

# TRILATERAL COOPERATION ARRANGEMENT AS THE INDONESIAN DEFENSE STRATEGY TO COUNTER ASYMMETRIC THREATS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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**Abstract** – The development of the strategic environment has an impact on the rapid development of asymmetrical threats. The Southeast Asian region is one that faces this threat. Indonesia, as one of the countries in the Southeast Asian Region, has conducted a Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement to prevent the asymmetrical threat, especially in the Sulu Sea. This study aims to analyze the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement strategy as Indonesia's defense strategy in overcoming asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asian Region. The research method used is a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. This study uses the theory of defense science, the concept of strategy, counter terrorism, asymmetric warfare, defense cooperation, cooperative security, and deterrence theory. The results of this study can be divided into three namely, first, the asymmetrical threat that occurs in Southeast Asia, especially the Sulu Sea continues to grow and specifically divided into terrorism; transnational crime namely armed piracy and kidnapping for ransom; and illegal migration. Second, in its implementation, the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA) in the Sulu Sea consists of Coordinated Sea Patrol, Air Patrol, Information and Intelligent Sharing and Land Exercise. The four patrols are strategic cooperation which constitutes a unity so that they cannot be separated in parts or functions. However, in its implementation, there are opportunities and challenges that need to be a concern of both policy makers or operational parties. Third, the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement is a strategy that can overcome the asymmetrical threats that have occurred in Southeast Asia, especially in the Sulu Sea since 2016-2018, but in 2019 the asymmetrical threats in the Sulu Sea have increased. The strategy used is to use defense cooperation as well as using soft power and hard power which provide deterrence effects for asymmetric threat actors. In addition, it strengthens the collaboration of Ministries and Institutions as policy makers, as well as the military army and local governments as operational implementers and supporting rules such as operational procedure rules.

**Keywords:** Asymmetric threats, strategy, Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA)

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## Introduction

Following the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense<sup>4</sup>, the existence of a National defense system has been formulated and regulated in order to be able to accommodate the objectives that are to be achieved in the national interest. National interests based on the 2015 Indonesian Defense White Paper<sup>5</sup>, are defined as anything related to the objectives of the State. Hence, protecting the entire nation of Indonesia and each of its blood spill, promoting public welfare, developing the nation's life, and carrying out world order based on independence, eternal peace and social justice, are amongst the objectives of this nation<sup>6</sup>.

However, the dynamic development of the environment and strategic context always brings changes to the spectrum of threats that are complex and have implications for national defense. According to the National Defense White Paper, the

complexity of threats is classified into multidimensional patterns and types of threats in the form of military, non-military and hybrid threats<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, according to the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto, he stated that threats could be divided into actual and potential threats. The actual threats are terrorism, separatism, violations in border areas and outermost islands, natural disasters, various illegal activities, horizontal conflicts, cyber crime, and energy scarcity. While potential threats are threats that will occur, and the time must be predicted.

The current globalization can be a challenge because the forms of threats undergo some changes in dimensions involving methods, technology, morals, organization and time which are called asymmetrical threats. In the asymmetric threat pattern, there are five real dimensions that are targeted for asymmetric attacks, namely economic, social, cultural, political, and ideological aspects. According to Marshal Hadi

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<sup>4</sup> Indonesian Law Number 3 (2002) about Defense

<sup>5</sup> Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia, (Jakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, 2015), p. iv.

<sup>6</sup> Preamble of Undang-Undang Dasar 1945, 4th paragraph.

<sup>7</sup> Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia. *Op.cit*, p.1

Tjahjanto (2018), the development of a strategic environment in society both nationally and globally can affect asymmetrical threats because of the existence of a new world order in the form of uni-multipolar, namely the threat of terrorism, cyber threat and vulnerability at sea that Indonesia needs to overcome<sup>8</sup>.

Based on the location of the occurrence, asymmetrical warfare can occur on land, sea, air and via cyberspace.<sup>9</sup> Based on its scope, further asymmetrical warfare is divided into a global, regional and national scales. Asymmetric warfare on a global scale covers terrorism, sea-rovers and pirates, rebel terror and the existence of a state that violates the norms of the international community. Regional level covers territorial disputes, international migration, international criminal organizations, and can be triggered by transnational business groups. Meanwhile, foreign penetration and national vulnerability are on a national scale. The Sulu Sea is one of the locations where the asymmetrical

warfare occurs, which attracts attention not only to countries with direct borders, but also countries within one region as well as international parties. The bordering countries are Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. While countries in the Southeast Asia Region that are in one region need to maintain regional security, as well as international parties feel the need to create global security and stability, especially from asymmetrical threats. The map of the Sulu Sea can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Map of the Sulu Sea

Source: Google Maps, 2019

Maritime asymmetrical threats that occur can be in the form of, especially for the Sulu Sea is Terrorism; transnational crimes such as armed pirates and kidnappings by asking for ransom; and illegal migration which can cause insecurity in the maritime territorial of

