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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOUTHEAST ASIA – UNDER THE VIEW OF FORECASTING METHOD

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ABSTRACT

In Political Sciences, forecasting is taken as a crucial method in studying international relations. This is a scientifically-based research process that seeks to understand and embrace the movement trend, the fundamental development trend of the future and to recommend a number of different responses. This article examines the methodology of forecasting based on the materialist dialectical methodology, predicting the movement and transformation of the world on the principle of inheritance. Inheritance is approached in three aspects: first, how the old world formed and developed; second, the appearance and impact of new elements in the new world; third, degree of reception of the new things and renouncement between the old world and the new world. At the same time, the authors use this method to forecast the trend of Southeast Asia in the coming decades of the 21st century. We anticipate that in the twentieth century, Southeast Asia was a colonial region of Western colonialism and also a hotbed of the Cold War. The inception of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the last half century has contributed significantly to the change and development of Southeast Asia although there are ups and downs within which the aim of ASEAN has been consistent to peace, stability, cooperation and development. Therefore, peace, cooperation and development will continue to be the mainstream of Southeast Asian relations, but the region continues to be significantly geopolitical for great and major powers to compete for influence.

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INTRODUCTION

Forecasting is prediction based on knowledge of past behavior. The forecaster must consider to what extent past trends will continue in the future. This methodology has become one of the standard and routine practices in many contexts including predicting the weather, the economy, the advancement of technology, the effect of medicine on a patient, and even changes in fashion. Forecasting is no exception in the field of international relations as it can provide early warning of conflict and other human disasters, help decision making and planning in the present, and modify variables now to alter (or be prepared for) the future. Since the mid-twentieth century, forecasting has become an important method in political sciences in general and international relations studies in particular. Patterns, indicators, and forecasts of international environments and behavior are of interest to policymakers as they try to link national goals and policy alternatives and to scholars as they try to develop a "meteorology" of international relations. A problem exists, however, in delineating trend patterns so that precise and reliable forecasts can be made.

This is a methodological problem arising from the nature of the data on nations and regions as well as the many variables that need be analyzed. In other words, international relations forecasting is a science-based research process that is characterized by professional principles, including the various stages in order to realize the right future, grasp the basic trends of development so that various response solutions can be offered. The future here is the future of the world with its environment constantly changing, complex, and embracing many unpredictable variables. Southeast Asia is exceptionally a case in point, lacking plausible explanatory power in terms of the existing forecasting approaches in international relations in this region—namely structural approach, time-series designs, and game-theoretic framework—as the region is geopolitically and geostrategically important to outside major and great powers, along with divergent state behaviors and as data collection faced obstacles in most of the so-called authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states. Rather, to circumvent some of the problems of the aforementioned approaches, we employ the methodology of forecasting based on the materialist dialectical methodology, which attempts to predict motion and changes of the world as a sound ground for analyzing the region of Southeast Asia on the basis of the three principles of inheritance: first, how the old world was formed

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and developed; second, the making and impact of new elements in the new world; Third, the reception level of the new elements and the rupture between the old world and the new world. At the same time, the author uses this method to forecast the trend of Southeast Asia in the coming decades of the 21st century.

Forecasting approaches: seeking an analytical framework

In recent decades, there have been a growing number of sophisticated forecasts which sufficiently show that international relations forecasts are of interest to many researchers around the world. Large amounts of information and data has been collected and analyzed by the most advanced predictive methods for forecasting international conflicts at the time, and many authors have pointed to the limitations of forecasting as well. There is a prediction for a particular area in different and narrow spaces and from different sources, such as information from intelligence forces (Feder, 1995). A particularly encouraging sign is the multitude of approaches that scholars have developed over the recent years to improve the predictive capacity of their models and to offer early warning schemes to the policy community (Schneider, Nils & Sabine, 2010). Most scholars view the world as consisting of a large number of alternatives. Futures research evolved as a way of examining the alternative futures and identifying the most probable. However, there is no way to state what the future will be with complete certainty as regardless of the methods employed there will always be elements of uncertainty until the forecast horizon has come to pass. Also, there will always be blind spots in forecasts. We cannot, for example, forecast completely new technologies for which there are no existing paradigms, even scientific predictions are only possible in fields where the forecasters can rely on prior knowledge and accumulated evidence in the form of systematically collected data or the insights of experts who possess privileged knowledge about an otherwise impenetrable decision making process (Gerald, Nils & Sabine, 2010).

For the variety of forecasting methods, researchers have developed different ways of classifying these methods. Classification of forecasting methods helps to organize and better understand different methods, and more importantly provides a guidance of choosing different forecasting methods under different contexts. A good classification should be concise, exclusive and exhaustive. However, none of the current classifications meets all of these requirements (Gentry, Calantone & Cui, 2006). The classification is a modification of the schema developed by Gordon (1999) as follows:

Genius forecasting: This method is based on a combination of intuition, insight, and luck. Psychics and crystal ball readers are the most extreme case of genius forecasting. However, the demerit of genius forecasting is that it's impossible to recognize a good forecast until the forecast has come to pass.

Trend extrapolation: This method examines trends and cycles in historical data, and then use mathematical techniques to extrapolate to the future. The assumption of all these techniques is that the forces responsible for creating the past, will continue to operate in the future. This is often a valid assumption when forecasting short term horizons, but it falls short when creating medium and long term forecasts.

