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Research article

Global Maritime Fulcrum: Indonesia's Middle Power Strategy Between Belt And Road Initiatives (BRI) and Free-Open Indo Pacific (FOIP)

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to correlate Indonesia's global maritime fulcrum (GMF) as Indonesia's middle power strategy to its response to the two geopolitical strategies of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) of the Quad (the United States, India, Japan and Australia). This article used the process-tracing method to examine the information sourced from journal articles, news media outlets, government press releases and other resources. The article unfolds in four sections. The first explains the background of why the global maritime fulcrum was chosen as Indonesia's middle power strategy response to the BRI and FOIP. The

second explains how Indonesia uses the GMF as its middle power strategy. The third part explores how the middle power strategy through the GMF policy responds to the BRI. The last part elaborates on Indonesia's strategy when responding to the FOIP. It concludes that it is prevalent that Indonesia uses the GMF as its middle power strategy when responding to the BRI and FOIP.

Keywords: *Indonesia, global maritime fulcrum, middle power, Belt and Road Initiatives, free-open Indo Pacific*

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The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) employed by the Chinese government and the Free-Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) of the Quad are two geopolitical strategies used to exercise their influence outside of their respective regions. One of the affected regions is Southeast Asia as it is strategically located for use as an international production chain for Chinese ambitions. The Indo-Pacific area is where the US, Japan, India and Australia are looking forward to enhancing their collaborations with the countries inside the area. Indonesia, as the largest country in Southeast Asia with a prominent role as an Association Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leader, tries to balance the geopolitical influence both from China and the Quad. The purpose of this article is to explain the role of the global maritime fulcrum (GMF) as a middle power strategy in response to the BRI and FOIP employed by the major powers. The GMF itself serves as Indonesia's governmental policy to strengthen the state's maritime connectivity since it has previously lacked attention from the previous government. Furthermore, this article explains why the GMF is the chosen policy employed by the Indonesian government to respond to the BRI and FOIP. This leads to the initial assumption that Indonesia, as a middle power country, uses a middle power strategy through the GMF to cope with the two geopolitical influences.

Background

The initial research suggests that Indonesia has to face both the BRI and FOIP, which are employed by China and the Quad respectively. Indonesia's response is to direct the two geopolitical strategies in line with Indonesia's ambition through the GMF. Since becoming president in 2014, Joko Widodo has considered private investors and companies from China to assist Indonesia in improving its connectivity and state infrastructure.¹ After attending the BRI Summit in Beijing on May 2017, Jokowi asked the Coordinator of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Luhut Pandjaitan, to lead the team in preparing a list of projects to go under the BRI framework.²

On 26 April 2019, Jokowi signed the 23 Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with China in order for them to collaborate on infrastructure projects in

Indonesia.³ Xi Jinping also suggested that Indonesia has a strategic geographic position that could enhance the BRI projects when he announced the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) Program part of the BRI in October 2013.⁴ Both the GMF and BRI focus on connectivity improvement. From the perspective of MSR, China wants to connect its trade route to Europe through Asia and Africa. When Jokowi stated the GMF strategy, it was in parallel with Chinese intentions. They are also willing to connect several islands in Indonesia.⁵ Connectivity serves as a crucial aspect in both countries' cooperation, referring to Indonesia with its GMF ambition and China with its BRI project. Therefore the GMF and BRI work in synergy and complement one another. This means that each party is looking for potential cooperation and this makes Indonesia an important partner for China and *vice versa*, which helps to fulfill their ambitions.⁶

On 22 September 2015, Xie Feng, the Chinese Ambassador for Indonesia, looked at the synergy between the GMF and BRI that could open up more opportunities. First, the GMF and BRI complement each other. Both frameworks have the same purpose, namely economic development by optimising the maritime sector with a focus on infrastructure and connectivity. The second point is that it could strengthen the relations between the two countries. Both have already achieved a consensus regarding the development strategy including a maritime partnership. China has been involved in the development and expansion of thirty ports in East Indonesia and it is willing to be a partner in the rebuilding and expansion of Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta.⁷

The relations between the GMF and BRI were stated in 'the Joint Statement on Strengthening Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Indonesia' on 26 March 2015. Both states agree to develop the cooperation that fosters the implementation of various programs such as 'the China-Indonesia joint table-top exercise of maritime search and rescue' and 'the China-Indonesia center for ocean and climate'. This is in addition to continuing to cooperate for the purpose of cruise safety, maritime security, maritime search and rescue, and maritime research and protection.⁸ One of the GMFs' major projects that has successfully gained support from the Chinese government is *tol laut*. The purpose of *tol laut* is to increase the sea connectivity between the main ports in Indonesia such as Belawan in North Sumatra, Tanjung Priok in Jakarta, Tanjung Perak in Surabaya as well as the ports in Makassar South Sulawesi and Sorong in Papua.⁹

