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## **Indonesia Defense Alliance Probability in the Free-Active Foreign Policy**

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**Abstract** Since its independence, Indonesia has chosen to be a neutral and impartial on the side of any force in its foreign policy, known as a Free-Active Foreign Policy. Likewise, in the military policy related to the alliance, explained in the White paper of Indonesia Defense Minister (2015), Indonesia will not join any military alliance. However, with the unprecedented Minimum Essential Force (MEF), which incompletes, the development of the area's strategic environment with the incoming varieties of potential threats, is there any possibility for Indonesia to conduct Alliance in order to improve its military capability? This paper focuses on the issue of problems regarding to the possibility of the Indonesian alliance in the present, with the status of free-active foreign politics. Data sources and data in this paper obtained from a variety of books and journals, supported by some information from the news media. The main purpose of the discussion in this paper is to find factors that allow Indonesia conducting an alliance in the future, with several sub discussions about the history of Indonesian cooperation shafts in the field of defense, cost and benefits in conducting Alliance, and challenges that Indonesia will encounter in case of joining an alliance.

**Keywords.** Indonesia, Foreign Policy, Alliance, Potential Threats.

### **Introduction**

Free-Active Foreign Policy, being an Indonesian political outlook, which has been consistently established and implemented until today. This political view is driven by post-colonization state conditions in an attempt to become a stable state. Non-block movements are the result of this political principle and are followed by other newly independent countries, especially in Asia to Africa, as countries which seeks to build its nation after the prolonged colonization.

The non-block movement became a political policy of the post-colonial states to keep its country amid the rivalry between two global forces. Indonesia as one of the initiators of non-aligned movements, in its free-active policy, establishes itself to remain a neutral position without the alignments between the two shafts of the world. The rationality of Indonesia's foreign policy is also a manifestation of national objectives in safeguarding the country from the threats and contributing to the world tranquillity (Republic of Indonesia Constitution, 1945).

At the end of the World War two and the end of colonialization periods in various parts of the world, has offered a hope for the world peace. The peace expected in the period after it, became a mere mirage faced with the emergence of a new world conflict between the Soviet Union and the American United States. The conflict that divides the world in these two Axis powers has led the world to a greater threat of war. Involving the both countries policy in carry the improvement of weapon race, which triggers the increase of nuclear weapons in both countries. The Free-Active foreign political policy is listed in the Law number 37 1999 which regulates the detailed practical reference of foreign cooperation. Along with the Indonesia dynamics of domestic politics, directly or indirectly its participate in the various directions of the practical order policy conducted at various times. Various types of cooperation with different power shafts in the world have been conducted by Indonesia, including various military cooperation. There is no denial Indonesia in the Sukarno era was more likely to be pleased to cooperate with the Soviet Union. This was evidenced by the creation of the Jakarta axis with Pyongyang Peking and Moscow established at that time. Including the assistance from the Soviet Union related to the provision of various types of modern defense systems in Indonesia's effort to obtain the island of Papua as one of the factors why it can occur.

Likewise, during the time of President Suharto tends to lead Indonesia to cooperate with the United States since his early years. This can be seen from various cooperation conducted, from various aspects, such as one of the highlights until now, is the cooperation between the Government and private sector in the development of gold mines in the land of Papua. Until the termination of diplomacy with one of the countries in the previous axis, China in 1967 .

Nevertheless, many major threats attacking Indonesia became an undivided part during various defense cooperation. The release of East Timor, Ligitan, and Sipadan Island are some example cases where the sovereignty of Indonesia's defense was not perfectly maintained, despite its best efforts had been accomplished. Although it cannot be assumed as a loss, the next two cases become part of the State defense systems in safeguarding the territory's sovereignty. The cases of the island of Ambalat and also North Natuna Sea which confiscates the focus of the various Indonesian people, and it was also assuredly the main concern of the Indonesian military because of direct contact in the sovereignty of Indonesia territory.

In addition to the various real threats from the outer part, the threat was also created from the domestic sphere. The Indonesian military's ability is in the rank of 16th out of the 137 Global Power Index. Openly. several presidents in recent periods stated that the ability of Indonesia primary weaponry defense system is still within less threshold. Coupled with a small military budget allocation, the position of collective Indonesia also shrinks itself in military and defense-related areas. Although in the year 2024 Indonesia will be planned to reach the point of Minimum Essential Force (MEF) that proclaimed will be able to improve the defense capability of Indonesia.

