

# ASSESSING INDONESIA MARITIME DOCTRINE FOREIGN POLICY AS A RESPONSE TOWARD STRATEGIC RIVALRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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## **Abstrak**

*Rivalitas strategis yang melibatkan dua kutub kekuatan besar geopolitik, Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok, mengancam stabilitas dari otonomi regional Kawasan Asia Tenggara. Rivalitas Amerika Serikat-Tiongkok yang menyentuh sektor akses maritim guna meraih supremasi dan dominasi di Laut Tiongkok Selatan dan Samudera Hindia menjadi perhatian bersama bagi negara anggota ASEAN, tak terkecuali Indonesia. Pada saat yang sama, pemerintahan Indonesia dibawah komando Presiden Joko Widodo mengedepankan doktrin maritim dalam kebijakan luar negerinya. Doktrin maritim yang dibawa oleh Indonesia memiliki capaian untuk menciptakan kerjasama yang bermula pada wilayah perairan. Paper ini berargumen bahwa Indonesia dengan visi poros maritim dunia dalam kebijakan luar negerinya adalah bagian dari upaya menjadi penengah dari rivalitas strategis yang ada di Kawasan Asia Tenggara. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif, dapat diketengahkan tiga*

*alasan poros maritim dunia yang dibawa oleh Indonesia dalam kebijakan luar negerinya berupaya menengahi rivalitas strategis di Asia Tenggara yakni: (1) menitikberatkan pada upaya mempertahankan otonomi strategis dan keamanan maritim Asia Tenggara, dan (2) memberikan upaya resolusi konflik untuk ASEAN agar bertahan dalam rivalitas strategis antara Amerika Serikat dan Tiongkok.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Doktrin Maritim, Rivalitas Strategis, Otonomi Regional, Kebijakan Luar Negeri*

### **Abstract**

*The strategic rivalry that involved between two major geopolitics power states, United States and China threatening the stability of Southeast Asia regional autonomy. The Sino-US strategic rivalry which happening over maritime access, supremacy, and dominance in Indian Ocean and South China Sea become a particular concern for the ASEAN Member States, including Indonesia. At the same time, Indonesia government under Joko Widodo proposed doctrine maritime through its foreign policy. The aim of maritime doctrine foreign policy is to create a unity from the sea. This paper argue that Indonesia proposed maritime doctrine foreign policy to response the strategic rivalry in Southeast Asia. Using qualitative method, it is revealed the reasons of Indonesian Government using maritime doctrine foreign policy to mediate strategic rivalry in Southeast Asia by: (1) seeks to preserve Southeast Asia's strategic autonomy and maritime security, and (2) give a conflict resolution for ASEAN to survive between Sino-US strategic rivalry.*

**Keywords:** *Maritime Doctrine, Strategic Rivalry, Regional Autonomy, Foreign Policy*

## **Introduction**

The development of Southeast Asia along with the emergence of an organization called the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) makes this continent a target for deeper research. There are many reasons why Southeast Asia, with its political and foreign policy implementation (especially with regard to ASEAN) is promising as an object of research. First, its claim of being the central driving force of the region's relations with its external partners makes it an area of interest (Weatherbee, 2015). Southeast Asia is becoming increasingly important unit of the international system, in terms of security, economic, and political as well as non-traditional interests (Weatherbee, 2015). Second, with ASEAN as its regional organization now emerging as a hub with its own global network with connections in varying degrees to all of the great (and some lesser) world powers, it is becoming the fulcrum of a regional balance of power (Weatherbee, 2015).

Recently, the condition of geopolitical power has shifted in East Asia, hand in hand with the emergence of China as a major power due to its impressive economic growth rates and strong military capability (Sukma, 2016). This change in the geopolitical situation has a direct impact on the Southeast Asia states, especially regarding maritime security. The rise of China has interrupted the supremacy of world powers, such as the United States, especially in maritime territory (Sukma, 2016). Strategic rivalry between the United States and China over maritime access, supremacy and dominance in two strategic oceans (Indian Ocean and the South China Sea) are particular concern to Southeast Asia states (Sukma, 2016). The case of maritime dispute in the South China Sea involving

China and some Southeast Asian states like Vietnam, Philippines, and Brunei Darussalam is evidence that Xi Jinping attempting to create a driving force in the ongoing power shift in East Asia. In this instance, ASEAN (as a regionally representative organization) needs to preserve the identity and sovereignty in maritime territory, otherwise it could be marginalized in its role as a manager of the inductive order (Sukma, 2016).

