

# The Effectiveness of SBY Defense Strategy to Encounter China Power in International Security Threats 2009-2014

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## ***Abstract***

This study aims at explaining the effectiveness of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's defense strategy in 2009-2014 to encounter international security threats especially in the rise of China. The defense strategy built by SBY is caused by the dynamism of international security which continues to grow. The condition can threaten the sovereignty of every country and disturb the stability of international security. This research is written down based on two concepts offered; those are national interest and balance of power. This study implements qualitative method that uses literature study of several books and journals. The technique of analyzing the data used in this research is inductive techniques. Study of literacy, journals, and some books are used in data collection to collect data for SBY defense effectiveness. The finding of this research shows that the strategy used by SBY to encounter international security threats are: (1) applying active free politic in foreign policy to establish defense cooperation; (2) designing MEF to meet the standard budget in building Indonesian military strength; (3) employing free from one block when any countries deal with conflict; and (4) maintaining peace and defending the sovereignty of citizens from external threats in accordance with Islam. It is not necessary to prioritize the group interests to determine the policy of defense strategy if the strategy designed by SBY has already given an impact on its effectiveness to safeguard the sovereignty of Indonesia. The author uses an inductive approach to analyze data. By collecting data or describing relevant as well as from reliable sources with the ultimate goal of generalizing. The generalization is intended as a statement about relationship between two or more concepts; this statement can vary from simple to very complex

**Keywords:** Strategy of defense; military; international security; sovereignty.

## ***Abstrak***

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan efektifitas strategi pertahanan Presiden Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono tahun 2009-2014 dalam menghadapi ancaman-ancaman keamanan internasional khususnya dalam kebangkitan China. Strategi pertahanan yang dibangun SBY disebabkan adanya perubahan dinamika keamanan internasional yang terus berkembang dan berpotensi mengancam kedaulatan negara bahkan mengganggu stabilitas keamanan internasional. Penelitian ini ditulis berdasarkan dua konsep yaitu, *national interest* dan *balance of power*. Hasil penelitian ini menggambarkan penerapan kebijakan bebas aktif dalam pembuatan kebijakan luar negeri untuk membangun kerja sama pertahanan dan merancang MEF (*Military Essential Force*) guna memenuhi anggaran standar pembangunan kekuatan militer Indonesia. Strategi pertahanan yang diadopsi oleh SBY sejalan dengan apa yang Islam ajarkan, yaitu menjaga perdamaian dan membela kedaulatan negara dari ancaman kekuatan internal/eksternal.

**Kata kunci:** Strategi pertahanan; militer; keamanan internasional; kedaulatan.

## **Background**

International security is one of concept where the nations look for any threats from interaction between the nations. This condition confirms that international security is an exclusive condition which was born as the impact of state interaction in a system. Broadly, the terminology of international security has been depicted of weaponry, superpower states, and wars between nations (Rachmat, 2015). International security is a product of how a country can minimize threats from outside that can disrupt the security and even sovereignty of a country. Looking for the dynamics that occur in the world of international security, indirectly every country will strengthen itself to make security in order to maintain the sovereignty of the country from external threats. Developing countries are beginning to increase the defense force especially in the military field, this is to avoid interventions from countries with large powers or superpower countries.

Basically, every country has rebuilt the military power they have, in order to keep the country's sovereignty. Similarly, China and Russia are beginning to build and improve their military power in terms of technology, human resources, and weaponry equipment. This is done to overcome and anticipate the attack and even intervention from outside parties. Not only Russia and China are starting to rebuild its military power, but also Indonesia during the presidency of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The rise of the China military has proven when the conflict in the South China Sea (SCS) began to re-emerge in international studies and issues. Determination of the SCS zone as being inseparable from China's national defense interests to create a zone of sea and air rejection, so that the opponent's strength can be denied within a certain time in mainland China (Prabowo, 2013). In this conflict, China also wants to prove that their military power is starting to rise again with new powers. Because the conflict in the SCS also involves the United States (US) in the name of freedom of navigation, and the United States as well as China's competitors in terms of economic, technological, military and state defense, ideology, and have common interests in Asia, especially Southeast Asia.