<sup>8</sup> Ramadhan, “Perang Asimetris, Ancaman Keamanan Negara yang Wajib Diwaspadai Menurut Panglima TNI”, retrieved from <https://www.asumsi.co/post/perang-asimetris-ancaman-keamanannegara-yang->

[diwaspadai-panglima-tni](https://www.asumsi.co/post/perang-asimetris-ancaman-keamanannegara-yang-diwaspadai-panglima-tni), 26 January 2018, on 3 July 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Rod Thornton, *Asymmetric Warfare*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), p.12

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines<sup>10</sup>. If we look from its territory, the Sulu Sea is one of the most important trade routes in the world. Cargo ships with a turnover of around 40 billion dollars pass through the region each year, with around 700-800 million US dollars of coal exports from Indonesia to the Philippines. This has become the reason for the development of asymmetrical threats in the Sulu Sea<sup>11</sup>.

As an effort to overcome the asymmetrical threat in the form of transnational crime and terrorism, the countries in Southeast Asia through ASEAN have therefore made a support agreement. ASEAN member states hold fast to the ASEAN Security Community (ASC). Related to combating terrorism, there is the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) in January 2007 in Cebu, Philippines and the ASEAN Comprehensive Plan of Action on

Counter-Terrorism in Manila in September 2017<sup>12</sup>. On the other hand, related to transnational crime, there is the ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2025) and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC)<sup>13</sup>.

In addition to regional and international cooperation, one of the collaborations undertaken is the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement, agreed by three countries, which are Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, bearing in mind the importance of the Sulu Sea security area for the three countries in particular and the Southeast Asia Region in general. The three-state cooperation agreement formed due to the increased security challenges arising from piracy against ships (arm robbery), kidnapping, transnational crime, and terrorism in maritime areas, namely the Sulu Sea.<sup>14</sup> This Trilateral Cooperation

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<sup>10</sup> Sulistyningtyas, *Sinergitas Paradigma Lintas Sektor di Bidang Keamanan dan Keselamatan Laut*, (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015), p.32.

<sup>11</sup> Nyshka Chandran, "Forget Trump and China, Piracy in the Sulu Sea is a Fresh Threat to Asia Trade" retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/11/22/forget-trump-china-sulu-sea-piracy-is-threat-to-asia-trade.html>, 22 November 2016, on 30 November 2019.

<sup>12</sup> ASEAN. "Asean Convention on Counter Terrorism", retrieved from [https://asean.org/?static\\_post=asean-](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-convention-on-counter-terrorism)

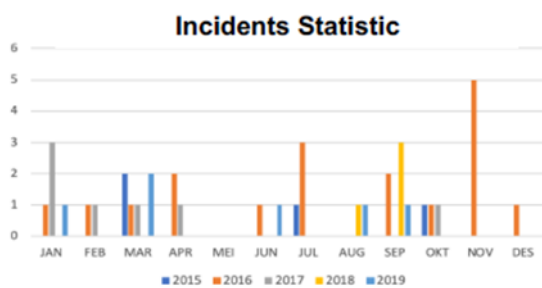
[convention-on-counter-terrorism](https://asean.org/?static_post=asean-convention-on-counter-terrorism), on 29 October 2018.

<sup>13</sup> AMMTC. "ASEAN Plan of Action in Combating Transnational Crime (2016-2015)", retrieved from [https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/ASEAN-Plan-of-Action-in-Combating-TC\\_Adopted-by-11th-AMMTC-on-20Sept17.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2012/05/ASEAN-Plan-of-Action-in-Combating-TC_Adopted-by-11th-AMMTC-on-20Sept17.pdf), on 30 October 2018

<sup>14</sup> Kementerian Pertahanan, *Framework Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement*, (Jakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, 2016), p.1

was initially motivated by the mutual desire of the three countries to discuss and take strategic steps in overcoming asymmetrical threats, especially robbery and hostage taking by the radical Abu Sayyaf group.

The Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement provided a reduction in the incidence of the Sulu Sea from 2017 to 2018 specifically piracy and kidnapping for ransom. Nonetheless, in 2019, according to the Sulu Laut statistical report from the Indonesian Army Headquarter, up to October 2019 there was an increase in piracy and kidnapping crimes for ransom compared to the previous year. The following is a figure of the incidents statistic that occurred in the Sulu Sea 2015-2019.



**Figure 2.** Data on incidents statistic at the Sulu Sea  
 Source: Indonesian Army HQ, 2019

However, in its implementation, the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement experienced several obstacles and challenges which were the causes of the

suboptimal implementation of this strategy, which had an impact on the increasing incidents that occurred in the Sulu Sea in 2019. These obstacles and challenges were that the countries participating in this collaboration did not open their sovereignty in implementing the operations against asymmetrical threats that occur, communication lines that are still problematic so as to inhibit action, limited defense equipment used in operations, and the non-existent of some standard operation procedures (SOP) with reasoning that this agreement is relatively new.

Furthermore, as explained earlier, researchers specifically discussed asymmetrical threats which are terrorism, transnational crimes namely armed robberies and kidnappings, which demand ransom and illegal migration. Those are asymmetrical threats that often occurs in Southeast Asia and the Sulu Sea in particular. Armed piracy and kidnappings by ransom are methods used for terrorism to obtain funding for their actions. While illegal migration by becoming refugees or foreign workers is one way to expand foreign terrorist fighters in the Southeast Asian Region.

