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FACTORS IN CONSTRUCTING INDONESIA'S PERSPECTIVES ON THE INDO-PACIFIC

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Abstract: *The term "Indo-Pacific" became increasingly significant and was accepted by several countries, including Indonesia. The government welcomed the term as part of its foreign policy projection, which developed its unique perspective or interpretation, including inclusivity, a rule based on international law, and ASEAN's centrality and cooperation for regional growth. This study would answer the question of how the concept of Indo-Pacific will be interpreted within Indonesia's unique context compared to other countries. Thus, this research aimed to describe several key factors in constructing the Indonesian perspective on the Indo-Pacific concept, particularly under President Jokowi's leadership. This research applied qualitative with library methods from the primary and secondary data sources. This paper argued six factors that constructed Indonesia's perspective on Indo-Pacific: maritime historical legacy; the "Bebas-Aktif" principle; ASEAN values; geographical position; and democratic values. The research concluded that Indonesia is one of the major countries that consistently championed the term "Indo-Pacific" within the regional and international spheres, with a "moderate" status in terms of its foreign policy implementation, which is mainly characterized by inclusivity and cooperation in the economy by constructively engaging all countries.*

Keywords: *Indonesia; Indo-Pacific; Bebas-Aktif; Jokowi; Global Maritime Fulcrum*

INTRODUCTION

Japan has played a crucial role in developing the Indo-Pacific concept over the last two decades. The confluence of the Indian and Pacific Seas in "broader Asia" was obliquely referenced by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in his speech to the Indian Parliament in August 2007 about "the dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and prosperity". He embraced the perspective of the Indo-Pacific, concentrating on infrastructure development in East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa (Abe 2007). Within Indonesia's context, particularly under President Jokowi's successive leadership, the Indo-Pacific concept has been increasingly used since 2014, owing to the vocabulary strongly coinciding with his vision of the Global Maritime Fulcrum. Indonesia's perspective on the Indo-Pacific under Jokowi's leadership emphasized several principles: cooperation, no rivalry, inclusiveness, transparency and openness, and respect for international law (Setkab 2018). Indonesia believes cooperation in the region must be concrete through development cooperation, especially in the economic field, to achieve a stable, prosperous, and constructive Indo-Pacific region (Antara 2019). However, Indonesia applied values in the Indo-Pacific differ from the United States' policy through political or security alliances such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) or AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States). Given this dynamic, analyzing the factors behind Indonesia's

perspective on the Indo-Pacific is critical to explain the rationality to other countries that could encourage cooperation rather than conflict in the region.

FACTORS IN FORMULATING INDONESIA'S PERSPECTIVE ON INDO-PACIFIC

In formulating Indonesia's perspective on the Indo-Pacific, several significant elements become its major foundation: maritime historical legacy; "Bebas-Aktif" foreign policy principle; ASEAN multilateralism; geographical position; and democratic values.

Maritime Historical Legacy

In terms of the maritime historical legacy aspect, the maritime kingdoms of Indonesia in the past played an essential and inseparable role in contributing to Indonesia's recognition of the concept of the Indo-Pacific. As the term is critically close to the maritime domain within the Indian and Pacific oceans, it is relevantly correlated with the historical past of Indonesia's maritime kingdoms. Several of Indonesia's maritime empires had critical roles in the past maritime affair in the region in enacting the spirit of Indonesia's glory in the past, which recalled in the modern day such as Kutai Kingdom, Tarumanegara Kingdom, Sriwijaya Kingdom, Singhasari Kingdom, Mataram Kingdom and Majapahit Kingdom (Winarsih 2018).

President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) justified and correlated the Indo-Pacific following his vision of the Global Maritime Fulcrum on a historical aspect at his first state speech after taking the oath as President of Indonesia for 2014-2019 on Monday, 20 October 2014; he stated:

> Oceans, seas, straits, and bays are the future of our civilization (...) We have long turned our backs on the oceans, seas, straits, and bays. So, starting today, we will bring back the glory of our ancestors as brave sailors. The motto of our ancestors in the past resonates again 'Jalesveva Jayamahe' [which means] on the sea we are victorious (Widodo 2014, 10).