Increasing China military power is to maintain regional stability control of East Asia and Asia which is the center of China's power and defense power against the United States. China's desire to create and build a one-belt, one-way region along the Eurasia peninsula is the dream and goal of China to take control of some of Asia's countries. In this conflict, China has claimed the SCS as its territory by depicting U Shapes Lines (Prabowo, 2013) that transcend the boundaries of the sovereignty of the six directly-affected countries, causing them to be a direct claiming state and increasing their alertness to any possible situation. causing them to be a direct claiming state and increasing their alertness to any possible situation. Given the dynamics that occur in the world of international security, indirectly every country will strengthen itself to make security in order to maintain the sovereignty of the country from external threats.

The rise of the China government with its military power expecting to rule Asia is considered as a threat to Indonesia. With the existence of a strong defense system and human resources and even the main tool of the weapon system (alutsista) is adequate, then Indonesia can defend its sovereignty from the rise of China military forces that can attack Indonesia at any time. SBY's defense strategy made significant changes in the strength of the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI), the TNI's Power as the main defense that guarded the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is a vital part that must be considered in priority. So, the strength of the TNI can be the main foundation in the defense of Indonesia to maintain NKRI from outside parties' intervention. The national power is always seen in terms of military alertness compared to other aspects. Because the military power can anticipate any threat that multidimensional.

The concept of national interest can establish cooperation between countries or two countries to assist the development and even development of a country in competing without a conflict. National Interest often done by diplomacy to reach an agreement that benefit both of parties or multi parties (Mas'oed, 1994). Each country must have its own interests in every policy that is created, because the power of a country will be created if it has partners with strong and advanced countries. The State is the key international actor in regulating sovereign, domestic and international policy systems is purely in the national interest (Sheehan, 2000). Every country needs a system of defense and security in order to preserve the nation's sovereignty.

Islam sees the importance of maintaining a country, Islamic ideology of the international community has gradually eliminated the attitude of a person or a leader of a country in defending or overriding its defense force. On the other hand, maintaining a state will always be associated with a considerable military force to defend and unify the sovereignty of the state and nation. Islam has taught that keeping the unity of the ummah to defend the state is mandatory in order to uphold *baldatun thayyibatun*. Islam teaches about the importance of the attitude and even the actions of a leader in developing the defense force from a military standpoint, so that the sovereignty of the state will remain intact from outside attacks or threats.

This study was conducted by literature study through the collection of previously discussed studies as a comparison or reference in writing this research. The author uses an inductive approach to analyze data. By collecting data or describing relevant as well as from reliable sources with the ultimate goal of generalizing. The generalization is intended as a statement about relationship between two or more concepts; this statement can vary from simple to very complex

With the increase of defense strategy applied by SBY has greater impact on Indonesian government such as increasing, adding, and increasing the power of three dimensions. This is indispensable for maintaining the stability of Indonesia's defense and security in the face of the threat of a continuing and ever-evolving rise in China in the Asian region that has a direct impact on Indonesia's sovereignty and the instability of regional security. How is the effectiveness of SBY's defense strategy in the face of the threat from the rise of China in 2009-2014?

### **The Effectiveness of SBY Defense Strategy to Encounter the Rise of China**

The threat of international security dynamics causes each country to increase its security and defense against external threats. The increasing alertness of every country is due to the ever-changing dynamics of dynamic international security, even the big and powerful countries are always developing defense technology and increasing their military power. This kind of thing makes other developed countries participate in the development of military forces, especially working together with other developed countries in order to improve their military power.

China is one of the developed countries in the fields of technology, economy, and military power. In the era of president of Xi Jinping, China continues to expand its economy to

compete in international markets; in a mission to strengthen its military strength so that it can compete with developed countries with strong military power (HUISKEN, China's Military Modernisation, 2010). President Xi makes military power the main foundation of foreign and domestic policy making; he wants to make China's military power a major foundation in strengthening his country internationally.

The continuing military force built by China has prompted countries in East Asia and Southeast Asia to be concerned about China's intervention by using its military aggressiveness. This concern is also felt by the United States because it can threaten the inevitable wars in Asia. Moreover, China has shown its aggressiveness in the South China Sea claim that the six countries are involved in the conflict. With its huge military strength, China placed its military fleet on alert in the claims area.

