

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi enunciated India's foreign policy from 'Look East' to 'Act East'. India's Look East policy was driven on economic and political urgency. Meanwhile, Act East policy focused on strategic approach to establish influence in Indian Ocean where China has been projecting power for few years. This research shows that India as world's largest democracy finally showed her potential as a great power country. Generally, this new foreign policy would include security, strategic, political, and defense collaboration with Indian Ocean littoral countries.

Indian Ocean is one of the busiest waters compared to another ocean. Having more than 1000 ships passed annually, it made the region the most strategic place. This region also connected Africa, Europe, South Asia, Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Australia. Thus, several activities were conducted here, whether legal or illegal. In fact, India's trade activities were traded through the region thus India tried to ensure its trade tack.

The focus of this undergraduate thesis was the change of India's foreign policy. Willing to play a greater role in South Asia region, India would have to stand strongly to provide security around Indian Ocean. More importantly, India's willingness to provide security was driven by China's assertiveness in India's backyard. China has been giving aid to develop infrastructure among Indian Ocean littoral countries that happened to be India's neighbor states. China's strategies to influence

aforementioned states were by military and massive economic approaches. Additionally, the country was also active on protecting the waters by reducing pirate's activities on Indian Ocean. Thus, through Act East, India could create influence, provide security, and maintain balance with the China government.

Since India opened her market, India's economy rocketed and she gained recognition as an Asian Tiger. India managed to sign ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement ease trading activities among its member. She also became the member of The ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+), a defense cooperative mechanism to discuss maritime security issues. Also, India initiated The Indian Ocean Rim Association to promote security in the Indian Ocean.

On January, One Belt One Road (OBOR) was Beijing's attempt to expand its influence in the Indian Ocean. According to Jagannath P. Panda, OBOR was one aggressive project and might erect concern among regional states and any other power. OBOR's focuses are Silk Road Economic Belt and Maritime Silk Road. Linking Asia to Europe and Africa, OBOR aimed to build economic corridors, acquire land through investments, and maritime power through infrastructure construction (ports and harbors).

This research showed significances in the study of International Relations. It highlighted the ambitions of India and China national interest. Considering that India's Act East policy was a new topic in international studies, this research contributed to add more source related to India's policy changes. In fact, India was a rising power and intended to play a greater role in the

region. India's international focus might vary during these years, but she remained to keep her nation's identity as a peaceful and independent country that support co-existent and cooperation. Because of the stable growth in the last decade, India has risen as one of the largest economies in Asia. As a middle-class country, India has large potential and opportunities in the region and global stage. By undergoing Act East policy, there are several agenda including cooperation and infrastructure ahead. Nonetheless all of the agendas have not been done yet. Nevertheless, explanation delivered in this thesis was the most recent information from reliable sources.

As for research argumentation, this thesis used two theories. The first theory was the securitization theory by Barry Buzan to analyze India's extraordinary movement toward South Asia countries and Indian Ocean Region. The second theory was hegemonic stability theory to understand China's assertiveness in Indian Ocean by maritime and economic approaches. For India, it was important to create good profile among neighborhood country in order to ease the development for India. To gain her ambition, India should play a greater role by providing security, giving aid to build infrastructures, conducting official visits, and increasing frequency of military exercises with neighbor countries. All of these actions were considered as an extraordinary measure to prevent threat developing. India was trying to contain China's influence in Indian Ocean.

On the other hand, China was trying to anchor its power in Indian Ocean. It started from The String of Pearls years ago by domination military and naval

presence in the region. Recently, China pursued its One Belt One Road strategy to achieve economic ambition by connecting Asia market to Europe by developing ports and harbor. Moreover, China is building a strong bilateral relation with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Pakistan. With China's growing economy and military, it has proven that China was capable to project its power in Indian Ocean and South Asia, as well as became a hegemon in the region. Therefore, India's action to change its policy from 'Look East' to 'Act East' was in order to contain and counterbalance China's assertiveness in Indian Ocean since the region was an important water for India. Indian Ocean since 16th century, and the fact that now 70% of India's economic activity was through Indian Ocean. Thus, India must protect Indian Ocean with 'Act East' policy.

Notably, 'Act East policy was only the extension of 'Look East' that more likely focused on South Asia countries. This was done because China has been projecting power and influences by giving economic aid such as cheap loan to support infrastructure development. Nevertheless, India would keep securing her backyard by economic improvement, military exercises, diplomacy, and high-level visits.