**Construction Of Threats For Indonesia On The Issue Of The North Natuna Sea Against China's Aggressiveness**

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**Abstract**

*This article discusses the construction of threats to Indonesia against the North Natuna sea problem in the face of China's aggressiveness in these waters. The findings of this article are that there has been a change in Indonesia's orientation in viewing North Natuna waters, which previously was more oriented towards developing economic activity, has shifted to a security orientation as a result of China's threats and aggressiveness in these waters. This article uses Alexander Went's theory of constructivism. This article uses a qualitative approach with literature study data collection methods.*

***Keywords:*** *Indonesia, contstructivism, threat, China, North Natuna Sea*

**Abstrak**

Artikel ini membahas konstruksi ancaman terhadap Indonesia terhadap masalah laut Natuna Utara dalam menghadapi agresivitas Tiongkok di perairan tersebut. Temuan dari artikel ini ialah terjadi perubahan orientasi Indonesia dalam melihat perairan Natuna Utara yang sebelumnya lebih pada orientasi pengembangan aktivitas ekonomi beralih ke orientasi keamanan sebagai dampak dari ancaman dan agresivitas Tiongkok di perairan tersebut. Artikel ini menggunakan teori konstruktivisme dari Alexander Went. Artikel ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode pengumpulan data studi kepustakaan.

***Kata Kunci:*** *Indonesia, konstruktivisme, ancaman, Tiongkok, Laut Natuna Utara*

**Introduction**

**Indonesia's Strategy in North Natuna Waters**

At present the maritime conditions of a country can reflect the geopolitical thinking policy of that country. The concept of maritime strategy adopted by several countries in the world is certainly based on maritime power. Maritime power itself has an understanding not only reflecting the power at sea represented by a country's navy (navy), but broad understanding that is the extent to which a country is using its maritime optimally (Sakhuja, 2011).

China is a country that has a highly developed geopolitical thinking strategy in Asia. After running the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) strategy in 1992, China once again made a grand strategy on maritime affairs. This is in line with the current economic and military development in China. On October 3, 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping officially announced the concept of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Century Maritime Silk Road in front of the Indonesian parliament. The core of the policy is the development of marine infrastructure from mainland China to the main ports in South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe by combining land and sea routes referred to by China with the term OBOR (One Belt One Road) (Suropati, Sulaiman, & Montratama, 2016). This certainly becomes a hope and a challenge for Indonesia, a hope to establish better and sustainable cooperation with China and the challenges of China's economic and military development accompanied by Chinese aggressiveness in the ASEAN region, especially in the South China Sea conflict.

Of the several cases that can be seen related to the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia prefers hedging strategies in dealing with China by maintaining good relations with China while maintaining sovereignty (Syauqi & Abrar, 2018). This strategy was chosen to maintain economic relations between the two countries. The construction of the threat that China in the North Natuna Sea remains a threat to Indonesia's sovereignty, but not as a threat to economic relations between the two countries. Indonesia has also carried out other strategies besides hedging, which is to replace the naming of the South China Sea associated with the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) into the North Natuna Sea in 2017, but it is not effective in changing the construction of China's threat to Indonesia.

Hedging according to Evelyn Goh is a series of strategies aimed at avoiding situations or as a backup in situations where a country cannot choose strategies such as balancing, bandwagoning, or neutrality. Goh sees that hedging strategies consist of indirect or soft balancing; engagement at political, economic and strategic levels; and involve major power in the region to maintain regional stability (Syauqi & Abrar, 2018). Indonesia will find it difficult to implement a balancing strategy, because Chinese investment is still enjoyed by Indonesia, while the bandwagoning strategy is very unfavorable for Indonesia because it will be bound and dependent on other major power countries. In addition, Indonesia's credibility in ASEAN is also at stake if it does not form an alliance among fellow ASEAN member countries, but Indonesia has a difficult habit of dealing with conflicts in ASEAN if Indonesia is involved in the conflict. Indonesia seems to be able to reduce the conflict with China when Indonesia is not directly involved in the case, for example the case in the Declaration of Conduct and Code of Conduct between China and ASEAN in the South China Sea conflict.

In addition to hedging, Indonesia can also take advantage of diplomatic efforts to resolve incidents in the waters of Natuna with China. UNCLOS is the success of Indonesia's diplomacy in expanding Indonesia's territorial waters and making Indonesia an archipelagic nation. Indonesia can use its diplomacy again by carrying out the UNCLOS principle. Starting with the Djuanda Declaration on December 13, 1957 and ending at UNCLOS 1982, Indonesia succeeded in expanding its territorial waters 3-6 million km2 without military expedition activities, as revealed by Arif Havas Oegroseno (2017) (Mcrae, 2019). The problem with using this strategy is that China seems to be inconsistent with UNCLOS. In addition, all ASEAN countries also ratified UNCLOS, as well as China which ratified UNCLOS in 1996, so that this strategy will become a strategy of mutual claims between China and countries in the ASEAN region. As a result, the South China Sea has become a "hole in the doughnut" which is ready to be exploited by countries that have succeeded in capturing these waters. The implication is that Indonesia's diplomacy toward China will be "charm-offensive" (Mcrae, 2019).

