation of Russia in the Philippines held negotiations with the leadership of the Philippine Chamber of Mines, which includes the largest enterprises in the industry.

The possibility of expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between companies from both countries was discussed at the meeting. The Philippine side expressed particular interest in attracting Russian technological solutions for processing nickel ore and automating processes in the mining industry. Currently, the bulk of Philippine nickel is exported to China in raw form.

The leadership of the Chamber of Mines of the Republic of the Philippines expressed its readiness to assist interested Russian enterprises in establishing contacts with local industry leaders.

*DR. DARIA S. PANARINA — RESEARCH FELLOW OF THE CENTRE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA, IOS RAS, HEAD OF THE LABORATORY FOR THE STUDY OF THE RUSSIAN DIASPORA IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE EAST.

The potential for cooperation in the agricultural sector is high as well. In June 2023, Russian companies in the agricultural sector visited Manila on a business mission. During the meetings, Philippine partners expressed interest in increasing supplies of agricultural goods from Russia, especially poultry and meat-and-bone meal.

On the Russian side, the mission was attended by the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, Rosselkhozadzor, the National Meat Association and 15 leading Russian companies producing agricultural products. On the Philippine side, more than 60 organizations took part in the events – government bodies, the business community and key industry associations.

Over three days, more than 200 meetings and negotiations were held between Russian and Philippine companies. During the mission, there was an exposition of Russian food products, where potential importers could study the quality characteristics and assortment. The business program included a series of b2b negotiations, a plenary session on the prospects for the development of bilateral cooperation, and a round table on effective strategies for working in the market of the Republic, as well as on-site events. The Russian delegation got acquainted with the work of chain retail in the Philippines, took trips to the retail chains The Marketplace and Landmark, where the mission participants examined the goods presented on the shelves, the price offers of competitors and asked the management of the chains questions about the features of working with foreign suppliers. As part of the discussions, the Philippines proposed to the Russian Federation not only mutually beneficial trade in agricultural products, but also the creation of joint ventures for processing agricultural products. The prospects for supplies of Russian grains and leguminous crops to the Philippines were also discussed.

One of the last important events for our countries for the development of relations was the 3rd meeting of the Joint Russian-Philippine Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, which was held in Manila on October 4-5, 2023. The Russian delegation, which included more than 40 representatives of Russian bodies authorities, organizations and companies, was headed by Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation Alexey Gruzdev. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation.

During the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission, Russia and the Philippines outlined further steps for cooperation in a wide range of areas: in the field of trade and investment, industry, agriculture, energy, and transport. The Russian side confirmed its readiness to supply meat products, cars, and medicines to the Philippine market. Philippine partners expressed particular interest in cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of energy supplies, mining and processing of rare earth metals, in the field of information and communication technologies and creative industries.

Tourism was noted as a promising topic of cooperation between Russia and the Philippines. Despite the fact that the tourist exchange between Russia and the Philippines in the “pre-pandemic” year amounted to no more than 50 thousand tourist trips, now both Philippine and Russian air carriers and travel companies are actively exploring opportunities to develop cooperation in this area. At the same time, Philippine companies are interested not only in attracting Russian tourists, but also in increasing inbound tourism to Russia. The question of opening direct flights between Moscow and Manila still remains open.

The parties noted the intensification of interregional cooperation between Russia and the Philippines. In particular, at the beginning of 2023, a delegation from the Moscow Government visited Manila. In the Philippines, Moscow presented not only the most advanced achievements in the field of urban environment, but also organized a full-fledged business mission with the participation of our Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The forum «Moscow – Manila: modern vectors of bilateral cooperation» clearly demonstrated the interest of the business communities of the two countries in expanding foreign economic relations, the need to exchange experience in the implementation of the «Smart, Safe City» programs, modernization of urban life support systems, introduction of digital technologies, development of technology parks, creative industries, museum exhibitions. A Cooperation Program until 2025 was signed between the cities, under which the parties agreed to exchange experience and information on the development of urban transport, including electric transport, urban planning, education; develop contacts between companies and entrepreneurs of the two megacities, strengthen cooperation in the field of tourism, ecology, sports and culture.

In September, a Philippine delegation led by the mayor of Cebu City, Michael Lopez Rama, visited Vladivostok to participate in the Eastern Economic Forum; in 2022, an Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation was signed between the cities.

The Philippine-Russian multidisciplinary business forum, which was attended by over 100 Philippine companies and organizations, aroused high interest on the part of Philippine business on the sidelines of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission. During the plenary session of the business forum, representatives of the FESCO TG, National Payment Systems JSC, and the National Meat Association spoke. A representative of the city of Moscow made a presentation on digital and transport solutions for urban development.

In addition to the already identified areas of cooperation, there are many others. The introduction of alternative payment systems in the Philippines by the Russian side may be in demand. Thus, representatives of the business community in the Philippines are showing interest in the MIR system, which could become a convenient tool for conducting mutual settlements between business entities of the two countries. A promising direction is the intensification of scientific and technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of the Philippines, which is considered as one of the key factors in achieving the goals of modernizing the Philippine economy and diversifying the entire range of relations between our countries. It is equally important to continue to develop relations in the fields of culture, art and education. In the educational field, recent achievements include:

— On the Filipino side, the efforts of the New Era University in Manila to open and develop the Russian Studies Center in order to promote understanding of Russian geography and history, language and culture, science and technology, and international relations through lectures, visualization, interactive and collaborative teaching, as well as an interdisciplinary approach to learning.

The New Era University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MGIMO in Russia in 2018 and has been participating in events of scientific and educational universities in our country for several years so far. In 2023, representatives of the New Era University also took part in the scientific conference “Colonialism in the East and its impact on the modern world” on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok on September 10.

— On the Russian side — the development and expansion of quotas for the training of Filipino citizens in Russian universities, providing them with additional grants and internships in specialized areas in demand in the Philippines. For example, the possibility was discussed for Filipino students to undergo during 2022–2023. training at the Institute of High Technologies and Advanced Materials of the Far Eastern Federal University under the program “Operation of Nuclear Power Plants”, as well as practical training at the site of the Rosatom state corporation in the Far Eastern Federal University at the International Research Center for Advanced Nuclear Technologies.

In general, the Philippines is determined to more actively develop cooperation with the Russian Federation in those areas where it already exists, as well as to conduct more intensive bilateral contacts at the level of officials, and Russia, for its part, actively supports this initiative and is ready to cooperate with the Philippines on all directions.

FROM RELIGIOUS TO POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES: HISTORICIZING GEOPOLITICAL ENCOUNTERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTERNATIONAL ORDER IN THE MODERN WORLD*

INTRODUCTION

In this report I will delve into the intricate ways nations around the globe engage with each other and the interactions they form. We will explore the perspectives and theories put forth by esteemed scholars such as Keone, Kissinger, Mearsheimer, and Kaplan. It is essential to grasp the historical engagement between countries and the profound impact these interactions have had on the world. This scholarly exploration will encompass diverse elements including historical contexts, societal beliefs, power dynamics, geographical influences, strategic approaches, economic repercussions, international organizations, societal and cultural perspectives, and the enduring consequences over time (Huntington 1996; Brzezinski 1997; Nisbett 20023; Slaughter 20027; at Kissinger 2015).

This essay is structured into three sections: (1) Geopolitical and IR Concepts, Ideological Systems and the Invented Social Technology in the Formation of World Empires; (2) Religious Ideological Systems, Invented Social Technology and the Rise of the World Empires; at (3) Political Ideological Systems, Invented Social Technology and the Rise of Nation-States.

In the first section, I will delve into the core concept of the study and relate it to current viewpoints on geopolitics, international relations, ideological frameworks, and the impact of social technology on shaping global political landscapes. Moving on, the second part will center on how states embraced religious ideologies such as Mandala of the Hind-Buddhists, Ummah of the Arab-Persian-Turkish, and the Ekklesia by the Europeans. I will also explore their utilization of social technology played a role in expanding empires and consolidating conquered lands. Lastly, the third section will shift focus towards the evolution of political ideology, leading to the formation of nation-states, with specific emphasis of course on the United States (US) and the Soviet Union (SU). I will also examine how their use of of social technologies expanded and solidified during the Cold War period.

GEOPOLITICAL AND IR CONCEPTS, IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND THE INVENTED SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY IN THE FORMATION OF WORLD EMPIRES

In this section of my report, I want to highlight three important geopolitical and IR concepts so that we can be guided in dealing with this topic: (1) there are important key elements about the transformative dynamics that led to the transition from religious to political ideology; (2) it is necessary to rethink the mainstream narrative about the study of geopolitical encounters and their impact in the contemporary era; and (3) there is a need to emphasize the importance of an alternative narrative in the study of geopolitical encounters and their impact in the modern world.