It concluded that the Indo-Pacific term closely correlated with the maritime sphere of Indonesia as a nation with solid marine historical background. In the modern history of Indonesia, particularly in the context of the colonial era, the territory of the Indonesian state still refers to the regulations of the Dutch East Indies colonial era, namely the Territorial Zeeënen Maritieme Kringen Ordonantie 1939 (TZMKO 1939). In TZMKO (1939), it is written that the territorial waters of Indonesia are only three nautical miles wide, which surround each island. Thus, foreign ships could cross the waters that separate the islands. Each country could carry out any beneficial or detrimental activity to Indonesia's sovereignty. Foreign ships are free to sail in the Java Sea, Banda Sea, and Makassar Sea, which are within the Republic of Indonesia (RI) territory. Indonesia objected to this regulation because the TZMKO (1939) ignored the unique characteristics of Indonesia as an archipelagic country (Fatimatuzzahro and Raditya 2021).

Prime Minister Djuanda Kartawidjaja declared that Indonesia's seas are not limited to the zones regulated in TZMKO (1939). Instead, Indonesia adheres to the idea of an archipelagic country, which means that its sea area comprises the sea next to, between, and within the Indonesian archipelago. Indonesia has 17,000 islands whose unity and defense must be

maintained. The Djuanda Declaration was announced on 13 December 1957. The essence of the Djuanda Declaration was that Indonesia had absolute sovereignty over all the waters around it. The Djuanda Declaration was recognized and stipulated in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, it took a long time before the world realized it. RI increased by 2.5 times to 5,193,250 km2, except for Irian Jaya, which had not been recognized internationally then. Based on the calculation of 196 straight baselines from the farthest island points, a virtual boundary line surrounds the Republic of Indonesia along 8,069.8 nautical miles (Ulwiya 2019). Thus, the ancient and modern maritime histories played a critical role in constructing Indonesia's maritime vision in several aspects, including defense, political, economic, social, and cultural perspectives.

"Bebas-Aktif" Foreign Policy Principle

This belongs mainly to the "Bebas-Aktif" (Free and Active) foreign policy as a constitutional mandate that must be carried out in diplomacy and Indonesian foreign policy (Marsudi 2019). The guiding idea is founded on the harsh legacy of colonialism and the Cold War block competition between the US and USSR (Greenlees 2018). Bebas-Aktif was characterized by Hatta's idea in 1953 as the founder of foreign policy, which stated that Indonesia's independent principle does not wish to align herself with either of the opposition blocs, the Western bloc or the Communist bloc, whereas the active principle because it actively carries out a peaceful policy as a loyal member of the United Nations, by practicing its independent and dynamic approach, Indonesia endeavors to seek friendship with all nations, whatever their ideology or form of government, based on mutual respect (Hatta 1953).

In the context of the South China Sea conflict, the trilateral defense partnership between Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) and China might lead to a conflict between the two blocks, particularly as the trilateral military pact's development of nuclear-powered submarine technology by Australia, Britain, and the US has the potential to endanger stability, security, and peace in the Indo-Pacific area. As a result of the South China Sea conflict, Indonesia's stance towards AUKUS and PRC can demonstrate that the country is in the middle of a conflict between the AUKUS and China. According to the principle of active foreign policy that Indonesia has implemented, the situation in the Indo-Pacific is not neutral but guided by clear policy direction. In this situation, Indonesia can benefit from the existing hostility between the two parties in the economic and defense sectors (Putro 2021).

Indonesia's closeness to AUKUS might be seen in its political stance favoring national interests in the military. Indonesia avoided openly supporting the AUKUS, which might prevent Indonesia from branding itself as a go-between for AUKUS or the PRC, for Indonesia to continue to be in a strong bargaining position to carry out economic cooperation with China, keeping in mind that economic growth and development are one of the leading programs of the government of President Joko Widodo. Close ties between Indonesia and AUKUS in the field of defense can go hand in hand with the close relationship between Indonesia and China in the economic sector, which is currently underway. A free and active foreign policy is still relevant to advancing international politics because it can still be carried out with an emphasis on

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Indonesia's national interests and a balanced position by not favoring any group or country in the Indo-Pacific (Putro 2021).

