

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

International political development apparently cannot be separated from conflict, whether civil war (domestic conflict) or conflict between countries. In general, conflicts occur as a result of the failure of the parties to reach the middle ground, or it can be a form of one-party impressionism towards the other party. One of the conflicts that occurred in 2017 is a border dispute between India and China in 2017.

India and China are the two major countries in the world when viewed from the geographical area or population. This then succeeded in making China and India a country that had a strong influence in each of its regions, both South Asia and Central and East Asia.¹ Between China and India became a significant political-security force when the country has the resources of the colonel, the latest defense equipment to the missile weapons commodities including WMD (weapon of mass destruction) and ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile).²

In 2017, between India and China faced with border conflicts that occurred from June 16 to August 28, 2017 or about two and a half months. This conflict occurred around the Doklam region, which is a plateau and the Chumbi valley which is the territory of the Tibetan authorities and the Ha Valley region which is the area of Bhutan's sovereignty, as well as the Sikkim region which is the territory of India.

The People's Liberation Army caused the border conflict between India and China in opening highways in the Doklam

¹ China is the fourth largest country in the world after Russia, Canada, and the United States which is 9.59 million km. Meanwhile, India is the country with the seventh largest area in the world after Russia, Canada, the United States, China and Australia whose area is 3.28 million km. Processed from Collins Flint and Peter J. Taylor, *Political Geography: World Economic, Nation and Locality*, Routledge Publishing, London and New York, 2017, p.38-39 and 90.

² Ibid

region. During this time Doklam is an area of grazing local communities. Construction of infrastructure by China began on June 16, 2017, by deploying heavy equipment. The project then received criticism from India for that day after that, namely on June 17, 2017, the Chinese Government sent its military press to this region to remedy the project. On the other hand, the Indian government has also prepared heavy equipment and armed forces to stop the project and the outbreak of the conflict which concluded that dozens of people were injured on both sides.³

In the end, this conflict managed to stop temporarily on 9 October 2017 when the Chinese managed to meet with the Indian Minister of Defense, Nirmala Sitharaman. In the meeting in the Doklam region, both parties agreed to bring the border crisis into peaceful dialogue and dialogue. Nevertheless, many parties remain concerned that similar conflicts will occur in other regions, because the border areas of India and China are quite extensive, most of which are isolated and steep, including valleys, rivers, and canyons.⁴

The conflict between China and India turned out to have broad consequences not only for the two countries but also for countries located in the border region, Bhutan. The government of this country is concerned about the occurrence of large-scale and widespread conflict because this border area also concerns Bhutan, particularly concerning the safety of agro/agricultural communities in the Doklam region.⁵

On 29 June 2017, the Bhutanese government under the leadership of Dasho Tesring Wangchuk stated that Bhutan would

³ "2017: A Tough Year on China-India Relations", at <https://thediplomat.com/2018/01/2017-a-tough-year-for-china-india-relations/>, accessed on October 15, 2018.

⁴ "Ready to Maintain Peace a Frontier with India: China and Sitharaman Joint Visit a Border Region," at <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/ready-to-maintain-peace-at-frontiers-with-india-china-on-sitharaman-s-visit-to-nathu-la/story-EVdlopKMXl0rkre9mRlZqM.html>, accessed on October 16, 2018.

⁵ "What Do the Bhutanese People Think About Doklam," in <https://thediplomat.com/2017/08/what-do-the-bhutanese-people-think-about-doklam/>, accessed on October 16, 2018.

maintain neutrality. This is important because so far, India considers Bhutan to be pro-Indian, while India sees Bhutan pro-China. The most important thing for Bhutan is not to let India and China fight.

Bhutan is a country that is politically, economically and geographically small in South Asia. This country's politics adheres to a constitutional monarchy, where there is a king's position, but its position does not have absolute power / authority because it is limited by clear rules and regulations. Then in the legislative field, Bhutan has a parliament that can be divided into two, namely the lower house (council) and the upper house. This is where various domestic and foreign policies are made.⁶

Economically, Bhutan has the smallest GDP (gross domestic product) in the South Asian region, which is 2.62 billion US dollars. Even though it is small, it turns out that economic growth has developed quite stably in the agrarian sector, including fruit farming. Vegetables, kay. In 2010, the Bhutan government under the leadership of Prime Minister Lotay Tshen began to develop a diversified modern economy by opening new industries, including cement plants, fruit processing and canning to the tourism industry to several mining industries.⁷

Bhutan's position in a fairly steep mountainous region makes it a locked country land or a country that does not have access to territorial waters. Geographically, Bhutan is a country that does not need to have a large enough armed force due to the potential for a low threat, namely threats originating from territorial waters, but of course Bhutan is quite vulnerable to the conflict of major countries around it because of its position between China and India in 2017.

