

Hedging Against Giants: Indonesia's Strategy towards India and China in the Indian Ocean

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Abstract

China's growing military and economic influence in the Indian Ocean has posed security challenges to India as a regional power in the region. As the two countries are competing over hegemony in the ocean, tensions grow and unavoidably create security uncertainties between countries in the region. Located strategically along major sea lanes connecting East Asia and South Asia, Indonesia has a strong interest in keeping the Indian Ocean safe and secure. However, the enduring India-China rivalry in the Indian Ocean has posed a threat not only to the Indonesia's interest, but also the regional peace and security. This article analyzes how Indonesia as a middle power responds to these security uncertainties through hedging. This strategy is primarily aimed at mitigating risks Indonesia faces amid escalating tensions in the Indian Ocean. It is also geared towards avoiding conflict with target states —India and China. The article opens with an overview of the dynamics of India-China rivalry in the Indian Ocean. It then examines Indonesia's hedging strategy towards India and China. It argues that Indonesia prefers to strengthen bilateral relations with India and China through increased cooperation in the maritime sector as part of this strategy. It demonstrates that while the Indonesia-India's increased maritime cooperation is forged in the area of defense and security, Indonesia enhances engagement with China in the area of economic and infrastructure development.

Keywords:

Hedging, Indonesia, Indian Ocean, India-China rivalry, Middle power

INTRODUCTION

As a country with the largest archipelago in the world located at the intersection of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia has an important role in the maritime sector to open up opportunities for cooperation with other countries in the region (Mubah, 2019a). Its position in the Indo-Pacific region is very strategic because

Indonesia is home to Sea Line of Communications (SLOCs), which is the Indo-Pacific Sea communication lines in which there are abundant valuable energy resources such as oil, gas, and coal (Agastia and Perwita, 2016). Indonesia currently has ambitions to become a Global Maritime Fulcrum. The Global Maritime Fulcrum is Indonesia's strategic vision aimed at making the country an archipelagic state with strong maritime power, maximizing the potential of its maritime resources. Similarly, India and China are also eager to make their maritime one of the important aspects of their national

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interests (Pattiradjawane and Soebagjo, 2015).

Indonesia and India strengthen strategic partnerships in various important fields such as defense, security, and maritime affairs. India is eager to support the development of Indonesia's military and defense industries as well as to enhance maritime security to protect its interests at regional and global levels. In addition, India also intends to increase cooperation in the defense sector with Indonesia through funding and technology transfer (Parameswaran, 2015). The intensity of Indonesia-India maritime cooperation reached its peak in 2005, which showed an increase compared to previous years. In 2005, there were two important cooperation agreements between Indonesia and India, namely the establishment of New Strategic Partnership and a Memorandum of Understanding on maritime affairs and fisheries (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2005). However, Indonesia is not only increasing its cooperation in the maritime sector with India, but also with China that has the fastest economic growth in the world. China's economic development is also followed by its progress in the military field, which has in turn, made this country an emerging superpower in the Asia Pacific region. China's rapid economic growth is what drives it to meet domestic needs for supply of natural resources, especially energy. To achieve this goal, China carries out a series of economic expansions and exerts its hegemony in various parts of the world such as the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, and Africa (Rosinawati and Munabari, 2021).

China also has the same vision as Indonesia in the maritime sector: Indonesia

has a vision of the "Global Maritime Fulcrum", while China has the "Maritime Silk Road Initiative", which is an inseparable part of the big umbrella vision of this country's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China's BRI vision has two main corridors, namely: 1) Land Corridor through the "New Silk Road Economic Belt". This vision aims to connect China with Europe and Africa through Central Asia and Russia, West Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia; 2) Sea Corridor through the "Maritime Silk Road Initiative" which aims to connect South China Sea, Indian Ocean, South Pacific Ocean, Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean Sea, and the eastern coast of Africa at various points (Palit, 2017). The cooperation between the two countries is carried out through developing maritime science and technology, increasing tourist visits from China to Indonesia, building power plants, building shipyards, as well as cooperation in the field of fisheries (Sindonews 2015). The strategic competition between India and China affects the policies made by the governments of both countries and the vision of both countries towards their interests in the Indian Ocean. For India, competition with China in the Indian Ocean is driven by its quest for national pride and identity. India has always considered itself to be the region's sole major power, including in the Indian Ocean. However, China refuses to recognize this claim (Collin, 2019).

