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The development of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific region and its influence on Indonesia's policy as a global maritime fulcrum

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Abstract: The trilateral defense and security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States has strong impact to the security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific area. This agreement entails a strengthened alliance between Australia and enhanced military collaboration with the United States and the United Kingdom resulting in regional volatility. This paper aims to examine the AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States Partnership) agreement and the resulting ensuing instability in the Indo-Pacific region, specifically from Indonesia's perspective. The focus of the research is on the interplay between Indonesia's diplomacy capability and the military functions of the Indonesian Navy as security policy. This study employs a qualitative approach to delve into in-depth insights into the evolution of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific region, which triggered a series of responses from many countries subsequent to the announcement of the establishment of the AUKUS Defense Pact. The AUKUS establishment simply reinforces the notion that geopolitical tensions are pulling the area apart. The influence of the AUKUS-China war can jeopardize regional stability since the US and China continuously demonstrate the supremacy of their armaments in order to dissuade one another. The AUKUS-China contest has had a highly adverse impact on Indonesia. This article argues that the Indonesian Navy's diplomatic prowess is crucial because it has the potential to play a big influence in the Indo-Pacific region's international political dynamics concerning the South China Sea. Furthermore, the Indonesian Navy must proactively prepare for potential armed conflicts in Indonesian territorial seas by developing a comprehensive maritime policy during times of peace, leveraging its geographical advantages.

Keywords: AUKUS; security policy; global maritime fulcrum; Indo-Pacific; Indonesia

1. Introduction

The emergence of AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States Partnership) has undoubtedly garnered interest from nations in the Indo-Pacific region, most notably China. China's current military and economic dominance in the Indo-Pacific area makes AUKUS a mechanism to distribute power in the region. China has highlighted the fact that the AUKUS agreement is a signal from Washington to fend off China's military development in the Indo-Pacific region. However, this agreement has surprised not only China, but also France, New Zealand, the European Union, and a number of Southeast Asian nations. These countries are concerned about infringement of the principle of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons because one of the terms of the cooperation is that the US and UK will assist Australia in acquiring nuclear submarines, cooperating in cyber capabilities, increasing artificial intelligence (AI) cooperations, cooperating in quantum technologies, and increasing underwater capabilities (BBC News, 2021).

The terminology of Indo-Pacific which now has taken center stage in diplomatic

language and geostrategic thinking in the region's countries and beyond, nearly displacing the region's long-standing idea of Asia-Pacific. The term's origins may be traced back to the 1920s, but its recent resurgence was mostly influenced by the United States, in response to China's assertive ascent. In an attempt to emphasize US military presence in the area, the US renamed Pacific Command, its oldest and largest military command, to Indo-Pacific Command in 2018 (Jaknanihan, 2022). As depicted in the **Figure 1** below, Washington's discourse in the Indo-Pacific area, which combines geographical space with measures largely aimed at countering China, ultimately leads to the isolation rather than the unity of regional nations. The establishment of the trilateral defense and security pact between Australia, United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) has made a major impact on the security landscape in the Indo-Pacific region. The pact entails a strengthened alliance between Australia, US and UK, increased military collaboration, along with an expanded role in Asian security pertaining to the China-US conflict. This arrangement increases UK's and Australia's support for the United States over China (Risman, 2023).



Figure 1. Indo-Pacific region, 2022.

This condition will have an impact on maritime and land resource exploitation, diplomatic military shipping, and the movement of commodities and people. The navy is tasked with safeguarding commercial, diplomatic, and military entry into critical regions, including Western Europe, East Asia, and South Asia, in accordance with strategic developments (ASEAN, 2023). The navy must exercise its ability to control physical space. They must, in particular, exercise control over the relationships between production, distribution, and consumption in the economic geography. Navies must protect coastal economic hubs and seaports where goods are loaded onto ships and transported through sea lanes. The navy exists to achieve these objectives, which are classified as military, diplomatic, and policing (Booth, 2015). Due to this context, this study focuses on the diplomatic and military roles of the Indonesian Navy in coping with the dynamics of AUKUS development in the Indo-Pacific.

Relations between AUKUS three allies and China are already at a historical low, and the agreement, which does not mention China by name but is widely interpreted as a response to its expansionism in the South China Sea and hostility toward Taiwan. Several nations, including Indonesia, are concerned that the content of this arrangement could spark an arms race and potentially lead to a nuclear war with China. The AUKUS trilateral military pact is thought to be a response to China's aggression

in the South China Sea conflict. This condition has the potential to produce security instability in the Indo-Pacific area since it could lead to open military conflict, particularly nuclear war, resulting in huge losses to Indo-Pacific security and even global peace. Indonesia's geographic placement as a neighboring country to Australia places it squarely in the midst of a conflict. Abdul Kadir Jailani, Director General of Asia-Pacific and Africa of Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, stressed the need of Indonesia's preparedness to deal with regional geopolitical changes. Because acquiring a nuclear-powered submarine may most likely start a nuclear arms race (Delanova, 2021).

Indonesia's Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto and Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi met with Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Marise Payne on 9 September 2021, in Jakarta, and agreed on key military cooperation areas. The arrangement is specified in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, the MoU on Cyber Cooperation and Emerging Cyber Technology, and a collaborative training agreement between the Indonesia's Military and the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The Indonesian Minister of Defense also met with the British Secretary of State for Defense, Ben Wallace, which resulted in a license agreement to produce British combat ships in Indonesia, specifically the Arrowhead 140 frigate-class combat ship, which is scheduled to be built in two ships by PT PAL in Surabaya and completed in 2026. Indonesia's varied military alliances are an endeavor to maintain an active position in the Indo-Pacific area in the face of rising tensions between AUKUS and the PRC, which could escalate to military conflict and even nuclear war at any time (Humas, 2021).

Indonesia will undoubtedly be affected by both this defense treaty and the ongoing dispute between the great powers. Obviously, the three AUKUS countries do not acknowledge that the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific Region exists for any other reason than to bolster the military resilience of member states. However, the combining of two countries with nuclear submarines to assist one country, that is Australia, in acquiring nuclear submarines is concerning for other countries in the region. This nuclear submarine possesses numerous benefits, such as limitless exploration capabilities, stealthy detection, the ability to attain speeds of 55 km/h and even higher while diving, a cruising speed of 38–47 km/h, a power of 210 MW that does not require recharging for the next 30 years, a crew of 15 individuals and 117 enlisted personnel, combat capabilities, and intelligence operations (Kuper, 2020).

