

P-ISSN: 2986-3686

E-ISSN: 2798-4427

JGSS

Journal of Global Strategic Studies

Vol. 3 No. 1 June 2023

U.S. Military Strategy Since Vietnam

John Mueller

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NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Yohanes Sulaiman

Universitas Jenderal Achmad Yani

Dear readers:

It is with great pleasure that we present this issue of the Journal of Global Strategic Studies. It is hard to believe that we are now commemorating the third year of our journal. We are thankful for your continuous patronage, and constant support from our editorial board, editorial teams, authors, and reviewers. We hope that we will be able to keep offering you high quality publications from established and up-coming scholars in our fields of Political Science, notably International Relations and Comparative Politics.

In this issue, we are honored to again publish a work by John Mueller, one of the most esteemed scholars in International Relations. As usual, Mueller offers a thought-provoking piece that provides a vantage point of the United States' evolving military strategies to deal with challenges from Vietnam to Iraq, to its fight against ISIS, and presently, in trying to deal with the aftermath of Russia's invasion to Ukraine. Here, Mueller argues that the United States is successful in achieving its goals by pursuing a restrained military policy that provide advice, supplies, and intelligence, in support of local, indigenous forces. In contrast, its all-out military interventions such as its invasions on Afghanistan and Iraq only leads to defeat.

Natalie Sambhi, who studies the dynamics of civil-military relationship, notably on the relationship between a civilian president and the military chiefs, wrote our second article. In this case study on Indonesia, Sambhi looks at the politicization at the selection of Indonesia's *Panglima*, its military chief, and how the president's level of control over selection of the military chief and the chief's behaviour varied with personality factors and timing.

Our third article comes from Mohamad Rosyidin, who uses constructivism to analyzes how arms modernization among several states in Southeast Asia hinders ASEAN's collective identity building as the arms mobilization tends to preserve culture of

individualism and sharpens strategic rivalry among Southeast Asian states themselves. He suggests that ASEAN should prioritize collective identity building first than focusing on arming themselves.

Zhang Yun wrote our fourth article on China's role in global governance. He argues that despite of growing China's clout and power, China is still unable to assume a leading role in global governance due to its lack of capability and its own disinclination to assume a leading role. He points out that the Belt and Road Initiatives will be a very useful vehicle for China to use to contribute positively to global governance by providing public goods.

Finally, last but not the least, Muhammad Arif Prabowo shows in his article how growing threats from China influences Japan's decision to remilitarize. In turn, growing conflicts between China and Japan changes public perception itself, pushing for growing support for remilitarization.

As we embark on the next chapter of our journal's journey, again we invite you to join us in celebrating this milestone of the third year of our publication and to engage with the remarkable collection of articles presented within these pages. We are confident that they will inspire you, challenge your perspectives, and stimulate further research and dialogue in the captivating field of international relations.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to the Journal of Global Strategic Studies. Thank you for your willingness to read this note. Here's to many more years of insightful scholarship, impactful research, and fostering a deeper understanding of our interconnected world.

Cimahi and Bandung,

June 2023

Yohanes Sulaiman
Executive Editor

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U.S. Military Strategy Since Vietnam: The 9/11 Wars as Aberrations

John Mueller

Lecturer, Department of Political Science, Ohio State University

Impelled by an overwhelming desire to hunt down those responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States launched military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq where it toppled regimes that had little or nothing to do with 9/11. There has been a tendency to see these exercises as misguided elements of a coherent plan to establish a “liberal world order” or to apply “liberal hegemony.” In fact however, the militarization of the post-9/11 period has been a glaring, extended, and highly consequential aberration. During the quarter century before that, the United States pursued a foreign policy that was far more restrained militarily, and it seems ready now to resume that tradition (perhaps even more so) after its exhausting 9/11-induced military ventures which have so thoroughly failed to deliver satisfactory results at an acceptable cost. Moreover, public opinion in the United States it is not messianic or in constant search of monsters abroad to destroy. As part of its move back to a more restrained military policy, the United States developed—or further developed—a strategy called “by, with, and through” that was particularly evident in its successful military campaign from 2014 to 2019 against the Islamic State. In this, the United States worked with local forces by providing advice, supplies, and intelligence, and carrying out airstrikes while the locals were expected to take almost all of the casualties. Although hardly new, this approach seems to have a future and is currently being applied in the war in Ukraine.

Impelled by an overwhelming desire to hunt down those responsible for the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States launched military invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq where it toppled regimes that had little or nothing to do with 9/11. Initially successful at that task and eventually accompanied by rhetoric about spreading democracy and stability in the Middle East, the wars soon devolved into extended counterinsurgency (or counteroccupation) operations that have resulted in the deaths of more than 100 times as many people as perished on 9/11.

Fear about international terrorism impelled these military ventures: without 9/11, it is likely neither would have taken place. The Taliban regime in Afghanistan was deemed to be at blame by having “harbored” al-Qaeda, and the central argument impelling and then perpetuating the multi-decade war there was that, if the US withdrew, al-Qaeda would move from its apparently inadequate hideout in Pakistan to again set up shop in the country to plot and carry out further attacks against the United States.¹ And the Iraq War was substantially impelled by the argument that, left in office, its leader, the reviled Saddam Hussein, would develop nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and hand them off to terrorist groups, particularly al-Qaeda.²

However, there has been a tendency to see these exercises as misguided elements of a coherent plan to establish a “liberal world order” or to apply “liberal hegemony” (Posen 2014; Mearsheimer, 2018; Walt, 2018; Schweller, 2022). In fact, the militarization of the post-9/11 period has been a glaring, extended, and highly consequential aberration. During the quarter century before that, the United States pursued a foreign policy that was far more restrained militarily, and it seems ready now fully to resume that tradition after its exhausting 9/11-induced military ventures which have so thoroughly failed to deliver satisfactory results at an acceptable cost. Moreover, public opinion in the United States is not messianic or in constant search of monsters abroad to destroy.

From Vietnam to 9/11

In the wake of its withdrawal from the Vietnam War in 1973, the United States fell into something that has been dubbed the “Vietnam syndrome.” Although it still pursued the Cold War with the Soviet Union, it substantially avoided the active, or at any rate the direct and extensive, use of U.S. military force to do so. That is, there continued to be support for the contest against international communism but not for the tactic of opposing it through armed interventions like Vietnam where American casualties were suffered in great numbers.

¹ On this “safe haven myth,” see Glaser and Mueller, 2019, pp. 6-9.

² On the unlikelihood of such a transfer, see Mueller, 2023.

In the late 1970s, in fact, the United States essentially let its policy of containing the Soviet Union lapse and watched as the Soviets welcomed ten new countries into their camp: Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Grenada, Laos, Mozambique, Nicaragua, South Yemen, and Vietnam. All of those countries soon became dependent on Moscow economically, politically, and sometimes militarily—particularly Afghanistan, where the Soviets found it necessary to intervene with force in order to keep their local allies in power. As it turned out, the Soviets eventually came to realize that they might have been better off being contained.³

Even when American military force was applied during the last quarter of the twentieth century, it was done rather sparingly, not crusadingly. Its most assertive Cold War actions during that period were a military invasion of the small Caribbean Island of Grenada in 1983 and an operation to support anti-Soviet rebels in Afghanistan. Outside of the Cold War, the United States bombed Libya for a day in 1986 in retaliation for the Libyan government's sponsorship of terrorist activities; invaded Panama in 1989 to depose an offending regime; and led an international coalition in 1991 to reverse Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, successfully restoring Kuwait's decidedly illiberal government. In all these cases, its opponents were scarcely formidable. For example, although the Iraqi army may have looked impressive on paper in 1991, it lacked strategy, tactics, defenses, leadership, and morale, and it responded to confrontation with the U.S.-led offensive mostly by fleeing or by surrendering (Mueller, 1995). And in 1994, the government in Haiti, faced by the prospect of a U.S. invasion, was persuaded to flee.

Other military ventures Washington pursued between the Vietnam War and 9/11 were even more limited and were mostly not carried out for “hegemonic” purposes, but for humanitarian ones—something additionally facilitated by the end of the Cold War.⁴ American troops were sent to Lebanon in 1983 to help police a cease-fire there, but they were abruptly pulled out when 241 of them were killed in their barracks by a terrorist bomb. In 1992, American

³ For an extended discussion, see Mueller, 2021a, ch. 2.

⁴ For an extended discussion of this change, see Mueller, 2004, ch. 7.

soldiers helped stabilize Somalia, which was in the midst of a civil war and an attendant famine. But Washington withdrew its forces after 18 of its soldiers were killed in a chaotic firefight. Stung by this experience, the Clinton administration did not act to stop the genocide in nearby Rwanda in 1994.

There were also great concerns about civil war in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, but along with much handwringing, the U.S. military role involved little more than supplying aid and advice and, toward the end of the conflict, conducting limited bombing missions against Serbian targets in Bosnia. Only after the fighting was over did Washington send in troops to perform policing operations. A few years later, the United States led a NATO bombing campaign against Serbia to stop violence against Kosovo Albanians, but no American forces ever got close to fighting on the ground.

Overall, this record does not suggest a country looking for a fight, questing after monsters to destroy, or seeking to act like a hegemon. As Christopher Preble puts it, the efforts often “had an ad hoc quality about them” and “seemed purely reactive” not “part of a broader U.S. campaign to shape the world order to suit its interests” (Preble, 2009, p. 28).

There was a considerable expansion of democracy during the period. However, except for the democracy-restoring invasions of Grenada and Panama and for pressures on Haiti and perhaps the Philippines, the U.S. military did not play much of a role in this. Much more important were the examples set by the United States and, even more, by Western Europe. Thus, between 1975 and 1990, Spain and Portugal and then almost the whole of Latin America adopted democracy as did Taiwan and South Korea (and, later, Indonesia). And after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1989 and of the Soviet Union in 1991, many counties in eastern Europe, often anxious to join the appealing west, did so as well.⁵

It is true, however, that American rhetoric during the period did not match its military restraint. President Ronald Reagan insisted that world peace was at stake in the civil war in Lebanon, and President George H. W. Bush opined that

⁵ On this remarkable development, see Huntington, 1991; Mueller, 1999, pp. 212-22.

his war in the Gulf would “chart the future of the world for the next 100 years.” In addition, Bush (and later President Bill Clinton) declared that a coup in Haiti was an extraordinary threat to the security and economy of the United States. There have also been proclamations about how the United States has a responsibility to protect people in other countries and is “the one indispensable nation,” suggesting that others are, well, dispensable.

However, as suggested, such a vast proclamation was accompanied by half-vast execution. Despite all the hyperbolic and self-important rhetoric, between the end of the Vietnam War and the end of the century, the United States averaged only about 20 combat deaths per year including the toll from the barracks explosion in Lebanon (or about half that annual average if those deaths are excluded). Over the same period, the total number of military personnel dropped by 720,000, and military spending declined from 5.6 percent of U.S. GDP to 3.1 percent.

In the presidential election campaign of 2000, no one seems to have opposed George W. Bush’s explicit support in the October 11 debate for a “humble” foreign policy. Indeed, his Democratic opponent, Vice President Al Gore, deemed the idea to be “an important one.” To a considerable degree, both candidates were in tune with the times.

The 9/11 Aberration

Any commitment to humility disappeared when al-Qaeda attacked the United States on September 11, 2001. After the attacks, Bush abruptly abandoned humility to proclaim that the country’s “responsibility to history” was now to “rid the world of evil,” seeking, it would appear, to outdo God who had tried and failed with that flood of His sometime earlier.⁶ With this bizarre goal in mind, the United States launched the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, began to hunt down terrorist suspects across the globe as part of its “Global War on Terrorism,” and

⁶ Record, 2010, p. 139. A search finds that perhaps the only newspaper to comment on Bush’s absurdly extravagant pronouncement was the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* which noted that Bush “perhaps overpromised.”

established a national security state internally.⁷ Although Bush, like most of the Republican party, had previously ridiculed the concept of “nation-building,” he now embarked on two such enterprises each of which lasted decades and, in different ways, failed miserably.

As noted, the overwhelming impetus of these wars was rather banal: to get the bastards responsible for 9/11. The United States was not engaging in messianism nor was it questing after monsters to destroy. It was seeking safety, and the ventures were based on the fears generated by, and on the perceived threat suggested by, the 9/11 experience.⁸ John Mearsheimer argues that these two “endless wars” were part of an effort “to spread democracy around the world” (2018, p. 152) while Stephen Walt says that it was “the pursuit of liberal hegemony” that “led to” those “costly quagmires” (2018, p. 14). But as historian Melvyn Leffler concludes about the war in Iraq, the United States “went to war *not* out of a fanciful idea to make Iraq democratic, but to rid it of its deadly weapons, its links to terrorists, and its ruthless, unpredictable tyrant” (Leffler, 2023, pp. 248-49). Indeed, any argument about democracy in Iraq rose in significance, as Bruce Russett (2005, p. 396) has noted, only after the security arguments for going into the wars proved to be empty. Or, as Francis Fukuyama (2005) has put it, a prewar request to spend “several hundred billion dollars and several thousand American lives in order to bring democracy to . . . Iraq” would “have been laughed out of court.” Moreover, when given a list of foreign-policy goals, the American public has rather consistently ranked the promotion of democracy lower—often *much* lower—than such goals as combating international terrorism, protecting American jobs, and strengthening the United Nations (Mueller, 2011, 152).

This militarized reaction to the 9/11 attacks accounts for the overwhelming amount of American military action over the last 50 years.

⁷ As part of this, the United States created or reorganized more than two entire counterterrorism organizations for every terrorist arrest or apprehension it made of people plotting to do damage within the country. Mueller and Stewart, 2016, p. 2.

⁸ The alarm was justified for a while, of course. Indeed, no other terrorist attack, before or after 9/11, in war zones or outside them, has inflicted even one tenth as much total destruction as 9/11 (Mueller and Stewart 2016b, pp. 117-21). That alarm, however, should in time have been reassessed. However, with little exception, it was not.

Without 9/11, the comparative military restraint of the last quarter of the twentieth century would likely have continued. For example, defense department adviser Richard Perle, one of most ardent proponents of war with Iraq in 2003, had published an article before 9/11 that, while strongly advocating a policy hostile toward the country, recommended only protecting and assisting resistance movements within Iraq, not outright invasion by American troops (2000).

Neither of the two post-9/11 wars was necessary. It is unlikely that the insecure Taliban regime in Afghanistan, where al-Qaeda had carried out training, needed to be overthrown: the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda was often very uncomfortable, and the regime might have been susceptible to international pressure—especially from Saudi Arabia, which had been trying to extradite terror chief Osama bin Laden for years (Mueller, 2021c). Instead, the interveners seemed to believe that American soldiers “could walk into the world’s most conservative villages, make friends, hunt their enemies, and build a better society,” as Canadian journalist Graeme Smith noted (2015, p. xvi). These attacks by foreigners regularly rallied tribal members to the Taliban’s cause (Malkasian, 2021, pp. 173, 454-55).

And Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq was unlikely to dominate the Middle East with its ramshackle and unreliable army that was banned from entering Baghdad with heavy equipment out of fear that it might overthrow the regime (O’Kane, 1998). Indeed, as Jeffrey Record notes, even if Saddam Hussein “had possessed nuclear weapons, there is no convincing evidence he would have been undeterrable” (2010, p. 165; see also Mueller, 2023; Mueller 2002; Mearsheimer and Walt, 2003; *New York Times*, 2002). And any connections he had with terrorist groups were with ones attacking Israel at the time in the Second Intifada, not with al-Qaeda (Leffler 2023, pp. 86, 244, 249, 252). As an Army War College study notes, in conducting the Iraq War, U.S. leaders seemed to have believed that other actors would not react. But Iran, a co-member with Iraq on Bush’s “axis of evil” hit list, had a huge incentive to make the American occupation of neighboring Iraq as miserable as possible, and the study concludes that Iran “appears to be the only victor” of the war (Rayburn and Sobchak, 2019,

vol. 2, p. 639). Moreover, terrorists from around the world were attracted to the fray, something warned about before the U.S. invasion (Mueller, 2003).

As it became clear just how costly and counterproductive the main conflicts of the “war on terror” had become, Washington began to shift back to a more restrained military approach. In the “Arab spring” of 2011, it looked for a while like a set of Middle East countries, following the example of those in East Europe after the Cold War, might liberalize or democratize. As noted, the East Europeans, like those in Spain and Portugal before them, were motivated in part by a desire to join the very desirable club comprised by the secure and wealthy countries of West Europe. Perhaps because there was no comparable club in the Arab case, liberalizing efforts fell apart in the next years. At any rate, the military response by the U.S. in this case resembled the period before 9/11 more the one after it. As in Bosnia, it joined a rather large number of other states to assist the rebels in Syria, and it supplied some Kosovo-like bombing to help those in Libya. Both efforts failed miserably: the rebels lost in Syria and those in Libya, after toppling the reigning dictator, fell into civil war among themselves.

A change in U.S. military policy was evident in a major Defense Department statement in January 2012 which stressed that “U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct largescale, prolonged stability operations” (Martinez, 2012). This suggests that the military and its leaders had concluded that they simply didn’t know how to successfully execute such missions, and, in that sense, it expressed a degree of restraint, even humility. Presumably with this in mind at least in part, policymakers worked to reconfigure the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq to reduce the death rate of U.S. military forces. In Afghanistan, the rate was over 400 per year in 2010-11, but it declined to under 25 per year later. The death rate in Iraq was over 800 per year between 2004 and 2007, but it declined to under 70 per year in 2010-11 and to less than 25 per year thereafter. (All of these rates, however, are much lower than those suffered earlier in the wars in Korea and Vietnam.) In 2014, Washington sent troops back to Iraq to fight the Islamic State, or ISIS, but, as will be discussed more fully in the next section, in the years that followed, the United States mostly provided advice and air support while local fighters bore the brunt of combat deaths (Gordon, 2022).

Both the Obama and Trump administrations moved to reduce U.S. commitments to the “forever wars,” echoing a shift in American public opinion that had come to sour on the conflicts even though they were identified with terrorism (Mueller and Stewart 2020, pp. 8, 19-21). As after Vietnam, the public continued to support the strategic goal—in this case fighting international terrorism—but not the tactic of direct on-the-ground intervention. Indicative of the public’s wariness about military ventures abroad was its response to bipartisan support in Congress in 2013 for the punitive bombing of Syria after the ruling regime of Bashar al-Assad was deemed to have carried out a poison gas attack on civilians. Out of concern that the action would lead to further involvement in the conflict, the public was strongly opposed to using force—as members of Congress of both parties found when they went home to their districts (Rhodes 2018, pp. 237, 240).

