ADJUSTMENT OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY FOR SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE TIME OF PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI AND ITS IMPACTS ON INDIA - VIETNAM RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of the article will present and analyze the adjustment of India’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia under Prime Minister N. Modi and its impacts on Vietnam - India relations.

Theoretical framework: In this study, International Relations theories such as those of Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism have been used to clear the goals, approaches and content of India’s policies for Southeast Asia, the adjustment of Prime Minister N. Modi towards ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries.

Method: The author uses historical methods, interdisciplinary research methods and comparative methods to present and evaluate India’s foreign policy with ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries under Prime Minister Modi compared to before and evaluate the impacts of this adjustment on Vietnam - India relations in the future.

Results and conclusions: Historically, India has reached Southeast Asia by way of peace, trade and religion. Entering the 21st century, Southeast Asia is one of the focal points in India’s strategic adjustment to the Asia-Pacific region because of its extremely important geo-political and geo-economical position. However, India’s foreign policy before 2014 (Look East Policy) was primarily “observation” rather than “action”. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in May 2014, the Look East Policy has been adjusted into the Act East Policy to expand the goals, scope and areas of cooperation, and enhance the actions and strategic priorities in relations with its extended neighbor Southeast Asia.

Implication of the research: This adjustment has greatly impacted on India, Southeast Asian countries and the Vietnam - India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The article provides some policy implications for Vietnam to promote the Vietnam - India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the coming time.

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AJUSTE DA POLÍTICA EXTERNA DA ÍNDIA PARA O SUDESTE ASIÁTICO NA ÉPOCA DO PRIMEIRO-MINISTRO NARENDRA MODI E SEUS IMPACTOS NAS RELAÇÕES ENTRE A ÍNDIA E O VIETNÃ

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo do artigo será apresentar e analisar o ajuste da política externa da Índia para o Sudeste Asiático sob o primeiro-ministro N. Modi e seus impactos nas relações entre Vietnã e Índia.

Estrutura teórica: Neste estudo, as teorias de Relações Internacionais, como as do Realismo, Liberalismo e Construtivismo, têm sido usadas para esclarecer os objetivos, as abordagens e o conteúdo das políticas da Índia para o Sudeste Asiático, a adaptação do primeiro-ministro N. Modi para os países da Asean e do Sudeste Asiático.

Método: O autor usa métodos históricos, métodos de pesquisa interdisciplinares e métodos comparativos para apresentar e avaliar a política externa da Índia com os países da Asean e do Sudeste Asiático, sob o comando do primeiro-ministro Modi, em comparação com antes, e avaliar os impactos desse ajuste nas relações entre Vietnã e Índia no futuro.

Resultados e conclusões: Historicamente, a Índia chegou ao Sudeste Asiático por meio da paz, do comércio e da religião. Ao entrar no século 21, o Sudeste Asiático é um dos pontos focais do ajuste estratégico da Índia à região Asia-Pacífico por causa de sua posição geopolítica e geo-econômica extremamente importante. No entanto, a política externa da Índia antes de 2014 (Look East Policy) era principalmente “observação” em vez de “ação”. Desde que o primeiro-ministro Narendra Modi chegou ao poder em maio de 2014, a Política de Look East foi ajustada para se tornar a Política Act East para expandir os objetivos, o escopo e as áreas de cooperação, e melhorar as ações e as prioridades estratégicas nas relações com seu vizinho estendido do Sudeste Asiático.

Implicação da pesquisa: Este ajuste teve um grande impacto na Índia, nos países do Sudeste Asiático e na Parceria Estratégica Abrangente Vietnã - Índia. O artigo fornece algumas implicações políticas para o Vietnã para promover a Parceria Estratégica Abrangente Vietnã - Índia no próximo tempo.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo é um trabalho elaborado, abrangente e sistemático dos autores através de uma abordagem internacional.

Palavras-chave: ajuste, política externa, Índia, Sudeste Asiático, N. Modi, Vietnã.

1 INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia has a particularly important strategic position, where many of the world’s most important maritime routes pass through, running from East to West and...
from North to South connecting major economies in the world. Among these traffic routes, the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, Loombok and the South China Sea play an important role in the security and prosperity of East Asian countries, as well as those of the Asia-Pacific region and India. China’s rise in this region further pushed the Prime Minister Modi’s government to strengthen ties with Southeast Asia, determined to assert power and influence in this region.

Entering the 21st century, India-ASEAN relations also began to reap significant achievements, especially in economic cooperation, energy security, and military. Under the influence of endogenous and exogenous factors, the Modi’s Government has adjusted the Look East Policy into the Act East Policy in order to strengthen the substantive relationship with neighboring Southeast Asia. This strategic shift is seen as a successor to the policy of previous administrations. This adjustment not only has a great impact on India and Southeast Asian countries, but also has a profound impact on the political chessboard in the Asia-Pacific and the global politics-economy. Therefore, it receives a great deal of attention from researchers and policy makers worldwide and needs to be further studied.

Vietnam and India have a long-standing and traditional friendship founded by President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Through many ups and downs of history, that relationship has been preserved, nurtured and continuously developed by generations of leaders of the two countries, culminating in the upgrading of the Strategic Partnership (2007) into the relationship of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (September 2016). Given India’s growing position and role in Southeast Asia and the Vietnam-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, India’s foreign policy adjustment to Southeast Asia will open both opportunities and challenges for Vietnam and the impact on the relationship between Vietnam and India now and in the future. The study of the adjustment of India’s foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi and its impacts on Vietnam and the Vietnam-India relationship will serve as a basis for Vietnamese policymakers to give recommendations to promote Vietnam - India relations in the future.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The topic is approached based on theoretical frameworks on international relations, including realism, and liberalism, with basic arguments about the nation, the
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3 LITERATURE REVIEW

India is an emerging power with an increasing role in the Indo-Pacific region. Since N. Modi came to power, he has adjusted many policies to promote India’s national strength, including foreign policy. This made greatly impacted the regional and world situation. Therefore, the adjustment of India’s policy under Prime Minister N. Modi has been studied by many scholars and politicians around the world.


