

From Diplomacy to Industry: Evaluating the Long-Term Impacts of Indonesia – Türkiye Defense Cooperation on Regional Stability

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Abstract: Building on over seventy years of relations, Indonesia-Türkiye's bilateral cooperation experienced significant growth following the 2010 defense agreement. The collaboration between Indonesia and Türkiye exemplifies a progressive method in defense diplomacy, integrating strategic cooperation with industrial innovations. Anchored in shared geopolitical interests, this collaboration has led to significant advancements, including the development of the Tiger Tank (KAPLAN MT/APC) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), representing critical milestones in Indonesia's defense modernization and industrial self-reliance. This paper evaluates the long-term impacts of Indonesia-Türkiye defense collaboration on Southeast Asia's regional stability and Indonesia's defense industry growth. The findings reveal that this partnership provides strategic benefits for both nations. For Indonesia, it facilitates access to advanced defense technology, strengthening its domestic defense industry and reducing reliance on imports. For Türkiye, the partnership solidifies its position as a key defense supplier in Southeast Asia, expanding its geopolitical and economic influence. This study highlights the dual role of the Indonesia-Türkiye partnership in enhancing Indonesia's defense capabilities and contributing to a resilient regional security architecture amid intensifying great power rivalries. Utilizing a descriptive qualitative methodology, the research draws on official documents, bilateral agreements, policy statements, academic literature, and media reports. The findings reveals that this collaboration advances Indonesia's technological independence, strengthens its geopolitical positioning, and supports a more autonomous foreign policy. Amid a complex global geopolitical landscape, the partnership serves as a critical foundation for shared national interests and regional stability.

Keywords: Defense Diplomacy, Indonesia-Türkiye Defense Cooperation, Regional Stability, Self-Reliant Industry, Defense Modernization

1. Introduction

Southeast Asia, characterized by rapid economic expansion, cultural diversity, and complex security challenges, possesses substantial geopolitical importance. Amidst these dynamics, regional stability, which is pivotal for prosperity, hinges on practical cooperation and robust national security frameworks. As the largest archipelago and a key player in Southeast Asia, Indonesia holds a vital position in the regional security framework. The nation faces myriad challenges, including territorial disputes, transnational crime, and the implications of emerging military technologies. To navigate these complexities, Indonesia has prioritized the modernization of its defense capabilities through strategic international cooperation, aiming to lessen its dependence on traditional foreign suppliers and align with its broader strategic and industrial goals.

One of the most notable cooperations is with Türkiye, a partnership that exemplifies a significant shift towards innovative bilateral defense strategies. This cooperation is underpinned by shared strategic aims and mutual benefits, extending beyond conventional defense pacts. It includes significant initiatives like the Tiger Tank (KAPLAN MT) development and the acquisition of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), showcasing a blend of diplomatic and industrial progress. These projects highlight the role of defense diplomacy in serving dual purposes: bolstering national industrial bases and enhancing regional stability. Through Türkiye's expertise in defense technology and Indonesia's strategic geographic stance, this partnership enhances the defense capacities of both nations, positioning them as influential actors in regional and global security discussions.

The Indonesian Ministry of Defense has actively engaged with Türkiye through several collaborative agreements encompassing the development of various simulators and other defense technologies

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(Indonesia Defense Ministry, 2022). This ongoing support underscores the importance of the Indonesia-Türkiye defense relationship, which spans multiple facets of cooperation, including political, economic, and cultural exchanges. This multifaceted collaboration contributes to balanced global power dynamics and peace-building efforts (Indonesia Defense Ministry, 2023). The long-established history of relations between Indonesia and Türkiye and their continued commitment to enhancing defense cooperation are crucial for fostering trust and developing the defense capabilities of both nations.

According to Indonesia's Ambassador to Türkiye, the benefits of collaborating with Türkiye in the defense industry lie in its willingness to share knowledge through technology transfer. This makes Türkiye one of the few nations willing to establish a comprehensive defense partnership with Indonesia, further solidifying their cooperative relationship.

Türkiye's defense industry has experienced rapid growth in both quality and quantity. As of 2024, Türkiye successfully exported 230 defense products to 185 countries worldwide (İletişim Bakanlığı, 2024). This growth has transformed Türkiye into a self-reliant nation in the defense industry, with at least 70% of its domestically produced defense equipment (Invest in Türkiye, 2024). Aselsan, Turkish Aerospace Industries, BMC, Roketsan, STM, FNSS, and Havelsan were among the seven Turkish military businesses listed in the rankings published in military News Magazine in 2023. Moreover, Türkiye has established itself as a prominent global leader in drone production, with its drones playing a significant role in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. This progress highlights Türkiye's growing stature as a key player in the global defense industry, presenting valuable prospects for collaboration and technology transfer (Ambassador of Indonesia to the Republic of Türkiye, 2024).

Indonesia and Türkiye share common views on global peace, with Türkiye's foreign policy strategy rooted in cooperation and partnership, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and independence. Türkiye actively fosters bilateral and multilateral relationships, participating in regional and international cooperation forums (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024). Türkiye, as a key member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), holds the position of the second-largest military force within the alliance, following the United States. It plays a vital role in securing Southeastern Europe and hosts two major NATO airbases. Furthermore, Türkiye is among the few NATO members with substantial combat experience. Its advanced defense industry has further empowered the nation to develop indigenous military technologies (Özlü, 2022, p. 217). Türkiye's modern defense technologies and its willingness to transfer knowledge through the Transfer of Technology (ToT) make it a suitable supplier of defense equipment for Indonesia. Türkiye leverages its neutral stance to assert its role in maintaining stability at both regional and international levels.

