

Implications of Tensions in South China Sea Region on Land Force Strategy in Indonesia's Defense

Sukmawijaya, Helda Risman, Joni Widjayanto

Republic of Indonesia Defense University

Abstract—The South China Sea have strategic value, from economic and military aspects. In some parts of the waters there is an overlap of jurisdictions between claimant states (Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and China), causing a high potential for conflict. Geopolitical turbulence in the South China Sea region further illustrates the dynamic strategic environment and adds complexity to threats to security in the region. The panelitian method used is a qualitative descriptive method. According to Sugiyono, descriptive methods are studies that describe, describe, or describe the state of the object studied as what it is, according to the situation and conditions when research is done. The theories used are balance of power, military of balance, steps-to-war, and balance of threat. China's rapid military development has made it a powerful country and has the potential to become a hegemony in the region and will create new tensions in the region. This situation encourages countries in the region to increase their military capabilities, produce military weaponry and equipment, and even form military alliances to offset China's military capabilities in the region. The U.S.-China rivalry makes the South China Sea region a single geostrategic theater that will drag regional countries into the maelstrom of conflict, including Indonesia in it. Facing a dynamic environment, Indonesia with an active defensive strategy deploys land aspect forces that have been centrally structured and dispersed (territorial command units), in an effort to prevent assertive actions from other countries.

Keywords: South China Sea, military of balance, country defense

I. INTRODUCTION

The South China Sea is a strategic waterway, both in terms of military and economic aspects. The vast South China Sea area, which covers the waters of several countries in Southeast Asia, is not surprising that the waters are a struggle between China and several countries in the region. Judging from its geographical location, the South China Sea borders the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and China. In some parts there is an overlap of jurisdictions between claimant states (Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and China), thus causing a high potential for conflict in the region.[1] China's presence in the South China Sea has created new tensions in the Southeast Asian region, as a result of unilateral claims to the territorial waters. Indonesia as one of the countries in it is also affected by tensions in the region, from security aspects and economic aspects, especially with regard to the waters of Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Natuna Sea.[2]

According to Prof. Hikmahanto, there are 3 (three) reasons why China wants to claim the South China Sea, namely; First, China has always claimed that it has always existed in the South China Sea, with the Nine Dash Line. Second, China will at any time maintain its stance. Third, China now has military and economic power that can strengthen the movement of their claims to territory in the South China Sea. Despite the U.S. threats, China will maintain its position, because it already has military and economic capabilities.[3]

The warming up of the South China Sea region has encouraged countries involved in conflict in the region, to increase military power and fighting capabilities by conducting military exercises, either unilaterally or jointly with other countries (bilateral) in the territorial waters of the South China Sea, and such activities have increased tensions and triggered an escalation of conflict in the region.[4] Since 1949, China has tended to use military force in resolving territorial disputes, leading to conflicts of little scope in the region, such as the China-India border conflict in 1962, and the China-Vietnam border conflict in 1979. China has been willing to compromise with its neighbors in dealing with land border cases, but in disputes over maritime features and ownership of offshore oil and gas reserves, china is using a more coercive approach.[5] This causes countries involved in disputes, seeks to increase their military combat capabilities and increase domestic military industry, to create military balance in the region, military of balance.

The abundant content of oil, natural gas and natural resources in the South China Sea region has led some countries to gain control of it, leading to disputes between China and the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam to date. China has claimed sovereignty over the Spratly and Paracel islands as well as other mainland features depicted in the "nine dotted lines", and created two new administrative districts to take control of the Paracels and Spratlys. The PLA Navy, Chinese coast guard and maritime militias have been deployed to carry out patrols in the South China Sea region, disrupting the implementation of the country's oil, gas and natural resources exploration.[5] In response to the unilateral and sustained actions of the PRC fishing vessel, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam have publicly rejected claims to Beijing's nine dotted lines and used the power of international law to support their right to maritime sovereignty.[5]

Since 2014, the Spratly Islands have become a major construction site, turning coral islands into permanent artificial islands. In less than a year it could create new landmasses of more than 10 km², and Fiery Cross Reef, which was submerged at high tide, is now an airstrip with a length of 3,100 meters and a new port of 63 hectares. And by June 2015 China had created a new landmass with an area of 4 Km² and 5.6 Km² at Subi Reef and Mischief Reef, and this figure is still growing.[6]



Figure 1. Map of China's Maritime Claims

(source: <https://ipdefenseforum.com/id/2016/08/strategi-laut-cina-selatan/>)

In modernizing the tools of war, China is a great player whose rise did not involve or mobilize a coalition to help it against the United States, and today China has risen with its military equipment industry.[7] In military activity, China is determined to take a more active role in advancing its armed forces to support its foreign policy goals. In its 2020 revision of China's national defense law, China tasked the PLA with strengthening national interests abroad and empowering the PLA in global economic and diplomatic activities, as well as carrying out the development of military capabilities for operations tasks outside China's border regions, for security purposes and supporting its global development.[5]

Since the mid-1990s, China's military has been rapidly developing and making it a sophisticated and optimized fighting force to keep pace with American power, due to the support of tremendous economic growth. China's defense budget rose by about 900% between 1996-2018, so the Chinese military (PLA) was able to maintain its impressive military modernization in all aspects of its major capabilities, in the fields of missile technology, fighter jets, attack submarines, and surface ships, both qualitatively and quantitatively.[8]

