



## GATHERING NEW FORCES IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION, THE IMPACT AND COUNTERMEASURES OF VIETNAM

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### Abstract

In recent years, the fluctuations in the regional situation, the change in the balance of forces of the major countries, and the increase in competition in the fields of the two superpowers, the US and China have had a great impact on the collective forces in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, the hot spots of the region such as the Korean peninsula, the East and South China Seas, and the island of Taiwan, etc. are also potential factors for the reversal of the situation of gathering new forces in the region during time next time.

In this article, we analyze in depth the situation in the Asia-Pacific region, the process of assembling new forces in the region with major directions such as the gathering of forces led by the US, by China. Country-led, led by other countries, organizations, and issues. From the change in the new set of forces in the region, there are questions about Vietnam's policies and actions to adapt, take advantage of opportunities, continue to promote cooperation, political stability, economic development, etc. economy and firmly protect national sovereignty.

**Keywords:** Asia-Pacific, Impact, Gathering forces, Vietnam.

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### Introduction

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially after the financial and economic crisis of 2008-2009, the gathering of forces of countries in the world has undergone many new changes. The set of forces shifted to revolve around the relationship between the two superpowers US-China and partly the US - Russia relationship. Many new links have been born, such as the "Belt and Road Initiative", the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the China-Japan-Korea Summit, the Four-Party Security Dialogue between the US and the US-Japan - India - Australia (group of Quartet) ... Countries adjust their relations according to the movement of these relationship pairs and especially based on their national and ethnic interests. With the strong development of the trend of globalization, the increasing interdependence and interweaving of interests among countries, along with the state of struggle and cooperation in relations between major countries, the process of gathering forces took place flexibly and diversely.

The Asia Pacific<sup>1</sup> is a region with rich resources, many important throat positions on the international trade route, and natural arcs that create important strategic values in many fields, especially security, defense, and economy. Whether approached from a geographical, economic, or political perspective, the Asia-Pacific is also a region of special geostrategic value. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Asia-Pacific region re-emerged on the world political map with an important position. This region is a natural geographical convergence of major countries. The concentration of policies of major countries, especially the two superpowers, the US and China, towards the Asia-Pacific region has further increased the region's important position in world politics. For that reason, many scholars and world politicians have forecast that the 21st century is considered the Asia-Pacific era. With the changes in the world situation in the first two decades of the 21st century, with its increasingly important geo-strategic position, the Asia-Pacific has become a hot spot in the new set of forces of the Asia-Pacific region world powers.

## Content

### Theory on the gathering of forces and the international context in the first 2 decades of the 21st century

Rally of force or force alignment is a term that has long been used in the study of international relations with different meanings. The term was originally used to refer to the concentration of military forces. This interpretation was commonly used during the two world wars<sup>2</sup>. Later, the term was also used by countries in specific political contexts within the country and understood to mean how politicians rally their forces and attract voters. During the cold war period, socialist countries often used the term "gathering" to refer to forms of association aimed at countering imperialism and colonialism and promoting democracy<sup>3</sup>. This is the basis for the understanding of force gathering in Vietnam today. Accordingly, force gathering refers to forms of association between countries to coordinate policies to deal with common challenges, especially in terms of security. In a broader sense, a set of forces is the behavior of the subject linking, and coordinating actions together in groups/mechanisms to pursue specific goals.

In addition, realist scholars use less the term "collection of forces" but use the term "balance of power". Scholars of this trend argue that weaker states tend to form alliances to counter a major power's security threat and that world order is maintained by the balance of power between opposing coalitions together (C, W.Kegley & E, R.Wtkopf, 2009, 457). In this understanding, the two terms "gathering of forces" and "balance of power" refer to the same phenomenon which is the association between states in international relations to combat the challenges and threats to world security. Other scholars of this trend also refer to the tendency to side with the stronger or stronger side, calling it a form of "bandwagoning" policy. In addition, non-alignment or neutral policy forms are also chosen by some countries mainly in security policy. Accordingly, some countries try to have good relations with all major countries but do not participate in any military security bloc. Some countries even have isolation policies that do not advocate having relations with any major countries. It can be

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<sup>1</sup> Asia - Pacific is a term used to refer to a large, interconnected area of countries and sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific. Although this term is used quite commonly in many research works, international forums, but so far, there has not been a complete consensus on defining geographical limits (Police Strategy Institute 2021, p.13).

