

# *Indonesian State Defense Readiness Facing Threats In The Asia-Pacific Region*

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**Abstract** — The readiness of Indonesia's national defense to face threats in the Asia-Pacific region has become a major concern for the government and society. The dynamic and complex geopolitical conditions in the region demand strategic efforts and optimal readiness from a defense standpoint. This study aims to analyze Indonesia's defense readiness when facing threats in the Asia-Pacific region. The method used is a qualitative-descriptive approach using secondary data from various relevant sources. The results of the study show that Indonesia's state defense readiness has experienced a significant increase in the last few years. Nonetheless, there are still a number of challenges that must be faced. These include expanding the scope of threats, modernization and increasingly sophisticated military technology, and limited human resources. Therefore, further efforts are needed to improve Indonesia's state defense readiness through the development of better military infrastructure, increasing human resource capabilities, and cooperation with other countries in the

Asia-Pacific region. The expansion of threats such as cyber threats and maritime security has highlighted the need for nations to focus on developing their defense capabilities. In order to effectively respond to these new and evolving threats, it is important to prioritize modernization and invest in more sophisticated defense equipment. This includes not only purchasing new equipment, but also investing in the development of cutting-edge technology. However, this modernization presents challenges. Requires significant financial resources, and as a result, governments must carefully allocate their defense budgets to ensure that they are investing in the most effective and efficient ways possible.

**Keywords — Indonesian Defense, Threats, Asia-Pacific Region.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

The readiness of Indonesia's national defense in facing threats in the Asia-Pacific region has become a major concern for the government and society. In the dynamic and complex geopolitical conditions of the region, it is very significant to maintain national security and defense. Various security threats that have arisen in the Asia-Pacific region, such as territorial conflicts, terrorism, drug trafficking, and cyber threats, increasingly demand strategic efforts and optimal readiness from a defense perspective. Indonesia as one of the largest and most populous countries in the Asia-Pacific region, has a very strategic role in maintaining regional security and stability. Therefore, Indonesia's defense readiness in facing threats in the Asia-Pacific region is very significant to note. This study aims to analyze Indonesia's defense readiness for facing threats in the Asia-Pacific region.

Currently the Asia Pacific region receives special attention from Asia Pacific countries. Safety of trade traffic and energy distribution is the focus of the effort in strategic maritime lanes. This trend directly affects the existence of Indonesian waters because more than 80% of Asia Pacific trade by sea (SLOC) and trade routes (Sea Line of Oil Trade/SLOT) occurs in Indonesian waters, and this figure makes up more than one quarter of all trade. World. The current condition of the region's strategic environment is full of security threats and challenges originating from state and non-state actors. These non-state threats arise from various cases, such as border disputes between countries that have not been resolved properly, and the Navy's arms race (naval *arms race*) and the problem of freedom of sea use (*freedom of navigation*).

The Asia-Pacific region is the optimal location for ensuring access to clean water, reducing malnutrition, and alleviating poverty in Asian nations. Additionally, the security of the Asia-Pacific region is crucial, not just for the benefit of Asia but also for numerous African countries that are vulnerable to threats. Security is currently the primary concern for members of the Asia-Pacific region, as it poses a significant challenge. The emergence of China as a regional superpower poses a serious threat to the existing Asia-Pacific order, particularly to the United States. The region is currently experiencing a power struggle with key players such as China, Russia, and the United States. Conflicts are centered around North and South Korea and Japan's security policies towards China, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

At the same time, there were several complicated problems occurring in the Asia-Pacific region, namely on the Korean Peninsula, as well as conflicts between Japan and China due to historical manipulation that China accused Japan of in the Senkaku Island dispute (Diaoyu Island in Chinese). Chinese ship accidents and aircraft reconnaissance are examples of issues that have become hot spots between countries in the Asia-Pacific region, especially various threats in the maritime border area, which can trigger disputes and tensions that have an impact on regional dynamics. At present, the competition between the United States and its allies against China, on the other hand, concerns the development of China's military power in order to control the South China Sea, and on the other hand, the development of India's sea power in order to control the Indian Ocean in accordance with its political aspirations is an issue that must be considered. Indonesia as a whole is indirectly involved because of the proximity of the conflict area, which directly borders the Indonesian state (Sartono, 2021).

The implementation of national defense is important to support and protect sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the security of the nation as a whole. The defense of the Indonesian nation state is based on a universal defense system that is not aggressive or expensive to protect national interests. Solving problems related to and affecting national defense is carried out by prioritizing diplomacy, strengthened by modern armed forces. Indonesia actively promotes global partnerships, promotes coherence, and creates a dynamic balance. Conditions are characterized by the absence of a dominant state power in the region. This was done in the belief that this was an opportunity to increase cooperation and partnership in building defense forces for the progress of the country (RI Defense White Paper, 2015).

