

Indonesia's Geopolitical Position on Blanket Overflight Access: A National Security Perspective

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ABSTRACT: Indonesia's strategic geographical position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans places its airspace within an important geopolitical environment, particularly amid increasing strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific region. As a sovereign state, Indonesia possesses full and exclusive sovereignty over its national airspace; however, cooperation in the fields of defense and security may create a need for foreign military aircraft to obtain access to Indonesian airspace. One mechanism that may arise in this context is *blanket overflight access*, which provides broader and more continuous access than individual flight authorization. This study aims to examine how *blanket overflight access* for foreign military aircraft is regulated from the perspective of Indonesian national law and how Indonesia's strategic position in airspace geopolitics affects the implications of national security policy for such access. This research employs a normative juridical method using a *statute approach* and a *conceptual approach*. The study examines relevant national legislation, international legal instruments, scholarly literature, and other legal materials concerning airspace sovereignty, airspace management, international agreements, geopolitics, and national security. The findings indicate that *blanket overflight access* is not specifically regulated under Indonesian legislation but may be legally assessed through the framework governing state sovereignty over airspace, airspace management and security, defense and national security, and international agreements. The granting of such access must therefore be based on clear legal authority, defined limitations, and effective state control and oversight. From a geopolitical perspective, Indonesia's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific makes its airspace a significant strategic asset. Although *blanket overflight access* may strengthen defense cooperation and strategic relations, unrestricted or insufficiently controlled access may create vulnerabilities to national security and affect Indonesia's strategic position and foreign policy. Accordingly, the implementation of *blanket overflight access* should be carefully balanced between the interests of international defense cooperation and the protection of Indonesia's sovereignty, national interests, and national security.

KEYWORDS: *Blanket Overflight Access*; Airspace Sovereignty; Airspace Geopolitics; National Security.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic state with a strategically significant geopolitical position, situated between two continents, namely Asia and Australia, and between two oceans, namely the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This geographical position places Indonesia at the intersection of strategic routes connecting various regions of the world, particularly Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. Such a location gives Indonesia significant importance in various international activities, including trade, transportation, communication, human mobility, as well as defense and security activities. Accordingly, Indonesia's geographical position not only provides advantages in enhancing connectivity and international relations but also places the country within a strategic environment shaped by the interests of other states. This condition presents both opportunities for Indonesia and challenges concerning national security (Royani, 2024).

Indonesia's strategic position makes its geographical characteristics closely connected to national interests and state policies in responding to geopolitical dynamics. Geopolitics essentially concerns the relationship between a state's geographical conditions and its interests and policies in maintaining its existence and achieving its national objectives. In the context of Indonesia as an archipelagic state, its geographical position along strategic international routes gives its territory significant strategic value for other states. Such interests are not limited to Indonesia's land and maritime territories but also extend to the airspace above its territory. Therefore, Indonesian airspace should be regarded as part of a strategic domain that influences the country's geopolitical interests and national security.

From a national security perspective, Indonesia's geographical conditions are not merely territorial matters but are also closely related to the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national safety. National security essentially constitutes a

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system established to protect the existence of the state from various threats, whether originating domestically or externally (Sulistyo et al., 2012). Over time, threats to national security do not necessarily manifest in the form of direct military attacks but may arise through various activities that affect the state's ability to control its territory and safeguard its strategic interests. Therefore, national security is also closely associated with the state's ability to maintain control over strategic spaces within its sovereign territory.

One such strategic space is airspace. Airspace occupies an important position because it is used not only as a route for civil aviation but also for defense activities, surveillance, military mobility, and the pursuit of various strategic state interests. Developments in aviation technology and military aircraft capabilities have further increased the significance of airspace in interstate relations. Activities conducted by foreign aircraft in or around a state's airspace may have implications for security perceptions, territorial surveillance, and the state's ability to safeguard its national interests. Accordingly, airspace should not be viewed merely as a transportation domain but also as part of a strategic environment with significant geopolitical and security dimensions.

As a sovereign state, Indonesia exercises full authority over its airspace, as affirmed under international law through the 1944 Chicago Convention, which recognizes the complete and exclusive sovereignty of states over the airspace above their territories (Delfiyanti, 2023). This principle demonstrates that control over airspace constitutes one of the manifestations of state sovereignty. Airspace sovereignty provides Indonesia with the basis to determine the forms of utilization of its airspace, including determining which foreign aviation activities may be conducted within it. Nevertheless, in international relations, such sovereignty does not necessarily mean that a state's airspace must be completely closed to activities by other states. States may grant certain forms of access based on their interests, relations, and agreements with other states.

