Asian Journal of
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Art

e-ISSN: 3025-4507
p-ISSN: 3025-5287
Index: Harvard, Boston, Sydney University, Dimensions, Lens, Scilit, Semantic, Google, etc

https://doi.org/10.58578/AJSTEA.v3i4.7112

Hedging through Defense Diplomacy: Indonesia's Non-Alignment in the Age of Emerging Technologies

Sekar Hesti Suminar, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, Oktaheroe Ramsi
Defense University, Indonesia
sekarhesti.smn@gmail.com

Article Info:

Submitted:	Revised:	Accepted:	Published:
Jun 29, 2025	Jul 25, 2025	Aug 6, 2025	Aug 11, 2025

Abstract

Indonesia's long-standing doctrine of a "free and active" foreign policy is increasingly reinterpreted in the 21st century as a strategic hedging approach, enabling the state to navigate intensifying great-power competition and rapid technological change. This study examines the emergence of defense diplomacy as a core instrument of Indonesia's hedging strategy, allowing engagement with major powers and access to evolving defense technologies without compromising its non-aligned identity. Using a qualitative case study method, the research contrasts two key partnerships: the PT Len–Thales combat management system contract, representing Indonesia's engagement with Western technology, and the ongoing Indonesia–India *BrahMos* missile negotiations, exemplifying diversification beyond traditional suppliers. The findings demonstrate that cultivating diverse, well-managed defense relationships mitigates overdependence on a single partner, enhances indigenous technological capacity, and advances strategic autonomy. This analysis argues that Indonesia's hedging constitutes a contemporary articulation of non-alignment, reconciling normative commitments to sovereignty with pragmatic uncertainty management amid emerging technologies. By situating this dynamic within the broader framework of middle power diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific, the study underscores the growing relevance of defense

AJSTEA Journal is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

diplomacy in safeguarding national interests in a fluid and contested geopolitical environment.

Keywords: Indonesia; Hedging Strategy; Defense Diplomacy; Non-Alignment; Emerging Technologies

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, the Indo-Pacific has become the center of great-power competition, China and the United States creating challenging governance, security, and technology problems for medium powers like Indonesia. Globally, rising tensions in the South China Sea, trade wars, and competing influence campaigns have increased strategic uncertainty. Locally, Indonesia is also caught between the need to modernize its defence capabilities at all costs and maintaining its highly prized national principle of strategic autonomy and its foreign policy credo of "free and active" non-alignment (bebas aktif). Latest studies emphasize that defence diplomacy military-to-military relations, training, and technology transfers on bilateral and multilateral bases has been central to Indonesia's meeting this double challenge (Gindarsah, 2015).

In response to such domestic and international dynamics, the scholar learns that Indonesia's elite have begun adopting increasingly a strategic hedging strategy, with selective participation in multiple powers combined with soft balancing in diversified defense relations rather than exclusive alignment. Scholars such as Tiola (2021) argue that Jakarta's economic engagement with China while bolstering defence cooperation with the U.S. is a deliberate hedging stance to retain as much freedom as possible within a contested regional order. Similarly, Gindarsah (2015) outlines Indonesia's defence diplomacy as a hedging strategy which combines strategic engagement with the desire to modernize and enhance its defence industrial capacity.

Indonesia's well-established doctrine of *bebas dan aktif* ("free and active") foreign policy has evolved as a response to complex global and regional challenges (Gindarsah, 2015). In the current Indo-Pacific environment, marked by heightened U.S.-China rivalry and geopolitical uncertainty, Indonesia faces the dual challenge of modernizing its defense capabilities while safeguarding its strategic autonomy and non-alignment principles (Tiola, 2021).

The emergence of advanced technologies such as combat management systems, artificial intelligence, and supersonic missile technology has transformed modern defense strategy. For Indonesia, with its limited domestic defense-industrial base, securing access to these technologies without overdependence on a single foreign power is critical to preserving national sovereignty. This technological race underscores the importance of defense-industrial partnerships that include technology transfer and capacity-building (Ambarwati et al., 2022).