Basis for Formulation of Norms: " In the text of the National Security Bill, the concept of national security concerns the state's efforts to create a sense of security for its individual citizens, whose policies are all based on national interests, not on groups and individuals. Every national security policy must be experienced by all citizens, who are aware that everyone needs a sense of security and wants to continue to live in peace. Because security and welfare are interdependent, threats and disturbances to national security disrupt social welfare conditions, and conversely, poor national welfare conditions cause many national security problems.

The meaning of national security today is broader than just state defense and efforts to counter them, as it was previously known. In this context, the implementation of comprehensive national security becomes an inseparable part of the line of life of the nation and state, whether ideological, political, economic, socio-cultural, or defense-security, and must take into account the national interest in international relations or the development of international relations. The international community. Based on the Copenhagen School's concept of security as a survival measure for related political actors, Buzan, Waever, and Wilde developed the theory of securitization. An issue or phenomenon related to security will be divided into several levels, including the point of agreement that the issue can become a threat, for which security actors can use their power under the Speech *Act* to reconstruct a threat that has a harmful impact (Triyoga Budi, Sugeng, 2014).

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper uses a qualitative descriptive method using secondary data from various relevant sources. The data used in this research include documents on national defense policies and strategies, publications from government agencies and related research institutions, as well as various news sources and articles related to security and defense in the Asia-Pacific region. Go through three parts to get results. The first discussion will discuss Indonesia's position on the threat in the Asia-Pacific region. The second discussion discussed Indonesia's strategic national interests. The third discussion discussed the Indonesian National Defense's readiness to face threats in the Asia-Pacific region. Strengthening national defense and security is important for supporting national development. If a country's defense is strong, other countries will cooperate and not take threatening actions.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia's defense readiness for facing threats in the Asia-Pacific region has experienced a significant increase in recent years. This can be seen in the various efforts made by the government, such as increasing the defense budget, modernizing defense equipment, and increasing defense cooperation with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. An increase in the defense budget is a significant indicator of a country's defense readiness. According to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), in 2020, Indonesia will be ranked 23rd out of countries with the largest defense budgets in the world. In the same year, the Indonesian government allocated around 1.3% of total GDP to the defense budget. Even though it is still below the average defense budget of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the increase in Indonesia's defense budget in recent years shows a strong commitment to strengthening the country's defense readiness. In addition, the Indonesian government has also modernized its defense equipment to increase the country's defense readiness. One example is the purchase of Sukhoi fighter planes from Russia and submarines from South Korea. Apart from that, the government also plans to buy more defense equipment, such as tanks and helicopters, in the near future.

Defense cooperation with other countries is also an important strategy for increasing Indonesia's defense readiness. Indonesia has conducted defense cooperation with various countries in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the United States, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. This cooperation includes joint military exercises, an exchange of intelligence, and the transfer of defense technology. In addition, Indonesia is also an active member of various security and defense organizations in the Asia-Pacific region, such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). Even so, there are still a number of challenges that must be faced in increasing Indonesia's national defense readiness. First, the wider expansion of the scope of threats, such as cyber threats and maritime security, demands special attention and preparation in terms of developing defense capabilities. Second, modernization and increasingly sophisticated military technology require greater investment in purchasing and developing more sophisticated defense equipment. Third, limited human resources are also a challenge in increasing national defense readiness, especially in terms of developing personnel capabilities and improving the quality of human resources in the defense sector.

### 3.1 Indonesia in Threats in the Asia Pacific Region

There are six important maritime security issues faced by countries in the Southeast Asian region in maritime development, including: (i) border conflicts due to territorial claims and *overlapping claims to jurisdiction*; (ii) *sea piracy and armed robbery*; (iii) *maritime terrorist threat*, (iv) *transnational organized crime*; (v) *safety of navigation*; and (v) *marine environment protection*. Meanwhile, at the regional level, Indonesia's strategic environment will be marked by five developments and trends in the Asia Pacific region, namely: (i) the interests and security policies of major countries such as the United States, China, Japan, Russia, India and Australia; (ii) the dynamics of developments and trends in multilateral security cooperation, especially ASEAN and ARF; (iii) the dynamics of regional economic cooperation and competition related to the prospect of free trade and competition regarding access to markets and resources (natural resources, human resources, capital and technology); (iv) potential conflicts between countries related to territorial and border disputes (sea and land); and (v) increasing the importance of transnational crime issues and problems.

