

Militarising the Natuna Islands for Indonesia's Gunboat Diplomacy

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This paper examines the significance of Indonesia's plan to militarize outer islands as a leverage for Indonesia's gunboat diplomacy and deterrence effect in the South China Sea conflict. The South China Sea dispute involving China, several ASEAN member countries and the United States (US) has been highlighted to be the most intense maritime conflict in the last five years. In 2015, the Indonesian Defence White Paper perceived that the conflict poses potential threat to Indonesia's outer islands, which are part of Indonesia's territorial sovereignty and integrity. Various diplomatic measures to prevent open war in the South China Sea have been proposed by Indonesia in various forums in the ASEAN. However, it does not mean Indonesia relies only on the soft power aspect; rather, it is also preparing itself in the hard power aspect. Therefore, in an attempt to avoid the domino effect caused by the conflict, the Indonesian Ministry of Defence has proposed a grand strategy to build and strengthen its military base in Indonesia's outer islands. By using the Gunboat Diplomacy concept, deterrence and qualitative methods, this paper shows that instead of merely utilizing military forces as legitimate deterrence and defence purposes, militarizing Indonesia's outer island can also be regarded as a responsive gunboat diplomacy against the security uncertainty in the South China Sea conflict. A lesson can be learned from Indonesia's strategic notion to exploit geographical conditions for archipelagic defence purposes by altering continental-oriented strategy to aerial and naval warfare.



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The rise of China as indicated by its rapid economic and military development is one of the current issues faced by countries in Southeast Asia. Historically, China learned the lesson from the failure of Glasnosts and Perestroika by the Soviet Union in 1991. Notwithstanding the Tiananmen incident in 1989, China has begun to reform its economic policy under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. With the help of Chen Yun's economic philosophy, China began to develop their economic integration, business cycle and planned economy with market regulation (Fewsmith, 2001, pp. 44-45). The Yun's economic philosophy worked relatively well through Deng's successor Jiang Zemin as by 2002 China's gross domestic product (GDP) was \$1,266.1 billion. The size of the country's economy, which is comparable to that of Canada (\$714 billion), makes China a significant economic power; despite the fact that it remains a low-income developing country because its large number of population (more than 1.2 billion) (Yahuda, 2005: 209-210).

Today, considered as the world's new super power both economically and militarily, China often takes aggressive steps to support its political manoeuvres in the region. One example of China's reckless action towards countries in the Southeast Asia was its claim over South China Sea. By 2016, China has occupied most of the islands in South China Sea, reclaimed 3,200 hectares areas and built military bases, hangars, and barracks and communications facilities in Spratly and Paracel islands (Lunn & Lang, 2016, p. 14).

China's claim on South China Sea using its nine dash line overlaps with claims declared by countries in Southeast Asia region, such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand and Taiwan. This claim indicates rejections towards China's unilateral claim. On January 2013, the Philippines brought the South China Sea dispute to the International Arbitration Court. At the same time, the Philippines was also involved in military cooperation by intensifying bilateral military exercises with the United States (US) in South China Sea area and earned US financial support to boost the US-Philippines security partnership (To, 2003, p. 25). China increased its military budget by \$215 billion in 2017. This indicates a 28.9% increase in China's military budget since 2014 (SIPRI, 2017).

China's claim on the South China Sea also overlaps with Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone in the seafront of Natuna's waters. Located

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on the northern part of Indonesia, Natuna has a very strategic position for world's maritime transportation and economics. It is located on the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) and Air Lines of Communications (ALOC) that connect countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa and also countries in the Central Asia, East Asia, Pacific and America (Natuna's Local Government, 2016). Judging from the potential conflict escalation in South China Sea, Indonesia highlights its commitment to developing and building sufficient defence capability, weaponry, human resources, infrastructure and institutional facilities by including these items into the strategic plan of the Indonesian Ministry of Defence (*Renstra*) or Phase II of the defence force development program (2015–2019) and *Renstra* III (2020–2024). By 2014, Indonesia completed the construction of the Centre for Peace of Indonesia (IPSC) and 14 border protection posts, one of which is located in Natuna district. This district was projected to become the pilot project for Indonesia's plan to use its outer islands as the country's military aircraft carrier (Rappler, 2016).

