

INDONESIA PARTICIPATION IN DEFENSE DIPLOMACY IN INDO-PACIFIC

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ABSTRACT

Global political, economic, and social dynamics in this modern era have shifted the interests of every nation from defense power acquirement to domination of resources. One of the richest of resources area is Indo-Pacific. There is still no international statute about the region's territorial borders, but some powerful states compose their own version of the borders scheme, based on their own national interests. As general geographical consensus, the area ranges from Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and the land areas within. The geopolitically strategic region contains plenteous potential to empower Blue Economy and shipping industry, but also appeals various maritime security issues like piracy, smuggling and illegal fishing. Indonesia as one of the Founding Fathers of ASEAN and located at the strategic point of international trade route, has lots of potential to be major player in Indo-Pacific. Indonesia needs to enhance its political role while defending Indo-Pacific security through defense diplomacy. This research is conducted using qualitative method, with literature resources from various books, international articles, government and news website. The result of this research explains about Indonesia participation on defense diplomacy in Indo-Pacific, including the activities, opportunities and challenges within, and Indonesia's national interest in the defense diplomacy.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Military, Indonesia, Indo-Pacific.

1. Introduction

The global political, economic, and social dynamics in this modern era have shifted the interests of every nation in the world from colonialism and imperialism to domination of resources. Every country is now competing to fulfill the essential interests of its people such as food, development and national security, in a more diplomatic and mutually beneficial acts through international trade and cooperation.

Apart from shifting national interests, globalization also highlights the strategic value of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. With the presence of major Asian powers, the two waters are very important as the center of world security and economic growth. As the largest water area in the world, the two oceans—including the agricultural and maritime countries within—produce plenteous natural resources and high potential to develop Blue Economy. Although there is

still no international statute about the region's territorial borders, some countries especially the great powers (United States, Australia, Japan and India) compose their own version of the borders scheme, based on their national interests and still changing as the global situation and interests are developing. The general geographical consensus believes, the area ranges from Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and the land area (states) within (Haruko, 2020).

The Indian Ocean is currently developing into a very strategic area as world trade route in the last 20 years. In total, at least 12% (about 20,000) ships did trading in 2015, including 2,000 oil vessels and nearly 1000 Indian Ocean container ships (Kazsubska, 2017). This data adds more strategic value to Indian Ocean and could help to open more opportunities for wider maritime exploration. On the other hand, the stability of this region also greatly affects its

member countries' national security, political conditions, domestic economic and social growth. In order to protect its national interest, Indonesia as a developing country, has to maintain good relations with the developed Indo-Pacific countries –especially in military cooperation– as one of the balancing efforts using hedging strategy.

Even though Indo-Pacific region is relatively peaceful, the countries within still have to maintain and increase their military strength, including improving defense equipment technology for national defense and regional security strategies. Military cooperation with various countries, including in the comparison of strength, prevents the emergence of a security dilemma, especially between countries that have experienced human rights violations or territorial borders.

Before getting deeper into the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesian military itself still faces several problems in their own territorial waters, both state security issues and tensions with other countries. For example, there are some piracy and foreign ships disputes that illegally steal natural resources in Indonesian waters. Even though Indonesia has approved an agreement with neighboring countries to conduct joint patrols, the efforts to protect Indonesia's sovereignty and security are still considered ineffective because Indonesia still has several shortcomings that hinder its military cooperation with other countries (RSIS, 2012). Lack of the ability of military power to protect the country can affect the credibility of the country's leadership in international realm. This is what Indonesia needs to improve in order to maintain its major role in the Indo-Pacific region.

Likewise, in the Southeast Asia region, Indonesia and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member countries are also still getting various external pressures that affect their regional security and stability. For example, the issue

in South China Sea; which is located within the Indo-Pacific region, a dispute involving Southeast Asian countries with one of the great political and economy powers, China. Several ASEAN countries are bound by the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) agreement with China and are under pressure in fighting for rights to the South China Sea. Although Southeast Asia is a regional unit, each member has their own interests and foreign policies (Thu, 2020). State security and national development are the top priorities, so economic and military cooperation with other major powers must be maintained.

It is not only Indonesia and Southeast Asia that are worried about China's domination in the Indo-Pacific region. Graeme Dobell from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) said the US has a strategy to combine its allied countries in the region to balance China's dominating presence (Wallis & Batley, 2020). The threats that may arise in this region need to be anticipated by increasing the strength and cooperation of each countries' military. Not only the developed countries, small island nations and developing countries also need to affirm their military strength in this regional cooperation in order to maintain maritime security, protect natural resources, and indirectly protect the national interests of each country.

