

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The beginning of the 2020 was not predictable and made certain countries enter chaotic conditions including economic, tourism, education, social, politics, and health. This condition is caused by a coronavirus that infected the human respiratory system and then the disease is known as COVID-19. This disease started in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 and has rapidly spread to various countries in the world since the early of 2020, not long after that, The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic that needs attention and caution (Putri G. S., 2020).

This pandemic not only affects the increasing number of human deaths in the world but also the mobility of people in terms of working and travel restrictions for some time as long as this condition is still followed by social impacts afterwards (Warwick McKibbin & Roshen Fernando, 2020). The condition creates both governments from developed and developing countries that are pushed into crisis in maintaining their national condition which is to protect the health of the people yet also managing the economic activity of their own countries. Not only that, the governments must also prepare for the recovery conditions after the pandemic.

Public administration is being tested by the COVID-19, each government uses different approach in managing and tackling the spread of the disease. There are countries

that use a soft approach like herd immunity and some other countries choose a hard way for managing it by doing a big lockdown.

COVID-19 influences the improvement of multilateral and bilateral relations between countries. In the case of bilateral cooperation, it can be seen from the example between Britain and South Korea which maintain direct flight routes between the two countries and ensure there are no disruptions in travel even during this pandemic. This direct flight is intended to facilitate their access to cooperate in overcoming coronavirus where the two countries plan to increase the capacity of testing new types of coronavirus cases and expand the purchase of South Korean diagnostic tools (Amani, 2020).

South Korea is one of the first countries that have coronavirus cases outside China in January, the growth rate for corona cases in the country has been very slow for some time but in February 2020, this country had a very high growth of COVID-19 cases, it because there was one person from a religious group who had the corona virus, she transmitted the disease to others during a religious event was held in one of the Church in the city of Daegu, not long after that the place was identified as a virus cluster. The government launched a massive test campaign for every person in order to track the spreading of the virus fastly. The country made the tests freely available, some places also using the drive-through mechanism where people can do the test from their own car in the capital city, Seoul (BBC News, 2020).

The authorities are able to effectively find, isolate, and treat infected people and track down people who might have contact with people who were positive of COVID-19 before (Vismanath, 2020). Only a short time

after the dramatic COVID-19 increase in casualties, the country succeed in suppressing the growth rate with a program owned by President Moon Jae In called TRUST¹ as well as how the government make cooperation with South Korean technology companies to make the test kits which can do mass checks on the citizens (Klingner, 2020).

In the early days of this increase of coronavirus cases, South Korea built 600 testing centers and at least could check 20.000 people per day, but when the number of increases was lower, the country tested 10.000 people per day. This is enforced because South Korea is aware that the virus spreads very easily, thus it needs to be put into place in a fast action and massive test. The COVID-19 test kit produces by a major South Korean company which has been approved internationally through the US FDA where Seegene Inc. was given an Emergency Use Authorization of the Allplex test kit which was considered to be the standard of SARS-CoV-2 test and was sold to over 60 countries (Khaliq, 2020).

With its success in suppressing the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the country, many countries are interested in cooperating to purchase or get assistance in the form of humanitarian aids related to COVID-19 test kits during this pandemic, with more than 100 countries procuring the essential medical equipment from South Korea. However, this country must make a balance regarding the procurement of these test kits for domestic demand and also to export the corona virus test kits, which are the United States, United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia (Sang-ho, 2020). South Korea prioritized those

¹ Transparency, Robust Screening and quarantine, Unique but universally applicable testing, Strict control and Treatment.

countries considering that they have made very good cooperation with it in various sectors as well as considering the growing condition of COVID-19 and how each country is experiencing difficulties in dealing with its COVID-19 cases.

South Korea made Indonesia as one of the countries to send its test kit because of seeing the rapid growth of COVID-19 in Indonesia. As of April 1, 2020, there were 1.677 cases, 157 deaths, 103 recovering (CNN Indonesia, 2020) with death percentage up to 8,9 percent (Mukaromah, 2020). Whereas when certain countries reported their COVID-19 cases which spread in some areas of the countries, Indonesia has not detected and reported any such cases for about two months. However, when the virus is confirmed to be entered this country, it spread rapidly even faster than the coronavirus growth from other countries. South Korea donated 32.200 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test equipment to handle COVID-19 in Indonesia, this is a follow-up of South Korea's commitment to prioritize Indonesia to tackle the corona cases that occurred in the country (CNBC Indonesia, 2020).

Basically, the relationship between South Korea and Indonesia has been implemented diplomatically since 1973. Both countries made the relationship in a lot of terms especially for economic activity because back in 1970s, the countries were at the developing stage and struggling to survive during the Cold War. Now, South Korea has become a developed country and emerged as one of the strong and high income countries in East Asia while Indonesia is still being a developing country, their relationship grew even stronger. South Korea now has been the third biggest investors in Indonesia.

