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ЭНЕРГЕТИЧЕСКОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО КИТАЯ В ЮГО-ВОСТОЧНОЙ АЗИИ: ДВОЙНЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ ДЛЯ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО РОСТА И РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

Лю Юань

аспирант

Кафедра международных отношений

Факультет международных отношений

Белорусский государственный университет

г. Минск, Республика Беларусь

Аннотация. Статья исследует стратегии энергетического сотрудничества Китая в регионе Юго-Восточной Азии, уделяя особое внимание тому, как Китай использует двойные стратегии для стимулирования экономического роста и укрепления региональной безопасности. Энергетическое сотрудничество включает инвестиции в инфраструктуру, развитие проектов возобновляемой энергии и углубление двустороннего и многостороннего сотрудничества с странами Юго-Восточной Азии. Эти инициативы не только обеспечивают Китаю диверсификацию энергетических поставок, но и способствуют улучшению энергетической структуры и устойчивому экономическому развитию стран региона. Однако такое сотрудничество также вызывает геополитические последствия, связанные с региональной безопасностью, энергетической конкуренцией и экономической зависимостью. В статье утверждается, что энергетическое сотрудничество Китая в Юго-Восточной Азии представляет собой комплексную стратегию, направленную на балансирование экономического роста и безопасности, что способствует стабильности и процветанию региона.

Ключевые слова: Китай, Юго-Восточная Азия, энергетическое сотрудничество, экономический рост, региональная безопасность, двойные стратегии.

Introduction

China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia has emerged as a cornerstone of its regional engagement, reflecting a strategic balance between fostering economic growth and enhancing

regional security. As one of the world's largest energy consumers, China has prioritized securing reliable energy sources to sustain its domestic economic development while simultaneously contributing to the advancement of energy infrastructure in Southeast Asia. This cooperation encompasses substantial investments in energy infrastructure, promotion of renewable energy projects, and fostering stronger bilateral and multilateral ties with Southeast Asian nations.

At the heart of this strategy lies a dual approach: driving economic growth and ensuring regional security. On the one hand, energy cooperation supports Southeast Asia's sustainable development by improving energy access, diversifying supply chains, and advancing renewable energy transitions. On the other hand, these initiatives aim to bolster regional security by stabilizing energy markets, reducing geopolitical tensions, and fostering trust through shared economic interests.

This study explores the intricate relationship between China's energy strategies and their dual outcomes—economic and security-related—in Southeast Asia. By examining key initiatives, impacts, and challenges, the article provides a comprehensive understanding of how China's energy cooperation is reshaping the region's landscape. Furthermore, it highlights the broader significance of these efforts in promoting regional stability, economic prosperity, and sustainable development for all stakeholders involved.

China's Energy Cooperation Strategies in Southeast Asia

China's energy cooperation initiatives in Southeast Asia have been instrumental in fostering economic growth through substantial investments in energy infrastructure, advancing renewable energy projects, and forging bilateral and multilateral agreements.

1. Investments in Energy Infrastructure

China has made significant investments in Southeast Asia's energy infrastructure under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aiming to improve energy distribution, reduce costs, and promote regional integration. These efforts include the construction of power grids, gas pipelines, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals, particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. For instance, China's state-owned enterprises have played a leading role in large-scale energy projects, contributing to regional energy stability and addressing Southeast Asia's increasing energy demands [1]. These infrastructure investments not only enhance energy access but also strengthen the energy trade networks, creating long-term economic benefits for both China and the region [2].

2. Development and Implementation of Renewable Energy Projects

China has taken a leading role in promoting renewable energy in Southeast Asia, addressing the region's dependence on fossil fuels while advancing clean energy solutions. Countries like Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines benefit from Chinese-led projects in solar, wind, and

hydroelectric power, helping to meet the ambitious goal of achieving 23% renewables in the regional energy mix by 2025. Through initiatives such as the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (APAEC), Chinese companies have supported renewable energy development, enhancing the sustainability of Southeast Asia's energy sector [3]. Additionally, collaborative mechanisms, such as technology transfers and joint ventures, have accelerated the adoption of renewable energy technologies in the region [4].

3. Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

Bilateral and multilateral agreements between China and Southeast Asian nations have strengthened economic ties and energy cooperation. Agreements such as the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have facilitated energy trade, tariff reductions, and joint energy development initiatives. These frameworks encourage the development of integrated energy markets, particularly through projects like the ASEAN Power Grid and the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline, which align with China's goals of energy diversification and regional growth [5]. Furthermore, bilateral initiatives, such as China's partnerships with Indonesia and Vietnam, have resulted in collaborative energy projects that enhance energy security while reducing reliance on external energy sources [6].