Indonesia's military infrastructure development efforts also began in 2012. After the Chinese coastguard incident which crashed into an Indonesian fishing patrol boat in October 2013, Indonesia began to pay attention to the military aspect of Natuna waters. October 2016 and May 2017 were the climax, when Joko Widodo was immediately present to see military training in Natuna waters by riding KRI Imam Bonjol. Not only that, Joko Widodo also brought several related Ministers to the meeting on the warship, the result of this incident was to make Natuna a priority of the Indonesian Defense Planning 2024.

The last strategy that can be applied by Indonesia is to use the economy. Joko Widodo instructed the Ministry of Fisheries to build a fishery center in Natuna waters. In addition, bringing 400 fishing boats (fishermans) from Java to Natuna is also an effort to strengthen Indonesia's presence in Natuna waters (Mcrae, 2019).

**Theoretical framework and research method**

Alexander Wendt's simple opinion about constructivism is that international politics consists of intellectual endeavors in building an international system as a "social construction" which contrasts sharply with positivist traditions and materialist conceptions as echoed by groups of realism and liberalism. The similarity between realism, liberalism and constructivism is that they both raise anarchist traditions (culture of anarchy), but for constructivism the anarchist tradition is constructed by the state itself which is a contestation of ontology and epistemology positivism. Socially, constructivism challenges the structure of human life as the main tradition of material phenomena, and rationally debates the function of humans not only as regulators of behavior (behavior-regulating) but constructed identity and interests.

Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that has basic claims: (1) the state is the most principle unit of analysis in international political theory, (2) key structures in the state system are inter-subjective rather than material, (3) and identity and state interests are constructed by social structures, rather than naturally formed themselves (Award & Behravesh, 2019).

The concept of "identity" is a concept that is very calculated in the perspective of constructivism, and is a crucial part in the interpersonal and international interactions. Wendt subjectively states that an actor's intentions shape motivation and attitudes that are rooted in self-understanding. The identity mentioned by Wendt is not only as a unit but also as an understanding and that understanding is also understood and represented by other parties. So there are internal and external aspects of subjectivity in understanding Wendt's constructivism.

Analyzing problems in the North Natuna Sea can be explored through the Lebensraum theory that the state is seen as an organism that requires living space to develop. North Natuna Sea, including problems that can be associated with it. Managing the North Natuna Sea which is also a border area requires integrated and comprehensive action. Indonesia as a country in the perspective of constructivism is the most principle unit of analysis in international political theory, the identity and interests of the state are constructed by social construction rather than naturally formed, therefore Indonesia as a maritime country that is geographically very natural may not necessarily have geopolitical and geostrategic orientation oriented sea, especially in managing border issues such as the North Natuna Sea case. For this reason, Indonesia makes regulations in the form of laws that have been issued such as Law (UU) No. 43 of 2008 concerning State Territories and Law (UU) No. 17 of 1985 concerning ratification of the United Nations sea law convention (UNCLOS 1982). In addition, Indonesia also established a National Border Management Body chaired by the Minister of the Interior in accordance with Presidential Regulation (Peraturan Presiden) No. 44 of 2017 (Purba. Sampe L, 2020).

**Research Method**

The research could be classified as an explorative research which applies qualitative analysis approach, especially the literature study related to the North Natuna Sea and the construction of threats to Indonesia against China's aggressiveness in these waters.

**Result and Explanation**

**Natuna's position for Indonesia**

In 2013-2014 Natuna was discussed by the central government in Jakarta only in economic, cultural and tourism aspects (Meyer, Nurmandi, & Agustiyara, 2019). The relations between Indonesia and China were considered to be still warm that year, the two countries agreed that the problem in Natuna waters was only an illegal fishing problem. However, Natuna's position changed orientation from merely economic, cultural, and tourism aspects after China redefined the nine dash line in March 2014.

In 2015, Natuna was officially reviewed by the Indonesian government in a security perspective. This security perspective is related to the context of Indonesia's sovereignty and security. Joko Widodo in 2015 instructed the Head of the National Planning Agency (BAPENAS), Andrinof Chaniago to study Natuna to be a stronghold of the Indonesian military fortress or in other words make Natuna the Pearl Harbor of Indonesia (Meyer et al., 2019).

