

## **Indonesian Defense Strategy to Encounter Challenges in the Indo-Pacific (Case Study: Hegemonic War of China and the United States of America in the South China Sea)**



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**ABSTRACT:** As an arena of hegemonic war between China and the United States of America (USA), Indo-Pacific has economic value that can increase conflict in the region. This hegemonic war then cultivated rapidly, as evidenced by the expanded issue through the involvement of other countries such as France, Germany, and England. This research basically examined the actions of Indonesia as a non-claimant country in conducting defense strategy to prevent threats that can disrupt its territory, especially in the North Natuna Sea which is adjacent to the South China Sea as the main theater of this hegemonic war in Indo-Pacific. This study was analysed using qualitative method, descriptive analysis and neorealism perspective. As an effort to maintain territorial sovereignty, especially in the North Natuna Sea which is close to South China Sea, Indonesia had done several defense strategies which can be categorized as internal and external balancing. Internal balancing consists of relocation process of fishermen from North Coast of Java to Natuna, increasing trend of defense budget and particular allocation for the security of North Natuna Sea, and execution of combat exercise. External balancing includes cooperation of joint exercises and national defense industry quality improvement through transfer of technology and knowledge, joint development, as well as acquisitions.

**KEYWORDS:** Hegemonic War, South China Sea, Defense Strategy, Internal and External Balancing, North Natuna Sea

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Indo-Pacific is a marine bio-geographical area that includes the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the Western and Central Pacific Oceans, as well as the Indonesian and Philippine Seas. The geographical area of the Indo-Pacific is still problematic because it depends on the actor and the geographical position of the actor concerned. USA describes the Indo-Pacific as a region that consist of the west coast of USA to the west coast of India. On the other hand, the member states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) describe Indo-Pacific region as an area that includes Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean with ASEAN countries as its midpoint (Anwar, 2020, pp. 111-113). Meanwhile, China views Indo-Pacific as a strategy formed by USA by combining the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean regions to hinder China's rise as well as to maintain its own leadership and interests in the region (Chen, 2018).

The Indo-Pacific is a fighting showground for geopolitical interests because of its strategic values, since the region is known as the centre of 2/3 of the world's economic and trade powers where countries with the largest military budgets in the world such as United States, China, India, Japan, South Korea exist (Pedrason, 2021, p. 90-92). This region is essential because of the growing mobility in the oceans, the Indo-Pacific then became the busiest cross-trade area in the world and became a home for countries with large populations and led to high energy demand. The Indo-Pacific region also has abundant marine wealth, accounts for approximately 30 percent of global fishery production (MoMAF of Indonesia, 2019) and is home to world-class companies, as well as being a vital driving force in world economic growth (DoS of USA, 2019, p. 5). The South China Sea as one of the areas in the Indo-Pacific is one of the busiest international trade routes with a value of USD 3.37 trillion (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020), which is passed by 50 percent of the world's tankers for shipping oil. Several countries have the existence of the South China Sea as an export and import trade route, which places the region as a major factor in the supply of fuel and raw materials to surrounding countries. With an area of 3.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, the South China Sea is estimated to have oil reserves of 11 billion barrels (bbl), natural gas of 190 trillion cubic meters, and hydrocarbon reserves of 105 billion bbl (Xu, 2014).

### **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was carried out using qualitative methods with descriptive analysis regarding to the situation that occurred in the Indo-Pacific, especially the South China Sea which was the focus of the research. This descriptive research is executed through

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the process of finding a problem that can be used as an object of research through social issues or phenomena; and mapping of previous research and theories that can be used to analyse the object of research (White & Sabarwal, 2014, pp. 1-2). Qualitative methods rely on observations of research objects whose findings are not obtained through statistical procedures or computational forms, although the data can be calculated and conveyed through numerical translation. Qualitative methods and descriptive analysis allow analysis oriented to exploration, discovery, to inductive logic to explain a phenomenon that is the object of research (Nugrahani, 2014, pp. 31-32). This research involves data collection techniques from literature studies, which are the basis for the information needed by researchers regarding phenomena that occur in the Indo-Pacific, especially the South China Sea (Sarwono, 2006, pp. 223-228). This literature study utilizes the data obtained in the form of books, journals, research reports, newspapers, scientific articles, documents, and interview results found on websites to form a comprehensive understanding regarding to hegemonic war between China and USA, as well as Indonesia's defense strategy to encounter the aggressiveness of the war and protect its national security.

