

# **Redefining Indonesia's Foreign Policy "Free & Active": Challenges & Opportunities of Indonesia's - China's Alliance in the Development of Space Technology**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper aims to analyze the opportunities and challenges of the Indonesia-China alliance in the development of space technology. We know that Indonesia's foreign policy is free and active politics. But, the condition of the global strategic environment developing so greatly with the 4.0 industrial revolution and the increasing tension between America and China has contributed to the contestation of the development of space technology. The development of the strategic environment will make Indonesia establish an alliance with one of the countries, in this case China as a country that has begun to strengthen its dominance over America to be able to realize its interests in the development of space technology for national independence. This paper uses a descriptive qualitative methodology, using library data sources through various books and journals related. Based on the analysis by the author, basically there are opportunities and challenges that must be faced by Indonesia in forming an alliance with China in the development of space technology. Indonesia's opportunities are supported by relations between the two countries which have long been implemented. Meanwhile, from the challenging side, it is still the dominance of America in relation to this space technology, so that America tends to be able to intervene. While this is related to the Chinese Indonesian alliance, what is important to do is to strengthen Indonesia's diplomacy towards China to be able to get a transfer of technology & transfer of knowledge that will support the development of national space technology.

**Keywords:** *Indonesia's Foreign Policy, Free & Active, Challenges, Opportunities, Alliance, Space Technology*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The global strategic environment has changed so rapidly, which ultimately affects the development of regional and national strategic environments. This change is marked by the development of increasingly sophisticated technology that triggers the emergence of Industrial Revolution 4.0 and is characterized with modernization of technology, the internet of things, artificial intelligence, and robotic. In addition, the increasingly fierce competition between the United States and China in the South China Sea is also a problem affecting the conditions of regional and national strategic environments that must be considered by Indonesia. The condition of the global strategic environment also naturally influences Indonesia's foreign policy which must adapt to various international conditions. Indonesia's foreign policy must pay attention to

global conditions while still carrying out the goal of realizing national interests.

In connection to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the threat from the development of a global strategic environment that increasingly leads to the Southeast Asian region, in terms of Indonesia's national interests, it must start to improve its space technology capabilities that can support strengthening national defense. Indonesia's National Interest in mastering space technology is an important thing to do to support the implementation of defense diplomacy. In realizing the independence of space technology, Indonesia cannot do it alone. Aside from having limited budget, human resource capabilities, and availability of technological facilities, Indonesia's weaknesses are also related to supporting industries that will supply technology components. At present, the national industry has not been able to provide support for the development of space technology in Indonesia. Thus,

Indonesia needs to cooperate with other countries to make the dream of technological independence of space come true.

International cooperation is a part of Indonesia's foreign policy as a medium to realize national interests. Amid the development of a very dynamic global strategic environment, Indonesia is faced with competition from 2 (two) developed countries: the United States and China. China is now the rising star in various fields that are openly ready for opposing American rule. This condition certainly triggers Indonesia to formulate a foreign policy that can accommodate Indonesia's interests in relations with both United States and China. Indonesia's "free and active" foreign policy is demanded to be able to adapt to changes in the global strategic environment. So far, Indonesia's foreign policy has a principle of "free active", which is interpreted as Indonesia's commitment to determine its attitude to international problems freely and to be free from the poles of world powers and to contribute actively to solving various world problems.

But is the principle of "free active" still relevant to Indonesia amid the increasingly uncertain global strategic development environment? The emergence of China as "the rising star" that seeks to fight American domination is an interesting thing that Indonesia must pay attention to. Will Indonesia continue to hold on to these principles by always being a "good child" or will try a new movement aimed at one of the American or Chinese camps to be able to support the realization of national interests, especially interests in the independence of space technology that supports the national defense system?

This paper limits the scope of discussion to the development of space technology. It tries to analyze the cooperative relationship between Indonesia and China from the perspective of space cooperation. Thus, recommendations can be formulated related to the direction of Indonesia's foreign policy in the future related to the development of space technology to achieve independence in order to support the national defense system.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Conception of Indonesia's Foreign Policy**

The definition of Indonesian Foreign Policy is mentioned in Article 1 paragraph 2 of Law Number 37 of 1999 concerning Foreign Relations which explains that Indonesia's Foreign Policy is "Policies, attitudes and steps of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia taken in engaging with other countries, organizations international, and other subjects of international law in the context of facing international problems in order to achieve national goals". Foreign Policy is closely related to national interests, which are understood as a way to articulate and fight for national interests towards the outside world. Foreign policy can be defined as a policy taken by the

government in the context of its relations with the international world in an effort to achieve national goals. Rosenau said that foreign policy is essentially a mechanism for the nation-state to adapt to changes in its environment [1].