The U.S. strategy continues to work to build

partnerships with other countries, which serve as a bulwark against China. One of them is known as "The Quad," which consists of the US, Japan, Australia, and India. The Quad was formed in addition to cooperating in the economic and technological fields, as well as cooperating in the military field to deal with Chinese aggression. In 2021 the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia have announced a trilateral security alliance to deal with 21st-century threats, under the name AUKUS. Combining the military capabilities of the alliance countries to have greater capabilities, AUKUS also assists Australia in acquiring technology and producing nuclear-powered submarines in order to fulfill its submarine fleet. To date, only six countries in the world own and operate nuclear-powered submarines, including the United States, Britain, China, France, India and Russia.[10]

The AUKUS deal also covers key areas such as artificial intelligence, cyber warfare, underwater capabilities, and long-range strike capabilities, and includes nuclear components and limited nuclear defense infrastructure.[9] The presence of nuclear-powered submarines will increase the strength of the Royal Australian Navy's submarine fleet, which are currently all diesel-powered. There is an increase in military power in the region to counter China's growing influence in the region.[11] With the formation of AUKUS' new defense alliance building a nuclear-powered submarine industry on Australian territory, it has also raised concerns for Indonesia and countries in the region as it could spark an escalating rivalry between China and the United States, which would ultimately threaten security stability in the South China Sea region.[12]

Research Methods

This paneling uses qualitative descriptive methods. According to Sugiyono, descriptive methods are studies that describe, describe, or explain the state of the object studied as it is, in accordance with the situation and conditions when the research is carried out. The study also uses a qualitative approach.[13] The focus of the study is the implication of tensions in the South China Sea region on the strategy of land forces in Indonesia's defense. This descriptive research is carried out through a process, from starting to look for problems to be used as research objects to theories used to analyze existing data and documentation.[14]

China's military revival and development

China has plenty of room to improve its military capabilities, as evidenced by an average increase in the budget for military interests of 15.36% annually since 1990. Spending funds on defense is a form of sustainable investment to increase military capabilities, so that the country will be able to deal with the ever-changing dynamics of the environment. Rapid economic development has allowed china's military to gain access and support to create new technologies with dual civilian use to support weapons innovation.[15] Military progress has been elevated to a priority equivalent to economic development. China continues

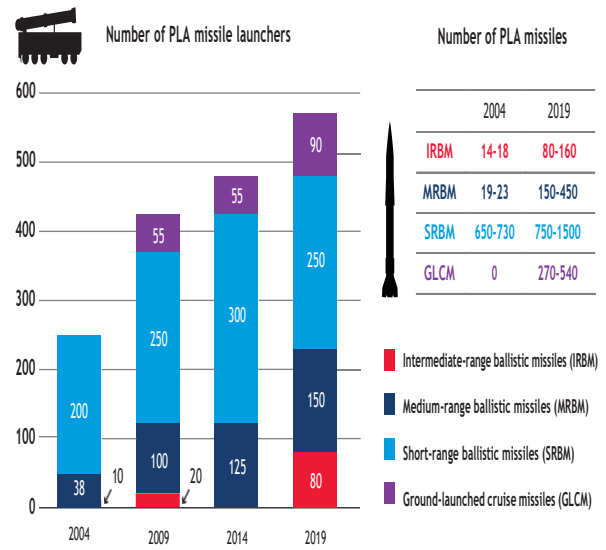
to strengthen its military power to deal with any threats, disruptions and obstacles, so that its military has the ability to wage war and win modern wars that use high technology.[15]

China's military modernization is aimed at achieving prominence in coastal areas, where the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and maritime paramilitary forces use facilities in the features it occupies in the Spratly Islands as an advanced operating base in the South China Sea. China's use of patrol boats and corvettes is key to its maritime improvement. To improve its war capabilities, Beijing continues to test more advanced weapons, which can be launched from land, sea and air, to develop capabilities and support long-range military operations.[16] Currently the Chinese Navy has grown to become the strongest and largest in Asia, by 2020 the strength of its submarine fleet is growing to more than 70 submarines. China also has the largest air force in Asia, and will continue to develop its capabilities so that it has a fifth-generation fighter.[17]

In terms of technology transfer, China has mastered the knowledge and operation of advanced weapons, in particular weapons and technology of war machines from Russia, such as; The Sino-Russian fighter aircraft, so China is able to produce the AL-31 engines used in su-27 fighter jets. In addition to the SU-27SK/Flanker-B and SU-30MCK fighter jets, China continues to acquire surface-to-air missiles (SA-10, SA-17, SA-19), anti-ship missiles (SS-N-22 and SS-N-27), anti-radar missiles (AS-17/Kh-31), Kilo/Tiye-636E class submarines, and Sovremenny-class destroyers from Russia.[18] As China's military grew rapidly and modernized, it caused China to have greater influence than countries in the south China Sea region. The rapid development of the PLA Rocket Force's capabilities, seen in the implementation of realistic exercises in 2020. The exercise aims to enhance combat capability and readiness, the ability to mobilize quickly, and enhance the ability to operate in complex electromagnetic environments, as well as integrate all supporting elements. In the course of these drills and tests, the Chinese military has fired four confirmed intermediate-range ballistic missiles toward the South China Sea.[5]

China has deployed a series of powerful precision missiles and other counter-intervention systems to weaken its competitors. in 2020, PLARF is advancing its long-term modernization plan to enhance its "strategic deterrence" capabilities, and develop military technology;

1. A new generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) that will enhance the capabilities and power of its missile forces.
2. DF-26 medium-range ballistic missile (IRBM), capable of carrying out conventional and nuclear precision strikes against land and sea targets.
3. Create a hypersonic weapon operational system, DF-17 hypersonic glide vehicle-capable medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM)



Picture 2 China's missiles.