As a member of ASEAN and having a comprehensive strategic partnership with India, the Government and strategic researchers in Vietnam are particularly interested in the adjustment of India's foreign policy under Prime Minister N. Modi. There are many research works by Vietnamese scholars on this issue. Notable research projects include the following:
Ngo Xuan Binh (2019), “Adjusting India's foreign policy under Prime Minister Modi”, Social Science Publishing House. This book was published in the context of Prime Minister Modi promoting the implementation of the Look East Policy by transforming the Look East Policy into an Act East policy to strengthen economic and security linkages with Southeast Asia to deeply involved in this area. The main content of this book focuses on the foreign policy issues of the Modi administration when India’s economy and position are raising and the Act East policy aimed at bringing India to a new level. India under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi has changed its perception of power’s global strategy. For example, India will be more assertive in its sovereignty disputes with China and confrontation with Pakistan. India's foreign policy builds core economic and security interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, along with being tough with China and Pakistan, India also aims to promote bilateral and multilateral relations in the region, especially with QUAD Diamond Quad members, ASEAN and Southeast Asia.

Tran Nam Tien (2016), “India and Southeast Asia in a new international context”, Culture and Arts Publishing House, Ho Chi Minh City. This book affirms India’s economic and political strength in determining to establish its status as a regional power on its way to the world and compare it to the rise of its northern neighbor China. Thereby, identifying factors that had positive and negative impacts on the adjustment of India's foreign policy from 2014 to the present from the geo-economic and geopolitical environment of Asia in particular and of the world in general. Moreover, the book emphasizes that Southeast Asia is the center of India's foreign policy not only for economic interests but also for political and security interests to affirm its position as a great power in India’s Asia-Pacific. Another key point in this book is that India - Vietnam relationship is a special relationship in the overall India - ASEAN relationship. In the context that the “Look East” policy turns into an "Act East" policy and China increases its influence in the South China Sea, Vietnam plays an even more important role in India’s strategic priorities in Southeast Asia.

Nguyen Thi Que (2017), “India's foreign policy in the early years of the 21st century”, Political Theory Publishing House, focuses on clarifying targets, principles, mottoes, mission and orientation of India's foreign policy orientation in the early years of the 21st century.

There are many other related works such as Nguyen Xuan Son (2006), “The foreign policy of major countries and relations with Vietnam in the first two decades of...
The above studies have presented and analyzed the adjustment of India's foreign policy in general, which is limited in different periods and spaces. Each author approaches the problem in its way and aims at different research objectives. However, there has been no comprehensive and systematic study on the adjustment of India's foreign policy towards Southeast Asia and making policy recommendations for Vietnam in a partnership comprehensive strategy with India. This is a novelty of the article. The above studies are a valuable reference source for the authors to complete this study.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this study, International Relations theories such as those of Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism have been used to clear the goals, approaches and content of India’s policies for Southeast Asia, the adjustment of Prime Minister N. Modi towards ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries. Beside, the research is carried out based on the worldview and methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism (Nguyen Huynh Bich Phuong 2023, 4). The author uses historical methods, interdisciplinary research methods and comparative methods to present and evaluate India’s foreign policy with ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries under Prime Minister Modi compared to before and evaluate the impacts of this adjustment on Vietnam - India relations in the future. In general, these above research methods are used in close and harmonious combination by the authors to achieve the research objectives of the paper (Hung, N. V., Hung, N. D., Thinh, T. C. 2023, 5).
5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 THE ADJUSTMENT OF INDIA’S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SOUTHEAST ASIA FROM 2014 TO PRESENT

*Look East Policy* was born in 1992, starting from the goal of economic benefits, national defense-security and energy security. The Look East Policy is a multifaceted and multi-pronged approach to forging strategic links with individual countries, developing closer political links with ASEAN, and developing economic ties strongly with Southeast Asia, helping India create a foothold in the wider Asia-Pacific region. After a quarter of a century of implementation, this policy has achieved remarkable successes. Under Prime Minister Modi (in 2014), with the position and strength of a regional power, India has upgraded this policy into the Act East Policy with three main directions of implementation: (1) consolidating and strengthening relations with neighboring South Asian countries to maintain the leadership and commanding role in the Indian Ocean region; (2) developing relations with great powers; (3) strengthening relations with East Asia, especially Southeast Asia, although it is not equal to the US, Russia, and China. Thus, the adjustment of India’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia is not outside the adjustment of the Look East Policy to the Act East Policy of Prime Minister N. Modi. This adjustment is a change in both the objective and the content of India’s policy towards Southeast Asia.

5.1.1 India’s Look East Policy

In terms of objectives:

India’s policy towards Southeast Asia aims to: first, institutionalizing linkages with ASEAN and its member countries (Dialogue Partners, ASEAN+ Summits and Membership of the ARF); second, strengthening bilateral relations with the member states of ASEAN; third, creating a foothold and assert a position so that Southeast Asia does not become the only “backyard” or “zone of influence” of a major country outside the region, especially China. And fourth, through the Look East Policy, Southeast Asia is an important gateway to help make India one of the great powers in the Asia-Pacific.

To reach the goal, India employs the following approaches: First, emphasize the role of ASEAN as a regional cooperation mechanism. That is, when approaching Southeast Asia, India chooses to focus on ASEAN. Second, sub-regional cooperation through the promotion of multilateralism. Accordingly, in order to link the Northeast...
India sub-region with mainland Southeast Asia, BIMSTEC (Bangladesh - India - Myanmar - Sri Lanka - Thailand Economic Cooperation) and Mekong - the Ganges Cooperation – MGC are two main institutions used by India. Third, use economic diplomacy and defense diplomacy to promote convergence of interests and strategies.

