

Peloponnesian War: Lessons Learned for Indonesia's Foreign Policy and Defense Strategy

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ABSTRACT

The Peloponnesian War was a protracted conflict fought between the city-states of Sparta and Athens, along with their respective allies, in ancient Greece from 431 to 404 BC. The War was a significant and devastating event that resulted in immense economic and military strains on both sides. It is studied by many for its historical significance and the lessons it provides on the impact of prolonged conflicts. The parallels between the Peloponnesian War and modern-day conflicts, particularly in relation to a Rising Power vis-à-vis a Declining Power, are often used to understand the power dynamics and strategic considerations in modern-day warfare. The focus of this study is to take the strategies implemented by the conflicting parties in the Peloponnesian War, with a sub-focus on the modern era, namely the conflict in the South China Sea as a form of hegemony over the Asia Pacific. This research was conducted using an interpretive qualitative analysis method which was carried out through a literature study until November 2024. This research attempts to take some lessons from the Peloponnesian War, especially as a reference for developing a comprehensive and effective defense strategy today, to be used by Indonesia and ASEAN countries with the hope of creating peace in the IndoPacific region.

INTRODUCTION

The Peloponnesian War was an ancient Greece war fought between Athens and Sparta, assisted by their allies, with the aim of hegemony over Greece. The war lasted for a long period of time (431-404 BC), until the decisive intervention of the Persian Empire in support of Sparta. The Spartan fleet, built with Persian subsidies, led by Lysander, eventually defeated Athens and began a period of Spartan hegemony over Greece. The Peloponnesian Allies were a coalition of Thebes, Corinth and Sparta (Lendon, 2014).

The main historical source of the Peloponnesian War is the detailed account in "The History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides". It is stated that he began writing his history as soon as the war broke out and drew information from first-hand accounts. Thucydides was exiled in 423 BC and settled in the Peloponnese, where he spent the remainder of the war collecting sources and writing his history. Scholars consider Thucydides to be reliable and neutral between the two sides (Morley, 2021).

The War was a significant and devastating event that resulted in immense economic and military strains on both sides. The war was described as a 'world war' in miniature, involving states from various regions (Lazenby, 2007). It is studied by many for its historical significance and the lessons it provides on the impact of prolonged conflicts.

The parallels between the Peloponnesian War and modern-day conflicts, particularly in relation to a Rising Power *vis-à-vis* a Declining Power, are often used to understand the power dynamics and strategic considerations in modern-day warfare.

The focus of this study is to take the strategies implemented by the conflicting parties in the Peloponnesian War, with a sub-focus on the modern era, namely the conflict in the South China Sea as a form of hegemony over the Asia Pacific. This research attempts to take some lessons from the Peloponnesian War, especially as a reference for developing a comprehensive and effective defense strategy today, to be used by Indonesia and ASEAN countries with the hope of creating peace in the Indo-Pacific region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Balance of Power Theory

The "balance of power" system is a system in which the power held and exercised by a country in the system is checked and balanced by the power of other countries. Thus, when the power of a country grows to the point of threatening other countries, a balancing coalition is needed to hold back the rising power. So that any attempt to achieve world hegemony does not occur (Schweller, 2016).

Center of gravity (CoG) Theory

Clausewitz (1832) explained that in general, CoG has two things in one meaning: CoG is the place where the most concentrated mass is found. The first meaning, CoG as a place that can become the most dangerous attack force. Second, CoG is the most strategic attack target. Clausewitz argued that this approach was based on the scale of victory, which was based on the size of the

defeated force. So, to achieve this goal, the main target is the enemy's greatest concentration of strength. The greater the force used to conquer the greatest concentration of power, the more guaranteed the effect will be in the form of a greater scale of victory. This approach describes the characteristics and impact of the CoG theory (Clausewitz, 1832).

Security Complex Theory

The concept of a security complex is defined as a group of countries that have similar perceptions and primary concerns regarding security that are so closely related that their national security problems cannot be analysed or resolved separately from each other (Buzan et al., 1998).

Strategy Theory

According to Lykke, there are three interrelated elements that must be carefully considered in formulating a strategy, namely: "End" represents the final goal or target to be achieved, "Ways" refers to the method used. used to achieve goals, and "Means" are the resources, capabilities, and assets available to implement the chosen methods (Jablonsky et al., 2008).

