



## **Jurnal Pertahanan**

Media Informasi tentang Kajian dan Strategi Pertahanan yang Mengedepankan *Identity*, *Nationalism* dan *Integrity*

e-ISSN: 2549-9459

<http://jurnal.idu.ac.id/index.php/DefenseJournal>



### **SEAPOWER AND ASYMMETRIC WARFARE IN INDONESIA**

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#### **Article Info**

##### **Article history:**

Received 31 October 2019

Revised 31 March 2020

Accepted 31 March 2020

##### **Keywords:**

Asymmetric Warfare,  
Eyes in The Sky,  
Defense Cooperation,  
Malacca Strait Patrol,  
Seapower

#### **Abstract**

This study analyzes the asymmetric warfare that occurs at sea and the seapower that should be possessed by a state to overcome maritime asymmetrical threats. This study uses descriptive qualitative which explains in detail the asymmetrical warfare at sea and seapower using case examples. This research uses case examples of asymmetrical threats that occur in the domestic territory of Indonesia, namely the Malacca Strait case. The theories used in this study are defense theory, the concept of seapower, the concept of asymmetric warfare and the concept of international cooperation to analyze the case that occurs. The results of this study are Indonesia's seapower to combat asymmetric warfare was built in three ways namely, strengthen the military defense equipment, carry out defense cooperation with the state that borders with Indonesia and strengthen the collaboration between related ministries and institutions. These ways are implemented through Malacca Strait Patrol which is defense cooperative include Malacca Sea Strait Patrol, Eyes in the Sky and Information Sharing.

DOI:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.33172/jp.v6i1.620>

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

According to 1982 UNCLOS Article 46 states that: a. "Archipelago State" means a state constituted wholly by one or more archipelagos and may include other islands; b. 'archipelago' means a group of islands, including parts of the island,

interconnecting water, and other natural features which are so closely interrelated that such islands, water, and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, or which historically have been seen as such (Wahyono, 2009).

Furthermore, Wahyono (2009) stated that following these provisions, Indonesia fulfilled the requirements to become an island or maritime nation. Based on astronomy, Indonesia is located in the position of latitude and longitude between 6° North Latitude to 11° South Latitude and 95° East Longitude to 141° East Longitude. Meanwhile, according to geographical location, Indonesia is located between two continents, Asia and Australia, and between two oceans, namely the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Indonesia as the largest archipelago in the world which is located between two oceans and two continents has a unique and strategic geographical position. This position places Indonesia directly bordering the sea and land with the ten regional countries. Indonesia also has waters as one of the arteries of international trade which makes Indonesia vulnerable to border disputes and threats that affect both domestic and regional instability. As an archipelagic and maritime nation, Indonesia is very interested in creating security in the region, including maritime security to support Indonesia as the Global Maritime Fulcrum (*Poros Maritim Dunia*). Therefore reliable management of natural resources, border areas, and defense are needed (Ministry of Defence, 2015).

The international system with the principles of openness and freedom currently in force also has a negative impact on the defense and security of Indonesian waters. Warfare is no longer conventional but has shifted to being asymmetrical (Pranoto, 2016). Furthermore, the term asymmetrical warfare has attracted worldwide attention since the publication of the article “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars” by Andrew Mack which shows the fact that some countries that have great military power accept defeat against their colonies (Mack, 1975).

According to Sulistyningtyas (2015), there are several asymmetrical war threats that occur in waters, including:

a. Sponsored by a nation-state

Conflicts between countries began to subside, but individual asymmetric warfare players continue to pose a threat to global security. There are several countries that provide shelter for criminals and terrorists who carry out illegal activities in maritime areas outside their countries. In addition, a State can provide sophisticated conventional weapons manufacturing materials and experts to individuals or groups of criminal offenders.

b. Terrorism

Terrorism groups are classified as non-state actors who take advantage of the openness of national boundaries and technological advances that enable them to control their acts of terror. Terrorists are also able to develop an attack that is effective, fast, using a variety of platforms that carry explosives, light aircraft or offshore oil drilling facilities. For example, terrorists in Indonesia are proven to travel to and from one country to another using sea transportation. This was done because it was considered safer and had many roads due to lack of supervision by Indonesian law enforcement officials.