Although there is no assumption of the experts stated that alliances can solve various polemic from various threats to Indonesia efficaciously, reducing potential threats with the increase bid of Indonesia in the eyes of the world certainly was not something useless. Amid the growing global issues rapidly, we need to have a deterrence effect, which in the forefront aspects concerned with military capability. Not only in terms of fundamental strengths of the Indonesian National Army (TNI), but also the capabilities of military facilities, obtaining the assistance of other countries that are always ready to accommodate, because, in the development nowadays, the good relationship between Countries will highly influential concerning each national interests.

From the discussion above, this work will investigate deeper the possibilities of Indonesia in Alliance, which also focuses on factors and characters making it possible for Indonesia to have

an Alliance presently, as well as the cost and benefit when Indonesia has alliances in the defense aspect.

### **Defense Alliance.**

Generally, the defense alliance can be assumed to be an act of cooperation both formally and informally with a joint commitment to maintaining defense and security between two or even more countries involved internally (Walt, 1997). Based on the online dictionary of Cambridge, Alliance is a group of countries, political parties, and people who accept to cooperate in interest or common purpose. This terminology in global politics could directly refer to defense cooperation, because to differentiate it from partnerships, communities, and integrations, alliances require the opportunity of involvement of military elements and shared enemies. The defense in this paper focuses on the traditional notion of emphasizing the military aspect.

In alliances, every country attempted to find ways to offset the threats. It can be a Balancing, a cooperation by joining the opposite party the threats origin. Or even Bandwagoning, the effort to join the party which forms the threat. The magnitude of the threat which becomes the foundation for each country to choose from both models depends on the four factors according to Walt (Walt, 1985): power aggregate, territorial proximity, offensive capabilities, and offensive intention. Salmon, once explained that alliances have characteristics in its formation (Salmon, 2006), which can be categorized into the following points:

- Values/Goals/Ideology/Mutual Benefit
- Interests/Interdependence/Trade-offs/Wealth
- Conflict Resolution/Territorial Settlement/Settlement of Disputes
- Cooperative Security/Common Security/Collective-oriented Security
- De Facto/Tacit
- Adversarial Partners/Antagonist
- General Threat/Indefinite orders/INDISTINCT/No particular character
- Against an Immediate Definite Threat
- Fighting
- Wartime
- Attacking

In the Alliance, Benson, Bentley, and Ray of Vanderbilt University also argue that there are two types of alliances, namely: Conditional Deterrent Alliance (CDA) and Unconditional Deterrent Alliance (UDA) (Benson, 2013). In the CDA type, there is no absolute thing in terms of supporting other countries in the alliance. This means that members of the Alliance are authorized to refuse to help other countries who are obtaining threats. Meanwhile, in UDA, a member country will always get support from other countries when dealing with various conflicts occurred, regardless of whether the country is morally concerned or not. While Walt, S argues that alliances also turn out to be weakened, which is caused by three things: change in perception of threats, declining the credibility of alliances, as well as the change of domestic political alliance member State. So it can be explained that the strategic environment of a country affects the sustainability of an alliance (Walt, 1985).

From the theories above, there is a conclusion that the alliance a country has made can increase its military capacity into relatively large. Where such ability can surely be used as a state effort to achieve its national interests primarily associated with its defense, with various types, various objectives, and various characteristics that build alliances Defense itself. This is what can be the core of the purpose of forming the Defense Alliance.

**Free Active Foreign Policy : Conceptual View In Achieving National Interests.**

Indonesian foreign policy is a Free Active Foreign Policy since its early independence was adopted until now as the basic axis of Indonesia in taking a various foreign policy. It was pioneered by the figure of Bung Hatta since 1948 amid the global story of the world, which then had a cold war between the Western and Eastern blocs. The purpose of this foreign political system is that Indonesia has the kind of attitude and choice to be impartial to one of the blocks from the past until now. This is carried out and strengthened as stipulated in articles 2 and 5 of Law No. 37 1999 concerning Foreign Relations, foreign relations conducted based on Pancasila, the Constitution of 1945, foreign political policy, regulations National laws and international customs. Foreign politics in Chapters 3 and 4, explained that Indonesia adheres to active free principles.