Defense relations between Indonesia and Türkiye were reinforced in 2010 during reciprocal visits by then-presidents Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Abdullah Gül. Since 2012, the two nations have formalized their defense collaboration by holding annual Defense Industry Cooperation Meetings (DICMs) to enhance capacity building and foster strong linkages. Further, the visit of then-president-elect Prabowo to Ankara in 2024, subsequent to President Erdogan's courtesy visit to Jakarta, illustrated a strong commitment between the two nations to enhance their bilateral relations. The increasing interactions, along with other defense-related visits, dialogues, and routine naval training, demonstrate the commitment of both countries to strengthening their defense cooperation.

This paper argues that the Indonesia-Türkiye defense collaboration has a profound and enduring impact on Southeast Asia's regional stability and Indonesia's defense industry growth. By evaluating collaborative projects and their outcomes, the study illuminates how defense diplomacy serves as a critical tool for addressing contemporary security challenges while fostering industrial innovation. This research bridges the gap between defense diplomacy's theoretical frameworks and practical outcomes by analyzing the partnership through industrial development and geopolitical strategy lenses.

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of the Indonesia-Türkiye defense partnership's dual impact. First, collaboration serves as a critical mechanism for advancing Indonesia's domestic defense industry, paving the way for economic growth and technological self-reliance. Second, it reinforces Indonesia's strategic posture in Southeast Asia. This region continues to navigate the complexities of great power rivalries, non-traditional security threats, and localized conflicts. The Tiger Tank (KAPLAN MT) project, for instance, not only provides Indonesia with a modern armored vehicle but also enables knowledge transfer and capacity-building for its domestic industries, contributing to long-term industrial autonomy.

Beyond industrial gains, the collaboration is equally consequential for regional stability. Southeast Asia remains a focal point for geopolitical competition among major powers such as the United States and China. Defense partnerships like the one between Indonesia and Türkiye offer middle powers the opportunity to assert their influence and shape the security architecture in ways that prioritize regional priorities over external agendas. By fostering trust and interoperability among regional actors, such collaborations mitigate the risks of escalating tensions and contribute to maintaining peace and stability.

These partnerships underscore the deepening defense relations between Indonesia and Türkiye, focusing on joint development and technological collaboration. While these initiatives demonstrate promising advancements, understanding their broader implications requires further exploration. Specifically, this study addresses how such collaboration influences Southeast Asia's regional stability and the strategic benefits it provides for Indonesia's defense industry and geopolitical positioning. Additionally, the research aims to seek how Indonesia can leverage this partnership to maximize long-term gains in defense autonomy and regional influence. These questions underscore the need for a deeper examination of the partnership's role in shaping both Indonesia's national defense objectives and the broader dynamics of regional security.

This research analyzes the intersection of diplomacy, industry, and regional stability, enhancing the comprehension of how bilateral defense collaborations can function as significant tools for national and regional progress. It underscores the strategic importance of the Indonesia-Türkiye collaboration and provides a framework for evaluating similar initiatives in the context of evolving global security challenges.

2. Literature Review

The literature review explores defense diplomacy's theoretical and empirical foundations, the specific dynamics of Indonesia-Türkiye relations, and the broader implications for regional stability in Southeast Asia. By synthesizing existing research and identifying critical gaps, this section establishes the academic context for the study and highlights the unique contributions it aims to make.

2.1. Defense diplomacy

Defense diplomacy, a concept within international relations theory, explains how nations utilize military collaboration to fulfill broader political, economic, and strategic goals. It refers to using military resources and partnerships to foster trust, avert conflicts, and improve mutual security (Winger, 2014, p. 11). This idea has gained traction as countries increasingly focus on cooperative security rather than traditional power dynamics. In the twenty years since the end of the Cold War, a new form of defense cooperation has arisen, and the phrase "defense diplomacy" did not become widely used until after the conflict. According to Cottey and Foster (2004, p. 5), defense diplomacy is the peacetime use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defense ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy and more specifically the use of military cooperation and assistance. This approach emphasizes the deployment of military forces and accompanying infrastructures in a manner that is peaceful and cooperative in order to achieve broader global policy objectives.

Defense diplomacy is a strategy that uses the military to achieve a range of diplomatic aims and agendas by changing it into a tool of soft power or influence (Alice, 2000, pp. 46-67). Numerous scholars have identified various activities that a government can engage in to implement its defense diplomacy. For example, defense diplomacy aimed at building confidence involves creating positive relationships with neighboring or allied nations to promote friendship and alleviate tensions stemming from previous conflicts. Meanwhile, defense diplomacy focused on military capabilities seeks to improve a nation's defense strength at a military level (Laksmana, 2011, p. 74). This may encompass collaboration in the trade of weaponry, provision of weapon grants, joint military drills, exchanges of military personnel, and other related activities (Banerjee & Mackay, 2020, p. 4). Lastly, defense diplomacy related to the defense industry is centered on enhancing and fortifying a nation's defense sector (Hills, 2000, p. 47). This can result in greater political and economic autonomy, diminish reliance on foreign sources for defense capability advancements, and yield economic advantages for the cooperating nations.

A country's ambition on the international stage is to achieve its national interests. Although conflicts of interest can arise and may sometimes lead to open disagreements, it is crucial to avoid such situations deliberately. As a result, most nations rely on diplomacy to secure and protect their national interests. The enhancement of military capabilities is part of efforts to advance national defense and security, which can be employed as diplomatic instruments by sovereign states. This approach is known as defense diplomacy. Numerous nations have shifted their military functions to serve as tools of diplomacy, with the goal of achieving their objectives without resorting to violence or open hostility (Sudarsono, Mahroza, & D.W., 2018, p. 70). This shift has resulted in the military's position in state diplomacy being perceived as more than merely a tool of violence.