c. Transnational Crime

International trade which is growing and relying on the use of the sea as a transportation route has a negative impact on increasing crime at seas such as smuggling (humans, illegal drugs, firearms), armed pirates and piracy. For example, illegal activities in Southeast Asia especially in Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia such as people smuggling and firearms are carried out through the Sulu Sea and the Malacca Strait.

d. Destruction of the marine environment

Intentional marine destruction activities

result in disasters of the marine environment and global warming. For example, overfishing is often a source of violence among fishermen. Meanwhile, especially in Indonesia, global warming can cause the sinking of small islands. This will affect the determination of the boundaries of the state's jurisdiction, especially if the location of the small island is on the border of a neighboring country.

e. Illegal migration by sea

In many cases, illegal migration creates a dilemma for Indonesia. On one hand, the Indonesian government refuses immigrants from entering Indonesian waters. However, on the other hand, the government is obliged to help the souls of people who are experiencing difficulties at sea because of the lack of food, medicine, and others. But it would be very dangerous if terrorist groups who took advantage of disguising themselves as immigrants and tricking authorities in Indonesian waters.

Seeing asymmetrical threats that are so developing in the sea and maritime areas of Indonesia, defense capability at sea is important to be improved. This study will discuss the seapower and asymmetrical warfare that occurred in Indonesia and the Indonesian government's strategy in overcoming the asymmetrical threats that occur. The case that will be discussed in this study is maritime security in the Malacca Strait. Many countries have an interest in the Malacca Strait, which makes the Malacca Strait is vulnerable to the threat of international crime, such as piracy and terrorism.

If Indonesia fails, then it will invite international intervention to participate in the management of the strait and will automatically become international property or internationalization so that the waters become free transit and coastal countries have very limited authority because, in essence, they are no longer their territory.

Many losses experienced by coastal countries if they become international waters, one of which is the loss of income sources of about 32,463 fishermen who depend on their lives to search for fish in these waters. For this reason, coastal countries must work together and work together to manage the Malacca Strait (Forbes, 2007).

As an effort to overcome the asymmetrical threats that occur, a Trilateral Coordinated Patrol cooperation was agreed upon by three countries namely Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore given the importance of the Malacca Strait security area for the three countries in particular and the Southeast Asia Region in general (Emmers, 2009). This collaboration consists of the Malacca Strait Sea Patrol (MSP) which was launched in 2004, Eyes in the Sky (EiS) which was launched in 2005 and Malacca Strait Patrol-Information Sharing (MSP-IS) in 2006.

The three countries prioritize the implementation of the Trilateral Coordinated Patrol to deal with robberies in the Malacca Strait. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, and maritime terrorism attacks on shipping lines have become serious issues in the Malacca Strait which is part of asymmetrical warfare. Based on this background, this research will discuss seapower and asymmetric warfare in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This research is included in the type of qualitative descriptive research. In qualitative research methods, researchers propose research questions be answered through understanding, not with hypotheses, because the essence of qualitative research is understanding a phenomenon, not proving a phenomenon (Heradiansyah, 2010). The data sources used in this study, namely secondary data sources. Sugiyono (2014) explains secondary data sources do not provide information directly to researchers.

Secondary data is processed from primary data presented from other people. By using secondary data sources, this study uses literature more, namely by obtaining data from the literature that supports research.

While according to Miles and Huberman (Miles & Huberman, 2012) there are several general stages are usually carried out in analyzing qualitative research data, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction phase is done by exploring data that requires researchers to get used to and master the overall data by repeatedly reading research findings data, then simplifying the data until the data can be detailed. The data that has been obtained will then be presented with narrative techniques and will usually be divided into certain chapters so that the explanation is more structured. After going through these stages, the author can then make conclusions. The stages of concluding are done to find compatibility between problems and research objectives with the data obtained and the concepts or theories used during the study.