(source : Averting crisis: American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the the Indo-Pacific, United States Stud. Cent. Univ. Sydney, July 2019)

The PLARF has a range of short-range, medium- and long-range ballistic missiles as well as ground-launched cruise missiles. Plarf's ground-based missile forces also continue to refine and equip the ability to be able to carry out precision strikes based on air and sea. The PRC is also currently developing an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and increasing the power of nuclear-capable missiles.[5] China has been successful in modernizing its ballistic missiles, with the missile's range capabilities already in place, so existing Chinese missiles are capable of striking directly against American and allied bases located on Japanese territory as well as those on Singapore territory. The following is the maximum range of missiles owned by China, clearly illustrated in the picture below.

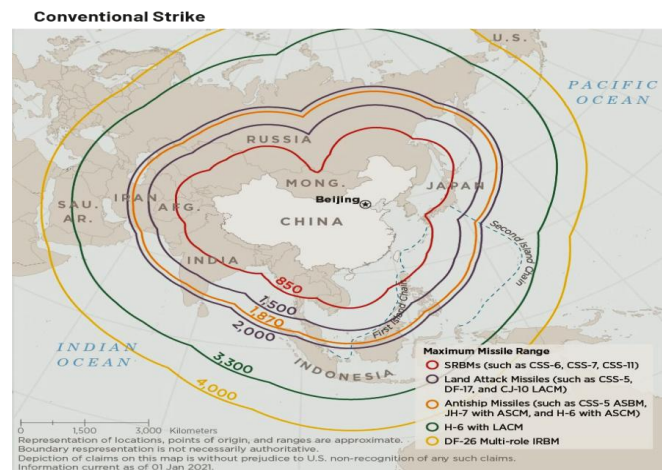


Figure 3. Maximum range of missiles.

(source: The Secretary of U.S. DoD (2021), Military and security velopments involving the People's Republic of China)

The south China Sea region is dynamic and full of complexity

The South China Sea has become a conflict-prone territorial waterway and a struggle for countries in the region, because it contains abundant natural resources, oil and natural gas and supported by its strategic location, located on the international merchant ship crossing.[4] In 1992, China announced claims to the South China Sea and a map of nine dotted lines as part of its territorial territory, and also confirmed that the territory belonged to Beijing.[9] Recently the South China Sea situation with an area of about 3.5 million km² began to heat up again, and involved many state actors, especially countries located in the region. Although it does not rule out the possibility of intervention and the interests of non-Asian countries involved in the conflict.[18]

In The Steps-to-War Theory explains that "the issue of states' territorial boundaries can make conflicted or competing parties increasingly hostile" and encourages them to take escalation measures. This theory provides an explanation of the causes of war, based on several interrelated factors; competition, military development, alliances, ruling (hardline) leaders, repeated military disputes, and others, so that each step and action can potentially lead to war between competing and contiguous countries.[13]

In addressing and resolving territorial issues between states, good and friendly relations and interaction between the warring countries are very important, if the warring countries fail to reach an agreement through the negotiation process, then their tendency will use coercive strategies, and will eventually worsen the situation and will increase the possibility of war.[13]

Since 2013, China began reclamation of islands in the South China Sea region and in 2016 has completed the construction of infrastructure 4 outposts on the coast of the Spratly archipelago, namely; Johnson, Gayen, Hughes and Cuarteron, equipped with an administration building, weapons base and cannon base sensors. In 2018 China developed another 3 outposts of the Spratly islands, namely; Coral Fiery Cross, Subi and Mischief to enhance the ability to detect the presence of the military and military in the region.[19] Scenarios for a future war or peace in 2030, it is estimated that there will be no lasting peace, nor permanent war, and no clear distinction between war or peace situations. And the tensions that occur in the gray zone almost entirely replace conventional war with hybrid and political warfare, so that the region will gradually slip and enter into a permanent gray zone between war and war.[14]

In early July 2020, tensions in the South China Sea began to rise, when China held five days of military exercises near the Paracel islands, while the U.S. did the same by deploying two of its aircraft carriers, the USS Nimitz and the USS Ronald Reagan, in the adjacent region. The incident caused the two countries to accuse each other and blame each other for who triggered the tensions.[18] Tensions escalated, after China took new measures to strengthen its position in the

South China Sea. By implementing new regulations as a form of major power in the region, every submarine, warship, nuclear-powered ship, vessel carrying radioactive materials, chemicals, liquefied gases, and hazardous substances must report the position of its ship when it enters the territorial claims waters of the South China Sea, and the Chinese government will take a firm stance, if the vessels pose a threat to its national security.[20] While the United States has implemented Freedom of Navigation (FON) in the South China Sea as an international waterway and will defend freedom of navigation in the region, that freedom is urgently needed by the U.S., both in trade and military interests.