The 2015 Indonesian White Paper presents the country's viewpoint on the principles of international defense collaboration, Emphasizing the importance of cultivating trust between nations through mutual respect for sovereignty, non-interference in domestic affairs, and the pursuit of shared benefits.. This approach aims to mitigate conflicts between countries. Additionally, the cooperation seeks to enhance defense capabilities by advancing the professionalism of personnel through education, training, and partnerships within the defense industry. International collaboration is seen as an essential tool of defense diplomacy, promoting national interests in defense through tangible actions that are advantageous for all parties involved. As a result, defense cooperation is vital for promoting regional security and stability. Furthermore, the 2015 Defense White Paper emphasizes the various dimensions of Indonesia's defense diplomacy. The first dimension revolves around military relations with ASEAN nations. In contrast, the second-dimension highlights Indonesia's leadership within ASEAN and its active participation in defense diplomacy with significant global powers in the Asia Pacific region, including the establishment and development of defense and military relationships with Türkiye (Indonesian White Paper, 2015).

Indonesia's defense diplomacy has three main agendas: building mutual trust, enhancing military capabilities, and advancing domestic defense industries (Syawfi 2009, p. 263). Defense. In the context of developing defense industries, defense diplomacy includes initiatives such as arms sales agreements, technology transfer, joint ventures, and research and development collaborations (Cottey & Foster, 2004, p. 5). Indonesia perceives defense diplomacy as a strategic instrument to promote regional stability and collaboration while concurrently enhancing its national defense capabilities.

Studies in this domain emphasize defense diplomacy's dual functions: strengthening bilateral ties and fostering multilateral stability. For instance, Smith & Werman (2016) highlight how defense diplomacy facilitates the transfer of technology and expertise, enabling states to modernize their defense industries. Similarly, recent research by Chang & Jenne (2020, p. 25) underscores its role in shaping regional security architectures, particularly in volatile regions like Southeast Asia.

Indonesia must prioritize the enhancement of its defense industry partnerships to address both conventional and unconventional security challenges, as the Indonesian defense minister underscored. The nation's strategic position should be leveraged to bolster its regional leadership and address regional challenges. During the 2024 ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM), Prabowo Subianto underscored Indonesia's significant position as a founding member of ASEAN and a regional leader in promoting the bloc's objectives. Analysts and officials indicated that Indonesia is committed to strengthening regional resilience, maritime security, and multilateral trust in the face of escalating geopolitical tensions. Officials reflected that ASEAN has consistently been the foundation of Indonesia's defense and security strategies (Da Costa, 2024).

Indonesia's defense diplomacy was highlighted during President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's visit to Ankara in 2010, where discussions on fostering collaboration in the defense industry occurred. Aligned with the theoretical framework of Cottey and Forster, both President Yudhoyono and Defense Minister Yusgiantoro engaged in strategic dialogue and negotiations to establish a formal defense partnership. The collaborations was formalized by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding Defense Industry Cooperation (The Diplomat, 2017). Further progress in this diplomatic effort was achieved through partnerships between defense companies from Indonesia and Türkiye, which will be explored in the following chapter.

2.2. Security dynamics in Indo-Pacific region and Indonesia's strategic priorities

Both conventional and unconventional threats influence Southeast Asia's security landscape. Its strategic location and economic importance have made the region a focal point for great power competition, highlighting the need for robust mechanisms to maintain stability. Defense cooperation is crucial in this context, as it enhances regional deterrence and promotes interoperability among nations.

The first step in gaining an understanding of the security situation in the Indo-Pacific area is to recognize the system and the units that are involved. The term "system" is specifically employed to denote the entirety of the Indo-Pacific region. Similarly, the "units" comprise the nations that are included within it. These nations includes; USA, Japan, China, South Korea, North Korea, Australia, and some Southeast Asian countries. There are several different ways in which power is distributed throughout the Indo-Pacific region. This region is home to many of the world's most powerful nations, both militarily and economically. In contrast, many Southeast Asian countries have limited military capabilities and are still developing their economies. This disparity in power distribution creates a conflictual relationship, where stronger nations seek to assert control over the region while weaker nations strive to ensure their survival.

As Breslin (2010) argues, regions are not solely defined by geographical proximity but also by shared cultural, economic, linguistic, and political characteristics that contribute to a collective identity. The Indo-Pacific is defined as a region that includes the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Its geography and cultural ties, economic interconnectivity, political relationships among state and non-state actors, and other unifying elements characterize it. The polarity of the Indo-Pacific region is characterized by a multipolar structure dominated by great powers. The Indo-Pacific area exhibits a multipolar structure dominated by major countries. Nonetheless, attention frequently centers on two dominant powers between the United States of America and China. The inequalities in power imbalances, along with regional polarization contribute to the instability of the Indo-Pacific system, which stays multipolar yet ultimately converges around two dominant power poles (Azizah, Swastanto & Rudiawan, 2023, p. 124).

There is a wide variety of threats that the region must contend with, both conventional and unconventional. Territorial disputes in the East and South China Seas, Taiwan-related tensions, and Korean Peninsula hostilities are examples of conventional threats (Kim, 2015, p. 115). These are all examples of traditional hazards. As a result of these problems, defense coalitions such as QUAD and

AUKUS have come into existence (Farmonout, 2025). The Indo-Pacific area is home to a few classic threats that have the potential to erupt into open conflict amongst the various nations that make up the region.

According to Azizah, Swastanto, and Rudiawan (2023, p. 125), the contention regarding the South China Sea brings to light the fight for sovereignty in territories that are rich in resources and strategically important. China's historical claims and military presence have intensified tensions, frustrating other claimants and prompting ASEAN's efforts for peaceful mediation. Therefore, claimant governments have been strengthening their military capabilities, frequently aligning themselves with Western powers like the United States, in order to take advantage of the region's tremendous potential. Similarly, regional instability is further exacerbated by territorial disputes between Japan and China regarding the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea. Coercive acts and the militarization of contested territories drive these disputes.

