



## Indonesian Foreign Policy and its Response to South China Sea Affairs for Regional Stability

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## **INDONESIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS RESPONSE TO SOUTH CHINA SEA AFFAIRS FOR REGIONAL STABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

This research explains the relationship between Indonesian foreign policy and taking the case studies of conflicts in the South China Sea. Today the dispute between the two major countries, such as America and China, is increasingly heating up in the South China Sea discourse, coupled with the increasing dynamics of the strategic environment that directly impact Indonesia's foreign policy and politics. The research method used in this research is a qualitative research method, supported by literature studies. In international politics, Indonesia has determined its position as a country that adheres to the principle of active free foreign policy, which in terms of foreign policy, Indonesia will not be influenced by the hands of other countries. This paper shows that Indonesia's defense policies and strategies in anticipation of the South China Sea conflict have not been properly announced. It was found that defense policy and strategy have not been in line with the foreign policy that pays special attention to the dynamics of the Southeast Asian region, including in the South China Sea. In addition, the latest defense policies and strategies have not paid attention to the dynamics of the South China Sea conflict. Indonesia's defense policy and strategy still consider that the conflation in the South China Sea can be resolved through soft power and does not anticipate the use of hard power that will have implications for Indonesia's national interests.

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## **Introduction**

The development of today's dynamic strategic environment affects the implementation of state defense. Dynamics that need to be observed in the past five years include economic growth, which has implications for the development of military power, especially in the Asia Pacific region. This dynamic greatly influences the increasingly complex and multidimensional patterns and forms of threats, in the form of military threats, nonmilitary threats, and hybrid threats that can be categorized as real and unreal threats. Real threats themselves are a form of threat that is a priority in handling it, including terrorism and radicalism, separatism and armed insurgency, natural disasters, violations of border areas, pumping and theft of natural wealth, disease outbreaks, cyberattacks, and espionage, as well as drug trafficking and abuse while unreal threats are a form of threat in the form of open conflict or conventional war, where the opposite is a force the armed forces of the two countries, currently and in the future, are still unlikely to happen to Indonesia (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015).

Implementation of state defense is aimed at maintaining and protecting the state's sovereignty, the integrity of the territory, and the safety of the entire nation. State defense





for the Indonesian country is structured in a total defense system, not aggressive and not expansive to protect national interests. Indonesia's defense is structured in a total defense system to achieve national goals. Total defense is essentially a defense that involves all citizens according to their roles and functions, the development of state defense is carried out based on the strategic policy of national development as stated in the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025. The development of state defense is directed to build a defense posture that is resilient and has deterrence power as an archipelagic state, the development of state defense directed to be able to answer various possible threats and actual problems adapted to geographical conditions and dynamics of the strategic environment, military defense is directed in order to realize national development that supports the policies of the world maritime axis, especially to realize the strength, capability, and title of the TNI in proportion to face military threats and hybrid threats. Reserve Components and Supporting Components, the Reserve Component consists of citizens, natural resources, artificial resources, and national facilities and infrastructure that have been prepared and organized to be deployed through mobilization to enlarge and strengthen the Main Components (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2015).

As an independent and sovereign state, the implementation of foreign relations of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is based on the principles of equality of degrees, mutual respect, mutual benefit, and mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs as implied in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Following the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, one of the objectives of the Government of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is to carry out a world order based on independence, lasting peace, and social justice. To realize the objectives intended above, the government of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia has been carrying out relations with various countries and regional and international organizations. The implementation of foreign relations activities mentioned above through bilateral and multilateral forums is devoted to the national interest based on the principle of a free and active foreign policy. According to article 3 of Law Number 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations, free and active foreign policy is a foreign policy that is essentially not a neutral politics; instead, it is free to determine attitudes and wisdom towards international problems and does not bind itself a priori to one world power and actively contributes, both in the form of thought and active participation in resolving conflicts, disputes, and other world problems, for the realization of a world order based on freedom, lasting peace and social justice. Foreign relations are any activities that concern regional and international aspects carried out by the government at the central and regional levels, or other institutions, state institutions, business entities, political organizations, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, or Indonesian citizens. Meanwhile, foreign policy is the policy, attitude, and steps taken by the government of the Republic of Indonesia in carrying out relations with other countries, international organizations, and other subjects of international law to face global problems and achieve national goals (Susetyorini, 2017).