In terms of content:

Firstly, promoting institutional connectivity through strengthening bilateral and multilateral political relations

In terms of multilateralism, India regards ASEAN as the focal point to rebuild its relationship with Southeast Asia, India's main goal is to become a Dialogue Partner of ASEAN. Through active diplomatic efforts, in 1992, India became a partial dialogue member of ASEAN and a full dialogue member of this organization in 1995. In 1996, India joined the ARF, and attended the fourth ARF senior officials meeting in 1997 (Vo Xuan Vinh, 2007, p.5). This reflected the growing relationship between the two sides and the adjustment of India’s policy and strategy with Southeast Asia (The communiqué was issued at the end of the Fifth ASEAN Summit, 1995). By 2002, India became a party to the ASEAN + 1 cooperation mechanism; In 2003, India signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). Thus, in terms of institutions, India is eligible to participate in the East Asia Summit. In December 2005, in Malaysia, India was one of the official members to attend the East Asia Summit (EAS) - an important cooperation mechanism in Asia.

In particular, India always upholds the role and centrality of ASEAN in the region. At the 5th ASEAN-India Summit (2007), Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stressed that “the convening of the East Asia Summit is a historic development. We acknowledge the valuable contributions of ASEAN as the engine of this positive development and invite India to participate in the first place.” (Indian Prime Minister's address at the 5th India-ASEAN Summit, 2007). At the 9th IISS Asia Security Summit (June 2010), India’s National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon emphasized: “ASEAN must be the foundation of ADMM+8 in addressing the future security of the region” (Address by NSA (National Security Advisor of India) at the 9th IISS Asia Security Summit, 2010). In the ASEAN-India Vision Statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of ASEAN-India dialogue relations (1992-2012), in addition to the two sides affirming to elevate the relationship to a strategic partnership, “India reaffirmed continue to support ASEAN centrality in the evolving regional architecture, including the
EAS, ARF, ADMM+ and other regional processes.” (Vision Statement ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, 2012).

On the bilateral side, since 1992 the next Prime Ministers of India have regularly visited Southeast Asian countries. In 1992, Narsimha Rao visited Indonesia and in 1993 to Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, and Vietnam. Prime Minister India also visited Singapore in 1994 and Malaysia in 1995. These visits created many opportunities to interact with policy makers from Southeast Asian countries. India participated for the first time at the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) in Jakarta, Indonesia in July 1996 and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) with a focus on discussing political and security concerns of the Asia-Pacific region (Ram, A. N., 2008, p.8).

Secondly, economic integrating through institutionalization of bilateral and multilateral trade and investment activities.

The announcement of the Look East Policy is a step towards India’s post-Cold War geo-economic integration into the Asia-Pacific region through the Southeast Asia gateway. According to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, “Look East Policy is a strategic shift in India's vision of the world and India’s place in the developing global economy”. Indian Foreign Minister J.N. Dixit also once said: “The engagement with the economies of important industrialized countries in the West, Japan and ASEAN countries creates opportunities for India to access investment and technology exchange” (J.N. Dixit, 2001, p.340). To facilitate economic and trade activities, India and Southeast Asian countries have institutionalized a number of economic cooperation mechanisms. A number of cooperation mechanisms have been put in place to promote bilateral and multilateral economic relations between the two sides. The Joint Commission on Trade between India and ASEAN countries has been upgraded to the ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee. As a result of India becoming a Dialogue Partner, the ASEAN-India Joint Cooperation Committee and the ASEAN-India Working Group on Trade and Investment were established. The ASEAN-India Fund was established to promote trade, tourism, science and technology and other economic activities. In particular, in 1998, for the first time, the two sides held a High-Level Leadership Conference. In 2000, India, along with Thailand and Myanmar, established the Ganges and Mekong River Cooperation organizations. In 2003, India, Thailand, and Myanmar held a “Conference to connect traffic between the three countries” and proposed to build a cross-border route between India - Thailand - Myanmar. Also in 2003, India and ASEAN held the Leaders’ Summit.
and the India-ASEAN Trade Summit and established an annual cooperation mechanism. In addition, together with China, India signed the “Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between India and ASEAN” (Grare, Frederic, p.125). In order to institutionalize economic activities, during the first meeting between the economic ministers of India and ASEAN in Brunei in September 2002, the Indian Minister of Trade and Industry expressed his wish to conclude a formal agreement with ASEAN between as a Regional Trade and Investment Agreement (RITA) or a Free Trade Area (FTA) in the coming years (India is Interested in FTA with ASEAN, 2022).

During this period, the total two-way turnover increased from 2.3 billion USD to 7 billion USD in the early years of the 21st century (S.D. Muni, 2021). India’s trade growth with Southeast Asia was the fastest of any other region between 1991 and 1997. While ASEAN’s exports maintaining momentum, imports declined significantly as a result of the financial crisis 1997-98. Exports increased from about $1.4 billion in 1993 to more than $6.2 billion in 2000. On the other hand, ASEAN’s imports increased from $1.4 billion to $4.4 billion in 1997, but fell sharply to 1. 71 billion USD in 1998 but increased to about 3 billion USD in 2000 (Data taken from the website of the ASEAN Secretariat). Especially, by the end of 1996, out of the total of 200 joint ventures of India abroad, there were 152 joint ventures in ASEAN countries with the number investment capital over 88.5 million USD (Dinh Van Ha, 2012). From 1993 to 2003, bilateral trade growth of India - ASEAN reached an average rate of 11.2% from 2.9 billion USD in 1993 to 12.1 billion USD in 2003 (www.hoinhap.org.vn, 2/10/2014). At the third India - ASEAN Summit in 2004, the two sides signed the “Partnership for Peace, Progress and Mutual Prosperity”. In the same year, India became a member of the East Asia Summit. In 2009, the two sides signed the ASEAN – India Free Trade Agreement (AIIFTA). In the first quarter of 2011, the two-way trade turnover between India and ASEAN reached 57 billion USD, increasing 8 times in the past 10 years. India’s share of exports to ASEAN increased from 7.49% in 1996 to 10.86% in 2010. ASEAN accounted for 10% of India’s total trade (Bhawna Pokharna, 2010, p.36). It can be said that ASEAN and India are important investment partners of each other. From 2004 to 2010, India’s investment in the ASEAN region reached $21.8 billion, accounting for 25% of India’s total overseas investment (Ranjit Gupta, 2007, p.36). The two sides have signed such as Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Comprehensive Economic

Thirdly, promoting multilateralism

The highlight of India’s Look East policy towards Southeast Asian countries is towards multilateralism through regional cooperation institutions. India is proactive in launching new multilateral initiatives involving Southeast Asian countries. The most prominent and effective operation is the Mekong - Ganges Cooperation (MGC) 2020; Bangladesh - India - Myanmar - Sri Lanka - Thailand Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in 1997 and Ganga - Mekong Swarnabhumi (India, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) in 2000.

