

Research Article

The Strategic Value of China's Foreign Policy and The Rivalry of The Majors Power in The Indo-Pacific

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Abstract

The Indo-Pacific in the development of world politics is a meeting place for stakeholders from the US, China, Japan, India, Australia, and ASEAN to articulate each country's strategic interests. The rivalry between the US and China has been referred to as the new cold war in Southeast Asia. This momentum is an excellent opportunity for ASEAN to develop and expand its role in the Indo-Pacific by emphasizing centrality and putting its role to good use. Including the challenges of how China projects its strategic values to Australia, Japan, and India. This research analyzes the strategic value and emerging challenges of Majors Power in the Indo-Pacific. This article uses the theory balance of power with a qualitative descriptive method. It explains how China expands its influence in the Indo-Pacific region by increasing the distribution of rising power, new security concepts, peaceful rise, engagement, and comprehensive establishments and how this strategic value poses a challenge to India, the US, Australia, and Japan. The rise of the Indo-Pacific is one of the influences involving the superpowers by looking at the potential in the region. This is inextricably linked to China's national interest. The results of this research is that China uses the strategic value of rising power and new security concepts in its rivalry with the US and ASEAN. Concerning Australia, China prioritizes engagement and comprehensive establishment by leveraging economic benefits. In addition, China has shown a peaceful rise and engagement, as well as geopolitical rivalries with Japan and India.

Keywords: *Strategic Values; Foreign Policy; China; New Powers; Balance of Power.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indo-Pacific refers to the strategic and geographical constructs in the foreign policy of different countries. The term has replaced the "Asia-Pacific" terminology previously used more dominantly. In the context of strategic policy, the Indo-Pacific is an area that has become a traffic artery for services, capital, and goods, especially most of the world's energy supply. Geographically, the Indo-Pacific describes the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean region as the center of geopolitical activity in maritime, security, and trade (Saputra & Sudirman, 2020). Several countries that have used Indo-Pacific as a regional region include the United States, China, Japan, India, Australia, France, and ASEAN (Haruko, 2020: 1).

Southeast Asia is the third most populous region in the world after East Asia and South Asia. The region's economic strength ranks in the top five (Lee, 2018). For China and the US, the Indo-Pacific is an arena of competition, mainly due to the presence of Southeast Asian or ASEAN countries. The Indo-Pacific region also shows a shift in influence and power from west to east. Its strategic geopolitical value is emphasized by strong nations such as the US, China, India, Japan, Australia, and several ASEAN countries. In the Indo-Pacific context, the US believes that its military has played a role in maintaining regional security stability, so the US prioritizes its strength in the security sector (Scott, 2018: 25). Meanwhile, China is moving forward in the economic field as China has made practical use of infrastructure development projects and high-speed rail projects to strengthen its presence as a partner for countries in the world (Alunaza, 2021: 119).

The position of China, which has already led the economy in the Indo-Pacific, poses a challenge for the US to build a broader partnership. According to experts of regionalism studies (Lin & et al., 2020: 72-73), economic development and trade have become the main concerns of regional countries compared to the military field. Several ASEAN countries initially involved in cooperation with the US slowly changed their policy direction towards China, including Malaysia, which focused on trade and the army training, the Philippines agreed to a Memorandum of Cooperation on Coast Guard, and Thailand, which received investments from Alibaba in infrastructure projects and digitization that also resulted in the termination of US Air Force operations at U-Tapao International Airport. Amid these circumstances, the US has subsequently strengthened dialogue and consultations with Japan, India, and Australia in the Indo-Pacific, including through the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad. The Quad coordinates diplomatic, economic, and cyber security efforts, maritime, non-proliferation, and counter-terrorism (Lin & et al., 2020: 79).

The rivalry between China and the US in the Indo-Pacific revolves around political, economic, and security issues. Technological and infrastructure development have become the dominant features of the competition between the two countries for regional power and status (Heiduk and Wacker, 2020: 7). In this regard, China has a greater chance than the US. On the other hand, ASEAN countries must stand between the two competing powers. Under these circumstances, the challenge for the Indo-Pacific countries is to create competition management between the two superpowers to ensure regional stability so as not to cause negative polarization in the future (Shambaugh, 2018: 87). This paper analyzes the strategy pursued by China amid its competition with the US and other major powers such as India, Australia, and Japan. In addition, the author also discusses the strategic options for ASEAN countries to maneuver between China and the US amid tensions.

