

Geopolitical Analysis of Indonesian Defense Cooperation: Case Studies KF-X/IF-X Jets Fighter

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Abstract: This study is attempt to evaluate the cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea in developing KF-X/IF-X Jets Fighter from the geopolitical analysis perspectives. Indonesia, as the rising military power, attempts to build the military Industry in order to maintain integrity of territory. The cooperation of Indonesia South Korea in Jets Fighter in 2016 is prospected as early entry for air defense industry. Then, this study argues that the cooperation of Indonesia South Korea is vulnerable referred to geopolitical analysis. Therefore, this study explores alternatives for Indonesia in building air defense referred to geopolitical analysis.

Key words: Indonesia, KF-X/IF-X, defense industry, geopolitical analysis, Jets Fighter

INTRODUCTION

In the Indonesian defense white study, Ministry of Defense (MOD) has been mentioned that the construction of national defense is a priority to build a formidable defense force which has the ability to prevent the archipelagic state as well as a maritime country, so that Indonesia has a bargaining position in maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity. Then, the defense industry stakeholders have determine priorities technology. Some of the priority programs of the defense industry namely: Submarine and Industrial Development propellants as well as the development of rockets, missiles, National Radar, Medium Tank and Jets.

In order to increase the capacity of military industry, the Ministry of Defence allows national military industry to build cooperation with other parties. This cooperation is intended to increase the capacity and accelerate the defense industry. In order to improve specifically air defense capabilities, Indonesia establishes some cooperation in the defense industry, for example with South Korea in developing Jets Fighter. "Indonesia is a big country with land and sea so widely. Certainly, we should have the ability to control sea and air," said Minister of Defence Ryamizard Ryacudu after witnessing the signing of a cooperation contract manufacture prototype fighter aircraft, Korea Fighter Xperiment Indonesia Fighter Xperiment (KF-X/IF-X), between Indonesia and South Korea in Jakarta, 7 January 2016 (Khusus, 2016). This study is attempts to evaluate the cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea in the cooperation developing KF-X/IF-X Jets Fighter through geopolitical analysis.

Literatur review

Geopolitical analysis: Independency in defense is part of a political concept. The "defense", referred here is the defense of a nation-state which is the highest political unit in the international political system. A nation-state has sovereignty in regulating its own territory without any foreign intervention. But in a situation of anarchy, there is always a potential conflict of interests among states. Therefore each state will have to secure their own interests with a combination of diplomacy (soft) and military (hard) means.

Securing, in military means, intends to intimidate or coerce the behavior of the parties that threaten the security of a nation-state. Then, the construction of military posture should be directed to create abilities to make fear (or deterrence) and serious damage to the enemies so that enemies will behave according to the will of the nation-state. Without those two abilities that, then a nation-state is always in a vulnereable situation to enemy threats.

The realist believe that rivalry among states is inevitable. Every state try to accumulate power, especially in the military field to preserve her existence and way of life. This logic drived from viewing the world as an anarchic system which requires every state to secure herself (in the principles of self-help). A state can only align with other state(s) only if such alignment is in line with her national interest (Hadi and Adlin, 2008).

John Mearsheimer further considers that the relative power (not absolute power) is the most important in international politics. The statement should pursue security polities that could increase her relative power

against all of her rivals. In the era of globalization, the compatibility of national interests and other states' interests would be challenging. Reducing military budget would only make a state more vulnerable to future and unknown threats (Baylis and Smith, 2005).

Realist also view all the other states as her potential enemies. This view makes the state always concern and fearful of the development of others' forces. The state fear will encourage the state to leverage internal and also external power. This condition creates a condition called security dilemma. In security dilemma, each state share fear to each other. The development of a state's internal power for her own security is in the expense of other states insecurity. The security dilemma get intensified if the uncertainty get higher (Collins, 2000).

Security dilemma should be avoided if related parties can build mutual trust (known as confidence building measures). Each party has mutually assured that each has no intention to attack the other parties. With the absence of uncertainty, distrust can be mitigated and the security dilemma can be avoided.

