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Analysis of Indian National Interests in the Malacca Strait Coordinated Patrol in 2018

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Abstract:

The Malacca Strait is one of the strategic trade routes with more than 60,000 ships passing over more than one third of the world's commodities. Strategic values do not necessarily bring benefits, but also bring security threats. The number of countries that use Malacca Strait shipping services increase crime rates such as piracy, drug trafficking, environmental pollution, and various other threats. In an effort to overcome this problem, since 2004 multilateral cooperation has been established in the Malacca Strait Security Patrol scheme between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. This collaboration has succeeded in reducing crime rates since this collaboration was established. In 2018 India As one of the new actors in the Asia Pacific region volunteered to join in the Malacca Straits Patrol scheme. This study analyzes policies, strategies and national interests of India in the Malacca Strait. By using the foreign perspective with the Strategic Model / Rational Model as well as the concept of national interest, this research uses the Kulitative method with a case study approach to the coordination of the Malacca Strait Security Patrol. Research data collection is carried out by literature review of journals, books, reports, and internet-based sources. India, which views the Malacca Strait Patrols collaboration as a strategic partnership has a vision to expand Chinese cooperation and political influence in the Southeast Asia region and within the framework of the Indian maritime strategy in the Pacific Ocean to the Asia Pacific region.

Keywords: Strategy, interests, joint patrol, malacca strait, Asia Pacific

1. Introduction

For centuries, the Strait of Malacca became an important trade route marked by the famous port of Malacca in the 1400-1700s so that the strait became one of the policy priorities (Britannica, 2019). At present there are at least a number of important international ports in the Malacca Strait, including: Singapore Harbor, the Merging of Kelang (Malaysia), and the Ports of Pulau Pinang and Belawan (Indonesia). In its development, the Malacca Strait became a trade traffic that involved the dependence of many countries. The Malacca Strait is an energy distribution channel for industrial countries such as China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Nearly around 13.6 million barrels of oil and around 72% of trade traffic between the Asia Pacific and Western countries such as India, the Middle East and Europe crosses the region. This makes the Malacca Strait as the busiest strait with more than 60,000 ships passing by carrying almost one third of the world's commodities (C.S.Kuppuswamy, 2004). Strategic values do not necessarily bring benefits, but also bring security threats. The number of countries that use the services of the Malacca Strait adds to the number of piracy and illegal crime, even the Malacca Strait has become the most dangerous voyage in the world (Yudistira, 2016).

According to Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2005), it was stated that the threats were in the form of human trafficking, arms smuggling, kidnapping, robbery, and piracy of ships, and terrorist attacks aimed at paralyzing the international trade flow of the Malacca Strait. On July 20, 2004 in Batam a collaboration was formed under the name Malsindo Trilateral Coordinated Patrol which is a coordinated patrol activity between Indonesia and Malaysia (Wijaya, 2017). In addition, in its development, coordinated patrol carried out not only involves trilateral agreements between coastal countries, but also the participation of Thailand has shown how Southeast Asian countries can join forces against various threats in the form of piracy. This cooperation is guided by the ASEAN Way principle to be able to enter into a cooperation agreement to improve maritime security in the Malacca Strait waters by maintaining the principle of sovereignty and non-intervention (Shiee, 2006, p. 180). This has been regulated in the International Regulation for Preventing Collisions at Sea agreement and the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which gives rights to protect sovereignty and establish transit regulations in the Strait of Malacca, including security of entry and exit of goods, management traffic, and other regulations (Wijaya, 2017).

Based on data from the IMB Piracy Report (2018) there was a significant decrease in the threat of crime from 2004 with a total of 38 crime cases until the end of 2017 with the number of detected crimes reaching zero (p. 6). On 29-30 May 2018 in the Indonesia-India meeting in Bali, India Proposed itself to join in cooperation with the trilateral state between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore in maintaining security in the Malacca Strait. Geographically, the Malacca Strait is not an area of Indian sovereignty and the effectiveness of the previously established security cooperation demonstrates the success of the cooperation. This study will analyze India's National Policies, Strategies and Interests wanting to be incorporated into the Malacca Straits security cooperation scheme. By using the Qualitative method with a case study approach of the patrol cooperation in the Malacca Strait Security, this study will answer that question by using a foreign perspective with a Strategic Model / Rational Model and the concept of Indian national interests in the Malacca Strait.