Broadly discussed, it can be concluded that the spur of defense diplomacy through cooperation between Indo-Pacific countries is caused by the strategic value of this region that has the potential to become an area that is prone to transnational (maritime) crime. The area can be used as a route for the mobilization of terrorist organizations, smuggling and illegal trade, or exploitation of natural resources. It is hoped that Indonesia will be able to maintain regional security and its interests by showing the existence of its military power to in the international stage.

Apart from increasing their capability and modernizing military technology, Indonesia also needs to carry out diplomacy by maintaining military cooperative relations with other countries. Reducing threats to national security can be done by minimizing tensions with other possible actors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Indo-Pacific

The Indo-Pacific concept has been studied by a number of researchers and scientists, but there is still no consensus (yet) on a fixed definition. Various parties, especially developed countries, can freely define the scope of its territorial boundaries and interests in Indo-Pacific. The concept of boundaries by each party also often changes according to international dynamics that affect their capacities and interests. The term Indo-Pacific is essentially a biogeographic formation of the earth's seas mapped from the Indian Ocean, West and Central Pacific Ocean, and connected by the South China Sea, where Indonesia stands as a biogeographic link among the Indo-Pacific waters. The term Indo-Pacific is not a mere discourse, but scientifically a geopolitical area with a legitimate existence. This concept later evolved into a social construction of international relations as a form of regional cooperation in political, trade, economic and military grand strategy based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982) (Yadav, Kompas 2020).

In his research, Wada Haruko (2020) states the birth of the term "Indo-Pacific" has become the symbol of unifying powerful and developing countries within it or the ones with interests in the region (US, Australia, Japan, France, UK, India, and Southeast Asian countries). Then, they started to develop efforts to bring the Indo-Pacific as an ideal and strategic region based on the values of these countries. The countries in the Indo-

Pacific region have their respective geographic definitions that intersect with each other even though the geographical boundaries of the Indo-Pacific concept are still unclear. So that neither now nor in the future there is universal and coherent certainty about which countries belong to or control the region.

According to Auslin (2010), geographically, the Indo-Pacific region has the potential for dynamic economic power (blue economy), military and politics dispute or cooperation field, so that it becomes an important region in the world, with the hope of having a significant impact globally; creating a region with the stability of security and welfare of its people, into a more liberal area without having to involve US military forces or their allies, as the world's most impactful powers. However, Auslin also argues that there are several foreign policy challenges for the US and liberal countries, namely maintaining the security of the Indo-Pacific from issues of political tension that trigger any other issues that can affect global economy, politics and security stabilization.

Meanwhile, according to Wallis and Batley (2020), not only the US and its allies have an interest and power domination in the Indo-Pacific region, Australia and the island countries in the Pacific Ocean also play the important role as a starting point for analyzing geopolitical changes in the Pacific Islands and their impacts on the region. However, there is still a concern that the unique characteristics and interests of Pacific Island countries will be neglected as the great powers enter the Indo-Pacific region. Thus, the concept of 'Blue Pacific' was formed by Pacific Island leaders which aims to encourage Pacific Island countries to enhance their autonomy strategy as a "Blue Continent", to survive amidst global power competition in the region.

It can be concluded that one of the

“side effects” of the entry of great powers in the Indo-Pacific is the emergence of concerns for the residents of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands over the impact of geopolitical changes in the Indo-Pacific, even though they don’t share the same geopolitical perspective. One of the efforts to affirm the interests of the Pacific Island Leaders Forum is to emphasize the security concept of the 'Blue Pacific' which promotes the security of human rights and the environment (especially the ocean), where human welfare takes precedence over threats to national security. Australia is also expected to help address the domestic security issues in the Pacific Island countries (Wallis, Batley, 2020).

2.2 Indonesia in Indo-Pacific

As a country with promising maritime potential that is reckoned with in the world, Indonesia must begin to expand its geopolitical outlook beyond Southeast Asia to design its foreign policy and play a more active strategic leadership role. Indonesia has succeeded in strengthening its presence in the Indo-Pacific in the midst of international competition from major world powers, by cooperating with ASEAN as an association of countries from the strategic regions within the Indo-Pacific region itself, Southeast Asia (Scott, 2019).

Indonesia is also a potential great Indo-Pacific power, it must be able to prove its ability to handle various security issues in its country. For Indonesia, military power is an important aspect of state security even though it is not the main factor on determining the perception of the country's security. This is because the challenges to state security for Indonesia arise from internal problems such as the dynamics of changes in society in efforts to develop the country. According to Indonesia, establishing national and regional resilience is more important so that the protection support from

the great powers (The Quad, especially US) does not become an urgent necessity (Wanandi, 1982).

