

THE INFLUENCE OF THE STRATEGIC POSITION OF INDONESIA IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA TOWARD THE MILITARY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDONESIA AND CHINA IN 2010-2015

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the strategic position of Indonesia in South China Sea (SCS) towards the military partnership of Indonesia and China from 2010-2015. The aim of this research is to analyze how the strategic position of Indonesia influences the military relationship between Indonesia and China.

The South China Sea is one of the most strategic and influential regions; it has the capability to threaten the stability of Southeast Asia. Indonesia as one of the most significant countries in ASEAN geographically, has a strategic but conflicted position. This research will analyze how the strategic position of Indonesia in the SCS influences their military partnership with China.

This research formulates questions as to how the Indonesian strategic position in the South China Sea influences the China-Indonesia military relationship in 2010-2015? This article a neo-realist theory, a national security concept and a geo-strategic concept to accomplish this. It also uses a qualitative method of analysis through research papers and holding interviews. Through the three concepts and school of thought, this research has found that there is an influence on the strategic position of Indonesia in the militaristic relationship between Indonesia and China. The strategic location of Indonesia in the South China Sea and the significant role Indonesia plays in ASEAN can positively affect the relationship between Indonesia and China.

Keywords: South China Sea, Military Partnership, China, Indonesia, ASEAN.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mencoba menganalisis pengaruh posisi strategis Indonesia di LTS terhadap kerjasama militer Tiongkok-Indonesia periode 2010-2015. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis bagaimana pengaruh posisi strategis Indonesia di Laut Tiongkok Selatan terhadap kerjasama militer Tiongkok-Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan melakukan studi pustaka dan wawancara.

Laut Tiongkok Selatan sebagai salah satu wilayah perairan strategis dunia membawa dampak ancaman stabilitas regional ASEAN dan kepentingan Tiongkok. Indonesia sebagai salah satu negara yang memiliki peran penting di ASEAN, secara geografis juga memiliki letak strategis dalam wilayah konflik LTS. Untuk itu, penelitian ini akan menganalisa pengaruh dari posisi strategis Indonesia di LTS terhadap kerjasama militernya dengan Tiongkok.

Artikel ini menggunakan pendekatan teori neo-realis, konsep kepentingan nasional, dan konsep geo-strategis sebagai kerangka pemikiran. Melalui analisa berdasarkan ketiga kerangka pemikiran tersebut, peneliti menemukan bahwa ada pengaruh posisi strategis Indonesia di LTS terhadap kerjasama militer antara Tiongkok-Indonesia. Letak strategis Indonesia dalam konflik LTS dan peran penting Indonesia di ASEAN memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan kerjasama antara Tiongkok-Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Laut Tiongkok Selatan, Kerjasama Militer, Tiongkok, Indonesia, ASEAN

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world with over 17000 islands (Vaughn, 2011, p. 1). In addition, the sea stretches to 5.8 million with a shoreline of 95,181 (Pujayanti, 2011, p. 3). With this massive area of the sea Indonesia has a variety of natural resources and its Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEE) totals 2.7 million km² (Wahyono, p. 169 - 170). Indonesia has sea borders with Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, India, Thailand, Vietnam and Australia. While its Exclusive Economic Zone borders the Philippines, India, Thailand and Australia (Pujayanti, 2011, p. 3).

Geographically Indonesia is located between two continents: Asia and Oceania. This geographic location is advantageous for Indonesia in terms of geo-politics and an economical standpoint in both

regional and global economics (BNPP, 2014, p. 1-2). This positions Indonesia next to some of the world's most important shipping lanes and trade routes. Most of the world's trade flows through the Malacca Strait. The Malacca Strait connects the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Indonesia is also considered central to the geo-politics of the Association of South East Asia Nation (ASEAN), which has become a main player in geo-politic dynamic of the Asia-Pacific (Vaughn, 2011, p. 1). This means that Indonesia is a field of interest for many countries in the world. One of these countries is China, which has an interest in the South China Sea.

The South China Sea is part of the Pacific Ocean with an area of 3.5 million km². The South China Sea is directly adjacent to many countries of Southeast Asia and East Asia, including: China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, and Vietnam. The South China Sea has natural resources such as crude oil, natural gas, and fish. Not only that, the South China Sea is the world's most important shipping route. These economic values and its strategic position can cause conflict between countries with overlapping interests (Irada, 2013, p. 4-5).

Besides being a threat, the South China Sea conflict is an opportunity for Indonesian military modernization. Taking a neutral stance in the South China Sea conflict has allowed Indonesia the chance to cooperate with and receive military support from many countries, such as China, United State, Russia, and Australia. (Kurnia, 2014, p. 7-8). This research is an analysis of the Indonesian strategic position

in South China Sea and how this affects China-Indonesia military cooperation.