This research also explores how the development of nuclear-powered submarines through the AUKUS trilateral defense pact has received a lot of comments and highlights from many countries, such as China, France, and Russia, who in essence state that the AUKUS trilateral defense pact is an act of provocation that can undermine the stability and security of the Indo-Pacific region, carrying cold war-era sentiment, intensifying the arm race, and turning the Indo-Pacific region into a nuclear zone (Mao, 2021).

In reaction to Australia's decision to buy nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS, Indonesia has reasonable concerns about the submarines (Humas, 2021). Indonesia is one of the countries that has expressed alarm about a potentially unavoidable arms race. The objective of this paper is to examine the diplomatic and military responsibilities of the Indonesian Navy in relation to the security situation and

consequences for Indo-Pacific nations resulting from the formation of AUKUS. It also seeks to determine how the Indonesian government, which is the central figure in this analysis, ought to and will develop security policies to such changes.

Given the history of diplomatic ties between Indonesia and Australia (Humas, 2021), Indonesia must exercise greater caution in responding to the Australian government's intention to build a nuclear-powered submarine. In accordance with the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TOC), Indonesia recollects the right to urge Australia to uphold its commitment to the agreement or the principle of nuclear non-proliferation, as well as to the maintenance of regional peace, stability, and security (Cabinet Secretary of Republic of Indonesia, 2021). Indonesia is situated directly adjacent to Australia, which increases the likelihood of direct or indirect consequences; escalating tensions in the region could endanger Indonesia's stability; Indonesia could also become entangled in the rivalry and tensions between the great powers; and Indonesia's proximity to Australia further complicates the matter. Consequently, Indonesia must proactively forecast the evolution of the dynamics within the AUKUS.

Reviewing the cooperation agreement within the AUKUS defense accord in retrospect reveals that it predominates in the expansion of maritime capabilities. Indonesia, as an archipelagic country surrounded by sea for the majority of its territory, is obligated to maintain maritime security and sovereignty in the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), which is governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), namely 200 miles of its coastline. As a result, the Indonesian Navy, as the authority in protecting the security and sovereignty of Indonesia's oceans, plays an essential role. Nevertheless, according to Richard Harding, the effectiveness of naval power is significantly influenced by factors such as financial resources, infrastructure, political and naval decision-making, tangible quality and quantity, maritime resources, ships, naval officers, corps commander, and infrastructure (Harding, 2004). In line with Mahan (2015), sea power can be further categorized into six components: physical confirmation, population, national character, geographical location, and size of the population. This is intriguing to the researchers since sea power is seen not just in the military at sea, but also in non-military areas such as politics, economy, society, and cultural. Therefore, researchers are driven to undertake an examination that identifies components of domestic maritime capability and devises strategies to optimize their application in safeguarding the security and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia amidst the evolving dynamics of the AUKUS.

Peacetime requires the nation to devise and construct a defense posture that includes the development of a fleet force capable of competing in a balanced environment; furthermore, the nation may construct a fleet force in accordance with the greatest threat the enemy may face. The maritime strategy can provide a framework for the use of naval forces in both peacetime and warfare, which is carried out on a constant basis in accordance with the country's grand and military strategies (Madutharanga and Timur, 2023). This tactic may be offensive, defensive, or a combination of the two. Thus, it is critical to integrate this component in the definition of naval and marine strategy. The idea that the maritime strategy governs various monitoring of naval activities in peacetime, during naval operations, and during

wartime (Strachan, 2007).

2. Materials and methods

The AUKUS trilateral pact, involving Australia, UK, and the US, is a significant issue within the security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific area that demands attention. The accord, which primarily addressed defense and security matters, had a substantial influence on the stability and unpredictability of the region. Australia, along with the United Kingdom and the United States, constitutes an alliance that has the capacity to alter the security dynamics in the South Pacific region. This study seeks to examine the AUKUS agreement and its ramifications on the Indo-Pacific area, with particular focus on the Indonesian viewpoint. Indonesia, being geographically positioned between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, possesses a significant inclination towards comprehending security changes in its vicinity. The research will examine the interaction between Indonesian diplomacy and these developments, with a particular emphasis on the role of the Indonesian Navy in shaping security policy.

The study aimed to comprehend not only the military ramifications of AUKUS, but also the alterations in regional diplomatic dynamics and Indonesia's response to the tensions arising from AUKUS. This paper aims to enhance comprehension of how AUKUS influences security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region and its implications for Indonesia's interests as a significant participant in this regional context, with a particular focus on Indonesian diplomacy and security policy. This study examines the relationship between the AUKUS agreement and the consequent Indo-Pacific instability, particularly from Indonesia's standpoint. This article argues that the Indonesian Navy's diplomatic prowess is crucial because it has the potential to play a big influence in the Indo-Pacific region's international political dynamics concerning the establishment of AUKUS. Furthermore, the Indonesian Navy must proactively prepare for potential conflicts in Indonesian territorial seas by developing a comprehensive maritime policy during times of peace, leveraging its geographical advantages.

In this research using qualitative methods. This research uses qualitative methods to describe thing, people's behavior or situation at the certain place in detail and depth in narrative form (Bungin, 2020). The research carried out by researchers is phenomenal in nature so that it requires qualitative methods that can assist researchers in providing rich descriptions of phenomena and are able to encourage understanding of the role of diplomacy and the role of the navy in dealing with the development of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific. The data is then analyzed qualitatively using an inductive approach. The theory was utilized to create the data acquired through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The data acquisition, management, and analysis for this study adhere to a specific methodology. In general, data research is classified into three categories: in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Informants in this study focused on sources from ministries or institutions and stakeholders related to maritime security, such as the Headquarters of the Indonesian National Armed Forces, the Center of International Cooperation of Indonesian Armed Forces Headquarters, and the Republic of Indonesia Ship's officers, as well as incentives related to the fields studied by researchers and fully involved in AUKUS

assessment. Data analysis was performed during data collection. Given the volume, complexity, and complication of the data gathered from interviews, the field, and the results of documentation excavation, the researchers conducted data analysis in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification.