In 2016, Natuna was fully reviewed by the Indonesian government as a security issue, this can be seen from several indications there are; budget allocation for military installations in the region, efforts to increase 5,000-12,000 personnel to serve in the region, sending protest notes to China, and prioritizing incidents in Natuna waters as a matter of national security (Meyer et al., 2019).

**Chinese Perception of Indonesia in the Natuna Incident**

China first released the nine dash line claim in 1993, since then the escalation of the territorial boundary violation was in the ambivalence curve situation, including with Indonesia. China has always been a double standard for Indonesia in the case of the Natuna waters incident since 2016. This is done by China as if to be careful in responding to Indonesia related to this incident. China's perception of Indonesia is divided into two. First, it still considers the incident in Natuna waters to still exist and has occurred, secondly, the strategic relations between the two countries continue to run well. This Chinese perspective can be analyzed through the theory of images from Hermann and Fischerkeller (1995) which states that the structure of relations between countries is influenced by the image of each built between the two countries (Kartikasari, 2019). There are 5 types of images built by one country against another: first, enemy images; who consider a country a threat. Second, degenerate image; which considers the possibility of a country can be exploited. Third is the colonoy image; the perception of the state considers other countries weak and inferior is not comparable with his country. Fourth is ally image; one country considers another country to be balanced and equal so that it can be made an ally. The fifth is the perception of an imprealist image; consider his country stronger and could threaten other countries.

China's perception of Indonesia in the incident in Natuna waters , the analysis shows that China placed Indonesia in the category of ally image. This is because Indonesia is able to cooperate with China with the ongoing economic cooperation, and Indonesia is considered to have the same capabilities and culture for China (Kartikasari, 2019).

**Troops and Equipment Development**

In an effort to secure the North Natuna Sea, the TNI has deployed 600 TNI personnel by involving 5 KRI, a Boeing TNI AU aircraft. According to the Commander of the Joint Regional Defense Command I (Pangkogabwilhan I) Vice Admiral (Laksdya) TNI Yudo Morgono the entire personnel and the Armed Forces will be prepared for 18 combat alert operations which he directly leads. Initially only 5 warships were prepared by the Navy, seeing the increasing intensity of the activities of Chinese fishing vessels and Coastguards in the region, the TNI again increased its security as a result of the construction of threats seen by the TNI. There are 2 warships with Frigate types and 2 tanker types which are also alerted by the Navy to respond to the threat (Wismabrata. Michael Hangga, 2020).

Warships that alerted Indonesia to combat standby in the North Natuna Sea consist of Corvettes and Frigates. Corvette type ships are deployed, namely:

1. KRI Tjiptadi 381
2. KRI Teuku Umar 385
3. KRI John Lie 358
4. KRI Sutendi Senoputra 378
5. KRI Usman-Harun 359

Whereas the Frigate type ship, TNI Al dropped a ship consisting of:

1. KRI Ahmad Yani 351
2. KRI Karel Satsuit Tubun

The Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) has also prepared ships with tanker types in combat standby operations (CNNIndonesia, 2020b), namely:

1. KRI Tarakan 905
2. KRI Teluk Sibolga 536

This shows that the construction of threats can make the country as a unit of analysis in the perspective of constructivism a reference in placing military power in the North Natuna Sea region for Indonesia. The following data describe the strengths of each TNI dimension in the Natuna region (Setyaningrum, 2020):

**Table Of Strengths of Each TNI Dimension (Matra) In The Natuna**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Matra** | **Defense Equipment** | **Amount** |
| 1. | TNI AD (Army) | TNI Soldiers | 3.600 Personil |
| 2. | TNI AU (Air Force) | F-16 | 4 |
| 3. | TNI AL (Navy) | KRI (Frigates, corvettes and logistical vessels) | 8 |
| 4. | Badan Keamanan Laut (Coastguard) | Patrol boats | 2 |

The source is processed from the article: Putri Mei Setyaningrum https://www.wartaekonomi.co.id/read265643/ bersiap-di-natuna-begini-kekuatan-militer-indonesia-yang-dahkan.html accessed on March 3, 2020

In addition to preparing combat standby operations by the TNI, the government through the Ministry of Political, Legal and Security Coordination and the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs in coordination with the Republic of Indonesia BAKAMLA (Maritime Security Agency), also took a role in securing the North Natuna Sea. Through the Head of BAKAMLA, Vice Admiral Achmad Taufiqoerrachman said, the additional strength of BAKAMLA will be done, because this is natural in nature if there is a threat to maintain sovereignty. But the approach taken is in accordance with current conditions, namely using the white “hull strategy” rather than “the gray hull strategy”(CNNIndonesia, 2020a).