The Mekong - Ganges Cooperation - MGC: A multilateral initiative including India and 5 ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) to cooperate in the fields of tourism, culture, education, transportation and communication, in which, transport connection is one of the important pillars. This initiative was launched in 2000 in Vientiane, Laos. Under the framework of the MGC, six countries jointly develop transport networks including the East-West Corridor project and the Trans-Asia Expressway (Aseanindia, 2007). Notably, the Asia Highway Project is expected to link Singapore with New Delhi via Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), Ho Chi Minh City – Vietnam, Phnom Penh (Cambodia), Bangkok (Thailand), Vienna Blanket (Laos) Chiang Mai (Thailand), Yangon and Mandalay, Kalemyo (Myanmar), Tamu, Dhaka and Calcutta (India). India has begun construction of a road connecting Tamu (Manipur) to Kalemyo, an important intersection in central Myanmar (Kuppuswamy, 2006). This will contribute to promoting border trade between India’s northeastern region and neighboring countries of Myanmar and the Mekong River region. The MGC is not only an expression of cultural and commercial links between member countries over the centuries, but also a cooperative mechanism that contributes to enabling people to live in the two basins of the Mekong River and the Mekong River Basin. The Ganges River connects more closely to develop together, promote integration and prosperity. Thus, the MGC became a mainstay of India’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia during this time.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multidisciplinary Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC): Historically, communities and countries around the Bay of Bengal have interacted and established diverse relationships. Along with many other initiatives after the end of the Cold War, a new sub-regional grouping was established on
6 June 1997 in Bangkok called Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIST-EC) including Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The main areas of cooperation identified include cooperation in trade, investment, industry, transportation, infrastructure, science and technology, human resource development, energy, fisheries, agriculture, natural resources and tourism. In 1997, Myanmar became a member of this institution. In July 2004, at the first BIST-EC Summit, BIST-EC was officially renamed BIMSTEC (BIMST-EC Summit Declaration, 2004, p.23; Bhasin, 2004, p.916; Morris, Peter, 2004). The focus of BIMSTEC is: expanding BIMSTEC cooperation to the fields of culture, education, community health, biodiversity protection and traditional knowledge, rural development, medium enterprises and small, construction, environment, information and communication technology, biotechnology, climate change research and natural disasters. India and its member countries also established a BIMSTEC free trade area, Annual Action Plan on Tourism, established BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce, etc. This can be seen as another attempt by India in connecting with the hub of ASEAN through Myanmar and Thailand.

Fourthly, promoting strategic interaction through defense diplomacy

Within the framework of the Look East Policy, military cooperation between India and ASEAN countries is also promoted. In which, India has signed defense agreements with countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam. India has initiated a clear naval diplomacy with South and Southeast Asian Sea states. The Indian Navy conducted the Milan naval exercise with the navies of Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and Sri Lanka in 1995 in the Bay of Bengal. Since 1991, India has been conducting naval exercises with Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia in the Indian Ocean and with Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines in the following years through the Milan naval exercise and “Joint Communiqué on Cooperation Against Terrorism with ASEAN” (Annual report 2006-07, Ministry of Defence, Government of India, 2006, p.32; Jayant, V., 2000), etc. In 2000, India sent warships, tankers and submarines to Japan, South Korea, Indonesia and Vietnam to jointly conduct bilateral exercises as a sign of India’s goodwill to strengthen its presence in this region (Nguyen Tang Nhi, Huynh Ho Dai Nghia, p.32-41).

With these steps, India has built strategic trust based on similar interests with Southeast Asian countries. In addition, India also emphasized cooperation in maritime security, especially security in the East Sea. At the ASEAN Defense Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM+), India affirmed: The security of sea lanes is important to the Asia Pacific
region, etc, cooperating with other countries in the region has enhanced security for the maritime industry in the region. A collective approach to maritime security will benefit the entire region (Kar, Sitanshu, 2010). In addition, in the ASEAN-India Vision Statement on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of dialogue relations (1992-2012), the two sides agreed to promote cooperation at sea, including through participation in the ASEAN Maritime Forum (AMF) aims to address common challenges on maritime issues such as piracy, search and rescue, environment, maritime security, connectivity at sea, freedom of navigation, fisheries and other cooperating areas (Vision Statement ASEAN – India Commemorative Summit, 2012).

Thus, from the expansion of economic focus, India began to adjust its policy to the areas of strategy and security. However, India’s policy prior to 2014 was mainly “observation” rather than “action”. This led to strategic adjustments in the later period by the Government of India to the extended neighbors Southeast Asia.

5.1.2 Adjustment of India’s Foreign Policy Towards Southeast Asia

Policy goals:

The Act East Policy objectives that Prime Minister Modi directly mentioned (PM Narendra Modi talks of foreign policy goals with Indian envoys, 2017) include: (1) Accelerating economic integration, boosting India’s presence in new markets; (2) Strengthening India’s security role in the neighborhood through increased engagement and influence; (3) On the basis of positioning at the stage of the Look East policy, it is necessary to “enhance the position” and influence of India in the region as a major country, a “force to protect the peace and security order” and the subject providing the secure connection.