Indonesia has increasingly employed defense diplomacy as part of a broader hedging strategy, engaging with both Western and non-Western powers to reduce strategic risk. Recent initiatives, such as the PT Len-Thales joint venture for combat management systems and radar technology (Thales Group, 2024) and the ongoing negotiations with India on the BrahMos supersonic missile (The Diplomat, 2025; E. Times, 2025b) demonstrate Jakarta's balancing approach by diversifying its defense partners.

Indonesia's strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific is shaped by intensifying great-power rivalry and rapid advancements in defense technologies, which challenge its long-standing *bebas dan aktif* ("free and active") foreign policy. While previous studies have examined Indonesia's hedging mainly in economic and diplomatic terms, there is limited analysis of how defense diplomacy and technology partnerships contribute to this strategy. Recent initiatives, such as the PT Len-Thales joint venture and the Indonesia-India BrahMos missile negotiations, illustrate Indonesia's effort to diversify partnerships while maintaining technological autonomy. This article addresses the main research question: How does Indonesia's defense diplomacy serve as a hedging strategy in the context of emerging defense technologies?

Lastly, this study examines how Indonesia's defense diplomacy operationalizes its non-aligned foreign policy amid emerging defense technologies, focusing on two high-impact cases: the PT Len-Thales combat management cooperation and the Indonesia-India BrahMos missile negotiations. It argues that such defense diplomacy not only reduces overreliance on major powers but also reinforces Indonesia's flexibility, technological independence, and regional leadership in a shifting geopolitical and technological landscape.

Previous studies for example, Rahmanillah and Bastianillah (2022) analysis, and technology transfer cases such as the C-705 missile cooperation have followed Indonesia's

steps towards defence diversification and the use of offsets and local content in procurement. These studies point to contact with India and China as one of the ways of reducing reliance and improving bargaining power. But scholarship lags behind: few have ventured to write about Indonesia's defence diplomacy in the context of emerging defence technologies like missile systems like BrahMos, command-control platforms, UAVs, and satellites, and elaborated on how these ententes de facto enable technological autonomy and non-alignment in practice.

This article fills the gap by employing neorealist theory and hedging frameworks (Kuik, 2016) to explain recent defence diplomacy efforts as purposive statecraft measures, rather than opportunistic cooperation. Indonesia's technology-based defence alliances are thus viewed, from a neorealist perspective, as cautious responses to the international system's anarchic character and distribution of material power capability, entered into with the aim of warding off external threats while expanding national capacity. Defence diplomacy can be defined as the use of diplomatic instruments and military engagement to foster co-operation, build confidence, and reduce conflict through activities such as military-to-military exchanges, joint exercises, and defence cooperation agreements, thereby promoting stability and interoperability without formal alliance commitments (Sarjito & Perwita, 2024). Based on primary materials, government policy briefs, news releases, and industry publications, this analysis looks at how such partnerships function as instruments for addressing uncertainty and underpinning Indonesia's strategic-autonomy technology-foundations.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to examine Indonesia's defence diplomacy strategic hedging with the backdrop of emerging technologies. Qualitative research is most appropriately employed to answer questions that are attempting to understand complex political behavior and strategic decision-making within their natural environmental context in a way that meanings, patterns, and connections can be understood that are unquantifiable. The phenomenon of interest in this research is Indonesia's non-alignment as a hedging strategy, is one that requires a rich and interpretive analysis that prioritizes depth of insight over width of scope. Employing such methodology, the research will seek to provide sophisticated understanding of Indonesia's

defence diplomacy practice as a strategy for bargaining great-power competition and uncertainty about new technology, as explained by neorealist concentration on material relations and pressure from the system (Express, 2025).