Indonesia's strategic position along with its vast natural resources and geographical condition as a natural archipelago state makes it prone to potential threats from its surroundings, such as disruption of the country's maritime security and violation of Indonesia's borders by neighbouring countries. The growing potential of conflict escalation in the region, especially pertaining to the South China Sea dispute, the Indonesian government plan to build military base on its border area and develop Indonesia's outer islands as a line of defence. This paper attempts to analyse this particular defence strategy and uses Natuna and Rote islands as a case study by considering the escalation of tension and instability in the South China Sea. By using the qualitative method, the aims of this research are as follows. First, the study aims to identify the security complex in the Southeast Asia that Indonesia could likely to encounter in the future, especially in the northern part of Indonesia's border area. Second, the study seeks to assess the strategic value of utilizing Indonesia's outer island as part of gunboat diplomacy in the region, and finally, evaluate the use of Indonesia's outer island as Indonesia's line of defence for deterrence effect. These aforementioned goals enable this research to contribute significantly to the study of international relations, especially in terms of strategic studies, on the study on the utilization of a country's geographic feature to boost its defence system.

Previous studies have attempted to elaborate Indonesia's effort to protect its border areas. A study by Purwanto in 2016 under the title of *Indonesia's Border Management Using the Perspective of Archipelagic State* shows that within the past 10 years, Indonesia has been adopting a centralization paradigm which inevitably undermine the key role of its border areas as the front doors. The Indonesian government has not taken a holistic approach to maintain security in Indonesia's border areas because the country's defence policy focused mainly on Java area. Purwanto proposed that Indonesia consider a comprehensive defence and welfare approaches through the development of social and economic infrastructure in its outermost areas. Purwanto's research is in line with the aim of this research due to its focus on Indonesia's border management on the outer islands. However, instead of elaborate general issues on border management, this research will focus primarily on the utilization of of Indonesia's outer island as Indonesia's military aircraft carrier in Indonesia's defence strategy.

Another previous research that provides a compatible reference for this research is a research by Michel W. Dunaway (1991) under the title of *Gunboat Diplomacy in a New World Order: Strategic Considerations for U.S. Naval Intervention in the Twenty-First Century*. In his paper, Dunaway analyse s the use of gunboat diplomacy in United State's involvement in the Middle East conflicts, such as in Lebanon, Libya, and the Gulf War. His research shows that in each of these cases, US incorporated some of the world's most capable naval weapons system to create credible threat towards the opponent. Naval demonstrations were used by US as a tool to achieve certain political goals without resorting to armed confrontations with the opponents. Dunaway's research supporting the idea of utilizing gunboat diplomacy as a country's naval strategy to secure its security, sovereignty, and national interest.

In his article titled "A Southeast Asian Perspective on Northeast Asian Security, Pablo-Baviera (2002) compared both similarities and differences of security environment features between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia. He stated that in order to help manage its security challenges, Southeast Asian Countries, including Indonesia, can benefit from learning how Northeast Asian countries manage similar issues especially territorial disputes and maritime jurisdiction issues. China aggressive activity in South China Sea (e.g. island reclamation and militarization) can be influenced (or analyse d by SEA Countries) by the situation in Taiwan Strait and Korean Peninsula. For example, if China

choose to use force on Taiwan it will certainly place in doubt China's diplomacy attempt in SCS and at the end will provoke SEA Countries to continue their military modernization and build-up in the region. SEA countries, whether they acted individually or collectively through ASEAN, have considerable experience in conflict avoidance, confidence-building, and preventive diplomacy. This can be used to boost peaceful international behaviour by assuring all parties for resolving SCS disputes peacefully through cooperative measures.

Furthermore, as stated by Harahap (2018), building an ideal defence capability for Indonesia must highlight the importance of contextual defence studies. This means there is a need in understanding the dimension within the borders that occur and in accordance with the conditions that exist in accordance with many things and lead to conditions that are in accordance with what is done in accordance with the existing aspects. Harahap (2018) also mentioned a specific condition of Indonesia with its archipelagic nature, that lead to important changes of conception of the existing boundaries and the need to find new approach that meet the context of Indonesia's strategy.

In short, these previous studies indicate that as an archipelagic country, Indonesia needs to improve its defense strategy from Java-centric continental-based approach to a more holistic approach that put its outer islands and sea as the focal points of Indonesia's territorial sovereignty protection. Learning from the naval strategy implemented by the US in the Middle East, demonstration of naval power on the border areas can be utilised as a diplomacy measure that generates deference effect on the opponent. As part of ASEAN, Indonesia hold the reputation of performing a leading role in the peaceful settlement of the South China Sea dispute. Indonesia always tried to put forward the practice of conflict avoidance, confidence-building, and preventive diplomacy during the negotiation with China to discuss the South China Sea development. However, the case of China's claim on Natuna water has proved that relying merely on the soft-diplomacy approach is not sufficient in protecting Indonesia's sovereignty on its outer islands and preventing future threats to its territory.

