

Indonesian Geopolitics: Response to the Dynamics Occurring in the World

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Geopolitics, strategy, Globalization, Russian-Ukrainian War, United States-China Rivalry.

ABSTRACT

In the context of globalization and rapid geopolitical changes, Indonesia as an archipelagic country with a strategic position has an increasingly important role in facing challenges and opportunities at the international level. This research aims to analyze and identify Indonesia's geopolitical response to the dynamics currently occurring in the world. The research method is descriptive qualitative, including literature analysis, secondary data, and interviews with geopolitical and diplomatic experts. By focusing on changes in dynamics that are occurring, such as the increasingly heated rivalry war between the United States and China, the Russia-Ukraine war, this research will explore the Indonesian government's strategy in dealing with these dynamics. The research results highlight that the volatile global political situation has had a significant impact on Indonesia's foreign policy. The link between global dynamics and Indonesia's national interests requires a careful approach. In conclusion, Indonesia needs to maintain a balance between national interests and participation in international cooperation, utilize strategic forums such as the G-20 to support national development, prioritize regional cooperation through ASEAN, optimize the potential of energy resources as a comparative advantage, and create political stability and security domestically as the main basis for facing the complexity of global geopolitical dynamics.

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INTRODUCTION

In the midst of increasingly heated rivalries between America and China and the seemingly never-ending conflict between Russia and Ukraine, major challenges to global stability emerge in the form of non-compliance with international law and norms (Al Syahrin, 2018). Even though this turmoil has significantly affected the geopolitical dynamics of Europe, it is often considered trivial at the global level, with minimal focus on its impact in the Southeast Asia region, including Indonesia. Paying attention to this reality, countries in the global south, including Indonesia, are showing a cautious response in responding to this global conflict (Sutrino & Meirinaldi, 2020). This response reflects the unique geopolitical perspective developed by countries in this region, where foreign policy is designed taking into account regional security and special consideration of the major rivalries currently taking place in the world (Wono et al, 2022).

Even though Indonesia is located outside the direct center of the main conflict, its government still strives to maintain balance and independence, trying not to get caught up in the perception of global dualism (Sonny, 2020). Indonesia carefully takes a neutral position on controversial international issues, considering that maintaining regional peace and stability takes priority over interfering in major conflicts occurring outside its region. The narrative that

Indonesian Geopolitics: Response to the Dynamics Occurring in the World..... Kunkunrat Kunkunrat

sees this conflict as a more significant struggle between democracy and autocracy has, quite rightly, sparked debate (Damayanti et al, 2018).

Even though countries like Indonesia are not directly involved in global conflicts, their role in providing economic and political support can be a key factor in shaping the international response to these conflict situations (Sudira, 2017). For example, Indonesia has the potential to play a significant role in ensuring the implementation of long-term sanctions against parties involved in violations of international law. Through wisely expressed economic and political support, Indonesia can become a stable force in efforts to encourage compliance with international norms (Walesasi et al, 2022).

Indonesia, like other southern countries, is clearly aware of the broader strategic implications of this global conflict. In particular, in the context of increasingly intense rivalry between the United States and China, Indonesia understands the need to maintain balance and not openly take sides with either party (Rimapradesi et al, 2023). Through a careful diplomatic approach and foreign policy, Indonesia seeks to maintain balanced relations with the two great powers, with the aim of maintaining stability and peace at regional and global levels. Indonesia's geopolitical response in the context of greater global competition reflects awareness of the key role played by southern countries in shaping world geopolitical dynamics (Rosmawandi, 2022).

Lessons learned from events in Ukraine provide valuable insight into how states respond to and view aggression, creating impacts that may influence the intensity and likelihood of future threats. Although geopolitical tensions between superpowers are a long-standing phenomenon, the crisis in Ukraine is an important signal of a return to historical norms after a post-Cold War period of relative peace (Hutabarat, 2022). This incident reminds us that geopolitical turmoil can stimulate repeated cycles of conflict, providing a warning to other countries about the importance of maintaining the balance of power and encouraging diplomatic solutions in response to changing global dynamics. Therefore, a deep understanding of these dynamics is crucial for efforts to prevent conflict and maintain peace at the international level (Hakim & Sadiyin, 2022).

Today's global political dynamics are an aspect that the government needs to pay serious attention to. Achieving national goals in various fields as stated in the preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia cannot be separated from the regional and global strategic environment that influences it. It cannot be denied that even though the international system is multipolar, the tendency of large countries such as the United States, the European Union, Russia and China to carry out proxy wars and struggle for influence in various regions of the world will directly and indirectly influence Indonesia's foreign policy. Therefore, the principle of free and active foreign policy which guides Indonesia in the global political arena must be sharpened into a tactical and comprehensive geopolitical strategy to fulfill national interests.