Consensus methods: Forecasting complex systems often involves seeking expert opinions from more than one person. Each is an expert in his own discipline, and it is through the synthesis of these opinions that a final forecast is obtained. This method, however, falls short because the situation is often controlled by those individuals that have the best group interaction and persuasion skills.

Simulation methods: Simulation methods involve using analogs to model complex systems. These analogs can take on several forms, mainly a *mechanical analog* and a *mathematical analog*. Paradoxically, strong correlations between predictor variables create unstable forecasts, where a slight change in one variable can have dramatic impact on another variable.

Cross-impact matrix method: This method recognizes that the occurrence of an event can, in turn, affect the likelihoods of other events. Probabilities are assigned to reflect the likelihood of an event in the presence and absence of other events. The resultant inter-correlational structure can be used to examine the relationships of the components to each other, and within the overall system. The advantage of this technique is that it forces forecasters and policy-makers to look at the relationships between system components, rather than viewing any variable as working independently of the others.

Scenario: The scenario is a narrative forecast that describes a potential course of events. Like the cross-impact matrix method, it recognizes the interrelationships of system components. The scenario describes the impact on the other components and the system as a whole. The primary purpose of a scenario is to provoke thinking of decision makers who can then posture themselves for the fulfillment of the scenario(s). The three scenarios force decision makers to ask: 1) Can we survive the pessimistic scenario, 2) Are we happy with the most likely scenario, and 3) Are we ready to take advantage of the optimistic scenario? However, that does not mean that the future will take place within one of the three scenarios. The best chance is that the future does not go beyond the framework of the maximum or minimum scenario. In other words, all three scenarios must be predicted in a way that develops things. This does not exclude the possibility that different groups or individuals will predict the opposite (Quang, 2016).

Decision trees: Decision trees originally evolved as graphical devices to help illustrate the structural relationships between alternative choices. These trees were originally presented as a series of yes/no (dichotomous) choices. As our understanding of feedback loops improved, decision trees became more complex. Their structure became the foundation of computer flow charts.

It seems clear that no forecasting technique is appropriate for all situations. There is substantial evidence to demonstrate that combining individual forecasts produces gains in forecasting accuracy. There is also evidence that adding quantitative forecasts to qualitative forecasts reduces accuracy. Research has not yet revealed the conditions or methods for the optimal combinations of forecasts. With regard to forecasting in international relations, three approaches have gained growing attention. First, the structural approach, which tries to predict the risk of a geographical unit (whether a country, a region, or

a town) experiencing a certain behaviour in subsequent time periods given important characteristics of the unit at present. This traditional approach has recently seen the import of classification techniques such as neural network algorithms (Beck *et al.*, 2000; Rost *et al.*, 2009) and of cutting-edge econometric tools (Ward and Gleditsch, 2002). Such innovations have improved the predictive accuracy of conventional structural models. But the high level of temporal or spatial aggregation is a major limitation of this approach, especially as the covariates often only change slowly. To circumvent some of the problems of the structural approach, scholars frequently resort to time-series designs, using shorter time intervals. There are numerous attempts to predict the further evolution of conflict within a particular conflict area like Kosovo (e.g. Pevehouse and Goldstein, 1999) or the Levant (e.g. Schrodtt and Gerner, 2000; Schneider, 2012). The main advantage of single conflict time-series designs is the possibility to model the dynamics within a particular conflict more precisely. However, this advantage comes at the price of reduced external validity, as the conflict trajectories do not necessarily resemble each other across different conflicts.

The third and final approach, pioneered by Bueno de Mesquita and his co-authors (e.g. Bueno de Mesquita *et al.*, 1985; Bueno de Mesquita, 2011; see also Bueno de Mesquita, 2002, 2009, for summaries), is game-theoretic. The general idea of this initially decision-theoretic framework is to use detailed information from area experts as the empirical basis. The forecaster then employs these data as the input for strategic models that calculate predictions about possible outcomes in political contests. The approach is particularly well suited for the development of comparative model evaluations and has been used to explain and predict patterns of decision making in the European Union (Bueno de Mesquita, 2011; Thomson *et al.*, 2006; Schneider, Finke and Bailer, 2010) and elsewhere (Bueno de Mesquita, 2002, 2009). Rational-choice forecasting models are generally attributed with very high levels of predictive accuracy, as evaluations of classified predictions show (see e.g. Feder, 1995, as well as the survey by Feder, 2002). This approach, however, reveals the limited ability to predict how a process unfolds over time. Obviously, none of these three forecasting approaches provides better applications in all contexts. Instead, we believe that while the structural approach is often the only one available for forecasting at the global scale, the rational-choice framework is particularly useful for the prediction of single events, which can be of a routine or dramatic nature. This comparative advantage looms particularly large in contexts where only a few experts are able to provide reliable empirical input for the models. If relevant information is available publicly and non-dramatic events have to be forecasted, the time-series method might be more useful, particularly with access to temporarily more fine-grained data. In the context of the Southeast Asian region, we employ the dialectic materialism with three principles of inheritance to provide an insight into the region. With this method, the article attempts to argue that forecasting Southeast Asia may further be anchored in four types of initial conditions: structure, probability, preference, and trends and projections (the most prevalent type today).

