

**Received:** 21 December, 2025

**Accepted:** 01 May, 2026

**Published:** 06 May, 2026

# Geopolitical Priorities of the Leading States of Modern Asia

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**Cite this article:**

Kostiuk, O., Mishkov, O., Novytska, K., Khamula, S., & Shapoval, I. (2026). Geopolitical Priorities of the Leading States of Modern Asia. *Cultura Científica*, (24), pp. 328–340.

## Abstract

The significance of this research stems from the transformation of the modern system of international relations under the growing influence of emerging Asian powers and their role in shaping a new global balance of power. Geo-economic rivalry, large-scale infrastructure initiatives, technological competition, and changes in the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific region are redefining geopolitical strategies and expanding the economic, institutional, and innovative instruments of international influence. Increasing economic integration, the development of regional cooperation frameworks, and the rapid advancement of technological systems are strengthening Asia's position as an important center of global development and transforming patterns of international cooperation. The purpose of this study is to substantiate the strategic foreign policy priorities of the leading Asian states and to assess

their impact on the formation of a new global balance of power, taking into account economic, security, and technological factors. The article analyzes the main directions of geopolitical activity in the region, the features of geo-economic strategies, and the role of institutional interaction and technological development in ensuring international leadership. The research is based on contemporary concepts of geopolitics, geoeconomics, regional integration, and the multipolarity of the international system. The findings demonstrate that the geopolitical leadership of Asian states is formed through the combination of economic strength, technological capacity, diplomatic flexibility, and effective security strategies.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, leading Asian powers, foreign policy, geoeconomics, global balance of power, international cooperation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of studying the geopolitical priorities of the leading powers of modern Asia stems from the profound transformation processes taking place in the global political and economic system in the context of an emerging multipolar world order. Over recent decades, the Asian region has become a key center of global development, concentrating significant economic resources, technological innovations, transportation and logistics routes, and strategic security interests of the leading powers. The growing role of China, India, Japan, South Korea, and other Asian states in international processes contributes to a shift in the traditional balance of power and to the formation of new approaches to the implementation of foreign policy strategies and regional cooperation.

Modern geopolitical processes in Asia are influenced by a combination of economic competition, technological rivalry, energy interests, and security challenges. The active implementation of large-scale infrastructure and integration initiatives, the development of international transport corridors, the struggle for access to strategic resources, and the formation of new economic alliances are changing the nature of interstate cooperation. At the same time, the states of the region seek to strengthen their sovereignty, ensure stable internal development, and increase their influence in global institutions, which leads to the emergence of new models of geopolitical leadership.

Historically, Asian international relations have been built around military-political alliances, economic interdependence, and regional security arrangements. However, the contemporary context is marked by changes in the means of geopolitical pressure, in which economic diplomacy, technological superiority, digital transformation, control over logistics networks, and new areas of the economy are becoming increasingly important. The race for technological superiority, control over global value chains, and the creation of alternative financial and economic platforms are generating a new form of international relations in the region.

This question is becoming more important than ever in the context of growing regional tensions, transformations in the global security system, and the increasing influence of geo-economic factors on state foreign policy. Asian countries are also increasingly employing economic, investment, and innovation instruments as tools of strategic influence, reflecting the transformation of classical geopolitics and its shift toward a geo-economic mode of thinking. This calls for a comprehensive understanding of the strategic objectives of the countries of the region, based on knowledge of their national interests, historical circumstances, and current global challenges.

Studying the geopolitical priorities of the leading states of modern Asia is of great theoretical and practical importance, as it allows a better understanding of the patterns of transformation in the world system of international relations. It also helps determine the directions of further regional cooperation and assess the impact of the Asian factor on the formation of the political and economic world order of the twenty-first century.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, the study of geopolitical processes in the Asian region has become particularly relevant because of the growing role of Asian states in transforming the global balance of power and shaping new models of international interaction. Current scientific discourse demonstrates a gradual shift from the traditional interpretation of geopolitics as exclusively military and political rivalry toward a more comprehensive understanding of geo-economic, technological, and institutional factors of international influence. A significant part of these studies is related to the analysis of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is considered a key tool for transforming the spatial structure of the world economy and creating new centers of global development [1, 2].

From a scholarly perspective, the Belt and Road Initiative is not only an infrastructure construction project but also a comprehensive geo-economic policy instrument designed to raise China's political and economic role through investment, logistics networks, and regional integration. Studies indicate that its implementation results in a major redistribution of power in South and Southeast Asia, offering new opportunities for economic growth while also creating strategic complications for other states in the region, such as India [3, 4, 5, 6]. In this context, scholars emphasize the aggravation of geopolitical rivalry between China and India, which is gradually transforming from a regional rivalry into a broader strategic confrontation in the Indo-Pacific region [7].

Considerable attention is also given to the formation of the Indo-Pacific region as an alternative regional ordering principle. Experts highlight that the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy seeks to counterbalance China by strengthening security alliances, maritime cooperation, and economic coordination among the United States, Japan, India, and like-minded partners [8, 9]. Consequently, the region is increasingly shaped as a multi-layered deterrence matrix, in which economic interdependence continues while political rivalry intensifies.