In responding to the India-China rivalry, Indonesia implements a hedging strategy against the situation of security uncertainty resulting from this rivalry. Hedging is an alternative strategy to balancing, bandwagoning, and buck-passing within the framework of the balance of threat

theory. This strategy is applied by a state when it feels unsure about the intensity of the threat source. This strategy supports a state to establish a relationship with its partners that cannot be predicted in the future by relying on policies that help improve bilateral relations between them and secure an insurance policy against any future threats posed by these partners (Tessman, 2012).

India and China are currently involved in an escalating conflict in the Indian Ocean (Brewster 2015). China proposed the concept of an integrated sea shipping lane inspired by its past glory through a trade route known as the "Silk Road". China's proposal, which was later formulated into "One Belt One Road", was not supported by India because this concept was considered politically charged and threatened India's national security (Hu, 2017; Sutrisno, 2017). Relations between India, China, Indonesia, and the United States in the Indian Ocean also add to the complexity of the conflict. The United States is an ally of India, which is also at odds with China. Meanwhile, Indonesia is a maritime country in Southeast Asia that is automatically affected by the conflicts of interest of these three major powers. It is undeniable that India and China have also important roles and great interests in the Southeast Asian region (Egberink and Van der Putten, 2010). This background has prompted Indonesia to implement a hedging strategy in response to the India-China rivalry. This study demonstrates the nature and patterns of Indonesia's hedging strategy against India and China in order to deal with the uncertain security situation, especially in the Indian Ocean. This study argues that the area of

cooperation in the hedging strategy carried out by Indonesia against India is different from what it did with China. While the implementation of Indonesia's hedging strategy against India emphasizes cooperation in the fields of defense and security, Indonesia's hedging strategy against China is focused on economic cooperation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative method with the concept of hedging in international relations as an analytical tool for Indonesia's strategy in dealing with the escalation of conflict in the Indian Ocean between two great powers that are competing with each other to exert their hegemony in the world. This study used secondary data, which are reference sources in the forms of journal articles, books, and diplomatic activities between Indonesia, India, and China that were documented in the news media. While data were frequently collected in the subject's natural settings, analysis was based on the researchers' interpretations. To ensure the data's credibility, we collected data from a variety of sources and at several different times. Additionally, to conduct an objective comparison, this study involved multiple researchers in the data collection and analysis processes. Once sufficient data had been gathered, researchers examined the case for patterns and sought explanations through the lens of international relations theory, particularly the concept of hedging.

The period of this study started from 2015 to June 2021. The study period was taken since 2015 due to an increase in the tension of relations between India and China

as well as an increase in cooperative relations between Indonesia and India as well as China during the President Joko Widodo's presidency. Bilateral cooperation activities between these countries during this period were then analyzed with the concept of hedging to demonstrate the nature and patterns of Indonesia's hedging strategy in dealing with the uncertainty of the security situation because of the India-China rivalry in the Indian Ocean.

The Concept of Hedging in International Relations

The concept of hedging by most scholars of international relations is used to answer several questions regarding contemporary theory and practice of international relations, such as: 1) How do countries respond to the increase in the strength of other countries that can threaten their national security interests?; 2) When these countries strengthen cooperative relations with a number of major countries as partners, how do these countries anticipate the end of cooperative relations with these major country partners in the future?, and most importantly; 3) How do foreign policy makers address security challenges in a multipolar and uncertain global political environment? (Ciorciari and Haacke, 2019).

As a social phenomenon, hedging can be understood both at the unit and regional levels (Korolev 2019) Several scholars have tried to develop different aspects of the concept of hedging in the international relations literature. Within the context of balance of power theory, the concept of hedging emerges as an alternative to balancing and bandwagoning as the third

options (Koga, 2019). The strategy is carried out by a state when it feels unsure about the intensity of the threat, by establishing a relationship with other partnering countries as an insurance policy. Goh (2005) defines hedging strategy as a "middle ground" that avoids having to choose one side at the expense of the other. Using Southeast Asian countries as a case study, she demonstrates three key characteristics of regional hedging: first, soft balancing, which entails including great powers as a counterweight to other major powers; second, complex engagement with a rising China on economic, political, and strategic levels in the hope that the country will adhere to international norms; and third, a general policy of enmeshing and cooperating with several great powers simultaneously in the rebalancing process (Goh 2005)). Furthermore, as an alignment strategy, hedging behavior may indicate a lack of clarity regarding the shared security interests with several great powers (Lim and Cooper, 2015).

