INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)
AS STRATEGIC FACTOR IN SHAPING INDONESIA'S IMAGINED COMMUNITY AS AN ARCHIPELAGIC COUNTRY

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Abstrak

Naskah ini dirancang untuk menelaah pentingnya Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) bagi perkuatan ide 'Imagined Community' dari Indonesia guna menjadi sebuah Negara Kepulauan. Ide ini semakin mengemuka sejak Presiden Joko Widodo memerintah, dan terus menggaungkan kebijakan nasional yang bermuatan maritim. Telaah dalam naskah ini akan memuat unsur-unsur sejarah dan hukum internasional, sebagai penguat ide Indonesia menjadi kekuatan maritim. Naskah ini selanjutnya meninjau nilai penting dari IORA sebagai perpanjangan pemikiran strategis Indonesia, guna menggapai harapannya membangun sebuah 'Imagined Community', atau Masyarakat Bayangan'.

Kata Kunci: IORA, Imagined Community, dan World Maritime Fulcrum

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the importance of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in strengthening Indonesian imagined community as archipelagic country. The idea has become more important following the rise of President Joko Widodo, who constantly pursuing maritime-oriented policies. This research will rely on official documents or literature that emphasize the status of Indonesia as an archipelagic country, as well as the international law that legitimizes Indonesia as an archipelagic country, along with historical factors and policies of World Maritime Fulcrum in the current administration. This paper will then reveal Indonesian long hibernation as an archipelagic nation. It is through IORA Indonesia works strongly to implement its imagine community, in line with capacity to bridge the ideas leading to the world maritime fulcrum. The results of this study indicate that there are interconnections surrounding the legitimacy of international law, the historical factors, the ongoing state policy, as well as state involvement in help establishing IORA. All ideas support the Indonesian dream of establishing its own imagined community.

Key words: IORA, Imagined Community, and World Maritime Fulcrum

The Basis of Indonesia's Imagined Community

In the past, Indonesians navigated open seas up to Madagascar and South Africa, owing to the country's location within the international trade routes. As represented by its pre-colonial kingdoms such as Srivijaya, Majapahit, Banten, Aceh, and Cirebon, Indonesians ruled their islands and surrounding seas, and interacted with the past great powers such as China, India, the Arabs, the Portuguese, and the Dutch.

It was also through the seas that colonial powers such as the Dutch and the Portuguese conquered the above mentioned kingdoms, and made their territories as part of their global empire. Soon after its independence in 1945, Indonesia in 1957 committed itself to pursue its Djuanda Declaration, highlighting its readiness to control all seas connecting its archipelago.

It was during the height of the Cold War that states had begun to wield their power on seas, through mountains and across plains, whereas their success depends above all on their ability to bridge their foreign policy to the underlying geopolitical situation. Looking at the sporadic claims in sea environments, in 1958, the United Nations (UN) felt the need for setting the rules over the sea. The UN then performed the first United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea) which resulted in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1958. In the process, improvement occurs up to the latest convention agreed on UNCLOS in 1982 which has now been ratified by 159 countries and the European Union, including Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (Tabloid Diplomasi, 2010, and Unclos 1982).

Learning from the results coming from Unclos 1982, Indonesia entitles to a territorial sea as far as 12 nautical miles, contiguous zone as far as 24 nautical miles, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of 200 nautical miles, and the continental shelf (seabed) as far as 350 nautical miles or more. In addition, the set is also on the high seas and the Area. The width of each zone is measured from the baseline, which under normal circumstances is on a shoreline low tide. Indonesia has the right to draw a line in the form of a belt that surrounds the base of the whole archipelago. These baselines are called archipelagic baselines, joining the edges of the outer islands of Indonesia (Unclos, 1982).

Indonesia's territorial sea measuring 12 nautical miles, measured from archipelagic baselines instead of the coastline of each island. Thus the island other zones that could total is 350 nautical miles, or more, from the baselines. The outer limits of maritime zones can be determined unilaterally if the available space allows. For example, in Southwest Sumatra, Indonesia could define the outer limit of the EEZ of 200 nautical miles because no other state around it located at a distance of 400 nautical miles from the Indonesian baseline (Tabloid Diplomasi, 2010).

Imagined Community and Its Context

Earlier on, Benedict Anderson defined a nation as 'an imagined political community, both limited and sovereign', with nations may have similar interests or identify themselves as part of the same nation (Anderson, 1991: 9). Similarly, social and cultural construction of a country helps it to identify itself, links itself with its surroundings, and finds its way to shape the world (Wendt, 1992: 403-40). Social construction will also provide meaning, signification, distinguish between material and social world, and later on institutionalize and establish norms in its overall interaction in the world (Wendt, 1995: 73). At the final analysis, social construction helps countries to develop a political behavior to construct something immaterial than material (Wendt, 1999:1). In short, social construction relates strongly to political practices, involving people, governances, political systems, interactions of states, and foreign policies.

