

Indonesia's potential as a maritime power

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia's geo-strategic position, its huge archipelagic disposition and its large population, which accounts for close to two-fifths of Southeast Asia's total population, can be said to possess some natural characteristics needed for emerging as a maritime power. Maritime consciousness has always been possessed by Indonesia and many initiatives have been undertaken by the previous leaderships to cater to its maritime interests, but these initiatives have not been able to place Indonesia in the category of a maritime power. The current president has for the first time publicly promulgated his vision of making his country a maritime power. In this context, the study will aim to analyse Indonesia's potential as a maritime power by examining whether the measures undertaken by Jokowi and his predecessor, Yudhoyono, can help this vision in taking shape.

KEYWORDS

Global maritime fulcrum;
PACINDO; MEF; green navy;
maritime power

Introduction

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) maritime vision for Indonesia as a global maritime fulcrum (GMF) has garnered worldwide attention. For the first time such a grand and ambitious maritime vision has been publicly promulgated by a president in Indonesia. Jokowi has managed to place the maritime goals of Indonesia into the domain of a broader politico-strategic discourse from the confines of policy papers and documents. Jokowi's election manifesto focussed on "(a) strengthening Indonesia's maritime security, (b) expanding the canvas of regional diplomacy to cover the entire region of the Indo-Pacific, and (c) projecting the Indonesian navy as a respected regional maritime power in East Asia".¹ The GMF vision is based on five pillars: (1) rebuilding maritime culture; (2) management of marine resources; (3) developing maritime infrastructure and connectivity; (4) maritime diplomacy; and (5) improvement of maritime defence. The vision has a lot of similarities with the maritime ideals and goals of Jokowi's predecessors. For instance, upholding Indonesia's identity as an archipelagic nation has been the aim of Indonesia's defence planners and previous presidents for long and initiatives like the Djuanda Declaration, Wawasan Nusantara are such examples. Additionally the importance that has been given to Indonesia's geography always in the defence planning of the country also forms the prime focus of the GMF vision. Ristian Supriyanto points out that,

The GMF highlights Indonesia's location at the centre of the sea lines connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans and important for global seaborne trade and that Indonesia maintains the

interest to decide the future of the Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. Its centrality in the Indo-Pacific allows Indonesia to build regional and international cooperation.²

However, the GMF vision is not “an old wine in a new bottle”. It does not just talk about upholding Indonesia’s archipelagic identity or boosting the naval capabilities enough to secure and protect the huge maritime domain, but aims to transform Indonesia into a maritime power.

This paper aims to analyse Indonesia’s potential as a maritime power. It begins by defining the “concept of maritime power”, then locates Indonesia’s geography which bestows on it the potential of being a maritime power. An attempt will be made to recognise Indonesia’s maritime interests and concerns followed by identifying the policy priorities and the initiatives taken in view of these interests. The last section will examine whether these initiatives can help Indonesia emerge as a maritime power.

Defining maritime power

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan in his seminal work outlined six characteristics as principal conditions affecting the sea power of nations. These are: geographical position (access to sea routes), physical conformation (ports, etc.), extent of territory, population, national character, and character of the government.³

However, the current opinion on sea power is very much distinguishable from the above stated view. For instance, Geoffrey Till looks at sea power as more than just possessing military maritime capabilities. He views sea power both as an input and an output:

The inputs are navies, coast guards, the marine or civil-maritime industries as more than military maritime capabilities. Sea power is not simply about what it takes to use the sea. It is also the capacity to influence the behaviour of other people or things by what one does at or from the sea. This approach defines sea power in terms of its consequences, its outputs not the inputs, the ends and not the means.⁴

With time and with the on-going wave of globalisation, many elements have been added to Mahan’s six characteristics or components of sea power. The present-day enablers include: “economic strength; technological prowess; socio-political culture; geographic position; dependence on maritime trade and sea resources, and government policy and perception”.⁵ The more widely accepted term now is “maritime power”. Being a maritime power is not only about possessing naval capabilities; the present-day idea of maritime power does not just equate with naval power. As brought out by Deborah Sanders,

