

## **THE ROLE ANALYSIS OF INDONESIA'S POLICY STRATEGY ON INDO-PACIFIC**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The emergence of Indo-Pacific terminology which is increasingly developing causes the interest of countries to be involved in the role of the region increasingly high for various reasons. Indonesia as an archipelagic country has the opportunity to improve its strategic position to support of the "Indo-Pacific" concept. Therefore, this article tries to analyze the role of Indonesia's policy strategy towards the Indo-Pacific. In this article, the author wants to analyze and provide an overview of the role of Indonesian policy in the Indo-Pacific region. This research is a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. Based on policy analysis, the results found, Indonesia has a role as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia as an archipelago utilizes the strategic role of its region by implementing maritime policy to become the world's maritime axis in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia made ASEAN the centrality of its policies in promoting the Indo-Pacific. The Implementation and Movement of Policies undertaken by Indonesia towards the Indo-Pacific are in accordance with the perspective and national interests of the country which take advantage of opportunities and maximize profits in the geographical structure of the region.*

**Keywords :** Foreign Policy, Indo-Pasifik, Indonesia, middle power

### **ABSTRAK**

Kemunculan terminologi Indo-Pasifik yang semakin berkembang menyebabkan minat negara-negara untuk terlibat peran dalam kawasan tersebut semakin tinggi dengan berbagai alasan. Indonesia sebagai negara kepulauan memiliki kesempatan dalam meningkatkan posisi strategisnya untuk mendukung konsep "Indo-Pasifik". Oleh karena itu, artikel ini mencoba untuk menganalisis peran strategi kebijakan Indonesia terhadap Indo-Pasifik. Dalam artikel ini penulis, ingin menganalisis dan memberikan gambaran mengenai peran kebijakan Indonesia dalam kawasan Indo-Pasifik. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Berdasarkan analisis kebijakan, Hasil yang ditemukan Indonesia memiliki peran sebagai kekuatan menengah dalam kawasan Indo-Pasifik. Indonesia sebagai negara kepulauan memanfaatkan peran struktur strategis wilayahnya dengan menerapkan Kebijakan maritime untuk menjadi poros maritime dunia di wilayah Indo-Pasifik. Indonesia menjadikan ASEAN sebagai sentralitas kebijakannya dalam mempromosikan Indo-Pasifik. Penerapan dan Pergerakan Kebijakan yang di lakukan oleh Indonesia terhadap Indo-Pasifik sesuai dengan prespektif dan kepentingan nasional negaranya yang memanfaatkan peluang dan memaksimalkan keuntungan dalam letak struktur geografis kawasan.

**Kata Kunci :** Kebijakan Luar Negeri, Indo-Pasifik, Indonesia, Kekuatan menengah

## **A. Introduction**

The Indo-Pacific is a geographical concept that unity of western Indian Ocean region of the Pacific region including adjacent seas in East Asia and Southeast Asia into a single regional construct. The term Indo-Pacific emerged since Gurpreet S. Khurana a Marine Strategist and Executive Director of The New Delhi National Marine Foundation use named "Indo-Pacific Strategy" in 2007. (Gurpreet S Khurana, 2017) The Indo-Pacific concept changes in the popularity of "Strategic maps" of how the world is understood in strategic terms and basic ideas. The Indo-Pacific strategic map underwent numerous changes in meaning and meaning since the advent of China's reform and openness policies in the 1980s (Gurpreet S Khurana, 2017).

In 2010, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton formally recognized the Indo-Pacific for the first time. (Gurpreet Singh Khurana, 2017) This was done by the United States given the importance of the Indo-Pacific to the path of global trade. The United States, along with the Indian Pacific navy, is expanding its activities within the Indo-Pacific. Donald Trump interprets the Indo-Pacific concept as a withdrawal of democratic forces such as India, Australia, Japan and other Asian countries in a front line "dealing" with China in the framework of a new "cold war" (Sinta Herindrasti, 2019).

