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Geo-economics of the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) vision of Indonesia

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Abstract. Considering the present context of international relations, trade, investments, tourism and other economic and financial instruments have come to the forefront in determining the nature and scope of interstate relations. Since the end of the Cold War, the world began to give greater emphasis to international economic activities and that in return has made the world highly interdependent, especially in the fields of international trade, investments and financial assistance. These developments in the international arena have made “geo-economics” an area of greater concern. Geoeconomics can be simply defined as the relationship between economic and geographical conditions. Indonesia in 2014, under the leadership of Joko Widodo, initiated Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF) Vision with the prime objective of becoming a maritime power. Against this backdrop, the main objective of this research is to examine the geoeconomic significance of this GMF vision. As Indonesia is the largest economy in Southeast Asia and an integral part in maritime trade routes, Indonesia’s GMF vision remains highly significant in promoting the economic interests of the country. The research examines how Indonesia can attain its economic interests through the GMF vision. This is desk study and both primary and secondary data is used for the purpose of the study. As per the findings of the study, Indonesia’s maritime economy continues to play a significant role in the country becoming a major economic powerhouse and the level of success which can be achieved by Indonesia as a maritime country would depend on how well it implements the GMF vision. The Belt and Road Initiative of China would complement the GMF vision, while Indonesia should also be vigilant to the major challenges which hinder the country’s ability of realizing the geoeconomic interests.

Keywords. Global Maritime Fulcrum, Geoeconomics, Indonesia, Maritime culture

Introduction

Considering the present context of international relations, trade, investments, tourism and other economic and financial instruments have come to the forefront in determining the nature and scope of interstate relations. In fact, states increasingly practice power politics by economic means (Scholvin & Wigell, 2018). These developments in the international arena have made “geo-economics” an area of greater concern. In 1990, in his article appeared in “The National Interest”, Edward Luttwak argued that the waning of Cold War marked a shift from geopolitics to geo-economics in world politics (Tuathail, 1998, p.107). According to Luttwak (1998) as the relevance of military threats and military alliances wanes, geo economic priorities and modalities are becoming dominant state action (ibid). As defined by Luttwak (1998), geo-economics is a term that describes inter-state rivalry and conflict conducted through methods of commerce and is therefore simply an economically driven form of geopolitics: “State, as

spatial entities structural to jealously delimit their own territories will not disappear, but reorient themselves toward geo-economics in order to compensate for their decaying geopolitical roles” (Chacko, 2015, p.329). Reiterating the relationship between geopolitics and geo-economics, Blackwill and Harris note that, geo-economics is the use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results; and the effects of other nations’ economic actions on a country’s geopolitical goals (2016, p.20).

Indonesia, being the largest archipelago in the world, is gifted with greater geopolitical significance, and having understood this, during a Presidential debate in 2014, then Presidential candidate Joko Widodo promoted the idea of Indonesia being a maritime axis in Southeast Asia (Agastia & Perwita, 2015, p.32) and after being elected as the President of Indonesia, during his speech at the East Asia Summit 2014 in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, Widodo unveiled the five pillars of Indonesia’s “Global Maritime Nexus” policy (Neary, 2014, p.01). They are;

- 1.Revival of Indonesia’s ‘maritime culture’, recognizing the link between the country’s archipelagic geography, identity and livelihood;
- 2.Improved management of Indonesia’s oceans and fisheries through the development of the country’s fishing industry and building maritime food sovereignty and security;
- 3.Boosting Indonesia’s maritime economy by improving the country’s port infrastructure, shipping industry and maritime security;
- 4.Maritime diplomacy that encourages Indonesia’s partners to work together to eliminate conflict arising over illegal fishing, breaches of sovereignty, territorial disputes, piracy and environmental concerns like marine pollution; and
- 5.Bolstering Indonesia’s maritime defenses, both to support the country’s maritime sovereignty and wealth, and to fulfill its role in maintaining safety of navigation and maritime security.

As noted by Puspitawati, the Global Maritime Fulcrum is aimed to put Indonesia as a single maritime power with considerable diplomatic influence, especially in becoming a central role in two vast maritime regions- the Indian and Pacific Oceans (2017, p.326). According to Andika, the launch of GMF could be seen as the effort of President Jokowi’s administration to increase the presence of the state in the maritime sphere (2017, p.52).