Indonesia (as an archipelagic state that is one of the founders of ASEAN) has significant maritime territory compared to other states in Southeast Asia, and thus has a responsibility to be aware of this situation. With this potentially real threat apparent in Southeast Asian maritime territory which could harm the regional order, Indonesia, as a legitimate authority in the region has major influence in working together with ASEAN in upholding the value of sovereignty. Therefore, Indonesia's foreign policy in this regard called "Maritime Doctrine Foreign Policy" provides an option for ASEAN to survive the Sino-US strategic rivalries. Indonesia is hedging against the possibility of China's hegemonic rise by putting its strategic weight behind the preservation of the status quo in the South China Sea, although Jakarta is not a claimant state in the dispute (Pereira, 2015). Furthermore, the Global Maritime Fulcrum foreign policy provides Indonesia with a good chance of preserving Southeast Asia's strategic autonomy through ASEAN (Sukma, 2016).

This paper aims to contribute to the emerging literature on international relations by examining the reason of Indonesian Government for pursuing maritime doctrine foreign policy to response strategic rivalry in Southeast Asia. The following question

is central to this study: Why has the recent government of Indonesia opted to use maritime doctrine foreign policy to response strategic rivalry in Southeast Asia? That research question is formulated by triggering three causal relationships which are: (1) ASEAN needs their member states to maintain the continuity of regional cooperation, (2) its important to seeks to preserve Southeast Asia's strategic autonomy and maritime security, and (3) the needs of Southeast Asia states to maintain maritime security which is under threat by the strategic rivalries between China and United States. Regarding the starting assumption that Indonesia has taken the decision to pursue maritime doctrine foreign policy within ASEAN, this research proposes the following two hypotheses: (1) maritime doctrine foreign policy seeks to preserve Southeast Asia strategic autonomy and maritime strategy and (2) maritime doctrine foreign policy provides an option for ASEAN to survive the strategic rivalries between China and United States.

Analytical Framework: Foreign Policy Decision Making System, Regional Order, and The Relations between Idea, Identity, and Foreign Policy Behaviour

In approaching the main research question, this study employs an analytical framework with core arguments linked to literature on foreign policy decision-making system, regional order, and the relationship between identity, ideas and foreign policy. This is primary because the three theoretical frameworks provided in this research are useful for proving the reason why Indonesia's maritime doctrine foreign policy become a response for strategic rivalry in Southeast Asia.

## **1.1 Understanding the Foreign Policy Decision-Making System**

The study of foreign policy analysis generally is about how the way decisions are made can shape eventual choice of action (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). In diYerent perspectives, foreign policy decision-making systems can be referred to as the choices made by individuals, groups, and coalitions that aYect a nation's actions on the international stage (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). Besides this, according to Synder (2002), foreign policy decision-making is understood as a process which results in the selection of a socially defined and limited number of alternative choices intended to bring about a particular future state of aYairs envisaged by the decision-makers (Synder, 2002). This therefore, lends credence to the argument that foreign policy decision-making process is about the way of "deciding" based on various options.

There are many factors which determine a foreign policy decision-making system. These include the environment, and psychological, international and domestic factors (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). Other factors that can be a determinant in foreign policy decisions are about the reference of cognition, systemic factors and media eYects (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). A positive environment surrounding the process of foreign policy decision-making will most likely result in the creation of a good foreign policy. Further, there is a psychological perspective that influences and shapes foreign policy decision-making, which involves factors such as the personality and beliefs of leaders, leadership style, emotions, images, cognitive consistency, and the use of analogies (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). International factors are also determinants in the shaping of foreign policy decision and these can be made in a strategic seting, which involves states at an

international level, and these include deterrents, arms races, strategic surprise, alliance formation and regime type of adversary (Minb & DeRouen, 2010). Internally, domestic factors which affect the process of foreign policy decision-making are to do with influencing the stability of states, such as domestic politics, economic conditions and public opinion.

The definitions and determinant factors in foreign policy decision-making systems as outlined above will all be used as a framework for this dissertation. In terms of definition, it is useful for understanding the meaning of how the Indonesian government produces its foreign policy in a system. Hence these determinant factors help to understand the background of every single foreign policy strategy that has been produced, including the latest called maritime doctrine foreign policy.