Chinese-Indonesian military cooperation began with the signing of a strategic partnership agreement in 2005. China and Indonesia continue to increase their military cooperation. They do so by conducting various activities such as military consultation, military industry cooperation, joint military exercises, and maritime security cooperation (Anwar, Rafi 2013 in Rachmayanti 2013, p 27). Moreover, to build the ideals of realizing regional security stability both countries have agreed to increase and expand these joint military exercises.

In 2007, both of countries established a forum for consultation on China-Indonesian defense. Since then, Indonesia's Army (TNI) and China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) have conducted many joint military exercises under the codename "Sharp Knife". Furthermore, to strengthening the professionalism and defense diplomacy between the two countries, China and Indonesia have agreed to send officers to study in military educational institutions of both countries, develop cooperation Su-27, solidify the establishment of "Navy to Navy Talk", and increase language skills by giving Chinese language courses to TNI officers. In 2013, the two countries held joint military exercises, involving focus "airborne" and naval military exercises. (DEPHAN 2013 in Rachmayanti 2013).

SOUTH CHINA SEA GEO-STRATEGIC

The South China Sea is directly adjacent to China, Taiwan, Filipina, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam (Schofield, 2013, p. 9). The South China Sea includes the waters and land of the Spratly and Paracel

Islands. This area also covers the area along the River Macclesfield, the Scarborough Reef, a vast stretch of the Malacca Straits to the Strait of Taiwan (Roza, Nainggolan, & Muhammad, 2013, p. vii).

This totals 1.4 million square miles of ocean with hundreds of small islands, reefs and rocks covering an area of six square miles. Natives inhabit these islands but only a fraction are empowered by any state to enforce any claim on them. The South China Sea is a region which attracts the attention of world, because it has abundant natural resources and more than half the world's oil is shipped through there. (Bader, Lieberthal, & McDevitt, 2014, p. 4).

to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), China estimates that the South China Sea has 213 billion barrels of oil, ten times the amount of back up oil of the US. American researchers however estimate only 28 billion barrels. The EIA also estimates there is approximately 900 cubic feet of natural gas, similar to the amount of gas in Qatar. In addition the South China Sea is an important ecosystem, rich in sea wildlife (Roza, Nainggolan, & Muhammad, 2013, p. viii).



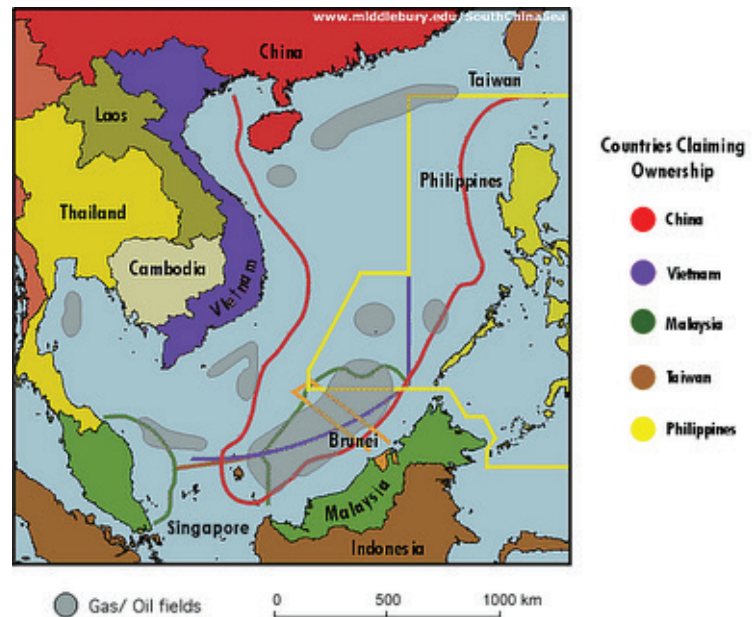
Source: Laura Schwartz, 2014, p. 5

Figure 1. South China Sea

The South China Sea is a strategic area because it connects the waters of the Indian and Pacific Ocean. These waters are important because of the trade through these waters. Annually international shipping worldwide is expected to reach 5 trillion dollars (Schwartz, 2014, p. 1).

The South China Sea is home to the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC). The safety of SLOC and freedom of navigation is vital for the global economy as international trade relies on sea transportation. (Schofield, 2013, p. 10).

Furthermore, the South China Sea is rich in natural resources and natural gas. According



Source: IEA." International Energy Administration Country Brief: South China Sea"

Figure 2. Oil and Gas Resource Potential Map

The geo-strategic position shown above, demonstrates how many countries make the South China Sea a national priority. This in turn results in conflict over land rights in the South China Sea. In terms of geo-politics the South China Sea impacts trade routes and resources therefore there is a lot of competition in the area. Furthermore the technology, resources and power of China and the US ensures that the South China Sea benefits the two hegemony. Therefore the South China Sea is an area prone to violence and conflict.

