International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

The Geopolitics Of The Thai Canal In Mahan And Kautilya's Perspective On Indonesia's Maritime Strategy In Southeast Asia

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Abstract

The Thai Canal or Kra Canal project has become one of the most significant geopolitical issues in the Southeast Asian region because it has the potential to change the regional maritime balance of power. This article analyses the geopolitical dynamics of the Thai Canal through two major approaches, namely A.T. Mahan's Sea Power theory and Kautilya's Mandala theory. Mahan's approach emphasises the importance of control of sea lanes as a determinant of national power, while Kautilya highlights the hierarchical interactions between states based on interests and balance of power (raison d'état). By combining these two theories, this research seeks to assess how the Thai Canal project affects Indonesia's maritime strategy, particularly in the context of its strategic position towards the Strait of Malacca and the Indonesian Archipelago Sea Route (ALKI). The analysis shows that the Thai Canal has the potential to shift international trade flows from the Strait of Malacca to the Andaman Sea, resulting in changes to the geopolitical configuration of the region. Based on Mahan's perspective, this condition requires Indonesia to strengthen its control over ALKI II and III to maintain its strategic role in the global trade route. Meanwhile, in Kautilya's perspective, Indonesia needs to implement balanced diplomacy between major powers such as China and the United States to maintain regional stability and national interests. Overall, this article emphasises the importance of synergy between maritime power and regional diplomacy as a basis

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for Indonesia to respond to the new geopolitical dynamics triggered by the Thai Canal.

Keywords: ***Geopolitics; Thai Canal; A.T. Mahan; Kautilya; Indonesian Maritime Strategy; Southeast Asia.***

INTRODUCTION

State defence is a fundamental element in maintaining the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and safety of the entire Indonesian nation from all forms of threats, both military and non-military. The dynamics of the global strategic environment marked by the increasing complexity of multidimensional threats require the state to have a defence system that is adaptive, integrated, and oriented towards long-term national interests. Indonesia faces significant challenges in developing an integrated defence system capable of simultaneously securing its vast maritime, land, and airspace from increasingly complex multidimensional threats. Evidence points to substantial integration and capacity challenges across multiple studies. Armawi and Wijatmoko (2022) identify the transformation of the Asia-Pacific geopolitical defence architecture, while Ningsih et al., (2022) documented new forms of threats, including cyber-attacks, asymmetric warfare, and hybrid warfare that require adaptive responses. Indonesia, as the world's largest archipelago, has its own challenges in developing a defence system capable of simultaneously securing sea, land, and air jurisdictions. These challenges include traditional threats such as military aggression and sovereignty violations, as well as non-traditional threats such as terrorism, transnational crime, and natural disasters.

Indonesia's strategic geography between two oceans and two continents makes the region vulnerable to regional geopolitical dynamics. Studies confirm Indonesia's strategic vulnerability due to its location between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Asia-Australia continent, making it "highly vulnerable to disintegration" (Akmaliza et al., 2022). Regional geopolitical dynamics, particularly US-China great power competition, create "the potential for security escalation in Indonesia's maritime region" (Armawi & Wijatmoko, 2022). Therefore, strengthening the national defence doctrine becomes a strategic urgency in ensuring the effectiveness of national defence policy. Defence doctrine not only serves as a military operational guideline, but also as a conceptual framework that directs the overall defence strategy, from the aspects of force building, deployment, and the use of defence forces.

Syarifuddin and Midhio (2021) assert that Indonesia's total defence strategy differs from the concept of conventional total war and emphasises international defence cooperation as the

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key to building national power in the face of military and non-military threats. The study of Indonesia's defence strategy from the perspective of national defence doctrine is important to understand how the concept of universal defence is implemented in the context of a changing strategic environment. Rahmatika (2022) demonstrates doctrinal adaptation to emerging AI threats through strategic responses, including policy development, intelligence capabilities, and integrated defence components. This approach enables an in-depth analysis of the congruence between doctrine, policy, and implementation on the ground, and how both military and non-military elements of national defence can optimally contribute to maintaining national stability. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of defence strategy studies and practical implications for policy makers in strengthening Indonesia's national defence system with resilient, adaptive, and sovereign characteristics.

