

# INDONESIA - SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE COOPERATION

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## Introduction

South Korea together with Indonesia agreed to strengthen strategic cooperation and support each other in economic recovery after the global pandemic (Coordinating Ministry For Economic Affairs Republic of Indonesia, 2022). The fiftieth anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries will be held in 2023. However, it still raises the question, what should both countries as strategic partners do to address a number of current global problems. The South Korean government supports Indonesia's initiatives regarding Indonesian G20 Presidency and together they will succeed in the G20 agenda in 2022. This was stated in Jakarta at the end of February 2022 by Airlangga Hartarto, Coordinating Minister for the Economy of Indonesia when meeting the Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy South Korea, Moon Sung Wook, as follows

*“The Indonesian presidency supports the theme of energy transition to be included in the trade, investment and industry working group. I hope the South Korean government can support this. Furthermore, because of the G20, Indonesia also wants to invite the South Korean Government to build strong partnerships in the fields of trade, investment, industry, and what is now important is the digital or e-commerce sector”.*

There are a number of reasons why South Korea has made Indonesia a strategic partner in Southeast Asia, among others: 1) Indonesia is the initiator of the Asia-Africa Conference in April 1955; 2) Indonesia's free and active foreign policy and carry out impartial diplomacy; 3) Known as the largest countries in Southeast Asia and a regional leader; and 4) Indonesia is South Korea's important partner in the defense sector. The signing of the agreement between Indonesia and the Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK-CEPA) is a challenging milestone in bilateral economic relations between Indonesia and South Korea (Manurung, 2022). Indonesia is the only ASEAN country which has a special strategic partnership, this reflects the importance meaning of Jakarta to Seoul. Both established concrete cooperation in the fields of defence; human resources and capacity building; and research and development. Indonesia in forming military defense independently also carries out cooperation to build an ideal defense with reference to the Minimum Essential Forces/MEF ( (Tanduk et al., 2022).

## Overview of Indonesia's Defense Policy

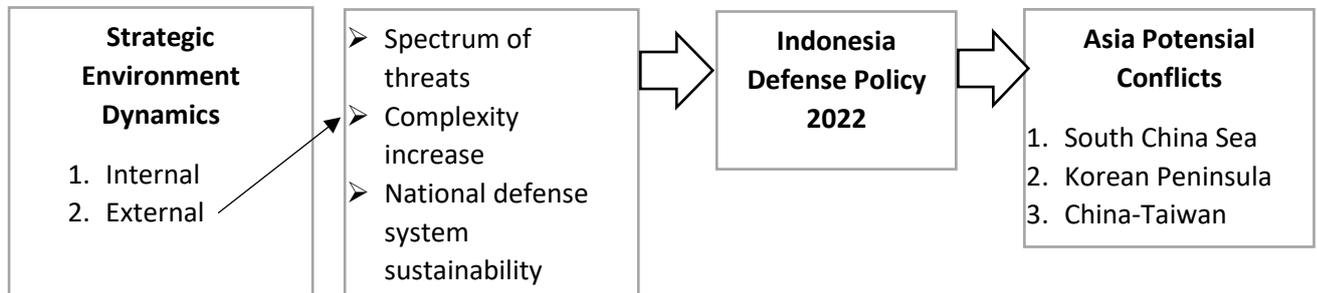
The implementation of the Indonesian state defense is guided by the universal people's defense and security system (*Sishankamrata*) by involving all citizens, regions and other national resources (Indonesia Defense Ministry, 2022). Defense or military policy is a public policy related to efforts to realize national, regional and international security. Indonesia's defense and security policies in 2022 cover from dealing with terrorism to bureaucratic reform. There are seven points related to Indonesia's defense policy conveyed at the beginning of January 2022 by the Minister of Defense of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto (Sidebang, 2022), as follows

- 1) Boosting the readiness and professionalism of defense and security to deal with terrorism, radicalism, separatism, existing latent dangers, natural disasters, humanitarian assistance, and the tasks of world peace missions and other emergencies. These include chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive threats;
- 2) Strengthening defense and security cooperation with ASEAN countries and other countries in the context of creating mutual trust, building defense capabilities, professionalizing the Indonesian armed-forces (*TNI*), and strengthening the defense industry in supporting diplomacy and foreign policy;
- 3) Pursuing the formation of production units in *TNI*, adjusted to the need to optimize the tasks of the *TNI* through war military operations and military operations other than war;
- 4) Preparing the defense areas for large islands independently by preparing reserves of food, water, energy and other national infrastructure, which aims to create defense logistics centers spread throughout Indonesia.
- 5) Strengthening the coastal missile defense system and coastal surveillance system to carry out control of strategic straits in accordance with the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes I, II, and III;
- 6) Realizing the synchronization of defense spatial planning in the form of defense area spaces, detailed plans for defense areas, and national strategic areas for defense interests with provincial, district and city spatial layouts;
- 7) Carry out evaluations and improvements in all levels of the work units of the Indonesian Ministry of Defense and the *TNI*.