Based on this introduction, this research will discuss trilateral

cooperation arrangement as the Indonesian defense strategy to counter asymmetrical threats in Southeast Asia. Based on the introduction of the above research, thus, there is a formulation in how the problem raised, what are the Indonesian defense strategies in overcoming the asymmetrical threats in Southeast Asia. The research problems can be formulated in three research questions as follows:

How is the development of asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asian Region?

- a. How is the implementation of the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA) in the Sulu Sea?
- b. What is Indonesia's defense strategy in tackling the asymmetrical threat in the Southeast Asian Region through the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA)?

### **Research Method**

This research on the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement as Indonesia's defense strategy in overcoming asymmetrical threats in Southeast Asia uses qualitative method. Qualitative

research is research conducted to comprehend the meaning of individuals or groups involved in a social problem that is being researched. In qualitative research, the data collected is in the form of words, images, so that it does not emphasize numbers. Researchers seek information about the phenomenon that exist and study the results of work on the same problem or situation<sup>15</sup>.

This research is also explained through a case study approach. The case study approach is a research design found in many fields, especially evaluation, where the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a certain case, or program, event, activity, process, or one individual, or more. Cases are limited by time and activity, and researchers gather complete information using various data collection procedures based on a predetermined period<sup>16</sup>. This research uses a case study of an asymmetrical threat in the Sulu Sea that affects the security stability of the Southeast Asian Region in 2015-2019.

This study uses theories and concepts to discuss problems in problems' formulation. The theories

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<sup>15</sup> Lexy Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2011), p.29

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16

used are defense theory, deterrence theory and strategy theory. While the concept used is the concept of counter terrorism, the concept of asymmetrical warfare, the concept of defense cooperation, and the concept of cooperative security.

### **Results and Discussion of Asymmetrical Threat Development in the Southeast Asian Region**

The asymmetrical threat is growing rapidly in the Southeast Asian Region and is a threat that will disrupt the stability of the Region and hinder the achievement of the objectives or interests of ASEAN member states. The coming asymmetrical threat can be in a form of military or non-military threats. Some asymmetrical threats that occur in Southeast Asia and become the object of research are terrorism, transnational crime, and illegal migration. The utilization of advance information technology as a tool of propaganda plays a significant role as a method for occurring asymmetrical warfare. To that end, researcher will further elaborate the asymmetrical threats that occur.

First, terrorism is one of the asymmetrical threats that occur in the Southeast Asian Region. The

development of terrorist organizations in other regions in Southeast Asia is more to the actions of weapons attacks and guerrilla rebellions. There is an ISIS movement that is making propaganda on Muslim groups in the Southeast Asian region, especially Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Additionally, the inseparable phenomenon is the Foreign Terrorist Fighter, which is currently developing and using the latest information and communication technology in delivering their terror messages aimed at causing fretfulness and fear to the public.

Second, transnational crime in Southeast Asia consists of human trafficking, sea-rover, piracy, weapons smuggling, terrorism and cyber crime which are asymmetrical threats and have the potential to disrupt regional security. Especially in Southeast Asia, armed piracy and kidnappings by asking for ransom are two threats that have potential to support terrorism. Although it has experienced a decline, countries in the Southeast Asia Region continue to anticipate terminating the spread of the asymmetrical threats.

Illegal migration is human movement that occurs outside the norms of the sending, transit and

recipient countries. The incident occurred in the Sulu Sea, especially on the border of Indonesia and the Philippines. This is evidenced by the thousands of undocumented citizens in both countries. An interesting characteristic of population status is that there are residents who have dual citizenship. They can vote in two countries, at the time of the general election, this group is said to have the potential to have a spirit of divided nationalism.

### **Implementation of the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement in the Sulu Sea**

The asymmetrical threat that occurred in the Sulu Sea resulted three countries, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, to formulate a cooperation of those three states called the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement. The Sulu Sea is an important sea for the three countries because it is related to the coal export-import routes of the three countries. But the development of the strategic environment that occurred in 2017 where the situation in the Philippines began to flare up with the emergence of war between the government and the radical groups in

Marawi, the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement cooperation began to be used as well to overcome the threat of terrorism, especially foreign terrorist fighter.

The Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement consists of Coordinated Sea Patrol, Air Patrol, Information and Intelligence Sharing and Land Exercise.

- a. Coordinated Sea Patrol
- b. Air Patrol
- c. Information and Intelligence Sharing
- d. Land Exercise

### **Indonesia's Defense Strategy in Overcoming Asymmetrical Threats Through Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement**

Indonesia's defense strategy in overcoming asymmetrical threats through the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement is carried out with diplomacy and softpower among partner countries, but towards the actors are used both softpower and hardpower. Conducting operations that are part of this collaboration is a strategy currently used to ward off asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asian Region. This collaboration has a deterrence effect for terrorists, transnational crime, and illegal migration.