In the qualitative tradition, this research applies the case study method. Utilizing the case study design allows careful examination of contemporary phenomena in which the boundary between the phenomenon and context is poorly defined, and therefore highly suitable to examine Indonesia's defence diplomacy strategic application(Yin, 2018). The cases are centered on two significant cases: (1) the PT Len-Thales joint venture for a combat management system, which is symptomatic of Indonesia's growing engagement with Western technology suppliers, and (2) the Indonesia-India BrahMos supersonic cruise missile negotiations, which are representative of diversification towards non-Western suppliers. The cases were selected due to their strategic significance, technological orientation, and implications for Indonesia's hedging strategy. Unlike the existing literature that has hitherto examined Indonesia's grand hedging strategy or defence diplomacy in general (Gindarsah, 2015; Tiola, 2021)this research makes a contribution to the literature by examining technology-intensive relations as tools of hedging and thereby drawing much-needed focus to an essential though less-researched aspect of Indonesia's non-alignment policy.

Through purposive sampling, the two cases have been selected because they are informant-rich sources that illustrate how Indonesia deepens military relations and preserves strategic autonomy at one moment in time. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research where the aim is to obtain a deep understanding of given phenomena and not statistical generalization of results (Sugiyono, 2019). Both instances are high-value technology transfers and are examples of Jakarta's moves to hedge strategic risks in a world characterized by multipolarity and are therefore appropriate for analysis of the merger of neorealist theory and hedging strategy.

The evidence collection was predominantly documentary analysis through different types of evidence such as government policy announcements, press releases, trade journals, peer-reviewed journals, and reputable news websites. Documentary analysis has been widely accepted as a qualitative research method that is systematic and rigorous and enables the identification, evaluation, and clarification of documentary evidence to achieve contextual insight(Times, 2025). Empirical data in the form of Ministry of Defence reports,

joint venture agreements, and PT Len and Thales press releases were used to describe first-hand accounts of Indonesia's technology partnerships, whilst secondary research in the form of academic articles was used to supply interpretative descriptions as well as theoretical context. Findings from official records were validated by cross-checking the data against mainstream media and academic journal sources in order to ensure authenticity. Where further clarity was needed, further semi-structured interviews with defence policy commentators and experts were conducted to enable triangulation of data and cross-validation of interpretation.

In this regard, the hedging, referring to a mix of engagement and some offsetting to cap strategic risks (Kuik, 2016), was employed as the interpretative framework to comprehend Indonesia's defence diplomacy. The emerging trends were then organized into thematic headings such as "technology-driven engagement," "supplier diversification," "capacity-building," and "strategic autonomy." Recursive comparison with the theoretical framework and literature were employed to sharpen the themes for relevance and analytical rigor.

Through the intersection of varied sources of data and the right analytical framework, validity and reliability of outcomes are ensured in this process. Triangulation of primary sources, expert opinion, and academic reports reduces the risk of bias and ensures the highest validity of outcomes. Second, application of neorealist theory as an explanatory framework enables systematic analysis of how the system pressures and distribution of material capabilities influence Indonesia's strategic choices(Hartanto, 2025). This is a theoretically synthesised and empirically rooted analysis of Indonesian hedging through use of defence diplomacy to pursue next-generation technologies in non-aligned way.

RESULTS

This research confirms that Indonesia's defence diplomacy hedge can be explained in two technologically-based high-impact cases: PT Len-Thales joint venture in combat management and radar systems, and ongoing Indonesia-India talks on BrahMos supersonic cruise missile. Empirical evidence in state statements, formal documents, and industry journals reveals both instances advance Indonesia's interests of obtaining advanced defence technologies, enhancing national capacity, and upholding strategic autonomy, thereby realising its foreign policy of non-alignment in the age of emerging technology.

Table 1. Indonesia's Defence Diplomacy Initiatives (2024–2025)