To begin, key concepts in historicizing geopolitical encounters and their impact on contemporary world order are important because they enable a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the historicizing narratives on geopolitical encounters and their impact on contemporary world order—(a) contextualization, (b) ideologies and worldviews, (c) dynamic power, (d) geostrategies, (e) economic factors, (f) impact on international institutions, (g) social and cultural aspects, and (h) long-term consequences are among the manifest elements.

When exploring geopolitical engagement or interactions in today's world, different viewpoints are expressed, such as realism, liberalism, constructivism, and post-colonialism. These perspectives, when looking at geopolitics and international relations, prioritize power dynamics and national interests in the initial section. The following section centers on the role of institutions, collaboration, and norms in molding the global framework. Additionally, the third part underscores the important of concepts, norms, and shared identities in relationships, especially within the context of evolving geopolitical models. Conversely, the fourth section delves into the enduring impact of colonialism and imperialism on shaping modern geopolitical engagements. .

*DR. VICENTE C. VILLAN — PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PHILIPPINES, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, AND A FACULTY FELLOW AT THE ASIAN CENTER, UP DILIMAN.

This sheds light on the important story of how countries are becoming more interconnected, global organizations are emerging, diplomacy, trade and international laws play roles in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. I believe that grasping power disparities, cultural dominance, and ongoing inequalities in the world order should be viewed through a historical lens in these interactions. Post-colonial scholars stress the need to decolonize knowledge and push for worldwide fairness and justice, while also critically analysing how power is intertwined with spatial tactics and communication in geopolitics. Scholars of critical geopolitics investigate how narratives and representations influence identity formation, territorial disputes, and international conflicts.

Alternative narratives play a vital role in discussing about geopolitical interactions and their effects, as they expanded a wide range of viewpoints and deepen our understanding of international relations. For instance, efforts to decolonize historical accounts, explore intersectionality, and present counter-narratives offer opportunities to questions prevailing or widely accepted stories. These narratives aim to uncover new perspectives from non-traditional sources, grassroots movements, local community

development initiatives, offering a comprehensive outlook on social phenomena and historical events. Geopolitics and international relations concepts can effectively be elucidated by religious and political ideologies, as well as the rise of nation-states. Notions involving the establishment of global empires encompass the development of ideological frameworks and societal structures that facilitate territorial expansion and reinforce imperial power. These initiatives led to the creation of social technologies that streamlined the manipulation of public information, undermining of cultural expressions and heritage, dissemination of propaganda and psychological tactics, advancement of social infrastructures and communication tools, enforcement of policies and colonial regulations for population movement, mythologizing indigenous narratives, subversion of the script systems and print media platforms, and strategically crafting the imperial symbols for cultural supremacy.

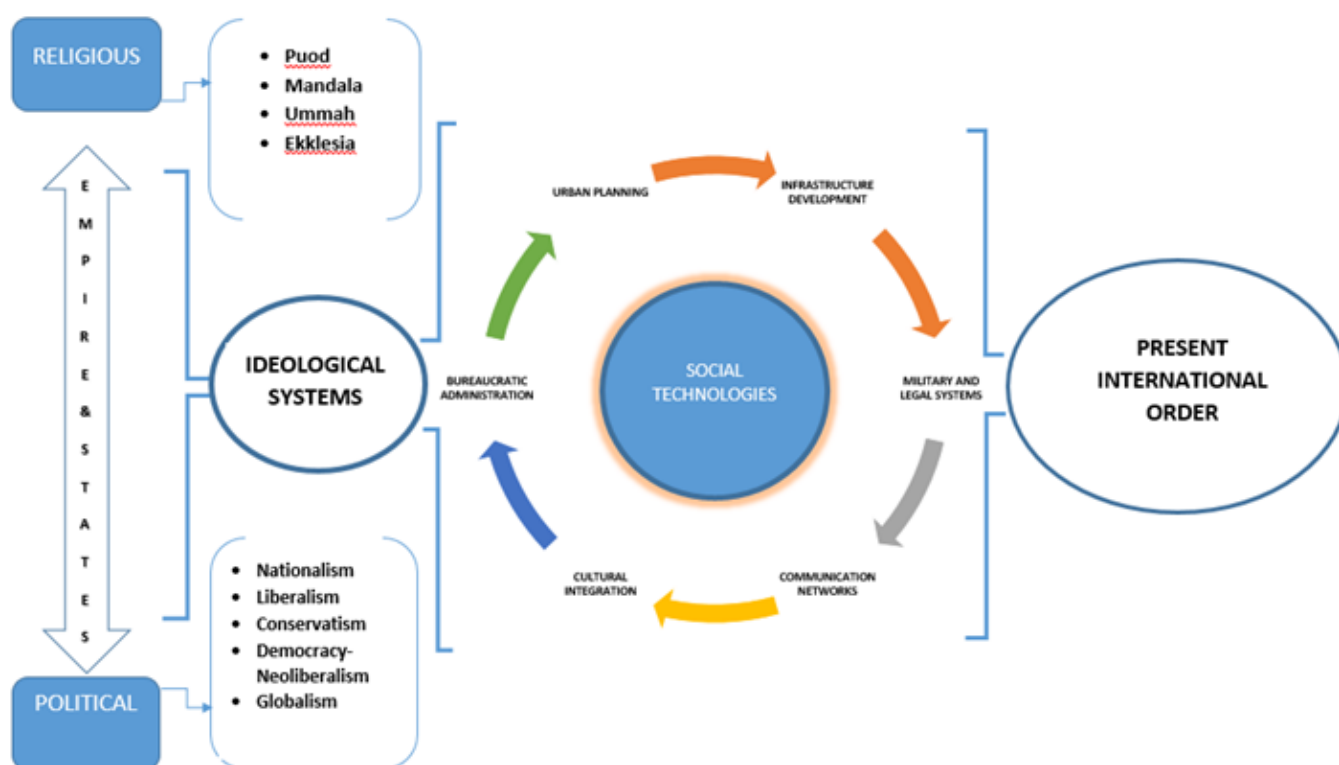


Plate 1: Conceptual Map (Villan, 2024)

RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, INVENTED SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE RISE OF THE WORLD EMPIRES

In the world of global politics, it is evident that the ideas and beliefs of countries hold shape how they interact with each other. This is a point emphasized by Walt (1987), highlighting the significant role that ideological systems play in the dynamics of international relations. Among these, religious ideology stands out, and if we go back in time, it becomes clear that it had a major impact on how different societies and regions engaged with each other in the international arena (Walt 1987).

In Afro-Asian and Eurasian history, it is evident that religious belief systems played a significant role in shaping kingdoms and empires. This influence was particularly prominent and can be seen in specific regions—the arid and disolate xeric-steppe areas, the river and coastal fluvial-littoral zones, and the mountainous-orographic regions—of Eurasia. These were the setting where the various societies, ranging from nomadic and semi-nomadic (such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Harrapa, Mohenjodaro, Chin, Han, Gupta, Acahemenid etc) to seafaring Eurasian groups (like the Austronesians, Phoenicians, and the Vikings), were deeply impacted and guided by their religious beliefs and cultural traditions.

The personal beliefs of individuals within the empires was greatly influence by their grand ambitions, principles, and drive, making a deep impression on various aspects like politics, society, culture, and military actions.

Prominent examples of these include China's Mandate of Heaven, Japan's Son of Heaven, Southeast Asian's Deva Rajah, Korea's Heven Will, Iran's Guardianship, Saudi Ariba's Al Saud, Russia's 3rd Rome to name a few. These cases vividly demonstrates how religious ideologies have played a crucial role in shaping the identities of empires.

As we delve deeply into historical records, it becomes evident that religion is not just a collection of abstract ideas in ancient times; instead, it is employed practically through the use of symbols and metaphors based on organic concepts. Take, for example, the Mandala in Hindu-buddhist Asia, Ummah in Arab-Persian-Turks Afro-Asia, and Ekklesia in European-North Asian Eurasia—they all demonstrates how these beliefs were interwovwn into the fabric of daily existence (Rhodes 1972; Hansen 1991; Wolters 1994; Ober 2008; Bowring 2015; Esposito 2015; Moten 2015).