American participation in the war in Afghanistan declined but lingered, lasting so long, as noted, because of the appeal of the argument that, should the US fail there, al-Qaeda would return to Afghanistan to plot and carry out more 9/11s. Failure did come about in 2021 with an utter collapse of the Afghan forces trained and supplied by the US and with a consequent victory by the insurgent Taliban. However, the public reacted with remarkable equanimity. And, it might be added, al-Qaeda has yet to return to set up shop in Afghanistan. Its leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who had been successfully holing up in Pakistan for 20 years, did make a visit to the Afghan capital a year after the Taliban takeover. But safety did not follow him, and he was promptly killed in an American drone strike.

Evidence of this emerging public aversion to the 9/11 wars could be found at least as early as 2005 (Mueller 2005). Now, the United States seems to have fully embraced an “Iraq syndrome” or an “Iraq/Afghanistan syndrome,” and it has moved back to a considerable degree of military restraint. As something of an indicator, military spending as a percentage of GDP, which rose considerably in the decade after 9/11, is back to the levels of 2000. The American public might still support a campaign against international terrorism by air or drone, but there is little appetite for invasion and occupation—and none whatever for crusading.

Nonetheless, overall military spending remains high despite military failures in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Campaign Against ISIS and “By, With, and Through”

Thus, the United States has moved back to a more restrained military policy as advocated by many particularly during the course of the two 9/11 wars (Posen 2014). As part of this, it has developed—or further developed—a strategy called “by, with, and through” that was particularly evident in its successful military campaign from 2014 to 2019 against the Islamic State, or ISIS. Under this strategy, the United States worked with local forces by providing advice, supplies, and intelligence, and carrying out air strikes (Wasser et al., 2021). But the locals were expected to take almost all of the casualties. And, indeed, they did: tens of thousands of people were killed in the war, but only twenty of them were American service personnel (Gordon, 2022, p. 390).

Key to the success of the strategy, then, was the willingness of the locals to fight and die for the cause. This quality, costly in lives to the locals if not to their outside supporters, is difficult to inspire or fabricate, but it helps greatly if the enemy, as in the case of ISIS, is taken to present a threat that is genocidal or existential to the locals.

The 2022 book, *Degrade and Destroy: The Inside Story of the War Against the Islamic State from Barack Obama to Donald Trump*, by Michael Gordon, a top military reporter for the *Wall Street Journal*, can help to guide the discussion. As its title suggests, the book focuses primarily and in considerable depth on the American contribution to the campaign. Although it does not deal very much with the fighting qualities of ISIS—an omission that has come with analytical consequences, as will be seen—it is nonetheless highly useful in assessing the development of the strategy that defeated ISIS.

A problem is that a willingness by the locals cannot readily be created by U.S. efforts. Because of its focus on the Americans, Gordon’s book tends to underplay that dynamic.

The United States certainly tried: it spent \$20 billion over a decade to create defense forces in Iraq (Morris and Ryan, 2016). However, confused and corruption-ridden, these forces simply fell apart when challenged by ISIS fighters in 2014, abandoning territory and weaponry to ISIS even though the defending forces often greatly outnumbered the challengers (Parker et al., 2014).

But there was soon a remarkable transformation: effective forces in opposition to ISIS emerged among the locals. They came not only from the Iraqi army but also from various militia and paramilitary groups, especially Kurdish ones. They often squabbled and, as Gordon extensively documents, a central U.S. mission was to get them to coordinate their efforts. But all were in agreement on the need to extinguish ISIS and to risk death in the process.

However, although this change was likely bolstered by the American commitment, it was caused not so much by that as by local fears and revulsion at the vicious and genocidal tactics and goals of ISIS, which, as Daniel Byman puts it (2016, pp. 160,152), had a “genius at making enemies” and could not make common cause even with other Sunni rebel groups. A poll conducted in Iraq in January 2016 found that fully 99 percent of Shiites and 95 percent of Sunnis expressed opposition to ISIS (al-Dagher and Kaltenthaler, 2016). Spines had become steeled by its staged beheadings of hostages, summary executions of prisoners, and rape and enslavement of female captives. For example, in 2014, ISIS massacred some 1,700 unarmed captured Shia military cadets by shooting, beheading, and choking them, triumphantly web-casting videos of the event (Giglio, 2019, p. 157; Cockburn, 2015). This mind-concentrating episode is mentioned only in passing by Gordon. But, as one ISIS opponent puts it bluntly in the film *City of Ghosts*, the conclusion for many was “either we will win, or they will kill us all.”

In addition, the U.S. strategy against ISIS was aided by the fact that Americans came to believe that the enemy presented a direct threat to the United States—another element that is substantially missing from Gordon’s narrative. This stemmed from the vicious group’s ultimate idiocy: staging and webcasting beheadings of defenseless American and Western hostages in the late summer and early fall of 2014. Only 17 percent of the American public had advocated sending

ground troops to fight ISIS after its successful routs earlier in the year—it seemed to be yet another incomprehensible civil conflict among Iraqi factions. However, the beheadings—tragic and disgusting, but hardly of the order of the magnitude of destruction wreaked on 9/11—boosted support to over 40 percent, and that went even higher later. A poll conducted in 2016 asked the 83 percent of its respondents who closely followed news about ISIS whether the group presented “a serious threat to the existence or survival of the U.S.” Fully 77 percent agreed, more than two-thirds of them strongly (Mueller and Stewart, 2022, pp. 16, 22).

For all the success, however, it seems possible that civilian deaths would have been far lower if ISIS fighters, many of them disillusioned and fundamentally muddled, had been allowed to flee the fray.

Because of its focus on American policy and strategy, Gordon’s book says little about the inner workings and machinations of ISIS. But that issue is especially relevant to some brief suggestions at the end of the book arguing that efforts should be made to improve the strategy to reduce civilian casualties. As he points out, U.S. strategy, particularly as put forward by Secretary of Defense General Jim Mattis, was focused on “annihilating” ISIS (Gordon, 2022, pp. 327, 337-38). As a result, sieges of ISIS forces often made the fighters cornered rats and did not allow them an escape route. This led to situations such as the one in which an American bomb blew up a building housing two ISIS snipers, killing 105 civilians in the process (Taub 2018). But sometimes, local commanders did allow for escape routes, and evidence in the book suggests that this may have saved many civilian lives (Gordon, 2022, pp. 338-39).

As Gordon points out (2022, p. 397), the concern was that if ISIS fighters were allowed to escape, they would be free to rejoin the battle elsewhere. But this concern seems to have been based on an overestimate of their capacities and dedication.

In fact, after its startlingly easy advances of 2014, in which Iraqi defenders mainly fled, ISIS did not show much dedicated military tenacity (Mueller and Stewart, 2016). Some of this was evident even early on (Mardini, 2014; Mueller, 2014). Thus, the group announced in 2014 that it was “ready to burn 10,000 fighters” in one fight but abandoned the field after the loss of a few hundred (Fitch

and Nissenbaum, 2014). In late 2015, it launched three badly-coordinated offensives in northern Iraq that included “armored bulldozers,” but all were readily beaten back (Gordon, 2015).

Frontline commanders observed of ISIS that “they don’t fight. They just send car bombs and then run away. Their leaders are begging them to fight, but they answer that it is a lost cause. They refuse to obey and run away” (Sly, 2016). Increasingly, ISIS sought to ferret out informants within the ranks, some of them alienated by sharp cuts in salaries, executing them by such methods as dropping them into vats of acid (CBS/AP 2016). In defense, ISIS seems primarily to have relied not on well-organized military operations, but on planting booby traps, using snipers, and cowering among civilians (Knights and Mello, 2015). For example, to maintain its human shield, ISIS murdered hundreds of civilians who tried to escape, sometimes hanging the corpses from electrical pylons as a warning (Taub, 2018).

Rather than treating ISIS fighters as cornered rats behind human shields as U.S. policy dictated, it might have been better overall to let them escape. Some escapees might have fought again, but many seem to have been thoroughly disillusioned and were anxious to flee the fractious, murderous, and pathological ISIS society. Fears at the time that foreign fighters would return home to commit terrorist attacks were understandable, and that did happen in Paris in 2015 and Brussels in 2016 (Callimachi, 2016). But there were few, if any, such events later; fears about returnees proved to substantially unjustified (Mueller, 2018).

The Past and Future of “By, With, and Through”

After the extended, tragically costly, and fundamentally absurd aberrations caused by the overreaction to 9/11, then, American military restraint appears to be back—perhaps even more so than in the post-Vietnam decades. And as the country limps now from its 9/11-induced failure in Afghanistan, it even seems possible that official rhetoric will mellow. Self-infatuated proclamations about American superpowerdom, exceptionalism, and indispensable nationhood, seen

by many to be arrogant, may subside, at least for now.⁹ And even notions about “the responsibility to protect” are losing their sheen.

Gordon (2022, p. 3) concludes that the “by, with, and through” strategy constitutes a “new way of war.” However, it is not clear that the strategy is all that new: Gordon himself espies “elements” of it in earlier interventions (2022, p. 393). In fact, in many respects, it was fully in view in the American (and European) approach to civil wars in Bosnia and Croatia in the early 1990s. The outside interveners were willing to supply and advise one side in those conflicts and even to apply some focused bombing. But, as noted, U.S. troops were sent to police the situation only in 1995 after the wars had been substantially settled—when the military environment had become “permissive,” as it was put at the time by President Bill Clinton and others. Helpful to the success of the mission was the fact that the opposing Serb forces were substantially incompetent and criminalized (Mueller, 2004, pp. 88-95).

Something similar could be seen in U.S. strategy in the last years of the Vietnam War two decades earlier. Sapped by declining popular support for the war at home, the U.S. contribution had been reduced to a supporting role by 1971, while the South Vietnamese forces America had trained were expected to bear the brunt of any ground fighting. In 1972, North Vietnam launched a major offensive, and for a while, it looked like South Vietnam’s military would fold. However, some elements did hang on, blunting the offensive. When that was obvious, the United States re-entered combat, but mainly with airpower, and the combined effort defeated the offensive. But three years later, when the North launched another offensive, the ill-led South Vietnamese military did collapse, and the United States mainly stood back and withdrew its personnel, watching as the North took over and handed the United States the greatest debacle in its foreign policy history. As with its later debacle in Afghanistan, failure was accepted with remarkable equanimity (Mueller 1984).

Foreign policy analyst David Ignatius (2017) argues that the United States military may well have found a “winning combination” in its war against ISIS.

⁹ On superpower arrogance, see (Fettweis, 2018).

However, as the Vietnam experience suggests, it needs local forces that are prepared to do the fighting and dying. Indeed, in a broader comparative study, Stephen Biddle and his colleagues (2018) conclude that security force assistance works best, and perhaps only, if the locals are convinced they face a mind-concentratingly existential challenge. Otherwise, their interests are likely to depart considerably from those assisting them.

Nonetheless, Gordon's contention that this "new way of war" has a future seems to be on solid ground. Although the book was in press when the war in Ukraine erupted in 2022, he suggested in later interviews that a version of the strategy is currently being applied by the United States and its allies in that conflict. Following the approach applied when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan a few years after America's Vietnam debacle, there has been support for locals opposing the invasion, but not for direct intervention.

Although the United States and NATO had done some training and had sent military aid to Ukraine in recent years, they were wary and expected that, if a Russian invasion took place, the Ukrainians might well fold the way U.S.-trained forces had in Iraq in 2014, in Afghanistan in 2021, and in South Vietnam in 1975. They were especially concerned about supplying intelligence because Ukraine's intelligence apparatus was shot through with Russian moles (Harris et al., 2022).

However, once the Ukrainians proved to be dedicated and effective at defending against a threat that seemed to endanger the existence of their state, the essential element in the "by, with, and through" strategy was established. This was bolstered by outrage at the Russian invasion, which inspired broad popular support in North America and Europe for a costly assistance effort (Friedman, 2022; Mueller, 2022a).

Moreover, it seems likely that outside support for dedicated forces like those in Ukraine can be sustained because the "by, with, and through" strategy does not require that casualties be suffered by the supporters. Mounting U.S. casualties were the essential cause of the decline in popular support for wars like Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, not events in the war (which generally proved to

have only a short-term effect) or the antics of anti-war demonstrators (Mueller, 2022b).

But if the conflict in Ukraine suggests that this “way of war” has a future, it is a limited one. As experiences in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan attest, dedicated local forces cannot readily be fabricated by well-meaning outsiders, even after decades of effort and expense.

A degree of restraint can also perhaps be seen today in the reaction to the rise of China, which many see to be the primary danger out there. Even alarmists push for little more than rearranging the U.S. military (or selling submarines to allies) in a (potentially quixotic) effort to somehow “balance” against China’s (primarily economic) rise. Other proposals have even less bite. For example, they advocate working with allies, improving American officials’ understanding of China, calling out China’s repressive policies, countering Beijing’s efforts to potentially control communication networks, and cooperating on common interests, such as climate change (Mueller, 2021b). But there isn’t much of a call for major military operations to counter China.

However, a test might come if China decides at some point to take over Taiwan by military force. If local forces resist effectively, as happened in Ukraine, it seems rather likely that the “by, with, and through” approach will be applied by the United States in much the same manner as in Ukraine. If Taiwan’s forces fold, however, outsiders are unlikely to try to rescue them on their own.

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Jokowi's Generals, Civilian Control, and the Power of the Panglima

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The relationship between the president and the military chief (known as the Panglima) can be a useful proxy for understanding the state of civil-military relations in Indonesia. This research note argues that, under President Joko Widodo, democratic norms of civil-military relations have been further eroded with the selection of the Panglima becoming increasingly politicised, rather than being guided by operational or service rotation needs. Also, the president has experienced varying levels of civilian control over the military chief, influenced by factors such as personality and timing.

Introduction

Understanding the influence and power of a nation's military chief can reveal a lot about civil-military relations in a country. In Western democracies, civil-military relations describe a normative arrangement in which civilian authority has supremacy over the military. The military chief is not elected by the people and owing to the considerable force at their disposal, must be subordinate to the president. Furthermore, this civilian control is predicated on a set of norms, rules, and institutions that structure and regulate the balance of decision-making power between civilian institutions and the military. In contrast to this model, Indonesia's military chief—known formally as the Panglima—has played a prominent and influential role not just in defence and security but in domains beyond traditional military affairs such as politics and economics. For instance, during President Suharto's New Order (1966–1998), a period marked by authoritarian governance with high levels of military control, the formidable General Benny Murdani enjoyed unprecedented levels of bureaucratic power,

holding the position of military head and Minister of Defense between 1998 and 1993.¹⁰

With the end of the New Order came democratisation and the introduction of democratic civil-military relations norms. For instance, in October 1999, President Abdurrahman Wahid appointed a civilian defence minister, Dr Juwono Sudarsono, as an early attempt to exert civilian control over defence affairs. However, the extent to which Indonesia's political and military elite have practised civil-military norms has been shaped by the country's history and current circumstances. Examining the Panglima is one such way of identifying trends in civil-military relations in post-*Reformasi* Indonesia and the extent to which these norms have become institutionalised.

Despite the significance of the position, existing literature on the armed forces commander is limited, even more so on the Indonesian military's chief. This research note attempts to expand on this area of Indonesia's civil-military relations, leading to other areas of inquiry. These might include: What influence does the Indonesian military chief have (on military modernisation, civil-military relations, morale and so on) and how has it changed over the decades? What is the impact of service on the role or effectiveness of the Indonesian military chief? What has rotation through the services achieved? What does all of this tell us about the current and future Panglimas?

This research note focuses on the relationship between the Panglima and the current president Joko Widodo (known popularly as Jokowi), who will have had five Panglimas by the time he leaves a decade in office in late 2024. Why did Jokowi pick who he picked? What were the consequences of those decisions? What does that tell us about civil-military relations during the post-*Reformasi* era under President Jokowi? This research note draws three conclusions: first, under Jokowi, the extent of the military chief's influence is shaped both by the personality and background of the president but also the Panglima. Second, the position of the Panglima serves political over operational interests. Third,

¹⁰ General Maraden Panggabean also held the positions of Panglima and Minister of Defense concurrently between 1973 and 1978.

patronage networks can be successfully exploited to secure the position of the Panglima, a trend likely to continue under Jokowi's successor. As such, this research note argues that democratic norm of civilian control is mostly satisfied under Jokowi; he has exercised varying levels of controlling the selection of the chief and the behaviour depending on factors like his understanding of the military.

Military chiefs and civilian control

This research notes argues that examining the relationship between the military chief and the president yields useful insights into the state of civil-military relations. Civil-military relations are more than a description of ties between the armed forces and civilians. Civil-military relations also constitute a normative arrangement, particularly in democracies, whereby the armed forces are subordinate to elected civilian officials. Under this arrangement known as civilian supremacy, civilians exercise what is known as civilian control. Croissant et al (2010) propose one definition of civilian control as

“that distribution of decision-making power in which civilians have exclusive authority to decide on national politics and their implementation. Under civilian control, civilians can freely choose to delegate decision-making power and the implementation of certain policies to the military while the military has no decision-making power outside those areas specifically defined by civilians. Furthermore, it is civilians alone who determine which policies, or aspects of policies, the military implements, and the civilians alone define the boundaries between policymaking and policy-implementation” (Croissant et al. 2010: 955)

In other words, critical decision-making processes are devoid of undue military interference. Reality, of course, does not reflect such a neat divide. Civil-military relations are often “characterized by overlapping or shared competencies, areas of contestation, delegation of responsibilities, and informal networking between military officers and civilian elites” (Croissant et al. 2012: 7). Thus, civilian control is best understood in practice as the balance of power between the civilian and military spheres as tending towards the former.

Civilian control includes control exercised by the head of state. In democracies such as Indonesia, the president, who is elected by the people, is the

commander-in-chief of the armed forces and exercises civilian supremacy. The Law on the Indonesian Armed Forces 34 of 2004, states that the president is responsible for appointing and dismissing the chief. In appointing the Panglima, the president submits a candidate's name to the House of Representatives for vetting and approval, adding another layer of civilian oversight. The president also has the authority and responsibility for deploying TNI forces which, including the Panglima, is a "tool of the state" (*alat negara*). The law also clearly affirms civilian supremacy in requiring the TNI to be "subject to every policy and political decision stipulated by the President through the process of constitutional mechanisms." It also specifies that the military "does not engage in the practice of politics" but must prioritise "the principles of democracy, civil supremacy, human rights, national legal provisions and ratified international legal provisions."

One way of appraising the civil-military balance and understanding how civilian supremacy is exercised in Indonesia is to study the relationship between the president and the Panglima. Specifically, what level of control does the president exert over the selection of the Panglima and to what extent can the president control a Panglima stepping outside of the legally defined remit of their role. The law only states that the president is responsible for selection but sheds little light on how the mechanics of this works in practice. The law specifies that a military chief can be selected from any senior officer who has served as a service chief and the role can be rotated through the services (*dapat dijabat secara bergantian*) but again, this provides few clues by which criteria a candidate is found suitable. Regarding the remit of the role, again, the law states the Panglima is responsible for the use and management of the TNI, carrying out national defence, and providing advice to the defence minister. Like the rest of the TNI, the chief must remain politically neutral and must reinforce the principles of democracy. How has this worked in practice?

