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**РОЛЬ И ВЛИЯНИЕ АСЕАН В НОВОМ КОНТЕКСТЕ,  
А ТАКЖЕ ВОПРОСЫ, КАСАЮЩИЕСЯ УКРЕПЛЕНИЯ ПОЗИЦИЙ  
ВЬЕТНАМА В ЭТОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ В БЛИЖАЙШЕМ БУДУЩЕМ  
ASEAN'S POSITION AND INFLUENCE IN THE NEW CONTEXT AND ISSUES IN  
PROMOTING VIETNAM'S ROLE AND POSITION IN ASEAN IN THE COMING TIME**

**Аннотация:** За последнее время позиция Ассоциации государств Юго-Восточной Азии (АСЕАН) значительно укрепились. АСЕАН стал "яркой точкой" экономического восстановления после пандемии COVID-19 и местом особого внимания со стороны крупных стран, сохраняя гармонию между ними в условиях усиливающейся стратегической конкуренции. В этом процессе Вьетнам играет важную роль, особенно в поддержании единства, защите принципов и формировании "правил игры" в рамках АСЕАН.

**Abstract:** Over the past time, the position of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been increasingly strengthened and strengthened. ASEAN is a "bright spot" in economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and a place of special concern for major countries, maintaining the harmony of major countries in the context of increasingly fierce strategic competition. To achieve this, Vietnam plays an important role, especially contributing to maintaining unity, upholding the principles and shaping the "rules of the game" of ASEAN.

**Ключевые слова:** АСЕАН, Вьетнам, развитие, позиция, партнер, принцип

**Keywords:** ASEAN, Vietnam, development, position, partner, principle

1. Through the process of formation and development, ASEAN 's position is constantly strengthened and strengthened. In fact, over nearly 60 years of existence and development (1967 – 2025), ASEAN has succeeded in turning Southeast Asia from a divided and confrontational region to a regional community of 10 Southeast Asian countries that are peaceful, stable and developing, and increasingly have a great position and influence in the world. Currently, ASEAN is one of the most attractive regions for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the world economic map. In 2022 alone, ASEAN will attract up to 17% of the world's FDI. If in 2010, FDI inflows to ASEAN were just over \$75.8 billion, this figure has tripled, to \$224 billion by 2022 [1]. ASEAN's share in world trade increased from about 6.5% in 2010 to 7.5% in 2021, faster than other regions (ASEAN is being valued as a large consumer market, as the world's fifth largest economy), and reflects the outward-looking nature of ASEAN integration [2]. In 2022, ASEAN's gross domestic product (GDP) reached nearly \$3.4 trillion, reaching over \$5,000 per capita. It is forecasted that by 2027, ASEAN's GDP may reach over USD 4 trillion and by 2030, about 60% of ASEAN's population has the potential to join the middle class [3, c.344].

ASEAN is showing its central role through multilateral cooperation institutions led by ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN+1, ASEAN+3, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+). Along with cooperation mechanisms in ASEAN, typically the ASEAN Charter and ASEAN Community Vision 2025, the above multilateral cooperation mechanisms have been helping ASEAN handle quite well the relationship



between national and ethnic interests and regional interests, the interests of the region with external partners, especially the reconciliation of interests with major countries, thereby expanding its influence and prestige not only in Southeast Asia, but also in the whole world, creating a premise for making the most of external resources for maintaining peace, security and development of the region and member countries.

Notably, in order to actively distance itself from the competition for influence from external powers, ASEAN has established and expanded relations with major countries, pursued multilateralization and diversification policies, and flexibly applied balancing strategies. In the past 5 years, ASEAN has established comprehensive strategic partnerships with most of the world's leading powers, such as China (2021), the United States (2022), Japan (2023), India (2023)... This contributes to maintaining ASEAN's central role in the shaping regional architecture. In ASEAN's "Document on the Indo-Pacific" (AOIP) released from the previous year, ASEAN wishes to maintain an Indo-Pacific region of dialogue and cooperation instead of confrontation, cooperation, healthy competition and elevating the "central role" of ASEAN as the fundamental principle to promote cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, ASEAN focuses on strengthening and optimizing ASEAN-led mechanisms, including EAS, ASEAN+1, ARF, ADMM+ and many others [4]. This approach helps ASEAN maintain the balance in geopolitical competition between major countries to attract external resources, maintain security, cooperation and development.

