



Indonesia's Leadership through "Vaccine Diplomacy" in Securing National and Global Vaccine Stocks

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Abstract

Dalam semangat pulih dari dampak pandemi Covid-19, dunia menghadapi berbagai kendala dalam beradaptasi dengan new normal. Minimnya pengetahuan tentang bagaimana menyikapi pandemi menyebabkan penanganan krisis Covid-19 yang berdampak pada banyak sektor dilakukan secara mandiri oleh masing-masing negara. Nasionalisme vaksin oleh masing-masing negara menyebabkan kelangkaan vaksin dan menimbulkan ketimpangan akses vaksin antara negara maju dan negara berkembang. Kelangkaan barang publik yang penting seperti vaksin menunjukkan bahwa dunia memang tidak memiliki solidaritas dan kepemimpinan, untuk sedikitnya. Dengan teori kepemimpinan strategis, penelitian ini berupaya melihat upaya Indonesia untuk mendorong munculnya solidaritas antar negara melalui berbagai platform hubungan internasional. Dengan metode kualitatif, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa peran kepemimpinan Indonesia menjadi kunci untuk menyatukan negara-negara keluar dari pandemi Covid-19 dan mendorong distribusi vaksin yang adil.

Keywords: *Strategic Leadership; Vaccine Diplomacy; Global Health*

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Introduction

Two years since the emergence of the first case of COVID-19, all countries in the world are still fighting against the spread of the virus. In a period of two years, a large number of people around the world have been infected and many have not even managed to be saved. In dealing with the impact of COVID-19 which has resulted in a high death rate, each country has implemented a policy of limiting large-scale community activities which creates an international impact because the restrictions on these activities also occur on international flights. With the restrictions on activities, many sectors are paralyzed or hampered such as the economic sector, education, tourism, and many more. Adaptation steps taken by countries are to implement vaccination programs and at the same time continue to apply social distancing policies.

In overcoming the consequences of COVID-19, vaccines are an important commodity that every country in the world is fighting for to break the chain of pandemics. After the vaccine was discovered, new problems arose such as equitable access to vaccines

throughout the world. Indonesian Foreign Minister, Retno LP Marsudi during a Special Session of the UN General Assembly discussing COVID-19, stated that finding a vaccine is not the end of the challenges being faced, but each country still has the next task, namely, ensuring vaccines can be accessed and distributed properly. Fair for all countries in the world (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). This statement is due to the unequal access to vaccines around the world. The existence of access (price, accuracy, and quota) is not evenly distributed because many countries, especially developing countries have limited ability to produce and distribute vaccines.

The limitations of countries to produce and distribute vaccines depend on the availability of adequate technology and infrastructure to create vaccines. The most important thing is the knowledge of vaccines and their development which is often monopolized by companies from developed countries. Indonesia has also experienced limitations on infrastructure and technology, so the vaccine manufacturing process still requires cooperation with other countries through bilateral and multilateral cooperation schemes (Prakoso, Azizah, and Hertanti, 2020). Other obstacles that arise in handling COVID-19 are also encountered in the economic and security fields, allocation, and distribution. According to research conducted by Prakoso, Azizah, and Hertanti regarding the challenges of vaccine distribution, companies have regulations that are not adapted to the critical pandemic conditions, so access (price, accuracy, and quotas) will always be a problem that has an impact on the economy, safety, and security, allocation, and distribution.

The obstacle that arises from a political perspective for vaccine distribution is the phenomenon of vaccine nationalism. What is meant by vaccine nationalism is the political behavior of a country that prioritizes the fulfillment of vaccine needs for its citizens compared to equitable distribution of vaccine supply by sharing with other countries. Vaccine nationalism is not a problem when the fulfillment of the national interest for vaccines is carried out in an appropriate way, but vaccine nationalism will become a problem when this attitude of prioritizing national interests is accompanied by the purchase and stockpiling of vaccines that exceed domestic needs so that a high disparity will be created in the spread of vaccine quotas (Djumala, 2021).

Due to limited access to vaccines in certain countries, especially developing countries, the COVID-19 vaccine has emerged as a new diplomatic instrument for several countries that have access to vaccine production and distribution, such as China, India, Russia, and the United States. These countries have an advantageous position in exerting influence through donations or loans made from their country's vaccines to countries with low vaccine access (Lee, 2021). As a result of these events, vaccine diplomacy is understood in a very specific way and tends to be negative, namely referring to the use of bargaining positions carried out by these countries during a pandemic.

