

Russia-Thailand Defense and Security Cooperation in the Context of Strategic Competition in Southeast Asia in the Early Twenty-First Century

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ABSTRACTS

This article analyzes Russia–Thailand defense and security cooperation in the context of intensifying strategic competition in Southeast Asia in the early twenty-first century. Drawing upon the theoretical approaches of soft balancing and hedging strategy, the study clarifies the motivations driving bilateral cooperation while examining key areas of collaboration, including military-technical cooperation, arms procurement, military training, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, and non-traditional security challenges. The findings indicate that, for Russia, Thailand serves as an important partner in its strategy to expand influence in Southeast Asia and enhance its presence within the Indo-Pacific security architecture. Meanwhile, Thailand views Russia as a supplementary partner for diversifying its defense relations, reducing dependence on the United States, and maintaining strategic balance among major powers. Nevertheless, Russia–Thailand defense and security cooperation continues to face significant constraints stemming from the U.S.–Thailand alliance, U.S.–China strategic rivalry, and the consequences of the Russia–Ukraine conflict. The article contributes to clarifying Russia’s role in the contemporary Southeast Asian security architecture.

Keywords: Russia, Thailand, defense cooperation, regional security, Southeast Asia