Throughout history, the spiritual beliefs of various cultures played a crucial role in guiding empires as they embarked on conquests and territorial expansions, often driven by a sense of divine entitlement or superiority. Notable examples include the Mandala concept among Hindu-Buddhists, the Ummah concept among Arab-Persian-Turkish, and the Ekklesia concept among Europeans, all of which influenced the shaping of global orders as depicted in Plate 2 (Pre-Nation States World Order)

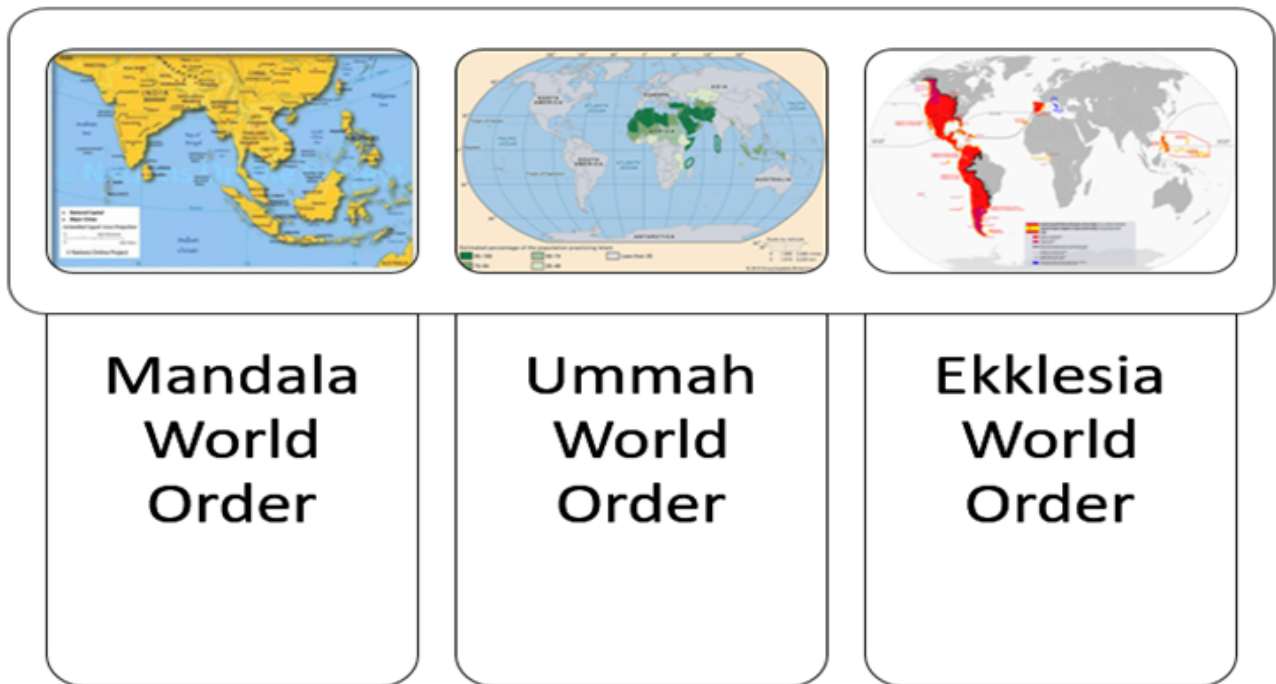


Plate 2: Pre-Nation-State World Order (Villan, 2024)

What exactly is the Mandala, as religious ideology held by Hindu-Buddhists, that influenced the structure of empires before Europe's ascendance and expansion in the 16th century? The concept of Mandala within Hindu-Buddhist traditions originates from Sanskrit words 'manda, signifying 'the essence,' and 'la,' indicating 'possessor.' The concept is a fundamental aspect of Hindu-Buddhist spirituality, visually represented by diagram consisting overlapping circles and squares that symbolize the cosmos, the connection between humanity and divinity, and carry significant ceremonial importance in both Hinduism and Buddhism. This intricate bond is epitomized by the Mandala within the deva rajah (divine leadership) illustrating the relationship between the ruling authority (emperor) and the governed (citizens), with the latter acknowledging the former as sacred leader deserving of respect and loyalty throughout the empire (Wolters 1999; Villan 2013).

While the Ummah religious ideology of the Arab-Persian-Turkish means an invisible body believers within the Islamic faith that has unleashed their unique historical experiences in the oasis environment and has paved the way for the development of razzia tradition essential for the centralization of Arab-Persian-Turkish power and culture in West Asia, Europe, Maghreb, Central Asia, Europe, and Insular Southeast Asia (from Umayyad to Ottoman). The phenomenon of conversion to Islam has become a place of refuge for the faithfuls, where the cooperation, compassion, and unity of all believers who wish to do the will of Allah—to gather together into dar-ul Islam in seeking peace and blissful life (Watt 1968; Villan 2013).

Conversely, the religious concept of the Ekklesia within European societies pertains to an invisible body of believer practicing the Christian religion, originating from historical events and the influence of Greco-Roman traditions. This development arose from the propagations of the teachings advocated by Lord Jesus Christ in Israel and proselytized by his apostles, spreading from Jerusalem, through Greece, and reaching Rome during the first century (Villan 2013).

As Christianity spread, the Romans embraced key Christian's teachings and adapted them to fit the Greco-Roman culture and traditions prevalent in the 4th century. This transformations led to the rise of universal religion, namely Catholicism, which held sway. The ekklesia functioned as a cohesive religious ideology for European societies, enabling political, economic, and cultural control, particularly from the 11th to the 13th centuries and again from 13th to the 16th century. The ekklesia played a crucial role in instigating the Cruzada, the Reconquista, and the Conquistas, reshaping world history, including the Philippines. In addition to nation-states, the latter two endeavors were instrumental in building and expanding their empires.

Beyond mere military victories, religion functioned as unifying and cohesive element in empires, offering a shared set of beliefs for people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The experiences of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Rome, Byzantium, Achaemenid, and similar cases highlight this dynamic; these empires were adept at establishing a religious ideology that promoted beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies within their territories. The spread of these religious ideologies was facilitated by social technology implemented by the empires such as bureaucratic systems, urban planning, infrastructure projects, military and legal frameworks, communication networks, and cultural blending. Essentially, it made it easier to spread religious texts, beliefs, edicts, laws, norms, and customs, acting as a tool to strengthen the empire's power and impact across its territory.

Looking back at the ancient Rome, they indeed had advanced technology, creating numerous remarkable social infrastructures such as roads, canals, and bridges that brought significant changes in how trade, communication networks, and religious ideas spread. Among these, the Appian Way stood out, not just as a road but also played a significant role in the empire's administration, thereby accelerating the dissemination of religious ideology. Religions like Hinduism-Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity were also proactive in gaining more followers and expanding their influence through successful conversion efforts. Back then, missionaries acted as early influencers and are recognized today as in the realm of social media as social influencers, embracing religious beliefs and reaching communities across the Roman empire.

In this context, Emperor Constantine stands out as prominent figure who promoted the growth of Christianity in 312 CE, receiving approval from the highest imperial authority across the empire. Between 3000 BCE and 1825, various religious ideology like Mandala for the Hindu-Buddhist regions, Ummah for Arab-Persian-Turkish domains, and Ekklesia for emerging European powers, combined with strategic use of social technologies, profoundly influenced global empires. These ideologies played a key role in driving conquests, fostering unity, spreading religious concepts to strengthen imperial unity, laying moral foundations, and establishing trade networks and infrastructures.

POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS, INVENTED SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY AND THE RISE OF NATION-STATES

Since the 1800's up to the Colwar period, and continuing on from the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989 until today, there has been a notable shift in how we view geopolitics and international relations, all the while using social technologies to shape and maintain nations-states. This shift represents a fundamental change in our perspective on the world (Berlin 1969; Hobsbawm 1994; Arendt 1951; Fukuyama 1992; Marx & Engels 2012). These periods are recognized as the early staged of what we now define as the modern era, closely intertwined with the swift progress of science and technology. Subsequently, the Industrial Revolution emerged, leading to significant alterations in the ways people across the globe lived. One significant change was the move away from religious towards embracing new political ideologies like nationalism, liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and globalism.

The political ideologies that were prominent in shaping the global order collided awkwardly as the 20th century began, as depicted in Plate 3 (World Order Under Two Superpowers). Alongside the rise of these political ideologies, civic values like freedom, equality, social order and justice became more prominent in society. As countries emerged from colonial rule, there was growing desire for independence that required looking back on history, embracing the rich past, and incorporating cultural heritage into national agenda of stability, peace, and development. These concepts are not floating around; they shape how we discuss geopolitics and determine policies that involve national interests in both superpowers and other ideologically aligned sovereign states.