In the current era, Indonesia has a closer relationship with South Korea in which both countries upgraded the

level of partnership into Special Strategic Partnership starting in 2017 and the agreement is about sharpening the acceleration of industrialization. The two countries agreed to increase cooperation in four areas i.e. security, economic cooperation, expanding community exchanges, and cooperation at the regional and international levels (Susilo, 2017).

In the same year, the President of South Korea, Moon Jae In, six months after his administration to be precise, declared his foreign policy entitled New Southern Policy. New Southern Policy is a program that effectively demonstrates the president of Republic of Korea's long-term foreign policy toward South East Asia, India, and beyond to create a good community of people, mutual prosperity and peace in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres among the others and reducing the dependence of the country with the four major countries i.e. The United States, China, Japan, and Russia (Indonesia-South Korea New Southern Policy Young Professionals Lab, 2021). The program was first unveiled in Indonesia in 2017. Both countries signed the Indonesia-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK-CEPA) which can be considered as the first result of the South Korea New Southern Policy (Lee, 2019).

According to the above evidence, it can be seen how the Korean Government contributed to Indonesia in fighting against COVID-19 and this has been helpful for the country, moreover with the relationship both countries built since long ago. Nevertheless, on the other hand, a question rises around the interest of Korean government humanitarian aid to Indonesia and Indonesia's position as one of the three priority countries. Does

this aid motivated purely by humanitarian reason or does it have any other goals that South Korea wants to achieve from Indonesia? This argument will be further investigated in this research.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the problems above, the research question of this research is formulated, as follows: Why is South Korea interested in sending aid in the form of a COVID-19 test kit and choosing Indonesia as one of the priority country?

C. Theoretical Framework

This research focuses on discussing the national interest framework to explain the context of Korea's foreign aid in Indonesia in the form of exporting COVID-19 test kits to Indonesia. Before discussing specifically about national interest theory, I would like to discuss about the concept of foreign aid. In this research, foreign aid is understood as the movement of goods or services from a country or international organization to other country or people in need. It can also be understood as material goods or services that are owned or controlled by the donors, the allocation of which may vary according to their purposes and interest.

According to Hans J Morgenthau (1962), foreign aids can be classified into six categories that have something in common which is transfer money, goods and services. Although this is called as an aid, but in the motive and implementation there are number of interests that are trying to be fulfilled, especially the political and economic interests of the donor country.

1. **Humanitarian foreign aid:** An aid usually in the form of medicine and agricultural thing which governments have traditionally extended to the nation that are victims of natural disaster such as flood, earthquake, tsunami, and even epidemic falls. This aid actually has not any political element or motive in it, yet there is also possibility that humanitarian aid can be operated in the political context for the next or long term between the donor and recipient countries.
2. **Subsistence foreign aid:** It has the purpose of covering the deficit in the recipient donor's country budget. This assistance is not much different from humanitarian foreign aid because it is more aimed at preventing the disintegration of order and disintegration of the people of the recipient country. What makes it different is this foreign aid shows directly to have a political function which impacts to eliminate the opportunity for the emergence of a new regime that might be better than the existing leadership regime;
3. **Bribery:** It is assistance offered by one government to another government with the aim of gaining political excellence or support. Bribery can be in the form of money or services through assistance for economic development where money and services are channeled through pure machinery to help economically. Therefore, these bribes are less effective way of being called an aid by buying political good.
4. **Military foreign aid:** Foreign aid for military purposes is a traditional way by which nation buttress their alliances. The traditional military aid can be understood as a division of labor between

two allies who pool their resources, one supplying money, material, and training, the other providing primarily manpower.

Nevertheless, military aid for today's era is quiet contrast with the traditional one. The purpose here is to seek political advantage in exchange for military aid. It obligates by implication, the recipient toward the giver. Military aid here is a bribe.

5. **Prestige aid:** Assistance in the form of infrastructure or investment development that benefits the donor country more than the recipient country. This is almost like Bribery but for most developing countries, the assistance is quite beneficial and focuses more on its political benefits for a country. The advantage of giving a prestige aid among others is where it gains political and economic superiority and fosters a patent relationship between the generosity of the giver and the openness of the recipient country.
6. **Foreign aid for economic development:** This aid has a very much smaller range of potentially successful operation than is generally believed. Its success depends in good measure not so much upon its soundness in strictly economic terms as upon intellectual, moral, and political preconditions, which are not susceptible to economic manipulation, if they are susceptible to manipulation from the outside at all. Political results of successful foreign aid for economic development may be either unpredictable or counterproductive in terms of the political goals of the giving nations.

Based on the type given by Morghentau above, the case of Korean aid to Indonesia is included in the humanitarian foreign aid category. This is due to the emergence of South Korea's reaction to alacrity in sending corona virus test kits during the COVID-19 spreading in Indonesia, which continues to increase rapidly every single day. In addition, the COVID-19 countermeasure agreement has not yet had a long-term political or economic element, but only assistance has focused on overcoming COVID-19 in Indonesia.