Three aspects of the inheritance principle in forecasting international relations: World history is a complex process of movement, but it does not mean that it is arbitrary, messy but rather, behind the rich, diverse seemingly arbitrary,

chaotic; it is the domination of certain logics and rules. Recognizing the characteristics of the past and understanding the nature of the present will help us predict the future based on the principle of inheritance. The inheritance is expressed in the following aspects:

First, how the old world was formed and developed: All things and phenomena of nature and society have its historical processes, ie the process of existence, development, transformation and even death. It is a constant process of movement; sometimes, it was flat, straight but sometimes, it was crooked, complex, inevitable interspersed with the random things in various shapes. The complex, tortuous complexity sometimes makes the essence, the inevitable law of things, the phenomena “obscured”. The elimination of random, non-fundamental factors to see the inevitable, basic and repetitive things, thus revealing the nature, laws of objective development of things, phenomena is an important goal of researching. Therefore, forecasting international relations is necessary to study the past. However, studying the past is not simply restoring the “picture of the past” but also to finding the inevitable factors within the “picture of the past” to draw out the nature, the objective laws of motion, development of reality, thus we can predict the future.

Second, the appearance and impact of new elements in the new world: Understanding the past, also, we need to pay attention to the new elements that are emerging and will develop in the new world. Because the process of historical development is always influenced by many objective and subjective factors, especially the appearance of new factors. Any things, phenomena in the world go through the process of birth, survival, development and destruction. The new things do not appear from nothing, they can only be born on the basis of the old, so it is not the abolition, the complete destruction of the old. The new in dialectical materialism is the continued development of the old on the basis of the removal of the negative, obsolete, backward aspects of the old, and the selection, retention, improvement of appropriate, positive aspects, add new aspects in accordance with reality (Vietnam Central Theoretical Council, 2017).

Third, the degree of reception of the new and the renouncement between the old world and the new world: From the above two processes, it is necessary to consider the degree of renouncement between the old and the new; between the old world and the new world. This renouncement, in essence, reflects the human approach to evolution and development. The upward movement of things, keeping up with changes depends on the adaptability of the new, the courage to exchange the old, and the positive outlook on the outside world. And old values are sometimes an obstacle to evolution and development, like the concept by Thomas (2014)¹.

Therefore, to forecast the future of Southeast Asia, we must first understand the past. In other words, the basis for forecasting what is new is the past. But what happened in the

¹ In his work “The Lexus & the Olive Tree”, Thomas L. Friedman discusses the renouncement as a concept that reflects the conflict between civilization and backwardness, between old and new values, between values of national character and global values. The author uses Toyota’s modern ‘Lexus’ icon located in southern Tokyo and the ‘olive tree’ on the Jordan River to mimic the conflict. Olive tree is a symbol of the so-called ‘identity’: for various reasons, people tend to retain the old values.

last decade of the twentieth century has shown that the environment of this region is always vibrant, this contradiction is gone, new contradiction will appear. Saying so to assert that a lost old thing still leave its legacy. Inheriting does not just mean continuing. It is important to draw and understand lessons: lessons of successes and failures. The lessons of successes are to continue and the lessons of successes failures are to avoid repetition.

Looking back to Southeast Asia in the twentieth century

The most striking feature is that Southeast Asian countries are affected by the bipartisan world order and the rivalry in Southeast Asia has increased the tension between the two poles. Southeast Asia is located in the southeastern part of the Asia-Europe continent, comprising 11 countries: Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos and Brunei with a total area of 4,494,047 km². This is an area on the East-West trade channel known as the "Inter-World Center", strategically important in economic and political terms. It is also the crossroads of the world's civilizations and is also the land to compete for the influence of major countries in history. In the twentieth century, Southeast Asia was a colonial region of the Western colonies, a hotbed of the Cold War. Many countries, after gaining sovereignty, have followed different political institutions. Although there are ups and downs, the goals of the countries are peace, stability, cooperation and development; disagreement reconciliation to join together into the common house ASEAN.

The Second World War ended, in the context of a devastated and weakened Europe in the international system, with the diminishing role of Britain, France and especially the ruin of Germany. The US and the Soviet Union emerged as world superpowers that are wealthy and powerful. Both countries soon took over the power of international political relations. However, The Soviet Union - The United States with two opposing ideologies stood on opposite lines. This makes postwar reconciliation distant. A series of conflicts emerged, though they were not directly confronting, but initiating a new war named Cold War. Worried that many colonial countries after independence would support and become allies of the Soviet Union, the United States used aid packages, technical assistance and sometimes military attack to support the pro-Western forces in new countries (Bureau of Public Affairs, US Department of State, 2017). The US military strategists found that the weakest point in strategies of the US in Asia was Southeast Asia, a large area adjacent to China to the south. Because "Southeast Asia is of strategic importance, it controls the gateway between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean." "Southeast Asia is very important to the United States" (Ellen, 2002). In addition, the previous dominant powers in Southeast Asia such as Britain and France were struggling with domestic difficulties and stepping away from the region, making it easier for the United States to influence them was much easier than combining the forces to confront the Soviet Union in Europe. The influence in the Southeast Asian also helped the United States to complete the two island chains (US West Coast - Hawaii and Guam - Japan - Philippines - Singapore) in order to maintain security in the Pacific Ocean, to ensure the flow of goods and military forces of the United States in this ocean. If the opponent wins Southeast Asia, sooner or later the United States will lose the