Since independence in 1945, Indonesian foreign policy has been implemented by considering several normative aspects. The normative aspect in question generally consists of the foundations and principles of Indonesian foreign policy. There are three kinds of foundations of Indonesian foreign policy, namely the ideal foundation, the constitutional foundation, and the operational foundation. The ideal foundation and constitutional foundation of Indonesia's foreign policy are Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. The operational foundation is more dynamic because it is determined by the government in power. Meanwhile, the principle of Indonesia's foreign policy is free and active. As an ideal foundation for foreign policy, Pancasila provides limits on basic values that must be reflected



in foreign policy. As the basis of the state, Pancasila contains the national ideals and goals of the Indonesian nation, which are the basis for every government regulation and policy at various levels, ranging from the constitution to other regulations under it. Of course, in this case, it includes Indonesia's foreign policy. Implementation of Pancasila in Indonesia's foreign policy, according to Marsudi (2006), Pancasila is an open ideology. It means that the interpretation of Pancasila must be flexible in accordance with the context of the problems and strategic issues. Flexibility is important given that in foreign policy it is dynamic. For example, when there is a threat to national integrity and integration, then the government can find the limits of the orientation to consensus, especially when a crackdown must be taken (Ministry of Bappenas, 2015).

The principle of free foreign policy remains a relevant and important foreign policy principle for the country. Although it developed from a specific and changing historical situation, the principle of being free and active is able to reflect the aspirations of the Indonesian nation in building foreign relations. During Sukarno's reign, for example, the principle of freedom and activity had already appeared in Sukarno's speeches before it was affirmed through a government proclamation on November 1, 1945 that substantially emphasized a friendly foreign policy, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and upholding the UN charter in the implementation of foreign policy. This means that before the start of the Cold War, the principle of being free and active had already begun to be held and socialized by the Indonesian government. After the Cold War's start, the discourse on the principle of freedom and activity was seen as undergoing a shift or expansion of meaning. The concept of freedom in its present sense contains the meaning of independence; that is, it is not under the colonization or domination of other nations and is impartial to any of the blocs or groups within the international power competition (Ministry of Bappenas, 2015).

Indonesia's foreign policy from the era of Abdurrahman Wahid to Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono showed a tendency to put forward the principle of active free politics. Even with several interpretations that vary in each implementation, Indonesia strives to be independent by fostering relations with friendly countries as much as possible. In the Abdurrahman Wahid era, even Indonesia's tendency to be able to foster relations with countries outside the west became an obvious feature. In addition to making many visits to Middle Eastern countries and Latin America, Abdurrahman Wahid made the People's Republic of China the first country to visit while serving as president. ASEAN-China Security Cooperation Also developed on security issues in the South China Sea with the start of discussions on the draft Code of Conduct on the south china sea issue in May 2000. The draft was completed in November 2002 on the 'Declaration on the Conduct of the Parties in the South China Sea' (Sinaga, 2013).

With this in mind, it is necessary to study and understand the relevance of Indonesia's free and active policies in the South China Sea conflict. Security and defense of the country. From this review and understanding, it is expected to produce appropriate policies to support a strong defense.

## **Method**

Research methods are basically a scientific way to obtain data with a specific purpose and usefulness. Based on this, there are four keywords that need to be considered, namely, scientific method, data, purpose, and usability. The scientific way means that the research activity is based on scientific features, namely rational, empirical, and systematic. The research method that will be used in this research is qualitative research. According to Sugiyono (2013), Qualitative research methodology aims to analyze and describe the



phenomenon or object of research through social activities, attitudes, and perceptions of people individually or in groups (Sugiyono, 2013).

Qualitative methods are used in this study to analyze the relevance of Indonesia's active free politics in the South China Sea conflict in order to realize a strong national defense. This research approach is a case study. Case study research is research by defining a specific case. The goal is twofold, namely:

- 1) Illustrate a unique case, a case that has an unusual interest in itself and needs to be described or detailed (often referred to as an intrinsic case); and
  - 2) Qualitative methods were used in this study to analyze the relevance of Indonesia's active free politics in the South China Sea conflict in order to realize a strong national defense. This research approach is a case study. Case study research is research by defining a specific case.
- (Creswell In Rianto, 2016).