GEO-POLITICS OF SOUTH CHINA SEA

Geo-politics is a field that has been studied since before the cold war. Geo-politics is identified as the power or control over a certain area. However as time goes by geo-politics has evolved. Tuathail envisions a world where people are no longer fighting to expand their territory. However post-cold war, geo-politics has shifted towards terrorism and nuclear power. Tuathail also identified that geo-politics is dominated by geo-economy and global issues (Tuathail, 1998, p. 2).

There are three factors, which make the South China Sea prone to conflict. The first factor is the large amount of natural resources present, mainly oil and other sources of energy. Secondly, the geographic location of the South China Sea as the central trade route between nations makes it prone to conflict, as there are many countries that rely on this trade route. Asians, Americans and Europeans use this trade route. As a result there are three areas that serve to maintain stability in the region: Southeast Asia, East Asia and Asia Pacific. Thirdly, the economic growth of Asia has resulted in high competition for energy resources and so the nations in the dispute over the South China Sea want to control the allocation of these energy resources. This competition for energy resources is dominated by the US and China (Roza, Nainggolan, & Muhammad, 2013, p. x-xi).

The potential geo-strategic and geo-economic advantages in the South China Sea results in geo-political competition. Conflict in the South China Sea began in 1951 when the Prime Minister of China Zhou Enlai claimed the Spratly and Paracel Islands. In September 1958, China reiterated their claim to the islands. That same year, China also declared its territorial claims, naval strength and sovereignty (Fravel, 2011, p. 293).

In 1974, China seized the last Vietnamese island in the Paracel as well as solidifying its regional hegemony over the islands in the South China Sea. In 1988, there was another conflict regarding the Spratly Islands between the Chinese and Vietnamese navies. At the

height of this conflict a short war broke out that resulted in the sinking of 74 Vietnamese ships and Chinese victory over six islands. Around late 1994 and early 1995, China started building on top of coral reefs. These coral reefs were allegedly in Filipino waters. In 2002 China established the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) with ASEAN. However, in 2009 the South China Sea became another source of conflict amongst nations. Conflict emerged regarding the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Over the next few years' conflict in the South China Sea continued to build up between nations regarding territorial claims and fishing policies (ICG, 2015, p. 1-2).

After the territorial claims made by China, similar claims were made by Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei. These six nations competed over power in the South China Sea. All six nations aimed to gain as much territory as possible while solidifying their power. Some of these countries use history as the basis of their claims.



Source: Processing by author

Figure 3: Claimant Countries

China's Claim

China claims two large islands in the South China Sea (SCS), the Spratly Island and the Paracel Islands (Fravel, 2011, p. 293). The development of international maritime laws made China compile claims over maritime rights through the adjustment of legislation. China aligned its legal system with the requirements of the United Nations (UN) convention on the Law of the Sea. In 1992, the National People's Congress (NPC) passed legislation on sea territories and zone borders with China. This legislation confirms China's statement of claim in 1958 with more specific explanations. It was on this legal basis that China established its coastline border limits in 1996. Two years later, the NPC issued the Law on the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the continental shelf of China. In the legislation China added maritime rights beyond those listed in the Law of 1992. China's Law on the EEZ does not directly refer to the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands, but when combined with Law of 1992 concerning sea territories, China seemingly provides the basis to claim maritime rights to these islands.

In 2011, China asserted its verbal interpretation of the United Nations *Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf* (CLTS) records, claiming that the Spratly Islands have "full rights" over the territorial waters, the EEZ, and the continental shelf of the SCS (Fravel, 2011, p. 294). The statement is seen by China as validation of its maritime rights in the SCS. This is due to the Chinese success in occupying the Spratly Islands.

Taiwan's Claim

Taiwan's claims began in 1946 and 1948 by issuing the "Location Map of South China Sea Island". The map includes eleven dotted lines which was later adopted by the Chinese into the nine dash line map (Kuok, 2015, p. 6). Taiwan uses the same claim with China. Almost all of the cluster of islands within the Spratly Islands, the Paracel Islands and Pratas islands are claimed by Taiwan (Veronika, 2012, p. 45).

As with China, Taiwan also clarified the nine dash line map in their claims towards the SCS. In 2014, Taiwan took a small but significant step by providing an explanation towards territorial claims that went against

UNCLOS and prevailing international law. Taiwan also undertook peace initiatives in the SCS by appealing for a confrontation waiver, promoting peace and development in the SCS, as implemented in the East China Sea (ECS). Through the same approach, Taiwan expects to reach a peaceful agreement for the utilization of the region, similar to the success of fish exploration agreements in ECS on islands disputed with Japan (Kuok, 2015, p. 8).

