

## **Indonesia's Opportunity to Develop Maritime Potency : Utilizing Chairmanship in IORA 2015**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Indonesia is one of country located near Indian Ocean, it means that Indonesia is a maritime nation. Hence, Indonesia is a very big potential maritime to develop its economy. The aim of this paper is to determine how Indonesia used its opportunity to develop its maritime potency by utilizing IORA chairmanship during 2015-2017. The emphasis of this paper was placed on the examination of the perspectives and experiences of Indonesia as the largest archipelagic country and biggest economic growth in IORA. Indonesia could play a role, helping to strengthen the IORA and turn it into a respected and matured regional forum. By actuating this condition, Indonesia has a chance to get two advantages: in the domestic level, a significant progress in maritime sector of economic development can be achieved. Meanwhile, at the international level, this condition can be taken as a shortcut to propose the idea of Indonesia's vision to international community in order to boost Indonesia's bargaining position in the international maritime issues.

**Keywords:** *IORA, maritime*

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## I. BACKGROUND

Under the new proposal of Joko Widodo's direction in his term as a President, Indonesia is finally back to its identity as a maritime nation. After a long time off period, having agriculture as the primary focus for the government to work with, this year is an excellent start to explore the maritime potency of Indonesia. Although it sounds slightly late for the government to finally realizing the urgency of making maritime become the leading of both diplomacy and economic growth, we shall understand that this year is the right time to start the maritime policy considering the important role for Indonesia as a chair in IORA starting this year.

Indonesia will be the chairperson of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the period of 2015-2017 and receive the baton of the IORA chairmanship from the predecessor, Australia in October 2015. This strategic position should be well maintained by Indonesia as a leader in order to achieve not only upholding a better position for IORA in the world but also a better position for Indonesia to realized its main tagline to be a Global Maritime fulcrum.

Indonesia, with a total area of 7.7 million km<sup>2</sup>, is the fourth longest coastline country, with more than 95.181 km, and has more than 17.480 islands.<sup>3</sup> No wonder as the largest archipelago country in the world it has a great potential of natural resources to be discovered. If all of the potencies can be managed into tangible economic assets, it can be used to improve the people welfare, source of foreign exchange, environmental preservation, and become a medium for unifying the nation. It is expected that Indonesia, as an experienced ASEAN player, the member of G20, the world's largest archipelagic state and as the biggest economy in Southeast Asia, will revitalize IORA's role in the world during its chairmanship in IORA.<sup>4</sup>

As the third largest Ocean in the world, Indian Ocean can be seen as a potential area for a lifeline of international economic and transportation sector. It carries half of the world's container ships, one-third of the bulk cargo traffic, and two-thirds of the world's oil shipments.<sup>5</sup> This region is tangled and connected to another border as potential trade routes in sea-lanes. Moreover, this route becomes a massive market because of the populations of their members; if it is combined together it could be more than a third of world's population. Imagine that each of the countries in this area could contribute the potential products such as raw minerals, metals, energy for industries, agricultures, and technological inventions. It would not be impossible to accelerate the global economic pioneered by the Indian Oceans area.

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<sup>3</sup> Directorate of Planning for Agribusiness and Other Natural Resources. 2011. *Fishery Industry at a Glance*. Retrieved from [www.bkpm.go.id/img/file/fisheries.pdf](http://www.bkpm.go.id/img/file/fisheries.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Saragih, Bagus BT. (2015, February 26). RI's Maritime Axis To Pivots Westward Through IORA. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/02/26/ri-s-maritime-axis-pivots-westward-through-iora.html#sthash.uZ51wuhV.dpuf>

<sup>5</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association. *Background*. 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.iora.net/about-us/background.aspx>.

Realizing the beneficial of making a focus regional organization in the Indian Ocean, ten years ago the Government of Mauritius proposed a meeting to discuss the enhancement of economic cooperation among countries of the Indian Ocean Rim. On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1995, IORA was formally launched. The representatives from the government, business sectors, and academia, which came from Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Sultanate of Oman, Singapore and South Africa, known as the "Core Group States" or M-7, were known as the former of IORA.<sup>6</sup> Until now, there are 20 members from south hemisphere and Indian Ocean Rim, which consist of "Core Group States", they are Bangladesh, Comoros, Indonesia, Iran, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mozambique, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Similar to any other regional organization, IORA also has priority areas to be focused and achieved together with their members. Those are Maritime Safety & Security, Trade & Investment, Disaster Risk Management, Fisheries Management, Academic & Science & Technology, Cooperation, Tourism & Cultural Exchanges, and Gender Empowerment.<sup>7</sup> To achieve the goals of the objectives that already mention above, IORA also has "Action Plan"<sup>8</sup> they are:

**1. Vision :**

To formulate and implement projects for economic co-operation relating to trade facilitation, promotion and liberalization; promotion of foreign investment, scientific and technological exchanges, and tourism, movement of natural persons and service providers on a non-discriminatory basis; and development of infrastructure and human resources, as laid down in the Work Program of the Association. (Art. 3.2 of IORA Charter)

**2. Policy Guidelines:**

1. Enhancement of Trade, Investment, Finance and Energy Cooperation within the Region
2. Education, Culture, and Technology
3. Enhancing Cooperation On Fisheries
4. Promotion of Tourism Cooperation
5. Disaster Management and Risk Reduction
6. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

**3. Implementation Mechanism:**

The Sub-Committee stressed on the need of the following to ensure proper implementation of the projects. Those are Strengthening of the National Focal Points as the implementing framework; a regional level project-based

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<sup>6</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association. *Formation*. 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.iora.net/about-us/formation.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association. *Priority Areas*. Retrieved from <http://www.iora.net/about-us/priority-areas.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association. *Action Plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.iora.net/about-us/action-plan.aspx>.

facilitator role for the Heads of Missions in Pretoria to expedite the completion of projects; Setting up of sector working groups after finalization of priority areas; and half-yearly meetings at the level of Senior / Technical officials of Member States.

#### **4. Financing Mechanism :**

The prime responsibility for financing any project of IORA is with the participating Member States; Resources of the IOR-ARC Special Fund may be approached as a complementary mechanism; and, the financial and technical assistance of the Dialogue Partner States and other National, Regional, International and Donor Organizations may also be mobilized.

After knowing that IORA is potential regional organizations, which align with Indonesia's mission on Global Maritime Fulcrum project, yet it raises an issue which facts IORA is not widely known as compared to other regional organizations. This means, becoming a chairman of IORA need full support of not only Indonesia but also all the member to hand in hand work together. It requires various meetings and discussions on different possible activities that Indonesia will undertake within the framework of the IORA were made, including the identification of a range of things that will be the Core of Indonesia's Chairmanship in the IORA<sup>9</sup>. The essential thing is that Indonesia will not only merely serve as a chair, but also about how Indonesia will develop as a leader. Meaning, Indonesia has a wider role in leading, organizing and contributing IORA so that it has a better importance for the world in the future.

## **II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

In Alexander Wendt's words, "Identities are the basis of interest".<sup>10</sup> He suggests in a conclusion that, the fundamental basis of an international or even supranational organization is having the common identities in order to realize its common goals. Here, believed the identities not only coming from the similar background of beliefs, nationals, and races but also including the similarity of having same geographical sharing borders. Since that time many studies have examined the idea of identity, however, the most suitable theory, which can be related in this paper, is constructivist approached. Constructivist argue that understanding how non-material structures condition actors identities are important because identities inform interests and in turn, in actions.<sup>11</sup> As already recognized, constructivists are defined by their emphasis on the socially constructed character of actors' interests and identities, and by their concomitant

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<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2015, March 15). No. 86 Vol VIII. RI foreign minister : *IORA Can be Designed to become More Strategic*. Retrieved from <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2015/maret/Diplomasi%20Maret%202015%20%28English%20Version%29.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Wendt, Alexander. (Spring, 1992). *Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*. International Organization. Vol. 46, No. 2. p. 398.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, Burchill, et al. 2005. *Theories of International Relations Third Ed*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Print.

faith in the susceptibility to change of even the most seemingly immutable practices and institutions in world politics.<sup>12</sup>

Based on a constructivist approach, the formation of IORA can be then elaborated using this constructivist's idea of identity, which those twenty member countries of IORA share. In 1995, during a visit to India, President Nelson Mandela stated "the natural urge of the facts of history and geography should broaden itself to include the concept of an Indian Ocean Rim for socio-economic co-operation and other peaceful endeavors. Recent changes in the international system demand that the countries of the Indian Ocean shall become a single platform."<sup>13</sup> This mean IORA's members are having strong identical identities. First, the countries that compose IORA are those bordering the Indian Ocean, hence in this case it was the geographical identity that first initiated the formation of IORA. Second, due to the geographical identity (the Global South bordering the Indian Ocean), IORA was bounded regarding the economic potencies of Indian Ocean. Third, the common historical experience of European imperialism had left a lasting impression on the leaders of states in the Indian Ocean region - of a sense of shared identity. The rediscovery of the past littoral economic, social and cultural community, of an ocean-centric regional co-operative grouping serving as a bridgehead between Africa, Asia, and Australasia, therefore, seemed only natural.<sup>14</sup>

By acknowledging the similarities of strong common identities which shared by the members of IORA, here it expects that the role of the chairman is to drive the common identities to be in bold actions of politics which could uphold the existence of IORA itself. Indonesia as widely known have a great potency of maritime, great economic growth, great-shared borders with the Indian Ocean, and had long enough of the history of colonization could be relied upon as a chairmanship to accelerating its potency and IORA as well.

