

# Concentric circle approach to defence and foreign policy politics essay



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Security perspective after Cold War has changed tremendously. Not only that state has to deal with external military aggression, it also has to go through overwhelming challenges of non-traditional security issues. Among the issues are terrorism, ethnic conflict, sea piracy, smuggling of illegal weapon and drug trafficking[1]. In this case, Indonesia is not an exceptional.

Although Indonesia has been cautious to any action taken by any states within its geostrategic area since 1945 (after independent today), the concentration given by Indonesia government since mid-1990s is more on the non-traditional issues that impede state's domestic political stability, unity, territorial integrity and thus to its sovereignty. This is partly due to the region where it is located, that is (to a certain extent) stable and less prone to the state-to-state conflict. In this case, the traditional threat of aggression from other countries is very unlikely to happen in this region[2], its military preparedness has to be intact to overcome all mentioned non-traditional security issues that it is currently confront with[3]. For Indonesia, the dynamic shift of threat from non-taditional to traditional security may manifest themselves in the form of invasion or aggression from other countries[4]especially when considering the case of 9/11 terrorist attack and the reaction taken by United States and its allies in their mission on the global war on terror in Afghanistan as an instance.

Concious with the challenges that impede Indonesia lately particularly when we look at terrorist Bali bombing in 2002 and J. W. Marriott bombings in 2003[5], the twin-suicide bombing at the J. W Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in 2009, as well as its unresolve issues of armed separatist movement imposed by Free Papua Movement (OPM)[6], has made Indonesia aware that

if the government did not overcome such non-traditional security issues effectively, it would cause more political, economic and social instability than what Indonesia is currently facing with. Thus, in order to overcome such situations, Indonesia through its defence and foreign policy has been used as a guideline to maintain state's order as well as its national interest or national security.

The question is what is Indonesia's defence and foreign policy? How does Indonesia utilise its resources to overcome the traditional and the non-traditional security threat considering the challenges that it has to face especially when domestic instability is eminent. Apart from that, how does Indonesia synergise its defence and foreign policy to overcome the problem? What kind of approach that Indonesia use to preserve its own national interest? And what exactly is Indonesia national interest?

By considering its security threats this paper argues that i) on one hand, Indonesia mobilises or use its armed forces to tackle the problems that occur, in which the preservation of state's sovereignty and territorial integrity is its primary goal. ii) Indonesia, on the other hand utilises its foreign policy as a synergy in maintaining and achieving state's national interest through different type of strategies. iii) This paper will conclude that, as in the case of Indonesia; foreign and defence policy cannot be separated especially when discussing state's security perceptions and the strategy that it use to overcome it. In this case, state (Indonesia) uses its two statecrafts (state strategies) through the use of force as well as diplomacy as its major instrument in preserving and maitaining its national interest.

Therefore, this paper will highlight, first, Indonesia internal and external security threats. Second, Indonesia defence policy in addition to its strategic national interest and third, this paper will focus on its foreign policy and approach taken by Indonesia in synergising its defence and foreign policy as a method of preserving and maintaining its national interest.

## **2. 0 INDONESIA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY THREAT**

As the Republic of Indonesia enters the year of 2010, and celebrates its 65th Independence Day in August of the same year, it is evident that the security concern of the state will continue to be dominated by the same issues that it faced a decade ago. In fact the major concern of Indonesian government is unlikely from external threat of aggression rather their internal or domestic political instability. It was stated in the white paper issued in 2003 when Indonesian government acknowledged for the first time on the persistence of non-traditional security issues that occurs in the country[7].

A glance at Indonesia's security perceptions, internally; despite a relative improvement in the economic development as well as its political situation, Indonesia faces tremendous difficulty in overcoming at least three [3] key security issues or challenges: i) the threat of terrorism, ii) protracted secessionist movements, and iii) the return of communal violence.