In 2013, Australia released a white defense paper containing government articulations about the Indo-Pacific concept for the first time. This new Australian defense policy recognizes India in its east orientation. Australia actively supports the "Indo-Pacific" strategy promoted by the United States, not just to enhance US-Australia trade relations. However, the

steps were taken by Australia in supporting and contributing to the Indo-Pacific to pursue interests that are not limited by the use of coercive force. Besides, Australia also wants to increase its presence and scope of interest in Southeast Asia, thereby emphasizing an important position in the "Indo-Pacific" strategy (McDougall, 2018)

Overall, the "Indo-Pacific" Strategy is still in the form of ideas to date. The starting point of the Indo-Pacific is to build a hedge against China's economic and military rise, as well as reconstructing the regional order. Southeast Asia is a major area that can not be missed to connect the "Indian Ocean" with the "Pacific Ocean". Small and medium-sized countries are trapped between China and the United States (Chen, 2018). On the one hand, they are afraid of changes in the regional order brought about by the rise of the Chinese economy. On the other hand, they do not want to lose part of the dividends caused by the economic development of China (Chen, 2018).

This causes each country to carry out policies by their perspectives and strategic interests, causing a variety of dynamics including Indonesia. This is a question of Indonesia's realistic needs, What is position of Indonesia's policy strategy for the "Indo-Pacific" concept.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **The Balance of Power Theory**

The term Balance of Power is also known in the context of international cooperation. The Balance of Power Theory refers to a situation where no state dominates over other countries. It is identified that unbalanced is dangerous in assuming a policy of balance of power. The

concept of Balance of Power explains that great power in a country must be balanced with one other big power. It is intended to provide and create stability in a world political condition. The concept of Balance of Power is intended to prevent the hegemony of one country in the world from another (Griffiths Martin, O'Callaghan Terry, 2008).

Balance of Power was first introduced by Ernst Haas (Hedar, 2016) in his writing *The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda* in the journal *World Politics*. Ernst Haas defines Balance as stability and peace. The ideal world thinkers do not intend to interpret the concept of Balance of Power as a method for creating conditions that are stable and peaceful, because of the stable and peaceful conditions which are called the Balance of Power.

HC Palmer and ND Perkins argued in his book *International Relations*, Balance of Power is "The Balance of Power assumes that through shifting alliances and countervailing pressures no one power or combination of powers will be allowed to grow so strong as to threaten the security of the rest" (Sheehan, 1996).

Meanwhile, according to Hedley Bull (Bull, 1995) Balance of Power is a principle that is conducive to the international order that can produce a kind of basic objective of the meaning of life namely survival, security, and stability for personal wealth. Bull supports several opinions (Sheehan, 1996) which states that the state must be an independent agent who freely determines their destiny. The moral value of freedom and mutual independence legitimizes the Balance of Power (Bull, 1995).

Indonesia's policy towards the Indo-Pacific is in line with the theory of Balance of Power. This is illustrated where Indonesia carries out policies with alliances and helps promote the Indo-Pacific to balance power. The conclusion of the Balance of Power Theory states that if there are signs of the emergence of large power, then other countries will try to fight it by countering the threatening state power. This threatened condition makes the United States ally. This was illustrated by allied countries including Indonesia which helped promote the Indo-Pacific to counter the rise of China.

### **Foreign Policy Concept**

Foreign policy is a form of national interest in a country. The policies adopted must meet all elements of the interests of society and the national interests of the country. Foreign policy has the meaning as a set of formulas, attitudes, directions, values, and targets to maintain, secure, and advancing the national interests of a country in international regulations. Foreign policy is a set of targets for how a country interacts with other countries in the political, economic, social, and military fields. This interaction makes state actors carry out various kinds of cooperation whether bilateral, trilateral, or multilateral.

