

Reflections on the Indonesian Navy's Military Geostrategy Through Learning Against the Russian-Ukrainian War

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Abstract

The Russian-Ukrainian war is the focus of the world's attention now. The existence of a war between these two countries has become a lesson for other countries in the world that war might occur in their country. This argument certainly applies to the Indonesian state. Through the Indonesian Navy, Indonesia has a vision of 5 Global Maritime Fulcrum. with a strategy to increase its war fleet and infrastructure. However, a war in Indonesia can still occur because war is not only due to a country's military strength but also its political factors. This study aims to evaluate the geostrategy of the Indonesian Navy's national army through its five pillars reflected in the Russia - Ukraine war. The method used in this research is descriptive evaluative using secondary data. The results of this study state that even though the Indonesian Navy has implemented the geostrategy of the five pillars of the Global Maritime Fulcrum, a war in Indonesia can still occur due to political factors. Political factors were the main cause of the Russia – Ukraine war, where Ukraine wanted to join NATO and endanger Russia. For this reason, the Indonesian government, including the Indonesian Navy, needs to emphasize solving political problems using a diplomatic approach.

Keywords: *Maritime Axis Geostrategy, Russian – Ukrainian War, Politics, Indonesian Navy*

INTRODUCTION

The Russia – Ukraine war is a global concern, showcasing the potential for conflict anywhere in the world. It serves as a reminder that disputes can arise between neighboring or politically strained countries, such as North Korea and South Korea or China and Taiwan. This conflict in Europe has extensive geopolitical, economic, infrastructure, and health implications, affecting individuals and the environment significantly (EEAS Press Team, 2022). The prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict has persisted due to the involvement of external actors such as the European Union and the United States, facilitated by NATO organizations. This engagement has materialized in the provision of military equipment support, ranging from portable drones to advanced missile systems. Additionally, economic penalties have been imposed by Western nations on Russia in the aftermath (Bimo, 2022; Vajriyati et al., 2022). These conditions raise doubts about Russia's "against conventional forces victory" in the war against Ukraine in Eastern Ukraine. As a result, Russia has begun to increase its nuclear alert, and there are threats to use nuclear weapons in case of urgency (Leatemala, 2022; Vajriyati et al., 2022). According to Lieven (1999); Vajriyati et al., (2022) in their work "Ukraine and Russia: A Fraternal Rivalry", historically, Russia and Ukraine have a closeness that is too complex to be separated. Lieven believes Ukraine's future is as an independent state with close cooperative relations with Russia. On the other hand, (Bilinsky, (1999); Vajriyati et al., (2022), in their work "Endgame in NATO's Enlargement: The Baltic States and Ukraine", argue that accelerating the process of expanding the NATO alliance by establishing an alliance with four countries from Russia's western border, namely, Latvia, Livonia, Estonia, and Ukraine) such actions can create a safe environment and strengthen stability in Eastern and Central Europe (Korostelina, 2003; Vajriyati et al., 2022).

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the interactions between Russia and Ukraine have progressively worsened, leading to a significant turning point with the Ukrainian Revolution in 2014. The series of occurrences was later characterized by Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, accompanied by the support for separatist movements in the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, which were based in Russia (Mankoff, 2022; Vajriyati et al., 2022).

The potential for conflict similar to the Russia-Ukraine war exists in Indonesia due to frequent political disputes over maritime boundaries. Indonesia's strategic geographic location, adjacent to Australia and bordering the South China Sea, can lead to conflicts over territorial interests. Given these circumstances, it is vital to assess how the Indonesian Navy's military strategy, outlined in its five pillars, aligns with potential threats to Indonesia. These pillars focus on restoring maritime traditions, efficient marine asset management, enhancing maritime infrastructure, engaging in diplomatic collaborations, and bolstering maritime defense capabilities (Mustari et al., 2018). This research will evaluate how the Indonesian Navy's strategic pillars apply in a Russia-Ukraine war scenario and assess their readiness in the face of potential threats to Indonesia. The study employs a descriptive evaluative approach to analyze existing theories and policies.