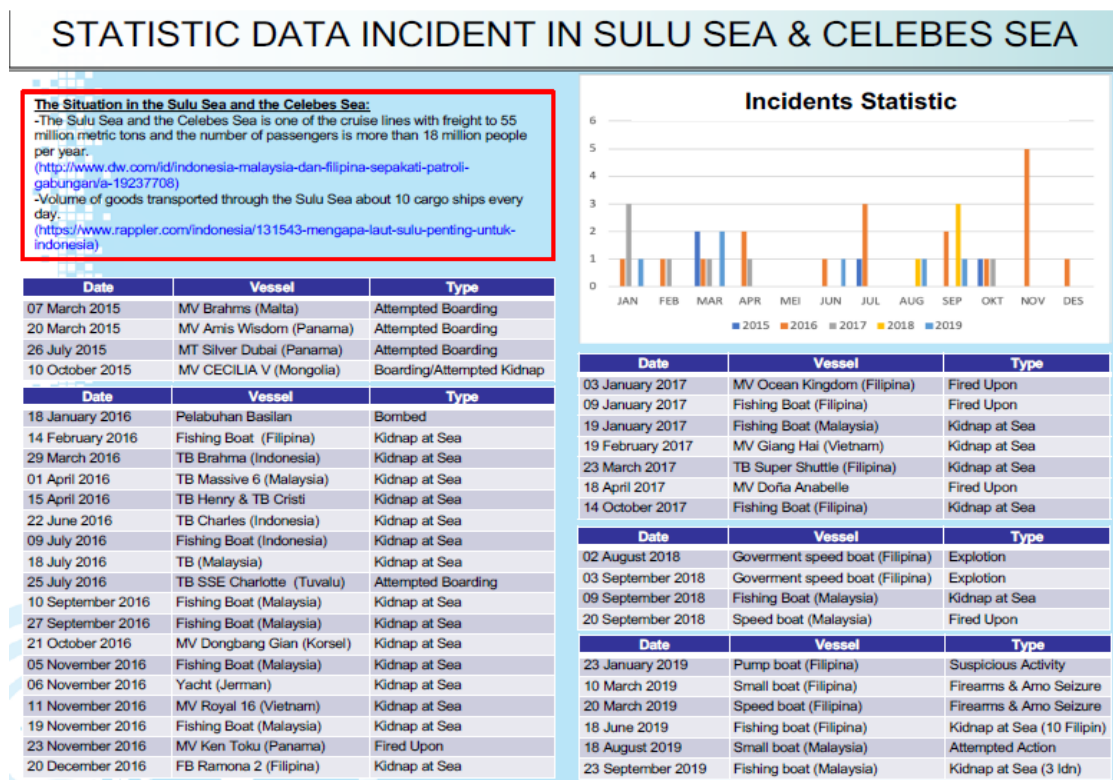


Theoretically, strategy can be understood as an art or a plan carried out to achieve a goal.<sup>17</sup> This is in line with Indonesia making a defense strategy used to achieve national defense objectives in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense and the objectives of the Indonesian state listed in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution.

Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA) defense cooperation is one of the strategies implemented by

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, which has succeeded in reducing the number of asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asian Region, especially the Sulu Sea. Since 2016, crimes such as bombings, kidnappings by asking for ransom, piracy and shootings. This can be seen in the Figure 3.

Although there has been a significant decrease in transnational crime in the Sulu Sea, in 2017, the Marawi battle have raised concerns on the influence of radicalization and the threat of ISIS expansion through foreign



**Figure 3.** Data on Incidents Statistics in the Sulu Sea and the Sulawesi Sea  
 Source: Indonesian Army HQ, 2019

<sup>17</sup> Houghton Mifflin Company, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), p.29

terrorist fighter. This expansion can be done by becoming a refugee. However, there are around 7894 refugees who do not own citizenship documents and become illegal immigrants. It is these people without documents who are feared that they will become an asymmetrical threat because they can easily be ideologically influenced to become terrorists.<sup>18</sup> The following is data from Undocumented Citizens.

**Table 1.** Undocumented Citizens 2019

No.	Confirmed Citizenship	Count
1.	Indonesian	2.619
2.	Filipino	2.655
3.	Dual	422
4.	Not Sure/Undetermined	1.006
5.	For INS Confirmation	99
6.	Not Appearance/Non-Completion	1.944
Total		8.745

Source: Indonesian Army HQ, 2019

Based on the facts above, the development of the strategic environment is in line with the threats. The Indonesian government is preparing the management of human resources and all potential to defend not only

during wartime but also during peacetime and post-war.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, the Indonesian government encourages conducting air patrols and joint land exercises with member states. This action is the development of marine patrols and intelligence in the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA) cooperation and improving facilities and infrastructure in border areas.

In discussing Indonesia's defense strategy in pre the asymmetrical threat in the Southeast Asian Region through the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA), the researcher will implement the concept of strategy concept developed by Lykke in which state that strategy is a process that involves identifying ends, means and ways specifically designed to achieve an objective. Systematically the formula is defined as "Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means"<sup>20</sup>. Ends are the expected objective of the strategy, ways are actions required to achieve the strategy, and means are resources may be deployed to achieve the main objective.