China's defense strategy in developing its military strength is also supported by technological developments to create a modern military force and can compete with the countries of great military power (Chase, 2016). China is strengthening its military by increasing its troops, developing nuclear weapons, and cooperating in arms trade. The power built by China does not come from the iron arm of president Xi who has a military background. With the development of China's military power that began to build its power in Southeast Asia, many ASEAN countries became concerned about China's aggressive actions that used its power to intervene in ASEAN countries. One of Indonesia is starting to worry about the development of China's power is very significant, especially in the South China Sea claim. The South China Sea is a real threat to Indonesia (Prabowo, 2013); although Indonesia is not included in the country claiming the region. The Indonesian government remains to the conflict, because the territory of Indonesia in North Natuna waters directly geostrategic with the South China Sea.

President SBY with his military background felt the threats posed by the development of China military power using them as the main basis for policy making by president Xi. During its second presidential term SBY began forming the MEF to rebuild Indonesia's military power so as to compete with the military forces of other countries, and to begin to cooperate with countries with modern defense technologies (Arifin, 2014). The policy was undertaken to rebuild Indonesia's military strength in maintaining the sovereignty of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia

and the security of the Indonesian nation and to avoid dependence on one country in the fulfillment of Indonesian military power.

President SBY prioritizes the development of defense systems and security forces to safeguard TNI territory of Indonesia. SBY administration continues to build military power without any suspicion from other countries, especially China. This is occurred because Indonesia would like to maintain its sovereignty in Natuna Sea without any suspicion from the China government, so the governments of SBY only do the development of defensive military force in maintaining the territorial sovereignty; instead of offensive acts (Gromico, 2017).

SBY's strategy to deal with external threats is an effective strategy in maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the Indonesian nation. In the implementation of defensive strategic based on several factors such as national interests, political identity, territorial integrity, and defense technology development. Yudhoyono's effective strategy is able to rebuild Indonesia's military power without suspicion from other countries and also to increase Indonesia's partnership with countries with modern technology industries.

The strategy adopted by SBY is an effective defense strategy in dealing with international security threats that could threaten Indonesia's sovereignty and the unity of NKRI. In the indicator of effectiveness of defense strategy of SBY can be seen from two big concepts that become benchmarks in the effectiveness of defense strategy effectiveness of SBY. Effectiveness is what makes the defense strategy by SBY can face the threat of international security, especially the rise of the aggressive military China.

### **Indonesia National Interest**

Each country has a different national interest in any foreign and domestic policy making. Indonesia is putting forward its national interest in increasing military power (TNI) to protect the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia and the sovereignty of the Indonesian nation. In its interests, the government of SBY has been doing a lot of cooperation with China from various sectors such as: economy, technology and modern defense technology to build Indonesian military power to achieve professional soldiers with capabilities and even qualities that can compete with other military-powered militaries.

The South China Sea conflict that caused six ASEAN countries to participate made Indonesia as mediator of the conflict. In addition, because a mediator to safeguard peace in geographically bordering territory with Indonesian waters, the Indonesian government is also utilize the momentum to establish cooperation with China in strengthening its military fleet. The cooperation between Indonesia and China had done something that there would be no suspicion from Indonesian military forces that could endanger China.

This strategy is used by SBY to reestablish the Indonesia-China relationship which has a dark history. SBY cooperated with China to get Indonesia's national interests in defense modernization with a common goal in building military strength between the two countries. Indonesia's national interests with the same objective as China in building this military force are used by SBY to reduce China's sense of suspicion over continuous Indonesian military development. Indonesia's national interest as a mediator in South China Seas' conflict has presented some of Indonesia's goals in establishing relations with China to strengthen Indonesia's military power. In this conflict Indonesia does not favor any party, Indonesia is only a mediator in maintaining the creation of peace in the region. By impartially one of the conflicting groups, this makes the goal of the Indonesian national interest achieved to maintain peace and re-establish relations with China.

In the cooperation between Indonesia and China in the era of SBY began to improve after so long the relationship between the two countries decreased causing the China government began to believe in the goodwill of Indonesia in a good relationship (Arifin, 2014). Indonesia cooperates with China not because it wants to side with the eastern bloc, but Indonesia does not want to rely on one big country in its foreign relations. This has made the Indonesian government to make an evaluation of the US embargo on weapons and spare parts of armaments against the strength of the TNI; however, an embargo by the United States made Indonesian military forces weaker and could not compete with other military forces.

The cooperation between Indonesia and China has undergone significantly changes due to the two national interests between the two countries that are mutually beneficial. Indonesia can have modern defense technology to fulfill the needs of TNI alutsista in building its strength again to become professional soldier and have quality that can compete with world military

power, China can develop its market in Indonesia which can build China economy to compete in international market.

