

Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept Seen from Southeast Asia: Perceptions, Ambiguities, and Strategic Hedging

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Abstract

This paper examines how Southeast Asia received Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept amid intensifying great-power competition and a fragmented post-2022 international order. Drawing on the theoretical framework of strategic hedging, the study argues that Southeast Asian states do not interpret Russia's new foreign policy as a driver of regional-order restructuring. Instead, they largely incorporate it into existing practices of uncertainty management. Through an analysis of the region's strategic context, perceptions of Russia's role, and patterns of strategic ambiguity and selective alignment, the paper demonstrates that Russia is viewed as an important but non-decisive partner in Southeast Asia. While Russia's discourses on multipolarity and the Global South resonate at a principled level, they have not translated into firm strategic commitments from the region. Rather, Southeast Asian states maintain strategic ambiguity to preserve autonomy and mitigate risks arising from structural confrontation among major powers. The paper contributes to contemporary international relations scholarship by reaffirming the analytical value of the hedging framework in understanding the behavior of middle and small states in an increasingly fragmented global order.

Keywords: Russian foreign policy, Southeast Asia, strategic hedging, strategic ambiguity.

1. Introduction

The adoption of the Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation in 2023 marks a significant adjustment in Russia's post-Cold War foreign policy strategy, as Moscow formally emphasizes multipolarity, sovereignty, and an expansion of its external engagement beyond the Euro-Atlantic space (Prezident Rossiyskoy Federatsii, 2023). Issued amid escalating Russia-West confrontation following the Ukraine conflict, the document reflects not only short-term responses to geopolitical

shocks but also deeper structural shifts in the contemporary international order (Lo, 2015; Sakwa, 2017, 2021). Nevertheless, most existing scholarship continues to focus on how Russia itself interprets and positions its new foreign policy, while paying insufficient attention to how external actors receive and reinterpret this strategic adjustment.

Southeast Asia constitutes a particularly appropriate case for addressing this gap. Characterized by a concentration of middle and small states, a strong emphasis on the centrality of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and a long-standing tradition of flexible non-alignment, Southeast Asia has historically managed great-power competition through various forms of hedging aimed at coping with uncertainty and avoiding explicit alignment choices (Goh, 2005; Haacke, 2019; Kuik, 2008, 2016). Russia's war in Ukraine and Moscow's subsequent foreign policy repositioning after 2022 have introduced new pressures on Southeast Asian states, compelling them to recalibrate their approaches toward Russia amid overlapping security, economic, and normative considerations (Storey & Choong, 2022; Storey, 2025).

Recent studies suggest that Southeast Asian responses to Russia's post-2022 foreign policy have been marked by ambiguity and selectivity. While Russia's narratives of multipolarity and critiques of Western dominance resonate to some extent with prevailing perspectives in the Global South (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Zarakol, 2017), practical constraints—particularly in defense cooperation, military-technical ties, and exposure to sanctions—have limited the scope for deeper political alignment with Moscow (Gosselin-Malo, 2023; Storey, 2021; Zaręba, 2022). Vietnam's conduct between 2022 and 2024, often described through the lens of “bamboo diplomacy”, vividly illustrates how Southeast Asian states seek to maintain relations with Russia while avoiding direct confrontation with other major power centers (Alexander, 2025).

Against this backdrop, this paper analyzes how Russia's 2023 foreign policy is perceived and interpreted in Southeast Asia, with a focus on patterns of perception, strategic ambiguity, and hedging behavior. By shifting the analytical lens from Russia's doctrinal intentions to regional reception, the study highlights the agency of middle states in interpreting and adapting great-power signals, while contributing to broader debates on international order transformation in the post-hegemonic era (Jones & Jenne, 2021; Tan, 2020; Wohlforth, 1999).

2. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Framework

This study employed a combined theoretical framework that integrates hedging theory in international relations with a perception- and interpretation-oriented approach to foreign policy analysis in order to explain how Southeast Asian states receive and respond to Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept. In the context of intensifying great-power competition, hedging is understood as a flexible strategy adopted by middle and small states to manage uncertainty, avoid rigid alignment choices, and maximize policy autonomy (Goh, 2005; Kuik, 2008, 2016, 2022). This

approach emphasizes deliberate ambiguity, allowing states to pursue selective cooperation while maintaining strategic distance from major powers.

