

# INDONESIA'S POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE AUKUS TRILATERAL DEFENSE PACT

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# INDONESIA'S POLICY ANALYSIS OF THE AUKUS TRILATERAL DEFENSE PACT

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze the direction of the Indonesian government's policy in responding to the AUKUS (Australia-United Kingdom-United States) trilateral defense pact agreement and its relationship to the China-ASEAN conflict in the South China Sea based on the free and active policy adopted by Indonesia. The research method in this study uses a fully qualitative approach. The type of data used in this research is secondary, from various scientific articles and related news. ASEAN has become divided in addressing Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program together with the AUKUS Alliance. Countries give different reactions, some support, oppose, or observe. Responding to this, it becomes a challenge for Indonesia to continue to play an active role in escalating tensions between AUKUS and China, which can lead to military conflict and even nuclear war in the Indo-Pacific region. With free and active politics, Indonesia should be able to play the role. Position Indonesia is not included in the vortex of blocks or influences from superpower countries competing for influence/hegemony, especially in the Asia Pacific Region.

**Keywords:** AUKUS, Australia, China, Indonesia, United Kingdom, United States.

## 1. Introduction

As a neighbouring country to Australia, which is also involved in the South China Sea (SCS) conflict, Indonesia's geographical location puts Indonesia in a vortex of potential conflict between AUKUS (Australia - United Kingdom - United States trilateral defense pact) and the People's Republic of China (Putro, 2021). "It makes Indonesia very wary that AUKUS will significantly increase power projection in the Indo-Pacific. Indonesia takes a position to emphasize the obligation of all parties to maintain peace and security through respect for applicable international law" (Delanova, 2021). The Indonesia Director-General of Asia-Pacific and Africa, A.K. Jailani, stated that: "There are logical reasons for Indonesia to be worried because the actions taken by Australia will change the geopolitical situation in the region. It will be a destabilizing factor. Because there is no such thing as the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine without sparking the possibility of a nuclear arms race." (FPCI, 2021)

Indonesia will be affected because all nuclear submarines and Australian military assets will pass through Indonesian territory to join its allies. "Indonesia expressed concern over the deal, warning that it could lead to an arms race. Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said they were deeply concerned about the continued arms race and power projection in the region and asked Canberra to maintain its commitment to regional peace and stability". (Star, 2021; Wikipedia, 2021)

The Indonesia Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) said the formation of the AUKUS alliance consisting of Australia-the United Kingdom-United States indicates a potential signal for increased escalation in the South China Sea (SCS). It also has an impact on Indonesia. The direct impact can be in the form of many military forces from non-claimant countries in the SCS. Then, it also can increase the dynamics of international relations related to the SCS. The direct impact can be in the form of many military forces from non-claimant countries in the South China Sea. In addition, the contestation at sea will encourage the countries involved to increase their war capabilities, thereby increasing the potential for war to break out. Generally, conflicts between countries encourage nationalism, resulting in horizontal conflicts between people (Prakoso, 2021).

Based on the explanation above, this study aims to analyze Indonesia's best attitude in responding to the AUKUS trilateral defense pact because it impacts countries in the strategic environment of the South China Sea region (SCS), especially Indonesia as the closest neighbouring country.

## 2. Method

The research method in this study uses a fully qualitative approach. The type of data used in this research is secondary and comes from various scientific articles and related news and literature related to defense and security policies. In collecting data, researchers used library techniques to provide information about the balance of power

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situation of each country involved in the South China Sea conflict between China, the AUKUS alliance, Indonesia, and other indirectly involved countries. After conducting a literature study, the researcher tried to conclude Indonesia's position towards Australia, the United Kingdom, and United States alliances (AUKUS).

The approach used uses various political theories and international relations, including the theory of neorealism and free and active international political policies from Indonesia. The perspective of neorealism theory is used to analyze Indonesia's position on the dynamics that occur as a bridge for researchers to parse and analyze problems more deeply. Deductive research is an option to find a constellation of defense and security policy factors that encourage and explain Indonesia's position and attitude at the regional and global levels (Arikunto, 2010). (Perdana et al., 2021).