Hedging, as a security strategy, incorporates elements of balancing and bandwagoning. Some Persian Gulf states employ a hedging strategy in their dealings with Iran to mitigate risk in the short term while also anticipating contingency measures to deal with long-term uncertainty (Guzansky, 2015). Responding to Iran's growing influence, small and medium-sized countries in the Persian Gulf incorporate elements of balancing and bandwagoning strategies, utilizing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as a framework for security cooperation. South Asia follows a similar pattern, with India maintaining strategic ambiguity toward China. Boon (Boon, 2016)

demonstrates how India's economic engagement with Modi's government does not eliminate Delhi's threat views toward Beijing. Meanwhile, Kuik (Kuik, 2016) examines how members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have pursued a hedging strategy toward China, which is primarily motivated by pragmatic factors, including economic and diplomatic considerations.

All in all, their foreign policy outputs are influenced by great power competitions and domestic concerns. Additionally, Murphy (Murphy, 2017) argues that, despite China's growing assertiveness in Natuna sea, Jakarta's response was constrained by domestic political factors such as its reliance on China's economic assistance and competing bureaucratic politics between the country's security and political elites. Therefore, in line with its "independent and active" foreign policy principle and to avoid over-reliance on a single great power, Indonesia employs a strategy of economic pragmatism and limited bandwagoning simultaneously toward several major powers (Mubah, 2019b; Mursitama and Ying, 2021).

The hedging strategy serves to minimize threats by increasing the influence of countries that implement hedging strategy in response to threats from great powers. There are two types of hedging strategies. First, a hedging strategy that is oriented towards increasing military capabilities to reduce the imbalance of military capabilities against more powerful countries. This includes increasing economic capacity through various means such as maximizing the exploitation of energy resources, increasing the number of trading partners,

and acquiring advanced technologies. The second type of hedging is oriented towards finding alternative sources of public goods or subsidies provided by the system leader and initiating the formation of new alliances to deal with uncertainties associated with changing international systems (Tessman, 2012).

The Dynamics of India-China Rivalry in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Ocean is a strategic area for countries that have national interests in the maritime sector. As the third largest ocean in the world, the Indian Ocean separates Asia, Oceania, Antarctica, and Africa. This ocean has a total area of 73.44 million square kilometers and accounts for about 20% of the total area of the world's oceans. The Indian Ocean region also has abundant natural resources such as minerals, oil, and natural gas. Countries in the Indian Ocean region have more than two-thirds of the world's oil reserves consisting of 35% of world gas reserves, 60% of uranium, 40% of gold, 80% of gem reserves and various other mining materials (Kaplan, 2009). The Indian Ocean has also an important role for the world economy that connects international trade from Asia to Europe. It is a very strategic waters in the 21st century due to the high economic growth of Asia and the increasing need for countries in the region for natural resources to meet domestic needs due to the increasing economic growth of countries in the region (Reddy, 2016).

China has built up its economic and political interests in the Indian Ocean region over the past few decades. Middle East and

African countries are major exporters of China's domestic energy needs. Saudi Arabia and Angola provide 33% of total oil imports to China. Russia, Iran, Oman, Iraq and Venezuela have also done the same. To maintain the security of its oil supply, China implemented a strategy known as the String of Pearls. This strategy was not officially issued by the Chinese government, but was coined by several foreign countries to refer to a manifestation of China's increasing geopolitical influence to improve port access and air traffic, develop special diplomatic relations, and modernize military forces in a region of high strategic value starting along the coastline of the South China Sea, passing through the Malacca Strait, through the Indian Ocean, to the Persian Gulf or the Strait of Hormus (Brewster, 2015).

Similar to China, India also has a great interest in the Indian Ocean because of its geographical position in the middle of the third largest ocean in the world. India is also the fourth largest energy consumer in the world after the United States, China, and Russia. India's top priority in the Indian Ocean is to protect the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), because 95% of India's total trade uses oceanic sea lanes. Today India has been trying to expand its influence throughout the Indian Ocean. The Indian Navy plays an active role in developing security relations aimed at enhancing India's ability to project its military might and limiting China's ability to develop security relations in the region. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 launched a comprehensive set of Indian government policies in the Indian Ocean. First, India is committed to taking any necessary action to

secure Indian mainland and its archipelagic territories and defend its maritime interests; second, enhancing security cooperation with regional partners; third, increasing cooperation related to efforts to improve maritime security and support sustainable development (Zhang and Sun, 2019).