Recent scholarship has further refined the concept of hedging by identifying its operational logics—such as trust-building, network diversification, and soft balancing—and by specifying the conditions under which hedging strategies are most likely to emerge in the Asia-Pacific context (Haacke, 2019; Jackson, 2014; Jones & Jenne, 2021; Yao, 2025). Building on these contributions, this study conceptualizes hedging not merely as a security choice but also as a mode of interpreting and receiving external foreign policy signals. Accordingly, the analytical framework is supplemented with a perception- and interpretation-based approach, which enables a distinction between Russia's self-positioning intentions and the ways in which Southeast Asian states understand, accept, or adapt those messages in practice.

Research Methods

Methodologically, the study relied on qualitative analysis based on the synthesis and interpretation of secondary sources, including academic literature, research reports, and policy analyses on Russia–Southeast Asia relations, regional responses to the Russia–Ukraine war, and ASEAN hedging strategies. A thematic comparative analysis is employed to identify common patterns of perception, strategic ambiguity, and hedging behavior across the region, while also highlighting variations among key cases. This approach facilitates a systematic linkage between theory, discourse, and practice, allowing for a balanced assessment of both the influence and the limitations of Russia's new foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

In addition to synthesizing secondary literature, the study employed policy discourse analysis to examine how key concepts such as multipolarity, the Global South, strategic autonomy, and hedging are interpreted in academic studies and policy reports related to Southeast Asia. This method helps clarify the distinction between Russia's self-positioning discourse and the ways in which regional states receive, reinterpret, or adapt these messages within their own policy practices.

Furthermore, the study adopted illustrative case comparison to highlight the diversity of regional responses to Russia's new foreign policy. Selected cases—such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and other ASEAN states with varying levels of defense cooperation with Russia—are referenced to illustrate different manifestations of hedging strategies in the region. This approach does not aim to construct fully independent case studies; rather, it serves to identify broader patterns in Southeast Asian foreign policy behavior.

The combination of discourse analysis, literature synthesis, and thematic comparison enabled the study to connect theoretical perspectives, regional perceptions, and policy practices. This approach provided a balanced assessment of both the influence and the limitations of Russia's new foreign policy in Southeast Asia.

Finally, the paper clearly distinguishes hedging from classical alignment models such as balancing and bandwagoning. It treats hedging as a flexible strategy of uncertainty management that enables Southeast Asian states to maintain relations with multiple centers of power simultaneously without committing to rigid alignments or structural confrontation.

3. Findings

Southeast Asia's Strategic Context

In the post-2022 period, Southeast Asia operates within an increasingly complex strategic environment characterized by intensifying great-power competition, the fragmentation of the international order, and the spillover effects of the Russia–Ukraine war. Unlike regions structured around rigid security alliances, Southeast Asia constitutes an open strategic space in which middle and small states must simultaneously manage overlapping power axes—most notably between the United States and China—while also accommodating the presence of extra-regional powers such as Russia (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Sakwa, 2017).

Within this context, ASEAN and the principle of “ASEAN centrality” continue to play a pivotal role in shaping regional strategic behavior. Despite limited institutional capacity and often fragile internal consensus, ASEAN provides an essential multilateral framework that enables member states to preserve diplomatic space, reduce pressures to choose sides, and manage great-power competition through norms-based mechanisms and preventive diplomacy. This approach reflects Southeast Asia's enduring preference for regional stability over deep engagement in systemic confrontational structures (Goh, 2005; Tan, 2020).

Alongside this, traditions of flexible non-alignment and strategic hedging remain central to the foreign policy thinking of many Southeast Asian states. Unlike Cold War-era non-alignment, contemporary hedging allows states to maintain security ties with the United States, expand economic cooperation with China, and diversify relations with other partners to avoid strategic dependence (Jackson, 2014; Jones & Jenne, 2021; Kuik, 2008, 2016, 2021). Within this logic, Southeast Asia does not seek absolute neutrality, but rather prioritizes strategic ambiguity and adaptive flexibility in response to major shifts in the international environment. Some studies further argue that flexible non-alignment continues to offer Southeast Asia a viable means of sustaining regional integration without becoming locked into great-power rivalry (Gong, 2022).