The granting of access to another state's airspace is essentially part of interstate interaction and may be influenced by economic, political, transportation, defense, and security interests. In the context of defense and security, access to airspace has strategic value because it may provide military forces with greater mobility. Such access can serve as an instrument to accelerate aircraft movements, support the implementation of particular operations, and enhance a state's ability to conduct defense cooperation with partner states. Therefore, access to airspace is not merely a matter of aviation technology but may also constitute part of a state's geopolitical strategy.

One form of such access is *blanket overflight access*, namely a general authorization granted to another state to conduct overflights without undergoing an individual authorization procedure for each flight. Unlike a mechanism requiring each flight to obtain separate approval, *blanket overflight access* provides broader and continuous access subject to the terms agreed upon by the states concerned. Such a mechanism may offer strategic advantages in the context of defense cooperation because it enables air mobility to be conducted more rapidly and flexibly. Nevertheless, the broader nature of such access also raises questions concerning how the granting state can maintain its capacity to monitor and control activities conducted by the state receiving the access.

From a geopolitical perspective, the granting of *blanket overflight access* may be viewed as part of the interaction of interests among states. The state receiving access has an interest in obtaining greater operational freedom and mobility, while the state granting access may seek certain benefits from the cooperative relationship. Thus, the granting of airspace access does not occur within a politically neutral environment but rather within a broader relationship of interstate interests and power. For Indonesia, any decision to grant access to its airspace must take into account its strategic geographical position and its interest in maintaining balanced relations with various major powers in the region.

This issue has become increasingly relevant amid the geopolitical dynamics of the Indo-Pacific, which have witnessed growing interests from various states in the region. Indonesia occupies a highly strategic position within these dynamics because its territory connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean and lies near several strategic international routes. This condition gives Indonesian airspace strategic value for the mobility and activities of states with interests in the region. Under these circumstances, Indonesia's policy of granting access to its airspace may have consequences extending beyond bilateral relations and may influence Indonesia's position within the broader regional strategic environment.

The issue of *blanket overflight access* has attracted attention in Indonesia in connection with the establishment of the Major Defense Cooperation Partnership (MDCP) between Indonesia and the United States. The partnership provides a broader framework for bilateral defense cooperation, while the proposed access for U.S. military aircraft to Indonesian airspace remains a distinct issue subject to further consideration under Indonesian law and national procedures. On the one hand, such cooperation may strengthen bilateral defense relations and enhance Indonesia's national security capacity. Cooperation with other states may provide benefits in the form of enhanced defense capabilities, military capacity development, information exchange, and strengthened interoperability in addressing various security challenges. On the other hand, granting foreign military aircraft access to Indonesian airspace raises questions concerning how Indonesia can safeguard its national interests and maintain effective control over its airspace when another state is granted broader access to such territory (Muhammad, 2026).

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This issue becomes particularly significant when viewed from the perspective of Indonesian geopolitics. Indonesia must consider not only the immediate benefits of defense cooperation but also its strategic position and interests within interstate relations. Granting a particular state access to Indonesian airspace may provide strategic benefits for bilateral relations, but at the same time may influence how other states perceive Indonesia's strategic position. In a geopolitical environment involving multiple major powers, any policy concerning strategic spaces may have consequences for Indonesia's relations with other states. Therefore, *blanket overflight access* should be analyzed based on Indonesia's national interests rather than solely on the technical benefits arising from the granting of such access.

Furthermore, airspace issues have previously raised security concerns when an F-18 Hornet fighter aircraft, allegedly belonging to the United States, flew at low altitude near the Kakap Natuna FPSO in 2021. Although the aircraft was located outside Indonesia's territorial waters, its presence attracted attention because it was in proximity to a national strategic asset related to a state's energy security (Muliawan et al., 2022). This incident demonstrates that the activities of foreign military aircraft around Indonesia's strategic areas may have security and geopolitical dimensions, even when such activities do not take place within Indonesia's territorial sovereignty.

