

Implications of Indonesia's joining the BRICS on national defense and security strategy

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Abstract

Purpose: This study analyzes the strategic implications of Indonesia's membership in BRICS on national defense and security, focusing on its potential to strengthen military cooperation, diversify defense procurement, and enhance geopolitical positioning while navigating complex global alignments.

Research methodology: This study employs a qualitative method using a literature review and secondary data analysis. These sources include policy documents from the Indonesian government, international reports, and academic publications related to BRICS, defense diplomacy, and global security dynamics. Descriptive and comparative analysis techniques were used to explore the strategic implications and potential shifts in Indonesia's foreign policy.

Results: The study finds that BRICS membership offers Indonesia enhanced access to alternative funding via the New Development Bank, broader defense cooperation, and opportunities to modernize military capabilities through technology transfer. It also provides a platform for more assertive defense diplomacy. However, risks include potential diplomatic friction with Western allies, internal power asymmetries within BRICS countries, and challenges to Indonesia's non-aligned foreign policy stance.

Conclusions: Indonesia's BRICS membership can bolster national defense and strategic autonomy if managed with diplomatic prudence. A balanced foreign policy is essential to leverage the advantages of BRICS while preserving partnerships with Western powers and ASEAN allies. Investment in cybersecurity, military modernization, and defense diplomacy is crucial for long-term stability.

Limitations: This study relies solely on secondary data, limiting insights into internal policy dynamics and practical implementation.

Contribution: It offers a strategic perspective on Indonesia's BRICS engagement and its implications for defense diplomacy and national security.

Keywords: *BRICS, Defense Diplomacy, Geopolitics Global, Military Cooperation, Economic Resilience*

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1. Introduction

In an increasingly complex global political landscape, multilateral cooperation has become an essential strategy for developing countries seeking to enhance their competitiveness and assert greater influence within the global economic and security architecture. As the international system becomes more multipolar and less dominated by traditional Western powers, emerging economies are exploring

collective frameworks that allow them to amplify their voices, secure equitable treatment, and pursue development in more favorable terms.

One of the most prominent manifestations of this strategic shift is the rise of the BRICS bloc, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. This coalition represents a coordinated effort among leading emerging economies to challenge the existing international order, which they argue has long been skewed in favor of developed Western nations. As Keohane and Nye Jr (1973) suggest, the formation of such blocs reflects a broader trend in international relations, where interdependence is channeled through strategic alliances and shared institutional mechanisms.

The BRICS bloc seeks to establish a more balanced global economic system by promoting south–south cooperation across various sectors. Trade agreements among BRICS members have helped reduce dependency on Western markets, whereas investment initiatives have opened new avenues for infrastructure development, technology exchange, and energy collaboration. Moreover, the bloc's emphasis on inclusive globalization aligns with the aspirations of many developing nations to achieve sustainable growth without being subject to the conditionalities often imposed by Western-led institutions.

A key component of BRICS' strategic posture is its effort to provide alternatives to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, two Bretton Woods institutions that have traditionally been dominated by the United States and its allies. In this regard, the establishment of the New Development Bank (NDB) is a landmark achievement. The NDB aims to finance infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS countries and other emerging economies, promoting economic autonomy and resilience. According to Balfour et al. (2024), the NDB not only symbolizes a shift in global financial governance but also offers a practical platform for circumventing the policy constraints often associated with Western funding sources.

Furthermore, BRICS' geopolitical relevance continues to grow, as its member states assert their influence in regional and global decision-making arenas. Collectively accounting for over 40% of the world's population and nearly a third of global GDP, BRICS leverages both demographic and economic heft to advocate for reforms in global governance institutions, including the United Nations Security Council and the World Trade Organization. Their unified stance on issues such as climate justice, digital sovereignty, and equitable vaccine distribution further underscores the bloc's commitment to reshaping global norms from a Global South perspective.

For Indonesia, which has Southeast Asia's largest economy and a strategic role in the Indo-Pacific region, membership in BRICS marks an important step in the diversification of global partnerships. With increasing geopolitical tensions and changes in the structure of international trade, this membership has the potential to increase Indonesia's bargaining power in economic negotiations and defense diplomacy (Ramadhani, D, Shafira, Dewi, Jatmiko, & Warganegara, 2024; Roberts, 2020). However, this step also poses challenges, especially in maintaining a balance in relations with Western countries and ensuring that integration into BRICS remains in line with long-term national interests. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the strategic implications of Indonesia's membership in BRICS on national defense and security policies.