Theoretical framework

This article uses several concepts to explain the security complex in Southeast Asia region caused by the growing tension in the South China Sea Dispute, the strategic value of Indonesia's outer island as the

means of gunboat diplomacy and the following deterrence effect. The first concept is deterrence. The main idea this concept is to create military threats that able to prevent the opponent (deterree) from taking aggressive actions towards the deterrer. The act of preventing certain moves by the deterree usually conducted through the effort of discouraging them or enhancing threatening actions towards the deterree country. A deterrer will try to stop a deterree from doing any actions that are not in line with its interests (Buzan, 1991, pp. 163–167). One of the essential variables of deterrence is technology, which refers to the destructive capability of a country's weaponry system (Buzan, 1991, pp. 177–179). One of the types of deterrence strategy is called the non-provocative defence. This concept explains the development of military forces for defensive purposes rather than offensive. A state can significantly enhance its professional military capability by equipping the fleet with defensive weaponry that is efficient in defence but has no offensive capability (Buzan, 1991, pp. 276–283).

The second concept used in this research is gunboat diplomacy. This concept examines the use of naval force as a strategy to maintain security on the outer islands. According to James Cable, gunboat diplomacy is the use or threat of limited naval force other than as an act of war, to deter or secure an advantage or to avert loss, either in the furtherance of an international dispute or else against foreign nationals within the territory or the jurisdiction of their own state. The essential requirement for the practice of gunboat diplomacy is the use of warships to demonstrate threat and power of a state to support and sustain deterrence effect derives from military capability (Cable, 1994, pp. 8–13). As stated further by J. R. Berridge and Alan James (2003, p. 120), gunboat diplomacy can be defined as the use of naval power in support of what would now be called coercive diplomacy. It is sometimes perceived ideally as gunboat diplomacy whenever a state's vessel (both small and lightly armed), which has shallow draught and great manoeuvrability derived from their steam and propulsion, is employed to 'show the flag' or go into action beyond national borders. The essential requirement to implement gunboat diplomacy effectively is the use of restraint quick action, limited goals and the use of power at a low or simple level. The practice of gunboat diplomacy should avoid magnificent or abundant use of power because it can lead to opposition and counterattacks from the opponent (Mandel, 1986, pp. 65–66).

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The third concept used in this research is outer islands published by the Indonesian government. Outer islands refer to remote islands located strategically on the border side of a country and directly face other countries' territory without being obstructed by other islands. The management of the outer islands aims to maintain territorial integrity, national security, national and state defence, create regional stability, utilize natural resources for sustainable development and empower communities through the improvement of people's welfare. The outer islands are very prone to threats from other countries, especially if no proper effort from the government to protect and develop the area. Hence, it is very important for a country to manage its outer islands decently by paying serious attention to its strategic values and potentials (PP No. 6 Tahun 2010, p. 1).

Security complex in Southeast Asia and Indonesia's threat perception on state security

Since 1970s the South-East Asian nations has been constructing the regional security environment by calling for a 'Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN). However, the sustainability of this security environment or construction vulnerable against the complexity of the external powers' relations (Thompson, 2015: 143). At the moment, security complex in Southeast Asia very much depends on the tension and territorial rights in the South China Sea. The uncertainty has deteriorated as the US military became involved in the region. According to the SIPRI report in 2017, military spending as a share of GDP in Asia rose by 4.6% in 2016, while at the same time China has increased its military expenditure by 5.4% to \$215 billion in 2016. In addition, military spending in Asia and Oceania amounted to \$450 billion in 2016, an increase of 4.6% on 2015 although due to Chinese economic slowdown, the regional spending increased by 64% between 2007 and 2016. Meanwhile, between 2015 and 2016 the trends of military expenditure grew up to 5.1% in Southeast Asia with total of \$41.9 billion in military spending (Nan Tian, et.al, 2017, pp. 1-5).

Prior to the issuance of South China Sea map that contained nine-dash line in 2009, in 1948 China created a map which contained eleven-dash line around South China Sea. In 1953, this map was revised through the removal of 2 dashes around Gulf of Tonkin. To support its claim over South China Sea, Chinese government declared some historical evidences, one of them is the book of Shi Jing poetry

from the period of 475-221BC which gave the name *Nan Hai* (means Southern Sea or South Sea) to the area around South China Sea. China also published its own law to support its claim, such as The Declaration on the Territorial Sea in 1958. This declaration stated that China's territorial sea included the territorial sea around the islands of the South China Sea (Spartly or *Nansha* islands, Paracel or *Xi-sha* islands, Zhongsha Island, and Pratas Island).

Problem occurred in 1995 when China began to send its naval forces to the South China Sea water that supposed to be regarded as international water. The Nine Dash Line claim, or during the reign of the Kuomintang called as eleven-dotted line, was claimed by the Chinese government. This claim appeared in 1947. In 1949, Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Foreign Minister, changed the eleven dotted lines into the Nine Dash Line. Since then, China's unilateral claims over the South China Sea has responded negatively by several ASEAN member countries that also have similar claim over South China Sea based on the International Law of the Sea, the geography factor and historical facts (Yahuda, 2004: 17).