The Russia–Ukraine war has placed this strategic configuration under new strain, as Southeast Asian states face mounting pressures related to international law, sanctions regimes, and norms of sovereignty. Nevertheless, regional responses reveal a consistent tendency to avoid politicizing foreign relations along the lines of global confrontation. Statements and actions by ASEAN and individual member states have largely focused on the indirect consequences of the conflict—such as economic stability, energy security, and supply-chain disruptions—rather than treating the war

as a test of alliance loyalty or normative alignment (Alexander, 2025; Storey & Choong, 2022).

Against this backdrop, Russia is generally perceived as an important but non-central actor in Southeast Asia's strategic calculations. While Russia lacks China's extensive economic influence and does not function as a security guarantor comparable to the United States, it maintains a notable presence in areas such as defense cooperation, energy, and multilateral diplomacy. For many Southeast Asian states, relations with Russia are framed within a logic of partner diversification, aimed at expanding strategic autonomy and reducing dependence risks (Korolev, 2016, 2019; Storey, 2021, 2025).

Another defining feature of Southeast Asia's strategic context is intra-regional diversity. Member states differ significantly in their security dependencies, economic interest structures, and historical ties with Russia, resulting in uneven responses to Moscow's new foreign policy. This diversity constrains ASEAN's ability to articulate a unified position toward Russia, while reinforcing a tendency for national-level policy management through differentiated hedging strategies (Haacke, 2019; Kuik, 2021).

Finally, Southeast Asia's strategic environment is shaped by prevailing perceptions of a shifting international order. While many regional actors share the view that Western-led order is in decline, they remain cautious about the emergence of a new order marked by confrontation and hierarchy. Consequently, Southeast Asia tends to support discourses of multipolarity and balance of power at the level of principle, while avoiding deep commitments to order-building projects that could impose long-term strategic costs (Lo, 2015; Wohlforth, 1999; Zarakol, 2017).

Taken together, these factors indicate that Southeast Asia's strategic context is defined by caution, flexibility, and a strong emphasis on uncertainty management. This structural setting explains why regional actors interpret Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept through the lens of strategic hedging, combining selective engagement, sustained ambiguity, and the avoidance of rigid alignment. This context provides a critical foundation for analyzing Southeast Asia's perceptions, responses, and the limits of its engagement with Russia's new foreign policy in the sections that follow.

Russia as Seen from Southeast Asia

Amid intensifying great-power competition and a fragmented international order, Southeast Asia's perception of Russia is fundamentally pragmatic, selective, and non-absolutist. Russia is neither viewed as a central strategic partner for the region nor dismissed as a marginal actor. Instead, it is generally perceived as a complementary partner that can expand Southeast Asian states' strategic space in an uncertain post-2022 environment (Korolev, 2016; Storey, 2021, 2025). A salient feature of Southeast Asian perceptions of Russia is the relative separation between political-normative assessments and practical interests. While the Russia-Ukraine war raises questions related to international law and sovereignty, many Southeast Asian states have

avoided interpreting Russia exclusively through the lens of a normative confrontation between the West and Russia. Regional responses have instead emphasized the indirect consequences of the conflict for economic stability, energy security, and global supply chains, rather than engaging in partisan attribution of political responsibility (Alexander, 2025; Storey & Choong, 2022).

In the defense sector, Russia has long been regarded as an important—though increasingly constrained—arms supplier in Southeast Asia. Prior to 2022, Russia maintained a significant position in several key markets, such as Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia, cultivating an image as a defense partner relatively free from stringent political conditionalities. Following the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict, however, disruptions in supply chains, financial transactions, and logistics have undermined Russia's defense export capacity. As a result, many Southeast Asian states have reassessed their level of dependence on Russian military equipment (Gosselin-Malo, 2023; Storey, 2021). This has contributed to a growing perception that Russia remains a useful partner but no longer constitutes a comprehensive alternative to other defense suppliers.

At a broader strategic level, Southeast Asia tends to view Russia as a secondary balancing actor within the regional power structure. Russia lacks the resources to compete directly with either the United States or China in Southeast Asia, yet its presence retains symbolic and strategic value in terms of foreign policy diversification. Korolev (2019) argued that Russia's limited but selective engagement in arenas such as the South China Sea reflects a form of reverse hedging, whereby Moscow seeks to maintain relations with multiple parties without becoming entangled in regional conflicts. This approach aligns with the preferences of many Southeast Asian states, which prioritize stability and the avoidance of escalation.

