

TRANSFROMING MYANMAR'S STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA DURING 2011-2020

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received: 27 October 2023 **Revised:** 15 November 2023 **Published:** 27 November 2023

ABSTRACT

Myanmar at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia makes access for China to the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean, as well as provides India access to Southeast Asia. This makes it an important stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, with Myanmar's transition to democracy in 2011, the United States aimed its focus on "pivot to Asia" due to China's rise, desiring to maintain regional stability, global trade and security. For these reasons, Myanmar plays an important role for India, a US's alliance, to reduce Chinese influence and dominance in the region. In previous studies, scholars have focused increasingly on the strategic interest and behavior of small and middle countries adopting hedging strategy to secure and promote their independence through a rising China. Therefore, this study intends to explain Myanmar's strategic behavior within China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and India's Act East Policy (AEP) under Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) during 2011-2020. This study will highlight the conceptualization of hedging adopted as a tool by Myanmar through its geostrategic position. This study analyses why Myanmar is actually transforming its strategies between China and India and what benefits it gains from pursuing hedging strategy together with India. This study shows that Myanmar's pursuit of a hedging strategy with India has got the benefits like reducing its dependence on China to an extent and diversifying its relations with other great powers.

Keywords: Myanmar, China, India, Hedging

CITATION INFORMATION: Naing, S. (2023). Transfroming Myanmar's Strategic Behavior between China and India During 2011-2020. *Procedia of Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(11), 8.

INTRODUCTION

Myanmar has a long coastline bordering the Bay of Bengal, leading to the Indian Ocean, which is of strategic importance to foreign states, and many flows of trade through the Malacca Strait. Being a key transit zone between India and the Pacific Ocean, Myanmar is regarded as the main channel of trade from the Middle East and Africa to East Asia. Numerous scholars and experts in international relations, political science, and geography have researched and created geopolitics because it provides a framework for understanding the motivations, strategies, and interactions of nations in global politics (Brzezinski, Z., 1997). In modern social science, when the approach to geopolitics became predominant in research on international relations, it boosted this line of thinking (Scholvin, S., 2018). Myanmar's geographical position at the crossroads of geopolitical importance makes the major powers much impressed (Yonghong, D., & Hongchao, L., 2014). Situated strategically between China and India, Myanmar can have more leverage in its relationships with its two powerful neighbors by reopening relations with the U.S. Therefore, Myanmar is a key neighbor of China and India as the geopolitical pivot in the Indo-Pacific region for its strategic significance.

Two important concepts in the field of geopolitics are "pivot" and "hedging," which describe strategies adopted by countries to manage their relationships with other nations. Moreover, the term gained prominence in recent years, particularly with regards to the United States' "pivot to Asia" or "rebalance" strategy. The concept of pivot in geopolitics refers to a country's strategic shift or reorientation of its foreign policy towards a new region or set of countries. Pivot strategies involve reallocating resources, establishing new partnerships, and enhancing diplomatic and military engagement. However, pivoting comes with challenges, including potential strains on existing alliances, the need for significant resources, and the risk of escalating tensions with other major powers. From the view of Brzezinski's aspects, the four major powers in the Indo-Pacific region are the United States, China, India and Russia of which the regional major powers are China and India, considered as "geostrategic players" (Brzezinski, Z., 1997). Brzezinski also interpreted: "Geopolitical pivots are the states whose importance is derived not from their power and motivation but rather from their sensitive location and the consequences of their potentially vulnerable condition for the behavior of geostrategic players". A state that can bring very important political and cultural effects to the most active geostrategic player in neighboring countries can also be determined as a geopolitical pivot. In this context, this study attempts to apply Brzezinski's Geopolitical Pivot and Strategic Players on the Eurasia chessboard by contemplating India and China as geostrategic players and Myanmar as the geopolitical pivot in terms of Asia chessboard.