In addition, Indonesia also has an ambition to revive its identity as the largest maritime country so that it can play a more active role in the international realm, especially the Indo-Pacific, as presented by President Joko Widodo at the East Asia Summit in November 2014 as GMF – Global Maritime Fulcrum (Laksmana, 2019). Thus, Indonesia seeks to collaborate with ASEAN through the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific document, which was prepared with the hope of strengthening ASEAN cooperation in bilateral and multilateral dialogue with external parties that focus on welfare development and maritime aspects as an element of global leadership. This document is an attempt by Indonesia to maintain the autonomy of power in Southeast Asia. Through this strategy, Indonesia is indirectly implying a message to all major powers in the Indo-Pacific not to make the Southeast Asia as an arena for competition, but as the field to work together to strengthen the region security and prosperity in inclusive partnership (Manurung & Arry, 2019).

2.3 Regional Security

One of the main interests of every country is its own regional interests. Ensuring the security of the area in which the country is located cannot be achieved without the joint efforts of the neighboring countries. According to Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (Erokhin et al., 2018), regional security is a group of countries whose primary security interests are closely related so that they cannot be separated individually with each other. The theory sees the situation of interdependence in state security as a critical factor in grouping of territorial division.

In the Indo-Pacific realm, there are five countries with great powers that have the

potential to become the center of the Indo-Pacific geopolitics (US, PRC, India, Japan and Russia) who have very strong interests in the region - that may intersect one another, even to the point of threat of war. This geopolitical situation indicates that every country with a small or medium power in a region will tend to form a regional security (security community). The challenge is to convince major countries to work together to protect their respective interests, including maintaining regional security (Bell, 2005).

2.4 Diplomacy and Defense Diplomacy

State diplomacy in the defense sector is carried out to build trust between participating nations as well as a foundation to prevent conflicts with other countries (security dilemma). This strategy also aims to increase the capability and professionalism of defense through various education, training, strategic defense equipment procurement, and transfer of technology. Through this context, international defense diplomacy is expected to become an instrument of national defense diplomacy in fulfilling national interests (Widiyanto, 2019).

Defense diplomacy is carried out in the context of managing national interests and national defense. In the level of global competition, establishing military cooperation is an effort to balance power conducted by Indonesia in facing the domination of great power countries in the Indo-Pacific region, including the Southeast Asia region. Through defense diplomacy, Indonesia as a developing country can establish cooperation with major countries (The Quad: US, Japan, Australia, India), aimed to minimize the competition and threats risks from other countries. Through military cooperation, all involved parties, including Indonesia, are expected to do transfer of technology to exchange capabilities and various knowledge and

increase capabilities and maintain regional security (Winarno, 2014).

Defense diplomacy has several main functions, including: collecting and analyzing information on the armed forces and security situation in countries of conflict or the purpose of sending military forces, promoting cooperation, communication and mutual relations between sending armed forces and receiving countries, arranging working visits to representatives from defense authorities and military units of sending countries in receiving countries, supporting defense equipment business contracts between the sender and receiving countries, and as representatives of the sender countries and their armed forces at official event in receiving countries (Pajtinka, 2016).

According to Penghong Cai (2016), defense diplomacy is a traditional security concept used for political purposes, namely strengthening the defense and security of a country and its allies against the enemy together. Meanwhile according to Dr. Erik Pajtinka (2016), defense diplomacy is defined as a series of activities generally carried out by the state defense authority with the aim of achieving the country's foreign policy interests in the field of defense and security policy, which are determined by negotiation skills and other diplomatic skills.

3. Research Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach, since the data used is written data (words), from journal articles, books, news and government or international organization official websites. All dynamics reviewed in the data will form a timeline and interpreted as a conclusion to answer the formulation of research problems, without being quantified first. Then, we use Historical method because this research is compiled using data about a series of phenomena that have occurred, in the form secondary data

(literature study). The data is about the process and various dynamics of a series of activities in Indonesia's defense diplomacy efforts with other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

This research will use literature study technique as the main technique because although it is secondary data, literature sources provide a variety of information and data needed easily, factually and completely. The sources for this research are literature data varied from articles of journals on similar topics, books on theory in military and diplomacy, previous research related to the Indo-Pacific, and news and websites of government or official institutions.

The data management and analysis method begin with the reduction step, where the data collected from all sources will be classified according to its compatibility of the content with the subtopics discussed in the data analysis section or used as argument support. Data that is not so relevant to the topic will not be included. After the data is classified, the data will be analyzed and presented in the form of descriptive or narrative text. After the data is coherently analyzed, the final step is drawing conclusion by narrowing down the main points.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Military Cooperation in Indo-Pacific

In the book *International Cooperation* by Zartman & Touval (2010), it is explained that cooperation has meaning as a situation in which the parties involved agree to work together to produce a benefit for all members that cannot be obtained by the efforts of one country alone. The intended benefits are not only material goods, but also understanding of progress in achieving common goals, such as the development of security, status or freedom of action, along with the boundaries between actors. Thus, it can be said that cooperation is defined as more than just "the

absence of conflict", but also actions that are taken consciously, specifically, and based on positive goals. Main elements of multilateral cooperation are concrete actions of working together, agreements (not just by chance), capital and benefits for all parties involved.