In particular, the terminology of the meaning of "free" means unbounded by anything and anyone. This has been described by Indonesia in its aim to initiate United Nations in the Asian and African continent at the Asian-African Conference at Bandung in April 1955, which is immediately supported by countries in the Asia-Africa region which has Independence or in the exertion for its independence. Meanwhile, the explanation of the word "active" means to participate in the implementation of the tranquility of the world. The point of the Bung Hatta notion at that time, was free during the problem and the cold war that occurred between the two polar ideology that is communist and liberalist. The option of Indonesian foreign political attitude has been very compatible with what has been aimed, and it also become the country's goal which is the national interest in the opening of the Constitution which is also the cornerstone of Indonesian constitutions.

Therefore, foreign politics made Indonesia freely determine its attitude and policy to the international problem, not to bind itself in one side power of the world, and actively present a right contribution for whoever. In the form of thought and active participation in resolving conflicts, disputes, and other world issues, to realize the order of the world based on independence, lasting peace and social justice.

The opening of the Constitution 1945, emphasizing that keeping the country safe in the form of nation safety protection is Indonesia's national goal. Hence, the State must be able to protect its existence, sovereignty, and authority first (Sukmadi, 2010). Carrying out its function to maintain security and defense is an essential task of a country as an entity gaining authority from the people. In carrying out its obligations the state can leverage all the power and national resources that its implementation is governed through a national security system in various forms of statutory legislation (Sukmadi, 2010).

Based on a variety of literature, national security is generally interpreted as a fundamental need to protect and safeguard the national interests of a nation with the use of political, economic and military forces to confront Various threats from both outsides and inside the country. National security concepts can be described as follows;

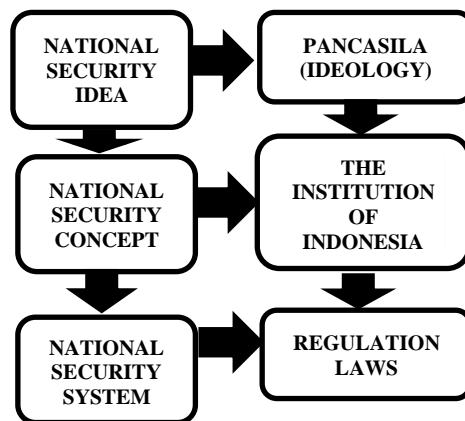


Figure 1 : Idea – Concept – National security system of Indonesia

In the scheme above, it provide an overview of national security ideational based on the main idea of national security in Pancasila. Ideology is the idea of driving the concept of draft, objective, and development of Indonesian national security. National interest then became the dominant factor in the national security concept of a nation. National security can also be interpreted as a necessity to maintain and preserve the existence of the State through economic, military and political forces and the development of diplomacy. This concept emphasizes the ability of the government to protect the territorial integrity of the country from threats that come from outside and within the country (Sukmadi, 2010).

The reason for a paradigm change in security is more fundamental, shifting or changing the human life's governance as a result of the stepping toward the advancement of science and technology that has increasingly encouraged the process of globalization every People's life aspects, nations, and countries (Sukmadi, 2010). Along with the growing relationship to the similarity of interests between countries, encouraging the development of collective security concepts. The collective security concept rests on inter-State security cooperation so that each country gets a security guarantee together. Essentially, collective security still relies on balancing military forces to create security stability in the region (Sukmadi, 2010).

Aside from being a condition, national security is also a function. As a function, the understanding is to provide security protection to all nations and all of Indonesia's ancestry that includes the protection of State security, public safety protection (community) and security protection of citizens, of any kind of threat and or action that is influenced by external or internal factors (Sukmadi, 2010). When national security conditions are reviewed from the side of the threat, threats to national security can be physical threats, such as military attacks, terror acts, natural disasters, and so on. The military invasion of other countries is clearly an external threat to state security (which could also include threats to public safety and citizen security) (Sukmadi, 2010).

### **Free Active Politics Faced with The History of The Indonesian Defence Challenge**

The defense is conceptually defined as an action to safeguard Indonesia's national interests from disruptions and threats. The view of threats in the state defense concept is divided into two basic categories of military threats and non-military threats (Kemhan, 2014). Military threats are interpreted as an armed threat committed by foreigners on the basis of aggression and assault (Kemhan, 2014). The view of the military threat to this point remains a grey concept. In which, this threat is still regarded as an unrealistic view of threats. Looking at this perception, the Government's attention to the potential threat of the military is still in the context of ideas that have not been viewed as a real possibility of threats to the interests of the State. In other

circumstances, non-military threats are becoming more concerned for the Government's attention to the presence of threats that are directly facing the community.