Geopolitical turbulence in the South China Sea region further illustrates the dynamic strategic environment and adds complexity to threats to stability and security in the region. What's more, the mandala area that is the battleground of U.S. and Chinese competition is in the region, and puts Southeast Asia at the center. The strategic environmental dynamics that illustrate the US-China rivalry, have made the Indo-Pacific region a single geostrategic theater that will drag regional countries into the vortex of Indo-Pacific dynamics, including Indonesia which is the central point (fulcrum) of the Indo-Pacific.[15]

Arms race and military of balance in the South China Sea

With a balance of power, a country can maintain its survival in the structure of the international system, by preventing one country from gaining greater power so as to dominate other countries. Balancing is a country's strategy to increase its military capabilities to strengthen the country and balance power with a larger country. Balancing is the right of freedom of action of each country to enhance and balance its power with other countries, without having to surrender to stronger state hegemony.[19]

The Theory of Balance of Power created by Morgenthau contains not only expressions that lead to military capabilities and deterrence, but also to all structures that contain relations between states. The Asia-Pacific region is seen as the region best suited to understand the importance of a role in building multilateral interactions. For the United States, this region is very influential on the security of its territory, this is because the geography of the Asia-Pacific is directly adjacent to the East Coast of the United States.[21]

With China's military strengthening, there is the potential to dominate the South China Sea as well as the Indo-Pacific region, causing new threats, which not only have a direct impact on the United States, but also on alliance countries that are geographically close to China, so the U.S. feels the need to strengthen its military in the region.[21] The United States continued the adaptation process set out in the Army Strategy at the end of 2018, highlighting the emergence of new rivalings that have great power in the region, resulting in a new need to prevent and defeat over competing nations. The U.S. has focused and prepared for high-intensity conventional combat operations against a balanced

enemy.[22]

The United States remains committed to enhancing cooperation with its allies and partners, including those members of the ANZUS Treaty, where Australia, New Zealand and the United States will continue to work together by focusing resources and attention on the Indo-Pacific region through rebalancing

its strategy, strengthening alliances and implementing cooperative relations with countries in the Indo-Pacific. The United States, United Kingdom and Australia formed a new AUKUS alliance on September 15, 2021, with the aim of assisting each other in building military capacity and power, as well as assisting Australia in developing a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. That means Australia will become the seventh country in the world to operate nuclear-powered submarines. The partnership will make it easier to share information and expertise in technologies such as artificial intelligence, cyber, quantum technology, underwater systems, and remote attack capabilities.[23] Here is a comparison of the number of U.S.-China submarines clearly illustrated, in the image below.

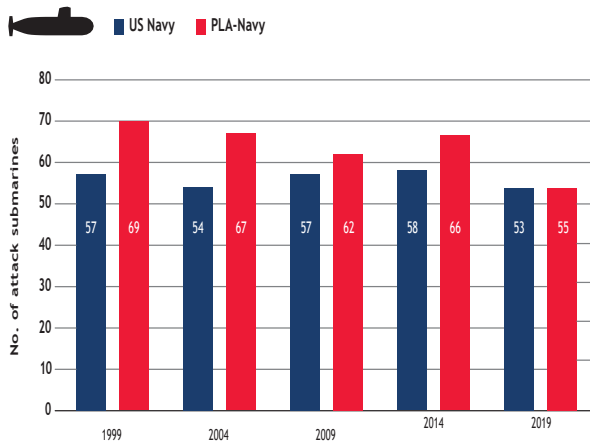


Figure 4. Comparison of the number of U.S.-China submarines.

(source: Averting crisis American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the the Indo-Pacific, United States Stud. Cent. Univ. Sydney, July 2019)

The United States continues to build partnerships with other countries that serve as bulwarks against China. One such group is known as The Quad, which consists of the US, Japan, Australia, and India. The Quad was formed to cooperate in the economy, technology, and military, to deal with China's continued aggression. The Quad would not be as strong as it is today, if not to deal with continued Chinese aggression.[9] The following comparison of the military capabilities of the American alliance is clearly illustrated, in the figure below.