### Defense Theory

The defense is the face to recognize (recognizable face) of a country. The defense is a reality that determines the sovereignty and safety of a nation and state. In addition, the defense is a national necessity that truly exists in and primary since the sovereignty of a State is recognized. According to Miriam Budiarjo (2008) explaining that the national defense grows and develops in a political system related to the implementation of the state defense function is a political system framework. While the reality of a superior political system, apparently requires a foundation known as theory. A theory only grows and develops well if it has a discipline (S. Nasution, 2009).

In the present context, the defence should pay attention to the principles of collective international security (collective internationalism) and non-military defense

both against traditional threats and asymmetric warfare. In addition to an increase in various war machines (defense equipment), an increase in the soft power (soft power) of the nation-state in a manner the whole thing is important.

### Seapower

Alfred Thayer Mahan (2010) in his book *The Influence of Seapower Upon History (1660-1783)* states that there are six conditions needed by a nation to be said to have seapower, as follows:

- a. Favorable geographical position
- b. Useful coastlines, abundant natural resources, and favorable climate
- c. Territorial area
- d. A population large enough to defend its territory
- e. Communities who understand about the sea and commercial companies
- f. Government with influence to dominate the ocean

Furthermore, Mahan explained that the concept of seapower was divided into two forces, namely maritime power and naval power. In it, there are several other concepts such as merchant ships, harbors, merchandise, industrial potential, naval support, bases and warships warship).



**Figure 1.** Seapower  
Source: Mahan, 2010

According to Rod Thornton (2007), seapower is the ability of a country to control its oceans or known as Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), the purpose

of maritime mastery has two main objectives namely control of trade routes and economic improvement. Judging from the developments that have taken place in Indonesia, these two goals are still not optimal. Many factors affect the results of the main objectives that are hampered, including piracy, piracy and the possibility of becoming targets of terrorism.

### **Asymmetric Warfare**

Asymmetric warfare has many definitions with different interpretations from each author. David L. Grange (2000) in his article titled "Asymmetric Warfare: Old Method, New Concern" defines asymmetric warfare as conflicts that deviate from the norm, or indirect approaches to influence the balance of power.

Another definition by US Military Strategy in Rod Thornton (2007) regarding asymmetrical warfare is unconventional or inexpensive approaches that circumvent our strengths, exploit our vulnerabilities, or confront us in ways that we cannot match in kind. It can be said as a war that uses a non-conventional approach and then exploits the vulnerability of actors in an unusual and not dispelled way.

According to Toft (Arregin-Toft, 2005), there are several reasons why weaker actors can win a war against stronger actors:

- a. Weak actors may have secret weapons (biological weapons and so on);
- b. Weak actors may have strong allies (proxies);
- c. Strong actors cannot provide more threats to weak actors;
- d. Weak actors use unusual and very effective strategies;
- e. The weak will of the actor to lose money (both in terms of costs incurred or the sacrifice of the actor (suicide bombing).

### **Defense Cooperation**

In building defense cooperation, Indonesia has a rationale for defense cooperation.

According to Parulian (Parulian, 2013), three basic rationales is underlying the formation of defense cooperation, namely:

- a. Threat assessment. Every country will have a calculation regarding the threat. The threat can arise from within and outside the country and comes from state actors or non-state actors. After knowing the threat, the country will then arrange a defense strategy to counter it.
- b. Country situation. Changes in the strategic environment of a country also contribute to the formation of defense cooperation. This change will inevitably affect the power map in the region concerned and may change the pattern of relations between countries.
- c. Armament technology development. Defense and security weaponry is one of the determinants of the country's military strength. Indonesia defense and security equipment tools, hereinafter referred to as *Alpalhankam*, are all equipment to support national defense as well as security and public order. *Alpahankam* modernization is an absolute thing that must be done by a country.

Indonesian Defense White Paper (Ministry of Defence, 2015) explains that defense cooperation was held to build mutual trust between countries with the principle of mutual respect for the sovereignty of other countries, not interfering in domestic affairs, mutual benefit, preventing conflicts between nations, and building national defense capacity.