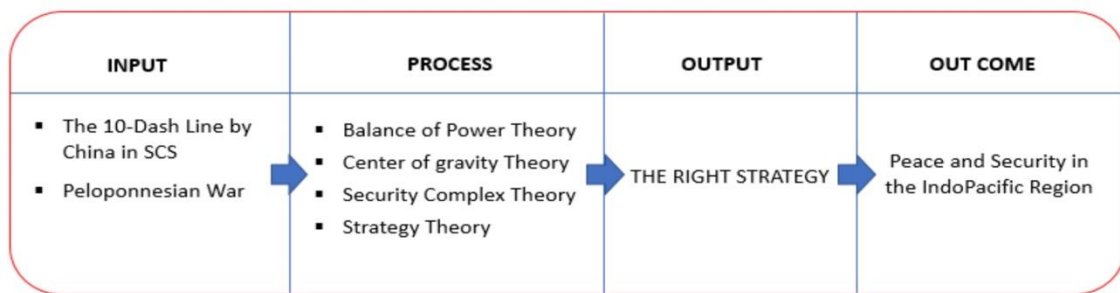


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted using an interpretive qualitative analysis method conducted through a literature study up to November 2024, from secondary sources whose truth can be accounted for, including notes from Thucydides, expert research results, official government reports, scientific journals, and internet news up to 2024. The analysis was conducted using the triangulation method to ensure the interconnectedness of several data into a series of interconnected understandings. Then it was analysed using the theory presented in the framework of thought, to develop an appropriate strategy with the ultimate goal of creating peace and security in the Asia Pacific region.

RESEARCH RESULT

Historical review of the Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War was an ancient Greece war fought between Athens and Sparta, assisted by their allies, with the aim of hegemony over Greece. The war lasted for a long period of time (431-404 BC), until the decisive intervention of the Persian Empire in support of Sparta. The Spartan fleet, built with Persian subsidies, led by Lysander, eventually defeated Athens and began

a period of Spartan hegemony over Greece. The Peloponnesian Allies were a coalition of Thebes, Corinth and Sparta (Strauss, 2014).



Figure 2. Map of Peloponnesian War
(Platias & Koliopoulos, 2000)

The Peloponnesian War was an ancient Greece war fought between Athens and Sparta, assisted by their allies, with the aim of hegemony over Greece. The war lasted for a long period of time (431-404 BC), until the decisive intervention of the Persian Empire in support of Sparta. The Spartan fleet, built with Persian subsidies, led by Lysander, eventually defeated Athens and began a period of Spartan hegemony over Greece. The Peloponnesian Allies were a coalition of Thebes, Corinth and Sparta (Strauss, 2014).

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sources and writing his history. Scholars consider Thucydides to be reliable and neutral between the two sides (Morley, 2021).

Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power and prosperous economy was the primary factor in the Peloponnesian War. Athens controlled most of the Mediterranean along with Greece, 50 years before the war. According to Thucydides, that after Athens became the leader of the Delian allies, they had supreme power known as the Athenian Empire. They almost drove the Persians from their areas in the Aegean and supremacy of more occupied territories. Athens' naval power was also growing day by day and endangering the border countries (Morley, 2021).

The Peloponnesian War was divided into three phases, *inter alia*:

1. ***The Archidamian War (431 - 421 B.C.)***

The Archidamian War began with the Battle of Stratus, where Athens deployed 100 ships and destroy the cities of Elis and Laconia. In June 431 BC, the Peloponnesians led by Archidamian II invaded Attica. The Spartan army was able to control it in just three weeks. This happened because Pericles made a mistake in his war strategy, the strategy used was a frontal and open attack. The Spartan army had been trained from an early age to be able to deal with it easily. One-third to two-thirds of the population of Athens lost their lives. And unfortunately, Athens was hit by a deadly plague that caused Pericles to die in 429 BC.

Because they were afraid of contracting the plague, the Peloponnesian army finally left the destroyed Attica. After Pericles' death, an opposition figure from Pericles emerged, namely Cleon. He made the Athenian army more aggressive in fighting Sparta. And the attack operation on the Peloponnesians began, bringing 5 Trireme ships complete with 400 troops under the command of General Demosthenes. The fleet landed on the Pylos Peninsula. There is the island of Spachteria which is Sparta's weakest outpost, and with a brilliant war strategy, Demosthenes was able to trap and defeat Sparta in Spachteria.