There are many scholars who have stated hedging to be the major strategy and further provided small and medium-sized states the details of the range of policy choices. Hedging has become a vital concept in the exploration of international politics in the Asia Pacific (Kuik, 2008; Ciocciari, 2010; Tessman, 2012; Tunsjø, 2013; Lim & Cooper, 2015; Murphy, 2017; Ciocciari & Haacke, 2019). Moreover, Hedging has considered a growing significance in the international relations literature of the 21st century (Fowler et al., 1973: 945). In examining the policy of Southeast Asian states toward the expanding influence of China, it is better to focus on the hedging concept (Huang, C. C., 2015). Hedging is a policy that looks for positive relations with all major powers in a region (Roy, D., 2005). In addition, a hedging strategy provides more suitable conditions for countries, managing risks and uncertainty (Chen, I. T. Y., & Yang, A. H., 2013). In addition, hedging is a set of small state behaviors with the goal of maintaining a balance of power. Hedging is the strategy in which small states are assumed to change their behavior or combine different approaches so that they can better pursue their national interests. According to Korolev, A. (2019), smaller states pursue hedging behavior when great powers have uncertain and unbalanced distribution and competition of powers. In this study, the hedging concept has been used by Myanmar to become a geopolitical pivot with

its geostrategic position the way small states apply hedging to avoid uncertain risks in the rivalry between major powers.

However, there were very few researches that revealed Myanmar could become a geopolitical pivot in the Indo-Pacific region. This study will hence explore whether it can escape from China's influence and become a pivot country between China and India and how Myanmar could benefit from pursuing hedging strategy with India. The findings of this study seem to be effective for Myanmar policymakers and decision-makers in implementing the country's political and economic development by using the significance of Myanmar's geostrategic location, as well as to be helpful research for further studies. This study intends to investigate whether Myanmar really needs to transform its strategic behavior by pursuing a hedging strategy to have close relations with other powerful countries and to examine whether it can maximize its national interests and security.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Myanmar's Potential to be Geopolitical Pivot between China and India

Pivot states play a crucial role in shaping regional and global security and stability due to their strategic geographic locations and access to strategic resources, as highlighted by Sweijs et al. (2014). Myanmar's strategic significance is underscored by its location at the confluence of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia, offering a potential supply route and staging point to control access to the Strait of Malacca (Malik, 1997; Zhao, 2008). As a neighbor to China and India, Myanmar has the potential to serve as a pathway connecting these giants, making it a geopolitical pivot in Asia (Lidarev, 2013). The geopolitical rivalry between China and India for influence in Myanmar is evident, as both recognize its importance for their regional and economic objectives (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2014). China has invested heavily in military and economic cooperation with Myanmar (Zhao, 2008). India, on the other hand, has sought to enhance its strategic relations with Myanmar as part of its "Look East" policy (Myo, 2015). India has focused on improving infrastructure, security, and economic cooperation, including the Kaladan transport project (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2014). Myanmar's efforts to balance its relations with major powers, especially China and India, aim to reduce dependence on a single country (Yhome, 2014). However, achieving this balance poses challenges and dilemmas, with China's determination to maintain Myanmar within its strategic orbit (Malik, 1997). Nonetheless, Myanmar must diversify its foreign relations and diplomatic efforts, emphasizing its strategic location and resources to potentially become a geopolitical pivot in the Indo-Pacific region (San, 2020). Adopting a "counter-hedging" strategy is essential for Myanmar to reduce its dependence on China (Zhao, 2008).

Hedging Strategy pursued by Myanmar

Myanmar is not only connecting as a bridge to Southeast Asia for India (the Act-East policy) to counterbalance the rise of China but also serving as a gateway to the Indian Ocean for China (Go west policy) with its geographic significance. Myanmar, since 2011, has initiated a shift in its domestic politics towards democracy while attempting to reorient its foreign policy. Myanmar found ways to implement straightforward and extreme policies which are to benefit its national interests and strategies in changing external relations (Wah, S. T., 2016). The shift of Myanmar's domestic politics was driven by the need to reduce its dependence on China and navigate the geostrategic competition between great powers in Southeast Asia (Han, 2017). Small states like Myanmar prefer hedging to maintain benefits from existing relationships with rising powers (Myo, 2016). The State of Southeast Asia: 2020 survey report reveals Myanmar's preference for strategic partners like India as it employs its geostrategic position and natural resources to find a better balance among great powers (Meredith, 2013). A hedging strategy has been adopted by Myanmar to balance the influence of major powers and safeguard its interests. Therefore, Myanmar's hedging approach has expanded its diplomatic relations with

other great powers, especially with India to reduce China's influence (Fiori & Passeri, 2015; Ramya, 2018). Myanmar aims to rebalance China's influence in its economic and political spheres, engaging with external players while avoiding overreliance on any single power (Meredith, 2013). Myanmar has pursued various hedging strategies in specific projects; hedging with balancing strategy instead of bandwagoning in Kyauk-Phyu Deep Sea Port Project, hedging with resisting strategy in Myit-Sone Dam Project, and hedging with cooperation strategy in New Yangon development project, aiming to benefit from its state-market-society dynamics (Passeri & Marston, 2022). Hedging strategies provide Myanmar with the flexibility to counterbalance Chinese influence, maintain neutral positions, and preserve good relations with major powers (Soong & Aung, 2021). However, Myanmar will continue to good relations with China, as it seeks to enhance its economic and political interests through strategic ties with major powers like India (Huang, 2015).