Externally, the war on terrorism – both at the regional and global levels – continues to place Indonesia at the centre of regional and global attention. In this case, the nature of Indonesian government responses to the problem of terrorism, in which the government is constrained with its domestic

capabilities in pertaining to the communication network level and its locals' <https://assignbuster.com/concentric-circle-approach-to-defence-and-foreign-policy-politics-essay/>

sensitivity to curb terrorism within the country, is putting the Indonesian government in a state of strain particularly on its relations with the outside world; regionally - ASEAN as the whole, its close neighbour Australia as well the United States.

The security environment of Indonesia remains volatile since it retains independent status in 1945. In this case, the most security challenges faced by the government of Indonesia now remain the threat of terrorism[8]910. Being the world largest archipelago with the biggest Muslim and multicultural population in the world, Indonesia certainly has a multi-diverse complexity in maintaining order and security. In this particular context, terrorism has become the threat to the safety of the nation, even a threat to democracy and civil society[11]. Despite the successes of arresting and prosecuting hundreds of terrorism suspects, radical groups were still active in recruiting new members. Since the bombing of Toserba Ramayana, Jakarta on January 2nd 1999 until the twin-suicide bombing at the J. W Marriott and Ritz-Carlton hotels in 2009, terrorism threat in Indonesia has increased tremendously[12]. Ten years of receiving consistence terrorisation from the terrorist group, there has been a serious doubt, if not pessimism, in the country whether the government has the ability to find and deal with the impact in a swift and firm manner. The government faced a difficult task of balancing the need to crack down terrorist networks and the imperative of taking into account terrorist group activities[13].

Apart from terrorism, Indonesia at the same time faces major threats from armed separatist movement[14]. In fact, the armed separatist movements were not new to Indonesian government. As early as 1950s (during the <https://assignbuster.com/concentric-circle-approach-to-defence-and-foreign-policy-politics-essay/>

tenure of Sukarno until today; President Bambang Yudhoyono), the primary objective given by Indonesia government are still the same which is maintaining order at the domestic level especially to the case that derived from armed separatist movements which happened in East Timor[15](now Timor Leste), West Papua[16](still happening), and even in Aceh[17]province[18]19. In other words, its main task is safeguarding Indonesia's territorial integrity. Aside from territorial integrity comes national economic strategic interest and state's sovereignty. All these interest embedded in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution. Among others, State has to safeguard and protect the sovereignty of the state, territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia, the nation's safety and pride, and at the same time involve actively in efforts to create world peace[20].

Communal conflicts that happened in Maluku, South Sulawesi (Poso), in Kalimantan (Sanggau Ledo, Sampit, Sambas) was also considered as one of the major security threat facing by Indonesia from within[21]. So much so, it requires serious attention from the central government. Indonesia is a heterogeneous state. With a vast number of ethnic residing in a country as well as the geographical characteristic as an island nation; makes it easy for communal conflicts to occur. The issue that triggered the conflict was mainly due to a religious (Maluku and Poso, Sulawesi) and racial (West Kalimantan) background[22]. In fact, to some extent it was also triggered by an intergroup exclusivity and the socio-economic gap. According to Jones[23], in her report says, "...one of the things we see is how changing population balances among different ethnic and religious groups has led to certain kinds of tensions, often with one group feeling that it is under siege by another."

The loss caused by communal conflict is enormous; it causes waves of evacuation, tremendous suffering of people, casualties and large material loss. In fact, the biggest communal conflict is ruined national solidarity and the bond of unity as a nation.

Indonesia's external threat perceptions on the other hand remain shaped primarily by internal sources of instability and conflict and suspicious of involvement of foreign actors in those internal conflicts. Indonesia's elite, both civilian and military, continue to express concern over the possible involvement of foreign countries not only in the regional rebellions such as Aceh and Irian Jaya (Papua) but also in the spate of terrorist attacks across in the country, especially the Bali bombings. Some Indonesians believe that there is an international conspiracy (especially by the West) to undermine Indonesia's stability and security through the issue of terrorism[24]. Many also recent the fact the international community, especially the United States, has come to see Indonesia as a hotbed of terrorism. These sensitivities among government officials, political, community leaders, and the public at large have in turn brought about a degree of uneasiness for Indonesia in both its relationship with neighbouring countries in the regional war on terrorism and its relations with the United States[25].

