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**THE EVOLUTION OF ASEAN'S POLICY TOWARDS  
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CONNECTION**

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## Research design

### *Statement of Research Problem*

The post-Cold War period has been notable for the transformation of security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. This is particularly significant for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), since, motivated by the aggravating security challenges, it established a cooperative security system presented by the “multilateral dialogue venues ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the East Asia Summit”(EAS)<sup>1</sup>.

This system encounters serious challenges. One of the key elements to highlight is the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) initiative, introduced during Donald Trump’s presidency. In light of the initiative’s impacts and the growing tensions between the U.S. and China, ASEAN’s Outlook on the Indo-Pacific - rooted in inclusivity and the principles of ASEAN’s central role, mutual trust, respect, and transparency - failed to align with the priorities of major regional actors in the Asia-Pacific<sup>2</sup>.

The lines of geopolitical confrontations are becoming clearer, while the dedication of countries to international cooperation is waning. Persistent animosities and standing tensions within Southeast Asia, as well as adjacent areas remain unabated. The escalation of rivalries among influential nations extends beyond political and security domains to encompass trade, finance, technology, and various other sectors. Diplomatic efforts to manage potential disputes in the South China Sea (SCS) have failed to produce concrete outcomes, with developments in this region outpacing progress on the ASEAN member states and China’s Code of Conduct (COC). The recent changes in Myanmar, a related

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<sup>1</sup> Gorbako A.A. The ASEAN Regional Forum from an Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Perspective: Time to Think Bigger // South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development. 2022. Vol. 3. No. 56. P. 40-48.

<sup>2</sup> Канаев Е.А. АСЕАН в контексте расширенной концепции тихоокеанского регионализма. Дискуссии и акценты [ASEAN in the Context of an Expanded Conception of Pacific Regionalism. Discussions and Emphases] // In book: National and International Strategies in Indo-Pacific. Analysis and Forecast / Mikheev V., Shvydko V. ed. – Moscow, IMEMO, 2020. - 182 p.

implementation of the five-point plan crafted by the leaders in 2021 to help bring Myanmar back to normalcy<sup>3</sup>, another recent outbreaks in the South China Sea between the PRC's coast guard vessels, Philippine and Vietnamese vessels in disputed waters amid China's continued encroachment on exclusive economic zones, make ASEAN's key challenges that undermine its centrality increasingly urgent. Responding to this geopolitical crisis, ASEAN commenced its inaugural first-ever joint military drills in Indonesia's South Natuna Sea in September 2023, which marks a step forward in enhancing defense capabilities among ASEAN member countries and fostering collaboration in tackling common challenges<sup>4</sup>. Predictably, it generated diplomatic protests from the PRC. This raises the question of whether ASEAN is capable of providing meaningful answers to such developments.

A noticeable aftereffect of FOIP accounts for the emergence of the issue of sea lines of communication (SLOCs) security in the Asia-Pacific region. "After the emergence of the discourse on maritime security in the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy and the revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, as well as the establishment of AUKUS, the issue of security of sea lines of communication has become relevant to the Asia-Pacific region, including Southeast Asia"<sup>5</sup>.

The security of SLOCs encompasses three key components:

Firstly, it involves freedom of merchant shipping (navigation), which includes the right of "innocent passage" through the territorial waters of coastal states. This also covers the freedom to access ports, utilize facilities and docks, load and unload cargo, and transport both goods and passengers, as well as the

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<sup>3</sup> Karmini, N., Tarigan, E. Southeast Asian Leaders Face Thorny Issues Ahead of ASEAN Summit // The Diplomat. URL: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/09/southeast-asian-leaders-face-thorny-issues-ahead-of-asean-summit/> (retrieved: 03.01.2024).

<sup>4</sup> Budiman Y. C. ASEAN kicks off its first-ever joint military drills in Indonesia // Reuters. September 19, 2023. URL: [https://translated.turbopages.org/proxy\\_u/en-ru.ru.fbc9050e-659e5213-cd878fd7-74722d776562/https/www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/asean-kicks-off-its-first-ever-joint-military-drills-indonesia-2023-09-19/](https://translated.turbopages.org/proxy_u/en-ru.ru.fbc9050e-659e5213-cd878fd7-74722d776562/https/www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/asean-kicks-off-its-first-ever-joint-military-drills-indonesia-2023-09-19/) (retrieved: 03.01.2024)

<sup>5</sup> Terskikh M., Narkhova E., Gorbato A. The Transformation of the South China Sea Issue in the US Foreign Policy: from Rebalancing to the Indo-Pacific Narrative / in: Regions in the Contemporary World: the Global Turbulence and Its Impact on Asia (Collective Monograph) / Ed. by E.Kanaev, S.Luzyanin, A.Baklanov, V.Vishnyakova. HSE University. – Moscow: ФИЛИНЪ, 2021. – P. 164-176.

uninterrupted operation of the maritime traffic routes, protection of navigation aids, facilities and supporting equipment (navigation systems)<sup>6</sup>;

Secondly, freedom of military navigation refers to the unobstructed movement of military ships throughout maritime areas, excluding the territorial waters of sovereign nations<sup>7</sup>;

Thirdly, an unimpeded construction of undersea cables and pipelines, as well as intercontinental network of undersea fiber-optic cables, transmitting information thorough them<sup>8</sup>.

### *Relevance of problem*

The topic of the research is relevant and deserves scholarly attention for several reasons.

Firstly, *the “Indo-Pacific Region” and the AUKUS factor*. “The AUKUS is a new alliance between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, established on 15 September 2021. Along with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, it is part of the U.S. regional and global strategic network”<sup>9</sup>.

AUKUS will allow its participants to share the latest developments in long-range weapons, cybernetics and developments in artificial intelligence. The establishment of AUKUS poses a risk of proliferation of nuclear material technology, that triggers arms race, due to the transfer of nuclear submarine building technology to Canberra and the intention of major actors to have such a fleet in the nearest future<sup>10</sup>. Alliances like the Quad and AUKUS tend to erode already existing formats

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<sup>6</sup> Hoffman A.J. Navigation, Freedom of // Oxford Public International Law, Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law, 2011. URL: <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A.J.Hoffmann-Freedom-of-Navigation-EPIL.pdf> (retrieved: 03.05.2023)

<sup>7</sup> Mikheev V.V., Shvydko V.G. (eds) Shaping a new system of trans-Pacific security and co-operation. The formation of a new system of trans-Pacific security and co-operation. Scientific Report. - M.: IMEMO RAN, 2013. - 74 p.