Previously, several articles have been found explaining the geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific. Such as the article (Saputra and Sudirman, 2020:215) wrote about the development of the Indo-Pacific concept as a geopolitical construct of Indonesia in the region through ASEAN. Another study is an article (Bagus Dharma Agastia and Agung Banyu Perwita, 2016:12-13) which mentions the Indo-Pacific as something that is given. Including Poltak Partogi's article in (Alunaza, 2019: 191-192) explaining Indonesia amid rivalries between China, Japan, and India in the Indo-Pacific region. The article presents the unavoidable implications of competition from major countries like India and China in the region. Because China and India are seen as new powers that could potentially change the position and dominance of the US in the region. Another article still related to this article is the work (Albi, Retnaningsih, & Nizmi, 2021:30) explaining ASEAN attitudes to the competition between China and the US in the Indo-Pacific. As a regional organization, ASEAN does not opt for the two countries and prefers cooperation in maritime and international trade.

This article is different because the author wants to see the strategic value of China's foreign policy projected onto several major power countries in the Indo-Pacific. The strategic values the author describes and analyzes in this article are rising power, a new concept of security, peaceful rise, involvement, and comprehensive settlement. Several articles explain China's rising power in an article titled *Rising China; Trajectory of an Emerging Global Power*. This article explains China's economic power from an integrated perspective, including the values of nationalism and culture, as well as the history explaining China's economic development, which is present as a global power recognized by the world (Ratha, 2014). From the dimension of China's new concept of security, it is explained that this approach is used as a new approach used by China in foreign relations in anticipation of the development of a multi-polar world and as a safeguard for the stability of China's national interests (Alunaza et al. 2018). The aim of China's new security concept is a projection as a good partner country in foreign relations. Moreover, peaceful emergence also describes the direction of China's foreign policy with other countries, emphasizing support of highly qualified capital from the economic sector, advanced technology, and highly influential human resources (Alunaza, 2021). Meanwhile, China's involvement and the comprehensive establishment are known for China's strategic strength in enhancing good relations with many target countries in various fields such as diplomatic, military, and economic (Musfiroh et al., 2020).

A lot of research explains China's economic and military rise but does not explicitly explain the strategic value framework of China's foreign policy which is a novelty in this research. Therefore, the contribution of this article is expected to be a reference for the development of discussions and analysis of China's foreign policy in the development of the situation and rivalry of various countries in the Indo-Pacific region. The broad implications of competition from the major countries in the region cannot be ignored as it can potentially change the good relations between countries developed so far.

The author attempts to explain the phenomena in this article using a theoretical framework and the concept of balance of power. Neorealism explains that the balance of power is formed by external forces that can threaten a country, as defined by Kenneth Waltz, who explained that the balance of power could arise from two main elements, namely the anarchist international political structure and state units that want to survive. The central thesis of this theory is to discuss the balance of power in a global anarchist system. Traditionally, it is explained that this approach seeks to explain the efforts made by the state as a sovereign entity to survive amid pressure from outside the territory's boundaries. The

state must seek strength by approaching other countries to stay on the global political agenda. In this case, a power struggle competition is seen as a regular thing in nature and often occurs between countries worldwide (Paul, 2004: 56).

In order to measure how the power struggle can be adequately explained, several things can be considered indicators of the balance of power that occurs. Starting from geographic location, political and economic strength, social culture, government, diplomatic capabilities, and military force. But in general terms, the struggle for power in an international anarchist system can be seen from the military, political and economic power between countries. The balance of power theory explains that the physical strength of a country has great power and poses a great threat to other countries beyond the boundaries of its territory. This theory is believed to explain the rivalry between China, Australia, the US, Japan, India, and ASEAN in world politics, especially in the Indo-Pacific region. These countries are believed to have super capabilities and middle powers, which could threaten other nations trying to become great powers in the Indo-Pacific.

RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is a descriptive-analytical study with a qualitative approach. The author attempts to provide an overview and explain the phenomenon using data collection techniques obtained from the results of a literature search. The qualitative approach in this paper is expected to provide a clear insight into the strategic value of China's foreign policy and the rivalry between the major powers in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, descriptive qualitative in this research is expected to achieve the research objective, which is to explain the data of the examined object in detail and clearly. The type of data presented in this article is secondary data from library research from journals, research reports, books, official documents, and articles on the Internet with reliable sources. The data obtained then went through data analysis techniques based on Miles and Huberman's explanations, namely collecting data, sorting data according to the analytical framework, and concluding (Sugiyono, 2010). So that data is collected to support this article's final explanation. The limitation of this article is to see how the strategic value of China's foreign policy is projected and implemented in maintaining its rivalry with other Indo-Pacific countries in the global political constellation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rising Power and A New Concept of Security and Rivalry between China, the US, and ASEAN

Whether we realize it or not, the expansion of China's influence on the international world is inevitable. China has been recognized as a new power and center of gravity in world politics. This is also what the US must accept. China continues to use its approach to a rising power, including in a bid to beat the US over the rivalry between the two. China not only has enormous ambitions but is also backed by a very stable economic power in the eyes of the US and the world. This makes China's strategy to maintain its power successfully, and the US efforts to rebalance power with China will automatically become more complex. One of the difficulties the US faces with China's rising power is the maritime territorial dispute in the South China Sea. The US appears to be faced with a very dire dilemma between defending its

domestic interests or continuing to step up efforts to be perceived as superior in military strength in the region.

China wants to show a strategy to play on the world's political agenda and indirectly seek and challenge US power. China's interests are to create a new political order and military power in the Indo-Pacific and strive to surpass the power of the US. Thus, it allows China to show the great powers that China is indeed quite successful in implementing the strategy of rising power against the great powers of the world, namely the US. China is unwilling to accept the status quo to implement its rising power strategy, and its international assessment is seen as unfair to US interests. Another rising power effort by China against the US is to create a naval power to rival the strength of the US and several allied countries in the region.

Competition to increase naval power continues to develop into a source of tension between China and the US (Al Syahrin, 2018: 148). So far, China continues to strive to increase its military might in regional security. This is supported by increased military spending and technological support to defeat US power. This is evidenced by China's efforts to create artificial islands and build new military bases. For China, the rising power strategy continues by looking to the South China Sea as a resource that can be used to contain US power in the region. The claim to the border with the South China Sea is also seen as a conflict of interest with several countries in the region, such as Japan, South Korea, and the Philippines, which are allies of the US. This includes several ASEAN countries such as Vietnam, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

China's strategy to show its strength is another by pursuing a foreign policy that emphasizes the principle of a new security concept. China is seen as a threat to many major power countries in the Indo-Pacific, with a significant increase in the Chinese economy. This was also achieved through China's cooperation with many countries, which was very positively received. On the other hand, this response has also become a threat as it realizes and is concerned that China will continue its efforts to increase state spending in the military sector, which will undoubtedly impact and potentially threaten many countries in the world (Septian Eko Cahyono, 2017: 8-12).

The new security concept strategy being implemented by China aims to explain to the international world that China's economic growth poses no threat to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. According to China's perspective, the increase in the country's domestic economy is another country's advantage. The many collaborations can evidence that China continues to engage in a bilateral to the multilateral framework. For other countries, however, China's economic improvement poses a real economic threat in its rivalry with several Indo-Pacific major powers. The author sees that the rivalry that takes place in the Indo-Pacific region is caused by a strategic geographical location, which at the same time can lead to unstable geopolitical conditions. The new security concept pursued by China is to take advantage of domestic economic progress to establish mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries. At the same time, China also plays a role in this cooperation and uses it as a tool to improve protection and increase political and military power.

On the other hand, China is also applying the new security concept by focusing on efforts to resolve disputes with neighbouring countries through peaceful dialogue. This includes the signing of the Beibu Bay Demarcation Agreement with Vietnam. As well as diplomacy with ASEAN regarding the code of conduct in the South China Sea. Another thing that China is trying to do is see economic exchanges and interactions as an essential path to take in the effort to develop regional economic cooperation with ASEAN. This is evidence of

China's consensus to continue contributing to the security and stability of the ASEAN region. In addition, China is also seeking to develop a regional security dialogue and play an active role in the ASEAN regional forum and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Engagement and Comprehensive Establishment of China and Rivalry against Australia

China and Australia have officially established bilateral relations since 1972. Meanwhile, since the 1990s, economic cooperation began to develop. Although the partnership was based on mutual mistrust, China remained Australia's main trading partner until 2019, accounting for 39% of exports and 27% of imports 2019. However, in 2017 Australia cancelled several investment projects. In 2018, Australia also rejected Huawei products from China with its 5G technology. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, if relations between China and Australia continue to deteriorate, Australia will lose 6% of its GDP (Ryan, 2020) because most Australian products are exported to the Chinese market (Khalil, 2020).