The Korean Peninsula also remains a source of tension due to the unresolved status of the Korean War. North Korea's focus on military and nuclear advancements, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, has heightened international fears and maintained global attention on the region. Meanwhile, Taiwan's conflict with China continues to escalate, with Beijing seeking reunification and the U.S. demonstrating support for Taiwan's sovereignty. Tensions have been exacerbated by actions such as the visit of House Speaker of United States Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in 2022, with China responding through military provocations and harsh condemnations (Reditya, 2022). Together, these disputes underscore the Indo-Pacific region's persistent traditional security threats. It is not just the military deployment of China and the United States that is contributing to the tensions in the Indo-Pacific region; it is also The mobilization of military fleets from U.S. allies, including the United Kingdom, France, and Australia, under the AUKUS security agreement, has escalated military operations in the Indo-Pacific region. The increasing military presence of Indo-Pacific nations, especially China, poses a risk of the area descending into a new Cold War. The rising tension heightens the probability of military confrontation as competing alliances endeavor to demonstrate their power.

The Indo-Pacific region faces various non-traditional threats, including climate change, natural disasters, terrorism, and maritime crimes. Natural disasters such as droughts, floods, landslides, forest fires, and smog are significant concerns, often driven by human activities despite being triggered by natural factors. Considering that a substantial segment of the Indo-Pacific region comprises territorial seas, maritime offenses are particularly prevalent. Challenges like as piracy, illicit commerce, human trafficking, and terrorism are significant, particularly as half of the world's trade routes traverse this region (Azizah et al., 2023, p. 125).

In addition to conflicts, the Indo-Pacific fosters cooperation among nations and international institutions. Countries with shared concerns, such as territorial disputes with China, often collaborate to uphold international maritime law, ensure open sea lanes, and promote trade and navigation. Prominent examples of cooperation include alliances like QUAD and AUKUS, led by the United States, as well as regional partnerships under ASEAN's framework. The motivation behind these initiatives is a collective dedication to the establishment of a prosperous, safe, and stable Indo-Pacific region. Both the patterns of conflict and cooperation in the region reflect the national interests of the countries involved.

The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), initiated by Indonesia and established during the 34th ASEAN Summit in 2019. It underscores ASEAN centrality and seeks to foster stability, peace, and security in the region by adhering to the principles of accountability, inclusivity, and cooperation among ASEAN member states and external partners (Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry, 2019).

Image 1

Map Illustrating China's Claimed Area Overlapping Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in North Natuna Sea



Source: *The Maritime Executive*, 2017.

According to Nutterlein's (1979, p. 248) framework, Indonesia's strategic objectives in the Indo-Pacific include safeguarding its sovereignty and protecting its citizens from external threats. A significant challenge to Indonesia's defense is the South China Sea (SCS) territorial disputes, particularly concerning Indonesia's Natuna Islands, which fall within China's contentious nine-dash line claim. Despite not being a claimant state in the South China Sea dispute, Indonesia has unequivocally repudiated China's assertions, maintaining that the Natuna Islands are sovereign Indonesian territory. President Joko Widodo underscored this position during his visit to Natuna, emphasizing its status as an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia (Tempo, 2020).

In response to rising tensions, Indonesia has sought defense collaborations to reinforce regional security. While multilateral frameworks like ASEAN play a vital role in collective security, bilateral partnerships such as Indonesia-Türkiye defense cooperation have emerged as significant mechanisms to bolster stability in Southeast Asia. For instance, defense collaborations with Türkiye focus on technological transfer and joint production and knowledge exchange, enhancing Indonesia's capacity to address security threats, including those stemming from territorial disputes. By combining resources and expertise, this collaboration supports Indonesia's goal of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, while simultaneously strengthening its defense capabilities against traditional and non-traditional threats.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research framework to analyze the defense cooperation between Indonesia and Türkiye, focusing on its impacts on regional stability and the growth of Indonesia's defense industry. A qualitative case study approach is adopted, centering on the Indonesia-Türkiye defense partnership as a single, in-depth case. The case study method is particularly well-suited for examining complex and context-dependent phenomena such as defense diplomacy, enabling the researcher to uncover patterns and insights that inform broader discussions on bilateral collaborations in the defense sector.

Qualitative research is chosen for its descriptive nature and analytical depth, prioritizing the exploration of processes and meanings from the perspectives of the subjects involved. This approach relies on a theoretical framework to maintain focus and ensure alignment with empirical evidence while providing a structured foundation for discussing the findings. The qualitative methodology enables the study to effectively address intricate aspects of the defense partnership and its multifaceted implications (Creswell, 2014, p. 37).

The data for this study are collected through a literature-based approach, which involves analyzing various sources, including official documents, such as bilateral agreements and government reports, that outline the objectives and scope of Indonesia-Türkiye defense cooperation. Additional materials include speeches and statements from policymakers and defense officials of both nations, as well as books, journal articles, media reports, and internet-based resources. This comprehensive data collection strategy ensures a robust and nuanced understanding of the research subject.

This paper aims to explain the long-term impacts of Defense Cooperation between Indonesia and Türkiye on regional stability in Southeast Asia and to assess the contribution of defense diplomacy to Indonesia's defense industrial growth and autonomy. Literature reviews form the basis of the author's descriptive qualitative approach. To conduct these reviews, the author perused a variety of sources, including official documents, bilateral agreements, government reports, speeches and statements by policymakers and defense officials from both countries, books, journals, articles, media reports/news, and websites that pertain to the subject of this research.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings from this study highlight the profound impact of the Indonesia-Türkiye defense collaboration on both industrial growth and regional stability. This section interprets the results within the broader context of defense diplomacy, regional geopolitics, and industrial policy. It offers insights into such partnerships' strategic value and potential for future development.

4.1. Indonesia - Türkiye defense relations

The significance of Türkiye as a regional power, coupled with the shifting dynamics of the international arena and its export-oriented economy, has compelled the nation to extend its reach into further away territories. As the fastest-growing region with substantial economic potential, Southeast Asia has emerged as the main focus of Turkish foreign policy. Türkiye's increasing interest in Southeast Asia has enhanced its connections with Indonesia. The defense sector presents significant opportunities for collaboration in Türkiye-Indonesia relations. Türkiye and Indonesia are G-20 nations, and collaboration would be advantageous for both in numerous respects. The success of Türkiye's defense sector and Indonesia's demand for defense supplies have fostered a conducive environment for collaboration. The collaboration has expanded in both quantity and variety under business-to-business (B2B) and government-to-government (G2G) frameworks.

