



Original Article

INDONESIA'S ATTITUDE IN FACING THE SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT, POLICY ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Background. The South China Sea conflict is one of the complex and challenging geopolitical issues in the Southeast Asia region. This study aimed to analyze Indonesia's attitude in dealing with this conflict, with a focus on foreign policy and its implications for regional stability.

Research Method. This research uses a type of legal research that is normative in nature (normative legal research) and through a foreign policy analysis approach.

Findings. The factors are diplomacy and negotiation policy, Indonesia's role in ASEAN, efforts to strengthen maritime cooperation, external actor involvement, the need for a just and sustainable settlement, impact on regional stability, and protection of national maritime interests that influence Indonesia's attitudes and the strategies taken by the Indonesian government in managing this conflict. The impact of Indonesia's attitude towards political and security dynamics in the Southeast Asia region.

Conclusion. Indonesia has an important strategic role to play in addressing the South China Sea conflict as the largest maritime nation in Southeast Asia. Indonesia's presence in regional diplomacy and efforts to mediate the conflict are key to achieving a sustainable solution.

Keywords: Conflict, Indonesia, South China Sea.

BACKGROUND

The importance of the South China Sea as a strategic maritime route and the complexity of conflicts that occur in the region[1]. The South China Sea is a strategic region that is at the center of conflict between several countries in Southeast Asia. The conflict involves disputes over maritime territorial claims, natural resources, and navigation rights in the region. The complexity of this conflict has increased with overlapping claims between several countries such as China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. In this context, Indonesia's stance plays an important role as the largest maritime country in Southeast Asia[2]. Indonesia has a strategic interest in maintaining stability and security in the region, as well as managing the South China Sea conflict peacefully and sustainably.

Indonesia's stance in dealing with the South China Sea conflict is reflected in the foreign policy taken by the government. Indonesia has prioritized diplomacy as the main approach to resolving this conflict. Through active participation in regional forums such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Indonesia seeks to facilitate

dialogue between the countries involved to reach a fair and sustainable settlement[3]. Indonesia is also strengthening maritime cooperation with other countries in the region, including in terms of water surveillance and maritime capacity building.

This policy shows Indonesia's commitment to strengthening its presence and active role in maintaining regional stability in the South China Sea. The implications of Indonesia's stance based on diplomacy and regional cooperation have important implications for stability and security in the Southeast Asian region. By maintaining a peaceful and dialog approach, Indonesia can be an effective mediator in managing the South China Sea conflict and preventing conflict escalation that has the potential to harm all countries in the region[4].

Strengthening maritime cooperation also has a positive impact on strengthening the capacity of countries in the region to address maritime security challenges, including the threat of conflict in the South China Sea[2, 5]. As such, Indonesia's stance not only influences political dynamics at the regional level but also contributes to broader stability and peace in Southeast Asia.

The problems that arise related to Indonesia's attitude in dealing with the South China Sea conflict include several aspects that need to be analyzed in depth, the existence of overlapping maritime territory claims between various countries that have tried to claim their status, namely China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. This will certainly create potential conflicts over natural resources, navigation rights, and territorial sovereignty, which could threaten regional stability. Tension Escalation and Potential Armed Conflict can occur, if tensions continue to occur and escalate in the South China Sea, increasing the risk of armed conflict between the countries involved. This threat can trigger a regional security crisis and disrupt the geopolitical balance in the Southeast Asian region. The involvement of external factors such as the United States, which has strategic interests in the Asia Pacific region, is also a factor that further complicates the dynamics of the South China Sea conflict. Interference from these external actors can strengthen confrontation between the countries involved and worsen the current conflict situation. This study aimed to analyze Indonesia's attitude in dealing with this conflict, with a focus on foreign policy and its implications for regional stability.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is a valuable method in political analysis as it allows researchers to gain in-depth insights and understanding of political phenomena. This approach involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as interviews, observation, and document analysis, to examine the complexities and nuances of political processes, actors, and interactions[6]. By utilizing qualitative research methods in political analysis, researchers can explore the underlying meanings, motivations, and social dynamics that shape political behavior and decision-making. This qualitative approach is particularly useful in studying topics such as political ideologies, public opinion, social movements, and policy processes. By using qualitative research methods in political analysis, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the complexities and nuances of political phenomena.