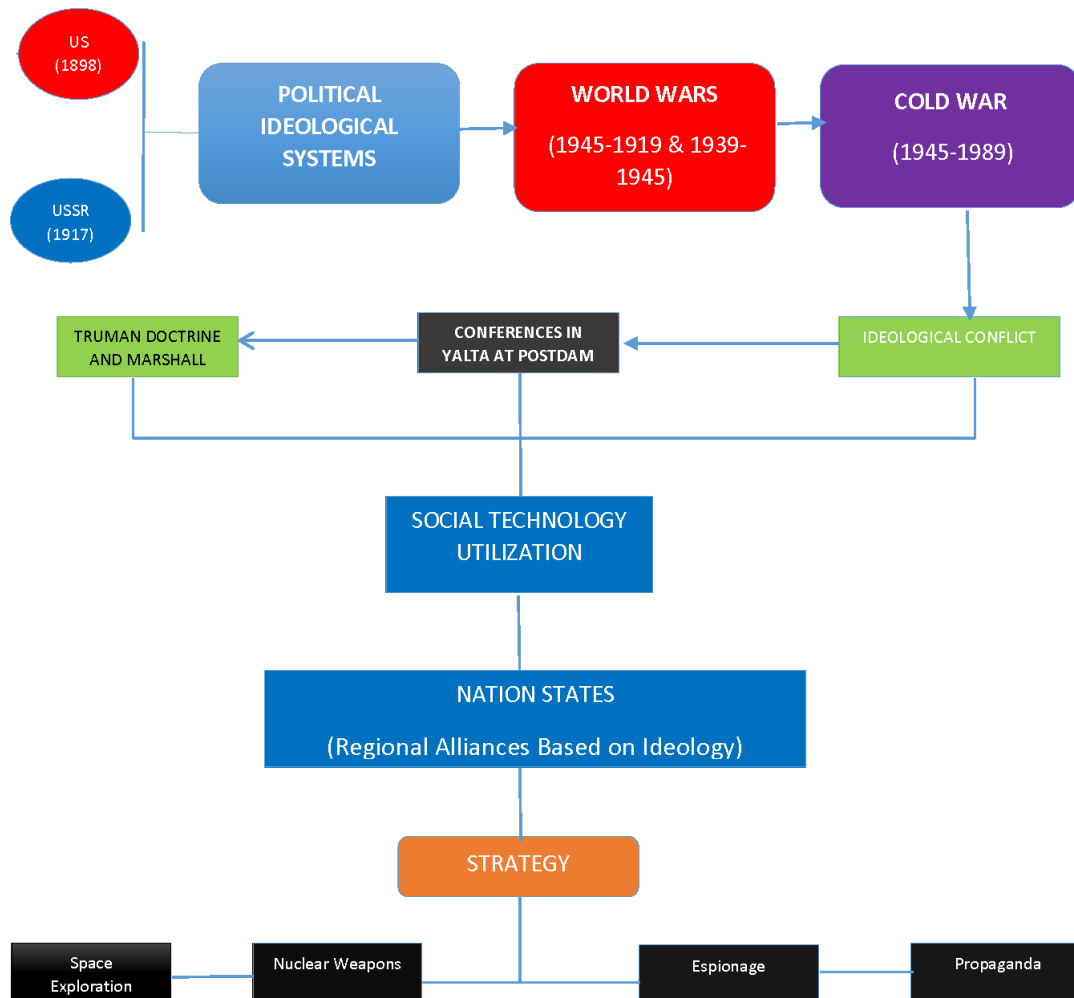


Plate 3: World Order under Two Superpowers(Villan, 2024)

Conversely, between the years 1825 and 1898 until 1989, nations globally utilized a method to collaborate, which was notably reinforced by the establishment of the United Nations on October 24, 1945, through the application of social technology. This concept involves the interaction among individuals, as evidenced by events even earlier such as the Yalta Conference on February 4, 1945 and the Potsdam Conference on July 17, 1945. Social technology denote the innovative approaches, tools, and techniques employed by nation-states sharing similar ideologies to tackle social, political, and economic challenges at the international level.

As an illustration, key tactics employed by allied nations sharing an ideological framework encompass activities like launching space explorations, manufacturing nuclear arms, conducting espionage, and disseminating propaganda. These endeavors became viable through the incorporation of social technologies shown in Plate 1 commonly utilized by nation-states, stemming from established bureaucratic advancements, legal structures, communication grids, cultural integration efforts, and military strategies. Nations predominantly made full use of communications platforms, including ICT based media, digital networks, and other technological tools that influence how information is spread, opinions are molded, and relationships are upheld among diverse entities on the world stage.

In simple terms, social technologies play a vital role at the intersection of technology and social dynamics, influencing geopolitical interactions, and international relations. This has resulted in the swift spread of ideas such as individual freedom, limited government involvement, and unrestricted market operations, significantly impacting nations like France, Germany, and Italy. The Industrial Revolution facilitated by the development of social technologies that reshaped the global political scene, as evidenced by various sources (Nye Jr., 2002; Leibetseder 2011; Tamošiūnaitė & Žalėnienė 2013; at National Geographic 2023). Advancements in mass production for global markets and mass media have made it easier to disseminate nationalist beliefs and rally people around them. Another important in the situation was socialism—a political ideology supporting communal ownership and resource distribution. Major countries like the Soviet Union and China adopted this philosophy and utilized contemporary technologies, as highlighted by scholars such as Sherwin and Gissy, to manage their economies and ensure stability (Sherwin 2020; Gissy 2022).

The political doctrine, assisted by social technology made easier by the Industrial Revolution, established the foundation for interactions between countries, leading to the rise of social movements, creation of national identities, and efforts for progress independent of their oppressors' influence. This aims not only to fortify established

national communities but also to address escalating separatist movements and border disputes among nations (Weber 2001; Schieder and Spindler 2014). In these noted patterns, mass media, the internet, and digital platforms also hold significant importance in worldwide communication and social movements. How countries get along is a bit like a dance, and many things pull the strings—like movements fighting for independence, the chaos of World Wars, and governments that like to be a bit bossy.

In the event that new conflicts arise, which are inevitable, the United Nations will take steps to deal with and prevent them for the sake of peace. The issues may not be as dire; in any place and time, mass media, the internet, and world wide digital platforms also have a crucial part in addressing pressing problems. The shift has altered our interactions and engagement on a global scale, empowering various international organizations and virtual social movements dedicated to enhancing the world.

In summary, the methods by which countries communicate, collaborate, and cooperate crucially in forming national communities, establishing national identities, and striving for inclusive growth, are undoubtedly influenced by political and social ideologies, as well as technology used to socially connect from 1825 to 1989. The entire global landscape was shaped by how nations interacted by factors such as colonialism, revolutions, and border disputes. And surprisingly, even in the present day, the manner in which we engage online and utilize social media platforms continues to significantly impact international affairs.

CONCLUSION

In summary, religious ideology in general refers to a set of beliefs, values, principles, and doctrines that guide and influence governance practices within a religious system. Three major religious ideologies have emerged in the world—the Mandala of Hindu-Buddhists, the Ummah of Arab-Persian-Turkish, and the Ekklesia of the Europeans. On the otherhand, political ideologies also refer to a set of perspectives that shape the behaviors, policies and strategies of nations or political actors on the global stage. Featured among these are the idea of liberal-nationalism that shaped Nation-States in Europe and some former colonies, the Democratic Elite-Neoliberalism of the US that formed Democratic States, and the Marxist-Leninist communism that created socialist states.

At present, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 which led to the collapse of the once powerful; USSR, the rise of global powers such as the Russian Federation, the US, China, and emerging players in the global power arena like India and others are paving the way for what I see as the ideology of globalism.

For all intense and purposes, globalism refers to a geopolitical principle of advancing interconnectedness, global governance, and cooperation to address pressing global issues. The promoted idea of globalism encompasses facing global challenges such as climate change, international crimes, and economic inequality that can be addressed through international cooperation and collaboration.

However, China's noticeable emergence as a major global player is transforming the geopolitical terrain, with particular emphasis on extending its influence in Asia, Africa, and other regions through aggressive development initiatives such as the Belt and Roads projects. Economically, China holds the position as the world's second largest economy and a key participant in international trade, emphasizing in manufacturing technology and infrastructure projects at home and abroad. In the realm of geostrategy, China combines economic strength, military modernization, and diplomatic maneuvers to advance its strategic objectives and challenge Western dominance, notably that of the United States.

The US continues to strengthen its geoeconomic influence in the fields of innovation, technology, finance, and trade as seen in its influence over Silicon Valley technology giants, and the agreements such as the North Atlantic Treaty Agreement (NAFTA), and Trans-Pacific Partnerships (TPP). In my opinion and I do believe, only through BRICS strategic initiatives and de-dollarisation movement can counter the ongoing dominance of the US worldwide.