METHODS

The research method used is a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach based on library research. This method was chosen to analyse geopolitical phenomena in depth through conceptual and theoretical studies, with an emphasis on the interpretation of classical theory and its relevance in the contemporary strategic context of Southeast Asia. Descriptive-analytical qualitative research was used because the object of study is multidimensional, involving aspects of geopolitics, maritime strategy and classical thinking in defence science. This approach allows researchers to systematically describe the relationship between Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of sea power and Kautilya's thoughts on mandala theory, as well as its implications for Indonesia's strategic position in the Southeast Asian region. The analysis is conducted by interpreting key concepts from both theories to assess how the construction of the Thai Canal could affect the regional maritime power balance and Indonesia's strategic interests.

The data sources used are secondary, including scientific journal articles. Source selection was purposive based on relevance to the research theme. Data analysis techniques were carried out through a process of data reduction, categorisation of theoretical concepts, and drawing strategic meaning integrated in a maritime geopolitical framework. This approach aims to produce an in-depth understanding of the shifting maritime dynamics due to the Thai Canal project and its strategic consequences for Indonesia's national interests. This study also seeks to construct a strong theoretical foundation to formulate an adaptive Indonesian maritime strategy to regional geopolitical changes. The results of the analysis are expected to enrich the scientific repertoire in the field of geopolitics and maritime strategy, as well as make a practical contribution to the

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formulation of Indonesia's future maritime defence policy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. A.T. Mahan Theory

The Thai Canal or Kra Canal project is one of the most strategic maritime infrastructures in Southeast Asia that has the potential to significantly change the geopolitical map of the region. The canal is planned to connect the Andaman Sea in the Indian Ocean with the Gulf of Thailand in the South China Sea, cutting through the Kra Peninsula in southern Thailand. Tseng and Pilcher (2022) conducted a comprehensive PESTELE/SWOT analysis based on a literature review, quantitative data and interviews with 20 regional experts from four countries, finding that the canal poses significant challenges to ASEAN's political balance while offering substantial maritime business potential through reduced voyage times and possible new routes. Pedrason (2021) analysed Indonesia's defence diplomatic response, concluding that the canal (planned with Chinese investment) creates new security threats that require more intensive Indonesian defence diplomacy to maintain ASEAN regional stability. Based on Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of maritime geopolitics, control of the sea is a determining factor for a country's power. The sea not only functions as a communication and trade route, but also as a space for domination and power projection. Mahan's concept of Sea Power emphasises the importance of geographical location, fleet strength, port infrastructure, and the ability to control strategic sea lanes as the main elements of a country's maritime glory.

The Thai Canal project, if realised, would provide an alternative route to the Malacca Strait, which has been a major choke point in global trade. Othman (2023) identifies the Malacca Strait as "key to maritime, energy and food security in the ASEAN region," while Kusumawardhana (2023) specifically addresses China's "Malacca Dilemma" - a term coined by President Hu Jintao in 2003 to describe China's dependence on this maritime route. The Malacca Strait passes through more than 100,000 ships annually, including about 40 per cent of world trade and 80 per cent of China's energy imports. The opening of the Thai Canal could divert some shipping flows away from the Strait of Malacca, potentially altering the strategic and economic balance in the Southeast Asian region. Based on Mahan's analysis, the canal would expand the maritime influence of countries that can control it, especially China, which has a significant interest in ensuring the security of energy and trade routes from the Middle East to the Pacific. Shorter connectivity through the canal would provide significant logistical advantages while strengthening naval presence in the Indian Ocean.

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Indonesia's strategic position as an archipelago located between the Indian and Pacific Oceans makes it an important actor in the regional maritime system. ALKI I (Indonesian Archipelago Sea Route I), which crosses the Strait of Malacca, is one of the vital routes for international shipping. Various studies confirm Indonesia's pivotal position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, with 6.4 million km² of maritime territory that serves as a vital international shipping lane (Asmara et al., 2020). Hutagalung (2017) His paper validates the importance of ALKI I through the Malacca Strait as a crucial international shipping lane. The existence of the Thai Canal has the potential to reduce traffic intensity in ALKI I and the Malacca Strait, which could economically reduce revenue from shipping services and potential logistical benefits in western Indonesia. However, from a maritime security perspective, the reduced congestion in the Malacca Strait may lower the risk of non-traditional threats such as piracy, smuggling, and oil spills. This is as explained by Narahara (2024) who emphasises the need for increased surveillance on all ALKI routes, including the eastern corridors of ALKI II and III. This situation can be utilised by Indonesia to strengthen its surveillance and security focus on ALKI II and ALKI III, which connect eastern Indonesia with the Pacific Ocean.