The collaboration in defense technology began with the formal visit of Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to Türkiye, culminating in the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in June 2010. This accord was formally ratified four years later, culminating in the enactment of the 2014 Law Number 19 of the Republic of Indonesia, which pertains to the Ratification of Defense Industry Cooperation between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Türkiye. Both parties reached a consensus regarding the supervision of defense technology advancement, encompassing collaborative research, production, modernization, and prospective sales, in addition to a pledge to uphold shared interests, security, and integrity as clearly articulated in the regulations. Subsequent to the endorsement by parliament, the Indonesian government commenced significant collaboration with the Turkish government. Concerning technical and operational matters, both governments, alongside their respective ministries of defense and domestic defense enterprises, participated in discussions regarding

various agreements that were amplified following Indonesia's President Joko Widodo's visit to Türkiye in 2017 (Luerdi & Marisa, 2020, p. 3).

Collaboration commenced in various fields, including specialized apparatus like radar systems and extensive transfers of military knowledge. An exemplary instance of defense collaboration between Türkiye and Indonesia is the Kaplan MT medium-weight tank, produced through the partnership of FNNS, a Turkish armored vehicle manufacturer, and PT Pindad, an Indonesian defense firm. A cooperative agreement was instituted in 2015 to develop two prototype medium tanks. The contract for the serial manufacturing of the KAPLAN MT (TIGER) Medium Weight Tank, which promotes enduring collaboration, was successfully finalized between FNSS and PT Pindad in 2019. The agreement anticipated the production of 18 KAPLAN MT vehicles and the completion of design optimization studies by 2020. The partnership including technical assistance for the production and provision of components supplied to PT Pindad for manufacturing in Indonesia concluded in 2021. The initial manufacture of these vehicles was completed by 2022, marking a major milestone in the bilateral defense collaboration and representing Türkiye's first defense export endeavor in the tank category (FNSS, 2022). At the Saha Defense and Aerospace Exhibition 2024, which took place in Istanbul, PT Pindad and FNSS announced the next phase of their collaboration, which involves the development of the second batch of Kaplan armored personnel carriers (APCs). This tracked vehicle, which weighs thirty tons, has the capacity to transport up to thirteen troops, which includes the driver, the commander, and the gunner. In order to combine battlefield management systems and modern mission technologies, it uses an open electronics architecture. This architecture draws on the knowledge that was acquired during the Kaplan Movement Training program. Twenty-five years from now, production of the Kaplan armored personnel carrier (APC) is expected to start, with the initial units being constructed at FNSS facilities in Türkiye. Following this, production will move to Indonesia in accordance with a technology transfer agreement, which will provide PT Pindad the opportunity to manufacture the cars on a local level. It is projected that deliveries will take place by the end of the year 2026, which will greatly enhance Indonesia's defense capabilities and promote local self-reliance in the production of military goods (Asian Military Review, 2024).

Defense cooperation between Türkiye and Indonesia has advanced through various agreements and negotiations. The diversification of defense cooperation includes the acquisition of advanced missile systems, aerial warfare technologies, and naval combat management systems from Türkiye. Indonesia has acquired FACM-70 fast attack missile boats and ANKA unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), with production and assembly carried out in collaboration with Türkiye (İletişim Başkanlığı, 2024). The package includes Khan missiles and a multilayer air defense system manufactured by Turkish company Roketsan, in addition to the ADVENT Combat Management System created by HAVELSAN. The systems were supplied to Indonesia for implementation on the patrol vessels of the Indonesian Navy in 2022 (Naval News, 2022). The ADVENT Combat Management System highlights Indonesia's position as an important partner in the realm of Turkish defense technology on the global stage. The Indonesian military is set to be the first international users of the system (Daily Sabah, 2022). Indonesia has entered into an agreement to implement ASELSAN's sophisticated defense technologies. The components include SARP, CENK, the Naval Gun Fire Control System for the Indonesian Coast Guard Command, the Air Defense Missile Fire Control System (FCS), and the Missile Data Link (Aselsan, 2024).

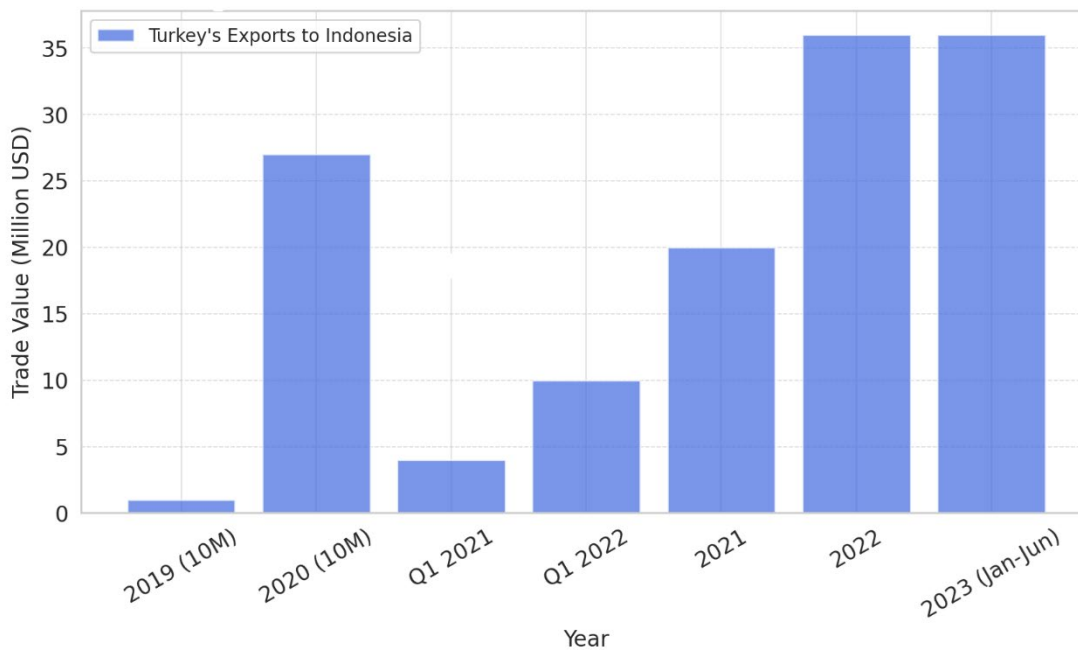
Türkiye and Indonesia have expressed strong ambitions to deepen their defense industry collaboration. Former Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi emphasized that defense cooperation is a priority for both nations, advocating for a partnership that extends beyond Indonesia purchasing defense products from Türkiye. This move underscores Indonesia's significant commitment to fostering defense ties with Türkiye (Move2Türkiye News, 2022).

