

## CHANGING THE LEVEL OF SECURITY AND IMPACT ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE THEORY OF REGIONAL SECURITY COMPLEXES

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**Abstract:** *The South China Sea is an area of extraordinary geopolitical significance. The region is characterized by territorial disputes between ASEAN and the PRC. The dispute intensified after military drills were launched in the South China Sea to demonstrate the military strength of the region's states. South Asian land claims are made by seven Asian countries: Brunei, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. The article focuses on the situation between China and selected states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations - Brunei, Philippines, Malaysia and Vietnam. In recent years, the geopolitical balance of the region has changed in the wake of China's military growth and, in parallel; the agitation of neighboring states has increased. The aim of the article is to investigate the impact of changing the level of security on the development of economic cooperation in the ongoing territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The author analyzed the development of the political-security situation between the People's Republic of China and selected states, focusing on the development of international trade between countries in the context of changing the level of security.*

**Keywords:** *trade balance, regional security hegemon, economic cooperation, regional territorial disputes*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Security defined by the realist is, the state of absence of military threats to the state's survival in the anarchic system of the international system. (Sulović 2010) Carnesale and Nacht (1976: 2) defined security as a set of factors with "a direct impact on the structure of the nation state and the sovereignty of its members, with particular emphasis on the use, threat and control of military components". Wolfers (1962: 149) states that state security "in an objective sense measures the absence of threats to acquired values, and in a subjective sense the absence of fear of attacking these values."

Copenhagen School, characterized security as (Buzan, 1991: 37) "the ability of states and societies to maintain an independent identity and functional integrity." Buzan, Waever and de Wilde (1998: 27) defined security as "survival despite existential threats." The original military concept of realists was expanded to include four areas of potential threats, such as the political, economic, social and environmental sectors (Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998).

The security constellation is closely related to the theory of the regional security complexes of the Copenhagen school. Buzan and Waever (2003: 491) characterize the security constellation as "a general formula formed by the interplay of four levels: domestic, regional, interregional, and global." The Theory of Buzan and Waever (1998) describes four levels of relations in the regions where the security constellation is

concerned. These include the vulnerability of the individual states in the region, the relations between the states in the region, the interaction of the region with the neighboring regions and the role of the global superpowers in the region.

The theory of regional security complexes fulfills three important functions that indicate the appropriate level of analysis in security studies and allow the development of security scenarios for different forms of regional security complexes (Buzan and Waever, 2003).

The basic element is the concept of neighboring geographically close states. Geographic location affects the intensity of interaction between individual actors because they are located in one region and can pose a security threat to a particular state.

War conflicts consume financial resources that could be used to promote food production. They disturb the distribution of food supplies and lead to interruption agricultural production. (Korecki, Staňková, Cabicarová, 2015)

The standard principles forming the regional security complex are the division of power, rivalry and alliance among the major powers within the regional security complex. The emergence of co-operation and hostility at regional level is influenced by historical and political elements and material conditions. If the rivalry between some states is very strong, the principle of penetration is added to the formation of the regional security complex. (Buzan and Waever, 2003)

The emergence of the regional security complex must "have a sufficient degree of interdependence so that it can be considered a linked group and could be distinguished from the surrounding security regions, Buzana and Waever (2003: 47-48)

The last variable is the exclusivity or overlap of regional security complexes. The author has worked with the fact that the ASEAN states have an exclusive regional security complex.

For achieving effective use of military and commerce capabilities in the logistics support process of the units located in the foreign countries there were restructured aims and were equipped by performance metrics and quantification (post research activity). (Pomazalová, Korecki, Darkwah, 2010)

The basic structure of the regional security complex consists of four elements (Buzan and Waever, 2003), which are boundaries, anarchic structure, polarity, and social construction.

## **2. ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

Association of the Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) was founded on August 8, 1967. The founding states were Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. The number of Member States increased between 1984 and 1999 on Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. (Overview 2012)

The performance of the economy is characterized as the total value of the products created by the national economy over a certain period of time. The most important areas are the quantity and quality of human resources, the existence of minerals and other natural resources, the level of technological progress, social and political settings (5 Factors 2015).