During Jokowi's second term Evan Laksmana argued that the GMF was absent in his inauguration speech along with the topic regarding foreign policy. Jokowi's priorities for his second term are about trade and investment, citizen protection, sovereignty, regional and global leadership and diplomatic infrastructure. The hallmark of the GMF itself would not become Jokowi's grand

strategy. Laksmana suggests that GMF is not a well-researched agenda in the very first place, it is only a political campaign platform used in order that people would assume that Jokowi has a grand agenda for Indonesia in terms of foreign affairs.¹⁰ To some degree these stances are correct; however, the GMF is still being pursued at various different levels. Coordinating the Ministry for Maritime Affairs and Investment for instance started to make Kebijakan Kelautan Indonesia (KKI) or Indonesian Maritime Policy a blueprint and roadmap for a long term policy. The name of the document is Konsep Haluan Maritim (Maritime Direction Concept). The ministry already arranged the working group and had intense communication with the Presidential Staff Office along with the National Development Planning Agency in formulating this policy. The ministry also conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to study maritime policy in depth. The document is expected to be released in September 2021.¹¹ In another aspect, *tol laut* as one of the hallmarks of Indonesia's cooperation with foreign countries such as China also made significant progress until 2021. The Ministry of Transportation suggested that in 2021 they are able to add four routes for a total of thirty routes connected by the *tol laut*.¹² Therefore, it is safe to assume that the GMF is still an ongoing project, since the relevant ministry has been trying to establish the foundation to develop GMF policy in a deeper manner as well as continue works on the relevant projects for the GMF itself.

When it comes to Indonesia and the Quad who brought in the idea of the FOIP, the cooperation under the FOIP framework is still being established and settled. The FOIP was just starting to gain attention among Indonesian policymakers when there was an ASEAN informal summit in Singapore in April 2018. Indonesia put forward the 'Indo-Pacific Cooperation' strategy that adheres to four basic principles. The first is that Indonesia wants the cooperation to be inclusive, transparent and comprehensive. Second, it should bring in benefits for all of the countries involved in the region. Third, the cooperation should uphold peace, stability and prosperity. The last is that it should respect international laws and ASEAN Centrality.¹³

As the FOIP is still evolving and the shape of the framework is still being worked on, the relations between the GMF and FOIP can be seen from each Quad member's cooperation with Indonesia. As Indonesia prioritises its infrastructure development, US investors have started to invest in Indonesia through the US International Development Finance Corporation. This is a development bank that provides financial solutions for infrastructure, digital connectivity and energy in developing countries. This kind of opportunity was responded to by Indonesia through Luhut Panjaitan as Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Maritime and Investment, stating that as a maritime country, it is necessary for Indonesia to accept the investment for the development of the outer islands in order to protect Indonesia's sovereignty and security.¹⁴

Furthermore, when it comes to the Indonesian-Australian cooperation, it shows that the cooperation between these two countries also focuses on Indonesia's GMF ambitions. On 6 January 2020, both countries signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The purpose of this is to increase their level of cooperation in the domains of the economy, trade and investment. Prior to this cooperation, Indonesia and Australia signed the Joint Declaration on Maritime Cooperation in Sydney on 26 February 2017. The cooperation was realised here in the form of a Plan of Action in 2018.¹⁵ Moreover, with India, Indonesia also ensured its cooperation concerning maritime issue by making a Joint Statement on Maritime Cooperation on 12 December 2016 followed by the Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation on 30 May 2018. Recently, on 6 July 2020, both countries signed the MoU on Maritime Safety and Security to enhance both countries' cooperation in the maritime sector.¹⁶

Last but not least, the relations between Indonesia and Japan also focus on maritime issues. Both countries agreed to establish a bilateral maritime forum, the Indonesia-Japan Maritime Forum (IJMF), on 21 December 2016. This cooperation marks the same commitment from both countries to the free and open navigation of the sea. This forum also covers collaboration related to maritime safety, security, economic, infrastructure, education and training. Both countries also agreed to establish a fish market and port infrastructure development in Indonesia's outer island through the Exchange of Notes (EN) as part of the Program for Development of Fisheries Sector in the Outer Islands.¹⁷

Literature review

To understand the conception of Indonesia's middle power, the authors further research on several literatures that explained the same topic. We then classified these literatures into three categories: (1) what kind of middle power Indonesia has; (2) how Indonesia's middle power strategy is evolving; and (3) how Indonesia uses the middle power strategy in relation with other countries.

First, what kind of middle power does Indonesia have? Karim argues that Indonesia seeks to connect the status-seeking behaviour of middle power with the state's foreign policy agenda.¹⁸ In other words, middle power is a concept of international status that states its aim to pursue through the enactment of role conceptions. It is not merely a function of good international citizenship or material capability. In line with Karim, Kusumaningprang also argues that rather than its material capabilities, Indonesia's long standing history of middle power activism is the foundation for characterising Indonesia as an extraverted middle power.¹⁹ This status is then grounded in Indonesia's constitution to institutionalise the international obligations.

Second, how is Indonesia's middle power strategy evolving? Azra explains that Indonesia's posture as a middle power has been up and down.²⁰ Indonesia rose in the international arena under President Sukarno (1945-1966) and President Suharto (1967-1998). Meanwhile, Indonesia's role in regional and international affairs declined considerably during the early years of the post-Suharto era (1998-2004), although there were several attempts to restore Indonesia's prominence as a middle power under President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001) and President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004). During the administration of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004-2009 and 2009-2014), Indonesia finally showed itself eager to play the middle power's role in the international arena. Hidayatullah then argues that since its independence, Indonesia has persistently conducted the role of middle power Assembler by establishing regional leadership in Southeast Asia, and then adopted the role of middle power Advocate since Yudhoyono's presidency.²¹ Besides that, Alvian et al. identify the change of Indonesia's middle power diplomacy strategy under the presidency of President Yudhoyono and President Jokowi from an outward looking to inward looking orientation.²²