According to Sugiyono (2013), data collection techniques are the most strategic step in a study because the study's main purpose is to obtain data. The researcher will not get data that meets the set data standards without knowing the data collection techniques. Two things affect the quality of research data: the quality of research instruments and the quality of data collection. The quality of the research instrument is concerned with the validity and reliability of the instrument and the quality of data collection with regard to the accuracy of the means used to collect the data. Furthermore, when viewed in terms of the method or technique of data collection in this study, the data collection technique was carried out by interviews (interviews), documentation, and a combination of all.

In order to obtain data that can be scientifically accounted for, it is necessary to check the validity of the data. The data triangulation technique is used to check the validity of data. In data collection techniques, triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various data collection techniques and existing data sources. If the researcher collects data by triangulation, then the researcher actually collects data that simultaneously tests the credibility of the data, namely, checking the credibility of the data with various data collection techniques and sources. Triangulation techniques mean researchers use different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source. In this study, two data collection methods were used, namely interviews and documentation for simultaneous data sources. So, the triangulation technique in this study was carried out by checking the results of interviews with research subjects related to the relevance of Indonesia's active free politics in the South China Sea conflict to realize a strong national defense and its supporting literature (Sugiyono, 2013).

## Results And Discussion

### Implementation of Indonesian Foreign Policy in defending Indonesia's sovereignty

Foreign policy and Indonesian diplomacy are carried out to ensure the guarantee of Indonesia's national interests, national growth, economic development, people's welfare, national security, and social justice for all Indonesians, as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD NRI). Foreign Policy in Indonesia still diplomatically refers to a free-active foreign policy based solely on national interests. This national interest is the basic foundation in the implementation of governance and the life of the nation-state in achieving national ideals. The nation's founders were willing to sacrifice their souls, bodies, and thoughts to design a concept for Indonesia's position in the hands of





such an intense vortex of foreign policy currents. Among them is the result of Mohammad Hatta's thoughts. Hatta stated that Indonesia's foreign policy is based on the free and active principle, which means that Indonesia is not tied to any of the blocs, both communist and capitalist. But at the same time, it still plays an active role in international associations while upholding national goals (Soebagyo, 2013).

Departing from the description above, it is not an exaggeration to say that the current change in global politics has made international issues more complex. An understanding of the political constellations and the ability to respond appropriately to these issues both now and in the future become indispensable. In some case studies, international political issues are now shifting no longer only related to war and violence but have penetrated into a more complex realm, namely economic, cultural, and even cultural issues. Therefore, the role of diplomacy in the resolution of conflicts that occur between countries becomes very important (Wuryandari, 2008). The reforms have brought about major changes in the structure of domestic politics as well as foreign policy. In the domestic sphere, presidential power over other highest institutions is undergoing changes. Along with the good running of democracy after the new order, Indonesia has again shown its active position in the international forum. Indonesia places ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) as the region's main axis in the international political arena. ASEAN is Indonesia's top corner in dealing with regional issues, including the security turmoil that has occurred in the South China Sea (Sinaga, 2013).

South China Sea area, as one of the largest ocean areas in the world, has a very strategic role, both in terms of economy, politics, and security, thus making this region has great cooperation potential that countries around this region can utilize. The natural resources available in the South China Sea region are also very large, where according to data from the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA), the potential natural resources in the South China Sea are petroleum reserves of 11 billion barrels and natural gas which reaches 190 trillion cubic feet (Tfc) as well as hydrocarbon reserves that are very important as energy supplies. Meanwhile, according to energy consultant Wood Mackenzie, there are oil and gas reserves of 2.5 billion barrels in the region. In addition to having a strategic role as a trade route, the South China Sea area is also an international communication channel that connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, making it the busiest route in the world. This sea area is international trade traffic worth no less than 5.3 trillion US dollars annually (Hardoko, 2016). The South China Sea dispute stems from a statement by the Government of the People's Republic of China that claims the entire South China Sea waters in 1947, China created a map claiming most of the territory. The Communist Party, which took power in China in 1949, then created nine-dash lines around the South China Sea region on its official map in 1953 (Tempo, 2016).