### **III. LITERATURE REVIEW: NEOREALISM**

Neorealism or structural realism was formed by Kenneth Waltz in 1979 who described that structure of the international system is the fundamental background of relations between countries. The actions of a state do not come from the instinctive influence of an individual or a state, but because of an anarchic international structure. The aim of the state is to survive by increasing its own strength and capability (self-help), where the stronger the ability of a country, the less likely it is that the country is dominated by a stronger state (Waltz, 1979, p. 111).

Furthermore, Mearsheimer elaborated that in an anarchic international system, there is no enforcement of rules and entities other than the state which can impose a rule on a particular country. This structure results each country will not recognize the intentions of other countries in taking an action, where this can be analysed as a threat to that country. In maintaining its existence, the state as a rational actor will determine strategic policies by considering the external situation, thus these policies can take full advantage of attempts to survive. The manifestation of state power is military capability, to dominate other countries or as a form of defense (Toft, 2005, p. 383).

Neorealism differentiates state behaviour in increasing its power through defensive realism and offensive realism. Using defensive realism, the state increases its power not to become a new hegemon, but to maintain its existence in the structure of the international system (Synder, 2002, p. 152). While offensive realism believes that every country increases its power to become hegemonic power which aims to dominate the international system so that the country can survive (Yani, Monratama, & Mahyudin, 2017, pp. 34-35). Defensive and offensive realism can be summarized through basic predictions, namely offense-defense balance which will prioritize peace, cooperation and balance of power (Glaser & Kaufmann, 1998, pp. 47-48).

Balance of Power shows that the state will be able to maintain its survival in the structure of the international system by preventing one country from gaining greater power to dominate other countries. Balancing is a strategy of a country to increase its military capability, which is carried out both internally and externally, and aims to strengthen the country and balance the power of a larger state (Walt, 1985, pp. 4-5). Balancing is a common thing for a country to implement because there is freedom of action offered by this strategy. Each country balances to increase and balance its power with other countries without having to succumb to the hegemony of a stronger state (Walt, 1985, p. 15). Balancing is carried out in a self-supporting situation where the state can only depend on itself through internal and external balancing.

Internal balancing is carried out by one country through increasing its economic and military capabilities as well as conducting operations to prevent inequality with other countries, this becomes a deterrent strategy against a larger power besar (Kaufman, Little, & Wohlforth, 2007, pp. 9-10). External balancing will lead to a defense cooperation framework that is used to balance the power of a larger country, and strengthen a country's military capability. Defense cooperation generally begins through the implementation of defense diplomacy which will take several forms of cooperation such as alliances, coalitions, strategic partnerships, and the security community (Wilkins, 2011, p. 54).

### **IV. SOUTH CHINA SEA: CHINA'S HISTORICAL CLAIM, AMBITION, AND AGGRESSIVE OCCUPYING STRATEGY**

China uses the nine-dash line based on a map that was first issued by the Chinese government in 1947 to claim South China Sea, which in fact intersects with the Exclusive Economic Zone of other countries in the South China Sea area based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. (UNCLOS). This claim is strengthened by historical justification in the form of Chinese legal basis which includes the 1992 People's Republic of China (PRC) Law concerning the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone and the 1998 PRC Law concerning the Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf (Broderick, 2015, p. 1). China utilizes the existing legal basis in asserting its maritime rights in the South China Sea by making the area part of China's maritime boundaries and traditional fishing grounds. China's nine-dash line claim in fact overlaps with the Exclusive Economic

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Zone (EEZ) of other countries in the Indo-Pacific region such as Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, to Vietnam (Fravel, 2011, p. 294).