Aspect	PT Len – Thales Group (France)	BrahMos – Indonesia & India
Start Time	May 2024	Negotiations active since late 2024 (confirmed in March 2025)
Key Actors	PT Len Industri (Indonesia) & Thales Group (France)	Indonesian Ministry of Defence & BrahMos Aerospace (India-Russia)
Project Focus	Co-development of CMS, GM400α radar, and C2 systems	Acquisition and potential co-production of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile
Type of Cooperation	Joint Venture (JV), technology transfer, technical training, local R&D center	Negotiations for acquisition, tech transfer, and joint manufacturing
Localization & Facility	Center of Excellence in Bandung for R&D and system maintenance	Visits to BrahMos facilities in India, joint production assessment
Technology Benefits	Access to CMS source code, training in France & Bandung	Missile tech enhancement & local production capabilities
Transaction Value	Not disclosed	USD 200–450 million (projected); India offering line of credit
Status as of August 2025	Ongoing: 13 GM400α radar units in production & SkyView integration for Indonesian Air Force	Not finalized; still under government evaluation
Strategic Approach	Engagement with European partner, avoiding overreliance on US/China	Diversifying from Western sources; Indo-Pacific synergy via India
Key Figures Involved	Supported by Prabowo Subianto	Prabowo, PM Modi, Indian Defence Minister, and Admiral Muhammad Ali
Geopolitical Objective	Strengthen defence autonomy via co-production	Balance against China's power, without joining major power blocs
Related Policy	DEFEND ID – promotes local production and technology transfer	Anti-off-the-shelf: demands tech transfer & local participation
Preliminary Outcomes	Local radar production, knowledge transfer, innovation hub	Increased technical knowledge; no final deal yet
Diplomatic Value	Strategic cooperation without entanglement in global power rivalries	Active hedging without formal military alignment

(The Diplomat, 2025)

PT Len-Thales Joint Venture

In May 2024, Indonesia's state-owned defence electronics company PT Len Industri signed a joint-venture agreement with French-headquartered Thales Group to co-develop innovative combat management systems (CMS), air-surveillance radars, and integrated command-and-control solutions . Under the JV, Thales and PT Len will initially co-develop and deliver thirteen Ground Master 400 Alpha (GM400α) long-range radars alongside the SkyView C2 system to the Indonesian Air Force, marking the first in-country localisation of these exact platforms.

The agreement also envisages setting up a Centre of Excellence in Bandung to serve as a regional hub for R&D, systems integration, and maintenance. According to

official releases, the JV will oversee localisation of CMS software and assembly of hardware, ushering Indonesia away from legacy direct-acquisition models toward sustainable co-production. Moreover, with Thales commanding some 60 percent of all naval CMS installations in Indonesia, PT Len gains access to deep-rooted expertise and infrastructure, while benefitting from proprietary software-code access and stringent in-situ training modules both in France and Bandung.

Empirical evidence of enhancement is forthcoming across the board. First, PT Len engineers have undergone stringent training modules in Thales' laboratories in France and in the Bandung facility on CMS integration, as well as on maintaining radar systems. Second, the JV has initiated knowledge transfer agreements, opening to PT Len access the proprietary software codes of CMS modules, a giant leap towards technological autonomy. Third, under Indonesia's DEFEND ID initiative, the JV aligns with the government's broader push to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers and elevate domestic manufacturing capacity for strategic systems.

Before, the Thales experience of Indonesia was only in the procurement of radars and C2 systems where technology transfer was minimal. The JV thus represents a big leap: there is training and co-development involved, which allows Indonesia to indigenize the follow-on production of CMSs and enhance its operating independence. Even Prabowo Subianto himself then openly disclosed the significance of such collaborations for Indonesia's "sovereign defence capability," or his term, capacity to operate and maintain advanced systems on its own.

The PT Len-Thales case illustrates the ultimate example of Indonesia's defence diplomacy hedging rationality. By pledging a European partner beyond the U.S.-China security rivalry, Jakarta diversifies its supply base, gains access to substantial leading-edge technologies, and strengthens its national industrial web without engaging strategic entanglement with one specific power alignment.

Indonesia-India BrahMosh Missile Negitiations

Concurrently with exploring co-operation with Western defence producers, Indonesia has advanced in negotiations with India to purchase and co-develop BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, among the world's fastest operational missile with a 290-400 km range. The BrahMos, a joint development of India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya, is a significant technological

advancement of Indonesian missile technology and deterrence capability. Negotiations have been underway since late 2024, marked by high-profile meetings such as Prabowo Subianto's visit to New Delhi where he met with Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2025.