What is meant by strategic leadership is the ability of decision-makers decision-makers are burdened with full responsibility for the characteristics of each individual, the activities carried out by each individual, and the way that individual carries out his activities and the impact of these activities that affect the results and goals of the organization he leads. (Frinkelstein and Hambrick, 1996). In addition, Hitt and Ireland (2009) argue that strategic leadership is the ability to anticipate, define a vision, maintain flexibility, and empower others to create the necessary strategic changes. Teck Penland (1997) states that strategic leadership is a process of identifying, crystallizing, and communicating existing changes to ensure integration and harmony in the current and future environment.

To achieve transformational change using strategic leadership instruments, Penland stated that several strategic leadership attitudes must be taken, including:

1. Change the attitude of directing to leading (Directing to Leading)
2. Turning crisis management into an action plan (Crisis Management to Planning)
3. Turning individual control into a networking effort (Networks)
4. Change the mentality to improve people or other things into continuous improvement (Fix-It Mentality to Continuous Improvement)
5. Turning error detection into error prevention (Error Detection to Error Prevention)

This strategic leadership theory can be used to see how Indonesia's leadership through its vaccine diplomacy is to secure global vaccine stocks and ultimately secure national vaccine stocks through efforts that are included in the strategic leadership stance according to Teck Penland.

To understand vaccine diplomacy, we can first understand the concept of medical diplomacy or medical diplomacy by Peter Bourne (1978) which states that health and medicine also play a very important role to strengthen international relations in terms of humanitarian crises, especially health, where health and medicine are becoming the basis for creating a dialogue and bridging the diplomatic barriers that exist due to emotional concerns. Over time, medical diplomacy has developed into global health diplomacy based on an awareness that health problems have political, social, and economic implications across countries that require global action to protect every individual as a citizen of the world (Kickbusch, 2007).

According to Hotez (2014) what is meant by vaccine diplomacy is almost all aspects of global health diplomacy that use vaccine distribution as a basis and include the important role of the Global Vaccine and Immunization Alliances (GAVI), an organization of vaccine alliances which is also an element of WHO, also the Gates Foundation, and other important international organizations. Meanwhile, Shakeel (2019) expressed his opinion regarding the definition of vaccine diplomacy as a branch of global health diplomacy that promotes the use and distribution of vaccines to achieve larger global health goals as well as shared foreign policy goals. The ultimate goal of vaccine diplomacy is the joint development of vaccines related to technology by several scientists from two or more nations that may ideologically differ or contradict.

Sanchez (2022) argues that vaccine diplomacy is symbolic of world leadership in its scientific and non-military capacity through aid, distribution of biomedical supplies, transport of goods and people, global supply chain support, and significant reduction of infections all of which are important aspects of a global economy the state exercises its soft power. This is supported by Nye (2021) who defines soft power as the ability to influence others and obtain desired results through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion or payment. From all opinions regarding vaccine diplomacy, it can be concluded that vaccines are a new instrument in global health diplomacy to meet the national interests of interested countries because of the price or value of vaccines amid the Covid-19 crisis.

As an instrument of soft power diplomacy by producing countries and owners of abundant vaccine stocks, vaccine diplomacy shows a gap in the bargaining power of developed and developing countries. Amid the use of vaccines as an instrument of diplomacy of major countries, Indonesia through its leadership can encourage the

emergence of world solidarity. Through an understanding of vaccine diplomacy as well as strategic leadership, this paper tries to see how Indonesia can return the aim of vaccine diplomacy to its roots, namely as global health diplomacy where all countries with different ideologies can unite for the benefit of individuals around the world.

If we reflect on the context of vaccine diplomacy in Indonesia, then vaccine diplomacy is understood as the use of Indonesia's close relationship with certain countries to gain access to vaccines. Indonesia is an active country in diplomacy and negotiations to gain access to vaccines amid limited access to vaccines caused by disparities in technological and infrastructure capabilities to the phenomenon of vaccine nationalism. The existence of competition between countries in fighting over vaccines, and the practice of vaccine diplomacy carried out by countries that have access to vaccines for other purposes have encouraged Indonesia to fight for vaccines as public goods globally, because by fighting for equitable distribution, then countries without access, including Indonesia, will get access on vaccines easily.