<sup>18</sup> Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Laporan Traffic of Undocumented Citizens di Wilayah Perbatasan Indonesia-Filipina*, (Jakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, 2019), p. 29

<sup>19</sup> Makmur Supriyatno, *Tentang Ilmu Pertahanan*. (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2014), p.68.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Lykke, *Military Strategy: Theory and Application*, (Pennsylvania: U.S. Army War College, 2010), p. 13.

## Ends

Is the objective to be achieved through the strategy. Referring to the point of view of Indonesia, the aforementioned objective is divided into the national objectives and national defense objectives. Indonesia's Objective is to protect the whole people of Indonesia and the entire homeland of Indonesia and to advance general prosperity, to develop the nation's intellectual life, and to contribute to the implementation of a world order based on freedom, lasting peace and social justice.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Indonesia's defense objective within the Article 4 of Law Number 3 of 2002 is to preserve and protect the sovereignty of the country, the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia and the safety of all nations from all threats<sup>22</sup>. One non-military threat is asymmetrical.

Furthermore, the main purpose of this research is to analyze the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement cooperation to face the increasing security challenges arising from robberies of the ships, kidnapping, transnational crime, and terrorism in the Sulu Sea maritime zone

## Means

The resources may be deployed to achieve the objectives of the implemented strategy. Resources deployed in the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement are Ministries and agencies as policymakers, as well as the Indonesian Army (TNI) and local governments as operational implementers. Moreover, it is also required proper defense equipment to provide a deterrence effect for asymmetric war actors. Military and non-military strength are the required resources. The Indonesian Army (TNI) is not only the main party in charge, it is also needed to empower the supporting parties.

In this part, the Ministries and agencies make the policies and supporting regulations in the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement cooperation, as they are newly formed cooperation so that there are still many supporting rules such as operational procedure rules that need to be made. While the Indonesian Army (TNI) and local government as operational implementers conduct

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<sup>21</sup> Preamble of Undang-Undang Dasar 1945 4th paragraph.

<sup>22</sup> Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 3 Tahun 2002 tentang Pertahanan Negara

training to be able to adjust to the development of threats that occur. Operational support tools and inscriptions are the resources needed to achieve the strategic objectives.

### **Ways**

Ways are the required action to achieve the strategy. The actions taken are to carry out effectively and efficiently all of its operations, such as coordinated sea patrol, air patrol, information and intelligence sharing, and joint land exercises. Furthermore, strengthening facilities and infrastructures in the border zone. The Manado regional government has increased the efforts to strengthen immigration to decrease the illegal immigrants and refugees' numbers that migrate to Indonesia illegally who are allegedly related to the foreign terrorist fighter.

Then, member countries cooperating with communication protocol may create networks of countries that coordinate in real-time and work across legal and jurisdictional lines to ensure collective action against maritime threats. The development of

protocols or communication and coordination centers, as in international law, will require multilateral support, the sustainable focus of national, operational capabilities and legal mechanisms concerning the banning and prosecution action. These are being pursued by the Indonesian government to support the implementation of the *Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement*<sup>23</sup>.

Following the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2002 in article 3 in the nature, basic, objectives, and functions of the national defense. The objectives include preserving and protecting the sovereignty of the country, maintaining the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, and maintaining the safety of all Indonesians. There are two strategic objectives to be achieved as follows:

First, Realizing the national defense that leads to world peace through active free politics. Following the Indonesian foreign policy principle "independent and active" in which independence is described as determining its path, free from other party influence while being active is

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<sup>23</sup> Brian Wilson, "Responding to Asymmetric Threat in the Maritime Domain: Diplomacy, Law, and Naval Operations". *Maritime Affairs*. Vol.5, No.2, 2009, p. 68

described as leading action to world peace and being solid with all nations. National sovereignty and integrity are the essences of national defense. Many aspects support and influence the realization of an optimal national defense that drives the country's growth in a positive direction. National defense is essentially the basis of world peace achievement generated from solid cooperation and harmony among countries in the world, such as developed, developing, or least developed country. As the basis of world peace, national defense is the initial fortress for the great nation which determines as a nation that respects and protects every individual in it as part of its citizens.

National defense is realized by optimizing the role of national defense agencies such as the Indonesian Army (TNI) and Polri, and in the context of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia is a nation that embraces pluralism and is capable of democracy and creating a proper political climate. The Alignment among these factors will create social and economic welfare for the nation and state. Furthermore, the nations of the world on a larger scale are cooperating in various sectors including creating

political agreements aimed at the advancement of countries in the world and protecting world peace.

Through the implementation of foreign policy principles “independent and active”, countries in the world may share the ideas concerning the appropriate strategies to be implemented to prevent problems that may impair the international sovereignty and apply corporate action to seek effective solutions in resolving existing conflicts. independent and active policy principle not only gives more rights to every nation in the world to develop and participate in the international domain but also the mass media to play an active role in exposing the actual issues<sup>22</sup>. Through several international conferences such as the UN meeting, the APEC and IMF conferences, the realization of world peace is a balance in various fields and environmental aspects of all citizens in the world.

