

Sea Power as National Defence: Has Indonesia implemented it?

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Abstract

The objective is to analyze the role of maritime defense in Indonesia's national strength and alliances, examining modern naval capabilities, regulations, investment, and Mahan's Sea Power principles for strategic readiness and economic integration in the 21st century. The research employs a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on in-depth understanding and data interpretation. Triangulation is used for data validity, and analysis follows an inductive approach without generalization. Additionally, it utilizes sea power theory and defense diplomacy concepts to explore Indonesia's maritime strength and diplomatic efforts. Sea Power is an important issue for all countries in the world. Several maritime conflicts have gotten out of control due to a lack of input regarding naval defence strategies. Such as conflicts over the dynamics of China's militarisation in the South China Sea (LCS) region or the Russia-Ukraine Black Sea conflict. Considering Indonesia as a maritime country that is required to immediately provide national defence in the future, to prevent future conflicts, following the application of sea power, Indonesia is considered to have achieved the criteria in this matter. Therefore, through the application of Alferd Thayer Mahan's "Sea Power" theory, researchers try to adapt this theory to several Indonesian efforts in the 21st Century with an interest in highlighting the Indonesian Navy's efforts and strategies in achieving contemporary sea power in the 21st century. With a focus on research into Indonesia's national interests in achieving sea power and Indonesian naval strategy. With the results, it is hoped that readers will be able to realize the importance of the sea and find out to what extent Indonesia has implemented Mahan's theory by examining the two superpower countries, the US and China, which are countries that have applied this theory to their navies

Keywords: *Sea Power, Naval, Indonesia, Sea Power*

INTRODUCTION

A country's maritime defence strategy can be seen from various sub-factors and can have a strong influence on the country's power system. Until now, national defence has become an important issue behind the many widespread conflicts. Several examples of world maritime problems, especially countries in the ASEAN region. Stating that there are 11 resolved maritime conflicts and 9 unresolved maritime conflicts in the ASEAN region to date (Nishikawa, 2021). One of them is the SCS conflict which has not yet been resolved. Indonesia has an important role in maintaining the security of the SCS border with the Natuna Sea. Amid China's intense militarization of conflict in the South China Sea (SCS). China's conference meetings with ASEAN countries are often held to resolve SCS conflict issues. With the meaning of using conflict resolution through maritime diplomacy between the countries involved. This aims to achieve peace between each country considering that China is one of the 'Super Power' countries. These meetings are seen as an opportunity that can turn conflict into cooperation (Gao, 1994). But until now the dynamics of China's militarization in the South China Sea are getting stronger. With the presence of the Chinese navy which is increasingly spreading to blockade the SCS (Japan's Ministry of Defense, 2019)

Therefore, Indonesia must strengthen its national defence through maritime defence to create national strength. This can be seen from how the navy can have more influence in the modernization development of the country at sea, through strengthening naval defence, and the

emergence of the 'Naval Service' naval service covering capability, capacity, regulations and investment. With the results, it will build the strength of alliances and cooperation dominated by maritime access, as a form of 'Worldwide Network of Maritime'. Through this, a country can survive through the creation of alliances and partners. This opens up sea access and makes sea control easier. This strategy will create the modernization of maritime defense alerts in the future (US. Department of Defence, 2020).

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With this, sea power is seen as an interest in defending the country and achieving alliances or cooperation, which can be achieved through diplomatic procedures. This is important for Indonesia as a maritime country. Maritime power will increase the potential of natural resources and human resources which will influence Indonesia's national economic integration (Rochwulaningsih et al., 2019). In this research, researchers are interested in researching the importance of sea power, 'Sea Power', which has sea influence in many aspects. Through the application of Mahan's thinking regarding 'Sea Power', there are several important elements to achieving sea power. Therefore, this research will focus more on the elements of forming maritime power in a country. With the scope of the country of Indonesia, the researcher tries to analyze how the Indonesian archipelago nation develops its navy as a 'Naval Strategy' value in the 21st-century era through aspects of sea power in Mahan's thinking. With the results, has Indonesia implemented and made efforts to be ready to achieve the concept of sea power in its country.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on in-depth understanding and interpretation of the meaning of data. This approach is often used to explore aspects that are difficult to measure, such as values, beliefs, cultural norms, and individual experiences. This method also studies the state of the main natural objects. The tool requires samples of the desired data from various data sources. In this survey, triangulation (combination) was used, data analysis was carried out inductively or qualitatively, and the qualitative results showed that no generalization was intended (Sugiyono, 2009). Qualitative research has a descriptive nature and tends to use an inductive approach to analysis so that the process and meaning in this research are based on the subject's perspective which is more emphasized.

