

Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation from the Perspective of the Global Governance Initiative: Status Quo, Motivations and Challenges

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of profound changes in the global governance system and escalating geopolitical competition in the Asia-Pacific, regional security cooperation has become a critical link in safeguarding regional stability and improving the global governance system. Currently, unilateralism and bloc politics are resurging, and traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined, posing severe challenges to the regional security order. Upholding the core principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the Global Governance Initiative advocates a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective. It provides value guidance, theoretical support and practical pathways to address the fragmentation of security cooperation and reshape the security governance landscape in the Asia-Pacific.

Keywords: Global Governance Initiative; Asia-Pacific Region; Regional Security Governance.

1. Introduction

The traditional Western-dominated global governance system increasingly shows defects of inadaptability, unfairness and inefficiency [1], which can hardly meet the security and development demands of emerging markets and developing countries. Unilateralism, protectionism and hegemonism occur frequently; Cold War mentality, zero-sum game and bloc confrontation are resurgent. Regional hotspots such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Palestine-Israel conflict continue to spill over, exacerbating global security turbulence [2]. As the core engine of global economic growth and the most densely populated region, the Asia-Pacific is also a key field of global strategic competition. According to the Asian Development Bank, the Asia-Pacific contributes about 60% of global economic growth, accounts for 59% of the world's population, and its regional economic aggregate accounts for more than 60% of global GDP, with trade volume making up over 40% of the world's total. It is the core area of global economic and strategic competition. The region gathers major global powers including China, the United States, Russia, Japan and India, covering developed, developing and least developed countries. Its security and stability directly affect the global strategic balance and the direction of global governance reform.

For a long time, influenced by historical grievances, territorial disputes and ideological differences, Asia-Pacific security cooperation has featured a dual parallel and confrontational structure. On the one hand, ASEAN-centered multilateral security mechanisms have advanced steadily; on the other hand, the US-led military alliance system has been continuously strengthened, and exclusive small multilateral mechanisms have emerged [3]. Regional security mechanisms are characterized by fragmentation, inefficiency and confrontation, failing to form governance synergy and effectively respond to complex trans security challenges such as terrorism, cross-border crimes and climate change. Against this background, China has put forward the Global Governance Initiative, which follows the principle of

extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, providing Chinese concepts and practical plans to break the deadlock in Asia-Pacific cooperation and reshape the security architecture.

Western scholars mostly study Asia-Pacific security cooperation from traditional inter relations theories such as realism, liberalism and constructivism. Realism emphasizes the leading role of great power competition and alliance systems in the Asia-Pacific security structure; liberalism focuses on the promotion of international institutions and economic interdependence to security cooperation, holding that multilateral security mechanisms and regional economic integration can effectively boost security cooperation among countries and reduce conflict risks; constructivism pays attention to the shaping role of ideas, norms and identities on Asia-Pacific security cooperation, stressing the significance of the spread of security concepts and identity construction for the formation of a regional security order. However, most foreign studies are based on a Western-centric perspective, paying insufficient attention to the security demands of developing countries and lacking research on new governance concepts such as the Global Governance Initiative, which is inconsistent with the actual development of the Asia-Pacific. Domestic studies, based on China's position and Asia-Pacific realities, focus on issues such as the fragmentation of Asia-Pacific security mechanisms, great power competition and the lack of security mutual trust, and have achieved fruitful results on topics including the Asian Security Perspective, a community with a shared future for mankind, and China's participation in Asia-Pacific security governance [4]. In recent years, some scholars have begun to integrate the Global Governance Initiative with Asia-Pacific security governance research [5], but there are still three deficiencies. First, systematic research on Asia-Pacific security cooperation from the perspective of the Global Governance Initiative is not in-depth, mostly focusing on a single dimension without comprehensive and multi-level analysis. Second, research on the motivations and challenges of Asia-Pacific security cooperation is not detailed, with weak case and data support.

Third, discussions on optimization paths lack pertinence and operability, making it difficult to adapt to the complex and volatile Asia-Pacific security situation. Based on this, this paper conducts an in-depth, systematic and targeted study on Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation from the perspective of the Global Governance Initiative to enrich relevant research results.

2. Internal Connection between the Global Governance Initiative and Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation

The Global Governance Initiative and Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation are interrelated in value guidance and practice implementation, concept innovation and reality response, showing distinct characteristics of concept compatibility, practical guidance, problem orientation and development synergy. The global governance concept centered on extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective under the Global Governance Initiative provide fundamental guidelines for solving the fragmentation dilemma of Asia-Pacific security cooperation and reshaping the regional security architecture. The Asia-Pacific region is an important testing ground for the concepts of the Global Governance Initiative, and its security cooperation practice is a key starting point for promoting the implementation of the initiative and improving the global security governance system. The two empower each other to advance the improvement of the global governance system.

2.1. Core Connotation of the Global Governance Initiative

The Global Governance Initiative is an important concept and action plan proposed by China to address global governance dilemmas and solve the “four deficits”. Its core is extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, adhering to multilateralism, opposing unilateralism, hegemonism and bloc confrontation, and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. Covering politics, security, development, culture, ecology and other fields, the Global Governance Initiative aims to promote the democratization, rule of law and rationalization of the global governance system.