In CNN Indonesia news, Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto spoke at the opening of the 2022 Ministry of Defense leadership meeting. He said Indonesia's geographical location in the Indo-Pacific region gave rise to various threats that could endanger state sovereignty. Threats range from military, non-military to hybrid threats. "The Indo-Pacific is an area that brings together major world powers such as the United States, Japan, Russia, and China. Very dynamic and complex developments raise various threats, both military, non-military, as well as hybrid threats, which are predicted to still threaten national interests in the future.

The military threats range from foreign military forces, armed forces from within the country, such as open conflicts, conventional wars, violations of sea and air borders, separatism, infiltration, and espionage. He added, "The policy of implementing national defense is a reference for the Ministry of Defense and the TNI in carrying out national defense. The implementation of national defense is guided by the universal people's defense system, involving all citizens and all other national resources."

The international community was recently shocked by the formation of a trilateral strategic defense pact called AUKUS, which was formed by the new alliance of the United States with Britain and Australia. With the goals and expectations of this security agreement towards building greater defense industry cooperation globally, Australia is advancing a vision of key technological developments, including *cyber capabilities*, *artificial intelligence*, quantum technology, and additional ocean dimension capabilities. The vision that Australia refers to based on the potential challenges in the Indo-Pacific region has increased significantly. Apart from the vision of the development of defense technology in the country, considering the potential for the Indo-Pacific region to be prone to continuing conflicts, on the other hand, the formation of the security agreement refers to China's involvement as the main reason for the formation of AUKUS.

Contrary to the main argument of the AUKUS countries, that the security agreement is intended to maintain the stability of the Indo-Pacific region, China actually sees AUKUS as only a form of proof of the aggregate strength of AUKUS countries to further expand their wings in the field of defense. With this support, the closeness between countries will increase ASEAN's allies in responding to threats from the region and encouragement to increase Australia's nuclear submarine technology will benefit several related regions. The Philippines believes in its view that there is an imbalance in the power that ASEAN member countries have to deal with regional instability in the South China Sea case.

Indonesia and Malaysia showed direct concern in contrast to the attitude of the Philippines. Because it is likely that there will be an arms race in the region that will harm other countries and eventually become a threat. The concerns and concerns expressed by Indonesia were that Australia itself had violated the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and maintained regional stability as stipulated in the Friendship and Cooperation Treaty, and Indonesia emphasized that Australia complied with international law in UNCLOS 1982 to protect the region and maintain stability. So that Indonesia prefers and prioritizes joint diplomatic negotiations with neighboring countries to resolve differences peacefully.

### 3.2 Indonesia's Strategic National Interest

In the dynamics of development and geopolitical complexity in the Asia-Pacific region, the interests and goals of Indonesia's foreign policy in general in the future are focused on promoting the identity of an archipelagic state in diplomacy and building international cooperation. Indonesia must also strengthen *middle power diplomacy*, which can turn Indonesia into a regional

power with selective global participation, expand regional participation in the Asia-Pacific region, and increase participation in the roles, aspirations, and interests of the people in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy and foreign diplomacy.

As mandated in the fourth paragraph of the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia was established with national goals including:

*"protect the entire Indonesian nation and all of Indonesia's bloodshed, promote public welfare, educate the nation's life and participate in carrying out world order based on freedom, eternal peace and social justice".*

According to the preamble to this law, situations and conditions are required that can guarantee the realization of the entire process of implementing national goals, aspirations and interests through planned and programmed national development. Let's free all Indonesian people from poverty and ignorance which is manifested through maintained security and stability. And Indonesia must play a role and actively support the realization of world peace that is harmonious, harmonious and balanced in international relations.

Based on the Defense White Paper, Indonesia continues to promote a free and active policy that is guided by the principle of peace-loving but more independent, as well as the view that neighboring countries are friendly and work together to maintain security and stability. Building a shared vision is very important to minimize problems that arise in international relations, both bilaterally and multilaterally. The development of the TNI is not intended as a form of updating, but rather as an effort to achieve TNI professional standards based on the vision, mission, Nawacita, and *Poros Maritim Dunia* (PMD). To implement the PMD policy, the government must build a maritime defense force that supports satellite technology and drone systems.

The Ministry of Defense (*Kemhan*) has identified several factors that pose threats to national goals and interests. These threats are determined through a continuous process of strategic analysis that considers data, facts, and situational trends at the global, regional, and national levels. The strategic environment has become increasingly complex and escalating in various parts of the world, reflecting ongoing problems caused by a range of background factors. Many strategic issues in the region have gained global attention due to their dynamic and intensifying nature. Understanding the dynamics of the strategic environment is crucial for formulating national defense policies and strategies that align with government policies related to PMD (*Poros Maritim Dunia*).