This is the main basis for SBY when facing the South China Sea conflict involving six ASEAN countries and China claimants. The Government shall adopt a policy of mediating the settlement of the conflict without the existence of impartial measures against any of the conflicting states. Having a political identity, SBY always applies and upholds the political identity in every cooperation with other countries. SBY's strategy is very effectively in establishing bilateral or multilateral relations is based on Indonesia's active free politics make SBY does not have to stand hand against a country that can weaken the political identity itself. This political identity also makes SBY in the argument "a thousand friends, zero enemy".

### **Indonesia Defense Project**

In the era of SBY's leadership, the policy on the development of defense and security system in modernizing military weaponry, especially for defense equipment, became the government's top priority (Iskandar, 2014). One of them is designing MEF that helps to develop minimum standardization of military force owned by TNI, in order to make the Indonesian military as a military force that is respected by the international world and can maintain Indonesia's sovereign territory.

SBY sees the potential of Indonesia as a country with strong military potential with a large number of populations encourages him to design the development of defense systems. With the position of geostrategic Indonesia is what makes SBY continues to increase the military power of Indonesia, not to mention the many internal, regional, and even international conflicts that are often faced by Indonesia. The threats that can occur can only be anticipated with the existence of military security and defense systems, and powerful modern defense technology.

With the MEF, the development and funding of the Indonesian military towards a professional force made the plan not only a fantasy of the country. With the MEF all the development of military power began to develop with the standardization of the military that are competent in the field and can carry out its duty to maintain the integrity of the state and the security of the nation (Buku Putih Kementerian Republik Indonesia, 2015). In addition to the design of MEF, SBY also began to establish relationships of major countries that have



technology with great military strength and can assist Indonesia in developing its military strength.

SBY government also fires several national defense industries that can help TNI preparedness in facing all threats. The development of several national defense industries also provides an opportunity for the domestic industry to provide its role in strengthening the Indonesian military development into a military that has capabilities in the international world. With the national defense industry, the state can save the budget spent on importing weapons from other countries; so that domestic production is not underestimated.

The aspects of SBY in building the military development plan that became the top priority during his leadership did not make other countries worry about the threatening military power of Indonesia. This is caused by policy making by SBY is not too aggressive, such as:

1. Develop domestic defense technology industry,
2. Cooperating with other defense industry countries such as China, Russia, Germany, and the United States,
3. Designing a Military Essential Force to standardize minimum defense budget expenditures of the TNI,
4. Not taking sides with any bloc in the cooperation of defense technology and military weaponry,
5. Sending Indonesian troops in world peace missions to create an international peace balance (Peraturan Menteri Pertahanan Nomor 19 Kebijakan Penyelarasan Minimum Essential Force, 2012).

The policy is done by SBY to achieve the national interest based on active free politics, so that Indonesia in the era of SBY leadership has one thousand friends, zero enemies. It is this kind of thing that makes the ASEAN countries, especially China that has great power in East Asia and Southeast Asia is not worried about the development of Indonesian military power. In addition, the action taken by SBY is not as an offensive action that can threaten other countries, but a defensive policy to maintain the integrity and sovereignty of the Indonesian nation in order to achieve national security and maintain the stability of world peace.

### **Islamic Perspective to Defense The Nation**

The security stability for each country is a very sensitive matter, because in every country has a society that must be protected and the sovereignty of every country in maintaining the integrity of the country. Maintaining the security of the country is closely related to the faith, because when the faith vanishes undoubtedly the stability of the security and defense of a nation will be shaken (Al-Nashr, 2017). Two elements between security and faith are mutually supportive of each other in maintaining the sovereignty and integrity of the country in protecting the people within it.

وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولا تعتدوا إن الله لا يحب المعتدون

“And fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Allah does not like those who transgress”. (al-Baqarah: 190)

Islam has taught that maintaining the integrity and security of a nation in order to protect its society is a noble thing for a leader, because he is not willing if his people feel that there will be threats and anxieties that could threaten his comfort in the state. Public security is a priority for every leader to maintain the integrity of the country and its people; however, a leader must undertake the development of a defense and security system to protect the sovereignty of the nation and its country.