Until now, disputes in the South China Sea have directly involved six countries, namely Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam, related to each party's claims to the Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands. Indirectly, disputes in these waters will also involve other parties affected by the spillover, such as the United States, which strongly upholds freedom of navigation. Indonesia's non-claim to territory in these waters began to be "disturbed" by China's unilateral claims in 1992 when China published a unilateral map of the South China Sea of nine broken lines in the South China Sea (Nine Dots Lines. U Shape Lines or Nine-Dash Map) which enters the Territory of Indonesia's EEZ in the north of the Natuna Islands. When mapped, the conflict in the South China Sea is closely related to the claimants' political, economic, and defense interests. Politically, controlling part or all of the South China Sea would give high political bargaining power. This will also have an economic impact



because the South China Sea is rich in oil and gas content, which will provide many economic benefits if exploited.

Meanwhile, from the defense aspect, control over part or all of the South China Sea area will provide a strategic advantage because the South China Sea is the link between the Malacca Strait and the East Asian region. Indonesia has importance for handling conflicts in the South China Sea because if they cannot be adequately handled, they will impact the stability of Indonesia's and the region's security. It is also in Indonesia's interest to assert its claims to Indonesia's EEZ in these waters located north of the Natuna Islands. Related to that, Indonesia must have relevant and up-to-date defense policies and strategies to anticipate conflicts in the South China Sea (Buntoro, 2012).

Regional countries involved in South China Sea conflicts generally use historical and geographical grounds in contesting ownership of sea areas and two island clusters in the South China Sea region. China, for example, claims the disputed territory based on Chinese ownership of the sea area and the two Paracel and Spratly archipelago clusters since 2000 years ago. Then the Chinese government claimed to have issued a map detailing China's sovereignty over the South China Sea in 1947, known as the Nine Dash Line. Conflict can be seen from various perspectives by looking at the background, the actors involved and their interests, as well as the intensity and breadth of the conflict area. From its background, the South China Sea conflict can be seen from the historical claims of territorial control in the past by traditional rulers that led to claims of ownership by subsequent rulers of the territory of the same kingdom or state. Meanwhile, of the actors involved and their accompanying interests, several countries in the region, both ASEAN members and non-ASEAN, as well as countries outside the region, are their stakeholders (Mirdanis, Saputra, et al. 2013).

Meanwhile, based on several events in the South China Sea, judging from the intensity of the South China Sea conflict, it can be categorized as a low-scale conflict because it has not caused a large-scale armed conflict between feuding countries. However, suppose unmanageable and effective solutions are sought in future developments. In that case, the conflict may become more open in nature and expand widely into an armed conflict between countries in the region. In Law No.37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations in Article 3 states that: "Foreign Policy adheres to the principle of active freedom perpetuated for the national interest" Indonesia is in a unique position in addressing the South China Sea dispute. Indonesia has a long history of never taking sides on numerous occasions, despite its status as a natural leader (hegemon) in the Southeast Asian region. The complex and dynamic geopolitical situation makes a choice to take sides (alignment) very rational. Regarding the South China Sea Conflict, there are tensions between Indonesia and China have resumed recently. China called on Indonesia to stop drilling for oil and natural gas in the South China Sea maritime area claimed by the two; Indonesia calls it the North Natuna Sea. China's increasing aggressiveness in terms of claiming the South China Sea needs to be watched out for and taken seriously because in the South China Sea Area It becomes a struggle for several countries; this is where Indonesia's role is needed Indonesia's policy as a determinant of conflict in the South China Sea. However, there is Indonesia's conflict with China in the South China Sea over the seizure of the Northern Natuna sea area, which is claimed to be in China's Nine dash line for historical reasons; this is due to the weak Indonesian diplomacy (Ra'is, 2019).