New geopolitical conditions arising from the Thai Canal project require Indonesia to strengthen maritime competitiveness through increased port infrastructure capacity and strategic sea lane management. The development of major ports such as Kuala Tanjung, Tanjung Priok, and Bitung should be geared towards accommodating potentially shifting trade flows. Improving port infrastructure is crucial to the vision of Indonesia's Maritime Axis, as explained by several sources, among others: Puriningsih (2022), who demonstrates concrete infrastructure needs through the transformation requirements of Sorong Port, emphasising modernisation to international standards for transshipment capabilities. Sarjito, (2023) pointed out the significant contribution of technology in optimising port and logistics systems, while Mosyofa and Muammar (2024) confirmed the government's focus on maritime infrastructure investment to facilitate trade. Optimising Indonesia's role as a regional maritime hub is an important step to maintain its strategic influence in the global trading system. The development policy of the world maritime axis that has been launched needs to be directed at strengthening sea control and sea denial, according to Mahan's principles, to ensure the sovereignty and security of national sea lanes.

The Thai Canal project also has a strategic dimension to Indonesia's economic growth. The potential decline in shipping volume through the Malacca Strait can be compensated for by increasing the added value of the national maritime sector, such as the shipbuilding industry, maritime logistics services, and strengthening the coastal economy. While the development of

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Indonesia's maritime sector can indeed compensate for potential shipping losses in the Malacca Strait due to the Thai Canal, Persada dan Setyawanta (2021) assert that the Kra Canal will significantly change shipping patterns and the economic map of Southeast Asia, requiring countries to develop coastal areas competitively. The existence of the canal can encourage Indonesia to develop a maritime economic diversification strategy by emphasising the efficiency of domestic sea transport and increasing the competitiveness of international ports. Mulatsih (2023) provides evidence that the development of the shipping industry can generate considerable foreign exchange while increasing employment and maritime economic growth. The direction of maritime economic policy that is adaptive to geopolitical changes will determine the extent to which Indonesia is able to maintain its position as a major maritime power in the region.

The Mahanian context places the sea as a factor of global dominance that determines national welfare and regional stability. Within this framework, Indonesia needs to see the Thai Canal project not as a threat, but as an opportunity to strengthen its geopolitical role in Southeast Asia. The geographical advantage of being an archipelago should be optimised through a synergy between maritime defence policy, economic diplomacy, and marine infrastructure development. Such a strategy will ensure Indonesia remains the maritime centre of gravity amidst the changing geopolitical order marked by intensifying great power competition in the Indo-Pacific region.

b. Mandala Kautilya Theory

The existence of the Thai Canal project can be analysed through the perspective of the Mandala Kautilya theory, which focuses on the concept of the circle of power and relations between states based on strategic interests. This theory describes the foreign policy relationship system as a dynamic network consisting of Great Power, Middle Power, Deliberative State, and Less Power, with the main principle of raison d'état as the basis of state policy rationality. In this context, each state acts according to its national interests to maintain its existence and expand influence in the region. Several studies provide substantial evidence supporting the power-based strategic behaviour framework in the context of regional infrastructure projects such as the Thai Canal. The research shows clear Great Power dynamics, with China's Belt and Road Initiative representing a strategic infrastructure investment to expand regional influence (Iriawan, 2020). The US, on the other hand, responds through strategic partnerships such as AUKUS to counter Chinese hegemony (Purnamasari & Sushanti, 2023). Middle Power countries such as Indonesia exhibit the deliberative behaviour described in Mandala theory, using defence diplomacy to protect national interests related to the Thai Canal project (Pedrason, 2021) and using specific

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diplomatic strategies in maritime affairs (Polanunu & Kusumaningrum, 2022). This shows consistent raison d'état behaviour, with Indonesia maintaining the principles of a "free and active" foreign policy to balance the competing interests of major powers.