Ultimately, by starting with an understanding of geopolitical dynamics, international relations, and historical perspectives, we will gain academic insights to help us pursue an all-encompassing global strategy aimed at realizing a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable future for the global populace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Allard, Olivier. 2019. *Slavery and Islam*. Translated by Susan Pickford. New York: Oxford University Press.
2. Anderson, Benedict. 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
3. Arendt, Hannah. 1951. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
4. Blackburn, Robin. 1997. *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800*. London: Verso.
5. Berlin, Isaiah. 1969. *Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
6. Bowering, Gerhard. 2015. *Islamic Political Thought: An Introduction*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
7. Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1997. *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*. New York: Basic Books.
8. Campbell, Gwyn. 2003. *The Structure of Slavery in Indian Ocean Africa and Asia*. New York: Routledge.
9. Chatterjee, Indrani. 2013. *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
10. Chowdhry, Geeta. 2008. *Decolonizing International Relations*. Washington DC: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
11. Enloe, Cynthia. 1990. *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
12. Esposito, John L. 2015. *An Introduction to Islamic Political Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press.
13. Fukuyama, Francis. 1992. *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press.
14. Gissy, William. 2022. "Scientific socialism impacted socialist movements throughout Europe and, partly, in Western European settler colonies." In ScientificDirect. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/scientific-socialism> (date of accession, 16 October 2023).
15. Hall, Kenneth R. 2005. *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
16. Hansen, Mogens Herman. 1991. *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology*. Translated by J. A. Crook. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
17. Hobsbawm, Eric. 1994. *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*. New York: Vintage Books.
18. Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
19. Kaplan, Robert D. 2012. *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tells Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*. New York: Random House.
20. Keohane, Robert. 1984. *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
21. Kissinger, Henry. 1994. *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
22. Kissinger, Henry. 2015. *World Order*. New York: Penguin Books

23. Leibetseder, Bettina. 2011. "A Critical Review on the Concept of Social Technology." In Semantic Scholar. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Critical-Review-on-the-Concept-of-Social-Leibetseder/25e138ded3380f35996bcc7a48851e71eb7b5c85> (date of accession, 16 October 2023).
24. Mandala. In <https://indianisationinsoutheastasia.weebly.com/mandala-political-and-economical-system.html> (date of accession: 26 December 2024)
25. Marx, Karl, and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. Edited by Jeffrey C. Isaac. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012. (Originally published in 1848).
26. Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
27. Moten, Abdul Rashid. 2015. *Islamic Political Thought: The Basic Concepts*. Oxfordshire, England, UK: Routledge Publishing Ltd.
28. National Geographic. 2023. "Industrial Revolution and Technology" (nationalgeographic.org). (date of accession, 16 October 2023).
29. Nisbett, Richard E. 2003. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why*. New York: Free Press.
30. Nye Jr., Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: PublicAffairs.
31. Nye Jr., Joseph S. 2011. *The Future of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs.
32. Ober, Josiah. 2008. *Democracy and Knowledge: Innovation and Learning in Classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
33. Paluka, April. 2022. "Roman Technology." In Study.com. <https://study.com/learn/lesson/roman-technology-overview-inventions.html#Aqueducts:%20Marvels%20of%20Roman%20Engineering> (date of accession, 16 October 2023).
34. Rhodes, P. J. 1972. *The Athenian Boule*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
35. Schieder, Siegfried & Manuela Spindler. 2014. *Theories of International Relations*. New York: Routledge.
36. Škarzauskiene, Aelta, Ruta Tamošiūnaitė & Inga Žalėnienė 2013. *Defining social technologies*. In ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267394392_Defining_social_technologies(date of accession, 16 October 2023).
37. Sherwin, Wilson. 2020. "Socialism: Foundations and Key Concepts - Reading Lists." In JSTOR Daily. <https://daily.jstor.org/reading-list-socialism/> (date of accession, 16 October 2023).
38. Slaughter, Anne-Marie. 2017. *The Chessboard and the Web: Strategies of Connection in a Networked World*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
39. Villan, Vicente C. 2013. Sakayan, Sining, at Wika: Pagpopook sa Ugnayang Panlipunan at Pangkalinangan ng Pilipinas sa Harap ng Pangkaayusang Pagbabanyuhay sa Daigdig noong Ika-17 at Ika-18 Siglo. In Saliksik E-Journal. Tomo 2,3 blg. 1: pah. 1-29. https://ejournals.ph/function/reader1/read2/web/reader.php?id=uploads%2Farchive%2FSEJ%2FVol.+2+No.+1+%282013%29%2FP%2F01+Pambungad-Villan_EDITORIAL.pdf&di=13730 (date of accession: 26 December 2024).
40. Walt, Stephen. 1987. *The Origins of Alliances*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
41. Watt, William Montgomery. 1968. *Islamic Political Thought: The Basic Concepts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
42. Weber, Cynthia. 2001. *International relations theory: a critical introduction*. 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge.
43. Wolters, O.W. 1999. *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asian Program Publications, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University.

THE CONTEST FOR SEA POWER AND THE FAILING NAVAL DETERRENCE IN EAST ASIA *

INTRODUCTION

In the human history of warfare and great power contests, there is ample evidence of maritime competitions and confrontations. Great powers are anxious about their safety at sea, even when they are physically cut apart from existential threats on land. Now as the rising China becomes a potential hegemon, expands its naval forces, and challenges the status-quo led by the United States, researchers have been interested in assessing the possibility of a naval war between the two great powers. This article addresses the question of how the likelihood of war has been influenced by the water-rich geopolitical setting in East Asia, in comparison to that during the Cold War, when the two camps had their core interests concentrated on continental Europe and were neighboring each other.

I argue that the existence of waterbodies separates the great power players and, as a physical barrier, significantly limits the possibilities of a land war. However, as a result of the improbability of land warfare, China and the U.S. are more likely to resort to force at sea when their clash of interests becomes irreconcilable. Whereas the land-dominant geographics of the Cold War motivates the competitors to deter each other's aggressions, deterrence counterintuitively is likely to fail in water-rich East Asia, and the likelihood for a naval war to break out becomes alarmingly high. Therefore, for any two states that have a clash of interest, war is more likely to occur between the pair which has to fight on water than the between the pair that may fight on land due to escalation considerations. This potential for conflict is currently underappreciated by existing scholarly works and policy analyses. They are inclined to believe in the stopping power of water in preventing wars and are falsely optimistic about the prospects of Sino-U.S. relations in East Asia.

My explanation is composed of the following parts. To begin with, it reviews some existing literature on the nature of naval forces and sea power. I focus on Mahan's depiction of the sea as a «great common» (Posen 2003, 8-12), to counter the false belief that water may provide peace and stability in the region. Second, by comparing the Cold War to the ongoing naval competition between China and the U.S., it observes that the risk for a war to break out in maritime East Asia today is much higher than that on the European central front in the 1980s.

Then, I establish my theory that explains the failing naval deterrence. Due to the specialness of naval warfare, deterring naval aggression from a naval power takes a conceptually different logic than deterring a land invasion. Naval deterrence is overall easier to fail, as countries perceive naval conflicts to be naturally limited, more controllable, and involve less cost. When the cost of war and the risk of escalation reduce, the likelihood of war breaking out increases. Naval wars, unlike the wars that threaten the mainland of great powers, are thus more «imaginable» between China and the U.S., considering the water-rich geographical setting in East Asia.

Last but not least, I give an overview of the already failing A2/AD deterrence which was used by China to deter U.S. maritime aggressions when it was still on the rise. Based on empirical observations, I conclude that the naval competition between China and the U.S. is likely to evolve into a war, considering the water-rich geographical setting in East Asia and the naval nature of this specific case of a great power contest. Contrary to the optimistic predictions that water might provide a guardrail, halt the conflict and promote peace in East Asia, the very existence of waterbodies that deprives the two countries of threatening each other on land increases the risk of war, making East Asian geopolitics volatile.

LITERATURE REVIEW

My arguments are made within the scope of realism. To lay out the theoretical foundations of the research, the literature review offers a brief recap of realism and its approaches to understanding international politics. Great powers make the entirety of the realist narrative, and they are largely defined in military terms. A great power is a state that «plays a major role in international politics with respect to security-related issues» (Levy 1983, 10-19). From a realist perspective, great powers interact in world politics following the bedrock assumptions. The nature of the international system is anarchic. Countries possess and are ready to use their offensive military capabilities. They are uncertain about each other's intentions. The primary goal for all countries is to survive, and they behave rationally to pursue that goal. As a result of these underlying logics, states fear each other, have to live by themselves in the self-help world, and need to maximize their relative share of world power to increase the prospect of survival (Mearsheimer 2014, 29-36).

*TIAN KANG — DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY. TIAN KANG RECEIVES HIS M.A. DEGREE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, AND IS A PH.D. CANDIDATE AT TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY. HIS RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE OFFENSIVE REALIST I.R. THEORIES, GREAT POWER POLITICS, MILITARY AND SINO-U.S. RELATIONS.

It is in such an environment where great powers constantly confront one another in security competitions and, in their most fierce format, wars. In the process, they use military power to defend themselves, attack others, and deter aggression in peacetime. Some geographical conditions, such as marshes or mountains also discourage the use of force and reduce the likelihood of war to different extents. For a long time, waterbodies have been recognized as a great deterrent that poses a significant limit to great powers' expansion. This "stopping power" of large bodies of water "profoundly limits an army's power-projection capability" (Mearsheimer 2014, 114). Oceans around the world that take more than 70 percent of Earth's surface, therefore, halt land invasions and make overseas conquests especially difficult.

This stopping power of water, however, is falsely translated by many scholars and policy analysts as a guarantee of peace. They mistakenly equate the deterrence against conquest to the deterrence against any form of aggression and thus claim that the water-rich geographical conditions in East Asia bring about stability, arguing that the lack of means to existentially threaten each other can prevent wars for all. In their view of the world, countries are content with their security of the homeland and do not pay as much attention to the gains at sea. Since one would never be able to endanger the mainland of another, there is no way two water-separated great powers would ever fight. .