### **3. 0 INDONESIA DEFENCE POLICY AND ITS STRATEGIC NATIONAL INTEREST**

In analysing Indonesia's defence policy and its strategic interest, this paper will highlight few important things. First, this paper will look at its defence policy, the nature of its national interest as well as its strategic interest in overcoming state's security challenges.

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The map of Indonesia. Source: <http://www.electricscotland.com/thomson/reflections10.htm>.

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The primary legal documents bearing on defence policy are the 1945 Constitution and the Defence Act (Law No. 20) of 1982[26]. Constituted under article 30 of the Constitution, it is stated clearly that the duty of the state government is to protect all Indonesians (citizens) in every aspect from any threat. The notion to protect Indonesia's citizens, however, is part and parcel of Indonesia's national interest that is; to safeguard and to protect the sovereignty of the state, the territorial integrity, the nation's safety as well as its pride[27]. The foci of Indonesia's defence and security are thus, represented in conventional term as a series of 'concentric circle' emanating from Jakarta. In providing a clear picture of this defence and security strategy, the main area that covers the most or 'hot area' of Indonesia's security is its land and maritime borders (stretching up to its Zone Economy Exclusive, ZEE).

The second circle, on the other hand covers the area of its neighbouring countries as well as the region where it is located. In this particular context, what ever happens in the region will directly or indirectly gives impact on the security aspect of Indonesia especially when it is located at one of the most important trade sea-lane that connect the West and the East; stretching from Indian Ocean to the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea. Thus, on account of its strategic position, it is important for Indonesian Armed Forces to maintain its national jurisdiction especially when almost all countries in the world rely heavily on Indonesia's stability and security as well as its self-

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defence capacity for its own national resilience[28]. In other words, the development of a strong and flexible state apparatus, political and social cohesion and a robust economic infrastructure which enables Indonesia to defend itself and contribute to the defence of the region.

Defence Act 1982, on the other hand provides a basic provisions of the defence and security of the Republic of Indonesia. It is a notable document that mentioned the social and political functions of Indonesian Armed Forces. Lowry[29]stated that;

“ The act states that national defence and security includes defence against both external and internal threats and that these threats may be directed against national freedom, sovereignty, national unity and solidarity, the integrity of the nation and national jurisdiction, and the values of the national ideology; Pancasila as well as the constitution. The Act also explained that the threat can be overcome by ‘ total people’s resistance within a system of total people’s defence (Sishankamrata). It was designed to marshal and mobilise the nation’s physical, moral and material resources.”

In order to attain the desired goals, Indonesia has highlighted few strategies. Among them are permanent strategic interest, urgent strategic interest and the international cooperation in defence which underlies in future strategic interest. All of these embedded in Indonesia’s Strategic Defence Interest[30]. The permanent strategic defence interest of Indonesia is the administration of defence to guard and protect the country’s sovereignty and the unity of Indonesia and the country’s honour from every threat, either from outside or

from inside of the country. In order to protect all these interests, it is important to be prepared to defend the country without regard for the argument as to whether or not a concrete threat exists. In carrying out permanent defence interest, Indonesia will always maintain a love for peace, independence and sovereignty. Thus, in resolving every conflicts and dispute, Indonesia's will always first put forward diplomatic efforts and the use of force will be mobilised if the diplomatic means fail. Therefore, the Indonesia chooses an active defensive strategy in its defences.

Indonesia's urgent strategic interest on the other hand is directed to overcome actual security issues, which action could undermine and distrust indonesia's sovereignty and unity. In line with this, there are few security threats that Indonesia has to overcome with. The security issues, nonetheless, are heavily concentrated on the non-traditional security issues that emerge within the country. This includes fighting and overcoming the international threat at home and abroad, overcome the disturbances of armed separatist movements, counter radicalism and solve communal conflicts, overcome international crime as well assisting the government in handling natural disaster or any humanitarian activity[31].