<sup>8</sup> Wall C., Morcos P. Invisible and Vital: Undersea Cables and Transatlantic Security // Center for Strategic & International Studies. June 11, 2021. URL: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/invisible-and-vital-undersea-cables-and-transatlantic-security> (retrieved: 03.05.2023)

<sup>9</sup> Gorbatko A.A. The Pacific Island Countries in China’s Current Policy // South East Asia: Actual Problems of Development. 2022. Vol.1. No 1(54). P. 66-74.

<sup>10</sup> Murphy K., Hurst D. Australia nuclear submarine deal: Aukus defence pact with US and UK means \$90bn contract with France will be scrapped // The Guardian. September 16, 2021. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/sep/16/australia-nuclear-submarine-deal-contract-france-scrapped-defence-pact-us-uk> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

for political dialogue with a clear anti-China agenda, that undermines and marginalizes the ASEAN-led multilateral dialogue venues based on the principle of consensus.

Secondly, *the changing regional geopolitical dynamics*. The Asia-Pacific region is witnessing power shifts and evolving alliances that have significant implications for maritime security. The rise of China and its increasing assertiveness in the region, as well as the role of the United States and other major powers, have reinforced the need for comprehensive analysis of ASEAN's maritime security initiatives, as well as ASEAN's role as a regional actor, which is able to shape regional security architecture and promoting cooperation among its member states. Exploring ASEAN's engagement and effectiveness in promoting multilateral cooperation in the maritime domain, ASEAN's initiatives in progress, such as the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, it is getting possible to address maritime security challenges.

Thirdly, *China's factor*. On August 28, 2023, China's Ministry of Natural Resources released its "10-dash line map" or "New standard map 2023", which is an edition of the "9-dash line map", expanding its claims in the West Philippine Sea, now covering Taiwan and India's Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin<sup>11</sup>.

The PRC-Oceania-South Pacific Blue Economic Passage Sea routes planned as a part of the Chinese mega-strategy "21st Century Maritime Silk Road", which aims to head south of from the South China Sea to Pacific Ocean, will require long-term and focused political dialogue, both among giant actors, middle powers in the region and the Pacific Islands Forum members. Particularly in relation to China, it is timely and relevant to formulate the line how to engage with the PRC, that is why time-tested ASEAN institutions can play an essential role as a coordinator in the region. Infrastructure continues to be a vital necessity for the Pacific island nations. The PRC's "Belt and Road Initiative" appears to serve as a framework that facilitates increased investment and trade, along with long-term infrastructure projects aimed

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<sup>11</sup> Ma Zhenhuan. 2023 edition of national map released // China Daily. August 28, 2023. URL: <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202308/28/WS64ec91c2a31035260b81ea5b.html> (retrieved: 03.01.2024)

at regional development. However, this initiative raises concerns about the potential for using such infrastructure for military purposes and acquiring strategically significant assets and locations, that potentially can be used for monitoring sea lines of communication from Latin America to East Asia and South Pacific by the People's Liberation Army naval army. In spite of competing interests, for small developing island countries, political shifts provide opportunities for greater leverage, including relationship with international community that can be updated. The dilemma facing the South Pacific involves a choice between longstanding allies and an alternative offered by China. This framing continues to be the prevailing theme in academic discussions surrounding the region amid ongoing geostrategic competition.

Lastly, *the factor of "mid-level actors" in the Asia-Pacific region* matters. The evolution of regional processes of maritime security against the backdrop of rising China's modernization in its maritime domain has triggered the boost of security cooperation of "mid-level" actors (particularly, the Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) (2020)<sup>12</sup> and the Australia-Japan the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) (2022)<sup>13</sup>).

### *Literature Review*

Academic literature review is broadly divided into several categories.

The group of academic literature on the issues related to the object of the research – *the evolution of the processes determining the state of security and cooperation at the maritime borders of the Asia-Pacific region after the end of the Cold War*.

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<sup>12</sup> Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Republic of India and Australia. URL: <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/india/joint-statement-comprehensive-strategic-partnership-between-republic-india-and-australia> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement. January 6, 2022. URL: [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/ocn/au/page4e\\_001195.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/ocn/au/page4e_001195.html) (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

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<sup>14</sup> Bernard F.W. L. Geopolitics, Geostrategy, and Defense Policy // in: Strategy and Defense Policy for Small States: Problems and Prospects. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2022. P.6-14.

<sup>15</sup> Brant P. Chinese Aid in the South Pacific: Linked to Resources? // Asian Studies Review. 2013. Vol. 37. No. 2. P. 158-177.

<sup>16</sup> Carr A. Re-Examination the Australia-U.S. Alliance: the Menzies and MacArthur Models. // Australian Strategic Policy Institute. February 25, 2020. URL: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/re-examining-the-australia-us-alliance-part-2-the-menzies-and-macarthur-models/> (retrieved: 04.01.2021)

<sup>17</sup> Chan S. The Power-Transition Discourse and China’s rise // Encyclopedia of Empirical International Relations Theory. London: Routledge, 2008. - 197 p.

<sup>18</sup> Chivvis C.S. Biden’s Forthcoming National Security Strategy: Making It Real // Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. November 10, 2021. URL: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/11/10/biden-s-forthcoming-national-security-strategy-making-it-real-pub-85734> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>19</sup> Graham E. Divining the Fluid Element: From Cooperation to Conflict in Japan-China Maritime Relations // Security Challenge. 2015. Vol. 11. No. 1. 2015. P. 51-73.

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<sup>21</sup> Jannuzy F., Lohman W., Ford L.W. and Bencosme F. Key U.S. Policy Issues in the Indo-Pacific Region // The National Bureau of Asian Research. February, 2019. URL: [https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/engaging\\_asia\\_briefs\\_2019.pdf](https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/engaging_asia_briefs_2019.pdf) (retrieved: 14.01.2022)

<sup>22</sup> Jerwis R. Cooperation under the Security Dilemma // World Politics. 1978. Vol. 30. No. 2. P. 167–214.

