

## **SECURITY DILEMMA & ARMS RACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION POST-COLD WAR ERA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The security conditions in the Southeast Asian region are relatively safe, there have never been direct confrontations or head-to-head wars between countries in the region, if ever there had been a confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, but its not happen yet. During the cold war era, security in Southeast Asia was guaranteed by the two super power country, which are United States of America and Soviet Union. Some sort of bias think occur in this region, when the cold war ends European countries are committed to reducing their military budget, and the opposite is true in Southeast Asia. After the end of the cold war and the absence of security guarantees from the two countries, Southeast Asian countries began aggressively increasing their military budgets and increasing their defense force capabilities so that the Security Dilemma and Arms Race happen in this region. In particular, Indonesia has experienced an increase in the military budget from year to year, starting from 2007 Rp. 32 T to 2017 108 T. The increasing of military budget also occurs in all Southeast Asian countries, and this is clear evidence of the Security Dilemma and Arms Race in the Southeast Asian region. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research by describing all the phenomena of the research problem empirically. This study aims to explain and analyze the dynamics of Security Dilemma and Arms Race that happen in Southeast Asia, as well as Indonesia's involvement in this phenomenon, thereby increasing the defense budget each year.

**Keywords:** *Security Dilemma, Arms Race, Southeast Asia Region*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Increasing military strength absolutely being a sensitive matter because it can cause a security dilemma for other countries. Adagium of security dilemma at least confirms two things. First, efforts to increase the military strength of a country tend to always be interpreted as a means of developing offensive power by other countries, and second, it is difficult to distinguish between defensive forces and offensive forces. This can lead to miscalculation, misjudgment and mistrust. Increasing the military power of a country is a necessity, especially if there is a driving factor in that direction. That is, increasing the military power of countries in the region does not stand alone but there are factors that move in that direction. In the context of the Southeast Asian region, the driving forces are regional tensions, border disputes, the seizure of natural resources, the shift of US military activity to Asia, and the increasing presence of China on the LCS.

A Security Dilemma is a condition carried out by a country to improve the security of its self by increasing its defense or by forming an alliance with another country as carried out by its neighbors, because of a feeling of "worry" about the security of its own country. According to John H. Herz himself, the security dilemma or in International Relations is "a structural idea in which the efforts taken by a country to maintain its own security needs, regardless of their intentions, tend to inconvenience other countries,

especially countries which around him, because each country (which took the action) considers that the action it takes is merely defensive and the actions taken by other countries are threatening.

Arms Race defined as a dynamic process of interaction between countries or coalitions of countries which are competitive, dynamic, and forced to acquire their weapons. "Arms Race is a situation in which two or more countries try to have more and stronger weapons than each other". Arms race can also be interpreted as a continuous competitive effort (militarily) carried out by two or more countries, each of which has the capability to make more and stronger weapons than the others.

Colin Gray said the characteristics of the Arms Race, which are: first, there are parties who indicate their relationship is conflicting. Second, the structuring of power based on the calculation of the enemy's capabilities and objectives. Third, open qualitative and quantitative competition in arms purchases. Finally, an increase in the defense budget and the rate of revenue. In addition, Gray also stated that like war, the arms race has political objectives. Carl Von Clausewitz states that war is a continuation of politics in other ways, so it can also be concluded that the arms race is the militarization of war politics.

Military modernization or an increase in military power that occurred in Asia, especially Southeast Asia is actually also a logical consequence of economic

growth. This is what happened in the five main countries in Southeast Asia called the Big Five, they are Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam. In addition, the expansion of regional security coverage that must be safeguarded based on their respective national interests has also contributed to encouraging countries in the region to increase their military strength in order to be able to reach their security territory. Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, for example, have an interest in the security of the Malacca Strait, as well as other Asian countries that make these strategic waters their energy and trade supply routes. Increasing the military power of countries in the region will become a problem, if misperceived and suspected as a form of threat to security in the region. To avoid security misunderstandings and destabilization, transparency and strategic trust are needed, and ARF as a multilateral security forum in the Region can play a role in building such transparency and strategic trust through the development of constructive dialogue and consultation.