A new turning point in the bilateral defense partnership was reached in February 2023 with the signing of a defense cooperation action plan. Prabowo Subianto, the Minister of Defense of Indonesia, referred

to the deal as "historic," noting that it is a continuation of the strategic collaboration that exists between the two countries. He expressed high hopes that their close collaboration would positively contribute to the world's peace and stability. The Minister of Defense of Türkiye also stressed the significance of extending military training and defense industrial collaboration between the two countries, noting the good influence that this would have on the national interests of both countries as well as the contribution that it would make to the security of the region (Antara News, 2023).

Table 1

Türkiye's Defense Exports to Indonesia



Source: Türkiye Exporters Assembly, 2023.

Despite these advancements, there remains potential to increase the frequency of reciprocal visits to deepen the partnership further. In July 2024, Indonesian Deputy Defense Minister Muhammad Herinda visited Türkiye, followed by Defense Minister and President-elect Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo, who held meetings with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan in Ankara. During this visit, Subianto also toured the Bayraktar technology company, showcasing Türkiye's advancements in defense technology. Following these visits, Jakarta hosted Türkiye's Defense Minister Yaşar Güler on August 22, 2024, further strengthening ties through high-level engagements (Güler, 2024).

In February 2025, during the visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Türkiye and Indonesia executed multiple memorandums of understanding (MoU), encompassing the defense sector. The Leaders underscored the strategic significance of collaboration in defense and the defense industry to fortify national defense, augment strategic autonomy in the defense sector, and promote global peace and stability. The two leaders deliberated on the necessity of formulating a roadmap to augment defense industry engagement between the two nations, cultivate their respective national defense ecosystems, and reinforce bilateral partnerships in high-tech sectors through mutually advantageous initiatives. Both leaders concurred to enhance partnership beyond procurement and endorsed the formation of a joint venture and representative offices for Turkish key defense sector companies in Indonesia. The two Presidents concurred that prioritizing the enhancement of human resource capacity is essential, particularly through opportunities for mutual cooperation in education and training for Indonesian cadets and officers in Turkish defense institutions, focusing on critical areas such as cybersecurity,

intelligence, and counter-terrorism. Both leaders concurred to institute regular 2+2 meetings between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense to deliberate on and oversee the execution of strategic defense cooperation in 2025 (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2025)

4.2. Strategic implications for regional stability

Since the center of gravity in global politics has moved eastward, the Indo-Pacific region has absorbed the attention of world powers. Due to the substantial strategic environment present, nations focus their foreign policies in this area. Because of the proliferation of non-traditional threats and the large number of parties vying for control of the region, member states have had to tread carefully while addressing regional issues.

In the years after the Cold War ended, Türkiye's foreign policy shifted its focus to the Southeast Asian region. Turkish officials in charge of foreign policy have stated that fresh efforts towards Southeast Asian nations and regional organizations have been spurred by the region's booming economy. Türkiye has inked free trade agreements with multiple ASEAN member states and is a member of the organization's sectoral dialogue partner program. For the year 2019, Türkiye designated Asia as a New Initiative. The volume of trade that Türkiye conducts with countries in Southeast Asia has significantly more than doubled. Regarding Turkish foreign policy, Indonesia is of particular significance among Southeast Asian countries due to its strategic position and the size of its population. Türkiye and Indonesia have established a strategic partnership, and the two countries' collaboration in the military industry has solidified their bilateral connections (Kasım, 2023, p. 615).

Indonesia and Türkiye both play significant roles as regional actors, shaping the dynamics of their respective regions. After the Cold War ended, Indonesia's foreign policy focused on economic recovery and development, maintaining territorial integrity, developing democracy, and improving the country's reputation in the region and around the world (Yani, 2009, p. 15). President Joko Widodo introduced the concept of a global maritime fulcrum, aiming to establish Indonesia as a maritime power with extensive diplomatic influence. This maritime doctrine emphasized preserving national sovereignty, ensuring maritime security, and contributing to regional stability. Additionally, Indonesia sought to strengthen its archipelagic perspective by leveraging its vast economic potential as a maritime nation (Gindarsah & Priamarizki, 2015, p. 2). Recognizing that its primary challenges are maritime, Indonesia prioritized building a strong naval force to deter external threats, secure its extensive coastline, and protect its thousands of islands (Shekhar & Liow, 2014).

Indonesia has historically played a role in maintaining peace and security in the Asia Pacific area as a middle power. In order to maintain strategic autonomy in its regional diplomatic activities, the country needs to modernize its defense and become more independent. (Gindarsah & Priamarizki, 2015, p. 141). Indonesia's aim to enhance its defense capabilities has facilitated cooperation in Türkiye-Indonesia relations, given the recent growth in Türkiye's defense industry capacity. Türkiye is becoming a recognized force in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for its attempts to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance in domestic defense technology (MacGillivray 2016, pp. 16-17). The government is improving the competitiveness of its defense sector compared to other countries, allowing it to respond to challenges to its domestic and regional security with little need on foreign military equipment.