The conflict between India and China shows that the relationship between the two is still unstable due to conflict disputes and management of border areas. This is important because in 2017 alone China still faced 12 border issues,

⁶ Dhurba Rizal, "The Royal Semi Authoritarian Democracy of Bhutan", The Journal of South Asian Nation, Lexington Book and Publishing, London and New York, 2015, p.9.

⁷ Ibid.

including the Kashmir dispute involving Pakistan. On the Indian side, due to the development of border disputes, this issue will lead to more complicated problems related to the defense budget that is quite large, so that other fields become neglected, including social welfare, equitable development to the problem of hunger in India the year 2017 is still ranked first on the issue.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the problem as described above, the problems in writing this thesis can be formulated in the following questions:

"What is Bhutan's strategy to overcome the border conflicts between China and India?"

C. Theoretical Framework

To explain the background of the problem discussed the author uses a theoretical framework, each conflict theory, and coercive concepts. Both of these theories are seen as relevant to the case being discussed because they can describe in detail the Bhutanese strategy in the border conflicts between China and India.

1. Conflict Theory

Since pre-history, even predicted at the same time since the early human civilization conflict has existed along with the development of the world. Then the meanings about the definition of conflict also develop, where conflicts that occur traditionally have developed in non-traditional directions, including the proliferation of weapons, annexation, "soft conflict" and others. The meaning of conflict has various definitions. The word conflict first emerged from Latin, namely "configere" which means to hit each other. Then in the scope of sociology, conflict can be interpreted as a social process involving two or more people or can also refer to a group of people, where one party

attempts to get rid of the other party by destroying or making the opponent weak or helpless.⁸

The present socio-political dynamics influence conflict itself due to limited community resistance. Various changes that occur encourage individuals and groups of society to carry out compromise actions, some of which can produce joint solutions, but others lead to the occurrence of collisions between individuals, stakeholders or organizations. Brown Stewart states that:

*"...the occurrence of conflict caused some major cause effort a person or a group of people to realize that goal will be achieved, mastering the allocated resources will be shared by the party that has power legally, decisions are taken or the characters or the behavior of the parties involved."*⁹

Stewart's definition emphasizes that conflict does not occur in reactionary or euphoric ways (occurring without a transparent background or reason). More than that, conflicts occur after the parties involved undergo a variety of learning that was previously triggered by momentum or event taking into account the various factors that are in it.

Conflict over compromising actions occurs because one party cannot accept the results of compromise, each party fails to make a decision that is "win-win solutions," one of the parties who cannot massage neutrally and there is interference from a third party. The conflict then causes a variety of severe impacts, both on the parties involved or the environment, including the following:¹⁰

- a. Domination or conquest of one of the parties involved in the conflict.

The dominance of one party is a consequence created by the victory of one party in the conflict. In

⁸ Dale R. Guthrie and Brown Largest Stewart, *The Nature of Paleolithic Art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2005, p. 67-68.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Raymond C. Kelly, *Warless Societies and the Origins of War*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Press, 2000, p.19.

other words, the winning party will enjoy its superiority to the minor party, this will later form strong party pressures on the weak side, discrimination, and violations of human rights on the weak side, and the emergence of class groups one and second class.

- b. Property damage and loss of human life.

Damage to property is something that cannot be avoided from a conflict. Traditional conflict shifts into modern conflicts have resulted in damage that tends to be greater because the use of weapons and defense equipment (the central equipment of weapons systems) with more lethal power and sometimes the targets achieved often miss the private parties who have no interest for the conflict itself.

- c. Worsening relations between warring parties.

Worsening relations between warring parties is a consequence of conflict. If it is understood in depth, the parties involved in the conflict generally originate in the same or adjacent environment, for example, the same or bordering region or the same social performance and status, so that it can be said that the parties involved in the conflict have a relationship between one and the others. As a result of the conflict of relations between individuals, organizations and even the state will be interrupted. Even worse, if before the conflict broke out, the parties involved in the conflict had an exclusive relationship and mutual need/dependency, this would be detrimental to the parties to the conflict themselves. All of them require time to realize normalization if the conflicting parties are aware.