In the security field, the Global Governance Initiative extends to a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective, which transcends traditional hegemonic and exclusive security. “Common security” emphasizes that security is universal, equal and indivisible. Small and medium-sized ASEAN countries and major powers such as China, the United States and Russia all enjoy equal security rights. The security of one country cannot be achieved at the expense of the security of others, and regional security requires joint maintenance by all countries. It opposes bloc confrontation by the United States in the Asia-Pacific and tying small and medium-sized countries into geopolitical games. “Comprehensive security” advocates coordinating traditional and non-traditional security, integrating security elements in politics, economy, military, culture and ecology, and building an all-round and multi-level security governance system to comprehensively respond to

various security threats. The South China Sea issue requires both the management of territorial disputes and cooperation in maritime search and rescue and marine pollution control. “Cooperative security” takes dialogue, consultation and win-win cooperation as fundamental approaches, abandoning zero-sum games and military coercion. The Asia-Pacific adheres to the “ASEAN Way” to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation. The dual-track approach is adopted for the South China Sea issue, with direct parties coordinating solutions and ASEAN playing a coordinating role, opposing unilateral actions and military threats. “Sustainable security” focuses on the long-term, stable and sustainable nature of security, coordinating security and development, promoting security through development and safeguarding development with security. The Belt and Road Initiative promotes infrastructure connectivity, consolidating the foundation of security cooperation through economic cooperation. The China-Laos Railway has contributed to the coordination of security and development in the Mekong River Basin. The *Concept Paper of the Global Security Initiative* and the *Initiative on Strengthening Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific* provide specific guidance for Asia-Pacific security cooperation.

2.2. Leading Value of the Global Governance Initiative to Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation

The Asia-Pacific has numerous countries, diverse civilizations, significant development gaps and diverse security demands, intertwined with historical issues and practical conflicts. The traditional hegemony-led and bloc-confrontational security model can no longer meet regional development needs and runs counter to the common aspiration of all Asia-Pacific countries for peace, cooperation and development. Upholding the concepts of openness, inclusiveness, mutual benefit and win-win results, the Global Governance Initiative provides all-round and in-depth leading value for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation, mainly reflected in three core levels: concept, mechanism and path.

First, concept leadership breaks the cognitive misunderstandings of “security dependence”, “exclusive security” and “hegemonic security”, establishes consensus on universal and common security, guides Asia-Pacific countries to abandon ideological prejudices, transcend geopolitical differences, and gather value consensus for security cooperation based on common regional interests. China has continuously promoted the common security perspective at the Beijing Xiangshan Forum and the ASEAN Regional Forum, pushing ASEAN to integrate the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective into regional security norms. ASEAN countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia have explicitly opposed bloc confrontation and become active practitioners of the common security perspective.

Second, mechanism leadership promotes the transformation of existing security mechanisms toward openness, inclusiveness and efficiency, makes up for shortcomings such as fragmentation, overlapping functions and inefficient governance of regional security mechanisms, advocates building a regional security mechanism system that is interconnected, coordinated and with clear rights and responsibilities, guarantees the equal participation of small and medium-sized countries in security cooperation, and improves the representativeness and enforcement of security

mechanisms. It promotes the inclusion of the SCO as an observer in the ADMM-Plus and strengthens docking between the two mechanisms, promotes cross-border cooperation between the Mekong River Commission and the SCO to remedy fragmentation, and advances consultations on the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea to ensure equal participation of small and medium-sized countries, solving structural dilemmas of regional security governance through institutional development. [6]

Third, path leadership advocates replacing conflict with dialogue, confrontation with consultation [7], and zero-sum game with win-win cooperation, providing peaceful solutions to regional hotspots such as the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and South China Sea territorial disputes. It encourages countries to focus on common security interests, deepen practical security cooperation, and coordinate responses to traditional and non-traditional security threats, pointing out a clear practical path for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation. For the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, China has put forward the “double suspension” initiative and the “dual-track” approach, calling for the DPRK to suspend nuclear and missile activities and the United States and the ROK to suspend large-scale joint military exercises, and advancing denuclearization and a peace mechanism on the Peninsula in parallel to create conditions for a political settlement [8]. For cross-border crimes in the Mekong River, China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand have jointly established the Mekong River joint patrol and law enforcement mechanism to crack down on cross-border illegal crimes such as drug trafficking, smuggling and illegal immigration, providing an Asia-Pacific model for non-traditional security cooperation. For South China Sea territorial disputes, China has proposed the dual-track approach: disputes over Nansha Islands are resolved through consultation and negotiation by direct parties, and peace and stability in the South China Sea are jointly maintained by China and ASEAN countries. It promotes the implementation of the *Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea* (DOC) and accelerates COC consultations to manage differences and deepen cooperation through peaceful means.

The three are inherently compatible. First, value compatibility: the common aspiration of all Asia-Pacific countries for peaceful development is consistent with the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits of the Global Governance Initiative. Second, demand compatibility: the fragmentation and inefficiency of Asia-Pacific security cooperation require the guidance of concepts and mechanisms from the Global Governance Initiative. Third, practice compatibility: inclusive cooperation of ASEAN and anti-terrorism cooperation of the SCO are highly consistent with the security perspective of the Global Governance Initiative. This inherent compatibility determines that the Global Governance Initiative is a key support for solving the dilemma of Asia-Pacific security cooperation, realizing the modernization of regional security governance and building an Asia-Pacific community of shared security. [9]

3. Status Quo of Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation from the Perspective of the Global Governance Initiative

Against the background of profound changes in the global governance system and profound adjustments in the Asia-

Pacific geopolitical structure, Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation is at a critical stage of concept reshaping and practice transformation. Currently, Asia-Pacific security cooperation has advanced with the participation of diverse actors, showing positive trends such as expanding fields and rising willingness to cooperate, but also facing structural dilemmas including deep fragmentation of mechanisms, intensifying bloc confrontation and insufficient governance efficiency. Its development status and future trend are directly related to regional peace and stability and the reform of the global governance system.