The definition of maritime power must be broadened to include the ability of an actor to carry out a wide range of tasks in the maritime sphere: securing maritime traffic, protecting maritime resources, enforcing state sovereignty in the Economic Exclusive Zone (EEZ), etc. Therefore, maritime power appears to be a multidimensional concept going far beyond the strict military aspects.⁶

Maritime power is a comprehensive ability of a nation to use the seas for its own purposes, while preventing others from using the seas in ways that are to one’s own disadvantage. For a maritime country like Indonesia, its main interest will be to capitalise on the expansive seas surrounding the archipelago for its advancement and not to perceive the seas as a natural disadvantage. This is very well highlighted in the mantra “Jalesveva Jayamah” (“in the ocean we triumph”) invoked by President Jokowi during his oath taking ceremony.

Indonesia's maritime geography

Indonesia's geo-strategic location and expansive archipelagic disposition brings with it the need for the formulation of a maritime strategy. It constitutes of 17,508 islands spread over a distance of 5000 km.⁷ Indonesia is the second largest littoral nation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and located at the crossroads of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans. It also shares maritime boundaries of nearly 1300 km in the Indian Ocean with five countries – Australia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore. The total area enclosed by sea is four times greater than the area enclosed by land. Important sea lines of communication (SLOCs) such as the Strait of Malacca, the Sunda, Lombok and Makassar and Wetar/Omboi Straits border Indonesia.⁸ Besides the geographical advantage, it also has a strong ancient maritime foundation led by the ancient empires of Srivijaya and Majapahit who possessed powerful fleets and established control over the local seas.⁹

The significance of Indonesia's maritime geography is reflected in the writings of Indonesia's then Vice President Mohammad Hatta who in 1953 had noted that,

Indonesia, lying between two continents – the Asian mainland and Australia – and washed by the waters of two vast oceans – the Indian and the Pacific – must maintain intercourse with lands stretching in a great circle around it ... Its position at the heart of a network of communications has for centuries made the archipelago a halting place for all races and a staging base in international travel.¹⁰

Again in the 1970s, an Indonesian scholar, Munadjat Danusaputro commented that,

At this world cross-road position, Indonesia occupies the position at the centre, and so ... Indonesia is occupying the world's cross-road centre. As the world cross-road's centre, Indonesia also has the function of a linkage point and shoulders the duty of being the linkage between the four directions of the world cross-road. This geo-political fact clearly shows that Indonesia has the role and simultaneously the duty to endeavour to ensure that this world cross-road always runs smoothly and is never closed. In other words it can be said that Indonesia's performance of its duty in this role in the middle of the world will determine whether the cross-road survives or perishes.¹¹

While mentioning about his “Pacific-Indo-Pacific” vision, former Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa had stated that what is being imagined is “a triangular (space) spanning two oceans, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, bounded by Japan in the north, Australia in the South-east and India in the south-west, notably with Indonesia at its centre”.¹² President Jokowi also has a similar vision and ideology and plans to “bring the Indian Ocean back into Indonesia's regional canvas and projects Indonesia as a power straddling thousands of islands between two continents (Asia and Australia) and two Oceans (the Indian and Pacific)”.¹³

Indonesia's maritime interests and concerns

The Indonesian archipelago is spread over thousands of islands, and lack of connectivity and poor port infrastructure has led the country to function as a “collection of weakly connected economies rather than as a unified market”.¹⁴ Further, there are concerns of illegal exploitation of marine resources and fishing of potentially 6.4 million tons of fish that can be harvested annually, and of islands being used as grounds of smuggling. The rich

reserves of natural resources in the seas have not been harnessed for the welfare of the people and the economic development of the archipelago.¹⁵

Safeguarding maritime boundaries is a top priority for the Indonesian government. Unresolved border issues have also been a major concern for Indonesian policymakers. According to an official document, the country is still involved in territorial disputes over three land borders and seven maritime regions.¹⁶ Maritime sovereignty has also been accorded equal priority in Indonesian thinking. Munadjat Danusaputro mentions that,