- d. Increased solidarity among group members who experience conflict with other parties.

The conflict can also cause an increase in solidarity. It becomes a very human thing if each of the parties involved in the conflict will seek support, especially from parties who are in the same stream or have the same goals, as well as what the other party does. Although the increase in solidarity will create a

strong sense of togetherness, this will be more dangerous for the development of the conflict itself. Energy for the unity of parties joined from solidarity will form a more substantial escalation of conflict on a broader scale.

2. Coercive Diplomacy Concept

A diplomacy is a classic approach in international politics that continues to be relevant for use until the modern era. The concept of diplomacy can become a universal proposition used by world policymakers to avoid conflict, build affiliation with third parties to realize the achievement of national interests. Diplomacy is the primary strategy in realizing the achievement of national interests. Although diplomacy is basically mechanized on the interaction of an entity of a country against an international entity which can be in the form of a state, international organization or community group, diplomacy can be divided into several methods, including market diplomacy, dollar diplomacy, secret diplomacy, public diplomacy, conference diplomacy and several other methods, including coercive diplomacy.¹¹

Coercive diplomacy is merely a method of diplomacy by prioritizing the function of imposing sanctions. Whereas systematically, coercive diplomacy is a method of diplomacy that aims to change the attitudes, policies or decisions of a country with threats, sanctions, termination, delays, reduction to a cancellation of foreign cooperation. Barry Buzan stated that:

"... coercive diplomacy is a tug-of-war and adjustments to the implementation of the lightest and most severe sanctions are known as ultimatums in the hope that the opposing parties can follow the propositions/plans that have been planned. Success or failure is largely determined by various factors including the capability of the strength of

¹¹ Umar Suryadi Bakry, Basics of International Relations: First Edition, Prenada Media, Jakarta, 2004, p.78.

the subject and the opponent, the issue that is developing, the chronicity of the problem and others. ”¹²

Coercive diplomacy is also better known as diplomacy in applying sanctions. At first, it was an effort to emphasize the application of sanctions to the state which conclusively violated international law, but in the development of coercive implementation also carried out by a country against other countries which were considered to endanger the continuity of domestic or global security.

Then Alexander George stated that coercive diplomacy is a method of diplomacy to influence the will of the enemy or the structure of incentives. Complete George stated that:

*“...Coercive diplomacy can be more clearly described as "a political-diplomatic strategy that aims to influence an adversary's will or incentive structure. It is a strategy that combines threats of force, and, if necessary, the limited and selective use of force in discrete and controlled increments, in a bargaining strategy that includes positive inducements. The aim is to induce an adversary to comply with one's demands, or to negotiate the most favorable compromise possible, while simultaneously managing the crisis to prevent unwanted military escalation.”*¹³

The implementation of coercive diplomacy is carried out through several stages, each of which is:¹⁴

- a. Ultimatum is a manifestation of the final attitude of a country towards an opposing country at a political issue level.
- b. Tacit ultimatum is the final form of an attitude of a country towards an opposing country in a national level in the form of a policy legitimized by the government,

¹² R.P. Barston, Modern Diplomacy, Longman Group UK Limited, London, 1988, p. 48.

¹³ Alexander George and William Simon, The Limit of Coercive Diplomacy, Westview Press, Boulder-Colorado, 1994, p.39.

¹⁴ Ibid.

interest groups and policy-making instruments of a country.

- c. Try and See to see feedback for following final decisions or evaluation for further policy implementation.
- d. The gradual turning of the screw is to move problems that develop permanently in the framework of conflict reconciliation in a more permanent concept.

Through the description of the above approaches including conflict theory and the concept of coercive diplomacy, it can be applied to Bhutan's role in the border conflicts between China and India, so that various policies implemented by this country have passed various legitimate and rational considerations. The Bhutanese government under the leadership of Prime Minister Tshering Thogbay argued that the kingdom it was running had been crushed by two major powers, namely India and China. Although since the 1980s large-scale conflict has not occurred, this potential still exists.