The important element affecting the level of security in the South China Sea is the exclusive economic zone legally anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

The exclusive economic zone is an "area beyond the territorial sea and adjacent to it". The EEZ shall not exceed 200 nautical miles (24 nautical miles) from the baselines. The author analyzed the gross domestic product in 2011-2016. In 2011, ASEAN's total GDP amounted to USD 2,081,632 million. The volume of exports amounted to USD 1 239 465 million and the volume of imports amounted to USD 1 154 256 million. Member States achieved a positive trade balance with a surplus of USD 85,209 million. The trade balance indicator on GDP reached 4.09%. Economic performance indicators of ASEAN and China are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: GDP and trade balance of selected ASEAN and China countries in 2011 in million USD  
(Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

Year	2011				
Country	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo	Trade volume in % GDP
Brunei	14 220	12 464	3 628	8836	62.14%
Malaysia	268 516	228 086	187 473	40613	15.12%
Philippines	206 895	48 305	63 692	-15387	-7.44%
Vietnam	123 166	96 905	106 749	-9844	-7.99%
China	6 682 402	1 898 381	1 743 484	154897	2.32%

The volume of international trade between ASEAN and China reached US \$ 280,150 million and increased by 21%. Export growth was 13% to USD 127,598 million. Import grew by 28.3% to \$ 152,552 million. Total imports significantly exceeded total exports and trade balance with China amounted to a deficit of USD -24,953 million. China's share of ASEAN's foreign trade fell to 10.3% in exports, but rose by less than one percent to 13.3%.

There was an armed conflict between China and the Philippines. International trade between countries grew by 18% from USD 10,678 million in 2010 to USD 12,606 million in 2011. Exports revenue amounted to USD 6,102 million, while expenditure on imported commodities increased to 6,504 million USD, the balance for the Philippines was negative with a deficit of USD 402 million. China was an important trading partner; the share of the total foreign trade volume of the Philippines increased by half a second percentage to 12.7% for export and 10.2% for imports. Changing security as a result of the Chinese-Filipino confrontation did not adversely affect economic cooperation between states.

Chinese activities in the Vietnamese EEZ have escalated tensions. Foreign trade between Vietnam and China amounted to US \$ 36,479 million. It increased by 31%. At the same time, there is a rapid increase in business operations with China. Export increased by 50% from USD 7,742 million to USD 11,613 million and imports increased by 23% from USD 20,203 million to USD 24,866 million. The trade balance was deficient by USD 13 253 million. China was an important trading partner with a share of 23% in the import and a 12% share of the export. Changes in the level of security did not have a negative impact on the intensity of international trade between Vietnam and China.

2012, ASEAN Member States generated total GDP of US \$ 2,205,065 million. Exports amounted to US \$ 1,253,678 million and imports to US \$ 1,223,227 million. ASEAN countries reached a trade surplus of USD 30,451 million. The share of trade balance to GDP was 1.38%. State economy performance indicators are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. GDP and trade balance of selected ASEAN countries and China in 2012 in USD million  
(Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

YEAR	2012				
	Country	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo
Brunei	14 350	13 000	3 572	9428	65.70%
Malaysia	283 216	227 537	196 392	31145	11.00%
Philippines	220 723	52 099	65 349	-13250	-6.00%
Vietnam	129 629	114 529	113 780	749	0.58%
China	7 207 389	2 048 714	1 818 405	230309	3.20%

ASEAN's international trade volume with China exceeded three hundred billion and reached US \$ 319,485 million. Export earnings amounted to US \$ 141,892 million, representing an increase of 11.2%. Expenditure on imports of products amounted to US \$ 177,593 million, representing an increase of 16.4% compared to 2011. China's share in total foreign trade increased by the share of China in the total volume to 11.3% in export and 14.5% in the import. ASEAN reached a trade deficit with a deficit of USD 35,701 million in trade with China.

As a result of Chinese activities, tensions between Vietnam and China have escalated. Foreign trade between countries reached a total volume of USD 41,869 million, an increase of 15%. Exports increased by 11% from US \$ 11,613 million to \$ 12,835 million, Import increased by 17% from US \$ 24,866 million to US \$ 29,034 million. The balance of trade balance was negative with a deficit of USD 16,189 million. China remained the most important trading partner for Vietnam, with a share of total imports of 25.5%, representing an increase of 2%. Changes in security due to the Sino-Vietnam confrontation did not have a negative effect on economic cooperation between countries.