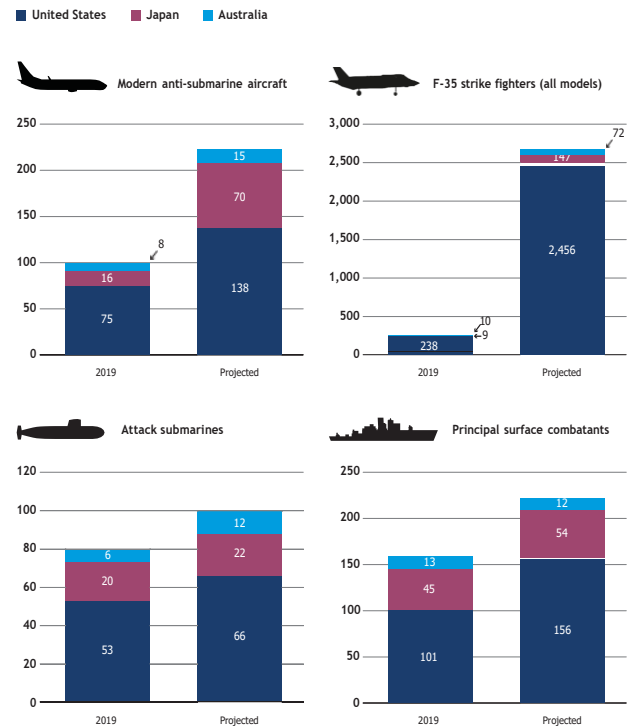


Figure 5. Military Power of the U.S. Alliance State

(source: Averting crisis American Strategy, Military Spending and Collective Defence in the the Indo-Pacific, United States Stud. Cent. Univ. Sydney, July 2019)

In terms of military power, China has the strongest and largest air force in Asia and continues to pursue fifth-generation fighter technology. As for naval power, China already has a submarine fleet of more than 70 combat-ready submarines.[17] Military modernization is an investment, China has developed new network technology, explored potential space uses, enhanced cyber capabilities, and developed electromagnetic warfare, targeting enemy control network centers. With new technology about the network, it will make it easier to provide a comprehensive and real-time picture of the enemy's military capabilities, location and movement of the enemy, so that the enemy will be clearly known and the war will be easily won.[24]

The rapid growth of China's national power accompanied by modernization in the field of arms and military, so the strategic policies taken and implemented by China, will certainly have a great influence and impact on stability in the Indo-Pacific region until 2035.[17] Some of the characteristics of China's military development that deserve attention for countries in the region, are; First, China is more focused on achieving a complete increase in military power over the long term. Second, China will significantly increase its submarine combat capabilities, by increasing its submarine strike capability massively against aircraft carrier strike groups. Third, China's economy and technology are becoming double pillars to sustain its military development. With a strong economy and backed by the

availability of resources, China will easily provide budgetary support for the development of military power and military technology.[15]

There is an indication of a change in strategy in U.S. military policy to the Asia-Pacific region, this is seen in the withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces from the Middle East, and diverting it to the Asia-Pacific region, especially the South China Sea region. The shift was triggered by China's increased capabilities, which have become a new force in the region, both in economic, diplomatic and military fields.[21] The U.S. remains committed to maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific region, continuing to work with its allies and partners Australia and New Zealand in the ANZUS alliance.[17] The United States through its rebalancing policy is a form of confirmation of insecurity against the improvement of China's capabilities in the last decade, it is reflected in the operationalization of the Balance of Threat theory. Although China has now become The New Emerging Power, it cannot be fully said that the dominance of world powers has moved into China's hands.[21]

Facing this uncertainty, complexity and dynamic strategic environment, some countries in the region are interested in making military alliances with other countries. This is due to the significant differences in the capabilities of one country with another, especially military capabilities, economic forces, and advances in military technology. To measure the strength of a country that is expected to provide a threat, it can be seen from the ability of that country in several aspects, namely; Industrial capabilities, military capacity, economic strength as seen from the total Gross National Product (GNP), and technological advances.[25] Based on this, an alliance is the best option, in response to a threat, in which the alliance countries will feel safe, because the aggressor state will face it not as a single state, but as a combined opposition.[22]

The effect of the South China Sea conflict on Indonesia's defenses

China's claim to part of Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone around the North Natuna Sea is a manifestation of unresolved conflicts in the South China Sea region. China's territorial claims intersect with the territorial and exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of several regional countries in accordance with international sea law. Indonesia has no territorial claims in the South China Sea, but China's famous nine dash line claims are tied with Indonesia's EEZ jurisdiction in the North Natuna Sea. To support the territorial claims, China is taking coercive measures that are likely to violate Indonesia's sovereignty and sovereign rights, such as the entry of Chinese fishing boats in the North Natuna Sea to carry out illegal fishing. The presence of the fishing boats was escorted by Chinese coast guard vessels. China's decision to take coercive measures to support its territorial claims in the South China Sea, including in the North Natuna Sea, is an implementation of the grey zone strategy used to achieve its national interests.[36]

China's aggressive actions over the North Natuna Sea are a threat to Indonesia's sovereign rights, with China's claims to the Nine-dash Line intersecting with the borders of the North Natuna EEZ Sea.[26] China's threat has been evident, in 2021 China officially asked Indonesia to halt oil and natural gas drilling exploration in the North Natuna region, and China also protested the implementation of Garuda Shield military exercises conducted in August 2021.[27] The potential for conflict and tension in the South China Sea region has become a hot spot to be considered in the context of regional security by countries in ASEAN.[28]

In the theory of balance of threat (Stephen Walt, 1987), it is explained that to see the level of threat, balance of threat has the power to see the strength of our opponent and national strength, which is then used as material for balance to the threat. There are four things that are the measure of the strength of the state in making an impact, against the threat, namely; Aggregate power, geographic proximity, offensive power, and ability to demonstrate aggressiveness toward opponents (perceived aggressiveness).[25] Where this aggregate power element is a resource owned by a country, which is influenced by military power, natural resource wealth, technological advances, population numbers, and industrial development.[21]