Based on the foregoing, *blanket overflight access* is not merely a matter of granting flight access to foreign military aircraft, but also involves legal considerations, geopolitical interests, and national security concerns. In the Indonesian context, the issue is particularly significant because the granting of broader airspace access must be reconciled with Indonesia's sovereignty over its airspace, its strategic position in the Indo-Pacific, and its national security interests. Accordingly, this study examines how *blanket overflight access* for foreign military aircraft is regulated from the perspective of Indonesian national law and how Indonesia's strategic position in airspace geopolitics and its national security policy implications shape the implementation of such access. The study therefore seeks to analyze not only the legal basis and regulatory framework governing *blanket overflight access* under Indonesian national law, but also Indonesia's strategic position and the potential security implications arising from broader access to its sovereign airspace.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs normative legal research to examine the legal norms governing state sovereignty over national airspace, the use of airspace by foreign military aircraft, and the formation and implementation of international agreements related to *blanket overflight access*. The study examines law as a normative system reflected in legislation, legal principles, and relevant international legal instruments (Fuady, 2018).

The study applies the statutory approach and conceptual approach. The statutory approach is used to examine Indonesian legal provisions concerning airspace sovereignty and management, including the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory, Law Number 1 of 2009 concerning Aviation, Government Regulation Number 4 of 2018 concerning Airspace Security of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 21 of 2025 concerning Airspace Management, and Law Number 24 of 2000 concerning International Treaties. The conceptual approach is employed to analyze the concepts of state sovereignty, geopolitics, national security, and *blanket overflight access* in relation to the use of Indonesian airspace by foreign military aircraft.

The legal materials consist of primary and secondary legal materials. Primary legal materials include national legislation, international conventions, and other relevant legal instruments, while secondary legal materials comprise scholarly books, journal articles, research findings, and other academic literature concerning air law, international law, geopolitics, and national security. The legal materials were collected through library research and analyzed qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method (Marzuki, 2008). The analysis examines the relationship between the legal framework governing airspace sovereignty and management and the geopolitical and national security considerations surrounding *blanket overflight access* for foreign military aircraft in Indonesia.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Regulation of Blanket Overflight Access for Foreign Military Aircraft from the Perspective of Indonesian National Law

The granting of blanket overflight access to foreign military aircraft is fundamentally connected to the exercise of state sovereignty over national airspace. Airspace is not merely a medium for aviation activities but constitutes a territorial domain over which the state exercises sovereign authority. Consequently, any policy granting foreign military aircraft access to Indonesian airspace must be assessed within the broader framework of Indonesian national law governing state territory, airspace sovereignty, defense and security, and the formation and implementation of international agreements. Although Indonesian legislation does not yet expressly regulate blanket overflight access as a specific legal concept, the possibility of granting such access can nevertheless be examined through the existing legal framework governing the use, management, control, and protection of Indonesian airspace.

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This means that the absence of an express statutory provision on blanket overflight access does not necessarily create a legal vacuum; rather, its legality must be determined through the interaction of several existing legal norms.

The constitutional foundation for state authority over Indonesian territory may be traced to Article 25A of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which establishes Indonesia as an archipelagic state characterized by the Nusantara principle, with its territory and the boundaries and rights thereof determined by law. This provision provides the constitutional basis for the state to regulate and protect all areas falling within its sovereignty, including the airspace above its land and maritime territories. From this perspective, airspace cannot be separated from the territorial conception of the Indonesian state. The constitutional recognition of Indonesia as an archipelagic state therefore has implications not only for the protection of land and maritime territory but also for the exercise of state authority over the corresponding airspace. Accordingly, any policy concerning foreign access to Indonesian airspace must first be understood as an exercise of state authority over a sovereign territorial domain.

This territorial conception is further reflected in Law Number 43 of 2008 on State Territory, which provides that the territory of the state consists of land territory, waters, the seabed and subsoil beneath it, as well as the airspace above it. The inclusion of airspace within the definition of state territory establishes a direct legal relationship between airspace and Indonesian territorial sovereignty. Consequently, foreign aviation activities conducted within Indonesian airspace fall within the regulatory and supervisory authority of the Indonesian Government. The legal status of airspace as an integral component of state territory is particularly significant in the context of blanket overflight access, because the granting of access to foreign military aircraft cannot be understood simply as a technical authorization for flight operations. Rather, it constitutes a form of state authorization concerning the use of a territorial domain under Indonesian sovereignty. Therefore, the scope, conditions, and limitations of such access must remain subject to Indonesian law and the sovereign authority of the Indonesian state.