Third, how does Indonesia use the middle power strategy in relation with other countries? Beeson and Lee argue that ASEAN remains a major consideration for Indonesia to exert its middle power diplomacy.²³ But, Indonesia is also increasingly seen as a state with the potential to play a role beyond Southeast Asia. Hellendorf further explains that ASEAN's countries—including Indonesia—tend to risk tolerant, rather than risk-averse, in running their middle power strategies.²⁴ Indonesia seeks to defend a broad commitment to ASEAN-led multilateralism and its self-interest through targeted policies with other countries. For example, through China's rise and assertiveness in the South China Sea, Indonesia has derived diplomatic and political benefits, such as supporting the ASEAN-led discussion and negotiation process with China about the dispute on the South China Sea. Furthermore, Sriyanto argues that Indonesia's middle-powermanship can be seen through growing relations between Indonesia and China.²⁵ With creating the GMF, Indonesia seeks to build domestic connectivity from Chinese investment through the BRI program.

This paper then closes to the third category about how Indonesia uses the middle power strategy in relation with other countries. But different from Beeson and Lee, Hellendorf, and Sriyanto who focused on ASEAN or China—including the BRI—this paper brings the BRI and FOIP together. Not merely Indonesia's strategy in broad, this paper is more focused on the GMF as a middle power strategy of Indonesia in relations with the BRI and FOIP. Furthermore, we combine three middle power approaches to analyse it, namely an hierarchy approach, a functional approach and a behavioural approach. Furthermore, this

paper aims to show that Indonesia acts as a middle power through creating the GMF. This certainly matters because through the GMF, Indonesia has begun to show its maritime capacity more concretely. Indonesia then seeks to encourage relations between other grand maritime program/concepts, namely the BRI and FOIP. This means that Indonesia is not likely to use the GMF as competitor, or against the BRI and FOIP. Indeed, Indonesia tends to gaining advantages as much as possible in relation between these two, including prestige and investment to build infrastructures. Also, Indonesia will not disengage from ASEAN because Indonesia still has a prominent role in this organisation. It can provide an opportunity for Indonesia to influence any decisions within the ASEAN.

Global maritime fulcrum as Indonesia's middle power strategy: Theoretical approach

As the previous explanation suggests, it shows that both with China and the Quad, Indonesia prioritises its policy through the GMF when dealing with the BRI and FOIP. It can be assumed that Indonesia is exercising its middle power strategy. The concept of middle power was brought in by Jokowi during his presidential campaign in 2014. He explained that the role of Indonesia as a middle power should be achieved through its selective involvement in regional and global issues. Indonesia took the opportunities offered by China and the Quad and directed them to fit Indonesia's interests.²⁶ This is also in parallel with the three strands approach in middle power states, namely an hierarchy that focus on states' material capacity or quantifiable indicators of powers, functionality that focus on states' interest in specific areas which offer more benefit than other areas and behaviour that focuses on states' behaviour for being a good international citizen. The first approach, hierarchy, closely relates to the state's material capability between great powers and small powers.²⁷ It combines the developmental, economic, social and military indicators that determine the state's ranking within the international system.²⁸ Second is the functional approach, assuming that their material capability can be used to become involved in the international area. Middle power states use their power to influence and make sure of its responsibilities regarding certain functions in international relations.²⁹ Middle power states only focus on specific areas that offer better value and results. The third is the behavioural approach which argues that middle power states have the characteristic of behaving as a good international citizen that supports multilateralism, supporting the international order or having a role as a mediator in disputes.³⁰ This approach makes it clear that a middle power state cannot act alone. However, it is able to have a systemic impact within small groups through international institutions.³¹

Hierarchy approach

According to Gilley and O'Neil, the hierarchy approach—or positional approach—can be described as the material power capabilities that middle powers possess relative to both great powers and small and weak states.³² It is characterised by its focus on quantifiable indicators of power between states relating to differences in population size, military expenditures, strategic geography position, gross domestic product, etc. The use of quantitative indicators has several strengths, such as the ability to measure states' power in an objective manner and facilitating comparisons across states. In other words, middle power states can use their abundant resources to attract other countries and build beneficial cooperation with them. Therefore, we use resources powers as the operationalisation from the hierarchy approach.

In this case, Indonesia is a middle power state that possesses abundant resources, especially natural resources. One of Indonesia's prominent capabilities is its vast maritime territory and geographic strategic position. This resulted in Jokowi stating his policy of serving as a global maritime fulcrum in order to make Indonesia a world maritime power. Indonesia is the biggest state in Southeast Asia and the biggest archipelagic country in the world. Because of its strategic location between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and between the Asian and Australian continents, this makes Indonesia a contested area with a great power interest.³³ The economic, political and military dynamics within the Asia-Pacific region and with developed states such as the United States (US), India, Australia, China and Japan heavily rely on Indonesia's stability, foreign policy and geopolitical thinking since Indonesia is also an ASEAN leader.³⁴ Indonesia has a strong maritime capability compared to smaller powers, thus meaning that Indonesia has confidence when projecting themselves on the international arena through global maritime fulcrum initiatives. This serves as a prominent step towards becoming world maritime power.