It is expected that a hybrid war will take place in the South China Sea region and involve several regional countries, including Indonesia in it. One of the EEZ sea borders owned by Indonesia, is in the North Natuna sea (which is part of the Indonesian EEZ sea), whose existence and territorial sovereignty must be maintained by the state. Indonesia's active defensive doctrine requires that Indonesia defend the country's sovereignty against foreign invasion.[29] Indonesia is paying particular attention to the potential conflict expected in the South China Sea region, strengthening its existing military power to enhance the country's defense capabilities, and establishing a new combat unit to provide deterrent to any growing threats in the region. All combat units, combat assistance units and operations support units will be integrated into one command and control. In the implementation of combat operations, it will be equipped with a network centric warfare-based operating control system.[30]

In Indonesian defense, the arrangement of the placement of military units is arranged in proportion to sustainable tactical and strategic considerations and adapted to the geographical characteristics of Indonesia. The deployment of military units also serves as a deterrent force, a force of enforcement, and a recovery force. The deployment of military units, especially land forces, includes deploying forces centrally, and deploying territorial forces and deploying support forces. The centralized force that has been prepared consists of deploying Kostrad troops and deploying Kopassus troops, and deploying territorial forces, consisting of 15 Kodam units (15 Headquarters).[31]

Each Kodam unit is the main command and control center in the construction and operation of tactical and

strategic activities in areas that have been divided and determined in a sustainable strategic planning. Kodam is also a strategic compartment that has the task of organizing the activities of building soldiers' capabilities, training, and preparing units and operational readiness of their units to support and carry out active defense operations in the ground region.[32] In the deployment of military forces (army) in the region, the military units have been arranged and placed in accordance with tactical and strategic considerations, keeping in mind aspects of Indonesia's geographical condition, as an archipelago.[31]

The Indonesian government has taken action to respond to threats or potential conflicts by conducting military exercises in the waters of North Natuna. This military exercise is aimed at training the combat readiness of the Indonesian military. One of the training activities carried out is angkasa yudha 2016. This Yudha Space Exercise will initially be held in Tanjung Pandan Belitung Regency. However, the central government ordered the change of training site to the Natuna Islands of Riau Islands Province, approaching the territorial boundaries of Indonesia's EEZ. The shift of the training ground to the Natuna Islands area as a training ground, can not be separated from incidents involving Chinese ships and KRI Imam Bonjol that occurred in natuna waters.[30] In addition, the TNI also held a Rapid Reaction Beating Force (PPRC) exercise in Natuna. Rapid Reaction Beating Team (PPRC) training in 2017 in Tanjung Datuk Riau Islands. In this exercise, TNI personnel involved amounted to 5,900 TNI soldiers who are members of the Land Task Force, Sea Task Force, Air Task Force, Ground Unit, Manover Infantry Unit, Combat Assistance Unit, Administrative Assistance Unit, by deploying the main weapon system (alutsista), among others; Sukhoi SU-30 and Sukhoi SU-35 fighters, Super Puma helicopters, KRI Yos Sudarso, Leopard Tanks, Cesaar cannons and Giant Bow cannons.[30]

To ensure the security of the Natuna region and its surroundings, Indonesia built a military base accompanied by the establishment of an integrated TNI unit and also the Regional Joint Command. The construction of this military force is not intended to compete, but is intended as a form of affirmation that the North Natuna Sea is part of Indonesian territory. In addition, the Indonesian government must ensure that the development of military power does not trigger a domino effect in the form of military competition, with countries in the region.[30]

With the dynamics and developments available, to strengthen the security of the State, integration programs concentrating on improving military capabilities have become a demand, as the methods of these joint exercises are most effective.[33] In the face of a strategic environment that is uncertainty, complexity, and dynamic, the defense of the Indonesian state is structured with a layered defense strategy, which combines layers of military defense and layers of nonmilitary defense as a mutually supportive defense unit, so that Indonesia will be able to rely on its own capabilities and

not depend on other countries.[31]

Every country in the world including Indonesia has the right to maintain its survival and defend its homeland from various threats. For Indonesia, the principle of "active defensive" defense has always been applied in managing the country's defense, by not being aggressive and not expansive, and prioritizing state sovereignty to ensure national interests.[31] The visualization of Indonesia's defense is regulated by phasing as follows; First attack and destroy the enemy when the enemy is still in his country, secondly if the enemy is still able to attack it will be destroyed at sea (above sea level exclusive economic zone), third if the enemy is still able to carry out attacks then destroyed in coastal areas, fourth if coastal defenses can be penetrated then carry out protracted war and fifth if military capabilities supported by reserve and supporting components already have the strength and the ability, then drive the enemy out of the territorial territory of the state.[34]

Indonesia's state defense is used to realize and defend the entire territory of the Republic of Indonesia as a unit of defense to protect the country from all forms of threats.[35] And in the implementation of international relations, Indonesia continues to strive to carry out diplomacy and maintain good relations with all countries, including China and maintain the stability of the South China Sea area, as a form of implementation of Indonesia's free-to-active Foreign Policy.[30]

II. CONCLUSION

China's presence in the South China Sea has created tensions in the Southeast Asian region, as a result of unilateral claims to the territorial waters. The issue of territorial boundaries of countries can make the parties involved in the conflict will be increasingly hostile and encourage to take escalation steps. In the theory of steps-to-war, some of the contributing factors to war are; competition, military build-up, alliances, ruling (hardline) leaders, and repeated military disputes. China's tendency to use military force in resolving territorial disputes has led to conflicts of little scope, such as the China-India border conflict in 1962, and the China-Vietnam border conflict in 1979.