Threat mapping in Indonesia's national security concept is not separated from the real threats that interfere with the national interests, especially those originating from the domestic. However, threats originating from outside the territorial boundaries of Indonesia also cannot be ignored due to its undetectable nature. Indonesia's free active political outlook encourages flexible attitudes to actively establish relationships with each country. Indonesia's foreign political flexibility can be seen from the long history of Indonesian foreign relations in every Indonesian presidential leadership.

During the time of President Sukarno, Indonesia faced the challenges originating from the outside or in the country. It is not apart from the condition of Indonesia that has not been stable as a new country that is looking for an identity. The effort to build the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia territory deal with the continuing Dutch colonialization in West Irian. The struggle of West Irian became an example of the effectiveness and flexibility of free political activity as a national goal. Indonesia's strong desire in liberating West Irian from the Netherlands and the difference in strength between the two countries encouraged Indonesia to build political relations with the Soviet Union. In Sukarno's leadership, the Soviet Union had supplied Indonesia with one cruiser, 14 destroyers, an antisubmarine patrol vessel, 20 missile vessels, several torpedoes, cannon vessels and armored and amphibious vehicles, helicopters, Bombers, and bomber planes.

Indonesia does not formally or directly establish a defense relationship with the Soviet Union. The proximity of Jakarta-Moscow is not separated from Sukarno's political view which has a mix of western skepticism. This cooperation also builds strong bilateral relations between the two countries. Even today the purchase of various Defense Equipment by also involving sales exchanges with local commodities such as processed rubber, textiles, furniture, tea, CPO ( palm oil) footwear and so on, the product of Indonesia's unmitigated Russian products will also be exported. At the time of Sukarno, especially in the period of 1959-1965, Indonesia and China had a close diplomatic relationship, which was demonstrated by the Jakarta - Beijing axis (Pradana, 2016).

In the reign of President Suharto, one of Indonesia's most prominent foreign policy changes, for instance the diplomatic disconnection with China (formerly known as the People's Republic of China) in 1967 (Suryadinata, 1998). One of the factors that supported this policy took place was that the Government considered that China was involved in the 1965 rebellion. If President Sukarno had previously been said to be leaning towards the east, at this time the government seemed to be more eager to cooperate with the western side. This can be seen from a variety of cooperation in various areas especially economics, including the exploration cooperation in the land of Papua that lasted continuously today.

In the realm of defense, as well as a bilateral relationship between Indonesia and the United States. Both countries at this time have an interest in relation to economics and Politic. In fact, both have the same perception of threats resulting from the axis of communism. Meanwhile, technical cooperation is marked by the delivery of Indonesian military personnel to the U.S. to follow various levels of education in order to achieve military professionalism, at National Defense University, College War Academy), school Command staff, short courses, and seminars. The military cooperation of both other technical countries is through the Military Assistance Program which ended in 1978 (Sukadis, 2018).

At the end of President Suharto's reign, Indonesia faced the challenge of human rights violations and it worsening relations with the West. The effect of this problem is the weapon embargo made by the United States. This embargo continued until the reign of President Habibie, Gusdur

to Megawati. In the midst of the Embargo, in 2003 the government formally importing a Sukhoi fighter Squadron. This is conducted because of the inability of the Indonesian Military Equipment to be used in the event of damage and the country does not have the ability to purchase spare parts needed.

An inauguration of the two-sided politics conducted by Indonesia, which is still being done. A practical policy to prevent the inability to use the Military Equipment due to a factor such as Embargo in the future. Likewise, in the period carried by President Gusdur, where he attempted to reestablish cooperation in foreign relations of Indonesia to re-cooperate freely, this can be seen from the domestic politics Related to the termination of RI-China cooperation in the previous era. Even at this time in the political policy of his country, the people of Chinese descent got some more special privileges than ever before.

Meanwhile, in the era of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and President Joko Widodo, faced with the good relation between the two shafts, both Western and Eastern bloc. But relationship between countries cooperation with both shafts emphasized by the President Joko Widodo as a relationship between countries to always be profitable for Indonesia. Therefore the direction of cooperation in this foreign relations, the Government markets are so open to any country. Although in 2020 there were several times the pressure made by other side related to the procurement of national military equipment which impacted the unreached direct purchase agreement of the Sukhoi S30 fighters as many as 11 units.