Bebas-Aktif policy also played a role in achieving world peace, continued to contribute, and is always part of the solution to nations' problems by promoting a win-win approach (Putro 2021). This idea represented in an Indo-Pacific strategy focused on ASEAN that is more in line with the organization's inclusiveness values in contrast to the US vision of a "free" Indo-Pacific sees domestic political openness and good governance as essential components, which puts it in conflict with China (Acharya 2019). In addition, as the Global Maritime Fulcrum became a vision under his leadership, he stressed that Indonesia would continue to adhere to an active foreign policy and be involved in every international forum (Lumanauw 2014).

ASEAN Values

Within Indonesia's foreign policy on a multilateral level, ASEAN has been regarded as the cornerstone of Indonesia's foreign policy since its establishment until now (Marsudi 2019). ASEAN is a crucial instrument in implementing Indonesia's foreign policy, which is a priority at the regional level as the first circle of Indonesia's foreign policy (Fitriani and Panduwinata 2018). Notably, Indonesia has a significant role in the association. It is perceived as the leader of ASEAN due to factors including having the largest population, being wealthy in natural resources, and having the biggest economy in the region.

The association based on the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) of 1976 contains the following essential principles, which the ASEAN Member States have endorsed, namely: (i) mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations; (ii) the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, or coercion; non-interference in the internal affairs of one another; (iii) settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means; (iv) renunciation of the threat or use of force; and (v) effective cooperation among themselves (ASEAN 2021, 2).

In responding to the development of the Indo-Pacific dynamic term, Indonesia is the leading country in promoting the adoption of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), which coincides with maritime diplomacy under the Global Maritime Fulcrum vision and interest in the Indo-Pacific idea (Acharya 2019; Kemlu 2019; Khaoirunnisa and Aryani 2022). Jokowi stated that the idea of the Indo-Pacific is fundamental for ASEAN to remain relevant and maintain its centrality. The Southeast Asia region, located in the middle of the Indo-Pacific region, must become a fulcrum by building peace and prosperity, turning this potential threat into an increase in cooperation within the tug-of-war of world power constellations.

Jokowi also underlined the importance of ASEAN developing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, prioritizing openness, inclusiveness, transparency, respect for international law, and respect for ASEAN's centrality. In addition, Jokowi welcomed the positive response from ASEAN countries to the Indo-Pacific concept and made it a joint ASEAN concept as member countries provided full support for the idea (Kementerian Sekretariat Negara 2018). Indonesia's foreign minister stated that as ASEAN adopted Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia would ensure implementation in the next five years (Marsudi 2019). ASEAN also complements its

extended forums, such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting (ADMM), and ADMM Plus, to improve the regional architecture.

Geostrategic Position

Indonesia occupies a valuable geostrategic location in a significant triangle territory encompassing two oceans. It is a critical triangle that spans the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Indonesia is in the center bordering Japan in the north, Australia in the southeast, and India in the southwest. As a result, some of the world's most critical sea lanes - connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans - can be found as the largest archipelagic country in the world, with around seventeen thousand islands (Natalegawa 2013).[1] Indonesia owned several critical straits in the hub of the region, especially the Strait of Malacca, which is the main transit route for commodity trade to Asia and is part of Indonesia'sterritory, followed by other critical straits such as the Straits of Sunda, Lombok, and Makassar (Kusumastuti 2014).

Indonesia ratified the Convention on the Law of the International Sea and is legally obligated to provide foreign ships and aircraft that can traverse Indonesian waters through the route specified, called the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lane (ALKI). There are three ALKI: (i) crossing the South China Sea, Karimata Strait, Java Sea, Sunda Strait, Indian Ocean including the Strait of Malacca; (ii) crossing the Sulawesi Sea, Makassar Strait, Flores Sea, Lombok Strait; (iii) across the Pacific Ocean, Maluku Sea, Seram Sea, Banda Sea, Ombai Strait, Sawu Sea, Indian Ocean (Idhom 2021, 1). Several countries have become more dependent on and rely on the strait, including China, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea (Paszak 2021). Besides tremendous opportunities within Indonesia's waters, it also threatened Indonesia's security.

In traditional threat, Indonesia's current position has a strategic vulnerability due to located between two continents and two oceans, particularly between the marine base in Darwin and nuclear-powered submarines, the deployment of troops at the British Indo-Pacific naval base, and the deployment of troops in the South China Sea, which can threaten Indonesia at any time (Permatasari 2022).