2. In recent years, ASEAN has gradually strengthened internal solidarity, especially in responding to sensitive regional issues. In 2020, under the leadership of Vietnam in the role of ASEAN Chair, ASEAN reached a consensus on the East Sea issue, including the drafting and adoption of the Code of Conduct for the East Sea (COC) in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982. In September 2023, ASEAN for the first time conducted joint exercises in the South China Sea under the chairmanship of Indonesia, without the participation of Western countries. In the current complicated and unstable geopolitical situation, by this move, ASEAN has shown its independence, autonomy, neutrality and desire to maintain a peaceful and stable environment in Southeast Asia.

ASEAN increasingly sees itself as a "bright spot" of economic growth and FDI attraction in the new context. ASEAN's economic growth in 2024 reached 4.4% [5] and is forecast to reach about 5.5% in 2025 – still one of the world's highest economic growth areas (the GDP of the world economy is only about 3%) [6]. ASEAN's central role in the regional architecture continues to be maintained and strengthened. ASEAN is constantly expanding and upgrading, deepening relations with all partners, persistently pursuing a strategy of multilateralization, diversification of relations, and strategic balancing with major countries. At the same time, the increased engagement and competition between the US and China through geo-strategic projects, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the US FoIP, also contribute to increasing the geo-strategic position, geo-political resources of ASEAN/Southeast Asia if ASEAN and its member countries are increasingly united, strategically autonomous and increase their adaptability and competitiveness.

In general, ASEAN's position and influence are increasingly on the rise, in which ASEAN is a "bright spot" in economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and a well-adapted region in the context of strategic competition between major countries. It is still very complicated to continue to maintain the "central role" as well as maintain an environment of peace and solidarity in ASEAN. However, ASEAN also faces significant challenges when the division and fragmentation of the world political and economic system are ongoing, and the solidarity within ASEAN is not really high.

3. For Vietnam, after nearly 30 years of joining ASEAN, Vietnam has made great contributions to the development of the Association, contributing to ending the confrontation in Southeast Asia, and at the same time Vietnam quickly became the "nucleus" to promote regional unity and solidarity by mobilizing other countries to admit Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar into the



"common home" of ASEAN [6]. With its role and responsibilities, Vietnam not only actively participates and coordinates with ASEAN member states to promote intra-bloc cooperation and linkage, forming the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), but also proactively takes the initiative to form the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), making the ASEAN integration process multifaceted and inclusive. Notably, during its tenure as ASEAN Chair in 2010, Vietnam launched an initiative to expand the EAS for Russia and the United States to participate, establishing the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+) mechanism. By 2020, as the ASEAN Chair, Vietnam has taken timely actions in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak, such as the establishment of the ASEAN Health Supplies Reserve and the ASEAN Center for Response to Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Epidemics (ACPHEED); through the ASEAN Fund for COVID-19 Response, the ASEAN Strategic Framework for Responding to Public Health Emergencies, and the ASEAN Comprehensive Resilience Framework. At the 37th ASEAN Summit (ASEAN-37), the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed; in particular, the leaders of the countries were determined and affirmed to jointly build the East Sea region of peace, stability, friendship and cooperation, based on the framework of international law, UNCLOS in 1982. Vietnam's efforts and contributions have been making an important contribution to maintaining and strengthening solidarity and unity, promoting intra-regional connectivity and expanding ASEAN's international cooperation, making ASEAN's position increasingly important not only for member states and the region, but also having a great influence in international issues, especially strategic balance, promoting security, cooperation and development in the Asia-Pacific region.

In recent years, Vietnam has also been rated as the ninth most diplomatic-capable country in Asia and the second in ASEAN [7]. Notably, Vietnam's diplomacy not only makes an important contribution to the political and legal struggle to protect maritime sovereignty, islands and territorial integrity, but also participates in building and shaping multilateral institutions, gradually promoting the role of mediating international issues, including ASEAN. Vietnam's successful organization of the second US-North Korea Summit in February 2019, successfully assuming and fulfilling the role of ASEAN Chair in 2020 and a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2020-2021 term, upgrading relations with the Republic of Korea (2022) and the United States (2023) to a comprehensive strategic partner,... has been expanding the strategic space, as well as the position and role of Vietnam in general and Vietnam's diplomacy in particular in the international arena, including ASEAN.