3.1. Diversified Actors of Security Cooperation and Deep Fragmentation of the Mechanism Structure

From the perspective of the Global Governance Initiative, Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation is at a critical stage of concept reshaping and practical exploration. On the one hand, the common demand of all countries for peaceful development is highly compatible with the core value of the Global Governance Initiative, injecting new impetus into regional security cooperation. On the other hand, the complex geopolitical structure, diverse participants and fragmented cooperation mechanisms also bring practical challenges to Asia-Pacific security cooperation. The current cooperation pattern shows the vitality of multi-actor coordination, but also exposes shortcomings of institutional fragmentation and insufficient coordination, urgently needing the guidance of the Global Governance Initiative to transform regional security cooperation toward higher efficiency and inclusiveness.

At present, participants in Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation include major global powers, small and medium-sized countries in the Asia-Pacific, regional international organizations and trans-regional international organizations, forming a multi-level, multi-type and multi-field security cooperation mechanism system. However, it presents remarkable features of deep fragmentation, decentralization and confrontation. Statistics show that there are more than 60 security cooperation mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific, involving more than 40 countries and 20 international organizations, including about 15 US-led mechanisms and 12 ASEAN-led mechanisms. The lack of a unified coordination framework leads to separate operations and poor coordination, seriously restricting the overall efficiency of security cooperation. On the one hand, ASEAN-centered multilateral security mechanisms are important carriers of inclusive security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. As the largest and most widely participated multilateral security dialogue mechanism in the Asia-Pacific, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) covers almost all major countries in the region, focusing on preventive diplomacy, crisis management and non-traditional security cooperation. It promotes security dialogue and cooperation through the “ASEAN Way” (consensus-based, non-interference in internal affairs and gradual progress), building a platform for equal exchanges among Asia-Pacific countries [10]. The ADMM-Plus focuses on military security cooperation, carrying out practical actions such as joint military exercises, military personnel training and anti-terrorism cooperation to enhance regional military security mutual trust. Since its establishment in 2010, the ADMM-Plus has formed a complete cooperation system of “annual defense ministers’ meeting + expert working group (EWG) + thematic exercises”, covering 10 ASEAN countries

and 8 dialogue partners (China, the United States, Japan, the ROK, Australia, India, Singapore and Russia), becoming the only multilateral military dialogue mechanism in the Asia-Pacific covering all major military forces. Through the “ASEAN Way”, the mechanism builds an official channel for equal dialogue between major powers and small and medium-sized countries, effectively reducing the risk of miscalculation. The East Asia Summit (EAS) balances security and development issues, promoting dialogue and cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries in broader fields. As an important sub-regional multilateral security cooperation mechanism in the Asia-Pacific, the SCO focuses on core issues such as anti-terrorism, anti-secession, anti-extremism, border security control, drug control and cross-border crime crackdown, establishing a sound cooperation mechanism and action system and playing an irreplaceable key role in safeguarding security and stability in Central Asia and the surrounding Asia-Pacific [11]. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), the Beijing Xiangshan Forum and the Shangri-La Dialogue have built diversified dialogue bridges for regional security exchanges from official dialogue, academic exchanges and security seminars, gathering some security cooperation consensus. Meanwhile, regional security remains fragmented with scattered resources. In 2025, AUKUS announced the expansion of nuclear-powered submarine cooperation, conflicting with the nuclear-weapon-free zone concept of ASEAN and regional cooperation mechanisms, further exacerbating institutional fragmentation.

On the other hand, the US-led bilateral alliance system and exclusive small multilateral mechanisms constitute another important force in the Asia-Pacific security structure, showing a trend of continuous strengthening and intensifying confrontation. Relying on bilateral military alliances such as US-Japan, US-ROK, US-Philippines and US-Australia, the United States has continuously deepened military cooperation, upgraded weapons and equipment, strengthened joint military exercises, and built a military security network covering the Asia-Pacific [12]. Meanwhile, it has launched exclusive small multilateral security mechanisms such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and AUKUS, drawing lines along ideology, building a geopolitical encirclement against specific countries, wantonly hyping the “China threat theory”, strengthening military deterrence and bloc confrontation, and seriously undermining regional security and stability. These alliance systems and small multilateral mechanisms are highly exclusive, closed and confrontational, forming a parallel or even confrontational pattern with ASEAN-led inclusive multilateral security mechanisms. The lack of effective connection, communication and coordination among various mechanisms leads to scattered security cooperation resources, overlapping functions and mutual constraints, making it difficult for Asia-Pacific regional security governance to form synergy and give full play to governance effectiveness. [13]

3.2. Continuous Expansion of Cooperation Fields and Imbalanced Development of Traditional and Non-Traditional Security Cooperation