The shift in US military activity to Asia also seems to have influenced countries in the region to adapt to their military capabilities. At least it was done to be able to slightly offset the US military events that are now projected into the Asian region. Countries in the region as the host certainly do not want to just be spectators in seeing the US military presence in Asia. They also need to present

themselves with confidence to face of US military strength as one of the largest military forces in the world. For this reason, increasing military power is a choice that must be made by Southeast Asian countries as well as for building independence in terms of securing the country's sovereignty.

The appearance of China as a major country in the region with its military modernization has certainly also influenced the countries in the region to increase its military power, especially countries that have territorial disputes with China on the LCS and the East China Sea. In recent years China has continued to show LCS that is in contact with several ASEAN member countries and the East China Sea that is in contact with Japan. China, with its increasing military spending (second highest after the US), continues to build more modern military forces and is certainly projected to be able to break deeper into disputed waters in the LCS and the East China Sea.

According to Reuters news agency, sourced from a several observer institutions, there are at least three ASEAN countries that are strengthening defense equipment. Indonesia is buying some submarines from South Korea and maritime radar systems from China and the US. Vietnam also added Russian submarines and fighter jets. Singapore is not left behind. The tiny country is the fifth largest arms importer in the world and continues to add sophisticated weapons. Anticipating the development of China's

military strength and also supported by rapid economic growth, Southeast Asian countries are increasingly spending military budgets to strengthen shipping lanes, ports and maritime boundaries that are vital for the flow of exports and energy. According to observers, territorial disputes in the South China Sea that contained abundant oil and natural gas resources made Vietnam, Malaysia, Philippines and Brunei have to anticipate the development of China's military capabilities, which also had an interest in those ocean. Even countries that are far from the dispute, such as Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, also feel the need to strengthen their respective maritime security by increasing the capability of defense equipment.

The arms race in Southeast Asia was also triggered by American intervention. To rival China, Washington is increasing military relations and cooperation with the Philippines, Indonesia and Australia. This means that these countries are easier to penetrate into the American military industrial sector. America on the other hand argues that such cooperation is only in the framework of partnership.

The security dilemma in Southeast Asia remains at the level of conventional arms competition, not at the level of a fierce arms race. When comparing aspects of the quantity of weapons possessed by countries in Southeast Asia by the Land Army, Navy and Air Force respectively, Indonesia in general has offset and even

leading. Inherent in this regard, some of constraints such as a minimal budget (on average still below 1% of Gross Domestic Product), as well as obstacles in the embargo on arms from the United States which have occurred until 2005 were attacks. The challenges faced by the Indonesian government. If the budget becomes the main obstacle in developing Indonesia's defense posture, then efforts towards increasing GDP become something that cannot be avoided. With the effort to double the amount of GDP, it is expected that the percentage of the defense budget will also be increased to the reasonable and ideal level of Minimum Essential Force policy framework adopted by Indonesia. Without a significant leap in that direction, at least the next ten years, Indonesia will be very far behind at the regional level, considering that building a country's military posture requires no short time.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODE**

The study was conducted in Indonesia focused on Security Dilemma and Arms Race in Southeast Asian Region. This research uses a qualitative method with an intrinsic case study approach. Characteristics of informants are considered capable of providing information of Security Dilemma and Arms Race in Southeast Asian Region. The data collected through unstructured observation techniques, interviews conducted with the key informant. Study documentation obtained through Security Dilemma and Arms Race in Southeast

Asian Region. Data processing is done through interactive analysis approach from Miles and Huberman through stages: data collection, data reduction, data processing and data verification. (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

### **C. SECURITY DILEMMA & ARMS RACE IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN REGION**

The term of Security Dilemma was created by Germany academic John H. Herz, through his book, *Political Realism and Political Idealism*, in 1951. At the same time the British historian Herbert Butterfield, described the same situation through his book *History and Human Relations*, but termed it as "absolute prediction and irreducible dilemma" (absolute states and irreducible dilemmas). According to John H. Herz himself, the security dilemma or in International Relations is "a structural idea in which the efforts taken by a country to maintain its own security needs, regardless of their intentions, tend to inconvenience other countries, especially countries which around him, because each country (which took the action) considers that the action it takes is merely defensive and the actions taken by other countries are threatening.