The heightening competition between China and India in the realization of their interests in the Indian Ocean region is marked by efforts to increase their influence on other countries in the ocean. For example, China is enhancing its strategic partnership with India's rival — Pakistan — within the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China also finances investment in Port infrastructure projects in Gwadar, Pakistan; Hambantota, Sri Lanka; Kyaukpyu, Myanmar; Chittagong, Bangladesh; Melaka, Malaysia; Kra Isthmus, Thailand (Stanzel, 2019). China is also increasing its naval presence and role in the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR). This condition is exacerbated by India's rejection of China's Belt and Road Initiative, which India considers a threat to its national sovereignty (Chang, 2016).

Against the backdrop of this escalating competition, China outperformed India in the struggle for influence in the Indian Ocean. However, potential conflicts and tensions resulting from the competition between the two countries loom large, considering that India tends to forge alliances with Western countries to counter China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean. For example, India has the potential to enhance its naval cooperation with the United States, France, and Australia by offering some of its naval bases that can be

used to replenish the logistics of these countries' naval fleets or to increase the frequency of further naval cooperation such as joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean (Mukherjee, 2018).

Indonesia's Hedging Strategy towards India

Indonesia's hedging strategy against India is implemented through enhancing cooperation in the maritime sector. Cooperation between the Indonesian and Indian navies within the framework of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) has increased since 2015 marked by a number of maritime development projects such as joint maritime exercises, joint maritime patrols, friendly visits of Indian Navy ships to Indonesia and vice versa, as well as the two countries' maritime defense and security agreements (Indian Navy, 2015; Singh, 2018). In December 2016, Indonesian President Joko Widodo paid a state visit to India. The visit was also aimed at increasing maritime cooperation between the two countries. During the visit, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed under the heading of "Maritime Cooperation" between Indonesia and India with a focus on improving maritime security and promoting maritime industry (Ministry of External Affairs of India, 2016).

Indonesia is strengthening maritime cooperation with a number of countries in the Indian Ocean including India through its leadership in IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) in the 2015-2017 period. In the organization's Summit held in Jakarta in March 2017, the six priorities of IORA cooperation that India rolled out during India's leadership at IORA in the 2011-2013

period were strengthened by Indonesia as the host, namely: maritime security, trade facilitation and investment, fisheries management, disaster management, academic and technological cooperation, and tourism and cultural exchanges (IORA, 2017). Indonesia's willingness to become the leader of the IORA during this period indicates the country's great interest in the maritime sector in the Indian Ocean. After all, maritime security in the Indian Ocean is a top priority, which is why it is set at the top of the six priorities of the IORA.

In response to President Joko Widodo's return visit to India in 2016, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Indonesia in May 2018 on a five-day visit to several countries in Southeast Asia. In his meeting with President Joko Widodo, Prime Minister Modi brought up three important topics of discussion, namely maritime security, China's potential threat in the Asian maritime region, and increasing trade cooperation (Kaura, 2018). In order to realize its Global Maritime Fulcrum vision, Indonesia took the opportunity to further strengthen maritime security cooperation by providing the Indian Navy with strategic access to Sabang Island for the purpose of supplying logistics for its marine patrol operations in the eastern Indian Ocean including Malacca Strait.

In 2019, as a realization of the Joint Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia and India formed a Joint Task Force entitled "Development of Connectivity in Aceh and the Andaman-Nicobar Islands" that aims to facilitate the realization of cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, tourism, fisheries, and energy.

As the first step, Indian infrastructure and transportation company RITES Ltd has conducted a feasibility study for the construction and development of the Sabang Port (Tempo, 2016). The Sabang Port is not only aimed at facilitating connectivity between Aceh and the Andaman-Nicobar Islands. It also serves as a strategic outpost in the Indian Ocean and helps boost Indonesia's geopolitical leverage in the region (Shekhar, 2020).

Table 1.