With the deepening of globalization and the diversification of security threats, the fields of Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation have continued to expand, achieving an all-round extension from traditional to non-traditional security areas

with richer cooperation contents. However, the problems of unbalanced development and insufficient coordination between the two are prominent. [14]

In the field of traditional security, countries conduct dialogue and competition around core issues such as territorial and sovereignty disputes, military mutual trust building, regional hotspot management, arms control and maritime security [15]. The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, South China Sea territorial sovereignty and maritime rights disputes, China-India border issues, military mutual trust building and the Taiwan Strait issue have become the focus of cooperation and competition and core variables affecting Asia-Pacific security and stability [17]. The Philippines has repeatedly taken unilateral actions. Although the China-Philippines maritime consultation mechanism has continued to advance [18], no breakthrough has been made on highly sensitive issues. Some countries have eased security conflicts and enhanced military mutual trust through high-level security meetings, military diplomatic exchanges and joint military exercises, achieving certain cooperation results in low-sensitivity traditional security fields such as crisis management, maritime search and rescue and anti-piracy. However, cooperation on highly sensitive traditional security issues such as territorial sovereignty and strategic security has made slow progress with limited effects, and relevant hotspot issues remain unresolved. [19]

In the field of non-traditional security, facing transnational and complex security challenges such as terrorism, cyber security, climate change, major public health security, cross-border crimes, marine pollution, natural disasters, energy security and food security, common interests among Asia-Pacific countries have become prominent, with strong willingness to cooperate and closer collaboration, achieving many phased and practical results. China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand have launched the Mekong River joint patrol and law enforcement mechanism, carrying out continuous joint patrols, cracking down on transnational drug crimes and ensuring waterway safety, effectively maintaining security and stability in the Mekong River Basin. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Asia-Pacific countries carried out cooperation in vaccine research and development, vaccine assistance, epidemic prevention information sharing and cross-border epidemic prevention collaboration to jointly respond to public health crises. In the field of cyber security, many countries have cooperated in cyber attack prevention and data security protection. In the field of climate change, countries have joined hands to implement carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals and strengthened cooperation in ecological and environmental protection. Normalized cooperation mechanisms have also been established in cracking down on cross-border crimes and natural disaster relief [20]. However, on the whole, non-traditional security cooperation still has many deficiencies, lacking long-term and institutionalized cooperation mechanisms. Countries have differences in technical standards, information sharing, responsibility sharing and benefit distribution, and the depth and breadth of cooperation are far from sufficient to effectively respond to increasingly severe non-traditional security challenges. [21]

3.3. Significant Differences in Cooperation Models and Intensified Game between Multilateral Cooperation and Bloc Confrontation

With the wide spread and in-depth implementation of the

Global Governance Initiative, more and more countries in the Asia-Pacific have recognized and accepted the security model of multilateral cooperation, dialogue and consultation, and inclusive win-win results. They have actively responded to the common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective, taken the initiative to participate in inclusive and open security cooperation processes, abandoned bloc confrontation and zero-sum games, and committed to promoting regional security governance toward fairness, win-win results and stability [22]. Small and medium-sized countries such as ASEAN have always adhered to multilateralism, advocated resolving differences through dialogue and consultation, and played an important balancing and leading role in Asia-Pacific security cooperation through multilateral mechanisms such as the ARF, ADMM-Plus and the Asia-Pacific Security Cooperation Council [23]. Major countries such as China and Russia have actively promoted multilateral security cooperation and practiced the Global Governance Initiative. Practical practices such as Mekong River joint patrol and law enforcement and SCO anti-terrorism cooperation have injected positive energy into regional security cooperation. The concept of multilateral cooperation has gradually taken root and become the common choice of most countries in the Asia-Pacific [24]. In sharp contrast, exclusive US-led mechanisms such as AUKUS and QUAD have frequently promoted joint military exercises. By 2025, the number of participating countries in joint military exercises under the QUAD framework has expanded to the United States, Japan, India, Australia and multiple allies, with a total of more than 100,000 troops. The United States has continuously deployed more military forces to the Asia-Pacific and strengthened forward presence. Some countries have clung to the Cold War and hegemonic mentalities, pursued bloc confrontation and exclusive, closed security models, regarded the Asia-Pacific as an arena for geopolitical competition, drawn lines along ideology and values, formed closed security blocs, and deliberately created regional division and confrontation, seriously impacting the atmosphere of multilateral security cooperation. The US "Indo-Pacific Strategy", through AUKUS's expanded nuclear submarine cooperation and QUAD's promotion of technological blockade and military containment, directly conflicts with ASEAN-led multilateral cooperation mechanisms, further intensifying the model game of Asia-Pacific security cooperation and leading to the continuous division of the regional security architecture. The game between two distinct cooperation models has become the most prominent feature of current Asia-Pacific security cooperation, making the future of regional security cooperation full of uncertainty and hindering the in-depth advancement of regional security cooperation.