<sup>23</sup> Karpavičiūtė I. Analysis of Regional Security Dynamics. Internal and External Factors and their Interplay: Ph.D. Dissertation, 2010. - 250 p.

<sup>24</sup> Köllner P. Australia and New Zealand Face Up to China in the South Pacific // German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA Focus). 2020. No.3. – 12 p.

<sup>25</sup> Levick E. Is China Using Its South Sea Strategy in the South Pacific? // The Strategies, Australian Strategy Policy Institute. June 18, 2019. URL: <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/is-china-using-its-south-china-sea-strategy-in-the-south-pacific/> (retrieved: 04.01.2022)

<sup>26</sup> Meick E., Ker M., Chan H.M. China’s Engagement in the Pacific Islands: Implications for the United States // U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Staff Research Report, June 14, 2018, URL: <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China-Pacific%20Islands%20Staff%20Report.pdf> (retrieved: 06.01.2022)

<sup>27</sup> Medcalf R. and Mohan R. Responding to Indo-Pacific rivalry: Australia, India and middle power coalitions // Lowy Institute for International Policy. 2014. - 24 p.

<sup>28</sup> Menges K. China: the growing threat // Per. from English Bulycheva A.G.; Preface. to Russian. ed. Tsygichko V.N. M.: Publishing House Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 2006. - 608 p.

<sup>29</sup> Meng W., Hu W. The United States, China, and the Indo-Pacific Strategy // China Review. 2020. Vol. 20, Issue:3. P. 127- 142.

<sup>30</sup> Murphy A.M. China’s Grand Strategy toward Southeast Asia // in: China’s Grand Strategy: a Roadmap to Global Power? / ed. by Denoon D.B.H. NY: New York University Press, 2021. – 296 p.

<sup>31</sup> O’Keefe M. The Militarisation of China in the Pacific: Stepping Up to a New Cold War? // Security Challenges. 2020. Vol. 16. No. 1. P. 94-112.

<sup>32</sup> Oosterveld W., Wilms E. and Kertysova K. The Belt and Road Initiative Looks East. China in the South Pacific // Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. 2018. P. 46-58.



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<sup>35</sup> Santo E. M. Militarized marine protected areas in overseas territories: Conserving biodiversity, geopolitical positioning, and securing resources in the 21st century // Ocean Coastal Management. 2020. Vol. 184. – 13 p.

<sup>36</sup> Szadziwski H. A Search for Coherence: The Belt and Road Initiative in the Pacific Islands // In book: The China Alternative: Changing Regional Order in the Pacific Islands / Ed. by Smith G. Terence W.S. Canberra: ANU Press. 2021. P. 283-318.

<sup>37</sup> Taylor F. M. Territorial and Maritime Boundary Disputes in Asia / in: Oxford handbook of the International Relations in Asia / ed Pekkanen S.M., Ravenhill J., Foot R. NY: Oxford University Press, 2014. - 810 p.

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*Academic literature review of issues related to the subject of the research – the evolution and intermediate outcomes of the ASEAN approach to maritime security challenges within the outlined chronological framework.*

*The foreign examination is presented by following researchers: Allès D.<sup>89</sup>, Caballero-Anthony M.<sup>90</sup>, Ba A.D.<sup>91</sup>, Emmerson D.K.<sup>92</sup>, Guxing W.<sup>93</sup>, Jones D.M.*

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The conducted analysis on the evolution of ASEAN's policy towards the maritime security challenges in the Asia Pacific region shows that there is no shortage of research on specific aspects of ASEAN's maritime policy, such as the evolution of the ASEAN-led multilateral cooperation system, the South China Sea territorial dispute and ASEAN's attempts to work out a resolution mechanism for this security issue.

The further research on the evolution of the processes determining the state of security and cooperation at the maritime frontiers of the Asia-Pacific region, specifically focusing on the ASEAN approach to maritime security challenges within the period of 1992-2024, allows to explore several academic lacunas and contribute to the existing scholarship in the following areas:

- *Historical evolution.* Investigation of the historical evolution of ASEAN's approach to maritime security challenges in the period 1992-2024 allows

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<sup>118</sup> Huong Le Thu. The ASEAN Regional Forum // Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. 2019. P. 62-63.

<sup>119</sup> Nachiappan K. India-ASEAN Relations: Riding and Transcending the "Indo-Pacific" Wave // The Journal of Indian and Asian Studies. 2021. Vol. 2. No. 2. – 17 p.

<sup>120</sup> 彭虹. 中国与“21 世纪海上丝绸之路”沿线国家双边贸易影响因素——以南太平洋 5 岛国为例 [Peng Hong. The influencing factors of bilateral trade between China and countries along the “21st century Maritime Silk Road”—Taking the five South Pacific island countries as an example] // 福建农林大学学报: 哲学社会科学版 [Journal of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University: Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition]. 2020. Vol. 5. P. 47-53.

<sup>121</sup> Putra B.A. ASEAN Political-Security Community: Challenges of establishing regional security in the Southeast Asia // Journal of International Studies. 2019. Vol. 12. No. 1. P. 33-49.

<sup>122</sup> Yukawa T. The ASEAN Way as a symbol: an analysis of discourses on the ASEAN Norms // The Pacific Review. 2018. Vol. 31. No. 3. P.298-314.

<sup>123</sup> 于婷婷. 中国与东盟海上非传统安全合作: 动力、障碍及对策 [Yu Tingting. China-ASEAN maritime non-traditional security cooperation: dynamics, obstacles and countermeasures]// 华中师范大学 [Huazhong Normal University]. 2017. 69 p.

<sup>124</sup> 邹立刚, 王崇敏. 中国的海洋问题与南海问题及其应对举措 [Zou L., Wang C. China's Ocean Issues and South China Sea Issues and their Countermeasures] // Observation of the South China Sea. 2012. Vol. 5. P. 10-15.

<sup>125</sup> 郑先武. 陈海波. 中国-东盟安全合作的综合化. [Zheng X. Synthesis of China-ASEAN Security Cooperation] // 现代国际关系[Contemporary International Politics]. 2012. Vol. 3. P. 47-53.

examining how it has developed over time and identifying key milestones or shifts in policy and strategy.