The strategic benefits of the Indonesia-Türkiye collaboration extend beyond industrial advancements, significantly influencing regional stability in Southeast Asia. The cooperation has also reinforced Indonesia's strategic posture in Southeast Asia. By modernizing its defense capabilities, Indonesia has strengthened its deterrence against potential security threats, contributing to regional stability. This strengthened posture contributes to the overall security architecture of Southeast Asia, reinforcing Indonesia's role as a stabilizing force in the region. The partnership with Türkiye has enhanced

Indonesia's ability to participate in multilateral security initiatives, fostering greater interoperability and trust among Southeast Asian nations.

Türkiye's defense industry establishes a presence in Southeast Asia through strong connections with Indonesia. Through collaboration with Indonesia, Türkiye gains access to partnerships with Indonesia's allies in multilateral contexts. The Indonesia-led Multilevel Naval Exercise Komodo (MNEK) facilitates Türkiye and various nations in enhancing their capabilities and fostering confidence-building measures.

Furthermore, the partnership exemplifies the potential of middle-power nations to assert their influence amid great power rivalries. By engaging in equitable partnerships, Indonesia and Türkiye demonstrate how defense diplomacy can balance external influences while prioritizing regional stability and self-reliance. This approach serves as a model for other nations navigating similar geopolitical dynamics.

4.2. Industrial growth and self-reliance

Indonesia has been encouraged to diversify its procurement of armaments from many nations due to the historical experiences of allies who imposed an arms embargo against the country. Due to the various factors that are involved in the process of acquiring defense equipment from other countries, the government has been encouraged to build and expand the national defense industry. The advancement of the national defense industry is inextricably linked to the support and assistance it receives from other nations, due to the limited understanding of technology and the production of sophisticated weaponry. The national interest in the defense sector requires a more focused strategy via government-to-government (G-to-G) diplomacy, particularly in defense diplomacy (Riyadi and Dewi, 2022, p. 81). As a strategic tool, defense diplomacy helps the Indonesian government achieve its goal of fostering autonomy in the country's military industry. This G-to-G diplomacy, which is focused at promoting the national defense sector, is founded on the cultivation of strong connections and collaboration with other nations, as demonstrated by Indonesia's defense partnership with Türkiye.

Since the presidency of Yudhoyono (2004–2019), Indonesia has established a roadmap for the development of its defense capabilities, guided by the principle of self-reliance (Rofii, 2023, p. 276). Law No. 16 of 2012 was passed by the Indonesian government to further strengthen the growth of the country's military industry. Goals outlined in Article 3 of this law include strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities for defense systems, becoming self-sufficient in the production of security and defense equipment, and building robust and autonomous security and defense systems (Indonesian Ministry of Defense, 2012). Article 34 also states that the Ministry of Defense must give preference to defense equipment made in the country. The Ministry is directed to work with nations that can offer technology transfer as a component of the procurement process if local producers are unable to fulfill particular defense needs. As part of these guidelines, local content must be considered, offsets must account for at least 85% of the total procurement cost, trade offsets must be taken into account, and defense offsets or knowledge transfer must be considered (Riyadi and Dewi, 2022, p. 84). This approach reflects the government's commitment to fostering self-reliance in the defense sector while ensuring that international procurements contribute to the development of Indonesia's defense industry. These regulations underscore Indonesia's determination to build a self-sufficient defense sector, supported by collaborative research initiatives with allied nations, exemplified by its ongoing partnership with Türkiye.

The areas that contributed to the enhanced capabilities of both nations' defense industries were defined in detail by Law No. 19 of 2014 of the Republic of Indonesia, which dealt with the Agreement of Defense Industry Cooperation Between the Governments of Indonesia and Türkiye. Both nations agreed on a number of points, including the need for facilities, the development of a joint committee to encourage cooperation in the defense sector, the need to safeguard intellectual property, and the importance of

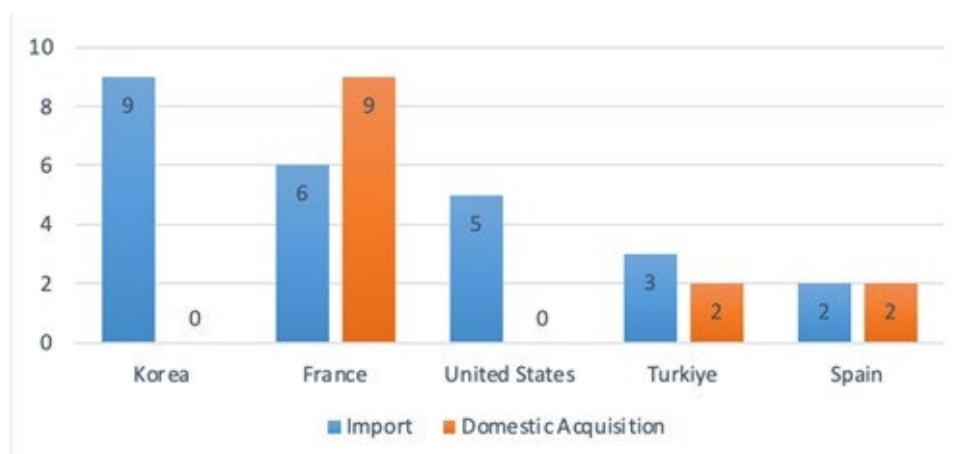
keeping all relevant documents, information, and materials secret. The parties made a commitment to prioritizing the interests, security, and integrity of each nation, with the understanding that disagreements would be settled peacefully through negotiations within the joint committee, with the goal of avoiding recourse to international courts and, if necessary, addressing them through diplomatic channels (Rofii, 2023, p. 278).