3.4. Mixed Results of Cooperation with Partial Breakthroughs and Overall Dilemmas

After years of development, Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation has achieved certain phased results in some fields and regions, effectively alleviating security risks in local areas and maintaining basic regional stability. The SCO has achieved remarkable results in cracking down on the "three evil forces", safeguarding border security and carrying out anti-terrorism cooperation, with terrorist attacks dropping by 80% year-on-year, effectively ensuring security and stability in Central Asia and the surrounding Asia-Pacific. ASEAN-led multilateral security mechanisms have played a positive role

in managing regional conflicts, building confidence measures and promoting low-sensitivity security cooperation. The implementation of the DOC and consultations on the COC in the South China Sea have played an important role in managing differences and maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea, and the *Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea* (CUES) in the South China Sea has been effectively implemented. Practical actions such as the China-Laos-Myanmar-Thailand Mekong River joint patrol and law enforcement and epidemic prevention cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries have effectively solved regional security problems and benefited people across the region.

However, on the whole, Asia-Pacific security cooperation still faces many deep-seated dilemmas and is far from achieving the efficient, inclusive and sustainable security governance goals advocated by the Global Governance Initiative. Regional hotspot issues remain unresolved, great power competition continues to escalate, security mutual trust among countries is seriously lacking, and the enforcement and binding force of security cooperation are weak. Most cooperation remains at the level of dialogue, exchanges and declarations, making it difficult to implement. Regional security mechanisms are fragmented and confrontational, failing to form synergistic governance forces. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined, and the existing cooperation system cannot effectively respond to complex security challenges. Hegemonism and bloc confrontation have undermined the regional security order, leading to turbulence in the Asia-Pacific security situation and unsatisfactory overall security cooperation results.

4. Motivations for the Development of Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation

The evolution of Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation results from the interaction of internal demands and external environments. On the one hand, the core demands of regional countries for common security and stable development, the transnational pressure of complex security threats, and the deepening of regional integration constitute the fundamental internal motivations for cooperative development. On the other hand, the reform of the global governance system, great power strategic competition and the conceptual guidance of the Global Governance Initiative provide important external impetus and value guidance [25]. The two intertwine to jointly shape the development context and future trend of Asia-Pacific security cooperation.

4.1. Internal Motivations: Common Security Demands of Regional Countries as the Fundamental Driving Force

From the logic of the Asia-Pacific's own development, the continuous advancement of regional security cooperation stems from all countries' pursuit of security and development. Among them, the transnational nature of complex security threats, the endogenous demand of regional integration and the security demands of small and medium-sized countries constitute the core internal forces driving cooperation.

First, the transnational nature of complex security threats forces coordinated cooperation. Security threats in the Asia-Pacific have long broken through the limits of single fields and countries. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined and transformed, showing obvious

transnational, complex, sudden and destructive characteristics, which is the fundamental internal driving force for Asia-Pacific countries to carry out security cooperation. Security challenges such as terrorism, cross-border infectious diseases, cyber attacks, marine pollution, climate change, cross-border crimes and energy crises cross national borders and affect many countries. No single country can respond alone, and coordinated cooperation and joint actions at the regional level are necessary for effective governance. Terrorist organizations cross the Asia-Pacific and carry out attacks, requiring countries to strengthen intelligence sharing, joint law enforcement and border control to form a joint crackdown force. Major infectious diseases such as COVID-19 and avian influenza spread rapidly through cross-border population flows, and only joint epidemic prevention cooperation among countries can curb the spread. Non-traditional security threats such as cyber attacks and cross-border telecom fraud also require multi-country coordination. In 2024, there were 15 cross-border terrorist incidents and 100,000 cross-border telecom fraud cases in the Asia-Pacific, involving more than 100 billion US dollars; more than 30 extreme climate events triggered disputes over water and food security [26]. These common and indivisible security threats have made Asia-Pacific countries deeply aware of the importance of cooperative security, forcing them to abandon differences and join hands to safeguard regional security and stability.

Second, security demands of integrated economic development. The Asia-Pacific is one of the regions with the highest degree of economic integration and the strongest economic vitality in the world. Regional trade, investment cooperation and industrial and supply chain integration are deep, forming an intertwined economic structure [27]. According to APEC statistics, the total trade volume of the Asia-Pacific accounts for nearly 60% of global trade, intra-regional trade accounts for more than 50%, the trade volume between China and ASEAN reaches 6.5 trillion US dollars, and industrial and supply chains are deeply intertwined [28]. The Asia-Pacific accounts for more than 70% of the global semiconductor and new energy industries, and the economic interests of all countries are closely linked. A peaceful and stable security environment is a basic prerequisite for sustainable regional economic development and the protection of national economic interests. Once regional security is turbulent, military conflicts, geopolitical games and sanctions will directly damage the stability of regional industrial and supply chains, hinder trade and investment, and severely hit economic development, bringing incalculable economic losses to all countries. Therefore, to safeguard their economic development achievements, ensure the stability of regional industrial and supply chains, and achieve sustainable economic development, Asia-Pacific countries have a strong demand for security cooperation. They are committed to deepening security cooperation to resolve security risks, maintain regional stability, escort economic cooperation with security cooperation, and realize the positive interaction between security and development.

