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‘Garuda Shield’ vs ‘Sharp Knife’: Operationalising Indonesia’s Defence Diplomacy

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Abstract In the Post New Order period, there was a significant development in Indonesia. The issuance of the Law on TNI in 2004, has since guided how the Indonesian military operates in dealing with external and internal security threats and curbed its socio-political role, which is associated with the New Order regime. However, it has not explicitly touched upon the implementation of defence diplomacy, which has significantly increased within the last decade. Hence, the article aims to analyse the development of Indonesia’s Defence Diplomacy in the Post New Order period, particularly in the context of joint exercises. This article attempts to answer two key questions: ‘*How has Indonesia developed its defence diplomacy as part of its overall diplomacy?*’ and ‘*What factors account for different practices undertaken in Indonesia’s defence diplomacy?*’ The article qualitatively scrutinises the development of Indonesia’s defence diplomacy activities of joint exercises by comparing two bilateral exercises with the major powers, the Garuda Shield and the Sharp Knife. In supporting the analysis, the article relies on the combination of interviews and observations performed during fieldwork from July 2018 to July 2019. The article is

critical since it offers an alternative approach to studying Indonesia's defence diplomacy. (197 words)

Keywords: defence diplomacy; joint exercises; Indonesia; United States; China

Introduction

Scholars interpret defence diplomacy as the use of military and defence instruments to pursue national interests and foreign policy objectives abroad (Edmonds & Mills, 1998). In recent years, many countries have increased their defence diplomacy activities, including Indonesia. As a democratising country, Indonesia has amplified the use of military and defence instruments as part of its overall diplomacy. Despite the contradiction to the Post-New Order agenda to limit their roles in socio-political affairs, including the foreign policy, defence diplomacy is important for Indonesia to facilitate strategic engagement, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and to build its military capability (Gindarsah, 2016, p. 338).

Among Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities, joint exercises have also become one of the most important activities. Joint exercises help address Indonesia's security problems. They are also important for CBMs (Syawfi, 2009). With opportunities to translate into concrete actions through joint exercises, the Indonesian Defence Ministry and the Indonesian Military, or known as Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), have contributed significantly to strengthening relations with other countries, particularly the major powers, the United States and China.

This article thus explores how Indonesia has used bilateral joint exercises as its defence diplomacy activities. Historically, Indonesia initially established regular joint exercises with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries. However, these exercises later

developed with non-ASEAN countries.¹ Despite the significance of bilateral exercises with other ASEAN countries, the article exclusively limits the discussion to Garuda Shield and Sharp Knife since these exercises allow Indonesia to engage with the major powers. The former is co-organised with the U.S., and the latter is co-managed with China. These two countries are the most important major powers among the others for Indonesia's strategic interests (Laksmiana, 2017).

The selection of these exercises are critical since the Garuda Shield has become the largest bilateral Army to Army joint exercise for the Indonesian military. Meanwhile, the Sharp Knife, notwithstanding its discontinuation, allowed an interaction between Indonesia's Special Forces unit, Kopassus, in exchanging counter-terrorism skills and knowledge, which was not possible with the U.S. military due to the Leahy amendment. The counter-terrorism materials are also considered as sensitive issues which are only assigned for top tier military units.

By using literatures on defence diplomacy, the analysis in this article elucidates how Indonesia operationalise its defence diplomacy through these two joint exercises. The article attempts to answer two research questions: 'How has Indonesia developed its defence diplomacy as part of its overall diplomacy?' and 'What factors account for the different practices undertaken in Indonesia's defence diplomacy?' These questions are important for the second Widodo administration with a new defence minister amidst the trade war and rivalry between the United States and China since these two countries have become the most important major powers for Indonesia.

¹ Indonesia has organised numerous annual and biannual joint exercises with both *ASEAN* and *non-ASEAN* countries, which involve individual services or joint services. Annual exercises are continuously held between Armies and Navies; meanwhile, biannual exercises are managed between Air Forces. Joint exercises organised with ASEAN countries are as follows: *Malaysia*: Kekar Malindo (Army), Linud Malindo (Army), Malindo Laut (Navy), Elang Malindo (Air Force); *Thailand*: Tiger (Army), Kris (Counterterrorism), Sea Garuda (Navy), Elang Thainesia (Air Force); *Philippines*: Dolphine (Army), bilateral and Indomalphi (Army, Navy), a trilateral joint exercise; *Singapore*: Safkar Indopura (Army), Eagle Indopura (Navy), Elang Indopura (Air Force); *Brunei*: Keris Satria (Army), Helang Laut (Navy), Elang Brunesia (Air Force). In addition to ASEAN countries, Indonesia has also managed annual joint exercises with other countries like *Australia* (Dawn Kookaburra, Kartikaburra-Army; Cassoway/Corpat, New Horizon-Navy; Elang Ausindo, Albatros Ausindo-Air Force) and *India* (Garuda Shakti-Army, Samudra Shakti-Navy).

Defence Diplomacy and Joint Exercises

With the advantages shared by its various activities, defence diplomacy has gained more attention in the context of diplomacy. Indonesia has also employed defence diplomacy to engage with its foreign counterparts. There has been a rise of Indonesia's defence diplomacy in the Post-New Order period. Nonetheless, there has been a very limited number of study which offers empirical analysis on how Indonesia has developed its defence diplomacy activities, particularly joint exercises. This section provides a brief explanation on defence diplomacy and joint exercises to help contextualise the theoretical framework for further analysis in this article.

Defence diplomacy has gained more attention since the Post-Cold War era. Defence diplomacy has been interpreted as the use of military as a diplomatic tool abroad to achieve national and foreign policy objectives (Edmonds & Mills, 1998). Thus, in the context of defence diplomacy, military can play its role as a foreign policy instrument (Cottey & Forster, 2004). With this function, military can contribute to a country's foreign affairs.

With their skills and knowledge, military plays a more significant role when interacting with their foreign counterparts, which helps strengthen military to military relations and possibly contribute to better relations between nations. Since they have similar traditions, it is not difficult for the military to interact with their foreign military counterparts. Hence, defence diplomacy has become a significant part of overall public diplomacy (Cai, 2016). In fact, scholar argue that defence diplomacy is important to be considered as a foreign policy force multiplier (Floyd, 2010).

Under defence diplomacy, there are numerous key activities, ranging from strategic dialogues, personnel exchanges, training and education, inter-military assignment, and port visits to joint exercises (Cottey & Forster, 2004). Among these activities, the use of joint

exercises has demonstrated a more concrete action at the operational level since joint exercises also facilitate interaction between soldiers instead of only focusing on strategic leaders. They also enable greater interaction with the involvement of larger number of military personnel.

In the context of joint exercises, countries have used these defence diplomacy activities to pursue their objectives, such as trust building and interoperability, as well as modernisation agenda (Sachar, 2003). Scholar also argues that joint military exercises support defence cooperation between countries (Cheyre, 2013). Due to these significances, joint exercises are viewed as key diplomatic tools abroad (Edmonds & Mills, 1998). Thus, it is not surprising if some countries have used joint exercises to improve their global images (CSIS, 2019).