Rosenau defines foreign policy as an attempt by a country to overcome and benefit from its external environment through its overall attitude and activities (Yanyan Mochamad Yani, 2010) in his assumption of maintaining and sustaining the country's survival as foreign policy. If we do a study of a country's foreign policy then we will enter into a broad and complex phenomenon that includes internal life and external needs. The

internal life and external needs such as aspirations, culture, national attributes, capabilities, institutions, conflicts, and routine activities aimed at achieving and maintaining a country's social, geographical, and legal identity as a nation-state.

Plano believes that foreign policy is a policy designed to reach national goals. The national objectives to be reached are part of concrete formulations designed to link national interests to the ongoing international situation and the power they have to reach them. These goals are designed, selected, and determined by decision-makers and controlled to change or maintain policies in certain state matters in the international environment (Yanyan Mochamad Yani, 2010).

While K. J. Holsti defines foreign policy covering all actions and activities of the state on its external environment as an effort to benefit from the environment and various internal conditions that support the formulation of actions (Yanyan Mochamad Yani, 2010) K. J. Holsti clarifies the political objectives of the state into three criteria including the first, Values that become the values the goals of the decision-makers. Second, the period needed to achieve planned and established goals. These goals include short-term, short-term (middle term), and long-term (long-term). Third, the type of claim filed by one country against another country (Yanyan Mochamad Yani, 2010).

Indonesia's foreign policy towards the Indo-Pacific has an attachment to Indonesia's role as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia's policy strategy which also promotes the Indo-Pacific cannot be separated from the national interests of the country. Political

reasons, Indonesia as a middle power that chooses to engage with the United States and China to benefit from what is offered by the two rich and powerful countries.

Indonesia's policies that support multilateralism with ASEAN have made Indonesia even more influential in terms of leadership. Besides, Indonesia, which is the largest archipelago in the world, clearly considers the control and management of the maritime domain from a critical interest to its national interests. The global maritime support policy becomes a strategy that benefits Indonesia based on its political, security, economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects (Anwar, 2020).

### **C. Method**

In analyzing the role of Indonesian policy towards the Indo-Pacific, this research uses descriptive qualitative research. In general, qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by the research subject, for example, behavior, perception, motivation, actions, etc. holistically and using descriptions in the form of words and language, in a specific context natural (Barlian, 2016).

According to John W. Cresswell in *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches* "Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written

report has a flexible structure. Those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation" (W.Cresswell, 2014).

According to Bodgan & Biklen, qualitative research is one of the research procedures that produces descriptive data in the form of writing and behavior of the objects being observed (Rahmat, 2009).

By using descriptive qualitative analysis, it is intended to provide an overview of the role of Indonesian policy in the Indo-Pacific region. By using this descriptive analysis researchers can get a picture and find out the value of the variables that connect between variables with other variables. Researchers reduce data, present data, and draw conclusions or verification.

Researchers use the literature study method of the object under study that relates to the significance of Indonesia's policy role in the Indo-Pacific. This is following the literature search techniques carried out by researchers through written studies such as books, journals, documents, articles, web sites on the internet related to the topic under study.

#### **D. Result and Discussion**

##### **The Role of Analysis Indonesia's Policy on Indo-Pacific**

At this time interest in the Indo-Pacific is growing and increasing, with countries trying to get involved in taking part in the region. The increased interest in the Indo-Pacific region was driven by the rise of India as an economic powerhouse with growing and developing influence in regional affairs and the rise of the Chinese

economy that rivaled a superpower. The emergence of China as a new superpower challenging the United States has given birth to a pessimistic prognosis. Then how is the role of Indonesian policy towards the Indo-Pacific based on Indonesia's strategic location in the region.

Indonesia has a strategic position in the Indo-Pacific geopolitical context. Indonesia is at the meeting point that connects the two oceans. Indonesia is in a "supra-strategic" position by becoming a shipping lane for international trade that connects South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. Indonesia's geographical structure has an impact on maritime security issues in the region. Thus, the regional security architecture formed in the region cannot be successful without Indonesian support.