In April 2020, tensions between the two countries mounted over Australia's support for an international investigation into the origins of the corona virus first reported to have occurred in Wuhan, China (Paul 2020). In retaliation, China then imposed import sanctions, such as imposing bans and restrictions on Australia on products such as wine, beef, lobster, barley, and cotton (Choudhury, 2020). China has also suspended economic dialogue with Australia, indicating that relations between the two are still tense (Vaswani, 2021).

In the security context, Australia continues to pose a threat to China, especially about China's aggressive presence in the South China Sea and the speed of China's military modernization that has long alarmed Australian politicians (Al Jazeera, 2020). In this case, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the US strengthened its military and diplomatic engagement with its allied countries, including Australia, to deal with China. China has recently conducted its military program in the South China Sea. Philippine Secretary of State Teodoro Locsin Jr. criticized China's plans to tie up its ships around the Spratly Islands, which are part of the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone. However, some countries are US alliances, such as New Zealand, that are not interfering in the South China Sea conflict and instead choose to maintain the intensity of their economic relations with China (Johnson & Detsch, 2021).

Meanwhile, China and Australia have provided financial assistance related to relations with Pacific countries. China has provided aid since 1990, but significant assistance was delivered in 2006 when China renovated roads, ports, and airports, established a floating hospital, supplied fishing vessels, and Fiji acquired a hydrographical vessel from China. However, in January 2018, Australia's Minister for International and Pacific Development Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, stated that China's investment in infrastructure development in the Pacific countries had exacerbated the country's external debt. According to an analysis by the Australia Lowy Institute (2018), China is not providing the aid it promised to countries in the Pacific. Australia and New Zealand have the most considerable aid contributions at 55% for the region's development (Adam, 2019).

Nevertheless, by early 2021, 5 of the 18 member states of the Pacific Islands Forum had withdrawn from a dispute over the organization's leadership, supported by the US, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. The five countries that started were the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Palau, and Nauru. This made allies worried about the presence of China, which took advantage of the regional bloc's breakup to approach

the five countries that withdrew. Stephen Nagy (2021) argues that these countries have low incomes, mainly due to the pandemic, which means they face serious economic problems. The presence of China in the region that can provide aid and loans to developing countries in the Pacific in exchange for access to resources and markets is seen as an attractive opportunity (Ryall, 2021).

For Australia, China also took an extraordinary approach by leveraging the strategic value of engagement and comprehensive establishment, formulated as trilateral cooperation aid in the Pacific. This subsequently led to much speculation against China, which is considered very aggressive in spreading influence in the Indo-Pacific region. For China, by using economic power, it will be straightforward to approach many major power countries, including Australia, which has the status of a long-standing donor in the region. China prioritizes mutually beneficial infrastructure development with other countries and tries not to interfere in domestic affairs (Alunaza and Musfiroh, 2020: 197-199).

The existence of China has also indirectly threatened Australia. Australia, which has long been a donor country, offers conditions perceived as disadvantageous to the borrowing country. Meanwhile, China developed a favourable aid scheme and challenged Australia as a long-standing donor using four specific strategies. The relationship between the old donor country and the recipient is very contradictory. China comes with a mutually beneficial aid scheme. China comes by not interfering in the country's internal affairs and receiving aid. China comes with a more significant amount of assistance. These four things threaten Australia as a long-time donor. China is seen as highly exploitative. However, this was denied by China for involving Australia as a donor-recipient in a trilateral cooperation aid program with New Zealand and as an attempt to lessen criticism of China. (Alunaza & Musfiroh, 2020: 197-199). Both countries welcomed this move, demonstrating China's good faith in Australia as a long-term donor willing to provide aid to donor-recipient countries. The Chinese side argued that assistance in the trilateral cooperation scheme was only intended to help without political interests (Connolly, 2016: 4).

Peaceful Rise and Engagement of China and Rivalry against Japan

Previously, the relationship between China and Japan was not explicitly defined as a competition. Besides being part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China and Japan have also entered a new era of cooperation in development investment. However, the presence of superpowers in the Indo-Pacific led to significant geopolitical changes, including economic relations between China and Japan (Solís, 2020: 1). As an extension of US interests, Japan is considered dominant regarding technological developments, the industrial sector, and aid related to the region's development. China also adopted the East Asian development state model by imitating the development character of Japan. The two countries then sought to implement industrial transformation policies that impacted China-Japan economic relations. This condition becomes even more acute when China comes up with new strategies and approaches in the present time. So that the pattern of interaction between the two countries changes, leading to the question of the Pacific regional economy. Moreover, the main reason causing geopolitical uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific is the US withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) during Donald Trump's administration. In short, the formation of the TPP during the Obama administration was based on US strategic considerations regarding the diplomatic and military dimensions as a counterbalance to China's power in economic regionalization in the Indo-Pacific (Chiang, 2019: 284).