Myanmar-China Interactions within the Framework of BRI

The term "Pauk Phaw Relation" was emerged to show the friendly relationship and established official diplomatic relations between Myanmar and China (Myo, M. A., 2011). Myanmar's gateway to the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean creates it as a significant participant in the region of Asia-Pacific (and Indo-Pacific). To fulfill its economic aim and handle the risks in the Malacca Strait, China needed a new trade route through Myanmar to the Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean. Therefore, China has been planning to build "Belt Road Initiatives-BRI" as its first diplomacy step since late 2013. Strategically, Myanmar holds a crucial geopolitical position for China as it provides a shorter and more direct path for Chinese goods to reach the Indian Ocean. This reduces China's dependence on the longer sea routes through the congested Malacca Strait. Politically, Myanmar gained military supplies such as weapons, equipment, technology and training for its air and naval officers from China to expand military-to-military cooperation with Myanmar Armed Forces (Yhome, K. 2014). Economically, it is a long-term cross-continental policy and investment plan aimed at developing infrastructure and fostering the economic collaboration of countries along its BRI orbit. China has invested heavily in Myanmar's infrastructure, particularly in the construction of roads, railways, and ports. As part of the BRI, the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor was established under a memorandum of understanding signed between Myanmar and China, linking Kunming with Mandalay, Yangon, and the Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) of Myanmar which is a prime example of such infrastructure development. Therefore, Myanmar's geopolitical and geostrategic position is crucial for China not only to counter rising India but also to get benefits economically and geopolitically as Myanmar is the main channel connecting South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia, as well as the junction between the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean.

China's neighbors, including Myanmar, a member of ASEAN, welcomed the BRI, believing it to be a way to strengthen connectivity through better infrastructure. Although some China's BRI Projects can create job opportunities to the local people, they may harm Myanmar's natural environment. Many projects of China such as pipelines and other infrastructure projects have made resentment in Myanmar increase for such negative impacts like environmental damage, being unequal in distributing benefits and harmful impacts on local people and their traditional ways of life. For these reasons, Myanmar has reconsidered BRI's projects, China's strategic ambition, because local societies have negative aspects of Chinese projects as well as to reduce China's loans and its dependence on China.

Myanmar-India Interactions within the Framework of FOIP

The relationship between India and Myanmar is rooted in common historical, ethnic, cultural, and religious ties. Myanmar has been a crucial place for the interests of the two rising neighbors, India and China, since the end of the 1980s as it lies strategically at the node of the Indian subcontinent, the Indian Ocean, southwestern China, and the rest of continental Southeast Asia (Egrettau, R., 2008). After the 1990s, India's so-called "Looking East Policy"

focused on the Asian market and extended trade relations to Southeast Asia. India and Myanmar reopened diplomatic missions and consulates in 2000 to improve bilateral economic relations between the two countries. Later, India's policy changed from "Look East" to "Act East", with a more proactive attitude. Myanmar is the access to India's 'Look East' policy, and India's efforts to achieve its goal of strengthening ties with Myanmar have given new momentum. Myanmar is participating in many river and land-based projects of India, such as reconstruction of Sittwe port, the Kalatan Multi-Transport Project and the Tamu-Kalayawa-Kalay Road project and another area where India is deeply involved in Myanmar is the India-Myanmar gas pipeline project, namely. India's role in BRI is important for Myanmar to offset over-dependence on China's projects. Therefore, Myanmar is more closely with the proximity of India to promote the FOIP strategy. As Myanmar is a geopolitically important place and closer to India's heartland than China, Myanmar has become an essential part of India's regional geostrategy towards South and Southeast Asia and its Northeast territories (Lidarev, I., 2013).