However, the trust may easily evaporated, when a party run paradoxical policy such as purchasing offensive armaments but labeled for defensive purposes. Singapore is an example when she procured six submarines (Challenger and Archer classes), six Formidable-class frigates, 84 fighter jets (F-15SG and F 16C/D), four airborne early warning aircrafts (G550-AEW & C) and five tankers (KC-135R and KC-130H). Her military posture is hard to tell for defensive purpose. Her strike forces can be projected far beyond her territorial border. While Indonesia, the biggest state in the region, has only two submarines (with additional three in the near future), eleven frigates (Ahmad Yani and Diponegoro classes), 50 fighter jets (Su-27SK/Ms, Su-30 MK/2s, and F-16A-Ds), a tanker (KC-130B) without airborne early. On study, Indonesian air seapower is temporarily weaker than Singapore. The inferiority feeling leads to insecurity that can only be mitigated by power balancing.

Budget efficiency: Defense doctrine will dictate what is needed by a military to conduct military operations. This doctrine must, then, be constantly updated to adapt to the changing strategic environment. Defense doctrine, in Indonesia, elaborated by the TNI Headquarters under the doctrine of Tri Dharma Eka Karma or abbreviated as Tridek. The Tridek doctrine characterized by layered defense and elastic defense (according to Permenhan No. Per/23/M/XII/2007). In addressing military threats however, the doctrine has not been identified threats faced by Indonesia in more detail in next 25-50 years, the strategic capability of Indonesian military to mitigate such

threats, the source the power that Indonesia should exploit in attaining the desired strategic capability. If the threat has been clearly identified, then the TNI Headquarters should be able to study more about how the military posture should be built to mitigate threats today and in the future. Afterward, TNI HQ should be able to identify the desired military strategic capabilities to address the threats. Finally, TNI HQ can determine what resources need to be built and acquired that achieve the desired capability. The pattern of such an approach is called the Resource-Based View (RBV) which has been developed by the US military. Interestingly, RBV is first used in management disciplines and being projected to strategic studies, especially in defense sector.

Furthermore, the Tridek doctrine Tridek does not provide direction on what to do in the negative spectrum. For example, if the Indonesia get involved in a war against Singapore, at the beginning of war campaign, Singapore would definitely eliminate Indonesian offensive and defensive main armaments such as aircrafts, warships, submarines, radars (although, the cause of war between the two countries less likely meant to occupy each own territory in total). When Indonesian main armaments have been paralyzed, only Indonesian light infantry forces that would survive and hold limited power.

From the above perspective, selection of armaments should be done very carefully to prepare Indonesian military in all three spectrums. Especially for main armaments selection, their procurement process takes longer time (mostly over 2 years) and need deep pocket (hundreds of USD). The corrective actions on failure in selecting appropriate armaments would need more extra cost and time. For example in selecting new fighter jets, if the parameters used is a technology based on 4++ generation while the potential threats using 5-generation technologies, the acquisition of 4++generation fighter would useless.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Realizing the above debates, this research uses qualitative research. This research involves both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data includes interview transcripts, relevant indexes and indicators, laws and regulations, policy documents, proceeding of conferences and speeches. The text analysed includes policy documents and statements considered to be official versions. Then, the secondary data includes scholar's research publications.

Then, to provide deeper information, this research conducted interview with relevant people including three Indonesian senior diplomats who initiated and supervised

foreign policy of Indonesia in the South China Sea. The use of triangulation is inevitable, considering the need to highlight the causal path from the independent to dependent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Geopolitical analysis of Indonesia: In building her military posture of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), Indonesian will face three situational alternatives. The first is a situation to face stronger enemy (called as negative asymmetric situation), the second is a situation to face fairly balanced enemy (called as symmetrical situation) and a third is a situation to face weaker enemies (called as positive asymmetric situation). Then, each situation (or spectrum) will require different tactics and weaponry as follows:

First, in negative asymmetrical spectrum, the nation state own weaponry will soon be paralyzed by enemy at the beginning of war campaign (Kaplowitz, 1990). Then, nation-state is compelled to rely on her own infantry force in the situations of attrition war. The effective firearms used by the nation-state is a light infantry weapons with high mobility such as rifles, MANPADS, MANPATS and mines. While a common tactic used is guerrilla war, predominantly by ambushes and sabotage tactics. So that the enemy had turned their strategy from offensive to become defensive (Kaplowitz, 1990).

Second, in symmetrical spectrum, war will involve a battle between in kind weaponries. Various tactics will be used to outmaneuver enemy. However, symmetrical war almost never happen. Each state will attempt to leverage each own power or to obtain external power (through alliance) to change from symmetrical to positive asymmetrical. Every state then try to be stronger than their rival(s) and strive for balancing with each other (military) power. In other words, that arms race is a result of the security dilemma.