Bhutan's awareness as a fellow South Asian country then sought to ask China and India to end the conflict between the two countries. This is a potential conflict reconciliation because so far Bhutan has managed to maintain neutrality by not being drawn to the interests of one country. Also, Bhutan also seeks to implement coercive diplomacy by seeking the support of various domestic and foreign entities to fight for their interests. Some of the frameworks of Bhutan's coercive diplomacy concept, including ultimatum, are carried out in Bhutan by fighting for a reconciliation of conflicts between India and China by inviting Bhutanese producers to include ministries, parliaments, and society at large. Bhutan, which was realized through foreign policy, and the gradual turning of the screw supported reconciliation of more permanent conflict between China and India by inviting the international community,

including the UN Security Council and SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's).¹⁵

Thus the end of the China and India border conflict in a fairly fast period (June 16, 2017, to August 28, 2017) turned out to be one of them influenced by Bhutan's initiative in developing a conflict reconciliation strategy. Bhutan's political or military position, which has a smaller capacity, both in terms of leadership and armed forces resources, both in terms of budgetary factors, personnel or defense equipment, but Bhutan is on a reasonably neutral side. Although viewed from a historical aspect, Bhutan is closer to India, but since the early decades of the 2000s, the country has intensified in developing cooperative relations with the Chinese side. Thus, Bhutan's ability as reconciler to conflict is related to neutrality and its position which can at any time become a victim, while on the other hand India and China both make Bhutan's geostrategic position as part of expanding its influence in the Asian region.

D. Hypothesis

Through the description of the underlying theoretical framework, it can be hypothesized that Bhutan's strategy to overcome the border conflict between China and India was to follow up the conflict seriously through coercive diplomacy, namely to ask the Chinese and Indians to end the conflict through negotiations by putting forward efforts to maintain national sovereignty and maintain neutrality not to support China or India in the ultimatum framework, tacit ultimatum, gradual turning of the shrew.

E. Research Methods

The research method used is a qualitative method, which is a research method that focuses on analyzing non-numerical data and without using statistical formulas as the approach. While the

¹⁵ "China and the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation's," in <http://theasiadialogue.com/2017/10/11/china-and-the-south-asian-association-of-regional-cooperation/>, accessed on the 15th February 2019.

analysis of the author's data uses descriptive qualitative which is intended to describe the situation that is deemed relevant objectively and clearly by the facts that occur to then be concluded.¹⁶

Facts or information that utilizes secondary data used to relate to the problems that will be discussed in the work of this thesis. The analysis process in this research is descriptive, where data has been collected and then compiled and presented so that a systematic picture of the research problems is found.¹⁷

Then the technique of data collection is done through library research. Data is obtained through sources derived from books, journals, newspapers, and the internet relating to Bhutan's role in the border conflicts between China and India.

F. Objectives and Benefits of Research

1. With this writing, it is expected to answer the research question and prove the hypothesis about Bhutan's strategy in the border conflicts between China and India
2. With this essay writing, it is expected to be able to add insight to writers and parties who need about the dynamics of security politics in the Asian region, especially concerning the conflict between India and China, and a description of Bhutan as a country located in these two major countries.
3. This paper is one of the requirements in obtaining a bachelor's degree in political science with a specialization in international relations study programs, at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta.

G. Research Scope

In order to simplify the writing of this thesis work, the author gave a limitation of research in 2017. The year was chosen because it was a period that showed the outbreak of border conflict between China and India, as well as a period

¹⁶ Winarno Surakhmad, Introduction to Basic Scientific Research in Technical Methods, Tarsito, Bandung, 1989, p.140-141.

¹⁷ Ibid

about Bhutan's strategy in following up the two countries' conflict issues. The coverage outside of the year is a little touched as long as there are relevance and relevance to the theme being discussed.

H. Writing System

In writing the following chapters, the author will divide the discussion into five chapters, with the details of each chapter as follows:

CHAPTER I is an introduction consisting of the background of the problem, Research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, research methods, research objectives and benefits, research scope, and writing system.

CHAPTER II is a chapter that contains an overview of China, India, and Bhutan's military power, as well the comparison of military power between those three countries.

CHAPTER III is a chapter that discusses the border conflict between China and India, covering the background, the development of the conflict and various impacts, as well as Bhutan's response in following up on this issue.

CHAPTER IV is a dissemination chapter that outlines Bhutan's role in the China and India border conflicts through the implementation of coercive diplomacy by prioritizing efforts to maintain national sovereignty, as well as avoiding favor for China or India in the tacit ultimatum framework and gradual turning of the shrew.

CHAPTER V is a chapter containing conclusions from the discussion of the previous chapters.