The term "Hull" in the shipping world means the body of boat. "White hull" means the hull of a ship with white color which is identical to "coast guard" or territorial guard who does not have military power to fight, is the same as sea police, while "Gray Hull" means a ship with hull or gray body of the ship the ashes identified with a naval military ship of a country that has the power of war for large scale. All of these terms are in accordance with Harold Kearsley's theory in his book "Maritime Power and the 20th Century" (Haje, 2020).

From the BAKAMLA slap, it can be concluded that the construction of threats perceived by the TNI is different from BAKAMLA. BAKAMLA is more about negotiation and diplomacy in the process of maintaining sovereignty in the North Natuna Sea, while the TNI is more on the use of hard power, thus BAKAMLA remains in the established line in handling cases in the North Natuna Sea. This is in line with foreign policy outcomes in the North Natuna Sea and efforts to deal with Chinese ambitions in these waters using the concept of humble-hard power. This concept was introduced by Adam Nieves-Johnson in his book entitled "A Bilateral Analysis of the South China Sean Dispute: China, the Philippines, and the Scarborough Shoal" with the meaning that humble-hard power is a new form of hard power without intimidation military (Robertua & Sinaga, 2018).

This shows that Indonesia will not show a military threat but peaceful diplomatic activities while still using power without showing indications of great contradiction in the international world. This form of response applied by Indonesia to Chinese aggressiveness means that bilateral relations between the two countries that are currently implementing several mega projects with China are not disturbed, one of them is the rapid train project in several cities in Indonesia. With a focus on investment in the form of mega projects carried out by China in Indonesia, Indonesia and China do not appear to involve problems in the North Natuna Sea because it is part of the economic interests of the two countries, but with the presence of the humble-hard power concept, Indonesia can still maintain its sovereignty without disrupting Chinese investment in Indonesia.

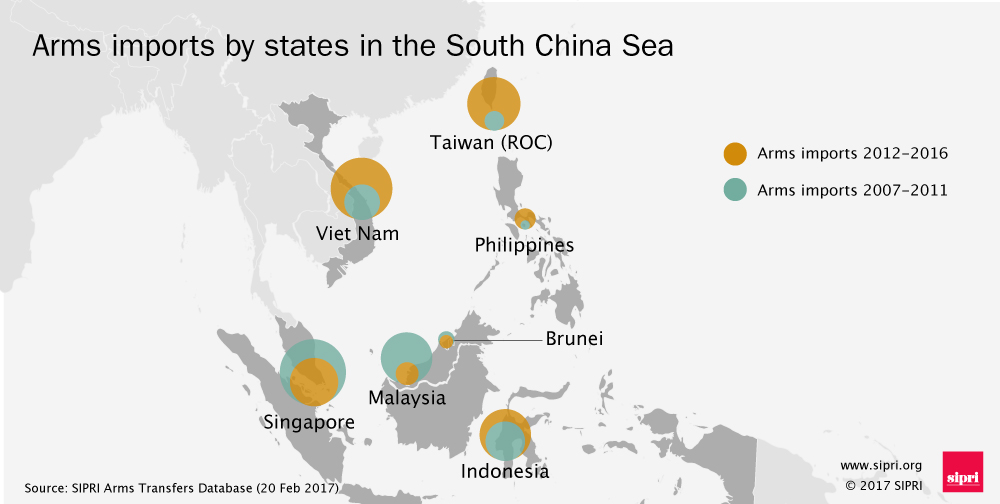
**Photo of Arms Import by States in the South China Sea**

Photo Source: The state of major arms transfers in 8 graphics (Dr. Kate Blanchfield, Pieter D. Wezeman and Siemon T. Wezeman accessed via https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2017/state-major-arms- transfers-8-graphics

The South China Sea Conflict is one of the objects that makes the rhetoric of every country involved in the conflict to increase its military strength. By importing various defense equipment from outside. SIPRI data shows that the Philippines and Vietnam are the highest countries in increasing the import of weaponry activities, especially weapons related to sea defense. SIPRI data shows the Philippines has increased arms imports by 42.6% from 2012-2016, followed by Vietnam with an increase in arms imports by 20.2% in the same period (Blanchfield, Wezeman, & T, 2017). Taiwan and Indonesia also did the same thing, Taiwan increased its weapons imports by 64.7% while Indonesia increased its weapons imports by 70%. Singapore also showed a significant increase in data, which amounted to 47% which was very interesting in the 2007-2011 period (Blanchfield, Wezeman, & T, 2017). Only Malaysia did not significantly increase its gun import activities during the 2007-2011 period (Blanchfield et al., 2017).

