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“Balance of Threat” Theory and Strategic Options:  
Southeast Asian Countries’ Perceptions and Response  
to the U.S. and China

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## Abstract

This thesis critically applied the “Balance of Threat” theory to the analysis and interpretation of alliance behavior patterns of weak secondary states represented by Southeast Asian countries, and attempted to illustrate that the most important factor affecting the behavior patterns of the weak secondary states is their threat perception towards the surrounding powers, and more specifically, in the example of Southeast Asian countries and China or the United States, the perception of Southeast Asian countries towards whether the two great power have offensive intentions upon them. This thesis also introduced the “hedging behavior” as a new pattern of behavior into the system “balance of threat” theory, strengthening explanation power of the theory in the interpretation of the behavior patterns of weak secondary states and the patterns when the states didn’t conduct neither balancing nor bandwagoning behaviors.



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