### **2.2. International Cooperation**

International cooperation is a part of the study of international relations. According to Holsti, cooperation can be defined as follows [2, pp. 652-653]:

- 1) The view that two or more interests, values, or goals meet one another and can be produced, be promoted, or be fulfilled by all parties at once.
- 2) The view or hope of one country that the policies decided by other countries will help the country achieve its interests and values.
- 3) Certain agreements or problems between two or more countries in order to take advantage of equality of interest or conflict of interest.
- 4) Official or informal rules regarding future transactions are developed to carry out the agreement
- 5) Transactions between countries to fulfill their agreement.

While the motive for conducting cooperation is related to space cooperation, it can be linked to science & technology (S&T) cooperation. The motivating factors and motives of countries to engage in international cooperation vary greatly. Flanagan (2012) have identified two broad sets of goals for international S&T cooperation: (i) intrinsic goals, which directly lead to proof of S&T such as collaboration among researchers or building large-scale infrastructure, and (ii) external goals that focus on supporting other policies such as foreign policy, economic/market policy or development policy [3]. Whereas Fikkers and Horvat (2014) identified 15 motives in conducting international S&T cooperation on a spectrum that ranged from 'narrow' agreements to 'broad' agreements [4]:

- 1) Increase cooperation;
- 2) Exchange of experience;
- 3) Achieve changes in R&D funding patterns;
- 4) Increase the economies of scale of R&D;
- 5) Increase access to research infrastructure;
- 6) Increase human capital;
- 7) Improve the country's research reputation;
- 8) Increase innovation and market orientation;
- 9) Develop a general strategy;
- 10) Achieve research excellence;
- 11) S&T capacity development;
- 12) Highlight cooperation during diplomatic visits;
- 13) Protect security;
- 14) Change diplomatic relations;
- 15) Promote public diplomacy.

### **2.3. Alliance or Strategic Partnership**

An alliance is a formal association of states for the use (or non-use) of military force, intended to the security or enhancement of their members, towards certain countries, whether or not this other person is explicitly identified. Alliances, however, are only a formal subset of broader and more basic phenomena, distinguished from "harmony." Alignment equals a common set of hopes between two or more countries that they will support each other in a dispute or war with a particular state. This expectation arises mainly from shared common interests and they may be strong or weak, depending perhaps on the relative level of conflict between the parties and the common enemy. Formal alliances strengthen existing alignments or perhaps create new ones, with sincerity, specificity, legal and normative obligations, and (in modern times) their public visibility [5, pp. 104-105].

The alliance relationship includes the following parts: 1) strategic concepts, or objectives, which define the joint obligations of alliance partners; 2) joint defense strategies where roles, mission, and responsibilities are determined; 3) agreement on the type and level of strength needed to implement a joint defense strategy; 4) a series of more specific agreements on command relations, basis regulation, and load sharing [6, p. 11]. The motives for making an alliance are as follows [7, p. 3]:

- 1) Maintaining relative strength/increasing military status and capabilities/maximizing strength;
- 2) Facilitating transparency and communication;
- 3) Facing internal/external threats;
- 4) Expression of foreign policy decisions/justify some political interests;
- 5) Control the crisis or the outcome/spread of war (apart from broader political strategies);
- 6) Instruments for developing and changing state systems.

### **2.4. Space Diplomacy**

Diplomacy in traditional terms is defined as a dialogue between countries [8]. Whereas the term space diplomacy by the space community is defined as [9]:

- 1) Ideas for formulating and implementing practical initiatives so that the interests of countries meet with each other in space.
- 2) The art of negotiation to coexist peacefully in space for the future of humanity.

Space Diplomacy can be interpreted as dialogue, negotiation in an international collaboration which is motivated by interests related to space. At present, there are considerable international collaborations that are motivated by the importance of developing joint space technology, because the nature of space technology is high tech, high risk, and high money. Science & Technology is now playing an important role in creating a globally connected modern society. In international affairs, diplomacy, technology, and economics are the most important tools for any country. Diplomacy is the art of negotiating to protect one's interests and promote one's

influence in international affairs. For each sovereign country, both technology and diplomacy are important tools for managing international relations, which in essence protecting national security and projecting national power [10, p. 7].