Indonesia's Bilateral Relations with the Major Powers

Brief History: U.S.-Indonesia Diplomatic Ties

Indonesia and the United States have a long history of their bilateral relations. The U.S. firstly established its embassy in Indonesia in December 1949. At that time, the U.S. government appointed Horace Merle Cochran as the first Ambassador to Indonesia (Office of the Historian, n.d.). A few months later, Indonesia assigned Dr Ali Sastroamidjojo as the first Indonesian Ambassador in Washington, D.C. in February 1950.

The diplomatic relations between the two countries have experienced numerous dynamics over time. During President Sukarno's administration, there was a period when the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations grew stronger, which was signified by the establishment of the Mutual Security Agreement (MSA). The MSA resembled a defence pact, which authorised a security guarantee from one party when the other party encounters any external threat. The U.S. perceived the MSA as an incentive for a partner country, like Indonesia, to align with the Western bloc. Indonesia secretly signed this agreement with the U.S. in January 1952, whereby Indonesia would receive U.S. economic and military assistance (Anwar, 2008, p. 185).

However, the signing raised domestic political objections in Jakarta, which resulted in the ousting of Prime Minister Sukirman from power. The agreement was perceived as contrary to Indonesia's principle of 'independent and active' foreign policy.

Historically, there are several difficult times in the U.S.-Indonesia relations. In the late 1950s, the U.S. involved in supporting the regional rebels, which aimed to overthrow the Indonesian government. This involvement in supplying military weapons and equipment generated anxiety in Jakarta. Nevertheless, the good connection between General Ahmad Yani, the Indonesian Army Chief who was also a graduate from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and Colonel Benson, the U.S. Defence Attaché to Indonesia, was key to helping improve the bilateral relations (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2013, p. 27). Yani asked Benson to provide the Indonesian military with operational maps and convince U.S. top military leaders that supporting the rebel groups would be contra-productive for U.S. interests. Benson could win the attention of General Maxwell Taylor, Chief of Staff of the Army, who later ended U.S. support to the rebel groups (Evans, 1989, pp. 28-29).

Despite the termination of this U.S. support, the country still attempted to overthrow President Sukarno. In 1959, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) channelled fund to the local Army commander, which was later used to organise anti-Chinese campaigns in West Java. These campaigns aimed to disrupt Indonesia's relations with China (Mozingo, 1976, p. 178). Over time, concern arose in Washington, D.C. regarding Sukarno's foreign policy, which sought to establish good relations with communist countries. In 1965, Jan Walandouw, one of the CIA's contacts during the Permesta rebellion, visited the U.S. and promoted Suharto as the next leader a few months before the G30S incident occurred (Nishinara, 1976, p. 202).²

² G30S is the coup d'état plot, which was associated with the communist movement and aimed to assassinate the Army top generals as well as take over the administration.

Suharto, who was then the Commander of Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat/Kostrad (Army Strategic Reserve Command), assumed command in crushing the communist movement following the coup plot. He further gained more U.S. supports. The disclosure of several secret documents revealed that the U.S. launched covert operations targeted at provoking a clash between the Indonesian Army and the Communist Party (U.S. Embassy, n.d.). Thus, only when Suharto took office, did relations between the two countries become closer again.

Notwithstanding these difficult relations, Indonesia continued sending its military officers to the U.S. during Sukarno administration (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2020). Many Indonesian officers attended U.S. professional military educations and became top leaders upon returning home. This policy was continued by President Suharto, where more opportunities were offered for strengthening defence ties. In addition to these programmes, the U.S. supported military operations in East Timor, prior to which Suharto had met U.S. President Ford (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2013).

Furthermore, the two countries also co-organised bilateral exercises. These exercises have involved individuals from Indonesia's elite military units, such as Komando Pasukan Khusus/Kopassus (Indonesian Special Forces) and Kostrad. Almost 16% of the total Indonesian Army Generals who graduated from the Military Academy were educated in the U.S (Laksmna, 2018).³ These high-ranking officers include the former President, General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and the current Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs, General Luhut Binsar Panjaitan.

However, there was a particularly difficult period in the bilateral defence relations. In 1991, the Dili incident captured the attention of the U.S. government because of the killings of protesters in Santa Cruz, East Timor. Responding to this incident, the U.S. imposed sanctions

³ The identification of this number was based on the observation in the period of 1950-1990.

and an embargo on Indonesia, which affected arms and military equipment sales to the Indonesian military (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2020, p. 3). Subsequently, the U.S. suspended the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme in 1994.

During President Habibie administration, Indonesia encountered its worst situation since the international community pressed the country on its alleged human rights infringements in East Timor (Juwana, 2003, p. 653). The referendum, offered by Habibie in 1999, led to East Timor's independence. In the same year, the U.S. adopted the Leahy Amendment, which made it more difficult for Indonesian military personnel to study in the U.S., especially those with negative human rights records (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2020, p. 11).

Habibie's successor, President Abdurrahman Wahid, attempted to improve Indonesia's international reputation following the East Timor incident. He listed the United States among countries for his initial state visits. He also appointed a civilian professor, Juwono Sudarsono, as Defence Minister. The appointment aimed to demonstrate civilian supremacy, which was positively welcomed by the U.S (Murphy, 2010, p. 369). Wahid also sacked General Wiranto, the Indonesian military chief, after receiving a report from a human rights investigation team. During his administration, 18 military officers, militia leaders, and civilians were indicted for their involvement in East Timor (Järvinen, 2004).

Nonetheless, a series of anti-US demonstrations occurred in Indonesia during Wahid's era, which resulted in the temporary closure of the U.S. embassy in Jakarta. This closure quickly drew criticisms from the Indonesian government. The bilateral relations even deteriorated when another incident occurred on 6 September 2000, where the militias attacked a UN office in Atambua and killed three UN staff members, including an American (Murphy, 2010, p. 370). Hence, the U.S. promptly adopted a harsher policy towards Indonesia.

Over the years, the U.S.-Indonesia relations began to improve after the World Trade Centre (WTC) attack in September 2001. Following the attack, Wahid's successor, President

Megawati Sukarnoputri, visited the U.S. At that time, air traffic was effectively suspended in the U.S. She expressed Indonesia's support for the fight against terrorism, representing a leader from a Muslim dominated country. The U.S. considered her visit to be of critical importance (Smith, 2003, p. 454). Nevertheless, during her administration, Indonesia expressed its opposition to the U.S.' decision to commence the Iraq war in 2003. Indonesia perceived this war as being waged against Islam and as violating international norms.

In the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations, the IMET programme has played a critical role (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2020). The ban on IMET following the Santa Cruz incident restricted the bilateral relations, which lasted from 1994 to 2004. During this period, there was very limited interaction between the two militaries (Wenas Inkiriwang, 2020, p. 4). Hence, Indonesia attempted to find alternative sources of the procurement: Russia and China.⁴ Despite the suspension, high-ranking military officials from both countries managed to exchange their views on regional and global security issues through the Indonesia-United States Security Dialogue (IUSSD). This dialogue was established in 2002 and has since enabled to review the bilateral defence cooperation (Bilateral Relations, n.d.).