In the writings of Haryanto, (Haryanto, 2015) Bakrie stated that "Indonesia should maintain its geographical supra-strategic position, particularly its strategic maritime areas. This is because Indonesia is the largest maritime state in ASEAN and its SLOCs (Malacca Strait, Lombok Strait, Moluccas, and Wetar Strait) have been central to the ASEAN and the world). Meanwhile, regional maritime security - as the most important aspect of ASEAN Plus security architecture can no longer be left entirely to Indonesia, ASEAN, and other regional bodies, because in the end, it needs a strategy which may include collective maritime security.

Furthermore, Marty Natalegawa also said that "In terms of geography, it refers to an important triangular spanning two oceans, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, bounded by Japan in the north, Australia in south-east India in the south-west, notably

with Indonesia at its center. Thus as a result, in this largest archipelagic state in the world, amidst its archipelagic waters, are found some of the most strategic sea lanes in the world: connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Serving as highways for the movement of global trade, as well as of people and the associated ideas and cultural expressions they bring forth" (Haryanto, 2015).

Based on this, Indonesia is one of the categories of countries that have a role as a middle power. From various scientific discussions, there are various types of definitions of a middle power in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon including:

First, according to Thies and Sari, "middle power" is understood by proposing a 'role theory approach' in assessing the qualifications of a country as an intermediary for power by measuring the role that middle power can traditionally be a good international state agent, coalition builder, builder of peace bridge, peacekeepers, third party conflict mediators, and advocates of multilateralism in the international order.

Second, according to Ping, a middle power is a country that has an inherent form of state, craft, and a perceived level of strength because of its size. Ping proposes the theory of 'hybridization', the need to combine statistics, perceived power, and a state governance approach. In his article 'Middle power: comprehensive definition and typology' (Anwar, 2020).

Third, according to DeSwielande, middle power is clarified into five characteristics, namely state capacity, state conception, state status, regional impact, and systemic impact. Furthermore, De Swielande distinguishes it into three different types of middle power following

the 'three cultures of anarchy', including first, Hobbes' middle power, viewing regional/systemic structures as anarchist, based on their policies on power politics, pessimism, security, alliances and narrow interpretations of national interests, and prioritize high politics. Second, the Lockean middle power regards regional/systemic structures as less anarchic and pursues a mixture of high and low politics, the latter mainly focusing on economic and other material interests. third, the Kantian middle power, argues the anarchist world in a more positive way, emphasizing low politics and therefore greater involvement in activities such as bridge construction, cooperation, and mediation (Anwar, 2020).

Various types of definitions of a middle power, the author tends to enter the argument of Theis and Sari by using role theory to place Indonesia's role as a middle power in its policy towards the Indo-Pacific phenomenon. This can be seen from Indonesia's foreign policy that is trying to be a good state agent, building a coalition with ASEAN to maintain the stability of the Indo-Pacific region peace. In addition, Indonesia is also in a position between two major powers namely the United States and China. Indonesia as a whole prefers to engage with the United States and China, benefits from what is offered by these two rich and powerful countries, and does not want to have to choose between Beijing and Washington. Indonesia utilizes its maritime status as an island nation in the region. Indonesia is also present as a builder and guardian of the bridge of peace between the two great powers. Indonesia is also a mediator of third-party conflict and a supporter of international order multilateralism by promoting the Indo-Pacific. these policies

show Indonesia as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon, especially under the presidents Suharto, Megawati, Yudhoyono, and Djokovic.

### **Indonesia's policy as the world's maritime axis**

The Indo-Pacific region whose maritime domain is becoming an increasingly important focus for security, economic, and environmental reasons geographically. Indonesia as the category of the largest archipelagic country in the world and plays a role as a middle power utilizes its role to fulfill the national interests of the country. Indonesia applies the maritime policy to become the world's maritime axis in the Indo-Pacific region. The World Maritime Axis (PMD) is a concept presented by President Jokowi at the East Asia Summit, in Naypyidaw Myanmar on November 13, 2014 (Tuwo, 2014). History shows that the Srivijaya Kingdom and the Majapahit Kingdom in its heyday controlled the trade and service route between China and India. Based on the history of China and India is great power in the days of Srivijaya and Majapahit (Pradhani, 2018).