Another group of studies focuses on geo-economic reconstitution in the Asia-Pacific. The analysis indicates that the rise of Asia is underpinned by the restructuring of global production chains, the formation of regional economic blocs, and greater financial and trade integration [10, 11]. Through these processes, China, Japan, and South Korea are forging new industrial centers, which forms part of the broader movement of the global system's economic core toward the East [12].

Among the significant topics of modern research is the geocultural analysis of global politics. Researchers argue that states are using not only economic instruments but also soft power, cultural diplomacy, and education to establish long-term influence [13]. This approach opens the possibility of shaping the international environment without direct political coercion, which is especially significant in the policies of China, Japan, and South Korea.

Studies also focus on the rise of middle powers in Southeast Asia that pursue strategic balancing among the major powers. Analyses of ASEAN foreign policy reveal an intention to maintain autonomy through the hedging of partnerships and active multilateralism [14]. Such behavior builds a network system in interstate relations, in which no single state can claim full dominance.

A considerable part of the literature is concerned with the security aspect of geopolitical change. Scholars point out that the structure of competition between the United States and China in the region has now become a guiding principle for regional economic competition, underpinned by political and military deterrence. At the same time, infrastructure and investment tools are increasingly regarded as components of strategic influence, as reflected in assessments of the potential for “geo-economic pressure” through investment tools [15, 16].

At a more theoretical level, some contemporary authors analyze geopolitical shifts in Asia within the broader global transformation of the international system from unipolarity to multipolarity. Their analysis suggests that the formation of new regional institutions and economic blocs is reshaping traditional global centers of power and increasing the regionalization of the world system [17, 18].

Analyses by international institutions empirically confirm these trends. Data from World Bank, IMF, and UNCTAD reports illustrate the rapid rise of Asian economies as a share of global GDP, investment flows, and world trade, highlighting their growing importance in the formation of new rules governing international economic conduct [19, 20, 21].

A critical review of the literature reveals that, despite numerous studies, several gaps remain. In particular, limited attention has been devoted to the connection between geo-economic means and long-term security consequences, as well as to the increasing significance of technological competition in alliance politics. Further scientific knowledge is also required on how middle-power strategies affect the stability of the multipolar system as a whole. This calls for an analysis, at least at the level of determining the fundamental principles, of the geopolitical priorities of the leading modern states of Asia as a principal factor in the development of the global international order.

**Objectives of the study.** The purpose of this research is to examine the geopolitical agenda of the major states of contemporary Asia in the context of their foreign and geo-economic policy priorities and to analyze the effect of these priorities on the shaping of the regional and global system of international relations.

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

In studying the geopolitical strategies of the major powers in Asia and the new world order they are shaping, this research employed general scientific and specific methods derived from political and economic theory as well as international relations. The theoretical basis of the study was a dialectical approach, which facilitated the conceptualization of geopolitics as a processual system of relations among economic, security, and technological dynamics in the transformation of the world order. This methodology enabled the research to trace the transformation of the regional roles of Asian states from passive objects of international politics into dynamic centers of global influence.

The foreign policy priorities of Asian states were examined through the comparative-historical method, which made it possible to distinguish patterns of transformation from classical models of military-political confrontation to geo-economic and technological competition. This enabled an understanding of the rationale underlying the evolution of strategies related to the BRI, the Indo-Pacific concept, and intensified regional institutionalization.

The strategic orientations of the main actors of the region, including China, India, Japan, South Korea, and ASEAN, were examined using the comparative method. This made it possible to identify common and distinctive features of their geopolitical conduct and the particular characteristics of their use of economic, diplomatic, and security tools. The systemic-structural approach enabled the Asian region to be analyzed as a multilayered complex system in which states, international organizations, transnational economic networks, and technological platforms interact and combine to form a new architecture of international relations.

The impact of capital flows, trade agreements, infrastructure projects, and global value chains on the strengthening of the international power of Asian countries was evaluated through a geo-economic approach. Statistical and analytical tools enabled the aggregation of information from international agencies such as the World Bank, IMF, and UNCTAD in order to analyze economic patterns in trade, investment, and structural changes in the world economy.

Content analysis of scientific works and strategic documents made it possible to generalize contemporary theoretical approaches to the study of Asian geopolitics and to systematize key concepts of regional leadership, geo-economic rivalry, and the multipolarity of the world system. This analytical perspective allowed a critical evaluation of current theoretical debates about great-power competition and the potential of middle powers to act as balancers.

Scientific generalization made it possible to synthesize the findings of various scientific fields and to draw general

conclusions about the strategic priorities of Asian states' foreign policies, as well as the basic directions of transformation in the global balance of power. The combined application of these methodologies provided a systematic evaluation of geopolitical dynamics and strengthened the validity of the research results.