The Minister of Defense of Indonesia, Prabowo, asked for an increase in the readiness and professionalism of defense and security in dealing with terrorism, radicalism, and acts of separatism. Also asked to strengthen defense cooperation with Asian countries and other countries. In addition, he asked for the formation of production units within TNI units that are tailored to the needs of optimizing the TNI through war and military operations, as well as military operations other than war. "We must prepare defense areas for large islands independently by preparing reserves of food, water, energy, and other national infrastructure."

Based on the explanation of the National Security Bill, Ministry of Defense (2011), in relation to the perception of threats and efforts to respond to them, it is specifically necessary to explain that what is meant by operational policies and military strategies from the perspective of Indonesia's interests is the determination and determination regarding the development, development, and use of TNI forces. Based on developments in the strategic environment. In relation to the maritime dimension, it is necessary to understand that maritime security issues are not only a matter of law enforcement, but also sea conditions that are safe for use by its users, from various countries, and free from all forms of threats or disturbances. These disturbances include, among other things, threats of violence, such as military threats, piracy, piracy, sabotage of vital objects, and acts of armed terror at sea, and are free from navigational threats, threats to their resources, and threats from violations of law.

Several stages of securitization were carried out by Indonesia as a country that responds to the AUKUS trilateral agreement. Through securitization, it is also proof that Indonesia is also taking action to protect the sovereignty of its country. Considering that the AUKUS agreement will build nuclear submarines for Australia, it is clear that they have different strengths than conventional submarines, so that can be a reason for a counterattack towards neighboring countries, including Indonesia. (Lubis, 2018).

Indonesia benefits from various forms of regional cooperation with countries in the Asia and Pacific Region. These benefits come from various aspects: economic, political, security, social, and cultural. Regional cooperation that Indonesia actively participates in includes: Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), East Asia Summit (EAS), and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). Regional cooperation in the Asia and Pacific

region is defined as a form of cooperation between countries in Asia which includes Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and West Asia; as well as countries in the Pacific which include Australasia, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. However, in its development, the notion of regional is not only interpreted as a geographical area, but also as a political and strategic area.

### 3.3 Indonesian National Defence Readiness in Facing Threats in the Asia-Pacific Region

According to Indonesia's Defense White Paper from 2015, Indonesia has always supported the promotion of peace, security, stability, and prosperity in international relations through an independent and active foreign policy that involves 23 countries, while maintaining its non-aligned status. Indonesia maintains a neutral stance and uses dialogue as a means of resolving international issues, participates in global peacekeeping efforts, and actively works towards reducing international tensions. When it comes to national defense, Indonesia prioritizes the democratic principles of equality and togetherness, seeking to resolve conflicts through mutual agreement as part of its defense diplomacy efforts. The country aims to increase similarities and minimize differences to reduce conflict.

Related to the dynamics of regional geopolitical developments, there are several impacts that need to be anticipated by Indonesia from an early age. Today, issues that often come up in the Asia Pacific region are maritime security, energy security and territorial disputes. Here, Indonesia has a very close relationship with these three issues. The challenge being faced is how to manage issues of developing the strength of the Navy so as not to widen the gap in the balance of power. In fact, this gap triggers those who feel they are stronger to take actions that are seen as threatening regional stability. If Indonesia does not have high bargaining power from the aspect of military strength, especially the Navy, there will be opportunities for repeated acts of harassment and disrespect for Indonesia's maritime sovereignty, especially in waters that are still in dispute with neighboring countries as well as in strategic waters such as choke points and the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI).

Impact on the military field. The development of sea power in the region in the context of securing the national interests of each country will be detrimental to Indonesia if the government does not respond proportionately. Development of sea power (Navy/Indonesia Navy and *Bakamla*/Indonesia Coastguard) must continue to run according to the program Minimum Essential Force (MEF) so that the power unequal distance between Indonesia and other countries in the region does not widen. If widened, this could make a negative contribution to Indonesia's interests in the region, although it is believed that there will be no invasion of Indonesia for the next decade. However, the question and common thought is the struggle for border areas containing energy resources, who can guarantee that there will be no war or armed conflict, even if it is on a small/local scale. Even though it is small-scale and local in nature, as happened between India and China in the highlands of Ladakh Himalayas, between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh, the impact is that the country's sovereignty is threatened.

In the international political arena, Indonesia needs to carefully base the interests of superpower countries, so that Indonesia is not trapped in an arms race which in the end will only have a negative impact on Indonesia. In international diplomacy, Indonesia needs to put forward a balanced approach between the western world represented by the United States and its allies, as well as take the same approach with China and Russia on one side.