As for research methods, researchers also use two concepts and theories as instruments in researching the problems in this research, using sea power theory and the concept of defence diplomacy. There are several supporting aspects to achieve sea power. Not only from naval strength but can also include other supporting components of national maritime strength, such as 'Goeconomic' control of the maritime economy, geopolitics, maritime diplomacy instruments, international trade, all control over natural and marine resources and all naval operations (Prasetyo et al., 2019). So in this discussion, researchers will examine several efforts that have

been carried out in Indonesia to achieve Sea Power through naval power in achieving peace and state sovereignty today.

Sea Power

Sea Power or sea power is a naval force that will open the way to world military, political and economic power. Through Mahan's thinking, he ensured that the country's economy and defence could be achieved through a network of strengthening naval bases, expanding the navy, and naval trade to reach communication routes so that international market access could be expanded. This thinking occurred and is applied directly by the US to this day (United States Department of State, n.d.). China has followed Mahan's thinking through the China Coast Guard and efforts to expand the Chinese market through the BRI "Belt Road Initiative" (O'Brien, 2022). Mahan's second book entitled "The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire 1793-1812" explains that military or commercial control over the sea and trade operating over the sea are interdependent and can determine the outcome of an ongoing war. So that it has more influence on the development of naval power (Mahan, 1892).

Defense Diplomacy Concept as Sea Power

Defence diplomacy is said to be an effort to strengthen state power. Defence Diplomacy at sea includes Maritime Diplomacy and Naval Diplomacy. This means that maritime diplomacy is non-military, covering all aspects of public and civil activities carried out in waters or maritime areas as support for the navy (Nugraha & Sudirman, 2016). Meanwhile, Naval Diplomacy is an important part of general diplomacy in the water area. naval diplomacy is military. In its division, naval diplomacy consists of two aspects, namely Hard Power and Soft Power, where Hard Power is held by the Indonesian Navy. Meanwhile, Soft Power is held by the Coast Guard and other joint naval operations institutions. This is carried out to maintain peace and maintain maritime sustainability (Parasasti et al., 2023).

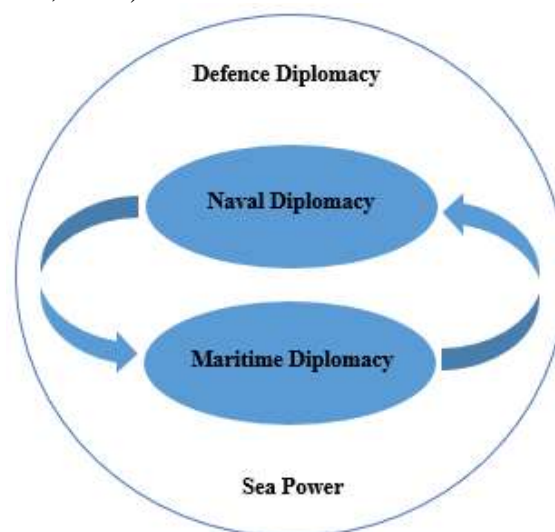


Figure 1. Description of the Urgency of the Role of Naval and Maritime Diplomacy
Created by researchers

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Maritime Diplomacy in Indonesia

Maritime Diplomacy is a form of international relations management business. Diplomacy itself is considered a flexible force for the Navy. Some examples are the 2004 Aceh Tsunami, which claimed many lives. Through diplomacy, alliances and cooperation partners

such as the US, Singapore and Australia are participating in aid efforts. This is seen as an advantage for Indonesia. Maritime diplomacy itself is broad, not only holding the navy but also holding the coast guard and other maritime police guards to be able to work together to increase maritime power (Le Mière, 2014). Through this concept, Indonesia itself has carried out several diplomacy through the conflict over China's expansion in the South China Sea (SCS) region. The implementation of this diplomacy is seen as a form of Indonesian naval strategy to strengthen its 'Sea Power' maritime power. In 2018, to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia, namely the Natuna sea border. So Indonesia implemented a form of diplomacy, which was carried out directly by the defence minister. To visit China. to form defence cooperation with China (Kurniawan, 2023)

This defence diplomacy is considered effective and fruitful because China's cooperation with Indonesia is running smoothly amidst the strong conflict over South China Sea expansion and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this diplomacy, Indonesia received health assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is recorded that this aid was sent by China as a result of the previous implementation of defence diplomacy. Chinese assistance is considered to be dependent. So, Indonesia still has to continue to carry out other defence diplomacy tactics, while thinking about the next steps so that Indonesia-China dependency does not harm the country's economy (Rakhmat, 2020). However, this form of diplomacy influences the pandemic. However, SCS expansion is still filled with militarization. This is still a 'homework' strategy for Indonesia to be able to carry out diplomacy well, considering the good relations between the two. So that SCS problems can be resolved immediately.