Notwithstanding this challenging period, the bilateral defence ties were fully restored in 2005 after President Yudhoyono taking office. Yudhoyono's previous background allowed him to establish personal contacts in the U.S. His commitment to countering terrorism and democracy also helped align Indonesia's foreign policy with the U.S.' grand strategy (Murphy, 2010, p. 373). Hence, the U.S. lifted the IMET ban in 2005. Furthermore, both countries signed the Comprehensive Partnership in 2010, which aimed to foster closer security and economic cooperation, as well as people-to-people interaction. The two countries also managed to

⁴ Indonesia listed the procurement of Russian and Chinese military platforms in the national budget proposal approved by the Indonesian House of Representatives in 2007. See "DPR RI Periode 2004-2009 Tahun Ketiga (Indonesian House of Representatives Periode 2004-2009 Third Year)," (Sekjen DPR RI (Secretary General DPR RI)), 131-32.

organise a total of 140 joint exercises in the first term of Yudhoyono administration (Murphy, 2010, p. 377).

Emulating his predecessor, President Joko Widodo adopted a similar approach to engage with the U.S. Widodo signed a Strategic Partnership with the country in 2015. Widodo's initial presidential term also saw an increase in the number of Indonesian personnel attending U.S. military schools. Because the U.S. still banned Kopassus personnel from going to America, Widodo administration approached the U.S. government to rescind this decision. When U.S. Defence Secretary, Jim Mattis, visited Indonesia in 2018, Indonesian Defence Minister, Ryamizard Ryacudu, proposed him to dismiss the ban as it is important for strengthening the bilateral cooperation (Stewart & Da Costa, 2018). Widodo administration has also continued Yudhoyono's policy of engagement with the U.S. military through joint exercises, including Garuda Shield.

Brief History: Sino-Indonesia Relations

Engaging with China, a rising major power country is essential for Indonesia. The Sino-Indonesia relations forms a unique aspect of Indonesia's diplomatic history (Sukma, 1999, p. 16). China was the first communist country with which Indonesia sought diplomatic ties following the transfer of authority from the Dutch in late 1949 (Sukma, 2009, p. 591). However, serious diplomatic tension arose in August 1951 when the Sukiman Cabinet arrested thousands of Indonesian and ethnic Chinese Indonesian who were suspected of arranging to overthrow the government with backing from China. The raids prompted the Chinese government to support the communists. Alimin, one of Indonesia's communist leaders, sought refuge in the Chinese embassy in Jakarta, where he was granted full diplomatic protection (Brackman, 1965, 270).

Nonetheless, Indonesia immediately managed this disruption. In October 1953, Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjojo assigned Indonesia's first ambassador, Arnold Mononutu, to Beijing (Mozingo, 1976, pp. 114-116). Following several negotiations upon the deployment of this Indonesian Ambassador, the two countries concluded a Dual Nationality Treaty during the Asian African Conference in Bandung in April 1955 (Sukma, 1999, pp. 24-26).

The Sino-Indonesia ties grew even stronger in the late 1950s. Sukarno viewed China as a potential ally to help achieve Indonesia's domestic and international agendas. In December 1960, both countries agreed to sign a protocol implementing the Dual Nationality Treaty. Subsequently, China demonstrated its support for Sukarno's West Irian campaign, and his decision on confrontation with Malaysia (Sukma, 1999, p. 31). Sukarno later proclaimed the "anti-imperialist axis" of Jakarta, Phnom Penh, Hanoi, Peking, and Pyong Yang, reflecting his concern over the threat of imperialism associated by Western countries (Weinstein, 2007, p. 167).

The relations changed when Suharto took office. He viewed Beijing interference by supporting Indonesia's communist movement (Sukma, 1999, pp. 2-3). Therefore, he adopted a more stringent approach toward China. Worsening bilateral relations resulted in the suspension of diplomatic ties in 1967 (Sukma, 1999, p. 3). The suspension strictly limited the interaction between both countries and their militaries.

Nonetheless, on 23 February 1989, when attending the funeral of Japan's Emperor Hirohito in Tokyo, Suharto surprisingly stated that his country would take necessary measures to restore the diplomatic ties with China. His statement astonished Indonesia's domestic audiences and the international community. After nearly thirty years of disconnection, both countries decided to restore their bilateral relations. The normalisation of diplomatic relations was finalised in August 1990 by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Resumption of Diplomatic Relations (Sukma, 1999, p. 4).

Suharto personally decided to restore relations with Beijing based on four domestic factors (Sukma, 1999). First, is the change in the state's domestic primary legitimacy from political stability to economic development, in responding to China's growing economic influence. Second is the change of interests in the economic sector, resulting from the decline of oil prices, which forced Indonesia to emphasise manufacturing and industrialization, relatively oriented toward China's growing market. Third, is domestic power relations, as the unrivalled Suharto's regime in the 1980s allowed him to deal with the anti-Beijing camp in the military. Fourth, is Suharto's desire to demonstrate a more assertive global role, which required normal relations with China (Sukma, 1999).

However, the resumption did not automatically eliminate existing problematic issues between both countries. Sensitivities and suspicions continued to dominate Indonesia's stance toward China (Sukma, 2009, p. 594). This was demonstrated when the Chinese Foreign Ministry expressed its concern over an anti-Chinese riot in Indonesia in 1994 (Sukma, 2009, p. 594). Indonesia promptly interpreted China's concern as an attempt to intervene in its internal affairs.

Despite this reality, Habibie adopted a more positive approach. He developed Indonesia's economic and trade relations with China (Wu, 2011, p. 120). This positive progress resulted from a significant development taking place as part of Indonesia's democratisation, which began a new chapter of active re-engagement and cooperation (Sukma, 2009, p. 596).

Furthermore, Wahid embraced a new position towards China. He made China as his first destination in 1999. He acknowledged China's consistent support towards Indonesia, as demonstrated in the UN Commission on Human Rights over the post-referendum atrocities in East Timor in 1999 (Haacke, 2003, p. 275). The visit contributed to improving the bilateral relations. Therefore, Wahid administration signed the Joint Statement on the Future Directions in Bilateral Cooperation with China in Beijing on 8 May 2000 (Haacke, 2003, p. 266).

Wahid's successor, Megawati, adopted a policy that resembled Sukarno's approach towards China. She consistently demonstrated its support to China, as exhibited when her foreign minister, Hassan Wirayuda, declined a request by then Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to visit Indonesia in 2002 (Sukma, 2009, p. 596). The rejection demonstrated Indonesia's sensitivity to China's concern over Taiwan, which reflected its acceptance of Beijing's one-China policy.⁵

Yudhoyono exhibited a greater engagement with China. During his first term, China's President, Hu Jin Tao, visited Indonesia in April 2005, in which both leaders presented the introduction of the plan of action to initiate a partnership by the signing of a joint agreement. The agreement laid the ground for comprehensive cooperation on a wide range of issues, including defence and security (Wu, 2011, p. 124). The two leaders also signed another joint declaration on a "strategic partnership" in January 2010.

Since then, Sino-Indonesia defence cooperation increased significantly. There had been annual cooperation programmes, which included personnel exchanges, training, and education programmes. Both countries agreed to jointly produce the C-705 guided anti-ship missile, which could target enemy's vessels within the range of 140-170 kilometres (Lamb, 2012).⁶ Indonesia negotiated to conclude this plan to help develop its defence industry as part of a joint investment with China.