Politically, bilateral relations with India, especially in security and defense cooperation, have injected new impetus under the political liberalization of the Thein Sein government. (Haacke, J., 2016). India and Myanmar started a fresh relation or a more fundamental transformation from India's Act East approach leading to a more proactive stance by changing India's government in 2014. By opening up relations between India and Myanmar, they got better opportunities and improvement and mutually beneficial their relations (Gottschlic, P., 2017). Their defense cooperation has been in progress. A more strengthening relationship together with a better understanding of reciprocal security concerns has been built between the two countries through high level visits, enhanced training, capacity building and support in provision of specific equipment and technologies. Economically, Myanmar and India relations during the past few years have been growing from cooperation in all sectors, particularly in those of trade and investment. There has been a close relationship with the Myanmar government established by India through infrastructure and connectivity projects that could promote their strategic interests under India's Act East policy. Moreover, India's involvement in the Indo-Pacific region has also become essential to balancing China's growing power as well as political, economic, and security issues of the maritime sector.

Myanmar and India stand as strategically important neighbors for China. Like China, India also makes efforts to influence over Myanmar to some extent. Because the view of China over Myanmar as strategically significant depends on two main reasons; 1) Myanmar may be the great help for China to counter India's regional influence; and 2) Myanmar provides it the shortest and most direct way to reach the Indian Ocean as a means of avoiding the Strait of Malacca that reduces China's dependency on the strategic chokepoint (Gupta, R., 2013). Generally, the two regional powers compete for influence in Myanmar in every policy area. For the reason that, Myanmar seeks to reduce its excessive dependence on any country and maintain a balance of power between the major powers to increase its influence and resist undue external influences in its affairs. Myanmar has changed its domestic politics to democratic rule since 2011 and attempted to reorient its foreign policy not only to protect itself from its dependence on China but also to overcome geostrategic competition between great powers.

Myanmar adopted a hedging strategy to offset China's influence, to develop relations with India and to reconsider the balance between the major powers in its foreign policy (Lee, J., 2012; July & Haacke, J., 2011). Meredith, K. J. (2013) stated that although Myanmar is dependent on China for military and economic support, by seeking closer ties with India, the country has sought to open up hedging strategic options in the face of the potential risks accompanied by this dependence. Some scholars pointed out that India's desire to counter the increased influence of China in the region and to improve its own influence and position with

regard to China encourages it to enhance close relations with Myanmar (Conference Report of Institute of Social Science, 2015). In addition, Myanmar also shifted to the smooth cooperation with India, the rising country regionally and globally, not only to improve democratic transition but also to reduce the dependence on China. Thus, Myanmar with a key geostrategic position attempts to mutually engage with its counterpart India by using hedging strategy, a useful tool for smaller states to attain a better balance in their relations with great powers. Accordingly, the following two hypotheses derived for this study:

Hypothesis 1: Myanmar's transformation to hedging strategy has significance in enhancing its economic and political gains by playing its geostrategic position.

Hypothesis 2: Myanmar's pursuit of a hedging strategy with India has got the benefit of reducing its dependence on China.

From the literature review, the conceptual framework can be drawn as shown in Figure 1.