Nowadays, history repeats itself, where China and India have risen to become big countries with a strong military and financial strength. Indonesia is in a difficult position in the face of competition between the two countries with great power. Indonesia is aware that the presence of China, which has penetrated various sectors and dominates, can be utilized to fulfill the national interests of the country. On the one hand, Indonesia wants to continue to maintain positive relations with China, especially because Indonesia wants investment from China to

improve infrastructure and also strengthen domestic industries that can open jobs. However, on the other hand, Indonesia also considers China as part of its country's security threat (S.D., 2019).

Indonesia is aware that China has great potential to create instability in Southeast Asia, especially as a threat to ASEAN unity. India views ASEAN as a region that has considerable economic cooperation potential and is an entry point for one of the biggest threats to India, namely China. This is one of the reasons that India pays great attention to the development of politics in Southeast Asia. India entered into a strategic partnership with the US, especially in the field of defense as an additional force in dealing with China. As a result, the influence of the US and China competing to increase its influence in the Southeast Asian region, including the Indo-Pacific phenomenon.

Based on Indonesia's policy as the world's maritime axis in the Indo-Pacific region, there are 3 (three) groups from various scientific discussions that interpret the concept as Indonesia's role in the policy.

The first group gives the meaning of the axis as the center or axis and defines PMD as a vision to make Indonesia the center of world marine activities.(Yanyan M. Yani & Montratama, 2018) According to the first group, PMD is more likely to be translated into English as a Global Maritime Fulcrum or GMF.

The second group, interpret the axis as a row or alignment as before the Beijing-Pyongyang-Jakarta axis (Nurfazrinad, 2017). According to the second group, PMD tends to be translated into English into the Global Maritime Axis or GMA. The second group considers that the alignment that is

to be built between Indonesia and other forces in the regional area can support Indonesia's strategic position and national interests.

The third group, interpreting the pivot as a maritime shipping lane, so that the intended PMD is Indonesia's vision to master the world's maritime shipping lane (Yanyan M. Yani & Montratama, 2018). This third group tends to translate PMD into Global Maritime Nexus or GMN.

The author is more inclined to enter the third group which states that Indonesia's strategic geographical structure should be optimally utilized by Indonesia, especially to master the strategic position in the world's maritime field by utilizing diplomatic relations with large powers in the region. Indonesia must be able to take advantage of international political competition that occurs in the Indo-Pacific region to achieve the national goals and interests of the country. The United States as a World Hegemon and China as a regional hegemon in a region that has attracted special attention in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia must be able to balance these two competent great powers in accordance with their respective strengths and advantages.

In the concept of the world's maritime axis (Yanyan M. Yani & Montratama, 2018) there are five pillars of Indonesian policy in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon, including:

1. Culture of Maritime: as a country the rebuilding of maritime culture through the redefinition of Indonesia's national identity.
2. Maritime Economy: manage and preserve the nation's maritime resources.

3. Maritime Connectivity: prioritize maritime infrastructure development, construction of transportation facilities and infrastructure, and sea tourism.
4. Maritime diplomacy: optimizing the path of soft power in dealing with a variety of regional threats and increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the maritime sector.
5. Maritime security: prepare hard power to strengthen Indonesia's maritime defense forces in the effort to secure Indonesian territory.