As part of the international community, Indonesia's pursue its third form of direct defence strategy based on international cooperation interest. In this case, Indonesia realise that other than the use of force as part of its statecraft strategy, Indonesia is committed to create a peace and good relations with other countries especially with its neighbour, the regional context and the world based on trust and cooperation. In fact, it cannot

release itself from any connection with the world in the effort to achieve its  
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desired goals. For Indonesia, this is the best strategy that could protect the nation from any external aggression especially in a form of state-to-state war. It is encapsulated as part of Indonesia's regional resilience. As a former secretary general of the Department of Defence and Security put it: "...we must defend further forward by befriending our neighbours and even by possessing the same threat perceptions" (Quoted in Lowry[32]). Recognising the limitations of its resources, Indonesia thus seeks a balance of interest rather than a balance of power[33]. In order to fulfil the requirement in upholding state's national interest, Indonesia defence policy has come out with a strategic defence in which it should ensure the accomplishment of its national interest and its international cooperation.

#### **4. 0 INDONESIA FOREIGN POLICY AND THE LINGKAGES TO ITS DEFENCE POLICY IN PRESERVING ITS NATIONAL INTEREST**

Although Indonesian government recognises and stressing oftenly on the need to maintain internal order or domestic political stability as well as territorial integrity as a primary objective for its defence strategy, this does not mean that other form of strategy is neglected. Indonesia, like other country in the world, pursue diplomatic statecraft as its first agenda especially at the international level. In this case, Indonesia apply active defensive approach or as what Lowry[34]coined as forward defence. As its defence policy, Indonesia's foreign policy is also uniquely influenced by its domestic events.

Indonesia's foreign and defence policy has always been a reflection of the beliefs and the actions of policymakers who are influenced, in varying

degrees and ways by the society and the international system in which it operates. Although Indonesia has witnessed different kind of leadership and approach that has been taken on its foreign policy, there has been no major changes being made by the Indonesian leaders except for some concentrations at the substantial issues like, the issuance of stabilising political order and combating terrorism by President Megawati and diliberating and extending economic resilience during the tenure of Abdul Rahman Awahid and B. J. Habibie. All of these could be said as the extraneous variables that has influnced Indonesia's foreign policy. Over all, the domestic imperatives such as commitment on the need to stabilise domestic politics, to preserve state's territorial integrity and sovereignty as well to maintain state's economic development has dominantly influence Indonesia foreign policy until today. What kind of approach that has been taken is rather different from one leader to another.

As mentioned ealier, Indonesia foreign policy is a synergy to Indonesia's defence policy. In this case, it requires extensive participation at the regional level as well as at the global level. For instance, under the tenure of President Bambang Yudhoyono, Indonesia is currently focusing on a new foreign policy outlook claimed as securing " Thousand friends and Zero Enemies"[35]. Under this policy Indonesia is moving towards attaining and trying to emerge as a responsible power (Middle Power) in the Southeast Asia region. It is carefully articulated as to improve relations with every nation in the region through bilateral and multilateral means. This includes promoting justice and order at the international arena, better investment policy for economic development, democracy and consolidation in regional

integration as well as maintaining national unity. All of these strategies are important for Indonesia as one of the method that could improve Indonesia's image at the international fora especially against all allegations of human rights abuses conducted against armed separatist movements in Aceh and Papua. For that, Indonesia is pursuing an active and independent approach[36]37

The necessity in conducting its foreign policy in constructivist approach is to denotes the ability to turn adversary into friend and to turn friend into partner. All of these are important as to provide a conducive environment in the region for the better future development based on trust, confidence building[38]. With such situation, all disputes and conflicts could be settle at the table of discussion through a diplomatic approach rather than aggressiveness. In this case, Indonesia will therefore not to use its forces as a method of finding solution. To prove this kind of things as important as it is, Indonesia, as of to this date, has not engaged in any military alliance with a foreign policy especially in securing its own capacity to influence world order or international relations. For that, Indonesia advocates that all Southeast Asian states develop their full economic, political and social potential while cooperating extensively with each other. This is the hope that could boster external aggression or challenges. At one level, this could be a security buffer for Indonesia if the region could be persuaded to act in unison to thwart the incursion of hegemonic influence. However, no other nations are enthusiastic to serve as security buffer for Indonesia[39].