Third, independent choice of small and medium-sized countries to safeguard their own security. The Asia-Pacific has a large number of small and medium-sized countries. Under the increasingly fierce geopolitical competition among major powers, simply relying on a single major power can hardly maximize their own security interests, and they are easily drawn into the vortex of great power confrontation and become victims of geopolitical games, seriously threatening

their sovereignty, security and development interests [29]. Influenced by the Global Governance Initiative, small and medium-sized countries in the Asia-Pacific have increasingly attached importance to independent, equal and inclusive win-win regional security cooperation, actively advocated multilateralism, opposed hegemonism and bloc confrontation. They hope to speak equally and express security demands through multilateral security mechanisms, balance great power relations, ease security pressure from great power confrontation, avoid falling into geopolitical conflicts, and safeguard regional peace and stability and their own security interests [30]. As an important part of the Asia-Pacific, the willingness and actions of small and medium-sized countries have gathered strong cooperative forces, becoming a key force promoting the development of Asia-Pacific security cooperation toward inclusiveness, equality and win-win results, and injecting sustained impetus into regional security cooperation. Countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam carry out balanced diplomacy, conducting security cooperation with China while maintaining military exchanges with the United States to safeguard their own security interests.

4.2. External Motivations: Two-way Promotion of Global Governance Reform and Great Power Competition

On the one hand, the reform of the global governance system forces reform. The traditional global governance system has prominent drawbacks such as unfair governance rules, unbalanced governance subjects and low governance efficiency, which can hardly effectively respond to global security challenges. The call for global governance reform is rising and has become an irresistible trend of the times. As an important part of global governance, the improvement and governance level of Asia-Pacific security cooperation are directly related to the process and effect of global governance reform, and it is a key link in promoting the reform of the global governance system. The international community generally pursues multilateralism, common security and win-win cooperation, and opposes unilateralism, hegemonism and bloc confrontation. This general trend of global governance reform forces Asia-Pacific countries to abandon outdated security concepts and cooperation models, optimize security cooperation mechanisms, conform to the core concepts of the Global Governance Initiative, promote regional security governance toward a more just, reasonable and efficient direction, promote the integration of regional security governance with global governance, and help improve the global governance system.

On the other hand, two-way influence of great power strategic interaction. Major powers have always played a leading and decisive role in Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation. Their strategic interaction and policy choices directly affect the process and direction of regional security cooperation, showing a two-way influence of both competition and cooperation [31]. On the one hand, major powers such as China, the United States, Russia, Japan and India have carried out dialogue and coordination on regional security issues, reached cooperation consensus and carried out practical cooperation in common interest fields such as anti-terrorism, climate change, public health security, maritime search and rescue and anti-piracy. Specific cooperation measures provide core impetus for Asia-Pacific security cooperation and lead the development direction of regional security cooperation. On the other hand, strategic

competition and interest differences among major powers have intensified. Some major powers, to safeguard their hegemonic status and geopolitical interests, take security cooperation as a game tool, pursue exclusive security policies, exacerbate regional security tensions and bring many challenges to Asia-Pacific security cooperation. China-US strategic competition in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea has intensified, and US arms sales to Taiwan have reached 2 million US dollars. Meanwhile, the concepts of great power coordination, benign interaction and win-win cooperation advocated by the Global Governance Initiative have guided major powers to abandon confrontational thinking, manage differences and deepen cooperation to a certain extent, promoting the rational and stable development of security cooperation and creating a relatively favorable great power environment for regional security cooperation. [32]

In addition, the international community generally expects stability in the Asia-Pacific. UN Secretary-General António Guterres has repeatedly stated that peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific are not only vital to the immediate interests of regional countries, but also related to global strategic balance and world peace and development, and are common global interests. For regional hotspots such as the Cambodia-Thailand border conflict, the United Nations has repeatedly called on relevant countries to resolve differences through dialogue and consultation, safeguard regional peace, and oppose bloc confrontation and military escalation. The international community generally expects Asia-Pacific countries to abandon bloc confrontation and zero-sum games, uphold inclusive win-win and dialogue consultation, deepen security cooperation, resolve security differences, and maintain peace and stability in the region [33]. This widespread expectation and public support from the international community have created a favorable international environment for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation, gathered extensive international consensus, and promoted Asia-Pacific countries to actively respond to the Global Governance Initiative, conform to the trend of the times and international expectations, take the initiative to deepen security cooperation, and safeguard regional and global peace and stability with practical actions, demonstrating the international responsibility and commitment of Asia-Pacific countries.

4.3. Interaction between Internal and External Motivations

Internal factors are the fundamental driving force: the common security demands of Asia-Pacific countries are the basis of cooperation. External factors are the conditions: global governance reform and international expectations promote countries to translate cooperation demands into practical actions. Great power strategic interaction is the core hub linking internal and external motivations. Benign interaction can amplify the role of internal motivations and create favorable conditions for cooperation. For example, major powers such as China and Russia practice the Global Governance Initiative, deepen practical cooperation through multilateral platforms such as the SCO and ADMM-Plus, promote consensus among countries in anti-terrorism and non-traditional security, and translate common security demands into institutional cooperation results. Malicious competition will restrain cooperation demands and exacerbate regional division and confrontation. The United States, taking the “Indo-Pacific Strategy” as the starting point,

promotes bloc confrontation through exclusive mechanisms such as AUKUS and QUAD, creates geopolitical confrontation, directly hedges the cooperation demands of Asia-Pacific countries and hinders the deepening of regional security cooperation. The independent choice of small and medium-sized countries is a key balancing force. ASEAN and other regional forces, taking multilateralism as a link, adhere to the “ASEAN Way” to promote regional security cooperation. They not only safeguard their own security demands through mechanisms such as the ARF and EAS, but also play a “balancer” role in great power competition, promote consensus among countries, hedge the negative impact of bloc confrontation, and become an important bridge connecting internal demands and external environments.