Athens managed to win in Spachteria, they captured about 300 - 400 Spartan troops and held them hostage. Knowing this, General Brasidas of Sparta gathered his troops and moved towards Amphipolis, the colony of Athens, which was a city producing silver as the main source of war funds for Athens. Cleon who knew this tried to pursue the Spartan troops, but was too late to stop Brasidas who was about to attack Amphipolis. And in the Battle of Amphipolis, both Spartan and Athenian leaders, Brasidas and Cleon, were killed. After that, both parties agreed to a peace treaty, the condition of which was that the city of Amphipolis was exchanged for Spartan troops held hostage by Athens, the agreement was called the Peace of Nicias (421 BC) with a status quo for 5 years as a sign of the end of the Archidamian War (Morley 2021).

2. ***The Sicilian War (415 - 413 B.C.)***

Elsewhere, namely in Sicily, Athens' allies were attacked by people from Syracuse. The Syracuse nation was of Dorian ethnicity (the same

ethnicity as the Spartans) so Alcibiades ordered to help his ally by sending troops to sail to Sicily. In the expedition there were 134 ships, more than 500 infantries, and 30 cavalries. After arriving in Sicily, a number of cities there began to join the Athenian troops. In just an instant, Syracuse was able to be destroyed by the Athenian troops. However, they were hindered by the arrival of winter, therefore the Athenian troops waited and spent their time planning how to completely destroy Syracuse. It turned out that the delay in the attack by the Athenian troops was able to be exploited by the Syracuse party by trying to ask Sparta for help, and finally Sparta sent troops under the leadership of Gylippus. It turned out that with this help, Syracuse could be defended and defeat the Athenian troops.

After this defeat, the Athenian troops in Syracuse also asked for help from the center and General Demosthenes was sent. After experiencing several more battles, the Athenian troops continued to experience defeat, therefore Demosthenes recommended retreating even though Nicias initially refused but finally agreed. With only a few troops able to return home.

3. *The Ionian War (Decelean) (413 – 404 B.C.)*

With the end of the war in Sicily, Athens once again suffered another defeat. And Athens tries to survive after experiencing defeat. Athens tried to bounce back quickly by taking advantage of Sparta's weakness in being slow in preparing its troops for the Aegean. And also the unresponsiveness of government officials from Sparta who were not trained as diplomats. Apart from that, Athens also had very abundant wealth. However, Athens was also rocked by an oligarchic revolution

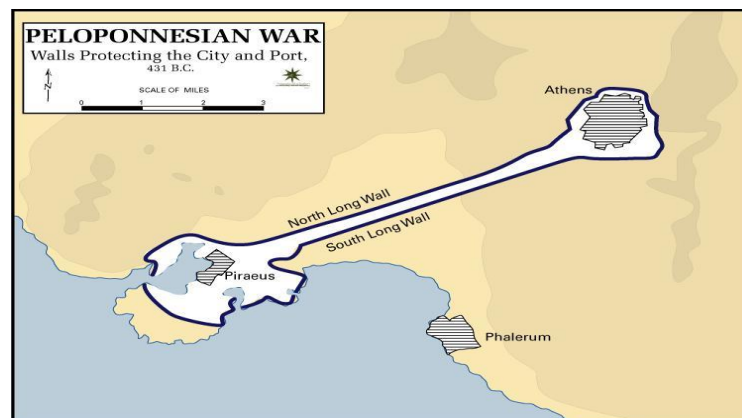


Figure 3. Sturdy Wall surrounding Athens
(Platias & Koliopoulos, 2000)

The final battle occurred in 406 BC, Athens won the naval battle at Arginusae, where Sparta lost many ships and experienced a decline in morale. Sparta led by General Lysander. He was neither a member of the Spartan royal family nor a strategist, but he was a diplomat who had good relations with the Persian prince, Cyrus (son of Darius II). It turned out that Lysander had learned

a lot from the defeat at Arginusae in the battle in the Aegospotami Sea (404 BC). Victory belonged to Sparta by being able to destroy 168 ships and capture around 3000 Athenian troops with Persian help. And was able to enter the city center after breaking through a very sturdy wall (Strauss, 2014).