Second, to create a strong, independent and competitive defense industry. Another objective to achieve the national defense policy principle is to create a strong, independent and competitive defense industry. Through the national defense policy in 2015-2019, it is described that a strong, independent

and competitive defense industry is required to be carried out by fostering the potential of technology and the defense industry, implementing local and offset content, selling the defense industry products, international cooperation, promoting the defense industry and technology development program and the defense industry.

It is undeniable, countries in the world continuously try to strengthen their defense through adequate human resources and defense equipment. The strong defense industry is a combination of national defense availability such as the police, army, or state intelligence services as well as defense equipment such as weapons, ships, and advanced combat aircraft. It is important to underline that the basis of defense is to prevent threats and harassment to the country affected by terrorism and crime.

The state that has a strong defense industry is the state that is capable to develop the resources either weapons or another defense equipment. Indonesia as one of the respected countries that are known as a country that has professional and strong national defense

forces and PT. Pindad as the national defense industry known as defense equipment and military products manufacturers for a good quality product.<sup>24</sup>

Then, through Indonesia's readiness for national defense, it may be stated that Indonesia as a developing country and one of the rich countries have been able to be independent and have high competitiveness in the military sphere. certainly, the existence of national military producers such as PT Pindad, a military unit that is trained and has international achievements is a great asset for Indonesia to realize the national defense objectives and play a role to realize and protect world peace.

As changing the pattern of terrorism activities, the strategy in combating terrorism must also be adjusted to be more effective and efficient. The strategy is required to be flexible so that it may promptly adapt to changes in the strategy applied by terrorist groups. Terrorism prevention strategies are the use of all potential national forces that exist to reduce the existence and power of terrorist groups

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<sup>24</sup> Pindad, "Kontribusi Berkelanjutan untuk Kemandirian Alutsista Indonesia", retrieved from

[https://www.pindad.com/downloads/article/a\\_r2016pindad\\_low4.pdf](https://www.pindad.com/downloads/article/a_r2016pindad_low4.pdf), December 2016, on 18 June 2019.

when communicating and implementing their plans and separating them from their allies.<sup>25</sup>

In the counter-terrorism process, five ways in counterterrorism may be implemented in the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement, such as:<sup>26</sup>

- a. Law enforcement. International and domestic terrorism may be conquered by appropriate law enforcement. Indonesia and the member countries of this cooperation and ASEAN members, in particular, have made several legal regulations regarding combating terrorism
- b. Terrorism funding Analysis. Terrorist actions are expensive and require saving funds that are essential for their actions. Law enforcement and intelligence agencies may trace terrorist finances. Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement which includes information and intelligence sharing can help to analyze the terrorism funding
- c. Communication Interpretation. A leading benefit of the global war on terrorism is the capability of anti-

terrorists to interpret the communication unknowingly. This gives authority regarding potential attacks and takes appropriate precautions. The information and intelligence sharing may help the interpretation of communication

- d. Controlling and surveillance. Interpretation of communication is only one aspect of counterterrorism. While sea and air patrols may conduct controlling and surveillance in the Sulu Sea
- e. Training and infiltration. Conducting training and infiltration to terrorism groups is necessary if the land patrol has been carried out

The main point considered as a weakness of the ASEAN Convention on Counter-Terrorism (ACCT) strategy in combating terrorism in the ASEAN region is the structural constraints of ASEAN countries regarding political policies between countries. Furthermore, the political policy-making process of ASEAN countries is relatively slow so that it is oftentimes ineffective in tackling and preventing terrorism action.

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<sup>25</sup> Forest Makarenko, *The Crime-Terror Continuum: the Interplay between Transnational Organised Crime and Terrorism*. (USA: Global Crime Inc, 2009), p.98

<sup>26</sup> Zoran Pavlovic, *Global Connections: Terrorism and Security*, (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009)

Furthermore, other weaknesses are the legal effect impairment regarding terrorism, the domestic political turmoil of ASEAN countries, the territorial dispute among an ASEAN country that creates an entry gap for terrorism groups, and the lack of prevention strategies for terrorism action

Also, remarks from the world's leaders of ASEAN member states regard the need for a joint agreement and strategy to fight terrorism. The form of cooperation of the ASEAN Convention on Counterterrorism (ACCT) is considered as a classic approach to conflict resolution, especially political conflict and terrorism. However, it should be considered that the act of embedding radical ideologies in the social sphere and religious community requires ASEAN Countries to have comprehensive value strategy in aspects of ideology, politics, economics, social, culture, defense and security as well as technology not only limited to emphasize the political problems that trigger the terrorism action.