Regarding the dynamics of the conflict in the South China Sea, in Indonesia's position, the country's defense becomes threatened if the conflict in the South China Sea is not handled properly and quickly. According to the 1945 Constitution, safeguarding the territory of this country is very important. The case of China, which claims territorial sovereignty over



Indonesian territory, shows Indonesia's borders importance. The Indonesian government should pay special attention to border areas. Do not let neighboring countries, especially Indonesia, which is thousands of kilometers away, claim the territory. In addition, being able to resolve LNU conflicts properly is very important. If not resolved immediately, it could escalate conflicts with China, as is the case of Vietnam and the Philippines, which require the use of small military force to assert territoriality, whether realized or not (Pratiwi, 2017).

### **The Relevance of Indonesia's Foreign Policy to Realizing a Strong Defense of the Country**

Indonesian foreign policy since the early 1990s has always sought to find solutions to mediate potential conflicts in these waters. Its implementation is the Workshops on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea, which aims to prevent conflicts by promoting cooperation between claimant countries to create Confidence Building Measures (CBM). Indonesia also successfully encouraged states with claims in the South China Sea to agree on a Declaration of Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the South China Sea in 2002, where initial talks were initiated since 1999. DOC is regulated in states that claim maritime territory in the South China Sea so as not to have conflicts in those waters that threaten the stability of the region. Despite many criticisms of DOC, the existence of DOC has at least been able to peacefully address the South China Sea issue even though there is no final solution to the dispute. Over time, the issue of the South China Sea dispute is officially on ASEAN's fixed agenda. In regular ASEAN meetings such as the ASEAN Summit, ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN Post Ministerial Meeting, ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN China Summit, and so on, the South China Sea agenda has always been one of the issues discussed. The inclusion of the South China Sea dispute issue in the ASEAN agenda is basically a projection of Indonesia's foreign policy into the ASEAN scope. Several important things are underlined regarding Indonesia's foreign policy toward the South China Sea (Orgaard, 2002).

Every country has national interests to be achieved. National interests can be achieved within the territory of the country itself and can also be achieved outside the territory of the country. In the event that the achievement of national interests is carried out outside the boundaries of the country's territory, the instrument used is Foreign Policy. This is also evident in the implementation of the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Indonesia, which seems to have different characteristics and styles in each period of government. The Old Order period had the characteristic of being closely related to the strongholds of communist countries, as well as a Confrontational style. The New Order period of Foreign Policy has the characteristics of being closely related to the camps of Western countries as well as a Low Profile-Cooperative style. Meanwhile, during the Order of Foreign Policy Reform, Indonesia had the characteristics of being in contact with all countries and an Active-Diplomatic style. Changes in characteristics and styles in implementation are more often highlighted from the aspect of the domestic situation and conditions (Bakry, 1999).

The dynamic illustrates how the South China Sea issue and China's claims to these waters have direct or indirect implications for Indonesia's national identity. Although the Indonesian government has realized that the South China Sea conflict can cause regional security instability and will have a far-reaching impact on Indonesia's national interests. However, the anticipation is still limited to diplomacy efforts alone. Indonesia's pro-active stance on these issues related to foreign policy seems to have not been balanced with defense policies and strategies. Since 1993, Indonesia has paid special attention to China's nine-dash line claim in Indonesia's EEZ and Natuna Sea as listed in a map published by China.





This prompted Indonesia in 1996 to hold a major military exercise in the Natuna Sea with the scenario of a threat of invasion from the north. However, after the military exercises to date, Indonesia's defense policy related to the South China Sea has not been clearly visible. In the aspects of defense policy and strategy, it is necessary to look at how the defense policy alludes to the perception of threats. Refers to the hierarchy in the field of disputes in Indonesia, the general policy of state defense is a reference in constructing a defense force in a time frame. Presidential Regulation No. 8 of 2021 concerning the General Policy of State Defense for 2020-2024 has broadly touched on the perception of threats. Referring to the Presidential Regulation, there are currently two threats that are being faced by Indonesia, namely actual threats and potential threats. From Presidential Regulation No.8 of 2020, there is no specific mention of the South China Sea issue. However, on the other hand, the Presidential Regulation confirms that one of the factual threats faced by Indonesia is conflict in the border area (Yusuf, 2010)."