- *ASEAN unity and disunity.* Exploring of the internal dynamics of ASEAN concerning maritime security policies contributes to examining factors that have either promoted or hindered unity among member states in addressing the South China Sea issue and other maritime security challenges.
- *Role of external actors.* There is the lack of a comprehensive in-depth analysis of the factors that have influenced the evolution of ASEAN's approach towards maritime challenges. The identification of the contributions of non-claimant ASEAN states in shaping maritime security policies related to the South China Sea conflict allows considering their interests, perspectives, and influence within ASEAN decision-making processes. Furthermore, analysis of the role of external actors, including major powers and international organizations, in shaping maritime security dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region will assess their impact on ASEAN's approach to maritime security.
- *Legal frameworks, governance.* Examine the development of the legal frameworks and governance structures within ASEAN related to maritime security governance in the Asia-Pacific region and assess of their adequacy in addressing contemporary challenges in the South China Sea context.
- *ASEAN's institutional capacity and conflict resolution mechanisms.* Explore ASEAN's institutional capacity and effectiveness in responding to evolving maritime security issues persist regarding the effectiveness of current mechanisms for addressing maritime disputes, particularly in relation to the South China Sea, and fostering peaceful resolution processes in the Asia-Pacific region from 1992 to 2024.
- *Community building efforts.* Evaluate of ASEAN's efforts in promoting maritime community building initiatives.



- *Regional power dynamics.* Examine how changing regional power dynamics and external influence affect ASEAN's maritime security strategy, especially concerning the South China Sea conflict.

### *A Brief Outline of the State of Expertise in the Field*

ASEAN has made significant achievements in addressing maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region since 1992. Key aspects include the development of cooperative mechanisms among member states and with external actors, the process of working out negotiation mechanism related to territorial issues and to prevent further escalation.

The 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea was a crucial step in addressing territorial disputes and promoting peaceful resolutions. Moreover, the establishment of various multilateral mechanisms have facilitated dialogue, confidence-building, and cooperation among member states and relevant stakeholders.

Another important milestone is the mediation of negotiations of the existing territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific region, which include ASEAN member states and external powers.

Furthermore, ASEAN has contributed to maintaining regional stability and peace through its collective security approach. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)<sup>126</sup>, signed in 1976, has established a framework for regional cooperation and non-aggression. This treaty, along with the principles of ASEAN centrality, has helped prevent major conflicts and consolidates ASEAN's role in shaping regional security architecture.

However, there are also some theoretical and methodological problems that have been revealed in ASEAN's approach to maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region. One problem is the limited enforcement capabilities of ASEAN's agreements and mechanisms. While ASEAN has been successful in creating

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<sup>126</sup> Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, 1976. URL: <https://asean-aipr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Treaty-of-Amity-and-Cooperation-in-Southeast-Asia-1976-TAC.pdf> (retrieved: 02.03.2024)

platforms for dialogue and cooperation, its ability to enforce its decisions and agreements remains limited. This has often resulted in delays or incomplete implementation of measures agreed upon by member states.

The lack of a unified ASEAN stance on certain maritime security issues due to conflicting national interests has posed challenges to the effectiveness of ASEAN's efforts to resolve the South China Sea dispute involving multiple ASEAN member states and external powers that hindered the organization's ability to take manage this issue. Moreover, the absence of a comprehensive maritime security framework and a lack of consensus on key concepts and definitions related to maritime security pose challenges. Different member states may interpret maritime security differently, resulting in a lack of coherence and effectiveness in addressing shared concerns.

### *Research Question*

*The research question* for the thesis is formulated as follows: why does the direction in which the evolution of ASEAN policy on enhancing maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region has taken undermines rather than re-energizes the Association's position as the coordinator of the Asia-Pacific cooperative security system?

### *Aims and Objectives*

To answer the aforementioned research question, the following *objectives* are set in the paper:

- to assess the continuity and changes in the Asia-Pacific maritime security in the bipolar era;
- to clarify the rise of global dimension in Asia-Pacific maritime security in the post-bipolar period and its SLOCs connection;
- to explore the efficiency of the “Indo-Pacific Region” and the “Belt and Road Initiative” as instruments to keep the Asia-Pacific maritime security issue manageable;

- to scrutinize ASEAN's policy on the South China Sea Issue as a model for framing a response to the Asia-Pacific maritime security;
- to examine ASEAN's relations with its dialogue partners from the Asia-Pacific maritime security perspective;
- to assess the response of ASEAN-led multilateral dialogue formats to the Asia-Pacific maritime security challenges.

*The object* of the research is the evolution of the processes determining the state of security and cooperation at the maritime frontiers of the Asia-Pacific region after the end of the Cold War.

*The subject* of the research is the evolution and interim outcomes of the ASEAN approach to maritime security challenges within the stated chronological framework.

*Hypothesis:* While ASEAN has been relatively effective in addressing maritime security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region since the end of the Cold War, the Association has not been able to qualitatively update its instruments to meet the current state of these challenges. As the threats to maritime security in the Asia-Pacific have taken on a global dimension, ASEAN's policy has followed the path of increasing efforts in areas prioritized in the first half of the 1990s.

#### *Scope and Limitations of Research*

The timeframe of the dissertation research: (1992-2024). The lower boundary is attributable to the post-Cold War period and the subsequent transformation of the Asia-Pacific security mechanisms.

In 1992, at the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit, ASEAN announced its decision to establish a pan-regional security dialogue mechanism (the ASEAN Regional Forum) based on the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conferences.

On July 1992, Foreign Ministers of the member countries of the ASEAN adopted 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea at the 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN

Ministerial Meeting in Manila, which marked the emergence of the issue of maritime security as an actual agenda for the Association.

During the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress on February 25, 1992, the "Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone"<sup>127</sup> was enacted, asserting sovereignty over the mainland and its coastal islands, as well as Taiwan and various other islands, including Diaoyu (Senkaku), Penghu (Pescadores), Dongsha (Pratas), Sisha (Paracel Islands), Zhongsha, and Nansha (Spratly Islands). This legislation elevated the South China Sea issue, transforming it into a matter of global significance, particularly within the Sino-American context, thus surpassing its regional implications within ASEAN<sup>128</sup>.

The upper boundary is 2024, this year marks 30 years of the ASEAN Regional Forum and 50 years of the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Partnership. The ARF has played an important role in the development of the maritime security discussions, while Australia has substantially contributed to the conceptualization of this issue, including SLOCs.