2. Methodology

This study analyzes policies, strategies and national interests of India in the Malacca Strait. By using the foreign perspective with the Strategic Model / Rational Model as well as the concept of national interest, this research uses the Qualitative Method with a case study approach to the coordination of the Malacca Strait Security Patrol. Research data collection is carried out by literature review of journals, books, reports, and internet-based sources.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Strategic Model / Rational Model

This model assumes that the state can be considered as an actor who seeks to maximize the achievement of their goals based on rational calculations in the arena of global politics (Jensen, 1982, p. 5). The focus of attention of the researchers is more emphasis on transactions / interactions between the parties involved rather than reviewing an event only from the point of view of the party who responded only (6). In a strategic perspective, the general pattern of foreign policy sustainability and change is explained based on the strategic goals of decision makers (Lovel, 1970, p. 26). Lovel (1970) has suggested that there are several main factors that influence the process of formulating a country's foreign policy strategy, such as: the structure of the international system, elite perceptions, strategies of other nation-states, and capabilities owned by the country. These four factors determine the mode of interaction between countries in a strategic perspective which includes leadership strategy, confrontation strategy, accommodative strategy, and concordance strategy (p. 65).

Foreign policy is a strategy or plan of action made by state decision makers in dealing with other countries or other international political units, and is controlled to achieve specific national goals as outlined in the terminology of national interests (Plano & Olton, 1988). Foreign policy carried out by the government of a country indeed aims to achieve the national interests of the people it governs even though national interests are determined by those in power at that time (Mas'ood, 1994, p. 184). The same thing was stated by Waltz (1967) that foreign policy was made by a country to achieve an interest that was influenced by the international system.

3.2. The Concept of National Interest

The national interests of a country generally have an important part in which there is self-preservation, independence, territorial integrity, military security and economic welfare (Plano & Olton, 1988). In this concept explains that for the survival of a country, the state must meet the needs of the country in other words, namely achieving its national interests. With the achievement of national interests, the country will run stably, both in terms of political, economic, social, and defense and security. National interest is a fundamental goal and the most decisive factor guiding decision makers in formulating foreign policy. The interests of the authorities and then the state create a series of actions that are set based on the policy needs of competition between countries (Waltz, 1967). To fulfill their national interests, the countries and actors of these countries undertake various kinds of cooperation including bilateral, trilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation (Yani, 2010, p. 3).

4. Discussion

4.1. Strategic Value and International Cooperation in the Malacca Strait

The Malacca Strait since the beginning of the 15th century until the beginning of the 21st century has the same relative issue that the Malacca Strait is a strategic path that can benefit both economically and politically so that the authority of power in this strait is needed. As the Portuguese did when they seized control of the Sultanate of Malacca in 1511. During the break of World War I and II, the British positioned Singapore as a center of defense to guard British territories in South Asia (Indian Ocean) and blockaded the gate of the Straits of Malacca to the south so that Japan would not be easy enter Australia and New Zealand. In contrast to geopolitical issues, the concentration of economic activity in the countries traversed by the Malacca Strait, namely Indonesia (especially the Riau Islands), Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand has experienced very dynamic changes. The economic space landscape or economic geography of the Malacca Strait has changed a lot. What character and pattern of change is most dominant in the Malacca Strait region is important to study because it has its own strategic values both in economic and political terms for countries that have authority in the territorial area of the Malacca Strait (Sangkoyo et al., 2011, p. 30).