From the practitioner side, according to Defense Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, today, there is a paradigm shift in the world in solving conflation, namely from hard power to soft power. Therefore, Indonesia prioritizes diplomacy in finding solutions to the South China Sea dispute. A different view from Indonesian academics represented by Eddy Prasetyono and Hasjim Djalal. According to them, the South China Sea is seen as a threat to Indonesia's interests. Because actors involved in disputes or interested in the South China Sea are the main actors in the region, such as China and the United States, the impact will be quite significant on Indonesia. Hasjim Djalal's opinion is in line with Eddy Prasetyono's view that the South China Sea dispute has a higher level of threat to Indonesia. The South China Sea has more potential to threaten Indonesia's national interests. This view is based on the reason that the countries in a dispute over the South China Sea area and the countries with high levels over the waters are the major countries in the Asia Pacific region and the countries that have defense alliances with major countries in the region. An example is Malaysia as one of the claimants in the South China Sea has a defense alliance in the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) along with the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. While the Philippines is bound by a defense pact with the United States. Even without the entanglement of a defense pact with the Philippines, the United States is certain to interfere in the South China Sea dispute in the name of freedom of navigation for its navy, particularly in the deployment of forces from the Asia-Pacific region to the Indian Ocean region (Yusuf, 2010).

Departing from this context, Indonesia as an ASEAN anchor country as well as having a strategic position in the Asia Pacific region is certain to be affected by the implications of the South China Sea dispute, although Indonesia is not listed as one of the claiming countries. Moreover, the complexity of the South China Sea dispute involving many actors is certain to threaten Indonesia's national interests, both from the political aspect of regional stability and from the economic aspect, namely Indonesia's energy security, which is derived from gas fields in the South China Sea EEZ. This is where researchers reason why the South China Sea dispute is seen as more likely to threaten Indonesia's national interests. According to the TNI commander, the South China Sea dispute implements a layered defense strategy that includes deterrence, enforcement, and recovery strategies. The deterrence strategy aims to realize the preparedness of all forces and abilities as well as the title of the TNI, which is able to provide a psychological challenge by realizing a formidable deterrent effect, both outward and inward. The enforcement strategy aims to be able to crack down on any threats that interfere with the sovereignty, territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia and the safety of the nation carried out in the form of combat operations to destroy the enemy in his



country, on the way and who have successfully entered the national territory using a protracted war strategy (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, 2012).

Departing from the state defense strategy developed, quoting from the Commander of the TNI, until now, the TNI still prioritizes deploying forces in selected border areas and conflict-prone areas. The title of TNI power, especially the navy's strength around the South China Sea region, is not considered to have been included in the needs plan that must be realized in the near future. Currently, the title and plan of the TNI judiciary are to deal with possible threats that exist around the Sulawesi Sea. Although there is a potential for conflict in the South China Sea, Indonesia does not expect the outbreak of open war, and all problems are expected to be resolved by diplomacy. The TNI has not yet developed a specific strategy to deal with the South China Sea dispute. Theoretically, the TNI needs a special strategy to deal with the dispute in the strategic water because the forces concerned there are major powers that are militarily much stronger than the TNI. However, considering the hierarchy of state defense, the absence of a TNI strategy specifically designed to deal with the South China Sea dispute is essentially an implication of a defense policy that has not viewed the South China Sea dispute as a threat to Indonesia with greater strategic implications.

## Conclusion

In practice, Indonesian policy of dealing with conflicts in the South China Sea is more heavily dotted with foreign policy and has not been balanced by defense policy. Indonesia's role diplomatically in the region in tempering potential conflicts in the South China Sea is quite prominent in seeking a peaceful solution at the diplomatic level. The lack of a prominent defense policy in anticipation of the South China Sea conflict makes the policy adopted not yet balanced, in the sense that there is no meaningful anticipation from the defense aspect if the word Indonesian diplomacy in the South China Sea fails to achieve the goals that have been set. Defense policy, particularly with regard to the construction of a force under the Minimum Essential Force (MEF), has not seen the dynamics of the highly fluid strategic environment in the South China Sea as a threat and challenge to be anticipated. In other words, there is a synchrony between foreign policy and defense policy that should not be allowed to occur. Indonesia's defense strategy has not been specifically designed to anticipate spillover conflict in the South China Sea. However, Indonesia's current defense strategy does not specifically pay attention to the possible conflict dynamics in the South China Sea.

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