

Dr. Mosyakov D., Orlov V. describes the basic trends in political development of the countries of South-East Asia in 2008. Process of integration and formation of the general economic and political space, and also the politics in region – the USA and China are considered.

Astafyeva E. considers Joseph Nye's «soft power» conception and its application by China in the countries of South-East Asia, through mechanisms of the cultural influence, new aspects in political ideology and foreign policy.

Dr. Zakaznikova E. describes the activity of the radical islamist groupings in the countries of SEA and analyses the measures of the government of the SEA states to confront or stop the escalation of the islamist expansion.

Dr. Koldunova E. analyses new tendencies of regional development in Southeast Asia connected with the current financial crisis and the changing role of great powers in the region. Recent events highlight the shift from the security affairs to issues of political economy in regional integration agenda. As a result one of the positive outcomes of the world economic crisis for the region can be seen in an emerging system of regional economic governance. The major powers' contribution to it varies greatly. Under president George W. Bush the US war against terrorism made it less attractive partner to the region while China has greatly benefited enlarging its relations with the region both economically and politically. During the current economic crisis China has already proposed new forms of economic cooperation to the region.

However it is still an open question whether recent regional initiatives will convert finally to the full-scale system of regional economic governance as the above mentioned may require some restrictions of national sovereignty.

Kouritsyn M. analyses practical implementation of the ASEAN-China FTA. Agreement has proved to be still inefficient in development of trade relations between China and SEA countries. However, its volume in 2004-2008 has increased more than twice with an average growth rate by nearly 17% a year. But the growth rate for Chinese exports to SEA countries has been much more higher than the same index

for its imports from the region (21,6 and 13,2% correspondingly). This is why Chinese exports to these countries has increased 2,7 times while PRC's imports from SEA countries has risen 1,9 times only. The negative trade balance for China in its trade operations with SEA states was declining constantly, and finally it decreased by 7 times: from 20 to \$2,8 bln.

Sukharev R. has stayed in detail on the reasons of appreciable expansion of economic ties between the countries of SEA and Middle East states. The author believes that the phenomenon is provoked first of all by price dynamics for oil in the world market which has caused appreciable growth of cost of imports from the Middle East countries for SEA partners. In 2007 appreciable revival of investment activity by private investors, as well as the state investment funds from the Middle East countries was observed in SEA. Attempts of the oil-and-gas companies of some SEA countries (especially of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand) to get direct access to resources of petroleum and gas of the Middle East have amplified also (first of all in Iraq).

Tsererin A. examine challenges and policy issues associated with ASEAN's initiative to establish the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. It investigates the contributing role of the 13th ASEAN Summit held in Singapore in November 2007. During this Summit a suggestion promoting civilian nuclear power was ushered. Facing the sharp increase in oil prices, the ASEAN countries have no alternative "but to make use of nuclear energy". The article aims to analyze the question whether the SEANWFZ Commission will be capable of managing the new challenges of the dramatic changes in the international arena since the 1995 Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) was signed. This is followed by a section examining Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone concept which aims to ensure that nuclear weapon did not fall into the wrong hands. The risk may be rising that North Korea and Myanmar are conspiring to create a security bond in Southeast Asia. The paper also discusses the impact major Powers interference particularly the issue of accession of the NWS to SEANWFZ. It aims to introduce the US and Chinese Positions on the process of establishing the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. The concept of NWFZ is designed to impose limitations on certain military activities of the major naval Powers such as the U.S., China, Russia, the U.K. and

France. That is where lies the significance of the concept of NWFZs, including that of Southeast Asia. However, the disputes relating to the Spratly and Paracels islands located within the geographical definition of the NWFZ involve a militarily powerful nuclear State - China - which has expressed its concern about the geographical definition of the NWFZ which includes a vast area of the South China Sea; parts of these group of islands are also claimed by Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Brunei. One of the U.S. concerns is that the Bangkok Treaty did not prohibit Southeast Asian countries from possessing any nuclear device for whatever purpose. Thus far, neither the U.S. nor China have signed the Protocol to the 1995 Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

The paper results in the statement that the ASEAN's NWFZ is a significant contribution towards the campaign for a world-wide elimination and ultimately outlawing of nuclear weapons.

Klyuyev I. has justified the assumption that Iran, aspiring to expand the contacts to the countries SEA, is guided by not only quite clear political reasons, but by certain national economic interests in this region which Iran aspires to protect by some subtle diplomatic methods. In their turn SEA countries hope to develop economic relations with Iran in hope to penetrate Iranian market with their goods and services.

Dr. Drugov A. considers political and economic processes in Indonesia in 2008 and in the beginning of 2009. There are certain signs of disappointment of the population with the results of democratic reforms after 1998. This disappointment led to the relatively low level of electoral participation. At the same time President Yudhoyono's government may boast political stabilization in the regions and the fact that Indonesia suffered relatively limited damage from the world crisis. Certain changes in the USA new administration policy towards Indonesia are noted.