## **3. METHODS**

This paper uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is one form of research that describes and analyzes human social reality. Meanwhile, descriptive research is the one aimed at describing and describing and mapping facts based on a particular perspective or frame of mind [11, p. 100]. Data collection techniques are done through library research. A literature study is a data collection technique by conducting a study of books, literature, notes, and reports relating to the problem being solved [12, p. 27]. In this case, it is related to news, reports, journals, and other writings related to the international relation issues, foreign policy, space technology cooperation, Indonesia – China cooperation, alliance, etc.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **4.1. Strategic Environment of Global Space Technology**

Space technology is now more advanced and sophisticated along with the development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Space faring countries such as America, Russia, China and India are competing to develop their space technology, even to develop their country's defense. The development of space technology to support defense can be seen from the emergence of the arms race in space. It started with America, then Russia, followed by China which developed its anti-satellite program (ASAT) that can shoot satellites in space from Earth. Then the last is India which has successfully tested anti-satellite missiles or Anti-Satellite Missile. These countries give each other a deterrence effect to show their strength. This capability is the pride of the country because it is considered strategic in crippling the ability of enemy satellites to spy on troop positions, encrypted telecommunications, and directing precision missiles at their targets [13].

In the development of space technology, China has become a new force for American domination related to the mastery of space technology. China is starting to expand its influence on countries whose space technology is still developing, especially in the Southeast Asian Region. China takes the role to provide transfer of knowledge and transfer of technology as a form of cooperation. Surely this will be welcomed by ASEAN countries which incidentally require the application of space technology in realizing sustainable development goals (SDGs). Likewise, Indonesia is currently still trying to realize its dream of achieving independence in the development of space technology.

#### **4.2. Indonesia-China Space Cooperation as Motive for the Alliance**

The development of space technology is one of the motives for a country to cooperate with other countries. Space diplomacy is done by making space technology as an object in cooperating with the state or other international entities to develop space technology that can support national defense and security. Space Diplomacy will certainly also strengthen Defense Diplomacy because, with the development of space technology, it can be used indirectly to support national defense and security through the use of space technology.

Indonesia's National Interest in realizing the independence of space technology as a booster of national defense diplomacy is something that must now be prioritized by the government. "*Civis Pacem Parra Bellum*", if you want peace then you must be prepared to fight. Preparing a defense force is a necessity for a nation that wants peace because with a strong defense it will be a powerful deterrence effect to resist the wishes of other countries to confront [14, p. 1]. Indonesia does not intend to fight, but Indonesia must have strong security and defense forces continuously, one of which is supported by space technology.

Cooperation between Indonesia has been running since the days of President Soekarno. China is Indonesia's strategic partner in various fields of cooperation. Indonesia-China cooperation related to space has been contained in Presidential Regulation No. 22 of 2019 concerning Ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the People's Republic of China Concerning Exploration and Utilization of Spatial Cooperation for Peace Purposes (Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Cooperation in the Exploration and Peaceful Use of Outer Space), which contains the main points of cooperation activities carried out by Indonesia – China:

- 1) Research and development of experimental satellites for scientific purposes, remote sensing satellites, and communication satellites;
- 2) Services for launching, tracking and controlling satellites including management and operations in their orbits;
- 3) Research, construction, use and utilization of the satellite earth segment system;
- 4) space science research;
- 5) Utilization and sharing of remote sensing satellite data.

In connection to the development of space technology, the alliance between Indonesia and China can be one way for Indonesia to realize its national interests. Although at

present the principle of Indonesia's foreign policy is "free and active", which means it does not side with one force. In a condition of a global strategic environment that is rapidly changing and uncertain, Indonesia must begin to determine its assertiveness. The alliance between Indonesia and China in the development of space technology is a new arena for Indonesia's foreign policy which is closely related to national interests which are understood as a way to articulate and fight for national interests towards the outside world. The alliance becomes a policy made by the government in the context of its relations with the international world in an effort to achieve national goals.