## **1.2 Understanding the Regional Order**

The reason for regional order being brought into the geopolitical arena can be attributed to the intention of the United States to rebalance their strategic priorities (Tan, 2012). As a superpower, the United States has turned its attention regarding strategic power toward Asia in the wake of its drawdown from the conflict in Afghanistan (Tan, 2012). Asia, which is the territory to feel the most impact from the rebalance of US strategic priorities, needs to be aware of this condition. The move by the United States to take control as the superpower country indirectly triggers a reaction from other superpower states located in East Asia, specifically China. Crucially, the way that the United States is looking to rebalance its strategic priorities by relocating its military assets to the region has

disturbed China (Tan, 2012). This has created a new clash in the geopolitical arena between Sino-US Southeast Asia, where those located in the middle of this rivalry between the United States and China, need to uphold their identity to keep their regional structure. Therefore, the need to maintain the regional structure initialized the concept called “regional order” in Southeast Asia.

The concept of regional power was originally devised by the Southeast Asia political and security thinker, Michael Leifer. In his writings, the idea of regional power emerged as the concept needed to be upheld by Southeast Asia states, primarily ASEAN member states, as the method by which to survive the impact of US- China strategic rivalries. According to Leifer, regional order means the existence of a stable structure of regional intergovernmental relationships informed by common assumptions about the basis of inter-state conduct (Khong, 2005). He also argues that regional order is mainly about structure consisting of two requirements, which are a set of assumptions about the interrelationships between resident and external states for which there must be common goals or a common strategic perspective (Khong, 2005). The other explanation for regional power (beside focusing on a stable structure) is about the existence and acceptance of certain common values (Khong, 2005).

### **1.3 Understanding the Relations between Ideas, Identity, and Foreign Policy Behaviour**

The third analytical framework that will be used in this research is by connecting the relations between ideas, identity and foreign policy behaviour. Reflecting on the study of international relations, there is a constructivism theory that offers the most comprehensive

account of the role of identity and ideas in foreign policy. It is interesting to note that identity, ideas and foreign policy behaviour are interrelated. Some IR thinkers like Emmanuel Adler and John Ruggie argue that identity informs interests (Wirajuda, 2014). On the other side, according to Alexander Wendt, interests take the role of presupposing identity.

The work produced by Kuniko Ashizawa can be a guide to understanding the relations between ideas, identity and foreign policy behaviour. Ashizawa (2008) proposes a term value of action framework as a tool for analyzing the role of ideas and identity in the process of formulating foreign policy. Ashizawa suggests a concept of treating identity that makes foreign policy makers a perception of what their country is and what it represents (Ashizawa, 2008). In addition, regarding the concept of state identity, Ashizawa maintains that it provides policy makers with a particular value that sometimes becomes a dominant value in the process of policy-making. His work, highlighting the importance of identity and ideas in the process of formulating foreign policy, shows three factors that are essential to define the preference of state foreign policy (Ashizawa, 2008). Those factors are, first, identity as a concept held strictly of state foreign policy (Ashizawa, 2008). This factor is concerned about the nature of fluidity in identity that determines the ability of foreign policy makers to highlight certain identities that mater, or the implication of a particular identity of foreign policy action. The second factor is the nexus between identity and values (Ashizawa, 2008). The point of identity in foreign policy behaviour is that it has a function to inform foreign policy makers in determining the appropriate preference for foreign policy strategy. The third factor

that is essential defines the preference of state foreign policy as the relationship between values and preferences (Ashizawa, 2008). These three factors have a role as the key variables in explaining foreign policy that has been made by the executive.

After the role of identity in the correlation with foreign behaviour has been explained, the next is the role of ideas. It has been proposed that ideas motivate foreign policy action. Several IR thinkers have put forward their argument stating the important role of ideas in the process of formulating foreign policy. According to Blyth (1997), ideas provide the necessary conditions for successful collective action among agents and facilitate agents and changes in foreign policy options. Chekel (1993) in his writings argued that the emergence of ideas is important during the decision-making process. Ideas also take on a role as a roadmap and focal points in influencing foreign policy behaviour (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993). Both Goldstein and Keohane agree that "ideas" are beliefs or values that are helpful in explaining political outcomes, particularly those related to foreign policy (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993).

### **Strategic Rivalries Faced by Southeast Asia**

In the beginning, strategic rivalries could be described as the relationships in which decision makers have singled out other states as distinctive competitors and enemies posing some actual or potential military threat (Colaresi, 2007). According to Diehl and Goerb, strategic rivalry is about a rivalry consisting of two states in competitions that possess the expectation of future conflict (Diehl & Goerb, 2010). Through its future development, strategic rivalries could be divided into two different types, which are main types and secondary types. The main types consist of spatial, positional, and

ideological (Colaresi, 2007). The other one, secondary types, consist of ethnic, dissidents, resources, and access (Colaresi, 2007). Those concepts, definitions, and types become indicators in identifying the clash between China and the United States within Southeast Asia territory, and hence, can be categorized as strategic rivalries.