Asia-Pacific Ocean.² The blocking stance has created a tight structure for the US's policies in Southeast Asia³. In order to prevent the spread of communism in Indochina, Southeast Asia became an important battleground for strategies of the US in Asia. Blockade strategy in Southeast Asia was officially started thereafter, and Indochina became the focus of the Southeast Asian strategies of the United States. The US declared its support for the aspirations of national independence in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, but on condition that the leaders of the new states must not be Communists, the US supported the establishment of the non-Communist states (ie anti-communist) stabilized in the region bordering China. According to Domino theory, the US supported its allies in Southeast Asia because of dissatisfaction with what it said "the communist forces want to rule Asia under the guise of the national spirit."⁴ The US urged France to cede nationalism in Vietnam, but on the other hand they could not cut aid for France because it would lose alliance to Europe's bigger concerns. In short, US policy has two sides of incompatibility: on the one hand, assisting the French in winning the war against Viet Minh - preferably under US control, on the other hand, the United States is expected to win the war. France will withdraw from Indochina "in a great way."⁵ The US intervention in Vietnam (1948-1975) was the evolution of a series of political, diplomatic and military policies and measures of the United States in order to carry out their goals in Indochina (in which Vietnam is the center). This process is considered to be the direct cause of the prolongation of the Indochina War and also the infiltration for the Vietnam

² "These actions--most important the inauguration of an anti-Communist loyalty-security program for government employees in March 1947 and the initiation of criminal prosecutions against individual Communists--not only provided specific models for the rest of the nation but also enabled the government to disseminate its version of the Communist threat." Cited in Ellen Schrecker (1994) (1st Ed.), *The age of Mccarthyism: A brief history with documents*, The State Steps In: Setting the Anti-Communist Agenda, Boston: St. Martin's Press.

³ In the NSC51, the title of US Policy for Southeast Asia by the US Department of State to the National Security Council on July 1, 1949, stated that "in Indochina, French policy was to strike for recapturing, etc., but France cannot use military means to destroy Viet Minh, the situation of Indochina is worsened a lot. Communists occupy a dominant position in the nationalist movement..."

⁴ The Pentagon Papers, Chapter 2, "U.S. Involvement in the Franco-Viet Minh War, 1950-1954", MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT - Harry S. Truman President, quoted "Recognition by the United States of the three legally constituted governments of Vietnam, Laos' and Cambodia appears desirable and in accordance with United States foreign policy for several reasons. Among them are: encouragement to national aspirations under non-Communist leadership for peoples of colonial areas in Southeast Asia; the establishment of stable non-Communist governments in areas adjacent to Communist China; support to a friendly country which is also a signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty; and as a demonstration of displeasure with Communist tactics which are obviously aimed at eventual domination of Asia, working under the guise of indigenous nationalism."

⁵ The Pentagon Papers, Chapter 2, "U.S. Involvement in the Franco-Viet Minh War, 1950-1954", quoted "*The U.S.-French ties in Europe (NATO, Marshall Plan, Mutual Defense Assistance Program) only marginally strengthened U.S. urgings that France make concessions to Vietnamese nationalism. Any leverage from these sources was severely limited by the broader considerations of U.S. policy for the containment of communism in Europe and Asia. NATO and the Marshall Plan were of themselves judged to be essential to our European interests. To threaten France with economic and military sanctions in Europe in order to have it alter its policy in Indochina was, therefore, not plausible. Similarly, to reduce the level of military assistance to the French effort in Indochina would have been counter-productive, since it would have led to a further deterioration in the French military position there. In other words, there was a basic incompatibility in the two strands of U.S. policy: (1) Washington wanted France to fight the anti-communist war and win, preferably with U.S. guidance and advice; and (2) Washington expected the French, when battlefield victory was assured, to magnanimously withdraw from Indochina."*

War, the role of the United States gradually came from the aid, counseling to direct participation in the war. The impact of large countries outside Southeast Asia on regional peace and security, sometimes pushes Southeast Asian nations into a confrontation, creates a double-long unstable situation to benefit those great powers. After the liberation of the South of Vietnam in 1975 and Cambodia's victory over the Khmer Rouge, the fear of the spread of communism enlarged in many Southeast Asian countries. China took the opportunity to get through the Khmer Rouge to Southeast Asia, filling the power vacancy after the US withdrew from Indochina.