Indonesian technical delegations have also visited BrahMos Aerospace manufacturing facilities to study production requirements and assess co-production feasibility. These official visits and technical discussions provide clear empirical evidence of growing diplomatic and technological cooperation. Negotiations have been focused on sea- and land-based variants of the missile, and Jakarta has expressed interest in technology transfer and co-production deals according to its declared policy of avoiding pure off-the-shelf acquisitions.

Negotiations between Indonesia and India regarding the acquisition and co-development of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile are reportedly in advanced stages, with estimated transaction values ranging from USD 200 million to 450 million. The CEO of BrahMos Aerospace has confirmed that discussions have been ongoing since 2023, covering both coastal and ship-launched variants, with projected values between USD 200-350 million. India has also proposed a financing structure involving a concessional Line of Credit, potentially channelled through a national institution such as the State Bank of India.

During President Prabowo's state visit to New Delhi from 23 to 26 January 2025, where he was the guest of honour at India's Republic Day parade, the Indonesian delegation, including the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Ali, visited the BrahMos Aerospace manufacturing facility on 27 January to assess production readiness and the feasibility of joint manufacturing. However, as confirmed by an Indonesian Ministry of Defence spokesperson in March 2025, no final decision has been reached, with Jakarta carefully evaluating the BrahMos offer alongside alternative missile system options.

Empirical indications indicate serious diplomatic and technical interaction. Different delegations from Indonesia have visited BrahMos Aerospace manufacturing units with an objective to study the production requirements and feasibility of co-production. Financial discussions talk about India's offer of a concessionary Line of Credit to facilitate the transaction and Jakarta calculates both the cost structures and local budgetary priorities. While no deal has yet been reached, Indonesia's Defence Ministry has confirmed

negotiations are taking place, which is Jakarta's prudent approach to seeking capability acquisition at reconciliation with economic and strategic needs.

Strategic interests also underpin this engagement's hedging imperative. Procuring BrahMos would alert Indonesia to an advanced missile system developed beyond Western alliance structures, which would be a counterbalance to China's nascent A2/AD coverage in the South China Sea. Aligning with India a rising Indo-Pacific power, enables Jakarta to diversify its alliances away from its historical Western sources and raise local security cooperation, without being committed to a great power bloc. Co-production and technology transfer would also allow Indonesia to build indigenous missile manufacturing capability, reducing dependence in the future on foreign sources.

Table.2 Key Features of Indonesia's Defence Diplomacy Strategy

General Feature	Description
National Strategy	Active use of defence diplomacy based on hedging
Cooperation Pattern	Not just procurement, but demands training, tech transfer, and joint manufacturing
Defence Industry Orientation	Focus on self-reliance, domestic production capacity, and frontier tech mastery
Non-Alignment as Active Strategy	Diversifying partners (West & non-West) without aligning with any power bloc
Strategic Goal	Achieve defence autonomy, military modernization, and diplomatic leverage

(Larosa, 2017)

Both cases illustrate the same pattern of Indonesia hedging through defence diplomacy. The PT Len-Thales JV illustrates effective engagement with Western technology providers on terms that prioritize indigenous capability and control. The BrahMos negotiations, although ongoing, illustrate Jakarta's demand for diversifying its strategic engagement and acquiring advanced systems from non-Western partners. Together, the case studies provide empirical evidence that Indonesia's defence diplomacy employs partnerships not only for procurement but as a means to access frontier technologies, build its defence-industrial base, and ensure strategic autonomy.

The results also highlight a striking feature of Indonesia's non-alignment: hedging is not a passive attitude but an activist strategy of building a number of carefully calibrated partnership. With the integration of Western as well as non-Western technology suppliers into high-technology cooperation, Indonesia mitigates overdependence, manages strategic

risks, and lays the technological cornerstone for independent defence capabilities in the era of intensifying great-power competition.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that Indonesia's defence diplomacy hedging manifests as intentional, technology-driven collaboration towards reinforcing strategic autonomy without aligning with any great power bloc. Neorealism argues that, within an anarchic international system where survival and security dominate, Indonesia is behaving. Being unable to balance major powers individually, Jakarta hedges by going to different actors to obtain diversification of defence alliances, reduce dependency, and acquire emerging technologies that can augment their self-sufficiency.

