

The Conflict of South China Sea and Impact on Indonesia's National Interest



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ABSTRACT: The South China Sea is a strategic water area and abundant in natural resources. China's historical claims and activities in the South China Sea have given rise to territorial disputes between China and countries around the South China Sea. Disputes over the territorial waters of the South China Sea are a challenge for regional stability, including Indonesia. This dispute poses a threat to the defense of the sovereignty of the Indonesian state because the contested location is near the Indonesian border, namely the territorial waters of the Natuna Islands. This paper uses a normative juridical approach which uses secondary data with descriptive analytical and qualitative research specifications. The results of this study concluded that the cause of conflict in the waters of the South China Sea is because each country has its interests to be realized to benefit from the conflict that occurs and for Indonesia as a mediating country it can continue to be maintained throughout the conflict in the waters of the South China Sea relating to the archipelago, security, and guaranteeing the freedom of international shipping and most importantly the national interest of Indonesia is not harmed, especially in protecting the country's sovereign territory, namely the territorial waters of the Natuna Islands.

KEYWORDS: South China Sea; Conflict; Impact; Indonesia.

A. PRELIMINARY

The South China Sea whose area consists of land and waters from two large island groups, namely the Paracels and the Spratlys, and the banks of the Macclesfield River and Scarborough Reef which consists of a wide area from Singapore starting from the Malacca Strait to the Taiwan Strait (Martin Sieff, 2012). In terms of territory and history, there are countries such as Taiwan, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, China, and the Philippines that have participated in disputes that have mutually prosecuted the territorial waters. Indonesia is not involved in this water dispute after the absolute claim issued by the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the South China Sea area in 2012.

The South China Sea is one of the maritime areas that has rich ocean potential with great value, both on the offshore mining side and on the fishery side (Castro, 2015; Glaser 2015). With the research that has been carried out by China, there is a sense of optimism related to the existence of oil reserves of more than 213 billion barrels or it can be said that 10 times the oil reserves of the United States. There is also the Energy Information Administration or EIA which is owned by America which provides information if the largest oil reserves in the South China Sea area come from natural gas which is the same as the oil reserves owned by the state of Qatar which is calculated by calculating about 900 trillion cubic feet (Roza, Nainggolan, & Muhammad, 2013).

The absolute claims that have been carried out by the People's Republic of China (PRC) over all the waters of the South China Sea are now causing concern for countries that can make claims or countries that cannot make claims around them, as well as countries outside the security area of the territorial waters. This worry is increasing which in turn will lead to tensions, resulting from military actions, intimidation and provocations that occur in the territorial waters as well as the diplomatic arena. Military action in the disputed waters is increasing and is even leading to the emergence of problems that have a low scale (low intensity conflict) but are still wide open with a higher intensity (high intensity conflict) if a permanent solution to this problem is not found. There are three things that make the South China Sea one of the water areas that can easily cause big problems recently and in the future. First, the South China Sea is a water that has the potential for abundant natural resources, especially in oil and other energy sources, which is coupled with the existence of clusters of islands in the vicinity which are currently being contested by countries in the vicinity such as Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Philippines, China, Malaysia, and Taiwan. Second, because the South China Sea is located on a route traversed by various international ships in the Malacca Strait, which in this strait is the busiest route in the world and is one of the routes that connects commerce starting from Europe to Asia and also America to Asia and vice versa which pass through the territorial waters of several important regional countries, namely Asia Pacific, East Asia and also

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Southeast Asia, so that apart from countries that can make claims to the South China Sea, several countries located in the South China Sea, such as Singapore and Indonesia, to the United States also has an interest in maintaining security and stability in the South China Sea.

Shipping activities that take place in the South China Sea as well as the implementation of a very dynamic economic development, make the role of the South China Sea increasingly an important route for both claiming and non-claiming countries, as well as some foreign countries and sensitive to any changes. The form of its military power in some of these countries and countries located outside the region that have interests. So, in every action of force from the armed forces, especially in the navy, it looks offensive to each country that will carry out the enactment of the reaction from countries whose interests feel threatened.

Then thirdly, due to the rapid economic growth in the Asian region, especially in China and the relatively declining economic growth in the European region and the United States, which made several countries try to acquire or seize the area from the South China Sea. In this case, the United States and China continue to strive to safeguard their energy security interests with the aim of controlling territorial waters which since ancient times have been accepted by means of compromise through several diplomatic channels for joint control through efforts to prevent themselves (self-restraint) to anticipate the occurrence of armed attacks in these waters, but until now more frequent violations are carried out intensively to show their power and also the need and use military force.