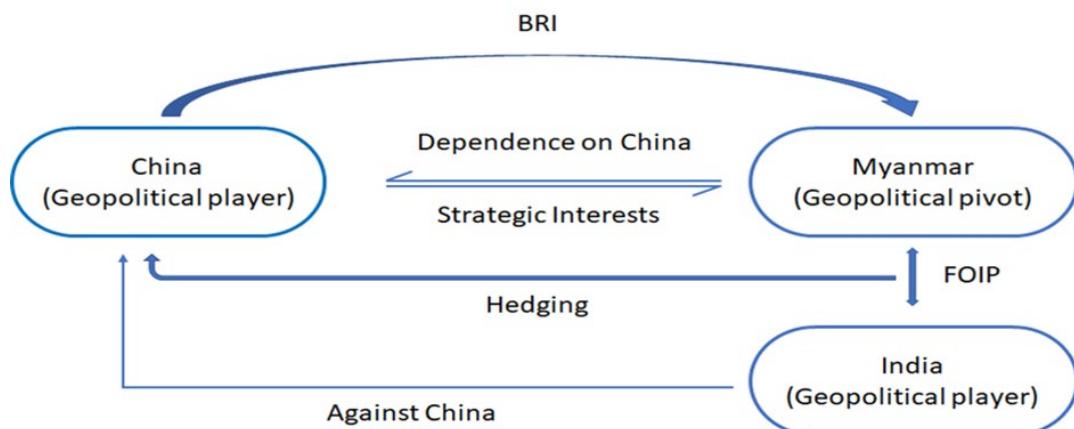


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used the explanatory research method, qualitative method, and comparative analysis by comparing with China and India. This study pointed out the explanatory method as empirical evidence to understand the importance and benefits of hedging strategy by investigating how small and middle states adopt hedging strategy for their economy and security in the uncertain future. The aim of comparative research is to improve the understanding of politics by the use of a scientifically constrained methodology. This study applied the comparative analysis to more understand local and regional politics by comparing among the strategic behavior of China and India and by transforming Myanmar's strategic behavior between the great powers with lack of available data and limited information. This study conducted qualitative research that includes the analysis of words, pictures, videos, or objects in the context in which they occur. This study is intended to understand the impact on economic and political events by changing the behavior of Myanmar cause of using hedging strategy. This study is based on the relevant concept with regards to geopolitical pivot and hedging strategy. It helps small and middle states to maximize their national interests and security and to engage their relationship with great powers by pursuing hedging strategy when they possibly encounter risks and uncertainties in the competition of geopolitical players not because of their power and motivation but because of being geopolitical pivot. This study collected the data from multiple sources with both of Burmese and English for the primary and secondary source of data. But, for the primary, it has some difficulties to collect the data so there was used the google form with questionnaires through email to get answers from Myanmar government officials because of political situation in my country. Collective data of issues are from concerned organizations and government officials' websites. Various documents and news are collected from

newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, governmental publications and statistics, reports of organizations, articles, books. In addition, update information available from internet sources concerning the relations and cooperation between Myanmar, China, India is used. But it has limited to get reliable data and met with the weakness and lack of available data.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Myanmar-China political and economic relations were heavily influenced by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Indo-Pacific region from 2011 to 2020. Myanmar played a vital role in China's BRI, given its strategic position, rich natural resources, potential as a transport hub, and proximity to China's southwestern border. China became Myanmar's largest trading partner, with agreements signed to promote trade and investment, leading to significant Chinese investments in Myanmar's infrastructure projects.

In parallel, Myanmar deepened economic ties with India, signing agreements related to trade, investment, and infrastructure development. According to India's Act East policy under FOIP, it sought to strengthen its relationship with Myanmar both for economic and political reasons. Myanmar facilitated China's access to the Indian Ocean and India's connectivity to Southeast Asia. Myanmar's role in the economic and political rivalry between China and India marked its significance as a geostrategic pivot.

Table 1 shows China's trade share in Myanmar increased from 2011-2015, driven by Myanmar's political transition, rich resources, and strategic location. From 2016-2020, trade share fluctuated due to Myanmar's evolving political landscape and external factors. In the same way, India's share of trade in Myanmar's total trade was on the rise from 2011-2012 to 2013-2014. India's share of trade in Myanmar's total trade also fluctuated, influenced by changes in India's policy and competition from other countries. India's share of trade in Myanmar's total trade decreased slightly in 2014-2015 and relatively decreased beyond 2017-2018 because of the shift of India's policy towards Myanmar under the new government, the delays and challenges in Myanmar for India's infrastructure and connectivity projects, Chinese greater investment in Myanmar under BRI as well as Myanmar's increasing trade relations with other Asian countries that increased competition for India. This can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Share of Trade Volume in Myanmar

No.	Content	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Share of Total Trade Volume by China	27.8	27.6	30.1	34.4	40.8	37.9	36.3	33.1	33.7	33.0
2	Share of Total Trade Volume by India	7.5	7.3	6.6	4.6	6.2	6.7	4.4	4.1	3.6	4.9

Source: Statistical Year Book of Myanmar

In Table 2, it is shown that Chinese investment in Myanmar faced challenges in 2013-2014 due to local opposition and political risks, leading Myanmar to explore alternative sources like India. However, Chinese investment increased again in 2019-2020, driven by key infrastructure projects. Regarding India's investment in Myanmar, it slightly increased in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 due to such factors as Myanmar's improved political and economic climate with opening up several sectors for foreign investment. A relatively decreased investment by India in Myanmar could be seen in the period of 2016-2020 because of India's own domestic economic challenges and changing foreign policy priorities, the weakness of monitoring and control in implementing the projects. India's investment in Myanmar increased briefly but decreased in the later years, as domestic challenges and competition from other countries made it difficult for India to maintain a strong economic presence. It can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Share of Total Foreign Investment in Myanmar