*"We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow.* As stated by Lord Palmerston, it is the national interest that is enduring in alliance or cooperation relations. So it can be said that the decision to enter into an alliance is legitimate by a country as long as it is still in a corridor to realize its national interests [7]. Therefore, the Indonesia-China alliance in realizing the national interest in the independence of space technology mastery can be a new chapter in Indonesia's foreign policy. The relevance of the principle of "free active" becomes blurred when it is associated with the changing conditions of the global strategic environment, in which America is no longer a big power that dominates in all fields. The emergence of new powers such as China is a counterweight to American domination. Indonesia's decision to form an alliance with China related to the development of space technology is a new chapter for Indonesia to sharpen its fangs so that it is no longer the object of international relations, but it is also time for Indonesia to participate as a subject of international relations.

#### **4.3. Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies of the Indonesia-China Alliance**

Regarding the development of space technology, China has become a strong country in the development of space technology to counter American domination. Opportunities for cooperation through the formation of an Indonesia-China alliance are important to do immediately in realizing the independence of mastery of space technology as one of the national interests. The national interest in realizing the independence of mastery of space technology is the motive for forming an alliance with China, where space technology can support the formation of Indonesia's minimum essential force (MEF) which will strengthen the national defense system. Opportunities for the alliance between Indonesia and China include:

**Table 1: Challenges & Opportunities of the Indonesia-China Alliance in Space Technology Development**

Opportunities	Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There have been good relations between Indonesia and China since the days of President Soekarno</li> <li>2. There has been a lot of cooperation between Indonesia and China in various fields, especially space technology</li> <li>3. Advanced Chinese space technology and China is ready to provide transfer of knowledge and transfer of technology to Indonesia, just waiting for Indonesia's readiness</li> <li>4. China as "the rising star" a new power that can fight American domination</li> <li>5. China is both in Asia so that it can strengthen Asia's power globally</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are still many who support the principle of "free and active" foreign policy which is still relevant to Indonesia</li> <li>2. Many countries have affiliates to America, such as Japan, so if Indonesia will cooperate with Japan it can be complicated</li> <li>3. Unstable national strategic environmental conditions (radicalism), there is still sentiment towards China (Communists)</li> <li>4. Must formulate a fair alliance scheme (grand design), Indonesia must be strong in a "bargaining position" (National Interest is the main objective of the alliance) lest Indonesia instead become the object of China</li> </ol>

Based on the challenges and opportunities of Indonesia in establishing alliance relations with China related to the development of space technology in the Table 1, what must be considered is that Indonesia must be strong in negotiating with China. National interests are the main motive in the alliance. The relationship between Indonesia and China is basically an interdependent relationship, so that Indonesia should not have an inferior perception when dealing with the growing power of Chinese influence. Indonesia must have a bargaining position that is used for modalities in diplomacy with China. Indonesian anticipatory measures towards China must also be formed, to anticipate the possibility of a bad alliance in the future. Related to the formation of an Indonesia-China alliance in the development of space technology, what must be considered by Indonesia is to form a fair alliance cooperation scheme between the two parties, because every country will certainly bring their respective national

## 5. CONCLUSION

Basically, international relations between two or more countries is always guided by the national interests of each party. The alliance as a form of international relations is also certainly formed by the basic national interests of each country that need each other to realize national interests. The Indonesia-China Alliance in the development of space technology to support the realization of independence in national space technology mastery is an important thing to do. The relevance of "free active" foreign policy must temporarily be set aside in order to realize these interests. Rapid changes in the global strategic environment have influenced the changes in the constellation of Indonesia's regional and national strategic environment. So that foreign policy must also adapt to the changes that occur. It is noteworthy that even though Indonesia is in alliance with China, it does not rule out the possibility for Indonesia to continue to establish relations with other countries to strengthen the realization of its

interests. Indonesia must also be prepared for the consequences that will be faced if it prefers China over America, as basically every decision there must be positive and negative things that surround it. Commitment from the leadership of this country, as well as coordination between stakeholders, is important so that foreign policy which was initially based on the principle of "free active" to be this alliance can be implemented as a whole. And the most important thing is Indonesia's own readiness in accepting the transfer of knowledge and transfer of technology from China. Do not let us have given these 2 (two) things, but we are not ready to apply them. Whereas within the framework of regional relations, the Indonesia-China alliance can also be utilized to support the development of space technology in ASEAN countries, so that it can be an effective deterrence effect in counteracting regional threats, challenges, obstacles, and disruptions.

national interests. It is because basically every foreign policy of a country has one goal, which is to realize national interests.

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