Abundant scholarship on the Indonesian military has shed light on the civil-military relations since the state's formation (Mietzner, 2008; Honna, 2005; Lowry, 1997; Rinakit, 2005; Singh, 2001). Some of these works, like Jenkins' (1984) monograph on Suharto and his generals, examine the power relations

between the president and high-ranking military officers. More recent works by Laksmana (2019) and Sebastian et al (2018) focus on Jokowi and the military, examining the president's hands-off approach and increasing levels of military influence. This research note builds upon these works on the civil-military relationship in scrutinising the relationship between the president and Panglima. It also expands the existing literature on former military chiefs which is dominated by biographies and memoirs.¹¹

The Indonesian military, the Panglima and civilian control

We cannot understand the role of the Panglima without understanding the broader context of changes to the Indonesian military's role in the state since *Reformasi*. In Indonesia, "the military's political weight – whether real or perceived – has remained an important factor in Indonesian politics" (Mietzner 2018: 140). While the TNI enjoyed intense levels of political and bureaucratic power during the New Order, it has since been depoliticised, with a New Paradigm (Paradigma Baru) barring active-duty officers from roles in cabinet or parliament. The doctrine of Dual Function (Dwi Fungsi), which legitimised interests in security and non-security roles, was dismantled and replaced with aspirations towards becoming a professional military focussed on external security. As part of democratisation, the military would be held accountable for abuses of power and that justice would be found for victims of human rights violations.

The onset of democratisation saw early changes to the role of the Panglima and the relationship with the president. Army General Wiranto, serving as chief at the time, had worked as Suharto's aide-de-camp in 1989, and as Panglima had maintained smooth relations with the president until his resignation. The ongoing fallout from the East Asian financial crisis and domestic political tumult necessitated a working civil-military relationship between Suharto's successor B.J Habibie and Wiranto to usher the country into democracy, which included kickstarting reforms to the armed forces, which were in a weak position at the time. One of the reasons Wiranto did not openly challenge Habibie's decisions

¹¹ Some examples include (Wiranto, Abdullah, & Tamara, 2003); (Pour & Scott, 1993); (Tjokropranolo & Arifin, 1992)

was that the president had originally planned to dismiss the chief. According to Wiranto, in exchange for supporting the president, he was kept on, allowing the passage of major political and security reforms (Wiranto 2003: 93–4).

Changes to the military's—and hence the Panglima's—primacy in the state were furthered by Habibie's successor Abdurrahman Wahid (known as Gus Dur). As mentioned earlier, he installed Sudarsono, a civilian defence minister with relevant expertise in law, foreign affairs and defence matters. A civilian defence minister, devoid of military corporate interests, can provide a crucial counterweight to the influence of the military chief in a range of defence policy areas such as force structure and procurement. Gus Dur also elected the first non-army Panglima, Admiral Widodo A.S., thereby breaking the army's monopoly of positions of power such as the military chief (see Table 1 Panglimas from *Reformasi* to present day). This established the norm of rotating the chief's position among the services.

Attempts to introduce democratic civil-military norms and further reforms have progressed slowly. During her presidency, Megawati Sukarnoputri showed little appetite to challenge the military, choosing instead to keep them as allies. Rather than rotating the Panglima position to the Air Force, she defaulted to the Army. For his part, during his decade-long leadership, former army general Yudhoyono rotated the Panglima position through the services though allowing army alternate years. He also appointed two civilians as Defense Minister with Sudarsono again followed by Purnomo Yusgiantoro. Civil-military relations during his tenure were stable, owing in large part to his military background and understanding of how to mitigate armed forces influence while, at the same time, encouraging further military professionalisation.¹²

This research note argues that perceptions of the Panglima also contribute to this state of affairs. The figure of the Panglima has historically loomed much larger than a tool of the state. For instance, the qualities of loyalty, perseverance

¹² Aside from launching a military modernisation program to boost naval and air force capacity, In particular, Yudhoyono pushed for the TNI to take greater part in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Such activity was intended to promote the country's role in multilateral security endeavours and, theoretically, provide soldiers opportunities to interact with other military forces.

and selfless sacrifice seen to be exhibited by the military's first commander, General Sudirman, during the War of Independence continues to be mythologised in contemporary Indonesian society. His statue stands high in central Jakarta and one can unfailingly find a *Jalan Sudirman* (Sudirman Street) in major cities. However, such glorification of the armed forces glosses over the complex and troubled relationship between civilians and the military.

Jokowi's Generals

Jokowi's first military chief, army General Moeldoko, was appointed by his predecessor, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Moeldoko finished his term in July 2015, approximately nine months into Jokowi's first term. Since then, Jokowi's chiefs have been army general Gatot Nurmantyo (July 2015 to December 2017), air force Air Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto (December 2017 to November 2021), army general Andika Perkasa (November 2021 to December 2022) and navy Admiral Yudo Margono (December 2022 to present) (see Table 1 for further details).

The rise and fall of Gatot Nurmantyo

When Moeldoko's tenure ended in July 2015, Army Chief of Staff General Gatot Nurmantyo became the first Panglima selected by the president. Speculating on the reasons for Gatot's promotion, John McBeth argued that the Air Force Chief of Staff was too junior, and Jokowi wanted to balance out "rebellious" police force (McBeth 2017).

Gatot's time as chief was marked by the promotion of conservative ideas. For one, he argued that Indonesia was amidst a "proxy war" waged by foreign powers, tapping into the country's deeply ingrained fears of foreign interference since the days of Sukarno. Specifically, Gatot argued that Indonesia could become a site where foreign states played out their interests, invoking the potential of food and energy insecurity. He named anarchist workers demonstrations, student brawls, divisions between TNI and POLRI, between political parties, social engineering by the media and rise of drug abuse as threats to the nation state (Wardi 2016). He also accused the US and Australia of spreading false stories in order to destabilise Indonesia (Coconuts Jakarta 2016). He promulgated these ideas via lectures at several universities and Islamic boarding houses. In February 2016, Gatot also signed an "defence pact" (*pakta*

pertahanan) with 11 organisations, including Republic of Indonesia Teachers' Association, Indonesian Publishers Association, Association of Indonesian Higher Education Publishers, to purportedly combat the threat of proxy war via the media (Rahmat 2016). His tenure as chief was not the first time that Gatot had made his political ideas known. When he was head of KOSTRAD, he declared Indonesia's democracy to be "empty". Gatot's public posturing also had religious dimensions. During the Action to Defend Islam 212 (*Aksi Bela Islam 212*) in December 2016 against the then governor of Jakarta Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (also known as Ahok) who was accused of blaspheming the Koran. While he mobilised the military against the 200,000-strong demonstration but appeared to take advantage of the intense media coverage, being photographed next to Jokowi wearing a white hajj cap rather than his usual Panglima hat (BBC News Indonesia 2016).

The year 2017 saw Gatot become considerably bolder and more autonomous. Continuing to position himself as defender of Indonesia's dignity, in January he raised the spectre of mass organisations who could threaten Pancasila (Siregar & Prasetyo 2017). Gatot caused further controversy in the same month when he unilaterally cancelled military ties with the Australian Defence Force. Training material used by Australia special forces which called the national ideology "Panca-gila" (*gila* meaning crazy in Indonesia) was deemed insulting to Indonesia. The Indonesian president was apparently not consulted in relation to the matter, before Gatot announced the cutting of ties.

In September, Gatot gave the order for soldiers to attend public screenings of Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI (Treachery of G30S/PKI), a four-hour propaganda film on the attempted 1965 coup which had been mandatory watching for schoolchildren and public servants during the New Order. Gatot promoted the idea that millennials should have a stronger grasp of Communism's threat to the nation. This meant the military's version of history, produced by the Armed Forces History Centre (Pusat Sejarah TNI, Pusjarah TNI) and unchanged since the end of the New Order. When the order was questioned by Defense Minister Ryamizard, Gatot retorted that he took orders only from the president (Loveard et al, 2017). Around the same time groups such as Legal Aid Foundation were

attacked for hosting a discussion on the killings of 1965. The countermovement was spearheaded by retired generals like Kivlan Zen.

Gatot's actions were also destabilising intra-security agency relations. He alleged that non-military institutions, the State Intelligence Agency (BIN) and the National Police (POLRI) had illegally imported firearms. The allegation was refuted by Wiranto and Ryamizard (The Jakarta Post 2017). A police spokesperson confirmed the weapons procured by his organisation were in accordance with procedure (Antara News 2017). The incident not only demonstrated a lack of unity among Jokowi's security actors but highlighted Gatot's unrelenting willingness to publicly play out grievances in the media, thereby positioning himself in a patriotic light. While Gatot was not due to retire from the military until March 2018, it appeared that Jokowi grew tired of his lack of control over the Panglima and replaced Gatot with the Air Force Chief of Staff Hadi Tjahjanto in December 2017.

Hadi's steady hands

In the wake of Gatot's ambitious behaviour, Jokowi opted for a more manageable military chief. In appointing Hadi as Panglima, Jokowi was seen as restoring political "neutrality" to the TNI (McBeth 2017). Part of his suitability for the job included Hadi's past service as the Adi Sumarno airbase commander in Jokowi's hometown of Solo, Central Java from 2010 to 2011 and then as the president's military secretary from 2015 to 2016. In other words, unlike Gatot, he was known to the president. Hadi was appointed Air Force Chief in January 2017, during Jokowi's presidency, thereby guaranteeing a place among eligible candidates for Panglima selection. The appointment also had the support of Wiranto, then serving as Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs, Ryamizard and Luhut, then serving as Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs (McBeth 2017). Another advantage for Jokowi was Hadi's age; being younger than other candidates would allow him to stay in the position for longer before reaching the mandatory retirement age.

It is notable that Hadi's tenure saw no controversies involving the Panglima's decisions in defence or political matters. Hadi did not openly challenge or undermine the president or other members of cabinet the way Gatot

had. Hadi served alongside two retired Army generals as Defense Minister and did not exhibit the same confrontational attitude as Gatot had towards Ryamizard. Within 12 days, the new chief reversed appointments made by his predecessor, helping to ensure that Gatot loyalists would not act as spoilers. There was a sense that Gatot was placing loyal officers in strategic posts which would frustrate Hadi's tenure (Anindya & Dwicahyo 2018). During his almost four years as head, Hadi main tasks would include repairing the relationship between the military and the police, securing the 2019 elections, responding to several natural disasters, responding to increasing Chinese vessels incursions around Indonesia's Natuna Islands, and assisting the national covid-19 pandemic response. Hadi's role in smoothing military-police ties was bolstered by the appointment of Jokowi's choice of police chief, Tito Karnavian. Hadi served until November 2018. After retirement, Hadi appeared to be rewarded for his loyalty in being appointed in June 2022 as Minister of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency.

The grand ambitions of Andika Perkasa

Andika is the second Panglima to have had a strong, personal connection to the president. He was politically well connected, being the son-in-law of A.M. Hendropriyono, a former Kopassus general and close advisor of Jokowi.¹³ Andika served as head of the presidential security guard (Paspampres), allowing him access to an inner circle from 2014 to 2016, the first few years of Jokowi's tenure. In November 2021, while serving as Army Chief of Staff, Andika became Jokowi's sole nominee submitted to the DPR for the position.

Unlike Hadi, who was selected to create stability, there is a strong case that Andika's appointment was based on nepotism and patronage. First, Andika had not been renowned for strong performance and the positions he held, though often seen as a pathway to the top job, were not for long. As Made Supriatma highlights, Andika was promoted from colonel to major general in a mere 11 months, days after Jokowi's inauguration in 2014 (Supriatma 2021). He then spent only four months as head of the Army's Strategic Command (Kostrad)

¹³ Hendropriyono also served as the head of the State Intelligence Agency (*Badan Intelijen Nasional, BIN*).

before rising to the Army Chief of Staff position in November 2018. Andika's military career is also unusually lacking in operational and territorial command experience, particularly for a high-ranking army officer (Anindya & Dwicahyo 2018; Supriatma 2014). While serving in Kopassus, he became well known after the arrest of Omar Al-Faruq, an alleged Al Qaeda leader with connections to Jemaah Islamiyah, in Bogor in 2002. At the time, Andika's father-in-law Hendropriyono was the head of BIN, the agency which authorised the arrest.

A second reason to suspect nepotism and patronage is that Jokowi could have promoted the Navy Chief of Staff Yudo Margono. The Navy had last held the Panglima position from 2010 to 2013 so, if the rotation system had been upheld, the service was arguably due a turn. It is possible Jokowi deferred to age; Margono, a 1988 academy graduate, is junior to Andika, a 1987 graduate, however, Jokowi has shown willingness to circumvent this formality in the past when he promoted police chief Tito Karnavian ahead of his seniors. If Jokowi had wanted stability and continuity in the Panglima, appointing Yudo would have given the Navy Chief two years in the job. Yet, doing so would have meant Andika would have reached the retirement age by December 2022 and been out of the running for the position after Yudo. Thus, it seems as though Jokowi used the opportunity to give a year to Andika, while still allowing Yudo some time in the position.

Andika's tenure was marked by low conflict with the president and investment in areas which would support not just the military's security interests but Jokowi's political ones. Central among these was Andika's "softer" approach to the ongoing struggle for self-determination in the Papuan provinces. The approach involved a greater emphasis on winning the hearts and minds of the people through welfare-based programs, among other steps (Lai 2022a). Despite Andika's intentions, the region saw violent clashes in the few months of 2022, leaving several soldiers killed. Experts deemed a welfare-approach led by the military and police, whom the local Papuan populations did not trust, would not likely be effective (Lai 2022a).

Andika also presided over deepening security ties with the US. This manifested in the upgraded version of Exercise Garuda Shield held with the US'

INDOPACOM into Super Garuda Shield in August 2022. The joint training exercise included over 4,000 combined forces personnel from 14 countries (US Embassy Jakarta 2022).¹⁴ Andika's familiarity with the US, as a result of having studied there for a total of eight years, was likely a factor in his ability to enact the upgraded exercise in such little time. In light of the increasing tempo of Chinese incursions in the South China Sea near Indonesia's Natuna Islands, deepening military ties and fostering interoperability with the US and other Indo-Pacific countries through field and maritime training activities is a logical step. However, given its nonaligned stance, it is rare for Indonesia to undertake military activities that could be misinterpreted by Beijing as greater alignment with the US. A cynical view would see Andika's investment in the high-profile event as an attempt to boost his standing domestically, among the army and also in front of an international audience.

Yudo Margono as caretaker

Yudo Margono has been the first naval Panglima in over a decade, however, his tenure will only last 11 months.¹⁵ Most recently serving as the Navy Chief of Staff, he was also commander of the Joint Regional Defence Command (Kogabwilhan) I from 2019 to 2020. Yudo was also responsible for a military taskforce to coordinate its covid-19 response and supervised the evacuation of Indonesian citizens from Wuhan, China. Prior to that, he was commander of the Navy's western fleet located in Riau. Despite the loss of the KRI Nanggala-402 submarine in April 2021 under his tenure as Navy Chief, Yudo's time working in key naval roles and in a joint capacity have given him experiences and exposure necessary for a Panglima. That said, Yudo's case shows that one's background or service need not provide compelling reasons for selection for two reasons.

¹⁴ First time participants were Australia, Singapore and Japan while other participating nations included Canada, France, India, Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste, and the United Kingdom.

¹⁵ The last naval Panglima was Admiral Agus Suhartono who served under President Yudhoyono from 2007 to 2010.

First, while the Navy was due the position under the informal rotational system, Jokowi's previous disregard for the tradition meant it was not guaranteed. The president was reportedly motivated to nominate Yudo in order to honour the rotation system between the services (*OBSERVER* 2022). In light of Jokowi's practice of selecting political allies—as shown by his appointments of Hadi and Andika—and selecting an army candidate ahead of a navy one, this is not persuasive. One analyst has suggested that a Panglima from a navy background would help the president further implement his vision of strengthening Indonesia's maritime capabilities (Darmawan 2022). The anticipated tenure of 11 months would be challenging for any navy chief to make significant progress on the maritime front.

Second, the appointment of Andika's successor proved to be a tight race between Yudo and the Army Chief of Staff Dudung Abdurachman. Efforts by both Yudo and Dudung to clearly ingratiate themselves with Megawati are indicative of the political manoeuvring involved in securing the position. For instance, in May 2022, while Yudo was still Navy Chief of Staff, the navy commissioned a domestically built presidential/VVIP corvette, KRI *Bung Karno*, named after the first president, to replace its ageing predecessor. The scheduled construction time for the corvette was short, with Yudo announcing the target launch date as February 2023 after a construction start date of June 2022 (Irawan 2022). As Sukarno's daughter, Megawati was invited to attend the ship naming ceremony the same month, while the ship itself was launched in April 2023 (Malufti 2023). During the ceremony, Yudo praised the first president as a great figure with a maritime vision (Sari 2022). At a naval event in August 2022, Yudo also praised Megawati for her support towards developing navy capability and invited her to deliver a keynote address (Lai 2022b).

Dudung has employed similar tactics. While governor of the military academy, he commissioned a statue in early 2020 of the first president Sukarno which reportedly caught the attention of Megawati (The Star 2021b). A senior member of PDI-P remarked that it was a "turning point" in the perception that her father was not a friend of the army (The Star 2021b), suggesting that Dudung's efforts might have garnered the support of the former president. While this was

done in the lead-up to his appointment to Army Chief of Staff, the political capital invested into courting these power brokers would have served well during Dudung's bid for the top job. Like Andika, Dudung also had political ties as his late father-in-law, Major General Cholid Ghozali, served on a supervisory board of a PDI-P organisation to reach Islamic voters. He also toured Islamic boarding schools in early 2022 to improve his popularity, proposing to recruit students as enlisted and non-commissioned personnel (Tenggara Strategics 2022). As military commander in Jakarta, Dudung had been tough on the Islamic Defenders Front (The Jakarta Post 2020), the group which had organised the Action 212 anti-Ahok rallies and had proved to be a political nuisance for Jokowi. That said, the involvement of power brokers in the Panglima appointment might have worked against him. Dudung's chance to ascend to the top job appeared thwarted once public rifts between him and Andika and between him and a lawmaker and House Commission I member Effendi Simbolon, a member of Megawati's party, were made public in 2022.¹⁶ Andika was reported to have given his support to Yudo (Tenggara Strategics 2022).

Since his appointment, Yudo has stated his desire to focus on building up the military's human resources (Suryana 2022). However, the reality of the role has dictated that Yudo pay attention to issues such as the Papuan provinces where a New Zealand pilot has been held hostage by the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB) since early February 2023. In response, the chief declared Operation Battle Standby, implying a more kinetic role when encountered by armed groups, making a symbolic break from the softer approach promoted by Andika (Marwangi & Haryati 2023). With only 11 months in the job, it appears Yudo will be more of a caretaker.