No.	Content	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	Share of Total Foreign Investment by China	93.6	22.3	3.9	14.3	37.5	10.6	29.1	28.2	41.8	4.9
2	Share of Total Foreign Investment by India	1.6	0.8	0.6	2.6	2.4	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0

Source: Directorate of Investment and Company Administration-DICA website

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aimed to enhance its influence in the region through infrastructure development, trade routes, and investments, taking advantage of Myanmar's strategic geopolitical location. This resulted in projects that faced local opposition, environmental concerns, and criticism over transparency and accountability. Myanmar's response to these challenges indicated its determination to protect its sovereignty and national interests, even if it meant risking its relationship with China. To reduce its reliance on China, Myanmar sought closer ties with other countries, especially India. India's Act East Policy (AEP) provided an opportunity for Myanmar to balance against Chinese influence, leading to an expansion of diplomatic and economic ties with India. Myanmar's hedging strategy with India allowed it to deepen strategic, political, and economic ties with India, countering its dependence on China. Despite potential risks, Myanmar achieved some benefits, including economic diversification, infrastructure development, security cooperation, and diplomatic support from India. This approach also offered Myanmar the potential for a finer balance in the relationship of Myanmar and major powers. The cooperation between Myanmar and India under FOIP has been a mix of progress and challenges. Myanmar's such efforts made Chinese influence in the country loosen a little bit although its hedging with India had got some but not many economic and political benefits. As hedging with India is an effective way for Myanmar to break out of China's cycle of dominance, Myanmar was explored to transform its strategic behavior between China and India.

As hypotheses 1 proposed above, the results showed that Myanmar's transformation to hedging strategy has been found to be significant in enhancing its economic and political gains by playing its geostrategic position although it offered not many benefits to Myanmar by cooperating with India. Moreover, according to hypotheses 2, it was found out that Myanmar's pursuit of a hedging strategy with India has got the benefits like reducing its dependence on China to an extent and diversifying its relations with other great powers.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Myanmar's strategic position, with access to the Indian Ocean and shared borders with regional powers China and India, has made it a focal point in their geopolitical ambitions. Myanmar cooperates with both countries under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and India's Act East Policy (AEP) to further its political and economic interests. Myanmar has traditionally maintained a close relationship with China, its largest trading partner and investor. China has invested heavily in Myanmar's infrastructure, including building oil and gas pipelines and developing the Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which is part of the BRI. Despite the tensions and challenges, China remained an important economic partner and a crucial player in Myanmar's development. China's BRI Projects, however, can be thought to harm Myanmar's socio economics and natural environment without well knowing and monitoring the projects. Therefore, comprehensive Feasibility Studies (EIA/SIA) are needed to be carried out. Moreover, the public should know about the good and bad points of the projects. BRI is expected to have benefit for Myanmar. Both Myanmar and China should prioritize transparency and communication in their partnership by taking into account the needs and

concerns of local communities, sustainable development as well as should pay close attention to environmental, social impacts, and seek to minimize any negative consequences.

On the other hand, Myanmar and India enjoy warm political and economic ties, which have been strengthened by India's AEP. India's continued engagement with Myanmar, particularly in the areas of connectivity, energy cooperation, and trade and investment, is important in deepening the bilateral relationship and promoting regional integration under the FOIP. Myanmar's transformation of strategic behavior and ties with India by adopting hedging strategy increased the diversification of foreign relations to a degree during the period of 2011-2020, so it is really the effective way for Myanmar to be able to reduce China's influence. Moreover, Myanmar gained greater leverage in regional affairs, tap into new sources of economic growth and investment, and build new alliances to promote its political interests.

If Myanmar transform its strategic behavior and adopted hedging together with India with its geostrategic position, it can not only reduce dependence on China but also diversify political and economic relations with ASEAN countries and others in the Indo-Pacific Region. If Myanmar can promote in market access and export promotion related to India, it could expand the network of trade routes and its economy in the region. If Myanmar deepens ties with India through hedging strategy for its national interests, it can contribute to regional stability and bring many benefits to the country's development, and could become a geopolitical pivot in the Indo-Pacific region. Myanmar needs to adopt effective and smart foreign, security and economic policies that benefit itself in order to handle its position between the competition of China and India in the Indo-Pacific region.

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Data Availability Statement: The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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