

Implementation of health silk road as a form of China's health diplomacy initiative in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the world since the beginning of the first case in Wuhan City, China. It made the international community urge China to take responsibility for the various actions and measures that came from countries affected by the virus. In this regard, China has established a cooperation initiative in health relations through the HSR (Health Silk Road) under the auspices of the OBOR (One Belt One Road) policy. HSR was considered to have a significant effect in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic virus through its health diplomacy approach in several countries, especially countries that have joined the OBOR policy, such as Indonesia. This paper's objective was to determine the role of HSR as a form of China's diplomacy initiative in establishing a health cooperation relationship with Indonesia to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. This writing focused on writing a descriptive non-numeric narrative with secondary data collection techniques. The HSR approach in Indonesia, such as mask diplomacy and vaccine diplomacy, has proven China's success in restoring its image in the international sphere. The delivery of an impressive amount of health assistance and COVID-19 vaccines to Indonesia showed China's seriousness in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords:

HSR; COVID-19; China-Indonesia; OBOR

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2020, the world was shocked by a variant of a new infectious virus known as the coronavirus (*Coronavirus Disease*) or COVID-19. The first case of COVID-19 was found in Wuhan City, China (Agustino, 2020; Yip & Perasso, 2021). COVID-19 has the same symptoms as the flu in general, but the transmission rate is three times faster than the general disease. Serious COVID-19 infections can cause severe health complications, such as lung infections, respiratory problems, and dysfunction of internal organs, such as liver and kidney disorders. The transmission of the virus spread very quickly into various continents, such as Asia, Europe, America, and Africa. Seeing the accelerated transmissions, the World Health Organization (WHO) firmly established COVID-19 as a global pandemic (Kompas, 2021).

There were 10,117,687 active cases and 502,278 global deaths on June 30, 2020, caused by the virus (The Global Fund, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic urges countries to implement various health protocol policies, such as *lockdowns*, to limit the spread of the coronavirus caused by mobility interactions between regions and countries (Apriliyadi & Hendrix, 2021; Asadurrohman et al., 2021). However, the health protocol policy hampers various human activities, which automatically also hampers various activities in various sectors, including economic, social, and development. In the economic sector, the World Bank estimated that the world economy would experience a global recession that would affect the value of global GDP by 5.2% in 2020 (Fairdiyanto et al., 2021). This estimate was also motivated by the strict *lockdown* policies implemented in various countries that hampered economic activity (Anjaeni, 2020; Arianto, 2021). Developing countries experienced more challenging obstacles than developed countries in various sectors. With these various problems, countries in the world viewed China from a negative side and distrusted considering that the virus first appeared in the country.

Countries such as the United States, Europe, and Australia have begun to call for distrust of China and sued China in international courts regarding cases of the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which was increasingly widespread in various countries (Kompas, 2020). In a *class action* lawsuit filed by countries that felt aggrieved by the COVID-19 pandemic, China was threatened to pay a claim of US\$ 6 trillion as compensation for losses caused by the pandemic (Sebayang, 2020). In addition, China was also required to be more transparent about various research on the COVID-19 virus. It was motivated by the Chinese government, which considered the virus a "hoax" and allowed eight doctors who researched it to be humiliated on Chinese national television. Not only that, but the Chinese government has also cornered doctors, scientists, and journalists regarding the case of the virus, and there are no preventive or handling measures to minimize the spread of COVID-19 (Kompas, 2020).

China was demanded to take responsibility and improve its reputation internationally due to the COVID-19 pandemic. China's efforts were inseparable from one of China's OBOR (*One Belt One Road*) policies, namely HSR (*Health Silk Road*) (Yamali & Putri, 2020). HSR is a diplomatic and cooperative relationship established by China with other OBOR member countries engaged in the health sector based on a document entitled "Three Years Implementation Plan of OBOR Health Cooperation" issued by the Chinese Ministry of Health Authority in 2015 (Chow-Bing, 2020). On the other hand, HSR is also a form of extension of China's geopolitical and geoeconomic influence by carrying out the concept of "*China Health Vision 2030*" following President Xi Jinping's speech in 2016, which aimed to realize other health policies both domestically and internationally (Gauttam et al., 2020). The primary objective of the establishment of this collaboration was to improve the health level of each country as the OBOR member by carrying out various approaches such as cooperative relations and public diplomacies, such as medical equipment assistance, medical assistance, and medical experts who would be sent to the friendly countries. The Chinese government hoped the HSR could improve China's tarnished image in the international community (Chow-Bing, 2020).