The Arms Race happen in accordance with the theory of neorealism which emphasizes how anarchic international systems can turn out to be peaceful with the concept of balance of power. According to Mearsheimer, quoted in the book "Balance of Power in World

History" by Stuart J. Kaufman, Richard Little and William C. Wohlforth, the great powers will try to maintain their hegemony in the world. The efforts of these countries to maintain their hegemony can be done by balancing the strength of their countries with each other. They compete with each other so as not to miss, so that later there will be a balance or equilibrium. But unfortunately, the concept balance of power resulted in an arms race. The arms race in principle has the advantage of being a counterweight to a powerful state that "could" act on its own accord with a smaller country. But with the characteristics given by Gray, the favorable circumstances could have been a lighter because they are based on conflicting interests with one another.

The idea of the Realists who have become the dominant understanding since the cold war era also remains a determination for the concept of contemporary international security. Contemporary era thinkers like Mearsheimer, assume the multipolar situation that occurred after the end of the cold war actually brought the international world to a more vulnerable situation. Meanwhile, the suspicions and fears of international anarchism remain apparent in the current behavior trends of each country. The race for strength and the anarchy situation of the international system go hand in hand with economic cooperation. Power is often the determination to pursue the interests of a country, including even in a profit-

oriented partnership. Or in other words, arms race is the other side of economic cooperation and globalization.

As explained above, that the concept of security according to the Realists is the full power of a country's military. The security of a country not intervened by another country is its military strength, the greater and stronger the military strength of a country, the less likely it is to be intervened by another country, as well as its competitiveness in international politics, according to the Realists of a country's position in politics internationally is largely determined by their ability to compete in the military and economic fields. And of course a country's military strength will be very strong if supported by the ability of the domestic defense industry as well. One thing that is fundamental in Realism is that the state views other countries as potential enemies that threaten security, an idea that comes from understanding that every human being tends to be aggressive and prey on other human beings, and this is natural. This means that the weakness of the state becomes a trigger for other countries to build greater strength in order to invade a weak state. Conversely, forces that are too large or extreme in other countries will trigger a country to further increase its defense and gather strength. This is called Security Dilemma.

### ***C.1. Security Dilemma***

In the long journey of the study of International Relations, security dilemma is known as one of the major concepts

used in analyzing international situations where the security and peace situation in it cannot be fully guaranteed. From the beginning until today, security is a vital interest for every country. Each country must be able to guarantee its own security. The strength of a country without guaranteed security will certainly make the power in that country collapse easily.

Security Dilemma is one of the concepts in realism theory that arises as a result of actions from a country to improve the security of his country, but on other side this causes a reaction from other countries who also want to improve their security, which in turn causes a decrease of security in the first country. This can happen because a country feels threatened by the power possessed by another country so it tries to increase its weapons and defenses that end in a situation where countries are competing to produce weapons. Security Dilemma is basically a reflection of the difficulties of a country's government to determine its security policy choices. If a country reduces its efforts to strengthen its security with the aim of creating peaceful relations with other countries, the consequence is that the country is vulnerable to being attacked by other countries.

However, if a country increases its defense power, it will cause the prejudice or suspicion of other countries in the international world that will trigger an arms race. These conditions will prioritize ways of resolving conflicts by military or war methods. Security Dilemmas

generally occur in a condition where a country increases its defense force policy which is purely intended for self defense but often considered different by other countries that it aims to attack. This then encourages enemy countries to supply weapons to increase their military strength caused by them trying to take the worst tendency that the country they are facing is trying to carry out attacks.