The Peloponnesian War changed the ancient Greek world. On the level of international relations. Athens, the strongest city-state in Greece before the start of the war, was almost completely subservient, while Sparta became the main Greek power. The economic impact of the war was felt throughout Greece: poverty was widespread in the Peloponnese, while Athens was completely destroyed and never regained its pre-war prosperity. The Peloponnesian War ended on April 25, 404 BC after Athens was defeated, the Peloponnesian League then completely renovated the Greek cities. The Athenian Empire, which was stronger before the war, then became a slave to Sparta. After the war, Sparta became the ruler of Greece. The Peloponnesian War devastated the economy, bringing poverty and suffering to the Greek people (Strauss, 2014).

Current conditions in Indo-Pacific

China's increasing capacity and determination to protect their interests has worried neighbouring countries and prompted the United States of America (US) to take a concrete action. So, this conflict escalated into a rivalry between China and the US (International Crisis Group, 2021). This conflict is currently increasingly leading to a sovereignty dispute between several countries around SCS, which seems difficult to resolve.

As an internationally recognized legal basis, namely United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982, which defines the jurisdictional boundaries of coastal states, including archipelagic waters, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone (EEZ), and continental shelf. The convention also regulates freedom of navigation on the high seas and environmental principles relating to the protection and preservation of marine life. With the adoption of UNCLOS, every country has a clear legal framework in managing and utilizing marine resources sustainably, as well as resolving disputes relating to marine areas through dispute resolution mechanisms regulated in this convention.

The main highlight from the perspective of international order is that China is trying to justify their claim as the authority to set norms in the SCS through several complex strategies involving the application and reinterpretation of international law.

China uses the controversial Nine-Dash Line to claim areas in the SCS as part of their territory. The history of the nine-dash line can be traced back to 1947 during the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek. This claim is based on the idea of "historic waters", which China believes they have historically controlled. However, this concept has no clear basis in international law and has been rejected by the International Court of Arbitration in the Philippines versus China case (Simanjuntak, 2020).

Subsequently, China introduced a new claim known as the "10-Dash Line" as outlined in an official map by the Ministry of Natural Resources in late August 2023. This updated claim expands upon the previous Nine-Dash Line by adding

an additional dash, formally incorporating Taiwan into the core area of China's territorial claims (Clayman, 2023).

There are several implications of China's unilateral claim implementation, including:

1. China asserts that they have the same rights as an archipelagic country. This includes treating the waters between islands as internal waters, similar to rivers or lakes within a country, thereby restricting the rights of other countries to traverse these waters without permission. Despite being a continental country, China has drawn a straight baseline around the Paracel Islands to claim these waters as China internal territory. This approach is expected to be extended to the Spratly Islands once which has strong military base (Mastro, 2021).
2. China claims a territorial sea 12 nautical miles from the Paracel baselines, not from individual islands, and from many features in the Spratly Islands to which China is not entitled under international law. China interprets the territorial sea as the space within which it has the exclusive right to make, apply, and enforce their own laws without foreign interference (Mastro, 2021).
3. China has expanded their EEZ claims to 200 nautical miles from their territorial waters and asserted the right to conduct military activities in this area, which is contrary to the principle of freedom of navigation, which is recognized as a universal practice in international law (Mastro, 2021).