Great power in the Kautilya Mandala framework can be identified through China's role as the main actor in the initiative and funding of the Thai Canal project. China's interests are rooted in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) strategy that aims to create new economic connectivity and maritime logistics routes to strengthen its control over global trade routes. Evidence suggests that China's BRI strategy directly addresses what President Hu Jintao called the "Malacca Dilemma" - China's heavy reliance on the Strait of Malacca for trade (Kusumawardhana, 2023). BRI serves as "economic and political diplomacy" that aims to secure production supply chains, spread capital investment, and strengthen international relations (Tantri et al., 2022). Various studies confirm the hegemonic purpose of the BRI in Southeast Asia. Research points to the BRI's function as a "soft power tool to build Chinese hegemony" in the region (Toruan, 2021), while other studies characterise it as China's attempt to build a "hegemonic image" in Southeast Asia through infrastructure diplomacy (Rivai, 2023). The canal will provide a geostrategic advantage by shortening shipping times between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, while reducing dependence on the Strait of Malacca, which has traditionally been at the mercy of the United States and its allies. This position emphasises China's efforts to expand its sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific region by asserting its economic, military, and political power.

Middle power is reflected in Thailand's role as a project-implementation country that seeks to balance its national interests with external geopolitical pressures. Thailand positions itself as a deliberative state that utilises geographical advantages to improve its bargaining position among major powers such as China, the United States, and India. The Thai Canal project provides a strategic opportunity for Thailand to strengthen the domestic economy through increased trade flows, port development, and industrialisation of the southern region. China is not only trying to maintain sea lanes, but the country is also advancing land transport. In other words, the country is trying to find other ways to achieve access to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean, which is done by cutting the Malacca route (Pedrason, 2021). This suggests Thailand is utilising its geographical advantage to improve its bargaining position among major powers. However, Thailand's position also puts it in a geopolitical dilemma as it must maintain a balance of diplomatic relations so as not to be perceived as siding with a particular power bloc. Independence in decision-making is a tangible form of the deliberative state character in Kautilya's theory.

Other Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, can be categorised as Deliberative

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States that have strategic interests in the dynamics of the Thai Canal project. Indonesia has an interest in maintaining regional stability and the balance of power in the Malacca Strait and beyond. Indonesia's strategic geographical position on the global trade route makes it a country that needs to anticipate the economic, political and security impacts of changes in shipping flows due to the existence of the canal. Indonesia's policy approach should be based on raison d'état thinking, namely national interests that focus on maritime sovereignty, regional stability, and the balance between security and economic growth. As stated by Pedrason (2021), 'Indonesia must consider each threat so that it does not impact the economic growth, political and security stability of the region in Southeast Asia'. Diplomatic and maritime defence strategies need to be aligned so as not to get caught up in great power rivalries that have the potential to disrupt the regional order.

Less powerful countries such as Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar will be indirectly affected by changes in the economic and trade structure in the region. Changes in logistics routes due to the Thai Canal may shift the centre of economic growth, ultimately affecting their economic relations and political dependence on China. Available evidence strongly supports the claim that Southeast Asia's small states face increasing economic dependence on China, with risks to political autonomy. The research below shows a clear pattern of economic dependence: Laos shows significant dependence on China through BRI projects, resulting in increased foreign debt, while inequality persists. (Yoshida, 2022). China's strategy of "debt trap diplomacy" has been documented in various regions, where economic cooperation creates structural dependencies that serve Chinese political interests (Al-fadhat & Prasetio, 2013). Based on the context of the Kautilya Mandala, these countries will be in the position of satellites that utilise relations with great powers to gain economic benefits, but risk losing political independence.

The raison d'état principle is the main foundation in explaining the political dynamics and strategies of the countries around the Thai Canal project. The national interests of each actor become the basis for determining attitudes and foreign policies towards this project. China uses the raison d'état approach to secure energy routes and strengthen economic dominance, while Thailand seeks to enhance its strategic position as a regional trade and diplomacy node. Indonesia places raison d'état as the foundation for maintaining a central role in maritime security and ensuring the balance of power in the region is maintained. Several studies show Indonesia's national interest-driven approach to the Kra Canal, Pedrason (2021) points to Indonesia's concern that the Kra Canal threatens economic growth, political stability and regional security, requiring intensive defence diplomacy to maintain ASEAN stability. China's strategic maritime interests are