The Major Manifestations of Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and India in the Context of Indonesia's Hedging Strategy in the Indian Ocean

Month/Year	Events	Results
December 2016	Indonesian President Joko Widodo's State Visit to India.	The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in the maritime sector under the heading of "Maritime Cooperation".
March 2017	Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) High Level Conference (KTT) in Jakarta.	Strengthening maritime cooperation through six priority issues: 1) maritime security; 2) trade and investment facilitation; 3) fisheries management, 4) disaster management; 5) academic and technological cooperation; 6) tourism and cultural exchanges.
May 2018	Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit to Indonesia.	- Strengthening bilateral cooperation under the "New Comprehensive Strategic Partnership"; - Agreement on "Joint Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific" with the realization of joint naval patrols between Indonesia and India in the Indian Ocean.
2019	Joint Task Force entitled "Development of Connectivity in Aceh and the Andaman-Nicobar Islands".	- The manifestations of cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, tourism, fisheries, and energy; - Feasibility study of construction and development of Sorong Port by Indian infrastructure and transportation company RITES Ltd.
July 2020	Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto's visit to India.	Cooperation to increase the capability of Indonesian military defense equipment with the Indian Ministry of Defense.
February 2021	Joint naval exercises between the Indonesian Navy represented by KRI Bung Tomo and the Indian Navy by the Indian Warship INS Talwar in the Arabian Sea	The realization of increased cooperation in the field of maritime security contained in the six priority issues of the IORA in the form of joint naval exercises to maintain security stability in the Indian Ocean.

In July 2020, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto paid a visit to India to establish cooperation in the defense sector. Together with his partner, the Minister of Defense of

India, Rajnath Singh, Prabowo was exploring potential cooperation opportunities to increase the capability of Indonesia's defense equipment (Wirawan,

2020). After all, increasing military capability is part of a hedging effort aimed at reducing the military capability gap between great and middle powers (Tessman, 2012).

In February 2001, the Indonesian warship, Bung Tomo, held joint naval exercises with the Indian warship, INS Talwar, in the Arabian Sea as a realization of increased cooperation in the field of maritime security contained in the six priority issues of the IORA. These exercises were also carried out by India a few months earlier with some other partner countries such as Japan, Russia, Australia, and the United States with a view to countering China's maritime expansion (The Economic Times, 2020).

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Indonesia's Hedging Strategy towards China

Similar to India, Indonesia is also cooperating with China in the maritime sector. In March 2015, a bilateral meeting was held by Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People, Beijing, China. During this visit, President Joko Widodo signed several Memorandums of Understandings, including on economic cooperation, the construction of a high-speed railway, maritime cooperation, and several other collaborations (Galih, 2015). President Joko Widodo in his speech during the visit emphasized the importance of increasing the number of national ports to support the implementation of Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum vision. A total of 24 national ports are in the process of being developed with the aim of becoming a sea toll

road connecting the western part and the eastern part of Indonesia (Tiezzi, 2015; Tempo, 2016). At the same time, President Joko Widodo also attended the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference in Hainan. In this forum, the two countries appreciated the progress that they had made in their maritime cooperation and agreed to optimize the cooperation framework between the Maritime Cooperation Committee (MCC) and the Maritime Cooperation Fund (MCF). The cooperation framework was established by the governments of the two countries in March 2012 as an important step to strengthen cooperation between them in the maritime sector (Global Times, 2012).

In September 2016, Indonesia and China agreed to increase cooperation in the economic sector. The cooperation was agreed during President Joko Widodo's visit to China during his bilateral meeting with President Xi Jinping. There are three areas of increasing cooperation that resulted in the bilateral meeting: increasing the volume of trade, investment, and tourism (Kusuma, 2016). In 2017, there was an increase in maritime cooperation between Indonesia and China that was marked by the 10th Technical Committee on Maritime Cooperation (TCM) meeting held in Jakarta on 14-15 December 2017. In this meeting, new proposals were discussed with a view to enhancing marine law enforcement, research and scientific observations in the marine sector, and other fields related to maritime peace and stability, especially in the South China Sea (Embassy of China in Indonesia, 2014).

In 2018, cooperation between the two countries in the maritime sector was marked by a visit by the Coordinating Minister for

Maritime Affairs and Investment of Indonesia, Luhut Panjaitan, to China. During his visit, Luhut was welcomed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, and they agreed to do a follow up on the Indonesia-China Strategic Comprehensive Partnership agreed in 2013. The two countries signed contracts worth USD 23.3 billion within the framework of the Maritime Silk Road Initiative. They also agreed that the focus within the framework was to invest in infrastructure, construction, railroad construction, toll roads, automotive products, real estate, power generation, iron, and steel (Antara, 2018).