<sup>2</sup> From the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, the British Royal Family used this term to refer to the concentration of troops. see: J.S.Brewer and W.Bullen, eds., (1600), Calendar of the Carew Manuscripts Preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, volume IV, p.264.

<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century, the term was used to refer to the fact that US Presidential candidates assembled groups of supporters. See: "Political-Presidential", Nile'National Register (October 19, 1844), p.103.

seen that the set of forces is more descriptive or policy-oriented towards the alignment of the center of power with other countries in different types and areas of relations, while the balance of power, or prosperity has more implications for the relationship between the center of power and other countries in the field of security and defense.

Conditions that affect force aggregation include:

First, the emergence of large countries as power centers, gathering enough factors to become an attractive "pole" and attracting other small and medium-sized countries in the region such as the US, China, and Russia. The appearance of "poles" is mainly due to the change in the correlation of forces under the influence of the law of unequal development and the period of prosperity and decline of big countries and due to the movement of the international context economic.

Second, the emergence of competitive factors between the poles, mainly problems arising in the region. Accordingly, major countries represent poles with different (core or fundamental) interests, which are difficult to reconcile and thus have a competitive vision of the world and regional order; pursue competing goals; use power to implement policies of competition and entice other countries to join them in mutually exclusive institutions and mechanisms.

The third is the choice of party, the choice of the policy of the countries that are the object of competition for the influence of the big countries. That new trend of gathering forces gives other countries some options from which to best protect their interests. However, the selection of foreign policy targets depends largely on the perception of national interests, specific political circumstances, and institutions, as well as on the history of each country's relationship to the poles, reactions, etc. The policies of different countries will not be the same. That means the "chosen side" will not be the same. Therefore, the concentration of forces will not be the same. Therefore, the forms of gathering forces will also not be the same at each time and field. The change of forces will therefore be noticeable when the leadership changes and it is accompanied by a strategic adjustment of countries.

Based on the above analysis, it can be seen that in the above 3 conditions, the first is a necessary condition, and the 2nd and 3rd is a sufficient conditions for new forms of force gathering to appear. Regarding the classification of force aggregates, there are different ways of classifying force aggregates at different levels (T, S.Wikins, 2012, 53-76). Classification based on security relations, according to international relations scholar Thomas S. Wilkins, the main forms of force gathering are allies, alliances, security communities, and strategic partners. Classification based on economic-political factors, economists Gabrielle Demange and Myrna Wooders argue that the set of forces consists of groups, alliances, clubs, and networks (G.Demange & M.Wooders, 2005).

Although not completely unified in the criteria for classifying forces, according to Vu Tung and Anh Tuan, the gathering of forces is associated with (i) power competition among major countries related to "vision" and different strategies of the regional and world order; (ii) The big country's attraction of other countries to its side to establish an area of influence (an area that is firstly based on its geographical proximity to strengthen its military presence, economy, value, etc.) and influence over other countries); Small and medium-sized countries adjust policies to adapt to big-country competition in the direction of "choosing sides" to ensure optimal benefits (Tung, N.V, & Tuan, T.A, 2018).