Stability of security will only be created by returning to the Islamic Sharia, upholding the laws of Islam, and running the *sunnah* of the Prophet *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam*. Security will be created from every individual, society, and country (Al-Nashr, 2017). The life of the nation and the state will feel less and uncomfortable if the country does not have the stability of security and defense that can protect its people from the threat of the outside world. The threats that come from outside are derived from the lack of state defense and security systems in maintaining the sovereignty of the country.

There are several mechanisms adopted by each country for the creation of security stability, such as: a system of dictatorship which imposes the will of the government regime to its people with persecution and threats; liberalism system which releases state and criminal control to achieve state security. Some of these ways will not even be able to create stability for

the security of their people, even if the country has strong military and defense technology. By teaching the norms of Islamic teachings, then a country has security stability and will create a peace between *ummah* in the country and the international community.

The country that has a strong military defense and security system and collaborated with the norms of Islamic teachings in maintaining peace, then the country will be able to maintain the sovereignty of the nation and the country can even maintain the creation of world peace that is protected from the danger of the threat of war. With the creation of a strong state and Islamic norms, the country will be able to maintain its international brotherhood and uphold peace.

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مِنْكُمْ آمِنًا فِي سِرِّهِ مَعَانِي فِي جَسَدِهِ عِنْدَهُ قُوَّةٌ يَوْمَهُ فَكَأَنَّمَا حَيَّرَتْ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا

"Whoever feels safe in his residence, his body is healthy and has lunch to eat that day, as if the world he has mastered with the whole". (HR.Tirmidzi)

The hadith explains that every individual who feels safe in his residence (country) then he will feel that the world he has mastered. This illustrates that the security and comfort of a people is the responsibility of a leader and his government, because the state is obliged to protect the people in it from any threat. In dealing with these threats, the state must have strong defense and security technologies to protect its people and be used as defensive measures, not to attack other communities so as to cause casualties and wars.

SBY's defense strategy in building Indonesia's military strength as a defensive form is one of the norms in Islamic teachings. Because the strategy applied by SBY is not to threaten or attack the sovereignty of other countries, causing the people to suffer. The strategy applied is to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia and the Indonesian nation for the sake of creating a peaceful life.

## **Conclusion**

Indonesia is an archipelagic country that has many small islands in Indonesia's outer regions. Without a system of defense and security with adequate military technology, the sovereignty of Indonesian territory is more vulnerable to threats coming from outside. Indonesia

which has geostrategic location which is very close to the sea with neighboring countries makes the Indonesian government must be more alert and vigilant in maintaining the sovereignty, because after all Indonesia must have a large army power and supported by modern weapon system that can face the attack- the initial attack when it comes to outside threats.

After experiencing an arms embargo, armaments, and spare parts of aircraft from the United States, the defense and security systems of Indonesian military forces experienced a very significant decline. Even the military power of Indonesia could not compete with countries in Southeast Asia by seeing the number of Indonesians who must be protected by the military. By undergoing a long-standing military equipment embargo for a decade made the Indonesian government in the era of SBY not only focusing on one big country in establishing defense cooperation; because if one country suffers a crash or implements an embargo to Indonesia then the Indonesian military's strength also depends on the country.

SBY reestablished Indonesian military power by designing the MEF which became the standard basis for the budget expenditures required by the Indonesian military to compete with the military of other countries and to the soldiers with professional quality and capability. With the MEF, the Indonesian military development has standardized budget expenditures to modernize weaponry, defense technology (defense equipment), and adequate facilities. Some of these factors make Indonesian soldiers able to perform their duties in totality in carrying out their duties to maintain the security of the nation and the sovereignty of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).

The implementation of SBY strategy is also like what has been taught in the teachings of Islam that always love peace and the duty of every leader to protect the security of his people. In maintaining the security and sovereignty of every nation, every leader must have a strategy in building the country's defense and security system so that people will feel secure when a country has a strong military in maintaining the sovereignty of its people. Islamic teachings that teach about defensive stance in defending the state have been applied by the president who also applies a defensive attitude in building his military strength.

Several factors that make the effectiveness of defense strategy that is applied by SBY in facing the threat of international security especially on the rise of China without any international spotlight, such as:

1. Design MEF to meet the standard budget in building Indonesian military strength.
2. Applying active free policy in foreign policy making to establish defense cooperation.
3. Not taking sides with one of the blocks when there is a regional conflict, especially the South China Sea conflict.
4. Applying defensive attitudes to safeguard Indonesian sovereignty and unity, not an offensive attitude to rival China's power.

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