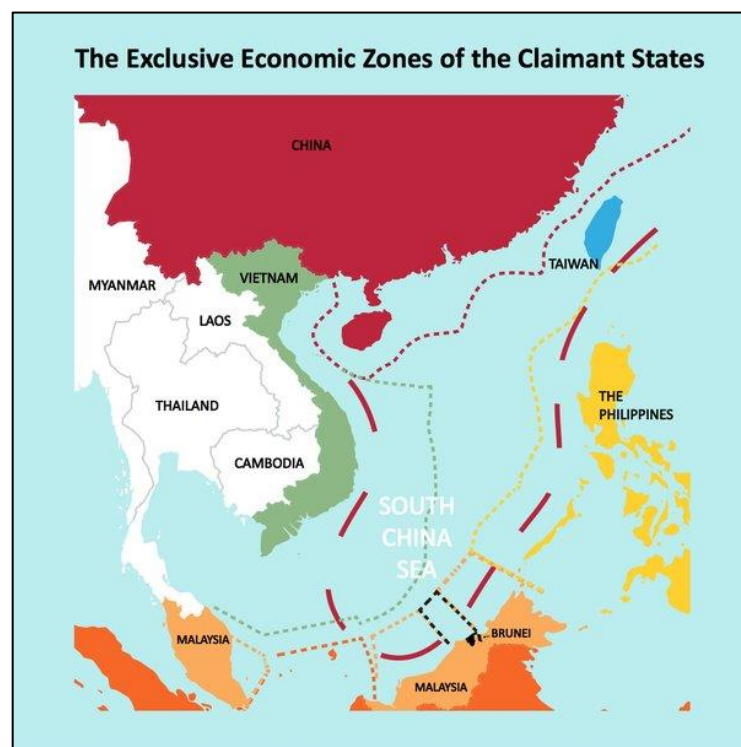


Figure 4. Ten Dash Line
(Vuković & Fechner, 2023)

China feels entitled to take the lead in setting norms in the SCS, arguing that this role is consistent with their national security needs and their position as a global power. China's position is at odds with the US and their allies. The US, along with other Western countries, has urged China to obey the international law, especially UNCLOS (Vuković, S., & Fechner, 2023). The use of military deployment in the SCS to protect China national interests is in line with Clausewitz's classical theory of war, which states that the use of military forces is merely a political instrument to realize a national interests (Clausewitz & Supriyatno, 2016). However, for Indonesia, the escalation of the conflict between the US and China has the potential to become a large-scale conventional war that will cause Indonesia to be trapped in an access war and a spill over war (Risman, 2023).

DISCUSSION

Key insights of the Peloponnesian War

While the Peloponnesian War occurred centuries ago, its lessons remain relevant for understanding modern-day conflicts, power dynamics, and the human costs of war, as outlined by Jeremy Black (2024):

- 1. Conflict Between Land and Sea Powers:** The Peloponnesian War was fundamentally a contest between land powers (Sparta) and sea powers (Athens). Sparta, recognizing its naval weakness, formed an alliance with Persia to counterbalance Athens' maritime dominance. This historical lesson highlights the importance of alliances in achieving a balance of power, as seen in modern parallels like the partnerships between the US, Japan, the Philippines, and Australia (Schweller, 2016).
- 2. Balance of Power Theory:** Stability in conflicts can be achieved by maintaining a balance of power between opposing sides. Sparta's alliance with Persia to match Athens' naval strength reflects this principle. Similarly, modern alliances aim to create military equilibrium to deter aggression, even if they sometimes conflict with broader commitments, such as ASEAN's focus on economic cooperation (Schweller, 2016).
- 3. Strategic Designs: Annihilation vs. Exhaustion:** The war showcased two distinct strategic approaches: First, Annihilation Strategy by Sparta that aimed to decisively destroy Athens' armed forces by targeting its CoG; Second, Exhaustion Strategy by Athens that adopted a strategy of attrition, employing maneuvers such as territorial occupation, crop destruction, and naval blockades to weaken Sparta over time (Platias & Koliopoulos, 2000). These strategies remain relevant for understanding modern military tactics.
- 4. Clausewitz's Theory on CoG and Annihilation:** Clausewitz emphasized the importance of directly targeting an enemy's CoG—the central source of its power—to achieve decisive victory. This aligns with Sparta's annihilation strategy and underscores the significance of focusing war efforts on critical vulnerabilities (Clausewitz and Supriyatno, 2016).
- 5. China's Modern Strategy: Gunboat Diplomacy:** In the contemporary context, China employs "Gunboat Diplomacy" by using its growing naval power to assert dominance in the South China Sea. This strategy poses a threat to neighboring

countries' territories and resources while reflecting China's broader goal of hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region (Vuković & Fechner, 2023).

6. Economic Considerations in Conflict: While military alliances are crucial, economic factors play an equally important role in countering adversaries. The US and its allies have been hesitant to fully confront China due to concerns about the economic devastation that war could bring to the Pacific region. However, leveraging economic power alongside military strength could provide significant advantages in countering Chinese dominance (Black, 2024; Jablonsky et al., 2008).

7. Targeting China's CoG: Economic Power: China's CoG lies in its economic strength. According to Clausewitz and Supriyatno (2016), targeting this CoG through measures like protectionist policies or anti-dumping strategies could significantly weaken China's dominance without direct military confrontation.

8. Broader Implications for Peace and Stability: The lessons from the Peloponnesian War emphasize the importance of military readiness, strategic alliances, and comprehensive planning while considering societal, economic, and political impacts. These insights remain vital for maintaining peace and stability in modern geopolitical conflicts.