Functional approach

The second is the functional approach that emphasises the middle power responsibility on certain issues that relates to gaining special influence within their functional area that is mirrored in its national interest. It suggests that middle powers tend to pursue their foreign policy goals in specific areas that offer the best return, often referred to as 'niche diplomacy'. According to Gareth Evans, niche diplomacy is the effort to concentrate resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field.³⁵ Therefore, middle power states must concentrate their resources on addressing issues that are ignored by small powers and which are not dominated by the major powers. In this case, Indonesia's 'niche area' is maritime, considering that

Indonesia has a vast maritime area. Through the GMF, Indonesia has realised its responsibility as the biggest maritime state in the world. The president has also declared that he will rebuild the maritime culture and improve the state policy towards the maritime sector. On 20 February 2017, Jokowi issued Presidential Decree No.16 about Indonesia Maritime Policy. The policy serves as general instruction for the maritime policy and its implementation through programs and activities within the ministry or non-ministry government. It is expected to help implementing the GMF faster.³⁶

Jokowi is the first president who officially published a maritime doctrine, resulting in the other international actors respecting the government's efforts to make Indonesia a maritime power.³⁷ The GMF serves as Indonesia's vision as a sovereign maritime state and it is capable of providing a platform for peace-building and security both at the regional and international levels. The GMF has seven pillars that can achieve this purpose: (1) the development of human and marine resources, (2) maritime security and law enforcement, (3) institutional and maritime governance, (4) the development of a maritime economy, (5) the management of maritime peace and protection and (6) the maritime culture and maritime diplomacy.³⁸ This means that Indonesia not only wants to focus this policy at the domestic level but that it also tries to project this policy in order to be a mediator of maritime conflict between neighbouring states. The status of Indonesia as a middle power has received attention and recognition from international actors.

Behavioural approach

The third is the behavioural approach that refers to the state's specific behaviour in international affairs, such as being a good international citizen, supporting multilateralism, supporting international order or serving as intermediaries in disputes. The label of 'good international citizen' triggers different assumptions from many scholars. James Souter argues that to become a good international citizen, states must comply with common rules and values including human rights, multilateralism, international law, etc.³⁹ Nevertheless, Charalampos Efstathopoulos, Jeremy R. Youde, Trace Hoffmann Slagter, Robert W. Cox, John W. Holmes, Andrew Linklater, Robert W. Murray and Ronald Behringer argue that foreign policy of middle powers is not purely driven by altruism—rather these states are also acting instrumentally.⁴⁰ In other words, the foreign policy of a good international citizen represents a middle ground between realism and idealism. These states do not always act kindly because it depends on the situation they are facing and on the interests they possess. Furthermore, middle powers also demonstrate a strong preference for multilateralism as they can overcome their lack of bargaining power at the bilateral level.⁴¹

Through the GMF, Jokowi stressed that Indonesia's power projection is 'Indo-Pacific Power'. The interconnection between the Pacific and Indian Oceans has served as Indonesia's main playing field for its foreign policy. Indonesia's leadership in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) between 2015 and 2017 provided it with the opportunity to expand its influence within the region.⁴² Indonesia also acts as a Southeast Asia leader through its agreement with several countries regarding their maritime borders. This includes discussing the border agreement Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with Australia and Papua New Guinea. Indonesia is also conducting an agreement on the continental shelf with various countries such as Malaysia, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Singapore and India. As a middle power state, Indonesia is also making an effort to provide multilateral solutions regarding international disputes by trying to foster compromise. It can be seen from Indonesia's role that they have tried to resolve the South China Sea dispute through a workshop.⁴³ Therefore it can be said that through the GMF, Indonesia's maritime diplomacy is stronger than before.

The global maritime fulcrum as a middle power strategy in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative

To understand the relationship between Indonesia's GMF and China's BRI, the authors have used several variables that are entailed in middle power theory. In this analysis, we have tried to use three approaches in relation to middle power theory—hierarchy, function and behaviour—to analyse the relation between the GMF and BRI. These three approaches have been further operationalised into four variables which are related to Indonesia's status as a middle power country such as: (1) having enough resources and power to attract the attention of major powers, (2) implementing niche diplomacy that is only focused on specific areas or issues that can bring in greater advantages regarding national interests, (3) building a constructive role as a middle power with the responsibility of keeping the region safe and strengthening the security of the region and (4) behaving as a good multilateralist to find an appropriate solution in order to resolve regional problems.

Having resource powers

A middle power is a state which is big or rich enough to attract the avarice of great powers.⁴⁴ The state supposes that its material capabilities can encourage other states to recognise its existence and prestige in the international area. Through the creation of the GMF, Indonesia wants to show the world that Indonesia is an essential Indo-Pacific power and that it has a strategic geographic location with the Indian Ocean in the west, the South China Sea in the north and the Pacific Ocean in the east. Indonesia's strategic location is known as a 'cross

road location' and it acts as a 'strategic funnel' between the Indo and Pacific components. Furthermore, regional geopolitics nowadays are characterised by the resurgence of maritime power in Asia and beyond, thus choke points in Indonesian waters have nowadays become critical components, specifically the Malacca Strait, Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait and Makassar Strait.⁴⁵