### *Methods*

The following *methods* were mainly used depending on the stage of the research:

First, *narrative and historical-comparative methods* play an important role in the research since they allow describing and covering the evolution of the processes determining the state of security and cooperation at the maritime borders of the Asia-Pacific region in the post- Cold War period, as well as making analogies to situate the current state of the maritime security challenges. Used to a greater extent in the chapter 2 and 3, implied the identification of cause-and-effect links in the analysis

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<sup>127</sup> The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. February 25, 1992. <http://www.asianlii.org/cn/legis/cen/laws/lotprocottsatz739/#:~:text=THE%20CONTIGUOUS%20ZONE-.LAW%20OF%20THE%20PEOPLE'S%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20CHINA%20ON,SEA%20AND%20THE%20CONTIGUOUS%20ZONE&text=This%20Law%20is%20enacted%20for,its%20maritime%20rights%20and%20interests> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>128</sup> Lee Chee Leong, Md Nasrudin Md Akhir. The Three Dimensions of China Threat to Japan's National Security // International Journal of East Asian Security. 2014. Vol. 3, No. 2. P. 27-46.

of the evolution of the territorial disputes in the South China Sea and to represent the response of ASEAN-led multilateral dialogue formats to the Asia-Pacific SLOCs security issue.

Second, *comparative and documentary analysis* allow exploring official documents, defense reports, speeches, statements and protocols of meetings serve as an effective instrument for the dissertation to analyze the evolution of ASEAN's policy towards maritime security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region (1992-2024) and to examine ASEAN's relations with its dialogue partners from an Asia-Pacific SLOCs security perspective.

Third, *retrospective method* allows identifying the roots and stages of the evolution of the Asia-Pacific maritime security challenges, the evolution and intermediate results of ASEAN's policy on that issue and reconstructing theoretical premises for determining the causes of the past events, while the *chronological method* presents this historical material in chronological sequence.

Furthermore, the *historical-genetic method*, used to a greater extent in the chapter 2, traces the genesis - i.e. origin and development of the negotiation process surrounding the development of the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea, along with the perceptions associated with this code as an instrument to manage maritime security/SLOCs security in the Asia-Pacific region during the timeframe of the dissertation research.

The *historical-typological method*, mainly applied in chapter 3, provides a comparative analysis of ASEAN's policy towards maritime security/SLOCs security issue in the Asia-Pacific region, with a specific focus on ASEAN's stance regarding the South China Sea issue during periods: 1992-1996 and 2013-2024.

The *historical-systemic method*, used in the chapter 2 and 3, allows demonstrating the interconnected events regarding the evolution of the processes determining the dynamics of security and cooperation at the maritime boundaries of the Asia-Pacific region in the post-Cold War era.

### *Selection of Empirical Data*

The first group of sources includes official documents, such as national strategies, official reports, strategic plans: Australia Government Foreign Policy White Papers and Defense White Papers<sup>129</sup>, a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Advancing a Shared Vision<sup>130</sup>, the Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy<sup>131</sup>, China's National Defense in the New Era<sup>132</sup>, China's Policy on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation<sup>133</sup>, China's Military Strategy<sup>134</sup>, China White Papers<sup>135</sup>, Indo-Pacific Strategy of the USA<sup>136</sup>, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance<sup>137</sup>, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022<sup>138</sup>, National Security Strategies of the USA<sup>139</sup>, Re-balancing the Rebalance: Resourcing

<sup>129</sup> Defense White Paper, 2016 // Australian Government, Department of Defense. URL: <https://www.defence.gov.au/about/publications/2016-defence-white-paper> (retrieved: 02.03.2024)

2017 Foreign Policy White Paper // Australian Government, Department of Defense. URL: [https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2017/australia\\_2017\\_foreign\\_policy\\_white\\_paper.pdf](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2017/australia_2017_foreign_policy_white_paper.pdf) (retrieved: 13.01.2024)

<sup>130</sup> A Free and Open Indo-Pacific, Advancing a Shared Vision // The United States Department of Defense, November 4, 2019. URL: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf> (retrieved 01.03.2024)

<sup>131</sup> The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy // U.S. Department of Defence. URL: [https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF](https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF) (retrieved: 13.01.2024)

<sup>132</sup> China's National Defense in the New Era // The State Council The People's Republic of China. July 24, 2019. URL: [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content\\_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/201907/24/content_WS5d3941ddc6d08408f502283d.html) (retrieved 28.04.2023)

<sup>133</sup> 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, 中国的亚太安全合作政策 [The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, China's Policy on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation]. Jan. 11, 2017. URL: [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2017-01/11/content\\_5158864.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2017-01/11/content_5158864.htm) (retrieved: 13.01.2022)

推动共建丝绸之路经济带和21世纪海上丝绸之路的愿景与行动 [Vision and actions on jointly building Belt and Road] // China. org.cn. September 15, 2015. URL: [http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/2015-09/15/content\\_36591064\\_5.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/chinese/2015-09/15/content_36591064_5.htm) (retrieved 28.04.2023)

<sup>134</sup> 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, 中国的军事战略 [The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, China's Military Strategy]. May 2015. URL: [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-05/26/content\\_2868940.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-05/26/content_2868940.htm) (retrieved: 13.01.2022)

<sup>135</sup> 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, 中国的亚太安全合作政策 [The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation]. Jan. 11, 2017. URL: [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2017-01/11/content\\_5158864.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2017-01/11/content_5158864.htm) (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, 新时代的中国国防 [The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, China's National Defense in the New Era]. July 24, 2019. URL: [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-07/24/content\\_5414325.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-07/24/content_5414325.htm) (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, 中国的军事战略 [The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, China's Military Strategy]. May 2015. URL: [http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-05/26/content\\_2868940.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-05/26/content_2868940.htm) (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>136</sup> Indo-Pacific Strategy of the USA // The White House. February 2022. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf> (retrieved 01.03.2023)

<sup>137</sup> Interim National Security Strategic Guidance // The White House. March 2021. URL: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf> (retrieved 25.02.2023)

<sup>138</sup> Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022 // the U.S. Department of Defense. URL: <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Nov/29/2003122279/-1/-1/1/2022-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF> (retrieved 28.04.2023)

<sup>139</sup> The White House, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, December 2017. URL: <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf> (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

U.S. Diplomatic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific<sup>140</sup>, the U.S. Department of Defense Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships and Promoting a Networked Region<sup>141</sup>. Analysis of this group of documents allowed to examine main directions and approaches of the political establishment towards critical national security issues and particular aspects of foreign policy implementation, to determine the official positions of great powers and other states with regard to each other.