On the other side, western countries still had a sense of distrust of the HSR idea. They criticized the Chinese government for deliberately using medical aid as a tool to broaden their narrative of other OBOR programs in recipient countries. Hearing this, on March 16, 2020, President Xi Jinping reviewed the definition of the HSR idea with Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, and emphasized that HSR was a new program of OBOR policy that contributed to global health programs and the world community (Chow-Bing, 2020). The

western media began to look at HSR as an exciting issue in efforts to deal with COVID-19. However, from the Chinese government's side, the western media saw that the western media deliberately distorted the facts regarding the idea of HSR. It made China prefer to explore HSR in developing countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Indonesia (Chow-Bing, 2020).

Indonesia joined and signed the OBOR MoU (*Memorandum of Understanding*) in 2017 (Fitriyanti, 2017). Indonesia saw OBOR as an effective form of cooperation to build various state infrastructures through various aspects, including investment, funding and development assistance, ease of export-import transactions, labor exchange, student exchange, humanitarian aid and health equipment, and so on. Diplomatic relations between China and Indonesia have existed for 70 years. However, there was a freeze in diplomatic relations in 1967, which was motivated by China's support for the Indonesian communist party's rebellion on September 30, 1965. Then, President Suharto re-opened diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1989, and relations between the two countries became harmonious again (Sinaga, 2013).

In January 2021, the number of COVID-19 spread in Indonesia was getting out of control, with the number of 1 million positive cases of COVID-19 spreading (Kominfo, 2021). Retno Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, emphasized that in building national health resilience and independence for the community in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to have a diplomatic approach and the right cooperative relationship with other countries. One of the efforts made by the Indonesian government was to establish cooperative relationships with China in the health sector, such as medical device assistance, vaccine distribution, medical personnel, medicines, and so on. The cooperative relationship between the two countries could not be separated from the role of HSR in assisting OBOR partner countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic (Margono et al., 2021).

Based on these descriptions, the author drew the focus of the problem in this paper: "How was the implementation of the *Health Silk Road* as an agenda for China's health diplomacy in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?" In this paper, the author saw that HSR, as part of the OBOR policy, played an essential role in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic problem. In addition, some benefits could be drawn from this paper, namely, knowledge related to the effectiveness of the cooperative relationship between China and Indonesia in overcoming the spread of COVID-19.

METHOD

The qualitative method was the research method used in writing this article. The qualitative method is a research method that focuses on collecting descriptive and non-numeric data articulated through writing that is not standardized through numbers (Lamont & Boduszynski, 2015). Qualitative methods are described as central position, used in generating words, narratives, descriptions, and interpretive and empirical study writing (Klotz & Prakash, 2008). Qualitative methods were often used in various International Relations (IR) research to summarize and describe various forms of complex international phenomena. Data collection techniques used in qualitative methods were secondary data collection techniques obtained through existing sources such as books, articles, journals, websites, etc.

There was also numerical data in this article, but the data was descriptive statistical in the references cited and reprocessed by the author. Thus, the numerical data was not data that was generated through a mathematical calculation process carried out by the author. This explanation was also supported by the statement of Lamont & Boduszynski (2015) in

his book entitled "*Research Methods in International Relations*", which explained that the scope of qualitative methods also includes descriptive statistical data, where the data can still be categorized into qualitative data (Lamont & Boduszynski, 2015). The numerical data described various forms of health assistance that China had distributed to Indonesia and the level of effectiveness of vaccines produced by several companies in China. In addition, numerical data showed the superiority of the COVID-19 vaccine produced by China compared to vaccines produced in other countries.