Indonesia has 17,500 islands. It has the second longest coastline in the world of around 99,093 km and a sea area of about 3,273,810 km.⁴⁶ Due to its strategic location, Indonesia is often regarded as an integral part of the BRI. Xi Jinping was convinced that Indonesia has a strategic position when he announced the 21st Maritime Silk Road program in October 2013.⁴⁷ China's desire to create maritime connections from its coastal area with countries from Asia to Africa and even reaching up into Europe has determined Indonesia's strategic position to be a crucial point. Several strategic sea-lanes of communication under Indonesian jurisdiction could support China's global maritime connections.⁴⁸ Xi Jinping and Joko Widodo even acknowledged that China's BRI and Indonesia's GMF were highly complementary because both focused on connectivity, especially maritime connectivity.⁴⁹

Despite its positive responses to the BRI, Indonesia has refrained from fully engaging with this China-led initiative.⁵⁰ Indonesia has a lot of important resources—both natural and human—and it is located in a strategic position, thus Indonesia just needs an investment from China to develop its performance. The Indonesian government seeks to optimise the advantages and minimise any risks by directing the Chinese investments into B2B (business to business) activities. In this effort, the government plays the role of facilitator in the investment and development process.⁵¹ Furthermore, Fitriani argued that there are several reasons that explain why Indonesia has responded prudently to Chinese offers: (1) the concept of the BRI not being clear until very recently, (2) Indonesia does not expect to be subjugated to any foreign power because of its past experience of Western colonisation, (3) Indonesia has had some uneasy economic interactions with China, as the influx of Chinese goods can endanger small and medium enterprises in Indonesia, (4) Indonesia has questioned the quality of Chinese investments, (5) China and the Chinese have been used for political purposes in Indonesia rooted in Suharto's regime and (6) there has been skepticism and curiosity regarding China's real intentions because China's assertive behaviours are sometimes problematic.⁵²

Implementing niche diplomacy

Niche diplomacy can be defined as the middle powers' capacity to increase its global influence through the identification of niche areas in its regional and global governance.⁵³ Rather than grasping at many areas, middle powers that

only focus on the specific area or issue have become of interest as it offers greater advantages.⁵⁴ The implementation of niche diplomacy can be identified by Indonesia's GMF behaviour when building relations with China's BRI. Because the GMF and BRI share a common objective to enhance connectivity, Indonesia views that the BRI will provide good opportunities to develop its connectivity and infrastructure.⁵⁵ Indonesia needs a huge investment from foreign partners to build its domestic infrastructure because the rate of foreign investment in Indonesia in terms of its total GDP is relatively low compared to neighbouring countries.⁵⁶

During Jokowi's visit to China against the backdrop of attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 2014, the two sides agreed to enhance their cooperation, particularly in the areas of maritime development and infrastructure.⁵⁷ Therefore it can be said that the 'niche area' determined by Indonesia is the BRI's infrastructure investment project. Indonesia then became the largest Southeast Asian recipient of infrastructure investment from China as the country received an investment amount of \$87 billion in repayable loans for the purpose of developing its economy.⁵⁸ This investment has been used to enhance many domestic projects in Indonesia such as the construction of railways and highways, oil and gas pipelines, power networks and maritime infrastructures. Maritime infrastructures are very important to Indonesia as an archipelagic country in order to connect the different islands.

When invited to the Center for Education and Training of the Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Xie Feng—the Chinese Ambassador to Indonesia—stated that Indonesia and China can further strengthen its bilateral cooperation in maritime infrastructure and connectivity development.⁵⁹ Indonesia's Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019 and the Blue Book 2015-2019 have listed several major infrastructure projects in Indonesia, such as the construction of bridges, ships and sea ports. In this plan, China will contribute and cooperate with Indonesia to implement these projects. Recently, Chinese corporations have actively contributed to the development of over 30 ports in Eastern Indonesia. China is willing to be a partner in the redevelopment and extension of Tanjung Priok Port in Jakarta, participating in the planning and design of the highways, railways and sea port facilities in addition to helping reduce cargo dwelling time.⁶⁰ Besides that, China is also ready to cooperate with Indonesia in the development of the Batam-Bintan cross-sea bridge. These Chinese investments in Indonesian maritime infrastructure projects can strengthen the maritime connectivity between its islands, thus smoothing the flow of goods and commodities and reducing the inequality between the Indonesian regions.

Building constructive roles

Middle power countries usually declare themselves to be a middle power. This declaration is an early step for countries seeking to increase their active role in international affairs.⁶¹ By adopting functionalism, these countries then believe that their status in the international system has risen. Instrumentally, it offered possibilities for countries to build their constructive role within the specific framework.⁶² Its responsibility thus differs middle powers from small powers or minor actors. This is because middle powers are convinced that they must keep the region safe, spreading a positive atmosphere between neighbouring countries.

Declaring itself to be a middle power was committed by Joko Widodo in his early administration as Indonesia's President. Further implementation was then carried out through the formation of the GMF as part of Indonesia's commitment and effort to become a global maritime power. Indonesia does not only act as a centre of maritime dynamics and economic activities between the two continents and oceans, but it also seeks to take a greater responsibility by strengthening the domestic and regional maritime domain.⁶³ These efforts are supported by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, who stated that Indonesia's GMF and China's BRI aim to strengthen maritime connectivity and enhance the capacity of Southeast Asian countries to maximise security and the management of their maritime resources.⁶⁴ The GMF was therefore an important instrument for Indonesia to use to strengthen its middle power capabilities and thus to increase Indonesia's constructive role in the region's security.