**Gathering new forces in the Asia-Pacific region in recent years.**

From the 2nd decade of the 21st century up to now, the world has undergone many changes and complicated fluctuations. On the global scale, the trend of power shifting from West to East took place strongly, leading to a change in the balance of forces among major countries. In the Asia-Pacific region, strategic competition appeared, and at the same time increased the concentration of forces in different trends, making competition and cooperation among major countries increasingly fierce. Against that backdrop in the Asia-Pacific, comparison forces change dramatically. Countries, especially big countries such as the US, China, Russia, etc., all focus on adjusting their foreign policies in the direction of strengthening and expanding relations to promote influence, compete for benefits in all aspects, and create a position that is most beneficial in the regional security landscape is gradually taking shape. Since the cold war, the methods of gathering forces are now more diverse, flexible, and mobile, depending on each issue and time in international relations, regardless of the socio-political regime different associations. Since the 90s of the twentieth century, the ideological factor has no longer played a leading role as before, and at the same time is no longer an insurmountable obstacle in relations between countries, especially in a region with diverse political institutions such as the Asia-Pacific. From here, the issue of national interests becomes a prerequisite factor, defining the objectives, contents, mottos of foreign affairs, and ways of gathering forces of each country, international and regional organization. Each country, big or small, derives its national interests from expressing its views and attitudes toward international issues. The gathering of forces on the international chessboard is not vertical with the basis of ideology, but this stage has an interwoven, diverse, and flexible collection with the common denominator being the coincidence of national interests in each certain historical moment, by location, in which countries both cooperate and compete with each other (Long, T.V & Phong, T.T, 2023).

In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the relationship of forces between major countries has undergone many changes, influencing international relations and directly affecting the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

First of all, the trend of power competition among major powers is becoming increasingly fierce, direct, and comprehensive, leading to intense conflicts in the region and new trends of force gathering. The correlation of forces between major countries has changed a lot, dominating international relations is mainly the relationship between the three major powers the US, China, and Russia. These countries are constantly adjusting policies, accelerating the realization of ambitions and strategic goals in the region.

For China, both historically and at present, Southeast Asia has always been an important strategic region. China is actively utilizing its economic strength and political prestige in expanding its relationship with ASEAN in all aspects. China is gradually abandoning the motto of "hiding oneself and waiting for its time", actively acting to express, decisively pursuing "core interests"; confidently promoting the model of a "new type of great power relations", becoming the main strategic competitor of the US in the Asia-Pacific region. China has openly defined its journey to becoming a world power in the middle of the twenty-first century with the push to realize the "Chinese dream".

As for Russia, Russia gradually recovered under President Vladimir Putin<sup>4</sup>. In the first two decades of the 21st century, Russia has gradually regained its position in the region and is

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<sup>4</sup> On August 9, 1999, in an unusual television program that was watched in amazement by the whole of Russia, the leader - the first President of independent Russia Boris Yeltsin called the name of the only person he trusted to successor to the

adjusting its East-West balance policy, paying more attention to Asian countries, and focusing on improving relations with China, and India, to participate more in regional cooperation mechanisms. Russia under Putin persists in its goal of reasserting its status as a great power and returning to the center of the world's "political chessboard". Russia has a drastic change in military power<sup>5</sup>; large investment in defense; resolutely maintains its sphere of influence in the "post-Soviet" space; implements an autonomous foreign policy towards pragmatism, flexibility, and balance between East and West; uncompromising struggle with the US in keeping/regaining advantages and influence in important geo-political and economic areas; ready to collide with the US and its allies, even using military intervention to show a resolute attitude to respond to threats to Russia's interests and national security.