In the world, the presence of three major countries - the US - China - the Soviet Union in Southeast Asia, and the relations and conflicts between them have made the situation more stressful. While the conflict between China and the Soviet Union from the previous decade has not been resolved,⁶ the United States has a bilateral relationship with both sides and is in favor of China. After 1975, the Cambodian problem made the inner Southeast Asia severely differentiated. In April 1975, after the pro-US Lon Nol government collapse, the Khmer Rouge government led Cambodia with reactionary domestic policies. Two million Cambodians were slaughtered at the hands of the Khmer Rouge, triggered the Cambodian people's revolution. With the help of Vietnamese volunteers, the Cambodian revolutionary forces overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979. On this occasion, on February 17, 1979, China sent more than 60,000 Chinese troops to attack six border provinces to "teach Vietnam a lesson" (Deng Xiaoping). Many researchers consider this war a part of the Third Indochina War. The situation in Indochina, Southeast Asia, and Asia became extremely tense and complex. On the one hand, China demanded Vietnam withdraw its troops and wanted to detain Vietnam in the Cambodian battlefield. The United States returned to Southeast Asia with its policy of encirclement, the embargo of Vietnam and the support of the Khmer Rouge in retaliation for the defeat of the war in 1975. Many countries in the region and in the world took anti-Vietnam side. As a result, internal states in Southeast Asia were divided. Since the mid-1980s, the tendency for peace between large countries became more pronounced, but the two-world order only really ended in the end of 1991, when the Soviet Union dissolved. These fluctuations affected the situation in Southeast Asia. Countries in the region were well aware that tensions were not beneficial to any country and they seek reconciliation for a peaceful, cooperative and developed Southeast Asian. The bottom line is in addressing the Cambodian situation. The end of the Cold War and the signing of the Paris Agreement on Cambodia (October 23, 1991) provided Southeast Asia with objective conditions to enter a period of peace, security and development.

The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the last half century has significantly contributed to the change and development of Southeast Asia

ASEAN is a political, economic, cultural and social alliance of nations in Southeast Asia. This organization was established

on August 8, 1967 with the first members: Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Philippines to express the spirit of solidarity among countries in the same region and fighting against violence and instability in member countries. As of 1999, ASEAN was composed of 10 member countries (except East Timor, which has not yet been admitted, and has been acting as an observer). The initial aim of the five countries could be said to be modest: working against both internal and external challenges. At that time, many people forecasted that ASEAN would disintegrate in a few years. Southeast Asia has become one of the most dynamic economic regions in the world in half a century and ASEAN is the second most successful regional organization after the European Union. The three motives for creating ASEAN are the purpose of building the country and its goals of economic, political and security development. Countries in the region that have lost confidence in outside powers have come together in the context of the 1960s to help each other. For Indonesia, it had an ambition of regional hegemony, while Malaysia and Singapore wanted to use Asean to curb Indonesia, bringing it into a more collaborative framework. Unlike the European Union with a centralized model of centralized power in each country, ASEAN aims to protect and promote nationalism.

Undeniably, Southeast Asia was a hot area during the Cold War. In 1967, the first ASEAN document, *Bangkok Declaration 1967*, emphasized the cooperation, promoting economic growth, social progress and cultural development, building a peaceful and prosperous South East Asia. However, at this moment, the situation in Indochina is strained due to the US Government's implementation of the Local War Strategy in Vietnam, the war was likely to spread to all Indochina, the issue of peace and security of the region became particularly important, dominating the activities of ASEAN. How to stop the influence of the revolutionary movement from Vietnam and avoid being dragged into the war with signs of quagmire in Indochina were the issues posed within ASEAN at this time. Thus, in 1971, *Kuala Lumpur Declaration* of ASEAN was born with the message of building a Southeast Asia into a "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality" (ZOPFAN). Some countries in the region have established diplomatic relations with each other (Malaysia and Singapore have established relations with Vietnam in 1973 after the Paris Agreement for Vietnam was signed in January 1973, but these relations were only on paper because these countries also have the mission in Saigon in relations with the Republic of Vietnam. In 1975, Vietnam won the struggle for independence, the United States withdrew from Indochina, Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was dissolved, thereby the common characteristics in the relations of Southeast Asian countries were both towards peace, respect and cooperation for the development, ASEAN also considered regional policy adjustment. The *Treaty of Amity and Cooperation* and the *ASEAN Declaration on Peace* were issued in February 1976 in Bali, Indonesia, which proclaimed the establishment of a Southeast Asian region based on the principle of respect for independence and sovereignty and territorial integrity, no interference in each other's internal affairs, no use of violence or threat of violence against one another, settlement of disputes by peaceful means of negotiation, co-operation. After Bali Conference in 1976, ASEAN promoted its economic cooperation programs, but efforts came to a standstill in the mid-1980s. The stalemate in the early 1980s was due to the problem of Cambodia, the United States and China wanted to "Bleed Vietnam" in the

⁶ In the midst of the twentieth century, within the socialist countries, especially the divisions between the two big countries: China and the Soviet Union, gradually developed into a border conflict between the Soviet Union and China in April and May 1962, culminating in the bloodshed between the two countries in the spring of 1969. This division proceeded in various ways until the late 1980s and resulted in the fact that a number of countries in the system are also affected by this disagreement.

Cambodian issue and dividing Southeast Asian nations. It was not until 1991 when Thailand proposed set up a free trade area that the new ASEAN trade bloc was founded. Each year, member countries rotate to hold official meetings to enhance cooperation. However, looking at the Southeast Asian institutions of the twentieth century, from the Southeast Asian Association (ASA) founded by Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand in 1961; MAPHILINDO by Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia established in 1963 to the ASEAN has now made a difference. This difference comes from the circumstances of their establishment and when compared with the relative effectiveness of ASEAN. ASEAN's activities in the last 50 years have provided us with lessons to forecast the direction, ways and methods of ASEAN reform and forecast future development trends in Southeast Asia.