In relation to the BRI, the GMF seeks to develop the discussion and cooperation ongoing in areas of maritime security. In 2004, the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency, *Bakorkamla*, executed defense diplomacy with China.⁶⁵ This activity was accomplished through the formation of MoU about satellite sensing to monitor the water area. In August 2018, Indonesia and China also discussed strengthening the defense industry cooperation in the annual meeting of the 7th Defense Industry Cooperation Meeting RI-China.⁶⁶ Two months later, these countries then discussed security cooperation again. In this session, the Vice Chairman of China's Central Military and Indonesian Defense Minister held a meeting to strengthen the military cooperation between the two countries. Indonesia and China expected that this meeting to further strengthen the cooperation in terms of maritime security, joint military exercise, personal training and multilateral coordination. Ryamizard Ryacudu—Indonesian Defense Minister—even said that Indonesia is ready to engage in working with China to maintain the regional peace.⁶⁷

Behaving as a good multilateralist

Middle powers tend to act as good multilateralists where they have national desires and the capability to implement specific behavior.⁶⁸ In this context, the role of any middle powers should not be viewed as ‘a fixed universal’ but instead as ‘something which must rethink [be rethought] continuously in the dynamics of international system.’⁶⁹ Middle powers seek to find a multilateral and negotiated solution in order to solve an international problem.⁷⁰ This behaviour causes these countries to be regarded as good multilateralists or good international citizens.

Through the GMF, Indonesia has tried to label itself a good multilateralist by connecting the interests of the BRI and ASEAN. Interestingly, the BRI emerged at the time ASEAN was executing its own programmes about the masterplan for ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) as a programme to improve intra-ASEAN connectivity, thus these two initiatives complement each other.⁷¹ Indonesia then became regarded by China as an important actor for the purpose of bridging its interest with ASEAN because Indonesia is the ‘de-facto’ leader of ASEAN.⁷² At the same time, Indonesia also has a strategic interest in securing its regional position and managing the building of integrated connectivity under the centrality of ASEAN. This country used the BRI to promote close regional trade and investment linkage in relation to the improvement of interregional physical connectivity.⁷³ As a good multilateralist, Indonesia used the Chinese investment to develop its maritime infrastructure in order to increase the regional connectivity and to smooth the flows of goods to and from neighbouring countries.

Global maritime fulcrum as a middle power strategy in relation to the free-open Indo Pacific

The early concept of the FOIP was introduced on 22 August 2007 by Japanese Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, in his speech at the Indian Parliament about ideas of Indo-Pacific which is called the ‘Confluence of the Two Seas’. Different from the BRI that possessed a clear framework, the FOIP is not yet settled. In this speech, Abe initiated to encourage a coalition between Japan, the United States, Australia, and India—then referred as the Quad.⁷⁴ In November 2017, President Trump then declared the FOIP at the APEC meeting. This concept became a reiteration of the liberal hegemonic order that was brought by the United States. Therefore, the FOIP is not merely Japanese strategy, but it’s the Quad’s strategy. It came up in Abe’s speech, and the implementation of that concept is committed by the Quad—especially the United States.

Different from the BRI that has a clear framework and implementation, the concept of the FOIP is not yet settled. There are no concrete steps from the Quad to implement the FOIP optimally. Therefore, we use different indicators

to analyse Indonesia's middle power strategy towards the BRI and FOIP. The authors then argue that the '5Cs' from John Ravenhill is more appropriate to identify Indonesia's middle power strategy in relations with the FOIP. The 5Cs include capacity, concentration, creativity, coalition-building and credibility.⁷⁵ This is also in parallel with the work of Andrew F. Cooper, Richard A. Higgott and Kim R. Nossal.⁷⁶

The first characteristic is capacity, which refers to how the capacity of a middle power state relies heavily on their capability to share ideas through diplomacy. The second is concentration, which refers to the uniqueness of middle power states as they concentrate their foreign policy priorities concerning the issues or areas that benefit them. The third is creativity, as they possess intellectual and entrepreneurial leadership that could shape the perspectives of other states within international organisations. The fourth is coalition building, which explains the middle power's capability to form coalitions that could have a similar perspective with the ideas brought to them. The fifth is credibility which refers to how the initiatives can be accepted without ambition to obtain the maximum benefits. Credibility also refers to the consistency of the initiated policies.

Given its strategic position and capabilities, Indonesia has been known as *primus inter pares* in Southeast Asia. This means that formally Indonesia is equal to other Southeast Asian states but with an important position through its historical involvement in the region. It is regarded as a natural leader of ASEAN in the dynamics and institutional-building process.⁷⁷ In the last few decades, there has been a tendency to enhance Indonesia's role as global middle power. During Joko Widodo's presidency (2014-), Indonesia's foreign policy has been directed towards regional power but selective in its global involvement by prioritising matters related to national interests.⁷⁸ This can be seen as middle power behaviour associated with the so-called 'niche' diplomacy through the concentration of its activities. One of the prominent visions of the Joko Widodo presidency is the vision intending to make Indonesia part of the global maritime axis. The GMF is mainly inward-looking but there are still outward-looking aspects, especially in response to regional dynamics. As the US-China rivalry is becoming tense in the region, Indonesia needs to be responsive in order to not get trapped by their strategic rivalry. The US and the other Quad countries are coming in due to the FOIP in response to China's BRI. This forces the countries in the region to take a side between the US and China. However, Indonesia, as a middle power, especially in response to the FOIP, has its own strategies within the GMF framework which will be explored later.