After the cold war, taking advantage of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the socialist system, the US rose to become the world's number one superpower, taking the leading role and leading the main security cooperation mechanisms political and military in the Asia-Pacific region, in which mainly bilateral cooperation. The newly adjusted US policy is that besides consolidating close ties with traditional allies in East Asia (Japan, Korea) and Southeast Asia (Philippines, Thailand), the US is interested in seeking and opening expanding cooperation on military security with potential partners in the region such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, ... and even Vietnam to expand influence in the region, prevent China's expansion in Asia Asia-Pacific. Joint exercises, military orders, high-level visits, as well as US military forces to Southeast Asia demonstrate the US effort to draw closer to countries in this region. To affirm its role and core interests in the region and the world, the US seems to have taken tougher and more involved steps and actions, especially under President D. Trump before. The US focuses more on economic and trade interests, on bilateral relations over multilateral, and strength and deterrence in terms of military, economic, and trade than diplomacy. The National Security Strategies (NDS) of 2017, and 2018, and the 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) of the US both identify China and Russia as adversaries, in which China ranks in position no.1, at the same time the United States exerts pressure in many ways to eliminate the advantages of these two rivals. In the 2017 National Security Strategy, the US identifies the Indo-Pacific as the number one priority area, in which Southeast Asia continues to be of interest and is the focus of US strategic deployment. Since entering the White House (January 1, 2021), the Joe Biden administration has made historic strides toward restoring US leadership in the Indo-Pacific, while reshaping the role of the United States) fit for the 21st century. At the first summit between the US and the Pacific island nations in Washington (September 2022), the administration of US President Joe Biden announced the Thai Partnership Strategy Binh Duong along with supporting hundreds of millions of dollars for island nations in this region. At the conference, the administration of President Joe Biden highlighted the "urgent challenges" that prompted Washington to draw up a first national strategy for the Pacific island nations, making "a broad and deep commitment to better" with the region, and affirms it as a foreign policy priority of the White House. Among the challenges mentioned are the climate crisis, illegal fishing, and the tourism industry's loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic (The White House, 2022).

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leadership of the country - Vladimir Putin. Putin was chosen as Prime Minister at the age of 47 and became President just a few months later.

<sup>5</sup> Not counting the nuclear weapons equivalent of the US (nearly 7,000 warheads). Russia's new-generation weapons have features equal to, or even superior to, the US, the S100 air defense system (possibly \$500); stealth aircraft Su57 nuclear submarine Bo; Club cruise missile; Amateur tank; especially potential strategic weapons such as space rocket Avanger, a hypersonic missile capable of carrying Kazal nuclear warhead... According to SIPRI, in 2018, Russia surpassed the UK to rise to second place. arms export world. Russia has negotiated and sold modern weapons (Su35, S400) to both allies and opponents of the US, such as Turkey, Iran, India, China...

In recent years, the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region has been affected more and more strongly by the process of accelerating the gathering of forces of major countries. China promotes the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI)<sup>6</sup>, seeing it as a tool to fulfill the first 100-year goal, and taking advantage of the opportunity to play a leading role in the pace of globalization and strengthen its actions in responding to the US in the trade war between the two countries; at the same time, showing a tough attitude towards the interests that this country considers as the core, challenging the US power in the region. Notably, during the recent Covid-19 pandemic, China made many moves to change its position of influence in the Asia-Pacific region from politics and diplomacy to confronting the US and its allies America on the ground in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, the US accelerated the deployment of IPS, increasing activities to contain China both economically and strategically. In addition, Australia, Japan, and India are also actively participating in regional activities and coordinating interactions with the US to seek a greater role. In particular, Australia and Japan have tightened their alliances with the US. India strengthens cooperation with the US to shape the regional security architecture in the Indo-Pacific Strategy to implement the "Act East" policy and works with Japan to promote the “Asia Africa Growth Corridor” to compete with China's BRI (Public Security Strategy Institute, 2021, 32-33).

The concentration of interests in the Asia-Pacific region has led to increased competition for the influence of large countries, placing small and medium-sized countries in the region before greater pressures both politically, and towards foreign policy, economic times security, especially the competition, to attract participation in the gathering of forces. The "choosing side" and choosing the form of “dealing” with major countries on how to best serve the interests of the country has become a matter of survival for countries in the region. In which, Southeast Asia, ASEAN has emerged as the focal point of strategic competition among major countries. Major countries acknowledge support for ASEAN's central role but also take advantage of ASEAN's forum mechanisms to express their views and strategies and compete with rivals, especially the US and China. Since then, it has both increased the role and geo-strategic value of ASEAN in the regional structure and made it difficult for ASEAN to unify and coordinate the implementation of common policies on many issues, most notably the East Sea issue. Since February 2022, the escalating Russia-Ukraine war has had a great impact on the political situation, the policy of gathering new forces in the world, as well as the Asia-Pacific region. The war has divided factions on both sides of the front line. On one side are Russia and the US, the EU, NATO, Ukraine, the G7 group, and several other allies on the other side. These two factions enlist, mobilize and persuade, and even pressure, countries and territories around the world to join their side and oppose the other, or at least not support the other side. The community of countries and territories in the world divided by the war in Ukraine into Russia and its pro-Russia partners, the US, Ukraine, EU, NATO, the G7, and their supporters, group of countries and territories with absolute neutrality and groups of countries and territories expressing different views and attitudes depending on specific issues and on specific occasions (Mau, N.D, 2023).