Result Analysis

The strategic partnership between PT Len Industri and Thales Group exemplifies how Indonesia's defence diplomacy operationalises hedging by merging Western collaboration with a resolute focus on domestic capacity-building. Through the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Bandung, Indonesian engineers have been embedded in every stage of research, development, and integration of combat management systems and radar surveillance technologies(News, 2025). This institutional arrangement not only secures comprehensive technology transfer and on-site technical training, but also underpins Jakarta's long-term DEFEND ID roadmap, aimed at consolidating a self-sufficient national defence-industrial base (Indonesian Ministry of Defence, 2024). By negotiating robust intellectual property clauses and local production guarantees, Indonesia engages in a form of "soft balancing" that preserves strategic autonomy while benefiting from Western expertisem(Ambarwati et al., 2022).

Concurrently, the latter co-developments of BrahMos with India demonstrate Indonesia's endeavor to diversify alliances to acquire state-of-the-art defence capabilities. Jakarta utilized diplomatic means to negotiate for a concessional Line of Credit with co-production, technology transfer, and knowledge-sharing conditions. The negotiations demonstrate Indonesia's habit of not receiving "off-the-shelf" purchases in building local production capacity and hence bolstering deterrence without the commitments of an alliance treat. In addition, interaction with India, a younger Indo-Pacific state, is another

balance between Western suppliers and regional coercive efforts, particularly in the contested South China Sea.

All of these case studies demonstrate why Indonesia's defence diplomacy constitutes an active and strategic hedging approach. By blending Western and non-Western alignments, both overseen under customized technology-transfer arrangements and local capacity benchmarks, Jakarta elevates its defence-industrial independence and stays open to adaptive foreign-policy options in case great-power competition intensifies.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The results are in line with existing scholarship on Indonesia's strategic hedging behavior(Gindarsah, 2015). Gindarsah described Indonesia's defence diplomacy as a means of reducing dependence and increasing strategic optionality amidst great-power rivalry. Tiola (2021) also cast Jakarta's foreign policy as a matter of balancing China economically and locking in security ties with the United States and others. This study adds empirical richness by zooming in on technology-rich defence partnerships, a dimension less explored in the contemporary literature.

Research on technology transfer in Indonesia's defense industry, such as Ambarwati et al. (2022), has emphasized the importance of co-production and offsets in developing national capacity. However, previous research used to focus on older examples such as the C-705 missile co-operation with China, which involved limited and sometimes contentious technology transfer. By contrast, the PT Len-Thales JV includes local capacity building as a structural component, indicating a shift in Jakarta's policy approach to cooperation. Similarly, the BrahMos discussions reflect Indonesia's growing willingness to engage with non-Western partners for high-end systems, hedging diversification beyond traditional suppliers.

These results are also in line with Kuik's (2016) theorization that hedging is a combination of engagement and restrained balancing. Indonesia's partnerships are marked by engagement in the form of cooperation and technology acquisition, accompanied by restrained balancing by diversifying suppliers in order not to become strategically dependent. In contrast to balancing through military expansion or formal alliances, Indonesia's hedging is implemented mainly through defence diplomacy non-binding agreements that augment capabilities without sacrificing flexibility.

Implication of Findings

The outcomes of this study have pragmatic and theoretical significance. They are theoretically positioned to show explanatory ability of neorealism and hedging theory to explain middle power strategic action in the era of technological competition . The school of neorealism represents the structural imperative of Indonesia's attempt to reduce exposure to vulnerability through diversification of allies, while hedging theory explains double logic of participation and selective balancing under its defence diplomacy. The research contributes to the body of work by noting that new technologies continue to dominate the centre stage of hedging behaviour as access to advanced systems like combat management and supersonic missiles turns such power imbalances around and increases independence.

Practically, the implications underscore the growing importance of defence-industrial cooperation to Indonesian national security policy. PT Len-Thales JV enables Indonesia to manufacture and service advanced defence systems locally, reducing its reliance on foreign producers in the long term (News, 2025). BrahMos negotiations, if resolved, would not only grant Indonesia access to the latest missile technology but also allow co-production, localized technical expertise, and deeper integration with India as an Indo-Pacific partner (Diplomat, 2025). Separately, they allow Indonesian technological sovereignty, the key to strategic autonomy in today's security environment.