For Indonesia The existence of the east coast of Sumatra Island and a series of small islands in the east that cover more than 1,600 Km of coastline is very productive in marine resources. The Malacca Strait is the second largest producer of marine fish after the Java Sea. This certainly can be a source of additional commodities for Indonesia. Therefore, the Malacca Strait region is one of the six zones of Indonesia's PKM (Development of Maritime Excellence) agenda (p. 13). For Malaysia, around 60% of the total annual fish catch comes from the Malacca Strait while for Singapore, the economic value of the Malacca Strait can be seen from how Singapore utilizes its strategic geographical location in the region to take a position as a trading country. A few years ago Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore initiated the establishment of an integrated Special Economic Zone connecting Singapore, Johor, and Riau, which was named the SIJORI Triangle. SIJORI is expected to be able to build competition from the three regions to be able to attract investors in infrastructure (Gerke & Evers, 2011). So that the Malacca Strait can be a central role in the expansion of economic activities in the Southeast Asian region as well as economic integration and cooperation between Asian countries in general.

Politically, the Malacca Strait has the meaning of being a choke point of the naval fleet in making a forward presence to various parts of the world, especially East Asia and the Middle East. For the Littoral State, political control of the Malacca Strait means recognizing the legitimacy of these States in the Malacca Strait. This was stated in the 1957 Geneva Convention on the Law of the Sea which said that the jurisdiction of the coastal State was 12 nautical miles drawn from the outermost point. In this case the Strait of Malacca is 220 nautical miles at the north entrance and narrows to 8 nautical miles at the south entrance. In 1982, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) agreed on several points of a new agreement on the law of the sea. One of them is mentioned in Article 57 of UNCLOS's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which states that a coastal State has the exclusive right to manage and utilize natural resources, freedom of navigation, the right of air flight, and to plant cables and pipelines as far as 200 nautical miles from the coastline. This means that each Littoral States State has economic access in the Malacca Strait. According to Pailah (2007) the consequences applied by EEZ in the Malacca Strait region made the Littoral States States have exclusive rights, among others, namely (p. 3);

- The sovereign right to exploration and exploitation of natural resource management maintains marine ecosystems.
- The right to carry out law enforcement is carried out by the apparatus who deals directly, in an effort to create, maintain and maintain peace.
- The right to take action against foreign vessels that violate the provisions of EEZ Indonesia.
- Exclusive rights to build, regulate, use artificial islands.
- The right to determine scientific activities in the form of research.

The Malacca Strait is a region in Southeast Asia between three coastal countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Factors such as geography, regularity and intensity of interactions, shared regional perceptions, and agency bind the formation of a regionalism. Thus it can be said that regionalism formed in the Malacca Strait is part of economic, political, security and socio-cultural engagement with consideration of geographical proximity. The term regionalism is often used to refer to regional cooperation and regional integration. regional economic development can actually be seen from how dynamic the relationships between economic corridors are, which are clearly visible with the hectic activity and mobility of the people in the corridor area (Gochhayat, 2014). The complexity of regional trade and the flow of international goods is a question of some security cooperation, which makes the Malacca Strait one of the threatening zones of international shipping. This strategic area is increasingly attractive to the international community because of its complexity in monitoring internal and external flow and its use as well as the security of these ports being subject to threats (Purushothaman, 2015, p. 6). In the end to achieve regional objectives of a safe strait, leading regional powers must take primary responsibility in the security phase and work together in overcoming these various threats.

Existing threats include piracy, terrorism, and also arms trafficking. While the perceived threat is the loss of control of the Malacca coastal states, patrols of ships sailing through the strait, power struggles, loss of naval bases and a race in maritime maritime ships. Furthermore, it is suspected that other terrorist groups in Southeast Asia, such as the Abu Sayyaf Group, the Free Aceh Movement, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), are also involved in arms trafficking, sea piracy, or terrorist attack in the region. Piracy in the Malacca Strait is believed to be reduced from day to day due to existing cooperation between the coastal states and the user countries (p. 7). Bilateral or multilateral agreements have been implemented for years to combat marine crime with varying degrees of success. Multinational efforts such as The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), Malacca Strait Sea Patrol (MSSP), Eye in the Sky (EiS), Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG) and others.