Eight years later, the two countries agreed to enhance their strategic partnership. When visiting Indonesia in October 2013, Xi Jinping, together with Yudhoyono, finalised the comprehensive strategic partnership between their countries (Future Direction, n.d.). This partnership fostered more significant interactions in the defence sector. Both countries cultivated mutual trust through defence and security consultations and envisioned increasing

⁵ Indonesia adopts a One-China policy where it has no diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

⁶ C-705 is a modified development of C-704, anti-ship missile which has been produced by the Chinese defence industry. This platform will be installed in fast missile boats or fast attack crafts operated by the Indonesian Navy.

defence cooperation ranging from joint exercises and training to defence industry collaboration (Future Direction, n.d.).

Similarly, Widodo has underlined the strategic importance of China for Indonesia. In March 2015, he visited China following an invitation by Xi Jinping (Joint Statement, n.d.). The two leaders perceived that their countries share related interests in the region as both had attempted to promote regional peace, stability, and prosperity. Thus, they highlighted the importance of intensifying defence cooperation by strengthening high-level military exchanges, effectively using defence and security consultations as a mechanism for interaction and forming a joint commission for defence technology and industry. This emphasised the significance of establishing a dialogue between the two militaries.

Additionally, Xi Jinping underscored China's commitment to respect and support Indonesia's national sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity (Joint Statement, n.d.). Subsequently, Widodo agreed with Xi Jinping that Indonesia's "Global Maritime Fulcrum" strategic concept is complementary to China's 21st Century Maritime Silk Road or recently known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Joint Statement, n.d.). Therefore, in 2016, the Indonesian House of Parliament ratified the defence cooperation agreement with China that was signed back in 2007 (Parameswaran, 2018). This ratification indicated Indonesia's commitment to defence cooperation with China.

Nonetheless, there have been challenges in the Sino-Indonesia relations under the Widodo administration, particularly in solving the disputes over the illegal fishing activities in the Natuna Islands, which are close to the South China Sea (SCS). Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) claim in the islands overlaps with China's nine-dashed line, which has become Widodo's most prominent foreign policy issue. The Natuna Islands are extended over 100,000 square miles of ocean and consist of 154 islands. However, there are only 27 inhabited islands in the area with a total population of around 169,000 people. The Eastern part of the

islands, known as block D-Alpha, is estimated to hold one of the world's largest gas reserves at approximately 46 trillion cubic feet (Supriyanto, 2016, p. 22).

In dealing with the SCS dispute, Widodo has made no compromise regarding Indonesia's territorial sovereignty. Despite his close engagement with China, Widodo publicly rejected China's so-called nine-dash line claim in the SCS in March 2015. Widodo has consistently expressed his position over the SCS issue, which underscores Indonesia's sovereignty over the Natuna Islands.

In 2016, three incidents occurred in Indonesia's EEZ. Indonesian Navy's vessel faced off against Chinese fishing boats. The Indonesian Navy claimed that these boats had fished illegally in Indonesia's territory. In June 2016, the Indonesian Navy seized a Chinese fishing boat and imprisoned seven crews (Panda, 2016). Meanwhile, China claimed the area as a "historic fishing ground" for its fishermen (Panda, 2016). A spokesperson from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Hua Chunying, later stated that "China and Indonesia have overlapping claims for maritime rights and interests" in the disputed area (Panda, 2016). Hence, Indonesia summoned diplomats from the Chinese embassy and complained about the illegal activities performed by the Chinese fishermen.

Furthermore, recent China's military infrastructures build up in the SCS has also generated Indonesia's concern. Not just because of their proximity to the Natuna Islands, but also because these activities could intensify the risk of conflict, with actual consequences for Indonesia's national interests (Supriyanto, 2016, p. 28). Responding to this situation, Widodo has adopted a more assertive approach. Following the clashes with the Chinese fishing boats, he held a cabinet meeting on a battleship in the Natuna Islands territorial waters. In the meeting, he highlighted a firm intention to safeguard Indonesia's territorial integrity and maritime rights from aggressive Chinese interventions. Subsequently, TNI conducted a large scale military exercise around the area.

Moreover, Luhut Pandjaitan, Coordinating Minister of Maritime Affairs, one of Widodo's key advisors, has threatened to take China to an international court if the country insists on enforcing its nine-dash line, which has the potential to affect the stability and security of the Natuna Islands. Indonesia has also renamed the waters around the islands as the Natuna Sea as an act of defiance against Beijing's ambitious territorial domination. China promptly criticised the renaming. Despite this criticism, TNI has begun constructing military bases in the islands, which include an army battalion, and companies of marines, engineers, and artilleries (Indonesia Opens Military Base, 2018). The dynamic bilateral Sino-Indonesia relations have, therefore, affected how each administration has managed Indonesia's relations with China.

Indonesia's Bilateral Exercises with the Major Powers

Garuda Shield: Befriending Uncle Sam

In the context of the U.S.-Indonesia defence relations, Garuda Shield (GS) plays a significant role in facilitating knowledge and skills exchange. It also fosters people-to-people communication. Moreover, it encourages interoperability between participating military units concerning crisis responses. Additionally, the engagement between participants contributes to improving peacekeeping capabilities in the region.

As a former peacekeeper, President Yudhoyono was interested in peacekeeping. With Indonesia's initial involvement in United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon (UNIFIL) in 2006, Yudhoyono viewed the importance of refining TNI's peacekeeping capabilities. Hence, the Garuda Shield was initiated with the U.S. military to help facilitate this intention (S. Sjamsoeddin, personal communication, January 23, 2019).⁷

⁷ Lieutenant General (Ret) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin is a former Secretary General (2005-2010) and Deputy Defence Minister (2010-2014) at the Indonesian Defence Ministry during the Yudhoyono administration, and currently serving as a Special Staff to the Defence Minister.

As the largest Army bilateral exercise, Garuda Shield was established in April 2007. In its inauguration, soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division of Kostrad and the US Army Pacific (USARPAC) trained together (Garuda Shield, 2007). The exercise adopted a theme of 'Peace Support Operations and Civil Military Operations' for a brigade-size scenario (Garuda Shield, 2007). For Indonesia, the exercise helped prepare personnel who would replace their peers in UNIFIL (Garuda Shield, 2007). Furthermore, GS has enabled participants to learn about the culture of their international partners.

Both countries initially decided to convene Garuda Shield as a bilateral exercise on an annual basis. However, in 2008, 2009 and 2010, GS was modified to a multilateral exercise in peacekeeping operations, which was co-organised with the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI). Due to the importance of GS, these exercises were officially opened by General Djoko Santoso, the Indonesian Army Chief (Bhatti, 2009). In 2008 and 2009, GS allowed Indonesia to engage with countries, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Togo, and Thailand (Bhatti, 2009). Additionally, the exercise also invited Brunei in 2010.

After three years of being a multilateral exercise, Garuda Shield reverted to a bilateral exercise in 2011. Held in Bogor, Indonesia, the exercise covered three main activities: Command Post Exercise (CPX), Field Training Exercise (FTX), and Humanitarian Civic Action Project (Douglas, 2011). The CPX adopted a scenario for resolving a complex security crisis, while the FTX focused on Counter Improvised Explosive Device (C-IED) training. The civic action project built a community centre and a public market for the local populace (Cole, 2011). The project allowed Indonesian and American soldiers to interact with the local people who were eager to contribute. The bilateral exercise also allocated a sports day and a cultural programme to enable greater informal engagement between participants (Douglas, 2011).