The finding has regional consequences more broadly. As a diversifying middle power, Indonesia can be modeled for strategic adaptability in the face of intensifying U.S.-Chinese rivalry (Tiola, 2021). Hedging is a move that brings on maximum deterrence without leading to alignment issues so Jakarta is able to project a independent voice in ASEAN and throughout the wider Indo-Pacific. The policy can serve as a model for other regional powers that are eager to eschew great-power competition at the expense of sovereignty (Goh, 2005; Kuik, 2016).

Research Limitation

Despite its conclusions, this study is limited. First, it handles inadequate case studies, as it would seem that the found patterns may not represent all of Indonesia's hedging through defence diplomacy. Other programs applicable to Indonesia, such as cooperation with Japan or Australia, may require additional information regarding Jakarta's diversification policy. Second, the analysis relies primarily on documentary sources and

some expert interviews; wider empirical data, possibly from within policymakers' and industry stakeholders' perspectives, could inform any future work. Third, the BrahMos negotiations continue to unfold, and their final outcome is still uncertain; events further down the road may cast further light or alter the strategic implications identified here.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine Indonesia's application of its non-aligned foreign policy by hedging via defence diplomacy in two technology-driven cooperations: PT Len-Thales joint venture and the current Indonesia-India BrahMos missile agreement. The study discovers that Indonesia pursues diversified defence-industrial cooperation strategically for the aim of accessing frontier technologies, build local manufacturing capability, and preserve strategic autonomy. The PT Len-Thales collaboration exemplifies successful engagement with a Western technology provider, embedding technology transfer and capacity-building within Indonesia’s DEFEND ID framework. Concurrently, negotiations for the BrahMos system illustrate Jakarta’s pursuit of high-end missile capabilities through a non-Western partner, further reducing dependence on traditional suppliers. Together, these examples validate that hedging through defence diplomacy is a continuing and conscious act, enabling Indonesia to navigate intensifying great-power competition and accelerating technological developments while being able to preserve its traditional non-alignment.

The study acknowledges limitations. It focuses on two case studies, which cannot provide the whole picture of Indonesia's hedging behavior, and is based primarily on document analysis corroborated by expert testimony. Outcomes of the BrahMos discussions are still awaited, and future developments can provide further insights into their strategic implications.

More analysis of other defence-technology transfer arrangements, like those with Japan, South Korea, and Australia, would provide a deeper appreciation of Indonesia's defence-industrial hedging. Greater access to insider sources of policymakers and industry players may also provide thicker analyses of decision-making and partnership dynamics. That study would extend the empirical foundation for the role played by middle powers using defence diplomacy in pursuing autonomy in the midst of great-power competition and rapid technological change.

REFERENCES

Ambarwati, E., Mahroza, J., & Supandi, S. (2022). Strategi hedging dalam mendukung diplomasi pertahanan Indonesia (Studi kasus: alih teknologi rudal C-705). *Jurnal Diplomasi Pertahanan*, *5*(1). https://doi.org/10.33172/jdp.v5i1.362

Diplomat, T. (2025). *Indonesia's interest in India's BrahMos: More than just a missile deal*. https://thediplomat.com/2025/02/indonesias-interest-in-indias-brahmos-more-than-just-a-missile-deal

Drab, L. (2018). *Defence diplomacy – an important tool for the implementation of foreign policy and security of the state*. **Security and Defence Quarterly**, 20(3), 57–71. https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0012.5152

Express, N. I. (2025). *Indonesia initiates $450 mn BrahMos missile export deal*. https://www.newindianexpress.com

Gindarsah, I. (2015). *Indonesia's defence diplomacy: Harnessing the hedging strategy against regional uncertainties*. https://hdl.handle.net/10356/104945