Vietnam's Claim

Vietnam's claim is based on the EEZ and the continental shelf boundaries, which results in almost all of the SCS being claimed by Vietnam. Vietnam calls the Spratly Islands Truong Sa, which it occupied for 20 years. In addition, Vietnam also claims the Paracel Islands and the Gulf of Thailand (Veronika, 2012, p. 46). Just like China, Vietnam uses historical claims to obtain territorial rights. However, the evidence supporting the historical claims of Vietnam are still in doubt (Sazlan & Buszynski, 2007, p. 146). As a result, this problem has become protracted with a long debate on the history of territorial rights without any attempt to find middle ground or even solutions (Irada, 2013, p. 12-14).

Vietnam claims the Paracels, because the area was controlled by Vietnam during the Nguyen Dynasty in 1802. Meanwhile, the Spratly Islands became part of Vietnam when the French included the territory to China's Cochi area in 1929. South Vietnam claimed the entire territory of France in the SCS and now Vietnam considers they are the inheritor of these areas. South Vietnam began to occupy the islands of the SCS on October 22, 1956. On May 12, 1977, South Vietnam announced the EEZ as far as 200 miles, which included the Paracel and Spratly Islands. Vietnam's claim is based on two papers published in 1979 and 1981 by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Sazlan & Buszynski, 2007, p. 146).

The Filipino Claim

The Philippines claimed that the area of the South China Sea is the West Filipino Sea. The Philippine Atmosphere, Geophysical, and Astronomical Service Administration (PAGASA) made this claim. In 2012 the Filipino govern-

ment planned to undergo an exploration in the South China Sea for natural gas and oil (Irada, 2013, p. 11).

The Philippines governs eight islands of the Spratly Islands, also known as Kalayaan. The Filipino claim is based on the EEZ and historical expeditions in 1950 (Veronika, 2012, p. 45). Similar to Vietnam their claims over the South China Sea are questionable.

The Philippines have long been involved in the geo-politics of the South China Sea, they protested when the French claimed sovereignty over the Spratly Islands in 1933. In 1956 Thomas Kloma landed on Spratly and he gave them the name Kalayaan as proof of the Philippines rights to the islands. By early March 1978 the Philippines was in control of eight islands in Spratly (Sazlan & Buszynski, 2007, p. 147).

The Malaysian Claim

Malaysia chose to back up their claims in the South China Sea through geographic rationality and ZEE based on the United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). However, in comparison to China, the Philippines and Vietnam, Malaysian claims are very weak. This is because of Malaysia's late timing in claiming the Spratly Islands. They only started to claim land in 1979 by creating a map. On the map Malaysia claimed rights over the islands, which have already been claimed by China, Taiwan, Philippines and Vietnam. Malaysia's claim in the South China Sea aims to increase its power in ZEE and push forward their national agenda. Malaysia claims three islands in the Spratly Islands. Malaysia strengthens their claim by building the tourism industry in the area, in doing so they increase their influence over the area.

In 1979 the Malaysia Mapping Directorate released a map that stated that areas of the South China Sea belong to Malaysia. Malaysia's claim began through the declaration made by the Minister of Home Affairs, Ghazali Shafie's. In 1983 Malaysia claimed Walet Reef, also known as Layang Atoll, and in 1986 Malaysia claimed two more territories. They claimed another two territories in 1999 (Sazlan & Buszynski, 2007, p. 147). 1983 marked the beginning of Malaysia's commitment to the South China Sea.

The Brunei Darussalam's Claim

Brunei Darussalam has formally claimed only one area south of the Spratly Islands. They claim 1-2 mil sea area, 200 mil ZEE and 200 mil land territory (Roach, 2014, p. 36). Their claim is based on UNCLOS 1982 that claimed Louisa Reef as one of their territories (Wirasuta, 2013, p. 86).

THE NATIONAL INTEREST OF CHINA IN SCS

Every nation has their different ways of ensuring their national interests are being met. According to Fravel (2011), there are three strategies that can be used to push a nation's agenda when it comes to territorial disputes. The first strategy is through cooperation. This strategy diminishes the possibility of violence as it emphasizes the importance of negotiation and diplomacy. The second strategy is through conflict escalation. This strategy uses a forceful tactics in diplomacy in order to achieve their goals. The last strategy is delay; this tactic is used by maintaining claims without the use of violence or brute strength.

The Chinese originally used the delay strategy to claim their rule in the South China Sea. However after the conflict between China and Vietnam in 1974 this strategy changed. China shifted to an escalation strategy by building military bases. However, in the end China reverted back to a delay strategy hoping to achieve a diplomatic and peaceful resolution with ASEAN nations.

The modernization of the Chinese military is focused on increasing the capacity of the PLA to execute regional operations. The PLA carries out Counter Intervention Operations in order to prevent outside military intervention in the South China Sea and East China Sea. China have also taken other measures to prevent outside intervention in South China Sea geo-politics such as anti – access/ area denial (A2/AD), short-range ballistic missiles and grounded and air launched cruise missiles. Furthermore, they have fighter jets with high accuracy, aerial refueling capability, early warning systems, and an integrated air defense system. The number one reason behind this extensive defence technology

is to prevent US intervention however it is also used against other countries that pose a threat to China (Glaser, 2014, hal. 2).