Kulikova M. examines the progress of election campaign in Indonesia. It studies the results of parliament elections, held on 9 of April 2009. It depicts main features of electoral law, the principle of allocation seats in Parliament. It depicts situation in main political parties of the country. It presents the results sociological surveys, conducted during the period during the election campaign. It describes three couples of

candidates for the Presidency and the Vice-President in forthcoming presidential elections in July 2009.

Suchkov G.V. analyses the 2009 elections and the armed forces: some aspects of the involvement of politicians with a military background in the presidential and parliamentary campaigns

The main event on the Indonesian socio-political scene in 2008-2009 has been parliamentary and presidential elections, which have showed that prominent retired officers (such as Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wiranto and Prabowo Subianto) have succeeded in gaining political ground. Parties, spearheaded by these figures, garnered a significant share of the vote during the parliamentary campaign thus strengthening individual positions of their leaders prior to the start of the presidential race. Symptomatically, each of the three competing sides (pair: presidential candidate/vice-presidential candidate) has one politician with a military background. This is one of the indications that 11 years after the fall of the New Order many Indonesians readily accept the idea of a retired officer taking a civilian office.

The paper highlights some aspects of retired officers' participation in the elections, analyzing their performance in the parliamentary campaign and estimating their chances of coming out victorious in the struggle for victory in July presidential/vice-presidential elections.

Dr. Urlyapov V. analyses the social-economic development of Malaysia in 2008, considers the situation in oil-gas complex, food problem and government's anti-crises program.

Orlova M. considers the role, main problems and perspectives (prospects) of social, economic, political and cultural development (extension) of the Chinese minority in independent Indonesia and Malaysia.

Also is investigated the level (degree) of social adaptation and ethnocultural assimilation of ethnic Chinese with native people, while negative ethnic stereotypes are taking roots in general consciousness.

The reasons of ethnoconfessional contradictions, that often are acquiring fierce forms, are examined here.

Berezinsky S. has analyzed some new phenomena in development OGC of this country in 2007 and their consequences for economic development of Brunei. He believes that the most remarkable for Brunei's

future was the opening of the third large gas deposit in the country in 2007. It will allow Brunei to continue deliveries of LNG for the world market (in the middle-term run at least). The second considerable contribution was the success in deepwater drilling on Brunei continental shelf (5600 m depth) which opens bright prospects for development of its oil and gas resources.

Dr. Gourevitch E. analyses some aspects of Singapore's foreign policy in 2007 which was a special year for city-state and its leaders as Singapore was in the Asean Chair for its 40-th anniversary. The author stresses that building a strong Asean is indeed a core element in Republic's foreign policy. Singapore, for all practical purposes, is the Asian hub.

Singapore wants Asean to revamp itself into a strong and cohesive organization able to partner Asia's new economic power, China and India. But in achieving that goal the group should resolve some problems connected with the development gap within Asean and relations between its members. In this regard a special attention is given to the bilateral Singapore's relations with Indonesia and Malaysia. Despite of the fact that from time to time ties between Singapore and its Malay neighbors in the past years have run into difficulties, but they have been moving on to a more mature track trying to segment areas where they could move forward. The Singapore's relations with the three most important. Asian countries, China, Japan and India, as well as its leaders' point of view on the USA role in the region as a counterbalance power to the rising economic and political influence of China in the region are under consideration too. Being the groups' richest and most developed member which has wide connections with big powers and world market the city-state can jump-start the process of rejuvenation for the rest of Asean.

Geyshevik M. describes the history and the current state of Russian-Singapore cooperation in creation of special economic zones. Author analyses existing agreements about consulting of Russian specialists by Singapore, announced investment plans, benefits, which Russia and Singapore can get from this cooperation.

Matyukhin M. explains phenomenon of Singapore – one of few developing countries which are carrying out large investments aboard, dynamics and structure by the following main factors: 1) the country

possesses sufficient investment opportunities; 2) objective realities limit volume of domestic investments – first of all it is a scale of the Singapore economy; 3) foreign investment activity is quite a natural form of Singapore's participation in processes of globalization and regionalisation, supplementing traditional forms like international trade in goods and services. Dynamics, economic sector and destination structure of outward (mainly direct) Singapore's investment of through 2003-2007 are analyzed.

Smirnova A. analyses the latest statistics on FDI inflow into Vietnam for 1988-2007 and have given a convincing evidence of high growth tendency of foreign capital run, showing up particularly in its third period beginning in 2000 (according to author's classification). Vietnam has entered again the group of the developing countries most successful in FDI mobilization, as well as moved ahead drastically by the greenfield projects number in SEA. The main reasons of Vietnam's success in the process have been analyzed extensively.

Orlov V. considers the characteristic features of the relations between the countries of ASEAN and Indochina in the 1960-ies-1970-ies, stressing the factors dividing them, especially American aggression against Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The US defeat in Indochina and consolidation of national governments in Indochina countries created the conditions for their joining the ASEAN. The author gives country by country picture of relations' development between the countries of ASEAN and Vietnam.

Dr. Sokolov A. based on the archives materials, describes the activity of the Union of the Russian State peoples in Indochina in 1925-1928. This monarchic organization consist of the Russian emigrants served in the French Foreign Legion.