The 5Cs analysis and Indonesia's strategy in response to the FOIP: AOIP as an extension of the GMF

In order to analyse this matter further, we need to identify Indonesia's middle power position in relation to its response to the FOIP. In line with the functional approach and behavioural approach, there is a need to identify the middle power through their diplomatic activities and the manner in which they pursue their foreign policy objectives. The authors argue that the '5Cs' can be the appropriate indicators to analyse the relations between Indonesia's GMF and BRI-FOIP.

Capacity

Capacity refers to the middle power's capabilities which heavily rely on its diplomatic capacity rather than military power. This is important in relations as it concerns how they disseminate and influence others with their ideas. Indonesia as a middle power also emphasises its diplomatic capacity when promoting the idea of the Indo-Pacific based on ASEAN centrality. How it is done will be explored through its relations with the other four 'Cs'.

Concentration

Indonesia during the Joko Widodo presidency prioritised the Indo-Pacific region and its objective of being part of a global maritime axis. This can be seen as a form of concentration in which the middle power will prioritise their foreign policy objectives which produce the desired results. While superpowers have the ability to focus on many areas, middle powers need to concentrate their foreign policy agenda due to their lack of capability compared to superpowers. This is called 'niche' diplomacy.⁷⁹ As Joko Widodo came into power in July 2014, Indonesia emphasised being a maritime power given its strategic location between the Indian and Pacific Ocean, thus stressing its focus on the Indo-Pacific through the GMF.⁸⁰ The Indo-Pacific is seen of as a geostrategic concern for Indonesia in which the strategic rivalry between the US and China will only divide or polarise the region. The goal is peace, stability and development in the region. South-east Asia is located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, thus it should retain its ASEAN's centrality to really ensure that the Indo-Pacific will not become an arena for competition between the great powers while ensuring the openness, transparency and inclusivity in the region. Indonesia will not only act as the centre of maritime dynamics but also take responsibility.⁸¹

Creativity

In this regard, the middle powers have creativity that is associated with intellectual leadership and entrepreneurial leadership. According to Oran R. Young, intellectual leadership refers to how an actor relies on their capabilities when

putting forward political energy and ideas that could shape the behaviour and perspectives of other actors through institutional bargaining.⁸² This can be seen in how Indonesia generated the Indo-Pacific concept. The idea itself is not new as we can trace it back to the second term of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency through the Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa. This is because he started to pay more attention to the Indo-Pacific. He further stated that there is a 'trust-deficit' in the Indo-Pacific which challenges the peace and stability of the region. Indonesia has tried to promote relationships based on the common good, specifically the 'Indo-Pacific Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation' in 2013.⁸³

As such, on 11 January 2018, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi made a speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and noted that, 'With regard to the future regional architecture, [...]. Indonesia wants ecosystem of peace, stability, prosperity to be established not only in ASEAN, but also in Indo-Pacific. Therefore, together with ASEAN, Indonesia will contribute in advancing a strong positive cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Instead of a cooperation that is based on suspicion or worse, a perception of threat.'⁸⁴ Indonesia will work together with other countries in the region to develop the so-called Indo-Pacific cooperation umbrella that is free, open, inclusive, rule of law-based and most importantly, based on the ASEAN's centrality.

If intellectual leadership is about generating ideas, then entrepreneurial leadership is about how the middle powers make use of their negotiating skill to influence or frame the issues in ways that are integrative while encouraging the actors to accept the deals.⁸⁵ During 2018 and 2019, Indonesia actively promoted and lobbied its Indo-Pacific concept with both ASEAN and EAS countries. The concept was introduced by Joko Widodo at the 32nd ASEAN Summit on 28 April 2018 which was later reiterated in the global dialogue of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) by Retno Marsudi on 16 May 2018. Furthermore, the concept was also formally presented at the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the EAS on 9 August 2018. On this occasion, Marsudi stated how Indonesia welcomes an exchange of views on the Indo-Pacific through discussions. She further assured the ministers that the concept was not intended to create any new mechanisms or to replace existing ones, rather, it is for the purpose of enhancing the existing mechanism following the dynamics in the region.⁸⁶

Coalition building

It was further emphasised in Joko Widodo's speech at the 13th EAS on 15 November 2018 that Indonesia would discuss the Indo-Pacific concept more openly with EAS countries. He also emphasised integrating the two oceans into a single geostrategic theater, '[...] the importance of increased maritime coopera-

tion, not only in the Pacific Ocean, but also in the Indian Ocean. We need to maintain peaceful and security in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. It is not about struggling for natural resources, regional disputes, and maritime supremacy. Rather, it is about how make the two oceans a center for world routes.⁸⁷ The Indo-Pacific concept itself focuses on three areas of cooperation, namely maritime cooperation, infrastructure and connectivity and sustainable development. These areas of cooperation are in line with the GMF's pillars in addition to the seven policy pillars of the Indonesian Ocean Policy: (1) maritime and human resource development, (2) maritime security, law enforcement and safety at sea, (3) ocean governance and institutions, (4) the development of the maritime economy, (5) ocean space management and maritime protection, (6) maritime culture and (7) maritime diplomacy.⁸⁸