Since the US exit from the TPP, Japan has used RCEP as a framework for cooperation with China. Meanwhile, the TPP has changed to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which consisted of 11 TPP countries and officially came into effect on the 30th of December, 2018. (Chiang 2019). On the other hand, although they are no longer part of the TPP, the allied countries, namely the US, Japan, Australia, and India, which are members of The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or The Quad, are actively working with each other to increase the influence of China on the last two decades (Aoyama, 2021: 1).

The pattern of Japan-China and Japan-US relations leaves Japan in a dilemma. In terms of technology, China continues to aggressively approach the spread of its technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robots, and Huawei and ZTE companies with 5G technology. However, Japan thinks that 5G technology will increase cyber security risks, so the country will tighten the selection of foreign investments, especially in the technology sector (Solís 2020).

As a solution, Japan and the US have agreed to develop a 6G network that is expected to hit the commercial market in the 2030s. The technology development requires an investment of USD 4.5 billion, fully facilitated by the two countries. Meanwhile, the Japanese economy is increasingly dependent on China. In 2020, 22.9 percent of Japan's total exports were dominated by China, surpassing the number of Japanese exports to the US. Professor Rumi Aoyama (2021) believes that Japan can no longer stand between the two superpowers of the Indo-Pacific after Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's term is over. This is because Japan needs to develop policies centered on a commitment to the US as its alliance, especially in the economic and security spheres in the Indo-Pacific (Aoyama, 2021).

In addition to Australia, China has also involved Japan and South Korea and assisted in trilateral cooperation to build trust between the countries involved in the cooperation program. The development of rivalry between China and Japan in the present era is characterized by the not-so-good security situation between the two countries. Such conditions in the Korean Peninsula and the East China Sea could indirectly threaten the stability of Japan's internal security. Both countries are still aware that economic competition between China and Japan could put their relations under strain. The root of the problem in the rivalry between China and Japan stems from economic competition, overlapping border issues, and historical heritage that fuels mistrust between the two countries. (Yuzhu, 2011:198).

China's statement that it has no political interest in trilateral cooperation aid shows that China is using a peaceful approach of strategic value that maintains peace when approaching other countries. This is evidenced by China's ability to approach other countries with technological advancements, vast capital, and resources gained from fostering a sense of peace. Meanwhile, the strength of China's engagement is assessed as the ability of strategic interaction as an attempt to influence changes in leaders' behaviour regarding a country's foreign policy by improving relations with target countries in several predetermined areas (Alunaza 2021).

China and India's Rivalry on Economy and Security

In the security sector, relations between China and India can be said to be unstable due to the confrontation in the China-India border region that has been going on for more than

four decades. Although the two had agreed to withdraw militarily in early 2021, reducing the risk of an immediate armed confrontation, tensions remain high. (Markey, 2021) sees a dispute that could pose new challenges to conflict management between China and India.

In 2019, relations between India and Pakistan became so bad that Indian security forces had to increase their strength on the border with Pakistan. This is also a challenge for India, as China has built a strategic partnership with Pakistan. The intensive relations between China and Pakistan are apparent from the investments that China has made in Pakistan in the infrastructure of tens of billions of US dollars, including in India's claimed region of Kashmir. According to Markey (2021), the complexity of security relations between India with China and Pakistan will continue to increase if peace efforts between India and Pakistan are not achieved.

Moreover, the two countries' attitudes exacerbate the complexity of crisis management. In June 2020, India deployed its warships in the South China Sea, limited to banning Chinese companies from participating in infrastructure projects in India, and denied as many as 59 Chinese web applications, including TikTok and WeChat, from the Indian market. Meanwhile, in October 2020, China brought about a power outage in Mumbai due to a cyber-attack by Chinese hackers. The dispute has implications for China-India relations going forward. Destructive relations are vulnerable as both have established nuclear powers and risk an economic downturn as China is one of India's largest trading partners (BBC News, 2021).