The Nine Dash Line claim by China then received a lot of opposition from many countries who claimed some islands in the South China Sea based on historical facts and the occupational use of the area. In order to contain the tensions over China's unilateral actions, since 2001 ASEAN has been trying to mediate the South China Sea dispute by upholding the principles of the ASEAN Charter. In the latest development, negotiation and mediation conducted by both the ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting ASEAN (ASEAN Ministerial Meeting / AMM) and the 45th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) 19th July 2010 to the discussion of the Declaration of Conduct (DOC) and Code of Conduct (CoC) on the status of the South China Sea at the ASEAN Summit 21 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia ended with a deadlock due to a conflict of interest between the member countries of ASEAN itself in resolving South China Sea disputes (Yahuda, 2004, pp. 16-17).

In response to China's aggressiveness, claimant states, such as the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia, increased their military and defense capability around the South China Sea. In 2014, Philippine government announced that the country would spend 885 million US dollars to buy new defense equipment, such as 3 guided-missile fast attack craft, two guided-missile stealth frigates, and two anti-submarine helicopters. This is to improve security around the group

of Spartly islands. Meanwhile, within the same year, governments of Malaysia and Vietnam also announced the 10 percent increase of their military budget to anticipate China's movements in the area around Spartly and Paracel islands. In October 2014, Malaysian Navy Chief, Admiral Aziz Jaafar, stated that Malaysia would buy 8 guided-missile corvettes and 6 anti-submarine helicopters and improve missile systems on its naval vessels to improve safety in South China Sea (Rustandi, 2016, pp. 4-6).

Besides the claimant states movements to secure South China Sea, United States also involved in this dispute by fighting for the freedom of navigation and transportation in this disputed area. As a response to the occupation of Mischief Reef (part of the Spartly islands) by China in 1995, United States firmly declared that freedom of navigation should be guaranteed and reinforced regardless of the overlapping claims between countries. In 1998, the United States dispatched its combat ships to the area around the Spartly islands as a response to China's protests against US military aviation activities around South China Sea water. In October 2015, United States sent a guided missile destroyer to the area around Spartly islands to guarantee freedom of military flight around the South China Sea (Bouchat, 2014, pp. 74-76).

The Chinese nine dash line claim has been formally protested by claimant states. On January 22, 2013, Philippine filed a South China Sea dispute between its country and China to Permanent Court of Arbitrations (PCA). The outcome of the ruling issued on July 12, 2016 stated that China's claim to sovereignty and historical rights in the South China Sea, as well as reclamation and development measures on the islands of the South China Sea have no legal basis and are contrary to international maritime law (South China Sea Arbitration, 2016, p. 1-3). However, China had previously declared its stance to refuse to participate or accept any PCA decisions unilaterally initiated by Philippine. In a position paper submitted to the United Nations in 2014 over its refusal to the submission of the South China Sea case to the PCA, China declared that its sovereign and other relevant rights over the South China Sea have been established over a long period of history, rooted in international law, and consistently upheld by the Chinese government (Rustandi, 2016, p. 2).

The South China Sea covers an area of 3,5 million km² stretching from the southern part of the People's Republic of China to the northern parts of Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia, as well as ex-

tending from the eastern part of Vietnam to the western part of the Philippines. Astronomically, the four clusters of these islands are in positions of 3 ° 57 'to 21 ° north latitude and 109 ° 30' to 117 ° 50' east longitude. In the South China Sea there are four groups of islands, namely Paracel, Pratas, Zhongsha, and Spratly, as well as geographical elements such as coral islands and rocks (Gao & Jia, 2013, pp. 99-100).

In response to the security complex in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has placed the South China Sea dispute in its 2015 Defence White Paper and since 2014 has spent 0.8% of its GDP or \$7 billion for military expenditure. We can see that Indonesia's threat perception is in line with the tension over the South China Sea. Maintaining balance of power in the region is important because Natuna is one of Indonesia's outer islands located at the borderline of South China Sea.

Indonesia's response to the military trends in Southeast Asia can be understood in the context of structural realists as a function of power asymmetries. According to Rosseau (2007, pp. 746-747), the immediate military balance in the region indicates the ability of a state to influence another state of alliance because a "real" conflict over material resources exists. In this case, the geo-strategic value and abundant natural resources that lie beneath the South China Sea create power asymmetries in an attempt not to start or become involved in an open conflict but maintain military status-quo in the region.