The degree of renouncement between the old world and the new world in Southeast Asia

In addition to the lessons learned from the old world, new factors have emerged. These new factors help us forecast the inheritance, reform the old or inherit and build the new. By analyzing ASEAN, we see ASEAN failing to promote its role as set forth in its *Bangkok Declaration 1967* for the next several decades. Although the Declaration emphasizes cooperation in promoting economic growth, social progress and cultural development, building a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asia, political and security issues in the region are becoming increasingly important and dominant in the operation of ASEAN for decades. Countries in Southeast Asia are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of regional alliances in regional and world development and thus have joined ASEAN in turn. However, for this organization to function as expected, it also needs innovation and reform. Its innovation depends on new factors such as new factors in international and regional relations; the main characteristics and trends, the awareness of humanity about the future, the democratization in international life. The ASEAN Vision 2025 and related plans in each specific area are the statement of ASEAN aspirations towards a broader, more comprehensive, and more important regional organization; a community that is actually operating according to the law with a broader participation of the people and bringing about practical benefits for them.

However, considering the integration of ASEAN to 2017 and the integration dynamics including: *economic dependence; political will and the presence of external threats*, ASEAN can hardly achieve the objectives set out in the 2025 Vision. The main reason is that countries in the region are not ready to push the deeper integration process towards the deeper links such as the 2025 Vision but carefully choose the cooperation plan that best serves the goals of the sovereignty protection and survival of domestic political regime while trying to control both the scope and pace of integration. The gravitational pull from the outside is substantially greater than the radial force. This poses challenges for the integration process of ASEAN, namely: Firstly, the level of economic dependence among the countries in the bloc remains low, priority for promoting regional cooperation is unclear. ASEAN does not have a strong intra-EU trade history, although it has close geographic proximity to Western developed economies. Secondly, on the external environment, there are many factors that reduce internal solidarity within ASEAN. In

particular, China is seen as a fundamental factor in dividing ASEAN, especially in the South China Sea, which threatens political and economic stability in the region. In the context of a new world order that is shifting to the multipolar world, comparing the forces of change towards reducing US hegemony and increasing the strength of the new poles is becoming increasingly apparent; The new world order is both diverse and global in relation to all aspects of international life. The nature of international relations is both cooperation and struggling. Interlacing in international relations is increasingly confirmed with the following features: relations in different levels; increasing dependence; New international issues arise, especially non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, epidemics, natural disasters, the environment, climate change, economic disputes, food security and people security. This requires the building of trust in international relations and the application of preventive diplomacy to avert all conflict risks and so the role of the United Nations needs to be strengthened and multilateralism is increasingly encroaching. Facing the complexity of the world and the region, the Asia-Pacific Ocean region, including Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia will continue to be a community, a dynamic development hub but also a strategic competitive region between some big countries. This is also a region with many unstable factors, territorial disputes, sovereignty islands in the South China Sea is also fierce. Major and great powers are adjusting strategy with cooperation, compromise, competition, mutual restraint, strongly affecting the situation in the world and the region.

Forecast for Southeast Asia in the coming decades

Studying the history of Southeast Asia in more than half a century, we forecast Southeast Asia from now to 2030 as follows:

Peace, cooperation and development will continue to be the mainstay of Southeast Asia relations; the risk of conflicts between countries in this region is almost nonexistent. However, within each country, interference, overthrow, terrorism, and separatism can occur.

In keeping with the rapid and complicated changes of the international and regional situation, the leaders of ASEAN countries are determined to accelerate the process of intra-regional integration and the establishment of the *ASEAN Community* (AC) by 2015 (instead of 2020 as previously agreed). The overall goal of the ASEAN Community is to build the Association into a more cohesive and cohesive intergovernmental organization, based on the ASEAN Charter; It is not a supranational organization and it is not closed but open to the cooperation with the outside world. The ASEAN Community is based on three pillars: ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC), ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). ASEAN external relations as well as the goal of narrowing the development gap within ASEAN (especially the IAI) are integrated into each of the pillars of the ASEAN Community. ASEAN has set a vision to 2025. With this vision, ASEAN's goal will be to continue building a cohesive political, economic, and socially responsible community. This means ASEAN takes people as its emphasis in policies, taking the rules and laws as the basis for its activities. ASEAN has made the Charter and this Charter itself is the basis for

ASEAN's activities. Over the next few decades, Southeast Asia will face many traditional and non-traditional security challenges. In particular, there are two hot issues: terrorism caused by the Islamist extremism and China's "Nine-dash line" ambition in the South China Sea. For years, the region's counter-terrorism cooperation has been more symbolic than reality. According to security experts, the successive failures in Syria and Iraq have been the cause of IS's intensification of terrorist activities, expanding its coverage in many parts of the world, not just Central Asia but also in Europe or Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia's risk to become the "next Islamic state" is a challenge for its military and forcing them to raise awareness of terrorists. Or the risk of elements of the terrorist organization: self proclaimed "Islamic State" (IS) and its supporters may seek to make dirty bombs from radioactive materials in Malaysia. In Southeast Asia, sea terrorism is a real threat. Thus, not only countries like the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia, but other countries in the region will also intensify anti-terrorism activities in Southeast Asia. The fight against Islamic extremism in Southeast Asia has "just started".