METHOD

This research adopts a descriptive approach with a focus on qualitative methods. The qualitative approach, as explained by Yulianah (2022), refers to a special tradition in the social sciences which essentially relies on observations of humans, both in their area and in their terminology. In this context, this research explores and describes Indonesia's geopolitical phenomena as a response to global dynamics. Research data was obtained through library research, with data sources in the form of relevant books and literature, as well as involving online data sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of ongoing geopolitical issues. It is important to note that the qualitative approach in this research emphasizes procedural analysis that does not involve statistical or quantification methods, allowing researchers to explore the complexity and context inherent in Indonesia's geopolitical response in depth. It is hoped that this approach can provide a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the complex dynamics that occur at the geopolitical level.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Rivalry between the United States and China

A very striking global political dynamic at the moment is the power struggle between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region. The rivalry between the two involves at least four key dimensions, namely technology, investment, infrastructure and security. China, as a new and growing power, is actively implementing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) policy in the Asia-Pacific region. Through this initiative, China seeks to build infrastructure and increase connectivity with various countries in the region. In addition, China also introduced the Chinese economic concept in international forums, including the United Nations General Assembly, with a special focus on low-income countries in the region. This effort is considered a strategy to erode the influence of the United States, especially considering the perceived failure to occur in implementing the Global Development Initiative policy initiated by the US, which is considered to have failed to develop developing countries in the region (Amalia, 2020).

The rivalry between the United States and China reflects strong competition in a variety of sectors, including technology, investment, and security. Technological competition is mainly reflected in both efforts to become leaders in the development of advanced technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), 5G and space technology. Meanwhile, the investment and infrastructure battle shows the efforts of each country to expand its influence through development and investment projects in regional countries. Overall, these rivalries create a complex geopolitical landscape in the Indo-Pacific region, with potential impacts on global security and economic dynamics.

In responding to China's aggressiveness in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States as the existing hegemonic power has taken proactive steps. In 2019, the US launched the Blue Dot Network policy, which aims to provide an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative. This policy, followed by the Build Back Better World initiative in 2021, signals the US's commitment to providing direct investment to countries in the region. The United States seeks to implement development projects that support economic growth and the welfare of society at large. By involving various countries in the Indo-Pacific, the United States promises to be a motor of prosperity in the region, creating a more attractive alternative for countries that may be tempted by China's infrastructure projects (Amalia, 2020).

Apart from that, the United States also emphasized its leadership in building a resilient Indo-Pacific region, especially in facing economic challenges after the Covid-19 pandemic. The US is committed to working with countries in the region to accelerate economic recovery and build resilience against similar crises in the future. By incorporating sustainability and resilience dimensions, the United States seeks to strengthen its position as a regional leader committed to security, stability and shared prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. This initiative creates a new dynamic in geopolitical competition in the region, providing an alternative for countries in the Indo-Pacific to choose development and investment models that suit their interests and values.

The rivalry between the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region has created a significant impact, especially in the emergence of proxy wars between these two countries. This phenomenon is manifested through the formation of regional alliances and blocs that divide countries in the region into certain groups. One striking example is the formation of the AUKUS bloc, involving the United States, Britain and Australia, as well as the QUAD bloc consisting of the United States, Australia, Japan and India. These two blocks reflect countries' efforts to strengthen their position in geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific (Hajiansyah & Maulana, 2022).

On the other hand, China is also involved in forming blocs, especially through cooperation with its ideological ally, Russia, in the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) group. This group embraces Central Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as India. Despite being involved in forums such as QUAD which is led by the United States, India also remains a member of the SCO forum which is led by China and Russia.



This reflects the complexity and dynamics in regional relations where regional countries seek to maintain the balance of their national interests while engaging in various forums and alliances.

In the midst of the rivalry between the United States and China, it is clear that countries in the Indo-Pacific region continue to prioritize national interests as the main guideline. Although involved in certain international alliances and forums, their membership is not always black and white and reflects an effort to maintain flexibility and independence in conducting foreign policy. This dynamic shows that, amidst global rivalry, regional countries tend to prioritize national interests and play an active role in shaping complex geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific.

Russo-Ukrainian War

The physical war between Russia and Ukraine that erupted in February created global political dynamics that require serious attention. This conflict marks the peak of tensions that have persisted since 2014, when Russia seized the Crimean Peninsula and conflict in eastern Ukraine grew. The main motive for Russia's invasion of Ukraine was the rejection of Ukraine's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was considered to threaten Russia's national security. Apart from that, Russia also accuses that the current Ukrainian government is controlled by a neo-Nazi group which has an anti-Russian attitude (Syuryansyah & Berthanila, 2022).

This war had significant implications for regional stability and security in Eastern Europe. In addition to the direct impact on the Ukrainian people who suffered as a result of the conflict, this war sparked reactions and responses from the international community. Many countries and international organizations condemn Russia's aggression and support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Economic sanctions were also imposed on Russia as a form of international pressure. Another implication is a shift in power dynamics and international relations. The war in Ukraine is in the world spotlight and raises questions about the balance of power in Europe and the extent to which diplomatic efforts can defuse the conflict. More broadly, the war created uncertainty and changed geopolitics in the region, having long-lasting impacts on international relations and the global world order.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine had devastating humanitarian impacts, especially regarding the massive displacement of the Ukrainian population to escape conflict. So far, more than a third of Ukraine's population has been directly affected by the war, forcing millions to flee their homes to seek refuge from threats and violence. These refugees face enormous challenges in meeting their basic needs, such as shelter, food and health services. Apart from the humanitarian impact, this invasion also caused tremendous material damage to Ukraine. Critical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, and other public facilities, is the target of attacks, increasing the burden of suffering on society and limiting the country's ability to provide basic services to its citizens. Post-war recovery in Ukraine will require collaborative efforts and major international support (Dano, 2022).