Literature Review and Research Focus

Previous research on diplomacy and COVID-19 conducted by Albert Triwibowo on *Diplomacy and Covid-19: A reflection*, stated that the response of countries when facing pandemic challenges that caused obstacles such as vaccine nationalism showed that diplomacy did not work effectively (Triwibowo, 2020). As a result, the diplomacy that occurs is only a national sentiment that does not reflect the interests of the international community. The diplomacy that took place during the pandemic still had to require all countries to be aware of the interests of the international community, not just the egos and interests of certain countries, especially in crises.

Previous research on Health Diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument during the COVID-19 pandemic written by Delanova on *Health Diplomacy as an Instrument of Indonesian Foreign Policy* highlighted that diplomacy during a pandemic is something that cannot be separated from national interests (Delanova, 2021). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are at least three steps that can be taken in dealing with COVID-19, first, steps that know no boundaries, second, steps that are based on global cooperation, and lastly, ensure that there is a fair opportunity in access to health.

Previous research has shown that diplomacy is failing in times of crisis. Countries tend to put their national interest as a priority which is not wrong, but it can be wiser when in the process, they do not neglect the fact that not every country has the access to a vaccine distribution. These studies show that there is a need for leadership that encourages countries to work together to tackle down COVID-19 within a global framework. If cooperation is formed, there will be no longer a phenomenon of vaccine nationalism and other obstacles that occur in other countries such as lack of access to manufacture (procurement). This paper aims to see how Indonesia's leadership has succeeded in securing the global vaccine stock to meet its interests in national vaccine needs as well as the interests of countries that have difficulty meeting vaccine needs.

Indonesia's leadership is the key to global vaccine security which also has an impact on the vaccine security process for Indonesian citizens. This occurs because Indonesia is actively expressing the encouragement of solidarity from countries, both developed and developing countries, to break the chain of COVID-19 which has escalated into a pandemic. Indonesia desires all countries in the world to have equal access to secure vaccines at affordable prices. It is based on the idea from Indonesia that global health will not fully

recover if there are still countries that have not succeeded in tackling COVID-19. The explanation given above then further raises a question on how Indonesia's Strategic Leadership through "Vaccine Diplomacy" has succeeded to secure the national and global vaccine stocks.

Method

This research was analyzed through the descriptive-qualitative research method to see the efforts of Indonesia's strategic leadership amid the Covid-19 crisis. These efforts can be seen from the activities carried out by Indonesia through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also related ministries collaborating with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The activities of these institutions are observed through library research techniques through secondary data sources such as press releases from related ministries, literature such as journals, and also news related to the topics such as the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release, recent journals with a similar concern about vaccine diplomacy around the world, and national journals published from reputable universities (Cresswell, 2014). Those research subjects are chosen to see the implementation of the theory in the real life. With this method, it will be possible to identify what activities or decisions are included in the characteristics of strategic leadership amid the Covid-19 crisis based on any alternative strategies that exist. With that being said, it can also see what needs to be prioritized among those existing alternatives and also identify how the implementation of vaccine diplomacy carried out by Indonesia can secure global vaccine stocks by closing the gap of bargaining power between countries.

Results and Discussion

Vaccines are an important commodity and are even up for grabs in early 2021. The numbers are still limited due to limited production and also uneven distribution, making vaccines a rare commodity. Dr. Tedros Adhanom in his discussion facilitated by Indonesia for Global Justice stated that the toughest challenge faced by vaccine distribution in 2020 is when pharmaceutical companies are still using a "business as usual" approach despite the current crisis. This is closely related to vaccine manufacturing procedures protected by patents, and other related matters. This phenomenon has an impact on the manufacture and distribution of vaccines amid a pandemic where every individual in the world should have access to the vaccine and ensure that no country is left behind.