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well documented by Kusumawardhana (2023) who details China's "Malacca Dilemma" and its use of the Belt and Road Initiative to secure alternative trade routes. This rational, national interest-based approach suggests that the Thai Canal is not only an economic project, but also a symbol of competing geopolitical interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

Analyses based on Mandala Kautilya theory show that the Thai Canal project has the potential to change the power structure in Southeast Asia. Great powers will seek to expand their influence, while middle and deliberative powers seek to maintain regional independence and stability. Smaller states will adapt to new geopolitical realities to maintain their economic and political survival. This dynamic reinforces the relevance of Kautilya's concept in explaining the behaviour of modern states that remain grounded in the principles of balance of power and national interests.

c. Comparative Analysis

The Thai Canal or Kra Canal project is a strategic issue with not only economic dimensions, but also geopolitical and defence dimensions. Research by oleh Pedrason (2021) shows that the Kra Canal is indeed recognised as a strategic issue with geopolitical and defence dimensions. oleh Pedrason (2021) asserts that the construction of the canal by Thailand through Chinese investment creates a new maritime route that poses threats in various sectors, which requires Indonesia to intensify defence diplomacy to maintain ASEAN regional security stability. The understanding of this project can be expanded through Alfred Thayer Mahan's theoretical approach and Kautilya's Mandala theory. Both theories highlight the importance of state power and interests in controlling strategic space, but differ in how they view the sources of power and interactions between states. Mahan focuses on sea power as a determinant of global domination, while Kautilya emphasises the power dynamics formed from relationships between states based on interests, geographical proximity and political capabilities.

Mahan's theory sees control of the sea as the core of global power. A country that is able to control sea lanes, build a strong fleet and have strategic ports will dominate international trade and politics. In the context of the Thai Canal, Mahan's view explains that the country that has control over the canal will gain a significant maritime advantage. China is actively pursuing the Kra Canal project through investments in Thailand as part of the creation of a new maritime route (Pedrason, 2021). This alternative route could shift the balance of power in the region, particularly against the dominance of the Malacca Strait route. Control of the Thai Canal would shorten the voyage time between the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, providing logistical and military

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advantages to the party that controls it. This view is in line with China's interest in strengthening sea power and ensuring the security of energy routes within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. The Belt and Road Initiative specifically targets the control of strategic maritime infrastructure, with China developing cooperation around the Malacca Strait region and building ports in strategic locations (Widhiyoga et al., 2024). China's Maritime Silk Road strategy explicitly aims to strengthen blue economy partnerships and secure trade routes (Rustam, 2020).The geopolitical implications are significant, with infrastructure projects serving as tools for regional influence projection (Iriawan, 2020).

Kautilya's Mandala theory emphasises that each state operates in a circle of power based on mutual interests and relationships between states. The Thai Canal project is a new centre of gravity in the geopolitical circle of Southeast Asia, where each country plays a role according to its level of power. China, as a Great Power, seeks to expand its influence, Thailand as a Middle Power, seeks to assert its economic sovereignty, while Indonesia and other countries in the region act as Deliberative States that weigh strategic interests for national and regional stability. This perspective underlines the importance of diplomacy and balance of power as a form of adaptation to the geopolitical changes brought about by the Thai Canal project.

The two theories show different approaches in looking at power structures and state interests in the Thai Canal project. Mahan's theory emphasises the physical and military aspects of sea domination, while Kautilya's theory highlights the political and diplomatic aspects between interacting states in a regional system. Both provide complementary insights into how states in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region are responding to the opportunities and threats of the project.

The following table presents a strategic comparison between Mahan's theory and Kautilya's Mandala theory of the Thai Canal project:

Tabel 1. Comparison Mahan's theory and Kautilya's Mandala theory

Analysis Aspects	**Alfred Thayer Mahan Theory**	**Mandala Kautilya Theory**
Source of Power	Sea power and control of international shipping lanes.	Balance of power between countries based on interests and geographical proximity.