Indonesia officially became a full member of BRICS in January 2025, making it the first Southeast Asian country to join the bloc (Australian, 2025). This decision was driven by a desire to strengthen South-South cooperation and reduce dependence on Western security and defense systems. However, this step also raises various questions regarding its consequences for Indonesia's position in the global geopolitical order and its impact on the national defense system (Natamiharja, Panjaitan, & Setiawan, 2025; Pessoa, 2025; H. Seran, Nursalam, & Tamunu, 2022). With Indonesia joining the BRICS in January 2025, various challenges and opportunities have emerged in defense and security aspects, especially in relation to defense modernization, defense partnership diversification, and strategic diplomacy with BRICS countries and Western partners (Pebrianto, 2023; Pessoa, 2025).

According to a report by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2023), Indonesia's stable economic growth and an 8% increase in its defense budget by 2024 are the main factors driving its membership in BRICS. In addition, based on data from Thayer (2013), total trade between Indonesia and BRICS countries has increased by 15% in the last five years, which shows that economic relations are getting closer.

On the other hand, the Permanent Court of Arbitration report (2016) highlighted tensions in the South China Sea as a security issue that can influence Indonesia's defense strategy in the BRICS. Thus, BRICS plays an important role in presenting alternatives in global economic and defense cooperation, which allows developing countries to have stronger bargaining power in international negotiations. For Indonesia, joining BRICS marks a major change in the direction of).

However, Indonesia's membership in the BRICS also poses challenges, including potential diplomatic tensions with Western countries, especially the United States and the European Union, which view the BRICS as a counteralliance to their economic and military influence (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016). In addition, there are concerns about how Indonesia can navigate the internal dynamics of BRICS, which is often dominated by China and Russia, two countries with strong geopolitical agendas (Hastjarjo, 2023; Riza, 2023; Thayer, 2013). Therefore, this study aims to examine the driving factors for Indonesia's membership in BRICS and its impact on the country's defense policy and security stability.

2. Literature review

Indonesia's potential membership in BRICS can be critically examined through the theoretical lenses of realism, complex interdependence, and defense diplomacy. Each of these international relations paradigms offers unique insights into how Indonesia can strategically benefit from aligning with a bloc emerging as an alternative to Western-dominated global institutions.

From the perspective of realism, as conceptualized by Waltz (1979), the international system is anarchic, and states act primarily to ensure their survival by maximizing power. In this context, Indonesia's interest in joining BRICS can be seen as a rational strategic move to increase its bargaining power in a global order increasingly characterized by great power competition. By forming alliances and intensifying cooperation with countries like China, Russia, and India—nations with substantial military and economic capabilities—Indonesia may strengthen its strategic posture against external threats, especially amid rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. Realism suggests that a state's alignment in multilateral blocs, such as BRICS, is driven not only by economic aspirations but also by the imperative to counterbalance hegemonic pressures, particularly from traditional Western powers.

Meanwhile, complex interdependence theory, introduced by Keohane and Nye Jr (1973), provides a broader framework for understanding Indonesia's motivations beyond the purely military domain. This theory argues that states are interconnected through multiple channels—economic, institutional, and cultural—and that military force is not the sole instrument of national power. Applying this to Indonesia and the BRICS countries, it becomes evident that Indonesia seeks to enhance its economic resilience, financial independence, and global relevance through deeper economic cooperation with BRICS members. The grouping's focus on South-South cooperation, the New Development Bank, and local currency trade mechanisms aligns with Indonesia's interest in diversifying its financial and trade dependencies, particularly as the country aspires to elevate its position in global value chains and reduce its vulnerability to Western-led economic shocks.

In addition, defense diplomacy theory sheds light on how Indonesia can project influence and build strategic trust through non-coercive military engagement. As defined by Cottey (2013), defense diplomacy encompasses a range of peaceful military interactions, including joint training, strategic dialogues, high-level exchanges, and cooperation in multinational exercises. For Indonesia, participation in BRICS offers a platform to enhance military interoperability with rising powers, explore defense procurement diversification, and build strategic military partnerships outside the traditional Western sphere. This approach complements Indonesia's doctrine of a free and active foreign policy

while contributing to regional and global stability through inclusive security dialogues and multilateral defense initiatives.