The Security Dilemma in International Relations will continue to exist as a concept in order to analyze and explain what is happening between countries that seem to be persistent in their efforts to improve security. A country will feel threatened if other countries appear to be offensive in increasing its security, and take similar steps to ensure its security as well. In the concept of a security dilemma, we can see that among countries competing to increase military power for their own security, they tend to be mired in mis-understandings. What should be defensive tends to be seen as offensive, thereby triggering other countries to take similar steps to improve their security. That's what happened in the concept of Security Dilemma in International Relations.

Referring to the anarchic international system, each country needs power and also security. Each country feels obliged to have of power both main and supporting, such as military and weapons, as evidence that a country has power and also as a means of defense in order to ensure the security of one country

from the threat of another country's power especially from outside attacks. With the anarchy condition, the state then considers that security is the first concern. The security dilemma will create competition between countries in an effort to improve each other's security. In this case, each country certainly does not want to be rivaled by other countries in increasing their own security. For this reason, the state will form a military budget as a result of efforts to set aside the country's foreign exchange for the benefit of weapons. Military funds are not small, and the interests of defense and security will continue to undermine the government budget for various other interests that it should fulfill.

Security dilemmas is vurnable happen in each region, both conflict-prone regions such as East and South Asia, and relatively peaceful regions such as Southeast Asia, China and Japan and South Korea and North Korea are clear examples where tensions arise as a result of increased security . In a similar response, China has also modernized its military. Each country actually feels threatened by increasing military power from other countries. The threat then encouraged them to take part in efforts to increase their defense and security. Likewise, India and Pakistan. One of the most common manifestations to date of the security dilemma. Another example, when Iran produces nuclear on the grounds to replace oil as the main source of power, Israel and various countries in the region

feel threatened and take the same steps to offset Iran. Likewise with countries in the Southeast Asia Region, when Singapore massively increased its military budget and purchased military equipment on a large scale, neighboring countries such as Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia also did the same because they felt threatened by what was conducted of defense in Singapore.

Security Dilemma is also able to force the state to form new alliances or strengthen existing alliances. If offensive actions are considered less profitable, then forming alliances can be a profitable alternative. Under the security dilemma there are two reasons why alliances are formed. First, a country that is less satisfied with its level of security will tend to have various forms of alliance to support and increase its level of security. Second, a country is doubtful about the strength of the alliance that it currently has to be able to help it in the event of a threat, so it decides to form a new alliance with another country.

Regarding the security dilemma, Hobbes, clearly defines how this concept has cohesiveness with human natural conditions that cause humans to feel afraid and threatened. When Hobbes imagines the natural condition of humans, he further describes how men and women when they are in a natural situation before the concept of a sovereign state is invented. The barbaric condition is the lack of security or fear because humans are in a 'state of mutual combat', where

women, men and children have the potential to harm one another, brutal and kill each other. The above conditions which, according to Hobbes, encourage humans to collaborate to form security agreements or norms that can guarantee their safety. With the values of peace and security formed, they are increasingly encouraged to form a sovereign state that can guarantee the security and welfare of its citizens.

Hobbes further explained, that the state is obliged to form a strong and sovereign entity, so that it can guarantee the security of every citizen, both in the form of internal threats and those coming from outside. In the security conditions that have been achieved, every citizen can achieve prosperity and happiness. However, this condition will naturally create fear or feeling threatened because of the anarchic international system. This is then called the security dilemma in international politics, where the achievement of domestic security in the creation of a state is always accompanied by insecurity conditions from internal and external aspects rooted in anarchic systems. This leads to assumptions about the impossibility of a country regardless of the conditions. Rather it is only possible to make agreements between countries, through international law or the rules of the game that benefit all countries, in order to help get out of existing concerns. Waltz believes that the security situation of the dilemma is common in the international world constellation, for this



reason a country needs to maximize every ability it has to create security from its country. Furthermore, Waltz argued that state security is the highest thing to achieve above the power or interests of his country.

Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the Security Dilemma will never disappear from this world. Because basically human beings are selfish and very ambitious in achieving something bigger. Humans are also competitive creatures which are the headwaters of conflicts that can trigger warfare. The security dilemma is not always bad. From the above review it can be seen how each country that "has a dilemma" tries to improve the quality of its security. It was strong enough to motivate other countries to enter the competition. But competing countries must keep in mind that an increase of this kind requires a large amount of budget. Do not let the increase in security adversely affect the country's economy.