Defense diplomacy by military cooperation can be carried out between two actors (bilateral) or with more than two actors (multilateral), such as in the concept of ASEAN and Indo-Pacific regional cooperation. The main objective of this multilateral cooperation is to maintain state sovereignty, erode various forms of colonialism by foreign powers, harmonize economic policies, diplomacy, education, health, science, national defense and security. Cooperation between countries can cover all areas of government, namely politics, economy, social, culture, defense and security (Winarno, 2014).

The relationship between domestic factors and the interaction of the country with other international actors or external situations (international factors) is an important driving force for a country to form cooperative or even conflictual policies. However, both cooperation and competition between countries are closely linked. Based on natural human behaviour on interactive concepts, there is no "pure" kind of cooperation. Nevertheless, in international relations, states compete aggressively and always involve influence and strength (hard power). Multilateral cooperation is also used as a competitive medium, for example in an effort to maintain a balance of power in the regions of these countries (Zartman & Touval, 2010).

One example of multilateral cooperation by Indonesia in the Southeast Asia region is the establishment of ASEAN. In the Indo-Pacific context, ASEAN consensus forms the "ASEAN Collective Concept: An Indo-Pacific Outlook" which is

Indonesia's interpretation of the Indo-Pacific concept through ASEAN perspective. There is no ASEAN country that individually has their own outlook on Indo-Pacific. This policy is part of ASEAN centrality principle as interests of each Southeast Asian country in the Indo-Pacific cooperation are ASEAN's common interests (Widiyanto, 2019).

The Indo-Pacific has a dynamic security situation and is prone to marine crimes such as human and animal smuggling, illegal fishing and piracy. In addition, China has increased its presence by strengthening the intensity and capability of its Navy in the South China Sea region, thus it triggered military transformation and naval modernization for other countries inside and outside Indo-Pacific (raising security dilemma) including Indonesia as the largest archipelago country and located in the strategic world trade route (RSIS, 2012).

The US, Japan, Australia, India are the countries with the greatest power and influence in the Indo-Pacific and are also known as the 'Quad' (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). The initial objective of its formation was to overcome the 2004 tsunami, then they re-started again in 2017 with a new goal of maintaining security and order in the area based on Indo-Pacific rules. Previously, The Quad had a setback in 2008 because each country still had different views and objectives on the area, before finally reuniting due to changes in global dynamics that produced common interest in the Indo-Pacific (Envall, 2019).

The Quad are still facing the challenge of uncertainty whether the four powers are able to maximize the opportunity to cooperate in line with the geopolitical competition in it. In addition, the effort to build regional order is also limited due to the absence of Indonesia. The power of China aggression, which was originally a factor in the decline of The Quad in 2008, has now

become a unifying factor because of their common goal to build regional cooperation based on shared values and principles, with threats from China (Envall, 2019).

Apart from facing Chinese aggression, some of the real security threats in the Indo-Pacific are piracy and terrorism, especially in the South China Sea region. ASEAN and other countries that have national interest in the area continue to work against these threats through cooperation and military modernization. The basic elements in the cooperation against terrorism consist of multinational integration, interoperability of two or more countries in dealing with same problems, and facilitating policy making for operations against security threats, in the tactical and strategic stages (Blannin, 2018). In the domestic sphere, government's efforts to develop counter terrorism (CT) capability require clear objectives and parameters for each participating country, covering all levels of the operational hierarchy, from individual CT practitioners, inter-agency networks, to policy makers. Meanwhile in the regional realm, capacity building is an effective way if the participating countries share the same security threats. Interoperability becomes an important aspect in the CT Indo-Pacific cooperation to the future by instilling a strategic relationship from the government's approach in expanding national and regional security across regions (Blannin, 2018).

Defense diplomacy is not limited to dialogue or peace agreements between the involved parties. Participating in defense diplomacy especially in the military area also means being active in various joint military physical activities in the Indo-Pacific environment: joint military exercises, conferences or seminars, student (soldier) exchanges with countries that are involved or have an interest in the Indo-Pacific to improve human resource capabilities (transfer of technology). TNI (Tentara

Nasional Indonesia) had discussed military cooperation with several US military representatives for Indonesia, including the enhancement of the Platoon Exchange program. This military cooperation includes military equipment and army exchanges for a joint military training program. Through this exchange program, the Indonesian Army sent a company of 43 soldiers to participate in joint training with the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii, USA. Meanwhile, the US Army sent the soldiers to join Indonesian Army's training ground located at the Para Riders 502 infantry battalion, Malang, East Java (Bhwana, 2020).