Then a culture-based approach is required as the basis for implementing

regional cooperation of defense.<sup>27</sup> The culture-based approach implementation has successfully proven, for example in 2016, there were 10 hostage cases of 12 Brahmin crew members by the Abu Sayyaf group. While sailing on Tambulian Island for transporting coal, 2 members of the Abu Sayyaf boarded and then pointed a firearm. Then 10 ABK were taken hostage by the Abu Sayyaf group. The terrorist group then asked for a ransom of 10 million pesos to release 10 ABK. The ransom will be used to fund the campaign of an Independent Islamic State. The Indonesian government refuses to pay the ransom as the money will fund the campaign to establish an Islamic state.

But Indonesia is obliged to protect all its citizens wherever they are. Therefore, the Indonesian Government decided to use peaceful means through diplomacy with the Abu Sayyaf group. In this case, the Government of Indonesia coordinates with the Sukma Bangsa Foundation, which was founded by Surya Paloh. The foundation then sent several people to meet the Abu Sayyaf group. Baedowi and Samsu Rizal were sent to

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<sup>27</sup> Kementerian Luar Negeri RI, "Masyarakat ASEAN: Aman dan Stabil, Keniscayaan bagi ASEAN", retrieved from

<https://www.kemlu.go.id/Majalah/ASEAN%20Edisi8-All.pdf>, on 29 November 2018.



approach and negotiate with the Abu Sayyaf group to release 10 ABKs taken hostage.

The Sub-regional Meeting on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) and Cross Border Terrorism, which was held in Manado, North Sulawesi in 2017 created an acceleration initiative to prevent terrorism in the Southeast Asian region. With the presence of delegations from Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand, this form of defense diplomacy shows the awareness and desire of each country, especially ASEAN member countries, for threats of terrorism.<sup>28</sup>

The existence of foreign terrorist fighter's forum has encouraged the application of ADMM mechanisms or other Indonesian defense diplomacy instruments. Besides, through the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (AIPR) it is also expected to reduce and prevent segregation and armed conflict in the region through reconciliation. Also, AIPR is expected to

provide a solution to the terrorism conflict by making instruments or provide preventive action and resolve terrorist conflicts in the Philippines.<sup>29</sup> This strategy may be a reliable action that may be implemented respectively with other when dealing with a problem. There is a diplomatic norm applied by ASEAN namely the ASEAN Way which contains norms of non-intervention, non-use of the armed forces, pursuing regional autonomy, and avoiding collective defense. The principle of non-intervention is a principle that guarantees the recognition of the sovereignty of member states, as well as guarantees protection from the interference of one-member countries against the domestic politics of other member countries.

The principle of non-intervention makes a country to have domestic authority in order to decide whether the country has a problem or not. If a country does not allow other ASEAN member states to take care of the domestic

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<sup>28</sup> Cahya Sumirat, "Kepala BNPT: Seluruh Negara ASEAN Harus Bersatu Lawan Terorisme", retrieved from <https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/1225238/14/kepala-bnpt-seluruh-negara-asean-harus-bersatu-lawan-terorisme-1501331158>, 29 July 2019, on 24 April 2019

<sup>29</sup> Riva Suastha, "RI Harapkan ASEAN Bisa Redam Konflik Lewat Rekonsiliasi", retrieved from <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20180201161506-106-273231/ri-harapkan-asean-bisa-redam-konflik-lewat-badan-rekonsiliasi>, 1 February 2018, on 24 April 2019.

problems of their country even though it is known that it will endanger the Region. Other ASEAN member states will not do anything.

The main point is considered as the weakness of the strategy in combating terrorism in the ASEAN region as the structural constraints of ASEAN countries related to political policies between these countries. Furthermore, the political policy making process of ASEAN member states is relatively slow so that it is often ineffective in tackling and preventing acts of terror. Furthermore, other weaknesses are the weak legal effect regarding terrorism, the domestic political turmoil of ASEAN member states, the territorial debate over an ASEAN member state that creates an opening for terrorism groups, and the lack of prevention strategies for acts of terrorism.<sup>30</sup>

The emphasis on the national legal framework reflects the broader challenges ASEAN will be facing in terms of strengthening regional cooperation in which a number of member countries

consider terrorism basically a domestic problem. Each member has a different national defense doctrine. Some member countries adopt a more militaristic approach to counter asymmetrical threats, while others generally respond through the criminal justice paradigm.

However, the difference between members and the principle of non-interference is among the biggest obstacles to coordinate strategy. One of the main difficulties in designing counter terrorism strategies or strategies for overcoming shared asymmetrical threats has been linked to developmental differences, the economy, significant political and social member countries, which produce various approaches for combating terrorism at the national level.<sup>31</sup>

One of the concerns for the Indonesian government is to make regional or bilateral agreements as a deterrence effect for asymmetrical or even other country for war perpetrators with the aim to facilitating the

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<sup>30</sup> Marguerite Borelli, "ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Weaknesses", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*. Vol.9, No. 9, 2017, pp.14-18.

<sup>31</sup> Benedetta, "ASEAN's anti-terror coordination problem". Retrieved from

<https://globalriskinsights.com/2017/10/asean-anti-terror-coordination-problem/>, 16 October 2017, on 30 November 2019.

achievement of country objectives and national defense objectives. Indonesia has the Malacca Strait and the Sulu Sea where the three-country agreement took place and which was copied and appreciated by the countries in Southeast Asia. When talking about regional security issues, it will indirectly be affected to the agreements or cooperation events which will give impact to regional security and stability.