#### 4. RESULTS

The current era of international relations is defined by deep transformation processes under the influence of the movement of global economic and political centers toward the Asian region. Asia has become a crucial space for world-system formation through economic competition, technological rivalry, security dilemmas, and institutional transformation. The increasing power of China, India, Japan, and the countries of East Asia is altering the global balance of power, while geo-economic instruments are playing an increasingly important role in defining geopolitical leadership. Research on contemporary regionalization processes shows that infrastructure connections, trade routes, and financial systems are becoming the foundation of strategic influence for the states of the region [10].

One of the key Asian geopolitical trends is the strengthening of regional multilateralism and integration, particularly within the Chinese framework of “One Belt, One Road”, or BRI. This initiative is not merely an economic-financial tool for developing transportation infrastructure but also a geopolitical and geo-economic strategy through which China seeks to strengthen its political influence by constructing a new framework of international cooperation [1]. The development of transport corridors, energy networks, and digital infrastructure projects strengthens China's economic ties with South and Southeast Asia and enables Beijing to cultivate long-term relationships [3]. At the same time, experts note that the expansion of Chinese influence has raised concern in India, where the BRI is considered to weaken India's own strategic position in the region [5, 6].

Among the factors reshaping the geopolitical landscape is the intensification of Sino-Indian rivalry, which is gradually moving beyond regional conflict and influencing the broader Asian security system. The shift from the concept of the Asia-Pacific region to the Indo-Pacific space indicates the need of states to establish a new regime of strategic balance [7]. The idea of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” emerged in response to China's expanding power and is seen as helping to foster new forms of cooperation among the United States, India, Japan, and Australia [8]. Consequently, the region's geopolitics is increasingly defined by the multifaceted character of the game at the subregional level, involving economic, military-political, and technological rivalry.

Modern Asian geopolitics reflects the fluidity of power, as economic, cultural, and technological leverage becomes as important as military instruments. China is also deploying geocultural power to create a positive international image through historical narratives and cultural connections [13]. Meanwhile, a version of globalization based on infrastructure and regionalized economics is taking shape, challenging traditional models of economic integration [2].

The increasing importance of China in the global economy has political and economic consequences for Southeast Asian states, which attempt to benefit economically from engagement with Beijing while also maintaining strategic autonomy [11]. In scholarly terms, this behavior is described as a balancing strategy, or “double hedging”, in which states engage with competing centers of power to reduce the risk of dependence [14]. This suggests that a complex, network-style system of regional order is developing, in which even medium-sized states assume important roles in maintaining stability.

The growth of geopolitical leadership in Asia is therefore heavily dependent on the ability of states to use economic resources in their foreign policies. China employs infrastructure diplomacy as a means of long-term influence [22, 23], while India seeks to assert itself as a technological power through regional cooperation [4]. Japan and South Korea are investing in new industries and high-tech production that enable them to maintain strategic importance in the region [12].

The US–China rivalry remains at the center of modern Asian geopolitics and includes elements of both economic interdependence and strategic competition. This situation is known as the “paradox of power”, in which the two powers compete while remaining tied by deep economic relations [24]. The American strategy focuses on ensuring open sea lanes and constraining China's power through a network of alliances and partnerships [16]. This contributes both to the formation of new security coalitions and to the consolidation of regional multipolarity.

Security problems are becoming increasingly important in the contemporary geopolitical context, including territorial disputes and influence over maritime communication routes, which remain central to international trade [18]. Economic tools, such as infrastructure loans and technology standards, are also increasingly being used more strategically [25]. Some scholars argue that the BRI could be used as an instrument of economic coercion in global politics [15].

The review of existing processes makes it possible to identify the core elements in the formation of leadership in Asia, including economic power, innovation potential, demographic resources, and the capacity to establish international alliances [26]. In this regard, the region is gradually moving toward networked multipolarity, in which no state can achieve complete supremacy [17].

Table 1 outlines several trends related to the development of the Asian geopolitical environment. These trends indicate the formation of a new type of international relations, in which traditional military-political tools are increasingly supplemented by global-economic mechanisms of influence. The current stage is characterized by the unprecedented

intensity of economic competition, which has elevated the struggle for control over production chains, investment flows, and key nodes of strategic infrastructure. The result is both the promotion of regional integration and the exacerbation of vulnerabilities among weaker states caused by economic interdependence. Infrastructure integration, especially through the Belt and Road Initiative, is significantly altering the regional order by enhancing trade and investment while consolidating the power of initiating states. Consequently, the Indo-Pacific Strategy is developing within this context as an attempt to secure a balance of power, indicating the rise of competitive multipolarity in Asia. A related development is the emergence of technological competition as a key determinant of geopolitical leadership, as dominance in digital technologies and innovation defines the economic resilience and security of states. This process is accompanied by the increasing relevance of soft power and geocultural influence, which enables states to consolidate international positions without, or before, the direct use of force. Middle-sized states in the region are also steadily pursuing balancing strategies by cooperating with various centers of power while avoiding excessive dependence on any single one.

