

The Vietnam Factor in transforming East Asia

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Nowadays China's southward expansion is in progress and a strong competition over Southeast Asia has started. Rapidly changing geopolitical landscape of the world order in this critically important region poses a serious challenge to the foreign policy of major powers. In order to comprehend the main trends of regional transformation we need to take into consideration recent events in East Asia with a special focus on the Vietnam factor. It is expected that the current economic growth in China will inevitably turn into political influence and will provoke significant security changes in East Asia on the whole, where Vietnam is a key component of any regional security system. In the XX century all major powers tried to set up their direct or indirect control over this country. Now the Vietnam factor is much more important, especially in context of new relations between China and ASEAN. It should be noted that probable Chinese domination in Southeast Asia will be impossible without establishing control over Vietnam. Today Vietnam is an area of both open and hidden rivalry between major powers. Particular attention is given to recent developments in ASEAN and China in context of Sino-American rivalry over Southeast Asia.