Indonesia realises the situation and perceives the South China Sea as an arena between the US and China arms race. The US's interest in maintaining stability in the South China Sea can be understood from a geo-economic sense and a geo-strategic point of view. As argued by Fisher (2016), the South China Sea has abundant fishery supply. It has been estimated that 10% of the world's fishery supply lies in the South China Sea. Apart from the fishery potential, according to the United States Energy Information Agency, the South China Sea also contains large petroleum reserves that could reach 11 billion barrels and natural gas reserves of 190 trillion cubic feet. This figure is considered the largest amount of petroleum reserves and natural gas compared to any other waters in the world. Geographically, the strategic value of the South China Sea can be seen for its location that is flanked by two oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. This advantageous position makes the South China Sea the main route of traffic for commercial ships and tankers going to countries in East Asia and Europe, Africa and the Middle East (Usman and Sukma, 1998: 26). According to the

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United States Department of Defence, by 2015, the total value of goods traded through the South China Sea had reached 5.3 trillion US dollars or about 30% of the total world trade value (Fisher, 2016). Therefore, we can see that the involvement of the US in the South China Sea is inevitable as a result of its great strategic, political and economic values.

China, on the other hand, has already built an artificial island and militarized the South China Sea and has also started to form alliances with several ASEAN member countries, thereby increasing the level of uncertainty in the region. Indonesia in respect to ASEAN's centrality and free and active principle of foreign policy must inevitably be involved in the conflict through diplomatic means. At the same time however, developing Indonesia's outer islands for military purposes could be understood as Indonesia's preparation toward professional military posture and enhancing deterrence effect similar to other ASEAN countries. Therefore, militarizing the outer islands can be regarded as Indonesia's strategic move to respond against the security complex in Southeast Asia.

Strategic values of Indonesia's outer islands as modalities for deterrence and gunboat diplomacy

In 2015, Indonesia's Ministry of Defence published the Indonesia Defence White Paper no. 23 of 2015. The paper is a comprehensive statement of Indonesian strategic and defence policy that should be disseminated to the public to create mutual trust and eliminate potential conflicts. The paper also concerns the security dynamics in the Asia Pacific region particularly on the South China Sea dispute. It explains that because the dispute takes place in areas with high geo-strategic and geo-economic values, the security dynamics are very influential for international transport and communication activities in the disputed area and thus deserves serious attention. It also explains that Indonesia, with its 92 outer islands, shall prioritise the management of small outer islands for the sake of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Indonesia (Ministry of Defence of Indonesia, 2015, pp. 6–8).

The paper also consists of Indonesia's strategic plans to develop frontier areas and its outer islands for military infrastructure and facilities, including remote monitoring and remote sensing devices (satellite-based aircraft/drones) as part of deterrence effect (Ministry of Defence Indonesia, 2016: 9–11). To enable the policy to materialise, Indonesia's defence planning must be based on President Joko Wido-

do's vision of Nawacita to prioritise maritime security as part of the World Maritime Axis. In principle, the Indonesian Armed Forces consists of four main components, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force, as well as a reserve component that includes national resources and infrastructure as supporting elements (Indonesian Ministry of Defence 2015, pp. 101–106). The defence strategic planning policy in 2014–2019 also indicates the enhancement of border area through the concept of integrated security belt that includes managing outer islands such as Natuna, Rote, Merauke, Biak and Morotai for defence purposes (Ministry of Defence Indonesia, 2016, pp. 12–16).

According to Bakrie (2007, pp. 13–14), Indonesia's internal defence strategic planning to build defence system is based on the concept of “unified approach” and “comprehensive strategy” that encompasses all archipelagic area in Indonesia. While externally, Indonesia's geo-strategic factor is aimed to strengthen deterrence effect through diplomacy, reconnaissance and early warning system. At the same time, Indonesia also has to cautiously aware on changes in international strategic environment mainly on the issue of technological and communication development that could influence the nature of threats and character of war. Lastly, Indonesia can finally build a sufficient military operation based on the strength of the required defence posture if those factors has been carefully calculated and put into defence budget. Although the Island of Natuna is located at the outskirts of the South China Sea but still the lack of early warning and defence system in the island creates a huge vulnerability for Indonesia's territorial sovereignty.

If we look closer at China's nine dash lines over the Paracel and Spratly Island, that have abundant natural resources and a strategic position on international shipping lanes, it is not impossible for the Chinese government to eventually claim Natuna's Economic Exclusive Zone waters as its territory. According to Prabowo (2013: 1–3) Indonesia has expressed objection against China's unilateral claim over the South China Sea in 2010 by filing a note verbal with the United Nations and affirmed that the nine-dash line attached to China's map in 2009 contradicts international maritime law. Therefore, the establishment of military facilities in Natuna is vital. It has currently has become Indonesia's pilot project as a line of defence both for deterrence and diplomatic objectives.