### 3. Results

#### *Neorealism Theory and Security Dilemma*

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The theory of neorealism was born from the overhaul of classical realist thoughts such as E.H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Neorealism has the basis that the international structure is essentially anarchy that does not have a clear supranational power in governing countries. Coupled with changes in the goals of each country that are never fixed (Mearsheimer, 2007), the rationale for the current world condition is that a country can never predict the will of another country in the future. Lack of trust in other countries causes each country to be busy strengthening their country's security to survive. Increasing the security of each country is hoped to prevent the desire to dominate the territory of other countries and create a balance of power. Although including the development of the theory of realism, neorealism has several differences from one another. Realists argue that cooperation between countries is like a figment because each country is busy only to fulfill its power domestically. In contrast, neorealism does not deny that there are opportunities for inter-state cooperation to occur. However, they view that cooperating states will always seek to maximize their relative power and maintain their autonomy (Jackson & Sorensen, 2013). Neorealism views communication between countries through an anarchic international system, which means an international system that does not have a leader and does not have regulations to regulate the actions of a country. With an anarchic international system, governmental and non-governmental actors must be able to adapt to all conditions. Due to the absence of a rule in the international system, actors are more concerned with the survival of their own country and focus on improving security. (Tawakal, 2022)

The concept of a security dilemma can be interpreted as a phenomenon of action and reaction between several countries where the actions of a country to increase its security will impact or be considered to weaken the security of other countries (Jervis, 1978). Balance of power can occur if the balance between offense and defense can be met. If offense dominates, the security dilemma will increase, which will result in other countries competing to improve the security of their respective countries or often called the arms race. However, an arms race can be prevented if the defense is more dominant than the offense (Glaser & Kauffman, 1998). The offensive-defense theory provides a new view of international politics which believes that war can be prevented when a country's defense power is considered to outperform the offense power of the country around its region. The compatibility or incompatibility of ideologies between countries can lead to misunderstandings that lead to conflict. It is prone to occur in relations between countries. The actors will try to prevent the conflict by increasing state security. In this case, it is included in the security dilemma between countries, which often leads to the occurrence of an arms race (Roe, 1999). This incident is based on fear and mutual trust that another country will pose a threat to its national security one day. Moreover, when the country feels the need to increase the security of their country in order to prevent conflict. (Tawakal, 2022)

Each actor at the international level will mutually achieve their respective national interests so that the strategic environment becomes an external factor that influences the defense and security policy. The strategic environment can be scanned through various dimensions. Bandoro stated the dimensions of security, economy, politics, social, and . The nature of the strategic environment is challenging because of the consequences of unique decisions and performance requirements. According to Owen Jacobs, the strategic environment has VUCA characteristics: volatile, full of uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Volatility is the nature of the strategic environment that is changing so rapidly. When the nature of change so quickly gives birth to the nature of uncertainty in the strategic environment. The relationship between elements in the strategic environment is complex. Due to ambiguity, planning and decision-making are becoming increasingly difficult in a strategic environment (Putra & Hakim, 2016). (Pangestu et al., 2021)

#### *Geographical Conditions of Indonesia* (Perdana et al., 2021)

Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, by the provisions of the United Nations Convention On The Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982), has provided three sea routes: Through the Indian Ocean-Sunda Strait-South China Sea; Through the Makassar Strait-Lombok Strait; and Through the Indian Ocean - Banda Sea - Maluku Sea - Pacific

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Ocean. Indonesian waters act as a world link between East Asia, the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, Africa, and Europe. Indonesia's position is also a crossing point between the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, the Asian continent, and Australia; even in the ASEAN region, two-thirds of its territory is Indonesian waters (Yanti & Aviolita, 2020). Because the economic interests of the West and the East pass through Indonesian waters, it is fitting for Indonesia to become a major player in the core area of world maritime traffic.