China's multifaceted energy initiatives in Southeast Asia reflect a strategic balance of fostering economic growth and addressing energy security challenges, benefiting both the region's sustainable development and China's expanding economic influence.

Regional Security Cooperation

China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia not only addresses energy security but also mitigates geopolitical tensions and fosters regional stability through strategic partnerships and collaborative frameworks.

Energy security is a pivotal driver of China's engagement in Southeast Asia, where energy demands are rising alongside rapid economic growth. China's initiatives, such as securing diversified energy sources and constructing energy corridors like the China-ASEAN energy channel, are designed to reduce vulnerabilities, such as the reliance on the Strait of Malacca for oil transport. These efforts are critical in addressing both regional and China's national energy security needs [2]. Additionally, collaboration on oil and gas exploration in contested regions aims to safeguard long-term supply while stabilizing energy markets [7].

Energy collaboration serves as a means of de-escalating geopolitical tensions in the region, particularly in the South China Sea, where overlapping territorial claims have created friction. Joint development agreements, such as the Memorandum of Understanding between the Philippines and

China on oil and gas exploration, highlight the potential for shared energy resources to promote dialogue and reduce hostilities. These agreements foster trust and create mutual economic benefits despite underlying territorial disputes [8]. Such initiatives align with China's strategy of "shelving disputes, pursuing joint development" to maintain peace while meeting energy needs.

Energy partnerships between China and Southeast Asian nations foster regional stability by addressing shared energy challenges, enhancing infrastructure integration, and promoting economic interdependence. China's energy partnerships in Southeast Asia contribute to regional stability by addressing shared energy challenges through multilateral cooperation. Efforts such as standardizing infrastructure and enhancing regional energy integration, facilitated by agreements under ASEAN-China frameworks, demonstrate the importance of cooperative mechanisms in achieving energy security and reducing political risks. These partnerships also counterbalance external influences, such as U.S. involvement, ensuring a more localized and stable energy landscape [9].

Economic Impacts

China's energy cooperation with Southeast Asia has had profound economic impacts, fostering regional development and ensuring mutual benefits. One of the most significant contributions is the diversification of China's energy supply. By tapping into Southeast Asia's rich reserves of oil, gas, and renewable energy sources, China has reduced its overreliance on imports from politically volatile regions such as the Middle East. This strategic diversification enhances China's energy security while creating economic opportunities for Southeast Asian nations.

In addition to securing energy resources, China's investments have significantly improved Southeast Asia's energy infrastructure, including power grids, gas pipelines, and renewable energy facilities. Under initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese-funded projects have modernized energy systems in countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia, reducing energy bottlenecks and supporting economic growth. These improvements align with regional goals for sustainable development, helping Southeast Asia transition to cleaner energy sources while increasing resilience to global energy market fluctuations [1].

Moreover, China's energy cooperation has played a crucial role in enhancing energy access across Southeast Asia, particularly in rural and underserved areas. By expanding electrification and providing reliable energy infrastructure, these initiatives have supported industrialization, created employment opportunities, and improved living standards. This increased energy access contributes to poverty reduction by enabling local economies to grow and reducing reliance on inefficient, high-cost energy sources. Beyond economic benefits, these advancements also help Southeast Asia build the capacity to address future energy demands sustainably.

Through its multifaceted energy cooperation efforts, China has not only advanced its own strategic interests but also contributed significantly to the economic development and stability of Southeast Asia, creating a foundation for long-term regional growth and integration.

Geopolitical and Security Implications

China's energy cooperation with Southeast Asia has significant geopolitical and security implications, shaping the region's strategic landscape in complex ways. One critical aspect is the intensifying energy competition among major powers in the region. Southeast Asia, with its abundant energy resources and strategic position along vital maritime routes, has become a focal point for competition between global powers like the United States, Japan, and China. China's aggressive pursuit of energy resources, including infrastructure investments and exploration projects, has sometimes been perceived as a strategic move to secure influence over the region, fueling concerns among rival nations and ASEAN members about potential domination of critical energy corridors, such as the South China Sea [2].