The objective of writing this article was to determine the role of HSR as a form of Chinese diplomacy initiative in establishing a health cooperation relationship with Indonesia to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the scope of research focused on the cooperative relationship between China and Indonesia through HSR. In collecting data, the author used books, scientific journals, and articles on the internet.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

President Xi Jinping first inaugurated the establishment of HSR through a speech in Uzbekistan in 2016. HSR is a form of China's diplomatic initiative to establish cooperative relations that focuses on global health issues and promotes health as an essential issue that can threaten the global community (Huang, 2022). In its approach, HSR is under the auspices of the OBOR policy, so countries involved in the OBOR policy will certainly be involved in the HSR project will undoubtedly be involved. There are several priorities for health cooperation established by HSR, including building an information network system for analysis of sustainable health industry development, establishing training of medical experts, exchanging information, technology, and medical personnel, increasing monitoring, prevention, and efforts against infectious diseases, expanding cooperation in the development of traditional medicine, and increasing the availability of medical aid and health assistance in OBOR countries (Cao, 2020).

The HSR proposal began to attract the international community's attention and was considered effective in promoting health cooperation and ensuring global community security. The HSR framework has been adapted by combining the stages of health policy that have previously been planned as a health implementation strategy that will be implemented domestically and internationally by the Chinese government (Cao, 2020). The implementation of the HSR framework began to be realized with the opening of various regional forums and cooperation programs on health themes, including the *Health Silk Road Forum*, *Boao Forum for Asia*, *China-ASEAN Health Cooperation Forum*, Association and management cooperation of China-Russia medical universities, and so on (Cao, 2020). By making efforts and actively promoting health issues, HSR began receiving various support from other international communities. It was evidenced by the signing of the MoU between China and the WHO (*World Health Organization*) in January 2017 regarding understanding health cooperation within the scope of the OBOR policy (Calabrese, 2022).

1. China's Health Diplomacy through HSR during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The HSR implementation strategy scheme for efforts to handle and eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic has been designed and presented by President Xi Jinping through video conference meetings at the 73rd World Health Assembly and the G20 Summit on COVID-19. During the meeting, President Xi explained the strategy for handling the COVID-19 pandemic through various transparent health approaches and openness to information and developments in medical technology that was used in creating antivirals and vaccines. In addition, President Xi also promised to provide various types of assistance to countries experiencing the same case to overcome the virus problem as soon as possible (Cao, 2020). On the other side, HSR, as a part of the OBOR policies, had

an absolute advantage in distributing medical assistance and health care personnel through the OBOR transportation network, including railways, airports, ports and shipping lines, and logistics centers (Huang, 2022).

Mask Diplomacy

China has taken various approaches to health diplomacy through HSR in various countries to restore its tarnished image due to the COVID-19 pandemic in various countries. Mask diplomacy and vaccine diplomacy are the two forms of health diplomacy that China most often applies in various countries in responding to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Mask diplomacy was a form of China's initiative to provide various types of health assistance to countries in need or experiencing a crisis amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The assistance provided by China included medical masks, PCR (*Polymerase Chain Reaction*) test kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), *digital infrared thermometers*, medical glasses, ventilators, and various other medical devices (Pragiwaka, 2021).

Table 1. Amount of health assistance that the Chinese Government had sent to various countries (March 1, 2020 – May 31, 2020 period)

Vaccine Names	Total
Face mask	70.6 billion units
PCR test kit	225 million units
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	340 million units
<i>Digital infrared thermometer</i>	40.29 million units
Medical glasses	115 million units
Ventilator	96,700 units

Source: (Cao, 2020)

In addition to the Chinese government's active role in supplying medical aid kits sent to various countries, other giant Chinese companies have also played an active role in donating various health aids to various countries with an impressive participation rate. Former CEO (*Chief Executive Officer*) of Alibaba Group, Jack Ma, has donated around 3,704 ventilators, 4 million units of COVID-19 rapid test kits, and 120 units of medical masks to 150 countries. Besides, Mr. Lei Jun, CEO of Chinese electronics giant Xiaomi, also contributed by sending tens of thousands of medical masks to Italy (Cao, 2020). The involvement of these giant Chinese companies was also a form of effort to spread the narrative of China's positive image to the global community (Fairdiyanto et al., 2021).

Vaccine Diplomacy

In addition to mask diplomacy, the Chinese government also actively applied vaccine diplomacy as a form of health diplomacy to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccine diplomacy is a form of health diplomacy that, in its approach, uses vaccines as a diplomatic tool. On the other side, vaccine diplomacy is an extension of mask diplomacy (Irawan et al., 2021). The Chinese government has collaborated with several other drug companies to create COVID-19 vaccines, which were then disseminated globally as well as a form of diplomacy. The vaccines that have been produced must go through several stages of clinical trials to meet eligibility and distribution standards, including preclinical testing, phase I clinical testing (safety), phase II clinical testing (extension of testing), phase III clinical testing (efficiency), joint testing, initial or limited approval, and approval (Makarim, 2020). From these testing stages, at least four Chinese vaccines passed and were eligible for circulation, including Sinovac, Sinopharm, Sinopharm (Wuhan), and CanSino (Irawan et al., 2021).