MILITARY PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND INDONESIA

The economic growth of China has a large influence in its militaristic ambition in the South China Sea. The shipping routes of the South China Sea are important for Chinese trade, especially the oil trade with the Middle East. Through its ambitious militaristic defense, China wants to secure its economy and therefore Indonesia has become an important nation to secure the trade routes in the South China Sea.

The militaristic relationship between China and Indonesia began with the TNI general Ryamizard Ryacudu's attendance in the North Industries Corporation (NORINCO) from 3–6 November 2005, in China. This meeting aimed at establishing a stable weapons industry. From 14–17th November 2004, Mayor General TNI Moch. Luthfie and the head of the Strategic Intelligent Body of TNI attended the Military Intelligence Department People's Liberty Army in China. This meeting established a partnership between the intelligence departments of China and Indonesia (I Wibowo in Utami S. Y., 2013, p. 63). Throughout 2003, the PLA and the TNI cooperated to achieve weapons systems (alutsista). This served as an alternative for TNI to service its minimum capacity.

On the 25th of April 2005 the strategic partnership declaration was realized. This declaration served as a commitment made by the government to improve bilateral relations in politics, security, economy, culture and development (Viollita, 2013, p. 3). Militaristic partnerships between Indonesia and China were arranged in eight points, which promoted mutual trust and confidence in each other's defense fields and is actively investigated increased defense and security consultations.

Unexpectedly results from the strategic declaration and the militaristic partnership between Indonesia and China were relatively slow. In 2007 the two countries came to an

agreement, the "Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and The Government of People's Republic of China in Cooperation Activities in the Field of Defense". This agreement was signed by the ministers of both nations: Juwono Sudarsono and General Cao Gangcuan.

According to Sudarsono, the agreement to work together was agreed because of the similar characteristics of the two nations. They had similar goals and vision. China's success in applying the concept of people's defense was regarded as making China a balancing force in Southeast Asia (Akbar, 2009, p. 1).

Four years later, Indonesia's Vice Minister of Defense, Syafrie Sjamsoeddin, and China's Vice Minister of Defense, Chen Quifa signed the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia and the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense of the People's Republic of China on Defense Industry Cooperation", on March 22nd, 2011. On the same day, the Directorate General of Defense Potential (Ditjen POTHAN), Pos Hutabarat and Ms. Zan Chunli, signed the "Letter of Intent for Development and Production Cooperation of Anti-Ship Sea Defense Weapon System between the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia and the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense of the People's Republic of China", in Jakarta (Utami S. Y., 2013, hal. 68 - 69).

There are three main areas of partnership and cooperation between China and Indonesia:

Area of Education

Since 2009, China and Indonesia have cooperated in the training of pilots. In 2009 and 2010, Indonesia sent 10 pilot officers for Sukhoi simulator training. Then in 2012, 7 pilot officers of the TNI attended four educational programs in China. These four programs included, the Defense and Strategic Course completed by one officer, the PLA Army Command and Staff College completed by two officers, the PLA Navy Command and Staff College completed by two officers and the PLA Air Force and College completed by two officers.

Area of Training Cooperation

China and Indonesia conducted joint exercises between Special Force Commando Forces, Indonesia's Army (KOPASSUS TNI AD) and the PLA, the joint exercises were called 'Sharp Knife'. This joint operation occurred on the 18th of June, 2011 in Batujajar, Indonesia (Utami S. Y., 2013, p. 69). This exercise continued throughout 2012. In 2013 and 2014 the two nations focused on joint air force training between Airborne Special Commando Forces (KoPaskhas) and the PLA, the operation was called "airborne sharp knife" (dmc.kemhan.go.id, 2015).

In 2015, the Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan extended an invitation for joint military exercises in the South China Sea at an informal forum in Beijing. However, this offer was rejected by Indonesia because Indonesia wanted to maintain regional stability and thought military exercises in the South China Sea would lead to conflict (Jingga, 2015).

Area of Defense Industry

China's progress in the military is advantageous for developing countries. China's produce in terms of production quality is equal to the products of Western countries and the price is much cheaper. One of the countries to take advantage of cooperation in the defense industry is Indonesia as the TNI is underequipped and requires outside technology.