In the non-traditional threat, the International Military Council on Climate and Security (IMCCS) report on "Climate and Security in the Indo-Asia Pacific" was published in July 2020. The report stated that exacerbated impacts of climate change, such as increased food and water insecurity, migration and forced displacement, disaster response, and a subdued recovery, and the broader economic impact could seriously complicate these existing security vulnerabilities - eroding coping capacity, increasing grievances, and exacerbating tensions and fragility. Further, the impacts of climate change will interact with the evolving regional security landscape. They will likely create new, potentially devastating risks, which may emerge in predictable but difficult-to-predict ways. Moreover, the residents of the Indo-Pacific are five times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than individuals living elsewhere (IMCCS Expert Group 2020). Indonesia must address the regional vulnerabilities, especially in the context of the Global

[1]According to Geospatial Information Agency and Center for Hydrography and Oceanography TNI-AL (2018) the number of islands in Indonesia has approximately 17,504 islands, and those that have been standardized and registered with the The United Nations (UN) consists of 16,671 islands.

Maritime Fulcrum at the hub geographical center of the Indo-Pacific, as 40 percent of marine traffic passes through Asia from the country (Kemenhub 2018, 1).

Values of Democracy

Since the end of Suharto's authoritarian regime in the last 32 years, through reformation in 1998 (Ganesan 2004), Indonesia has made great strides toward democracy, developing significant media and political pluralism and enduring many peaceful power transitions between parties (Freedom House 2022). The first foundation of Indonesia's democracy was written in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution underlines the spirit of a democratic country which states, "the Indonesian national independence in a Constitution of the State of Indonesia, which was formed in order of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is sovereign by the people".

The second important pillar is "Pancasila", which was created on 1 June 1945 and consisted of the five basic ideas of the country. With the concept of "Pancasila democracy", the Pancasila evolved into democratic values.

According to Darji Darmodihardjo, the concept is rooted in the Indonesian nation's personality and philosophy of life, whose embodiment is included in the provisions of the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution (Badan Pengkajian 2018). The concept of Pancasila democracy is defined as a democracy that is led by wisdom in deliberations/representations and that contains the spirit of belief in One Almighty God, just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, and social justice (Soemantri 1986, 7). Pancasila democracy has the following principles from an ideological and constitutional point of view, namely: equality for all Indonesian people; the balance between rights and obligations; the exercise of freedom that is ordinarily responsible to God Almighty, oneself, and others; realizing a sense of social justice; decision making by consensus deliberation; prioritizing national unity and kinship; uphold national goals and ideals (Soemantri 1986, 7).

Discussing the democracy quality in Indonesia, the 2021 Democracy Index launched by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in early February 2022 shows that Indonesia's average score on the index reaches 6.71. This score increased compared to 2020, which was 6.30, and currently, Indonesia's ranking has risen from 64 to 52 out of 167 countries studied. Indonesia is included in the ten countries with the best score improvement performance (Economist Intelligence EIU 2021, 13).

As the third and largest Muslim democratic country in the world, Indonesia contributes on an international level to promoting democratic values through the "Bali Democracy Forum", which was first held in 2008, ten years after *reformasi* started with the belief that promoting democracy is an integral part of Indonesia's foreign policy (Kemlu 2021). The 14th Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) in 2021 discussed "Democracy for Humanity: Advancing Economic and Social Justice during the Pandemic" (Chaterine 2021). Hence, Indonesia's strong adoption of democratic values correlated with Jokowi's Nawacita foreign policy principle, including the Global Maritime Fulcrum and ASEAN Outlook.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia's perspective on the Indo-Pacific significantly arose under President Jokowi's leadership on regional and international levels, with a solid background of reasons to adopt and recognize the Indo-Pacific terminology. Maritime history, the Bebas-Aktif foreign policy principle, ASEAN multilateralism, geographical position, and democratic values became vital to improving Indonesia's international status, especially in achieving the Global Maritime Fulcrum vision within the Indo-Pacific region. Assessing Indonesia's perspective on the Indo-Pacific resulted in a "moderate" approach to the regional construct, characterized by differences from the United States on the "hard" approach by exclusion on China, whereas Indonesia and ASEAN's inclusiveness on China's position in the region. However, Indonesia does not freely accept China's behavior by encouraging a set of rules and norms in the region to follow and by inviting other central states, including the United States, India, Japan, Australia, and others, to create cooperation as a key spirit in the region.

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