According to Indonesia for Global Justice, amid the struggle for equitable distribution of vaccines, Indonesia plays an active role in conducting diplomacy and negotiations regarding vaccine access, not only for Indonesia but also for the world. This effort was carried out through the COVAX Facility cooperation scheme, which is the World Health Organization (WHO) Covid-19 vaccine distribution program. The COVAX Facility is a joint program to support access to Covid-19 prevention by collaborating on research, production, and equal access to Covid-19 vaccines. This program is managed jointly by GAVI, WHO, and CEPI. Through this scheme, Indonesia acts as a co-chair that continues to strive for easy access, safety, and affordable vaccine prices (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

Through the Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi, Indonesia encourages the acceleration of global vaccine distribution under the COVAX Facility scheme. Indonesia stressed that the high mortality rate and also the increasing number of cases in many

countries exacerbated by the global vaccination gap is a challenge that must be considered together. Hence, Foreign Minister Retno pushed for the acceleration of global vaccination by increasing vaccine production by diversifying production, expanding the vaccine portfolio distributed by COVAX, and increasing the vaccination capacity of countries. Quoted from the official statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were several positive developments such as the implementation of the delivery of 103 million doses to 135 countries, the approval of the GAVI Alliance Board to support funding for vaccine deliveries to several participating countries worth USD 775 million, and the increasing number of countries that have applied for purchase of vaccines through a cost-sharing mechanism, including Indonesia.

In addition to the co-chairmanship task force at the COVAX Facility, Indonesia is also using its leadership on other platforms to fight for equal access to vaccines. After receiving the G20 Presidency relay from Italy for 2022, the Ministry of Finance stated that Indonesia has many agendas aimed at encouraging the accommodation of the interests of developing countries to get equitable access to vaccines (Ministry of Finance, 2021). With the theme "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" in the 2022 Presidency, Indonesia promotes the significant value of equally distributed vaccines, especially for developing countries. This is also to the principle of the spirit of No One's Left Behind that was promoted by Indonesia at the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly were to recover together, only a few countries can't escape the pandemic, it is necessary to have equal access to vaccines and high vaccination rates throughout the world.

Through Indonesia's leadership in the G20, Indonesia was also given a mandate by G20 member countries to design a global health architecture through global preparedness for a pandemic. This aims to prepare countries to be ready to face pandemics in the future, starting with vaccine manufacturers, strengthening health systems, as well as equitable access to vaccines. In that leadership, Indonesia also promoted the strengthening of a global health architecture that adhered to the principles of solidarity, equality, justice, and transparency (Ministry of Finance, 2021). This is evidenced by the intervention carried out by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo to encourage the strengthening of the global health architecture through a commitment to collaboration in pandemic control by ensuring timely, fair, safe, and affordable access to vaccines and health equipment as a global public good.

Teck Penland (1997) states that strategic leadership is a process of identifying, crystallizing, and communicating existing changes to ensure integration and harmony in the current and future environment. In securing global and national vaccine stocks, Indonesia has proven to have a proven transformational leadership role through its vaccine diplomacy. The vaccine diplomacy carried out by Indonesia is not merely to have more power or bargaining power against other countries, but is by the principles of the first vaccine diplomacy, which is to promote the use and distribution of vaccines to achieve greater global health goals.

In 2021, the Indonesian Covid-19 task force noted that the gap in the distribution and vaccination of Covid-19 in countries was still very high. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that of the 2.2 billion doses of vaccine that have been injected, 75 percent were in 10 developed countries and only 0.4 percent were in low-income countries. This shows that there is a need to encourage countries to close the existing gap to resolve the pandemic with a more holistic approach. In closing the gap, Indonesia has proven its strategic leadership which, according to Penland (1997) there are 5 (five) transformative attitudes.

First, changing the attitude of directing to leading (Directing to Leading) is evidenced by Indonesia's efforts to encourage other countries in various forums such as the UN General Assembly Annual Meeting, COVAX, GAVI, and even the G20. Indonesia's actual role is shown through the co-chair task force COVAX facility, the G20 Presidency, and also as a member country on any platform. Instead of demanding and being uncooperative, Indonesia uses these forums to continue to promote inclusiveness in vaccine distribution with principles such as "no one's left behind" and "Recover Together, Recover Stronger" in the hope that to get out of this Covid-19 Pandemic.

Second, changing crisis management into a planning action (Crisis Management to Planning). As the co-chair of the COVAX facility task force, Indonesia through Indonesia's strategic plan prioritizes the distribution of vaccines to low-income countries first. After being distributed to low-income countries, priority categories of vaccine recipients will be redefined such as vulnerable groups, including frontline health workers, as well as in the public service sector spread throughout the world. In addition, Indonesia proposes an effective and innovative financial mechanism to ensure high-income countries participate in funding efforts to provide Covid-19 vaccines and ensure that low-income countries continue to receive vaccines.