Application of Naval Diplomacy in Indonesia

To build 'Sea Power' through naval diplomacy, in 2023, Indonesia carried out the joint exercise 'Multilateral Naval Exercise Komodo' or MNEK in Makassar last June. This joint exercise also aims to serve as a means of defence diplomacy. Considering that there are two superpower member countries, namely the US and China, it is also to strengthen alliances with 10 Indonesian border countries as a form of peace. With a total of 36 countries participating in the activity. MNEK is also involved in non-war joint naval exercises (Wardah, 2023). Where this joint exercise is more focused on disaster relief and humanitarian objectives. With the activity theme "Partnership to Recover and to Risa Stronger" (Arman, 2023).

Strengthening the Indonesian Navy

In creating maritime power, Indonesia must prepare for the worst in activities at sea as a form of defence. Indonesia has abundant maritime wealth. So a strong form is needed to safeguard and maintain these assets (Setiawan, 2023). According to Global Firepower in 2023, Indonesia's military strength ranks 13th out of 145 countries recorded in Global Firepower (GFP) (Global FirePower, 2023). Meanwhile, according to WDMMW or The World Directory of Modern Military Warships in the 2023 Global Naval Powers Rank, Indonesia ranks 4th out of 37 countries tracked. With the latest activity inventory, Indonesia has 243 fleet units and 13 units are still being purchased (WDMMW, 2023). The details are as follows,

No	Assets	Unit
1	Aircraft Carriers	0
2	Helicopter Carriers	0
3	Destroyers	0
4	Frigates	7
5	Corvettes	25
6	Submarine	4
7	Patrol Vessels	168

8	Mine Warfare	9
9	Amphibious Assault	30
Total Assets Naval Forces		243
On Order		13

Table 1. Indonesian Fleet Assets 2023
Source: WDMMW

Indonesia is also modernizing several warship units which are considered to be completed by the end of 2023. Therefore, Indonesia has also agreed to purchase submarines, guided missile ships and frigates by the end of 2023 (Setiawan, 2023). By purchasing and modernizing defence and security equipment (alpalhankam), Indonesia is stated to have attempted to strengthen Sea Power through Indonesia's efforts to strengthen its navy.

Indonesia's Maritime Power in the 21st Century through the Global Maritime Fulcrum

The idea of a Global Maritime Fulcrum is an idea that has the goal of realizing Indonesian Sea Power in the Indo-Pacific region. This is considered to be important for the development and defence of Indonesia's maritime power. The Global Maritime Fulcrum has a series of changes from Geographic to Geomaritime to Geopolitics to Geostrategy with Geoeconomic results (Marsetio, 2019). In other words, through the Global Maritime Fulcrum strategy. So, it will produce maritime defence from the perspective of sustainable maritime economic development. Where Indonesia can benefit from the implementation of this idea. Such as being able to improve Indonesia's maritime culture which recognizes and appreciates the richness and diversity of marine resources. On the other hand, this strategy can also create improvements in marine monitoring, marine development, rehabilitation of marine ecosystems, and an increase in human resources. Therefore, it is important for Indonesia as an archipelagic country to be able to implement this idea (Binus Graduate Program, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Sea power is considered the most important thing for Indonesia. Considering that Indonesia is a maritime country that is rich in marine resources. Several naval efforts and strategies have been deployed to maintain peace, sovereignty and trade at sea. Sea power itself, through Mahan's theory of thought, has proven the results of superpower and guaranteed sea power. This can be seen from the two superpowers, the US and China, which are currently developing this theory for their navies. From strengthening the fleet, and navy, to expanding cooperation bases, alliances, diplomacy, to trade routes. It is time for Indonesia to move to correct Mahan's theory. Meanwhile, as part of Sea Power Indonesia's efforts, through the idea of the Global Maritime Fulcrum, it is hoped that Indonesia can make good use of sea power and strengthen its navy as a form of defence support.

Even though up to now, Indonesia is considered to have not been able to meet the criteria for a sea power user country, several Indonesian efforts to strengthen its naval base and fleet are considered to have increased national interests in the aspect of national defence. On the other hand, an effort to develop ideas through the world maritime axis is also seen as an idea to achieve a blue economy that can increase the country's development through sea power and the development of coastal communities. Therefore, it is hoped that in the future Indonesia can continue to implement this idea considering that Indonesia is a maritime country.

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