4.2. Policies, Strategies and Interests of India in the Malacca Strait

4.2.1. East India Act Policy

India has long had a strategic vision and mission for the region to the east. Based on historical studies, the Chola kingdom in India chose to expand power and establish trade relations with Srivijaya in Indonesia. Countries to the east of India are closer culturally to India, bearing in mind that the religions born in India spread to the east. After independence from Britain, India joined in non-aligned solidarity that was driven by many Asian countries. The role of India is greatly appreciated in peace in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (Muni, 2011). The end of the cold war which gave rise to new dynamics in the international political constellation pushed India back to formulating the direction of its foreign policy.

The political and economic crisis that hit India since the late 1980s led to the newly elected prime minister Narasimha Rao at the time developing a foreign policy capable of helping India recover. In 1991, Rao launched a Look East Policy which focused on building trade and investment relations with Southeast Asian countries (Haokip, 2011).

In 2003, Look East Policy was increasingly expansive both spatially and substantially. By retaining key players in Southeast Asia, India began to look to East Asia and the Pacific Islands. India's scope of interests has also been broadened towards building broader security and political cooperation (Haokip, 2011). At the operational level, Look East Policy is realized in the form of the Bay of Bengal Policy. This policy emphasizes the strategic role of the Bay of Bengal, the sea which lies east of India, as a gateway from the west towards the East (Asia Pacific). At the institutional level, the centrality of the Bay of Bengal in Indian foreign policy is outlined in the form of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Scientific, Technological, and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). BIMSTEC's fields of work include trade, investment, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, transportation relations, and human resource development (Muni, 2011). The intensification of economic interests has become the foundation for India to optimize its efforts to accommodate its political and security interests. In a bilateral context, Look East Policy is part of India's large counter-political agenda String of Pearls. Myanmar's close relations with China and Pakistan and the strong motivation of China to dominate the Sea Lines of Communication in Southeast Asia and South Asia have made India intensify the Bay of Bengal vision, one of which is by projecting political operations into the Straits of Malacca (Muni, 2011).

4.2.2. India as a QUAD Member

The quad itself was once again strengthened when the East Asia Summit (EAS) event was then held in Manila in 2017. Through the high-level conference which was also attended by China and Russia - Trump, Shinzo Abe, Narendra Modi and Malcolm Turnbull then took advantage of the momentum by bringing the Quad back to the surface. The interests of this cross-country security alliance are in fact a response to the geopolitical shift of the Asia Pacific region as well as overseeing the interests of countries such as India and Japan which incidentally are located directly in the Asian region. Meanwhile, the US with the spirit of its foreign policy that carries 'Rebalance to Asia' which was then echoed by Obama, then perfected by Trump through the doctrine of American First and considers China as the main enemy of the US. Through political calculations exhibited by the state actor, the Quad itself is a representation of US interests while cooperating with the regional central powers (Japan, India and Australia) as the 'bargaining price' of the power of the alliance. After knowing the purpose of the emergence of the Quad, then the description of what is the 'security dilemma' between countries, thus forming a 'security pact' through this Quad, should also be noted.

The development of the Chinese sea power strategy is economically implemented to secure the sea lane for its energy supply. However, it is politically part of the strategy to expand its influence in the Asian region. This path stretches from the Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, to the South China Sea that passes through the strategic path of the Malacca Strait (Gulshan, 2015). As is known according to David Scott, the main source of Chinese energy supply comes from the Middle East and Africa with a percentage of 62 percent. The strategy of securing the Chinese sea lane that was declared in 2005 was later popular with the term String of Pearl. This concept is a term originally conveyed by consultant Booz Allen based in the United States (US) in referring to the Chinese strategy along the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) which stretches from the Arabian Sea to the China Sea. Such routes are used for maritime trade traffic, logistics shipping and the Chinese Navy sailing lanes. In implementing the String of Pearl strategy, China established special diplomatic relations with the countries traversed by the route, which stretched from the Arabian Sea to the South China Sea. Thus the stretch also passes through the Strait of Malacca. This shows the expansion of China's geopolitical strategy in line with the strengthening of the economy and the capability of its power (Iqbal Cahyanto, 2017).