The situation of the strategic rivalries that are faced by ASEAN resulted from an argument that said that the Pacific Century is coming. The idea of that Pacific Century is coming from Hillary Clinton, who at that time was the United States' Secretary of State. In her writings, Hillary argues that the future of politics will be decided in Asia, not in Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the centre of action (Clinton, 2011). The government of the United States believes that maintaining peace and security across the Asia-Pacific is and increasingly crucial process (Clinton, 2011). The government of the United States has also tried to build their power in the Asia-Pacific regarding economic and military power, in order gain influence. Of course, Southeast Asia, as one of the crucial parts in the Asia-Pacific, has become a region that is also recognized by the United States. The government of the United States has begun to undertake several initiatives to deepen its alliance system and military presence in the Southeast Asia region (Sukma, 2012). According to the United States perspective, conducting cooperation with Southeast Asia is an important factor for maintaining peace and stability in the Asian Region. Since then, the United States has declared that their foreign policy direction would focus on Asia, mainly in the Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia.

In the same time, China is also in the phase of an economic and military development process. Several efforts have been conducted by the government of China regarding the intention of becoming

a major power in the Asia-Pacific. There is evidence that China has consistently demonstrated its ability to sustain impressive economic growth rates at an average of 10 percent over the last thirty years (Sukma, 2012). In addition, to become major power in the Asia Pacific, China subsequently tried to solidify its influence in Southeast Asia and promote an exclusive form of Asian regionalism (Egberink & der Puten, 2010). Not only is China government looking for improvement in the economy and military sector, but it is also conducting a charm diplomacy by building relations toward many states, including the United States itself and also the states in Southeast Asia (Sukma, 2011). From the beginning, the way China has gone about improving its economic, military, and diplomatic sectors has elicited attention from many states, including the United States.

The strategic rivalry that developed between China and United States had a direct impact on ASEAN. Geographically, the strategic rivalry of Sino-US takes place in the pivotal area in Southeast Asia, which is the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. Those two maritime areas are close to the ASEAN Member States national territory such as Vietnam, Cambodia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Hence, the strategic rivalry between the US and China over maritime access, supremacy, and dominance in two vital oceans is becoming a particular concern for the ASEAN Member States (Sukma, 2016). Apparently, the Sino-US strategic rivalry that threatens the Southeast Asia region could potentially undermine the ASEAN's regional autonomy (Sukma, 2016). The implications that the China-US strategic rivalries could harm ASEAN's regional autonomy has been shaped into three possibilities, which are likely polarizing ASEAN, marginalizing the role of ASEAN as a manager

of regional order, and creating difficulties for the ASEAN Member States to implement the value of centrality (Sukma, 2016).

Indonesia, as one of ASEAN's founding members, has notably promoted the principle of being independent and active in its foreign policy approach. By the maritime doctrine foreign policy, Indonesia has a chance in mitigating the potential risks of strategic rivalry surrounding the Southeast Asia region (Ramadhani, 2015). The Indonesian Government needs to play a role in preserving ASEAN centrality, accommodating major powers roles in the area, preventing both strategic rivalry among the great powers and a concert of authority, ensuring ASEAN's unimpeded access to material benefits, and also facilitating regional integration through maritime doctrine foreign policy.

### **Maritime Doctrine Foreign Policy to Preserve Southeast Asia's Strategic Autonomy and Security**

The clash of interests between China and the United States that emerged in Southeast Asia maritime territory potentially harms the autonomy of regional cooperation. The ideology of ASEAN centrality, which has been agreed upon since 1967, would become harder to sustain if there was no viable strategy. The Indonesia Government had a chance to preserving Southeast Asia autonomy through taking responsibility by Maritime Doctrine foreign policy. Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy under Joko Widodo regime declared that does not want the Southeast Asia region to be dominated by one power or a group of power (Sukma, 2016). Maritime Doctrine foreign policy could be to examine the relations of ideas and identity in foreign policy behaviour. The term of "ideas"

in foreign policy is viewed as having a roadmap and focal points in influencing foreign policy behaviour (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993). The role of ideas in foreign policy behaviour is having a major role in identifying states political outcomes.