In formulating policy, China has a hierarchy that separates the ultimate goals of the policy. Expected results will be divided into vital interests, important interests and general interests. The South China Sea issue is included in important interests which requires the government to take protective measures, as well as carry out bilateral negotiations with countries that can threaten the stability of the South China Sea (Costlow, 2012, p. 13). As one of national important interests, China enforces assertive policies such as island-building and military base construction, prohibiting fishing in the region, catching foreign fishermen and increasing the intensity of fishing activities. maritime patrols in the South China Sea.

China has executed reclamation on islands in the South China Sea, covering an area of 3,200 hectares since 2013. China has also completed coastal infrastructure at four small outposts in the Spratly Islands in early 2016. These outposts include Johnson, Gayen, Hughes, and Cuarteron Reefs, which are equipped with administrative buildings, weapons bases and cannon base sensors. In 2018, China developed anti-ship and anti-aircraft missile systems at Spratly Islands outposts. This missile system is a high-capacity ground-based weapon system that China uses in disputed areas. Military infrastructure has been built at three outposts in the Spratly Islands, namely Coral Fiery Cross, Subi, and Mischief since early 2018. This infrastructure includes radar facilities, missile defense, communications, aviation, ports, weapons bases, barracks, administrative buildings and military base for the navy and air. With the reclamation actions carried out by China in the seven Spratly Islands outposts, China has automatically increased its ability to detect and maintain its sovereignty in the South China Sea from claims by neighboring countries, as well as maintain a military and paramilitary presence in the region (DoD of USA, 2019, p. 75).

Furthermore, China has 20 posts on the Paracel Islands with the reclamation and construction of a military base and port on Woody Island, a helicopter base on Duncan Island, port development on the North Island, and the reclamation of approximately 8 km on Tree Island. Woody Island is said to be the center of China's installations on the Paracel Islands as evidenced by the routine training of strategic bombers, as well as the construction of the Haiyang Shiyou 981 oil drilling rig in 2014. China's strategy in Paracel Islands focuses this area as an anti-submarine area by deploying ASW Z-18F helicopter (Lee, 2016).

At the tactical level, China uses a cabbage-strategy that mobilizes all maritime power to surround the contested area to block all access in and out so that China has full rights over the area. This is done to minimize the threat of other countries in an effort to expand their territorial area by reclamation and construction of artificial islands (Miracola, 2018). This strategy has in fact been implemented by China at the Philippines' Scarborough Shoal. The problem in Scarborough Shoal has been discussed in the International Court of Arbitration with the result of the discussion that Scarborough Shoal is a coral island and does not have rights to the EEZ. The ownership status of Scarborough Shoal is held by the Philippines because the International Court of Arbitration does not recognize the historical claims used by China (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016). But Chinese President Xi Jinping rejected the rule that had been set up by the International Court of Arbitration, saying it was unwarranted and sent warships to the region (Phillips, Holmes, & Bowcott, 2016). China then executed Cabbage Strategy, to block access of every Filipino fisherman who intended to enter the Scarborough Shoal area. The Philippine Supreme Court asked Duterte not to make comments indicating that the Philippines was willing to let the territory fall under Chinese control. Despite receiving pressure from inside his country, Duterte stated that the Philippines had no power to fight Chinese occupation of Scarborough Shoal. Duterte stated that:

**"We cannot stop China from doing this, the Americans were not able to stop it. Sir, what will I do? Declaring a war against China? I can, but we'll all lose our military and policemen tomorrow, and we are a destroyed nation."**

(The Maritime Executive, 2017)

The problem at Scarborough Shoal shows China's hegemony over countries around the South China Sea, even countries allied with the US such as the Philippines do not have sufficient capabilities to fight it. With China's maritime power and the implementation of the cabbage strategy, the object countries can do nothing but accept China's assertive actions in its sovereign territory. Although UNCLOS 1982 and The Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) have binding and coercive powers, China can still continue to make claims in the South China Sea and threaten the sovereignty of several countries in Southeast Asia. If China's reclamation and salami slicing strategy is not taken seriously, then China will slowly gain full hegemony in the South China Sea.