Strategically, however, a crossroad location could become a bane when foreign maritime powers use the archipelago as avenues for military projection throughout the Indo-Pacific. A foreign military presence in Indonesian waters, even for peaceful navigational purposes, could compromise Indonesia's sovereignty in controlling its maritime domain, or when the foreign powers in question are antagonistic to one another, it could make Indonesia prone to collateral damage.¹⁷

The intensification of the maritime dispute in the South China Sea has also led to an increased use of the Indonesian waterways like the Lombok Strait, which is an alternative route to the South China Sea. Furthermore, the Chinese concern over the "Malacca Dilemma" may in the future lead to an increased use of the Lombok, Sunda and Makassar straits. Indonesia is wary of outside powers' presence and patrolling in waters in close vicinity; therefore, the recent exercise conducted by the Chinese Navy in the Lombok Strait was not looked at in a positive light by Indonesia.¹⁸ Indonesia's waters are also vital sea lanes used by foreign shipping vessels which need to be monitored and secured. This drives the need for modernising the navy.

Given Indonesia's maritime interests and concerns and its vision of emerging as a maritime power, an all-encompassing maritime policy should be designed. The key areas that ought to be addressed are: (1) infrastructure development or boosting of inter-island connectivity; (2) marine resources; (3) developing a shipping industry; (4) maritime security; (5) maritime diplomacy and foreign policy; and (6) naval development. This is what has been aimed to be done through the GMF vision of Jokowi.¹⁹ The following section will look into the initiatives that have been taken by the Yudhoyono and the Jokowi Presidency thus far, addressing the key areas stated above.

Port infrastructure

Indonesia's port infrastructure has been the subject of neglect and funding constraint over the years. The problem of connectivity of the islands is mostly faced by the outer islands of Eastern Indonesia, such as Maluku and North Maluku. According to the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, transportation accounts for over 15% of the cost of doing business, whereas in other regional economies, it is just 7%. In Indonesia, insufficient port infrastructure has made the cost of shipping of goods across the archipelago extremely expensive; as a result, only 5% of the total freight is delivered via the sea.²⁰

Maritime connectivity was an important agenda raised by Indonesia at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Focus Group Discussion in April 2013.²¹ Jokowi plans to upgrade or construct 24 ports over the next 5 years to provide greater domestic

connectivity, improve efficiency and increase access to Indonesian harbours by international shipping.²² The country has plans to invest \$6 billion dollars in the development of ports and it is estimated that it will take \$450 billion dollars to modernise the old infrastructure of Indonesia.²³

During his visit to Japan in August 2014, Jokowi was successful in securing commitments from the Japanese government to assist Indonesia in building its maritime infrastructure. Similar commitments from other major powers like the United States, China, South Korea and Russia are also expected. The Coordinating Maritime Affairs Minister Soesilo recently stated that “construction of four of the planned twenty-four deep seaports had already commenced; however, ensuring sufficient funds for new construction remains an issue”.²⁴ In January 2016, the government started the construction of a new deep sea port in Medan in Sumatra. Jokowi also hopes to initiate the construction of four more ports by October 2016 and also looks forward to finishing an offshore project begun earlier at Kalibaru in Jakarta by then.²⁵ Indonesia also seeks to cooperate with Beijing in its US \$40 billion “new silk road” plan for the building of two international seaports in Kuala Tanjung and Bitung.²⁶

Additionally for encouraging businesses to use the seas, the government plans to offer incentives to ship operators in the form of fuel subsidies and also proposes to import 2500 boats, to connect the major islands, reduce transportation costs and increase the flow of goods.²⁷

Marine resources

According to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia’s maritime potential can contribute up to US \$1.2 trillion to annual national income from mining, energy, fisheries, shipping and tourism.²⁸ In 2012, the blue economy concept was proposed by President Yudhoyono, in his speech at the Leaders Valuing Nature event in the series of Rio +20 meetings in Brazil. He argued for “the promotion of the use of natural resources for economic growth, social welfare, and environmental health sustainability, derived from local and small entrepreneurship as well as enticing maritime innovation”. At the multilateral level, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Indonesia has started to implement the blue economy concept in East Lombok and Central Lombok, which is expected to be completed by 2018. The Lombok Blue Economy Implementation Program is expected to generate 77,700 new jobs and an income of Rp 1.3 trillion (US \$114.88 million) annually.²⁹

In response to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, Jokowi took a “hard-line” measure by destroying and sinking foreign fishing boats that enter the Indonesian territorial waters illegally. Vessels from countries like Vietnam and Papua New Guinea along with many others have already been sunk by the authorities. Nonetheless, Indonesia has been careful to avoid the ire of a stronger regional power like China, as boats from China were confiscated, but not destroyed or sunk immediately.