Natuna is the foremost region, located at the northernmost part of the NKRI region and has very strategic values for Indonesia's de-

terrence and diplomatic capital because it is located in international shipping lanes. In terms of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea or UNCLOS, it is included in the SLOC and ALOC from Southeast Asia, South Asia, Arab and African regions to Central Asia, East Asia, Pacific and America or vice versa. The Natuna waters is considered a major chokepoint in the world's oil flows and oil transited between Middle East and the Pacific. It connects the Persian Gulf, Hormuz Strait to the Malaka Straits, the Natuna waters with South China Sea to the East Asian Countries and the Pacific. The daily oil flows in this area could reach 11 million barrel and 40 trillion meters cubic of natural gas (Kong, in Dewi, 2008, p. 54).

It is estimated that over 65,000 vessels pass through Natuna waters annually, which contributes to 30% of international trade and provides 80% of imported energy to user states such as Japan and China (Dewi, 2008: 55). The waters of Natuna are also very vital areas for some countries, especially Singapore, which relies on its energy supply and communication infrastructure from Natuna's oil reserve, natural gas pipelines and submarine fibre optic lines. As stated by Sitohang (2008, p. 46), Natuna's natural gas reserves are among the largest in the world with a total of 201 trillion cubic feet. Therefore, the need to stabilize and provide security in the Natuna waters depends on Indonesia's commitment and political will to strengthen its defence capabilities.

The strategic values for Indonesia's planning in securing the outer islands, particularly Natuna can also be found for economic advantages. According to Wardhani (2017), the security in Natuna had been used by the oil and gas industry in the region. An important reason for Indonesia to secure Natuna is to ensure clarity of navigation for ships that want to pass this area, clarity of natural resource exploitation area, and legal certainty in the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone region. In the previous map, Natuna is given to the Indonesian Territorial Sea area around Natuna waters with only 12 nautical miles from the base line of the Indonesian archipelago on islands that are part of Natuna Regency. In its latest map, Indonesia assigns the name Natuna North Sea to the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone in Natuna waters located 200 miles from the base of the Indonesian archipelago in Natuna.

Based on observation that we conducted on July 2018 in Natuna Island, most of the construction of new military bases in Natuna has been completed. New radar station in the north, several army bases around Ranai City, and dock facilities in the southern part of the island

are ready to be operated by TNI. While there is still ongoing construction in some other bases, all this progress indicates that the construction is in accordance with the strategic plan and the specified timeline in which all base construction should be completed in 2019. It may be noted that these new bases have not been occupied yet by its personnel, weapon system, equipment, or logistic.

There's a question about whether these strategic plan in Natuna calls for a regular rotation of forces that are positioned forward or permanently stationed forces in the island. While there is no major construction of personnel accommodation facility (barracks or houses) in navy and air force bases, new army bases in the island have major permanent housing and barracks for its soldier. These indicates that so far, army is the only branch that have plan to permanently stationed its force in Natuna while navy and air force will only deploy its troops proportionally.

Another thing that construction of these military bases is followed by the construction of supporting infrastructure in Natuna Island such as water supply, electricity, improved communication, hospital, and also new roads and bridges to support troops and heavy equipment mobilisation within the island. The construction of this supporting infrastructure came as a result of the evaluation from TNI major exercises on the island two years back. For example, during the Rapid Reaction Strike Force (Pasukan Pemukul Reaksi cepat or PPRC) exercise in 2017, some roads and bridges were damaged because they can't withstand military heavy equipment and vehicle, especially main battle tank. The remnants of last year exercise (helipad, weapons range, and observation tower) still can be seen and used.

It should be noted that there is also non-military infrastructure project currently taking place in Natuna. In Selat Lampa, navy base is located between civilian and fishery harbor which also have long docking and big storage facilities. In Ranai city, the installation of fiber optic telecommunication cable, oil pipeline and storage have been completed. In a warfighting scenario, these civilian infrastructures will play double role to be used by the military to help defending the island.

However, in terms of economic and social aspect, while most of the local communities support the strategic plan and new military bases construction, it seems that there is still threat perception discrepancy between the government/TNI and local communities. While the government saw future potential threat or conflict can come from South

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China Sea, based on several incidents and territorial disputes in the region, local communities didn't feel any threat from any country. This happened because those incident and dispute happened near EEZ border far away from Natuna Island itself. There is also not enough socialisation program conducted by government/TNI to explain the urgency of military base construction and the strategic values of Natuna Island to the local communities resulting in 'militarization fear' to some local communities. These communities worried that the militarization of Natuna island will make investors and tourists afraid to visit the island because of the impression of imminent war.