3. Results and discussion

Only six countries in the world now operate nuclear-powered submarines: the United States, United Kingdom, China, France, India, and Russia, all of which have civilian nuclear power businesses and nuclear weapons programs. Australia is projected to be ranked eighth. On 15 September 2021, Joe Biden, Boris Johnson, and Scott Morrison issued a joint statement announcing a “enhanced trilateral security partnership” known as AUKUS. Australia’s decision to join the aforementioned countries indicates a significant departure from this historical pattern. The AUKUS trilateral alliance stands for Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The major goal of establishing AUKUS is to expand military cooperation, which will increase security and stability in the Indo-Pacific area (Green, 2021). Its first ambition and significant project is to collaborate on nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy (Green, 2021). Beyond submarines, AUKUS intends to broaden its existing alliance structure, the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, into cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomy, quantum technology, underwater capabilities, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic, electronic warfare, innovation, and information sharing (Ward, 2021). AUKUS simply wins the technology fight against China by combining resources and connecting supply chains for science, industry, and defense.

The Australia-UK-US partnership joining AUKUS represents a changing world. In 2016, when Australia chose a diesel-electric design and France became the pilot project in the manufacture of its main deterrent weapon, at that time Australia did not consider nuclear submarines included in the selected option. That is because the Australian government and military leaders do not see the difficulty and complexity of the strategic environment for acquiring and operating nuclear submarines, and also because neither the US nor the UK would agree to Australia asking to share nuclear submarine technology. No government has shared this technology with any other partner since they entered the US and UK nuclear partnership in 1958.

By joining AUKUS, the partnership between Australia, the UK, and the US signifies a paradigm shift in world politics. When Australia chose a diesel-electric design in 2016 and France became the pilot project for the manufacturing of its principal deterrent weapon, nuclear submarines were not considered. That is because the Australian government and military officials are unaware of the difficulties and complexity of the strategic context for acquiring and operating nuclear submarines, and neither the US nor the UK would accede to Australia’s request to share nuclear submarine technology. Since embarking on the US and UK nuclear partnership in 1958, this technology has not been disclosed by any government to any other partner.

A factor that explains the shift in position of the three AUKUS nations is the genuine security challenges that the powerful and aggressive Chinese government, led by President Xi Jinping, faces on a global and Indo-Pacific scale. The Indo-Pacific military balance could change with AUKUS. China now faces a formidable new

defense alliance. Preventing potential conflicts in the region through the augmentation of military capabilities and impeding China's ascent to regional dominance are the focal points of this arrangement. The Chinese government also continues to invest in defense and technology in order to better equip and win conflicts. Xi also instructed the PLA (People's Liberation Army) to be "ready to attack at a moment's notice".

The phrase Indo-Pacific was originally used in academic settings such as oceanography and geopolitics. The philosophical foundations of the concept of "Indo-Pacific" originated in Weimar Germany and spread to Japan during the war (Li, 2022). Since the late 2010s, the term Indo-Pacific has become more commonly employed in geopolitical discourse. The contemporary United States played a significant role in driving the rise of the Indo-Pacific Region, which occurred against the context of China's aggressive expansion. In the anarchic world of international politics, Washington's Indo-Pacific discourse, which combines geographic space with strategy primarily aimed at China, only serves to isolate rather than unite regional nations, posing a significant risk of nuclear proliferation and undermining peace and regional stability. According to Wang Wenbin, Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, the US intends to promote regional prosperity, but provoking opposition and confrontation among regional countries has weakens the ASEAN-centered regional cooperation architecture that has been in place for years and poses a serious threat to work output (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2022).

The Indo-Pacific area serves as the recipient of 33% of US exports, acting as a catalyst for \$900 billion in foreign direct investment, which in turn generates a multitude of jobs dispersed over all 50 states of the US. The United States maintains a larger number of military personnel in the region than any other location outside of its continent. The Indo-Pacific region has received over one trillion dollars in foreign direct investment from the United States. Over the past five years, the United States has allocated a sum over seven billion dollars specifically towards renewable energy in the region (Blinken, 2021). The relevance of AUKUS lies in the heightened engagement of the United Kingdom in the Indo-Pacific area. The agreement will foster enhanced collaboration between the UK, Australia, and the United States in addressing issues pertaining to the Indo-Pacific region. It will also bolster interoperability with trusted allies. Under this agreement, UK will deliberately utilize its superior position to fulfill a crucial facilitating function without exhausting resources that may be allocated elsewhere. AUKUS represents a significant shift in US strategic thinking to reinforce its friends and redistribute its strength in the Indo-Pacific, as well as better integrate its allies into the supply chain and plan its industry to deal with an increasingly hostile China (Shoebridge, 2021).

Japan had officially declared its support for the initiative led by Washington, London and Canberra which saw the strengthening of such military relations as a complement to its agenda. India has been relatively less vocal, but sees all efforts to balance against China as in its interests too (Mohan, 2021). Malaysia describes AUKUS as a catalyst for a nuclear arms race in the Indo-Pacific region (Strangio, 2021). The establishment of AUKUS, with its development of a nuclear-powered submarine, caught South Korea off guard in multiple respects (Network, 2021). Initially, the ruling exposes the presence of US inconsistent principles. The US declined Seoul's appeal to exchange technology and highly enriched uranium for its

nuclear-powered submarines due to concerns regarding nuclear non-proliferation. However, the US made an exemption for Australia.

Furthermore, the United States has emphasized the unity of the alliance system. However, the establishment of AUKUS highlights the significance of the United Kingdom and Australia as allies, surpassing the importance of France and other nations. This hierarchical position has the potential to significantly weaken the fundamental principles of an alliance led by the United States. Furthermore, nuclear powered submarines are distinct from nuclear armed submarines, albeit they are built upon the military application of nuclear energy. Implementing such a decision would have significant adverse consequences for the spread of nuclear weapons, weakening the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework. This is because Japan, South Korea, and other countries in the region have the ability to submit a similar request for a nuclear-powered submarine. Ultimately, the decision made by the United States demonstrates the conventional equilibrium of power, rooted in strategic reasoning, that opposes China. This situation has negative implications for the regional power dynamics in the Asia-Pacific area, as it is speeding up the process of a new Cold War rather than slowing it down.