The fishing industry in Indonesia accounts for almost one-quarter of the total agricultural economy, but it lacks sufficient cold storage facilities and transport vessels. In an attempt to expand and modernise this sector, there are plans to construct a hundred fishery centres, with auctioning, storage and processing facilities.³⁰

Shipbuilding industry

Given the national plans for improving maritime connectivity and logistics, it is only logical that Indonesia has turned to shipbuilding industry. Naval development and modernisation is also one of the pillars of Jokowi's GMF vision and hence the acquisition and production of naval armaments like warships, destroyers, frigates, etc. becomes an important requirement. The domestic ship builders have struggled to meet the increasing demands, and the government is looking into reducing or removing import duties and the value added tax on foreign ship components. Such barriers increase the cost associated with domestic ship production by 25%. Indonesia's shipping company PT PAL has built a warship in the form of landing platform dock, the KRI Banda Aceh. Indonesia has also entered into an agreement with South Korea for the development of its shipbuilding industry to aid in its marine defence development program. Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering (DSME), a ship-building company of South Korea, has built a submarine for the Indonesian Navy.³¹

The state-owned PT PAL launched two warships in January 2016.³² Indonesia is set to export its first Strategic Sealift Vessel (SSV)-1, a Lloyd Register-class warship built entirely by PT PAL, to the Philippines Defence Ministry by May 2016. This is a part of a contract which the PT PAL had acquired from the Philippines government in 2014 for the construction of two SSVs. The other SSV is being targeted to be delivered by mid 2017.³³

Maritime safety and security

The initiation of coordinated patrols by Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia (MALSINDO) in 2004 to secure the Strait of Malacca was a pathbreaking step taken by President Yudhoyono, given Indonesia's averseness to be a part of any such initiatives before like the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against ships in Asia (ReCAAP). In 2005, he also issued a presidential decree to transfer Bakorkamla's³⁴ authority from the military headquarters to the Coordinating Ministry of Political, Legal, and Security Affairs (Kemenko Polhukam). The new Bakorkamla is responsible for formulating national maritime policy and coordinating the activities of 12 maritime-related institutions, including the navy, Polair, and Kestuan Penjagaan Laut dan Pantai (KPLP).³⁵

In 2006 the navy started drawing up plans for setting up a Sea and Coast Guard Indonesia (SCGI) as the main organisation to deal with maritime crime and to promote regional maritime security cooperation. The government was mandated to establish the Indonesian coast guard by Law No. 17/2008 on shipping, but this did not take shape. There are many agencies conducting coast guard tasks like the Navy, National Police, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ministry and Transportation Ministry leading to overlapping of missions.³⁶

In December 2014, President Jokowi took an important step by setting up a new Maritime Security Agency (Badan Keamanan Laut, BAKAMLA) under the Coordinating Ministry of the Political, Security and Legal Affairs to replace the previous Bakorkamla. One of the three-fold objectives of the Bakamla is "the realisation of national and international maritime security which will be able to guard the security and safety in the sea". The

Indonesian House of Representatives approved an additional Rp 726.3 billion (US \$56 million) in funding in 2015.³⁷

Naval modernisation

In 2005 the Indonesian government adopted the Minimum Essential Force (MEF):

A twenty-year plan (2005–2024) that sets forth a military modernization agenda, with a special emphasis on the modernization of the Indonesian navy and air force. In the context of naval build up, the MEF goal is to develop by 2020 a five-fleet force totalling 274 ships with striking, patrolling and supporting capabilities. The plan involves weapons procurement, development of an indigenous defence industry and the revamping of defence research facilities.³⁸