### **V. HEGEMONIC WAR BETWEEN CHINA-USA AND THE EXPANSION OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA CONFLICT IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION**

By the end of the cold war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, USA turned into the only power in the international system that made it a unipolar power (Posen, 2019, p. 347). The unipolar situation allows stronger countries to influence weaker countries, which means that hegemony of the strongest state power becomes an important element in a unipolar international system (Degterev, 2019, p. 410). In order to deal with this situation, weaker countries have a tendency to unite in one power, which is

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called a balancing act which aims to prevent inequality with other countries and balance the power of a larger state (Wilkins, 2011, p. 54).

USA as a unipolar power is the object of balancing strategy from weaker countries in the international system. One country which implements balancing act that continues to develop its strength is China, where China has become one of the countries with military and economic capabilities that have a global influence, this can be analysed from China's trade growth which has increased far from 1980, amounted from USD 40 billion to USD 4 trillion in 2015 (Morrison, 2019). China then expanded its hegemony in the South China Sea region, which was indicated by China's claim South China Sea using its map-based nine-dash line which was first issued by the Chinese government in 1947. China's nine-dash line claim in fact overlaps with the EEZ of other countries in the Indo-Pacific region such as Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, to Vietnam (Fravel, 2011, p. 294).

It is feared that the expansion of hegemony and the rapid growth of China will lead to a major and prolonged conflict if it is not handled quickly, thus USA decided to penetrate the Indo-Pacific region with Free and Open Indo-Pacific foreign policy announced by the President of the United States, Donald. Trump in November 2017. Free and Open Indo-Pacific has two meanings, free is a concept used to describe freedom against coercive actions by other countries, respect for sovereignty, compliance with regulations in solving problems, while open refers to on the openness of public routes which include sea or air, openness of trade routes and in investment activities (Pitakdumrongkit, 2019, p. 8).

In the defense sphere, USA executed the Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) strategy which was implemented up to 23 times in 2019 (Larter, 2020) with its strategic target which is deploying 60 percent of the United States naval fleet to the Indo-Pacific region by 2020 with the deployment of USS Montgomery, USS Barry, USS Bunker Hill, USS Mustin, and USS Wayne E. Meyer (Iswara, 2020). This strategy is the main step to ensure the presence of USA in the region, by conducting guard operations within 12 miles of disputed islands to balance China's military hegemony in the South China Sea (Broderick, 2015, p. 9). USA is not the only country that is trying to decrease China's hegemony in the South China Sea region, but there are also other countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK) which involved in implementing FONOPs to decline China's claims to the region (Akita, 2021). This has caused the expansion of the South China Sea case, which previously only involved countries in the Indo-Pacific, is now a global challenge with the involvement of other major powers which are trying to cease the growth of China's hegemony in the South China Sea.

The involvement of countries globally in the South China Sea case has in fact become a challenge in resolving border disputes in the Indo-Pacific. China continuously reminds other countries (outsiders) not to get involved in resolving the South China Sea problem, because these countries only take offensive actions without actually considering about its impact on the efforts that have been made by the countries involved in the conflict. Other countries such as USA, France, Germany, and Britain have only slowed the process of resolving border disputes in the South China Sea by continuing to increase the intensity of the conflict through offensive and aggressive means in the region.

**“We think non-regional countries should not deliberately amplify such differences or disputes left from the past. Non-regional countries should also not make use of these differences to sow distrust between China and ASEAN countries.”**  
– Prime Minister of China, Wang Yi (Petty, 2021).