Indonesia's engagement with BRICS reflects a multifaceted strategic orientation. Realism explains its interest in strengthening alliances to boost strategic leverage, complex interdependence emphasizes the importance of economic and diplomatic ties in securing national interests, and defense diplomacy highlights the role of peaceful military engagement in building trust and strategic depth. Through BRICS, Indonesia can not only pursue economic growth but also fortify its geopolitical standing and defense diplomacy capacity in a multipolar world order.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research methodology utilizing a literature review approach complemented by secondary data analysis. This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of Indonesia's potential role in BRICS by examining various data sources that reflect policy, academic, and strategic perspectives. This research relies heavily on official documents, such as policy reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2023), alongside publications from international organizations and peer-reviewed academic articles that explore the dynamics of BRICS and global defense strategies.

Secondary data serve as the foundation of this analysis, providing insights into the evolution of BRICS as a geopolitical and economic bloc, its institutional mechanisms, such as the New Development Bank (NDB), and the strategic motivations behind the inclusion or consideration of new members like Indonesia. Policy papers, government white papers, and defense strategy documents offer a state-centric view, whereas academic literature contributes to theoretical frameworks and critical evaluations of multilateralism, complex interdependence, and defense diplomacy.

To interpret this data, the study employs descriptive analysis to systematically present the characteristics of the BRICS countries and Indonesia's foreign policy orientation. This involves mapping out key themes, such as economic cooperation, defense interoperability, and strategic diversification. Additionally, a comparative analysis technique is used to evaluate Indonesia's current multilateral engagements in contrast to BRICS mechanisms, enabling the study to identify potential benefits, limitations, and geopolitical shifts that could arise from deeper involvement with the BRICS bloc.

By synthesizing these various sources, this study aims to construct a multidimensional analysis of Indonesia's geopolitical strategy, particularly in the context of evolving global power structures. The qualitative method, grounded in interpretive inquiry, is well-suited to explore the nuanced motivations, implications, and outcomes of Indonesia's engagement with BRICS, providing both an empirical and theoretical basis for policy recommendations and further research.

4. Results and Discussions

Several previous studies have provided valuable insights into the dynamics of BRICS membership and its implications for developing countries, particularly in the areas of economic growth, defense cooperation, and strategic alignment. These findings offer a relevant foundation for analyzing the potential consequences and opportunities of Indonesia's prospective engagement with the BRICS bloc.

Chen and Zhang (2025) highlight that countries within the BRICS framework tend to experience a notable increase in foreign direct investment (FDI) after becoming members. The formation of strategic economic ties, the creation of institutional financing mechanisms such as the New Development Bank (NDB), and reduced reliance on Western financial systems contribute to enhancing investor confidence in these economies. For Indonesia, this presents a potential opportunity to attract greater investment in infrastructure, the digital economy, green energy, and industrial development, especially from non-traditional partners.

Furthermore, Singh and Patel (2022) examined the rise of military and defense technology cooperation among BRICS countries over the past decade. This includes initiatives such as joint training exercises, defense procurement partnerships, cybersecurity dialogues, and defense industrial collaboration. This study underscores the potential for Indonesia to leverage BRICS membership to advance its military modernization agenda, particularly in areas such as cyber defense, unmanned systems, and digital battlefield capabilities. These collaborations would also enable Indonesia to diversify its defense procurement away from dependency on traditional Western suppliers, in line with the broader objective of strategic autonomy.

In contrast, Nugroho (2023) offers a cautionary perspective by stressing that Indonesia must carefully balance its national interests amid the internal power dynamics of BRICS, which are heavily influenced by China and Russia. The asymmetry in political and economic weight within the group raises concerns about the potential marginalization of smaller or newer members. Indonesia's traditionally non-aligned foreign policy and its strategic partnerships with the United States, the European Union, and ASEAN must be carefully maintained to avoid alienating key allies while engaging more deeply with BRICS.