Soon thereafter, the Indonesian Navy announced its “green navy” blueprint to build a 274-ship force structure by 2024. This would be divided into a striking force (110 ships), patrolling force (66 ships) and supporting force (98 ships). The Dutch-made Sigma-class corvettes have been in service in the Indonesian Navy since 2009. In 2011, with the commissioning of the fourth Makassar-class landing platform dock vessel, its amphibious capabilities also received an impetus. One of these participated in the hostage rescue task in the Gulf of Aden in March 2010. For boosting patrol capabilities, the PT PAL built fast-attack craft and armed them with Chinese C-802 anti-ship missiles. In April 2011, a Russian Yakhont missile mounted aboard an ex-Dutch Van Speijke- class frigate was successfully test-fired. PT PAL is also building frigates and submarines with foreign ship-building companies. In August 2010, an agreement was entered into with the Dutch company Damen Schelde to construct four to 16 guided missile escorts. These multi-purpose frigates will be fitted with an array of anti-submarine, anti-surface, anti-air and electronic warfare systems. Three Type-209 Chang Bogo submarines procured from South Korea will be added to the Indonesian navy’s two existing Cakra-class (Type 209/1300) submarines. The procurement budget has also been increased from US \$5.28 billion in 2011 to US \$7.5 billion in 2012.³⁹

According to *IHS Jane*, the Indonesian Navy is upgrading two provincial naval bases to the status of district bases. One of them is located on the island of Tarakan near North Kalimantan (Lantamal XIII), and the other in Sorong (Lantamal XIV) in West Papua. The up-gradation of Lantamal XIV is for the creation of a third fleet, the Central Fleet. The up-gradation of Lantamal XIII would strengthen Indonesia’s position in the Amabalat Sea Block in the Celebes Sea where it has a dispute with Malaysia.⁴⁰

The Jokowi administration seeks to undertake a more ambitious defence policy from the existing MEF policy. He will continue with his predecessor’s plan of giving a better shape to the indigenous defence industries and entering into increasing number of defence agreements with potential partners. Jokowi also aims to increase the defence budget from the existing 0.9% of the GDP.⁴¹ Huge fuel subsidies, which constituted 22% of the 2014 government spending, has been the main impediment for the Yudhoyono administration to boost the defence spending. In view of this, Jokowi seeks to restructure the country’s annual spending by reducing fuel subsidies from around US \$20 billion in 2014 to around US \$5 billion in 2015. Last year the government allocated a budget of IDR 102.3 trillion (approximately US \$8.2 billion) – a 16% increase from the 2014

budget.⁴² Jokowi also plans to carry forward the proposals laid down for the development of a green-water navy and the SCGI.

Maritime diplomacy

Indonesia believes that the sea does not divide countries, but unites them. The fact that it was the first country to try to resolve the dispute in the South China Sea through a Workshop on the South China Sea illustrates this. It was also the frontrunner in initiating the Declaration of the Code of Conduct for the South China Sea in 2002.

Indonesia has taken the lead in Southeast Asia by entering into agreements with countries over common maritime limits. For example, EEZ boundary agreements have been reached with Australia and Papua New Guinea. It also concluded continental shelf agreements with countries like Malaysia, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Singapore and India.⁴³

Despite Indonesia's membership of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) since 1995, this forum is yet to play an integral part in the country's diplomatic endeavours. As major powers in the region, India, Indonesia and Australia have the potential to bring equilibrium. "The IORA can potentially become a strategic balancing force in the years ahead, if Indonesia pursues a diversified foreign policy".⁴⁴ The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Community in 2015 and Indonesia's chairmanship in IORA for the period 2015–2017 provides Indonesia with an opportunity to expand its influence in both spheres.⁴⁵

Foreign policy

In the Vision Mission statement (Visi-Misi), President Widodo emphasises at projecting Indonesia as an "Indo-Pacific power". He sees the closely inter-connected Pacific and Indian Oceans (PACINDO) as the primary theatre of Indonesia's foreign policy engagement. During Yudhoyono's tenure, Indonesia started turning its attention towards the IOR. The signing of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement with India in 2005 and participating in the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo CORPAT) naval exercises bear testimony to this fact. Furthermore, former Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa's "Pacific-Indo-Pacific" vision and his proposal for the Indo-Pacific Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation are all reflective of this.