Third, turning individual control into a networking effort (Networks). Networking conducted by Indonesia at the G20 and the United Nations shows that Indonesia has a very strategic role to promote the equality of vaccine distribution. In particular, through the G20 Presidency, Indonesia as an emerging country with strong economic growth has broad influence. This moment was used by Indonesia to encourage and strengthen efforts to recover the global economy in an inclusive, strong, and sustainable manner (Ministry of Finance 2021). With the spirit of "no one is safe until everyone is safe", Indonesia is trying to convey the message that it will be useless if only a few countries have access to vaccines as long as the characteristics of the virus that causes Covid-19 can spread across countries without knowing physical boundaries. According to Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, Indonesia is also actively promoting equality of access to vaccines at the regional level by leading and encouraging various ASEAN initiatives in overcoming the pandemic and strengthening regional health resilience mechanisms.

Fourth, change the mentality to improve people or other things into continuous improvement (Fix-It Mentality to Continuous Improvement). This is shown in Indonesia's efforts to co-chairmanship the COVAX facility by continuing to strengthen distribution infrastructure, logistics, and the capacity of health workers in vaccine recipient countries. According to the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, health diplomacy will continue to be one of Indonesia's priorities. Indonesia also proposed a new pandemic treaty so that the world is better prepared to face the pandemic. As a proponent, Indonesia is ready to contribute constructively to the negotiation process for the pandemic treaty. With the formation of the treaty, it is hoped that it will clarify the role of countries in the future if a pandemic occurs again.

Indonesia has successfully proved that it has what it takes to achieve a transformational change using the four leadership attitudes. Each attitude reflects the role of leadership that Indonesia is entrusted to. It clarifies that Indonesia utilizes every leadership opportunity as a platform to create solutions and become a game changer. This reputation has become a solid basis for other countries to trust Indonesia in every decision-making that has to do with many countries. That is why Indonesia has contributed to so many leadership roles with satisfaction by far when the world is being tested by a humanitarian crisis in a form of

vaccine scarcity due to access and vaccine nationalism. The leadership role that is examined by Indonesia is like a wind of change amid diplomacy failure, a great example of how cooperation should be conducted shortly. The lack of leadership that the world is facing right now can be a lesson learned from the ongoing pandemic that solidarity is key, and to fully recover, there must be no gap in access to public goods that will support the whole process.

Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic has been going on for more than two years. During the pandemic, many aspects of life have been affected, such as education, the economy, and health. To recover from the impact of the pandemic, the world is faced with the challenge of adapting to new habits and limited knowledge makes handling health crises that affect many sectors tends to be done in solitary by each country. Seeing these challenges arise, Indonesia with its strategic leadership attitude can provide a view to the world that to get out of this pandemic, all must work together, especially in terms of vaccine distribution.

Vaccine security by each country solitary makes the number of vaccines limited and results in unequal access to vaccines. Vaccine diplomacy in a pandemic situation is used by several countries with advanced economies as bargaining power for their interests. Through Indonesia's strategic leadership, vaccine diplomacy can return to its main function, namely to solve global health problems. Indonesia's leadership has proven to be able to increase the awareness of countries to work hand in hand to get out of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a more structured mechanism through the COVAX Facility, as well as solidarity that arises through the G20, UN, and WHO platforms. That way, a clear flow of vaccine distribution will be created for developing and developed countries with the right mechanism so that global vaccine stocks, including Indonesia, can be fulfilled.

Indonesia successfully proved that during a crisis, its strategic leadership managed to map the existing alternative solutions and prioritized strategic options of leadership steps as the exact course of action. This research shows that Indonesia can use the momentum given as a leader in every platform and wholeheartedly put every nation's interest at heart. It reflects that Indonesia is not only putting its national interest by neglecting the fact that others are suffering as well, but with intuition, coordination, and strategic vision, Indonesia lives on the value that "no one's left behind". However, this research can be further elaborated by seeing the strategic leadership from the decision-making process from the strategic environment to the strategic leadership. This research gap can hopefully inspire other authors in the same field to examine how Indonesia chooses one action among existing alternative options and map out the strategic options as a course of action.

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