For the Narendra Modi Regime, Chinese maneuvering through the String of Pearl strategy would certainly be very tangent to the existence of his country. Because the scope of Chinese maritime policy touches India's geographical and massive impact. Then the thing that becomes a security dilemma for India is when 'high tension' with Pakistan can be exploited by China through cooperation that will be established. Because the scope of this maritime infrastructure development mega project will maximize the Gwadar port as a central point in the Central Asian region, which is in Pakistan's territory. With the existence of China building the port, at the same time China can also exist to control the wealth of energy resources available throughout the Central Asia region. And of course this will be a new round of escalation of the India-Pakistan conflict going forward. The United States is trying to restore its hegemony over the Southeast Asian region by creating an Indo-Pacific vision. While cooperating with its partners, Australia, Japan and India, the US is trying to implement the Indo-Pacific principles which were launched through Donald Trump's speech in November 2017 (Gyngell, 2011). This action was considered offensive because it tried to change the map of political constellation in a very strategic region and increase the tension of geopolitical rivalry (Wibowo, 2018).

4.2.3. Indian Interests

Since regional cooperation between India and the coastal states of the Malacca Strait had developed rapidly in the 19th century, the security of the strait was diplomatically a concern of India. Beyond all non-traditional threats, India's strategic interest in securing the strait plays a major role in securing land from the new security environment. India has found a way to stabilize regional security. The BIMSTEC initiative (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand-Thailand Economic Cooperation) found political-economic cooperation in the region where India stabilized its support and gained interest in the region. The main focal point about the Malacca Strait is that it has become a gateway and subsequently achieved bilateral and regional cooperation with several mechanisms of cooperation such as the ASEAN Regional Forum to address non-traditional threats in the region.

Now it is difficult to strengthen this bond because of changes in the regional security environment. Beyond all the extraordinary cooperation in the region, the formation of the ANC (Andaman and Nicobar Command) is growing into the current need, in turn, to secure the strait on the interests of defense projections and economic stability in the region. India has established close relations with ASEAN countries since independence and began expanding its influence in the Southeast Asian region during the 1950s by supporting Indonesia's independence struggle and engaging in the Indochinese crisis in the 1960s. India also signed friendly agreements with Indonesia, Myanmar and the Philippines and consolidated bilateral relations and diplomatic relations with them.

However, with the signing of the 'Peace and Friendship Cooperation Agreement' between India and the Soviet Union, relations between India and ASEAN have declined. The institutionalization of ASEAN-India relations first took place when the first ASEAN-India Meeting in Phnom Penh was held on 5 November 2002 and was considered as the success of the implementation of the Look East Policy of India. This success is considered as recognition of India's emergence as a key player in the Asia Pacific region (Mohini, 2002). There is clear recognition in India's strategic political circle of the importance of the ASEAN economy for India's national interests. Singapore in 2002, Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee stated, 'the Southeast Asian region is one of the focal points of Indian foreign policy, a strategic choice for economic interests' (Vajpayee, 2002).

India regards ASEAN as the core of the East Asia region and believes in putting emphasis on interaction with ASEAN. With deep concern about China's influence in the region, India invites ASEAN to foster multilateral security in the Asia-Pacific region (Mattoo, 2001). This was also emphasized by Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi where he stated that the Indo-Pacific region would not be a big theater for the new cold war, the proposition of the political and economic competition of the United States (US) with China. The US and its Quad ranks (Australia, Japan, India) slowly reduce the quality of ASEAN's role by raising a new actor, India, to face China. And we do not want this region to become a competition for Graham Allison's Thucydides Trap, which at the end we become the satellite that must choose to entrench with whom (Priatnah, 2019).