Through the ratification of the UNCLOS agreement, the Indonesian Republic Government also converted the pact with Law No. 17 of 1985. Which later gave birth to the International Law of the Sea in 1994. Through this regulation, Indonesia has the right to have sovereign rights in utilizing natural resources that enter Indonesia's marine area. Article 49 of the 1982 UNCLOS states that an archipelagic state's sovereignty includes the waters enclosed by the baseline and the airspace above it and the seabed and land below it. 4

Bueger in Prasetyo et al. (2021) convey a defense perspective in seeing the condition of Indonesia as an archipelagic state that has the potential to get threats from strategic funnels (choke points control). Because of that, logically, the ocean media becomes the centre of gravity of Indonesia's defense which can expressly realize complete sea control. The condition of Indonesian waters, both in terms of geopolitics, geostrategy, and economy, has a vital role for countries in the Asia Pacific region and, more broadly, globally. This condition requires Indonesia to be able to represent its maritime defenses through the role of the Indonesian Army (TNI), which is ready to tackle various possibilities in chokepoints control.

The dynamics in the international region provide a reaction for each country in taking their respective policies. The neorealism perspective appears to have occurred in a phenomenon of the AUKUS alliance in a series of conflicts in the South China Sea, both in Indonesia, Australia, China, and other countries involved and regional countries around them. Indonesia's position in the South China Sea conflict is also based on national interests, the principle of being free and active, trying to be as neutral as possible, and helping to maintain peace without being squeezed between the great powers.

If viewed from the perspective of neorealism, Indonesia is required to have a more realistic view that the strength of a country is the accumulation of all resources that can influence and control other countries in the international system. It includes geographical conditions, Indonesia's military posture, and what political steps Indonesia must take. As a country that adheres to a free and active foreign policy and has a national interest, Indonesia must be able to play its position in responding to the AUKUS Alliance and China.

Indonesia has a vital role in geopolitics, geostrategy, and economy. Not only for countries in the Asia Pacific region but also globally more broadly. This condition requires Indonesia to represent its maritime defenses through the role of the TNI, which is ready to tackle various possibilities in chokepoints control. A proportional and modern Indonesian military posture continues to be pursued through the Minimum Essential Force (MEF). Indonesia's achievement in the MEF is still far from the target set. It shows that the modernization of the defense equipment system has not been maximized to deal with dynamics and conflicts in the defense sector in the international environment.

Therefore, Indonesia is obliged to take a strategic political position and attitude in responding to the presence of the AUKUS Alliance. Indonesia is also expected to be able to diplomacy and embrace ASEAN countries to produce a joint statement that could limit the AUKUS alliance to create a controversial nuclear-powered submarine. The principle of freedom and activity is a limitation for Indonesia not to be biased towards one party because the bias that is born will certainly damage Indonesia's strategic order and conflict with national interests. (Perdana et al., 2021)

#### 10 *Indonesia as the World Maritime Axis*

The World Maritime Axis is based on Indonesia's awareness of a shift in the world's geo-economic centre of gravity to the east. It looks at the geographical condition of Indonesia, which is between the continents of Asia and Australia, the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the Southeast Asia region. In addition, as a country in the "middle" of the road, Indonesia has 4 (four) of the ten most strategic locations globally, namely the Malacca Strait, Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait, and the Makassar Strait (Inkindo Jakarta, 2016). These four locations have the potential to become centres of world industrial, trade, and maritime activities. Therefore, Indonesia has great potential to become the World Maritime Axis. It realizes its ambition as a maritime axis, and there are five main pillars that Indonesia needs to do (Portal, 2019). The five pillars are maritime culture, maritime economy, maritime connectivity, maritime diplomacy, and maritime security. When viewed from the contents of the five pillars, it can say that the World Maritime Axis Doctrine is a real strategy for realizing Dynamic Equilibrium. (Pangestu et al., 2021) 36