A year later, on February 20, 2012, the Indonesian Defense Minister made a reciprocal visit to the office of the Ministry of Defense of China. The visit came after the Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Liang Guanglie visited the Defense Ministry of Indonesia. Additionally, Purnomo Yusgiantoro also attended the meeting with the Deputy Chairman of the CMC General Guo Boxiong. Then followed a meeting with the head of State Administration for Science, Technology, and Industry for National Defense (SASTIND) Mr. Chen Qiufa. A day earlier, Purnomo Yusgiantoro visited the Aerospace Long March International Trade & co., Ltd. (ALIT). ALIT is a company that produces rockets and missiles, including an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) and rocket satellite launchers. This company is

monitored by SASTIND. Additionally, Purnomo also visited the Chinese Precision Machinery Import-Export Corporation (CPMIEC) to discuss the project C-705 which will be purchased by Indonesia and become part of the Transfer of Technology (ToT).

On January 10, 2013, the Deputy Minister of Defense Sjafrie, led a delegation to China to attend the Bilateral Defense Cooperation Consultation, RI-China's 5th Forum. The Forum aims to improve relations and defense cooperation between the two countries, as well as cooperation within the framework of ASEAN-Chinese relations. Not only that, the forum also aims to discuss the development of the regional security, especially in the Asia Pacific, the East China Sea and the South China Sea.

The Defense Consultative Forum Indonesia-China has been meeting since 2007. Since then, there has been a variety of successful cooperation's made by both nations, such as officer training, joint training of special forces of both countries, Sukhoi aircraft pilot training, defense cooperation and the purchase of major weapons systems.

Sjafrie also visited the National Defense University (NDU) China. On the same day, Sjafrie also paid a courtesy visit to the Chairman of the Military Center, Chinese General Fan Changlong in the First of August Building. At the meeting, General Fan expressed his appreciation towards Sjafrie's role in the framework of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and China.

June 13, 2013, Sjafrie welcomed the visit of the Chinese PLA, led by Major General Shang-guan Hui. The purpose of the visit was to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the defense field. The meeting discussed the enhancement of cooperation in the field of military equipment and military technology.

In 2013, Indonesia's defense ministry held the Jakarta International Defense Dialogue (JIDD) discussing the results of the visit of the Defense Minister to China. Sjafrie explained that Indonesia and China have agreed to cooperate on defense activities in 2013 and 2014. The two countries agreed to enhance

their capacity by increasing activities, such as military training for the air force, navy and ground troops. In addition, China also agreed to provide an opportunity for TNI officers up to the highest levels to enroll in Beijing. The Chinese defense ministry will also contribute in the construction of a peacekeeping center in Indonesia (kemhan.go.id, 2013).

STRATEGIC POSITION OF INDONESIA IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ON MILITARY COOPERATION OF CHINA-INDONESIA

Indonesia has a strategic position in the international political arena. This is an opportunity and a challenge for Indonesia. Because, as a country that has vast maritime areas, Indonesia is threatened by the countries concerned. Therefore, this study will investigate the Indonesian geo-strategic and geo-strategic influence of Indonesia in the South China Sea and in Sino-Indonesian military cooperation.

Geo-Strategic of Indonesia

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world. Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands, although only 6,000 are inhabited. Indonesia has a population of approximately 240.3 million with an increase of three million people per year. This figure makes Indonesia the country with the fourth largest population in the world, after China, India, and the US (Vaughn, 2011, p. 1).

Geographically, Indonesia is located between two continents, namely Asia and the Australian Continent. The geographic location is important from the aspect of geo-political and geo - global and regional economies (BNPP, 2014, p. 1-2). The strategic position makes Indonesia adjacent to an important trade route traversed by the world. Because, most of the world's trade flows through the Strait of Malacca linking the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean. In addition, Indonesia is considered as the geo-political center of ASEAN, which is a main player in the geo-political dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region.



Sumber: Atlas Indonesia dan Dunia, 2003

Gambar 1.3 Letak relatif Indonesia di posisi silang.

Source: Atlas Indonesia dan Dunia, 2003

Figure 4. Indonesia's Cross Position

Located between Asia and Australia as well as the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean is in a position to make Indonesia the world's cross-roads. The position is very strategic, because the high levels of sea and air traffic. Geo-politics of Indonesia are strongly influenced by the strategic elements of the resource and sea traffic (Monika, 2011, p. 2).

Four of the seven strategic Straits of Indonesia are in the territory of Indonesia: the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, the Strait of Lombok, and the Makassar Strait. These are stretches of sea transportation of oil and gas that should not be interrupted because of their importance to industrially developed countries. Geographically these are the region's 'choke points', where the narrow location limits the capacity traffic, cannot be easily bypassed, and can be easily blocked. This can result in time delays and significant costs. Hence, the necessity of alternative paths to shorten the travel time through the seventh strait. As trade routes from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean makes the Strait of Malacca the quickest route (Komara, 2013).