4. In the coming time, challenges from the geopolitical and geo-economic environment will continue to change complicatedly and unpredictably. Mechanisms established and pursued by the United States, such as the Tripartite Security Cooperation Agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia (AUKUS); the Russia-Ukraine conflict and mutual sanctions as well as the tendency to gather forces in "factions" and "axes" between the United States, China and Russia are increasing, along with the rise of trade protectionism, the rise of non-traditional security issues, such as epidemics, natural disasters, cybersecurity, etc. are and will continue to create challenges that hinder the rapid increase in national synergy in general, Vietnam's position, contribution and influence in ASEAN in particular. Therefore, in the coming time, Vietnam needs to prioritize some of the following main contents:

*Firstly*, continue to persistently and steadfastly pursue and defend ASEAN's core principles, especially the principle of consensus and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. In the context of increasing pressure to "choose sides", the persistent pursuit of the above principles not only helps ASEAN maintain intra-regional unity and ensure equality of rights and responsibilities for all member countries, but also contributes to minimizing geopolitical conflicts in the region due to competition and confrontation between major countries.



*Secondly*, in addition to continuing to consider ASEAN as one of the pillars of multilateral foreign policy, Vietnam needs to use many methods, combined with different mechanisms that Vietnam participates in, such as the United Nations, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), RCEP, CPTPP, Mekong – Lancang Cooperation,... to promote intra-bloc economic connectivity, maintain solidarity, maintain the central and proactive role of ASEAN in the multilateral cooperation structures that ASEAN has created.

*Thirdly*, together with ASEAN, implement the motto of "active neutrality" in relations with major countries; at the same time, be flexible in applying the "ASEAN way", especially the principle of consensus, on a number of specific issues. Historically, Vietnam has participated and increasingly actively built and perfected the ASEAN Community, not only contributing to strengthening the peaceful environment, solidarity, promoting cooperation and intra-bloc connectivity, but also creating favorable conditions for Vietnam to implement multilateralization, diversification of foreign relations, international integration and struggle to protect national independence and sovereignty [8, c.39]. The 13th Party Congress (January 2021) clearly stated: "ASEAN plays an important role in maintaining peace, stability, promoting regional cooperation but also faces many difficulties". Therefore, Vietnam needs to "actively participate in and promote Vietnam's role in multilateral mechanisms, especially ASEAN, the United Nations, APEC, and Mekong sub-region cooperation", "proactively, actively and responsibly work with ASEAN countries to build a united, strong, and sustainable ASEAN's central role in the regional security architecture" [9, c.158].

*Fourth*, proactively implement commitments to perfect the ASEAN Community, especially aiming to build the ASEAN Vision after 2025, focusing on developing the digital economy, green economy, connecting technical and social infrastructure, information technology, creating high-quality human resources; continue to promote the harmonization of Vietnam's legal system with ASEAN countries.

*Fifth*, in addition to promoting economic connectivity, government connectivity, infrastructure, and people-to-people diplomacy, Vietnam should make efforts to introduce new initiatives to promote security cooperation in the region, both in the field of traditional and non-traditional security.

*Sixth*, further strengthen the research and forecast of fluctuations in domestic and foreign policies of each ASEAN member state, thereby providing scientific data for Vietnam's policy adaptation.

Since joining ASEAN (1995), Vietnam has been an integral part of the "common home" of ASEAN and Southeast Asia. Vietnam and ASEAN have been and will always be closely connected and supportive of each other's development. To successfully implement the requirements and tasks of foreign affairs during the 13th Party Congress, Vietnam will contribute significantly to the process of ASEAN cooperation and linkage and maintain the central role of ASEAN in the structure of the Asia-Pacific region [10, c.45].

Unprecedented changes are taking place in the world, times and history. The shaping of the current world order reflects the situation of both cooperation and competition, which are becoming more and more drastic, mainly between the main actors, the United States, China, Russia and the European Union (EU). Considered one of the "security lowlands", the vortex of global geopolitics, therefore, the complex, multi-stage cooperation structure in Southeast Asia is strongly affected by the current world situation.

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