**Table 1.** Key trends in the development of the geopolitical environment in the Asian region

Geopolitical trend	Essence of the process	Main instruments of implementation	Leading actors	Economic consequences	Security consequences
Geo-economic competition	Transition from military-political rivalry to competition for economic influence and control over value chains	Infrastructure investments, loans, trade agreements, digital platforms	China, US, Japan, India	Increased economic integration and dependence of states	Increased economic vulnerability of small countries
Infrastructure integration (BRI)	Creation of transcontinental transport and energy networks	Ports, railways, energy corridors, digital silk road	China and South and Central Asian countries	Expansion of trade and investment flows	Strengthening China's strategic presence
Indo-Pacific strategy	Formation of an alternative system to balance China's influence	Security alliances, maritime cooperation, defense agreements	US, India, Japan, Australia	Diversification of economic partnerships	Increased military-political coordination
Technological rivalry	Competition for dominance in high-tech sectors	5G, artificial intelligence, semiconductors, digital standards	China, Japan, South Korea, United States	Redistribution of innovation centers	Cybersecurity risks
Geocultural influence	Use of cultural diplomacy as a tool for political influence	Educational programs, cultural initiatives, historical narratives	China, Japan, South Korea	Growth of tourism and humanitarian ties	Increased legitimacy of foreign policy
Balancing middle powers	Strategy to avoid dependence on a single center of power	Multilateral diplomacy, economic diversification	Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia	Expanded access to investment	Reduced risk of involvement in conflicts
US-China rivalry	Combination of economic interdependence with strategic competition	Sanctions, technological restrictions, military presence	US, China	Restructuring of global production chains	Polarization of the security environment
Regional security challenges	Escalation of territorial disputes and competition for maritime resources	Naval exercises, defense alliances	China, Japan, ASEAN countries	Risks to trade routes	Militarization of maritime spaces
Geo-economic pressure	Use of economic instruments as a means of political influence	Investment conditions, debt diplomacy, trade restrictions	China, US	Redistribution of financial flows	Political dependence of partners
Institutional transformation of the region	Emergence of new formats of cooperation and revision of the role of international organizations	Regional forums, economic partnerships	ASEAN, QUAD, RCEP	Deepening regional integration	Coordination of security policy

Source: developed by the authors based on Poon et al. [10], Wijaya and Camba [25], Rolland [1], Bharti [3], Bharti and Kumari [4], Saeed [7], Faisal [8], Jain and Lee [12], Winter [13], Evans [24], Chance [16], and Berger [15].

The sovereignty contest between the United States and China remains pivotal, covering both economic interdependence and strategic rivalry while influencing the rearrangement of global supply chains. Simultaneously, security threats arise from territorial and maritime communication disputes, to which military-political alliances are increasingly contributing. Economic tools are also being transformed into tools of political pressure, demonstrating the shift toward the geo-economic character of competition.

Therefore, the current state of Asian geopolitics combines economic integration, technological competition, and security rivalry. Countries increasingly emerge as leaders when they are able to efficiently combine economic, innovative, and diplomatic resources. This constitutes a new configuration of the global balance of power in the twenty-first century.

The summary of the determinants of Asian states' geopolitical leadership in Table 2 allows us to conclude that contemporary regional rivalry is multifaceted. The competitive advantage of states is not determined by one dominant resource but rather by a multilateral configuration of economic, technological, military-political, and socio-cultural potentials. Economic power remains central in the formation of leadership, enabling states to shape investment flows, trade relations, and spaces of economic dependence. This economic consideration underpins many broader geopolitical strategies.

A relevant result is also that geo-economic mechanisms have begun to prevail and that economic initiatives, infrastructure projects, and regional cooperation are becoming vehicles of strategic influence. This reveals the transition of classical geopolitical thinking into a geo-economic model, in which states increasingly compete in the fields of investment, technology, and logistics. Meanwhile, demographic potential generates new poles of economic growth, since large domestic

markets and human capital contribute to long-term economic strength and social stability.

**Table 2.** *Factors shaping the geopolitical leadership of Asian states*

Geopolitical leadership factor	Main instruments of implementation	Key leading states	Economic effect	Political and security effect	Long-term strategic consequences
Economic power	Investment expansion, trade agreements, infrastructure projects	China, Japan, South Korea	Growth in trade volumes and market integration	Increased economic dependence of partners	Formation of economically centered zones of influence
Geoeconomic strategy	BRI, regional economic partnerships, credit diplomacy	China, US, India	Redistribution of investment flows	Strengthening strategic influence	Institutionalization of geo-economic competition
Demographic potential	Education, digital employment, domestic market development	India, Indonesia, Vietnam	Expansion of consumer demand	Social stability and mobilization potential	Shift in economic growth centers
Technological leadership	AI, 5G, semiconductors, digital platforms	Japan, South Korea, China	Formation of new industries	Cybersecurity and technological autonomy	Emergence of technological blocs of influence
Military-strategic potential	Modernization of the army and navy, and defense alliances	China, US, India, Japan	Protection of trade routes	Conflict containment	Balance of power in the region
Geostrategic position	Port infrastructure, logistics hubs	Singapore, India, Indonesia	Development of the transit economy	Control of maritime communications	Strengthening the role of strategic hubs
Diplomatic flexibility	Multilateral foreign policy, regional alliances	ASEAN countries	Diversification of investments	Reduced risk of conflict dependency	Formation of network multipolarity
Institutional participation	ASEAN, RCEP, QUAD, international forums	Japan, Indonesia, Singapore	Deepening economic cooperation	Coordination of security policy	Strengthening regional governance
Geocultural influence ("soft power")	Educational programs, cultural diplomacy, media	China, South Korea, Japan	Development of tourism and creative industries	Enhancing international legitimacy	Long-term consolidation of influence
Energy and resource factor	Energy corridors, investment in resources	China, India, Persian Gulf countries as partners	Stabilization of energy supplies	Reduction of strategic risks	Formation of resource alliances