At the national level, this policy adjustment also targets domestic development, particularly in the Northeast region of India. This is an area bordering Southeast Asia, directly Myanmar and is currently an underdeveloped area of India (Raile Rocky Ziipao, 2008). Through policy adjustment with Southeast Asia, India strives to improve connectivity between this region and Southeast Asia through a hard infrastructure system for economic and political development, creating inter-regional connections between the Northeast region of India and Southeast Asia.

At the regional level, India’s policy objectives towards Southeast Asia include: securing India’s economic and security interests (especially maritime security), ensuring
a balanced Southeast Asia’s power through becoming a security provider and a balancing force with China and integrating with Southeast Asia (Dhruva Jaishankar, 2019, p.6.). Thus, if the original aim of the Look East Policy was to promote India’s economic development through increased cooperation, the objective of the Act East policy was to ensure that India stood firm in Southeast Asia and maintain the balance of power in the region (Dhruva Jaishankar, 2019, p.13).

Thus, the adjustment of India’s policy goals from 2014 to now compared with the previous period is reflected in three main points: first, the expansion of policy goals in depth, according to which, in addition to the economic goals of the Look East Policy, the Act East Policy for the period from 2014 to now has mainly focused on India’s security goals and other core strategic goals; second, the expansion of scope, the focus of this policy scope has extended from Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia to the entire Indo-Pacific region, in which ASEAN in its approach India’s proximity continues to be the mainstay of regional security; third, strategic priorities and actionability have been enhanced (Dhruva Jaishankar, 2019, p.6).

About the content of adjustment:

First, attaching the importance to ASEAN’s central role in the regional architecture.

In the context of Asia-Pacific becoming the center of contemporary politics, especially with China’s aggressive rise in the South China Sea, which has made Southeast Asia a regional and international political hotspot. In economic terms, ASEAN’s role is increasingly increasing in stabilizing regional security. As a result, Prime Minister Modi has made strategic adjustments to the organization.

ASEAN is identified as the nucleus of the “Act East Policy” and the center of the “Indian Dream” in the Asian century (Ministry of External Affairs (Government of India), Remarks by the Prime Minister at 12th India-ASEAN Summit, 2014). On the agendas of the House of Representatives and the Senate, India has mentioned a lot about relations with ASEAN. From 2010 to 2016, one of the key items on the Indian Senate agenda was related to the India-ASEAN rail/road connection and the India-ASEAN Summit (Ministry of External Affairs, 2021). During the session of the House of Representatives of India from May 2014 to April 2017, more than 16 questions and issues related to trade with ASEAN were raised and discussed, with a focus on trade issues such as: the visit of the leaders of ASEAN countries, India’s participation in the ASEAN summit, bilateral
relations with ASEAN countries, investment by ASEAN countries, digital connectivity with ASEAN and other issues in the ASEAN-India trade agreement (Sixteenth Lok Sabha Question list related to ASEAN, 2021).

ASEAN’s central role is even more evident in the context of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific and the warming of India-US relations under Prime Minister N. Modi. India supports US strategy on the basis of the two countries’ common strategic interests in Southeast Asia. India and the United States together support regional structures that are ASEAN-center. In addition, as a member of the QUAD, India also focuses on relations with Southeast Asian countries, especially emphasizing ASEAN’s central role in strategic orientation for the country. India’s cooperation initiatives with ASEAN countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Second, integrating with Southeast Asia:

Before Prime Minister N. Modi’s time, India’s policy emphasized focusing on bilateral relations and tightening multilateral relations with Southeast Asia. From 2014 to now, New Delhi has emphasized integration with Southeast Asia. Integration is a manifestation of proactive action, a strategic calculation rather than a tactical response as in the previous period. The objectives of this policy include: firstly, to help India stand firm in Southeast Asia; secondly, improve political trust and deepen strategic partnerships with these countries; thirdly, through increasing influence in Southeast Asia to build a favorable geo-political environment, participate in regional governance, build the image of a responsible great power, and realize the goal of becoming India’s global great power (Chi Thanh, 2021). Currently, there are four main channels that India is using through its integration policy with Southeast Asia: Politics - diplomacy, Security, Economy - Trade and Connectivity.

In the field of Politics-diplomacy: to achieve political integration, India promotes diplomatic integration through diplomatic priorities by two mechanisms: first, a multilateral mechanism through asserting the central position of the ASEAN institution; second, through bilateral cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. Before implementing this policy, India took steps to prepare in the previous stage through multilateral mechanisms: officially joined ASEAN after 1992, became a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (1994), India joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia and signed the Joint Declaration against International Terrorism with ASEAN in 2003, East Asia Summit (2005) National Ministerial Conference
Chamber of ASEAN countries (2010). This has important implications for the process of building the pillars of the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) in particular and the ASEAN Community (AC) in general. Together with these institutions, India’s efforts through sub-regional and inter-regional cooperation mechanisms such as BIMSTEC and Mekong-Gangetic Cooperation (MGC) are promoting connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia. ASIAN. This is the clearest manifestation of India's institutional integration with Southeast Asia.

**In the field of security:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated India’s concerns regarding regional security in Southeast Asia through his speech at the ASEAN-India Summit in 2016: “With the growing non-traditional and non-traditional knowledge, political-security cooperation is an emerging mainstay of our relationship, etc. Our partnership with ASEAN aims to create a response based on coordination, cooperation and sharing of experience at multiple levels.” (Opening Statement by Prime Minister at the 14th ASEAN-India Summit, 2016).