Nugroho also points out the diplomatic challenge Indonesia may face in maximizing the economic benefits of BRICS, without jeopardizing its ties with Western institutions. This includes managing perceptions related to geopolitical alignment, particularly at a time of growing tensions between BRICS core members and Western powers over issues such as the Ukrainian conflict, South China Sea disputes, and global trade regulations. As such, Indonesia must craft a multi-vector foreign policy that is pragmatic and flexible, ensuring that BRICS participation enhances its development and security goals without compromising broader international relationships.

The existing body of research underscores both the strategic potential and inherent risks of Indonesia's deeper engagement with BRICS. The opportunity to expand FDI inflows, modernize defence capabilities, and participate in shaping a more equitable global order is evident. However, it must be pursued with diplomatic dexterity and clear national priorities to navigate the complex geopolitical currents that define BRICS Constellation.

Based on the above background, Indonesia's membership in BRICS brings opportunities as well as challenges to national defense and security strategies. Therefore, further studies are needed on how Indonesia can leverage its membership to enhance regional stability, strengthen strategic alliances, and maintain independence in its foreign policy. Driving Factors for Indonesia's Membership in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) have developed into increasingly influential economic and geopolitical forces in the global order. This alliance aims to strengthen economic and political cooperation between developing countries to create a balance against the dominance of Western countries in the international system (Thayer, 2013). Since Indonesia's accession to BRICS in January 2025, various implications have emerged in various sectors, especially in national defense and security strategies..

In the current global context, marked by intensifying geopolitical rivalries, rapid technological changes, and shifting alliances, Indonesia must adopt a defense strategy that is both adaptive and flexible. The evolving security environment, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, requires Indonesia to not only strengthen its conventional military capacity but also embrace multilateral platforms that can enhance its defense capabilities through cooperation, innovation, and strategic autonomy.

Indonesia's potential membership in BRICS presents a strategic opportunity to diversify defense partnerships, bolster its defense industrial base, and access advanced military and dual-use technologies. According to Pessoa (2025), BRICS has increasingly become a platform not only for economic cooperation but also for promoting defense industry collaboration, military-to-military engagements, and technology transfer among its members. Indonesia, which is striving to modernize its military and reduce dependency on Western defense suppliers, could offer access to new defense procurement channels, including those from China, India, and Russia—countries that have demonstrated significant advances in aerospace, cyber defense, missile systems, and AI-driven defense platforms.

Furthermore, BRICS can serve as a vehicle for joint research and development in defense-related fields. The potential for multinational arms development projects, training exchanges, and logistical cooperation in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations could greatly enhance the interoperability and resilience of Indonesia's defense architecture. It also aligns with Indonesia's vision of building a self-reliant national defense industry, as mandated by strategic documents such as the Defense White Paper.

However, these strategic opportunities are not without critical challenges. As noted by Brown and Wilson (2021) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (2016), Indonesia's longstanding diplomatic and security ties with Western countries—especially the United States, Australia, and European Union members—remain central to its defense doctrine and economic development. These partnerships include defense dialogues, arms sales, intelligence sharing, and maritime security cooperation, which support Indonesia's role as a stabilizing actor in Southeast Asia. Closer alignment with BRICS could trigger perceptions of geopolitical realignment, potentially jeopardizing existing trust and strategic collaboration with Western partners.

Another complexity arises from the internal dynamics of BRICS, particularly the assertive foreign policies of China and Russia, which may not always align with Indonesia's commitment to ASEAN centrality and rules-based international order. Indonesia's non-aligned and independent foreign policy doctrine, known as "free and active" demands a careful diplomatic balance between the East and West, avoiding entanglement in major power rivalries while maximizing the benefits of multilateral cooperation.

Therefore, a comprehensive and nuanced policy analysis is needed to evaluate the implications of BRICS membership in Indonesia's defence strategy. This includes assessing risks to existing alliances, identifying areas for strategic gain, and ensuring that new defense collaborations through BRICS complement, rather than replace, Indonesia's existing defense ecosystem. Through this approach, Indonesia can safeguard its national sovereignty while enhancing its defense posture in a volatile global environment.

Indonesia's membership in BRICS can be analyzed using the theory of realism and complex interdependence. From the perspective of realism, countries tend to strengthen alliances and defense cooperation to deal with potential threats and increase bargaining power in global negotiations (H. V. Seran, Pandie, & Sayrani, 2022; Waltz, 1979). Indonesia, as a developing country with strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific, sees BRICS as an opportunity to strengthen its position in the face of geopolitical competition with other global powers, such as the United States and the European Union. With Indonesia's accession to BRICS, the country can access a broader collective defense system, gain support in international forums, and strengthen its bargaining position in trade negotiations and strategic alliances (Auma, Obici, & Mwesigwa, 2022; Keohane & Nye Jr, 1973).