USA, France, Germany, and the UK aggressive actions have triggered the emergence of a new approach from China, namely Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy. This diplomatic approach is named after the Chinese patriotic film, Wolf Warrior, which enhances Chinese people's sense of nationalism and patriotism. Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy marks the transition of China's conservative, passive, and humble diplomacy to become more assertive, proactive, and high-profile (Zhu, 2020). Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy is reflected as the efforts of Chinese diplomats to defend their national interests in a confrontational way, both through aggressive words and actions. Wolf-warrior diplomacy is performed to secure China's existence in the international system through the principle of self-help, which is proven by China's actions to increase its defense budget by 6.6% from USD 167 billion to USD 178.2 in order to secure the country's sovereignty and security (Yeo, 2020). China also issued a unilateral moratorium on fishing in the South China Sea as a country that claims most of the region (Xinhua, 2020) and enforced China Coast Guard (CCG) Law which authorized its maritime law-enforcement fleets to use lethal force on foreign ships operating in China's waters including the disputed waters in South China Sea (Trung, 2021). In addition, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Civil Affairs, China named 80 islands, coral reefs, and seamounts in the South China Sea (AFP, 2020).

## **VI. CHALLENGES IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA AND INDONESIA'S DEFENSE STRATEGY**

From the cases that occurred in the Indo-Pacific, it can be concluded that Indonesia faces threats in the form of Chinese assertive claims and actions in the South China Sea, and the ambitions of USA, Britain, Germany, and France to demonstrate their existence in disputed areas using FONOPs strategy with the assumption that the South China Sea is an international water (CNN Indonesia, 2020). As a non-claimant state, Indonesia has North Natuna Sea which is close to South China Sea as the theatre of



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conflict between China and USA in Indo-Pacific region. China asserts that North Natuna Sea as Indonesia's EEZ within 200 nautical miles (nm) overlaps with an area of 50,000 km<sup>2</sup> on the nine-dash line in which Chinese fishermen have used to fish for centuries (Nugroho, 2017). This overlapping case has become the basis for trespassing committed by Chinese fishing vessels in the region, involving coastguard and warship for protecting illegal fishing as well as intruding actions in the North Natuna Sea (Andryanto, 2021). USA also executed border violations in the North Natuna Sea by the involvement of aircraft carriers USS Princeton (CG-59), USS Nimitz (CVN-68), and USS Sterett (DDG-104) (Ramdhani, 2021). USA and China have become a challenge for Indonesia to secure the North Natuna Sea area which is close to conflicted area between two countries in South China Sea, thus Indonesia ought to establish and execute defense strategy that can enforce sovereign rights in the North Natuna Sea.

Defense strategy is an action plan designed to realize the national interest, specifically to protect the sovereignty of the state and the safety of nations. Defense strategies can also be used as a response to various spectrums of crises and serve as a guide for countries to deal with uncertainties in the strategic environment. The defense strategy has an impact on the development of country's power, national defense, the organization of defense elements and the utilization of technological advances (MoD of Indonesia, 2015). Indonesia's defense strategy is performed based on active-defense perspective. Active-defense is a manifestation of inactive and non-expansive defense which focuses on military and non-military defense by utilizing the role of the national military and civilians as an effort to prevent assertive actions from other countries that can threaten Indonesia's national interests (Risman, Sumertha, & Widodo, 2018, p. 37-58). In order to deal with the threats in South China Sea, especially North Natuna Sea, a layered defense strategy should be implemented through the universal people's security defense system (*Sistem Pertahanan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta / Sishankamrata*) (Setiawan, Mantri, & Junaidi, 2020, p. 155-167). The synergy between military and civilians plays an important role in the success of the active-defense strategy, as a deterrence effect and a proof of Indonesia's existence as a way to encounter military threats which happens in North Natuna Sea as a part of South China Sea.

### INDONESIA'S DEFENSE STRATEGY: EXISTENCE, DETERRENCE, AND NORTH NATUNA SEA TERRITORIAL SOVEREIGNTY

The North Natuna Sea is included in the coverage of East Natuna oil and gas block with an area of 4,165 km<sup>2</sup>, and the depth of 60-150 meters. The North Natuna Sea consists of Block D-Alpha which has natural gas reserves of 46 trillion cubic feet, crude oil for 500 million bbl of oil equivalent, and its fish potential (Pertamina, 2016). This indicates that the strategic value of North Natuna Sea consists of the potential natural resources such as fisheries, oil, gas, and its strategic position where this region is one of the international shipping lanes in Indonesia (Mahabror & Hidayat, 2018). Concerning about trespassing which was done by both China and USA, Indonesia had done several defense strategies based on active-defense perspective with the main points such as existence and deterrence whether it is done as internal or external balancing.