In addition, other hot issues such as Taiwan island, nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, and disputes in the East Sea and East China Sea... are hot spots affecting the issue of gathering new forces in the region area. In August 2022, China launched five missiles near Taiwan. All landed in Japanese territorial waters. This puts Tokyo on alert. In addition to the missile launches, Japan is concerned that China may seek to occupy the Senkaku Islands, a part of

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<sup>6</sup> The Belt and Road Initiative -BRI, is an "initiative" to connect infrastructure systems including land, sea, and air between China and the world. This initiative was officially announced on March 28, 2015, clearly demonstrating the policy of the typical foreign exchange policy of General Secretary and President Xi Jinping with promises of economic benefits for all participating countries, with Asia-Pacific at the heart of that strategy.

Japanese territory, which Beijing insists the archipelago - which it calls the Diaoyu - is part of China. On December 18, 2022, Pyongyang tested a new missile that could be armed with a nuclear warhead and capable of reaching Japan (A.Görlach, 2023).

From such a regional situation, it can be seen that the process of gathering new forces poses certain opportunities and challenges for Vietnam in the process of integration and participation in the regional and global structure bridge.

### **Impact of regional force consolidation and Vietnam policy implications**

In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, Asia-Pacific has become an important area in the strategy of gathering forces of major powers. China has not been able to replace the US as a comprehensive and dominant power in the current order and has not been able to create a new order to replace the role of the US. However, the US-China competition continues to be fierce in the Indo-Pacific region, along with other major powers such as Japan, and India... also actively asserting their position on the main chessboard of regional and international governance. These things make the correlation of forces between major countries in the region continue to change in the coming time, but there will be no major changes in the short term. The changes in the regional situation have created positive and negative impacts on Vietnam in the process of international integration.

First of all, Vietnam has the opportunity to promote cooperative relations with both the US and China. In the coming time, with the possibility that the US and China will find it difficult to compromise but also unlikely to have a major conflict, this will continue to be a great advantage for Vietnam. With an important geo-strategic position, a dynamic economy, an independent and self-reliant foreign policy, an increasingly active role in ASEAN and the United Nations, and a comprehensive network of strategic partners and partners. With all the major powers, Vietnam meets the conditions to become an important factor in the strategic chessboard of major countries. This is an important advantage that helps Vietnam enhance its "strategic value" and realize its goals of security, development, and international standing. In recent years, the US has paid certain attention to Vietnam and implemented policies to strengthen relations with Vietnam to protect practical interests as well as promote IPS to enter the stage of comprehensive implementation. The fact that the US attaches importance to strategic values and gives higher priority to Vietnam in regional policy will bring great advantages to Vietnam both from the perspective of security interests, development, and position. Specifically, the promotion of IPS deployment shortly opens up many prospects for cooperation between Vietnam and the US. Geographically, the Indo-Pacific concept covers the area connecting the two oceans, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. In terms of connotation, this concept has two elements: freedom and openness. Thus, considering the scope and connotation, it can be seen that this strategy is consistent with the interests of Southeast Asia in general and Vietnam in particular because Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, will become the center of the country's Indo-Pacific strategic scope. Another positive point is that the Quad - one of the key cooperation mechanisms of the Indo-Pacific Strategy - focuses on maintaining and protecting the rules-based regional order and promoting defense and security cooperation. These are all issues directly related to Vietnam's security environment. Countries in the Quartet have had activities to expand cooperation with several ASEAN member countries or within the framework of ASEAN mechanisms, especially in the field of non-traditional security such as humanitarian relief, counter-terrorism, etc. dad, pirate...