There was an incident between the Philippines and China at Scarborough Shoal. The volume of international trade between countries amounted to US \$ 13,295 million, an increase of 5%. Philippine trade with China rose 1% to \$ 6.159 million in exports. Imports increased by 10% from \$ 6,504 million to \$ 7,136 million. The negative balance of trade reached the level of USD 977 million. China's overall share of foreign trade in the Philippines decreased by almost 1% in exports but increased by 0.7% in imports, China was a major trading partner with an export share of 11.85% and a share of imports of 10.9%.

The change in security did not adversely affect the economic relations between China and the Philippines. China has invested almost \$ 5 billion this year to support the Philippine agricultural sector.

ASEAN sovereign transactions reached a level of GDP of US \$ 2,317,393 million in 2013. Exports amounted to US \$ 1,269,971 million and imports US \$ 1,243,109 million. The balance of trade showed a surplus of USD 26,862 million. The share of trade balance in GDP increased to 1.16%. Country performance indicators are presented in Table 3.

The total volume of foreign trade between ASEAN and China amounted to USD 350,509 million, representing an increase of 10%. Exports amounted to USD 152 546 million and imports of USD 194 963 million. ASEAN countries reported a negative trade balance with a deficit of USD 45,417 million. The year-on-year increase in commodity exports to China was recorded at 7.5%, while imports from China increased by 11.5%. China was the largest and most important trading partner for ASEAN in 2013, with exports accounting for 12% and 16% for imports.

Table 3. GDP and trade balance of ASEAN and China in 2013 USD million  
(Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

Year	2013				
Country	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo	Trade volume in % GDP
Brunei	14 045	11 447	3 612	7835	55.78%
Malaysia	296 507	228 330	205 897	22433	7.57%
Philippines	236 315	56 698	65 705	-9007	-3.81%
Vietnam	136 657	132 032	132 032	0	0.00%
China	7 766 512	2 209 005	1 949 990	259015	3.34%

The Philippines unilaterally handed over the Philippine-Chinese disputes over the territory to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. International trade between the Philippines and China grew by 17% from US \$ 13,295 million in 2012 to \$ 15,621 million in 2013. Exports increased by 14% to \$ 7,025 million. Import reached the level of USD 8,596 million. This was a 20% increase. The overall balance for the Philippines was negative with a deficit of USD 1,571 million. China reported an increase in the total foreign trade of the Philippines by 0.5% to 12.4%. Changing security did not adversely affect economic cooperation between states.

Malaysia did not fear changing the level of security despite the Chinese exercise on the Malaysian coast and suggested closer bilateral co-operation. Trade transactions between Malaysia and China reached USD 64,503 million, an increase of 10%. Export increased by 7% from USD 28,742 million to USD 30,775 million. Import increased by 13% from USD 29,723 million to USD 33,728 million. The foreign trade balance with China was negative with a balance of \$ 2,953 million. China was the most important import partner for Malaysia in foreign trade with a share of 16.4% of total imports and the second most important export partner with 13.5% of total exports.

Mutual economic co-operation, despite some tension, had an evolving tendency. In 2014, ASEAN's total GDP amounted to US \$ 2 422 294 million. Exports amounted to US \$ 1,290,830 million and imports amounted to US \$ 1,232,556 million. The economic surplus represented a trade surplus of USD 58,274 million. The trade balance accounts for 2.41% of GDP. Country performance indicators are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: GDP and trade balance of selected ASEAN countries and China in 2014 in USD million  
(Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

Year	2014				
Country	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo	Trade volume in % GDP
Brunei	13 715	10 508	3 598	6910	50.38%
Malaysia	314 333	233 927	208 850	25077	7.98%
Philippines	250 838	62 100	67 718	-5618	-2.24%
Vietnam	144 834	150 217	147 849	2368	1.63%
China	8 333 286	2 342 293	1 959 233	383060	4.60%

The volume of international trade between ASEAN and China increased to \$ 366,526 million, an increase of 5% over 2013. Exports fell 1.4% yoy to \$ 150,407 million. Import increased by 9.2% to \$ 216,119 million. Imports significantly outpaced exports and the trade balance with China generated a deficit of USD 65,713 million.

China was the primary trading partner for ASEAN in foreign trade. Exports reached 11.6% of total export and import levels of 17.5%.