According to Robert D. Kaplan, the Strait of Malacca is 'the heart of Maritime Asia', because the Strait of Malacca is a vital choke point of world trade. The Malacca Strait is the shortest route linking the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (Robert D. Kaplan in Monika, 2011, p. 11). Since the end of the 20th century

the Malacca Strait has become increasingly important as the economic center of the world shifts from the Atlantic to the Pacific. According to Robert D. Kaplan, the focus of the analysis of the geo-political world has shifted from Europe to Asia. Therefore, almost 70% of world trade takes place between countries of Asia and the Pacific.

This makes the Strait of Malacca highly strategic and captures the interests of many countries of the world. The Malacca Straits also pose a threat to the security and safety of shipping. Therefore, many countries want to have control or commanding power in the Strait of Malacca trade route.

In terms of the geographic location of the South China Sea, the area became a strategic point for trade lines or Sea Lanes of Trades (SLOT) and international communication lines or Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC). That's because the South China Sea is a path that connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (Antariksa, 2013, p. 107).

Politically, the South China Sea plays an important role in the stability of domestic politics. The South China Sea has become very vulnerable to border areas of conflict for ASEAN countries. The area is a dilemma for ASEAN member countries, because it can lead to conflict, but the area can also provide opportunities for cooperation. Not only ASEAN, but large countries such as the US, China, Russia, India, and Japan have great interest in the South China Sea. Therefore, these countries have become a major challenge for ASEAN. Because of its strategic position there are great economic opportunities for Indonesia, one of which is the potential for sea transportation (Gindarsah, 2014, p. 28).



Source: Menegakkan Kedaulatan Indonesia sebagai Negara Maritim: Beberapa Catatan IPB, Konvensi Kampus XI Forum Rektor Indonesia, Medan, 23 January 2015

Figure 5. Sea Transport Potential

Indonesia has become one of the main regions of trade and communication world. More than 750,000 vessels with a cargo of 300 million tons of cargo and 14 million people travel by sea annually. In addition, from 1700 port (with 25 strategic ports) 90% of it is a transit port of world trade. The value of trade passing through the sea lanes Indonesia has reached 300 billion US dollars in the Malacca Strait, 40 trillion dollars in the Lombok Strait, and 5 trillion dollars in the Sunda Strait (Sumaryono, 2009 in Laksamana, 2011, p. 107).

The Influence of Indonesian Strategic Position in SCS to Military Cooperation China-Indonesia

The strategic position of Indonesia in South China Sea is of concern to two major country, namely the US and China. The South China Sea conflict has become the center of world attention because of the escalating conflict which has the potential to escalate into war. The involvement of some ASEAN countries, such as the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, and Malaysia have reduced the importance of the Zone of

Peace Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN). Indirectly the South China Sea Conflict has become a threat to ASEAN member states and regional stability (Kurnia, 2014, p. 2).

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), notes the increasing arms race in East Asia. The data shows an average increase in defense spending by the countries of Southeast Asia of 42% from 2002 to 2011 (www.voaindonesia.com, 2012). This is forcing Indonesia to improve its military capabilities in the face of the threat of South China Sea conflict and to maintain security and stability of the ASEAN region. The conflict of the South China Sea is a serious threat to ASEAN and the economic cycle. Conflict can lead to disruption of shipping channels and the world oil trade. Moreover, conflict can hinder the economic dependence of ASEAN countries. Disruption of the economy in the South China Sea will influence the world economy. Such as, the increase in world crude oil price caused by the disruption of the oil distribution lines.

Meanwhile, analyzing the geostrategic location of Indonesia, Natuna waters that enter the Indonesian EEZ connect the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. These straits then become the shortest route to any conflict zone in South China Sea. This poses a threat to the integrity of Negara Kesatuan Republik

Indonesia (NKRI). Therefore, it is important for Indonesia to modernize its defense system in order to maintain harmonious bilateral relation with ASEAN countries, to prevent the expansion of the conflict to the Natuna waters and securing mining exploration in Natuna waters.

Indonesia's neutral stance on the South China Sea conflict brings benefits of cooperation and military assistance. One of these is the military cooperation between China and Indonesia. Military cooperation has increased since the signing of a strategic partnership agreement in 2005, and has become an opportunity for Indonesia to improve its military capability. The cooperation between both countries covers defense industrial cooperation, defense consultations, joint military exercises and maritime security cooperation (Anwar, Rafi 2013 in Rachmayanti, 2013, p. 27).

Military cooperation with China became one of Indonesia's strategies to strengthen the principle of "balancing without alliance". Technically, Indonesia is not only cooperating with China, but also with other countries of the world including the United States. The US has become a formidable opponent to the Chinese with their interests in SCS. Indonesia's strategic effort must balance the great powers which have competing interests in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific.