Following the explanation of defense cooperation, it can be synthesized that defense cooperation is a relationship between two or more countries that have the same goals according to the national interests of each country in the field of defense. Defense cooperation is cooperation that emphasizes national interests related to state sovereignty, security, stability, and people's welfare.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Dynamic of Asymmetric Warfare in Malacca Strait

The second busiest strait in the world after the Strait of Hormuz is the Strait of Malacca. The strait is flanked by three coastal countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. The existence of the Malacca Strait is considered very important for world trade because of its access to world sea transportation. Approximately 40 percent of world trade goods and half of the world's oil trade are transported through the strait, mainly from the Middle East with destinations to Japan, Korea, and China. The Malacca Strait is the closest path from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean so that it can be called the pulse of the world economy.

Along with the increase in world trade, according to Saeri (2013), it also impacts the density of traffic in this strait which causes many accidents because the physical condition of the strait is not large. With a length of about 805 kilometers and a width of 65 kilometers on the Southside and further to the north it widens around 250 kilometers and a shallow depth of 23.3 meters makes it prone to accidents especially traversed by large commercial vessels (Irewati, 2011).

The magnitude of the vulnerability to accidents and the high number of accidents has pushed one of the countries with an interest in this strait namely Japan to propose to form an international body that deals with the Malacca Strait consisting of strait-user countries plus coastal states (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore). However, this was rejected by Indonesia and Malaysia which stated that the strait had to be regulated by a coastal state and refused to be managed by an international body (Erlina, 2013).

In managing the Malacca Strait, the coastal state was faced with two serious threats, namely armed robbery and vulnerability to the militias. The threat concerns the high number of armed robberies on ships passing through the

strait and on ships that are anchoring anchor in the port area that is waiting in line to obtain permission to load and unload their cargo. The pirates, known as 'pirates' in the Malacca Strait are thought to live in Indonesian territory. They are well acquainted with the territorial waters and have the ability to operate at night with a small group of fewer than 10 people using speed boats and equipped with automatic weapons (Wargadireja, 2017).

Their target is robbing money, valuables or food needs on the ship and kidnapping the crew. Usually, they operate when the opportunity arises, usually at night and close to their hiding place. They pretend to be fishermen and there is a possibility of cooperating with the crew so they do not worry about being caught by the authorities. So there is a thought that their actions are not just for a crime but there is something bigger behind them.

### Seapower in Indonesia to Counter Asymmetric Warfare

To overcome the above threats, it is necessary to take the solution taken by the coastal countries, namely by establishing cooperation and coalition in overcoming the threat. In accordance with the three main keys discussed by the author, the first is security in the maritime sector is an important thing in maintaining global stability, Indonesia, in this case, has conducted international cooperation with several countries, including Malaysia and Singapore, relations between the two countries are strengthened with the special maritime patrol task force program formed on June 18, 2005, called Malsindo.

Secondly, to be more effective and efficient, global networks must continuously improve capabilities in terms of information dissemination. In this regard, Indonesia and Malaysia established a maritime security cooperation program by creating special communication channels to coordinate and communicate directly in the conduct of operations, especially during the pursuit of hijackers.

For information, that warships from one country are allowed to enter the territorial waters of the other country when teaching the ship the suspect has previously communicated with the host country.

Third, that strong security comes from relationships, cooperation, and close abilities. This is realized by establishing cooperation between coastal countries with the shipping industry and all stakeholders by forming a Co-operation Forum that focuses on related issues to maintain and improve navigation security and protection of the maritime environment in the Straits of Malacca.

In the maritime security sector, cooperation is held with the Navy of each country by committing to prepare their fleet of ships with modern equipment and equipped with weapons with the latest technology used to patrol the Malacca Strait (Wargadireja, 2017). For the shipping industry sector several initiatives were introduced, namely the maintenance and replacement of navigation aids (SBNP) and also conducted a study of the blueprint for navigation safety and environmental protection in the Malacca Strait (Bata, 2018).

Besides that, according to Marsetio (2014), the national interest of a maritime country is how to explore and secure all potential maritime resources respectively. The seapower can be strengthened by using several alternatives, namely:

- a. The role of submarines in exploiting maritime resources by creating underwater stations, improving underwater security, submarine industry and underwater technology, especially sea transportation and detecting sea plates that cause natural disasters, as well as a means of defense of a state under the sea.
- b. Amphibian surgery and anti-amphibious surgery. Anti-amphibious operations are different from coastal defense operations because anti-amphibious operations combine more aspects of land, sea, and air. In coastal

defense, the deployment of troops themselves is intended to prevent enemy transporters and logistics ships from landing the enemy forces along with their combat materials. To carry out effective and efficient anti-amphibious operations, the development of new doctrines needs joint doctrines. The threat in the future anti-amphibious operation turns out not only to the spectrum of land, sea, and air but also to the spectrum of electromagnetic and cyber waves.