Indonesian Sea

Indonesia's extensive maritime borders with neighboring countries, particularly the Natuna Sea adjoining the South China Sea, pose conflict potential that could lead to war (Sulistiyani et al., 2021). Neighboring Malaysia has occasionally contested sovereignty over the Natuna Islands and surrounding waters, but a post-1966 agreement has temporarily set aside such disputes. The Natuna Islands are primarily inhabited by Malay ethnic groups (about 85%), with Javanese (approximately 6.34%) and Chinese (around 2.52%) minorities (Tampi, 2017).

Historically, the Natuna region experienced a significant decline in its Chinese population, from 5,000-6,000 individuals to only 1,000 after the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation. Reports in the 1980s suggested that some surviving Chinese residents may have sought support, possibly for self-governance or inclusion within Chinese administrative jurisdiction. These complex maritime boundaries, along with uncertainties in areas like the Australian Sea, can lead to political issues and, potentially, conflicts.

Russia-Ukrainian war

The Ukraine and Russia conflict has been ongoing for a long time. According to Susetio et al. (2022), there are several reasons for the war between Russia and Ukraine to occur, namely:

1. The crisis started in Kyiv, Ukraine's capital, in 2013, when President Viktor Yanukovich rejected a deal with the European Union, leading to economic concerns.
2. In 2014, Russian forces occupied Crimea, leading to a referendum where Crimea voted to join Russia. This sparked separatist movements in eastern Ukraine, particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk, aiming for self-governance.
3. In July 2014, an international crisis erupted. A Malaysian Airlines flight was shot down over Ukrainian airspace, leading to discord between Russia, the United States, and the European Union. Investigators later attributed the plane's destruction to a Russian missile.
4. Efforts were made to end the conflict, including a ceasefire agreement in February 2015. However, diplomacy did not succeed in resolving the crisis.
5. In 2016, NATO deployed troops to Eastern European countries to deter potential Russian aggression. Cyberattacks on Ukraine also became prevalent during this period.

6. In 2018, Ukraine agreed to join NATO for large-scale air drills in October 2018. The training was carried out in the West Ukraine region. The exercise comes one month after Russia held its annual military drills.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, which began on February 24 and continues to escalate, has far-reaching implications in areas such as politics, arms control, terrorism, and the global economy. This prolonged conflict, affecting various regions of Ukraine, has also strained relations between the United States and Russia. Geographical proximity has played a significant role in this war, leading to territorial disputes and conflicts of interest, including access to valuable natural resources. Effendi (2020) suggests that geographical factors, combined with cultural considerations, have contributed to this conflict as Russia seeks to assert its global power status.

The Five Pillars of the Indonesian Navy

Indonesia has a geopolitical strategy as a Global Maritime Fulcrum. country. The Indonesian government launched a Global Maritime Fulcrum. with five pillars to realize Indonesia as a Global Maritime Fulcrum.. The Indonesian national army also uses this five-pillar strategy as its vision and mission, including is the Indonesian Navy, which has a maritime work area (Mustari et al., 2018). The five pillars that form the global maritime axis strategy are:

1. Rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture,
2. Maintain and manage marine resources.
3. Give priority to the development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity
4. Invite all Indonesian partners to work together in the maritime field through maritime diplomacy
5. Building a maritime defense force

The Indonesian Navy and national military have embraced the Global Maritime Fulcrum principles as a geopolitical strategy. This strategy is primarily focused on maritime defense, taking into account Indonesia's archipelagic nature. The government's vision of becoming a Global Maritime Fulcrum significantly influences the nation's defense strategy, especially in safeguarding its maritime interests (Mustari et al., 2018).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is evaluative descriptive analysis research with a qualitative approach. Evaluative research aims to evaluate a program, activity, theory, or findings to measure an activity, program, and research through activities to compare the findings of previous theories (Putra & Indradjati, 2021). Evaluative descriptive analysis evaluates primary data with secondary data. An evaluative approach is used to evaluate several variables: maritime culture variables, maritime resource security, and management variables, maritime infrastructure and connectivity allocation variables, and potential collaboration and diplomacy variables.