The strategic position of Indonesia in the SCS and its neutral attitude towards the conflict play an important role in the politics of Southeast Asia. The struggle for influence in ASEAN between the US and China make Indonesia an important player. Moreover, Indonesia is the largest country in ASEAN, which has an important role in the organization of the region. It is beneficial for the US and China when Indonesia is taking a neutral stance towards the SCS conflict, considering the strategic position of Indonesia in SCS and its critical role in ASEAN. It is no wonder that both countries sought to attract the sympathy of Indonesia to win influence in ASEAN. One of the ways is to provide facilities to meet the needs of defense equipment of Indonesia through military cooperation (Suryandari, 2013, p. 5).

There are three factors of Indonesia that are important for China. Firstly, the influence and status of Indonesia in ASEAN, which according to China can influence the organization when dealing with international issues. Secondly, the strategic location of Indonesia, especially the Malacca Strait which is a link between the SCS and the Indian Ocean. Thirdly, Indonesia's "independent and active" foreign policy (Baviera, 1999).

These three factors above are reasons that encourage China to undertake bilateral cooperation with Indonesia. One of these bilateral partnerships is in the military field. According to Rachmayanti (2013), military cooperation between China and Indonesia are caused by Chinese interests in SCS. The strategic position of Indonesia has encouraged China to boost cooperation in all fields with Indonesia.

Chinese-Indonesian military cooperation is driven by the interests of China in SCS. According to an annual report by the embassy, the Chinese looked to Indonesia's important role in ASEAN. The cooperation is expected to help China in securing its trade routes and oil ships from the Middle East (Annual Report of Indonesia Embassy in Beijing, 2013 in Utami S. Y., 2013, p. 34). Meanwhile, Indonesia sees that such cooperation can provide benefits for the development of its military industry.

The strategic position of Indonesia in the SCS put Indonesia in a difficult position. On one hand, Indonesia should maintain sovereignty, but on the other hand Indonesia is required to maintain regional security and stability of Southeast Asia. The SCS conflict indirectly has encouraged the ASEAN countries to enhance their military strength. Indonesia's military cooperation with China provides many advantages, such as the ease cooperation and more affordable prices for defense equipment of commensurate quality to that of the West. As a result, Indonesia can meet the needs of its defense requirements and maintain security and stability of the region. Meanwhile, for the Chinese its military cooperation with Indonesia is one of their strategies to secure its interests in the SCS.

CONCLUSION

The South China Sea dispute is causing geopolitical rivalry between countries which have interests in the region. The South China Sea has important natural resources and strategic trade channels which are the major cause of the conflict. The South China Sea conflict, which involves China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei Darussalam, has become a threat for regional security stability in ASEAN. Especially, the conflicting interests of the two world powers, China and the US.

The world's increasing energy needs have caused an increase in oil distribution from the Middle East to the countries in the Asia-Pacific. The South China Sea has become an alternative route to shorten the distance from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, the South China Sea is a strategic trade route and international communication route in the world. Furthermore, the South China Sea has significant natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, and fish. The strategic location and the natural resources cause conflicting interests between countries in the South China Sea, including China.

China claims almost 80% of the South China Sea. China's interest in South China Sea is driven by the growing need for energy to maintain the stability of its economy. Moreover, China also trying to find alternative energy resources aside from the Middle East. The Middle East is the largest oil exporting region in the world. Oil and natural gas in the South China Sea are some of the targets of interest of China. Therefore, China grows more aggressive in securing its interest in the South China Sea.

Military cooperation between China and Indonesia is driven by the strategic position Indonesia in South China Sea. Indonesia is located in the crossroads of the world. Indonesia has four choke points, which serves to shorten the distance of sea traffic. One of which is the Malacca Straits which connect the Indian Ocean to South China Sea. To reach the South China Sea, which is the route from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, and vice versa, ships must pass through Indonesian waters. Natuna waters are also included in the nine-dash line

map created by China. Natuna waters are the gateway to South China Sea from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

Although it has a strategic position, Indonesia choses to remain neutral in the South China Sea conflict. This neutral stance pushes Indonesia into the focus of two great nations that have interests in the South China Sea, namely China and the US. Viewing the attitude of neutrality and its critical role in ASEAN, Indonesia risks becoming an easy target for strategic interests of China and US. Moreover, China hopes to affect ASEAN through Indonesia.

Furthermore, Indonesia's neutral stance also gives it an advantage negotiating deals and military aid from China, US, Russia, Australia, and others. The opportunities are a good chance for Indonesia to increase its defense capability.

Military cooperation between Indonesia and China is driven by interest in Indonesia to maintain regional security stability. On domestic scale, the South China Sea conflict becomes a threat to the integrity of the Indonesia. While at a regional scale, the South China Sea conflict is causing strengthening of competing military power between ASEAN states. Indirectly, the situation demands Indonesia continues to build its defense capability. For China, military cooperation with Indonesia driven by the interest of China to secure its interest in South China Sea. This strategy is to win political influence ASEAN through Indonesia. Therefore, relations between the two countries provides benefits to the defence capacity of each country.

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