#### A. INTERNAL BALANCING DEFENSE STRATEGY

As an effort of internal balancing to emphasize the existence of Indonesia to protect territorial sovereignty, Indonesia has been moving >30 Gross Tons (GT) trawl-dismantled vessels from North Coast of Java (Pantura) to Natuna Sea (Nasution, Saputro, & Mursid, 2020). Relocation process was carried out in stages, with the transfer of 300 vessels in 2016, 100 vessels in 2017, and will be continued after fishing base has been built in Natuna (Rosana, 2020). Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia provided stimulus to Natuna local communities and Pantura fishermen in the form of vessels and fishing gear as well as alternative livelihood training (Natuna: vessels <10 GT, productive economic training, fisherman insurance, fisherman identification cards, ease of land-licence certification; Pantura: vessels >30 GT, fisherman insurance and training on new fishing gear to improve fishermen's skills) (KKPNews, 2017) (Akbar & Halim, 2020). These fishermen were also educated with state defense (*bela negara*) training through The National Military of Indonesia (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia / TNI*) Program which is *TNI Manunggal Masuk Desa / TMMD* since 2017 by the District Military Command 0318/Natuna. TNI collaborated with the Regional Government of Natuna Regency in making a joint program across Natuna Regency to strengthen territorial sovereignty by involving civilians as a supporting force based on *Sishankamrata* (Natuna News, 2021).

Indonesia defense budget also experienced an increasing trend since 2018, from Rp106.8 trillion to IDR 127.35 trillion in 2020 (Zahara & Rizky, 2020) then increased IDR 137.3 trillion in 2021 (Pusparisa, 2021). Indonesia allocated a defense budget of IDR 12.2 trillion to strengthen maritime security in Natuna based on Presidential Regulation Number 85 of 2021 concerning the Government's Work Plan for 2022. This defense budget will be used to fulfill the adequacy of Indonesia's Navy (*TNI Angkatan Laut / TNI AL*) weapon system equipment in Natuna by 40.59 percent and marine security equipment belonging to Indonesian Sea and Coast Guard (*Badan Keamanan Laut / Bakamla*) by 44.17 percent (Ziyadi, 2021). Increasing conflict and threat escalation in South China Sea as well as trespassing which was taken place in North Natuna Sea are considered as vital points of this enhancement and utilization of Indonesia's defense budget as an effort of internal balancing and establish deterrence effect.

Indonesia conducts naval combat exercises almost every year in the North Natuna Sea to strengthen its deterrence power by involving TNI as its focal point, specifically The Fleet Command I (*Komando Armada / Koarmada I*) or better known as the

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West Indonesia Fleet Command (*Komando Armada Barat / Koarmabar*). Koarmabar is one of the main commands under TNI AL which oversees 5 main bases (*Pangkalan Utama AL / Lantamal*), namely a) Lantamal I in Medan; b) Lantamal II in Padang; c) Lantamal III in Jakarta; d) Lantamal IV in Tanjung Pinang and e) Lantamal XII in Pontianak. Koarmabar operational unit consists of the Fleet Combat Group I (*Gugus Tempur Laut Armada I / Guspurla Koarmada I*) and the Fleet Marine Security Group I (*Guskamla Koarmada I*). Lantamal IV, which is located in Tanjung Pinang, oversees the Naval Base (*Pangkalan AL / Lanal*) in Natuna Regency, namely Lanal Ranai. Lanal Ranai is the main base for Indonesian navy ships (KRI and KAL) such as KRI Krait, KRI Welang and KAL Anaconda as well as a supporting base for other ships currently operating or conducting operations in the Natuna Sea. Naval combat exercise which had been carried out can be described as follows:

Year	Exercise	Location	Involved Elements
2016	<i>Latihan Geladi Tugas Tempur (Glagaspur)</i>	Lampah Strait and Natuna Sea	6 Navy Ships
2017	<i>Latihan Siaga Tempur Koarmabar</i>	Natuna Sea	23 Navy Ships 2 Tactical Reconnaissance Aircraft 1 Helicopter 2 Frogman Forces Command Teams 2 Diving Teams (Underwater Rescue Service) Naval Aviation Centre Team Health and Medical Team
2018	<i>Latihan Tempur Laut</i>	North Natuna Sea	5 Navy Ships 1 Tactical Reconnaissance Aircraft Lanal Batam Lanal Ranai Lanal Tarempa
2021	Glagaspur	Natuna Sea	26 Navy Ships 17 Aircrafts 28 Marine Combat Vehicles

Since early 2021, Indonesia has located four navy ships to operate routine patrols in the North Natuna Sea as an effort to emphasize existence and deterrence power. With a focus on protecting territorial sovereignty in the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia has also increased surveillance attempts to encounter escalating conflict tensions between China and the United States as well as trespassing by carrying out the Segara-21 standby operation in November. This operation will involve 5 navy ships and 1 aircraft type Beechcraft King Air 350i U-6401, which will constantly strengthen routine patrols in the North Natuna Sea (Afrizal, 2021).

### B. EXTERNAL BALANCING DEFENSE STRATEGY

Through the existing international cooperation, Indonesia performed joint exercises with other countries to improve TNI AL capability, comprehend tactics, and at the same time become a deterrence power as a show-of-force attempt because these exercises cover the use of weapons owned by both countries in securing maritime areas. In 2020, TNI AL conducted a joint exercise with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) from the Southwest of Jemaja Island to the North Natuna Sea using the passing exercise method. Guspurla Koarmada I deployed KRI John Lie-358, as well as KRI Sutanto-377, and JMSDF deployed the JS Kaga DDH 184 helicopter along with the destroyer JS Ikazuchi DD 107. Joint exercise began with Rendezvous (RV) in the Indonesian EEZ, then continued with salute and greetings between Commander of Guspurla Koarmada I Laksma TNI Dato Rusman and Commander of Escort Flotilla 2 JMSDF Rear Admiral Konno Yasushige. The exercise emphasizes maneuvering procedures in logistics transfer, namely the RAS Approach, and is supported with tactical maneuvers and farewell passes (Yahya, 2020).

Indonesia also conducted joint exercise with Singapore, between TNI AL and *The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN)* in 2021 which took place in Batam and Natuna Sea as well as Singapore Strait. TNI AL deployed KRI Diponegoro-265, KRI Malahayati-362, and CASA Aircraft while RSN deployed RSS Tenacious-71, RSS Justice-18, and F-50 RSN Aircraft. The purpose of this joint exercise is to improve quality and professionalism of Indonesia and Singapore as well as to strengthen the cooperation between two countries and support a positive value to maintain security stability in the Southeast Asian region. This exercise emphasized photo exercise, search and rescue exercise, VOI tracking exercise, over the horizon exercise, replenishment at sea, killer tomato surface firing target exercise, encounter exercise, flash exercise, and flag hoist exercise which were done using field maneuver method (Mazrieva, 2021).