Table 1. Evaluation Aspects of the Maritime Axis Geostrategy from the Indonesian Navy

No	Aspects studied	Description
1	Rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture,	Evaluating the maritime culture that the Indonesian Navy has implemented
2	Maintain and manage marine resources.	Evaluating the Indonesian Navy in protecting the Indonesian seas and efforts to enforce the law
3	Give priority to infrastructure development and maritime connectivity	Evaluating the Indonesian Navy's infrastructure and strategy in connecting the islands of Indonesia

- 4 Inviting all Indonesian partners to work together in the maritime field through maritime diplomacy
 - 5 Build a maritime defense force
- Evaluating the diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian Navy
- Evaluate the strength of the Indonesian Navy in case of war

Source : Author's preparation, 2022

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Russia war – Ukraine War Through the Sea Sector

The war between Russia and Ukraine also occurred in the maritime sector. According to secondary data from several print media publications, Russia's war with Ukraine is heating up in the maritime sector. The CNBC print media (SEF, 2022), namely, support this finding:

“Russia reports destroying a Ukrainian warship in the Black Sea. This incident occurred exactly five months after Moscow attacked Kyiv. “Sea-launched high-precision long-range missiles destroyed the anchored Ukrainian warship,” said the Russian Defense Ministry”.

The findings from the CNN print media (BLQ & BAC, 2022) also prove that the war between the two countries is heating up by sea:

“The Russian Navy has begun launching missile attacks from their warships on the Ukrainian city of Mariupol via the Sea of Azov.”

Based on information derived from print media sources, it's evident that the conflict between Russia and Ukraine extended to maritime areas as well. Hence, from these findings, it is necessary to strengthen the maritime sector to avoid potential wars occurring at sea. If the Indonesian government wants to avoid the same thing happening to Indonesia, then the Indonesian government must invest a budget for maritime infrastructure. A budget to strengthen the maritime sector is also needed to support the geostrategy of the five pillars of the Global Maritime Fulcrum.



Figure 1. Russia's war with Ukraine from the ocean
(source : Graauw, 2016)

Rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture

Maritime culture is a complex of ideas, ideas, knowledge, values, norms, and rules related to the maritime sector and used as a guideline for the economic, business, service, and political behavior of individuals/groups of fishing and non-fishing communities to achieve their socioeconomic interests in order to produce products (Andriati, 2016).

The Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) is authorized by the legal stipulation, Law Number 34 of 2004, regarding the Indonesian National Armed Forces Article 9. This regulation outlines that the TNI AL is entrusted with specific responsibilities. These include performing maritime obligations related to defense, law enforcement, and security maintenance within the national jurisdiction's maritime zones, in accordance with both national and international laws. Additionally, the TNI AL is charged with engaging in naval diplomacy to align with the government's foreign policy objectives, contributing to the enhancement and reinforcement of naval capabilities, and promoting the development and utilization of maritime resources (Haras, 2016).

The Indonesian Navy plays a significant role in realizing the Global Maritime Fulcrum, although there is a lack of a formal long-term military and maritime security strategy in Indonesia. This absence impacts the Navy's role in maritime security. Despite budget constraints, the Navy remains the most capable institution compared to civilian bodies like BAKAMLA. Effective defense management is essential to maximize the Navy's contribution to the Global Maritime Fulcrum (Haras, 2016). The Indonesian Navy actively supports the Global Maritime Fulcrum through its Archipelago Sea Defense Strategy (SPLN). This strategy, based on the TNI AL Eka Sasana Jaya doctrine, addresses maritime threats, internal security issues, and armed uprisings within Indonesia's territorial boundaries. It includes deterrence, layered defense, and sea control strategies (Mustari et al., 2018).

Maintain and Manage Marine Resources

In protecting and managing marine resources, the Indonesian Navy has already done this because protecting Indonesia's maritime is the obligation of the Indonesian Navy. The Indonesian Navy is tasked with securing Indonesian territorial waters, enforcing the law, and guarding the sea if any violations occur. The Indonesian Navy carries out uninterrupted operations by deploying 40-50 ships throughout Indonesia and providing supplies regarding violations at sea (Haras, 2016). This finding is supported by law number 3 of 2002 and law number 34 of 2004, namely:

1. The Indonesian Navy is the main component of defense at sea.
2. Tri Dharma Eka Karma TNI Doctrine. Where the function of the TNI is to be an antidote to every threat, obstacle, and disturbance that interferes with the state to act as a countermeasure for any attack or threat that has entered Indonesian territory as well as being a restorer when the threat starts to disappear and restoring things to normal.
3. The Indonesian Navy is the main defense component of the maritime dimension, maintaining security, and implementing law enforcement at sea. Then also carry out maritime and naval diplomacy, build the strength of the Indonesian Navy to carry out its main tasks, and empower maritime defense areas throughout Indonesia.
4. Indonesian Navy Jalasveva Jayamahe stated the role of the military in law enforcement at sea as well as diplomacy and support roles.
5. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 82 and universal rules”.

This secondary data proves that the Indonesian Navy has worked according to its function in the Republic of Indonesia, namely protecting the Indonesian seas and applicable laws. The findings of previous studies support this argument.

Give Priority to Infrastructure Development and Maritime Connectivity

The Indonesian government has prioritized the development of TNI AL infrastructure in supporting the five national pillars of maritime geostrategy by developing and modernizing TNI AL facilities and infrastructure.

One of the targets to be achieved in the 2021 national defense policy is implementing of the management of the defense area, which is based on large islands independently and can carry out protracted wars. This policy target is realized through three efforts: first, preparing the area as a defense mandala in an Integrated Tri Force unit to carry out warfare independently on the outer mandala, the main mandala, and the inner mandala, which is holding protracted wars. Second, prepare the defense areas for large islands independently by preparing food, water, energy, and national infrastructure reserves to create defense logistics centers spread throughout the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. Third, realizing effective command and control capabilities and increasing inter-island connecting transportation facilities for all compartments (Kemenhan RI, 2020; Kusuma et al., 2021). From a study conducted by the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020, it is known that the connectivity of islands and the development of TNI AL facilities and infrastructure is one of the national development priorities.

Media publication data by Kompas written by Yahya (2021) also support these findings: "Infrastructure in Lanal and education units in the regions must comply with the applicable standards, especially in educational institutions that produce tough soldiers. This infrastructure improvement will make soldiers comfortable at work. Adequate facilities for soldiers and their families can make TNI AL personnel professional and provide optimal results in carrying out their duties."

The findings published by Republika written by Sidebang (2022) also support that the government, through the Indonesian Navy, has a strategy for strengthening infrastructure to support the Global Maritime Fulcrum:

"In developing the capabilities of the Indonesian Navy, especially control, adequate technology is needed according to fast-paced demands, so the development of information and communication technology to support operations must develop very quickly."

From the secondary data, it is known that the Indonesian government has carried out the infrastructure development of the Indonesian Navy to support the creation of a geostrategy to become a maritime axis in the world, and the government, through the Ministry of Defense has also budgeted for this policy.

Inviting all Indonesian partners to work together in the maritime field through maritime diplomacy

Article 9, point c Law no. 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces explains that the Navy has a different task from other Armed Forces. The difference in this role is the role of diplomacy owned by the Indonesian Navy in foreign policy, which is carried out with the support of one of the Main Weapon System Tools, namely the Warships of the Republic of Indonesia (KRI). One of the core strengths of a country's Navy is its fleet, and the greatness of the Navy is the presence of its fleet (Louhenapessy & Raspati, 2021).

In carrying out diplomacy during the period 2016 to 2018, the Indonesian Navy has carried out activities related to diplomatic duties, namely the implementation of operational and training tasks with the involvement of other countries in the Southeast Asian region, both in the context of joint training bilaterally and multilaterally (Louhenapessy & Raspati, 2021).

Until 2019 the Indonesian Navy has sent 11 KRIs alternately once a year. In this case, the TNI Maritime Task Force, an element of the Indonesian Navy, has played a diplomatic function, better known as naval diplomacy (Sirmareza, 2017; Louhenapessy & Raspati, 2021). One form of naval diplomacy is the operation of the Indonesian Navy in the South China Sea, where this operation is categorized as preventive and public diplomacy (Louhenapessy & Raspati, 2021).

Based on these findings, it can be analyzed that the Indonesian Navy has proactively invited all Indonesian partners to cooperate in the maritime field as a form of maritime diplomacy.