Likewise in the early reign of the second period of Jokowi, through Indonesian defense, Prabowo Subianto, Indonesia is often conducting defense diplomacy with several countries in the world, whether it among former countries of Western blocks, such as the United States and Francis, or the Eastern Bloc, such as China and Russia. This might implies that the axis of cooperation in the current leadership is free and open for any countries, as long as it can accommodate a maximum advantage for Indonesia. For instance, in the military aspect, whether it is for the increasing of Military Equipment Capability, as well as the ability of Indonesian Armed forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia/TNI*).

### **Global Challenges and The Probability of Today's Alliance Development**

Salmon (2006) describes alliances as cooperation in achieving common goals and under cooperation in defense aspects. In his gaze, Salmon explained some of the characteristics in forming a defense relationship based on the form of problems encountered. It is additionally explained by Walt about the political strategy in the face of threats based on various factors. At the probability of establishing a defense alliance's current relationship, it will be heavily influenced by the challenges or threats encountered by Indonesia. As a real example in recent years, related to the conflict in northern Natuna sea. As it is known commonly that, China's unilateral decision on the recognition of the South China Sea territory is one of the problems with countries in the Asean region, including Indonesia. China oftenly shows the strength of its overpower in the region, heedlessly to the collective regulations which have been agreed in UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). But the reactive action of the majority of ASEAN countries is only Soft Power or diplomacy, because it is aware of military capabilities and other aspects of China-owned.

Based on that evidence there is a possibility that the establishment of this alliance can be assumed to actualized, in other terms it may conduct when there is a threat and the country has no readiness to do a preventive action against it. Asean countries certainly need to arrange an action that can be a deterrence effect to suppress the arbitrary actions from the threat. Although in the consideration of calculations, it is still not be able to withstand the hegemony of China

from various countries in Asean, but with the ability of the community, at least will be able to suppress or increase the collective Position of ASEAN countries.

### **Against an Immediate Definite Threat**

It is undeniable that the various developments of the era, including technology, will further accelerate the changing threat from Indonesia's strategic environment including the lifestyle of its people. Making globalization as an old issue which is only part of the global current change. But in addition, to encourage the development in various aspects, it can also bring threats that arise from the ease of access informally in the present. That can be seen from a wide range of cases, such as the ease of terrorists in the assembly of explosives through internet media, although there is no capability having a high and impactful to the surrounding circumstances. However, this can be one of the things that must be thought more seriously.

In other aspects, the cooperation of Our Eyes Initiative is one of the ways in the efforts of several ASEAN countries regarding the eradication of Transnational Crime around the waters of Sulu. Indeed, this is not defense cooperation in the form of alliances, but in the form of a Strategic Partnership that aims to overcome certain threats with the creation of cooperation among several countries. By the time, it is not impossible that would be one of the initial foundations for the creation of a higher level of cooperation.

With each country getting familiarized and accustomed to cooperate, the greater is also the possibility that these countries will have the same view and vision to the various cases of threats which can occur in the future. When this happens it will very possible for the countries to be able to form an alliance to ward off various threats due to the same viewpoint. The change of global political constellations also brought a challenge for Indonesia, for instance, China's becoming a strong player in the region which made America and its allies perceive it as a threat. The journey of conflict between China and America has lasted in recent times. China aggressiveness in the South China Sea region brings special attention to the United States. The United States gives special attention to the revival and aggressiveness of China in the South China Sea. In dealing with this problem, America builds a non-formal alliance in The framework of The QUAD, as a balancing power effort against China in the region through several actors inside. This brought Indonesia to a central position of conflict between China and the United States.

On the other hand, Indonesia in recent years has problems with China especially on the violation of the territory by Chinese fishermen in the South China Sea area. Furthermore, this issue encountered the peak political tension between the two countries with Chinese Government approach using a Coast Guard ship to guard the fishermen who enter the Indonesian waters. In this condition, Indonesia and China's political relations are experiencing tensions that make Indonesia respond by increasing the presence of security and defense stakeholders in the northern Natuna region. These problems have become an important challenge for Indonesia in establishing its policies ahead.

### **Strength Aggregate**

In looking at comparisons of military forces from countries affecting political constellations in Southeast Asia can be seen in the indicators of military power of each country. In the global Firepower report, military power is explained in some aspects of power, as well as manpower, military fleet or military equipment of their respective armed forces and military budgets. Military budget is one of the important indicators that can be seen in the military aspect of a country. Comparison of military budgets between countries can be seen from the table below.