China's aggressive actions were also seen in 2014, when the Spratly islands became a large construction site and turned it into an aju base with an area of more than 10 km², and Fiery Cross Reef has become a 3,100-meter airstrip. In 2016, China has built 4 outposts in the Spartly islands, namely; Johnson, Gayen, Hughes and Cuarteron, equipped with administration buildings, weapons bases and cannon base sensors to detect a military presence in the region. In addition, China has implemented new regulations as a form of major power in the region, that every submarine, nuclear-powered ship, ship carrying radioactive materials, chemicals, liquefied gases, and hazardous substances must report the position of the ship when entering the waters of its territorial claims. This has caused unrest in regional countries as well as

countries outside the region.

The U.S. strategy at the end of 2018, has highlighted the emergence of great power competition in the region, which must be prevented and defeated. The U.S. has focused and prepared for high-intensity conventional combat operations against a balanced enemy. Such conditions cause regional countries to increase military capabilities, by increasing the armaments industry, military exercises, increasing defense budgets, military cooperation and diplomacy, and participating in military alliances. The presence of The Quad, ANZUS and AUKUS becomes a balance of power that can offset China's military power and influence in the region.

China's threats to Indonesia proved real, in 2021 China officially asked Indonesia to halt oil and natural gas drilling exploration in the North Natuna region, and China also protested the implementation of Garuda Shield military exercises conducted in August 2021. Indonesia is currently paying particular attention to the potential conflicts that will occur in the South China Sea region, by strengthening and optimizing existing military forces and forming new military units to provide deterrent to any existing threats and disturbances. The deployment of military forces, especially the army is arranged proportionally and adapted to the geographical characteristics of Indonesia, where the scattered military force, serves as an antidote, enforcement force, and recovery force. The placement of land forces includes units with centralized force, and territorial command power and support unit strength spread throughout Indonesia, in order to defend state sovereignty.