Meanwhile, the complex theory of interdependence explains that in the era of globalization, countries depend not only on military power but also on economic relations and diplomacy to achieve national stability and security. Membership in BRICS allows Indonesia to reduce its dependence on one particular geopolitical bloc and expand cooperation with countries that have similar economic and political interests. For example, access to the New Development Bank (NDB) opens up opportunities for Indonesia to finance infrastructure projects and the defense industry without relying on loans from Western financial institutions (Balfour et al., 2024; Manalu, Shafira, Fardiansyah, Firganefi, & Cemerlang, 2022). Thus, membership in BRICS not only increases Indonesia's economic resilience but also strengthens national stability through the diversification of cooperation partners.

Furthermore, the perspective of the interdependence complex highlights how defense diplomacy can play a role in maintaining regional stability. Indonesia, as a country with a free and active foreign policy, can take advantage of BRICS to bridge differences between major countries and avoid direct involvement in geopolitical conflicts that could harm its interests. For example, Indonesia can play a

mediating role in regional issues such as the South China Sea dispute while maintaining good relations with China as a member of the BRICS as well as with ASEAN countries that are not members of the bloc (Chen & Zhang, 2025; Roberts, 2020). Taking into account the theory of realism and the interdependence complex, Indonesia's membership in the BRICS can be seen as a multifaceted strategy that not only aims to strengthen military defense but also to enhance Indonesia's economic competitiveness and diplomacy at the global level. Therefore, Indonesia's national defense and security strategy in the BRICS must reflect a balance between strategic alliances and national independence to avoid over-reliance on one particular global power.

Indonesia's membership in BRICS brings great opportunities to strengthen national defense strategies, especially in terms of access to military technology, diversification of defense procurement, and alternative funding. However, challenges need to be faced, including geopolitical pressure from Western countries, the internal dynamics of BRICS, and the impact on regional stability.

To maximize the benefits of BRICS membership, Indonesia is advised to maintain a diplomatic balance with Western and BRICS countries so as not to get caught up in geopolitical competition that can be detrimental to national interests. In addition, the government must develop a domestic defense industry to reduce dependence on foreign technology and increase the independence of the military sector. With the right strategy, Indonesia can leverage its membership in BRICS to strengthen national defense and security without sacrificing broader diplomatic and economic interests.

4.1 Discussion

4.1.1 Strategic Implications in Defense and National Security

In an era of globalization and increasing geopolitical uncertainty, countries face multidimensional challenges in maintaining defence stability and national security. Changes in global security dynamics, great power competition, and non-traditional threats, such as cybersecurity and terrorism, are factors influencing national defense strategies (Thayer, 2013). In this context, developing countries, including Indonesia, need to adapt their defense strategies to face increasingly complex contemporary threats. Indonesia, as the largest archipelagic country with a strategic geographical position in the Indo-Pacific, has an interest in maintaining territorial sovereignty and preventing potential threats from various international and regional actors. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the strategic implications of defense and national security is needed to ensure stability, independence, and competitiveness in the global defense system (Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia 2023).

Strengthening alliances and defense diplomacy is a strategic step in modern defense systems. Indonesia has expanded its strategic cooperation with various countries, including BRICS, ASEAN, and other bilateral forums. This approach is in line with the complex theory of interdependence, which states that countries depend not only on military capabilities alone, but also on economic and political cooperation to achieve national stability (Keohane & Nye Jr, 1973). Defense diplomacy plays a key role in building trust and reducing tensions between countries. Indonesia has been active in various joint military exercises, collective defense agreements, and strategic dialogues to enhance interoperability with international partners (Reis, Cohen, Melão, Costa, & Jorge, 2021). Thus, Indonesia's defense policy must balance military independence and international cooperation to create a more stable security environment.