To respond to the conflictual tendencies in the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesia initiated a concept called Dynamic Equilibrium due to the presence of two new powers. The Natalegawa Doctrine has been officially used by Indonesia since 2011, as stated in the annual statement speech of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (Ministry R.I., 2011). Indonesia Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa (President Soesilo Bambang

Yudhoyono era) issued a dynamic equilibrium policy doctrine. The doctrine of dynamic equilibrium can be said to be a free and active principle raised to the regional level. Natalegawa defines "Dynamic Equilibrium" as harmony in cooperation between countries that interact peacefully and create a sense of mutual benefit without a single dominant power in the region (Sutiono et al., 2019). Natalegawa stated, "Dynamic equilibrium is a condition in which there is no single dominant power in the region. Not because of political blocs but rather due to a new type of international relations emphasizing mutual security, common prosperity, and joint stability" (Ministry R.I., 2011). He describes three challenges faced in the Indo-Pacific region to achieve peace and stability: First, there is a trust deficit; second, there are still unresolved territorial claims; and Third, managing the impact of changes in the Indo-Pacific region (Natalegawa, 2013). (Pangestu et al., 2021)

#### *Indonesia's Factual Position*

Before analyzing further, it is necessary to know in advance Indonesia's factual position towards AUKUS and China where (Putro, 2021):

- A few days before the AUKUS trilateral defense pact was agreed upon, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto and Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi held a bilateral meeting. The meeting with the Australian Minister of Defense (Peter Dutton) and the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs (Marise Payne) in Jakarta on September 9, 2021. During the meeting, Indonesia and Australia agreed on several points of cooperation in the military sector. Namely the signing of the MoU on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, the MoU on Cyber Cooperation and Emerging Cyber Technology, and an agreement to conduct joint exercises between the TNI and the Australian Defense Force (ADF). In addition, Australia also donated 15 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) tactical vehicles for the TNI.
- After the meeting, on September 16, 2021, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto attended Defense and Security Equipment International, a defense industry exhibition held in London, England. After attending the exhibition, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto then held a bilateral meeting with the Secretary of State for Defense, Ben Wallace. During the bilateral meeting, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto and Ben Wallace agreed on a license to manufacture British battleships in Indonesia, namely the Arrowhead 140 frigate, which PT. PAL plans to produce two ships in Surabaya and is targeted for completion in 2026.
- Previously, Indonesia agreed to increase military and maritime security cooperation activities with the US on October 19, 2020, through a bilateral agreement between Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto and US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper.

Through the cooperation in the military sector agreed upon by Indonesia with Australia and the United Kingdom, Indonesia now has a good and strategic military relationship with the AUKUS country. On the other hand, military relations between Indonesia and China are in a bad state due to the dispute over the ownership of the North Natuna Sea. China has also claimed unilaterally part of its territory through the nine-dashed line. (Putro, 2021)

#### *ASEAN Attitude*

Since China launched its aggressiveness in the South China Sea (SCS), ASEAN countries have never actually had the same attitude towards SCS conflicts because each country has its interests. As the disputing states, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia have taken a stand against China nine-dash line. However, Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia show a passive attitude towards China. It is because Brunei Darussalam and Cambodia have economic dependence on China. On the other hand, a similar background underlies the attitude of the Philippines, which has close ties to the US. Therefore, ASEAN's joint attitude and multilateralism in responding to tensions between AUKUS and China are difficult to realize because ASEAN countries have their preferences and national interests. Indonesia can play an active role through multilateralism and ASEAN by having a common attitude to call for regional stability, security, and peace, especially because ASEAN is one of the important actors in the Indo-Pacific geographically between China and Australia. However, in this case, ASEAN multilateralism is likely to be difficult to realize, considering that ASEAN countries tend to have different attitudes. (Putro, 2021).