However, overall, within ASEAN, there has been "an increase in strategic distrust." Territorial and border disputes among neighboring countries are and will complicate the bilateral relationships. Only Laos and Singapore have no territorial claims as they have no common borders. The multilateral disputes over ownership of island territories in the South China Sea and access to the region's natural resources is one of the most troublesome issues. Meanwhile, the Indochinese countries want to cooperate to develop sub-region, but have not got a common voice on exploiting the economic potential of the Mekong region. ASEAN countries may still face risks that threaten ASEAN's unity and its ability to react to Chinese aggression at sea in the future. Especially in the coming period, when China's "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) becomes a reality, Southeast Asian countries, besides the economic benefits it brings, they also face certain challenges, risks. The BRI would likely cause intra-ASEAN divisions, which would adversely affect some South East Asian countries over settling disputes in the South China Sea. Because China wants to adopt this framework, it promotes bilateral economic cooperation with each of the ASEAN countries and draws more and more ASEAN countries into its influential trajectory. This could also be one of the key steps for China to gain regional leadership. With different political institutions, different levels of socio-economic development, and varying degrees of relations with the United States and China, each ASEAN Member State has its own policy options. In general, foreign policy is aimed at balancing of force or influence between the two powers.

The global economic pulling center is moving to Asia-Pacific Ocean and Southeast Asia, where the whole world is focused.

Some of them have good cooperative relationships, but others compete fiercely. Conflicts of interest, competition for contracts and markets with political support from related countries are becoming acute. The stronger the economy is, the more potential "political temperature" of the region and the risk of conflicts are. Each election campaign in ASEAN countries - whether Thailand or Malaysia, Cambodia and Indonesia, and to some extent, even Singapore - will contain disagreements among the ruling class, conflicts between the Government and the classes, between society and the state in

general. Failure to anticipate the implications of modernizing and speeding up these problems will inevitably lead to a new social imbalance, creating gaps and conflicts - as demonstrated by anti-corruption protests, religious and ethnic conflicts. The possibility of a country wishing to become the hegemonic power of Southeast Asia may occur, with large countries using force in international relations with smaller countries tending to grow. Tendency to intensify, modernize defense, compete on strategic weapons and cosmic issues, increase between some big countries and in Asia-Pacific Ocean.

The risk of a financial crisis in the coming period is low, but it is likely that the region will be able to return to strong growth, as the economies came back as the "tigers" of the Southeast Asia cannot happen soon.

By 2030, ASEAN is projected to have a high population, about 720 million people, making the region a big market. By 2030, maybe three to four ASEAN members will have high average incomes. However, in order to achieve that, member states must maintain a momentum of reform, institutional development, and build competitive and dynamic, truly rising ASEAN Community⁷. To do so, it is expected that by 2030, the ASEAN Economic Community will rank the fourth in the world to the United States, China and Japan. The financial crisis in East Asia has made it clear that there is a need for a strong and transparent financial and banking system. In addition, regulating and balancing investment flows is extremely important in any economy. As a result, many governments have issued regulations to regulate these capital flows. Economies once called the "tigers" of Southeast Asia such as Indonesia and Malaysia for nearly two decades have seen a quite impressive resurgence in some respects. Factors contributing to the 1997 financial crisis have been restrained, but new risks are emerging, including bubbles in the real estate market, inequality of wealth and chain effects originating from China.

ASEAN continues to be a full-fledged organization in Southeast Asia and plays a central role in the relevant organizations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), ASEAN plus 3 (China, Japan, Korea), ASEAN plus 1, East Asia Summit (EAS). These are the forums for exchanging views on peace, security, cooperation and development, building trust and finding solutions to relieve tension in Southeast Asia. With the adoption of the ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN community begins its operation from the end of 2015; ASEAN has shifted to a new stage of development that is higher degree of institutionalization and closer legal binding. But the instability of some countries can undermine the role of the Association. With half a century of establishment and development, ASEAN will be able to proceed in one of three scenarios: First, ASEAN shall follow the established guidelines, achieve the objectives of the Charter, become "a harmonious group of Southeast Asian nations, attaching itself in a mutual society", there is stability in politics and security have a place in the globalized economy, bringing into play the diverse colors of the cultures and bringing real benefits to every citizen. To do this, it requires cooperation with the spirit of high responsibility of each member country. Second, ASEAN will

⁷ This is one of the recent studies and assessments of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) conducted by the ASEAN and Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ARIA, Japan).

exist as it has, with modest implementation of ideas, willingness to compromise, avoiding internal cracks. *Third*, ASEAN can be divided in the style of EU's Brexit. Unlike the United Kingdom, if there is a departure from a certain country, it is mainly due to the influence of external factors such as the historical experience of Southeast Asia in the twentieth century. The main factor that can differentiate ASEAN is the South China Sea issue (Ninh, 2017). The linkage of the economic and military interests of major countries outside Southeast Asia will probably dominate the position of some countries.