### **Indonesia's policy as the centrality of ASEAN**

Indonesia's policy as the centrality of ASEAN is Indonesia's big concept in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon. ASEAN has a central role as a leader and dealer managing the regional security stability map. ASEAN is believed to be the initiator of the expansion and deepening of cooperation that crosses maritime cooperation projects, maritime infrastructure, energy and technology transfer, logistics development, etc (Priatna, 2019). Competition between the United States and China which spills over into the Indian and Pacific oceans has worried countries around the region. Intensified competition between the United States and China could jeopardize a long period of peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

Indonesia implemented a policy by reviving ASEAN as a foundation for unity. Because Southeast Asia is located in the geographical midpoint between the Indian and Pacific oceans and all the land around and within it. Indonesia is at the midpoint of the Indo-Pacific concept. Based on the



Balance of Power Theory states that if there are signs of the emergence of a large force, then other countries will try to fight it by countering the threatening state power. This makes the countries that feel threatened to unite to ally. This is illustrated by how Indonesia made ASEAN centrality to offset the rise of the great powers of the United States and China. Indonesia is a leading role in geopolitical cooperation. Indonesia implemented policies by also promoting the Indo-Pacific concept as an effort to offset the rise of the Chinese economy.

The role of Indonesia in ASEAN since the establishment of the association in Indonesia in 1967 is seen as one indicator of its status as an intermediate force. Indonesia made ASEAN its policy base because for Indonesia the Indo-Pacific regional architecture must not damage the centrality of ASEAN. ASEAN in its view must continue to maintain its centrality in the developing Indo-Pacific construct. The policy reinforces the importance of Indonesia as the centrality of ASEAN (Anwar, 2020). The centrality of ASEAN is considered important in ensuring the development of a truly open, transparent, and inclusive Indo-Pacific regional architecture that will try to bridge rather than highlight the differences between the countries involved role in the region.

Indonesia can become a leader and gain the trust and confidence of countries as the Indo-Pacific movers. Indonesia is not the only ASEAN member country that has tried to engage with all major Indo-Pacific powers equally and avoided partiality in the disclosure of strategic competition between the United States and China. Developing close relations with all major powers in the region is considered

important not only for economic and security reasons but also to avoid excessive dependence on one country. Indonesia relies on existing multilateralism forums by promoting the Indo-Pacific. Various bilateral relations between each ASEAN member country and other Indo-Pacific countries are considered as important building blocks in the development of Indo-Pacific cooperation.

## **E. Conclusion**

Based on the research objectives, the results found in the analysis of the role of Indonesia's policy towards the Indo-Pacific show that Indonesia plays a role as a middle force. These strengths are implemented from various foreign policies and the geographical structure of Indonesia which shows Indonesia as a medium-strength category. There are two main policies implemented by Indonesia as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific region, including;

Indonesia, an archipelagic country, utilizes its role as a middle power in the Indo-Pacific region which is a maritime domain. Indonesia applies the maritime policy to become the world's maritime axis in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia utilizes international political competition that occurs in the Indo-Pacific region to achieve its national goals and interests. In the concept of the world's maritime axis, there are five pillars of Indonesian policy in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon, including maritime culture, maritime economy, maritime connectivity, maritime diplomacy, and maritime security.

Indonesia, which is at the midpoint based on geographical location in the Indo-Pacific concept, utilizes its role to fulfill the national interests of the country. Indonesia

made ASEAN the centrality of its policies which helped promote the Indo-Pacific. This is to offset the great power of the United States and China in harmony with the Balance of Power Theory. Indonesia maximizes the benefits of the two powerful countries.

Indonesia is reviving ASEAN as a foundation of unity because Southeast Asia is located at the geographical midpoint between the Indian and Pacific oceans. ASEAN has a central role as a leader and the dealer is believed to be able to coordinate countries involved in the Indo-Pacific region. ASEAN is designated as the guardian and manager of security stability maps in the region. The centrality of ASEAN is considered important given the increasingly complex dynamics occurring in the region, to ensure a truly open and transparent development in bridging the regional architectural unity of countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

#### **F. Recommendation**

hoped that Indonesia can implement its policy firmly and thoroughly for the Indo-Pacific, given that Indonesia has had a significant role and influence in the region and should be able to truly utilize its role and maximize its opportunities as best as possible for the country's national interests. Besides, with this strict and thorough policy, Indonesia is expected not to be carried away by currents which can cause security instability in the region.

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