From the perspective of Southeast Asian policymakers, Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept is received primarily as a statement of global orientation rather than a commitment likely to alter the regional balance of power. Russia's emphasis on the Global South and multipolarity has elicited a degree of principled sympathy, as many Southeast Asian states share perceptions of the weakening of the Western-led order. However, this resonance remains largely normative rather than strategic, as regional actors remain cautious about Russia's capacity to translate multipolar discourse into tangible benefits for Southeast Asia (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Lo, 2015).

Intra-regional variation further shapes Southeast Asia's views of Russia. States with deeper historical ties to Moscow, such as Vietnam, tend to adopt restrained and pragmatic approaches, seeking to preserve existing defense and energy interests while avoiding entanglement in the political ramifications of global confrontation (Alexander, 2025; Zaręba, 2022). By contrast, countries with more limited engagement with Russia often approach Moscow's new foreign policy with greater caution, perceiving Russia as a peripheral partner within the broader regional strategic landscape (Storey, 2025).

From a longer-term perspective, Southeast Asia views Russia as a great power attempting to reposition itself amid significant structural constraints in economic capacity, technological development, and regional presence. This repositioning is monitored with cautious interest, but it does not generate expectations that Russia will assume a leading role in shaping Southeast Asia's regional order. Rather, Russia is situated within a multi-layered relational structure, in which Moscow's role depends heavily on its domestic stability and its ability to manage relations with other major power centers (Casula, 2025; Sakwa, 2017, 2021). Recent studies have even questioned the substantive depth of Russia-ASEAN relations, suggesting that the "strategic partnership" framework remains more symbolic than a foundation for deep and sustained cooperation (Korolev, 2024).

In sum, from a Southeast Asian perspective, Russia is perceived as an important but non-decisive partner – an actor capable of widening strategic options without altering the fundamental logic of the regional order. This perception clearly reflects Southeast Asia's hedging mindset, in which Russia is integrated into strategies of foreign policy diversification rather than elevated to the status of a core pillar or an alternative to existing strategic relationships.

Strategic Ambiguity and Selective Alignment

A defining feature of Southeast Asia's reception of, and response to, Russia's new foreign policy is the maintenance of strategic ambiguity combined with selective alignment. This approach enables regional states to avoid entanglement in global confrontational structures while preserving and optimizing national interests in an increasingly uncertain international environment. In the post-2022 context, strategic ambiguity does not signal indecision or inconsistency; rather, it constitutes a deliberate choice that reflects the risk-management capacity of small and middle powers facing intensified great-power competition (Haacke, 2019; Kuik, 2021). This perspective aligns with the classic understanding of hedging as a strategy for managing uncertainty in an incompletely structured power environment, allowing states to mitigate risks while avoiding rigid alliance commitments (Medeiros, 2005).

Within this logic, Southeast Asian states have refrained from making firm normative commitments regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict and Moscow's new foreign policy orientation. Instead of explicitly supporting or opposing Russia along the polarized value axis between the West and Russia, regional actors have emphasized general principles such as respect for sovereignty, peaceful dispute settlement, and regional stability. Such formulations preserve interpretive space and prevent lock-in to positions that could raise long-term strategic costs (Alexander, 2025; Storey & Choong, 2022).

Strategic ambiguity is paired with sector-specific selective alignment, whereby relations with Russia are maintained or adjusted depending on particular policy domains. In the defense sphere, many Southeast Asian countries continue to regard Russia as a useful partner, especially for technical cooperation and maintenance of existing platforms. At the same time, they have accelerated the diversification of

suppliers to mitigate risks arising from logistical and financial constraints following 2022 (Gosselin-Malo, 2023; Storey, 2021). This reflects an asymmetric form of alignment: cooperation is sustained at a level sufficient to preserve existing capabilities but not expanded into new commitments that could deepen dependency.

At the regional strategic level, selective alignment is also evident in Southeast Asia's reluctance to associate Russia's new foreign policy with existing regional security architectures. Russia is neither expected to become a security pillar in Southeast Asia nor to be deeply embedded in ASEAN-led governance mechanisms. Rather, Russia's presence is kept flexible and supplementary, consistent with the region's priority of maintaining balance among major powers without undermining ASEAN centrality (Goh, 2005; Tan, 2020).