Taking such a perspective, Robert Ross in *The Geography of the Peace* contends that although "both China and the U.S. have the geographic assets to potentially challenge each other and that that they are destined to be great power competitors", the bipolarity between the two great powers is likely to remain "stable and relatively peaceful" (Ross 1999, 82). Ross argues that China has already been an established dominator of mainland East Asia since 1991, as by then it owns the strongest Army in continental East Asia, and no bordering country has been able to pose a real threat to the Chinese land supremacy. "Geography reinforces bipolar tendencies toward stable balancing and great power management of regional order"; The geography of East Asia, by affecting great power interests and by moderating the impact of the security dilemma, offsets the tendency of bipolarity toward crises, arms races, and local wars" (Ross 1999, 83-97). In defensive realist terminology, the existence of water makes offensive much more difficult, motivates defense and discourages aggressive moves.

However, empirical evidence does not support such optimism. We see a fierce, and still intensifying maritime security competition between the two great powers cut apart — China and the U.S.

Some scholars have already realized the problem and have raised one of the reasons why a state's insularity — its separation from other competitors via large bodies of water — encourages rather than impedes aggression. Schuessler et al. ascribe it to a "freedom to roam" and a "sterilization of power" insular powers are less threatened in their respective backyards, and can better afford to project power abroad. In addition, they are less counterbalanced as they usually take the position as less threatening, offshore "security providers" (Schuessler et al. 2021, 4-6).

In order to approximate the possibility of a naval war specifically in the Sino-American case, I need to marry the geopolitics in East Asia to the nature of sea power. In *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, Alfred Thayer Mahan sees the sea as "a great common" that inextricably associates with the greatness of a nation and allows a country to project its power from a distant place, taking advantage of the extent of maneuverability (Mahan 1890, 29-59). "International struggles since classical times were often greatly affected by command of the sea", Paul Kennedy comments, "conversely, a country which lost command of the sea would suffer both militarily and commercially, probably to the extent of being unable to continue the struggle" (Kennedy 1988, 3).

Countries that are physically protected by water or those that do not have neighboring peer competitors "such as China and the U.S. today" may refrain from the pressure of either sparing a large portion of military forces to deal with the threat at door or being the target of a balancing coalition. They can hence concentrate on power projection to faraway regions, across the water. For this reason, one may see the greatest danger of naval war between two insular countries that are both freed to expand out in the ocean, to focus on their "capacity to influence politics in places farther from home" (Gartzke & Lindsay 2020, 601-04).

GEOGRAPHY AND DETERRENCE FROM THE COLD WAR ERA TO PRESENT

There is, therefore, an underappreciation of the facilitating effect of waterbodies since much fewer studies have been done on naval warfare or deterrence in comparison to war and deterrence on land. Since the end of the Pacific War, the U.S. and its allies had enjoyed a stable naval dominance during the Cold War and years afterward. The U.S. Navy was much stronger than its Soviet counterpart or an enemy it fought against, and it had been in a strategic holiday for 70 years before China could challenge its hegemony. During the Cold War, the U.S. was primarily concerned with warfare and deterrence in Europe — more specifically, on the 'European central front'.

Although the two camps fought over spheres of influence elsewhere in the world, most hostility, tensions and preparations for war took place in the European theater. It was a land-dominant environment, in which the only significant waterbody was the English channel and navies could not play an important part. The land forces of the two great powers were closely bordering each other and were put on high alert in response to the sensible threat of war.

Paradoxically, it was the perception of high risk – the threat that war could break out at any moment – that effectively deterred any aggression and provided stability. Both camps were convinced that their counterparts were well-prepared for an attack, and the prospects of winning in an offensive would be considerably low. Additionally, the cost of losing the war would be very high, since warfare would aim to conquer and threaten the survival of European countries. The high cost and high risk of war hence encouraged both sides to spend heavily on deterring one another. Deterrence is defined as an action to discourage states from taking unwanted actions, especially military aggression, to maintain a status-quo (Morgan 1977, 26-30). In the scenario discussed above, when a prospective attacker believes that the probability of success is low, and the costs of attack are high, deterrence is likely to withstand (Mearsheimer 1983, 23).

Deterrence is composed of three major dimensions: conventional deterrence on land, conventional deterrence at sea, and nuclear deterrence. Back in the 1980s, all three dimensions of deterrence were stable on the European central front, since the balance of power was in rough equilibrium. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union never gained a real advantage in terms of its military might. First off, its land forces were not capable enough to conquer Europe in an offensive, let alone being transported across the Atlantic to threaten the U.S. homeland (Mearsheimer 1982, 3-39). Naval balance did not play a big role, and still much favored the west. The nuclear balance of the two camps was assumed to be stable at most times.

In the Cold War story, Asia was a secondary theater from the perspectives of both sides, and a naval competition in the Asia-Pacific received even less consideration. The U.S. fought two wars in Asia – one on the Korean Peninsula and another in Indochina – which were both land wars and the U.S. Navy never got to confront any major naval power directly. It was in no position to think of a naval war, except when the navy was attached to a land war and had to do with amphibious attacks, shore bombardment, or logistics shipping. Deterrence, in the eyes of the United States before the end of the Cold War, was all about deterring a land war. Naval deterrence was least considered because of the weakness of its rivals' navies, as well as the supportive role of naval forces (Mearsheimer 1986, 5).

After the Cold War ends, the U.S. paid even less attention to naval warfare and deterrence, not only because there lacked any imminent threat, but also because security competition and balance of power were believed to be off the table. The U.S. and its allies, for the 70 years after the end of the Pacific War, never seriously thought about a naval war, or naval deterrence and balancing in general.

The geography that contains the potential for conflict today between China and the U.S. is fundamentally different from that in Europe. The way how conflicts break out and are conducted is also different from the combat scenarios that the U.S. had expected in Asia during the Cold War. There are probable scenarios, for a purely fictional example, when the Chinese ground forces engage the U.S. marine corps on the Taiwan island in a skirmish. Nevertheless, land warfare is not a major concern, as neither is capable of conventionally threatening the other's mainland. Geographically, the use of land force is largely restrained; militarily, China has consolidated its dominance on land in East Asia and there stands no chance a U.S. amphibious attack would ever win. Plus, it is reasonable to take nuclear war away from the discussion, given the scope of the study. If a war has to happen someday soon, it will most likely be a naval war. Naval deterrence hence becomes the main focus.

In the Cold War years, naval deterrence had been the most robust among the three types of deterrence I discussed before. The prospective attacker – the Warsaw Pact – could not pick a fight at sea and the U.S. thus never needed to worry about a naval competition. Conventional deterrence during the Cold War was entirely about deterring a land attack, for instance at the Fulda gap. In contrast, in the case of the ongoing Sino-U.S. security competition, the sea becomes the main arena and conventional deterrence is largely tilted towards naval deterrence. China and the U.S. might get dragged into a proxy war in Korea or elsewhere, but these may not be their focus. Land deterrence is playing a diminishing role as a decisive land war of conquest is highly improbable for geographical reasons.

In short, today's East Asia is no analogy to the inter-German borders in the 1980s, and one cannot understand the likelihood of war with the same logic of Cold War-era deterrence. In the Cold War from NATO's perspective, nuclear deterrence, land deterrence, and naval deterrence were all strong enough to discourage an attack by Warsaw Pact. However, while nuclear deterrence remains effective and can largely prevent an all-out nuclear war between China and the U.S., the naval deterrence from both sides grew relatively weaker, as will be elaborated later.

When land warfare is taken out of the game, the collapsing naval deterrence means a much greater risk of security competition turning into a conventional war. As I will explain in the following part, the nature of sea power and naval competition makes such a war more imaginable and acceptable.

THE FAILING NAVAL DETERRENCE AND THE WAR “MORE IMAGINABLE”

We may observe that the disputed areas in the Indo-Pacific today are mostly at sea: if the military clash has to happen, it undoubtedly has to be over more or less naval-oriented contingencies. Based on the RAND report, the hotspots that draw the most attention in the Sino-U.S. security competition include the South China Sea, East China Sea, Taiwan, Korea, and the Indian subcontinent (Dobbins et al. 2011, 2-5). The former two fronts are almost entirely naval, whereas the latter ones are believed to have significant naval involvements. In all five cases, the presence of land forces has been limited, either due to the water-dominant geographic setting or because of the narrow front in Korea, Taiwan, and Sino-Indian borders that greatly restricted the number of troops that can be deployed and the scale of the land war.

How countries discern sea-borne threats is fundamentally different from how they do it regarding threats on the other side of the land border, and the logic of preventing a naval war is fundamentally different from that of deterring aggressions on land. When the navy engages in a battle of “fleet against fleet” (Gorshkov 1979, 213-14) on the open seas, there is no obvious distinction between the attacker and the defender, nor is there any terrain that can help with defense, just as the mountains or marshes that can otherwise halt a mechanized offensive on land. Out in the great common, one can neither dig in nor build a Maginot Line to increase the defensive capability. Overall, geography cannot be borrowed to deter a naval war as it can be in deterring a clash on land. Structural factors that have to do with the nature of sea power, on the contrary, make naval war a more imaginable choice amid a great power competition and facilitate war in general.