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In order to strengthen national defense, especially in the maritime defense industry, Indonesia also conducted various foreign cooperations with South Korea, Netherlands, Sweden, and Italy. Indonesia cooperates with South Korea in the form of transfer of technology (ToT) for Type 209/1400 Submarine (Changbogo) between Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME) and PT PAL Indonesia. ToT was implemented in stages, the first 2 submarines were fully built at DSME involving 186 personnel from PT. PAL, followed by a third ship that has been built at DSME on a module-by-module basis and was assembled at PT PAL Indonesia under the name Alugoro-405 Submarine. Through this cooperation, Indonesia is known as the first country in Southeast Asia that can manufacture a submarine (Idris, 2020). Another partner from South Korea is POSCO Daewoo Cooperation, through a material package procurement agreement with SPER agreement number No. 03/10000/I/2017 which was signed on January 21 2017. This agreement aims to build a landing platform dock ship ordered by the Procurement Service of the Indonesian Navy Headquarters, the construction of strategic sealift vessel 123, nuclear-powered boats, SEWACO systems, tugboats, and hospital auxiliary vessels (PT PAL Indonesia, 2019).

Indonesia also signed a contract with the Dutch defense industry, namely Damen Schelde Naval Shipbuilding (DSNS) for the procurement of missile destroyers ship in the form of joint development and ToT. The PKR-10514 is the first over-water warship that was first built in Indonesia using a modular construction system system, with a length of 105.11 meters and a width of 14.2 meters and the speed of 28 knots which can sail up to 5000 nm with a sailing endurance of up to 20 days. This ship is equipped with the SEWACO (sensor, weapon, and command) system and is capable of conducting sea-surface, underwater, and network-based warfare (MoD of Indonesia, 2017). Indonesia then signed a Teaming Agreement Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (TA MRO) with Sweden, represented by BAE Systems BOFORS AB on 27 May 2021. This collaboration relates to ease of access in the repair and maintenance process of Indonesia warships and patrol boats, as well as transfer of technology and knowledge transfer to improve the quality of development of Indonesia defense industry (MoFA of Indonesia, 2021). Indonesia is also with the Italian defense industry, namely Fincantieri for the acquisition of six new FREMM class frigates, former Maestrale class frigates, and logistical support needed since June 2021 (Iqbal, 2021).

### VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The unpredictable changes of hegemonic competition between major powers in the Indo-Pacific region increase the urgency to keep this region safe and avoid the emergence of a great power that dominates the region. North Natuna Sea, as an area which is close to South China Sea as main theater of conflict in Indo-Pacific has been being under threat which is performed by either China and USA. The assertiveness of both countries should be considered as a challenge along with growing tension of conflict and internalization phase of South China Sea conflict. In order to encounter these challenges, Indonesia as a central actor must realize its readiness against threat to territorial sovereignty that can occur at any time, due to aggressive actions carried out by major powers in the Indo-Pacific Region. Indonesia had done several defense strategies which can be characterized as internal and external balancing based on active-defense perspective and Sishankamrata through the involvement of civilians and military. These strategies were implemented to emphasize the existence and deterrence power of Indonesia regarding to territorial sovereignty of North Natuna Sea as an area which is full of potential to fulfill the welfare of nations and the state.

Since hegemonic war between China and USA has been taking place in Southeast Asia, Indonesia should stand as a natural leader of ASEAN. Indonesia should be a driving force for defense efforts to encounter challenges in the Indo-Pacific, especially the South China Sea by highlighting a) implementation of diplomacy to accelerate the preparation of the Code of Conduct (CoC) between China and ASEAN to minimize China's assertive actions in the South China Sea; b) establishment of a confidence building measure (CBM) by creating a cooperation for joint patrols in the EEZ area of each ASEAN member country, this will increase the existence of member countries in the South China Sea and prevent the expansion of territorial claims by China as well as aggressiveness of USA, France, Germany, and UK; c) supporting the establishment of potential cooperation to improve maritime security, namely the ASEAN Navy Chiefs' Meeting (ANCM) to serve as the ASEAN Navy as a form of ASEAN Naval Cooperation. ANCM can be an ideal mechanism to be developed into an ASEAN Navy with the involvement of every member country that has a navy, where the ASEAN Navy will also be a platform to realize CBM and capacity building to deal with various threats in the territorial waters together; and d) improving the quality of the armed forces of ASEAN member countries through capacity building in joint training programs in the form of war exercises or non-war exercises, this strategy is used to form a deterrence force against China, USA, France, Germany, and UK.

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