Third, in positive asymmetrical spectrum, strike weaponaries used at the beginning of the war campaign using strike fighter and bomber jets to paralyze enemy's main armaments. After enemy's air, sea and land defense forces were paralyzed, more ground attack weapons such as cannons, attack aircraft, attack helicopters and other heavy weapons system were predominantly used. The enemy forces will then transform into groups of militia, separatists or terrorists.

For fighter jets, they are effectively used in the positive asymmetrical and symmetrical spectrum. In positive asymmetrical spectrum, fighter jets used in ground attack missions to engage the enemy with cannons, rockets, bombs and missiles. However, the

fighter jets have more value in symmetrical spectrum as balancing instrument to the rival state power (in the context of arms race). The more superior fighter jets owned, then the greater deterrent power possessed. With greater deterrent power on hand, the rival state would not dare to threaten us.

However, why should a state require indigenous defense? The answer will depend on the each state's geopolitical situation. If a state locates in a region that established mutual trust among each other in the region, then the needs for indigenous defense will be diminished. For example, among 28 NATO member states, only the United States, France, Germany, England, Spain, and Italy that are making their own 5th gen. fighter jets. Germany, England, Spain, and Italy actually made 5th gen. fighter jets in the Eurofighter consortium. While other member states feel confident that other states will not threaten them and choose to import fighter jets from other states, mainly from the United States.

Indonesia's political elite preserve to believe that other states will threaten her, and vice versa. According to Walt (1985), geographic proximity is one element to form a threat level. The farther a state to another, the smaller the threat level of that state to other state. And vice versa. This is also evidenced in many wars that have taken place between neighboring states such as in World War I and World War II. Wars between neighboring states are generally caused by territorial issues such as territorial disputes, annexation, expansion and competition to control resource-rich area.

Then, Indonesia still has several territorial dispute. Indonesia-Malaysia still has dispute over Ambalat Sea Block. Then, related to Indonesia-Australia, Indonesia concerned over Australia's mineral exploitation in the Indonesian EEZ near the Timor Strait. Another dispute is Indonesia Singapore that Indonesia threatened by Singapore because of its growing of military posture. Singapore operates offensive modern armaments, i.e., strike fighter jets, long-range reconnaissance aircraft, and airborne tanker. Singapore defense posture has been intentionally built to make Indonesia and other states threatened. So, it is logical if Indonesia distrust on Singapore true intentions in managing Flight Information Region (FIR) on airspace of Riau Islands.

The treat then entrap all ASEAN Community member states into security dilemma. Singapore keep building her offensive muscles internally and externally through its membership in Five Powers Defense Arrangement (FPDA) with Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and the UK. While Indonesia with her free and active foreign policy, has constrained herself to build alignment with foreign parties. It makes in an emergency situation, Indonesia must depend on herself including in fighter jets productions.

Selecting jets fighter for indonesia: The Coordinating Ministry for Maritime conveys the Seven National Defense Industry Programs that includes: development of fighter jet KF-X/IF-X, Submarine, propellant, rocket, missile, radar and Medium and Heavy Tank on March 4, 2015. Especially for fighter jet, it is intended to co-develop KF-X/IF-X with South Korea in order to have an optimum level of independence in producing next 4.5 generation fighter jet. The Government of Indonesian (GoI) is committed to provide 20% of the KF-X/IF-X development budget. GoI will involve MoD, TNI, PTDI and PT LEN for South Korean counterparts.

The KF-X/IF-X program was near to be failed as the South Korean parliament had not authorized the budget for the continuation of the KF-X program. The domestic political situation in South Korea, of course is threatening the existence of IF-X program. However, on January 7, 2016, the Government of Indonesia and South Korea have signed Cost Share Agreement (CSA) which Indonesia bear 20% of total cost that equals to US \$1.6 billion. As planned, in 2025 a KF-X IF-X fighter jet prototype would be produced and passed flight tests. Indonesia would be entitled to have one IF-X fighter jet prototype.

From the above description, the Indonesian government should establish an alternative plan for KF-X/IF-X project. Indonesia should avoid losing funds due to any delay or failure of the project worth a total of (minimum) US \$1.6 billion with other projects that has more measurable risks and benefits. In the US, the F-35 JSF project requires more budget and time from the original plan. Some of former F-35 partners had to lower their order, and some have to cancel it.