Naval security, compared to the security of land territory, is a more delicate issue. Even though it is not an existential matter, the sea-borne threat proves itself to be an issue important enough to care about – maritime security is always the next priority when the land borders are secured. For a pair of great power competitors that shares land borders or whose interests clashes on the continent – such as the U.S. and the Soviet Union in Europe – they care about the balance of land power as well as sea power, since these are the origin of conventional deterrence in respective domains.

To deter a potential Warsaw Pact attack on West Germany, for example, NATO invested heavily in its ground forces. However, for China and the United States, as argued, the possibility of a major war on land has been small enough for both countries to emphasize the balance of naval power, which they rely on to deter the other side.

While waterbodies do pose an insurmountable barrier that stops great powers from invading the mainland of each other across the seas, they do not limit the aggression of the navies. Warships can block trade routes, undermine the coastal defense and even remove a country from the list of great powers by annihilating its naval assets, as Japan did in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 (Corbett 2015, 382). For any great power, the lack of means to protect itself from the sea-borne menace is not an imminent existential problem, but still constitutes a very dangerous situation. In a realist world, being harmless is synonymous with being vulnerable. China paid a huge cost to learn this lesson. In the century of humiliation, the imperialist powers primarily came from the sea. When the Opium War broke out, China’s coast was defenseless, and its navy was close to non-existent. The rebuilt Beiyang fleet was again annihilated in the First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 (Elleman 2019, 29-42). Aggressions from the sea did not conquer China eventually, but nevertheless turned the country into a semi-colony and largely destroyed its dignity and sovereignty.

“In the last century, the European countries have moved from India into the South Seas, and from the South Seas into China” Prime Minister of the Qing Empire Li Hongzhang wrote in his policy memo in objection to the abolition of shipbuilding programs in 1872, “from the West to the East and from the North to the South, the foreign all across the Earth have gathered in China – and it is really a great change unseen in 3,000 years” (Li 1998, 873-79). 150 years later, China now borrows the notion of “changes unseen in a hundred years” to remind itself of the humiliation it suffered as a result of a defenseless navy, which invited the foreign invasion, enslavement, and suffering. With such a mentality in mind, China is hard to be deterred when the naval balance once again becomes a determinant factor in the country’s fate in the great power competition. Based on historical evidence, a naval defeat may not physically exterminate a country, but it can remove the victim from a great power status as Japan did to China and Russia. The sea is important so that an outbreak of war to ensure maritime security can be justified.

On another hand, a defeat in a decisive naval war can still be acceptable, as the result is not definite, and it does not pose an existential threat. Thus, fighting a naval war far away from the mainland is easier to imagine. It is believed that, by definition, a naval war is limited to the battleground at sea, and therefore a smaller stake is involved.

China or the United States' physical foundations of state survival is not endangered, even in a case of a total annihilation of the fleet. The manipulation of risk via nuclear use "as the last resort" can almost always prevent the worst case scenario of state destruction. Even if the conflict escalates into an extent that requires the use of nuclear weapons, they will be used at sea against enemy warships, not cities or ground targets.

The competition over sea power privileges independent naval battles that do not have to do with gains and losses of territory. Naval engagements are assumed to be instant, non-collateral and much more manageable probabilities of escalation "these features make leaders more inclined to resort to force on sea than on land. It is hard to imagine a major war fought on the mainland of either the U.S. or China, given the stopping power of water, the nuclear arsenals and the nationalist sentiment; a naval campaign at South China Sea or Taiwan Strait would sound much more reasonable and practical. The low stake, limited nature and high yield of naval warfare also makes it preferable to a war on land. When the consequences of a war are perceived to be less severe, the probability of war happening becomes higher. To sum up, for geographical reasons, should a war happen in a water-rich surroundings such as East Asia, it has to take place on water. For structural reasons, the subtlety of the naval component increases the likelihood of naval deterrence failing and a naval war breaking out between China and the U.S.

THE BREAKDOWN OF DETERRENCE IN THE SINO-U.S. NAVAL COMPETITION

Conflicts and even naval wars between China and the U.S. only become seriously discussed in recent years. However, there has been a clear trajectory of deteriorating Sino-U.S. relations for decades. According to a study carried out by Tsinghua University, the index of Sino-U.S. relations has fallen to the lowest point since 1971, when the two countries made their first diplomatic contact – and the downslope only seems to continue (Institute of International Relations 2021). Returning to the past, the hostility between the two countries today is no accident. As expected, most of the tensions since 1989 have more or less occurred around the sea. To give a couple of examples, the U.S. hijacked a Chinese cargo ship in name of an embargo in 1993. The naval forces of the two countries encountered in the Yellow Sea military exercise of 1994 and the Taiwan Strait missile crisis of 1996. In 2001, a U.S. EP-3 reconnaissance plane crashed a PLAN J-8 II interceptor above Chinese territorial water (Chase et al. 2017, 141).

Naval deterrence starts to receive more attention from both China and the U.S. as the disagreements

and disputes in the present become intensified and frequent. China has been aiming to deter U.S. military interventions in the region, break through the strangling island chains, and eventually expel U.S. military presence from East Asia. The U.S. responds with efforts to contain China's naval expansion. After Obama announced the initiative to "pivot to Asia", the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff approved the "Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons" (JAM-GC, previously known as the Air-Sea Battle doctrine) in 2016 (Lieberthal 2011). It aims to "inform joint force operations so that the U.S. can maintain access to and maneuver through the global commons, project power, and defeat an adversary attempting to deny freedom of action to the U.S. and allied forces" (Hutchens et al. 2017, 135).

Interestingly, the JAM-GC pictures an attempt to preserve the U.S. capability of access, that is, to counter the decade-long Chinese effort of deterring the U.S. from entering its backyard – famously named the "Anti-Access/Area Denial" (A2/AD) program. In other words, it is a deterrence against deterrence. In its simplest terms, the A2/AD is a defensive concept, specifically designed to prevent the U.S. from traversing East Asia and deter its naval aggressions. In the past decades, therefore, there has been a competition between Chinese endeavors to deter and the U.S. unsuccessful attempt to get rid of such deterrence – to secure its naval power projection capabilities in the Indo-Pacific. There thus forms a mutual naval stalemate that has been temporarily stable. China does not have enough naval assets to challenge U.S. naval superiority, and the U.S. could not threaten Chinese close waters for fear of the land-based A2/AD system. Such naval deterrence is breaking down as the naval power gap rapidly shrinks. With China's ambitions of a "blue water navy" and its massive shipbuilding program, distance is less a problem, offensive use of naval forces becomes an option, and there stands an opportunity that an attack on the U.S. fleet can be swift and successful.

Deterrence is a function of benefits, costs, and probability. According to Charles Glazer, an attack can be deterred if:

Probability of defender carrying out deterrent threat × Costs if threat carried out > Probability of the attacker accomplishing the action × Benefits of the action.

To simplify, deterrence is effective when $Costs \times P(Costs) > Benefits \times P(Benefits)$ (Glazer 1990, 20). From the equation, we see that deterrence is most likely to fail when at least one of the following happens, *ceteris paribus*:

- 1) costs incurred by deterrence failure become lower;
- 2) credibility of the deterrent threat becomes lower;
- 3) the attacker has a better prospect of achieving its goals;
- 4) the benefits of winning the attack become higher.

In the water-rich East Asia with a determining naval component, three out of the four changes listed above have been observed as the Sino-U.S. naval competition intensifies. As argued before, naval wars involve a smaller cost overall. The U.S. commitment to extend deterrence over the unpopulated Diaoyu Islands or a couple of shoals in the South China Sea also sounds less convincing. China has increased its prospects of winning the offensive over the years, as its navy has become much stronger in both absolute and relative terms.

As Michael Auslin correctly puts it, "Washington confronts the difficulty of dealing with a 'near-peer' competitor whose goals are increasingly antithetical to its own' (Auslin 2020, 174). To marry the theoretical foundations to observations in the real world, I predict that the naval deterrence in East Asia is bound to fail in the long run, and a naval war is likely to happen in the process of great power competition. As time goes by, the U.S. will find China an increasingly aggressive naval power and increasingly difficult to deter. By the time the naval deterrence fails, the U.S. is faced with two choices, either to concede the naval hegemony in the Asia-Pacific to China or to carry out the deterrent threat and engage in preventive naval war. In short, the naval deterrence today in East Asia is likely to fail, and a naval war is likely to break out between China and the United States.