Local communities also argued that the government should prioritise navy and air force instead of the army, in the strategic plan to improve archipelagic defense in Natuna Island. This is because if war broke out, the first and most important battle will occur at the sea and air, not land, since for way the invaders and TNI Natuna can only be reached through these two dimensions.

Therefore, in our opinion, the need to secure Indonesia's outer island as part of Indonesia's gunboat diplomacy is also based on China's doctrine on the traditional fishing ground in the South China Sea which is also being claimed by four other ASEAN member countries. China's doctrine caused the rising number of illegal fishing conducted by Chinese anglers in the area. The arrest of Chinese anglers by the Indonesian Navy from 2014–2016 indicates a security gap in the Natuna waters. It also indicates Chinese anglers have legitimate action to carry out an illegal fishing in the waters when the Chinese government claims the waters unilaterally. Therefore, strengthening the military forces in Natuna is necessary to reduce the level of uncertainty in the region. Indonesia also expressed its political statement to uphold sovereignty in the northern sea of Natuna and does not accept any of China's unilateral claim over the Natuna's waters.

Indonesia's strategic value on the outer islands, particularly the plan to militarize Natuna and the name alteration of the Northern Natuna Sea also pose a strong message to the actors involved in the South China Sea conflict. It indicates Indonesia has a stake and presence in the conflict both in the sense of hard power and soft power. The militarization of outer island could indicate Indonesia's gunboat diplomacy comes in another form; small, outer islands build as static-military vessels to 'show the flag' or go into action beyond the national border for deterrence and defensive purposes.

It means Indonesia has significant potential geographical advantages that can be utilised for the sake of the country's sovereignty, diplomatic, defence and deterrence purposes. Although the opposition or counter-attack against the opponent may not be mobilised, the deterrence effect can be achieved at least in preventing open war between powerful states involved in the South China Sea conflict and persuade those states to return to the negotiation floor in The South China Sea's Declaration of Conduct that has been discussed since 2002.

Deterrence strategy on Indonesia's gunboat diplomacy in the outer islands

In terms of its defence strategy, Indonesia is known to be a country that prioritises the peaceful approach in maintaining its national security and dealing with different types of threat, either from the inside or outside the country. However, this approach sometimes leads to vulnerabilities in Indonesia's sovereignty, especially in terms of its territorial sovereignty in the border area around the outer islands. One of the recent threats towards Indonesia's sovereignty was China's claim on Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone around Natuna. In 2016, China claimed this area as part of China's traditional fishing ground based on its nine-dash line claim on South China Sea dispute (Lunn & Lang, 2016, p. 14).

As a response to China's claim, Indonesia's former Politic and Human Rights Minister, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, on March 2016 stated that Indonesia will upgrade its defence capability in the outer islands and take bolder actions towards any threats that can harm Indonesia's sovereignty. In June and October 2016, Indonesian president Joko Widodo, made two visits to Natuna (RI, 2016). After the visit, General Gatot Nurmantyo, the Head of Indonesian National Army, stated that Indonesia will start building an integrated military base on its outer islands to anticipate any threats to Indonesia's territorial integrity. In this case, Natuna will be one of the pilot projects. According to *Indonesia's Integrated Military Base Masterplan 2016*, six areas in Natuna will serve as Indonesia's military base, namely Ranai, Sepempang, Sungai Ulu Village, Lampa Strait, Tanjung Payung Village and Tanjung Datuk Village (Rappler, 2016).

Indonesia's plan to enhance defence capability on its outer island, especially on Natuna that directly borders with the South China Sea, was not only stated directly by the government but was also

mentioned in the Indonesian Minister of Defence Decree Number./Kep/435/M/V/2016. In this official national regulation, improving the management and security in Indonesia's outer islands with Natuna as one of the priority areas was indicated as one of the main goals of Indonesia's defence policy in 2017. Indonesia's defence white paper also supports this goal by emphasizing the South China Sea dispute as one of the current issues that should be taken seriously by countries in the region in composing their defence policies (Ministry of Defence of Indonesia, 2015, pp. 6–8).

Indonesia's action to upgrade its defence capability on Natuna's island to respond the developments in the South China Sea dispute, especially China's recent aggressive moves in occupying the entire area, is in line with the logic of deterrence. In deterrence concept, an actor/state will prevent another state from taking action that would harm its existence by increasing the threat potential to that state. A deterrent will try to discourage the deterree from violating its national interest by improving its military power (Buzan, 1991, p.163–167). In this case, Indonesia's plan to build an integrated military base on Natuna could be seen as Indonesia's strategy to prevent China from violating its territorial integrity. Based on the Integrated Military Base Masterplan 2016, Indonesia plans to enhance its defence capability on Natuna by building an integrated mess and hospital and upgrading its military facilities by building hangars, squadrons, taxiway, helipad, drone facilities, radar and other facilities that will support the performance of Indonesia's air force, navy, and army (Safutra, 2016). This step is taken immediately after China took the aggressive step in South China Sea by directly claiming Natuna. According to Buzan, one of the essential variables of the deterrence strategy is technology. Technology pertains to the ability of a state to improve its military means to discourage the opponent from taking threatening actions, while geography talks pertains to the effects of geographical features on the implementation of a deterrence strategy.