What Does the Case of Jokowi's Generals Tell Us About Civilian Control?

When do soldiers obey politicians, especially in societies that have recently been ruled by the military? How do politicians compel or induce obedience from soldiers? (Trinkunas 2005: 4)

¹⁶ The feud between Andika and Dudung reportedly concerned the failure of Dudung's son to successfully pass the military academy entrance test (Lai 2022b).

Apt for the case of Indonesia, one answer could be “with difficulty”. The case of the Panglima during the Jokowi presidency shows, for the most part, levels of obedience, however, achieved through a careful balance of power between the civilian and military sphere, leading to three main observations.

1. President's personality and background

The first finding is that the president's personality and background are factors that influence the Panglima's behaviour. Laksmana (2019) has raised this point about Jokowi's lack of presidential handholding and the increase in military involvement. This effect was magnified with an ambitious Panglima like Gatot Nurmantyo who was willing to overstep the limits of his remit. Jokowi's predecessor, Yudhoyono, was a former army general and had not just extensive experience in foreign policy and security matters but had been involved in the reform process. He was notionally committed to steering Indonesia towards stronger democratic norms. In contrast, Jokowi came to the presidency with little background in defence and weak political ties at the national level. Gatot offered Jokowi a means to ingratiate himself with the military. This would allow Jokowi to focus more on economic and infrastructure development while delegating foreign affairs to Retno Marsudi, a career diplomat, and defence to Ryamizard, a former army general.

However, Jokowi's disinterest in such affairs allowed an ambitious Gatot to position himself as a defender of Indonesia's national values. The latter grew increasingly more assertive, even unilaterally deciding to sever defence ties with Australia (later found to be limited to certain exchanges). It was only after several of such incidents did Jokowi finally dismiss Gatot ahead of his retirement age, signalling a maturation in the balance of power between president and Panglima. In other words, Jokowi finally asserted civilian control. His subsequent appointment of Hadi Tjahjanto, a trusted aide, also sent a message that a more passive and manageable military chief would be preferred for a while.

2. The position as political capital

The second observation is that the position of Panglima under Jokowi affirms that the role is less about operational needs and more about securing political interests.

The president has appointed four military chiefs and, with the exception of Gatot Nurmantyo, has selected officers who aligned with his need to maintain patronage networks but also to check the influence of the armed forces. Hadi served to stabilise civil-military relations after Gatot had demonstrated a more politicised leadership. While a navy appointment would have given Jokowi a maritime-focussed leader for two years, he selected Hendropriyono's son-in-law Andika who had a meteoric rise but less operational experience than an officer at the same rank. Yudo will only have 11 months in the role but Jokowi will be able to select an army general to secure the February 2024 selection.

In pursuing such pragmatic and political ends, Jokowi has also undermined the informal tradition of rotating the chief's position between the services. The president has ignored the rotation between the services twice, in appointing Gatot after Moeldoko and in appointing Andika instead of Yudo. A coalition of human rights focussed NGOs criticised Andika's nomination on the grounds that Jokowi was undermining the rotational norm and hence spirit of reform, accusing the president of privileging personal ties and political imperatives (The Star 2021a).¹⁷

3. Panglima personality and political ties

Following on from the second observation, if Jokowi can use the Panglima position to consolidate patronage networks, military officers are encouraged to use patronage to secure their selection. This is evident in Hadi's personal ties with Jokowi, Andika's family ties, and in the jockeying between Yudo and Dudung to court political power brokers. As mentioned, Dudung also had elite ties with his father-in-law linked to PDI-P. Yudo was not originally considered by PDI-P to be part of "its people" (Lai 2022b) but it may seem that his lobbying of Megawati could have contributed to his success, providing encouragement of other service chiefs to do the same in future. In light of the pattern of Panglima nomination under Jokowi, it would seem natural that current Kostrad commander Lieutenant General Maruli Simanjuntak, who has not only followed a similar career

¹⁷ The coalition included Imparsial, the Jakarta Legal Aid Institute (LBH Jakarta) and the Commission for Missing Persons and Victims of Violence (KontraS).

trajectory as other army Panglimas but is also Luhut's son-in-law, be destined for higher responsibilities.

Conclusion

Jokowi's tenure saw the position of the Panglima evolve from a launchpad for a political career to a stabilising role to a patronage bargaining chip. While the reality of civil-military relations means that power can be shared between the civilian and military spheres but normatively tend towards the former, at times Jokowi's levels of control were curtailed. As observed in this research note, the president's level of control over the selection of the military chief and the chief's behaviour varied with personality factors and timing. This suggests that military figures like the Panglima can be more influential under the right circumstances. It also suggests that military roles like the chief's position can be manipulated by political brokers. This would suggest an ongoing pertinence of the military's place, or at least perceptions of it, within the Indonesian state. As one analyst puts it, "these political acts reflect the struggle of Indonesian political institutions to manage the legacy of Suharto-era military-backed authoritarianism" (Wangge 2018).

It is unlikely that this two-way manipulation will change under Jokowi's successor. The military reform process has not progressed significantly over the past decade nor has military professionalisation, such as the push for PKO under Yudhoyono, been prioritised. In fact, the military's influence in non-security domains has increased under the current president. As such, if civil-military relations balance is to shift, it will see greater overlapping between the spheres. The implications for future civil-military relations will include the reinforcement of nepotism and patronage systems, which will impact on the morale of officers investing in the hopes of merit-based systems. Instead, this will further incentivise personnel to cultivate political ties and offer inducements in return for support. This could create further potential for parts of the military to drift into political factions (Supriatma, 2014). One way to mitigate some of the politicisation of the Panglima position might be to require two candidates to be presented by the president to the DPR and for the vetting process to be more thorough, justifying one candidate over the other. In post-authoritarian states like Indonesia, the

institutionalisation of civil-military relations norms will still take some time to take root, as shown by the fluctuating power between the president and Panglima.

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Annex

Table 1. Panglimas from *Reformasi* to present day

Name	Service	President(s)	Start	End	Year of birth	Academy class
General Wiranto	Army	Suharto, B.J. Habibie	February 1997	October 1999	1947	1968
Admiral Widodo Adi Sutjipto	Navy	Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Sukarnoputri	October 1999	June 2002	1944	1968
General Endriartono Sutarto	Army	Megawati Sukarnoputri, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	June 2002	February 2006	1947	1971
Air Chief Marshal Djoko Suyanto	Air Force	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	February 2006	December 2007	1950	1973
General Djoko Santoso	Army	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	December 2007	September 2010	1952	1975
Admiral Agus Suhartono	Navy	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono	September 2010	August 2013	1955	1978
General Moeldoko	Army	Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Joko Widodo	August 2013	July 2015	1957	1981
General Gatot Nurmantyo	Army	Joko Widodo	July 2015	December 2017	1960	1982
Air Chief Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto	Air Force	Joko Widodo	December 2017	November 2021	1963	1986
General Andika Perkasa	Army	Joko Widodo	November 2021	December 2022	1964	1987
Admiral Yudo Margono	Navy	Joko Widodo	December 2022	TBC	1965	1988

ASEAN (in)Security Community:

Arms Modernization and Collective Identity Building in Southeast Asia¹

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The existence of arms modernization can be regarded as the high degree of security dilemma among states. In Southeast Asia, the fact that defense budget escalation followed by the military modernization may be the biggest obstacle to create an ASEAN Security Community. Unfortunately, there have been a little attention on the issue studying the correlation between arms modernization and the prospect of ASEAN Security Community. This paper seeks to fill the gap by analyzing how arms modernization in Southeast Asia is counterproductive to the ASEAN Security Community development. Using constructivism in International Relations, this paper argues that arms modernization among several ASEAN member states hinders collective identity building as a fundamental factor behind the security community. This argument implies that the formation of ASEAN Security Community will not create long-lasting peace in the region. This paper suggests that ASEAN should focus on collective identity formation to strengthen its own body institution rather than merely declare in a formal treaty.

Keywords: Arms modernization; ASEAN Security Community; collective identity

Introduction

ASEAN Security Community, or ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC) has established two blueprints. The first blueprint was established in 2009 to “provides a roadmap and timetable to establish the APSC by 2015” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). Thus, the blueprint became a guidance for ASEAN member states to pave the way for the establishment of APSC in 2015. However, the reality is far beyond the expectation. ASEAN is not ready to develop a full-fledge security community which “ensure that countries in the region live at peace with

¹ The earlier version of this paper was presented at the international conference on ASEAN Studies, “Inner and Outer Look of Southeast Asia in 2015: Championing ASEAN Community,” held by ASEAN Studies Center Gadjah Mada University, 1-2 October 2014. The author would like to thank Nadia Farabi, anonymous reviewers and audiences for their valuable comments.

one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2003). In 2016, ASEAN established APSC Blueprint 2025 “to elevate ASEAN political and security cooperation to an even higher level” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2016). The key difference with the previous blueprint is the outward-looking orientation of ASEAN role that enhance its centrality by playing actively and constructively at the global stage.

The establishment of APSC aims to ensure regional security where conflicts among ASEAN members should be settled through peaceful process. This includes dialogue and put aside suspicious one another. One of crucial issues about the future of Southeast Asian security that has been neglected by many analysts is arms modernization. Most existing studies on arms modernization in Southeast Asia have been trying to explain why states increase its military expenditure to purchase more weapons. For example, Tan (2004) stated that ASEAN military build-up is motivated by the national interest to protect economic resources. Meanwhile, Bitzinger (2007) examined the link between arms modernization in Southeast Asia and the ‘fear syndrome’ concerning China’s rise. Instead of anticipating threat from ASEAN fellow members, amplifying defense posture is a policy against China’s rise. There has been no study analyzing the link between military reinforcement among ASEAN states and the future of ASEAN security community. A longstanding analysis only mentioned that arms modernization among ASEAN members can lead to “a sense of insecurity compounded by their traditional distrust and suspicion that exist among them” (Yusof, 1996, p. 12). Meanwhile, Acharya (2013) also mentioned that arms modernization is one of the challenges of the establishment of ASEAN Community. Unfortunately, Acharya did not analyze further how it occurs. In short, there is no work that specifically focuses on the relationship between the arms modernization and the prospect of the establishment of ASEAN Security Community.

This paper seeks to fill the gap by analyzing the linkage between arms modernization among ASEAN states and the prospects for the establishment of ASEAN Security Community. Using constructivist perspective in the study of International Relations, this paper argues that arms modernization among

ASEAN members hinders collective identity building among ASEAN countries as an essential foundation to establish a security community. Furthermore, this paper argues that the establishment of ASEAN Community in 2015 would be a premature policy due to the unpreparedness of the member states to reduce the degree of suspicion and pattern of conflictual relationships. Constructivist suggests that the initial requirement to form a strong and enduring security community is to develop 'We-feelings' among themselves. Yet, recent trend of arms modernization in the region prevents the effort to build collectivity.

This paper will be divided into several parts. The first section will highlight the perspectives of constructivism that would be useful in explaining the security community. This section focuses on the concept of collective identity formation as a crucial factor behind a security community. The second part will distinguish concept of arms modernization and other overlapping concepts such as arms race, arms dynamics, arms build-up, and arms procurement. The third section will review the trend of arms modernization in Southeast Asia by focusing on the policies of the ASEAN member countries in strengthening their defense posture. The fourth section is an analysis that would link arms modernization and the prospect of the establishment of the ASEAN security community and how its implications for long-term peace-building efforts in Southeast Asia. The fifth part is conclusions and recommendations.

The role of collective identity in the security community

In international security studies, a group of states which are bound by a sense of solidarity is commonly recognized as a security community. The standard definition of security community proposed by Karl Deutsch (1957) in his classic work as "a group of countries that do not intend to fight each other and resolve problems peacefully." The security community is thus a mechanism for peaceful resolution of disputes without the use of military instrument. The aim of the security community is to anticipate and to resolve internal threats and conflict among themselves by non-violent ways. This concept differs from alliance which is formed to counter external threats (Acharya, 1991, p. 161). With this regard, NATO could be regarded as an alliance rather than a security community. In addition to the logic of threat, the security community and the military alliances

are different where the former is guided by the spirit of solidarity while the latter by the strategic interests. In other words, solidarity within a security community constituted by the meanings, understandings, and identities that create 'cognitive region' (Adler, 2005, p. 182) while strategic interests refer to rational calculation of individual countries.

Constructivism has major contribution to the study of security communities. Constructivist adopted sociological approach to explain the formation process of the security community. One of the constructivist useful concepts is collective identity. Collective identity can simply be understood as the feeling of each state as part of a greater entity. Affiliation to a group requires loyalties that create shared understanding as well as interest. Collective identity is the basis for solidarity, community, and loyalty that drives the same interests (Wendt, 1994, p. 386). As Wendt (1999, p. 229) put it, a positive identification of one state to another makes the differences become blurred. If states no longer perceive each other differently, then their relationship is characterized as a friendship. The pattern of relationships that are characterized by similarities rather than dissimilarities creates 'We-feeling' or solidarity as previously mentioned.

Collective identity is a crucial factor behind the formation of a security community. Adler and Barnett (1998, p. 38) formulated an analytical framework treating collective identity as intervening variable. This means collective identity does not determine the establishment of security community. There are many other factors such as the presence of an external threat, international dynamics, and intensive interaction contributing to the establishment of security community. Nevertheless, the collective identity plays an important role in the process of how states are committed to not use a military approach when resolving conflicts. The existence of collective identity creates a sense of mutual trust among states. Conversely, mutual trust among states strengthen collective identity. This mutual constitution creates friendship culture that is very important for the prospects of inter-state relations in a security community. Despite not a determining factor of the security community, collective identity is a 'necessary condition' that determines the success or failure of a community to create peace

among its members. In short, without collective identity there is no community at all.

Based on the framework formulated by Adler and Barnett above, we could apply it to analyze the development of ASEAN as a security community. In his study, Amitav Acharya traced the origins of ASEAN using constructivist approach. According to him, ASEAN is a product of the common perception of an external threat (Acharya in Adler and Barnett, 1998, p. 203). During the Cold War, ASEAN was formed by five countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines in response to the threat of communism exported by the Soviet Union. The common perception is a factor that allows the countries in the region agreed to form a regional organization that functions like a fortress to prevent the spread of the influence of communist ideology. As an ideological fortress, ASEAN was not oriented towards the far-out threats (Soviet Union or China), since communism in Southeast Asia had already infiltrated the region. At that time, the infiltration of communism manifested in the emergence of rebel movements were backed by communist countries such as Vietnam and China. Thus, the five countries realized the communist threat within the region so they were trying to prevent the spread of this threat by establishing ASEAN.

Once ASEAN formed, Southeast Asian countries had a regional organization that serves as an 'information bridge' to facilitate cooperation among countries in the region in various fields, especially economics and socio-cultural. The cooperation that had developed intensively then strengthen ASEAN as an organization that embodies a common interest. However, the increasing economic cooperation among ASEAN members did not automatically creates a sense of solidarity among its members. Conflicts among ASEAN states occur frequently primarily on the border issue. According to the adherents of liberal and constructivism, the increasing interaction among states can lead to the creation of solidarity. Yet, this does not occur in Southeast Asia. Despite cooperation in various fields takes place intensively, ASEAN member states remain unable to unleash themselves from narrow-minded policies. Enduring conflicts among ASEAN members reflect the low level of solidarity even if cooperation in almost all aspects have been well-developed.

The low level of solidarity among ASEAN members can be understood by looking at the norms they are embraced. ASEAN has been adopted norms that recognize the sovereignty of each member or 'norms of non-interference' or widely known as 'ASEAN Way'. Unlike the European Union, ASEAN adopted the principle of non-interference that prevents the creation of a sense of 'We-ness'. This characteristic makes ASEAN is categorized as a 'pluralistic security community'. Emmerson (2005, p. 171) defines a pluralistic security community is made up of sovereign states as opposed to the amalgamated security community consisting of the countries that had surrendered its sovereignty to the larger community. With the principle of non-interference adopted since the establishment of ASEAN, "[H]istorically the ASEAN region has been a thin and pluralistic security community" (Emmerson, 2005, p. 180). Pluralistic security community does not seek to erode the sovereignty among member states (Acharya, 2001, p. 156). Because the sovereign pluralistic security community is inviolable, it is much difficult to build collectivity in the genuine meaning. On the contrary, an amalgamated security community has shared understanding and shared interests which is relatively easy to build collectivity among its members. As a pluralistic security community ASEAN collectivity can be created through the development of collective identity that can unite their perceptions and interests in managing conflicts among themselves.

Arms modernization and other concepts

Before examining the trend of an arms modernization in Southeast Asia, we need to distinguish several confusing and overlapping concepts: 'arms race', 'arms dynamics', 'arms build-up', and 'arms procurement'. Arms modernization is defined as "the relevant upgrade or improvement of existing military capabilities through the acquisition of new imported or indigenously developed weapons systems and supporting assets, the incorporation of new doctrines, the creation of new organizational structures, and the institutionalization of new manpower management and combat training regime" (Tellis in Tellis and Wills, 2005, p. 15). Thus, arms modernization is the domestic policy of a country in the field of defense. In addition, arms modernization is not limited to the strengthening of the weapon system hardware. Arms modernization covers very broad and

comprehensive strategic policy. Arms modernization also overlooks the issue outside the scope of the domestic policy of a country such as the reactions of other countries respond to the military's modernization policy. Arms modernization is another term to describe 'arms dynamic' or 'arms build-up'. Buzan and Herrings (1998, p. 5) defines arms dynamic as "the entire set of pressures that make-actors (usually states) acquire both armed forces and change the quantity and quality of the armed forces they possess." This policy is intended to safeguard national security and not to dominate others.

Arms race, on the other hand, is defined as "the participation of two or more nation-states in competitive or interactive apparently increases in the quantity or quality of war materials and/or persons under arms" (Smith, 1980, p. 255). Arms race reflects the self-help behavior of states when responding to the actions of other states which are also doing the same thing. In other words, arms race is a reaction when states are threatened by others. This situation follows the logic of the security dilemma where increasing security by one state causes others feel insecure so constrained to increase its own security. This condition can be so dangerous and potentially lead to war. Gray (1971, p. 41) mentioned four fundamental conditions of an arms race. First, two or more parties are engaging in an antagonistic relationship. Second, they develop armed forces to combat or deter others. Third, there is an intense competition in terms of quantity and quality of military power. Fourth, rapid increase in quantity and quality of weapons.

Bitzinger (2010) in his article argued that the escalation of defense spending in Southeast Asia cannot be considered as arms race. Purchasing weapons does not entail mutual hostility and intention to dominate or defeat others as the Cold War logic. Rather, the massive arms purchasing among ASEAN members is more accurately described as 'military modernization'. However, this paper argues that the desire of a state to have strong military capabilities would most-likely rise suspicion that leads another state perceives it as potential threat. Although policies to strengthen the defense posture is exclusively domestic sphere, but the policy may trigger other countries do the same thing (Gray, 1971, p. 40).