Source: developed by the authors based on Poon et al. [10], Wijaya and Camba [25], Rolland [1], Bharti [3], Bharti and Kumari [4], Saeed [7], Faisal [8], Jain and Lee [12], Winter [13], Evans [24], Chance [16], and Berger [15].

Technological advancement is a key factor of leadership, defining the capacity of states for innovation and technological independence. The struggle over artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and semiconductors is producing new poles of power in the technology sector. Military-strategic potential continues to be important as a means of guaranteeing stability and deterring conflict, particularly in an environment where maritime communications and strategic resources are the subject of increased tensions.

Also significant are geostrategic positioning and control over transport and logistics nodes, which enable individual states to act as key intermediaries in world trade. At the same time, diplomatic flexibility and engagement in international organizations promote the emergence of networked multipolarity, in which middle powers are capable of influencing regional dynamics as they balance among several major centers of power.

The significance of geocultural influence is increasing, shaping the long-term legitimacy of foreign policy and strengthening the international power of states through public diplomacy in the form of education, culture, and information. The energy and raw-material subsystem also contributes to the strategic stability of economic development and encourages the emergence of new resource coalitions.

Therefore, contemporary leadership in Asia is formed through the combined reinforcing power of the economy, technology, security potential, political activity, cultural soft power, and geopolitical position. This multifactorial character reflects a region moving toward new and more complex levels of international relations, in which strategic advantage belongs to those states that can best combine various instruments of influence and adapt to the changing external environment.

At present, the development of international relations demonstrates that the importance of the Asian region as a center of global politics and economy is gradually increasing. Established Asian powers are actively pursuing their own regional strategies to ensure continued economic growth, strengthen security, and gain technological autonomy. In a changing world order, Asian foreign policy is no longer limited to the traditional diplomatic toolbox. It is becoming multidimensional, in accordance with the changing world order, and geo-economic, military-strategic, and innovative elements are increasingly coming into play. Growing competition among the great powers also shapes new models of regional development, whose defining features include competitive economic engagement combined with strategic rivalry, as seen in contemporary Asia [10].

One of the major elements shaping Asia's foreign policy direction is the pursuit of growth and greater space in the world economy. Through the Belt and Road Initiative, China aims to establish a transregional network of transport, energy, and digital infrastructures that would not only support trade relations but also consolidate long-term political partnerships [1]. Infrastructure diplomacy is a means of increasing economic influence and reshaping new or existing centers of economic integration, particularly in South and Southeast Asia [3]. Meanwhile, China's increased activity in the region compels other states to adjust their foreign policies, as reflected in the pursuit of more diversified relations and reduced dependence on a single partner [5].

India is formulating its own foreign policy narrative with a focus on its regional power status within the Indo-Pacific

framework. India's strategic priorities include ensuring maritime communications, cultivating maritime relations with Southeast Asian countries, and expanding economic relations with Western countries [7]. The rivalry between India and China is becoming a defining feature of regional order formation, as both states compete for influence in infrastructure, trade, and technology [6]. The idea of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" is rooted in the aspiration to maintain a balance of power and prevent excessive concentration of hegemony in one country [8].

The technological aspect greatly influences strategic priorities. The largest Asian powers view the development of digital technology, artificial intelligence, and the semiconductor industry as central to future geopolitical power. Japan and South Korea are investing heavily in high-tech fields in an effort to gain global advantages and reduce technological dependence [12]. China, meanwhile, combines technological development with foreign policy objectives by embedding digital infrastructure in international partnership projects [25]. This leads to new forms of technological interaction and increased global competition in innovation.

National and regional security have become focal elements of the foreign policies of major Asian states. The development of security in foreign policy strategies is further confirmed by the more active maritime role in the South China Sea and the multiplication of defense coalitions [18]. Military-strategic potential is viewed not only as a deterrent against conflict but also as a tool for maintaining stability along trade routes and securing access to resources. In this sense, US-China competition is the centerpiece of the regional security environment and entails a unique blend of economic interdependence and political rivalry [24].

Alongside military tools, states are now actively employing economic instruments to influence politics. Investment projects, financial loans, and trade agreements are becoming components of foreign policy that enable the formation of long-term partnerships and political loyalty [15]. This approach reflects a departure from classical geopolitics toward a geo-economic logic of global relations, which places economic means at the forefront.

The states of Southeast Asia have pursued strategic autonomy by balancing competing centers of power. They balance economic engagement with China with security ties to the United States and other partners in order to reduce the risk of dependency [27]. This tactic reflects the network structure of the regional order, within which the importance of middle powers is increasing.