**Building Defense Infrastructure**

In terms of defense infrastructure, Indonesia is also experiencing significant defense infrastructure construction. Initially, Indonesia only focused or had a defense infrastructure orientation which was initially very oriented towards the land (continental oriented) towards the orientation of the ocean (maritme oriented). This is also in line with Joko Widodo's foreign policy which is to make Indonesia a World Maritime Fulcrum as a national goal and be defined in accordance with Indonesia's maritime policy to become a maritime country that is sovereign, advanced, independent, strong, and able to contribute positively to world security and peace . The World Maritime Fulcrum is not only aimed at making Indonesia an archipelagic state (being a maritime) but is making Indonesia a country that has maritime power (Seapower) (Suropati, Montratama, & Sulaiman, 2018). So that in the Indonesian conflict with China in the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia through its TNI Commander Hadi Tjahjanto built a medium-term strategic plan on Natuna Island, namely by building an Integrated TNI Unit on Natuna Island (Eksa, 2018). This unit will involve inter-generational TNI officers from TNI Headquarters and Force Headquarters, whose main purpose is to provide deterrence effects on issues in the North Natuna Sea. And Hadi Tjajanto also said that the project will continue on other strategic islands in Indonesia, in accordance with the stages of the development of the next strategic plan (Eksa, 2018).

This integrated TNI Unit consists of all Army, Navy, Air Force TNI Units as explained in the following table;

**Table Consist of Integrated TNI Unit on Natuna Island**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Army | Navy | Air Force | Supporting Facilities |
| 1 | Composite Battalion (Kompi Zeni Tempur) | Marine Composite Company | Integrative Hangar | TNI Health Hospital |
| 2 | Baterai Rudal Artileri Pertahanan Udara | Navy Port | Hangar unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) squadron |
| 3 | Baterai Field artillery |  |  |

Source: Processed by researchers from various sources

The TNI Commander also added that the Natuna Integrated TNI Unit will continue to develop, the plan will be refined with an operational control system based on network centric warfare capabilities (Eksa, 2018). The initial process of this unit is the formation of units, personnel, and unit materials that will be carried out by each TNI unit's chief of staff. The TNI Integrated Unit will later become a permanent and integrated organization in one command, so that at any time it is ready to be deployed to carry out military operations.

Other functions of the Integrated TNI Unit are evaluating the dynamics of the development of threats, developing relevant operational concepts, and designing an integrated logistics support mechanism, having an operational control system, and evaluating the organization for validation data on the development of integrated TNI units in the future. This unit is also tasked with building relationships with stakeholders in the area to evaluate threats and solutions according to regional or local needs. In other words, the singularity of security spatial development must be built by involving regional officials such as the Governor of Riau Islands, Natuna Regent, military and civilian working partners, religious and traditional leaders, and the local community (Eksa, 2018).

With the establishment of the Integrated Military Unit in Natuna, it can be seen that the national government wants to make this area a priority area for development. The focus of development is not only on the economic field, but makes Natuna a military base. This Integrated TNI Unit will become a fortress of three “matra” within the TNI. Direktur Zeni Brigadier Erwin explained that there are 6 main areas in Natuna that will be built for integration defense (Rappler Tim, 2016). The development will be in 6 main areas in Natuna. There are; Ranai, Sepempang, Sungai Ulu Village, Lampa Strait, Tanjung Payung Village, and Tanjung Datuk Village. The specifications for the development of defense infrastructure in the 6 regions can be seen in the table on next page:

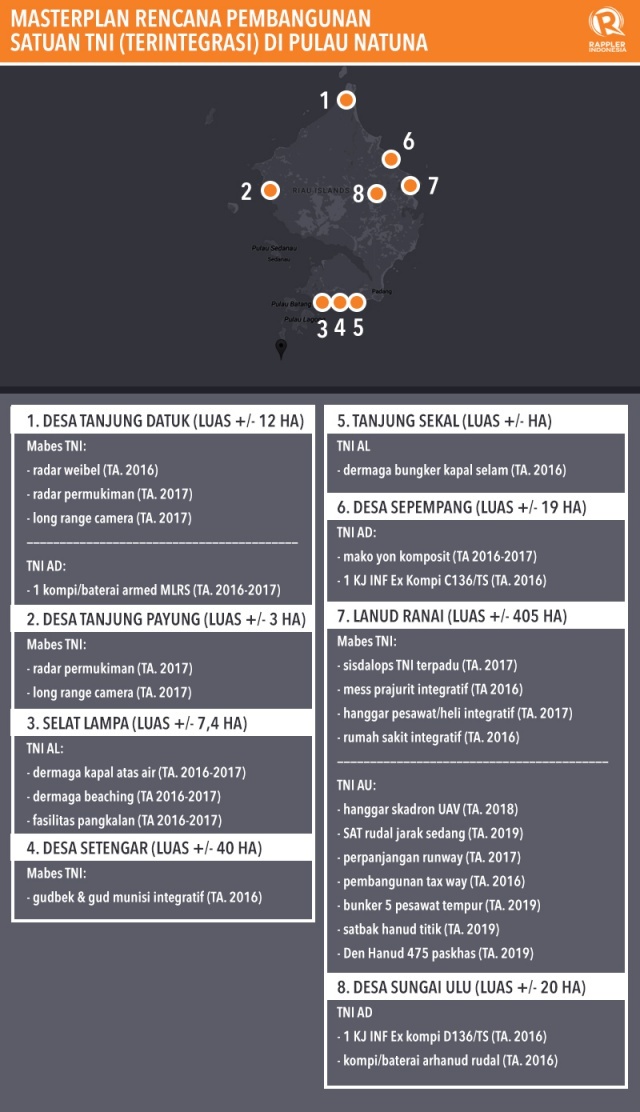
**Table of Defense Infrastructure**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Area** | **Matra** | **Defense Infrastructure** |
| 1. | Ranai | TNI AD | Barracks |
| Joint Task Force | Integrated hospital |
| TNI AU | Hangars:   * UAV squadron * medium-range missile satellite * Runway, * taxy way infrastructurs, * Fighter bunker * Den Hanud 475 Paskhas |
| 2. | Desa Sungai Ulu | TNI AD | Baterai Arhanud rudal |
| 3. | Desa Tanjung Sekal | TNI AL | Submarine bunker dock |
| 4. | Selat Lampa | TNI AL | * The boat dock * Beaching dock |
| 5. | Desa Setengar | Join Task Force/Headquarters | * Maharlan composite complex * Integrated ammunition warehouse * Kizipur Headquarters |
| 6. | Desa Sepempang | TNI AD | * Mako Yon Komposit * 1 KJ INF Ex Kompi C136 |
| 7. | Desa Tanjung Payung | TNI AU | * Surface radar facilities * Long range camera |
| 8. | Desa Tanjung Datuk | TNI AD | * Surface radar * Radar weibel * Long range camera * Komplek baterai armed mlrs |

Source: Processed by researchers from various sources

Even though the Indonesian government is aggressively building defense facilities in Natuna, in the international sphere, Indonesia considers this not to be a show of force in accordance with the statement of the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi (Rappler Tim, 2016). According to Retno, Indonesia reasoned that it was only to build the outer islands in Indonesia in order to maintain the security of the outer islands. And these military facilities were built to meet military training facilities for the TNI (Rappler Tim, 2016). The presence of defense facilities in Natuna also supports the government to support the development of the economic sector in Natuna, and this is related to the construction of the Airport in Ranai. Retno further explained that there is no overlapping border area between Indonesia and China in Natuna, Indonesia only has overlapping borders with Malaysia and Vietnam which are currently still in the process of negotiations (Rappler Tim, 2016).

**Picture of Defense Infrastructure on Natuna**



Source: Rappler Tim. (2016). TNI Bangun Pangkalan Militer Terpadu Natuna. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from https://www.rappler.com/indonesia/148468-tni-bangun-pangkalan-militer-terpadu-natuna

Regarding the issue of disputes in the South China Sea, Retno referred to the results of the agreement between ASEAN leaders at the Laos Summit in September 2016 which resulted in the launch of Hotlines between ASEAN-China as a means to communicate with each other on this issue. Leaders in ASEAN countries also agreed to keep the situation of the South China Sea stable and safe (Rappler Tim, 2016).

**Boarding Patrols**

Efforts to secure the North Natuna Sea for Indonesia are not only at the level of the Indonesia coastguard (Bakamla) or the TNI. In an effort to safeguard, Indonesia entered into agreements with 13 ministries or institutions, including fishing groups and Pertamina organizations. This is done as the foundation of institutional work related to the synergy and optimization, supervision, security and utilization of fish resources in the region. Construction of threats from China has become a threat whose scale is not only the level of threat faced by the state but also the community as the smallest part of the state element. Bakamla in this matter will be tasked with escorting Indonesian fishing vessels that conduct fishing activities in the region. Bakamla unloaded the KN Island Nipah-321 ship leaning on the KN Marore-322 island, KN Island Nipah 321 was commanded by Major Bakamla Margono assigned to patrol there and escort Indonesian fishing vessels operating there (Okezone, 2020). The presence of Indonesian fishermen in the region will strengthen that region is “dejure” and “traditionally” owned by Indonesia, even though China uses the traditional propositions and the traditional journey of their fishermen in conducting fish-handling activities in the region.