The latter concept is arms procurement or defense industrialization. Arms procurement is part of a military modernization. In an effort to improve the military capabilities of a country, the government takes steps to support the strengthening of military combat capability. Building a strategic industry in the field of defense is a step often adopted by the government. Investment in the defense industry means reducing reliance on imported weapons from big powers. Similar to the concept of military modernization, arms procurement is an instrument of self-defense or 'self-sufficiency' principle (Evans, 1988, p. 296).

So far it can be concluded that basically arms modernization is different from other concepts alike. While arms modernization is domestic policy of a country to upgrade its military equipment, arms race is foreign policy which involves competition among states in terms of weaponry. While arms modernization focuses on states intention and capability to enhance its weaponry system, arms race represents the security dilemma that is not present in the definition of military build-up or arms dynamics. Regardless of these conceptual differences, this paper argues that there is a possibility of arms race in Southeast Asia. In a globalization characterized by massive interaction among international actors, the domestic policies taken by a state can easily affect others. Arms modernization policies under the pretext of self-defense even potentially be interpreted differently by other countries. That is why this paper assumes that the individual policies of ASEAN countries in the field of collective defense can be seen as a phenomenon that has led to an arms race. As Aaron Beng (2014, p. 59) has argued, the dividing line between the arms race and arms dynamics are 'gray area' in which it is very difficult to determine whether the escalation of defense spending and arms purchasing is considered as arms race or not.

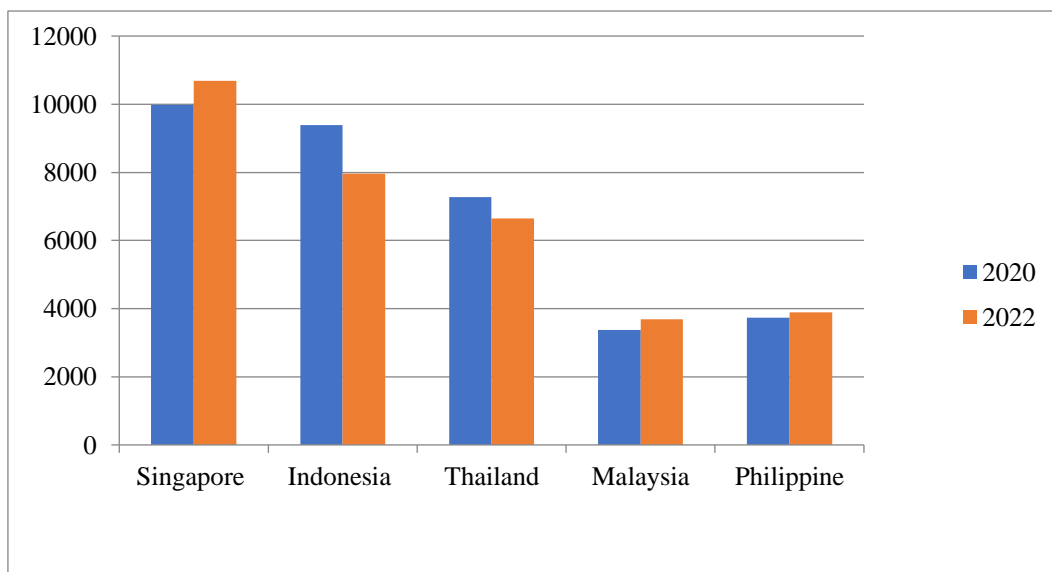
Arms modernization in Southeast Asia: current trend

In terms of underlying factors, arms modernization in Southeast Asia differs from other areas that are generally motivated by the fear of external threats. Acharya (1988) identified three factors that underlie the tendency of an arms modernization in Southeast Asia. First, Southeast Asian countries remained struggle with the problem of internal threats such as separatism and ethnic, religious, and cultural conflicts. Domestic instabilities triggered Southeast Asian

countries to increase their military strength. Second, Southeast Asian countries had intention to break out of dependence on security umbrella of a great powers. The presence of US military bases in a number of Southeast Asian countries is not long-lasting. By increasing their own military capabilities, Southeast Asian countries were ready in case the security umbrella of the great powers can no longer guarantee their security. Third, conflict in Indochina. This area has long often characterized by conflict. Indochina countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand are quite vulnerable hit by armed conflict. Therefore, several Southeast Asian Countries need to strengthen their defense capabilities to prevent armed conflicts.

The analysis above is no longer relevant to explain current affair in Southeast Asia. With the rise of China's influence in international sphere, Chinese threat has been an important factor affecting military modernization policy in Southeast Asia. The increase in the defense budget becomes the primary indicator that reflects how ASEAN countries attempt to anticipate impending threats. The data from SIPRI in 2021 shows that the military budget of some ASEAN countries has increased amid the pandemic of Covid-19. Singapore's military budget is the largest in Southeast Asia, with US\$ 10,683 million or 2.98 per cent of GDP, Indonesia US\$ 7,965 million or 0.7 per cent of GDP, Thailand US\$ 6,654 million or 1.32 per cent of GDP, Malaysia US\$ 3,682 million or 1.06 per cent of GDP, the Philippines US\$ 3,898 million or 1.04 per cent of GDP (SIPRI 2021). Comparing to 2020, Indonesia and Thailand reduce their defense spending in 2021. In 2020, Indonesia allocated US\$ 9,387 million or 0.86 per cent of GDP, while Thailand allocated US\$ 7,268 million or 1.46 per cent of GDP.

Figure 1. Military budget of five ASEAN countries 2020-2021 (in US\$ million)



Defense expenditure is not the only indicator of arms modernization. The most important is how ASEAN countries spend their budget to upgrade their weaponry. Singapore, the largest defense spender in the region, has continuously been upgrading its military muscle by purchasing various weapons system from great powers. Singapore's acquisition of four 218SG submarines from Germany was intended to enhance state's capacity in dealing with maritime security challenges in the region (Strait Times, 2019). In 2020, the US government had approved to sell 12 F-35B Joint Strike Fighter jets to Singapore which cost around US\$ 115 million each. The purchase aims not only to protect Singapore's sovereignty but also to contribute to regional peace and stability (Strait Times, 2020). In order to weaponize its jet fighters, Singapore has signed a US\$ 630 million deal with the US government to provide Raytheon AIM-120-7/8 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air-Missiles (AMRAAMs) including hundreds of guidance kits for bombs, various bombs, 20 Joint Attack Direct Munitions (Flight Global, 2022). In addition, Singapore has acquired four Close-Range Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (CR-UAV) to protect Singapore from threat either during peacetime or wartime (Mindef, 2022). Given the fact that Southeast Asia has succeeded in preserving peace and stability for more than five decades, Singapore's massive arms modernization is quite puzzling. However, according to Singapore's Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen, as a small and vulnerable country, Singapore must build its military power as strong as possible; "Singapore's philosophy is to make friends with all countries and seek no enemies. But we are

realists too, and keen observers of history and events around us, and especially what happens to small, vulnerable states” (Strait Times, 2022).

Indonesia also strengthens its air force by purchasing 42 Rafale fighter jets from France worth US\$ 8.1 billion and 36 heavyweight F-15 Eagle EX fighter jets from the US worth US\$ 13.9 billion. Indonesia’s aspiration to become a strong nation is the underlying cause of this decision (Ronodipuro, 2022). At the same time, Indonesia also plans to buy two Scorpene-class submarines from France. Since Indonesia has limitations in developing a blue water fleet, submarines are ideal substitution for surface vessels. In addition, Indonesia’s maritime security only capable to maintain its presence within its territorial waters instead of beyond its borders (Honrada, 2022). Nevertheless, Indonesia does not neglect the strategic role of warship in modern military strategy. That is the reason why Indonesia’s Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto bought eight warships from Italy. An Italian-based shipbuilding company, Fincantieri announced that it sells six new FREMM Class frigates and two second-hand Maestrale Class frigates including its logistics (CNBC Indonesia, 2021). In order to strengthen its naval force, Indonesia also modernizes its 41 old warships worth US\$ 1.1 billion in 2022. This program results from the cooperation between Ministry of Defence and PT PAL. According to Chief of Information Officer TNI AL, Rear Admiral Julius Widjojono, the modernization program is very crucial and indispensable since the rapid arms modernization between countries both at the regional and the global level is taking place (Republika, 2022).

Aside from Singapore and Indonesia, other ASEAN fellows also modernize their military posture by purchasing weapons from great powers. Vietnam, for example, has long been relying its defence system on Russian supplies. From 1995 to 2019, Russia had exported US\$ 7.38 billion worth of its weapon system or 84 per cent of its total arms export to Vietnam (Storey, 2021). In 2016, Vietnam bought 64 T-90 main battle tanks. In 2018, Vietnam signed a US\$ 1 billion deal to purchase Russian-made fighter jets, surface ships, and submarines. In 2020, Vietnam signed US\$ 350 million deal to buy 12 Yak-130 combat training jets. This contract becomes the first step for Vietnam to acquire Su-30SM and Su-35 from Russia (Hanoi Times, 2020). Currently, Malaysia plans

to buy Tejas light combat aircraft from India to replace its MiG-29 fighter jets (Free Malaysia Today, 2022). Likewise, Thailand shows its interest to buy four F-35s cost US\$ 413 million although the US government has not yet come to a final decision on that (Reuters, 2022). Thailand also signed a US\$ 410 million deal with China for the procurement of submarines amid the refusal of Germany to export diesel engines for China's submarines due to European arms embargo (Wall Street Journal, 2022). Previously, Thailand had acquired 120 armoured vehicles from the US which estimated cost of US\$ 175 million (Reuters, 2019).

Aside from China factors and security situation in the South China Sea, Southeast Asia's arms modernization does not diminish fear and suspicion among ASEAN member states. In other words, the policy of arms modernization is also due to the efforts of ASEAN states to anticipate threats to each other, due to many cases of disputes among themselves. Indonesia, for example, has a relatively less harmonious relationship with Malaysia. Both Thailand and Cambodia in a couple of times involved in a border-issue conflict that destabilize the region. Meanwhile, Singapore has always been felt as a 'lilliput' which is surrounded by big countries, giving a reason to have the strongest defense capabilities in Southeast Asia. As Collins (2000, p. 127) has argued, the Southeast Asian countries can be classified as the 'weak' countries not because of material capabilities they possess, but because they have not been immune from the security dilemma.

The impact of arms modernization on the prospect of ASEAN security community

Constructivists generally hold an optimistic view on the prospects of security community. Constructivists believe that states sometimes are not always suspicious of one another like realists does. States can reduce the degree of suspicion and build a shared commitment to create peace among themselves. However, this paper argues that the fact is not always so. Constructivist can be pessimist on the prospects of security community based on the argument that collective identity is a necessary condition for the existence of a security community. Without collective identity, the security community would fail to promote peaceful conflict resolution. This is not to say that sovereignty should be

blamed as the obstacle to the formation of such a community. Rather, states within a region should develop collectivity before they develop a security community. In short, constructivists are skeptical of the security community with lack of trust among its members.

In fact, collective identity building is not as easy as theory prescriptions. In Southeast Asia where the diversities are very large, collective identity seems like a jargon or symbolic. ASEAN Community motto “One Vision, One Identity, One Community” is not accompanied by strategies to build a solid foundation; ASEAN do not concern on how to build ‘One Identity’. It is ironic since one of the pillars of the ASEAN Political-Security Community is to “ensure that the peoples and Member States of ASEAN live in peace with one another and with the world at large in a just, democratic and harmonious environment” (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009, p. 1). ASEAN is in fact aware of the importance a sense of solidarity or ‘We-feeling’ by pursuing strategic measures such as Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). As stated in the ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint, strategic measures that can be performed such as bilateral defence department staff exchanges, joint military exercises and joint research. However, these measures remain unable to reduce mistrust between one country and another.

In addition, the term of ‘arms modernization’ does not appear in ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint. No single term of ‘arms modernization’ was found in the manuscript. ASEAN apparently neglect arms modernization as a factor that could hinder their commitment to build a community. As mentioned earlier, CBMs only limited to staff exchanges at the level of defense agencies and military elites. If we refer to the standard definition of CBMs as “measures that address, prevent, or resolving uncertainties among states,” then arms modernization should be a concern of many countries. Neither people exchange nor joint military exercises and research which are important, but ASEAN states should reduce their efforts to enhance military posture because it represents fear and strategic rivalry in the region.

Arms modernization in Southeast Asia is directly related to the prospect of an ASEAN Security Community. Arms modernization could lead to culture

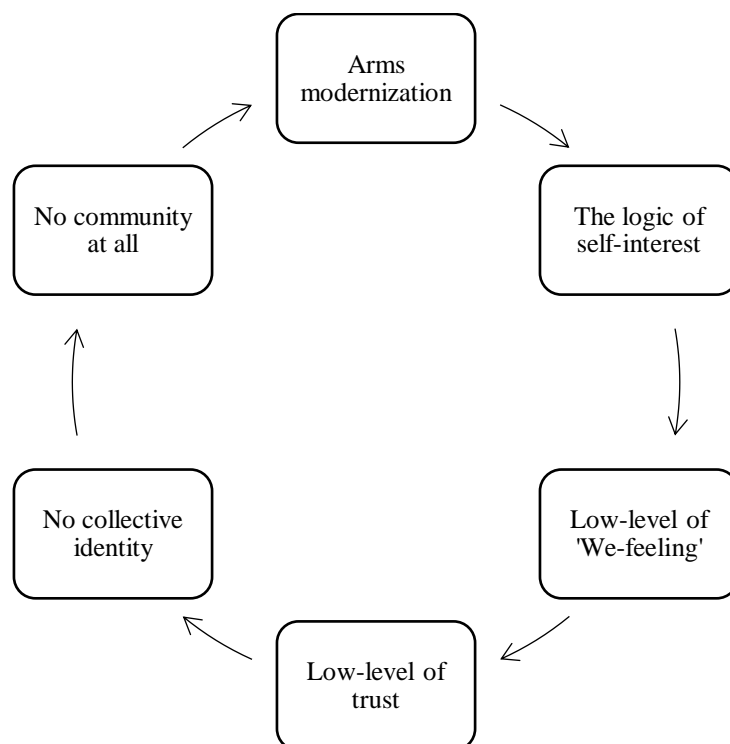
of rivalry among ASEAN states. Wendt (1999) called the culture of rivalry in international politics as Lockean culture. In Lockean 'logic of anarchy' states respect sovereignty of other countries and do not intend to conquer. Yet, the main characteristic of Lockean culture in international relations is states perceive each other as potential threat (Rosyidin, 2014, p. 21). Nevertheless, Lockean culture does not prevent states to cooperate despite fear and suspicious remain present in inter-state relations. Because strategic rivalry is dominated the logic of inter-state relations, Lockean culture is not appropriate condition to develop a security community.

Lockean culture is prominently present in Southeast Asian international relations. Although there is quite intensive cooperation, the strategic rivalries among ASEAN countries are also quite high at the same time. The increase of military budget followed by arms purchasing in order to strengthen the defense posture reflects this condition. In contrast to the commitment to build a security community that will ensure peace in the region, ASEAN fails to restraint its member from self-help policy. ASEAN fails to realize that one of the prominent characteristics of security community is "the absence of a competitive military build-up or arms race involving reviews their members" (Acharya, 2001, p. 17 and Acharya in Adler and Barnett 1998, p. 216). According to Acharya, the reason why the arms modernization should be eliminated is because it is "a key indicator of whether states have developed 'dependable expectations of peaceful change' and thereby overcome the security dilemma."

We can easily understand the arguments above with the line of argument below. The figure shows the pattern of inter-state relations in Southeast Asia. Arms modernization leads to low level of 'solidarity' or 'We-feeling' among ASEAN members. Then, low level of 'We-feeling' represents the Lockean culture characterized by rivalry rather than solidarity. This in turn leads to lower trust among ASEAN members. Mutual trust is a fundamental prerequisite for the formation of a security community because without trust how the countries within a community might be able to manage conflict peacefully and effectively. Massive arms modernization in ASEAN members represents visible lack of mutual trust among them so it is difficult to build a collective identity in Southeast

Asia. The absence of collective identity would make ASEAN Security Community no longer qualified as a 'community' in the real sense. Rather than being considered as a community, ASEAN remains follow the logic of the security dilemma that preserve rivalries among states leading to arms modernization policy.

Figure 2. Cyclical relations between arms modernization and the prospect of ASEAN security community



The model implies that arms modernization has negative impact on the prospect of peace in Southeast Asia. It seems logical since arms modernization in Southeast Asia is associated with the high level of suspicion among ASEAN countries. Ganeshan (in Rolfe, 2004, p. 117) stated that ASEAN has failed as a security community because of “the prevalence of intramural threat perceptions and the large number of outstanding bilateral issues that have the propensity to deteriorate into violence.” He added, “defense doctrines and weapon acquisitions of many ASEAN states are premised exactly on such conceptions of threat.” This argument supports the assumption that the military budget escalation of ASEAN countries followed by arms purchasing is anticipatory efforts to the threat perceived.

This is in contrast with the statement of the government elite. In celebration of 67th TNI anniversary in 2012, Yudhoyono said the Indonesian arms modernization is not intended to trigger an arms race in the region. Yudhoyono said,

[A]s I often convey in various international forums, there is no intention for us to encourage an arms race in the region. Nor is it our intention to be an aggressive military nation. In every opportunity, I underline the foreign policy that we possess the which is always guided by the desire to increase of the friends and to not be enemies, or “million friends, zero enemy” (Army Recognition, 2012).

In his speech at the Jakarta International Defence Dialogue (JIDD) in 2012, Yudhoyono asserted that Indonesia’s growing military budget is “a normal process of military modernization, and not as an arms race. Still, we must make sure that these armaments are accompanied by greater trust and confidence between nations, and especially between their militaries” (The Jakarta Post, 2012). Similarly, defence minister during the Yudhoyono administration, Purnomo Yusgiantoro in his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue 2014 stated, “[W]e in Indonesia are quite mindful that our quest for more security does not need to lead to more insecurity for others. It is always better for the strategic intentions to be rightly understood - not wrongly perceived - by others. Transparency and clarity will lessen reduce misunderstanding and mistrust” (The Jakarta Post 2014). Although these statements are intended to convince neighboring countries that the Indonesian military modernization for the sake of self-defense, but other countries are also doing the same thing and this is inevitable. Recently, Indonesia’s Defence Minister Prabowo Subianto asserted that arms modernization is inevitable due to the fact that those who do not prepare for war will always be occupied by others (CNN Indonesia, 2021). His statement probably refers to a realists classical adage “*Si vis pacem, para bellum*” (translated as “if you want peace, prepare for war”) coined by a Roman military author Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus.