In 2012, Garuda Shield involved 400 soldiers from Indonesia and 100 from the U.S. (Hiebert & Magpile, 2012). The exercise focused on peacekeeping and stability operations.

However, it began to cover disaster relief capabilities. It also managed several engineering projects for the local community. For example, American and Indonesian soldiers worked together to construct a community centre and renovate a family welfare centre in Malang, Indonesia (Garuda Shield, 2012).

In the following exercise in 2013, Garuda Shield introduced a new training scenario that focused on airborne operations. The scenario was aimed to augment international peace support operations, which had consistently been adopted since 2007. The US sent the 82nd Airborne Division, one of its most elite units. A total of 500 paratroopers from both countries participated. The US also operated, for the first time, its UH-60 'Black Hawk' helicopter and a C-17 Globemaster III, the largest transport aircraft (Meister, 2013). The latter is critical for airborne operations since they can carry more paratroopers compared to Indonesia's Hercules C-130. The involvement of airborne elements illustrated the significance of the exercise, especially with the donning of parachutist wings by Indonesian and American paratroopers, respectively.

The interactions between participants in these exercises have continuously taken place on a yearly basis, including in Widodo administration. In August 2018, another exercise was arranged at Situbondo, Indonesia, which involved personnel from the US Army's 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Indonesian Army's 9th Infantry Brigade (Logan, 2018). The engagement of this personnel helped enhance capacity building and strengthened relationships between the two militaries. The exercise also facilitated interoperability between militaries. Additionally, the recent bilateral exercise was organised in August 2019 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the US-Indonesia diplomatic relations (Ganoni, 2019).

Sharp Knife: A Closer Engagement with the Rising Dragon

The Post-New Order period initially gave rise to better bilateral relations with China. This development covered numerous bilateral low-level defence cooperation projects ranging from personnel exchanges to joint exercises, including the Sharp Knife (SK) (Defence Ministry Staff, personal communication, January 4, 2019). The bilateral exercise initiated a new chapter in Sino-Indonesian military relations as it was the first joint exercise between Indonesian and Chinese special forces units, which became strategic importance for Indonesia's defence diplomacy since the U.S. Congress has banned Kopassus from training with the American military.

Hence, the ban encouraged Yudhoyono to approach China to start developing joint counter-terrorism exercise between the two militaries. Following the Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership in 2010, the Defence Ministry implemented Yudhoyono's policy in enhancing Indonesia's strategic relations with China (S. Sjamsoeddin, personal communication, January 23, 2019). Both countries decided to use the Sharp Knife to refine their own special forces' counter-terrorism skills (Cordesman & Lin, 2015, p. 343).

The first exercise was organised in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2011. Kopassus participated in this inaugural exercise. Historically, Kopassus has contributed significantly to the establishment of various Indonesian special forces units, which include the Indonesian Navy and Air Force, as well as the Indonesian National Police's counter-terrorism unit, Detachment 88. Kopassus is also known for its success in resolving a hostage-taking situation in Don Muang Airport, Thailand, in 1981 (Conboy, 2003, pp. 288-289). The selection of Kopassus as the participating unit in the initial exercise demonstrated the importance of the exercise for Indonesia. SK represents concrete implementation at the operational level of the partnership with China, a rising major power country.

Thus, Indonesia and China co-organised Sharp Knife as an annual exercise that lasted from 2011 to 2014. However, after being represented by Kopassus in the first two years, TNI

headquarters assigned Paskhas, a Special Operations Unit of the Indonesian Air Force, to participate in 2013 and 2014 (Sharp Knife, 2014). As bilateral exercises, the venues chosen were selected on an alternating basis, enabling militaries from both countries to train abroad.

Interaction in the exercise was unique. The exercise was initially organised in English and supplemented by Mandarin as the means of communication (Indonesian Officer 10, personal communication, February 15, 2019). In subsequent years, participants used their respective languages: Indonesian and Mandarin. Nevertheless, when they encountered an issue to clarify, they used English. In the first exercise, ten Chinese interpreters assigned by the PLA, helped facilitate communication between participants. TNI also tasked one Mandarin interpreter (Indonesian Officer 11, personal communication, February 16, 2019). Over time, the PLA added more interpreters to the exercise, which was held in China to enable interaction between the Indonesian and Chinese soldiers (Indonesian Officer 13, personal communication, February 14, 2019). These PLA interpreters were language teachers, who taught Indonesian for the Chinese military (Indonesian Officer 16, personal communication, February 18, 2019).

Sharp Knife served to attain four key objectives. Firstly, the participants could exchange knowledge and experience in counter-terrorism (Indonesian Officer 12, personal communication, February 23, 2019). Secondly, they could explore and learn more about their counterparts' military-technical and tactical capabilities, including military bases and facilities (Indonesian Officer 11, personal communication, February 16, 2019). Thirdly, they developed an understanding of other militaries' traditions, which ranged from discipline to leadership. Finally, they could learn about socio-cultural affairs, the daily life of their military peers, and the local population (Indonesian Officer 12, personal communication, February 23, 2019). The fulfilment of these objectives contributed to building people to people connections and promoted the bonding between military units, which subsequently strengthened relations between the two militaries, that was significant for Sino-Indonesia relations.

The bilateral exercises helped translate Yudhoyono's strategic commitment to engage with numerous countries through his all-direction foreign policy. He managed to engage with the major powers, included China (Goh, 2015). However, the national leader's influence in driving Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities at an operational level, regarding bilateral exercises with China, was more significant during the Yudhoyono administration period than the Widodo period (S. Sjamsoeddin, personal communication, January 23, 2019).

Despite Indonesia's close economic engagement with China, Widodo adopted an assertive approach in dealing with China's illegal fishing issue since it linked to Indonesia's sovereignty. Based on Chinese history, the Ming Dynasty included Indonesia as part of its territory (Hayton, 2019, pp. 150-151). Therefore, China claimed its nine-dash line over the Natuna Islands, one of Indonesia's territories (Meyer, Nurmandi & Agustiyara, 2019, p. 71). Nevertheless, the Chinese self-claim was ignored by Indonesia. The Widodo administration blew up confiscated illegal fishing vessels, including a Chinese boat in May 2015. This destruction incited China's grave concern, primarily as the blowing up occurred amid heightened tensions nearby the SCS.

Regarding the tensions over the SCS, Widodo instructed General Gatot Nurmantyo, the TNI Commander, to maintain security and create stability in the disputed area, as well as to avoid any activity that could potentially create any further tension (Afrida, 2015). General Gatot translated the instruction as a 'no go' concerning establishing any military exercise with China, which resulted in the rejection of the Chinese Defence Minister's proposal to organise a joint exercise (Afrida, 2015). Gatot also decided to suspend the Sharp Knife exercise (Indonesian Officer 18, personal communication, July 30, 2019). As a conservative general, he tended to be more realist in nature (Mietzner, 2018, p. 147). He perceived the SCS dispute as a territorial integrity issue rather than just an illegal fishing matter. President Widodo offered

Gatot flexibility in putting his stamp on TNI's policy development (Parameswaran, 2015). Therefore, Widodo did not object when TNI decided to end the Sharp Knife.