In the Five Eyes intelligence cooperation, the UK and Australia collaborate with Washington on technology and have jointly created systems, organizations, and procedures over many years to share intelligence collection responsibilities. Due to the fact that AUKUS will collaborate on highly classified intelligence technologies that Washington will only entrust to its closest intelligence allies, radical integration is only possible among Five Eyes partners. The AUKUS defense deal caused a stir both domestically and internationally after it was signed. Public support for nuclear weapons in Australia is lacking, and all political parties in the country have unequivocally rejected the idea as baseless. For certain individuals within the anti-nuclear movement, the AUKUS deal is perceived as the most significant menace to nuclear non-proliferation since the disintegration of North Korea. For Australia's environmentalists, floating Chernobyl will destroy the harbors of Australian cities.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty permits non-nuclear-weapon states to abstain from manufacturing enriched uranium for the purpose of powering naval reactors. Naval fuel can be composed of low-enriched uranium, with a concentration of less than 6% for the latest French nuclear submarines (Philippe, 2021). The transfer of US nuclear submarine technology/fuel has faced criticism from certain quarters, who view it as an instance of nuclear proliferation. In his critique published in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, researcher Sébastien Philippe expressed his disapproval of AUKUS and predicted a surge in the spread of extremely sensitive military nuclear technology in the near future. He also warned that a substantial amount of new nuclear material would be left inadequately safeguarded or completely unprotected by international measures (Philippe, 2021).

An unannounced secret agreement will invariably exist at each stage of the process of forming a defense treaty between nations. At each stage of establishing a military agreement, there will invariably be an underlying strategic purpose. Analogously, regarding AUKUS, there are questioning of the true purpose that led to the organization's founding. This information was just disclosed in Bob Woodward's renowned and alarming book titled *Fear: Trump in the White House* (Costa, 2018).

Additionally, AUKUS Agreement strengthens the United States' defense and intelligence relationship with Australia and UK while augmenting some of the existing multilateral security arrangements. By strengthening key US alliances in the region through the AUKUS agreement and other multilateral initiatives, the Biden Administration may seek to answer questions from regional partners about US's commitment and resilience in the Indo-Pacific. The United States and Australia were treaty allies under the 1951 alliance of Australia, New Zealand, and the United States and the United States and United Kingdom were members of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance. The United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom also, along with Canada and New Zealand, has been part of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing group since 1946. The United States joined Australia, Japan and India initially in 2007 and again in 2017 to form the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). Australia and the United Kingdom, together with Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore, are part of the 1971 Five Power Defense Arrangements.

The AUKUS pact is a significant collaboration in capability development that has made progress in defense and other important security capabilities and seeks to involve allies and close partners as appropriate. Some aspects that become the main points in AUKUS are (Mao, 2021):

- 1) Underwater capability. Through the AUKUS Undersea Robotics Autonomous Systems (AURAS) project, the three countries are collaborating on autonomous underwater vehicles, which will be a significant force multiplier for our maritime forces. Initial trials and experiments with this capability are planned for 2023.
- 2) Quantum technology. The AUKUS Quantum Arrangement (AQuA) will accelerate investment to deliver quantum capabilities generation after generation. It will have an initial focus on quantum technologies for positioning, navigation, and timing. Together, AUKUS will integrate emerging quantum technologies into trials and experiments over the next three years.
- 3) Artificial intelligence and autonomy. Trilateral cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy will provide critical support for future force capabilities, increasing the speed and accuracy of decision-making processes to maintain capability advantage and defend threats supported by AI. Early work is focused on accelerating the adoption of and increasing the resilience of autonomous and AI-enabled systems in contested environments.
- 4) Advanced cyber. Remember the importance of the cyber domain for advanced capabilities? AUKUS will be focusing the efforts on strengthening cyber capabilities, including protecting critical communications and operating systems.
- 5) Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities. AUKUS partners will work together to accelerate the development of advanced hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities.
- 6) Electronic warfare. The electromagnetic spectrum is increasingly contested. The three nations will work together to share an understanding of tools, techniques, and technologies to enable our troops to operate in a contested and degraded environment.
- 7) Technological innovation. The work of innovation aims to accelerate each company's defense innovation and learn from one another, including ways to more quickly integrate commercial technologies to solve warfare needs.

- 8) Share information. Expand and accelerate the sharing of sensitive information, including, as a priority, enabling workflows that support work in agreed-upon advanced capability areas.

The AUKUS core technology is at the forefront of scientific research and will provide the military with an unparalleled advantage. The submarine project is expected to work as a means of coercion to significantly drive this new collaboration. The extent to which Australia will receive the submarine's nuclear propulsion technology is still uncertain. However, it is highly likely that the Australian defense community will have access to other sophisticated submarine technology, such as sensors and data processing systems for enhancing maritime domain awareness as well as for tracking and evading enemy forces (Philippe and von Hippel, 2021). Nuclear-powered submarines have significant technical and operational advantages. They possess superior range, endurance, firepower, speed, and detection and evasion capabilities. The primary benefit of nuclear-powered submarines is their capacity to sustain extended periods of submersion without limitation. Their fuel has the capacity to endure for several months, necessitating resurfacing solely for the purpose of replenishing food or personnel requirements. Nuclear reactors enable them to achieve higher velocities by producing substantial amounts of energy, resulting in minimal noise emissions. This confers a substantial benefit in terms of offensive capabilities and the ability to detect and remain undetected. Their cruising speed ranges from 38 to 47 km/h. Conversely, diesel-powered electric motorized submarines must frequently emerge in order to recharge their batteries and replenish their oxygen supply, rendering them more conspicuous. Smaller diesel-electric submarines possess cruising speeds ranging from 10 to 27 km/h and are more cost-effective in terms of operation and maintenance (Mitchell, 2022).

4. Discussion

Examining Indonesia's response to AUKUS is noteworthy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, through the elucidation provided by the Director General for Asia Pacific and Africa, unequivocally asserted that Indonesia, as one of the prominent countries in the region, reminded Australia of its responsibility to uphold peace and security. Furthermore, Indonesia reiterated the imperative for other nations to consistently uphold and abide by international law. No additional information has been provided regarding the specific measures that Indonesia, the largest country in ASEAN, will undertake in response to the founding of AUKUS. Indonesia's attitudes and actions will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the attitudes and actions of other ASEAN member nations. ASEAN member countries are anticipating Indonesia's response to the establishment of a new military alliance known as AUKUS. That is, in summary, the current observation derived from the evolution of the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific Region. The escalating tensions in the South China Sea region and China's expanding dominance through technological advancements and weaponry may have played a significant role in the establishment of AUKUS.