In the long run, it is expected that there will not be a prolonged conflict in the Southeast Asian Region due to cooperation between the Region itself and the regional organizations. In addition, the principle of ASEAN Ways with its habit of dialogue and peaceful and settlement, which is if there is a conflict, the way to resolve is on the negotiating table not on the ground through the battlefield, due to in terms of the losses will suffer greater if resolved by the military. Security stability may also affect other aspects, if the ASEAN region becomes insecure then the economy and human security will be threatened as well. Likewise, with ASEAN Centrality because of the problems of one country it might involve and even become a common problem for other ASEAN member states

## **Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations**

After conducting research and discussing the formulation of the problem, the researcher draws a general conclusion from the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement research as the Indonesian Government's Strategy in Overcoming Asymmetrical Threats in the Southeast Asian Region where the cooperation of three countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines may reduce the asymmetrical threat which occurs in Southeast Asia region through reducing the level of terrorism, transnational crime and maritime crime in the Sulu Sea. Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement Cooperation is a deterrence effect for transnational crimes, terrorism and illegal migration which occurs in the Sulu Sea in particular and the Southeast Asia Region in general.

Based on the results of discussion and data processing by researchers, the following conclusions may be concluded.

- a. The development of asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asia Region has developed rapidly from 2015 to 2019. This threat is a threat which could disrupts the stability of the Region and obstructs the achievement of the goals or interests

of ASEAN member countries. Some asymmetrical threats may occur in Southeast Asia, especially the Sulu Sea and the research object are terrorism; transnational crime usually is an armed piracy and kidnapping asking for ransom; and illegal migration. In order to deal with asymmetrical threats that occur we need a strategy.

b. The Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement was agreed in 2016 to overcome asymmetrical threats, namely robbery against ships (arm robbery), kidnapping, transnational crime, and terrorism in maritime areas, as in the Sulu Sea. The implementation of the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement consists of coordinated sea patrol, air patrol, information and intelligent sharing and land exercise. This collaboration is a functional collaboration because it has a special function for maintaining security in the Sulu Sea, meanwhile for the actors involved, this cooperation is included in regional cooperation which only involves three countries. But in its implementation, the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement faces several challenges that must be faced.

c. Indonesia's defense strategy in overcoming asymmetrical threats in the Southeast Asian Region through the Trilateral Cooperation Arrangement (TCA), the strategy is a process that includes the identification of ends, means and ways that are specifically designed to achieve a goal. Systematically there is a formula "Strategy = Ends + Ways + Means". Ends is the intended purpose divided into two such as national objectives and national defense objectives. The main objective of the strategy in this research is to overcome the asymmetrical threat in the Southeast Asian Region. The ways consist of coordinated sea patrols, air patrols, information and intelligence sharing and joint land exercises. Along strengthening facilities and infrastructures in the border area. While Means is the Ministry and Institution as policy makers relating to international cooperation and overcoming asymmetrical threats, as well as the TNI and local governments as operational implementers and supporting rules such as operational procedures.

While researchers provide

theoretical and practical recommendations. Theoretical especially for the University of Defense, this research is expected to provide additional recommendations regarding the development of science in terms of managing asymmetric threats comprehensively. Specifically, in the case of terrorism; transnational crime; and illegal migration. The research locus of Southeast Asia is to figure out and prove that Indonesia is implementing the country's goal of maintaining world peace.

As for practical, the researcher recommends a number of things with this collaboration will run more efficiently and effectively for the stability of the regional security in general and Indonesia's defense in particular. The recommendations shall include:

- a. Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines completed several operational procedures such as the Air Patrol SOP; cooperation agreements supporting the Status of Visiting Force Agreement (SOVFA) and Rule of Engagement, and resolving disputes from each country.
- b. Improve the flow and defense equipment associated with communication which is still problematic in order to inhibits action.
- c. The Ministry of Defense should take over this collaboration to become a Leading Sector. Currently this collaboration is handled by the Indonesian National Army (TNI) Headquarters, but Malaysia and the Philippines are handled by the respective Ministry of Defense. It is feared that it will complicate in decision making, especially in the field of policy.
- d. The Indonesian Ministry of Defense is also expected to pay attention to the supporting systems and coordinate with technical implementers at the regional level by strengthening aspects of personnel and defense equipment.
- e. Strengthen the synergy of relevant Ministries / Institutions such as the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Communication, Politics, Law and Human Rights (Kemenkopolhukam), and Indonesian National Army (TNI)

Headquarters in making the implementation of cooperation more effective.

- f. Enhanced supporting facilities and infrastructure that will be needed, especially in protecting borders in order to strengthen safeguards to minimize illegal immigrants.
- g. The involvement of Indonesian population in the border region as local wisdom in overcoming the asymmetrical threat. The role of the population may be done by preserving local wisdom that complicates foreign penetration related in order to counter terrorism and combating illegal migration. Due to that cooperation is needed between residents and officials who are tasked with securing the border area.

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