The use of geocultural power is also a relevant foreign policy tool. Cultural diplomacy, education, and humanitarian work contribute to enhancing the image of states in the international arena and to establishing long-term political interaction [13]. This enables Asian states to broaden their influence without the direct application of military force, thereby increasing the legitimacy of their foreign policies.

Driven by economic, security, and technological aspects, the foreign policy strategies of leading Asian countries determine the contemporary regional format. China seeks to achieve sustainable national development, consolidate its position in global production chains, and attain a favorable security environment. This creates a complicated system of regional engagement, cooperation, and competition.

**Table 3.** *Integral index of the geo-economic influence of Asia's leading countries*

Country	Share in global GDP, %	Share of global exports, %	R&D expenditure (% of GDP)	FDI inflow, billion USD	Technological competitiveness	Integral index of geo-economic influence (0–1)	Level of geopolitical influence
China	17	14	2.6	163	0.85	0.92	Very high, system-forming
Japan	4.1	3	3.3	2	0.88	0.74	High technology
India	3.5	2.2	0.7	71	0.60	0.69	Growing strategic influence
South Korea	1.7	2.9	4.9	18	0.90	0.70	Technologically dominant
Indonesia	1.3	1	0.3	22	0.45	0.50	Regional influence
Singapore	0.5	2.1	2.2	141	0.90	0.68	Financial and logistics influence

Source: developed by the authors based on [19, 20, 21].

The composite geo-economic power index is derived from several core economic parameters that define a country's ability to conduct foreign policy: the size of its economy, export potential, innovation activity, investment attractiveness, and technological competitiveness. The results show that geopolitical leadership in Asia is increasingly based on what states can achieve through economic, technological, and global investment power. Japan and South Korea are consolidating their leadership through technological superiority, while China is building systemic-level influence grounded in the size of its economy and expanding infrastructure. India is showing a substantial expansion of influence because of its demographic potential, and ASEAN states are increasing their influence through financial and logistical integration.

The present reform of the international system indicates that the activity of Asian states foreshadows the prospective reshaping of international relations, in which these states will play a leading role in the formation of the global balance of power. The rising economic strength, technological capability, and political assertiveness of major and non-major Asian states move the world order away from its unipolar form toward a more complex, multi-tiered arrangement in which regional power centers have a voice in determining the direction of international cooperation. The geopolitical orientations of China, India, Japan, South Korea, and the states of Southeast Asia are exerting growing influence over the

reallocation of economic and security resources, the modification of global interlinkages, and the development of a new system architecture [10].

Through massive infrastructure development and expanding global investment networks, China's geo-economic activity is reshaping the world balance of power. The BRI has acted as a means of creating new economic corridors between Asia and Europe, and between Asia and Africa, altering the geography of global trade and creating new areas of economic integration [1]. Infrastructure diplomacy allows China to merge economic and political interests with long-term relationships involving states engaged in transport and energy infrastructure projects [3, 4]. As a result, the world is gradually witnessing the movement of its economic axis toward Asia, with Asian economies gaining greater importance in the global system.

However, China's assertiveness has also triggered counter-reactions from other regional countries, encouraging competitive multipolarity. Indian foreign policy reflects a balancing act in which New Delhi seeks to assert itself in the Indo-Pacific region through partnerships and maritime security [7]. Meanwhile, the strategy of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" aims to keep trade routes open and prevent the emergence of a unipolar power center, which indirectly supports balance in the region [8]. This competition is not only reshaping the regional security environment but also influencing the way states cooperate at the global level, with a preference for coalitions of the willing rather than rigid military and political blocs.

The reconfiguration of the world order is greatly influenced by the technological dimension. Digitalization, technological development, and competition in innovation make technological superiority a core element of geopolitical power. China is also pushing strongly to integrate digital infrastructure into international cooperation frameworks, thereby exporting technological standards and deepening partners' economic ties [25]. Japan and South Korea, meanwhile, are establishing alternative technological pathways that emphasize high levels of innovation and international collaboration, and they are also competing for technological leadership [12]. This has led to the fragmentation of global technological ecosystems and is shaping new patterns of international cooperation.

Southeast Asian states have particular significance in the formation of this new arrangement of cooperation, as their balancing strategy enables them to maintain engagement with various centers of power. By engaging both with Chinese economic projects and with security relations involving Western partners, they are developing a networked model of regional order [27]. This multidimensionality is reflected in new forms of international cooperation that emerge through flexible partnerships and functional cooperation.

Geocultural policy, including the use of cultural diplomacy and humanitarian connections to improve the international standing of states, is also emerging as a vital instrument of influence. The broad dissemination of educational and cultural programs makes it possible to establish long-term channels of collaboration and build trust between countries [13]. When such instruments are combined with economic measures, they create a multidimensional form of influence that does not require the direct application of force.

Economic tools are now routinely used as political instruments, including investment conditions, trade restrictions, and financial sanctions [15]. This development suggests an evolution of international competition, with geo-economic measures becoming an essential element of the global balance. At the same time, the expansion of regional economic organizations and alliances strengthens state coordination and generates new forms of collective governance [9].