For example, regarding the AUKUS trilateral defense pact agreement, the Philippines became an ASEAN country that has supported the AUKUS agreement. "The Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Teodoro Locsin, on September 21, 2021, revealed that Asean member countries do not have the military power to maintain peace and security in Southeast Asia". The Philippines' attitude is understandable, considering that the Philippines is a longtime ally of the US. In addition, the Philippines is one of the ASEAN countries in the SCS conflict whose territory is claimed by China the most, precisely in the Spratly Islands. (Anadolu, 2021)

#### Indonesian Political Attitude

ASEAN has become divided over Australia's nuclear-powered submarine program together with the AUKUS Alliance. The Philippines supported, while Malaysia watched, and Indonesia arguably gave the strongest rejection. Many questions arise in response to Indonesia's political stance. Apart from geographical proximity, a historical site might make these two countries intimate at a dinner table, but both keep a knife at their waist. There have been several bilateral events or conflicts in the diplomatic realm between Indonesia and Australia in recent years. Responding to this, it becomes a challenge for Indonesia to continue to play an active role in the escalation of tensions between AUKUS and China, which can lead to military conflict and even nuclear war in the Indo-Pacific region. As a country that adheres to a free and active foreign policy, Indonesia must be able to play its position, namely (Perdana et al., 2021):

- First, Indonesia must be fully committed to standing as a neutral country, not leaning left or right. Indonesia must be able to become a "bridge" from potential future conflicts that occur both in the north (South China Sea) and in the south (Nuclear Powered Submarines).
- Second, as one of the founders of ASEAN, Indonesia ideally can appear as a leader to then lobby countries in ASEAN. Indonesia must be able to move its diplomacy and convince ASEAN countries. To produce a joint statement that states that ASEAN collectively regrets and rejects the existence of the Australian military's nuclear-powered submarine program because it is feared that it will worsen the situation in the region.
- Third, if diplomatic steps in ASEAN are deadlocked, Indonesia must pay special attention to its defense budget sector. Thus, it is hoped that Indonesia will have a stronger influence and position.

Indonesia is not taking sides or choosing one over the other because of deep distrust. "Indonesia does not believe one great power is inherently superior economically, militarily, or morally. It is also supported throughout Indonesia's strategic history, namely that every major power has undermined Indonesia's domestic order or acted contrary to its strategic interests. With this experience, Indonesia has developed a vision of regional order focused on maintaining stability and legitimacy in the region, formulating strategies, and rejecting the hegemony of great powers in the region". These goals support Indonesia's foreign policy, most of which still has a negative view of regional dynamics. While such evasion strategies have worked well in Jakarta, they are no longer suitable for the new era of great power competition in the Indo-Pacific. (Laksmiana, 2021)

#### 4. Discussion

##### Implementation of a Free and Active Foreign Policy (Putro, 2021)

The free-active principle is a basic doctrine in viewing Indonesia's foreign policy. Mohammad Hatta conveyed this in his speech entitled "Paddling Between Two Corals" at the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) on September 2, 1948. Indonesia's foreign policy must be active, not something that is expected in passive attitudes and actions. Indonesia must be able to become a subject that can determine its policies. Active here is an activity that shapes Indonesia to participate in international activities that lead to establishing a world order where it has three basic elements, namely independence, eternal peace, and social justice. Meanwhile, freedom is the freedom to enter into relations with any country to be free to determine their attitudes and decisions on global problems according to their respective values and benefits without binding themselves to a bloc. The principle of free and active was chosen to reject the demands of the left-wing of the Soviet Union and, on the other hand, the United States (US). With current conditions based on these principles, Indonesia will not take sides in any rivalry between the great powers, including the US and China in the Indo-Pacific. (Pangestu et al., 2021)

Indonesia's position in the South China Sea conflict is based on national interests, which involve the principle of free and active, which is held by trying to be as neutral as possible. According to Morgenthau, "National interest is the minimum ability of a country to protect and maintain political, military, and cultural identity from interference by other countries. The national interest of a country is not only influenced by internal conditions but also by the external environment" (Morgenthau, 1948). Nuechterlein defines national interest as a need and desire of one country about other countries from the external environment (Nuechterlein, 1976). There are several types of national interests; Nuechterlin said there are at least four national interests, namely the interests of defense, economy, international order, and ideology. Meanwhile, Sondermann explained that the national interest is related to matters in foreign policy, which will later become the country's attitude in responding to an international issue (Sondermann, 1960). (Pangestu et al., 2021)