Against this backdrop, this particular study looks into the geo-economic significance of the GMF vision of Indonesia. In other words, the main objective of the study is to examine the role of the GMF vision in the context of Indonesia deriving the economic gain from its strategic location. As far as the significance of the study is concerned, as mentioned earlier, present day international relations are more or less guided and determined by the economic interests of individual countries. Every country within the system strives hard to maximize its individual economic gains either through cooperation or sometime at the expense of other states. With regard to Indonesia, being the largest economy in Southeast Asia and the only South East Asian country in the G20, continues to make great strides in the economic frontier. As per the Asian Development Bank, Indonesia has able to maintain stable economic growth rate of over 5% during the period 2018-2019 (ADB,2020).

Furthermore, a report published by the Asian Development Bank (2011) titled “Asia 2050: Realizing the Asian Century” states;

“Asia is in the midst of a truly historic transformation. If it continues to grow on its recent trajectory, it could, by 2050, account for more than half of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), trade and investment, and enjoy widespread affluence.”

Moreover, according to this report, Asia’s rise will be led by seven countries namely; PRC, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. These developments in the international arena show the importance of Indonesia as an economic power house. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the GMF from an economic point of view remains highly significant.

Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study research of Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum vision which was initiated in 2014. This is desk study and both primary and secondary data is used for the purpose of the study. Primary sources include, constitution of Indonesia, defence white paper of Indonesia (2015), and speeches made by the president of Indonesia while the secondary sources of data collection includes journal articles, annual reports, websites etc.

Findings and Discussion

As noted earlier, Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world comprised of over 17,500 islands and geopolitically also its location remains highly significant. For many centuries, Indonesia has been a center for international trade especially given that it is located along the major trade routes (Map 01). Today also, its geostrategic location has made Indonesia an integral part of international relations.



Map 01: Dutch East India Company, Trade Network, 18th Century

Source: www.transportgeography.orfg

Compared to most of the countries in the world, the geographical location of Indonesia is unique. It is located between two oceans as well as two continents. Furthermore, when it comes to maritime trade, half of the world's trading goods and oil passes through Indonesian waters, including the strait of Malacca, the strait of Sunda and the strait of Lombok (Febrica, 2017). Looking at the main pillars of the GMF vision, each of these pillars reflects Indonesia's desire of reviving its identity as an archipelagic state. As an archipelagic state, its whole destiny depends on its territorial waters. From an economic perspective also its financially significant resources are found in its territorial waters. For an example, in Indonesia's GMF vision, it has given greater significance to its fisheries resource. Fisheries sector remains a main contributor of Indonesia's economy.

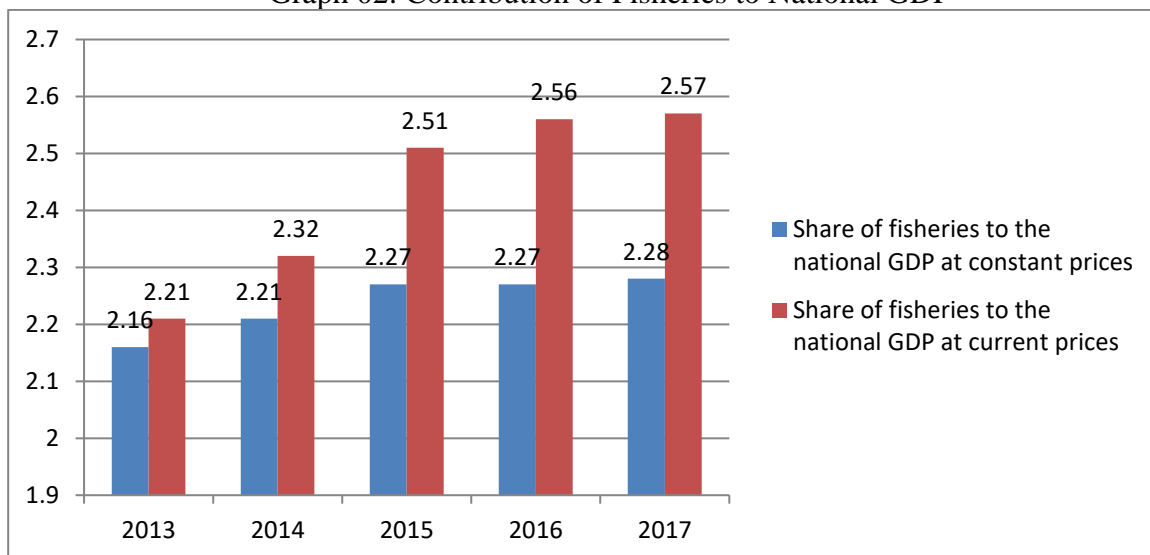
Table 02: Marine capture production (top five producer countries)