REFERENCES

- [1] Kemenlu RI (2013), Laut China Selatan, *Kemenlu RI*, Jakarta, Feb. 2013.
- [2] M. N. P. Tandy, E. G. Chen, A. Maria, C. H. Arrumaisha, V. E. Jackson, and B. Valerie, Analisis signifikansi keterkaitan geopolitik dalam pelaksanaan diplomasi preventif Indonesia pada kasus Laut Cina Selatan, vol.11, pp. 270–284, 2019, <https://journal.unpar.ac.id/index.php/Sentris/article/view/5181>.
- [3] Thea Fathanah Arbar (2020), 3 Alasan Mengapa China Klaim Laut China Selatan, *CNBC Indonesia*, Jul. 2020. <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20200724161343-4-175213/3-alasan-mengapa-china-klaim-laut-china-selatan>
- [4] Poltak Partogi (2013), *Konflik Laut China Selatan dan implikasinya terhadap kawasan*. Jakarta: P3DI Setjen DPR RI, 2013.
- [5] The Secretary of U.S. DoD (2021), Military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China 2021. <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.
- [6] DR. Alexander L. Vuving (2016), Strategi Laut Cina Selatan, *ipdefenseforum.com*, 2016. <https://ipdefenseforum.com/id/2016/08/strategi-laut-cina-selatan/>
- [7] R. Nayan (2007), Us policy on dual-use technology transfers to china, *Strateg. Anal.*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 553–581, 2007, doi: 10.1080/09700160701559219.
- [8] A. Townshend, B. Thomas-noone, and M. Steward, "Averting crisis: American strategy, military spending and collective defence in the Indo-Pacific," *United States Stud. Cent. Univ. Sydney*, no. Agustus, 2019, <https://www.usss.edu.au/analysis/averting-crisis-american-strategy-military-spending-and-collective-defence-in-the-indo-pacific>.
- [9] Alexander Ward and Paul Mclary, Biden announces joint deal with U.K. and Australia to counter China, *Politico*, Canberra, Sep. 2021. <https://www.politico.com/staff/alexander-ward>
- [10] Rika Anggraeni (2021), Apa itu Aliansi AUKUS? Apa dampaknya bagi Geopolitik Indo-Pasifik?, *Bisnis.com*, Jakarta, Sep. 2021.
- [11] Mahdi Muhammad (2021), Adang China, AS-Ingggris bantu kapal selam bertenaga nuklir untuk Australia, *kompas.id*, Jakarta, 2021.
- [12] ANTARA, Indonesia khawatir AUKUS picu tingginya rivalitas di kawasan Indo-Pasifik, *ANTARANEWS.Com*, 2021. <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/2485441/indonesia-khawatir-aucus-picu-tingginya-rivalitas-di-indo-pasifik>.
- [13] Sugiyono (2017), *Metode penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif, dan R&D*. Bandung: CV Alfabeta, 2017.
- [14] Sugiyono (2018), *Metode penelitian kuantitatif*, 1st ed. Bandung: CV Alfabeta, 2018.
- [15] W. C. Lee, "Long shot and short hit: China as a military power and its implications for the USA and Taiwan," *J. Asian Afr. Stud.*, vol. 43, no. 5, pp. 523–542, 2008, doi: 10.1177/0021909608094598.
- [16] J. Hackett, D. Barrie, B. Barry, N. Childs, L. Béraud-sudreau, and J. Raine, *Military Balance*, no. February. London, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003177777>
- [17] The Secretary of Australian (2016). DoD, *Defence White Paper 2016*.
- [18] R. W. W. O. W. Poespojoedho, "Naval diplomacy: Upaya defensif Indonesia dalam konflik Laut Tiongkok Selatan di era Joko Widodo," *J. Hub. Int.*, vol. 12, no. 2, p. 246, 2019, <https://ejournal.unair.ac.id/JHI/article/view/14027/8948>.
- [19] A. Prayoga, "Indonesian defense strategy to encounter challenges in the Indo-Pacific (case study: hegemonic war of China and the United States of America in the South China Sea)," *Int. J. Soc. Sci. Hum. Res.*, vol. 04, no. 10, pp. 2880–2889, 2021, doi: 10.47191/ijsshr/v4-i10-30.
- [20] Minta diserbu dunia? China buat aturan baru di LCS, *CNBC Indonesia*, Jakarta, 2021. <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20210831072415-4-272451/minta-diserbu-dunia-china-buat-aturan-baru-di-lcs>
- [21] V. Planifolia, "Strategi rebalancing Amerika Serikat di kawasan Asia-Pasifik," *J. Hub. Int.*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017, doi: 10.18196/hi.61101.
- [22] S. M. Walt, "Alliance formation and the balance of world power," *Int. Secur.*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 3–43, 1985, http://www.rochelleterman.com/ir/sites/default/files/walt_1985.pdf. voaindonesia.com, AS, Inggris dan Australia bentuk Aliansi AUKUS, saling bantu dalam pengembangan kekuatan militer, *voaindonesia.com*, Jakarta, Sep 2021. <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/as-inggris-dan-australia-bentuk-aliansi-aucus-saling-bantu-dalam-pengembangan-kekuatan-militer/6230803.html>
- [23] The International Institute for St, *The military balance (2021)*. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2021. doi:10.4324/9781003177777
- [24] S. M. Walt (1987), *The origins of alliances*. ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- [25] Faridh Ma'ruf(2020), The rationality of Indonesia free-active politics facing Chinese aggressiveness in the claims of the North Natuna Sea. ISSN: 2668-7798," *Tech. Soc. Sci. J.*, vol. 8, pp. 583–597, 2020, [Online]. Available: <http://www.techniumscience.com/>.
- [26] A. J. Iswara (2021), China protes pengeboran dan latihan militer Indonesia di Laut Natuna Utara, *kompas.com*, Jakarta, 2021.
- [27] Wandu Yusuf (2021), Rektor Nghan: ketegangan Amerika-Tiongkok di Selat Taiwan bisa berimbas ke Asia Tenggara, *medcom.id*, Jakarta, 2021.
- [28] M. B. Fajri(2020), Strategi pertahanan maritim Indonesia di tengah dinamika perang hibrida kawasan Laut China Selatan, *J. Penelit. Polit.*, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 69, 2020, [Online]. Available: <https://ejournal.politik.lipi.go.id/index.php/jpp/article/view/846/560>.
- [29] A. W. Pambudi(2019), Analisa respon Indonesia terhadap militerisasi Tiongkok di Laut China Selatan masa pemerintahan Presiden Joko Widodo 2014-2019, *Paradig. POLISTAAT J. Ilmu*

- Sos. dan Ilmu Polit.*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 89–104, 2019, doi: 10.23969/paradigmapolistaat.v2i2.1911.
- [30] Kemhan RI (2015), *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2015*. Jakarta, 2015.
- [31] Wikipedia.org (2021), Komando Daerah Militer, *Wikipedia.org*, 2021. https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Komando_Daerah_Militer
- [32] N. Rizani (2020), Prabowo Subianto dan pandangan pertahanan geostrategis Indonesia : Antara AS-Tiongkok dan ASEAN, *THC Insights Habibie Cent.*, vol. 09, pp. 1–6, 2020, <http://habibiecenter.or.id/img/publication/5220c07b208cc692e380a55b42ce9552.pdf>.
- [33] Makmur Supriyatno,(2014). *Tentang ilmu pertahanan*, 1st ed. Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014.
- [34] Undang Undang RI Nomor 3 tahun 2002 tentang pertahanan negara, [Online]. Available: https://kemlu.go.id/portal/id/read/101/halaman_list_lainnya/laut-china-selatan.
- [35] Boy Anugerah (2021). Penguatan strategi penangkalan dalam merespons aksi koersif Cina di laut Natuna Utara. *Jurnal Dinamika Global*,vol. 6,pp.286-307.2021. DOI: 10.36859/jdg.v6i2.701 ISSN: 2548-9216