Table 2. China's vaccine production house and level of effectiveness against the COVID-19 virus

Vaccine Names	Produced By	Effectiveness Rate
Sinovac	Sinovac Biotech	91.25%
Sinopharm	Beijing Institute of Biological Products Co., Ltd. (BIBP)	79.34%
Sinopharm (Wuhan)	Wuhan Institute of Biological Products Co., Ltd. (WIBP)	72.51%
CanSino	CanSino Biologics Inc.	65.28%

Based on the four Chinese vaccines, the Sinovac and Sinopharm variants are variants that have an important role in playing China's role in spreading influence and improving its image in the global community through vaccine diplomacy. Quoted from the ThinkChina.sg (2021) page, China has sent vaccines to 91 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, which were involved in the OBOR project with a total of 214 million doses of vaccines, including 41.03 million doses of Sinopharm variant and 165 million doses of the Sinovac variant. WHO has established the COVAC (*COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access*) scheme as a medium to facilitate the distribution of vaccines; thus, they can be distributed fairly and equitably throughout the world multilaterally. However, China saw the scheme as slower than distributing the vaccine directly to the country concerned. It made China's vaccine distribution process carried out directly through bilateral relations. On the other hand, bilateral relations also made it easier for China to reach their national interests and introduce the OBOR project to other countries (Hong, 2021; Rolland, 2020).

The Chinese government has adopted various approaches to health diplomacy with other countries. One of them was by promoting in various media such as print, broadcast, and social media as a form of instrument in disseminating their health diplomacy (Fairdiyanto et al., 2021). It was done to show the global community that the efforts made by China were forms of China's responsibility for the spread of the COVID-19 virus pandemic, which has claimed millions of lives. On the other hand, China has also taken advantage of the health diplomacy brought by HSR to establish a long-term diplomatic relationship with the country concerned through the OBOR silk route project (CNN Indonesia, 2020b).

2. HSR Implementation in Indonesia

HSR has played an essential role in providing various health assistance to countries experiencing a global crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic, especially to countries that were members of the OBOR policy. One of the countries as members of the OBOR policy is Indonesia. The implementation of China's health diplomacy in Indonesia has been going on since the middle of the first half of the COVID-19 pandemic, precisely in March 2020 (Margono et al., 2021). Indonesia was one of the countries in Southeast Asia that China prioritized in its efforts to strengthen health security and resilience through diplomatic relations between the two parties. Chinese President Xi Jinping reinforced a statement in a phone call with President Joko Widodo, who emphasized that China would always be ready to assist and support Indonesia in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic (Pinandita, 2020).

The health cooperation relationship between China and Indonesia has been successfully realized through mask diplomacy. The process of sending the health aid was distributed directly by the Chinese Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. Xiao Qian, to the Indonesian government, who at that time was represented by Harmensyah as Main Secretary of BNPB (National Agency for Disaster Management) on Friday, June 5, 2020 (Purnamasari, 2020). The handover of health assistance was carried out symbolically as a form of friendship between the two countries to combat the COVID-19 virus pandemic. The health assistance has arrived entirely after six deliveries in May and June 2020. The

forms of health assistance included 1.4 million units of medical masks, 70,000 units of N95 makers, 150,008 units of COVID-19 PCR test kits, 80,000 units of personal protective equipment (PPE) clothing, and 50 portable ventilator units, with a total value of IDR 7.8 billion (Purnamasari, 2020). These aids were handed over to hospitals and teams of medical personnel handling COVID-19 who were experiencing a shortage of adequate medical equipment.

In the meeting, Mr. Xiao Qian added that China and Indonesia had supported each other in various efforts to handle the COVID-19 pandemic (Purnamasari, 2020). It proved how friendly the two countries have been for 70 years. The diplomatic approach to masks has positively impacted China's tarnished image through bilateral relations. Supported by the implementation of HSR through the OBOR policy approach, the distribution process of health assistance could be easily distributed to several countries, including Indonesia.