The second section consists of international documents (international agreements, conventions, declarations, laws, resolutions of international organizations and protocols of meetings): ASEAN-China Agree on Guidelines to Accelerate Negotiations for the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea<sup>142</sup>, the ASEAN Charter<sup>143</sup>, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025<sup>144</sup>, 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea<sup>145</sup>, ASEAN, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025<sup>146</sup>, ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific<sup>147</sup>, ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transitional Crime (2016-2025)<sup>148</sup>, ASEAN Protocol on Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism<sup>149</sup>, ASEAN Secretariat's Information Paper on

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National Security Strategy // Obama White House. May 2010. URL: [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf) (retrieved: 04.07.2023)

Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States // the U.S. Department of Defense. URL: <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf> (retrieved 28.04.2023)

<sup>140</sup> The Committee on Foreign Relations, Re-balancing the Rebalance: Resourcing U.S. Diplomatic Strategy in the Asia-Pacific. April 17, 2014. URL: <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/872692.pdf> (retrieved 13.01.2022)

<sup>141</sup> U.S. Department of Defence, The US Department of Defense Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships and Promoting a Networked Region, 2019. URL: <https://media.defense.gov/2019/Jul/01/2002152311/-1/-1/1/DEPARTMENT-OF-DEFENSE-INDO-PACIFIC-STRATEGY-REPORT-2019.PDF> (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>142</sup> ASEAN-China Agree on Guidelines to Accelerate Negotiations for the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea // The Association of the Southeast Asian Nations. URL: <https://asean2023.id/en/news/asean-china-agree-on-guidelines-to-accelerate-negotiations-for-the-code-of-conduct-in-the-south-china-sea> (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>143</sup> ASEAN, the ASEAN Charter. URL: <https://asean.org/asean/asean-charter/charter-of-the-association-of-southeast-asian-nations/> (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>144</sup> ASEAN, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. URL: <https://asean.org/asean-community-vision-2025-2/> (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>145</sup> Center for International Law, 1992 ASEAN Declaration on the South China Sea. Jul. 22, 1992. URL: <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/database/cil/1992-asean-declaration-on-the-south-china-sea/> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>146</sup> ASEAN, the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 // The Association of Southeast Nations. URL: <https://asean.org/asean-community-vision-2025-2/> (retrieved: 02.03.2024)

<sup>147</sup> ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. URL: [https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific\\_FINAL\\_22062019.pdf](https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf) (retrieved: 12.01.2024)

<sup>148</sup> ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transitional Crime (2016-2025). 20.09.2017. URL: [https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Plan-of-Action-in-Combating-TC\\_Adopted-by-11th-AMMTC-on-20Sept17-1.pdf](https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Plan-of-Action-in-Combating-TC_Adopted-by-11th-AMMTC-on-20Sept17-1.pdf) (retrieved: 04.07.2023)

<sup>149</sup> ASEAN, ASEAN Protocol on Enhanced Dispute Settlement Mechanism. URL: [https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-protocol-on-enhanced-dispute-settlement-mechanism](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-protocol-on-enhanced-dispute-settlement-mechanism) (retrieved: 12.01.2024)



Maritime Cooperation<sup>150</sup>, ASEAN Vision 2020, Act No. 27/1992 of 24 November 1992 concerning national ports and merchant shipping (excerpts)<sup>151</sup>, the AUKUS agreement<sup>152</sup>, the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty)<sup>153</sup>, Bangkok Declaration<sup>154</sup>, the Compact of Free Associations Act of 1985<sup>155</sup>, 2011 Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations<sup>156</sup>, Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise<sup>157</sup>, Indo-Soviet Relations — Documents (1971)<sup>158</sup>, the International Role of the United States' Coast Guard (116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-2020))<sup>159</sup>, 1992 Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone<sup>160</sup>, 1998 Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf of the People's Republic of China<sup>161</sup>, Memorandum of

<sup>150</sup> ASEAN Secretariat's Information Paper, Maritime Cooperation in ASEAN. March 2018. URL: <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/ANNEX-3-10th-ISM-on-MS.pdf> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>151</sup> The United Nations, Act No. 27/1992 of 24 November 1992 concerning national ports and merchant shipping (excerpts). URL: [https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/ESP\\_1992\\_Act.pdf](https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/ESP_1992_Act.pdf) (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>152</sup> The AUKUS agreement // UK Parliament. 11.10. 2021. URL: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9335/> (retrieved: 12.01.2023)

<sup>153</sup> Office of the Historian, The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS Treaty), 1951. URL: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/anzus> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>154</sup> Bangkok Declaration, Aug. 8, 1967. URL: <https://asean.org/the-asean-declaration-bangkok-declaration-bangkok-8-august-1967/> (retrieved: 02.03.2024)

<sup>155</sup> The Compact of Free Associations Act of 1985 // U.S. Department of Interim. URL: <https://www.doi.gov/oia/about/compact> (retrieved 28.04.2023)

<sup>156</sup> 2011 Declaration of the East Asia Summit on the Principles for Mutually Beneficial Relations. 19.11.2011. URL: <https://cil.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2011-Bali-Principles-1.pdf> (retrieved: 02.02.2024)