Wilkins and Kim argue that the Indo-Pacific might be seen as a new mental construct that has emerged due to political and ideological factors, ultimately leading

to the development of a regional vision of security order (Kim, 2020). Indonesia has emerged as a prominent player in middle power diplomacy due to four primary factors. To begin with, remarkable functionalities: Indonesia holds the 16th position in terms of economic size and is the fourth most populous country globally. The economic potential of Indonesia is consistently expanding. Furthermore, despite various socioeconomic weaknesses, Indonesia demonstrates considerable resilience that clearly shows its aspirations as a substantial nation. This strength is derived from a rather balanced perspective on global affairs and is characteristic of a nation belonging to the middle-class category. Third, despite enacting a number of measures typical of middle-class countries, Indonesia has avoided taking a position that is pro-United States or pro-China. Hence, it might be regarded as a moderate nation that is 'doubtful' of such a dichotomous decision. Furthermore, Jakarta assumes the position of an unofficial influencer within ASEAN, serving as a potential influential force in the Indo-Pacific region and offering insights into the perspectives of various ASEAN nations (Abbondanza, 2022).

Indonesia's stance as a middle power nation practicing middle power diplomacy has a distinct influence on the AUKUS program. Countries in central regions, such as Indonesia, typically promote solutions that prioritize the active involvement of all key parties, thereby mitigating the likelihood of conflict escalation. Indonesia's approach to conducting middle-power diplomacy in the framework of AUKUS demonstrates a cautious awareness of the interests and power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia aims to ensure that the actions undertaken by AUKUS do not jeopardize regional stability or generate undesirable tensions. The concepts of national autonomy and supremacy can have a constructive impact on guaranteeing that every regional endeavor, including AUKUS, is aimed at objectives that are fair and advantageous to all participants, while giving priority to regional interests and security.

Numerous entities have asserted that the strained relations between AUKUS and China, exacerbated by both sides' nuclear arsenals, possess the capacity to escalate into an arms race that could potentially culminate in a resurgence of the Cold War. Indonesia should consider this as a cautionary sign regarding security prospects in the Indo-Pacific region, as the presence of China and the US, two major powers in the area, may lead to the emergence of satellite nations known as proxies. Indonesia maintains strong military ties with the AUKUS nations, which are engaged in a territorial dispute with China in the South China Sea. Indonesia's recent diplomatic efforts indicate a strong inclination to align with AUKUS and potentially serve as its proxy, showcasing significant potential in this regard.

According to a military observer from the Institute for Security and Strategic Studies (ISESS), Indonesia faces a variety of potential marine threats and challenges, which are consistent with the dynamics of the current strategic environment (Satriawan, 2022). Fahmi identified China and the United States' increased aggression in North Natuna waters as a potential concern. Fahmi also mentioned the AUKUS trilateral defense alliance, which includes Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States and aims to build nuclear-powered submarines. Fahmi contends that although being perceived as an endeavor to establish equilibrium of influence and stability within the region, the presence of AUKUS and the assertive nature of these influential nations may indeed incite friction and the intensification of war. The

ramifications of these dynamics encompass a range of perils to the autonomy, wholeness, and protection of Indonesia's marine domain. The dangers encompass possible assertions of sovereignty and control over Indonesian islands by foreign nations, along with unauthorized exploitation and utilization of marine areas by external entities, including both governments and businesses. Additionally, another peril involves the unauthorized or illicit transit of vessels through maritime routes and territorial waters. This encompasses dangers pertaining to the functioning of subaquatic monitoring apparatus, encompassing both military and non-military objectives (Ameliya, 2022).

Indonesia holds the 15th position in the Global Power Index ranking, indicating its significant military strength (Power, 2024). The calculation of the Power Index score involves the consideration of over 50 parameters, encompassing several areas such as military and financial might, logistical capacity, and geographical characteristics. Indonesia's military dominance has the capacity to serve as a diplomatic instrument in promoting regional peace and stability in the South China Sea, given the strategic and vital nature of this area for Indonesia and neighboring countries.

Indonesia has also opted to employ a middle-power diplomacy strategy in addressing the issues in the South China Sea. Indonesia's adoption of this method demonstrates its commitment to actively and constructively engage in conflict resolution, foster regional peace, and advance international collaboration. Indonesia acknowledges its significant role in addressing intricate matters in the South China Sea. Indonesia is actively engaged in ASEAN as a means to foster regional unity and address shared obstacles. Indonesia enhances its global diplomacy within the context of middle-power diplomacy by endorsing discussion and mediation as effective methods for resolving issues. Indonesia, as a member of ASEAN, serves as a mediator to alleviate tensions, foster conversation among the interested nations, and seek mutually agreeable resolutions. This strategy aligns with the tenets of middle-power diplomacy, which prioritizes playing a constructive role in resolving problems and fostering collaboration among nations.

Aside from that, Indonesia demonstrates its free-and-active foreign policy by claiming sovereignty and independence in managing resources in the South China Sea. Indonesia's non-claimant position in this conflict demonstrates a deliberate avoidance of aligning with certain foreign powers, therefore preserving its integrity and reputation as a dependable middle-power nation. Indonesia is actively strengthening its economic diplomacy and development cooperation with neighboring nations in the economic context. The objective of this move is twofold: to establish a favorable environment for collaboration and to mitigate the risk of economic discord, which has the potential to exacerbate the situation in the South China Sea. In addition to these measures, Indonesia aggressively advocates for the principles of peace, discussion, and collaboration through public diplomacy and the use of soft power. This endeavor is a component of a strategic plan aimed at altering worldwide perspectives on the dispute in the South China Sea and bolstering Indonesia's standing as a conscientious intermediary power on the global stage (Arif, 2020).

In relation to the principle of free-and-active foreign policy, Indonesia needs to have an attitude that is in accordance with these principles but oriented towards

national interests. Indonesia's position as involved in the South China Sea conflict and in the midst of a vortex of tension and potential military conflict between AUKUS and China means that in the future Indonesia cannot avoid the impact that tensions can cause between the two parties. Therefore, the Indonesian government should not be impartial without taking a stance, but should be careful in making foreign policies that can certainly benefit Indonesia. Indonesia needs to have its own stance in responding to the situation in the Indo-Pacific region based on the principle of free-and-active foreign policy that has so far been adhered to by Indonesia. Indonesia has an interest in contributing directly to efforts to resolve tensions between AUKUS and China, especially in the South China Sea in order to achieve regional stability, security and peace in Southeast Asia and Asia Pacific. One of the efforts to achieve this is to use military force that has been developed as a form of Indonesian diplomacy in this conflict.