Political goals distinguish two types of deterrence, namely, core deterrence and extended deterrence (Buzan, 1991, pp. 177–179). In terms of Indonesia's deterrence strategy on Natuna Island, which will be implemented by building integrated military base and improving Indonesia's military facilities in this border area, the technological aspect can be found in Indonesia's plan to build an aircraft hangar, UAV squadron, medium range missile satellite, runway extension, taxiway,

bunkers for five combat aircrafts on Ranai city; aircraft and helicopter hangars, drone facilities, runway extension, bunker for combat aircraft, beaching dock on Selat Lampa dock and surface radar, long range camera on Tanjung Payung district. For an outer island such as in Rote or Morotai, the defence capability will focus only on extending the aircraft runway, building a sophisticated radar and drone for early warning system in the Indonesian Air Force and Naval Base. All of these plans were included on Indonesia's Integrated Military Base Masterplan 2016 (Rappler, 2016).

Although Indonesia has prepared the master plan to build a military base on Natuna and enhance its defence capability to anticipate the threat to its sovereignty, this deterrence strategy still could be considered as a non-provocative action. This plan is non-provocative because all the plan establishes is that it is for defence purposes only (Buzan, 1991: 276–283). As stated by the former Indonesian Minister of Politics, Law, and Security, Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan, on March 23 after a meeting with Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Indonesia will upgrade its defence capability on Natuna while maintaining good bilateral relationship with China as Indonesia's partner. According to Luhut, Indonesia's plan to build the military base on Natuna was not intended for war purposes, and instead is projected to increase Indonesia's deterrence effect towards threat from outside and inside the countries. In short, Indonesia's plan to enhance its defence capability in Natuna to prevent the threat from China is not intended for offensive purposes. This plan is also supported by Indonesia's diplomatic approach to maintaining bilateral relationship with China (Dyah, 2016).

We also have to admit that Indonesia's gunboat diplomacy to sustain deterrence mainly in outer island is not sufficient because Indonesia's economic growth is still less than 7% annually and military expenditure is less than 1% of GDP share. As argued by Nugraha and Sudirman (2016), Indonesia has not been able to compete in the aspect of policy, military, and diplomacy capabilities in the regional and global scales because it has not optimised its geographical modality as the center of the world's maritime domain particularly in economics, sea transportation, fishery and energy. The Global Maritime Fulcrum is a very strategic theme in the future of world maritime issues. Therefore, Indonesia needs to maximise its maritime security by international cooperation by providing high-profile archipelagic states for other countries and build the implementation of gunboat diplomacy for de-

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terrence effect sufficiently. Furthermore, the Indonesian government and its navy can coordinate to conduct several efforts, including international maritime peacekeeping force, technology modernization, military buildup, enhancing human resources and naval deployment.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing sections, a conclusion can be reached that instead of utilizing military forces as a legitimate deterrence and defence, militarizing Indonesia's outer island can still be considered a responsive gunboat diplomacy against the security uncertainty in the South China Sea conflict. A lesson can be learned from Indonesia's strategic notion to exploit geographical conditions for defence purposes by altering continental-oriented strategy to naval warfare. Indonesia has finally focused its strategy on the military approach to create technological deterrence and a non-Java centric defence strategy to face potential sovereignty breach in its border. This additional strategy is to complete its previous approach in diplomatic and tribunal strategies which are considered to have failed in maintaining Indonesia's territorial claims (for example the loss Sipadan and Ligitan islands to Malaysia in the International Court of Justice in 2002).

In an attempt to support or maximise the strategy, this paper offers some suggestions. First, Indonesia through Indonesian National Development Planning Agency or Bappenas and the Ministry of Defence should formulate a master plan on the military base that the country is going to build to ensure that will serve as a proper deterrence in line with Indonesia's national interest. Second, Indonesia must measure the vulnerability and existential threats to each outer island under the archipelagic defence framework to assess and determine armed forces to be stationed in Natuna Island. Third, Indonesia should increase its presence and other military operations other than war activity in the outer islands, especially in strengthening civil-military relations to maintain territorial integrity by building a collective identity. Finally, the Indonesian government should fulfil its public services in the outer islands to ensure that the people of the outer islands continue to feel that they are part of Indonesia.



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