Internal demands and external impetus intertwine and work together to jointly shape the development track of Asia-Pacific security cooperation. When the external environment is favorable and great power interaction is benign, internal cooperation demands are fully activated, promoting the in-depth development of regional security cooperation. When the external environment deteriorates and great power confrontation intensifies, internal cooperation momentum is weakened, and regional security cooperation stagnates or even regresses. This dialectical interaction between internal and external motivations also provides a realistic basis for the implementation of the Global Governance Initiative in the Asia-Pacific and points out the direction for solving regional security dilemmas and building an Asia-Pacific community of shared security.

5. Challenges Facing Asia-Pacific Regional Security Cooperation from the Perspective of the Global Governance Initiative

From the perspective of the Global Governance Initiative, although Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation has achieved phased progress driven by both internal and external motivations, it still faces structural challenges in concept, mechanism and practice. The deep obstacles of Cold War mentality and exclusive security perspective, the continuous tearing of security mechanism fragmentation and bloc confrontation, and the inadequate adaptation between complex security threats and governance capacity together constitute the practical dilemmas of regional security cooperation. These challenges stem from the complexity of the Asia-Pacific geopolitical structure and are deeply intertwined with the pains of global governance system reform, posing a severe test to the implementation of the Global Governance Initiative in the Asia-Pacific.

5.1. Challenge Transmission Mechanism

Challenges to Asia-Pacific security cooperation present a hierarchical transmission logic of “conceptual divergence – institutional fragmentation – practical hedging”. At the conceptual level, the fundamental opposition between Cold War mentality and common security perspective undermines cooperation consensus at the root. At the institutional level, the parallel game between exclusive alliances and inclusive multilateral mechanisms leads to continuous fragmentation of the regional security architecture, making it difficult to form governance synergy. At the practical level, the superposition of great power strategic confrontation and the balancing dilemma of small and medium-sized countries further

amplifies contradictions at the conceptual and institutional levels, ultimately restricting the overall effectiveness of regional security cooperation. This transmission mechanism clearly shows the structural dilemmas of Asia-Pacific security cooperation and highlights the necessity and urgency of solving the dilemmas with the Global Governance Initiative [33].

5.2. Conceptual Level: Deep Obstacles of Cold War Mentality and Exclusive Security Perspective

The concepts of common security, multilateral cooperation and inclusive win-win advocated by the Global Governance Initiative are fundamentally and fiercely conflicting with the Cold War mentality, hegemonism and exclusive security perspective clung to by the United States and some allies, becoming the fundamental ideological obstacle restricting Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation. The United States and some allies adhere to the outdated thinking of zero-sum game and winner-takes-all, regard the Asia-Pacific as an arena for geopolitical competition, uphold the hegemonic logic of “America First”, pursue a “small yard, high fence” security strategy, deliberately hype ideological confrontation and great power threats, form closed and confrontational security blocs, deny the value of multilateral security cooperation, exclude regional countries from participating in security governance, and attempt to maintain hegemonic status through military deterrence and bloc confrontation. This outdated and backward security concept completely runs counter to the common aspiration of all Asia-Pacific countries for peace, cooperation and development, undermines the foundation of regional security mutual trust, exacerbates suspicion and confrontation among countries, makes it difficult for Asia-Pacific countries to form a unified consensus on security cooperation, runs counter to the core requirements of the Global Governance Initiative, and seriously hinders the in-depth advancement of regional security cooperation. For example, since its establishment in 2021, AUKUS, with military and technological cooperation as the core, has transferred nuclear-powered submarine technology to Australia. In 2025, it further expanded cooperation to include hypersonic weapons and AI warfare. Essentially, it is an exclusive military alliance that contains specific major powers along ideological lines, directly impacting the construction of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia and completely conflicting with the inclusive multilateral security concept led by ASEAN.

5.3. Institutional Level: Fragmentation of Security Mechanisms and Severe Lack of Governance Efficiency

There are numerous and diverse security mechanisms in the Asia-Pacific, but they lack unified top-level design, coordination framework and connection mechanisms. The problems of fragmentation, overlapping functions, inefficient governance and weak binding force are prominent, becoming an important institutional bottleneck for Asia-Pacific security cooperation [34]. On the one hand, ASEAN-led multilateral security mechanisms adhere to the “ASEAN Way”. Although the consensus principle guarantees the equal participation rights of all countries, it also leads to low decision-making efficiency and lack of mandatory enforcement. Most mechanisms focus on dialogue, consultation and exchanges,

failing to form substantive constraints on regional security issues and effectively solve substantive security problems such as the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue and South China Sea disputes. The US-led alliance system and small multilateral mechanisms are highly exclusive and confrontational, pursuing double standards, incompatible or even conflicting with other inclusive security mechanisms. Various sub-regional and trans-regional security mechanisms operate separately, lacking coordination, leading to scattered waste of security cooperation resources and difficulty in forming governance synergy. On the other hand, the representativeness and inclusiveness of existing security mechanisms are insufficient. The security demands of some small and medium-sized countries cannot be fully reflected, and the operation of mechanisms is mostly dominated by major powers, which cannot conform to the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits advocated by the Global Governance Initiative, further weakening the governance effectiveness of security mechanisms and making it difficult for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation to operate efficiently.