The issue of fisheries resulted in a confrontation between the Philippines and China. China claimed rights in the Philippine EEZ. Foreign trade between the Philippines and China reached a total volume of US \$ 18,316 million, up 17% over the previous year. Business transactions have risen. Export increased by 14% from USD 7,025 million to USD 8,033 million, with imports increasing by 20% from USD 8,596 million to USD 10,283 million. The balance of trade balance was negative with a deficit of USD 2 250 million. China's share of Filipino international trade increased by about 0.6% (to 13% of total exports) and by more than 2% (to 15.2% of total import volume). The Chinese-Philippine confrontation did not have a negative impact on economic relations between countries.

As a result of Chinese drilling activities in the South China Sea, Vietnamese nationalism and attacks against Chinese people have grown. Business transactions between Vietnam and China amounted to US \$ 58,575 million, an increase of 17% over the previous year. Exports increased from USD 13,177 million to USD 14,928 million (13% increase) and imports increased from USD 36,886 million to USD 43,647 million (an increase of 18%). The foreign trade balance with China was negative with a deficit of USD 28,719 million. China was a very important trading partner for Vietnam and was the most important import market with a share of 29.5% of total import volumes. China was the second most important export market, accounting for 10% of the total volume. International trade has developed positively, and the escalation of tensions and consequent lowering of the level of security have not had a negative impact on economic cooperation.

In 2015, ASEAN's total GDP was US \$ 2,531,942 million. Exports amounted to USD 1,155,538 million and imports amounted to USD 1,092,322 million. The trade surplus amounted to US \$ 68,216 million. The share of trade balance to GDP is 2.69%. Country performance indicators are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: GDP and trade balance of selected ASEAN countries and China in 2015 in USD million  
(Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

Year	2015				
Country	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo	Trade volume in % GDP
Brunei	13 637	6 352	3 229	3123	22.90%
Malaysia	329 952	199 158	176 011	23147	7.02%
Philippines	266 055	58 827	70 153	-11326	-4.26%
Vietnam	154 508	162 106	166 103	-3997	-2.59%
China	8 908 300	2 273 468	1 679 566	593902	6.67%

International trade between ASEAN and China reached US \$ 345,763 million. Export amounted to US \$ 134,249 million, imports amounted to \$ 211,514 million. The Balance of Payments amounted to USD 77,265 million. International trade volume decreased by 6%, export volume by 11% and import volume by 2%. China has maintained its position as its main trading partner with a total of 15.2% of total trade.

Joint military exercises of the US and the Philippines have posed a threat to China. The volume of international trade between the Philippines and China amounted to US \$ 17,870 million. There was a 2% decrease from the previous year to \$ 18,316 million.

Philippines and China have undergone radical changes: export declined by 20%, from \$ 8,033 million to \$ 6,393 million, while China's share of total exports fell by nearly 3%. Import increased by 12% from USD 10 283 million to USD 11 477 million, representing an increase of 1% of China's share of total import volumes. The trade balance was negative with a deficit of USD 5,084 million. China was the second largest trading partner for the Philippines with 10.9% export share and 16.4% import share.

Malaysia has come into conflict with China and has stepped up patrols in the South China Sea to increase national security. Trade transactions between Malaysia and China reached a volume of US \$ 59,304 million, down 7% compared to the previous year. Malaysia's trading operations with a Chinese partner fell sharply, exports fell 8% from \$ 28,222 million to \$ 26,062 million, imports fell by 6% from US \$ 35,322 million to \$ 33,242 million. The trade balance was negative with a deficit of USD 7,179 million. China remained an important trading partner for Malaysia, accounting for 19% of total imports, even though trade transactions declined. At the same time China was the second most important export partner.

Indonesia has strengthened its military capabilities and threatened China with an international court. Foreign trade between Indonesia and China amounted to US \$ 44,457 million. It dropped by 8% compared to the previous year. Export decreased by 15% from USD 17,605 million to USD 15,046 million and imports decreased by 4% from USD 30,624 million to USD 29,411 million. The balance of trade represented a deficit of USD 14,364 million. China was the most important import partner for Indonesia (with a share of 20.5% of total import volume) and the third largest export partner (with a 10% share of total exports).