IORA and President Joko Widodo's World Maritime Fulcrum

IORA is the association of Indian Ocean rim countries. This association was formed on 6-7 March 1997 in Mauritius. IORA Secretariat is located in Port Louis, Mauritius. The purpose of IORA is the improvement of economic cooperation and maritime (Lisbet, 2016: 5). Nowadays, IORA comprises of 21 member countries and seven dialogue partners under its wings. Indian Ocean itself is currently the third largest ocean and serve to transport and international trade with two-thirds of the world's oil shipments, a third of the bulk cargo traffic in the world and half of the world's container ships traveling through the region (Institute of Global Dialogue, 2014).

As an organization that emphasizes the strategic value of marine areas, IORA becomes a room for countries to manifest their sea aspirations. In the same way, as maritime cooperation has become President Jokowi's policy platform, the venue provided a logic for President Jokowi to associate the country as more sea-based rather than land-based. This is also consistent with changes in the geopolitical structure of the world where many countries are now producing greater political and economic policies which have maritime components.

On his international trips, President Joko Widodo spoke of how he saw Indonesia's role as a 'global maritime axis'. Recognizing Indonesia's status as the world's largest archipelagic state and its location at the crossroads of the Indian and Pacific oceans, Widodo emphasized the importance of making Indonesia's strategic maritime position the cornerstone of the country's foreign policy. The above mentioned idea is logical, as Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world composing of more than 17,000 islands, strung together by a 95.181 km coastline (the second longest after Canada), and approximately 70% of its territory in the form of sea (Santikajaya, 2014).

As Indonesia's coastal and marine areas have not been fully utilized, it is logical for President Jokowi to idealize the world maritime fulcrum in late 2014, elaborated in the following five pillars: (a) Rebuilding the maritime culture of

Indonesia; (b) Commitment to manage marine resources with a focus on building the marine food sovereignty through the development of the fishing industry by placing the fishermen as the main pillar; (c) The commitment to encouraging the development of infrastructure and maritime connectivity by building a toll of the sea, seaports, logistics and shipping industry and maritime tourism; (d) Inviting all partners to work together in the marine sector in order to eliminate a source of conflict in the sea, such as illegal fishing, a violation of sovereignty, territorial disputes, piracy and marine pollution; and (e) Establishing itself to become a sea power to guard the sovereignty and maritime wealth and maintain the safety of navigation and maritime security (Indonesia's World Maritime Fulcrum, 2016).

As Indonesia became the chairman of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in the 2015-2017 period, it has aspired itself to engage various kind of maritime cooperation, aiming to achieve its imagined community. Therefore, it can be understood why Indonesia worked strongly to produce a mutually accepted IORA Concord in 2017, with a goal of providing a real contribution in maintaining security and stability and achieving prosperity for the countries in the Indian Ocean region.

At the same time, IORA Concord is important to realize the vision of President Jokowi to make Indonesia as the world maritime fulcrum, and to further strengthen its efforts in developing cooperation in the maritime field, especially in the Indian Ocean region. The country's main challenges at the moment are how best it can manifest its archipelagic notion inside IORA, vis a vis reinforcing imagined community leading to achieving its perceived maritime security, maritime resource management, and maritime diplomacy.

Firstly, there is a need for Indonesia to firstly establish a sense of unity among all members inside unite themselves, and not allowing other states to take over their territories. In this context, there is a need to regulate issues of mutual concern such as illegal fishing, exploitation of marine resources, security of shipping lanes, which are in accordance with the policy of the world maritime fulcrum under the Jokowi administration. Such programs will become the strategic ingredients for the Indonesian maritime diplomacy.

Secondly, it is time for Indonesia to bridge its infrastructure priorities, linked with similar programs done by most coastal countries inside IORA, especially to involve countries outside ASEAN which are experiencing similar inter-island transportation problems. Key words in such areas of cooperation have been fully understood by the Indonesian government such as sea ports, deep seaports, logistics, shipping industries.

Thirdly, anticipating crisis coming from the unsettled territorial issues in the South China Sea, it is about time for Indonesia to help creating IORA into a Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (Zofpan), emulating the positive results coming from Indonesian leadership in ASEAN.

Fourthly, to help rekindle the maritime culture of countries in the Indian Ocean, which eroded along with centuries of European colonization. For this purpose, it is necessary for Indonesia to link its harbors with their traditional partners along with the Indian Ocean, and in the process producing new kind of

partnerships linking Indonesian cities, provinces, universities, and business associations. If such ideas are to be elaborated further, it is necessary for people living at the Indonesian coastal areas to better plan their local leadership, through selecting leaders who are familiar with maritime related issues.

CONCLUSION

It is not easy to transfer myth into reality. While the history and commitments are there, Indonesia needs continuity in advancing its imagine community. For this purpose, policies produced at the top leadership level should be continuously implemented at both the national and sub-national levels.

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