5.4. Geopolitical Level: Intensified Great Power Competition and Unresolved Hotspot Issues

Great power competition in the Asia-Pacific has become increasingly fierce. China-US strategic competition has intensified and spread in an all-round way, covering politics, economy, military, science and technology, culture and other fields. Relations among major powers such as US-Russia, China-Japan and China-India are complex and divergent, and strategic mutual suspicion among major powers has deepened, with increasingly fierce geopolitical competition. To safeguard their geopolitical interests and compete for regional security governance discourse, major powers take security cooperation as a game tool, continuously strengthen military deployment, woo allies for confrontation and provoke geopolitical conflicts, making the political foundation of Asia-Pacific security cooperation extremely fragile and the cooperation atmosphere continuously deteriorating. Meanwhile, regional hotspot issues such as the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, South China Sea territorial sovereignty and maritime rights disputes, China-India border issues and the Taiwan Strait issue have long remained unresolved. Some major powers take the opportunity to intervene, fan the flames, deliberately intensify conflicts and create confrontation, making relevant hotspot issues more complex and difficult to solve, and security cooperation deadlocked. These geopolitical contradictions and hotspot issues are intertwined and interact, seriously impacting the process of Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation, undermining regional security and stability, and completely contrary to the requirements of the Global Governance Initiative to resolve disputes through dialogue and consultation and safeguard regional peace.

5.5. Practical Level: Lack of Security Mutual Trust and Extremely Weak Cooperation Enforcement

The intertwining of historical grievances, territorial disputes, ideological differences and different development demands among Asia-Pacific countries has led to a serious lack of security mutual trust, becoming a core practical

problem restricting security cooperation [35]. Countries are suspicious of each other's strategic intentions, military deployments and policy orientations, lacking basic trust, making it difficult to carry out in-depth and substantive security cooperation. Even if cooperation consensus is reached, it is difficult to implement due to insufficient mutual trust. Meanwhile, the enforcement, supervision and binding force of Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation are extremely weak. Most cooperation remains at the level of high-level dialogue, declarations and exchanges, lacking specific, operable action plans, implementation rules, supervision mechanisms and accountability guarantees. Some cooperation agreements become empty promises, difficult to translate into practical governance results. In addition, in non-traditional security cooperation, countries have serious differences in technical standards, information sharing, responsibility sharing and benefit distribution, and are unwilling to transfer part of sovereignty or share core information, making it difficult to advance cooperation in depth and effectively respond to complex and transnational security challenges.

5.6. External Level: Multiple Interferences from External Forces Intervention and Security Rules Competition

In addition to major powers in the Asia-Pacific, some external forces, out of their own strategic interests, have actively intervened in Asia-Pacific security affairs, attempted to manipulate the direction of regional security cooperation, pursue security rules and governance models in line with their own interests, and wantonly undermine the process of independent regional security cooperation, becoming an important external interference factor for Asia-Pacific security cooperation. Led by the United States, external forces have continuously increased military presence in the Asia-Pacific, intervened in the internal affairs of regional countries, provoked regional confrontation through arms sales, joint military exercises and diplomatic pressure, and hindered independent security cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries. Meanwhile, competition over security rules in the Asia-Pacific has become increasingly fierce. Some Western countries attempt to monopolize the right to formulate security rules, pursue Western-centric security rules, exclude the reasonable demands of emerging markets and developing countries, and ignore the actual situation in the Asia-Pacific, leading to serious lack of fairness, inclusiveness and applicability of security rules. Such improper external intervention and unfair rule competition make it difficult for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation to build an independent, fair, reasonable and inclusive security governance system in accordance with the requirements of the Global Governance Initiative, seriously restricting the healthy development of regional security cooperation.

6. Conclusion

Against the background of profound changes in the global governance system and complex changes in the Asia-Pacific geopolitical structure, Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation is not only an inevitable choice for safeguarding regional peace and stability and achieving common development, but also an important practice for improving the global governance system and implementing the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. Upholding the

core principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the Global Governance Initiative advocates a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security perspective, providing a new value guide and practical path for Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation, with high inherent compatibility. Currently, Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation is characterized by diversified subjects, expanding fields, model games and mixed results. Internal motivations such as complex security threats, economic integration, independent choices of small and medium-sized countries, and external motivations such as global governance reform, great power strategic interaction and international expectations jointly promote the development of regional security cooperation. However, it also faces multiple severe challenges such as conceptual conflicts, institutional fragmentation, great power competition, lack of mutual trust and external intervention, which seriously restrict the in-depth advancement of security cooperation and the improvement of governance efficiency. Based on the perspective of the Global Governance Initiative, promoting the high-quality development of Asia-Pacific regional security cooperation requires all countries in the region to gather consensus on common security, abandon Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation; integrate diverse security mechanisms and build a coordinated and efficient governance system; effectively manage geopolitical differences and promote peaceful settlement of hotspot issues; consolidate the foundation of security mutual trust and improve cooperation enforcement; resist improper external intervention and build independent and fair security rules. Only in this way can we solve the dilemma of Asia-Pacific security cooperation, build a balanced, effective, sustainable, inclusive and beneficial Asia-Pacific security cooperation system, achieve common security, long-term stability and common development in the Asia-Pacific, and make important contributions to improving the global governance system and safeguarding global peace and stability.

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