Hartanto, Y. A. (2025). How effective is Indonesia's strategic hedging approach? *Jurnal Pertahanan Dan Bela Negara*, *12*(1), 1–20. https://jurnal.idu.ac.id/index.php/JPBH/article/view/19841

Indonesian Ministry of Defence. (2024). *DEFEND ID initiative: Strengthening Indonesia's defense industrial base*. Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Indonesia. https://www.kemhan.go.id

Kuik, C.-C. (2016). The essence of hedging: Malaysia and Singapore's response to a rising China. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *30*(2), 159–185. https://doi.org/10.1355/cs30-2a

Kusumadewi, H., & Wiswayana, W. M. (2024). *Multilevel hedging for middle-regional power: Indonesia's ascent toward powerhood through hedging*. Indonesian Journal of International Relations, 8(2), 123–145. https://doi.org/10.32787/ijir.v8i2.591

Larosa, T. (2017). The Future Defense System for the Indonesian Nation State. *Jurnal Pertahanan*, *3*(3), 261. https://doi.org/10.33172/jp.v3i3.237

Majumdar, O. (2024). Thales, PT Len partner to deliver radars, C2 systems to Indonesian Air Force. *Janes*. https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-news/c4isr/thales-pt-len-partner-to-deliver-radars-c2-systems-to-indonesian-air-force

News, A. P. (2025). *Thales boosts Indonesian defense with new joint venture*. https://apnews.com/article/f60cb55369617640a78601494e1a1881

Pramono, B. (2020). *Defense diplomacy and country existence*. **International Affairs and Global Strategy**, 87, Article 05. https://doi.org/10.7176/iags/87-05

Riyadi, F. A., & Dewi, I. M. (2022). *The role of defense diplomacy for the development of the Indonesian defense industry*. *Jurnal Ekonomi, Bisnis & Entrepreneurship*, 16(1), 80–91. https://doi.org/10.55208/jebe.v16i1.249

Samingan, M. (2025). **The defense economic strategy through diplomacy aims to increase defense entrepreneurship for a globally competitive Golden Indonesia in 2045**. *Jurnal Pertahanan dan Bela Negara*. https://jurnal.idu.ac.id/index.php/JPBH/article/view/19632

Sarjito, A., & Perwita, A. A. B. (2024). *Safeguarding the nations: Sasaran dan strategi diplomasi pertahanan*. Indonesia Emas Group.

Strangio, S. (2023). Indonesia close to closing deal for BrahMos weapons system: Report. *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2023/03/indonesia-close-to-closing-deal-for-brahmos-weapons-system-report

Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.

Sukmawan, D. I., & Pedrason, R. (2023). *Assertively hedging? Indonesia's motives and practices in the South China Sea. Intermestic: Journal of International Studies*, 7(2), 701–720. https://doi.org/10.24198/intermestic.v7n2.15

Syailendra, E. A. (2017). *A nonbalancing act: Explaining Indonesia's failure to balance against the Chinese threat*. **Asian Security**, 13(3), 237–255. https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2017.1365489

Thales. (2023). Thales to reinforce Indonesia's sovereign airspace protection capabilities with PT Len. In *Thales Group*. https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/worldwide/defence-and-security/press_release/thales-reinforce-indonesias-sovereign-airspace

Thales. (2024). PT Len and Thales sign joint venture agreement to strengthen Indonesian defense industry. In *Thales Group*. https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/worldwide/defence-and-security/press_release/pt-len-and-thales-sign-jv-agreement

The Diplomat. (2025). Indonesia's interest in India's BrahMos: More than just a missile deal. *The Diplomat*. https://thediplomat.com/2025/02/indonesias-interest-in-indias-brahmos-more-than-just-a-missile-deal

Times, H. (2025). *India, Russia and Indonesia agree on pricing of BrahMos deal*. https://www.hindustantimes.com

Tiola, A. (2021). Indonesia's China and US approach: Crafting policies out of standard operating procedures. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, *43*(3), 306–332. https://doi.org/10.1177/23477970211041662

Tribune, T. (2025). Why Indonesia is holding up the BrahMos deal. *The Tribune India*. https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/why-indonesia-is-holding-up-brahmos-dea

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.