Indonesia's contributions to international security remain limited and focused on the regional level, especially in the war against terrorism. Indonesia has signed a number of antiterrorism agreements with some regional states. The <https://assignbuster.com/concentric-circle-approach-to-defence-and-foreign-policy-politics-essay/>

Bali bombings and the Marriott bombing have not persuaded Jakarta to publicly-support the involvement of external powers in regional problems in which Indonesia continues to prefer regional solutions to regional problems.

Apart from that, Indonesia's foreign policy goal is to emerge as a responsible power in the Southeast Asian region. It is a unique amalgamation of the two schools of thought and policy of adaptation to the changing geopolitical and geostrategic compulsions. Being the world largest archipelago with the biggest Muslim population is again trying to gain leadership position in the region through a constructive and cooperative gestures and balanced bargaining between major powers. In fact, Indonesia's foreign policy is based upon a number of cherished principles that reflect the country's sense of national identity, how it wishes to protect and pursue its national interests vis-à-vis other countries, and the shape of the desirable world order. On 19 September 1999, President B. J. Habibie signed Act no. 37 of 1999 on Foreign Relations, which was actually the first such Act on foreign policy, signed since trigger Indonesia's independence. This Act formally stipulates key principles of Indonesia's foreign policy that had been practiced for most of the country's existence.

In that context, Indonesia consistently expresses the hope that the ASEAN will continue to serve as the main vehicle for regional countries to cope with security challenges in the region, especially non-traditional threats such as terrorism. During the 2003, ASEAN Summit in Bali, Indonesia obtained agreement from other ASEAN members to transform the organisation into a security community by 2020. Indonesia has also called for an increase in

intra-ASEAN maritime cooperation to provide more and more security aspect of the region as well as to its own country.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

Being the world largest archipelago with the biggest Muslim and multicultural population, Indonesia is trying it best to play a leadership role and at the same time struggling to maintain order mainly from its domestic instability as well as external security threats. Overseeing its defence, security as well as its foreign relations has proven 'complex' in sense considering its size, location, economic underdevelopment, geographical fragmentation and ethnic and religious diversity. However, since its Independence, Indonesian leaders have managed to manoeuvre the state and provide cohesion and national identity under a unitary state.

Looking at its foreign affairs, Indonesia has become a major political force in Southeast Asia. With its power resources mainly from its population, huge area of territory, vast number of natural resources and its potential market makes it important at the international arena especially in the region of rapid economic growth. Indonesia has taken a traditional-middle power role or approach in encouraging continued US engagement in the region as a stabilising force during the current period of transition (referring to Indonesia's domestic politics from 'guided democracy with vast amount of military involvement in the administration to civilian control). Moreover, the encouragement is also due to the fact of uncertainty especially with the rising of China's power in the future regional order. Nonetheless, it also need China to participate into the regional community is some form of cooperative

or common security arrangement to prevent the formation of competing power blocs.

Indonesia sought to change the pattern of its external relations. The pattern usually occurred in terms of partnership as well the type of activity that it involves. At home, Indonesia's traditional defence strategy has been one of national self-reliance based on total people's defence with the armed force as the core of the nation's arms. However, there are some challenges that it has to overcome with. Indonesia in this case acknowledged that their major difficulties are to cope with the vast number of islands as well as with the vast number of ethnic residing in the country. All of these could be tackled through an active participation from the population to help maintain order. However, globalisation is somehow another and big challenge to Indonesia as more and more population becoming more political democratic, appreciate interdependence economic development based on open market, there is no way that it could avoid for the population to become more individualistic than ever. It has somehow deteriorating the nationalism of the population.

## **ENDNOTES**