The use of force and military power in this modern era is used less frequently than in the past due to the increasing respect for human values. Even so, it doesn't merely mean that military power has completely lost its influence in securing national interest. The use of military force is decreasing, but not completely disappearing, because the measurement (the standard that determines the use of military force) of each country become varies according to each country's culture, situation, legal system and regulations (Gray, 2011).

4.2 Indonesia's National Interest

Every country has its urge to influence other countries using its national power. As Joseph S. Nye, Jr. states that state power is not only a debatable concept in political theory, but it is also described as the ability to influence the desired outcome or outcome and, if necessary, at the same time change the behavior of others in order to achieve its goals (Gray, 2011). While according to Aleksius Jemadu, every state has a national interest in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity, so the regulated foreign policy must be based on the objective of mobilizing support from neighboring countries, especially major

countries and including international organizations. The act or implementation that is taken for this purpose is the intimacy of a diplomatic mission. In addition, the state also has interest in maintaining national and regional security. Thus, a foreign policy was drawn up with the aim of forming and revitalizing military and regional cooperation. For examples, the signing of military pacts and joint military exercises (Jemadu, 2017). It is for this consideration of national interests that Indonesia is participating in defense diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific.

Indonesia is part of the international system with a national defense system in both national and international dimensions. This encourages Indonesia to develop cooperation in the military sector with other countries, as part of the country's diplomacy grand strategy. Indonesia has "free and active" foreign policy and international cooperation (diplomacy) strategy based on non-aligned principles, which means that it does not take sides with any alliance of any party. Even so, Indonesia still must play active role in international political strategy for the creation of a peaceful political constellation, in the regional and global sphere. Recently, Indonesia's geopolitical and geostrategic interests have begun to shape its identity and interests in responding to the challenges faced through the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, an idea of "ASEAN centrality" which has succeeded in uniting different views on the concept of the Indo-Pacific region which fair, free and inclusive. Even though it has not created its own Outlook on Indo-Pacific, it does not mean that Indonesia does not have an interest here. Implicitly, Indonesia is even a very influential actor in the Indo-Pacific (Yadav, 2020).

But the driving force of Indonesia's defense diplomacy; globalization, also induces crimes to grow and run easier. The

Southeast Asian region which is strategic economically and geopolitically must have a strong political stance, led by a large country in the region, so that this is not dominated or made a great power competition field. Geographically, ASEAN and Indonesia cannot be separated. Also, the interests of one party are the interests of the other party as well. So, as the “leader” of ASEAN, Indonesia must be able to align its national interests in line with the interests of all ASEAN through the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific (Yadav, 2020).

Currently, the capabilities of the Indonesian military, especially in terms of sophistication and modernity of the defense equipment of its Navy and Air Force, are still not as sophisticated as the ground forces defense equipment, while actually the biggest national border threats come from the water and air territories. Indonesia still needs help and lessons from other countries to advance its defense industry independently. The main interest of Indonesia in the defense diplomacy is to protect its country security by strengthening its national military force capability in dealing with transnational and maritime security issues. Thus, it can be concluded that Indonesia must increase its presence and position (stance) in the Indo-Pacific through defense diplomacy, to protect its national sovereignty and revitalize maritime culture, to enhance its political role in the Indo-Pacific.

4.3 How Indonesia Achieve its National Interest

Indonesia has no national Outlook in the Indo-Pacific, but through ASEAN which also accommodates the interests of all Southeast Asian countries, the strengths of each member country can be taken into account in the form of a collective power (bargaining power). Indonesia also has military budget for defense equipment and

weapons modernization, but Indonesia has agreed on CAATSA (Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) with the US, so Indonesia has to get permission from the US they want to buy weapons or equipment from US’s rivals like Russia and China. The Consequence of this CAATSA agreement is, Indonesia has to expand its market supplier to another western countries which are also US allies, like France, and Canada (CNN, 2020). This consequence actually helps Indonesia to establish wider diplomatic relations with other Western great powers. Indonesia learns that they can’t just rely on only one vendor for their military equipment needs. Indonesia even has its own local producers of military weapons, PINDAD and PAL company, developed after got embargo sanction from the US following the Santa Cruz tragedy.

Aligned with Indonesia's increasing presence in the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia's defense budget for 2021 has also increased by Rp. 19.4 trillion, namely Rp. 137.3 trillion from the previous Rp. 117.9 trillion in 2020. This very large defense budget reflects the importance of the security aspect in maintaining the boundaries of Indonesia and the ongoing global geopolitical tensions despite the Covid-19 pandemic, economic recession, and global discourse. The Defense Ministry's budget breakdown is divided into a force use program at Rp 4.4 trillion, a professionalism and welfare program for soldiers at Rp 11.4 trillion, a defense policy and regulation program at Rp 35.4 billion, a defense equipment modernization program, non- defense equipment and infrastructure at Rp 42.5 trillion, development of defense resources at Rp 1.6 trillion, as well as research, industry and higher education programs of defense at Rp 543.8 billion, to management support program at Rp 76.2 trillion (Yadav, 2020).