In the context of East Sea security becoming a hot issue for regional security cooperation, the sharing of strategic vision between India and ASEAN on a rules-based, transparent, and freedom of navigation, respect for international law, and respect for territorial sovereignty are strategically important convergences between the two sides. India’s participation in ADMM+, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in Southeast Asia and the signing of the Joint Declaration against International Terrorism with ASEAN in 2003 shows India’s commitment to support a peaceful and stable ASEAN. However, for current border and territorial disputes and conflicts, typically in the East Sea, India still maintains an approach that does not directly interfere in bilateral territorial disputes of other countries, often emphasizing compliance with international law, UNCLOS and freedom of navigation instead (New Delhi, India: Indian Navy Naval Strategic Publication). India also strengthens security ties with Southeast Asian countries, typically Singapore, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. India also conducts joint exercises and coordinated naval patrols with Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. The India-Thailand-Singapore exercises have opened up the possibility of coordination with two or more ASEAN member states.

**In the field of Economic - Trade:** The economic and trade integration in India’s policy with Southeast Asia is reflected in the documents signed between the two sides for intra-regional and inter-regional integration. The most obvious is the signing of the
Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between ASEAN and India on October 8, 2003. On the basis of the Framework Agreement, the two sides continued to sign the Agreements on Goods (effective on January 1, 2010), Agreement on Services (effective on July 1, 2015) and Agreement on Investment (effective on July 1, 2015) aimed at forming the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area (WTO Center, 2021), promoting economic-trade cooperation, and deepen economic-trade relations between India and Southeast Asia.

In the field of Connection: In the period before 2014, India mainly focused on connecting culture, people and commerce with Southeast Asia, from 2014 to now, India has also emphasized connecting infrastructure with Southeast Asia at bilateral and multilateral levels through: transport connection, energy connection, communication system connection, in which aid is mainly from India. India’s connectivity with ASEAN currently focuses on: the Golden Quadrangle (GQ), the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), and regional connectivity such as the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC); The India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Expressway and its extension to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam and the Mekong-India Economic Corridor (MIEC).

Third, emphasizing maritime security and green economy

The South China Sea maritime area is India’s strategic gateway to connect the Asia-Pacific region. India is interested in the South China Sea to protect its freedom of navigation and thus strongly supports stability in the region. India’s maritime security policy with Southeast Asia focuses on: (i) Ensuring the safety and security of trade and energy routes at sea; (ii) Ensuring freedom of navigation, observance and respect for international law at sea, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in all areas of interest to India, especially especially solving the East Sea issue; (iii) Expand the scope of cooperation and coordination with the navies of other countries to combat common threats at sea and ensure national interests at sea; (iv) Promoting peace, stability and security in the Southeast Asian maritime region with interests related to India; (v) Forming a favorable and positive maritime environment to enhance security connectivity in the maritime domains (Integrated Headquaters, Ministry of Defence, 2005).

Regarding the blue economy, focusing on sustainable development using marine resources, sustainable cooperation in the fields of fishing, ensuring energy connectivity at sea, aquaculture, clear energy, marine tourism development, etc. in order to link marine
economic development with sustainable development. India has made great efforts to pursue the “green economy” with many projects to exploit energy from the sea with Southeast Asian countries such as Myanmar, Vietnam, Singapore, etc.

Fourth, pursuing military diplomacy in a structural approach:

This is a policy with many adjustments under Prime Minister Modi compared to previous periods. After 1992, India formulated its defense diplomacy within the framework of its “Look East Policy” to protect the East Sea and ensure relevant strategic interests in Southeast Asia. However, from 2014 until now, the goal of India’s defense diplomacy in Southeast Asia is: first, to address the concerns of neighboring countries, and second, to show its role as a responsible great power and willing to assume responsibility for regional issues; and third this is a strategic response to contain China (Pankaj Kumar Jh, 2014, p. 47-52). And now, India is maintaining a structured approach in strategic planning and defense diplomacy in Southeast Asia. The content of this policy focuses on: Signing bilateral defense cooperation documents; Supplying military equipment and other material aid; Bilateral or multilateral military exercises for the purposes of training, armed forces training, military training, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, visits by ships, military aircraft and improve the strategic environment by building high-level trust and developing personal links between senior defense officials (Shri Kanwal Sibal, 2018). The structural approach manifests itself in the selection of strategic allies and countries important to their strategic interests to enhance cooperation to ensure a balance of structural power in the region. In particular, unlike other major external countries, India does not have any territorial disputes with countries in the region, which contributes to the effective implementation of this policy.

Fifth, the policy of increasing soft power influence:

India's soft power policy under Prime Minister Modi towards the world in general and Southeast Asia in particular focuses on three main aspects: proactively shouldering responsibility for regional and global issues; strengthening connections with the Indian diaspora and developing cultural diplomacy (Nguyen Le Thy Thuong, 2017, p.178).

Contrary to Panchsheel’s foreign policy under Nehru’s period, which focused on five principles: “respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation and peaceful coexistence”, the Modi’s government has formulated its own foreign policy doctrine under the slogan Panchamrit. Panchamrit’s five pillars are
“dignity, dialogue, common prosperity, regional and global security, and cultural and civilizational links” (Panchsheel Gives Way to Panchamrit, 2015). Compared to Panchsheel’s pacifist spirit, Panchamrit is more assertive and action-oriented as reflected in Modi’s diplomatic visits reflecting the concept of shared prosperity, regional security and culture and civilization ties through the use of cultural diplomacy and economic aid through a cohesive, strategic, and institutionalized approach (Pethiyagoda, Kadira, 2015). India’s soft power diplomacy with Southeast Asia is no exception.

5.2 IMPACTS ON VIETNAM - INDIA RELATIONS

5.2.1 India’s Foreign Policy Adjustment has an Impact on Southeast Asia and Vietnam

Vietnam is a gateway in Southeast Asia and an important member of ASEAN, so the adjustment of India’s foreign policy has an impact on Southeast Asia in general, Vietnam in particular and the relationship between Vietnam and India. First of all, India’s policy has both positive and negative impacts on Southeast Asia and Vietnam, in which the positives outweigh the negatives.