These key insights demonstrate how historical parallels from the Peloponnesian War can inform contemporary strategies for addressing power dynamics and conflicts in regions like the Indo-Pacific.

Analysis

Analysis of the Peloponnesian War –particularly regarding the dynamics between the rising Athens and the challenged Sparta– are often applied to understand the current power struggle between China and US, offering insights into contemporary international relations and strategic planning (Allison, 2017).

Against the backdrop, Indonesia should be able to draw a parallel understanding and strategic consideration towards the ongoing power dynamics between China and the US, in particular in the context of Indo-Pacific region, that in recent time has become the latest power-theatre between the two Hegemons.

China and the US have pursued their interests through active engagement and partnerships with numerous countries in the region. The growing involvement of major powers like the US and China, alongside regional players such as India, Japan, and Australia, has further escalated the situation (Dil, 2022).

The Indo-Pacific region has seen a wave of minilateral coalitions emerge since 2017, beginning with the revitalized Quad (Japan-India-Australia-US) and followed by AUKUS (2021) and the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (2022). This trend accelerated with the creation of JAROKUS (Japan-South Korea-US) in 2023 and JAPHUS (Japan-Philippines-US) in 2024, forming a network of US-aligned coalitions explicitly designed to counter China's growing influence through strategic cooperation among like-minded nations, as these groupings collectively aim to secure regional advantages in what can describe as an intensifying great power competition (Aristotle, 2024).

The US prioritizes ensuring freedom of navigation for energy and trade, maintaining a stable balance of power, addressing threats from actors like Iran and North Korea, and conducting maritime security operations, including counter-terrorism, anti-human trafficking, and anti-piracy efforts (Pedrason, 2021).

The dynamics of developments occurring in the South China Sea (SCS) have become the focal point of disputes between China and countries in Southeast Asia due to China's Ten Dash Lines (TDL) claim, which is a series of imaginary lines that starts on the Spratly islands in the SCS. Vietnam and the Philippines have maritime areas that overlap with NDL. Even though not a Claimant State in the disputes, Indonesia also has an exclusive economic zone that overlaps with TDL. (Ramsi, 2023).

This accumulated concern then pushed the idea of a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region to be adopted by nations in the world. The Indo-Pacific strategic environment appears complex, where the economic and strategic initiatives of major countries and regional organizations are idealistically motivated by the desire for an Indo-Pacific region that is open, rules-based, inclusive, and "free from all forms of coercion" (Ramsi, 2023).

In response to the shifting dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, countries in the region have introduced various initiatives and partnerships to better navigate the challenges they face. Prior to major alliances like QUAD, AUKUS, and IPEF, efforts such as Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), the joint Japan-India Asia-Africa Growth Corridor and Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI), and the European Union's New Global Gateway.

When talking about a country's Defense Strategy, it is not only talking about the armed forces. It is also talking about its Diplomatic roles and efforts (Muna et al., 2023). The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), driven by Indonesia, serves as a crucial framework for managing and potentially counterbalancing regional rivalries. By promoting dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders, including external partners, it aims to prevent the Indo-Pacific from turning into a stage for major power conflicts.

Leveraging its ASEAN chairmanship in 2023, Indonesia champions AOIP's core principles of centrality, inclusivity, and complementarity, deemed by Gyngell (2019) institutes Indonesia's vision of the Indo-Pacific, which is considered as the most inclusive compared the ones from Japanese, Australian, Indian, and of course the US version.

Key countries in the region, including Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea, the US, and the European Union, have issued formal joint statements with ASEAN endorsing cooperation under the AOIP framework, with many of these statements made during Indonesia's ASEAN chairmanship.

In essence, the balance of power is a type of international order. The balance of power describes a "manually operated" system, in which the balancing process is a function of human invention, with emphasis on the skills of diplomats and statesmen, the sense of community of nations, shared responsibility, and the desire and need to maintain the balance of power system (Schweller, 2016).

The use of all potential, namely military, diplomatic, and economic action, is in line with the theory of strategy in achieving goals (Jablonsky et al., 2008). And all forms of alliances built in the Pacific region, are actually a form of shared responsibility in creating regional security and stability (Buzan et al., 1998). However, these efforts are not defined in a real policy, which can be used as a strategy to counter Chinese dominance.