Rank	Country/territory	Production (Million tons, live weight)				Percentage of total, 2018
		2015	2016	2017	2018	
01	China	14.39	13.78	13.19	12.68	15
02	Peru (Total)	4.79	3.77	4.13	7.15	8
	Peru (excluding anchoveta)	1.02	0.92	0.83	0.96	-
03	Indonesia	6.22	6.11	6.31	6.71	8
04	Russian Federation	4.17	4.47	4.59	4.84	6
05	United States of America	5.02	4.88	5.02	4.72	6

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization

Currently, Indonesia remains the third largest fisheries producer in the world after China and Peru. Looking at fisheries sector contribution to country's economy, in 2017, the Indonesian fisheries sector contribution to the economy was almost 2.57% GDP or USD 16.8 billion (Graph 02).

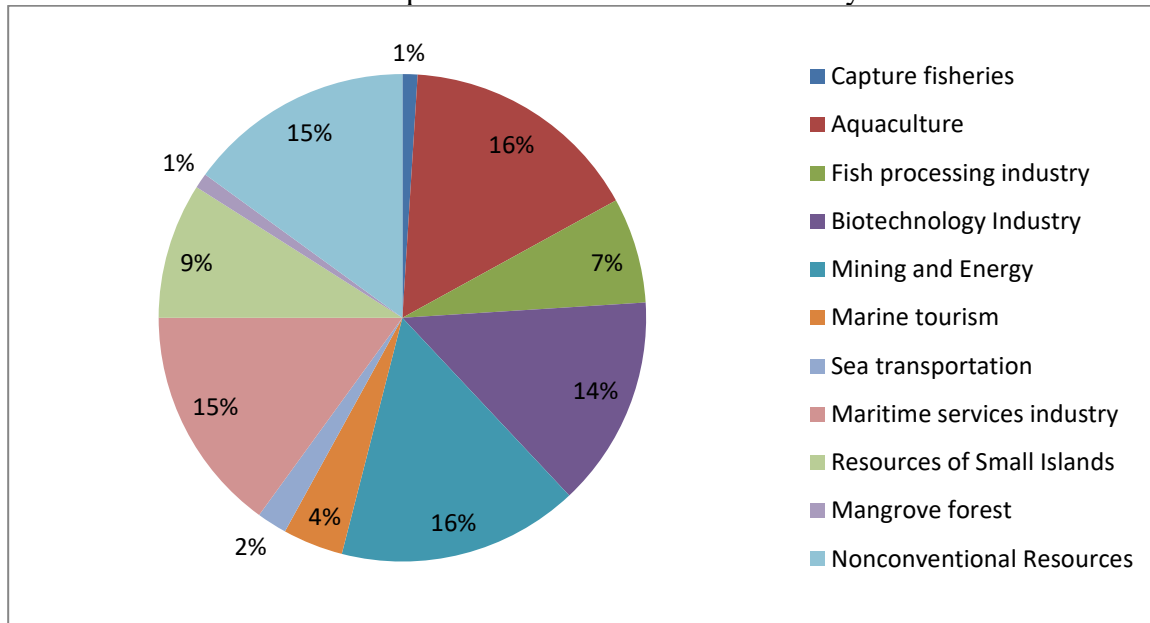
Graph 02: Contribution of Fisheries to National GDP



Source: BKPM

While the fisheries sector makes a significant contribution to the economy of Indonesia, it is not the only maritime potential Indonesia possesses.