FINDINGS

These findings will be about Indonesia's attitude in dealing with the South China Sea conflict and several aspects must be considered in the conflict, which are:

a. Diplomacy and Negotiation Policy

An analysis of the diplomatic approach taken by Indonesia in addressing the South China Sea conflict, including participation in regional forums such as ASEAN. An evaluation of Indonesia's negotiation efforts to achieve a just and sustainable settlement to the South China Sea conflict;

b. Indonesia's role in ASEAN

Indonesia's role as a member of ASEAN in facilitating dialog between ASEAN member states and China regarding the South China Sea conflict. Analyze Indonesia's role in influencing ASEAN political dynamics in dealing with the conflict issue;

c. Efforts to Strengthen Maritime Cooperation

Evaluation of Indonesia's policies in strengthening maritime cooperation with other countries in the region, including in terms of territorial waters surveillance and maritime capacity building, discussion of the impact of efforts to strengthen maritime cooperation on handling the South China Sea conflict and regional stability;

d. External Actor Involvement

Analyze the impact of the involvement of external actors such as the United States and other countries in the dynamics of the South China Sea conflict. Evaluation of Indonesia's strategy in responding to the interference of external actors and maintaining the balance of regional interests;

e. The Need for a Just and Sustainable Settlement;

The importance of achieving a just and sustainable settlement in the South China Sea conflict and Indonesia's efforts in supporting the process. Analysis of the challenges and obstacles faced in achieving a satisfactory settlement for all parties involved; and

f. Impact on Regional Stability

Discussion of the implications of Indonesia's stance on regional stability and security in the Southeast Asian region. Evaluation of the effectiveness of Indonesia's policies in mitigating the risks of the South China Sea conflict and maintaining peace in the region. By exploring and analyzing these aspects, the discussion can provide a deep insight into Indonesia's stance on the South China Sea conflict and its implications for regional dynamics.

g. Protection of National Maritime Interests

An analysis of the concrete steps taken by Indonesia to protect and defend its national maritime interests in the South China Sea, including maritime law enforcement and territorial waters surveillance. Evaluation of Indonesia's success in maintaining its maritime sovereignty and protecting navigation rights in the South China Sea region.

DISCUSSIONS

The need for a just and sustainable settlement is critical to achieving a just and sustainable settlement in the South China Sea conflict will be a challenge. It involves the complexities of multilateral diplomacy and negotiations between the countries involved and requires a strong commitment from all parties to the conflict to reach an agreement that is acceptable to all. In dealing with the South China Sea conflict, Indonesia is also faced with the need to strengthen its national maritime capacity[7]. This includes

improving the ability to monitor territorial waters, enforce maritime law, and protect national maritime interests in the South China Sea. ASEAN's role in handling the conflict and as the main regional forum in Southeast Asia, ASEAN also has an important role in handling the South China Sea conflict. However, the challenges in achieving consensus among its members and the complexity of ASEAN's internal political dynamics are problems in resolving of the South China Sea conflict. An in-depth analysis of these issues is important to understand the challenges faced by Indonesia in dealing with the South China Sea conflict and formulate an effective strategy to deal with the conflict peacefully and sustainably[8].

Indonesia's stance in dealing with the South China Sea conflict is reflected in the foreign policy taken by the government[9]. Indonesia has prioritized diplomacy as the main approach to resolving this conflict. Through active participation in regional forums such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), Indonesia seeks to facilitate dialogue between the countries involved to reach a fair and sustainable settlement. In addition, Indonesia also strengthens maritime cooperation with other countries in the region, including in terms of territorial waters surveillance and maritime capacity building[10]. This policy shows Indonesia's commitment to strengthening its presence and active role in maintaining regional stability in the South China Sea. Indonesia's stance based on diplomacy and regional cooperation has important implications for stability and security in the Southeast Asian region. By maintaining a peaceful and dialog approach, Indonesia can be an effective mediator in managing the South China Sea conflict and preventing conflict escalation that has the potential to harm all countries in the region. Strengthening maritime cooperation also has a positive impact on strengthening the capacity of countries in the region to address maritime security challenges, including the threat of conflict in the South China Sea[11]. Thus, Indonesia's stance not only influences political dynamics at the regional level but also contributes to broader stability and peace in Southeast Asia. In this context, policy analysis and its implications for regional dynamics are important to understand Indonesia's role in dealing with the South China Sea conflict and strengthening its position as a maritime country that plays an active role in maintaining peace and security in the Southeast Asian region.