Another important dimension of strategic ambiguity lies in the separation between discourse and practice. While several Southeast Asian states express measured sympathy for Russia's emphasis on multipolarity and the Global South, they simultaneously avoid translating such rhetorical resonance into concrete strategic alignments. This reflects an awareness that the emerging multipolar order remains highly uncertain, and that premature commitment to any order-building project entails significant risks (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Lo, 2015).

Studies of hedging in Southeast Asia suggest that strategic ambiguity often functions as a mechanism for buying time and preserving strategic autonomy. Kuik (2008, 2016) argued that Southeast Asian states tend to maintain simultaneous relations with multiple great powers—even when these relationships are mutually contradictory—to avoid binary choices. In the context of Russia's new foreign policy, this logic is reaffirmed as regional states sustain limited cooperation with Russia while ensuring that such ties do not undermine more consequential strategic relationships with the United States, China, or other partners.

Intra-ASEAN diversity further reinforces the tendency toward ambiguity and selective alignment. Countries with higher levels of dependence on defense cooperation with Russia tend to pursue pragmatic and discreet engagement, whereas states with weaker ties to Moscow can more readily maintain greater political distance. Yet across these variations, the common denominator remains the avoidance of overtly confrontational commitments or rigid alignments (Haacke, 2019; Jones & Jenne, 2021).

Finally, strategic ambiguity and selective alignment also reflect perceptions of Russia's hierarchical position within the regional power structure. Southeast Asia recognizes Russia as a globally significant power but one with limited influence over immediate regional dynamics. Consequently, maintaining a flexible relationship with Russia is understood as part of a broader uncertainty-management strategy rather than as an independent strategic pillar (Sakwa, 2017; Zarakol, 2017).

In sum, strategic ambiguity and selective alignment provide a crucial lens for understanding Southeast Asia's response to Russia's new foreign policy. By sustaining ambiguity, fragmenting alignment across policy sectors, and avoiding rigid commitments, Southeast Asian states seek to optimize benefits while minimizing risks—thereby reaffirming hedging as a central logic of regional foreign policy behavior in the post-2022 period.

4. Discussion

The analyses presented in Section 3 demonstrate that Southeast Asia's reception of Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept is shaped by a distinctive strategic context in which hedging, strategic ambiguity, and selective alignment function as central regulatory mechanisms. These findings yield several important implications for understanding the nature of Russia's foreign policy as perceived in the region, as well as for broader debates on how Southeast Asian states manage uncertainty within an increasingly fragmented international order.

First, the findings reinforce the argument that Russia is not perceived as a strategic pillar in Southeast Asia, but rather as a component within broader diversification strategies. This perception is consistent with assessments that, within the regional power structure, Russia lacks the economic and institutional resources to compete directly with the United States or China, despite retaining relative advantages in certain sectors, such as defense and energy (Korolev, 2016; Storey, 2021, 2025). Consequently, Russia's new foreign policy—despite its global ambitions—is received in Southeast Asia primarily at the tactical rather than strategic level, emphasizing complementarity instead of regional-order transformation.

Second, Southeast Asia's sustained strategic ambiguity toward Russia's new foreign policy highlights the adaptive capacity of hedging strategies in the post-2022 environment. Contrary to interpretations that equate ambiguity with indecision, the regional hedging literature underscores ambiguity as a deliberate choice aimed at preserving strategic autonomy and avoiding the costs of rigid alignment (Haacke, 2019; Kuik, 2008, 2016, 2021). In the Russian case, strategic ambiguity allows Southeast Asian states to maintain selective cooperation while avoiding entanglement in normative confrontations between the West and Russia (Alexander, 2025; Storey & Choong, 2022).

Third, the analysis reveals a notable gap between Russia's multipolar discourse and Southeast Asia's practical expectations. While many regional states share perceptions of the weakening of the Western-led order and express principled sympathy for narratives associated with the Global South, they remain cautious about Russia's capacity to translate these narratives into concrete benefits for Southeast Asia (Cooley & Nexon, 2020; Lo, 2015). This pattern reflects a form of conditional resonance, whereby rhetorical alignment does not translate into strategic commitment or long-term alignment.