The most directly relevant legal basis concerning the use of Indonesian airspace is Law Number 1 of 2009 on Aviation. Article 5 expressly establishes that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia possesses full and exclusive sovereignty over its airspace. Article 6 further provides that, in exercising such sovereignty, the Government holds the authority and responsibility to regulate airspace for the purposes of aviation, the national economy, national defense and security, socio-cultural interests, and environmental protection. These provisions demonstrate that Indonesian airspace is subject to comprehensive state regulation rather than unrestricted use by domestic or foreign actors. Consequently, the presence or movement of foreign state aircraft within Indonesian airspace cannot be treated as an activity that exists outside the authority of the Indonesian state. In this context, blanket overflight access may only be granted as a consequence of Indonesia's sovereign authority to determine the conditions under which its airspace may be used. The granting of such access must therefore remain consistent with Indonesia's defense and security interests and with the state's continuing authority to regulate the use of its airspace (Amannullah et al., 2025). The principle of full and exclusive sovereignty contained in Article 5 is therefore particularly important because it establishes the legal starting point from which any foreign military access must be assessed.

At the same time, sovereignty over airspace cannot be understood solely as a declaratory legal principle. Sovereignty requires the state to possess effective regulatory and supervisory mechanisms capable of ensuring that activities within its airspace remain consistent with national interests. This dimension is reinforced by Government Regulation Number 4 of 2018 on the Security of the Airspace of the Republic of Indonesia, which establishes mechanisms relating to the monitoring, identification, interception, and enforcement of aircraft that violate Indonesian airspace. The regulation demonstrates that the exercise of airspace sovereignty has both normative and operational dimensions. Normatively, the state determines the legal conditions governing the use of airspace; operationally, the state must retain the capacity to monitor and respond to activities that may threaten or interfere with national interests. Therefore, granting foreign military aircraft access to Indonesian airspace cannot be interpreted as a transfer or relinquishment of Indonesia's sovereign control. Even where access has been authorized, Indonesia must retain sufficient capacity to supervise the activities carried out pursuant to that access.

This distinction becomes increasingly important where access is granted on a blanket basis. Unlike an individual flight authorization, which allows the state to assess and approve each flight separately, blanket overflight access potentially establishes a broader and more continuous framework for foreign military aircraft to conduct overflights. Such an arrangement may provide operational advantages by reducing procedural requirements and facilitating military mobility. However, from the perspective of Indonesian national law, administrative convenience cannot override the state's continuing responsibility to control and supervise its airspace. The broader the access granted, the more important it becomes for the legal framework to establish clear parameters concerning the nature and scope of the access, the categories of aircraft covered, the purposes for which flights may be conducted, the areas that may be traversed, notification requirements, and circumstances under which access may be restricted or suspended. In other words, blanket authorization should not be interpreted as unlimited authorization.

The regulatory framework has subsequently been strengthened through Law Number 21 of 2025 on Airspace Management. The statute regulates airspace management as a process encompassing planning, utilization, control, and supervision of airspace. Importantly, the law recognizes airspace management as a broader governmental function rather than merely a technical matter concerning aviation operations. This framework is particularly relevant to blanket overflight access because the use of Indonesian

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airspace by foreign military aircraft constitutes a form of utilization that may have implications extending beyond ordinary aviation. Such utilization may intersect with defense, security, territorial sovereignty, and Indonesia's broader national interests. Accordingly, foreign military access must remain embedded within the state's mechanisms of planning, utilization, control, and supervision. Law Number 21 of 2025 therefore reinforces the proposition that foreign access to Indonesian airspace does not remove Indonesia's authority to determine how such airspace is managed or controlled (Yarti et al., 2026).

The enactment of Law Number 21 of 2025 also demonstrates that the contemporary legal framework governing Indonesian airspace places greater emphasis on the relationship between utilization and state control. The significance of this development lies in the fact that blanket overflight access involves a continuing authorization mechanism rather than a single isolated act of permission. Consequently, the legality of such access cannot be assessed solely at the moment the authorization is granted. Its implementation must also remain subject to continuing governmental supervision. Indonesia must therefore retain the ability to monitor the types and purposes of military flights, the areas traversed, the frequency of operations, and circumstances that may affect national defense and security interests. In this respect, the principles of control and supervision embedded in Law Number 21 of 2025 provide an important legal basis for ensuring that the granting of blanket overflight access does not diminish Indonesia's effective authority over its own airspace.