### III. RESEARCH DESIGN

The aim of this paper is to determine how Indonesia used its opportunity to develop its maritime potency by utilizing IORA chairmanship during 2015-2017. For the purposes of this paper, a qualitative descriptive research design would be used to analyze the core of the problem. According to Creswell, qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed

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<sup>12</sup> Martin, Griffiths. 2007. *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An introduction*. New York: Routledge, Print.

<sup>13</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association. *Background*. 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.iora.net/about-us/background.aspx>.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

views of informants and conducts the study in a natural setting.<sup>15</sup> Based on the premise and the features of a qualitative research design, this design was considered suitable for the purposes of this paper. This paper therefore, adopted an exploratory qualitative descriptive research design to provide an outlook: how a range of factors cumulatively affected Indonesia's opportunity to become a global maritime fulcrum by developing its maritime potency, the efforts which have and have not yet done to achieve it, the importance of IORA's, and the utilization of IORA's chairmanship to achieve Indonesia's objectives.

The justification for this paper design is chosen and analyzed from the several sources, which contain valid data provided. The hypothesis of this paper is proved the potentials factors, which Indonesia has to develop its maritime potency including utilizing IORA's chairmanship. The emphasis of this paper was placed on the examination of the perspectives and experiences of Indonesia as the largest archipelagic country and biggest economic growth in IORA.

#### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Evidently, a wide range of different interests in a regional power somehow triggers the rivalry among its member to overlapping each other. To avoid a runaway rivalry for regional power and influence, greater efforts to maintain regional stability is needed. Including here in Indian Ocean Rim Association where it reached two decades for its existence. As a chairman, Indonesia could play a role, helping to strengthen the IORA and turn it into a respected and matured regional forum. By actuating this condition, Indonesia has a chance to get two advantages: in the domestic level, a significant progress in maritime sector of economic development can be achieved. Meanwhile at the international level, this condition can be taken as a shortcut to propose the idea of Indonesia's vision to international community in order to boost Indonesia's bargaining position in the international maritime issues.

##### a. Indonesia's Direct Foreign Policy

Being declared for a moment, the project to transform Indonesia to be a Global Maritime Fulcrum would shift the priority of the national decisions, so that it would be more focus on upholding the maritime potency and actuating "pro-people diplomacy" as the focus of Indonesia's diplomacy. Align with its direct Foreign Policy; Indonesia has a great deal to be a chairman of IORA for 2015 until 2017.

"If we identify our foreign policy priorities for the next five years and connect them to IORA's interests, the 'maritime axis' is a perfect fit," Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi told a workshop on Indonesia's preparation for the IORA chair at the Foreign Ministry in Jakarta.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, she also gave a reminder of Jokowi's focus on

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<sup>15</sup> Creswell, John W.. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design*: Sage Publications, p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> Saragih, Bagus BT. (2015, February 26). RI's Maritime Axis To Pivots Westward Through IORA. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/02/26/ri-s-maritime-axis-pivots-westward-through-iora.html#sthash.uZ51wuhV.dpuf>

“pro-people diplomacy”, which she said must be given serious attention when Indonesia took over the chair of IORA from Australia later this year. “I have repeatedly said that our foreign policy is aimed at serving people’s interests. Therefore, this workshop is a good bottom-up forum to capture people’s interests and formulate [them into our mission as IORA chair],” Retno added.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Indonesia could propose that the peak IORA decision-making body be elevated from the council of foreign ministers to the summit level.<sup>18</sup> This would be an important step in encouraging political will among IORA members. IORA can be linear and connector their foreign policy from the members so that the member of IORA that including developing or under developing country also can be empowered to be welfare and getting prosperity by joining cooperation in IORA. This institution could play a crucial role as a leading actor in diplomacy track and give the Indonesian government better outreach on IORA projects both domestically and internationally. The benefits which gained from IORA is to advance the cooperation to return in the Indian Ocean along with the mutual benefits from each member.