Fourth, intra-ASEAN diversity continues to be a critical variable shaping responses to Russia's new foreign policy. States with deeper historical ties and defense interests linked to Russia tend to pursue pragmatic and discreet engagement, whereas others maintain greater political distance. Nevertheless, across these variations, the common denominator remains the avoidance of overt confrontation and rigid alignment – an enduring characteristic of Southeast Asian foreign policy behavior (Jones & Jenne, 2021; Kuik, 2021).

Fifth, the findings raise questions about the structural limits of Russia's new foreign policy in Southeast Asia. Challenges related to defense exports, financial constraints, and supply-chain disruptions since 2022 have reduced Russia's practical attractiveness as a long-term partner (Gosselin-Malo, 2023). This helps explain why Southeast Asian states tend to maintain cooperation at a status-quo-preserving level rather than expanding into new domains.

Sixth, the findings of this study contribute to the literature on hedging strategies by extending the analytical focus from alignment behavior to the processes through which major-power policies are received and interpreted. While much of the existing scholarship primarily examines how Southeast Asian states balance their relations between the United States and China (Haacke, 2019; Jones & Jenne, 2021; Kuik, 2008, 2016), this paper demonstrates that hedging also operates at the level of perception and discourse, as regional states actively filter and adjust foreign policy signals from Russia. In doing so, the study highlights an additional dimension of hedging – what may be described as interpretive hedging – in the foreign policy behavior of middle and small states.

Seventh, this study offers a new perspective compared with previous research on Russia's role in Asia after 2022. Much of the existing literature has focused on Moscow's "pivot to Asia" strategy or on assessments of Russia's geo-economic and military capabilities in the region. In contrast, this paper shifts the analytical focus to how Southeast Asian states receive and interpret Russia's new foreign policy. This approach demonstrates that Russia's role in the region is shaped not only by Moscow's material capabilities or strategic ambitions but also by the mediating processes of regional actors. In this sense, the study shows that Russia's influence in Southeast Asia is largely incorporated into existing hedging strategies, rather than directly restructuring the regional order.

Finally, from a theoretical perspective, the Southeast Asian case confirms the continued relevance of hedging as an analytical framework for understanding the behavior of small and middle powers in a reconfiguring international order. Rather than disrupting the underlying logic of hedging in Southeast Asia, Russia's new foreign policy has been absorbed into existing hedging practices through strategic ambiguity and selective alignment. This suggests that the impact of global strategic shifts – even those framed as rupture or realignment – is strongly mediated by regional contexts and by local capacities for uncertainty management (Wohlforth, 1999; Zarakol, 2017).

5. Conclusion

This paper examined how Southeast Asia has received Russia's 2023 Foreign Policy Concept amid intensifying great-power competition and the fragmentation of the international order in the post-2022 period. Through the analytical lenses of hedging, strategic ambiguity, and selective alignment, the study demonstrates that Southeast Asian states do not interpret Russia's new foreign policy as a catalyst for restructuring the regional order. Instead, it is largely absorbed into existing uncertainty-management calculations.

The findings indicate that Russia is perceived as an important but non-decisive partner in Southeast Asia. While Russia's discourses on multipolarity and the Global South resonate at the level of principle, they do not translate into rigid strategic commitments from the region. Rather, Southeast Asian states sustain strategic ambiguity to preserve autonomy, avoid alignment costs, and mitigate risks arising from structural confrontation among major powers. Engagement with Russia thus remains sectorally fragmented, with cooperation maintained primarily to safeguard existing interests while limiting expansion into long-term or binding commitments.

The analysis also showed that intra-ASEAN diversity plays a significant role in shaping responses to Russia, yet without altering the underlying regional logic of hedging. Even in cases where historical ties and substantive interests with Russia are deeper, states continue to prioritize caution, discretion, and the avoidance of politicizing foreign relations along global confrontation lines. This pattern reflects Southeast Asia's adaptive capacity to mediate global strategic shocks through flexible foreign policy practices.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforced the analytical value of hedging in explaining the behavior of small and middle powers in a shifting international order. The findings further suggest that the impact of global strategic adjustments—even those framed as rupture or realignment—is consistently filtered through regional contexts and concrete interest calculations. This provides an important foundation for future research on the role of non-Western regions in shaping, adapting to, and constraining contemporary projects of international order reconfiguration.

6. References

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