As such a strategic country in its position and role in the South China Sea conflict, Indonesia needs to determine and examine the dynamics. However, some parties view that ongoing dialogue efforts by the ASEAN countries in dispute will be useless because the Chinese government does not recognize the 1982 UNCLOS. In the case of the AUKUS alliance, Indonesia is trying its best to avoid affiliation with the alliance to adhere to the principles of foreign policy consistently. As an ASEAN member, Indonesia is expected to lead ASEAN through dialogue steps with the Chinese government. However, the concentration of Indonesia's diplomacy can be "split"

due to the increasing tension in the Natuna Sea due to the presence of the Chinese Coast Guard. Indonesia has always prioritized placing itself as the epicentre in maintaining regional stability without having to reduce bilateral relations with America and China (Hamilton-Hart & McRae, 2015). Neorealist thinkers such as Mearsheimer say that international politics is not always converted through real war but also turns to the elements of security and defense competition (Fitryasa, 2011). (Perdana et al., 2021)

In responding to the difficulty of realizing a common attitude and ASEAN multilateralism, Indonesia needs to have its attitude in responding to the situation in the Indo-Pacific region based on the principle of a free and active foreign policy that Indonesia has so far adopted. However, a free and active foreign policy principle cannot be interpreted as neutrality without a clear attitude. Many parties claim that the tension between AUKUS and China can become an arms race with the potential to continue to grow, leading to a second edition of the cold war, especially because of the possession of nuclear weapons by both parties. Indonesia needs to respond to this as a warning signal to the prospects for security in the Indo-Pacific region. The presence of China and America as the two "big players" in the Indo-Pacific region will create satellite countries called proxies. Indonesia has close military relations with AUKUS countries and is technically in conflict with China in the South China Sea. It has great potential to side with AUKUS and become AUKUS's proxy, supported by Indonesia's recent diplomatic gestures, which tend to favour AUKUS. (Putro, 2021)

Regarding the principle of a free and active foreign policy, Indonesia needs to have an attitude that is by these principles but is oriented toward the national interest. Indonesia's position, which is involved in the SCS conflict and is in the midst of a vortex of tension and potential military conflict between AUKUS and SCS, makes Indonesia in the future unable to avoid the impact that tensions between the two parties can have. Therefore, the Indonesian government should not be neutral without acting but should be careful in making foreign policies that can certainly benefit Indonesia. If viewed from a profit perspective, Indonesia's proximity to the AUKUS countries in the military sector will benefit Indonesia in modernizing the TNI's defense equipment. Although this closeness makes Indonesia seem inclined to side with AUKUS and not carry out a free and active foreign policy, this choice is a rational choice for Indonesia. Considering that currently, Indonesia is still involved in a dispute in the North Natuna Sea with China as part of the SCS conflict, thus modernizing it. Against defense equipment and other defense elements is an important matter that needs the attention of the Government of Indonesia. A free and active foreign policy cannot be interpreted as neutrality without a clear attitude. So proximity to AUKUS can be interpreted as a political stance oriented toward national interests in the defense sector, not as an open partiality to one or another. One party, as the Philippines did, so that Indonesia does not label itself as a proxy for either party, both AUKUS, and China. Indonesia's proximity to AUKUS in the defense sector can go hand in hand with Indonesia's and China's current economic proximity. Indonesia will remain in a favourable bargaining position for economic cooperation in the future, considering that economic growth and development are one of the main programs. Government. (Putro, 2021)