This vision was also clearly reflected in the statement of the former President Susilo Yudhoyono at the 2012 Shangri La Dialogue, where he stated that,

There is every likelihood that in the twenty-first century, the Indian Ocean will grow in geostrategic importance. We must make sure that the Indian Ocean does not become an area of new strategic contest and rivalry. Indeed, now is the time to cultivate the seeds for long-term cooperation, based on common interests in that part of the world.⁴⁶

The Indonesian diplomacy has for long been only ASEAN-centric; but now the focus will be also on the protection of sea lanes, and the evolving dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region. This signals Indonesia's resolve to not just look north towards the rise of China and its increasing assertiveness in the South China Sea, but also to focus on the west towards the Indian Ocean and the Indian subcontinent.

In January 2015, the current Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi officially laid down three foreign policy priorities of the Jokowi Government. These are: “a) maintaining Indonesia’s sovereignty; b) enhancing the protection of Indonesian citizens; and c) intensifying economic diplomacy”.⁴⁷ Today, Jakarta is more active in defending its sovereignty and national interests. The free and active (*Bebas Dan Aktif*) nature of foreign policy has now been reinterpreted. To Yudhoyono, it was seen as “a thousand friends, zero enemies”, and the current policy stresses that “All nations are friends until Indonesia’s sovereignty is degraded and jeopardised”. Jokowi is following a “pro-people” policy and according to Rizal Sukma, “Indonesia will no longer row between the two reefs, but will sail in the two oceans”.⁴⁸

Indonesia’s position on the South China Sea dispute has been consistent for the past several years. It claims that it is not a party to the South China Sea dispute, though China’s nine-dash line encloses the Indonesian-claimed Natuna Islands. This position is likely to change under Jokowi. According to a recent update in the *Jakarta Post*, Indonesian officials are planning to build a new base near the Natuna Islands. In March 2015, he commented that, “The nine-dashed line” that China says marks its maritime border has no basis in any international law.⁴⁹

The potential

Given Indonesia’s geo-strategic location, its huge archipelagic disposition and its 200 million people which account for nearly two-fifths of Southeast Asia’s total population, it can be said that Indonesia possesses some natural traits needed for emerging as a maritime power. An examination of the initiatives undertaken by Indonesia to protect its maritime interests, shows that maritime consciousness was always present, promoted and executed by the Indonesian presidents and the defence planners. The policies initiated, though, seemed to have propounded a maritime outlook and unity in the archipelago, but the underlying objective of these policies was not directed towards these goals. For instance, the Djuanda Declaration, the 1962 Law on “Innocent Passage” was passed by the Sukarno administration in lieu of the Irian Jaya crisis. The navy in Indonesia has not been allotted adequate funds and therefore has been accorded a lot of autonomy in carrying out its maritime security functions. The navy in a way has been responsible to manage its own funds and this led it to engage in illegal activities also.⁵⁰ Prof. Geoffrey Till’s illustration of “being maritime” and “maritime power” fits well in the case of Indonesia. Prof. Till distinguishes between “being maritime” and “maritime power”.

Being maritime means simply having maritime interests that derive from the international context in which countries find themselves, whether they like it or not. These maritime interests may derive from simple geography and the economic imperatives it sets. They may be determined by experience, habits of thought, culture and practice that are the consequence of long years of responding to these maritime circumstances. Some of these interests bear a distinct similarity to Mahan’s famous conditions for sea power. But the point is that they are interests only. They do not imply the capability to defend or develop them.⁵¹

Whereas “maritime power” denotes “being able to turn having maritime interests into an advantage and to greater control over one’s destiny. It requires an enhanced willingness and capacity to respond actively to one’s circumstances”.⁵²