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Strategic Orientation	Maritime dominance and global power projection through control of the sea.	Dynamic political relations and diplomatic strategies between countries.
Main Actor	A maritime nation with a strong fleet and strategic harbours.	States with different interests in the circle of power (Great Power, Middle Power, Deliberative State, Less Power).
Focus Analysis	Control of sea lanes, logistics, and military power as instruments of power.	Balance of political, economic and security interests between countries.
Implications for Thai Canal	The canal as a means of maritime domination that could shift influence in the Malacca Strait.	The canal as a shifting point in the balance of political and diplomatic power in Southeast Asia.
Relevance for Indonesia	Encourage the strengthening of the national maritime strategy and ALKI as a vital route.	Strengthen the role of maritime diplomacy to maintain regional stability and national interests.

The comparison shows that Mahan's theory provides a basis for analysing maritime power and control of strategic routes, while Mandala Kautilya's theory expands understanding of regional political dynamics involving various levels of state power. Both complement each other in assessing Indonesia's position towards the Thai Canal. Indonesia needs to strengthen its maritime defence according to Mahan's view, while optimising regional diplomacy according to Kautilya's principles to maintain the balance of power in Southeast Asia. An integrative approach between maritime power and strategic diplomacy is key in maintaining Indonesia's position as a sovereign and influential maritime power in the Indo-Pacific region.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the Thai Canal project through the perspective of Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory and Kautilya's Mandala theory shows that the canal has complex strategic implications for the geopolitical balance and maritime security of Southeast Asia. Mahan's theory emphasises the

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importance of sea control as an instrument of global power, so the construction of the Thai Canal can be understood as an effort to expand sea power and shift the dominance of international trade routes from the Strait of Malacca. The country that controls the canal will gain strategic advantages, both economically and militarily, through greater logistical efficiency and maritime power projection.

Kautilya's Mandala theory provides a more political and adaptive perspective on interstate relations around the Thai Canal project. Each state in the circle of power acts based on raison d'état or rational national interest. China acts as a Great Power expanding its influence through maritime connectivity strategies, Thailand as a Middle Power utilising the canal to strengthen its economic and political position, while Indonesia acts as a Deliberative State seeking to maintain its maritime stability and sovereignty amidst the changing regional order.

The integration between the two theoretical approaches shows that maritime power and political diplomacy are two inseparable elements in dealing with geopolitical changes in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia needs to adopt a comprehensive maritime defence and diplomacy strategy to remain strategically positioned amidst possible shifts in global trade flows. Strengthening the fleet, modernising ports, and optimising maritime diplomacy are concrete steps to maintain Indonesia's role as the world's maritime axis.

The Thai Canal ultimately became not only a transnational economic project, but also a symbol of the shifting balance of power in Southeast Asia. Mahan's approach emphasises physical strength and sea control, while Kautilya's theory underlines the importance of adaptive policies and rational diplomacy. Both emphasise that Indonesia's success in dealing with the dynamics of the Thai Canal depends on the ability to combine maritime power and geopolitical intelligence in a balanced way, so that national sovereignty and interests are maintained amid intensified global competition.

RECOMENDATION

Based on the findings of this research, several strategic recommendations can be formulated for Indonesia to respond effectively to the geopolitical implications of the Thai Canal project. Indonesia must reinforce its maritime defense posture by strengthening surveillance and control over the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI), particularly ALKI II and III, to maintain strategic leverage in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain. Investment in modern port infrastructure, such as Kuala Tanjung, Tanjung Priok, and Bitung, should be prioritized to enhance national competitiveness and anticipate potential shifts in global trade routes resulting from the canal’s

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construction. Furthermore, Indonesia needs to adopt an integrated maritime strategy that combines Alfred Thayer Mahan's concept of Sea Power with Kautilya's Mandala Theory, ensuring a balance between naval strength and diplomatic maneuvering. This dual approach will enable Indonesia to manage relations with major powers such as China and the United States without compromising national sovereignty or regional stability. Economic resilience must also be enhanced through diversification of the maritime sector, including the development of domestic shipping networks, shipbuilding industries, and the blue economy. At the regional level, Indonesia should take a leadership role in strengthening ASEAN maritime cooperation to ensure freedom of navigation, environmental sustainability, and collective security in Southeast Asia. Lastly, consistent maritime research, foresight studies, and policy simulations should be institutionalized to anticipate future geopolitical shifts and align national strategies with Indonesia's long-term vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum (Poros Maritim Dunia).

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