In 2019, The First Joint Steering Committee Meeting was held in Bali as a follow-up meeting on the framework of the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) between the two countries. In this meeting, the implementation of industrial estate projects and a number of ports and infrastructure developments in Indonesia were agreed. On this occasion, Indonesia also reiterated the importance of the four principles of cooperation with China; first, 'added value'; second, environmentally friendly technology; third, technology transfer, and; fourth the involvement of as many Indonesian workers as possible (Khadafi, 2019).

Marking the 70th anniversary of Indonesia-China diplomatic relations in 2020, the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, who is also the Coordinator of Indonesia-China Cooperation, visited China to strengthen maritime cooperation in addition to establishing cooperation in the field of health in an attempt to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic that has spread to various

countries in the world since the beginning of 2020 (Wirawan, 2020). In June 2021, during his visit to China, Luhut agreed to enhance

cooperation in the maritime sector, including the commitment of the two countries to expand the scope of maritime cooperation such as building a national fish storage center (Al Hikam, 2020).

Table 2.

The Major Manifestations of Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and China in The Context of Indonesia's Hedging Strategy in the Indian Ocean

Month/Year	Events	Results
March 2015	-President Joko Widodo's State Visit to China - Attending The Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Forum in Hainan, China	- Signing several Memorandums of Understanding on cooperation including in the maritime, economic, and high-speed rail developments. - Making a commitment to optimizing the Maritime Cooperation Committee (MCC) and Maritime Cooperation Fund (MCF) cooperation frameworks.
September 2016	President Joko Widodo's Bilateral Visit to China	Increasing cooperation in the economic field: volume of trade, investment, and tourism.
December 2017	10 th Technical Committee on Maritime Cooperation (TCM) meeting in Jakarta	Implementation of maritime cooperation such as increasing marine law enforcement, research and scientific observations in the marine sector, and other fields related to maritime peace and stability, especially in the South China Sea.
April 2018	Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Panjaitan, visited China	The signing of contracts worth USD 23.3 billion within the framework of the Maritime Silk Road Initiative. invested in infrastructure, construction, railroad construction, toll roads, automotive products, real estate, power generation, iron, and steel.
March 2019	The First Joint Steering Committee Meeting in Bali	Discussing the techniques for implementing strategic projects of the two countries such as infrastructure development, industrial estates, and ports.
October 2020	Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Panjaitan, visited China	Strengthening cooperation in maritime and health sector to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic.
June 2021	Minister of Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Panjaitan, visited China	Agreeing to expand the scope of maritime cooperation, such as establishing a national fish storage center.

Source: compiled from the news media

From the two tables of cooperation activities between Indonesia-India and Indonesia-China above as the manifestation of Indonesia's hedging strategy, it can be concluded that cooperation between Indonesia and India focuses on defense and security cooperation, especially in the maritime sector. In contrast, Indonesia-China cooperation is more focused on the economic sector. Although Indonesia's cooperation with India and China are both forged in the maritime sector, the alignment of the vision of the Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum and the China's

Maritime Silk Road Initiative is focused on the economy, including infrastructure development, rather than on defense and security. The focus on the fields of defense and security in maritime cooperation between Indonesia and India is due to the common perception of China's threat that is getting stronger in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea between the two countries. The common perception of the threat prompted the two countries to further enhance maritime cooperation with a focus on defense and security, as reflected in the Indonesia-India bilateral cooperation activities in the table above, such as cooperation in increasing Indonesia's and India's defense equipment capabilities and routine joint naval exercises.

Indonesia and India are also members of the IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) forum which makes maritime security and safety one of the main pillars of this forum in addition to the economic pillar. Furthermore, in addition to the common threat perception factor, Indonesia and India both project themselves at the representatives of regional powers in their

respective regions — Southeast Asia and South Asia — in the current multipolar global order. Another similarity is the fact that the security cooperation carried out by the two countries with the United States is believed not only to help Indonesia and India balance against China, but also increase their power and reputation in their respective regions (Brewster, 2011). In contrast to India, the character of maritime cooperation between Indonesia and China is more focused on the economic sector. Indonesia and China see a lot of potential for cooperation that can be maximized through the Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum's vision and the China's Maritime Silk Road. The direction of this cooperation follows the five pillars of China's Belt and Road Initiative, namely: 1) policy coordination; 2) facilities connectivity; 3) unimpeded trade; 4) financial integration; and 5) people-to-people bonds (Chance 2017). These five pillars predominantly aim to increase the effectiveness of economic and trade cooperation between China and other countries in the world by minimizing obstacles that can impede the effectiveness of this cooperation, such as constraints on infrastructure limitations, the integration of economic and finance regulations, and in the long term is the improvement of people-to-people relations. The table of Indonesia-China cooperation above clearly reflects the implementation of these pillars. The absence of bilateral cooperation between Indonesia and China in the field of defense and security owes to the fact that Indonesia considers it more appropriate if cooperation in this field is carried out through the ASEAN multilateral framework rather than through a bilateral cooperation framework, especially through the ASEAN Regional

Forum (ARF) where China is one of its dialogue partner countries.