Judging from the important position of the South China Sea which until now there are still frequent problems and the implications that are large in the days ahead and if there has been an armed conflict in the territorial waters, it means that the research that has been carried out will later discuss and conduct analysis. Of the causes and the impacts resulting from the conflict which has been estimated in a comprehensive manner. The State of Indonesia itself, which is not a claimant country that has an interest but an absolute claim that the People's Republic of China (PRC) wants to implement over the entirety of the South China Sea waters which consists of all islands outside or inside, participates in threatening the interests and sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. Owned by Indonesia which is in the waters of the Natuna Islands which is part of the archipelago province. With the existence of a claim that is absolutely threatened but overall, the interests of Indonesia as a maritime country are based on the concept of the Archipelago Insight whose existence is honorable based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982, especially on the right to manage the Exclusive Economic Zone area (EEZ) to 200 (two hundred) nautical miles.

Based on this background, the authors found the following problems: First, what is cause of the South China Sea conflict; second, what is impact of the conflict in South China Sea on Indonesia's interests.

This research on the South China Sea conflict is normative juridical research, namely a research method whose legal basis is based on library sources or secondary data. In this approach, information will be obtained from various fields related to research. The research specifications used are descriptive-analytical research specifications, which aim to explain the causes of a problem that arises and its impact. This descriptive explanation will later explain about all problems starting from the economic, security, and geostrategic perspective of the country that has an interest in territorial claims and also those who have an analytical interest will add to the explanation in a critical way of the existence of a problem that has arisen. First, data will be collected through a literature study using various sources of information that will report on the occurrence of an event and related to the development of the conflict in the South China Sea. In this study, the information obtained from electronic media and print media is needed. The literature study data is used in the maximum possible way to provide an acceptable explanation for the research questions that have been asked. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative methods. To be able to achieve the predetermined target, namely the purpose of carrying out this research, the researchers analyzed the data using several perspectives, so that later they were able to provide various policy alternatives.

B. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Conflict Causes of South China Sea

The background of South China Sea conflict can be seen from the historical claims of territorial control in ancient times by several traditional rulers who have fought for ownership claims from the same kingdom or country. But when viewed from the involvement and interests of the countries that follow it, there are countries in the region, whether ASEAN members or not, as well as countries outside the region that are implementing the country's interests. If viewed from the intensity, the conflict that occurred in the South China Sea can be categorized as a conflict of a low scale, but in the process of developing in the future, if it cannot be managed and find effective solutions, it can cause wider problems and create an armed conflict between countries in the South China Sea area. In terms of the area of the incident, the problems that often occur and occur repeatedly are at several points in the waters of the South China Sea which are in the Southeast Asia region, and usually occur in areas that can also be identified as East Asia. Can be said as a regional conflict (regional conflict).

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Viewed from the liberal aspect, which emphasizes more on a universal and rational approach, national entities when forming a state and nation, their rationality is always based on steps to work on an interest, because that is where the potential balance of the existence of several interests seeks to achieve. The consequence is that cooperation is the only point of connection between nations and humans when establishing international relations (Longman, Pearson, 2001). In this case, the role of the government is very important, but the centralization of its role can be bad so that the space for freedom will remain important and become one of the things that is politically in the order of supremacy so that every individual between state entities and nations can make a decision or even the right policies and good.

If the balance of interests between humans and state and nation entities is established, humans will not have a goal or interest to produce war. Likewise, there is an act of respect and respect for differences of opinion in democracy and pluralism diversity will occur when there is no centralization of power or authority in making a policy decision, namely the distribution of each authority or influence of each actor must be balanced which in policy decision making is not only focused and focused on one orientation of the power of the state government, but all the actors involved (Longman, Pearson, 2001). So when rationality becomes a characteristic of the approach, decision makers will always be able to pay attention to what is the basis or rights of each one. Several countries, namely parties with territorial interests over the South China Sea in the case of overlapping claims, stated that they did not want the solution that the PRC government (People's Republic of China) wanted, namely bilateral and unilateral solutions, but rather they wanted a multilateral solution that was deemed appropriate to be able to overcome the problem. the claim.

Disputes on opposing territorial claims so far cannot be decided and dismissed from the point of view of both the assessment and the measurement of boundaries where when viewed from each point of view the country concerned will produce different and different results that are difficult to identify between the EEZ, continental shelf, baselines, or other maritime boundary delimitation method (I Made Andi Arsana, 2007). The case of claims to the South China Sea area became more prominent after the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) made an absolute claim that damaged the security order called a security order where the existence of this security order is a system and ensures stability of interaction.

2. The Impact of South China Sea Conflict on Indonesia's National Interest

In a conflict that occurs, each country concerned and involved with this conflict certainly has an interest. All those involved in the South China Sea dispute must have a strategy of interest that they want to realize to be able to get an advantage in the ongoing dispute and minimize the chance of loss, including Indonesia itself who wants to realize an interest to achieve its goals, especially if it inflames and requires funds that can be said fairly large.