Indonesia's choice to create partnerships with AUKUS members on a bilateral basis can be viewed as a strategic move due to the mini-lateral forum's robust framework for regional security collaborations, particularly in enhancing the capabilities of the Indonesian Navy. Notwithstanding the apprehensions voiced by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on its establishment, Jakarta has initiated a bilateral engagement with AUKUS members. The September 2021 meeting between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Indonesia and Australia, along with the Ministry of Defense, emphasized the determination of both nations to enhance their security collaboration, thereby reinforcing their dedication to China. In addition, the Indonesian Ministry of Defense has secured a deal to acquire the most recent Arrowhead 140 frigate design from UK. This was accompanied by a technology transfer licensing agreement between Babcock and PT PAL to construct two frigates in Surabaya (Indonesia, 2021).

Although profitable and can greatly increase Indonesia's leverage, a strategic partnership with AUKUS should not be miscalculated. Further ties with AUKUS could be seen by Beijing as "betrayal", as it is feared that Indonesia has violated its neutrality by joining a Western military alliance. This situation will increase China's negative view of Indonesia and further damage China-Indonesia economic relations. Even with its frequent territorial attacks, China is still Indonesia's most prominent trading partner and the two countries have decided to cooperate on strategic infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Therefore, Jakarta always strives to maintain a balanced relationship between China and the West with the principles of neutrality and a free-and-active foreign policy.

Considering the findings of research on the modernization of the navy's defense equipment and the establishment of an Indonesian Navy base in Natuna, it is crucial to examine the US's response to China following the signing of the AUKUS defense agreement. Additionally, the level of US influence in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly in the South China Sea, Taiwan's Formosa Strait, and the Pacific Ocean region, further motivates Indonesia to enhance its presence in the vicinity of the South China Sea. The AUKUS Agreement granted the United States unrestricted legitimacy to deploy US warships to the Pacific Ocean and the Formosa Taiwan Strait, on the grounds of safeguarding the "Indo-Pacific" region, defending the Taiwan Strait, and preserving international maritime traffic. China's growing influence in the South

China Sea is driven by its strategic goals. The presence of China in the South China Sea has the potential to incite a direct conflict due to its non-compliance with international law. This has garnered resistance from both other claimants to the South China Sea and the United States, which serves as China's primary competitor in the area. Cable (1994) asserts that the navy serves as a very versatile tool of diplomacy due to its adaptability, capable of being employed across a wide spectrum of approaches ranging from amicable to highly assertive. They can exploit the maritime domain to obtain access to locations that are inaccessible to other military forces.

In 1954, the Chinese Premier, Chou En-Lai, proposed an alternate definition, claiming that all diplomacy was a continuation of war by other means. Furthermore, Strategist Edward Luttwak devised a concept for suasion. Suasion is a phrase coined by Kissinger that pertains to the deliberate measures employed to convince others to comply with our desires or to deter them from engaging in unpleasant activities. Therefore, suasion can either be hidden, generating supportive or preventive outcomes by the use of deployment or regular action, or it can be intentional and arise from conscious attempts to elicit a specific response. Naval suasion pertains to the impacts generated by forces that are based on or related to the sea (Luttwak, 1979). Luttwak enhanced it further by employing targeted naval suasion.

With sea power and defense equipment elements that are properly fulfilled, Indonesia through the Indonesian Navy can have sufficient bargaining power to carry out naval diplomacy in the South China Sea conflict. The term naval diplomacy refers to the use of a country's naval power instruments, such as warships and other defense equipment in support of foreign policy and to carry out attacks or firing weapons. In addition, naval diplomacy through the navy can also be used to increase a country's influence in selecting options for cooperation offers. This type of diplomacy can even be used by demonstrating these powers as supporting elements, or powers that represent certain tasks given by the state to the navy (Booth, 2014). The Indonesian Navy can support political goals through cooperative diplomacy and the use of soft power, or it can support them through coercive naval diplomacy, which is often referred to as warship diplomacy. Although in recent years navies have increasingly focused on the role of soft power in war prevention; coercive diplomacy is still an effective way to use naval power to support foreign policy. The mobility, flexibility and combat potential of the navy remain effective instruments of foreign policy coercion. However, it is no longer possible to force a country to do its bidding simply by placing "a man-of-war off the coast". Furthermore, the importance of domestic and international public opinion must be considered before using naval power for coercion. Coercive diplomacy can reach tangible foreign policy goals; however, it required a mix of political, diplomatic and naval skills to succeed (Colomb, 2015).

Booth (2015) offers an analysis of the use of the navy in support of foreign policy. He placed a significant emphasis on naval flexibility in diplomatic roles. Ships, although designed for war, can fulfill a variety of roles that are different from land forces. John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) explained that our diplomacy means nothing if we do not have the will to support it as far as Corbett is concerned, the first function of the fleet is to support or hinder diplomatic efforts (Corbett, 2018). Mahan also stated that sea power resources are to increase the prestige, security and influence of a country. A country that has great power must be strong in the sea. Till quotes Nelson,

“I hate your pen-and-ink men; a fleet of British ships of war are the best negotiators in Europe”. The opposite of Nelson’s statement above is also true, that being weak at sea puts you in political and strategic danger both at home and abroad (Mahan, 2018).

This research succeeded in redefining naval diplomacy in responding to the tension between AUKUS and China which has the potential to become an arm race with an ever-expanding scale. Naval diplomacy covers a wide range of activities, from port visits, exercises and humanitarian assistance to persuasive deployment and coercion. These are activities that are no longer limited to the navy alone, but in the modern era are carried out by coast guards, civilian vessels, and non-state groups. Indonesia’s position as non-claimant in the South China Sea conflict and in the midst of a vortex of tension and potential military conflict between AUKUS and China means that in the future Indonesia cannot avoid the impact that tensions can cause between the two parties. *Maritime Diplomacy in the 21st Century* explains and analyzes the concept of maritime diplomacy, which has been largely neglected in the academic literature. Furthermore, naval diplomacy can act as a valve to get through any tension that occurs without using conflict. This research describes the continued use of coercion outside of war by navies, while also placing it more clearly into the various roles and effects that maritime power has in peacetime. The question is, how can the main force of the Indonesian Navy be able to exploit its resources to advance the country’s foreign policy?