For China, in the context of the US promoting competition on many fronts, China also took strong action to gather forces, especially in Southeast Asia, where it has geographical and

economic advantages in history. Strengthening relations with Vietnam will help China increase its influence over the rest of ASEAN. On the other hand, China needs Vietnam's support to create strategic stability to realize the two 100-year goals, as well as implement the BRI initiative. In addition, China also needs the support of the Communist Party in promoting the value system of "Socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era." Therefore, Vietnam can take advantage of capital from China's BRI to implement infrastructure projects for socio-economic development or connect regional development projects with BRI to access the market (M.Pe, 2018). Chinese market to promote investment and export. Taking advantage of capital from BRI Vietnam will have the opportunity to develop and complete the road and rail transport system, and at the same time connect with the economic network of countries in Southeast Asia, promoting the corridor. East-West and ASEAN economies.

In addition, Vietnam has new favorable conditions to enhance its international position. In the context of the US and China intensifying their competition in the region, Vietnam has become the focus of strategic balance in the region. Therefore, besides the US and China, other major countries in the region such as Japan, Australia, and South Korea have also strengthened the implementation of their strategies to entice and increase influence on Vietnam to participate in the gatherings forces to create a balance in the region. In groups of forces that are not led by the US and China (such as ASEAN), countries also seek to create a consensus to resist pressure from major powers. This will create an opportunity for Vietnam to uphold the central role of ASEAN, promote ASEAN connectivity, and take advantage of ASEAN in its relations with major countries (Tung, N.V. & Tuan, T.A., 2018).

Besides, the race to gather forces in the region also poses many difficulties and challenges for Vietnam.

Firstly, Vietnam will face certain challenges in protecting its sovereignty, especially in the East Sea. The South China Sea is an important knot in the US-China strategic collision. Shortly, it will be a hot spot in the US-China dispute. China attaches special importance to the East Sea, considering it as a gateway to Southeast Asia and other countries in the Asia-Pacific. Although the US still attaches great importance to maintaining maritime security in the East Sea, it is not a priority compared to the Korean issue, or other hot spots in the Middle East and Europe. So the US is still straining with China on the South China Sea issue, but it may not last long because it has to focus on more important places, or it may compromise with China on other issues.

Second, if not handled skillfully in the issue of "choosing a side", Vietnam will easily get stuck in competition among big countries. In the context of increasing competition between the US and China in the coming time, the action-reaction-action cycle between the US and China is increasing, whereby the risk of miscalculation, and strategic misunderstanding is also higher. The pressure to "choose a side" is increasing with the momentum of the US-China competition (C.Ja Ian, 2020). The possibility of the US or/and China misunderstanding strategy or miscalculation when Vietnam joins forces with these two powers, leading to negative consequences in bilateral relations is unlikely can be excluded.

Regarding policy implications for Vietnam, in the face of the increasing competition between the US and China and the complicated trend of gathering new forces in the Asia-Pacific, most countries in the region are choosing a solution of "hedging" or "multi-pronged". Accordingly, these countries try to maintain the US involvement in the region on the one hand, but on the other hand, strengthen bilateral relations with China, and at the same time promote relations with "like-minded" countries (like-minded) to limit risks from US-China competition. This will also be the basic trend chosen shortly. However, the implementation of this policy will be



more and more difficult due to the pressure of “picking sides” from the US and China as well as due to the complex pull and push forces of different concentration trends (Binh, L.B, 2020). Therefore, Vietnam needs to clearly define its goals, principles, and motto when participating in the concentration of forces in the region.

It can be seen that the current situation of gathering forces, especially the increasingly fierce US-China competition, poses opportunities and challenges for Vietnam, in which strategic opportunities are key. However, the ability to take advantage of that opportunity or not depends on Vietnam's upcoming policies and actions.

Vietnam's biggest goal when joining forces in the region is to contribute to consolidating a peaceful and stable environment, ensuring security, attracting development resources, and enhancing the country's international position. country. The supreme principle in the process of considering participating in the gathering of new forces as well as within the framework of the participating force groups is the national interest.