On the other side, China also offered a form of health cooperation to Indonesia through vaccine diplomacy. The ratification of vaccine diplomacy between China and Indonesia was approved by Indonesia's Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, and Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, on October 11, 2020, at a meeting in the capital of China's Yunnan province, Yunming. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi added that countries that have established relations with China would be a top priority in receiving vaccine distribution, including Indonesia (Julita, 2020; Setiawan et al., 2022). In addition to vaccine distribution, vaccine diplomacy also involved cooperative relationships between State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) and other Chinese vaccine companies. In this case, PT. Bio Farma has collaborated with several other vaccine companies, such as Sinovac Biotech Ltd., Sinopharm, and CanSino Biologics Inc (Rosana, 2020). This collaboration was conducted to conduct clinical trials researching vaccines and easy access to vaccines (Margono et al., 2021).

The process of vaccine diplomacy between the two countries has been realized. In the first phase of vaccine distribution, the Chinese government sent 1.2 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine to the Indonesian government and received it on December 6, 2020. In addition to the finished vaccine, the Indonesian government also received 15 million vaccines from raw materials, which were processed further by PT. Bio Farma (Amiriyandi, 2021). Vaccine diplomacy activities continued until the 18th stage on June 30, 2021. At this stage, Indonesia has received 118.7 million vaccine doses, consisting of 13.2 million doses of Sinovac, Sinopharm, and AstraZeneca vaccine variants. In addition to vaccines in finished form, Indonesia also received 105.5 million doses of vaccines in the form of raw materials for the Sinovac variant. PT. Bio Farma reprocessed the variant and produced around 85 million doses of the finished vaccine. Thus, the total vaccine owned by Indonesia in June was 98.2 million doses of vaccine in finished form (Amiriyandi, 2021). From the vaccine diplomacy relationship, Indonesia has become one of the world's largest importing countries of Chinese vaccines (Mallapaty, 2021).

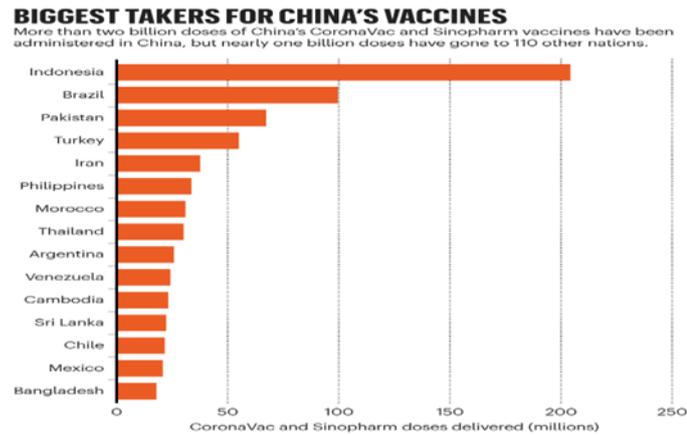


Figure 1. The graph of China's largest recipient of the COVID-19 vaccine in the world

Source: (Mallapaty, 2021)

One of the reasons the Indonesian government chose the COVID-19 vaccine produced by China was the fast development process. For example, the Sinovac variant of the COVID-19 vaccine has passed the phase I clinical testing phase at the level of safety for use. Then, in phase II clinical testing, the vaccine showed excellent immunogenicity. After the phase III clinical testing, the vaccine has passed and can be distributed throughout Indonesia (Ihsanuddin, 2020). Vaccines produced in China also had advantages in the distribution process. Vaccine variants such as Sinovac only require storage space with a relatively higher temperature and could be stored in a refrigerator, commonly used in Indonesia. Meanwhile, western vaccine variants that used RNA technology, such as Moderna and Pfizer, required special storage rooms with shallow temperatures (CNN Indonesia, 2020a).