b. Role of Indonesia in IORA

Broadly known as a pioneer and stalwart of regionalism in South East Asia, precisely among ASEAN, Indonesia is a very suitable actor to encourage the same in the Indian Ocean. As the *primus inter pares* in ASEAN, Indonesia has sought to promote norms by initiating a significant number of ASEAN documents, such as the ASEAN Charter.<sup>19</sup> Being a member and a big brother in ASEAN, Indonesia already giving some important legacy one of them is Treaty of Amity of Cooperation (TAC), which later it became a central element for promoting peace and cooperation. Indonesia also engages some of the great opportunity to anchor the ASEAN in it surrounds. For example, Indonesia with the help of ASEAN members successfully initiated Pacific in the East Asia Summit (EAS), which would bring the more benefits following the ASEAN Progress as a regional forum.

Seeing the great involvement done by Indonesia in another regional forum, it portrays us the strong power of Indonesia to be implemented in IORA. Moreover, the primary key is that Indonesia always shows a long lasting friendship relationship with many countries in the Indian Ocean including Indonesia has no conflict with any other state. In cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore, Indonesia

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>18</sup> Santikajaya, Awidya. (2014, December 12). *Indonesia: A Potential Leader in the Indian Ocean*. Retrieved from <http://thediplomat.com/2014/12/indonesia-a-potential-leader-in-the-indian-ocean/>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*

even offers an example of trilateral security cooperation through the Malacca Strait Sea Patrol.<sup>20</sup>

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Retno Marsudi said that boosting IORA's visibility, both internally and externally, will be the primary focus of Indonesia main tasks as chair. She also added that the activities that make IORA more visible need to be intensified during Indonesia's chairmanship.<sup>21</sup> This statement means that as a middle power, Indonesia had to focus on not only what Indonesia could get from being chair but also what it could contribute to IORA<sup>22</sup>. Here are the roles of Indonesia that could have been implemented during chairmanship.

1. Indonesia needs to uphold the maritime potency, especially in fisheries management. This could be done if the Ministry of Maritime affairs and fisheries proposed a number of initiatives, including the establishment of an IORA Marine and Fisheries Capacity development and Partnership Center located in Bungus port, Padang, West Sumatra.<sup>23</sup> As the priority issues which will be discussed, IORA would be more responsible for fish trade, eradication of fishing, sustainable fisheries, fish stock assessment, and fishermen welfare. This is the great place to start with since it is also would be the place for Indonesia to take over the rotating chairmanship of the IORA from Australia for the period between 2015 and 2017. The handover of the chairmanship is scheduled to take place in Padang during an IORA meeting to be held on October 20-23, 2015.<sup>24</sup>
2. Moreover, Padang as the first city to get direct in touch with IORA, we could also continue the development in another potential area such as we can emulate Surabaya. As the capital of East Java Province, in developing a shipbuilding industry alike the state-owned shipbuilding manufacturer PT PAL, which is supported by scientists of the Surabaya Institute of Technology (ITS). It would accelerate the technology development and also transfer the education<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Saragih, Bagus BT. (2015, February 26). RI's Maritime Axis To Pivots Westward Through IORA. Retrieved from <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/02/26/ri-s-maritime-axis-pivots-westward-through-iora.html#sthash.uZ51wuhV.dpuf>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2015, March 15). No. 86 Vol VIII. RI foreign minister : *IORA Can be Designed to become More Strategic*. Retrieved from <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2015/maret/Diplomasi%20Maret%202015%20%28English%20Version%29.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Indonesian Embassy Vienna, Austria. (2015, July 05). *IORA should boost development of shipbuilding industry: Expert*. Retrieved from <http://www.kbriwina.at/about-the-embassy/press-cultural-section/iora-should-boost-development-of-shipbuilding.php>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*



3. Indonesia is able to facilitate the regulations on trade and investment as well as management of fisheries, it disclosed that Indonesia's trade and investment target is quite high, where investment target for 2015-2019 is Rp 3.518,6 trillion, with PMA and PMD contributions are 63% and 36% respectively and a growth above 7%.<sup>26</sup> To achieve these targets, Indonesia's modalities are strong enough, where UNCTAD ranks Indonesia third in prospective host economies for 2014-2016. Meanwhile, Indonesia ranks 34th from 144 countries in the Global Competitiveness Index in terms of increased competitiveness.
4. As a friendly democratic country, Indonesia would also have a greater chance on IORA to be more communicative and having an effective meeting among its member in order to broader the cooperative projects, especially for external partners. Bridging the dialogue among partners in IORA should be encouraged more in order to engage them in some participation in IORA Projects, policy-making and security plan. It is caused by the current issues which very lack on IORA now is absent of inviting a potential external partner to be equally contributing in working projects.
5. Indonesia can utilize owned modalities in terms of disaster risk management, such as the World Class Training Centre, INA DRTG Sentul, museums, universities, and others<sup>27</sup>. Furthermore, Indonesia could also promote the potential tourism destination along the Indian Ocean as the attractive factor and spread the message about the peaceful and humble for the member of the Indian Ocean to welcome the tourism and external partners.