In the framework of naval diplomacy, the diplomatic steps that will be carried out after the presence element is met are the coercion or coercion steps, picture building or building impressions and images, and coalition building or coalition building and cooperation. According to Geoffrey Till, these three functions have different purposes and methods (Rafael, 2020). But, all three are continuous and complementary, like a spectrum where the boundaries between functions are blurred. Therefore, the activities they carry out may differ not in type and function, but only in level, so that the maritime power or in this case the navy of a country can be involved in more than one type of activity simultaneously. It can be analogized that the navy of a country that intercepts illegal ships from other countries that are full of weapons may be able to carry out the process of deterring, coercing, expelling and building coalitions or joint cooperation, regardless of existing conditions (Gorshkov, 1979).

Based on the research findings, it is crucial for the Indonesian Navy to maintain a strong presence at sea in order to provide the country with significant strategic and tactical advantages. This presence will serve to prevent conflicts and effectively respond to crises arising from tensions between AUKUS and China, as well as to be prepared for potential warfare. Enhanced oversight can effectively manage the deployment of Indonesian Navy warships (KRI) in the South China Sea by strategically allocating additional KRI vessels equipped with comprehensive operating capabilities. In order to achieve dependable forward operation, it is necessary to have appropriate facilities and sufficient resources. It is imperative to maintain a consistent or even heightened presence of the Indonesian Navy in order to exert significant pressure on potential adversaries. The Indonesian Navy has established a robust reputation as a proficient maritime force that consistently expands and improves. Indonesia’s military prowess is seen in its exceptional people, advanced weaponry, and robust defensive equipment. Additionally, the wellbeing and size of the

Indonesian Navy soldiers further demonstrate the country's significant military capabilities. In addition, it is imperative to establish a comprehensive and state-of-the-art harbor, educational and training institutions, medical facilities, and top-notch treatment centers. The Indonesian Navy must collaborate with private shipyards to utilize their ship maintenance and repair facilities (Widodo et al., 2018).

With the attributes it has, the Indonesian Navy is very useful in being able to represent force without its necessary application (Hayden, 2007) and this creates a creative ambiguity regarding the role of warships which can contribute in providing a measurable response across the spectrum of conflict. Refers to the effects generated by sea-based or sea-related forces (Luttwak, 1979). further maneuvering of the fleet can complement the consequences of deterrence. First, the deployment of the Indonesian Naval can explicitly be used to cause enemy destruction or limit the opponent's freedom of action so as to influence the enemy's behavior or the behavior of interested third parties, even if force is never actually used. Second, the deployment of the Indonesian Navy can produce a latent situation effect (Luttwak, 1979). The presence of the Indonesian Navy with its combat capabilities at a crime scene will have a deterrent effect on the enemy's freedom of action. Third, the movement of the fleet which is carried out regularly can be seen by potential opponents as a threat (because the threat is latent within the force itself) even though the movement is not intended to pose a threat. Fourth, sending a KRI or a task force for the Navy's fleet will have political influence or what is known as gunboat diplomacy (Cable, 1994).

Seeing the phenomenon of the AUKUS pact, it is necessary to reflect on the expression of Publius Flavius Vegetius Renuis in *Dē Rē Militārī* which states the phrase *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, "if you want peace, prepare for war". Furthermore, the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu in the Art of War revealed that conditions of peace are often maintained by being ready to go to war when necessary. In contrast to war on the open sea, coastal combat action can cover a large part, if not the entire theater. The battle in Indonesian waters will involve all the land, sea and air above it. Naval strategy extends to territorial boundaries (Wegener, 1989). Control of the sea in narrow seas cannot be obtained if the enemy only has equal strength with his opponent, let alone much weaker. Therefore, the opponent who will attack Indonesian waters, can be sure to have superior strength.

During sea wars, Indonesian waters made the Indonesian Navy which was in an inferior position had the opportunity to control one or both sides of the coast, with the help of the Indonesian Army and Indonesian Air Force. Inferior powers can successfully maintain sea control by taking a strategic defensive stance by taking advantage of geographical conditions (Adriyanto and Sutanto, 2022). More than that, in sea warfare in Indonesian waters, research results show that it is very possible to rely on the Indonesian army and air force as shown by the German seizure of the Denmark Strait in April 1940. land than on the high seas.

If in the open sea the superior party has a high level of control but the control is much smaller if in Indonesian waters which are close to the mainland of the big islands. Full control over various straits in Indonesian waters will not be obtained by the opponent, no matter how weak the strength of the Indonesian Navy is. This was exemplified by one of the sources in the British Fleet during World War I, never controlling the eastern and southeastern parts of the North Sea. Likewise, control of

the Adriatic Sea remained essentially in the hands of the Austro-Hungarian Navy throughout the war (Cook, 1931). In contrast to the open ocean, the threat to Indonesian waters continues to increase as adversaries get closer to the coast. The ability of the Indonesian Navy's power to challenge aggressor control or superior coalition forces can be far more successful in Indonesian waters than the Indonesian Navy's fleet having to fight in the open sea. This is accomplished by integrating sea power and land power. It is therefore important that during peacetime it is necessary to carry out joint combat training.

Robi emphasized that the AUKUS pact had an impact on Australia, Indonesia, and Southeast Asia, including increased security threats for Australia, increased regional noise for Southeast Asia, and the possibility of Indonesia becoming a battleground between the UKUS and China. The Indonesian Air Power Study Center's Chairman, Chappy Hakim, also underlined this concern, cautioning that bolstering the nation's defenses in the air as well as on land and at sea was crucial (Unas, 2021). Primarily due to the fact that the air domain has the capability of being designated as a battlefield. Given that airspace is not restricted by territory, this will result in the creation of new challenges. The AUKUS debate has prompted academics to underline the significance of rethinking the Indo-Pacific region's future. While AUKUS hasn't had a major impact on Indonesian sovereignty yet, Indonesia and ASEAN can function as peace pillars and actively contribute to bringing about peace (Widyatmoko, 2022).