Not only did it have a local impact, this war created shock waves on a global scale, especially through the energy crisis which penetrated the oil and natural gas markets. Russia, as the main energy supplier in Europe, was forced to play energy politics in response to the harsh sanctions they received from European countries. Fluctuations and volatility in oil and natural gas prices pose new challenges to global energy markets, affecting the economies of energy importing countries and creating uncertainty in energy availability and access worldwide. In addition, this global energy crisis is providing an impetus for countries to seek alternative energy sources and invest in renewable energy, increasing the urgency to reduce dependence on energy resources that are vulnerable to political turmoil. The war in Ukraine, thus, not only had a direct impact on the region but also created widespread ripple effects at the global level.

Indonesian Geopolitical Strategy

The currently volatile global political situation has a significant impact on Indonesia's national strategic environment. The relationship between global conditions and Indonesia's national interests involves various aspects, both economic, political and diplomatic. One

concrete example is Indonesia's national economic recovery strategy, which relies heavily on large amounts of foreign investment to drive the economy on a national scale. In this context, global political instability can reduce the probability of foreign investment entering the country, hampering ongoing economic recovery efforts.

The rivalry between the United States and China, which is manifested in the war of influence, is a factor that tests Indonesia's commitment to the principles of free and active foreign policy and ASEAN mainstreaming. Indonesia, as a member of ASEAN, seeks to maintain regional stability in Southeast Asia through diplomacy based on cooperation and dialogue. However, the great rivalry between the United States and China could create pressure on Indonesia's foreign policy, requiring a careful balance to remain consistent with these basic principles.

No less important, the war between Russia and Ukraine poses a test for Indonesia in carrying out the G-20 presidency this year. Rejection of Russia's actions by a number of G-20 member countries could create complex dynamics in this international forum. As leader of the G-20, Indonesia is faced with the responsibility to mediate and find solutions that are in line with the spirit of international cooperation. Thus, the volatile global political situation presents a real challenge for Indonesia in maintaining economic stability, carrying out effective foreign diplomacy, and leading international forums such as the G-20 wisely.

Geopolitics plays a central role in determining the direction of a country's foreign policy, especially when facing global political dynamics that are not always friendly. In the Indonesian context, foreign policy must be based on a careful view of its geographical situation. First, national interests are the main guide, and diplomatic practices must lead to collaboration with other countries without getting caught up in global conflict. In this context, maintaining a balance between upholding national interests and participating in international cooperation is crucial.

Second, strategic forums such as the G-20 presidency must be optimized to support national development, both physical and non-physical. In facing global political dynamics, Indonesia needs to utilize international forums to promote its national interests, especially in terms of economic development. Here, the G-20 as a global economic platform can be an important event to fight for Indonesia's interests and contribute to sustainable development. Third, Indonesia is advised to continue to mainstream cooperation at the regional level through the ASEAN mechanism. In the dynamic geopolitical situation in the Asia Pacific region, maintaining stability in Southeast Asia through ASEAN cooperation will have a positive impact on Indonesia's domestic security and stability. Strengthening ASEAN as a forum for regional dialogue and cooperation is the key to achieving this goal.

Fourth, strengthening aspects that are Indonesia's comparative advantages, such as energy resource management, must be optimized. Indonesia has huge energy resource potential, and its utilization can become an economic and geopolitical force. In the midst of energy scarcity and global climate change, optimizing energy resources is an important strategy to increase Indonesia's competitiveness at the global level. Fifth, creating conduciveness in the country, especially through a controlled political and security situation, is the basic capital. Strengthening existing institutions, developing national security policies, and the active role of civil society in supporting stability will provide a strong basis for Indonesia to play an effective role in global geopolitical dynamics. With this strategy, Indonesia can be more careful and alert in responding to the challenges and opportunities that arise from the changing global political environment.

CONCLUSION

The volatile global political situation provides challenges and opportunities for Indonesia in designing foreign policy and geopolitical strategy. In facing global political dynamics, Indonesia must consider several key aspects. First, maintaining a balance between national interests and international cooperation is a critical element. Second, utilizing strategic forums

such as the G-20 to support national development is imperative, with a focus on economic sustainability. Third, prioritizing regional cooperation through ASEAN as the foundation for stability in the Southeast Asia region. Fourth, optimizing the potential of energy resources as Indonesia's comparative advantage to support economic growth. Finally, creating domestic conduciveness, especially through political stability and security, is the main basis for responding to complex geopolitical dynamics. In conclusion, Indonesia needs to implement a careful and adaptive foreign policy, integrating national interests with global, regional and local dynamics in order to achieve long-term stability and prosperity.

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