Graph 03: Potential Maritime economy



Source: BKPM

As given in Graph 03, Indonesia's potential maritime economy is highly diverse ranging from Aquaculture to maritime tourism. According to a report compiled by the Indonesia Investment Coordinating Board, the total value of Indonesia maritime economic potential is US\$ 1.33 trillion per year.

Tourism sector remains a main contributor to the economy of Indonesia. In 2018, a total of 15.81 million foreign tourists visited Indonesia. When it comes to main tourist attractions in Indonesia, Bali occupies a prominent place.

Table 03: number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals to Indonesia by Entrance

Year	Airport					Total
	Soekarno Hatta	Ngurah Rai (Bali)	Polonia/Kualanamu (Medan)	Batam (Riau Islands)	Other Airports	
2012	2 053 850	2 902 125	205 845	1 219 608	1 663 034	8 044 462
2013	2 240 502	3 241 889	225 550	1 336 430	1 757 758	8 802 129
2014	2 246 437	3 731 735	234 724	1 454 110	1 768 405	9 435 411
2015	2 368 628	3 936 066	201 447	1 585 719	2 138 915	10 230 775
2016	2 603 195	4 885 062	211 942	1 510 203	2 308 873	11 519 275
2017	2 749 321	5 682 248	246 551	1 564 717	3 796 962	14 039 799

Source: www.bps.go.id

As given in Table 03, the most famous tourist destination in Indonesia is Bali. Bali is a renowned tourist destination in Indonesia famous particularly for its beaches and surfing. This is a good example to show the importance of marine tourism to Indonesia's tourism sector. Thus it is clear that, maritime economy remains highly significant in Indonesia becoming a main economic powerhouse in the future.

However, Indonesia is yet to fully make use of its geostrategic location. There are areas where Indonesia should pay special attention if Indonesia desires to make optimum economic use of

its location. As noted earlier, half of the world's trading goods and oil passes through Indonesian waters, including the Strait of Malacca, the strait of Sunda and the strait of Lombok. In order to cater these geogstrategic developments, Indonesia should possess highly competitive ports and other related infrastructure facilities. However, with regard to ports, questions are often raised whether Indonesia maintains their standards and competitiveness.

Table 04: Global top 10 ports by Cargo throughput, 2016-2017 (Million tones and annual percentage change)

Rank	Port	Cargo through		Percentage change
		2016	2017	2017-2016
2017				
01	Ningbo-Zhoushan (China)	918	1007	9.7
02	Shanghai (China)	700	706	0.8
03	Singapore (Singapore)	593	626	5.5
04	Suzhou (China)	574	608	5.9
05	Guangzhou (China)	522	566	8.5
06	Tangshan (China)	516	565	9.6
07	Qingdao (China)	501	508	1.4
08	Port Hedland (Australia)	485	505	4.3
09	Tianjin (China)	549	503	-8.4
10	Rotterdam (Netherland)	461	467	1.3

Source: UNCTAD

The above table shows the top 10 ports (by Cargo throughput) in the world. Despite the geopolitical significance of the country and the number of cargos travel through Indonesian waters, no Indonesian ports are in the above list. This is a major area of concern for Indonesia. As far as the reasons for this are concerned, one major is found in the logistic sector. Compared to other countries in Southeast Asia and Asia, Indonesia's performance in the logistic sector remains poor (Table 05).

Table 05: Logistic performance index 2018 (performance of selected Asian countries)

Rank	Country	Logistic performance index
07	Singapore	4.00
12	Hong Kong, China	3.92
26	China	3.61
39	Vietnam	3.27
41	Malaysia	3.22
44	India	3.18
46	Indonesia	3.15
60	Philippines	2.90

Source: UNCTAD

The Logistic Performance Index compiled by the World Bank, consists of six main indicators. They are; The efficiency of customs and border clearance, The quality of trade and transport infrastructure, The ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, The competence and quality of logistics services, The ability to track and trace consignments and The frequency with

which shipments reach consignees within scheduled or expected delivery times. As indicated in the Table 05, three countries in Southeast Asia perform better than Indonesia in the Logistic Performance Index while Indonesia has occupied the 46th place. One pillar in GMF vision emphasizes the importance of Boosting Indonesia's maritime economy by improving the country's port infrastructure, shipping industry and maritime security. In this regard it is vital for Indonesia to enhance the competitiveness in port infrastructure.