In this case, Indonesia can take advantage of the two conflicting parties in the defense and economic fields simultaneously. It is the expression "rowing between two rocks," the main principle of a free and active foreign policy coined by Vice President Mohammad Hatta on September 2, 1948. Indonesia's attitude towards AUKUS and China can be an affirmation that foreign policy is indeed a foreign policy. Free and active is still relevant to the development of international politics, which is far different from the previous cold war era because it can still be applied with an orientation to Indonesia's national interests. The Indonesian government needs to take diplomatic steps by conducting intense communication and embracing parties at the center of the conflict, both AUKUS, China, and even ASEAN, while maintaining stability, security, and peace in the Indo-Pacific region and a commitment to implementing the prevention of nuclear war as the main narrative. It will become important in policymaking by the Government of Indonesia in the future. In this case, the main objective of Indonesia's foreign policy is oriented toward the national interest. In practice, it still shows an image of Indonesia that is not biased or leans more towards one particular party. (Putro, 2021)

#### *Indonesia's Strategy toward ASEAN*

The tension between AUKUS and China provides a great opportunity for Indonesia to prioritize the ASEAN Spirit to play a role in balancing conflicting forces. The impact of conflict, if it becomes an open war, the impact of conflict will eventually be felt by Indonesia and all ASEAN members in the Regional Region. A united ASEAN led by Indonesia becomes the best chance to defuse the tension that is currently going on. (Prakoso, 2021)

Indonesia must maintain and promote a free and active foreign policy. Indonesia will become the Chair of ASEAN in 2023, providing an opportunity and must be able to play a role in the Regional Region. In responding to the formation of AUKUS, it prioritizes the togetherness of ASEAN countries. Prioritizing the interests of ASEAN reduces the interests of only certain countries. Indonesia and ASEAN maintain and promote The Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (SEANWFZ) or the Bangkok Treaty of 1995. The Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone or the Bangkok Treaty, commonly abbreviated as SEANWFZ. It is an agreement

between Southeast Asian countries consisting of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam to secure the ASEAN region from nuclear. (Prakoso, 2021)

It is prioritizing the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. The ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific is an affirmation of ASEAN's position in maintaining peace, security, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, which includes the Asia Pacific and Indian Oceans. This AOIP puts forward an open and inclusive approach to dialogue and cooperation in ASEAN priority areas, namely maritime, economics, connectivity, and the achievement of the SDGs, making ASEAN a bargaining chip from the interests of countries outside the region with interests in the ASEAN region. (Prakoso, 2021; Pangestu et al., 2021)

After carrying out a series of processes, diplomacy, and negotiations on organizational dynamics, the Indo-Pacific concept of Indonesia was finally trusted and approved by ASEAN. ASEAN adopted the concept, so it was named the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, agreed at the ASEAN Summit in Bangkok on June 22, 2019. The agreement shows that Indonesia's diplomatic strategy in conveying a view has been successful. It is important for us that Indonesia has a central role in maintaining regional stability, world peace, and maintaining the integrity of ASEAN. (Pangestu et al., 2021)

## 5. Conclusion

In establishing the AUKUS Pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, which is increasingly heating the Indo-Pacific region, especially with China, Indonesia must be able to diplomacy and place itself in the best position between the two great powers. With Indonesia's free and active politics, then:

- Indonesia should show the direction and implementation of foreign relations that respect sovereignty and independence in determining Indonesia's domestic and foreign policies.
- Indonesia should be able to play the role and position. It should be able to place it in the competition for influence between the United States and China in the Asia Pacific. Not take sides or enter the bloc of the two competing countries.
- Indonesia can increase economic benefits that encourage increased investment and trade from both the United States and China.

The increasing competition for influence in the Asia Pacific between the United States and China should not reduce or change Indonesia's free and active foreign policy. The position must prove that Indonesia is not trapped in the power of China or the United States without compromising Indonesia's integrity and independence to avoid the tug of war of interest. If they are not good at maintaining the same attitude and distance, they will place Indonesia in the block or control of the United States and China. The trade, investment and economic relations that continue to increase between Indonesia and the United States and China are the main consideration factors for Indonesia to maintain good relations with the two countries competing for hegemony in the Asia and Pacific region.

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