The issue becomes even more significant when blanket overflight access is established through an international agreement. Airspace sovereignty must therefore be considered alongside the constitutional and statutory framework governing international agreements. Article 11 of the 1945 Constitution provides that the President has the authority to conclude agreements with other states, subject to the constitutional requirements applicable to particular categories of agreements. This provision is further elaborated by Law Number 24 of 2000 on International Treaties. Under Article 10 of the law, international agreements concerning political matters, peace, defense, national security, or state sovereignty and sovereign rights are among those requiring ratification through legislation. Given that blanket overflight access for foreign military aircraft may directly affect defense, security, and the exercise of sovereign authority over national airspace, its establishment may therefore raise questions concerning the appropriate legal form and ratification mechanism of the underlying international agreement.

In this regard, a distinction must be made between the existence of international defense cooperation and the specific legal instrument through which access to Indonesian airspace is granted. International cooperation does not necessarily produce identical legal consequences, nor does every form of cooperation automatically constitute an international treaty requiring the same domestic procedure. Therefore, the legal consequences of blanket overflight access must be assessed according to the substance and legal character of the instrument establishing it. Where the arrangement creates legally binding rights and obligations for Indonesia and concerns defense, national security, or sovereignty, the constitutional and statutory requirements governing international agreements become particularly important. The granting of access to national airspace should consequently not be reduced to a purely administrative decision, because the arrangement may create continuing legal obligations as well as strategic consequences for Indonesia.

Beyond the legal form of the agreement, the substantive content of the access granted is equally important. A legally valid authorization does not by itself guarantee that the resulting arrangement adequately protects Indonesia's national interests. An agreement establishing blanket overflight access should therefore provide clear and measurable parameters concerning the scope of access, the purposes of military flights, the categories of aircraft eligible to use the access, the geographical areas or routes that may be traversed, notification procedures, operational requirements, and limitations on the exercise of the access. Such provisions are necessary to prevent a broad authorization from evolving into an effectively unrestricted ability of a foreign state to use Indonesian airspace. From the perspective of national law, these limitations serve as an important legal instrument for reconciling international defense cooperation with the continuing exercise of Indonesian sovereignty.

The requirement for clear limitations is also closely connected with the principle of state control. The existence of an agreement does not mean that Indonesia must surrender its ability to respond to circumstances that may affect its national interests. Rather, the agreement should establish a framework within which access can be exercised while preserving Indonesia's regulatory and supervisory authority. This is particularly relevant in the context of military aircraft because their activities may have implications that differ substantially from ordinary civil aviation. Military overflight may be associated with operational exercises, logistical mobility, strategic deployments, or other activities that carry security implications. Therefore, a legal framework governing blanket overflight access should provide sufficient safeguards to enable Indonesia to maintain oversight while still fulfilling its international commitments.

Once an international agreement has been lawfully concluded and entered into force in accordance with the applicable domestic procedures, the principle of *pacta sunt servanda* becomes relevant. Article 26 of the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties establishes that every treaty in force is binding upon the parties and must be performed in good faith. Accordingly, where Indonesia and another state lawfully establish blanket overflight access through an international agreement that has entered into force, the agreement gives rise, in principle, to an obligation for Indonesia to perform its commitments in good faith (Sinaga & Claudia, 2021). The principle is important because it ensures the stability and reliability of international commitments. At the

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same time, the application of *pacta sunt servanda* must be understood together with the terms of the agreement itself and the domestic legal framework governing its implementation.

The binding nature of an international agreement, however, does not signify that Indonesia relinquishes its sovereignty over its airspace. Rather, sovereignty and treaty obligations operate within a legal relationship in which Indonesia voluntarily undertakes specific commitments while retaining sovereign authority within the limits established by the applicable legal framework. Therefore, where an agreement grants blanket overflight access, its implementation must remain confined to the scope, conditions, limitations, and procedures established by the agreement and applicable Indonesian law. The existence of a treaty obligation cannot reasonably be interpreted as granting the foreign state an independent or unlimited entitlement to use Indonesian airspace beyond the terms agreed upon. This distinction is essential because the airspace concerned constitutes a strategic territorial domain directly connected to national defense and security.

From this perspective, the central legal issue is therefore not whether Indonesia may, in principle, cooperate with another state by granting access to its airspace, but under what legal conditions such access may be granted without undermining Indonesia's sovereign authority and national interests. Blanket overflight access should be understood as a legally structured form of access that derives its legitimacy from Indonesia's sovereign authority and, where applicable, from a valid international agreement. Its implementation must consequently be accompanied by clearly defined limitations, effective monitoring mechanisms, and sufficient governmental authority to ensure that access remains within the agreed framework. Such an approach is necessary to avoid a situation in which the practical convenience of military mobility gradually exceeds the legal parameters established by Indonesia.