The partnership between Indonesia and Türkiye exemplifies the practical applications of defense diplomacy. Rooted in shared strategic interests, the collaboration has produced notable achievements such as the Tiger Tank (KAPLAN MT) and the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) programs. These project initiatives go beyond technological innovation, reflecting a strategic alignment focused on bolstering self-reliance and reducing dependence on Western defense systems. Regional distribution of the Kaplan/Tiger medium tanks is strategically divided, with Indonesia focusing on Asia and Türkiye targeting markets in the Middle East and Europe (Elisabeth et al., 2021, p. 251). Along with the common goal of attaining defense and security self-sufficiency for both nations, economic factors play a major role in driving this partnership. When it comes to manufacturing medium tanks in particular, these defense industry alliances are crucial to Indonesia's goal of attaining defense self-sufficiency. Likewise, the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) initiative signifies a significant advancement for Indonesia's aerospace sector. Türkiye's cutting-edge drone technology fills a critical gap in Indonesia's defense capabilities, particularly in surveillance and reconnaissance. However, the reliance on imported components highlights the need for Indonesia to invest further in developing domestic supply chains, ensuring sustainability and self-reliance.

Considering Indonesia's historical issues with scale instability and fluctuating defense budgets, maintaining cooperation might be challenging. Under President Prabowo, the defense sector has experienced a substantial budget increase, rising from 0.78 percent to 1.5 percent of gross domestic product. The increase will enable the Indonesian Military to enhance its armament, including via procurement and coproduction with Türkiye. Even though Türkiye does not rank as Indonesia's primary defense industry partner in terms of quantity. The DCA, if realized, will provide a robust basis for enhanced collaboration.

Table 2

Indonesia's Largest Defense Partners By Quantity of Projects 2015- 2024



Source: *Military Balance + IISS, 2025.*

Strengthening the partnership with Türkiye will allow Indonesia to diminish its dependence on Western nations, particularly the United States, which has the capacity to impose an arms embargo on any nation at any time under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), thereby augmenting its strategic defense autonomy. Moreover, joint ventures between Indonesia and Türkiye in the defense sector and equipment production, utilizing both B2B and/or G2G frameworks, might

enhance extensive economic collaboration and prospects. Türkiye's adaptable approach to defense solutions facilitates tailored collaboration, fitting with Indonesia's specific defense requirements. Türkiye's readiness to actively participate in and endorse offset agreements with Indonesia will facilitate more profound collaboration.

By integrating Türkiye's advanced armored vehicle design expertise with Indonesia's manufacturing capabilities, this partnership enhances the defense industry's capabilities through technology transfer and capacity building. This synergy strengthens Indonesia's ability to produce advanced defense equipment and supports its long-term goal of defense autonomy. Indonesia's ability to produce defense systems on its own in the future is projected to be strengthened by joint production and development projects.

5. Conclusion

In an increasingly uncertain world marked by geopolitical complexities, nations must prepare for a broad spectrum of challenges, often requiring significant investments in defense and security. This dynamic has driven countries to prioritize reliable partnerships while enhancing domestic production, particularly in the defense sector. The growing defense cooperation between Indonesia and Türkiye exemplifies the strategic value of collaboration in strengthening national security and fostering regional stability.

Türkiye's defense companies have partnered with Indonesian counterparts, facilitating knowledge transfer and building trust. Despite geographical distance, both nations share mutual respect and strategic interests, making their collaboration a model for developing countries. Indonesia's strategic location, abundant resources, stable economy, and robust military position it as a key player in Southeast Asia, while Türkiye's commitment to this partnership underscores its recognition of Indonesia's pivotal role in the Indo-Pacific.

For Indonesia, advanced defense capabilities are essential to safeguarding sovereignty and promoting regional security. Leveraging technology transfer and prioritizing domestic production through this partnership, Indonesia enhances its deterrence capabilities, aligns with its foreign policy goals, and positions itself as a future player in the global arms market.

To make the most on the momentum of their close defense cooperation, both Indonesia and Türkiye must take certain factors into account. Firstly, in a progressively politicized global political landscape, both nations must uphold their dedication to being autonomous strategic entities within their own regions. In this manner, they can perpetuate the enhancement of their equipment and defensive capabilities without overtly opposing or aligning with a specific power. This stance will not only demonstrate how independent entities may retain their importance in a polarized environment, but also facilitate the advancement of bilateral relations. Secondly, drawing from past partnerships, Indonesia and Türkiye must dedicate themselves entirely to their alliance to guarantee that technological transfers, including co-development, may enhance both parties. Repeatedly, volatile funds and intricate bureaucratic procedures hindered Indonesia and its Korean partners from effectively realizing all stages of information sharing. The Defense Ministry must identify shortcomings and develop strategic action plans prior to pursuing additional collaboration. In this context, the potential for sustained, enduring relationships will become more judicious. In the forthcoming years, Indonesia and Türkiye must sustain their commitment to enduring collaboration. Facilitating both governments to autonomously adopt a nonaligned culture will be crucial for maintaining mutual trust between the parties.

Spanning critical areas such as research and development, tank production, software, and military training, the Indonesia-Türkiye defense partnership not only strengthens their domestic defense industries but also sets a precedent for strategic alliances that foster technological innovation and reduce import dependency. Beyond bilateral benefits, this collaboration contributes to regional stability

in the Indo-Pacific and demonstrates how developing nations can elevate their global standing through effective cooperation. Their partnership positions them as key players in fostering stability, leveraging Indonesia's role as a bridge to Southeast Asia and Türkiye's strategic access to Europe and beyond.

As influential regional powers and representatives of the Muslim world, Indonesia and Türkiye are uniquely positioned to shape peace and stability on a global scale. Deepening this partnership will open new opportunities to enhance their defense industries, expand geopolitical influence, and serve as a cornerstone of regional security and prosperity. This collaboration stands as a model for strategic alliances, advancing technological independence, national resilience, and mutual growth.

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