- c. Sea basing is done through mobile logistics, airbase naval, and three-dimensional of Command and Control Center namely Pusat Komando dan Pengendalian (Puskodal). Sea basing in addition to functioning as a naval base can also function as a three-dimensional command and control center including air, surface, and subsurface.
- d. The need for air support, air supremacy, and air superiority was originally only the length of the 'eyes and ears' of the ship, it turns out now and in the future is also an extension of the hand. Today Navy in developed countries has used drones as a means of gathering intelligence data.
- e. The existence of warrior supremacy. In increasing seapower, soldiers should be given a pattern of good education and training, especially regarding technology and diplomacy. Then it is necessary to reorganize the merit system and leveling to adjust the expertise system so that there are no gaps in personnel capacity at all rank levels.
- f. Transformation into a maritime nation. Nations should have maritime character and government should be like that. The character of a pro-maritime government will create policies in the political, economic and military nuances of maritime, which will benefit other fields, such as agriculture, trade and so on because the progress of the maritime world will also contribute to

other fields in national life.

In accordance with the explanation above, with the dense shipping lane crossing in the Malacca Strait it is very beneficial to the coastal countries that manage the strait because it becomes a large income to the country. For users of these pathways may have to think to reduce the burden of crossing costs by submitting to an international forum for internationalization. If the pathway is internationalized, the country's income automatically will drop dramatically or even none at all. For this reason, the coastal state which manages the Malacca Strait objected and for the coastal states must defend by forming a coalition and cooperation.

From the user country, it always seeks to achieve its goals by building a coalition with members of large and more countries, with tactics to create security stability in these waters so that international organizations can take over the management of these waters. This happened asymmetric tactics between the large coalition and coastal state coalition fighting over the management of the Malacca Strait, the coalition of large countries continues to make polemics while the coastal state's coalition seeks to reduce the instability of these water areas by establishing relations and cooperation and enhancing the capabilities of each country.

### **Implementation of Seapower in Trilateral Coordinated Patrol to Overcoming Asymmetrical Threats in the Malacca Strait**

The need to enhance the security of the Malacca Strait and the Singapore Strait has increased, and hence the need for coordinated sea patrols and combined maritime air patrols to be established. Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand have agreed to conduct these patrols in the Malacca Strait and the Singapore Strait, to be termed as Malacca Straits Patrol (MSP) (No Name, 2013).

According to Standart Operation System (SOP), MSP operations comprise two key activities, namely the Malacca Straits Sea Patrol (MSSP) and 'Eyes-in-the-Sky' (EiS) combined maritime air patrols. These operations will be supported by the Intelligence Exchange Group (IEG), which will have access to the Information Fusion Centre in Singapore by way of the Malacca Straits Patrol – Information System (MSP-IS).

Theoretically, the defense should pay attention to the principles of collective international security (collective internationalism) and non-military defense both against traditional threats and asymmetric warfare. So that through the Trilateral Coordinated Patrol cooperation, the Indonesian government strengthens national defense. This collaboration is carried out with diplomacy and soft-power with partner countries, but for both soft-power and hard-power perpetrators are used to counter asymmetric warfare.

According to Parulian (2013), there are three basic rationales underlying the formation of defense cooperation, namely:

- a. Threat assessment. Every country will have a calculation regarding the threat. The asymmetrical threat estimation in the Malacca Strait is proven by the existence of maritime crime which is a threat of international crime, in the form of piracy, piracy, and even terrorism.
- b. Country situation. Changes in the strategic environment of a country also contribute to the formation of defense cooperation. This change will affect the power map in the area concerned and may change the pattern of relations between countries. Indonesia is a maritime country and the country's goal of being the world's maritime axis is being focused. So that the Trilateral Cooperation Patrol cooperation gets the attention of policymakers.
- c. Armament technology development. Defense and security weaponry is one of the determinants of the country's



military strength. Alaphankam modernization is an absolute thing that must be done by a country. Adjustment and development of defense equipment should indeed be done because the pattern of operations in the Trilateral Cooperation Patrol is scheduled and can be strived to defeat the asymmetrical war perpetrators who use unexpected methods.