The trend of arms modernization in Southeast Asia is also exacerbated by the fact that most people in the ASEAN countries still perceive each other as a

threat. Growing public opinion tends to see the source of the greatest threat comes from their neighboring countries. Research conducted by Benny (2012) on Indonesian society public opinion showed that patriotism and nationalism determine the perception of threat in the region. According to the study, 95 per cent of the respondents should be angry if there are other countries who have occupied the territory of Indonesia, while 92 per cent of respondents are willing to protest if government do not express decisive policies during conflict. The majority of the public also perceives the neighboring countries as the major threats. Two neighboring countries perceived as a source of the greatest threat to the people of Indonesia are Malaysia (60.5 per cent) and Singapore (20.4 per cent). Meanwhile, research conducted by Roberts (2007) also supports the argument that high degree of suspicion among ASEAN members drives arms race in the region. Myanmar, Singapore, and Indonesia are the three countries that have low level of trust to other countries. In elite government level, 59.8 per cent respondents said 'do not trust' other countries. Regarding the prospect of armed conflict between ASEAN countries, Cambodia, Thailand, and Singapore are the three countries who see the potential for conflict in ASEAN is quite large, with 28.6 per cent 41.7 per cent and 46.7 per cent respectively.

The results of this study support the claim that the culture of inter-state relations in Southeast Asia are still overwhelmed by fear and rivalry. Consequently, this provides fertile ground for countries efforts to strengthen its military capabilities in case friction that lead to armed conflict occurs. Bilveer Singh (2007, p. 212) in his article argued,

intra-ASEAN security concerns are also uppermost in explaining ASEAN's defence procurements. This has been true in the past and is also true at present. While ASEAN member states have been reticent about threats emanating to members from within the ASEAN organization, the foreign and defence policies of the member-states, as well as the pattern of arms procurement, would tend to indicate that more often than not the enemy the ASEAN states are trying to overcome comes from within the organization rather than from without, even though this is never openly stated or identified.

Regional arms modernization might not lead to war between ASEAN member states. Yet, it reflects the low level of trust among them in managing

regional issues. Instead of using existing institutional arrangements, ASEAN countries focus on increasing their defence posture. This tendency brings a negative impact to the prospect of peace (peacemaking and peacebuilding) in the region. In addition, prioritizing on arms modernization would increasingly hinder ASEAN's problem-solving mechanism such as ARF and TAC (Annisa, 2015).

The findings of this study imply that ASEAN Security Community would not create long-term peace in Southeast Asia due to the absence of collective identity. This argument is consistent with previous studies that are skeptical about the future of the ASEAN Security Community. For example, sceptics have argued that ASEAN is an 'imitation community' "that are essentially rhetorical shells that give form but no substance to domestic and international arrangements" (Jones and Smith, 2006, p. 44). Similarly, Khoo (2004, p. 43) also criticized that "ASEAN is best explained as an institution that has its members locked into a vicious pattern of negative interaction." ASEAN failure as a security community is also caused by the lack of 'commitment institution' (Guan, 2004 and Rosyidin, 2013) and has no institutional maturity to resolve the conflict but rather rely on bilateral mechanism (Ganesan, 1995). Jones and Nicole (2015, p. 26) argued, "the contradiction between official consensus and actual practice has a damaging effect. The longevity of the institutional arrangement by no means entails progress, but rather the recourse to process without resolution." This paper supports such arguments even though has a different perspective. Using constructivism does not mean optimistic all the way down. Constructivism can be pessimistic to the security community because constructivist emphasizes on the importance of collective identity as a pre-condition of a security community development. Thus, this paper complements existing explanations related to ASEAN Security Community obstacles.

Conclusion

This paper argued that ASEAN's commitment to establish a (mature) security community is not an unreasonable policy. ASEAN has a long history in managing conflict between members peacefully. However, many factors remain

hinder to create a robust ASEAN Security Community. As the former Directorate-General of ASEAN of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja stated, the ASEAN Security Community is not an institution that formed in 2015, but it is something like gradual development (Puja, 2013). Among many problems faced by ASEAN, the absence of collective identity becomes the main limiting factor. Collective identity is not only important but also that ASEAN has absolute trust between each other when resolving conflicts among themselves. In this context, arms modernization among ASEAN countries is counterproductive in the process of collective identity building. The arms modernization tends to preserve culture of individualism and sharpen the strategic rivalry that could lead to security dilemma. ASEAN's commitment to establish ASEAN Community amidst arms modernization can be considered as a premature decision. In a contemporary situation in the South China Sea coupled with the arms modernization among ASEAN countries, the establishment of ASEAN Security Community is most likely just a formality rather than substantial. This is not to say that ASEAN's arms modernization would likely create war between them. Nor it would likely to lead to arms race among ASEAN member states. This finding implies that creating a security community without a strong foundation of collective identity is a myth. The massive trend of arms modernization in Southeast Asia reveals the fact that there is no collective identity among ASEAN countries. They have been dictated by realist dictum of self-help motivation rather than prioritizing regional interests.

This paper agreed that the ASEAN Security Community is not an end itself but an instrument to bring about peace in the region. Yet, creating instruments cannot simply be done by signing the agreement. ASEAN has a reputation as a regional institution that good at making promises that they cannot keep. With regard to domestic issues, for example, its member states tend to avoid relying on ASEAN institutions due to belief that domestic problems should be managed domestically (Suzuki, 2019). As Mattli (1999, p. 12) argued, signing an agreement does not produce integration. In other words, there are commitments that must be adhered to and implemented the treaty in order to give impact to the parties involved in it. Much more important than that, ASEAN countries should

not be too hasty to declare the ASEAN Security Community. The reason is quite simple: ASEAN is not ready yet to become a community. However, the decision was already taken. This paper suggests ASEAN should strengthen its structural foundation instead of signing the declaration. One of the structural foundations is to build ASEAN's collective identity. ASEAN has not much time left to build the foundation and the ASEAN Security Community. As a result, ASEAN Security Community will be established with or without a collective identity.

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China's Role in Global Governance in The Post-COVID-19 Era

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China's role in global governance system has attracted the attention of the international community since 2008, and academic discussions on China's role have been continuing. With the ongoing global transformation, scholars are increasingly focused on the growing impact of China's status as a major power on the global governance system and the world order. This paper discusses China's role in global governance in the context of post covid-19 from the perspectives of China's regional, international, and global identity. The article argues that China is rising as a regional power, but China's significance in the international community lies between that of a regional power and a global power. However, currently, China still lacks the capability and inclination to assume a leading role in global governance due to inadequate conditions and experience. China's stance on global governance is rooted in the original post-World War II United Nations Charter and China's influence on global governance is constructive and complementary. China's BRI serves as an international public good provided to the international community, especially to the Eurasian states. It holds significant implications for regional and global governance, ultimately contributing to global welfare.

Keywords: Global governance, China's role, regional power, Belt and Road Initiative

Global governance is a process, a process in which the existing global governance system with nation state as its key units is parallel with the emerging governance networks with regions as its key units. The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 has changed the original ecology of international relations, which has been described by Chinese scholars as profound changes unseen in a century. More and more international observers pay attention to China's role in global governance in post covid-19 era. With the deterioration of Sino-US relations and

the continuation of the Russo-Ukraine war in the context of post covid-19 pandemic, China's role in global governance has become a hot topic of international concern, which will be evaluated and analysed in this paper.

Since the concept of global governance was invented and used in UN in 1992, all institutional design and international practice on global governance are basically the production of western countries trying to reshape the world. In the international practice of the transition from the colonial era to the post-colonial era, global governance is an idealized "homogenization" institutional arrangement of the global order by western countries based on the unit of nation-state. Since the end of World War II, the global public goods supply mechanism dominated by western powers has basically satisfied the needs of global institutions such as UN, WB and IMF. This kind of institutional arrangement also formed of the global capitalist market, and after the end of the Cold War, it covered the countries and regions dominated or influenced by the former Soviet Union. However, when global capitalism develops to a certain stage, new systemic crises will emerge. On the one hand, the global industrial structure and supply chain formed under the capital logic of "winner takes all" has exacerbated the unfair distribution among countries and the gap between rich and poor, forming structural contradictions; The willingness and ability to supply public goods of global governance institutions have weakened, and it is difficult for emerging powers to fill this vacancy in the short term. In fact, global governance has been more localized and regionalized since the second half of the 20th century and the interaction of different actors in international politics is more concentrated at the regional level. The supply of regional public goods requires a stable power structure and material Power support, the role of major power in regional governance is indispensable. Therefore, how major powers, regions, play a role through regional mechanisms in the global governance requires more in-depth studies.

This article argues that global governance is still a system of an anarchy world, and that major powers are the most important players in global governance. However, one special power just like China should be analyzed in detail, not only from the reality of international politics, but also from a power's

historical experiences and geo-strategy to discuss. From the perspective of a long historical period, the role of the G2, G7 or G20 in global governance is short-lived. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China's role in global governance gets more and more important. However, most current research works are based on the existing great power theory, and there are not many discussions on the relationship between region and great power in global governance, and the understanding of China's status in global governance is also biased. On the basis of sorting out the existing research literature, starting from the discussion of China's regional identity and global identity, this paper regards the Belt and Road Initiative as China's international practice entering into regional governance and global governance, analyzes China's role in global governance, and believes that China is a prudent global power.

Academic discussion on China's role in global governance

Since the global financial crisis in 2008, there has been a significant increase in research on global governance transition and China's role (Li, et al., 2015; Jianwei & Weiqing, 2016; Taylor, 2017). In terms of Chinese scholarship, on the one hand, in light of global power shift and China's growing power, some scholars have put forward theories and countermeasures commensurate with China's international status. The representative ones are the international relations theory of "moral realism", the global governance plan of "extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits" (also known as the "China plan") as well as China's "Belt and Road" initiative (Xuetong, 2015; Yuyan, 2016; Lee & Jinghan, 2019). On the other hand, given the gap in theory and practice between domestic governance and international governance, some scholars believe that China should take a prudent attitude in participating in global governance, and they advocate that China's role in global governance should be brought into play through relationalism or multilateralism (Yongnian & Wenxing, 2015; Yaqing, Hongzhou, & Lumin, 2018; Yaqing & Ling, 2018). In terms of international scholarship, European and American scholars, represented by David Shambaugh, Ken Lieberthal, and David M. Lampton, have expressed concern about the unpredictability of China's future. They consider China as a "partial power" and an uncertain role in future global governance (Lieberthal, 2011;

Shambaugh, 2013; Shambaugh, 2018; Kennedy S. , 2017). Scholars such as Martin Jacques and Kishore Mahbubani think positively of China's new role in global governance. Looking at the failures of global governance from a Global South or Asian perspective, these scholars think of China as an emerging force leading global governance, as can be seen in the discussions on G2(US-China) co-governance and BRICS countries (Jinghan & Breslin, 2016; Kirton & Larionova, 2018). The above-mentioned discussions on the relationship between China and global governance have their rationality to some extent. Nevertheless, there are limitations of different disciplinary backgrounds or scholars' positions as well.

China's role from a regional power to a global power

What is China's role in global governance in the post covid-19 era? The first section provides a review of existing literature on China's role in global governance, the following section first examines China's global identity and regional identity in the historical background and realistic dynamics, and then analyzes China's regional and global status.

To start with, it is impossible to separate the three levels of China's internal, regional, and global governance. The significance of global governance for China should be analyzed objectively in three dimensions: China as a country, a regional actor and as a global actor, which contains the historical evolution of the relationship of China internally, China and East Asia, as well as China and the world. To understand the relationship between China and the world, some Chinese scholars use history as an approach to reconstruct China's position in the world. Wang Gungwu, Ge Zhaoguang, and Wang Hui have reconstructed the discourse on "China" from Chinese history, not only tracing the legitimacy of China's way of governance from history, but also placing China in the evolution of the world system since modern times. The discussion of "China" is reconstructed from Chinese history itself, both in terms of the legitimacy of Chinese governance and in terms of the evolution of the world system since modern times (Beng, 2014; Hui, 2017). China is "an 'intermediate country' connecting the past and the future in human history, and a 'bridge country' that bridges the relationship between traditional developed and developing countries. China is at a special stage of social development and has a distinctive

civilizational tradition. China is difficult to fit into a certain 'category', but it needs to be integrated into the whole world" (Jisi, 2013). Historically, the Middle Kingdom was firstly a geographical and conceptual concept, and then a political entity. For a long time, China existed independently in an inland East Asian system of "Chinese frontier" interaction, which "in most cases is not a strategy of active construction, but more embodied in the spontaneous expansion of the openness and demonstration of Chinese culture. This enhanced the stability of the international system in ancient East Asia (Cheng, 2012, p. 22). China's state form had been a continental endogenous dynastic empire until the nineteenth century. Since the Opium Wars, China gradually interacted with the Western world through sea lanes. Since the late nineteenth century, China has ceased to be an endogenous state and China's state governance has been deeply embedded in domestic, regional, and global levels of governance. The interactions and connections between China and East Asia, as well as China and the world, were activated in the second half of the 20th century by the great global changes and material and technological innovations (Buzan & Lawson, 2016). East Asian international relations were transformed from the earlier imperial model to the regional political interaction of a group of heterogeneous countries, With China playing as an important regional power, East Asia has become increasingly important in the global landscape.

Furthermore, China's role in the international community is somewhere between that of a regional power and that of a global power since 2008, China has been playing an increasingly important role in the international community. The international academia mostly explains the rise of China through American scholars' theories such as Paul Kennedy's "Rise and fall of Great Powers" and Graham Allison's "Thucydides's trap". However, both theories are mostly based on Western experience. As such, they fail to do justice to China's development direction and even bring misconceptions (Kennedy P. , 2010; Allison, 2017). The status signals that China gives to the international community are contradictory, on the one hand, it presents the identity of an emerging great power, and on the other hand, it shows the low posture of a vulnerable developing country (Xiaoyu, 2019, p. 100). Such contradictory status signals have made it difficult for the

international community to understand China's foreign policy and have caused a certain degree of anxiety and unease outside of China. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a clear analysis of China's role in the transformation of global governance. The author believes that China should first and foremost be a regional power (an imperial type of regional existence in the early periods). In the process of economic globalization since the second half of the 20th century, China has fully mobilized its resources through its nationwide system, conformed to and adapted to international rules, and thus increased its national power in a short period of time. The rise of China, first and foremost in East Asia, was the result of the reform and opening up policy of the Chinese government and the revival of the "tributary system and the Asian economic circle" connecting China's southeast coast with the outside world (Hamashita, 2013). Korean-American scholar David C. Kang argues that China did not rise suddenly given that China has a long history in East Asia and no other countries in the world has dominated a region for as long as China has done (Kang, 2017). In terms of power, China is indeed a rising global power. However, if positioned as a global power, China does not have a stable global political, economic, and military network, nor does it have the ability to supply institutional public goods on a global scale. China cannot afford to bear the global responsibilities in the reality of international politics. And more China lacks the experience in balancing its status as a great power with its global responsibilities while building a new world order. Since 1978, China has been a participant and contributor to the global governance system dominated by the UN, WTO, WB and so on. Confronting the new global challenges, China should be both a defender and a successor of the existing global order, and an advocate and reformer of new international order. Of course, in the transformation of the global order, China cannot afford to take on global responsibilities beyond its capacity and the "strategic overdraft" in foreign affairs will have a negative impact on the China's future.

China's "Belt and Road" Initiative and Global Governance

"Belt and Road" is the abbreviation of "Silk Road Economic Belt" and "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". In September and October 2013, when China's president Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan and Indonesia, he proposed to jointly

build the "Silk Road Economic Belt" and the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" with relevant countries. The construction of the "Belt and Road" is important for China to open up to the outside world under new conditions, and it is an important practical platform for promoting the construction of a community of shared future for mankind. Rooted in the history of the ancient Silk Road, this initiative has inherited and carried forward the Silk Road spirit centered on peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning, mutual benefit and win-win results. The "Belt and Road" initiative upholds and follows the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, and is committed to achieving policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration and people-to-people bonds, which is an initiative of development, cooperation, and openness. The construction of the "Belt and Road" spans different regions, different development stages, and different civilizations and provide public goods jointly created by China's governance and countries along the OROB. In the past 10 years, the Chinese's BRI has received the response and participation of more than 160 countries and international organizations, and "Belt and Road" has appeared in the reports of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council as keywords. The deepening of policy communication between China and related countries, the continuous strengthening of infrastructure connectivity, the continuous improvement of unimpeded trade, the continuous expansion of financial integration, and the continuous promotion of people-to-people bonds will provide more impetus for world economic growth and open up more space for international economic cooperation. Therefore, China's BRI is an important plan for China to participate in global governance, and it is of great significance for developing countries in Eurasia to participate in the global governance system.

China's position in Eurasia is formed naturally and historically. From a geographical perspective, China is located to the east of the Himalayas and the terrain is high in the west and low in the east and adjoins the islands on the west coast of the Pacific Ocean and a natural water area is connected to the Indian Ocean through the waters of the South China Sea around Southeast Asia. The relationship between China and neighboring countries that observers on

international politics pay attention to today is actually the relationship between empires and vassal states, core and peripheral areas in history and China used to be a natural hub of regional connection in Asia in history also. "One Belt and One Road" is a natural extension of the China-centered governance network to the surrounding areas, and it has fundamental significance for optimizing and integrating regional resources and promoting the strategic interact of different countries in the region. Since the China's government put forward BRI in 2013, it has put the "interconnection" of infrastructure in an important position and promoted regional governance with the construction of "roads, belts, corridors, and bridges" as the fulcrum. The digital infrastructure construction, cloud services, and networking technologies promoted by Chinese companies such as Huawei and Alibaba have been recognized by neighboring countries and regions and have played an important role in preventing the covid-19 epidemic. Despite facing the economy downward brought by the covid-19 epidemic, ASEAN has become China's largest trading partner since 2020, which shows that the BRI has achieved in Southeast Asia. However, the current academic discussions on China's "Belt and Road" are mostly at the level of investment, policies and programs, and the actual technical operation and monitoring and evaluation are still insufficient. Regarding BRI, there are also critical voices, for example, western society has constantly questioned where BRI will bring about the "debt trap" and neo-colonialism. Former Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi pointed out in an interview: "There are some different voices in the world regarding the 'Belt and Road' initiative, which they believe is China's geopolitical tool and may create debt traps for relevant countries. This is clearly subjective and unfair understanding to BRI and it is misunderstanding, misjudgment or even prejudice." This paper believes that the China's BRI should be based on monitoring through a set of digital and intelligent parameters and indicators on public policy systems, which can track the process of regional governance to avoid geo-risks, respond to emergencies, promote good regional governance, and then promote global governance.