Regarding positive effects: Firstly, India’s policies affect the ASEAN community process through India’s always supporting ASEAN’s leading and central role in cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific region; secondly, India’s implementation of the policy of increased engagement and adjustment from “observation” to “action” contributes to balancing the regional security architecture in a counterbalance and restraint with China; third, India’s use of it’s multilateral approach in resolving maritime security issues is indeed significant for efforts to resolve conflicts in the region in a way that benefits ASEAN in the East Sea issue; fourth, India’s commitment to support a peaceful and stable ASEAN that contributes to the consolidation of peace and prosperity in the region; Fifth, India’s policy of strengthening bilateral and multilateral connectivity to the Southeast region through projects to connect infrastructure in energy and transport contributes to promoting regional connectivity and integration. Southeast Asia and the inter-regional between Southeast Asia and South Asia.

Regarding negative effects, firstly, the increasingly close relationship between ASEAN and India pushes Southeast Asian countries towards the ability to reconcile the interests of major countries in the region such as the US, Japan, and China; Second, in the context that India and China are competing strategically at the global level, Southeast
Asia is facing the risk of becoming a political arena and a place of competition for influence between the two big countries. This creates a risk of insecurity in the region as well as a risk of division of solidarity within ASEAN and ASEAN because some ASEAN members have close relations with China, while others have a strategic security relationship with India.

Vietnam is no exception considering the opportunities and challenges that India’s foreign policy impacts on Southeast Asia. In terms of specific impacts, it is most remarkable that this transformation has emphasized the importance of Vietnam in the relationship between India and ASEAN, contributing to enhancing the role and position of Vietnam in the region. The fields of cooperation between India and the region have increasingly contributed to strengthen Vietnam’s comprehensive strength in economy, connectivity, security and defence, especially with Vietnam’s further support from India in the East Sea issue.

5.2.2 The Adjustment of the Look East Policy to the Act East has Huge Implications for India-Vietnam Relations

Overall, the most obvious impact is the adjustment of India’s policy towards Southeast Asia, contributing to upgrading the bilateral relationship between Vietnam and India. If the Look East Policy has contributed to elevating the traditional relationship between Vietnam and India to a strategic partnership (2007), then in 2016 – two years after India adjusted to the Act East Policy, the relationship between the two countries has officially upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This opens a new chapter in the bilateral and multilateral relations between the two countries, marking the deepening of the relationship between Vietnam and India.

In the field of political - diplomatic relations:

The strategic convergence between Vietnam and India at the regional level: Vietnam and India are two countries that play an important role in the two oceans of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. While India plays a leading role in the Indian Ocean region, Vietnam occupies an important geographical position in the Pacific region, especially, Vietnam plays an important role in ASEAN. Today, despite the complex changes in the geopolitical landscape of the region, India’s foreign policy adjustment and Vietnam’s multilateral foreign policy implementation bring strategic interest convergence between India and Vietnam, this is a solid foundation for cooperation between the two
countries. Vietnam and India have many favorable conditions to become important partners, contributing to the construction of Southeast Asia: free, open and rule of law.

On the basis of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership established by the two countries in 2016, as well as the similarity in strategic assessment, economic interests, political values and common security interests of both Vietnam and India, from 2014 up to now, the political-diplomatic relations between the two countries have gradually deepened and become substantive.

Since Vietnam and India upgraded their relations to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2016), the two countries have agreed to promote relations between political parties and legislative bodies of the two sides. India and Vietnam have issued 3 joint statements and visions including: (i) Joint Statement between Vietnam and India in 2016 (Joint Statement between India and Vietnam during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Vietnam , 2016); (ii) Joint Statement between Vietnam and India in 2018 (India-Vietnam Joint Statement during State visit of President of Vietnam to India , 2018); (iii) India - Vietnam Joint Vision on Peace, Prosperity and People in 2020 (India - Vietnam Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and people). In which, the two pillars of relations between the two countries focus on: first, defense and security cooperation is an important pillar; second, economic relations on trade is a strategic goal; third, strengthen cooperation and coordination of actions in regional and international affairs to share common security issues of the region, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

At the multilateral level, since the two countries raised the relationship to the level of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, the two countries have also cooperated effectively at international forums such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Retreat (ADMM) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), East Asia Summit (EAS), Ganges-Mekong Cooperation, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations; accelerate negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

In the field of security - defense relations:

Under the time of Prime Minister N. Modi, security - defense cooperation has been continuously promoted and has become one of the areas of cooperation of special importance for both Vietnam and India. Stemming from the international context, sharing interests at sea and security and pressure from China, the need to modernize the military
to protect national sovereignty and the requirements of modern warfare taking place
mainly with the participation of the air force and the navy.

In December 2020, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and his Indian counterpart
N. Modi in an online conference adopted a Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity
and People. The Prime Ministers of the two countries emphasized their determination to
step up bilateral defense exchanges, affirming that the defense and security partnership
between Vietnam and India will be strengthened and “become an important factor of
stability in the Indo-Pacific region” in order to shape the future Vietnam-India relations
(Nguyen Tien, 2021). After that, the two sides signed three important agreements on
security and defense cooperation: the implementation agreement between the General
Department of Defense Industry, the Ministry of National Defense of Vietnam and the
Department of Defense Production, the Ministry of Defense of India on defense industry
cooperaion; Agreement on implementing the project of building an information
technology system under the Center for Information Technology and Foreign Languages
between the University of Information and Communications, the Ministry of National
Defense of Vietnam in Nha Trang and the Embassy of India in Vietnam; Implementation
agreement between the Department of Peacekeeping of Vietnam and the Center for
Peacekeeping of India on cooperation in the field of United Nations Peacekeeping
(Vietnam-India Joint Vision Statement on Peace, Prosperity and People, 2020). In
January 2021, the two sides held a security dialogue with the participation of Indian
Defense Minister Ajay Kumar and Vietnamese Deputy Defense Minister Nguyen Chi
Vinh, in which the two sides pledged to improve the commitments between the two sides
within the framework of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

The level of extensive bilateral defense-security cooperation between India and
Vietnam in recent years is said to have “beyond the normal relations between countries”
(Why is India increasing its presence in the East Sea?, 2008). Security - defense
cooperation between the two sides is conducted in many fields: air defense - air force;
Navy, cyber security, military technology, armed forces exercises and cooperation to
share combat experience, etc. In addition, Vietnam and India have also strengthened
cooperaion to effectively deal with non-traditional security threats such as climate
change, environmental pollution, natural disasters, energy security, HIV/AIDS and
epidemics. In particular, in the context that the recent global pandemic of Covid-19 is
seen as a non-traditional security issue threatening the survival of all humanity, India and Vietnam have timely cooperated to prevent this dangerous pandemic.