Table 3. The temperature of the vaccine storage room

Vaccine Names	Required Temperature of Storage Room °C (Celsius)
Sinovac	-2°C to -8°C
Moderna	-20°C
Pfizer	-70°C to -80°C

Source: (CNN Indonesia, 2020a)

The health diplomacy scheme established by HSR indeed cannot be separated from the OBOR policy framework. The Indonesian government was also fully aware that the health diplomacy brought by China through the HSR was an extension of the OBOR policy. From this approach, we could understand that the relationship between China and Indonesia did not only focus on health cooperation, but the two sides have also agreed on a cooperative relationship in the form of economic recovery and development that has been agreed by the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut Binsar Panjaitan, and Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, in his meeting at a gathering in Yunming city. During the meeting, the two parties agreed to build cooperative relationships in the digital economy, including *e-commerce*, *big data*, *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*, computerization, and the development of 5G internet connectivity (Julita, 2020).

Other agreements were also discussed at the *Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2021* meeting held in Boao City, China. The forum aims to offer a high-level dialogue program between governments, businesses, and academics to discuss pressing and impactful issues for countries in the Asian region and throughout the world. During the forum, President Xi Jinping voiced his desire to seek global cooperation through the

OBOR policy framework scheme, especially in building a global health order and green growth to restore the world economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to this statement, President Joko Widodo stated that to achieve this, appropriate treatment was needed, including improving the quality of medical personnel and evenly distributing vaccination rates (Sasongko, 2021).

Even though diplomatic relations between China and Indonesia looked good, Indonesia must also be vigilant regarding the cooperative relationship built based on China's OBOR policy. In its approach, the health cooperation built by both parties will certainly provide benefits for China to advance its national interest agenda in Indonesia, such as the issue of the Natuna Sea dispute. It is because the cooperative relationship indirectly provides a diplomatic debt for Indonesia to cooperate with China in the future (Margono et al., 2021).

The same view also came from Western countries such as the United States and European countries. They viewed HSR as a form of China's new geopolitical strategy through OBOR amid the COVID-19 pandemic by providing various health assistance to various countries (Cao, 2020). It certainly added to the concern of the West regarding the influence of its hegemony in the international community with its dependence on health assistance from China. In response to this, western countries have begun to anticipate minimizing the number of circulations of Chinese medical products. However, these efforts only lasted for two months, from early January 2020 to the end of February 2020, and these efforts only reduced about 15% of total product sales. It is because China is the world's largest exporting country of medical devices. In 2018, China dominated sales of medical device products in the United States and Europe, with a total sales value of more than 50% (Cao, 2020). With China's strong influence in the medical world, it will be possible for the established health cooperation relationship to work well while simultaneously restoring China's image in the global community.

On the other hand, western countries had concerns about the role of HSR, which can shift the role of WHO as the central pillar in spearheading future global health efforts. In contrast to HSR, WHO has limitations in applying its influence, especially when dealing with national health policies in other countries. The influence of WHO on health policy in a country is limited to the total budgetary costs and voluntary contributions by a country. Coupled with the total income that continued to decline yearly, the value of WHO's role decreased in some countries. It was recorded that in 2019, the role of WHO was only 16% of the total national health policy (Cao, 2020). It was exacerbated by the release of the United States leadership at WHO on July 6, 2021 (Pramana, 2020). The United States is one of the WHO's most prominent donors, with a total value of up to \$500 million per year (ShareAmerica, 2020). Responding to the statement, China emphasized that the diplomatic relations established were temporary. Therefore, most likely, HRS will not compete with WHO's position as its function shortly. However, if HSR has more potential to contribute to health policy, China will not hesitate to incorporate OBOR values into its national interest agenda through HSR (Cao, 2020).

CONCLUSION

HSR has become China's diplomatic platform for establishing a health cooperation relationship with Indonesia in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. The health cooperation relationship established by China and Indonesia through HSR was divided into two forms, namely, mask diplomacy and vaccine diplomacy. Through this cooperative relationship, China has sent various forms of health assistance, including medical masks, PCR test kits, PPE, ventilators, and vaccines. The process of distributing health assistance could be said to

be very impressive, considering that HSR was one part of the OBOR policy. In addition to diplomacy, the two countries were also actively holding various meetings to discuss appropriate policies to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and restore the economy through the OBOR policy scheme by HSR. It proved how China was responsible and improved its image in the international community.

Even though HSR is a profitable platform for conducting health cooperation, Indonesia must remain cautious in cooperating through HSR. Because HSR is part of the OBOR policy, China can use HSR as an extension of the OBOR to advance its national interest agenda during a pandemic. With this approach, Indonesia must be critical in monitoring any changes and developments resulting from its cooperative relationship with China.

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