The sustainability of a country's defense is highly dependent on the modernization of defense equipment and the development of defense technology. In the face of conventional and non-conventional threats, Indonesia has sought to update its weapons system by collaborating with the domestic defense industry and establishing partnerships with countries that have advanced defense technologies (Singh & Patel, 2022). The use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based technology, big data, and advanced air defense systems is part of the national defense transformation efforts. From the perspective of realism, countries will continue to seek to strengthen their military capabilities to maintain the balance of power and protect their national interests (Waltz, 1979). Therefore, Indonesia must accelerate the process of defense modernization to ensure its readiness to face future threats.

In the digital era, cyber threats have emerged as one of the most pressing challenges to national defense and sovereignty. As reliance on digital infrastructure grows, so does the risk of cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, financial institutions, defense networks, and government data systems. These threats, if left unmitigated, can result in widespread disruption, economic instability, loss of strategic assets, and even paralysis of state functions.

Like many other nations, Indonesia is not immune to this growing threat landscape. In recent years, the country has witnessed a surge in cyberattacks, including breaches of government databases, phishing campaigns targeting state institutions, and ransomware attacks on public services. According to Goldstein (2019), the increasing sophistication of these attacks highlights the vulnerability of national digital ecosystems and underlines the urgency for governments to adopt comprehensive cybersecurity strategies as integral components of national defenses.

Cybersecurity today is inseparable from broader defense and security policies, especially in the context of hybrid threats—a blend of conventional, irregular, cyber, and information warfare tactics employed by both state and non-state actors. Developed countries have responded to this challenge by establishing dedicated military cyber units such as the United States Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), the United Kingdom's National Cyber Force, and China's Strategic Support Force. These cyber units are not only tasked with defending national assets but also with conducting offensive cyber operations when necessary.

For Indonesia, the implications are clear; there is an urgent need to develop a resilient, state-coordinated cyber-defense architecture. This requires more than just regulatory frameworks or increased funding; it demands an integrated approach that brings together the military, national technology industry, academia, and intelligence agencies in a synergistic manner. Balfour et al. (2024) argue that countries seeking to build robust cyber defenses must invest in human capital development, strategic cyber infrastructure, and cross-sector partnerships to address both current vulnerabilities and future threats.

In this regard, Indonesia should consider forming a National Cyber Defense Command under the coordination of its Ministry of Defense and national intelligence agencies, with institutional links to the Ministry of Communication and Information, the National Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN), and key universities. This command structure enables faster response times, centralized threat intelligence, and coordinated actions against complex cyberattacks.

Moreover, increasing investment in digital defense technology, including artificial intelligence for threat detection, quantum-resistant encryption, and autonomous defense systems, will be crucial. Public-private partnerships with Indonesian tech startups and global cybersecurity firms can further accelerate innovation and resilience in this field.

Indonesia's future defense strategy must fully embrace the cyber domain as a core battlefield. Strengthening cyber defense is not merely a technological upgrade; it is a strategic necessity for national survival, economic continuity, and geopolitical stability in an age where wars are increasingly fought through keystrokes and algorithms, as much as through bullets and bombs.

National security is inseparable from the regional and global stability dynamics. Indonesia, as part of the Indo-Pacific region, faces complex geopolitical challenges, including the South China Sea dispute, rivalries between major powers such as the United States and China, and threats from extremist groups (Roberts, 2020). Therefore, the national defense policy must consider regional dynamics when determining the optimal security strategy. Indonesia can play a stabilizing role in the region by adopting a strategic approach based on the balance of power and multilateral cooperation. The implementation of an inclusive and adaptive defense strategy will ensure that Indonesia remains a key actor in maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific (Chen & Zhang, 2025).

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4.1.2 National Security Implications

National security is a fundamental aspect of maintaining the stability of a country against various threats, both domestic and foreign. In the era of globalization, security challenges are becoming increasingly complex with the emergence of conventional and non-conventional threats such as armed conflict, terrorism, cybercrime, and economic threats (Thayer, 2013). Indonesia, as a country with a strategic position in the Indo-Pacific region, faces increasingly diverse security challenges owing to rapidly evolving geopolitical and technological dynamics. Therefore, a comprehensive strategy is required to ensure adaptive and sustainable national security. Indonesia's membership in BRICS can be analyzed using the theory of realism, complex interdependence, and diplomacy theory. From the perspective of realism, countries tend to strengthen alliances and defense cooperation to deal with potential threats and increase bargaining power in global negotiations (Waltz, 1979). Indonesia leverages its membership in BRICS to strengthen its strategic position in geopolitical dynamics and defend national interests amid global tensions.