With the termination of the exercise in 2015, Indonesia has no other bilateral exercise channel to engage with the Chinese military. The end of the joint exercises between both countries' special forces units had significantly affected the established relations and limited Indonesia's defence diplomacy towards China. This limitation encouraged the Indonesian military to engage with their Chinese counterparts through multilateral joint exercises, such as the Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo or under the ASEAN Defence Ministerial Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) framework.

Discussion

Garuda Shield: The Dynamics

Garuda Shield has focused on peacekeeping scenarios that reflect Indonesia's commitment to contribute to UN global peacekeeping efforts. Indonesia has consistently used the exercises as effective defence diplomacy activities since they allow them to train with the U.S. The author observed the bilateral exercise, GS 2018, in August 2018, in East Java, Indonesia. During the observation, the author interviewed several American and Indonesian officers.

The observation highlighted the importance of the exercise since it has benefitted both countries and militaries. For the American participants, the exercise was essential and constructive. An American Colonel who led the U.S. delegation, stressed that Garuda Shield helped build relationships between the two countries (U.S. Officer 1, personal communication, August 9, 2018). Another U.S. officer noted the significance of knowledge sharing in the exercise (U.S. Officer 2, personal communication, August 7, 2018). Another American personnel also underlined the prominence of the exercise in terms of diplomacy between the two countries (U.S. Officer 6, personal communication, August 5, 2018).

Likewise, Indonesian participants expressed similar perceptions of the significance of the exercise. An Indonesian officer underscored the importance of GS in facilitating knowledge transfer (Indonesian Officer 2, personal communication, August 8, 2018). The exercise is also essential in accommodating cultural exchange (Indonesian Officer 6, personal communication, August 8, 2018). Like their American counterparts, Indonesian soldiers viewed GS as an essential defence diplomacy activity (Indonesian Officer 7, personal communication, August 8, 2018; Indonesian Officer 8, personal communication, August 12, 2018). These positive responses indicate the importance of the exercise for Indonesia's bilateral defence diplomacy with the U.S.

The author further examined the interaction during Garuda Shield 2018. English was used as the official means of communication, which limited the interactions between participants. The expected interaction should emulate a real military operation, which was difficult to reach due to the issue. However, the involvement of interpreters helped solve this issue (U.S. Officer 8, personal communication, August 9, 2018). Despite their presence, the use of interpreters slowed down the exercise due to a lack of understanding of military terminologies (U.S. Officer 2, personal communication, August 7, 2018). Therefore, American participants utilised additional instruments such as pictures and the internet, including Google Translate, to rectify any misunderstanding (U.S. Officer 4, personal communication, August 8, 2018; U.S. Officer 6, personal communication, August 5, 2018). Moreover, American participants encouraged Indonesian officers with adequate English skills to help explain to their colleagues (U.S. Officer 7, personal communication, August 8, 2018).

The Indonesian participants also recognised a similar issue of the language barrier. They, therefore, acknowledged the critical roles of interpreters in the exercise (Indonesian Officer 9, personal communication, August 11, 2018; Indonesian Officer 7, personal communication, August 8, 2018). In addressing this issue, the Indonesian participants strived

to learn in order to understand better unfamiliar American military terminologies (Indonesian Officer 1, personal communication, August 9, 2018). For instance, the American officers invoked military abbreviations that were not familiar with the Indonesian officers (Indonesian Officer 2, personal communication, August 8, 2018). Additionally, the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) in the exercise, designates a complex process in the U.S. military doctrine instead of just a simple abbreviation. However, the presence of English-speaking Indonesian officers helped bridge this gap.

Despite these challenges, Indonesian and American participants felt that the exercise had provided them with several advantages. GS facilitated an exchange of knowledge and sociocultural aspects (U.S. Officer 7, personal communication, August 8, 2018). Indonesian soldiers could study U.S. tactics, doctrine, operations, military decision-making procedures, staff planning, and war games (Indonesian Officer 3, personal communication, August 7, 2018; Indonesian Officer 4, personal communication, August 9, 2018; Indonesian Officer 9, personal communication, August 11, 2018; Indonesian Officer 6, personal communication, August 8, 2018). Likewise, American soldiers could directly observe the capabilities of their Indonesian counterparts (U.S. Officer 4, personal communication, August 8, 2018). They also learned about Indonesian culture and military traditions (U.S. Officer 9, personal communication, August 8, 2018). They played fireballs, one of Indonesia's traditional games, and participated in the martial arts demonstration.⁸

Similarly, the Indonesian soldiers were introduced to American military tradition, such as drinking from a boot, commemorating fallen comrades. These knowledge and cultural exchanges nurtured a conducive environment for interaction. The American participants acknowledged that their Indonesian counterparts were friendly and accommodative (U.S.

⁸ Observation on the Garuda Shield, Situbondo, 5 August 2018. The author was given access to observe the conduct of Garuda Shield in August 2018.

Officer 5, personal communication, August 4, 2018). Thus, the engagement between participants in the bilateral exercise was identified as both positive and responsive (U.S. Officer 8, personal communication, August 9, 2018).

Differences: Sharp Knife vs Garuda Shield

There are several ways in which the dynamics in the Sharp Knife is distinct from the Garuda Shield (See Table. 1). First, in terms of the participants, the bilateral exercises were partaken by army personnel from Indonesia and China for the first two years until 2012 (Indonesia, 2012). The Indonesian Air Force personnel later participated in it until 2014 (Chinese, 2014). In contrast, GS has been limited to the participation of Indonesian and American Army soldiers. Therefore, the Indonesian organiser of the Sharp Knife exercise was the TNI headquarters (Indonesian Officer 17, personal communication, February 13, 2019), while the Indonesian Army headquarters convene the Garuda Shield. The difference in participants, however, had not limited Indonesia's defence diplomacy. It created more opportunities for interaction between the Indonesian and Chinese soldiers.

The second difference between Sharp Knife and Garuda Shield concerns the venue chosen for the exercise. The Sharp Knife was alternately conducted in Indonesia and China, where the inaugural exercise took place in Batujajar, Indonesia, while the second was held in Jinan, China. The third Sharp Knife exercise was also organised in Indonesia. Moreover, the fourth exercise, which became the last exercise, took place in China (Chinese, 2014). Meanwhile, the U.S.-Indonesia bilateral exercise, GS, was strictly convened in Indonesia. Therefore, SK allowed Indonesian soldiers to promote their culture, including military aspects, to a broader audience in China. Furthermore, changing training venues facilitated stronger

people to people contact, which contributed to building trust between participants and also with the local communities, that are important for Indonesia's defence diplomacy.

The third dissimilarity concerns the used language. SK initially employed English as a means of communication in the planning phase (Indonesian Officer 16, personal communication, February 18, 2019). Nevertheless, the actual exercises used both Indonesian and Mandarin (Indonesian Officer 12, January 23, 2019). This practice was unique as Indonesian officers attending military education in China had to use English instead of Mandarin (M. Asmi, personal communication, February 1, 2019). The use of three different languages in the exercise also indicates its distinction from the Garuda Shield.