Indonesia also actively joins other

Indo-Pacific states in joint military exercises, such as CARAT (Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training) which is a routine exercise with the US, Samudra Shakti, a naval exercise with India (NDTV, 2019), and the biggest Asia-Pacific military joint exercise organized by Thailand and US, Cobra Gold (Suwanrumpha, 2019), and many more. All these joint exercises are not just meant for capacity building and transfer of technology goal, but also defense diplomacy strategy by building communication and recognition between the forces.

4.4 Challenges and Opportunities

According to Stephan M. Walt, there is a theory of power relations which says that the distribution of power and interests between countries are the key factors that influence the emergence of conflict or war. Thus, any change in the distribution of power among countries is considered a major influence on stability and instability (Yadav, 2020). Likewise, the security stability in the Indo-Pacific Region which is influenced by the distribution of great powers (The Quad) and China, as well as ASEAN to counterbalance and prevent the domination of these great powers. Therefore, modernization of weapons and defense equipment in the short and medium term as well as a strategy to develop the defense industry in the long term is a logical necessity in accordance with space and time for Indonesia as deterrence in the midst of military, economic, and global political aggression, especially between the two superpower countries, which are the US and China (Yadav, 2020).

There are some opportunities for Indonesia to be benefitted through the defense diplomacy. First, Indonesia is located between two oceans and continents, with Malacca Strait in it, makes it an economically important state in Indo-Pacific. As stated by

US Energy Information Administration, in 2015, about one-third of all world oil and other liquid production (61%) was carried by sea through transit in the Strait of Malacca, as one of the world's second largest oil trading points. The Strait of Malacca lies between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, which is connected to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean via the South China Sea. It is the shortest sea route between the Persian Gulf suppliers and the main Asian petroleum market. Petroleum shipments through the Strait of Malacca will be distributed to China and Indonesia, two countries with the fastest growing economies in the world (Villar & Hamilton, 2017).

Geopolitically, Indonesia is a benevolent partner for the great powers because Indonesia is one of the Founding Fathers of ASEAN which makes Indonesia is quite respected amongst other ASEAN countries, including its insight to make ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific to protect Southeast Asian interests. Second, the US is more cautious for Indonesia not to be attached too close with China because of its BRI assistance in Indonesia, of course it will push the US to engage Indonesia closer, including to fight China's aggression in South China Sea. Also, Indonesia is world's biggest maritime and Muslim country, makes it as potential partner for Western states' interest, especially for the US to fight the terrorism.

In addition, one of the opportunities that can be viewed from economic and security perspective, Indonesia is currently considered to be transforming into one of the strongest countries in the Southeast Asia region. This is proved by Indonesia as one of the G20 organization which means Indonesia has gained significant progress in rapid economic development in recent years. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, through the passage of the Undang-Undang Cipta Kerja (Omnibus Law), the World Bank sees

Indonesia as a prospective country in global economic competition. Apart from domestic debates, global investors see the Omnibus Law as Indonesian government's commitment to international investment as well as open investment opportunities that make it easier for investors to build strategic industries in Indonesia, including the defense industry. This provides the premise that Indonesia's economic commitment and growth becomes a logical process for changing Indonesia's identity (Yadav, 2020). The economic stability of a country can become a potential conflict in the country, which if not solved properly, it can expand to transnational conflicts, or lessen the interest of other countries to cooperate, including defense diplomacy with Indonesia.

With its ever-increasing economic capacity, it is only natural that Indonesia, which has so far been considered the de facto leader in ASEAN, is able to play a more important role in the region, even more broadly in the Indo-Pacific geopolitical contestation. These geopolitical and geostrategic steps reflect a change in Indonesia's identity and interests in an Indo-Pacific social construction, which in fact has yet to be de-jured (Yadav, 2020). Economic progress also affects the social image of the Indonesian nation which increases the confidence of other countries to establish diplomatic relations not only in the economic and political fields, but also in defense cooperation. This is because the progress of the state market is often associated with democracy, which is one of the assurances for priorities from the big countries (especially the Western nations) to maintain and support diplomatic relations.