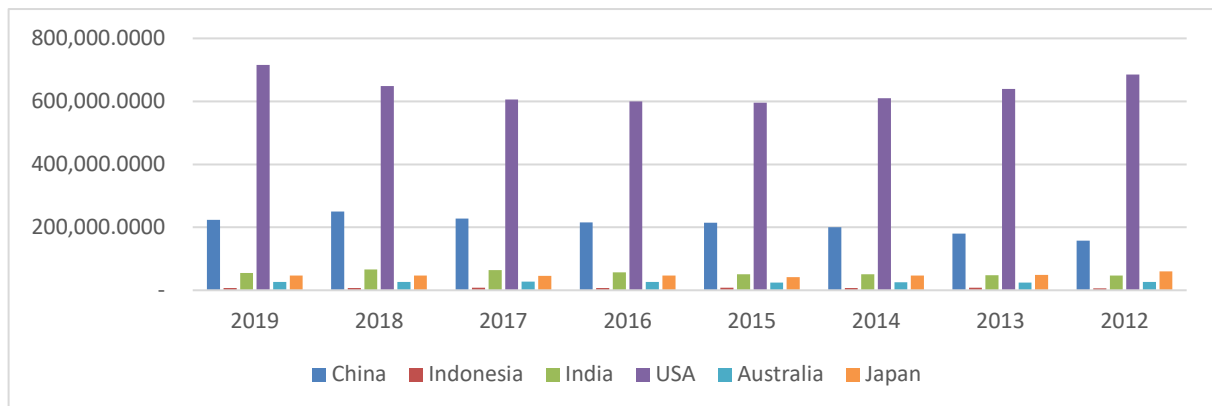


Figure 2 : Nations Military Budgets 2012-2019

Based on that data, the military power gap between Indonesia and global actors such as China and America has a far distance. This illustrates that Indonesia is still not able to make confrontation with related actors, especially concerning the inter-state conflicts on the military's ability. In simple words, the weak will always have difficulty even only to diplomacy with a country which is more superpower in terms of strength.

### Proximity of Region

Geographically, Indonesia has the proximity of the region with China and the existence of other actors in ASEAN. Located among the global strengths of China, Australia, Japan and the United States base in Indopacom. The territorial worldview with China provides the additional issue regarding to the North Natuna Sea disputes. China's presence in the South China Sea by bringing the strategic position of China's military base closer to Indonesia and this is a threat for Indonesia. In a brief history of cooperation by Asean countries, Singapore-Malaysia has more incline with the western axis. Besides as a part of the Britain Commonwealth, the two countries concerned more in cooperation with the American bloc than other. This can be strengthened by the collaboration of Five Powers Defense Agreement (FPDA) in which both countries are involved together with Australia, New Zealand and UK.

For the others, Vietnam, Laos, Camboja, and Myanmar, which has since been targeted to the eastern axis. Although later, Vietnam has increased tension with China concerning its declaration unilaterally in the South China Sea, which involved Vietnam with the South China Sea dispute. While the Philippines, at the beginning of this year, declared a halt to its military cooperation with the United States with various factors causing it to occur. Whereas the axis of cooperation established long time ago. Related to Thailand, Brunei, and Timor Leste, it cannot be recognized because cooperation between the countries seems flowing with any countries. Related to the probability of the emerging an alliance in the closeness area, then we fasten upon another factor such as a similarity of the threat toward **sovereignty** from several states around, the probability will become bigger. Especially for those states disputed directly against the threat made by China related to South China Sea, for instance. For Malaysia and Singapore, that would become a great opportunity for themselves or even for their alliance during this time, United States of America, which overtly compete against China in many aspects.

### Conclusion

The emerging of an alliance and Free-Active Foreign Politics is indeed cannot work side by side, because both of them are contrary to each other. However with the incoming various threats, and with the defense capability which have not reach minimum essential force, Indonesia according to the its history was able to take steps differ to its Free-Active foreign policy. In order to cooperate in the defense aspect with one of the most powerful axis in the world by conducting such as a Strategic Partnership. Even so, the ability of alliances in the present will be able to be used by Indonesia as a Deterrence Effect for the rival Countries, or such a raising of Indonesia's Bargaining Position in the realm of Diplomacy in the world, especially for countries spreading threats to the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.

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