China's own positioning: a prudent global power

Today's globalized world is the result of the Industrial Revolution originated from European and American countries. The decline of the global governance system is not only caused by the crisis of global capitalism in the high stage, but also the decline of the world order dominated by western countries. Since 2008, the so-called "centered globalism" is gradually transiting to the "decentered globalism" (Buzan & George, 2015). The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this process, and the shock brought about by the transformation of the global order has become more severe. Different regions and countries will temporarily retreat to their own regions, rethink the impacts and threats of economic globalization to their homeland, and re-examine the non-traditional security issues they confront in areas such as hygiene, health and the environment. The global challenges call for new means to deal with it, and the "China's way" is one of the options. However, China has no historical experiences in governing the world outside China, besides, "Chinese experiences" is only applicable to countries or regions with the same historical circumstances as China, and the practices of relevant countries are still in exploring. Positioning China as a global power has been proved to be harmful by the Covid-19 pandemic, due to the fact that apart from economic influence, China currently does not have the qualifications to become a global power in the fields of politics, military, technology and health etc. In addition, the strategic overdraft brought by the world morality and international responsibilities of a global power has been learned from other countries' experiences. As for global governance, the Chinese model is currently confined to the economic field, and there is no mature experience in the political, social, cultural, and other fields. Therefore, China's role in global governance is first of all "glocalization". Rooting in East Asia, based on Asia, and eye on the world is the proper foothold of China in the regional and global governance. The G2 of US-China, BRICS mechanism or the "Belt and Road" Initiative should not be regarded as the top-level design of China's participation in global governance and the overemphasis on China's global role is a vital theme which needs to be discussed in a broader context since the human beings still live in an anarchy world.

In light of the gradual decline of the existing global governance system and the rise of anti-globalization wave triggered by the global Covid-19 pandemic, Chinese scholars have begun to reflect on the effectiveness of global governance. Among them, regional studies have emerged as a pivotal area for theoretical contemplation and international engagement. On the one hand, considering the continued dominance of nation-states in the international system, it is prudent for China to maintain its influence through participation in established international organizations such as the UN, WTO, and IMF, ensuring a smooth and orderly transformation of global governance. On the other hand, REGION is a more flexible social and historical unit than nation-state. As such, it is advisable for China to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework and discourse on regional governance and expand its influence in the international practice of in East Asia and other regions worldwide (McKinney, 2018).

Conclusion

As a rising power, China has become a new player in global governance, however, global governance is a complex system and what China could do is limited. For example, China's role in global governance is still limited in the two events of covid-19 epidemic and Russia-Ukraine war in which the fragility of the global governance system is full exposed at the beginning of the third ten years in the 21th century. Therefore, all countries in the world need to assume relevant responsibilities and obligations in global governance. Of course, as a critical power, China can continue to play an important role in the post-epidemic global governance system. First of all, China can continue to play a role in the current global institutions, strive for the right to speak internationally in accordance with existing rules, spread new ideas that can represent the interests of emerging countries, and balance the impact of "neoliberal" values originating in Europe and the United States on global governance, making up the deficiencies of the existing global governance system. Secondly, China must take the initiative to cultivate a governance network from a regional perspective, in which China's authority, leadership and influence could be reflected through regional governance networks as a major power. The Belt and Road Initiative is a new approach to regional governance and how this constructive strategy is compatible with the existing

global governance system dominated by Western countries needs to be promoted in China's international practices and international cooperation.

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Japan's Remilitarization Struggle Since the Shinzo Abe's Leadership

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This essay discusses Japan's struggle to push its military capabilities to become more active in security issues since the reelection of Shinzo Abe in 2012. During this time, Japanese defense policy faced great challenges due to the restriction of the Japanese constitution of pacifism (Article 9) and the fact that the Japanese opposed the idea of militarism or 'remilitarization' initiated by Japanese political leaders, mainly Abe. However, the Chinese military presence in the region with overwhelming military capabilities and aggressive behavior, particularly around Diayou/Senkaku islands in the East China Sea, threatens Japan. This uncertainty has engendered a grim perception of China among the Japanese which forces Japan to fortify its security by reforming its defense policy to strengthen its military capabilities. In this essay, I argue that the remilitarization of Japan is stimulated by the Japanese perception of the threat of Chinese aggressiveness. By utilizing Robert Jervis's theory, the analysis is focused on a structural level to trace the incentive of Japan's remilitarization. This security phenomenon will be enlightened by two imperative concepts of the security dilemma and perception of threat. Other domestic aspects like public opinion and elites are discussed to show the veracity of the main argument.

Keywords: Japan, Military Capabilities, Security Dillema, Remilitarization, Threat Perception.

Introduction

This article discusses the remilitarization of Japan that is influenced by Japan's perception of China's threat. This article uses Robert Jervis' theories of security dilemma and perception of threat as the main tool of analysis to explain Japan's perception of threat. To further strengthen the analysis, this article will also look at internal factors, notably political elites and public opinion, as indicators for the perception of threat itself.

When Shinzo Abe became the Prime Minister of Japan in 2012, he tried to make major changes in Japan's defense policy by trying to revise Japan's

constitution¹⁹ and increasing its military budget. However, he faced opposition from the Japanese public, who believed that Japan should be truly pacifist and opposed remilitarization due to the trauma from the Second World War.

Abe's vision faces challenges from the Japanese public as they are more supportive of Japanese pacifism and reject militarism, largely due to the trauma of the war. However, why does Japan tend to push for policies that lead to remilitarization? This drive is caused by international structural motives, namely the threat of China. As for domestic factors such as political elites and public opinion towards Japan's remilitarization, they only have a certain level of influence.

The aim of this article is to explain the main motives behind Japan's push for remilitarization. The article explains that Japan sees the rise of China as a threat and considers it the main motivation for remilitarization. There are domestic motives, such as the influence of elites who do have dominance in policymaking, with the dominant position of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan's domestic politics, but it is not a strong reason. The reason is that even though policymaking is concentrated among those in strategic positions and with dominance in politics (political elites) (Mahendra, 2009, p. 43), it is not entirely true because even after Japan's leadership transition that occurred in 2020 when Shinzo Abe was succeeded by Yoshihide Suga, Japan's remains committed to remilitarization.

Additionally, policymakers tend to act according to the vulnerabilities they perceive or the magnitude of the threats they face (Jervis, 1978, p. 174). In this case, Japanese elites are trying to enhance defense capabilities due to the threat they face, namely the increasing power of China. Other domestic motives such as public opinion actually validate the threat posed by China because as China's threat increases in the region, public perception of China in Japan worsens, leading the Japanese public to support the strengthening of Japan's military capabilities as a defense against China. The drastic change in public opinion from

¹⁹ The ideology of Abe's revisionism stems from the pre-war colonial tradition and wartime period, aiming to assert Japan's position as a major leader in Asia and shift away from the post-war passive doctrine. Thus, constitutional revision (particularly Article 9) is an important goal for revisionists to legitimize Japanese militarism (Hughes, 2015, p. 8).

the era of Shinzo Abe to Fumio Kishida strengthens the argument that the increasing aggression of China is also felt by the Japanese public. Therefore, despite the traumatic history of militarism, the Japanese public tends to support the increase in Japan's military capabilities for the purpose of defense against China (Galic, 2022).

Therefore, it is clear that the motive for Japan's remilitarization is due to the threat posed by China. Based on the concept of the *security dilemma*, the increase in one country's security will threaten the security of other countries, thereby provoking them to enhance their own security (Jervis, 1978, p. 170). This means that any increase in China's military power will threaten Japan's security and provoke Japan to strengthen its military capabilities. Thus, every country will continue to adjust its security due to the perceived vulnerability from other countries, resulting from the effects of the *security dilemma*, which leads to an ongoing increase in security requirements due to the reciprocal nature of the *security dilemma* (Jervis, 1978, p. 182). Jervis emphasizes that the increase in one country's security makes other countries less secure, not because of misperception or created hostility, but because of the anarchic nature of the international structure. Even if a country is convinced that the current intentions of other countries are peaceful, they will not ignore the possibility that others may become aggressive in the future. However, if a country views another country as an enemy, it will react more aggressively than a country that perceives the world normally.²⁰

This situation can worsen based on Jervis' assumption that the perception of threat is an estimation of whether the other party will cooperate or not. If the other party is perceived as unlikely to cooperate, they are seen as a threat, and vice versa. This means that Japan regards China as a threat because China is perceived as unlikely to cooperate; in short, China is seen as an enemy of Japan. Jervis' theory, which focuses on the perception of threat as an important aspect in determining the threatening party for a country, also determines a country's response to that threat. Jervis adds that a country that views another country as

²⁰ In this case, although the security dilemma is a direct impact of the anarchy structure, the threat perception is also an important factor that can exacerbate the impact of the security dilemma.

an enemy will react more aggressively and responsively compared to viewing the world normally (Jervis, 1978). Therefore, it is not surprising that the increasing power of China leads Japan to react more aggressively and responsively through remilitarization.

Furthermore, due to the detrimental effects of the security dilemma and perception of threat, distrust arises, causing defensive postures to be seen as offensive. As stated by Jervis, if defensive and offensive postures cannot be distinguished, and offensive incentives have advantages due to military technological advancements, the future situation will be highly problematic. This will lead to a dominant incentive for attacking and potentially trigger an arms race that can lead to conflicts (Jervis, 1978, p. 211). However, since Japan's remilitarization is defensive in nature, the future situation, which may seem so dire due to the lack of incentives for escalation, is mitigated.

This article will explore the main motivations for Japan's remilitarization through a comparison between structural and domestic motives, as well as the impact of Japan's remilitarization on its relationship with China

Structural Motive

Security Dilemma

This article states that the main motive behind Japan's remilitarization is the threat from China. The increasing military power of China poses a threat to Japan's security, which provokes Japan to enhance its military strength in response. The process of strengthening Japan's military power is divided into two dimensions: external and internal.

First, Japan has security guarantees from the United States, which is a major external power or ally. However, US involvement in Japan and East Asia has decreased since the era of Donald Trump, triggering a resurgence of the long-standing political spectrum of "independent defense policy" among Japanese politicians, especially during the Abe era. This is based on the consideration that Trump's "America First" policy tended to make the US more focused on domestic issues, such as economic growth. As a result, US involvement in East Asian

security issues and, especially, in dealing with China has diminished since the Trump era (Fukushima & Samuels, 2018).

However, under the administration of Joe Biden, the US pays more attention to the East Asian region. In September 2020, Shinzo Abe resigned as the Prime Minister of Japan for health reasons, and Yoshihide Suga (from the LDP faction) replaced Abe as the Prime Minister of Japan (Bartlett, 2020). On April 16, 2021, Yoshihide Suga and Joe Biden held a meeting in Washington, DC. During the meeting, Suga and Biden emphasized their commitment to limiting China's attempts to change the regional status quo by force, particularly in the East China Sea and the South China Sea. This meeting had a positive impact on US commitment to East Asia and Japan. Therefore, Japan can rely on the capabilities of the US if China escalates tensions. On the flip side, Japan's position for the US is crucial in maintaining the balance in the Asia-Pacific region. This is supported by Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) policy, which aims to maintain order and enhance security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region, especially with the US, Australia, and India (members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: the Quad) (Koga, 2022). Japan's efforts to enhance its military power are supported by allies, especially the US, not only to strengthen Japan's internal security but also to increase allies' commitment to Japan in the future, as Japan's power becomes increasingly important for allies' interests in the Asia-Pacific (Hatoyama, 2021).

After Fumio Kishida assumed the position of Prime Minister of Japan, Abe's ideological legacy did not fade away. The desire to strengthen military power increased. In December 2022, the Japanese government approved a massive increase in military spending (discussed in more detail in subsequent discussions), followed by Fumio Kishida's diplomatic trips to allied countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Canada), mostly addressing security issues in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific. These diplomatic trips aim to strengthen allies' commitment to security in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific, as well as to open up opportunities for more comprehensive military cooperation in terms of arms supply, military infrastructure, and joint military exercises (Herydarian, 2023). This demonstrates Japan's willingness to strengthen

its defense system through military cooperation, in line with the increase and reform of its domestic defense system.

Since Japan describes China as the main threat to its national security, the development of its military defense system is built in accordance with the Chinese threat. In the internal defense system, there is a similarity in the focus on military enhancement between China and Japan. Both countries are more focused on expanding and strengthening their military capabilities in the maritime and air domains (in response to disputes in the East China Sea region where these domains are crucial). However, it should be noted that the expansion of the Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) is not yet comparable to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) due to limitations imposed by Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution. The military power gap between China and Japan is also one of the reasons that reinforce why Japan needs to strengthen its military.

In the maritime domain, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is currently the largest navy in the world. Gradually, the PLAN has shifted its operational strategy focus from "offshore waters defense" to a combination of "offshore waters defense" and "open-seas protection," which greatly supports the PLAN in conducting strategic operations far beyond China's territorial waters, including entering Japanese territory. On the other hand, the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) is also the largest air force in the Asian region and has begun to shift its strategic task focus from territorial air defense towards tasks that are both defensive and offensive in nature. This means that the military operations orientation of the PLAAF will also be aggressive. Furthermore, in 2017, the PLAAF underwent organizational restructuring to support tasks in regions far from mainland China or long-range air power projection. Through the expansion of tasks and the offensive orientation of the PLAAF and PLAN, it is evident that China will be more assertive in securing its interests and ambitions in the region, particularly in the maritime and air domains (Mastro, 2019).

In response, the National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) in 2013 and the Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP) for 2019-2023 explain a strategy that prioritizes defense enhancement in the maritime and air domains, known as the "*dynamic joint defense force*" strategy (H. Andrew Schwartz, 2019). This

indicates that Japan's military strategy is built to anticipate China's military aggressiveness in the maritime and air areas surrounding the East Asian region. In December 2022, Japan renewed its National Security Strategy (NSS), wherein the document emphasized that China is the primary threat to Japan's national interests. Furthermore, to strengthen the deterrence effect of the system, Japan has approved the use of counterstrike capabilities, allowing Japan to launch retaliatory attacks in the event of aggression. In a defensive defense system, deterrence is crucial, and considering the modernization of missile technology by countries in the East Asian region, particularly China, along with the increasingly militarized environment in the region, Japan's decision becomes highly rational (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2022).

This tendency, analyzed within the security dilemma, actually represents a positive action that demonstrates Japanese military strategists' understanding of the security dilemma's conditions. If we only consider the basic assumptions of the security dilemma theory, Japan's security requirements would be difficult to fulfill and could result in an arms race. Therefore, Japan adjusts the level of security necessary to counter China's threat, rather than solely focusing on overall military expansion. Although Japan's approval of counterstrike capabilities has received criticism from several countries, especially China, Russia, and North Korea, Japan's allied nations support this decision (Herydarian, 2023). The development of Japan's military defense system becomes an essential asset for playing its role in the Asia-Pacific region and will also strengthen allies' commitment to Japan and the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan's Perceptions of the Threat from China

A country cannot determine the intentions behind another country's military power increase. This reality often leads to miscalculations by many countries. To explain this, the perception of the threat will be discussed in this section. According to Jervis, the "perception of threat" occurs when another party is perceived as uncooperative, leading to it being viewed as a threat (Jervis, 1978, p. 170). In this case, Japan perceives China as a threat because it sees China as uncooperative. China's uncooperative stance can be observed through disputes in the East China Sea region (Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands), the historical relationship

between Japan and China, and the Japanese public's opinion on territorial disputes.

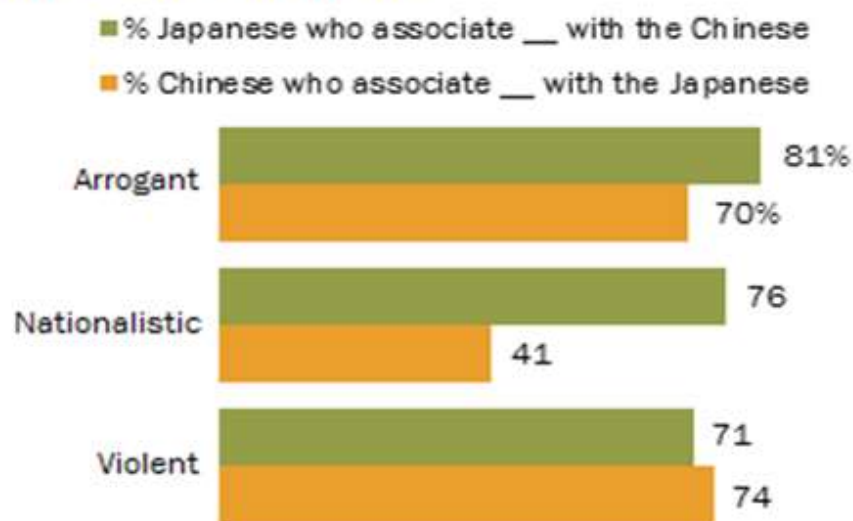
Tensions between China and Japan over the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have escalated since Japan's nationalization of the islands, triggering China's reactions. Since then, China has continuously deployed its military forces to secure the waters, initiating the "East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ)" in PLAN operations and "regulators patrols" in PLAAF operations to strengthen China's position in the region. This clearly makes Japan feel that China's aggressive actions threaten its national interests, as emphasized in Japan's 2022 Defense White Paper, which states that China is Japan's primary security threat (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2022). However, Japan has previously made diplomatic efforts to address the issue. For example, in 2013, Japan called for negotiations with China on several occasions and held a meeting in 2015. However, these efforts did not reduce China's aggressive activities in the region. This indicates China's uncertainty, as Japan's diplomatic efforts did not yield results, despite China's seemingly peaceful responses through the media.

The annual report of the Japan Ministry of Defense shows that China's military activities in the vicinity of the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands have been fluctuating but consistently high until 2022. In 2020, the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) conducted activities around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands for a total of 333 days (the highest number), while PLAAF activities in the vicinity of Japan were highest in 2016, with 851 instances, slightly decreasing to 722 instances in 2021. On the other hand, China also conducted military exercises with Russia in Japanese waters in October 2021, and then in May 2022, both countries conducted joint long-range flights across Japanese airspace and the Pacific Ocean (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2022). China's consistent military activities in the vicinity of Japan indicates China's uncertainty and aggression in the region, indirectly signaling to Japan that China is not stopping its militarization of the area and is pursuing its ambitious projects as a great power.

The disputes in the border areas between China and Japan also contribute to the negative perception of China among the Japanese public. According to a survey conducted by the Genron NPO in 2021 on the reasons for the Japanese

public's dislike of China and vice versa, 57% of the Japanese public stated that conflicts in the Diaoyu/Senkaku waters were the primary reason. Furthermore, in response to a different question about "why the Japanese public sees China's military as a threat," 71% of the Japanese public stated that it was because "China frequently violates Japanese territorial waters." This means that the disputes around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands are a significant factor shaping the Japanese public's perception (The Genron NPO, 2021). Another survey by the Cabinet Office regarding the Japanese public's assumptions about the conflicts around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands showed that the majority of the public responded, "In recent years, the Chinese government has repeatedly sent its ships to the waters around the Senkaku Islands and has repeatedly taken actions such as invading those waters" (Japan Cabinet Office, 2019). his statement explicitly indicates that the Japanese public feels invaded by China's actions in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands. In short, the Japanese public feels threatened by China's aggressive activities in that area.