Additionally, the adopted theme in the exercise underlines another difference between both exercises. SK focused on counter-terrorism, which involved special forces units (Cordesman & Lin, 2015, p. 343). This is dissimilar to GS, which has initially focused on peace support operations. In several years, GS has also used airborne operations and land operations as the main theme for the bilateral exercises, which involve major military equipment, such as attack helicopters and infantry fighting vehicles.

Therefore, the numbers of participants between both exercises are also significantly different. SK involved lesser personnel compared to GS since it was organised as a joint exercise between small elite military units, involving 50-80 counter-terrorism military operators from the two participating countries. While, GS has involved more soldiers up to 700 personnel from both the Indonesian and American militaries.

Table 1. Comparison between Garuda Shield and Sharp Knife

Joint Exercise	Garuda Shield	Sharp Knife
Partner Country	United States	China
Period	2007-current	2011-2014
Frequency	Annual	Annual
Service	Army	Army, Air Force
Venue	Indonesia	Indonesia, China
Language	English, Indonesia	English, Indonesia, Mandarin

Theme	Peacekeeping Operations, Airborne Operations, Land Operations	Counter-Terrorism
Significance	Involves major military equipment (attack helicopters, infantry fighting vehicles)	Sensitive subject
Number of Participants	150-700	50-80

Source: Created by author, 8 May 2020.

The difference between SK and GS, however, has enabled Indonesia to implement its defence diplomacy in a broader context as each has required the employment of different forces from the Indonesian military.

Findings: Indonesia's Defence Diplomacy

The Four Motives

This article identifies four potential motives which have supported different administrations over the employment of joint exercises as Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities. The first motive is the strategic engagement (Cottey & Forster, 2004, Chapter 1). Defence diplomacy is acknowledged as a wider strategy to help bolster existing military and foreign policy practices (Cottey & Forster, 2004, p. 77), which can enable this strategic engagement. Hence, as key defence diplomacy activities, joint exercises facilitate interaction with foreign militaries, which contributes to strategic engagement. Strong relations between militaries help enhance the connections between nations. The examination of the two exercises signifies their importance for Indonesia's strategic engagement, particularly the major powers, the United States and China.

The second motive is the Confidence Building Measures. Indonesian defence scholars highlight the importance of CBMs for Indonesia's defence diplomacy (Gindarsah, 2016, p. 338). CBMs aims to prevent conflict or any escalating tension between countries (Blake, 2016, p. 18). This is closely connected to the objectives of defence diplomacy in building confidence,

reducing mistrust, addressing shared security interests, and changing strategic relations between countries (Baldino & Carr, 2016). The two bilateral exercises have fostered people-to-people connections and promoted cultural exchanges between the two militaries and nations, which helps Indonesia to promote its values and identity in the eyes of major powers.

Bilateral joint exercises are useful in facilitating CBMs between participants since they produce stronger CBMs. From a political-military perspective, a bilateral exercise like SK indicates a high level of trust-building since it involves special forces units from the two countries. GS even contributes to a higher trust-building level by allowing larger military units to operate together in the military exercises. The interactions in both exercises refine trust building, which is essential for CBMs.

Third, is capacity building. Many developing countries in South East Asia, including Indonesia, have placed capacity building as a motivation for their defence diplomacy (Wesley, 2011). Through joint exercises, TNI personnel can learn new doctrines and tactics. They can also exchange their knowledge and experience with their international counterparts. This exchange contributes to increasing their overall military capacities and capabilities.

GS helps TNI refine its peacekeeping capabilities. Additionally, TNI personnel can enhance their understanding of U.S. military doctrines and tactics, which has educated them regarding the complexity of future interoperability with partner militaries. Meanwhile, SK has refined the counterterrorism skills for the Indonesian Special Operations units. Additionally, the Indonesian soldiers learned more about their Chinese counterparts' military skills and capabilities (Indonesian Officer 14, personal communication, February 22, 2019; Indonesian Officer 15, personal communication, March 28, 2019; Indonesian Officer 12, personal communication, January 23, 2019; Indonesian Officer 13, personal communication, February 14, 2019; Indonesian Officer 10, personal communication, February 15, 2019; Indonesian

Officer 11, personal communication, February 16, 2019; Indonesian Officer 16, personal communication, February 18, 2019).

Furthermore, the fourth motive is international reputation. In international relations, reputation has been used to determine the competence of potential partners or rivals (Crescenzi, 2018, p. 59). Some countries, such as the United Kingdom, articulate international reputation as a global influence when pursuing their National Security Objectives. A positive reputation will attract positive responses from other countries, which may contribute to cooperation instead of conflict (Crescenzi, 2018, p. 79). Indonesia's poor reputation in the early phase of the Post-New Order period has encouraged Yudhoyono to play a more active role in the context of foreign policy (Fitriani, 2015). Hence, joint exercises help build Indonesia's international reputation, which includes introducing Indonesian military traditions and cultures.

In GS, TNI personnel introduce local dances and martial arts to their American counterparts. They also attempt to show their best performance, which receives a positive impression from these American soldiers. Similarly, in SK, TNI personnel exhibit traditional dance and martial arts performances, which allows their Chinese counterparts to learn about Indonesian culture. Indonesian soldiers also demonstrate their unmatched rapid shooting skills, which exceed those of their Chinese peers (Indonesian Officer 13, personal communication, February 14, 2019). Additionally, with the opportunity to visit China, TNI personnel could interact and promote Indonesia to the local population nearby the training area.

The Two Key Factors

As discussed in the earlier sections, Indonesia has managed to establish bilateral joint exercises with the major powers, the U.S. and China. These two exercises have become important Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities since the countries are now the two strongest militaries in the world. In the Post-New Order period, Indonesia has increasingly used bilateral

exercises to engage with these major powers. However, different administrations have adopted different approaches regarding these exercises. These differences result from dissimilar influences asserted by the top national leaders. Hence, this article observes two key factors which have impacted on the development of Indonesia's defence diplomacy in the context of bilateral exercises. First, is the major powers rivalry. And the second factor is the role of top national leaders.

The Major Powers Rivalry

The Sino-U.S. rivalry is critical for the Southeast Asian countries. This includes Indonesia (Fels, 2016, pp. 1-2). Despite its relations with other major powers, Indonesia's relations with the U.S. and China have become the most important ones for its interests (Laksmiana, 2017, p. 124). Hence, major powers rivalry between the U.S. and China, has become one of the significant factors which stimulated Indonesia in enhancing its defence diplomacy. Bilateral exercises, such as Garuda Shield and Sharp Knife, have helped interact with the two major powers. GS was established in 2007. It has facilitated strategic engagement with the U.S. (U.S. Officer 1, personal communication, August 9, 2018). SK was initiated in 2011. Despite its discontinuation, the exercise had enabled Indonesia to engage with China strategically.

Since GS has become the largest bilateral exercise for the Indonesian Army, Indonesia decided to continue it. Recently, the U.S. and Indonesian Armies held the joint exercise to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic ties. Differently, Indonesia had discontinued SK (S. Sjamsoeddin, personal communication, January 23, 2019). Several incidents in the Natuna Islands triggered this discontinuation where General Gatot Nurmantyo decided to suspend the exercise.