For 2016, GDP was produced by the ASEAN Member States at US \$ 2 648 068 million. The volume of exports amounted to USD 1,141,118.1 million and imports amounted to USD 1,079,166 million. The ASEAN countries reached a trade surplus of US \$ 61,952 million. The balance of trade in total GDP was 2.34%. Economic performance indicators of ASEAN countries and China are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. GDP and trade balance of selected ASEAN countries and China in 2016 million USD  
Source: World Bank and WTO, own processing)

Year	2016				
	GDP	Export	Import	Saldo	Trade volume in % GDP
Brunei	13 301	4 960	3 090	1870	14.06%
Malaysia	343 939	189 414	168 392	21022	6.11%
Philippines	284 476	56 313	86 290	-29977	-10.54%
Vietnam	164 104	176 784	174 231	2553	1.56%
China	9 505 156	2 098 161	1 587 431	510730	5.37%

The total volume of foreign trade between ASEAN and China amounted to US \$ 368,025 million. It grew by 6% compared to the previous year, with exports totaling US \$ 143,518 million and imports of US \$ 224,507 million. The negative trade balance reached a deficit of USD 80,989 million. Exports of commodities to China increased by 7% year-on-year and imports of Chinese products increased by 6%.

By a decision of the International Court in The Hague, Chinese claims in the South China Sea were invalid and the country had to leave the occupied islands. PRC officials have ignored court rulings and strengthening positions on the islands has led to tension escalation.

In particular, the Philippines was deeply concerned by China's behavior. International trade between the Philippines and China reached a total of US \$ 22,108 million, up 24% from the previous year. Export transactions decreased by 3%, from USD 6,393 million to USD 6,192 million. The import transactions grew rapidly, by 39%, from USD 11,477 million to USD 15,916 million. Despite the decline in export transactions, China's share of total exports to the Philippines increased compared with 2015. The share of total imports increased by more than 2%. The negative balance of the Philippine trade balance amounted to USD 9,723 million. China was the fourth most important export partner for the Philippines, with a share of 11% of its total volume and with 18.5% of its total volume being the first major import partner. Changes in security resulting from China's decisions did not affect economic cooperation between countries.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW POLICIES TO INCREASE SAFETY LEVEL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

ASEAN and China's international trade relations are under intensive development, with the exception of 2008, as a consequence of the global economic crisis. The trade balance has increased from \$ 60bn to \$ 370bn since 2016 since 2003. An important milestone was the creation of a free trade zone between ASEAN and China in 2010. The current tensions arising from territorial disputes therefore have no impact on economic cooperation. In the area of security, however, there is an escalation of tensions in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, the definition of exclusive economic zones and the freedom of movement and exploitation of mineral resources in the South China Sea.

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The most intense disputes are about the Spratly and Paracel Archipelago, which are wholly or partially claimed by individual actors. The whole of Spratly's archipelago claims China and Taiwan within the line of nine lines, but also Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei claim some islands. The Paracel Archipelago is claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam. Chinese, Taiwanese and Vietnamese claims are documented by historical documents, while the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei are claiming on the basis of the boundary of the exclusive economic zone.

Claims based on historical relationships are not sufficiently conclusive. They do not provide credible information about permanent ties to the disputed territory. Claims based on the exclusion of exclusive economic zones are not specifically addressed in UNCLOS in the case of overlapping EEZ borders. It is assumed that the International Court of Justice relies on the agreement and cooperation of states within the region, even though states have already started to prove their claims by modern principles. The main principle is the occupation and effective control of the claimed territory. The Spratly Islands are currently partly occupied by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines, Paracel Islands are occupied only by China. Occupational policy causes tension escalation and negatively affects the level of security in the region.



Reducing tensions could be achieved by limiting securitization, stopping the occupation policies of the disputed islands and strengthening the confidence of actors and joint military co-operation in the region.

The creation and legalization of an exclusive economic zone in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 1982 extended the maritime rights of coastal States to 200 nautical miles from the base line. Some states are making territorial claims in the South China Sea on the basis of an EEZ that overlaps lines. An appropriate solution would be to apply a UN exemption to EEZ that would exclude all islands in the South China Sea from zone delimitation. States would only be allowed to define an economic zone at a maximum distance of 200 nautical miles from their coast. The freedom of movement in maritime, air and seabed research should be based on the development of cooperation and trust, based on the discussion and development of cooperation in finding a way to divide the mineral resources. Two options are available. The first solution is based on a fair distribution of raw materials in the same proportion, given the number of participants in the dispute, ie six identical shares. The second option would be based on defining a certain ratio to the total of mineral wealth that would allow a joint exploration of the seabed and subsequent mining. Applying the theoretical approaches of the Copenhagen school, it will probably be the most important recommendation for the international community and the global security hegemony not to engage in the region but only to oversee adherence to internationally agreed rules.

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