However, the concept has not attracted the other ASEAN members as they have shown less enthusiasm, especially Singapore who stated that the concept was lacking in clarity. This is also due to the view of the other ASEAN members that the concept is seen as an initial move to step back from ASEAN and to become more Indonesia-centric. They are concerned with the possibility of making EAS the default mechanism of this concept.⁸⁹ After an extensive process, Indonesia then outlined a draft document titled 'Indonesia's perspective for an ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific: towards a peaceful, prosperous, and inclusive region'. Furthermore, to finalise it, Indonesia held a high-level dialogue on Indo-Pacific cooperation in Jakarta on 20 March 2019. It was provided a platform to discuss and exchange views about the opportunities for cooperation.⁹⁰ The draft was finally adopted by ASEAN at the 34th ASEAN Summit on 16 June 2019. Sukma specified that 'the Outlook promises that ASEAN will continue to maintain its central role in the evolving regional architecture [...] and continue to be an honest broker within strategic environment of competing interests.'⁹¹

The intellectual and entrepreneurial leadership above is finally directed to coalition-building. For middle powers, a coalition of like-minded states is essential to realising their objectives. This is because middle powers are not as powerful as superpowers. They will usually build coalitions through multilateral settings. In this regard, Indonesia values multilateralism to achieve its objectives as clearly stated by Joko Widodo in the 9th EAS on 13 November 2014: 'For Indonesia, EAS plays important role in promoting security, stability and prosperity in the region. Therefore, I choose this multilateral forum to express our idea of becoming global maritime axis.' As a strong maritime power, Indonesia is committed to keeping the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean peaceful and safe, thus opposing any kind of contestation.⁹²

Credibility

From the first four 'Cs', we come to credibility. Ravenhill explained credibility as how the ideas or initiatives coming from the middle powers are likely to be accepted by all parties.⁹³ There is an opinion, when compared to superpowers, that middle powers are unlikely to dominate and become the largest beneficiary of the outcome. Instead, they highlight mutual benefits and common good. The Indo-Pacific concept laid down in the AOIP is widely accepted. Tan argued that the US response to China's BRI forces the countries in the region to take side.⁹⁴ In addition, the FOIP brought in by the Quad, especially by the US, is often seen as an anti-China coalition. This has hardened due to the tense rivalry between the US and China which makes the FOIP more directed as a counter balance against China. Its exclusive approach could jeopardise ASEAN centrality. In this context, the AOIP offers a different approach in the Indo-Pacific by emphasising ASEAN centrality and inclusivity. The AOIP will engage all powers within the EAS, including China.

There is also the dimension of credibility mentioned by Ravenhill: how consistent the middle powers are in their policies or initiatives, both domestically and internationally.⁹⁵ In this context, we can safely argue that Indonesia, as Marsudi said, is striving to become a true partner for peace, security and prosperity.⁹⁶ This has been consistently promoted and they take a lead in this matter. In response to the FOIP and the strategic rivalry between the US and China, Indonesia has played an important role in drafting the outlook in the Indo-Pacific. Given that the AOIP is an extension of the GMF vision, Weatherbee and Anwar noted that it will leverage Indonesia in the maritime domain and give credibility to the GMF in response to the FOIP.⁹⁷ Sukma noted that there are two imperatives in terms of how Indonesia will ensure the AOIP realisation: (1) that it is important for Indonesia to implement its maritime strategy comprehensively, and (2) that Indonesia must ensure to advance multilateralism through discussions within ASEAN-led mechanisms on a common strategy for the Indo-Pacific.⁹⁸ Indonesia along with the other ASEAN members must engage proactively in the midst of strategic rivalry. On top of that, Indonesia looks forward to the AOIP serving as an inclusive platform for all competing regional visions while mitigating any power rivalries.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Indonesia uses its global maritime fulcrum agenda to respond to power geopolitics like those of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) brought in by China and the Free-Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) brought in by the Quad. The analysis shows that Indonesia engages with the characteristics of being a middle power when responding to the BRI through maximising its own

resources and then implementing niche diplomacy. This also relates to using its strength when conducting diplomacy especially with China within the BRI framework and with Indonesia's interest in the GMF. Indonesia also has the capability to build itself a constructive role as well as being a good multilateralist within ASEAN by connecting the ASEAN interests with the BRI agenda.

Furthermore, Indonesia uses the 5Cs as middle power variables when responding to the FOIP. The first is capacity, focusing on Indonesia's power. The next is concentration, where Indonesia tries to focus on the benefits from the FOIP while connecting it with the GMF. Creativity is where Indonesia actively engages with establishing values for ASEAN in relation to the FOIP. It also connects with coalition-building where Indonesia is trying to develop its relations not only with the FOIP but also with other states, especially during the East Asia Summit. The last is credibility. It can be argued that Indonesia takes a firm stance when upholding neutrality when responding to the BRI and FOIP. Therefore according to both the middle power and character analysis being focused on Indonesia in response to the BRI and FOIP, it can be assumed that Indonesia is trying to focus on its own agenda as well as focusing on its values and capacity when responding to the BRI and FOIP.

Through this paper, we expect Indonesia could act in a certain way in the future. Indonesia uses the GMF as strategy to increase its prestige, role and influence in regional and even international order. Nevertheless, it does not mean that Indonesia will disengage from ASEAN because Indonesia still depends on this organisation. Indonesia also has a prominent role in ASEAN and there is a lot of space for Indonesia to influence the decisions from ASEAN. Besides that, Indonesia did not make the GMF to go against the BRI and FOIP. Indeed, Indonesia desires to build relationships and cooperation with the BRI and FOIP in any sector that suits its interest.



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