In summary, both exercises have established good relations between Indonesia and the two major powers' militaries. In the context of the complicated relationship between the U.S.

and China, leaning to one side is not an option for Indonesia (Sukma, 2012; Anwar, 2020). This principle is also essential in developing Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities of joint exercises. Despite the termination of SK, the successful relations between militaries as demonstrated in the two joint exercises, can help build the foundation to enhance cooperation with other nations (Ebitz, 2019). Therefore, the use of bilateral exercises to engage with the U.S. and China is critical in enhancing the implementation of Indonesia's defence diplomacy at the operational level.

Influence of Top National Leaders

The critical role of a national leader is important in the context of joint exercises. In the Post-New Order period, the significant rise of joint exercises has mainly occurred in both Yudhoyono and Widodo administrations. Yudhoyono adopted 'a million friends and zero enemies' foreign policy. He formulated this policy to engage with the major powers and strengthen Indonesia's deterrence against any potential aggression. When taking office, Yudhoyono inherited a poor international reputation of his country. Therefore, he envisioned to improve Indonesia's foreign policy where his country could play a global role, including in diplomacy, as part of his grand strategy (Fionna, Negara & Simandjuntak, 2018). Yudhoyono's policy influenced how the Defence Ministry and TNI engaging with their international partners, which included joint exercises.

Starting his presidential term, Yudhoyono could approach the U.S. in recontinuing the IMET programme for TNI. The U.S. government officially lifted the IMET ban in 2005. This good start helped Yudhoyono administration in organising the inaugural GS, an annual bilateral exercise between the Indonesian and the US Armies, in 2007. Similarly, his administration also created SK, an annual bilateral exercise with the Chinese military. As a former military general, Yudhoyono understood well the importance of defence diplomacy, where he often gave

technical directives to the Defence Ministry and TNI. This practice exhibits his influence as a national leader in driving the implementation of Indonesia's defence diplomacy in engaging with the major powers and other international partners.

Continuing Yudhoyono's policy, the Widodo government has managed to sustain the Garuda Shield. Recently, the US and Indonesian Armies organised GS in East Java, Indonesia, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic ties. Despite the continuation of GS, the Widodo government suspended SK following several tensions around the Natuna Islands.

Widodo has adopted a different policy to his predecessor, Yudhoyono, in dealing with incidents involving China concerning the Natuna Islands. While Yudhoyono settled the issue between Jakarta and Beijing quietly, Widodo prefers to employ a harsher policy that has made the Sino-Indonesia dispute public. His administration has demonstrated a more assertive military role in safeguarding Indonesia's sovereignty and territorial integrity when responding to the South China Sea dispute. In early 2016, three consecutive incidents occurred between Chinese fishing vessels and Indonesian patrol boats. Indonesia's response was to deploy several Indonesian military warships to act against Chinese fishing vessels operating in its territory near the Natuna Islands. Widodo's hard-line approach was referred by the Indonesian Military Chief General Gatot, who later decided to suspend joint exercises with the Chinese military.

Notwithstanding the increase of joint exercises in his administration, Widodo has demonstrated a softer influence on the implementation of Indonesia's defence diplomacy. Regarding SK termination, he exerted an indirect influence over TNI. Therefore, the influences exhibited by Yudhoyono and Widodo, as the Indonesian Presidents, confirm that the role of national leaders is critical in determining the development of joint exercises, which are among Indonesia's key defence diplomacy activities.

Conclusion

The article examines how Indonesia has developed its defence diplomacy activities in the Post-New Order period, by comparing two bilateral joint exercises with the major power countries, the Garuda Shield and Sharp Knife. Based on this examination, the article observes four motives for Indonesia's defence diplomacy through joint exercises, which include strategic engagement, CBMs, capacity building, and international reputation. These motives have driven the development of Indonesia's defence diplomacy in this period. The identification of these motives supplements Gindarsah's (2016) argument on the importance of CBMs and military capability build up in the context of Indonesia's defence diplomacy.

Moreover, the article identifies major powers rivalry as a critical factor which has affected the development of Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities, regarding joint exercises. As explained in the previous sections, Indonesia has managed to engage with the U.S. and China militarily through the Garuda Shield and the Sharp Knife exercises, respectively. Each of these bilateral exercises has its own significance as explained in the previous discussion section and also visualised in the comparison table.

Hence, the article is in line with Sukma's (2012) and Anwar's (2020) arguments that Indonesia cannot take side in engaging with the two major powers, the U.S. and China. The article also supports Laksamana's (2017) argument on the presence of pragmatic interests which has driven Indonesia's engagement with the two major power countries.

Furthermore, the article finds that the role of national leaders has also contributed to the development of Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities of joint exercises. The creation of GS and SK in the Yudhoyono administration highlights the presence of critical influence of national leaders in driving Indonesia's defence diplomacy. Widodo administration's policy of continuing GS has also indicated an essential influence of national leaders in defence diplomacy. However, there is an exceptional case in the first term of Widodo administration

where the Indonesian Military Chief, General Gatot, suspended SK following rising tensions around the Natuna Islands, as he referred to Widodo's policy in safeguarding Indonesia's territorial integrity and sovereignty in the disputed area.

In conclusion, the article concludes that the combination of the four motives as well as the two factors of the major powers rivalry and the role of national leaders have driven the development of joint exercises as Indonesia's defence diplomacy activities in the Post-New Order era. In fact, both the major powers rivalry and the role of national leaders have also affected the different practices of Indonesia's defence diplomacy, as exhibited in the case of joint exercises.

As President Widodo has just begun his second presidential term, it is likely that the administration will need to revise and formulate its defence policy, including Indonesia's defence diplomacy. Both the identified factors in this article, are important in guiding the Indonesian Defence Ministry and TNI in finalising the revision and formulation process to sustain Indonesia's defence diplomacy amidst the current trade war and rivalry between the U.S. and China.

Despite the constraint of this article in exploring a comparable examination of the two bilateral exercises due to the limited access, the article has offered a unique empirical analysis on joint exercises as defence diplomacy activities, in the context of the Indonesian case study. Since the topic has rarely been studied before, the article provides a new insight and alternate avenue of approach to further examine how a country has developed its bilateral military exercises to engage with the major power militaries and countries.

In fact, past studies on Indonesia's bilateral defence diplomacy only include joint exercises as a descriptive instrument to support the argument without exploring more on the joint exercises themselves. Those studies exclude the dynamics and how the interactions take place in the joint exercises as defence diplomacy activities. Therefore, the article provides an

empirical analysis of bilateral joint exercises by combining interviews with participants of the two exercises and observation on the Garuda Shield exercise in 2018.

With the significance of its finding, the study in this article can be used for a further comparison between the Southeast Asian countries regarding their bilateral joint exercises with the U.S. and China in a future publication. Moreover, the study can be also used to develop a future research on how a country develops both bilateral and multilateral joint exercises to support its defence diplomacy since the multilateral aspect of joint exercises has not been included in the observation of this article.

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‘Garuda Shield’ vs ‘Sharp Knife’: Operationalising Indonesia’s Defence Diplomacy

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