The decision of Indonesia's government has opted for pursuing Maritime Doctrine foreign policy is related with the result of identifying the process from the current situation of the Southeast Asia region. The ideas of Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy arise in response to the situation of ASEAN autonomy and maritime security that needs to be preserved from Sino-US strategic rivalries. The meaning of identity as a tool to inform the foreign policy makers for determining the appropriate preference is also correlated with the motive of Indonesia government using Maritime Doctrine foreign policy (Ashizawa, 2008). The identity of Indonesia as an archipelagic state, with 17,000 islands and situated between two strategic oceans, determined its foreign policy behaviour (Connelly, 2015).

### **Maritime Doctrine Foreign Policy give a Conflict Resolution for ASEAN to Survive between Sino-US Strategic Rivalries**

Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy gives a conflict resolution for ASEAN to survive between Sino-US strategic rivalries by the fact of its implications. During the era of President Joko Widodo, the idea of a Maritime Doctrine is not only bringing the concept but also implementation, which is reflective of strategic plan of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The implementation of Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine could be examined through regional order perspective. In the perspective regional order, the idea of Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy that is proposed by Indonesia's

government brings its core value of the regional structure. The regional order is the counter framework of the strategic rivalry itself. According to Leifer, the core value of regional order, mainly in the scope of Southeast Asia, is the existence of a stable structure of regional inter-governmental relationships informed by common assumptions about the bases of inter-state conduct (Khong, 2005). Then, in relation to Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy, the construction of the idea is providing a structure that ASEAN needs in facing their strategic rivalry. Looking to Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy, the government is inviting all the partners, the ASEAN Member States, to cooperate in the Maritime field (Connelly, 2015). It clear that the Indonesian government has a motive to pursue a Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy, particularly through supporting the maritime force development and providing a structure regarding regional order for Southeast Asia regional cooperation.

Regional stability in Southeast Asia which became an important point for Indonesia government indicates that Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy was made for upholding the ASEAN regional order. Referring to Leifer argument about regional order in ASEAN, stability security is one of the important points in terms of managing regional order (Khong, 2005). There is a correlation to President Joko Widodo speech at The East Asia Summit in Myanmar, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014. President Joko Widodo, on the behalf of the Indonesian Government, declared the awareness to maintain regional stability in the ASEAN region by proposing a maritime doctrine foreign policy (Widodo, 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that the motive of Indonesia maritime doctrine foreign policy strategy in ASEAN is for maintaining the regional order.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the motives of Indonesian government for pursuing The Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy toward ASEAN are supported by the theoretical perspectives. Regional order has substantiated the reason for the Indonesian government pursuing Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy toward Southeast Asia. The reason is about giving an option for ASEAN to survive between the Sino-US strategic rivalries by providing structure. The structure that is provided by Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy is in line with the concept of regional order. This is seen by inviting all partners in the scope of ASEAN Member States to cooperate in the maritime field. The other analytical framework, which is the foreign policy decision-making system, explains the reasons for the Indonesia government pursuing a maritime doctrine as a foreign policy strategy within ASEAN. Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy highlights the intention to preserve Southeast Asia's strategic autonomy and maritime security by the relations of identity, ideas, and behaviour in foreign policy decision system. Through the concept of ideas in foreign policy decision-making system, this has identified Indonesia's maritime doctrine foreign policy as a response to the situation of ASEAN strategic autonomy and maritime security. Then, the concept of identity in foreign policy decision-making system can be used for elaborating Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine as a tool to inform the foreign policy makers for determining the appropriate preference.

This study proposes recommendations for future research around the influence of the English School perspective within Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy. The implementation

of Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy provides a structure which correlated to English School perspective. According to English School thinker Hedley Bull, the concept of order in world politics is about a structure that leads to a particular result, which sustains elementary, primary or universal goals of social life (Bull, 1977). The idea of the English School about structure in world politics is similar to one of the pillars of Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy strategy. The correlations are about inviting all of the partners to cooperate in the maritime field regarding the conflict at sea (violations of sovereignty, territorial disputes, piracy, illegal fishing, and marine pollution). In the end, the approach of Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy will end up with one pattern of Southeast Asia regional cooperation called East Asia Summit, a forum that is connecting all Southeast Asia state leaders together with major geopolitical powers who have interests in ASEAN. The running of the East Asia Summit seems to have become a structure for ASEAN regional cooperation to sustain elementary, primary, or universal goals of social life from the English School perspective. Those relations between the English School's concept of structure, Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine foreign policy and the East Asia Summit in ASEAN become the recommendation for future research.

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