Based on the foregoing analysis, the regulation of blanket overflight access for foreign military aircraft under Indonesian national law is founded upon the interaction of three principal dimensions: airspace sovereignty, airspace management and security, and the state's authority to conclude and implement international agreements. Although Indonesian law does not expressly employ blanket overflight access as a distinct legal category, the granting of such access is not therefore outside the national legal framework. Its legality must instead be assessed through the combined application of the constitutional principle of territorial sovereignty, the statutory framework governing Indonesian airspace, the mechanisms for airspace management and security, and the legal requirements applicable to international agreements. The decisive point is that access granted on a blanket basis cannot be equated with unrestricted access. It remains an authorization derived from Indonesia's sovereign authority and must therefore be subject to legally defined conditions, limitations, supervision, and control. Accordingly, blanket overflight access for foreign military aircraft may, in principle, be implemented only where it possesses a clear legal basis, is granted through legitimate state authority, is established within an appropriate legal instrument, contains sufficiently precise limitations and safeguards, and preserves Indonesia's continuing ability to protect its sovereignty, defense, and national security interests.

B. Indonesia's Strategic Position in Airspace Geopolitics and the Implications of Security Policy for Blanket Overflight Access

Indonesia's strategic position in airspace geopolitics constitutes an important issue from the perspective of state security, particularly in relation to the proposed implementation of a *blanket overflight access* policy. As an archipelagic state situated between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia occupies a strategically important position as a link between various international activities, including economic, trade, defense, and security activities. This geographical condition gives Indonesia's territory, including its airspace, significant strategic value in the dynamics of international relations. From a geopolitical perspective, Indonesian airspace should not be understood merely as an administrative area, but also as a strategic domain with defense and security implications, given its role as an important transit route in the Indo-Pacific region. However, the emergence of *blanket overflight access* raises a distinct issue because it concerns access to airspace that forms part of state sovereignty. Under the 1944 Chicago Convention, every state possesses complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above its territorial jurisdiction (Juwana, 2012).

This principle establishes that airspace falls within the full authority of the state to regulate, monitor, and control. Unlike maritime areas, where the concept of the *right of innocent passage* is recognized, airspace does not generally confer an automatic right of passage upon other states. Accordingly, the use of national airspace by foreign parties must, in principle, obtain the consent of the state concerned. This legal framework demonstrates that control over airspace constitutes a concrete manifestation of state sovereignty. Consequently, policies concerning access to national airspace cannot be regarded merely as administrative matters, but must also be understood in relation to the strategic interests of the state. The granting of access therefore involves a balancing process between facilitating international or defense cooperation and maintaining effective national control over sovereign airspace.

At the same time, as an archipelagic state, Indonesia has international obligations concerning the establishment of the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (*Alur Laut Kepulauan Indonesia* or ALKI), which provide designated routes for international navigation and overflight. However, the establishment of these routes does not mean that the entirety of Indonesian airspace may be freely accessed by foreign aircraft. The ALKI regime applies only to designated corridors, while airspace outside those routes

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remains subject to Indonesia's full supervision and control. Therefore, if a *blanket overflight access* mechanism were to be implemented broadly, there is a potential risk of reduced state control over the use of national airspace because access would be provided through a mechanism that is less restrictive than individual authorization procedures (Hadisusilo, 2022). This distinction is particularly significant when the aircraft concerned are military aircraft, whose activities may have implications beyond ordinary aviation and may intersect with defense and security interests.

From the perspective of state security, this issue becomes increasingly significant because airspace is not merely related to civil aviation but is also an integral component of the national defense system. In the context of state security, protecting national territory constitutes an essential element in safeguarding the existence of the state against various threats. Accordingly, airspace surveillance is not solely intended to maintain the orderly administration of aviation activities, but also serves as a means of protecting national strategic interests. Greater access to national airspace without adequate supervision may create vulnerabilities within the national defense system. This is particularly relevant when access is granted to foreign military aircraft because their operational capabilities and missions may differ substantially from those of civilian aircraft.