Finally, Indonesia could actively contribute the real action plan for both the short and long terms, so that the regional forum such IORA has a better and effective tools to monitor the effectiveness of its cooperation projects. Meanwhile, the projects that already proposed need to define tangible outcomes that could be achieved within a certain timeframe, especially, in IORA the term for the handover of the chairman only in the length of two years. Learning from ASEAN, which defines its objectives in the three pillars of the ASEAN Community, IORA could select a limited number of priorities with clear purposes and instruments, instead of working on wildly ambitious but hollow commitments. If Indonesia intends to reinvigorate IORA, it needs to start preparing to do so now. One particularly urgent task is setting up a research institute/think tank, focusing specifically on Indian Ocean issues, which Indonesia currently lacks. The projects, which proposed is some of the regions in Indonesia, would be a great start to see

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>27</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2015, March 15). No. 86 Vol VIII. RI foreign minister : *IORA Can be Designed to become More Strategic.* Retrieved from <http://www.tabloiddiplomasi.org/pdf/2015/maret/Diplomasi%20Maret%202015%20%28English%20Version%29.pdf>

the seriousness of the implementation of IORA. This institution could play a crucial role as a leading actor in Track II diplomacy and give the Indonesian government better outreach on IORA projects both domestically and internationally. Indonesia has the potential to influence the direction and shape the dynamic of the Indian Ocean region. Referring to its diplomatic eloquence in the Southeast Asia and Pacific regions, Indonesia could constructively remake IORA as the premier regional forum for cooperation.

## V. CONCLUSION

Along with the role of Indonesia as the chairman of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the period of 2015-2017 come opportunities and challenges. One of the important things is to uphold a better position for IORA in the world. As a regional organization, IORA is not widely known as compared to other regional organizations, despite its multi-sector focuses and expertises, namely: Maritime Safety & Security, Trade & Investment, Disaster Risk Management, Fisheries Management, Academic & Science & Technology, Cooperation, Tourism & Cultural Exchanges, and Gender Empowerment. Therefore, it becomes an important target for Indonesia as the chair of IORA to ensure the development and the improvement of IORA's role for the benefit of its members, and also for the importance of IORA itself for the world. In the same time, being the chair of IORA has provided a chance for Indonesia to achieve the objective to become a Global Maritime fulcrum. While the priority is mostly projected on the progress to become Global Maritime Fulcrum, Indonesia must also pay attention to IORA's strength in order to accomplish the objectives. As the chairman, Indonesia is expected to drive the common identities from the members of IORA to be in bold actions of politics which could uphold the existence of IORA itself.

Indonesia could play a role, helping to strengthen the IORA and turn it into a respected and matured regional forum. By actuating this condition, Indonesia has a chance to get two advantages: in the domestic level, a significant progress in maritime sector of economic development can be achieved. Meanwhile, at the international level, this condition can be taken as a shortcut to propose the idea of Indonesia's vision to international community in order to boost Indonesia's bargaining position in the international maritime issues. From IORA's point of view, a great progress can be ignited by the careful process to select a limited number of priorities with clear purposes and instruments, instead of working on wildly ambitious but hollow commitments. If Indonesia intends to reinvigorate IORA, it needs to start preparing to do so now. One particularly urgent task is setting up a research institute/think tank, focusing specifically on Indian Ocean issues, which Indonesia currently lacks. Hopefully, the projects which proposed is some of the regions in Indonesia would be a great start to see the seriousness of the implementation of IORA.

Finally, with the advantages available for Indonesia as the chairman of IORA, the tasks which are left is to ensure the application of the right program for the right purpose, for the sake of Indonesia in achieving its objectives as Global Maritime Fulcrum, and also to reinvigorate IORA to rise ahead as one of

important regional forum in maritime sector. The government of Indonesia must be aware of every development of IORA progress and Indonesia's authority as the chair since these issues become important elements which complement each other, regarding the success of Indonesia's Global maritime Fulcrum project.

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