When it comes to improving country's infrastructure, one significant opportunity Indonesia has is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China. The Chinese government supported Belt and Road Initiative is a global connectivity project focused on Infrastructure development, energy and trade. As per the World Bank (2018) if completed, BRI transport projects could reduce travel times along economic corridors by 12%, increase trade between 2.7% and 9.7%, increase income by up to 3.7% and lift 7.6 million people from extreme poverty. The five cooperation priorities of the Belt and Road Initiative are; Policy coordination, Facilities connectivity, Unimpeded trade, Financial Integration and People-to-people bonds. As the largest economy in Southeast Asia and given its geostrategic significance, Indonesia has become an integral part of the BRI. From the Indonesian side, the country has already shown great interest in the BRI. Indonesian President was among the seven Heads of State from ASEAN to attend the inaugural BRI Forum in May 2017 (Negara & Suryadinata, 2018). As far the GMF is concerned, it will be in line with the Belt and Road Initiative, particularly from a geoeconomic perspective.

Table 06: List of areas of cooperation under BRI proposed by Indonesia

No	Type/Sector	Location	Province
01	Tourism	Lake Toba	North Sumatera
02	Industrial Zones	Sei Mangkei, Kuala Tanjung	North Sumatera
03	Port, Toll Road, Airport, railway	TBC	North Sumatera
04	Plantation	TBC	North Kalimantan
05	Industrial Zone, alumina	TBC	North Kalimantan
06	Onshore mini LNG	TBC	North Kalimantan
07	Tourism	Manado-Bitung	North Sulawesi
08	Industrial zones, agroindustry, logistics, fisheries	Bitung	North Sulawesi
09	Port, Toll Road, Airport, railway	TBC	North Sulawesi
10	Tourism	Ubud ,Kuta, Nusa Dua, Nusa Penida, Tanjung Benoa	Bali
11	Port, Toll Road, Airport, railway	TBC	Bali

Source: Negara, S. D., & Suryadinata, L. (2018). *Trends in Southeast Asia: Indonesia And China'S Belt And Road Initiatives: Perspectives, Issues And Prospects. Trends in Southeast Asia: INDONESIA AND CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVES: PERSPECTIVES, ISSUES AND PROSPECTS* (Rep.). ISEAS Publishing. Retrieved January 26, 2021, from https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/TRS11_18.pdf

As given in Table 06, all the projects proposed by Indonesia under BRI are part of country's GMF vision. For instance, ports, toll roads, airports, railways which have been proposed under

the BRI are linked with infrastructure development revealed in the GMF vision. Thus, the BRI could be a great boosting factor of Indonesia's Maritime Fulcrum vision.

Despite the geoeconomic significance of the GMF, there are key challenges to be addressed if Indonesia to benefit from the GMF vision. Security in the territorial waters and eliminating IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing remain key priorities of the government. For Indonesia, ensuring maritime border security remains very important. Considering the its location in the region, there is often greater possibility of outbreak of border disputes, especially with regard to territorial waters.

Table 07: Maritime boundaries between Indonesia and neighboring countries

Territorial	Continental	Exclusive Economic Zone
Malaysia	Thailand	Malaysia
Singapore	Malaysia	The Philippines
Papua New Guinea	Australia	Australia
Timor Leste	India	India
	Vietnam	Thailand
	The Philippines	Vietnam
	Timor Leste	Timor Leste
	Palau	Palau

Source: Andika, M. T. (2017). Indonesia Border Diplomacy Under The Global Maritime Fulcrum. *RITSUMEIKAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS*, 15, 45-66. Retrieved July 27, 2019, from [http://repository.bakrie.ac.id/2101/1/POL-Artikel-013 asia_15_andika.pdf](http://repository.bakrie.ac.id/2101/1/POL-Artikel-013%20asia_15_andika.pdf)

A major challenge Indonesia is facing today is the issue of IUU (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated) fishing. As noted earlier, the contribution made by the fisheries sector to the Indonesian economy is immense. However, the IUU fishing has today become a major challenge which hinders the progress of the fishing industry. Another pillar in GMF vision is bolstering Indonesia's maritime defenses, both to support the country's maritime sovereignty and wealth, and to fulfill its role in maintaining safety of navigation and maritime security. In this regard, Indonesia has now taken significant measures to counter illegal fishing within Indonesian maritime boundaries. Sinking the vessel policy is one of the moves made by the Indonesian government with regard to mitigating illegal fishing.