Of course in its involvement in the Malacca Strait, India has its own national interests where the Malacca Strait has an exclusive economic path. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is twice that of India and has quite an open market opportunity. The Malacca Strait has a rich natural resource base, India looks at the opportunity to be able to integrate its multi-national companies to develop the Malacca Strait region and more broadly in ASEAN. In addition, Malacca Straits countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand are the main investors in India, particularly in infrastructure development and venture capital activities. A recent study has predicted that countries in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region will experience the fastest economic growth in the world and offer the most potential benefits for foreign direct investment (FDI) over the next 10 years. This will be very meaningful because not only the security of the area but also the economic aspects that can lift the region as a whole with a variety of cooperation that might be formed later.

On the other hand, India, which has the intention to deter China, also needs cooperation with the assistance of several other countries. This step is carried out through the implementation of the 'The Necklace Diamond' strategy in response to Strings of Pearls. In terms of capability, India has the advantage over China. This can be seen from various modernizations of the INS Fleet, one of which is the construction of a new fleet of aircraft carriers. Necklace Diamond which is an extension of the Blue Water Navy is a strategy that sees countries outside South Asia close to the Indian Ocean such as Indonesia, Japan and Australia as diamonds. This strategy appears as a form that India wants to do relations in the form of Look East Policy through the power of the sea that is owned now to projects prepared by India for the future. India's move closer to the countries in the east due to poor relations with its neighbors in South Asia which has become a strong ally of China through the string of pearls. Of course India cannot deter China by embracing allies with China. Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh share a 'mistrust' view of India even though India is a regional power in the region. The strong Chinese influence in South Asian countries made India drop alternative choices through look east policy and implemented it in 'diamond necklace' with its Blue Water Navy capability (Iqbal Cahyanto, 2017). So that various attempts were made by India to gain its national interests including cooperation with the Littoral State countries which is a pre-incentive step in implementing the Strategy and also its foreign policy, especially in the Southeast Asian region.

5. Conclusion

The Malacca Strait is a strategic path that can provide benefits both economically and politically so that the authority of power in this strait is needed. For the Littoral State the strait provides its own advantages marked by the establishment of an integrated Special Economic Zone that connects Singapore, Johor and Riau, which is named the SIJORI Triangle. Therefore, this region has become a central role in the expansion of economic activities in the Southeast Asian region as well as economic integration and cooperation between Asian countries in general. Politically, the Malacca Strait has the meaning of being a choke point of the naval fleet in making a forward presence to various parts of the world, especially East Asia and the Middle East. For the Littoral State, political control of the Malacca Strait means recognizing the legitimacy of the sovereignty of these countries.

India, which sees the Malacca Strait as a very strategic area, has a vision and mission towards the region located to the east under the name Look East Policy. At the operational level, Look East Policy is realized in the form of the Bay of Bengal Policy. This policy emphasizes the strategic role of the Bay of Bengal, the sea which lies east of India, as a gateway from the west towards the East (Asia Pacific). The intensification of economic interests has become the foundation for India to optimize its efforts to accommodate its political and security interests. In a bilateral context, Look East Policy is part of India's large counter-political agenda String of Pearls. India's scope of interests has also been expanded by building security and political cooperation.

The joining of India with QUAD members gave India a distinct advantage as a collaboration that was deliberately built as a rivalry of Chinese influence and strategy in the Asia Pacific region. Although economically applied to secure the sea lane, its energy supply. However, politically the Chinese strategy is part of the interest in expanding its influence in the Asia Pacific region. The Chinese strategy called the String of Pearls strategy is a strategy that establishes special diplomatic relations with the countries traversed by the route, which stretches from the Arabian Sea to the South China Sea. Thus the stretch also passes through the Indian Ocean. This shows the expansion of China's geopolitical strategy in line with the strengthening of the economy and the capability of its power.

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