From a geopolitical perspective, a *blanket overflight access* policy may also have implications for Indonesia's foreign policy. Indonesia has traditionally pursued an independent and active (*bebas aktif*) foreign policy, which seeks to prevent Indonesia from aligning itself with any particular power bloc. This principle is important in maintaining Indonesia's strategic autonomy and preventing it from becoming entangled in competition among major powers. Therefore, granting extensive airspace access to a particular state may create perceptions of political alignment amid increasing geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific region. Under such circumstances, a policy initially intended to strengthen defense cooperation may be interpreted differently by other states and potentially affect Indonesia's strategic position within the region (Anwar, 2021). Thus, the geopolitical consequences of granting airspace access should be considered alongside its immediate defense benefits.

Furthermore, the use of Indonesian airspace by foreign military aircraft requires consideration from the operational perspective of national defense and security. The increased intensity of foreign military activity within or around strategically important airspace may create certain vulnerabilities, particularly concerning the potential collection of strategic information about Indonesian territory and national capabilities. Although such activities may be conducted pursuant to defense cooperation agreements, Indonesia must nevertheless maintain effective mechanisms of surveillance and control to ensure that the use of its airspace does not undermine national interests. In this respect, authorization mechanisms should not merely facilitate access but should also enable Indonesia to maintain sufficient oversight of the nature, purpose, route, and circumstances of foreign military flights.

Accordingly, *blanket overflight access* cannot be viewed solely as a form of defense cooperation, but must also be examined from the perspectives of geopolitics and state security. Given the strategic value of Indonesian airspace, any mechanism granting foreign military aircraft broader access must ensure that Indonesia retains its capacity to exercise sovereignty, maintain effective oversight, and control the use of its airspace. Therefore, stringent authorization, monitoring, and control mechanisms remain necessary to safeguard Indonesian airspace sovereignty and prevent potential vulnerabilities to national security.

Beyond its operational and geopolitical dimensions, *blanket overflight access* also raises a fundamental question concerning the relationship between state authority and the protection of sovereign territory. Because airspace forms part of Indonesia's sovereign territory, granting foreign military aircraft access must be assessed in terms of the state's continuing capacity to exercise authority, maintain oversight, and protect national interests.

These geopolitical and security considerations can be further understood through theories concerning the state, sovereignty, and the relationship between state authority and public interests. From the perspective of state theory, the state is established to protect common interests and preserve its continued existence. Within this framework, territory constitutes one of the fundamental elements of the state that must be protected because it is directly connected to the exercise of state sovereignty. In relation to a *blanket overflight access* policy, the central issue is therefore not merely whether authorization to use Indonesian airspace exists, but the extent to which the state can continue to exercise authority and control over territory under its sovereignty (Muladi, n.d.). The existence of formal authorization does not, in itself, eliminate the need for the state to retain effective control over the use of its sovereign territory.

From Soepomo's integralistic perspective, the state is conceived as an organic unity that prioritizes the interests of society as a whole. Accordingly, *blanket overflight access* should not be assessed solely from the perspective of the benefits derived from international defense cooperation. The state must also consider its long-term implications for national interests as a whole. In the context of Indonesian geopolitics, Indonesia's position along strategic Indo-Pacific routes gives its airspace considerable strategic value (Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1998). Consequently, a policy granting foreign parties access to Indonesian airspace may create vulnerabilities if it is not accompanied by effective and stringent oversight mechanisms.

The policy also concerns the interests of the Indonesian nation and its people. As reflected in Soekarno's concept of the *nation*, the Indonesian nation was constructed upon the foundations of unity and collective identity (Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 1998). Within this framework, national territory is not merely understood as a territorial boundary, but also as a

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representation of national identity that must be protected. Therefore, policies concerning strategically important national territory may generate sensitivity when they are perceived as reducing the state's control over its sovereign territory (Kusuma, 2004). The protection of airspace sovereignty thus has both a strategic dimension and a broader constitutional and national significance.

The people, as holders of sovereignty, also have an interest in such policies. Rousseau's concept of *volonté générale* places the common interest at the foundation of state decision-making. Accordingly, a *blanket overflight access* policy should not be assessed solely from the perspective of defense diplomacy, but should also take into account public security and the broader interests of the Indonesian people (Soehino, 2013). This consideration is important because defense policies that lack sufficient public legitimacy may generate debate concerning the extent to which the state is adequately protecting national sovereignty and public interests.