Lessons Learned for Indonesia

Efforts made by utilizing all resources – whether human, diplomatic power, technology, or natural resources – are essential steps toward achieving strategic goals (Jablonsky et al., 2008). Realizing the military weaknesses of ASEAN countries, forming a defense alliance becomes a manifestation of the shared responsibility of ASEAN nations to ensure regional security and stability (Schweller, 2016; Buzan et al., 1998).

Indonesia currently finds itself at a critical juncture where a robust maritime strategy is essential to protect its national interests and security amidst shifting regional dynamics. Given the strategic importance of its maritime pathways and chokepoints, Indonesia must focus on developing comprehensive strategies to address these challenges (Suseto et al., 2018).

A key aspect to consider is targeting the Center of Gravity (CoG), as emphasized by Clausewitz and Supriyatno (2016), since a major attack on the CoG could significantly weaken China's strength. Identifying and understanding China's CoG is crucial, as researchers argue that it lies in its economic power. However, no substantial economic measures have yet been implemented to undermine this strength.

Cognizant of the current power dynamics in the region as well as Indonesia's geostrategic situation, this paper utilizes key insights from the Peloponnesian War as recommendations for Indonesia's comprehensive warfare strategies.

Understanding the complexities of rising powers and associated risks requires a comprehensive strategy that anticipates potential threats and outlines actionable responses. This includes:

- 1. Diplomatic Engagement:** Indonesia should prioritize peaceful dispute resolution through dialogue and adherence to international law. Cooperative diplomacy with neighbors, including China, is essential, alongside confidence-building measures. Additionally, Indonesia should advocate for peaceful resolutions, adherence to international law, and cooperative security frameworks within ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific region.
- 2. Military Contingency Planning:** Indonesia must develop strategic plans for various scenarios, including low-intensity conflicts and potential escalations. This involves coordinated planning across all military units, particularly in land and sea operations, while considering terrain, resources, and capabilities. Furthermore, Indonesia should focus on developing a post-modern naval force where the TNI AL (Indonesian Navy) plays a dual role as both a defense force and a guardian of maritime security and order.
- 3. Strengthening Economic Cooperation:** To deter conflict and ensure regional stability, Indonesia should deepen economic collaboration with dialogue partners. This includes enhancing cooperation within ASEAN for joint logistics and economic support. Building resilience against potential supply disruptions is critical; exploring alternative trade routes and partners can mitigate the impact of sanctions or economic disruptions. Additionally, Indonesia should implement policies to safeguard its economy against external pressures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The lessons from the Peloponnesian War offer invaluable insights for shaping Indonesia's strategy in the contemporary geopolitical landscape, particularly in bridging warfare strategy with defense and foreign policy. By examining historical parallels and acknowledging current power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesia can proactively prepare for potential conflicts while safeguarding its national interests. A balance of power must be established to provide a deterrent effect against hegemonic ambitions, achieved through cooperative efforts that integrate military, diplomatic, and economic strategies.

The Thucydides Trap, characterized by the emergence of a rising power challenging an established power, underscores the importance of strategic analysis and comprehensive planning. China's growing military power is fundamentally supported by its economic strength, making its economy a critical Center of Gravity (CoG). Measures such as protectionist policies and anti-dumping strategies could effectively weaken China's dominance while avoiding direct military confrontation.

In this context, Indonesia must prioritize defense budget allocation, improve transparency and accountability, and foster public support for military readiness. Diplomatic engagement is equally essential to maintaining good relations with neighbouring countries and promoting regional stability. Cooperative diplomacy should focus on peaceful dispute resolution, adherence to international law, and confidence-building measures within ASEAN and the broader Indo-Pacific framework.

Strategic planning and coordination across all military units – particularly land and sea operations – are vital. The Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) must develop a comprehensive strategy that considers terrain, resources, and capabilities while adapting to evolving global threats. The development of a post-modern naval force is especially crucial, with the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) playing a dual role as both a defense force and a guardian of maritime security.

Domestically, fostering national cohesion and addressing internal divisions are critical for ensuring stability. Strengthening logistics infrastructure and regional cooperation will enhance resilience against potential disruptions to supply chains. By applying these lessons from history and integrating them into a cohesive defense-foreign policy framework, Indonesia might effectively navigate the complexities of modern warfare while contributing to peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research is expected to further explore this material.

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