In the next few decades, the 4.0 revolution continues to be the driving force behind the development of the world economy, including in Southeast Asia. As a consequence, the global economic structure will continue to sharply transition to a knowledge economy with new characteristics of cycles, growth rates, competitive environment, new opportunities and challenges to the countries. Singapore is still the leading industrialized country in the field of science and technology in Southeast Asia; Some countries, such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam, although having many human resource advantages, may continue to develop in the next few years or have not yet been able to break through because they still aim at broad economic development. Against this backdrop, the competition for science and technology has grown steadily. Other countries in the region try to narrow the technological gap in order to gain a better position in international division of labor.

The relationship between major and great powers, and their impacts on Southeast Asia

The role and position of Southeast Asia has increased with the increasing role, influence and strength of the Asia-Pacific Ocean region. Forecasting in the next few decades, the balance of power continues to tilt toward Asia and it is expected that the time is 2050 when China's GDP is equal to that of the US. The status of both cooperation and struggle is a common framework for international relations, but mainly around major countries such as the United States, Japan, China, Russia, India, especially the United States and China; Many multilateral institutions, mechanisms of cooperation and dialogue among countries in the region have been and will continue to be formed to regulate complex international relations. The South China Sea continues to be the hotspot of Southeast Asia. Civil society is beginning to shape and care about the issues of an information society such as freedom, democracy and human rights. The government of each country will have its own behavior - support or restriction - for civil society, depending on the characteristics of each country.

Southeast Asia continues to dominate the United States, Japan, China and India. Big countries avoid direct clashes, seek to mobilize their own interests, control other countries, and maintain stability and their existing benefits in the region. Over the next few decades, the United States remains the only superpower and important factor in addressing all international and regional issues. Thus, the United States will be forced to use more of its soft power as it seeks to improve relations with Asia, to return to Asia, and to find solutions to the remaining regional crises. The United States may divert nonviolent intervention that promotes a democratic process within Southeast Asia. The United States under President Donald

Trump may have certain adjustments in foreign policy toward Asia but perhaps Southeast Asia will continue to play a key role in US strategy with the region. The United States will continue to strengthen its ties with traditional Southeast Asian allies such as Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, in order to contain China's influence in the region. China will attach special importance to relations with its neighbors, including Southeast Asian nations. It is because: *First*, Southeast Asia is on the maritime route between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, the gateway to the Chinese world; is home to abundant resources, the main source of supply for China's fast-growing economy. Southeast Asia is the lever for Chinese enterprises to reach out to the world market. The international community has always regarded China's policy in Southeast Asia as a sign of intent in its overall foreign policy. Southeast Asia has become a "touchstone" to test "Theory of China threat". *Second*, Southeast Asia could become an advantage for China to restrain Japan and the United States. Therefore, China is keen to expand its operations in this area to protect its security interests. Southeast Asia, however, also has important economic advantages for the United States and Japan, so the region becomes a strategic competitive place between major countries. *Third*, only when China has a solid foothold in Southeast Asia, can it strengthen its influence in the region and in the world. China's growth will have both positive and negative impacts on Southeast Asia and will always make countries worried about the lack of trust in China. Over the next several years, disputes in the South China Sea remain a major obstacle in enhancing cooperation between China and ASEAN. The strong rise of the Chinese economy will be both an opportunity but also a great challenge for ASEAN's commodity production. So, competition in the trade to win market share, even competition in the intra-bloc market is also fierce. India is pursuing its "East Action" policy to boost its political and economic ties with Southeast Asia. This effort is expected to face a significant challenge as the region's trade turnover with China is six times as high as that of India. "India does not want Asia to be dominated by China". Southeast Asia is one of the key areas that can determine this", said Dhruva Jaishankar from the Brookings Institution India. Japan has also strengthened relations with Southeast Asian countries through aid, loans, and investment in projects. The competition between the big countries made Southeast Asia difficult to select partners. In the resurgence of China, ASEAN countries are implementing a balance policy of large countries which attaches importance to relations with all major countries.

Conclusion

The future of Southeast Asia is a complex issue. With forecasting method, we first need to look at the history of Southeast Asia for half a century, recognizing the characteristics of the past and understanding the present nature of the region, thus helping us predict the future based on the principle of inheritance. In the twentieth century, Southeast Asia was a colonial part of Western colonialism and also a hotbed of Cold War. The birth of ASEAN and its role is a milestone for the beginning of a new era in Southeast Asia. Although there are ups and downs, the goals that the countries aim are peace, stability, cooperation and development, disagreement reconciliation to work together for a stronger common ASEAN. Therefore, peace, cooperation and development will continue to be the mainstream of Southeast Asian relations, the risk of conflicts between countries in this

region is almost unexplored. However, within each country, interference, overthrow, terrorism, and separatism can occur. Southeast Asia continues to dominate the influence of large countries. Big countries are interested in and wish to be present in Southeast Asia, to intervene broader and deeper into the region in order to gain influence and to restraint, prevent each other from directing the region to their own orbit. The above are just forecastings and the level of accuracy depends on the ability to study. Forecastings are the general pictures from the point of view and perspective of the authors on the topic to be forecasted. Because this is a picture of what has not happened, that is, virtual forecasts are always given different scenarios. The future does not come true with a scenario that lies in a scene containing many different scenarios. That is the forecasting based on the scientific analysis of the past, present and future.

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