Furthermore, when analyzed from the perspective of state and national security, the implications of a *blanket overflight access* policy do not necessarily take the form of direct military threats. In the modern security environment, threats are no longer understood narrowly as physical attacks but may also include strategic, political, and geopolitical influences exercised by other states (Sekretariat Jenderal dan Kepaniteraan Mahkamah Konstitusi, 2010). Consequently, the assessment of foreign military access to Indonesian airspace should consider not only the possibility of direct military threats but also broader forms of strategic vulnerability that may emerge from geopolitical competition.

Within this context, Indonesia faces a complex strategic position. On the one hand, international defense cooperation may strengthen Indonesia's national security capabilities. On the other hand, granting airspace access to foreign states may place Indonesia in a vulnerable position amid competition among major powers, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia's continued commitment to an independent and active foreign policy therefore requires careful consideration to ensure that defense policies do not create perceptions that Indonesia is aligning itself with the interests of a particular state. Maintaining strategic autonomy is particularly important given the increasingly competitive geopolitical environment in the Indo-Pacific.

In addition, experiences involving foreign aircraft activity around the Natuna region demonstrate the close relationship between airspace and the strategic security interests of the state. Although not every foreign flight activity can necessarily be categorized as a threat, the intensity of foreign activities in strategically important areas nevertheless requires adequate monitoring. In this regard, the Indonesian National Defense Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or TNI), particularly the Indonesian Air Force, have an important role in maintaining the surveillance and security of Indonesian airspace. Effective institutional capacity is therefore essential to ensure that the granting of access does not undermine Indonesia's ability to monitor and respond to activities occurring within strategically sensitive areas.

The Indonesian National Police (*Kepolisian Negara Republik Indonesia* or Polri) also has a role in maintaining national security stability, particularly where defense policies generate implications for domestic security. This demonstrates that state security cannot be managed exclusively through a sectoral approach but requires coordination among relevant state institutions. The governance of foreign military access to Indonesian airspace consequently requires an integrated approach involving defense, aviation, foreign affairs, and national security institutions within their respective authorities.

Accordingly, the concept of the *Total People's Defense and Security System* (*Sistem Pertahanan dan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta* or Sishankamrata) becomes relevant because it places defense and security as a shared responsibility of all components of the nation. On this basis, a *blanket overflight access* policy should not be understood merely as a form of international cooperation. Rather, it should be situated within a broader framework aimed at protecting Indonesia's national interests, sovereignty, and security. The strategic value of Indonesian airspace requires any policy granting foreign military access to maintain a proper balance between the benefits of defense cooperation and the state's obligation to preserve effective control over its sovereign territory.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the regulation of *blanket overflight access* for foreign military aircraft under Indonesian national law is not specifically governed by a single statutory instrument. However, its legal basis can be derived from various regulations governing state sovereignty over national airspace, airspace management and security, national defense, and international agreements. Article 25A of the 1945 Constitution, Law Number 43 of 2008 concerning State Territory, Law Number 1 of 2009 concerning Aviation, Law Number 21 of 2025 concerning Airspace Management, and Law Number 24 of 2000 concerning International Treaties collectively establish the legal framework for the use of Indonesian airspace by foreign parties. Accordingly, *blanket overflight access* may only be granted on the basis of legitimate state authority, a clear legal framework, defined limitations, and effective governmental control and supervision. Where such access is established through an international agreement concerning defense, security, or state sovereignty, its formation and ratification must comply with the applicable constitutional and statutory requirements governing international treaties. Thus, although *blanket overflight access* is not specifically regulated under Indonesian law, its implementation remains subject to the principles of airspace sovereignty, national legal authority, and the protection of Indonesia's national interests.

Indonesia's Geopolitical Position on Blanket Overflight Access: A National Security Perspective

Indonesia's strategic position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans places its airspace within an important geopolitical environment, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, *blanket overflight access* has implications that extend beyond administrative aviation matters to national sovereignty, geopolitical interests, and state security. While such access may strengthen defense cooperation and international relations, extensive access for foreign military aircraft may also create vulnerabilities concerning airspace control, strategic information, and national defense, as well as generate perceptions of political alignment with particular major powers. This consideration is particularly important in maintaining Indonesia's *free and active foreign policy*. Accordingly, the implementation of *blanket overflight access* should not be assessed solely from the perspective of defense cooperation, but must also consider national interests, sovereignty, public security, geopolitical balance, and Indonesia's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, *blanket overflight access* should be accompanied by strict mechanisms of authorization, monitoring, and control to ensure that international defense cooperation does not diminish Indonesia's effective authority over its sovereign airspace or compromise national security.

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