CONCLUSION

My article answers the false belief about waterbodies in East Asia to deter aggression and keep the region peaceful. I argue in contrast that the water-rich geographical setting facilitates aggression and makes war more likely to happen between China and the U.S. I compare the case in the Sino-U.S. naval security competition to that during the Cold War on the European central front and come to an observation that conventional deterrence is more robust on the European central front than in today's Asia-Pacific. When the possibility of a survival-threatening land war is significantly limited, a naval war turns out to be more "imaginable" and "acceptable" in the eyes of great powers, as it does not involve the gain and loss of territory. The scale, costs, and risks of escalation are perceived to be limited, and this very limited nature of naval warfighting contributes to the overall weakness of naval deterrence. When naval war becomes the only imaginable option of warfare, there is a much greater possibility that a security competition may evolve into a war.

Except in the rare case when the U.S. willingly accepts the loss of its naval hegemony, a naval war is likely to break out. According to Glazer's model of deterrence effectiveness, the increase in its capability of winning the offensive as well as the smaller costs and possibility of being deterred will make China's naval expansion very difficult to be contained otherwise. Therefore, the current academia is dangerously mistreating the great power contest between China and the U.S., due to the misunderstanding of the facilitating effect of the naval component.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Auslin, M.R. (2020) *Asia's New Geopolitics: Essays on Reshaping the Indo-Pacific*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press.
2. Chase, M.S., et al. (2017) "Chinese Perceptions of and Responses to U.S. Conventional Military Power", *Asian Security*, 14, 136-54.
3. Corbett J.S. (2015) *Maritime Operations in the Russo-Japanese War*, Newport, Naval War College Press.
4. Dobbins, J., et al. (2011) *Conflict with China: Prospects, Consequences, and Strategies for Deterrence*, Santa Monica, RAND Corporation.
5. Elleman, B.A. (2019) *The Making of the Modern Chinese Navy: Special Historical Characteristics*, London, Anthem Press.
6. Gartzke, E. and Lindsay J.R. (2020) "The Influence of Sea Power on Politics", *Security Studies*, 29, 601-36.
7. Glazer, C.L. (1990) *Analyzing Strategic Nuclear Policy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press.
8. Gorshkov, S.G. (1979) *The Sea Power of the State*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press.
9. Institute of International Relations (2021) *Bilateral Relations Data*, Tsinghua University, <http://www.tuiir.tsinghua.edu.cn/info/1145/5668.htm>.
10. Kennedy, P. (1988) "The Influence and the Limitations of Sea Power", *The International History Review*, 10, 2-17.
11. Levy, J.S. (1983) *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495-1975*, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky.
12. Li, H. (1998) *Collected Works of Li Hongzhang, Changchun, Shidai wenyi chubanshe*.
13. Lieberthal, K.G. (2011) "The American Pivot to Asia", The Brookings Institution, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-american-pivot-to-asia/>.
14. Hutchens, M.E., et al. (2017) "Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons: A New Joint Operational Concept", *Joint Force Quarterly*, 84, 134-39.
15. Mahan, A.T. (1965) *The Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660-1805*, London, Methuen.
16. Mearsheimer J.J. (1982) «Why the Soviets Can't Win Quickly in Central Europe», *International Security*, 7, 2-39.
17. Mearsheimer, J.J. (2014) *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York, W. W. Norton.
18. Morgan, P.M. (1977) *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis*, New York, SAGE Publications.
19. Posen, B.R. (2003) "Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony", *International Security*, 28, 5-46.
20. Ross, R.S. (1999) "The Geography of the Peace: East Asia in the Twenty-First Century", *International Security*, 23, 81-118.
21. Schuessler, J.M., et al. (2021) *Revisiting Insularity and Expansion: A Theory Note*, *Perspectives on Politics*, 1-15.

THE RUSSIA–INDIA–CHINA–ASEAN COOPERATION MECHANISM AND A NEW WORLD ORDER*

The world order is undergoing profound changes. The Global South is becoming a key player in this transformational era. It is becoming increasingly clear that the trajectory of the world order is inextricably linked to the actions and decisions of developing countries. The Global South is a fulcrum on which the balance of global power is maintained.

Analyzing successful cooperation formats, the important role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) immediately comes to mind. It has managed to become a successful mechanism for resolving regional issues and maintaining stability. BRICS also gives scale to foreign policy. After the extension, the BRICS+ will account for almost 29% of global GDP, its share in daily oil production will grow from 20.4% to 43.1%, and the share of the world

population will amount to 46.7%. Nowadays, more than 40 more states want to join the association. Of these, 22 have already submitted official applications, and the procedure for their mission was finalized at the summit in Johannesburg in 2023.

The world is currently undergoing a reconfiguration of geopolitical alliances. Against this background, it seems necessary to develop more and more new options for cooperation. The article proposes to consider the format of Russia – India – China – ASEAN cooperation, which has great potential to change the geopolitical landscape. It also appears to be a pragmatic and visionary association. Synergy between Russia, India, China and ASEAN could become a driving force for regional integration, economic development and strategic stability. In the era of the transformation of the world order, the role of Southeast Asia has also increased. ASEAN is becoming more and more important in the international arena. It's not for nothing that the Association is called an «oasis of stability», because its participants manage not only to avoid serious shocks, but also to play a central role in shaping regional dynamics.

RIC (Russia – India – China) mechanism also emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation. The inclusion of ASEAN in this partnership promises to strengthen the association and bring it in line with the changing realities of the world stage. RIC+ASEAN cooperation has the potential to create a reliable and dynamic group of countries capable of solving regional issues and making a significant contribution to building multipolar world.

What distinguishes the proposed RIC – ASEAN mechanism? It includes countries with sovereign policies. Moreover, it is aimed not at competition but at creation, as it is interested in the development of its own region. RIC – ASEAN also appears to be economically more promising and resistant to external pressure. On the one hand, this mechanism may seem complicated and ponderous. However, it has serious potential to move away from a vision that serves the interests of only one power. It's less ideologized and more responsive to the needs of the region, which represents a step towards a more inclusive and balanced world order. It is important to note Russia's role in this emerging geopolitical scenario. Moscow has made serious efforts to establish contacts between Beijing and New Delhi after the escalation of the situation in Ladakh in May 2020. At that time, against the background of growing tensions between India and China, Russia became one of the few countries that actively promoted dialogue between the two countries. Moreover, Russia's support for India's permanent membership in the UN Security Council underscores its commitment to a more equitable and representative global governance structure.

As the world faces a divergent vision of the future and attempts by the former hegemon to maintain the status quo in the Indo-Pacific, it is important to promote open dialogue and seek common ground. Regional institutions should be recognized as the most important building blocks of a stable and just world order, where diversity of opinion contributes to the richness of global discourse. It is by adhering to these principles that countries can collectively navigate the changing trends of geopolitics and pave the way for a more harmonious future. The Russia–India– China–ASEAN Quartet can become a promising beacon that will illuminate the way to deal with the complexities of the changing geopolitical landscape. Emphasizing sovereign decision-making, the presence of several poles of power and the willingness to promote equitable economic development, this cooperation structure represents a significant step towards strengthening stability, inclusivity and mutual respect in the international arena. All this signal a collective step towards a multipolar future

*DR. ARTYOM A. GARIN – RESEARCH FELLOW, CENTRE FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA, AUSTRALIA AND OCEANIA, IOS RAS.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the authors of the articles featured in this issue. Your thoughtful contributions have been invaluable in shaping a publication that is not only informative but also vibrant and thought-provoking. It is through the exchange of diverse opinions and perspectives that we build bridges and create a platform for meaningful dialogue.

This exchange is an integral part of the multilateral world order, where equal dialogue and mutual respect lay the foundation for cooperation and mutual understanding.

The articles in this issue reflect a dynamic interplay of ideas, sparking discussion and inspiring reflection. The lively and intense nature of the content is a testament to the passion and expertise of our contributors. We hope that this edition serves as a springboard for further exploration, collaboration, and the sharing of experiences.

Thank you once again for your invaluable efforts and insights, which have enriched this publication and set the stage for future endeavors.

Dr. Artyom A. Garin — *Co-Editor of the Information and Analytical Gazette of The Centre For Southeast Asia, Australia And Oceania IOS RAS, Research Fellow (Russia).*



Institute of Oriental Studies
of the Russian Academy of Sciences
Centre for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania
Russia, 107031, Moscow, Rozhdestvenka St., 12
© Centre for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania IOS RAS
All rights reserved, 2025

The Center for Southeast Asia, Australia and Oceania at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences strictly adhere to the principle of maintaining the complexity of research by combining modern and traditional research cycles, focusing on domestic political development in Southeast Asian countries, their foreign policy and economic relations with partners

The Center serves as a hub for distinguished specialists, each bringing a wealth of expertise and practical skills to the table. These professionals combine deep academic knowledge with hands-on experience, addressing the evolving demands and priorities of contemporary science. The the Center aims to advance understanding in the field, promote cutting-edge research, and offer solutions that align with the challenges of a rapidly changing world.