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Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics

ĐỊA CHÍNH TRỊ VÀ THAY ĐỔI CÁN CÂN QUYỀN LỰC Ở KHU VỰC CHÂU Á. HÀM Ý ĐỐI VỚI VIỆT NAM

GEOPOLITICS AND THE CHANGING BALANCE OF POWER IN ASIA. IMPLICATIONS FOR VIETNAM

*Professor Joseph M. Siracusa
Associate Professor Alexey D. Muraviev
Curtin University*

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WHY ASIA MATTERS?

By any standard, **Asia now exerts an important influence in all parts of the world – economically, politically, strategically, and culturally** - in a way that it has not done previously in the modern era, and this should certainly arouse our interest.

WHY ASIA MATTERS?

For the first time in the modern era Asia is no longer dominated by an external power and contains within it three nations that are of global significance.

Asia's rise could shift global power from Westernization to Easternization, questioning Western dominance and the future of US-Asia relations. Will this lead to cooperation or conflict, and can major Asian powers find a way to coexist?

These are some of the key questions of our time, but what is not in doubt is that ***Asia is now the arena in which the crucial big power rivalries that will decide the future of the globe are being played out.***

ASIA'S RISING ECONOMIC AND MILITARY INFLUENCE

Economic and Military Growth

Asia's economic ascent boosts its political and strategic influence, with defense spending surging across the region.

Military Expenditure

The region is second only to the Middle East in defense procurement, with the PRC leading in military spending, followed by Japan, South Korea (RoK), India, Taiwan, and others.

Security Concerns

Notable for serious security challenges including the North Korean nuclear threat, Taiwan Strait tensions, India-Pakistan conflict, and territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Global Security Hotspot

East and South Asia's central role in global security threats, compounded by nuclear capabilities and rapid armament.

Need for Institutional Development

The region lacks robust international mechanisms for tension management, highlighting a gap in global governance participation.

Call for Power Sharing

Advocates for recognizing Asia's evolved global standing, urging the West, especially the US, to share international decision-making power.

THE 'ASIANISATION OF ASIA'

The **increasingly powerful economic, financial and trade links** that are binding Asia together ever more tightly, have given rise to what some see as a **new form of pan-Asian identity**, one that is based not only on a **shared colonial experience**, but more importantly on a **new sense of success and confidence** derived from the **remarkable growth** that has taken place in the region since the 1960s.

IS ASIA UNIQUE?

This discussion of the **Asianisation of Asia** and the extent to which we can regard Asia as a meaningful unit of analysis raises the key question of whether we can and should regard the continent as **a special and even unique entity**, one which is capable of **challenging many of the comfortable assumptions about economic, political and social development held in the West**.

IS ASIA UNIQUE? (YES)

Asia's Unique Heritage

Asia's distinctive values and institutions influence many facets of life, shaping a unique societal perspective.

Resistance to Western Consensus

Prevailing skepticism in Asia towards Western economic and political standards, with a preference for indigenous approaches.

Asia as a Growth Model

Asia's development strategies offer valuable insights for other developing regions on achieving long-term economic growth.

Concept of an Asian Community

Recent dialogues propose an Asian Community, aiming for deeper regional integration while acknowledging the need for careful planning.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The world is passing through a **revolutionary phase**.

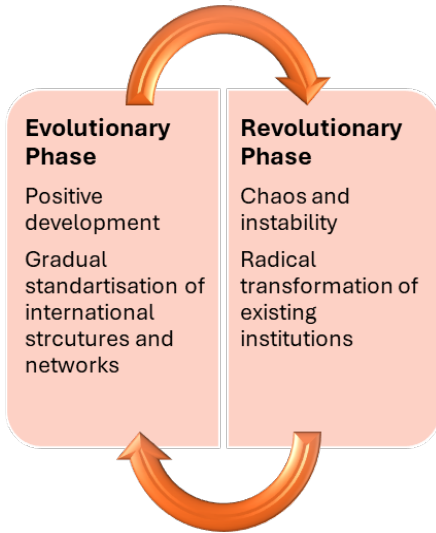


Chart: Evolution of megatrends

The current ongoing transformation occurs at three levels:

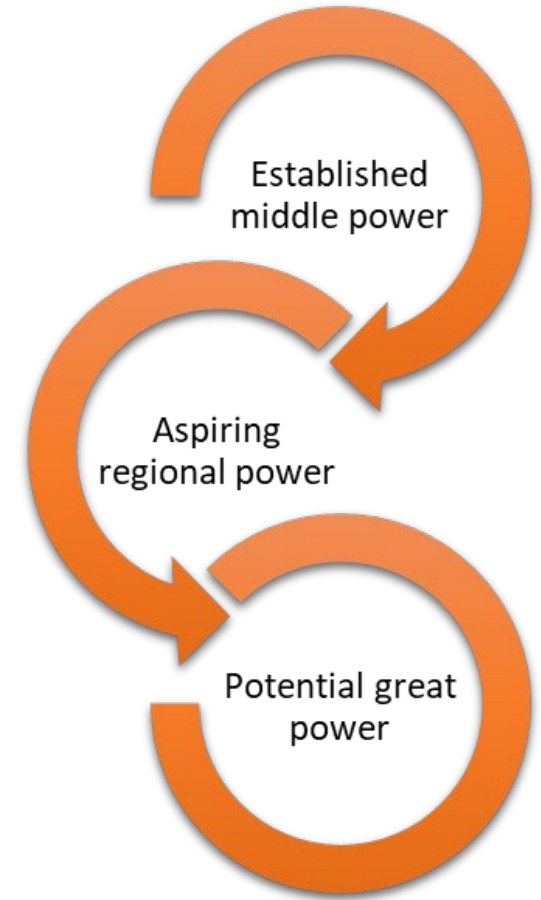
- The transformation of once established Westphalian international system.
- We are witnessing a transformation of state-to-state relations (change of the international order).
- We are witnessing a transformation of political systems of several nations.