Another significant implication is the growing risk of economic dependency on China. As Southeast Asian countries increasingly rely on Chinese investments and technology for energy infrastructure and development projects, concerns about overdependence have emerged. This dependency may limit the autonomy of ASEAN nations in making independent policy decisions, especially in situations where their interests conflict with China's. While these investments bring immediate economic benefits, they can lead to long-term vulnerabilities, as countries may struggle to diversify their partnerships or repay debts incurred under initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Finally, China's energy cooperation efforts have also influenced ASEAN's regional security dynamics. While joint energy projects and infrastructure development foster economic collaboration, they have also intensified existing territorial disputes, particularly in the South China Sea. China's assertive actions in disputed waters, often linked to its energy exploration and resource extraction efforts, have heightened tensions with neighboring ASEAN states like Vietnam and the Philippines. This has led to increased regional militarization and the involvement of external powers, such as the United States, in balancing China's growing influence. On the other hand, China's promotion of joint development agreements and energy-sharing initiatives offers a potential pathway for easing conflicts and fostering stability if managed equitably [8].

In summary, China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia reflects a dual-edged strategy, promoting economic and infrastructure development while introducing new geopolitical and security

challenges. The interplay of energy competition, dependency risks, and evolving security dynamics continues to shape the future of the region's stability and independence.

Balancing Economic Growth and Regional Security

China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia exemplifies a comprehensive approach that aligns its economic ambitions with security interests, creating a dual strategy for mutual benefit. By fostering energy partnerships, China aims to strengthen regional economic growth while addressing its own energy security needs. This approach includes significant investments in energy infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and cross-border initiatives designed to enhance energy accessibility and regional integration. These efforts not only secure a steady supply of energy for China but also promote economic interdependence, fostering stability in Southeast Asia.

Specific projects highlight the dual benefits of China's strategy. For instance, under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), investments in power grids, gas pipelines, and renewable energy facilities have improved energy access in Southeast Asia while securing energy supply routes for China. Projects such as the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline and renewable energy ventures in Vietnam and Indonesia contribute to regional economic development and provide shared benefits like job creation, enhanced energy security, and technology transfers. These initiatives also serve as confidence-building measures, fostering collaboration and mitigating potential conflicts over energy resources.

However, maintaining this balance between economic growth and regional security poses significant challenges. The risk of over-dependence on Chinese investments raises concerns about sovereignty and long-term economic vulnerabilities for Southeast Asian nations. Additionally, China's assertive behavior in contested areas like the South China Sea complicates its efforts to build trust among its neighbors, potentially undermining regional security goals. As energy competition intensifies with other global powers, such as the United States and Japan, managing these dynamics while avoiding escalation remains a delicate task for China. Striking a sustainable balance requires careful diplomacy, equitable partnerships, and a commitment to addressing regional concerns.

Conclusion

China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia demonstrates a dual strategy that effectively integrates economic growth and regional security. Through substantial investments in energy infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and joint development agreements, China has reshaped the regional dynamics by fostering interdependence, improving energy accessibility, and addressing shared energy security challenges. These initiatives not only diversify China's energy supply but also

contribute to Southeast Asia's economic modernization and integration, positioning the region as a vital player in global energy networks.

For Southeast Asia, this cooperation holds significant implications for long-term stability and prosperity. The improvement of energy infrastructure, expanded electrification, and promotion of renewable energy transition create new opportunities for sustainable development and poverty reduction. However, the growing reliance on Chinese investments and the ongoing geopolitical tensions in contested areas, such as the South China Sea, highlight the need for cautious engagement to avoid economic overdependence and maintain sovereignty.

Looking forward, China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia is likely to expand, driven by its ambition to secure energy resources and strengthen its geopolitical influence. Future success will depend on balancing mutual benefits, addressing regional concerns, and fostering equitable partnerships that enhance trust and stability. As global energy transitions accelerate, China's continued collaboration with Southeast Asia has the potential to redefine the region's economic and security landscape for decades to come.

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CHINA'S ENERGY COOPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: DUAL STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND REGIONAL SECURITY

Liu Yuan

graduate student

Department of International Relations,
Faculty of International Relations,
Belarusian State University
Minsk, Republic of Belarus

Abstract. The article explores China's energy cooperation strategies in Southeast Asia, focusing on how China employs dual strategies to foster economic growth and strengthen regional security. Energy cooperation includes investments in infrastructure, advancement of renewable energy projects, and the deepening of bilateral and multilateral collaboration with Southeast Asian countries. These initiatives not only diversify China's energy supply but also help Southeast Asian nations improve their energy structure and promote sustainable economic development. However, this cooperation also raises geopolitical implications involving regional security, energy competition, and economic dependency. The article argues that China's energy cooperation in Southeast Asia represents a comprehensive strategy that balances economic growth and security cooperation, gradually shaping the regional landscape and providing new momentum for regional stability and prosperity.

Key words: China, Southeast Asia, energy cooperation, economic growth, regional security, dual strategies.