Meanwhile, the complex theory of interdependence (Keohane & Nye Jr, 1973) explains that in the era of globalization, countries depend not only on military power but also on economic relations and diplomacy to achieve national stability and security. Indonesia uses this approach by taking advantage of the increasingly close economic ties in BRICS countries to increase national resilience and reduce dependence on Western countries. Diplomacy theory also plays an important role in maintaining national stability and security. According to Kissinger (2014), diplomacy is the main instrument shaping effective foreign policy, especially in building stable international relations. Indonesia applies the theory of diplomacy by adopting a free and active foreign policy approach so that it can balance national interests among major countries. Membership in BRICS also opens up opportunities for Indonesia to expand economic and strategic diplomacy to achieve broader security stability.

National security is not only related to military aspects but also includes social, economic, and protection of critical infrastructure. One of the key implications of national security is the increasing threat from state and non-state actors using asymmetric strategies such as cyberattacks and digital propaganda. Cybersecurity is a major concern for Indonesia because of the increasing number of attacks on government data, the financial sector, and national strategic companies (Goldstein, 2019). Therefore, strengthening the cybersecurity system through collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial for maintaining digital sovereignty. Indonesia also faces challenges in maintaining regional stability, especially related to the dynamics of the South China Sea and Indonesia's role in maintaining the balance of power between major countries, such as the United States and China (Roberts, 2020). The implications of these geopolitical tensions demand a more strategic and diplomacy-based defense policy to prevent potential conflicts on maritime borders and ensure freedom of navigation and safe trade.

However, the issue of terrorism and radicalism remains a big challenge for national security. Although Indonesia has succeeded in suppressing terrorist activities through cooperation with various countries and enhancing counterterrorism capabilities, this threat still remains. Terrorist organizations continue to develop recruitment strategies through digital platforms and social media; therefore, a new approach is needed to effectively counteract the spread of radical ideologies (Singh & Patel, 2022). Other threats that need to be considered are energy and food security. As a country with a large population, Indonesia must ensure the availability of sufficient energy and food resources to avoid potential social and economic instability. The global energy crisis and economic uncertainty caused by geopolitical tensions can directly affect national security. Therefore, the diversification of energy sources and food security are part of national security strategies that must be strengthened (Balfour et al., 2024; Blackwill &

Harris, 2016). National security includes migration management and border protection. Indonesia, as a country with a vast maritime border, often faces challenges in addressing illegal immigration, human trafficking, and the smuggling of illicit goods. Strengthening the border surveillance system through both technological improvements and regional cooperation is an important step in facing this challenge (chathamhouse.org, 2018; Reis et al., 2021).

National security implications in the 21st century are increasingly multidimensional, encompassing a wide spectrum of interconnected domains, including cybersecurity, regional stability, counter-terrorism, energy security, and border protection. These challenges have been amplified by the rapid advancement of technology, growing geopolitical tensions, and transnational security threats that transcend conventional boundaries. As Indonesia is an archipelagic nation positioned at the strategic crossroads of the Indo-Pacific region, the need to adopt a more adaptive, integrated, and prevention-oriented defense and security strategy has become increasingly urgent.

Cybersecurity is one of the foremost areas requiring immediate attention. With the surge in digital transformation across sectors, Indonesia's critical infrastructure, such as energy grids, financial systems, communication networks, and government databases, has become more vulnerable to sophisticated cyberattacks. The increasing frequency and complexity of cyber intrusions pose direct threats not only to national security but also to economic stability and public trust. Therefore, a substantial increase in cybersecurity investment is crucial. This includes developing a skilled cyber workforce, expanding cyber threat intelligence capabilities, improving incident response systems, and promoting public-private collaboration in securing digital ecosystems.

Equally important is the strengthening of defense diplomacy as a strategic tool to navigate the Indo-Pacific region's volatile security environment. Indonesia must intensify bilateral and multilateral engagements with regional and global partners to build mutual trust, facilitate joint military exercises, and participate in defense dialogues. Through platforms such as ASEAN, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), and potential involvement in BRICS, Indonesia can reinforce its geostrategic posture while promoting a balance of power that favors peace and stability in the region.