Indonesian Defense policy is recognized that the existence of the nation and state is at stake to face these regional potential threats. On the other hand, the development of the strategic environment at the regional level, in the Asian region there are threats that can trigger regional

instability and continuous threats including 1) South China Sea conflict, 2) Korean Peninsula, and 3) China-Taiwan.

**Picture 1 Indonesia Defense Policy (2022)**



A solid and reliable Indonesian defense policy should be capable of and a definite solution in dealing with threats posed by the dynamics of the development of the strategic environment.

### **Indonesia-South Korea Defense Diplomacy**

Indonesia still requires foreign capital or investment, technology and advanced technology products from South Korea. Meanwhile, South Korea needs natural or mineral resources, labor and a very large Indonesian market. For Indonesia, South Korea is a country that has the potential to be able to work together in various fields. This two countries bilateral relations are boosting in intensity because they are triggered by various factors, especially the increase volume of bilateral free trade (Badan Pembinaan Hukum Nasional, 2017).

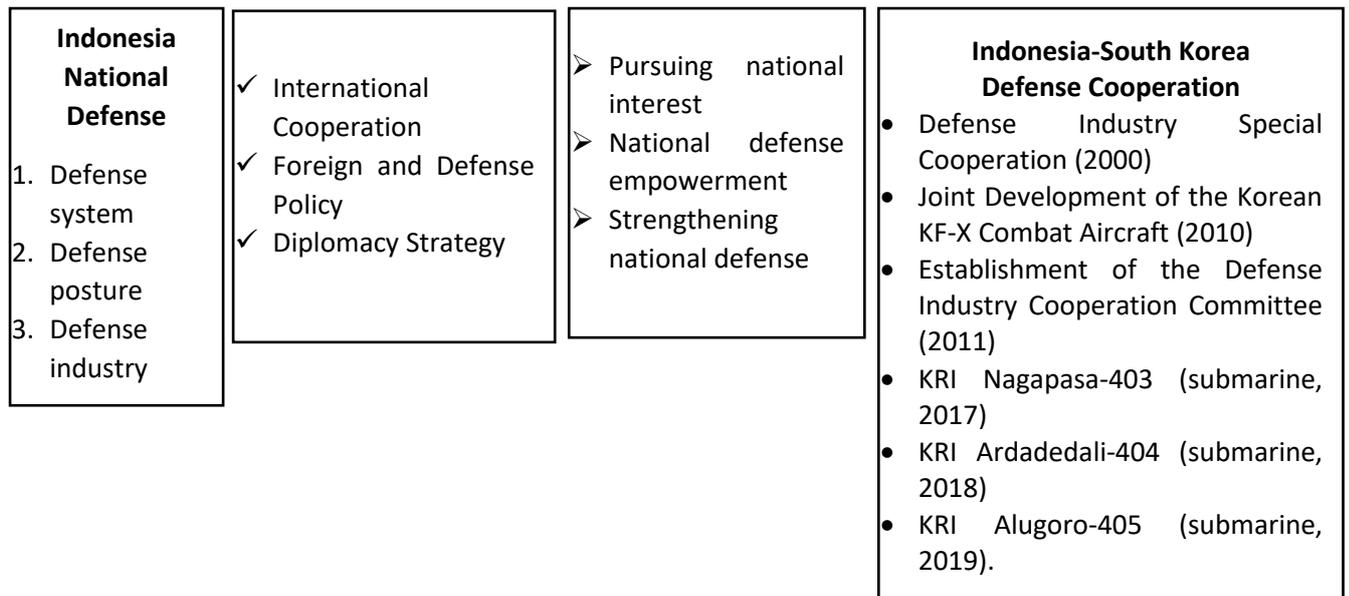
National defense is an important aspect that determines in building relations with other countries, in addition to solidly development and strengthening economic cooperation. Indonesia's foreign policy priorities are realized through strengthening the world peace and security stability ecosystem by strengthening the culture of peaceful conflict resolution and optimizing Indonesia's role in the UN Security Council (Indonesia Defense Ministry, 2022).