Meanwhile there are some challenges for Indonesia too. First, Indonesia's military capability is not yet reached the Minimum Essential Force (MEF). In 2019, Indonesia has just reached 61,48% from the goal,

75,54% (*Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia*, 2019). The Indonesian government seeks to empower the national defense industry to achieve the MEF target. However, there are three challenges that pose a problem in efforts to empower the national defense industry. First, funding issues, then procurement cooperation with other countries, and last, the transparency in the procurement of defense equipment. The program to achieve MEF through the national industry is expected not only to develop defense equipment through procurement, but also through empowerment of the defense industry to build the independence of the country's workforce and production (DPR, 2019). Indonesia has to improve its military force capability and modernize the equipment to be compatible with other countries' military force and be seen as benevolent security partner (*Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia*, 2020).

The second challenge is a two-edged-sword for Indonesia, the Malacca Strait. As the most strategic trade route in the world, this Strait of Malacca is also a main target of maritime crimes that really disrupts people's safety and economic activities. According to a Reuters report, the maritime crime rate in Asian waters is still high, even in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. More than 50 cases of hijackings, armed robbery and abduction in the region occurred in the first 7 months of 2020. These cases were two times more than the previous year, and is the highest number since 2016. Most of these issues occurred in the Sulu Sea and the Strait of Malacca, both of which are important routes in the shipping sector (Vestergaard, 2020).

As written in US Energy Information Administration official website, the Strait of Malacca is the main petroleum distribution chokepoint in Asia, in recent years, about 85% to 90% of all annual petroleum flows carried through this chokepoint have been

crude oil. The Strait of Malacca is also an important transit route for the distribution of liquified natural gas (LNG) from the Persian Gulf and suppliers from Africa. The International Maritime Bureau's Piracy Reporting Center says: piracy and attempted theft and hijacking, often threaten tankers in the Malacca Strait area (Villar & Hamilton, 2017). Economically, the safety of this route is also a main point to maintain Indonesia's partnership with other countries, especially for foreign investors in Indonesia. Indonesia's effort to secure this area reflects Indonesia's professionalism and commitment to uphold regional security and the Navy forces capability.

In my opinion, the other challenge for Indonesia in this defense diplomacy is also a two-edged-sword for Indonesia; which is the "Free and Active" foreign policy. This principle helps Indonesia to freely cooperate and make friends with every actor in this world. But somehow Indonesia stumbles on its own border of "not to take side – and to take side". Indonesia learns from its past of struggles to achieve national independence against the colonialism and imperialism; there is no nation that does want and need to be colonized by other nations. Thus, Indonesia was born with the idea of not taking sides (especially during the Cold War era, where Indonesia initiated the Non-Alignment Movement with other South Countries) because taking sides was considered as colonialism by having to abide under the influence and domination of a great power (foreign nation). Indonesia itself also has no intention, means and cause to intervene any country, as this principle is also implied in ASEAN's principle of non-intervention on domestic matter for all ASEAN members.

The basic principles that underly the foundation of Indonesia's "Free and Active" foreign policy provide benefits to Indonesia

because it allows Indonesia to carry out defense diplomacy with any party and without any constraint or opposition rules. In reality, Indonesia's defense diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific actually implies that Indonesia supports and needs the support from US, especially in the defense sector, because in fact most of activities in the defense diplomacy must involves US, or being organized by US (Moriyasu & Khan, 2020).

In addition, there are still some cases of China's aggression in the South China Sea and illegal fishing vessels roaming in Indonesian territory without permission. As reported in BBC Indonesia 30 December 2019, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its strong protest against China regarding its fishing boats entering the Natuna region. Even though they were driven out, the foreign ship was still reluctant to leave. The incident with a Chinese boat in Natuna also occurred three years ago when a patrol boat from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries caught a ship suspected of illegal fishing. The violation of foreign vessels in Indonesian territory prompted the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries to make plans for Indonesia to increase its territorial security operations throughout 2020, through sea patrol and air patrol. Previously, the Head of the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) Achmad Taufiqerrochman said Bakamla had evicted foreign ships entering Natuna Sea and his party took guard of it. He said, since December 10 2019, Bakamla has cooperated with various regional partners in the world, and there will be a movement of fishing fleet vessels from North to South countries which may also enter Indonesia territory. Thus, Indonesia will also send its fleet to participate (*BBC Indonesia*, 2019).

Apart from Vietnam, China also has frequently violated Indonesia's territorial waters. As happened on September 13, 2020,

when the Chinese ship CCG 5204 entered Indonesian waters and was reluctant to leave even though Indonesia apparatus had given a warning. The ship refused to leave because he thought that the area was part of his territory according to the Nine Dash Line concept. This incident is not the first time China has done. In early 2020, Chinese fishing boats and Chinese coast guards entered the Natuna Sea. The Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded by sending an objection note. However, China still insisted on claiming 80% of the South China Sea area where the North Natuna Sea is located, referring to the Nine Dash Line concept. Apart from Indonesia, China also often has similar issues with other ASEAN countries; Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Taiwan and Vietnam (Kusumo, 2020).