Build a Maritime Defense Force

Since his inauguration, President Joko Widodo's administration has been steadfast in its commitment to revitalizing Indonesia's maritime heritage, aiming to reestablish the country's historical maritime eminence. The government's focus has been on bolstering the maritime sector through initiatives like the implementation of a maritime logistics system known as Pendulum Nusantara, as well as introducing the concept of the Sea Highway. This innovative approach involves utilizing large-capacity vessels to efficiently manage the transportation of goods between Indonesia's Western and Eastern regions. Moreover, efforts are being directed towards enhancing port facilities and related infrastructure, with an emphasis on creating ports capable of accommodating sizable vessels. This strategic move is poised to enhance the efficiency and inclusivity of both logistics distribution and the overall national economy (Supandi, 2015).

According to Supandi, (2015), the Indonesian government's commitment to revitalizing marine life and advancing its status as a Global Maritime Fulcrum (PMD) is exemplified through the Five Main Pillars agenda, articulated during the 9th East Asia Summit in 2014. This agenda underscores Indonesia's identity as a nation intricately linked to its vast oceanic resources. It emphasizes self-sufficiency in seafood production, development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity, collaborative maritime diplomacy, and the establishment of a strategic maritime defense fleet. These pillars collectively symbolize Indonesia's dedication to harnessing its maritime potential for the benefit of its citizens and to ensure maritime sovereignty and stability.

The secondary data shows that the Indonesian government has carried out building Indonesia's maritime defense force through the Indonesian Navy. The Indonesian government has established a clear vision and mission for developing Indonesia's maritime defense force. The Indonesian Navy already has a short, medium, and long-term development strategy.

Discussion

The Indonesian Navy has diligently implemented its five geostrategic pillars in line with the nation's vision of becoming a Global Maritime Fulcrum. However, it's essential to recognize that wars primarily result from political factors rather than a country's military strategic policies. War, as defined by Carl von Clausewitz, is an act of violence intended to compel opponents to comply with one's wishes. It's a widespread armed conflict between mutually hostile political communities. There are two kinds of war causes: direct and general causes. A direct cause is only an event that encourages one party to feel legitimate and start a war over another. This immediate cause would not have arisen had it not been for the general causes which preceded it. The causes of war can vary, namely psychological causes, cultural and ideological reasons, as economic reasons and political reasons (Sarsito, 2009).

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, a topic of global concern, has historical roots dating back to Eastern European power dynamics. This armed conflict, which began in 2014, escalated in October 2021 when Russia started deploying troops near Ukraine's border, heightening the potential for war. The historical context includes Ukraine's rejection of Russian influence in favor of closer ties with the European Union and NATO. While NATO emphasizes peaceful conflict resolution and collective defense, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine has deep-seated political, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic dimensions (Susetio, 2022).

This situation serves as a lesson for Indonesia, even though the country has taken steps to bolster its maritime security through the Global Maritime Fulcrum vision. Indonesia faces potential conflicts in the South China Sea over natural resources and territorial claims, stemming from cultural and ethnic similarities with neighboring nations like Malaysia. Indonesia, surrounded by seas, must prioritize diplomatic efforts to prevent conflicts stemming from political factors.

CONCLUSION

The analysis results, show that the Indonesian government has implemented its geostrategy in the form of a global maritime axis vision. The Indonesian government, through the Indonesian Navy, has implemented five pillars which have become the Global Maritime Fulcrum strategy, namely: rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture, protecting and managing marine resources, prioritizing the development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity, inviting all Indonesian partners to work together in the maritime field through maritime diplomacy, and building maritime defense forces.

Indonesia is a maritime country, so the Indonesian Navy should have implemented the Global Maritime Fulcrum vision. From the results of the evaluative analysis, it was found that the Indonesian government, through the Indonesian Navy, has implemented the five-Global Maritime Fulcrum. and continues to improve every year. However, war occurs not only because of a country's military readiness. Reflection on the case of the war between Russia and Ukraine can be used to show that the war occurred due to cultural, geographical, and political factors. Politics became the main element for Russia's war with Ukraine because of Ukraine's interest in joining the Western bloc, which endangered Russia's power in the world.

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