Indeed, the implementation of the defense cooperation policy between Indonesia and South Korea is basically an effort to strengthen the vision of procuring Indonesian submarines by 2024 (Al-Fadhat & Nur Aziz Effendi, 2019, p. 373). The different from the previous several similar cooperations that are purely defense equipment purchases, the agreement signed in 2011 by two countries has included the technology transfer process to ensure the sustainability of Indonesia's maritime independence. This strategic cooperation still has serious challenges regarding the availability of human resources and limited budget allocation from Indonesian government in particular.

## Strengthening Indonesia-South Korea Defense Cooperation

However, Indonesia's defense system still needs support from other countries that already have a sophisticated and reliable defense system in the international system as its defense system be further strengthened through generating mutually beneficial defense cooperation with South Korea. This is Indonesia's sustaining effort to improve bilateral diplomacy and sustainable defense cooperation, which in the end is able to build trust between one country and another. In research from Manurung (2021, p. 27), the utilization of Indonesia defense cooperation with other country is a strategy of sustaining foreign and defense policy instruments abroad in achieving national interests and sovereignty protection. Indonesia through PT PAL Indonesia has collaborated to build submarines with Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering since 2013. However, related to the defense cooperation carried out by Indonesia and South Korea, the price for one submarine unit is US\$ 330 million or around Rp 4.7 trillion and this is for the Changbogo class (Aisyah, 2021). The total cost of procuring the three submarines is US\$1.08 billion, or around IDR 14.5 trillion.

**Picture 2 Indonesia-South Korea Defense Cooperation**



The tangible manifestation of the strategic partnership between Indonesia and South Korea in building cooperation in the defense sector is through the procurement of the Indonesian Warship Alugoro 405 ( (ANTARA News, 2021). The procurement of Indonesian warships is one of Indonesia's armed-forces steps to support the modernization of the main weapons system as planned by the Ministry of Defense in order to meet the MEF in 2024. The submarines will be used to guard waters and borders that are considered vulnerable, especially the surrounding areas in the North Natuna Sea and South China Sea. Military cooperation between Indonesia

and South Korea has been well established so far, specially in developing trust and enhancing defense industry cooperation. Indonesia's defense minister stated as follows (Indonesia Defense Ministry, 2021),

*“Indonesia-South Korea bilateral relations in the defense sector can make a positive contribution, not only to the national interests of the two countries, but also to maintaining regional security, peace and stability. There are still many opportunities for defense cooperation between the two countries that need to be explored together, especially in the context of building mutual trust and enhancing cooperation in the defense industry”.*

The Indonesian defense industry, especially the navy, is gaining new strength as an effort to strengthen the national defense system in guarding against potential threats. Indonesia's expectation as an independent country in the field of the national defense system will soon be realized by the presence of domestically made submarine products. Indonesian Ministry of Defense has handed over the operation of a submarine named KRI Ardadedali-404 on April 25, 2018 which was ordered from the South Korean Government through Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Co., Ltd with a total of two submarines (PT. PAL Indonesia, 2019). On the contrary, Indonesia is the only country in the Southeast Asian region that is able to develop and build submarine technology regionally. This sustaining mutual trust and defense industry development can also empower a number of other existing cooperation fields, such as economic, educational and socio-cultural cooperation. Indonesia and South Korea defense cooperation has so far contributed significantly in maintaining regional and international peace.

## **Conclusion**

Indonesia-South Korea relations are foreign bilateral relations between Indonesia and South Korea, which have the vision, values, and desire to contribute to the achievement of international peace as a common middle power in the Asia Pacific. Therefore, apart from being the fourth most populous country in the world, in the future it is expected that Indonesia will be able to become one of the reliable and respected countries in Asia Pacific. In enhancing defense cooperation with South Korea, the Indonesian government still needs to improve coordination and collaboration in efforts to develop the country's defense forces, in realizing a formidable defense system particularly.

South Korea government decision is appreciated by Indonesia, which is one of the most successful countries in the world in overcoming the problem of handling the spread of the global pandemic, with fast, accurate and efficient policies, as well as support from the Korean people. Indonesia's defense strategy and diplomacy include the synergy of the collaborative

cooperation between Indonesia and South Korea which is quite successful in the defense industry, especially in the transfer of technology and the procurement of defense equipment, developing the quality of soldiers with joint training, including cooperation in building a cyber university in order to produce experts in the field of defense cyber security. The sustainable cooperation with South Korea can accommodate Indonesia achieve its mission of industrial independence and in facing the challenges of the Industrial 4.0 revolution in the future.

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