Graphic 1. Japanese and Chinese Public Opnion on Nationalism
Japanese and Chinese differ most over who is nationalistic



Source: (Stokes, 2016)

Historically, disputes between China and Japan have been long-standing. According to a survey by the Pew Research Center in 2016, the history of the First and Second Sino-Japanese Wars has been one of the factors contributing to the

deteriorating relationship between the two countries. Consequently, both countries still hold grudges that generate negative sentiments such as nationalism, arrogance, and hostility. These negative sentiments have continued to develop during the Abe administration, as shown in graph 1, which indicates that both China and Japan view each other as "violent" with percentages above 70%. Thus, the tensions between China and Japan at the border are further exacerbated by these negative sentiments (historical legacies) because both countries continue to view each other through a negative lens. For example, China still harbors resentment towards Japan for its wartime atrocities and perceives that Japan has not sufficiently apologized for its mistakes. Therefore, the majority of the Chinese public view Japanese people with the stereotype of a "threat of violence" (Stokes, 2016). Similarly, Japan sees China as arrogant and nationalist. These perception issues indicate that China and Japan tend to find it difficult to find opportunities for cooperation and peacefully resolve the conflict, leading Japan to view China as a threat.

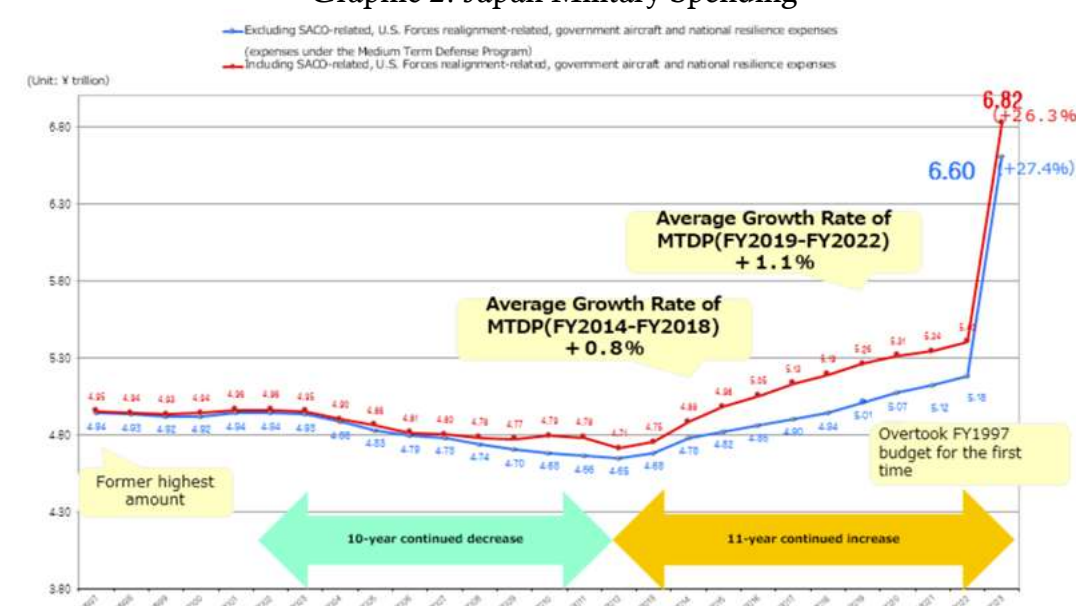
Domestic Motives

Japanese Public and Elite

Even though Shinzo Abe is no longer the Prime Minister of Japan, the ambitious vision he built for Japan over the course of approximately 8 years has not changed much under the administrations of Yoshihide Suga and Fumio Kishida. Considering the fact that both Suga and Kishida belong to the LDP party, they tend to follow Abe's ambitions and revisionist vision. None of them lean towards a direction contrary to Abe's vision, so the policies established during Abe's tenure continue, especially the efforts to enhance Japan's military power. The discourse on revising the Japanese constitution has always contradicted public opinion, especially during the Abe era. The majority of the public does not support constitutional revisions due to anti-militarism sentiments, where they reject the increase in military power out of fear of another war and increased government control over civilians. Therefore, the majority of the public does not support post-war constitutional revision ideas in Japan (Smith & Teraoka, Early Postwar Attitudes on Constitutional Revision, 2016). Generally, elites tend to act in line with public interests to gain support, especially in a

democratic system. However, Abe acted differently by ignoring public protests and continuing to push Japan towards a more militaristic direction, in line with the evolving security situation in the region (Madison, 2019, p. 124).

Graphic 2. Japan Military Spending



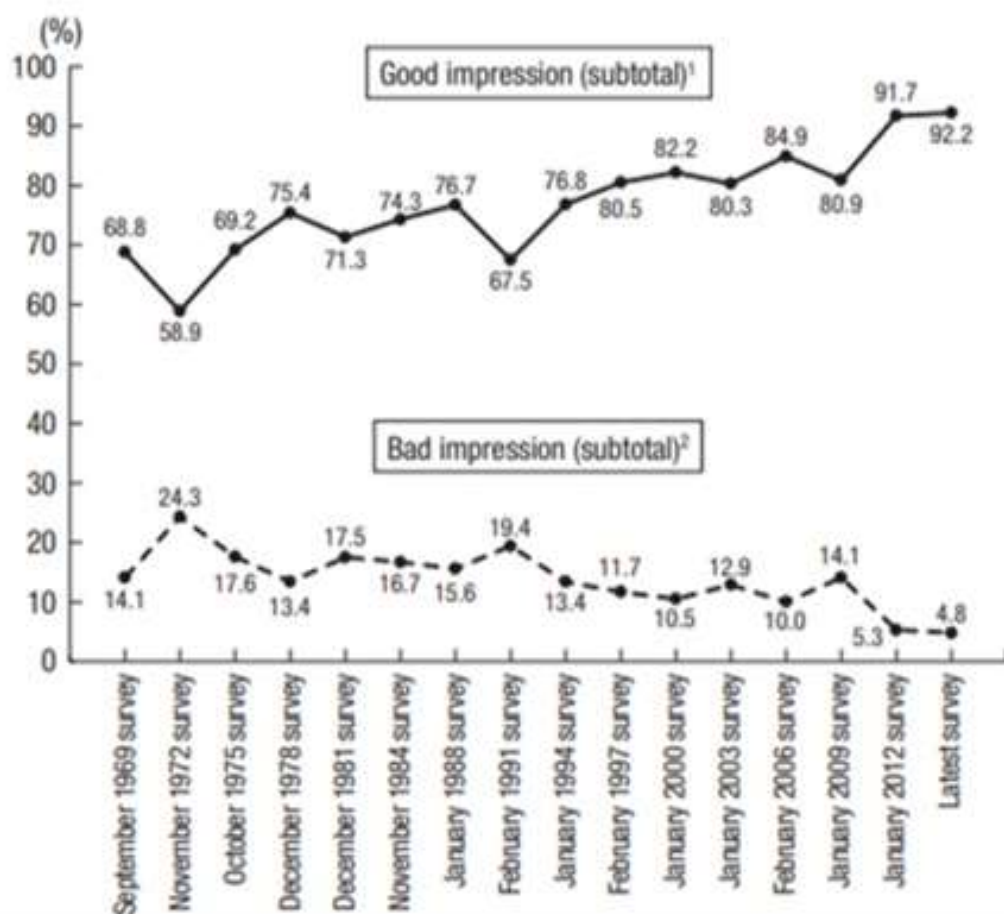
Source: Japan Ministry of Defence

Although without constitutional revisions, Japan's power has still increased, ranking 8th in the world in 2020 (Global Fire Power, 2023). Despite constitutional constraints, Japan maintains its position as a powerful nation, which proves that Japan is moving towards a more militaristic path. According to graph 3, military spending has been increasing every year since 2012, the year Shinzo Abe returned as Japan's leader (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2022). Interestingly, after Abe's resignation, particularly during Fumio Kishida's administration, the military budget for 2023 skyrocketed to ¥6.82 trillion (a 26% increase from the previous year). Based on the latest Defense Buildup Program, it is projected to rise to ¥8.9 trillion by 2027 (Japan Ministry of Defense, 2023). In addition to increasing military spending, Kishida also managed to achieve domestic consensus to develop counterstrike capabilities (based on the NSS), which had a significant impact on Japan's military defense system. The increase in military spending follows the militarization and potential military conflicts in the surrounding region of Japan, primarily due to China's consistent presence in securing its national interests in East Asia (the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands and

China's unilateral claim on Taiwan) (Liff, Kishida the Accelerator: Japan's Defense Evolution after Abe, 2023, p. 78).

With this situation, the Japanese public tends to support the increase in Japan's military capabilities. This is largely related to the public's dislike of China's activities in the region surrounding Japan, making it important for the public to prioritize maintaining security.

Graphic 3 Japan Impression of SDF



Source: Ministry of Defence

In 2015, Abe implemented policy reforms by enacting the "peace and security legislation." This legislation included revisions to 10 laws, reinterpretation of Article 9, and the enactment of the New International Peace Support Bill (Liff, 2018). The policy reforms aimed to expand the assignments of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) and provide opportunities for Japan to gradually enhance its military power. This policy triggered protests by thousands of Japanese citizens who viewed it as violating the principles of pacifism (VoA, 2015). In response, Abe made a statement that the "primary role of the SDF

would be non-military disaster relief...while national defense was considered of secondary importance" (Midford & Scott, 2008, p. 128). This statement was intended to shape public perception in a positive direction: the JSDF was meant to address non-military issues such as natural disasters and humanitarian concerns. As a result, surveys conducted by the Ministry of Defense showed an increase in public trust in the JSDF up to 2015 (graph 3) (Kennedy, 2018, pp. 44-46). It can be observed that from 2009 to 2012, public trust surged after witnessing the role of the JSDF in the earthquake and tsunami that occurred on 11 Maret 2011 (3/11 Event).

The event of 3/11 provided an opportunity for the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to get closer to the public by directly engaging in disaster-stricken areas to provide assistance and relief to the victims. Interestingly, even during the vulnerable period of 2012-2015, public trust in the JSDF continued to increase. Despite the Japanese public's general rejection of militarism (especially in 2015 when Abe implemented several security policy reforms), trust in the JSDF remained high. This means that the government's mediation, by assigning the JSDF to non-military sectors, had a positive impact on increasing public trust. Furthermore, the Japanese public's perception of China as a threat also played a significant role in the public's belief that strengthening the JSDF was reasonable.

Although public opinion is sometimes not fully taken into account, it provides stimulus to the perception of threats. The public offers an objective view (considered neutral in political interests) of the security conditions they perceive. For example, when China frequently engages in activities in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, the public holds a negative view because they feel that such actions threaten national security. Therefore, the public does not directly influence policies, but it confirms the security conditions and serves as legitimacy for policymakers that the decisions taken (in response to China's aggression) are not merely ambitious decisions made by the elites. So, although the decisions of the elites and the public in Japan sometimes do not align, there is a shared perception of the threat posed by China. In 2022, Japan's perception of China as a threat was explained in the National Security Strategy (China being considered the main security threat to Japan), and this was followed by an increase in public support

for the development of the JSDF. Approximately 41.5% of the Japanese public expressed a desire to enhance the JSDF, which was a 10.4% increase compared to 2018 (Kosuke, 2023). This fact shows that even though the public may have suspicions about the Japanese government, the increasing vulnerability caused by China is perceived by both the elites and the public. However, the assumption that the public fears that remilitarization will lead to the return of Japan's militaristic government and strengthen civilian control was a concern for the elites. Nevertheless, the elites seemed more determined to push ambitious policies without paying much attention to public protests (as seen during Shinzo Abe's era in 2015).

So, how does public opinion influence Japan's security policy? As mentioned earlier, the Japanese public's resistance to remilitarization tends to remain stable, particularly in rejecting the revision of the Japanese Constitution, which is a crucial constraint in formulating Japan's security policy, especially during Abe's era. Therefore, the elites cannot fully control the direction of policies because they are still bound by the constitutional rules (Smith, 2019, p. 28). On the other hand, China's threat has become a clear issue for Japan's security, and the public is also aware of this. In fact, the public considers China's actions in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, which are Japanese territorial waters, as an invasion (Japan Cabinet Office, 2019). Regarding this, James Simpson argues, "both countries feel they are on a path to conflict – although not necessarily military conflict" (Simpson, 2020). As of now, military escalation has not occurred, but the dispute continues to escalate to a dangerous level for both countries, so it is not surprising that both the elites and the public feel its impact.

Due to the increasing threat from China, it has influenced the public opinion in Japan towards China and also towards security policies (especially in the Kishida era). As a result, the decision-making process regarding Japan's security policies will face less opposition from the public. This also has an impact on Kishida's achievements in the significant changes to Japan's security policies, which are increasingly moving towards an ambitious level (counterstrike capabilities, military budget, and strengthening military cooperation with allies) because the Kishida administration does not face as much opposition

domestically as the Shinzo Abe era (Liff, 2018). In short, the Japanese public opinion becomes an important factor that influences the outcomes of Japan's domestic decision-making process, and the change in the Japanese public opinion due to the threat from China confirms not only the national threat but also explains the perception of an increased level of threat that is felt by the Japanese public.

The Main Motivation for Japan's Remilitarization

Japan's remilitarization is to enhance its military capacity and capabilities beyond the limits of self-defense or moving away from pacifism. The Japanese government's intention to strengthen its military power is not like the militaristic, expansionist, and civilian control of the World War era. However, remilitarization portrays a country that can defend itself and cooperate with its allies through international rules and norms to create regional and global stability (in line with the vision of FOIP). According to Corey Wallace's view, "For 'self-defense' reasons, Japan can legally destroy ballistic missile equipment in the DPRK if the DPRK is about to attack Japan. This is called 'preemption' and is considered self-defensive" (Wallace, 2020). This opinion aligns with the principle of military defense that prioritizes deterrence, thus making Japan's decision to develop counterstrike capabilities highly reasonable. This military strategy only ensures that if Japan is ever attacked, the consideration that Japan has the capability to launch a counterattack reaching the aggressor's bases can reduce the intention or possibility of such a direct attack.

Based on the theory of the perception of threat (Jervis, 1978), the question of who shapes Japan's perception has been explained, where this article assumes that Japan's perception of the threat from China is representative of both the public and the elite. Although the drive for remilitarization is dominated by the elite, the contribution of the public to the success of Japan's more assertive security policy cannot be ignored. In line with Jervis's claim that a state viewing another state as an enemy will react stronger and faster than usual (Jervis, 1978). This explains why Japan continues to push for remilitarization, disregarding protests from the Japanese public in the process, and eventually, Japan gradually achieves its ambitious vision, mostly initiated by Shinzo Abe over several years.

Therefore, the effect of the security dilemma will operate stronger due to Japan's perception of the threat from China, causing them to continually seek greater power, thus reducing the chances of cooperation (Jervis, 1978, p. 173). Although Japan's intentions are defensive, the vulnerability exacerbates the operation of the security dilemma, which will worsen the relationship between China and Japan in the future.

Furthermore, due to the confirmed perception of threat and security dilemma, it can be concluded that Japan regards China as an enemy, and China's military buildup accelerates Japan's remilitarization efforts. Thus, Japan's primary motivation for remilitarization is its perception of the Chinese threat. Even at the domestic level, China's threat is a concern for the Japanese public and elites due to the vulnerability faced by Japan, which further expedites remilitarization. Consequently, future disputes between China and Japan will worsen due to the perceived threat that portrays China as offensive. This will prompt Japan to continue enhancing its military power, thereby reducing opportunities for cooperation and exacerbating its military rivalry with China. However, the likelihood of escalation will decrease because Japan's remilitarization remains defensive, and the development of its military systems and technologies, particularly in defensive strategies, prevents total war from occurring. As Japan's military build-up in traditional domains (such as maritime and aerial domains, as well as counterstrike capabilities) tends to be defensive, the situation in the future will not be as dire as predicted by the realist paradigm.

Conclusion

This article explains that Japan's security and foreign policies have been at their most ambitious level since the return of Shinzo Abe's leadership in 2012 until the present. However, Abe's policies have always faced criticism from the Japanese public due to the anti-militarism sentiment prevalent among the public, which has been the main obstacle for Japan to develop its military strength. Nonetheless, neither Yoshihide Suga nor Fumio Kishida opposed or deviated from the revisionist ideology associated with Abe, thereby keeping Abe's ambitious vision alive into the Kishida era. With the increasing Chinese threat, the Japanese public's support for military development has grown, making it

easier for Japan to make security policy decisions with less opposition. Kishida's achievements in increasing military spending, developing counterstrike capabilities, and strengthening security cooperation with allies are crucial for the future development of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF), given the increasing vulnerability to conflicts primarily caused by China's aggressiveness in the region. The difficulty in finding a resolution to the disputes between the two countries worsens Japan's perception of China, as evidenced by China's consistent activities around Japanese territory (e.g., intrusions in the waters around the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands). Thus, this article explains that Japan's primary motivation for remilitarization is its perception of the threat posed by China, which is confirmed by the Japanese public and government (elites), as well as by China's ongoing aggressive activities. On the other hand, domestic motives, such as the dominance of elites with a strategic role in policy-making, are considered a weaker motive as they are still limited by public opposition (as seen during the Abe era) and are more influenced by Japan's systemic-level vulnerabilities.

On the other hand, public opinion can influence policy-making to a certain extent (either hindering or legitimizing), as well as confirming the development of tensions or the perception of threats towards China (assuming that the public is more neutral than political interests). However, the role of elites, particularly Abe's vision in the development of Japan's security policies, remains important in shaping a clear and sensible vision (despite facing significant opposition during his era). This allows his successors, Suga and Kishida (who are still within the political framework of the LDP), to inherit ideological principles and frameworks (e.g., FOIP and constitutional interpretation) as foundations for developing Japan's military policies. It should be noted that none of these Japanese Prime Ministers held different views on Japan's perception of China's aggressiveness. This aligns with Jervis' claim that policymakers will act according to the vulnerabilities they perceive or the magnitude of the threat they face. Therefore, these elites disregarded public opposition (especially during the Abe era) to enhance Japan's defense capabilities in response to China's escalating aggressive activities around Japanese territory, particularly in the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands area.

Considering the increasing power of both countries, the negative perceptions they hold towards each other, and the difficulty in identifying opportunities for cooperation to address disputes in the region (e.g., the Diaoyu/Senkaku conflict), the future of the relationship between the two countries appears increasingly bleak. However, due to Japan's remilitarization being defensive in nature, the relationship between China and Japan in the future, which seems to be on a path of conflict, will not be as dire because there is a lack of incentives for escalation.

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