To summarize the influence of Asian states' geopolitical behavior, these strategies arguably shape the transition toward a multipolar system of international relations in which economic, technological, and security domains converge in a single strategic space. The movement of economic activity toward Asia, the development of new institutions of cooperation, and the rise of regional powers all contribute to changes in the systems of global governance and global interaction.

**Table 4.** *Impact of Asian states' geopolitical strategies on the global balance of power*

Geopolitical vector	Strategic goal of Asian states	Key implementation tools	Economic effect on the global system	Security effect	Impact on the new configuration of the global balance of power
Geo-economic expansion	Formation of economic centers of gravity	Infrastructure investments, BRI, trade agreements	Relocation of production chains to Asia	Dependence on logistics routes	Shift of the economic core of the global economy to the East
Indo-Pacific balancing	Containment of the dominance of a single state	Security alliances, maritime cooperation	Diversification of trade partnerships	Strengthening military-political coordination	Formation of a multipolar system of deterrence
Technological leadership	Control of future innovation markets	AI, 5G, semiconductors, digital standards	Growing role of high-tech exports	Cybersecurity competition	Division of the world into technological ecosystems
Regional institutionalization	Strengthening regional autonomy	ASEAN, RCEP, economic forums	Deepening regional integration	Coordination of security policy	Weakening the dominance of Western global institutions
Network diplomatic balancing	Preservation of strategic autonomy	Multivector diplomacy	Attracting investment from various centers of power	Reducing the risk of conflict dependency	Emergence of flexible network multipolarity
Geocultural influence	Formation of long-term legitimacy	Educational programs, cultural diplomacy	Development of creative industries and tourism	Increasing trust between states	Consolidation of "soft" global influence
Energy and logistics strategies	Control of resource flows	Energy corridors, ports, transport hubs	Stabilization of global supplies	Protection of maritime communications	Redistribution of strategic control zones

Source: developed by the authors.

A profound reconstruction of the modern international system is gradually taking place, as the Asian region is becoming a major center of the global balance of power. The root cause of this transformation is geo-economic expansion, as more production and logistics activities are moving to Asia. The construction of infrastructure and trade routes facilitates the shift of the core of world economic activity to the East and, in doing so, contributes to the intensification of global

interdependence while opening new means of influence through control over transport corridors.

Meanwhile, the recalibration of the Indo-Pacific reflects the aspirations of regional states and their partners to prevent the accumulation of power in a single geopolitical node. Closer security coordination and the emergence of alliance formats lead to the formation of a multipolar deterrence system in which competition coexists with cooperation. This is changing the nature of global security, moving it from rigid bloc models toward more flexible coalitions.

Technological supremacy is gaining importance in shaping the world order and the economic and political power of states, as dominance in high-technology industries confers control over innovative sectors of the economy. Reflecting trends in digital standards and high-tech competition, distinct technological ecosystems are emerging, creating a form of international cooperation based on technological interoperability and innovation alliances. As a result, global competition is moving increasingly into the knowledge and technology arena.

Regional institutional formation and the establishment of economic associations serve as sources of Asia's increasing self-sufficiency in global governance. The growing importance of regional bodies generates competing mechanisms for the coordination of economic and security policy, within which traditional Western-based institutions may have reduced relevance as rule-makers in international cooperation. Meanwhile, networked diplomatic balancing empowers middle-level states to remain strategically flexible by engaging with various poles of power, and this mechanism itself is conducive to the emergence of a more complex, multi-tiered international system.

A crucial addition to geopolitical power is the geocultural strategy, which uses educational, humanitarian, and information instruments to ensure the long-term international presence of states. The diffusion of cultural patterns and values enhances soft power and helps set the stage for economic and political cooperation. Meanwhile, energy and logistics strategies are being employed to consolidate control over resource flows and key transportation nodes, with immediate consequences for the stability of global supply and the security of maritime routes.

The combined effect of the geopolitical tactics of Asian countries is therefore the creation of a new global balance of power in which economic, technological, and security spheres are interconnected and operate within a single system. Gradually, Asia is shifting from the role of a regional economic axis to that of a central pillar of the world order, due to the multipolar model of international relations based on competition, interdependence, and networked cooperation.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that the geopolitics of Asian states is systemic and multilayered. It extends beyond traditional military and political competition and forms a new type of global interaction based on a combined package of economic, technological, and security instruments. The findings support the view that the current transformation of the international system is driven by geo-economic processes, in which infrastructure development, trade management, and financial instruments are employed as means of foreign policy influence. This finding is consistent with views that interpret the BRI as more than an economic strategy, seeing it as a strategic tool for shaping new spaces of international integration and political interdependence [1, 2]. This research confirms that the expansion of China's geo-economic influence is moving considerable economic activity toward Asia and reshaping global production chains, findings that are increasingly emphasized in studies of regional rescaling in the Asia-Pacific [10].