The role of Balance of Power in the concept of Realism is that states are balanced with one another, no country is too strong and no country is too weak. Because, an imbalance of power will lead to war, a strong state will be triggered to get more power. In this case, power can be obtained one of them by forming alliances with other countries. In the Realist assumption, Balance of Power plays a very important role in creating world peace. Seeing the condition of power of each country, there are strong and weak, it will

tend to create war not peace because war is considered as a shortcut to gain interests and maintain power.

The end of the cold war marked by the collapse of the Soviet Union which was considered an enemy by the United States, led to the multipolar international constellation. There is no longer an eastern block whose space must be narrowed by the western block of the United States allies. And there is no Warsaw Pact that becomes a NATO threat. The west claims that it was the defeat of communism, and that it was a victory of liberalism in order to maintain its influence. Furthermore, the 9/11 that caused the destruction of the WTC building in the United States brought a new situation in the context of international security, that terrorism is a new enemy that must be fought together.

### ***C.2. Arms Race***

Arms Race defined as a dynamic process of interaction between countries or coalitions of countries which are competitive, dynamic, and forced to acquire their weapons. "Arms Race is a situation in which two or more countries try to have more and stronger weapons than each other". Arms race can also be interpreted as a continuous competitive effort (militarily) carried out by two or more countries, each of which has the capability to make more and stronger weapons than the others.

Because the world and the international system contained in anarchist, the state often builds and

increases military power for its defense and security purposes. However, because various countries are not aware of their intentions, other countries are not interpreting these actions as defensive actions but instead will respond to these actions as offensive actions. And if so, other countries might take aggressive action in response which would then create an unstable situation. Thus there will be the possibility of creating an Arms Race between countries, especially countries in a region.

Another example of the arms race as a result of the emergence of a security dilemma is what happened in Germany and Britain before the outbreak of world war 1. Robert Jervis said that most of the behavior in that period was a product of technology and belief that magnified the security dilemma. In this example, strategists believe that offensive action will be more beneficial than defensive action, but in the end it should not happen. In terms of the arms race what happened between the US and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, where both of them competed in the construction of nuclear weapons became the most famous real example.

War is one thing that feared and undesirable for all humans including the state. But war can not be denied its existence from the history of mankind. Conflict and war in the history of mankind have existed since humans came to know power and position. Over time, the tools (weapons) that humans use also vary,

including the transformation of traditional weapons to modern weapons. This transformation is categorized as fairness where we know that humans will always try to protect and seek security for themselves and their families. These innovations and transformations that humans have made come to a situation called the Arms Race. All forms of competition must have the possibility of conflict. In this case arms race as a form of competition will also cause conflict and may even reach the point of war. Even though Charles L. Glaser in his article said that arms race is not always bad and is not only associated with war, it is still possible that war will still exist.

The arms race is one of the sub-fields of study that is complicated in strategic assessment. It is difficult to distinguish between whether an increase in a country's weapons capability is part of an "arms race" with another country or just an attempt to "defend itself" or even just to maintain the "status quo" of security relations in a particular region. This is one of the reasons why so far there has not been a sufficiently comprehensive study of the arms race. It is interesting to note why this field of study is often considered to have no special and commensurate place in the study of international relations (Bellamy, 1975: 129), and is not even listed in the index of a book that clearly studies "strategy" (eg Baylis et al, 1975). It seems that this stems from a conceptual confusion, as well as difficulties in understanding it from the

context of logic, the process and its implications for strategic interactions in relations between countries.