Development of land defense is organized to carry out military and non-military defense against leading regional sea powers in the Asia-Pacific region with the principle of active defense to protect national interests. This is carried out by building a national defense posture on an ongoing basis to realize strength, capability and title. The development of military defense positions aims to fill the main components of the MEF (*Minimum Essential Force*) and prepare other defense components by prioritizing the development of maritime defense forces using satellite technology and drone systems.

Indonesia, in terms of defense diplomacy, continues to experience improvement and development plans, as a form of compliance with Indonesia's readiness to face regional threats and instability. AUKUS has become a threat to the state because of the previously described actions and reaped various impacts and responses. Indonesia's defense diplomacy is also a reference to securitization of threats, in addition to prioritizing diplomacy and multilateral negotiations, Indonesia is more focused on developing the defense industry to balance regional issues and prepare itself for regional issues. National defense is also an obligation for all citizens, through a strong defense it will further improve in dealing with various kinds of threats both from within and outside.

Defense diplomacy is a form of strategy in maintaining the security and sovereignty of a country, including Indonesia. The

improvement and development plan for Indonesia's defense diplomacy is an appropriate step in preparing itself to face regional threats and instability, including the impact of the presence of AUKUS. As a country that prioritizes diplomacy and multilateral negotiations, Indonesia understands the importance of maintaining regional stability and overcoming various problems that arise through inter-state cooperation. Therefore, the development of the defense industry is one of the main focuses in efforts to balance regional issues and increase the country's defense capability.

However, it is important to remember that national defense is not only the responsibility of the government, but also an obligation for all citizens. Preparedness in dealing with various kinds of threats both from within and outside can be achieved by building awareness and community participation in efforts to maintain national security and sovereignty. In facing challenges from AUKUS, Indonesia's defense diplomacy can play an important role in seeking a peaceful resolution and avoiding conflicts that are detrimental to both parties. In this case, Indonesia's defense diplomacy can take advantage of existing regional and international cooperation networks, including ASEAN, Non-Aligned and the United Nations, to strengthen Indonesia's diplomatic position in solving security and defense issues. Continuous and sustainable development of Indonesia's defense diplomacy is a strategic effort in facing various security and defense challenges in the region. In an effort to achieve this goal, all elements of society must play an active role and take part in building a comprehensive and holistic national defense readiness.

This preparation was made by the Minister of Defense of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto by modernizing the defense equipment, especially the maritime weapon system with a nominal budget of quite a lot equivalent to IDR 1.75 quadrillion with the support of BUMN and BUMS. With modest defense equipment ownership, Indonesia has not been able to keep up with the constellation of conflict actors in other regions, coupled with the increasingly high regional conflict tendencies, this has become a new urgency and challenge. But on the other hand, the defense of the Indonesian state itself cannot be underestimated because Indonesia is deep *Global Fire Power Military Strength 2021* is ranked 16th out of 140 countries. With significance for the strength of the marine defense system, a total of 282 assets with details; 7 Frigates, 24 Corvettes, 5 Submarines, 179 Patrol Boats. Strengthening the sea dimension defense system itself is a big reason because of Indonesia is an archipelago country with wider access to waters. Indonesia prefers to focus on preparing for defense in maintaining sovereignty in order to achieve the desired goal, because war is not the only path that can be taken to achieve peace, this is in accordance with the principles, If you want peace, prepare for war.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The strategic environment in the Asia Pacific region is currently full of security threats and challenges originating from state and non-state actors. These non-state threats arise from various cases, such as border disputes between countries that have not been resolved properly, the Navy's arms race, and the problem of freedom of sea use (*freedom of navigation*). The implementation of national defense is important to support and protect sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the nation as a whole. The defense of the Indonesian nation state is based on a universal defense system that is not aggressive and not expansive to protect national interests. Indonesia, in terms of defense diplomacy, continues to experience improvement and development plans, as a form of compliance with Indonesia's readiness to face regional threats and instability. Development in the field of international cooperation is directed at increasing bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation, which refers to a foreign policy that is free and active and strengthens its identity as an archipelagic country as well as a maritime country.

The wider expansion of the scope of threats, such as cyber threats and maritime security, demands special attention and preparation in terms of developing defense capabilities. Modernization and increasingly sophisticated military technology require greater investment in purchasing and developing more sophisticated defense equipment. Limited human resources are also a challenge in increasing national defense readiness, especially in terms of developing personnel capabilities and improving the quality of human resources in the defense sector.

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