Indonesia through BAKAMLA also conducted an analysis of the strategy to be applied in the northernmost western waters. Seeing from the development of the security situation, BAKAMLA applies the concept of the Indonesian Maritime Strategy which rests on 3 main pillars namely (Yoga, 2020):

1. Sustainable Presence at Sea
2. Sustainable Exploration of the Sea
3. Sustainable Trust Build by Sea

The strategy presented indicates that Indonesia continues to prioritize a soft approach in dealing with the threat of China in the North Natuna Sea. Indonesia does not want a tit-for-tat with China. The construction of threats in the North Natuna Sea is fabricated directly by Indonesia as a sovereignty issue that is naturally faced by a country in general without disrupting other strategic relations with China.

This strategy was conveyed by the Head of BAKAMLA Laksdya TNI Aan Kurnia in a coordination meeting with 13 ministries or institutions led by Minister of Political Law and Security Mahfud MD and also attended by Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi, Navy Chief of Staff Admiral TNI Siwi Sukma Adji, Commander of the Defense Regional Joint Command (Pangkogabwilhan) I Laksdya Yudo Margono, Kabarhakam National Police Commissioner. Pol. Agus Andrianto, S.H., M.H. and representative officials from other Ministries / Institutions, following details of ministries and institutions involved in securing the North Natuna Sea(Ridwan, 2020):

1. Deputy for the Coordinator of the National Defense Coordinating Ministry for Politics, Law and Security, Major General Rudianto.
2. Plh. Immigration Director General of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights Jhoni Ginting.
3. Director General of Customs and Excise, Ministry of Finance Heru Pambudi.
4. Director General of Sea Transportation, Ministry of Transportation R. Agus H. Purnomo.
5. Director General of Pollution and Environmental Damage Control, Ministry of Environment and Forestry M.R. Karliansyah.
6. Director General of Capture Fisheries Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries M. Zulficar Mochtar.
7. Operations Assistant Commander of the Indonesian National Army Major General TNI Tiopan Aritonang.
8. Head of the Marine Police and Air Police Corps Baharkam National Police Inspector General Lotharia Latif.
9. Deputy of Operation and Training of the Republic of Indonesia's Marine Security Agency Laksamana Muda Bakamla T.S.N.B. Hutabarat.
10. President Director of PT Pertamina (Persero) Nicke Widyawati.
11. Chairperson of the Indonesian Fishermen Alliance Central Board Riyono.
12. Chairman of the Central Board of the All Indonesian Fishermen Association Central Major General of the Indonesian Navy (ret.) H. Yussuf Solichien.
13. Head of the Basori Independent Fishermen Group.

The agreement was signed as a response to the entry of foreign ships in Natuna waters. In addition, he admitted, the government had so far been absent there and needed synergy from each element.

"So far we have not been there, so we have increased the volume of attendance in Indonesian waters, both in territorial waters and in sovereign rights waters, EEZ to the high seas. That we guard with patrol activities and economic activities in the future. Because after "later there will be more normal fishing activities carried out there," (Ridwan, 2020).

On the other hand, in the case of border patrols in the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia once received an offer from the United States to establish cooperation in sea patrols in the North Natuna Sea. This offer came from United States Secretary of Defense James Mattis in 2018 during a visit to Jakarta. The patrol point in the North Natuna Sea is one of the points discussed in the framework of cooperation between the two countries. Mattis himself dubbed the situation of the South China Sea and Chinese activities in the region as "mad dogs" because of disputes that involved too many actors (Asmardika, 2018). Mattis also appreciated that Indonesia changed the naming of the South China Sea into the territory of the Republic of Indonesia as the North Natuna Sea.

Susaningtyas Nefo Handayani, a defense and military observer said that patrolling in the Natuna Islands region is an act that is in accordance with International Law of the Sea and is an obligation of Indonesia as a country. The mechanism implemented by the TNI AL and BAKAMLA has been well implemented and accepted by various countries in the region including the United States. Every patrol activity that Indonesia wishes to carry out must first go through a bilateral agreement process that is accepted by both parties. As with the offer from the United States, the framework for bilateral cooperation must be agreed upon in advance. This is due to the nature of the sea patrol that is coordinate patrol or joint patrol (Asmardika, 2018).

Another mechanism that is also recognized is the passing execise (Passex) is a form if there are military ships or warships from other countries entering the Indonesian territorial sea. This joint exercise is common. The clash between the United States and China indeed lies in the principle of freedom (freedom of navigation). The United States regards the South China Sea as a free area while China insists that the region is part of its sovereignty.