The motto of Vietnam's participation in gathering forces is: 1) Sticking to the foreign policy of independence and self-reliance, and the motto of multi-lateralization and diversification. 2) Don't let big countries have "strategic misunderstanding" - avoid joining forces with one big country to make other big countries understand that Vietnam is going with one country against another. 3) Diversify the types of gathering forces involved. 4) Flexibly and skillfully use the participation in the gathering of forces led by this big country to promote relations with the other big country and other groups of forces. 5) Combining bilateral with multilateral, thoroughly exploiting Vietnam's strategic values in ASEAN, the United Nations, and regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific (Binh, L.H, 2020).

Regarding specific actions, first of all, is in dealing with the strategy of the two great powers of the US and China in the region. For the US Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) in the context that ASEAN has adopted the document ASEAN's Perspectives on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), Vietnam should take the initiative with ASEAN countries to influence the implementation of the US IPS strategy to suit the interests of Vietnam and ASEAN. At the same time, push the US side to concretize energy and infrastructure projects in IPS and actively participate in projects if it is suitable for Vietnam's interests. For China's BRI, an overall and objective assessment shows that not all projects within the framework of this initiative have negative impacts, on the other hand, China has also shown its determination to adjust the way the projects are implemented. The project aims to build and strengthen the trust of neighboring countries and the world. In principle, Vietnam and most of the ASEAN countries have shown their positive attitude, participating actively or not against the BRI. Therefore, in the coming time, Vietnam needs to take advantage of the positive points from this Initiative, promote investment, take advantage of infrastructure development, and strengthen connectivity with ASEAN countries and the Asian region- Pacific. Vietnam does not necessarily participate at all costs, there must be research and selection, but it is necessary to show sincerity and be ready to reasonably discuss with China about problems when participating in initiatives and mechanisms that China has just established and promoted such as the BRI Initiative, AIIB, Lancang-Mekong cooperation...

As for other gatherings of forces, Vietnam continues to promote its multilateral foreign policy, continues to deepen international integration, diversify and multilateralism its relations with countries around the world; at the same time takes advantage and promotes the role of multilateral institutions and forums in protecting and promoting our security and development interests; enhance the status of the country and harmonize with common interests; actively promote its role in multilateral institutions and forums, especially the United Nations,

ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, etc to create international support and consensus for the policy of cooperation, development, and cooperation settle disputes over territorial sovereignty, especially disputes in the East Sea in the spirit of international law. For the region, Vietnam needs to show its role in promoting solidarity and cohesion within ASEAN by actively promoting its active role in the "ASEAN Community"; promote consensus in ASEAN, avoiding being used by big countries to cause division in ASEAN; actively participating in ASEAN activities; there are many initiatives in strengthening solidarity and cooperation within the bloc; willing to play a larger role in matters related to national interests, creating conditions for major countries to promote cooperation with ASEAN. Vietnam, together with other ASEAN members, maintains and strengthens ASEAN's central position in the overall regional architecture and among other major regional forces.

### Conclusion

Thus, in recent years, the fierce dispute between the two superpowers, the US and China, have created drastic changes in the force composition in the Asia-Pacific region. The trend of gathering new forces in the region contributes to enhancing Vietnam's position and strategic value in the foreign policies of major countries, especially the US and China. Thereby contributing to expanding the "foreign space" and diversifying policy choices for Vietnam. However, dealing with the new Gatherings of Forces also causes more difficulties and challenges for Vietnam in implementing bilateral foreign policy as well as maintaining a peaceful and stable regional environment. In the coming time, the international and regional situation will have many unpredictable changes, especially the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war. A new world order is likely to take shape after the war is over. In that context, if there are the right policies and appropriate steps for new groups of forces in the region, Vietnam will solve challenges and continue to maintain a peaceful and stable environment, improve its position and attract more resources to serve the socio-economic development strategy, maintain national security and defense, and firmly protect national sovereignty.

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