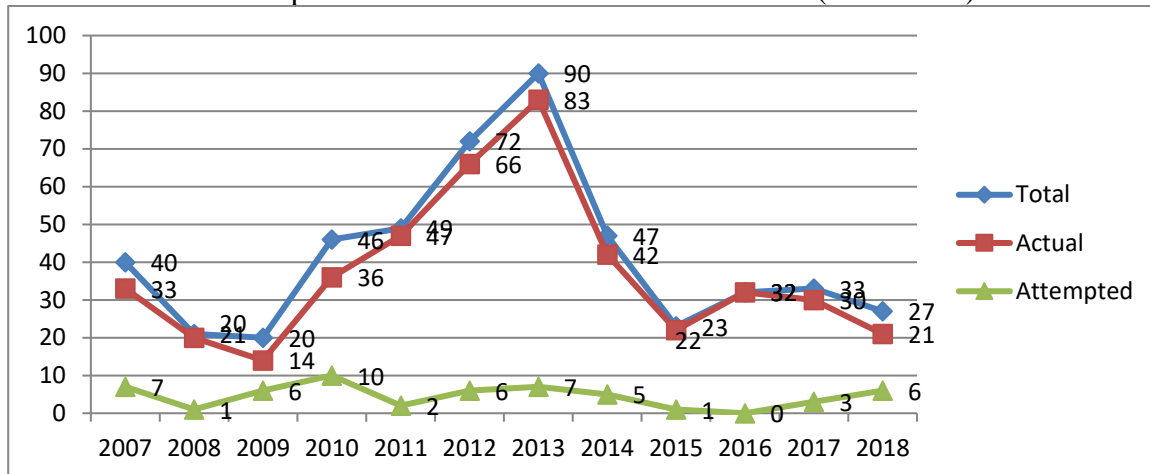
Table 08: Number of vessels engaged in IUU fishing destroyed by Indonesia (Nov 2014-August 2018)

Vessel's Flag	Total
Vietnam	276
Philippines	90
Thailand	50
Malaysia	41
Indonesia	26
Papua New Guinea	2
China	1
Stateless	1
Total	480

Source: Santosa, M. (2018, October). *Presentation at the 4t h International Symposium on Fisheries Crime. Presentation at the 4t h International Symposium on Fisheries Crime.*

Copenhagen. Retrieved from <https://bluejustice.org/fishcrime/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Combating-IUU-Fishing-Fisheries-Crime.pdf>
On the other hand, Indonesia also faces incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships.

Graph 04: Number of incidents in Indonesia (2007-2018)



Source: ReCAAP ISC. (2018). *Annual Report 2018: Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia. Annual Report 2018: Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia. The Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (Rep.)*. Retrieved January 26, 2021, from [http://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/reports/annual/ReCAAP ISC Annual Report 2018.pdf](http://www.recaap.org/resources/ck/files/reports/annual/ReCAAP%20ISC%20Annual%20Report%202018.pdf)

These are some of the key challenges which Indonesia will have to tackle prudently in its efforts towards becoming a major sea power.

Conclusion

Given its geostrategic location, Indonesia is well placed of becoming a major maritime power and it has greater potential of influencing and determining the nature and scope of international relations. In this regard, the Global Maritime Fulcrum Vision is certain to play a critical role. One reason which makes the GMF vision so significant is its geoeconomic importance. The GMF vision is so decisive in Indonesia's efforts of becoming a major economic powerhouse in the world. Given the fact that Indonesia's economy is linked with this maritime culture, the way Indonesia handles its maritime economy will be so crucial. It is clear that all the pillars of the GMF vision have great impact on the economy of the country. While Indonesia having wealth of maritime resources, it also has challenges to the countered. One such challenge is the infrastructure development. In this regard, Indonesia can cooperate with other countries, and the BRI will play a major role in the infrastructure development in Indonesia. Indonesia also has a number of challenges to be encountered, in attaining its geoeconomic interests. IUU fishing and sea piracy remain key challenges which need immediate attention.

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