<sup>157</sup> Pacific Islands Forum, Declaration on Preserving Maritime Zones in the Face of Climate Change-related Sea-Level Rise. August 6, 2021. URL: <https://www.forumsec.org/2021/08/11/declaration-on-preserving-maritime-zones-in-the-face-of-climate-change-related-sea-level-rise/> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>158</sup> Indo-Soviet Relations — Documents (1971) // The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of India. URL: [https://india.mid.ru/en/history/articles\\_and\\_documents/indo\\_soviet\\_relations\\_documents\\_1971/?TSPD\\_101\\_R0=08765fb817ab2000acc4fc0ea4968e745d01a04509b9afb543acdc944b8acf92ec40281e20ce475b087bcdcd86143000831bd4fe4c12705b4a0ee24df8480e5b2831769f6eee0e2f776fbc6f3289a19a9608c8148563f2d113a58c718902c244](https://india.mid.ru/en/history/articles_and_documents/indo_soviet_relations_documents_1971/?TSPD_101_R0=08765fb817ab2000acc4fc0ea4968e745d01a04509b9afb543acdc944b8acf92ec40281e20ce475b087bcdcd86143000831bd4fe4c12705b4a0ee24df8480e5b2831769f6eee0e2f776fbc6f3289a19a9608c8148563f2d113a58c718902c244) (retrieved: 03.02.2024)

<sup>159</sup> The International Role of the United States' Coast Guard (116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-2020)) // Congress. Gov. 03.10.2020. URL: <https://www.congress.gov/event/116th-congress/house-event/LC65682/text?s=1&r=7> (retrieved: 03.03.2024)

<sup>160</sup> The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. No 55, February 25, 1992. URL: <http://www.asianlii.org/cn/legis/cen/laws/lotprocottsatz739/#:~:text=THE%20CONTIGUOUS%20ZONE-LAW%20OF%20THE%20PEOPLE'S%20REPUBLIC%20OF%20CHINA%20ON,SEA%20AND%20THE%20CONTIGUOUS%20ZONE&text=This%20Law%20is%20enacted%20for,its%20maritime%20rights%20and%20interests> (retrieved: 03.02.2024)

<sup>161</sup> The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf of the People's Republic of China, June 26, 1998. URL: <http://ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/92660/108053/F-2106185583/CHN92660%20Eng.pdf> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)



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<sup>169</sup> Treaty of Shimonoseki, 1895 // USC US- China Institute. URL: <https://china.usc.edu/treaty-shimonoseki-1895> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

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<sup>171</sup> United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. URL: [https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention\\_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos\\_e.pdf](https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf) (retrieved: 02.02.2024)

<sup>172</sup> Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone // The Association of Southeast Asian Nations. URL: <https://asean.org/treaty-on-the-southeast-asia-nuclear-weapon-free-zone/> (retrieved: 02.02.2024)

<sup>173</sup> U.S. Department of State, Wellington Declaration on a New Strategic Partnership Between New Zealand and the United States. November 4, 2010. URL: <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2010/11/150401.htm> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

Zealand<sup>174</sup>, Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration<sup>175</sup>. This section of sources provided a more nuanced view of fundamental legislative acts and regulatory frameworks in the maritime domain within the timeframe of the research dissertation (1992-2024). Moreover, a comprehensive analysis of the ASEAN regulatory framework highlights the Association's role and its multilateral platforms in shaping the regional security environment.

The third group includes materials from official websites of the authorities<sup>176</sup>, which allowed enhancing the validity of research findings. Accessing materials from

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The fourth group comprises official statements, press releases, interviews, speeches and media coverage of senior officials. For instance, 2023 edition of national map released<sup>177</sup>, Chairman Statement at the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum<sup>178</sup>, “Confluence of the Two Seas”, a speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India<sup>179</sup>, Joint Statement on the ASEAN-U.S. Strategic Partnership<sup>180</sup>, Joint Statement of China-Pacific Island Countries Foreign Ministers' Meeting<sup>181</sup>, Joint Statement on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between Republic of India and Australia<sup>182</sup>, Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Ocean Statement 2021<sup>183</sup>, Pohnpei Ocean Statement: a Course to Sustainability<sup>184</sup>, President Xi’s speech at opening of Belt and Road forum<sup>185</sup>, Remarks by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People’s Republic of China At the Press Conference of The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation<sup>186</sup>, Speech by H.E. Ambassador Liu Xiaoming at Young Icebreakers’ Dinner: Make Belt and Road Cooperation A Dream Come True<sup>187</sup>, Xi Jinping’s

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<sup>187</sup> Speech by H.E. Ambassador Liu Xiaoming at Young Icebreakers' Dinner: Make Belt and Road Cooperation A Dream Come True // Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United Kingdom. June 2, 2017. URL:

speech at the opening ceremony of the Fifth ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting<sup>188</sup>. This group of sources provided a detailed reflection of leadership positions on different aspects of foreign policy implementation, current events, changes, as well as identified the specifics of foreign policy formation with regard to maritime security challenges. It considered factors, such as the Sino-U.S. rivalry, the competition between the two mega-strategies "Indo-Pacific region" and "Belt and Road Initiative", current trends and challenges for ASEAN, as well as key regional economic and security implications, and allowed comparing official policies of the ASEAN, great powers and other states and actual measures taken.

Media coverage is presented by materials of foreign and Russian media, such as: ABC News, the Age, Aljazeera, Army Times, ASEAN News Today, the ASEAN Daily, Asia Power Watch, the Australian, BBC News, the Canberra Times, Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy, China Daily, China Times, China Chief Economist Forum, CNN, the Conversation, the Diplomat, Duowei News, Fiji News, Focus Asia, the Guardian, Indonesia News.net, Malaysian National News Agency, New Strait Times, the Jakarta Post, the Japan Times, Japan Today, the New Zealand Herald, the New York Times, South Pacific News, the Strait Times, South China Morning Post, the Sydney Morning Herald, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the Strategist, the Wall Street Journal, Xinlan Zhuanlan, Xinhua. This type of source identified the key events, related to the topic of the dissertation research, that took place during the period under study (1992-2024).