The Indonesian Archipelago is characterized by closed and semi-enclosed seas, commonly referred to as "narrow seas." The ocean is situated within the continental shelf and is bordered by land. It is connected to the ocean or other closed or semi-enclosed seas through several straits, which are sometimes known as choke points. The shipping density in international straits exceeds that of the open sea. There exist numerous straits globally, although only approximately 120 hold significant international significance.

The Indonesian Air Force and Indonesian Army aircraft have the capability to conduct a greater number of military missions within a specific timeframe against adversaries who are invading or have already seized portions of Indonesian waterways. Given the abundance of islands and offshore islands in Indonesian waters, these land-based aircraft have the capability to launch attacks from bases strategically positioned along the paths used by enemy ships. They possess the capability for rapid deployment and relocation, either between military bases or within different areas of the theater of operations. Key prerequisites include a strategic maritime location, a lucrative operational foundation, and a sufficient array of naval and aviation installations (Vego, 2016). The compact dimensions of Indonesian waterways facilitate the utilization of Indonesian Air Force aircraft and Indonesian Army helicopters. Aircraft pose a persistent danger to the viability of all vessels, particularly those on the surface. Naval power can be rendered fully incapacitated by the persistent threat of aerial attacks (Vego, 2016).

Achieving dominance in maritime operations necessitates a well-rounded arrangement of naval forces. The appropriate overall size of the combat force and the size and kind of surface and submarine combatants should be planned based on the threat potential and physical conditions of the operating area. The limited dimensions and restricted expanse of numerous enclosed maritime regions, characterized by their

shallow depths, pose significant challenges for aircraft carriers, sizable surface warships, and nuclear-powered assault submarines (SSNs) to conduct operations effectively. Operating efficiently in Indonesian waters poses significant challenges for these combat troops, primarily because to the extensive distribution of several islands and offshore territories.

Upon examining the findings of this study, this article propose that the Indonesian Navy has the capability to construct littoral combat groups (LCG). An Indonesian navy equipped with a substantial fleet of small surface combatants and submarines to effectively establish dominance over the seas in the usual maritime conditions of Indonesia. Optimum strength is ideal for utilization in coastal regions. This force encompasses shipborne and/or land-based versatile helicopters, a range of autonomous vehicles which cover surface, subsurface, and aerial and specialized operations teams. Furthermore, due to the relatively short yet extensive span of Indonesian waterways, it is feasible to establish ground forces as well as coastal missile and gun batteries to provide support for LCG operations. Every LCG must be customized for a particular objective, such as capturing or combating control of the sea, assaults on enemy maritime commerce, and safeguarding or shielding of maritime commerce.

5. Conclusion

The AUKUS and China conflict's effect poses a potential threat to regional stability and continually demonstrates the advanced capabilities of their weaponry as a means of intimidation. The AUKUS-China hostilities have had a highly damaging impact on Indonesia, causing significant disruption to its national stability. Hence, Indonesia's diplomatic prowess may exert significant influence on the geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific area. In addition to actively engaging in diplomatic efforts with ASEAN to uphold regional security and stability, it is crucial to enhance the capabilities of the Indonesian Navy in the South China Sea. The large Indonesian archipelago, positioned between China and Australia, encompasses crucial maritime routes that connect the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well as linking the South China Sea with the waters next to northern Australia. Submarines have the ability to navigate through deep-sea trenches without being discovered. Indonesia should prepare for the possibility of major powers engaging in battle in our immediate vicinity. Indonesia should consider the possibility that Australia may claim Indonesian waters as their own, which could ignite a confrontation in the region. In the event of a severe conflict, it is plausible that a conflict may arise within the territorial waters of Indonesia. The Indonesian Navy must proactively prepare for potential armed conflicts in Indonesian territorial waters by formulating a comprehensive maritime policy during times of peace and leveraging its geographical advantages.

AUKUS is a resourceful economic and strategic alliance formed by three democratic states to achieve shared objectives and uphold international rules and norms through military cooperation. The significance of alliances like AUKUS lies in its ability to validate power conflicts in the region and promote strategic geopolitical development. Such alliances are crucial for preserving the equilibrium of power in the region. The trilateral security engagement among Australia, UK, and the US has created a geopolitical division with China, intensifying tensions that are more complex

to manage than previous conflicts between the US and the Soviet Union. The AUKUS agreement underscores the division between the strategic and operational aspects of defense, particularly concerning nations with vested interests in the South China Sea. The future of the Indo-Pacific is closely linked to physically distant countries, as the region has emerged as a worldwide hub for geo-strategic activities. This is either to counterbalance China's growing influence by preserving the equilibrium of power or to regain control over marine territories. The growing engagement and active participation of major powers in the region highlights the significance of upholding the global balance of power. However, this increased involvement also amplifies the vulnerabilities associated with the internal dynamics of the region. Indonesia has become a proxy country in the battle between China and AUKUS, meaning it is impacted by the war of influence due to its strategic geographical position between China and AUKUS. Indonesia's strategic geographical position in close proximity to the South China Sea and Australia renders it susceptible to being utilized as a proxy nation for intelligence activities pertaining to the AUKUS-China conflicts.

The adverse consequences for Indonesia have been considerable as a result of the AUKUS-China tensions' disruption of national stability. Indonesia's diplomatic skills as global maritime fulcrum can therefore have a big impact on the international political landscape in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition to collaboratively advancing proactive diplomacy with ASEAN to uphold security and stability in the region, it is crucial to enhance the Indonesian Navy's role in the South China Sea. The expansive Indonesian archipelago is positioned between China and Australia, serving as a crucial hub for maritime routes that connect the Indian and Pacific Oceans, as well as linking the South China Sea with the waters off northern Australia. Consequently, submarines do have the ability to navigate through deep-sea trenches without being discovered. Indonesia should prepare for the possibility of intense rivalry among major powers turning into a battle in our immediate vicinity. Indonesia should consider the possibility that Australia may assert its control over Indonesian waters, potentially leading to a clash in this region. In the event of a severe conflict, it is plausible that a conflict may arise within the territorial waters of Indonesia. The Indonesian Navy must proactively prepare for potential military engagements in Indonesian territorial waters by formulating a comprehensive maritime policy during times of peace and leveraging its geographical advantages.

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