Vietnam should develop its own net assessment of the future look of political elites in both global centres of geopolitical influence (Washington, Beijing, Moscow, Brussels) as well as regional centres in Asia and beyond.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Asia has become the main game, in the shifting global balance of power.
- Vietnam faces strategic dilemmas over the next 10-15 years that will shape its short to long-term policy decisions.
- Each of these status options needs to be considered in the context of Vietnam's strategic aspirations (medium to long-term strategic goals) versus available and emerging sovereign capabilities/capacities.



**Determining Vietnam's
future strategic status**

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The core strategic choice is considering **the country's strategic autonomy**: what does it mean for Vietnam? Is it in Vietnam's interest have one (pros and cons)? What are potential alternatives?

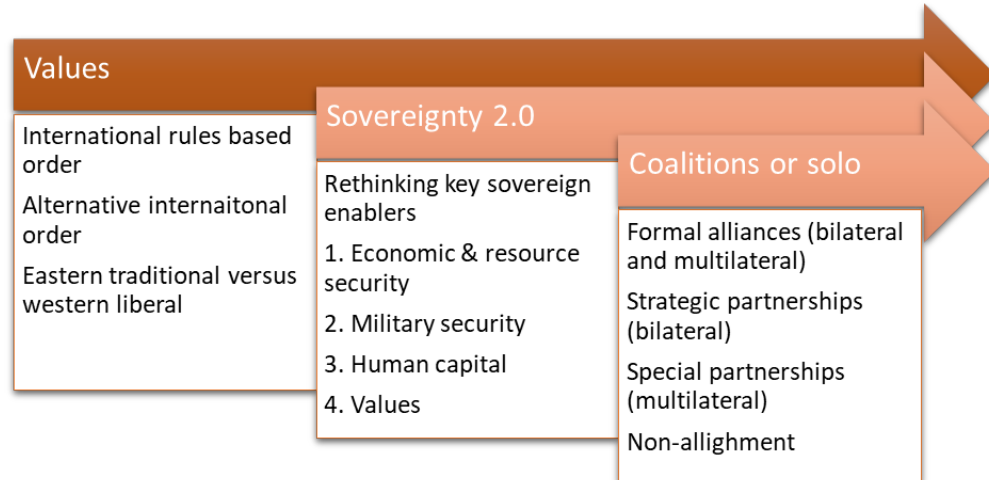


Chart: Addressing some of Vietnam's future strategic choices

2. Linked to that is the **dilemma of strategic compromise** as a factor that shapes up national strategic and foreign policy.
3. Another potentially fundamental dilemma worth considering is **Vietnam's position on values, international norms, and rules**

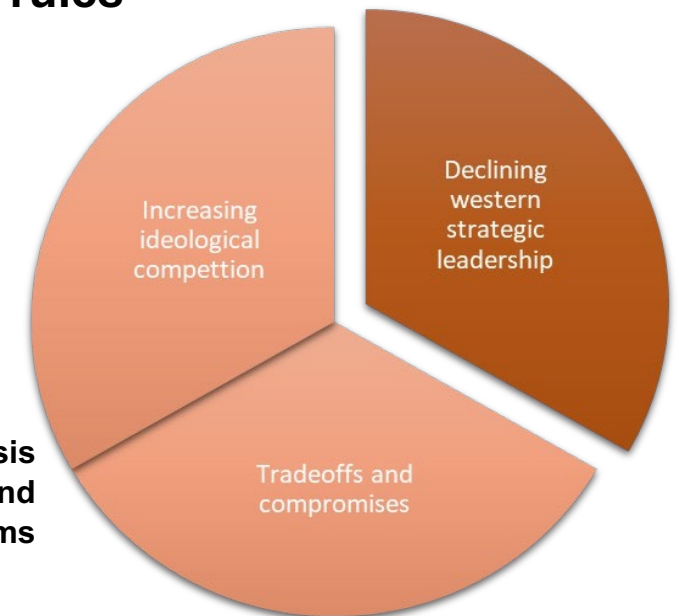


Chart: State of crisis of institutions and norms

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Should this paper be considered an ***actionable document***, its findings could then become one of sources of reference for the next generation of Vietnam's strategic thinkers and future leaders?

THANK YOU!

TRÂN TRỌNG CẢM ƠN!