The direction of defense and security cooperation within the multilateral framework is believed by the Indonesian government to be more effective in binding China into regional and international norms. Furthermore, Indonesia also encourages ASEAN and ARF to become an open forum for great powers in the world, including the United States, to actively share its roles in maintaining security stability in the Southeast Asia region. Thus, the escalation of tensions and conflicts in the South China Sea can be reduced by the active presence and role of other great power countries such as the United States in the region (Sriyanto 2018). In addition, since 2003, China has signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) together with other ASEAN partner countries. This treaty serves as the basis for the code of conduct that regulates cooperative relations between ASEAN member countries and their partner countries based on the principles of peace in problem solving and mutual respect for the sovereignty and interests of each country. After several incidents of border disputes in the South China Sea between China and several ASEAN countries such as Vietnam and the Philippines, China and ASEAN have also drawn up a Declaration of Conduct to resolve the disputes with more detailed guidelines and peaceful manner as well as mutually beneficial (Munabari, 2012).

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes Indonesia's hedging strategy against India and China as an inevitable policy to deal with the uncertainty of security situation resulting

from escalating India-China rivalry, particularly in the Indian Ocean. Using the concept of hedging, this study has presented a series of hedging strategy implementations carried out by Indonesia in the period 2015-2021. As a middle power, the choice of hedging strategy is deemed appropriate by Indonesia as a strategy not only to deal with security uncertainty, but also to cope with the negative consequences of the heightening India-China rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Since the beginning of President Joko Widodo's administration, hedging has been implemented by promoting increased cooperation in strategic fields such as the economy, including infrastructure development, defense, and security.

There are differences in the patterns and characteristics of the cooperative relationship between Indonesia - India and Indonesia - China. While the cooperation between Indonesia and India is focused on the fields of defense and security, the cooperation between Indonesia and China is more focused on the economic sector and infrastructure development. The focus of cooperation in the field of defense and security between Indonesia and India is mainly due to the similar threat perception between the two countries regarding the increase in China's hegemony in the world, including in the Indian Ocean. In addition, the two countries are also jointly establishing security cooperation with the United States to balance against China in areas that are Indonesia's main concern, namely the South China Sea, and in the Indian Ocean that is also the concern of both India and Indonesia. In contrast, increasing cooperation between Indonesia and China as a form of

implementation of the hedging strategy is not focused on the fields of defense and security, because Indonesia holds that it would be more appropriate if this cooperation is carried out within a broader framework of cooperation within ASEAN and ARF.

In other words, Indonesia encourages China to manage security challenges, especially in the South China Sea, through a multilateral framework. Moreover, there is a common maritime vision between Indonesia through its Global Maritime Fulcrum and China through its Maritime Silk Road Initiative, which has a lot of potential for cooperation in the economic sector that can be optimized. Although cooperation in many areas within the maritime sector between Indonesia-India and Indonesia-China remains stable, a number of recent studies suggest that there are still challenges and obstacles that need to be addressed to improve Indonesia-India and Indonesia-China cooperation more effectively and with more tangible outcomes. For example, Gopal and Alverdian (2021) argued that the cooperation in the fields of defense and security between Indonesia and India has neither been carried out effectively nor produced tangible outcomes. Similarly, in the context of the Indonesia-China cooperation, Negara and Suryadinata (2019) suggested that although Indonesia and China both share the need to prioritize their maritime sector through the Global Maritime Fulcrum and the Maritime Silk Road Initiative, efforts are still needed to synchronize visions, interpretations, rules and regulations as well as to manage conflicts of interest between the two countries. For this reason, further research is necessary to measure and evaluate the

effectiveness of cooperation between Indonesia-India and Indonesia-China in the maritime sector and to recommend strategies that need to be implemented in order to improve this cooperation more effectively with more tangible results.

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