In the field of economic: The adjustment of India’s policy under Prime Minister N. Modi from “Look East Policy” to “Act East Policy” aims to strengthen ties with India’s extended neighbors in the Asia region Pacific Ocean and expanding relations between India and Vietnam to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, in which Vietnam is one of the key countries in India’s eastern approach.

In the field of trade: From a meagre US$ 200 million in the year 2000, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has seen steady growth over the years. According to Indian statistics for Financial Year 2021-22, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam posted a growth of 27% and reached US$ 14.14 billion. Indian exports to Vietnam reached US$ 6.70 billion (increase of 34%) while Indian imports from Vietnam amounted to US$ 7.44 billion (increase of 21%). In FY 2021-22, for India, Vietnam was the 23rd largest trading partner globally and the 4th largest within ASEAN, following Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia (indembassyhanoi.gov.in).

Figure 1: Bilateral trade profile between India and Vietnam from 2012 to 2022


In Financial Year 2021-22, key items of exports from India to Vietnam included iron and steel, cotton, cereals, meat and fishery products, electrical machinery and equipment, machinery and mechanical appliances, auto parts, articles of stone, cement, plaster, paper and paper articles, inputs for leather articles, chemical products, organic and inorganic chemicals, pharmaceutical products, minerals and its products as well as animal feed. Key items of imports into India from Vietnam were electrical and electronic
equipment, chemicals, machinery and mechanical appliances, articles of plastic, copper and rubber, coffee, tea and spices, iron and steel and their articles, footwear, fertilizers, animal feed, inorganic chemicals, metals, silk, optical, medical and surgical equipment.

In the field of investment: India’s investments in Vietnam will reach about $1.9 billion (2020), including investments remitted to third countries. According to the Foreign Investment Agency, as of April 2021, India has 299 valid projects with a total investment capital of 909.5 million USD, ranking 26th among countries and territories investing in Vietnam. India’s main investment sectors are energy, mineral exploration, agro-processing, sugar production, tea, coffee, agro-medicinals, information technology and auto components (India - Vietnam trade and economic cooperation, 2021). A number of large Indian enterprises such as Adani Group, Mahindra, SRF Chemical Company and Suzlon Renewable Energy Corporation have shown interest in investing in Vietnam. As of 2020, Vietnam has 6 investment projects in India with an estimated total investment capital of 28.55 million USD, mainly in the fields of pharmaceuticals, information technology, chemicals and building materials (India - Vietnam trade and economic cooperation, 2021).

In addition, finding a stable energy supply is considered one of the top priorities of India’s foreign policy. These policy priorities bring India closer to Southeast Asia, in which Vietnam is an important part in India’s energy supply chain. Energy is also one of the five pillars of the Vietnam-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

In the field of culture - education: From 2014 to now, the cultural-educational relationship in Vietnam has had many exciting activities. India has won many educational and capacity building programs for Vietnam. On the occasion of Prime Minister Modi’s visit to Vietnam (September 2016), a Cultural Center in Hanoi was established. Also, during this time, India won 150 ITEC scholarships for Vietnam, 16 scholarships under the common cultural program and 14 scholarships under the Education Exchange Program.

In summary, although there are still many challenges, following the development momentum in the past years, especially since Prime Minister N. Modi became took power, the Vietnam - India relationship has many positive prospects. The direction of international and regional development and development policies of each country in the coming time, although there are many challenges, are basically favorable for promoting Vietnam - India relations. In that context, with the common political interests of the two
countries and the development trend of each country’s relations with its major partners, the comprehensive strategic partnership between Vietnam and India will continue to be maintained, strengthened and at a deeper and more comprehensive level. Bilateral relations have made great progress in the fields of politics - diplomacy, economy, security and defense, thereby supporting cultural development. Relations in education, science and technology continue to develop towards equality and mutual benefit, but India’s support for Vietnam still plays an important role. The potential for cooperation between Vietnam and India in various fields is huge. With the achievements and experiences gained in the past, in the face of the objective trend of regional and world economic integration and the aspirations of the governments and people of the two countries, the cooperation relationship between the two countries will be promoted to new heights. The good relationship between the two countries will make an important contribution to the cause of peacekeeping, stability, cooperation and development in the region and the world.

6 CONCLUSION

Overall, the adjustment of India’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia under Prime Minister N. Modi is an important breakthrough in Indian foreign policy. The Act East Policy is the successor, development and adjustment from the Look East Policy of previous governments and is also the result of the combined impact of internal and external factors. However, the most important is that the strategic response of a major power peacefully rising to a Southeast Asian region of important geostrategic significance emerging in the context of global power shifting to the East. With this adjustment, India has built and developed strategic partnerships with many countries in Southeast Asia, thereby expanding its influence, and becoming the new force in Asia in counterbalance to China. This policy adjustment is fully in line with India’s development strategy as well as the strategic interests of Southeast Asian countries. Especially the change in perception of Southeast Asian countries about the role and position of India - an active regional power and ready to shoulder responsibility in regional issues. The adjustment of India’s foreign policy towards Southeast Asia has pushed the Vietnam - India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership into reality and achieved great achievements in both bilateral and multilateral aspects. This will be the basis to open up many good prospects for Vietnam - India relations in the future. Vietnam and ASEAN countries wish to strengthen and
promote all-round relations with India for the benefit of both sides and for peace, stability, cooperation and development in the Indo-Pacific strategic region.
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