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Balancing or Bandwagoning: a quasi-civilian Myanmar in midst of China and U.S.A.

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Abstract

Balancing and bandwagoning are a pair of interesting contradictory in the political power fields and both of them expressed through various approaches such as economic sanction, ideological recognitions and security bans. Recently Myanmar implemented a series of diplomatic policies to change its international image of authoritarian and conserved country, which shifted its Chinese all-weather friends to a more opening-up status for the western countries. This phenomenon attracts the interests of some IR scholars and it also draws attention of the author. Whether Myanmar really head to U.S. embrace or just take advantage of both China and U.S. power struggle to maximize its national interests is the core point of this paper.

This thesis mainly aimed at exploring the reason why Myanmar shifted its previous diplomatic attitudes towards both U.S. and China, from one of Chinese all-weather friends to a much more neutral status with equal distance to both two powers, especially after democratic reforms processing to a quasi-civilian country. The case study method will be adopted in the thesis from the following three aspects: Myitsone Dam issue in the economic power struggles, sanctions releasing as an exchange condition of political reforms and the military conflicts and cooperation. The policy suggestions giving to Myanmar also offered after the general analysis in this thesis.

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Key Words: Balance of Power; Foreign policy; Economic Sanctions Releasing; Security Cooperation; China; Myanmar; Bandwagoning; Democratic Reforms;

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