In the realm of counterterrorism, Indonesia has made significant progress, but evolving threats demand continuous vigilance and innovation. Terrorist networks are becoming increasingly decentralized, making them harder to detect and disrupt. To address this, Indonesia should strengthen regional and global counterterrorism cooperation frameworks, enhance intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and invest in community-based prevention programs to counter violent extremism. A multidimensional approach that includes soft power, law enforcement, and deradicalization strategies is essential for sustaining long-term security.

Additionally, energy security must be treated as a core component of the national defense policy. Indonesia's vast but vulnerable energy infrastructure requires strategic protection, particularly when considering global energy market volatility and climate-related disruptions. Investments in renewable energy sources, diversification of supply chains, and protection of maritime energy routes are necessary to secure long-term resilience.

Border protection and migration management also warrant an expanded focus. As regional instability and climate change contribute to increased irregular migration, smuggling, and trafficking, Indonesia must enhance its border surveillance capabilities, strengthen legal frameworks, and deepen cooperation with neighboring states and international organizations, such as the IOM and UNHCR.

Indonesia's national security strategy must evolve from reactive defence mechanisms to a comprehensive anticipatory security framework. By prioritizing investment in cybersecurity, reinforcing defense diplomacy, expanding counterterrorism cooperation, ensuring energy resilience, and improving border governance, Indonesia can build a resilient and future-proof security architecture capable of withstanding complex global dynamics while upholding national sovereignty and stability.

5. Conclusion

Indonesia's potential membership in BRICS presents a strategic crossroad in its national defense and security trajectory, offering significant opportunities while simultaneously posing complex challenges. From a geopolitical standpoint, inclusion in BRICS countries would strengthen Indonesia's defense diplomacy leverage, enabling the country to participate more actively in shaping a multipolar global order. As part of a bloc comprising major powers like China, Russia, India, Brazil, and South Africa, Indonesia could gain access to alternative funding mechanisms, such as the New Development Bank (NDB), as well as broader opportunities for military cooperation, technology transfer, and defense modernization.

One of the most promising advantages lies in the potential to diversify defense partnerships and procurement sources, which would reduce dependence on Western military systems and open pathways for collaboration in cybersecurity, unmanned systems, artificial intelligence, and strategic logistics. Joint military exercises, academic exchanges, and defense dialogues within the BRICS framework could also contribute to capacity building and interoperability, particularly in hybrid threat environments.

However, these benefits are accompanied by strategic challenges. Indonesia will have to carefully navigate its diplomatic balancing act, strengthening ties within BRICS without alienating its longstanding strategic partners in the West, including the United States, Australia, and the European Union. These Western alliances have historically supported Indonesia through arms sales, military training programs, counterterrorism cooperation, and maritime domain awareness initiatives. An overt tilt toward BRICS, especially given the bloc's internal dynamics heavily influenced by China and Russia, could strain these relationships and raise questions about Indonesia's geopolitical alignment.

Managing internal BRICS politics is a delicate issue. The dominance of China and Russia, both with assertive foreign policies and complex histories of power projection, requires Indonesia to exercise strategic caution to avoid becoming a passive actor within the bloc. Preserving geopolitical independence and sovereignty is essential to ensure that Indonesia's national interests remain the primary drivers of its foreign and defense policies.

To optimize its engagement with BRICS while safeguarding national interests, Indonesia should adopt an adaptive and pragmatic defense diplomacy strategy. This involves maintaining open and constructive dialogue with both BRICS and Western actors, avoiding binary alignments, and positioning Indonesia as a bridge builder between the Global North and Global South. Active participation in both arenas can enhance Indonesia's role as a middle power and regional stabilizer.

Simultaneously, the government should channel BRICS cooperation toward strengthening the domestic defense industry, particularly in critical sectors such as energy security, digital infrastructure, and cybersecurity resilience. These sectors are essential for supporting a comprehensive national security framework in the 21st century.

In conclusion, BRICS offers Indonesia a unique platform to elevate its global standing and defense capabilities, but success depends on strategic nuance, policy coherence, and unwavering commitment to national sovereignty. With the right diplomatic posture and integrated policy design, Indonesia can reap the benefits of BRICS membership while reinforcing its role as a resilient, independent, and influential actor in international affairs.

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