It is difficult to deny that the fact is that the South China Sea area is a water with a million benefits that are considered very important for life, especially in Indonesia such as in the field of Indonesian economic activities where the real impact that can be felt on the operation of the export and import of goods sector is because the South China Sea is wrong. One entrance to the waterway that leads to Indonesia to carry out economic activities. Thus, due to the conflict, Indonesia will certainly find it difficult because the activities of export-import vessels are limited so that economic activities, especially exports and imports of goods, will be hampered.

The economic value of Indonesia's export-import trade in the South China Sea area reaches US\$5 trillion (five trillion US dollars) where the amount is arguably not small, which is five times the value of Indonesia's GDP. Economics and other fields that have resource linkages to the country's economy.

If in the future the South China Sea area will fall into the hands of the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Indonesian side is of course very worried that Natuna may also can be owned by the People's Republic of China (PRC) where the Natuna Islands are one of the areas that the PRC is fighting for Chinese people. Thus, Indonesia certainly does not want the transfer of ownership of the Natuna Islands to the People's Republic of China (PRC) to occur, seeing that the Natuna Islands have indeed become one of the country's assets that have abundant wealth in it and have various communities around the Natuna Islands who depend on the wealth of sources there.

Since 1990 ago, Indonesia has always been a country that positions itself as a non-claimant state. Then several incidents occurred where there were ships from the People's Republic of China (PRC) catching fish without a permit until they entered the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEEI). The government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) even supports fishermen from what is called a traditional fishing ground. This is the basis of the People's Republic of China (PRC) claim for their statement regarding the nine-dash line in the South China Sea.

The statement claimed by the PRC regarding the nine-dash line is one of the reasons why this dispute case occurred. There are 2 (two) important ones, first, the Paracel and Spratly islands which are claimed by the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) that the island and the rocks, corals in it become an island where warplanes from the Government of the People's Republic

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of China (PRC) can land on the island. Second, news about several non-regional countries experiencing concerns about the security of freedom of shipping traffic such as Japan, Australia, and the United States regarding guarantees of freedom in international shipping due to the South China Sea being dominated by the PRC (People's Republic of China).

Indonesia is a country that occupies a position as a country that does not make claims because there are two kinds of reasons as follows, namely Indonesia does not claim islands in the Sea and Indonesia's position is that it can be said to want to position itself as an honest and good country as a mediator of disputes both in the aspect of freedom shipping traffic and security activities. On the other hand, Indonesia should be able to position itself as one of the countries that neither agrees nor agrees with what the People's Republic of China (PRC) wants, namely the nine-dash line, otherwise the People's Republic of China (PRC) will continue to do so. Declare that all statements that they claim regarding the existence of the nine-dash line are considered to have been accepted by the entire international community as customary law.

For Indonesia, the disputed claims in the territorial waters of the South China Sea in the waters of the PRC (People's Republic of China) are not clearly stated because the Indonesian side does not recognize the PRC's claims as there are nine dashes and at the same time Indonesia wants to maintain its position by being an honest mediator and good, but of course in that position it certainly cannot be ignored when an interest that covers aspects of Indonesian national life will suffer a huge loss.

C. CONCLUSION

In resolving disputes in the South China Sea region, basically Indonesia plays an active role where Indonesia is an interested party in this dispute who wants to maintain the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Indonesian waters, namely the Natuna Islands which are opposite the South China Sea. Because the South China Sea can be said to be a strategic commercial area, of course there will be a significant global impact, especially what is felt by Indonesia from this dispute, namely the existence of obstacles to international traffic shipping so that it will be detrimental to Indonesia. For the Government of Indonesia, a foreign policy decision is needed regarding disputes in the territorial waters of the South China Sea. According to the constitution, Indonesia will always be in the forefront oriented towards order, especially world peace in the case in the waters of the South China Sea which will play a role in carrying out efforts and tasks to reduce anger, both cold war and hot struggles for the various countries concerned. Indonesia's position in the peace case is to mediate conflicts covering all aspects of the archipelago, guarantee security, freedom in international traffic shipping and most importantly Indonesia's national interests are not harmed.

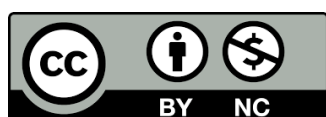
In terms of international law, there is a need for legal policies for all countries that are international, concrete, and permanent, including the PRC (People's Republic of China) itself where they claim the nine-dash line differently from the claims issued by UNCLOS last year 1982 which is different from other countries. Thus, this of course must be accompanied by a balanced policy push between civilians and the military as well as diplomatic channels to be strengthened again using civilian power control to oversee and maintain a country's defense so that conflicts can be minimized.

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