Geopolitically, China has been one step ahead of India regarding relations with small countries in South Asia. According to Yang (2017), China is using space to fill gaps in South Asian countries because India does not yet have sufficient resources such as funds and professional technology to participate in regional development efforts in South Asia. China has been involved in infrastructure development in several South Asian countries through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) program. China has built a border road between Nepal and Myanmar. Meanwhile, China has contributed to the construction of seaports in Sri Lanka and Pakistan. In addition, China has also built Confucian institutions in Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. While China takes a dominant economic approach, India can maintain its relations with South Asian countries only with a geographical, cultural, and historical approach (Paul, 2018: 3-6).

The stability of security at the China-India border and China's economic growth, which is five times faster than India's, have contributed to growing mistrust between the two countries. This is exacerbated by the US ban on Chinese products, namely Huawei and ZTE equipped with 5G technology, which makes India consider importing 5G products from China into its country. As a result, the Indian government has been criticized by Indian experts who stated that there was no evidence of hacking activities carried out by China through its 5G products, so the exclusion of 5G product offerings from China was enforced only in border areas included in territorial disputes (Kim, 2020: 90).

Yuan (2016) stated that the economic relationship between China and India would continue to be affected by political and security considerations before the two agree to address issues in both dimensions. In addition, India has selected Japan for the high-speed rail project, and China is no longer involved. However, India-China was previously believed to have contracted the project before the height of tensions in the border region in 2017.

As for India, which is increasingly open to the world regarding a new nuclear power, China is trying to approach it by leading the way and stopping India's willingness to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). The stance of China is in stark contrast to the perspective of the US, which fully supports the will of India. In addition, China is a little concerned about the start of economic, defense, and energy cooperation between Japan and India. However, China remains optimistic that it can bring India into an alliance to promote its national interests.

Earlier research by Ratha (2014) shows that due to its history and developments in the contemporary context, China has long been recognized as a great power by countries worldwide. This is the background to China's economic, political, and cultural influences in the Indo-Pacific, especially on the countries described in the explanation above. In the study of Alunaza, et al. (2018) China is implementing a new security concept intending to shape its image as a partner for other countries. Peaceful rise is the output of the Chinese security concept he applies to establish relations with Indo-Pacific countries. This research offers novelty in a statement that emphasizes the strategic value of China's foreign policy in the present day. In this case, the balance of power is the background of the relationship between China and countries in the Indo-Pacific. They were referring to the previous explanation that the balance of power can be interpreted as an attempt to balance the power of a country with other countries deemed to have a power or capabilities beyond the strength of their own country to survive in the global political arena. Through its peaceful rise, it can be seen that China is trying to balance its power in the Indo-Pacific, which is the arena for increasing influence and power between the country and the West (US) by implementing its strategic values. Although the cooperation between China and the US alliance countries, especially Japan, is based on a dilemma, the harmonious relationship between the two has proven to be the dominant feature in economic terms (Aoyama, 2021).

Meanwhile, Australia and India have instead focused their political, economic, and security projections on the US because of several issues relevant to the stability of the two countries' relations with China. However, the strategy then pursued by China was to establish diplomacy with archipelago countries in the waters of the Pacific, which could affect its position and strength in the Indo-Pacific even amid unstable relations with Australia. Thus, China's foreign policy poses strategic challenges for the US and its allied countries (Mon, 2020).

CONCLUSION

China applies strategic value in projecting its foreign policy onto several countries considered vital in the Indo-Pacific region. The strategic value projection carried out by China is to halt the accessibility of the US, India, Japan, Australia, and several ASEAN countries, which are seen as a threat to China's existence in the world political arena. The strategic value projections that China has made to the US have not been entirely successful as India is an alliance against expanding US interests. Meanwhile, Australia, Japan, and several ASEAN countries were progressing well in line with the strategic values promoted by these countries. However, if you look at Indonesia's side within the ASEAN framework, Indonesia chooses to determine and take a normative stance and maintain security. Considering that China and the US have a history of cooperation with ASEAN member countries. To maximize the projection of the strategic value it brings, China tries to use all values in the right way, stays on good terms, and tries not to be seen as a dominant country. While it cannot be denied,

every country in the world recognizes that China plays a vital role in world politics with the values carried out in its foreign policy. In terms of the balance of power, every major power country is trying to find loopholes to increase its power and influence in dealing with China. Because if a country that is seen as strong cannot do so, the position of sovereignty and national security of each country automatically becomes a threat. Given the dominance of China's influence and power, that will be bigger and growing.

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