In an effort to patrol the Indonesian sea, Bakamla is not alone as an institution that has that focus. There are 4 institutions that have the aim to secure the Indonesian sea, these institutions are:

1. Republic of Indonesia Sea Coast Guard (KPLP) under the Directorate General of Sea Transportation of the Ministry of Transportation
2. Water Police (Polair) which is under the auspices of the Republic of Indonesia Police (POLRI)
3. The Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) under the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia
4. Oversight of Maritime and Fisheries Product Competitiveness (PSDKP) under the auspices of the Ministry of Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia.

In 2019 the establishment of the Indonesia Sea and Coast Guard (ISCG) will be combined with the Republic of Indonesia Sea Coast Guard (KPLP) and Water Police (Water Police Directorate) and it is expected that Bakamla will be the coordinator of the two institutions. Referring to Law (UU) No. 17/2008 on shipping, the formation of ISCG is the empowerment of Bakorkamla and Strengthening KPLP, while in 2014, Bakorkamla has been transformed into Bakamla in accordance with Law (UU) No.23 / 2014 (JMOL, 2019).

It can be concluded, Bakamla and KPLP will be directed to become the "Sea and Coast Guard of Indonesia", but through different regulations (JMOL, 2019). Both of these institutions both have the characteristics of a white hull ship (gray hull) which is a characteristic of the coast guard in the world. Through the Government Regulation (PP) on Sea and Coast Guard which is expected to produce the same regulations at the technical and operational level so that they do not cause overlap.

In terms of operational Bakamla relies on 3 units of 80 meter patrol boats, namely; KN Island Nipah-321, KN Island Marore-322, and KN Island Dana-323. Ideally, Bakamla has 255 large and small patrol boats. However, since it was formed in 2014, Bakamla has always been hampered by limited state budget so that it is rationed with 3 ships (JMOL, 2019).

Whereas KPLP which is the oldest institution that has existed since the days of the Hindia Belanda government, now only has 378 patrol boats. The agency, which is under the auspices of the Ministry of Transportation, ideally has 500 units of patrol boats in various classes. PSDKP which has a function as a body that protects marine and fishery resources, to date has only 27 Supervisory Vessels and various sizes and types. The following are data on the number of ships from various classes and types from 5 agencies that will be merged in one technical and operational objective of the Indonesia Sea and Coast Guard (ISCG):

**Table Number of 5 Agencies that Will Join the Indonesia Sea and Coast Guard (ISCG)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Kelas/Tipe** | **LoA (Meter)** | **BAKAMLA** | **(KPLP)** | **Polair** | **DJBC** | **PSDKP** |
| **Kapal Markas** | **110** | **1** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **-** |
| **KN80** | **80** | **3** | **-** | **1** | **-** | **-** |
| **Kelas I, FBP 60M** | **60** | **-** | **7** | **-** | **2** | **4** |
| **Kelas A** | **48** | **6** | **-** | **10** | **-** | **-** |
| **Kelas II, FPB 42M** | **42** | **-** | **15** | **-** | **-** | **3** |
| **FPB 38M** | **38** | **-** | **-** | **-** | **7** | **11** |
| **Kelas III, Kelas B** | **28** | **-** | **54** | **11** | **31** | **14** |
| **Kelas IV, Kelas C** | **15** | **16** | **65** | **91** | **5** | **5** |
| **Kelas V, Speedboat** | **>12** | **14** | **237** | **-** | **137** | **89** |
| **Jumlah** | | **40** | **378** | **113** | **182** | **126** |

Source: Indonesian Sea and Coast Guard Sea Patrol Boat fleet https://jurnalmaritim.com/armada-sea-and-coast-guard-indonesia/ December 12, 2019 accessed on May 20, 2020

If the assets of the patrol vessels from the 5 agencies above are combined, the ISCG's strength is far above the MMEA (Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency), which has around 260 vessels. There are 51 patrol boat units above 40 meters that are able to operate up to the jurisdictional sea area (additional zone and ZEEI). Hundreds more for operations in the territorial sea, coast and river. With a total fleet of more than 800 units, the country is not overburdened by the ideal posture targets of each agency (JMOL, 2019).

**CONCLUSION**

Indonesia's identity as an archipelagic country is both an advantage and a disadvantage for Indonesia in several aspects. In the economic aspect, it will certainly result in the achievement and fulfillment of very high national interests, but in terms of security it is also the most risky aspect of threats from other parties, both state actors, collectives, and individuals.

North Natuna Sea is one of the waters that receive special attention for Indonesia at this time. This is due to the impact of the threat posed by China's aggressiveness in these waters. The construction of the threat posed by China has made Indonesia change the orientation of the management of these waters which was previously oriented to the economic aspect and has now changed to a security orientation. Several “security” border policies are also implemented in these waters, such as: developing troops and defense equipment, building military infrastructure, and strengthening security patrol collaboration in these waters.

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