The last section is illustrated by cartographic sources and statistics. In the process of the research the charters were used: China's "Ten-Dash line" (China Daily; Ministry of Natural Resources of the PRC, Map Technology Review Center)<sup>189</sup>, China's "Nine-Dash Line", Delimitation Agreements, Key Occupied or

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The group on statistics includes: ASEAN statistics (ASEAN Statistical Leaflet 2021<sup>196</sup>, ASEAN Statistical Yearbook 2021<sup>197</sup>), Pacific Regional Aid Program Performance Report 2018-19<sup>198</sup>), Center for International Maritime Security, International Maritime Organization (Reports on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships)<sup>199</sup>, International Monetary Fund (World Economic Outlook (2021), Projected GDP Ranking (2018–2023))<sup>200</sup>, Knoema (China Global Investment Tracker<sup>201</sup>, Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021 Edition (Comprehensive Power by

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country)<sup>202</sup>, The Observatory of Economic Complexity (China, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the USA, etc.)<sup>203</sup>, the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (Papua New Guinea - International Trade and Investment Country Facts)<sup>204</sup>, Statistics Times (Projected GDP Ranking 2018–2023)<sup>205</sup>, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI Military Expenditure Database)<sup>206</sup>, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (U.S. Foreign Assistance by country)<sup>207</sup>, Statista Research Department (Military expenditure worldwide 2001 to 2021)<sup>208</sup>. An analysis of this type of sources allowed to reveal the dynamics of economic activities of the major actors of the Asia-Pacific region, the investment indicators under the multilateral mega-strategies “Indo-Pacific Region” and “Belt and Road Initiative”, to examine Asia-Pacific regional aid programs and to demonstrate maritime military posture and military expenditures in the Asia-Pacific region.

### *Sequencing the Main Stages of Research*

## **List of Abbreviations**

## **Introduction**

## **Chapter I. The Theoretical Background and the Historical Retrospective**

### **I.1. Maritime Security Challenges: Defining the Terms**

### **I.2. The Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Challenges in the Bipolar Era: Continuity and Changes**

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<sup>202</sup> Lowy Institute Asia Power Index 2021 Edition, Comprehensive Power. URL: <https://power.lowyinstitute.org> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>203</sup> The Observatory of Economic Complexity, New Zealand. URL: <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/nzl> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

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<sup>205</sup> Statistics Times, Projected GDP Ranking. URL: [https://www.statisticstimes.com/economy/projected-world-gdp-ranking.php#google\\_vignette](https://www.statisticstimes.com/economy/projected-world-gdp-ranking.php#google_vignette) (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>206</sup> SIPRI Military Expenditure Database // Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. URL: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>207</sup> the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), U.S. Foreign Assistance by country URL: [https://foreignassistance.gov/cd/micronesia%20\(federated%20states\)/](https://foreignassistance.gov/cd/micronesia%20(federated%20states)/) (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

<sup>208</sup> Military expenditure worldwide 2001 to 2021 // Statista Research Department. Aug. 5, 2022. URL: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/264434/trend-of-global-military-spending/> (retrieved: 06.01.2024)

## **Chapter II. The Maritime Security Dynamics in the Asia-Pacific Region after the Cold War**

II.1. Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Challenges: Factors behind a Rise in Prominence

II.2. An Increasing Global Dimension of the Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Issues in the Post-Bipolar Period

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## **Chapter 3. ASEAN and the South China Sea Issue in 1992-2024: Evolution, Directions and Interim Results**

III.1. ASEAN the South China Sea Issue: Comparisons of 1992-1996 and 2013-2024

III.2. ASEAN and Its Dialogue Partners: an Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Perspective

III.3. ASEAN-led Multilateral Dialogue Formats and the Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Challenges: Evaluating Policy Measures and the Results Obtained

## **Conclusion**

## **List of Sources and Academic Literature**

*Expected outcomes and original scholarly research contributions to the subject field*

*Deep understanding the evolving maritime security challenges:*

The research will provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the evolving maritime security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. By examining historical background, the evolution of the ongoing disputes in the South China Sea, this study will identify the key factors and their implications for regional security architecture. The outcome of the analysis is of help to policymakers, academics and practitioners to devise effective strategies to address these challenges.



*Evaluating ASEAN's role in maritime security:*

The research will assess the evolution of the role of ASEAN in maintaining the existing maritime security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. By examining the ASEAN Community Blueprint, joint statements, and initiatives, the research will evaluate the effectiveness of ASEAN's policies and mechanisms for addressing maritime security challenges. This analysis will illuminate the strengths and weaknesses of ASEAN's approach, enhancing the understanding of its role in regional security governance

*Exploring the existing regional cooperation mechanisms and multilateral platforms:*

The research will explore the evolution of the existing ASEAN cooperation mechanisms in addressing maritime security challenges. By analyzing the ASEAN Regional Forum, the East Asia Summit and the ASEAN Defence Minister's Meeting Plus, as well as other relevant platforms, this study aims to assess their effectiveness and identify potential areas for improvement. The outcome will contribute to more effective regional cooperation in combating maritime security threats and fostering greater trust among participating countries.

*Assessing the implications of the existing maritime issue on the security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region:*

By considering the influence of external factors on security environment, the research aims to examine the evolution of the maritime/SLOCS issue in the Asia-Pacific region, present the new processes that significantly change the security architecture in the region and may potentially create new threats in the Asia-Pacific. In addition, it will scrutinize ASEAN's policy on the South China Sea issue as a model for framing a response to the Asia-Pacific SLOCs security. The assessment of the evolution of maritime security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region within a representative time span (1992-2024) indicates the changing of the nature of the SCS issue as the main hotspot of the Asia-Pacific amid a sharp escalation of tensions

amid the Sino-U.S. rivalry. The SCS issue has undergone several stages of development from regional conflict to global security issue, that has got nuclear implication recently.

*Evaluating the effectiveness of two prominent initiatives – the “Indo-Pacific Region” and the “Belt and Road Initiative”, in addressing security challenges associated with SLOCs:*

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of two significant initiatives—the “Indo-Pacific Region” and the “Belt and Road Initiative”—in addressing security concerns related to SLOCs. It will analyze the strategies, existing mechanisms, and implementation processes of these initiatives to assess their progress in tackling maritime security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the potential of these initiatives and identify areas for improvement, ultimately contributing to the overall understanding of regional security dynamics in the Asia-Pacific region. Moreover, the dissertation research allows identifying the commonalities and peculiarities in ASEAN’s approach to China’s initiative the Belt and Road Initiative and the U.S. strategy “Indo-Pacific region”.

*Identifying gaps in ASEAN’s approach to overcome the existing maritime security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region:*

The dissertation will provide an in-depth examination of ASEAN’s role and the mechanisms for regional collaboration, aiming to uncover the shortcomings and obstacles in the current maritime security initiatives of ASEAN. The findings will offer significant insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners, enabling them to develop more effective strategies and initiatives to enhance maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region, while also reinforcing ASEAN’s approach and revitalizing regional cooperation.

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