Although the above evidence shows about the benefits of aid but this research argues that foreign aid is some extent has been used by some countries as a tool to serve their own national interest. National interest is the fundamental objective and the most important factor that determines and guides decision makers in formulating foreign and domestic politics. The national interest serves as the desired end state to be achieved. Therefore, the policy made by the authorities make a national strategy to realize its national interests coupled with the support of ongoing conditions.

This is in accordance with the point of view expressed by Donald E Nuechterlin (1976), in which he argues that national interest is the perceived needs and desires of one sovereign state in relations to other sovereign states comprising the external environment. He classified basic national interest into 4 things:

1. **Security interests:** The interests created by a country to preserve and defend the safety of its populace from the physical threat from other states or foreign parties.

2. **Economic interests:** The state increases the economic growth of the country through the development of cooperative relations with other states.

3. **The interests of the world order:** Maintaining world political power and hegemony in order to remain stable and benefit the country, citizens of a country and companies can operate peacefully outside their country and avoid threats from outside parties.

4. **The interests of ideology:** Protect and advancement the ideology of the country from the threat of outside ideologies that try to enter and influence the country.

On the other hand, the way a country manifests its national interest may be varies. It also depends on what the country really needs at the moment, thus none of these national interests is more important than the others. However, if the interests of a country are of several types and seek for attention for the realization process, it can be seen from how a country implements its foreign policy and the reasons for its leaders to make these decisions.

This is also in line with the concept of national interest proposed by Hans Morgenthau (1949), he stated that the national interest is the state's ability or method to protect and maintain the integrity of the country in various ways including interference from other countries, which is then formed through foreign policies in the form of cooperation or conflicts with other countries. Yet the objectives of foreign policy can't be done only because of the national interest, it can be successful if it commensurate with the power the country have.

In line to discussion above, the author argues that South Korea has an interest to be achieved from

Indonesia, according to the theory described by Donald. E. Nuechterlein, the interests they have are economic interests where this is covered by foreign assistance in the form of the provision of COVID-19 test kits and the selection of Indonesia as one of the priority countries. This is based on a lot of cooperation, especially in the previous economic sector, such as the influx of investment from Hyundai Motor worth US \$ 1.5 billion (Mahardika, 2019) also the New Southern Policy which aimed to elevate Korea's ties with Southeast Asia and India to the level of its ties with the United States, China, Russia, and Japan — the four countries that have traditionally been most important to Korea. Now they have the power in the form of COVID-19 test kits which make a lot of countries are interested in having cooperation regarding this kit. This is the reason why Indonesia becomes a priority country for receiving COVID-19 test kits.

D. Hypothesis

South Korea's interest in giving Indonesia the COVID-19 test kits assistance and choosing Indonesia as one of the priority countries in 2020 is motivated by economic aspects in which Indonesia is one of the largest target markets of the country which is also as part of realization from the program proposed by President Moon Jae In, South Korea New Southern Policy, as well as increasing the relationship between the two in a special strategic partnership. So that the COVID-19 test kits are used as one of the instruments of soft power that South Korea has towards Indonesia.

E. Research Methodology

1. Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this research is the nation-state which is the interest of South Korea towards Indonesia during this pandemic era.

2. Method of Collecting Data

This research uses a qualitative method that emphasizes library research techniques. The data obtained are valid data and are secondary data obtained from print media in the form of books, it is also obtained from internet media such as journals, e-book official sites or news sites, as well as other sources such as seminars from valid parties related to the object of research and can support the research process. On this research also, the author uses a small interview with a party that who is relevant with the topic.

3. Methods of Analysis

In doing the analysis, the author will take all of the data that has been selected and classify from the literature review and use a descriptive approach to link it to the theoretical framework that has been chosen.

F. Scope of Research

The scope of research for this thesis is limited in the year of 2020 since the corona virus has just started in the end of 2019. The study will focus on how the government of South Korea has maintaining the people infected by COVID-19 in the country and how South Korea helps Indonesia during this pandemic era, also focusing on the national interest of South Korea toward Indonesia during this pandemic era.

G. Purpose of the Research

The objective of the author in this research is:

- 1) To explain the reason behind South Korea assistance towards Indonesia in the form of COVID-19 test kits and chooses it as one of the priority countries;
- 2) To inform the readers about the cooperation between South Korea and Indonesia in suppressing the increasing number of people infected by the corona virus.

H. Outline

CHAPTER I explains the briefly about COVID-19 and its impact on bilateral and multilateral relations among countries, also South Korea chooses Indonesia to be one of the priority countries to be given its corona virus test kit, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, and research methodology.

CHAPTER II explains about South Korea's success in maintaining the COVID-19 cases in its own country. This chapter will also explain about how Indonesia is crucial for South Korea to implement NSP, and does it really have any relations with COVID-19.

CHAPTER III provides a comprehensive conclusion on the research that has been discussed.