The existence of non-state roles in conflict resolution such as international institutions, non-governmental organizations, and independent experts in helping to resolve the South China Sea conflict, then an evaluation of the contributions and limitations of non-state roles in facilitating dialogue, promoting peace, and creating sustainable solutions[12, 13]. Strategies that can be adopted by Indonesia to deal with the South China Sea conflict in the future, include concrete steps in increasing the role of diplomacy, strengthening maritime capacity, and strengthening regional cooperation. The formulation of recommendations for Indonesian government policies in managing the South China Sea conflict effectively and sustainably, then is more emphasized on regional and international cooperation. The prospect of regional and international cooperation in resolving the South China Sea conflict can encourage peace and security in the region.

When linked to Indonesia's active role in promoting cooperation and dialogue between countries involved in the conflict as well as efforts to build trust and reduce tensions in the South China Sea, a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the South China Sea conflict and Indonesia's role in responding to these challenges to achieve regional stability and security can be obtained [14].

The contribution of this research that suggestion to Indonesia in dealing with the South China Sea conflict is as follows:

1. **Strengthening Multilateral Diplomacy:** Indonesia needs to continue to strengthen its multilateral diplomacy, particularly through an active role in regional forums such as ASEAN. This includes facilitating dialogue between the countries involved and encouraging closer cooperation in addressing conflict issues.
2. **Strengthening Maritime Cooperation:** Indonesia can enhance maritime cooperation with neighboring countries in the form of joint patrols, information exchange, and capacity building. This will help strengthen maritime security in the region and support efforts to maintain stability in the South China Sea.
3. **Strengthening National Maritime Capacity:** Investments in national maritime capacity building, including the development of infrastructure, technology, and personnel, will assist Indonesia in maintaining its territorial waters sovereignty and protecting national maritime interests in the South China Sea.
4. **Strengthening Strategic Partnerships:** Indonesia can strengthen strategic partnerships with other countries that have similar interests in maintaining stability in the South China Sea. This includes partnerships with ASEAN countries, ASEAN dialogue partners such as China, as well as countries outside the region that have strategic interests in Southeast Asia.
5. **Promoting International Law:** Indonesia can continue to promote the principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as the basis for resolving the South China Sea conflict. Supporting conflict resolution based on international law can strengthen legitimacy and justice.
6. **Encouraging Dialogue and Reconciliation:** Indonesia can serve as an active mediator in promoting dialogue and reconciliation between the countries involved in the South China Sea conflict. These efforts can help create effective channels of communication and promote peaceful resolution of disputes.
7. **By implementing these suggestions,** Indonesia can strengthen its role and contribution to maintaining stability and peace in the Southeast Asian region, as well as play a more active role in effectively and sustainably addressing the South China Sea conflict.

Recommendations for the Future will be to face the challenges and capitalize on future opportunities, several recommendations can be put forward. These include enhancing maritime cooperation with neighboring countries, strengthening multilateral diplomacy, and building strategic partnerships with regional and international actors.

CONCLUSION

Indonesia's approach to the South China Sea conflict is strategic, as it is the largest maritime nation in Southeast Asia. It has a diplomatic and cooperation approach, actively participating in forums like ASEAN to facilitate dialogue. Strengthening Indonesia's maritime capacity has positively impacted its position in dealing with the conflict, allowing it to monitor territorial waters and enforce maritime law. However, challenges such as escalating tensions, overlapping territorial claims, and external actors remain. Opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and reinforce diplomacy remain, but challenges such as escalating tensions and overlapping territorial claims remain.

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