These cases indicate that Indonesia must take strict but still diplomatic legal action, so as relationship between these countries remain harmonic. However, Indonesia cannot easily, clearly, and definitively determine who are allies and who are foes. Thus, Indonesia also cannot arbitrarily take decisive action to deal with these parties who interfere with the sovereignty of the country, the diplomacy factor must still be prioritized. These issues prove that in essence, that ideally every country will and be able to do whatever means – such as formulating foreign policies – that can protect its national interests, and certainly these policies must be flexible, applicable widely and universally for a long time, can be interpreted in various situations and conditions, for both urgent and well-planned needs for the future. Foreign policy is one of the top priorities for a country's Grand Strategy.

5. Conclusion

From all the descriptions above, this research is divided into 3 main points of

findings. First, what is Indonesia's national interests. Indonesia is a maritime country with "free and active" foreign policy, which means Indonesia is free to affiliate with any international actor, but is not legally bound. Thus, Indonesia has the obligation and rights to maintain good relations with all international actors, especially for the sake of fulfilling its national interests, especially to protect the security of its territorial waters.

Indonesia's territory safety shapes the trust from other countries to Indonesia's leadership and commitment on establishing Southeast Asia security. As the forum for developing countries, ASEAN has to hold onto a collective power to secure its interest in Indo-Pacific realm. Indonesia as the "leader" of ASEAN has to be able to prove its capability in securing Southeast Asia waters through this defense diplomacy. As a developing country, Indonesia still needs various international help and support from Transfer of Technology in equipment modernization and human resources capacity building. This defense diplomacy is also expected to be able to enhance Indonesia's diplomatic relation with powerful nations, for the sake of Southeast Asia not to a contestation gain, but to be a partner to work together with.

Shortly, we can summarize Indonesia's national interests are to strengthen its national military force capability in dealing with transnational and maritime security issues, like terrorism, illegal fishing, and piracy which are still happening in Indonesia's waters territory. Second, to enhance its political role in Indo-Pacific, as well as defending the region's security, third, to protect its national sovereignty and revitalize maritime culture, and last, through ASEAN outlook on Indo-Pacific, Indonesia also implicitly promotes Southeast Asia nations' message to other great powers; not to see Southeast Asia as

battleground because of its economic worth, but to see them as partner.

The second point is how Indonesia achieve its national interest. Indonesia participates not only in military seminar or summit, but it also various military physical activities in Indo-Pacific like multilateral military exercises. From whom Indonesia buy the equipment is an Indonesia military partnership tendency indicator. Another deeper defense diplomacy is intra-state government bodies interoperability and joint military activity, such as joint patrol in South China Sea with neighboring countries. Because of its “free and active” principle, Indonesia can’t be legally bound by any international security community, but Indonesia still striving to actively participate in global security activity in order to build international trust towards Indonesia.

The third point is challenge and opportunity for Indonesia regarding to its pursuit of national interests. As world’s biggest maritime country, one of the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, and part of G20 nations, Indonesia gains a lot of plus points in international stage. Indonesia is seen as a powerful nation in Indo-Pacific, especially because of its strong influence and leadership in Southeast Asia, which is a strategic point in Indo-Pacific region. Besides of the identity factors, geographically Indonesia has another plus point as one of the most important trade and shipping route in the world – Malacca Strait. In addition, Indonesia has a rich biodiversity and maritime resources which are so promising for Blue Economy sector

both for international and Indonesia's needs.

Unfortunately, some of the opportunities are also two-edged-sword and become serious challenges for Indonesia to keep eyes on. The breadth of Indonesia’s water area becomes easy target for maritime crimes. Malacca Strait for instance, as the busiest trading route in Indo-Pacific, has become main target of sea piracy which indirectly shows the lack of Indonesia’s capability to secure its region. Maritime security issues indirectly impacting Indonesia’s diplomatic relation with other nations. Not just piracy, Indonesia often gets bothered by illegal trespassing ships issues.

These maritime security issues expose Indonesia’s lack on human resource capability, coordination system and equipment modernity. Indonesia still has to be dependent on other countries’ military equipment because the local equipment producer is not yet capable to fulfill all Navy and Air Forces necessities, which are the front liner on protecting nation’s sovereignty. Defense diplomacy is expected for Indonesia’s military force to learn and acquire more transfer of technology in equipment modernization and human resource and capacity building. Politically, defense diplomacy implies the intention to maintain good relation between Indonesia and other countries, especially the great powers. Developing countries like Indonesia (through ASEAN) countries are engaging the great powers to prevent domination, as a balance of power strategy and surviving in Indo-Pacific geopolitics power competition.

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