Compared to the past, Southeast Asian countries and China now prefer the latest military vehicles and equipment. What is striking is the purchase of submarines. Malaysia has just bought three submarines, Indonesia ordered three, Vietnam has six and Thailand wants to buy four from Germany. Southeast Asian countries buy weapons because the feeling of insecurity. Vietnam and the Philippines, for example, are worried about the maritime policies Beijing will take. In the South China Sea there are six Vietnamese islands. No one knows what Chinese defense policies are that are increasingly rivaling American defenses. In addition to facing the giant country of China, among the ASEAN nations themselves there is also mutual suspicion, the island nation of Singapore, which is surrounded by large countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, has armed forces to be reckoned with. Indonesia and Malaysia have repeatedly made a fuss over fishing vessels. The conflict at the Cambodia-Thailand border in 2008 killed dozens of people.

Security dilemma is a feeling of insecurity from a country that arises due to activities carried out by other countries in strengthening their military capabilities. Factors causing the security dilemma include high suspicion, enmity and history of conflict between countries. As a result of this condition are arms races

that will occur as a prevention system by each country. This condition can cause a threat to traditional security, because the consequences that will arise will be even more destructive if you look at technological advances and the development of more advanced weapons. Coupled with the threat of nuclear weapons currently possessed by large powers. It is interesting to further formulate the security dilemma and see its relevance to the contemporary international world, with reference to the perspective of realism.

Carl Von Clausewitz stated that war was a continuation of politics in another way, so it could also be concluded that the Arms Race was a militarization of politics like a war. Although not always identified with War, Arms Race has the possibility of causing war. India-Pakistan is holding an arms race which, although it did not go to war, what happens is negative peace, as are other examples.

Colin Gray said the characteristics of the Arms Race, which are: first, there are parties who indicate their relationship is conflicting. Second, the structuring of power based on the calculation of the enemy's capabilities and objectives. Third, open qualitative and quantitative competition in arms purchases. Finally, an increase in the defense budget and the rate of revenue. In addition, Gray also stated that like war, the arms race has political objectives. Carl Von Clausewitz states that war is a continuation of politics in other ways, so it can also be concluded that the

arms race is the militarization of war politics. Negative peace is a condition where the peace situation contains an element of conflict or atmosphere where the previous conflict is still felt and has a new conflict if it is not dealt with thoroughly. This is the basis for my argument that arms race can later lead to war.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

Francis Fukuyama (2003) says that politics and international relations are a matter of historical evolution. In the direction where the historical wind moves, there we will find a contradictory and dialectical conundrum of history. Those who are optimistic about the course of world history will certainly follow the historical patterns depicted in the philosophical tradition of Hegel's Idealism in the frame of "Battle of Jena", while for those who are pessimistic, the historical patterns depicted tend to follow the philosophical tradition of Thucydides political realism in the frame of "Peloponnesia War ". Thus, the journey of world history is a dialectical journey of history, it is difficult for them to figure out where the historical wind will move, will it lead to progress (endism) or to decline (declinism).

The adage of the realists who said, "if you want to feel peaceful prepare for war", as if relevant to the increasing military budget of each country. All realize that interests can be fought for by means of force, and view the military as an absolute prerequisite especially when

speaking in the context of a country's security. The current multipolar condition has indeed removed the rivalry between the two blocs that existed during the Cold War era, but it certainly did not succeed in removing the rivalry between countries that still had ideological differences or poor historical backgrounds. Enmity among neighboring countries is still very high. On the other hand, what Russia has done to Crimea shows that occupational practices are still vulnerable. The arm race has further addressed the technological level and is increasingly the cause of the high tension of the security dilemma. The military alliance still exists today, even the actions of NATO in the Middle East are also the reason that security issues still speak at the traditional level. Furthermore, the nuclear arms race among developed countries poses a very serious threat to contemporary international security. Furthermore, we will see how the security dilemma phenomenon is so obvious, if it is related to security issues in the East Asian region that are happening between Japan and China lately, and also happen for countries in Southeast Asian Region.

There are many examples of why the Realist Theory is still relevant today, one of which is the position of the US, Russia, France, Britain and China on the UN permanent security council. The position of these countries is determined by their military strength. Another example at this time is North Korea and Iran, both countries also received special respect in international politics because

they have strong military power through their defense industries and of course have nuclear weapons.

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