Learning from the experience of the F-35 project, Indonesia must assess the risks of KF-X/IF-X project more carefully so that Indonesia will not entrapped in a dilemma where the project needs more fund injection but if Indonesia refused to provide the fund, the project KF-X IF-X will fail. Defining alternatives for KF-X/IF-X project will not be simple as well. There is no better choice for Indonesia than partnering with the US who has mastered all three key technologies in making fifth generation fighter jets. If Indonesia partnering with Russia or China, Indonesia would only able to get BVR missile technology. For their AESA radar and stealth technology, still in development stage.

But selecting the United States as a partner in the development of fifth generation fighter jet would be difficult to get consensus among the political elite in Indonesia. There is still distrust and suspicion of Indonesia's political elite to regard the US as a true partner. It is caused by various factors. Among them are historical factors which the US considered to deeply

interference in Indonesian domestic affairs by supporting PRRI separatist group in the 1950s. Then in 1965, there is allegation that the United States involved in the extermination of the communists in Java. Furthermore, although the US has perceived helping Indonesia in the annexation of Papua in 1962 but the US is considered very sensitive to the Indonesian Government policy to Freeport (a US gold mining company in Papua). Similarly, the US has been regarded supporting Indonesia annexation to East Timor in 1974 but there is allegation that the US had also involved of the loss of the territory from Indonesia territory in 1999. This negative image is compounded by the US embargo on Indonesia between 1995 and 2005.

However, US foreign policy towards Indonesia after the Indonesian reform era (1998 on ward) has changed significantly. In 2005, Indonesia and the United States had been agreed to establish a strategic partnership which also includes the field of defense. US sees the center of the international politic has shifted from the Euro-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific region, especially with the rise of China that threatens US global hegemony. The position of Indonesia which is geographically right in the middle of the Indo-Pacific and politically accepted by all major actors in the region (such as the US, China, North Korea, India, etc.), making Indonesia could potentially be a strategic balancer in the region. US and China both are interested in building closer bilateral relations with Indonesia. Similarly with India, Australia, South Korea and Japan. That character is unique for Indonesia that is not found in any other states.

US as partner: Indonesia's geopolitical position above should be used for Indonesian national interests. Negative perception of the US should be revisited wisely, intelligently and thoughtfully. As the only state that has the ability to develop 5th generation fighter jet indigenously, the US should be the best choice for Indonesia. However, the cooperation will require changes of perception on the US, especially if it is associated with geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. In the field of defense, Indonesia needs to consider forming a closer ties with the US. Geopolitical reality in the Indo-Pacific has divided the states into three groups, namely China's group, China's rival group and neutral group. The China's group consists of China, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar. While China's rival group consist of the United States, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Neutral block consist of Indonesia, Iran and some others.

In this situation, if Indonesia choose to stay neutral, she will not have broader and deeper access to US technology.

Choosing to affiliate with the US does not always mean being a US ally, or China's rival in the economic field. An example is Singapore which is not a US ally but has very broad access to US technology and remains the main trading partner of China in the Southeast Asia. This is because Singapore is very clearly choose to close to the US in the defense sector but remain close in the economic field to China. Singapore provides a base for four US Navy Littoral Combat Ship to monitor the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea. On the other hand, Singapore wide opened the doors to trade with China. For Indonesia, this can be seen as an accumulation of Singapore's political, military and economic power for Singapore's security.

If a state with strong military posture still pursuing external balancing from the US, would it be logical if Indonesia would choose to remain neutral or even affiliated with China? If Indonesia does not choose to affiliate with the United States, then the Indonesian defense posture will be far inferior than her neighboring states (notably Australia and Singapore). It is in the medium term, Indonesian neutrality would endanger Indonesian own security, where Indonesia has no influence to manage other states' behavior. In least schenario, other states may exploit the Indonesian EEZ unfairly but in the worst schenario: foreign actor may support separatist movements in Indonesia to balkanized Indonesia. So, it becomes increasingly imperative for Indonesia to establish closer defense ties with the United States.

Closure: The cooperation of Indonesia and South Korea in developing KF-X/IF-X should be evaluated by government. The cooperation is prone to be failed

because of the lack of support from South Korean parliament. Then, from geopolitical analysis the cooperation perhaps can not fulfill the Ministry of Defense goal that they want to control Indonesian air and sea. The possible choice for Indonesia is developing the cooperation in defense with United States. Although, United States position for partly Indonesian is threat in the international politics context but Indonesia possibly do cooperation with United States merely in defense industry. Indonesia, perhaps can build cooperation with United States like Singapore and United States cooperation which they are not allies but do cooperation merely in the defense industry.

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