The GMF vision carefully recognises all the vulnerabilities facing the Indonesian archipelago and tries to redress these through a planned action. A lot of work needs to be done by Indonesia to emerge as a maritime power. The last pillar of Jokowi's GMF vision, the development of the naval forces will need the most amount of work, given the fund crunch in this area and the fact that this pillar has the maximum potential to promote Indonesia's image in the global fora. Jokowi plans to increase the defence budget, but how much of the fund will be allotted for naval modernisation has not been outlined. Also he plans to allot more funds to the navy instead of the army, but how this will be done is also not clear. Moreover, the growth rate in Indonesia has gone down from 5.8 to 4.7%. It rose again to 5.04% in January 2016, but the GDP has had a bumpy ride.⁵³ There needs to be a uniform upper trajectory growth rate. Another obstacle for the Jokowi administration is solving the problem of coordination among the existing 12 maritime agencies in Indonesia. In the past, Indonesia's maritime initiatives and policies have not been successful primarily due to the previous presidents' involvement with internal security crises that plagued the country during their tenure. At present even if the internal crises have to some extent diluted, but the problem of Indonesians joining Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the recent terrorist attack in Jakarta will result in his attention getting diverted. Lastly, Jokowi faces a very strong opposition in the DPR (People's Representative Council).

Some scholars believe that Jokowi's vision, if properly implemented not only by him but also by the succeeding presidents, has the potential to make Indonesia emerge as a "medium maritime power". This term follows from Richard Hill's idea of "medium power".⁵⁴ It follows that a "medium maritime power is one that has vital interests in the maritime domain and some capacity to protect them".⁵⁵ Given Indonesia's infrastructure deficiency, prevailing corruption problem and a weak navy, a lot needs to be taken care of in the priority areas mentioned above before Indonesia even attains the status of a "medium maritime power".

In the Defence White Paper 2015, which is the first official policy statement released by the new government also mentions that Indonesia's defence power development is not intended to promote an arms race, and instead aims to achieve the goal of establishing Indonesia as a significant maritime power. However, a proper strategy for the realisation of the GMF vision has not been laid out. Surprisingly, the Defence White Paper does not lay down a clear strategy for the realisation of the maritime security component of the GMF. The induction of drones and satellite technology stated in the DWP will not be adequate to give shape to the GMF. There are glaring gaps in the Defence White Paper like the usage of the term Asia Pacific instead of Indo-Pacific even after Jokowi's coming up with a new term, PACINDO; though the Defence White Paper mentions the strategic disequilibrium in this region due to China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and the US' "Rebalance Towards Asia Policy", but how the Indonesian defence policy will be operationalised in relation to this has not been outlined; the demarcation of responsibilities between the various maritime agencies not finding a mention; continued reliance on the "Total Defence System";⁵⁶ additionally how the defence budget will be raised given the "not so smooth" economic growth has already led to a lowering of expectations about the success of the GMF.⁵⁷ The second phase of the MEF has already commenced, but the DWP does not indicate the plan to progress it further. Even though some aspects of the GMF like diplomacy and naval development have been addressed, the DWP gives no

indication as to how Indonesia will secure its seaborne economic activity. The DWP has very little to offer in the context of the GMF. It is a clear example of the disjoint that exists between the aspirations of the national policymakers and the strategy laid out by the defence strategists.

For being a maritime power, the goal cannot be restricted till attaining the status of a green navy; Indonesia has to target becoming a blue water navy given the huge archipelagic disposition of Indonesia, but Jokowi's vision is limited to Indonesia acquiring the capabilities of a green navy.⁵⁸

Conclusion

Indonesia's geo-strategic location places it as a primary player of the Indo-Pacific region. It will be in the interest of countries like India, China and the US who want to establish their influence in this region to develop good ties with Indonesia. This perhaps explains why the Chinese President Xi Jinping launched his Maritime Silk Road plan in Indonesia in October 2013.

Jokowi's maritime vision is a very detailed plan to raise Indonesia into a maritime power. This vision is truly an all-around maritime vision and not just concentrated on the naval dimension. But at the end all depends on the implementation. A number of challenges have to be overcome by the Jokowi administration to fully implement his vision. The underlying matter is that Indonesia does not even possess enough capability to patrol its large maritime domain; therefore, in a short span of 5 to 10 years to emerge as a maritime power, which will be able to influence events at sea and from the sea, seems far-fetched at the moment. Nonetheless it is the most strategically located country in the Indo-Pacific, and will always be at the centre of the emerging dynamics of this region.

Notes

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