Meanwhile, if it is associated with the concept of seapower owned by Alfred Thayer Mahan (Mahan, 2010), there are six seapower requirements to have a qualified seapower. Indonesia has six conditions needed by a nation to be said to have seapower, as follows:

- a. Favorable geographical position, Indonesia is located in the equatorial region and is located between two oceans and two continents.
  - b. Useful coastlines, abundant natural resources, and a favorable climate. Indonesia has the Malacca Strait which is a trade channel.
  - c. Territorial area. Indonesia is a country that has a territorial even one of the largest archipelagic countries in the world
  - d. A large population enough to defend its territory. Indonesia has a large population and soldiers who have the professionalism to secure Indonesia.
  - e. Communities who understand about the sea and commercial companies
  - f. Government with influence to dominate the ocean. Indonesia is fomenting the spirit of being the World Maritime Axis
- In its implementation, according to the Trilateral Coordinated Patrol is divided into three namely:

- a. Malacca Sea Strait Patrol (MSSP)
  - b. Eyes in the Sky (EiS)
  - c. Intelligent Exchange Group (MSP-IEG)
- First, Malacca Sea Strait Patrol (MSSP). In its implementation, the Malacca Sea Strait Patrol is divided into Commander Task Force (CTF), Commander Task Group (CTG),

Elements/Ships/Aircraft, and MAA (National Ops Node). The MAAs will serve as a national operation node to coordinate all MSP responses between the various operations centers of control authorities (EiS, IEG, and MSSP).

Second, Eyes in the Sky (EiS). Eyes in The Sky (EiS) is the conduct of combined maritime air patrols over the Malacca Straits and Singapore Straits, comprising forces from the participating states. EiS is a component of the MSP framework in enhancing the security of the Malacca Strait and the Singapore Strait. The EiS shall initially be undertaken by the three littoral states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. EiS is an open arrangement with the consent of the three littoral states of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Any other states could be invited to participate voluntarily with the consent and approval of the three littoral states (No Name, 2013).

Third, Malacca Strait Patrol-Intelligent Exchange Group (MSP-IEG). The role of MSP IEG as stated in the MSP SOP is to compile, evaluate and analyze data, and to conduct intelligence and information exchange in support of the MSP operations. In these regards, it is timely to develop a common procedure for IEG to achieve the stated roles.

The operations will be reviewed by the respective Joint Working Group (JWG) every four months, in addition to the forum of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC), and the meetings will be hosted alternately among the participating states. In the Collaboration of Operational Responses., the primary means of collaborating information and planning for combined MSP operations will be through the MSP-IS portal, where real-time information access to IFC's database is readily available. Real-time coordination and operational planning shall be conducted via combined conferences on the Group Chat function (No Name, 2013).

**CONCLUSION,  
RECOMMENDATION, AND  
LIMITATION**

Asymmetric warfare at sea has become a new type of war that makes the State further strengthen its seapower strategy in the face of threats. Crime at sea is not only associated with piracy actions involving massive human and sophisticated defense equipment used but more important is the strategies and actions are taken to get its interests.

In determining seapower, the state needs to pay attention to several things such as geographical conditions, the number of defense equipment and personnel to maintain the country's sea defenses which involve all components of the nation, estimate the possibility of attack, and cooperate with other countries. This is useful because asymmetrically, seapower is a power given by the state for military and civilian purposes and the empowerment of natural resources.

As a recommendation, the state should be able to prepare defense equipment specifically to ward off information warfare that occurs at sea. In addition, it increases intelligence cooperation to make it easier to obtain information related to threats or plans of attack. Related to the security forces, the need for additional training so that each dimension (Sea, land, air) cooperates to avoid competition and even imbalance of duties and functions of each dimension.

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