These findings align with the work of scholars who emphasize the intensification of China-India rivalry as an axis of the new regional security configuration. The replacement of the Asia-Pacific concept by the Indo-Pacific notion signals not only the widening of the strategic space of competition but also the effort of states to propose a balance-of-power concept in response to Chinese assertiveness [7, 8]. The analysis validates the view that India sees Chinese infrastructure and economic initiatives as a challenge to its regional standing, particularly in South Asia [3, 4, 5, 6]. Hence, the geo-economic contest in Asia is increasingly a balancing process rather than a direct military display of force.

The research also substantiates that technology is emerging as a critical component of geopolitical power. Competition in digital standards, innovation, and high-tech sectors is defining a new hierarchy of international influence, consistent with studies on the growing significance of states' technological autonomy in contemporary geopolitics [12, 25]. The spread of digital infrastructure in international cooperation projects leads to the development of technological ecosystems that gradually organize international cooperation. At the same time, these findings correspond with research on the political economy of Southeast Asia, indicating that technological integration has proceeded alongside increasing economic interdependence among states [11].

The analysis also concentrates on the security component of geostrategy. The findings confirm that the expansion of maritime activity and territorial claims in East Asia is producing a new regional security pattern, in which economic interests are closely connected with safe transportation and access to resource routes [18]. These processes appear to reflect the "paradox of power", whereby economic interdependence and strategic competition coexist among states [24]. The research also confirms that the use of economic tools as instruments of political influence has become common practice, forming a sphere of geo-economic pressure in relations between states [15, 16].

A comparison of the results with contemporary studies of regional diplomacy suggests that they conform to the notion

of networked multipolarity. Southeast Asian states are actively pursuing a dual strategy: economic cooperation with China and security relations with Western partners, enabling them to preserve their own strategic autonomy [14, 27]. These findings are also consistent with studies on the growing role of regional organizations in shaping alternative modes of international coordination [9].

The geocultural aspect of foreign policy is an essential complement to economic and security policies. The research supports the classical view that cultural diplomacy and humanitarian connections are effective instruments of soft power, influencing country image and enhancing cooperation on the international stage, which corresponds with the concept of geocultural power [13]. Alongside economic policies, this constitutes a comprehensive model of influence that enables states to increase their international visibility without direct application of military power.

The results of the study, when compared with global economic data, verify the identified trends in an objective manner. Statistics from the World Bank, IMF, and UNCTAD demonstrate the increasing importance of Asian economies in global output, investment flows, and world trade, suggesting a gradual reorientation of the global economic system [19, 20, 21]. This also confirms that the geopolitical activities of Asian countries are strongly based on economic foundations.

At the same time, the results extend current scientific perspectives by showing that the transformation of the world order is not simply a matter of one center of power replacing another. Rather, it reflects the emergence of a complex system of interdependencies. Competition and cooperation are the two main processes shaping new geopolitical configurations in Asia, as evidenced in contemporary analyses of the region's transformation in the twenty-first century [17]. Therefore, the study confirms the main conclusions of modern international literature and shows that the geopolitical strategies of Asian states are shaping a new configuration of the global balance of power, along with a new regional and global cooperation system based on a mixture of competition, economic interdependence, and institutional interaction.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The study makes it possible to assert that the present stage of development in international relations is distinguished by the increasing significance of the role of the states of the Asian region in the formation of a new configuration of the global balance of power. The geopolitical strategies of dominant Asian powers reveal a movement away from traditional power confrontation toward the integrated application of geo-economic, technological, diplomatic, and security instruments of influence. Thus, a multidimensional international system is evolving, in which economic interdependence coexists with strategic competition.

The increasing power of Asia is fundamentally driven by geo-economic expansion rather than direct confrontation, expressed through infrastructure development, investment initiatives, and the creation of international trade networks. These are the instruments through which states increasingly conduct their foreign policy, enabling the formation of long-term partnerships and the opening of new spaces of economic influence. This leads to a shift in the center of economic activity in the world toward the Asian region and to the reshaping of global production networks.

The study also found technology-driven world-order change to be particularly prominent. Competition in innovation, digital technologies, and high-tech production has become a new standard for geopolitical leadership, and technological autonomy is emerging as a key prerequisite for the strategic stability of states. At the same time, security strategies, such as maritime control and enhanced defense cooperation, build deterrence and preserve balance in the region.

Also significant is the rising role of middle-level states, especially Southeast Asian states, which conduct a diplomatic balancing act among major centers of power. This stance leads to a network model of international relations characterized by greater flexibility, multivector power, and a higher degree of mutual dependence. At the same time, economic and security instruments are complemented by geocultural influence and the sustainment of soft power, which ensures the long-term legitimacy of the international presence of states.

Therefore, the results confirm that the geopolitical strategies of Asian states are a significant catalyst for change within the world system. The international system is undergoing a gradual transformation toward a multipolar structure in which influence is measured not only in terms of military power but also in terms of states' ability to effectively combine their economic, technological, and diplomatic instruments within a coherent strategic development model. This marks the emergence of a new matrix of international cooperation, with Asia as a central locus of global governance and economic viability in the new century.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

## FUNDING

This research did not receive any financial support.

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## DATA AVAILABILITY

The data supporting the findings are available from the corresponding author upon request.

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