



## Potential of the Indonesian Navy in Protecting Maritime Border Areas: Measurement through Mahan's Theory

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia as an archipelagic country has open sea areas and the existence of the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lane (ALKI) which can create vulnerabilities to various possible maritime threats. The country of Indonesia, most of which is territorial waters, requires a strong Navy to maintain security and the country's territorial boundaries. The aim of this research is to see the potential of the Indonesian National Army Navy through Mahan's Theory. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The data collection technique in this research was carried out through searching secondary data obtained from books, articles, news, comments and government publications. The results of this research indicate that there must be an increase in the Indonesian Navy and modernization of Alusista must also be carried out.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The introductory section is here; You can provide logical and phenomenological reasons for conducting your research. You are also required to provide a clear explanation of the contribution of your paper to knowledge enrichment. It could be present in the description of a niche sample (capturing a unique sample), theory enrichment, or an interesting result (novelty if available). A brief and direct introduction to the subject matter is very important in this research. Therefore, it is imperative for Indonesia to prioritize the strengthening of its naval capabilities to protect its vast maritime territory. The modernization of Alusista, which includes upgrading its fleet with advanced technology and equipment, is crucial in ensuring the country's defense capabilities are up to par with potential threats in the region. By enhancing its naval power, Indonesia can safeguard its national interests and maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific region. This research aims to explore the importance of these initiatives in enhancing Indonesia's maritime security and defense posture.

Through strategic investments in its naval capabilities, Indonesia can not only protect its maritime territory but also assert itself as a key player in the region. By modernizing Alusista, Indonesia can effectively counter any maritime threats and assert its sovereignty over its waters. This research will shed light on the significance of Indonesia's naval modernization efforts and their impact on regional security dynamics. Ultimately, a strong and capable navy will be essential for Indonesia to navigate the complex geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific region.

Indonesia is one of the largest archipelago countries in the world, as well as a maritime country with a total of around 17,500 islands. The total area of Indonesia is 8.3 million square kilometers. With a water area of 6.4 million and a land area of 1.9 million square kilometers. Based on these facts, most of Indonesia's territory is water. The country of Indonesia also has a very strategic position in world shipping traffic, however, Indonesia as a maritime country currently still has massive incidents of illegal fishing, illegal immigrants, and smuggling of illegal drugs, as well as foodstuffs and used clothes (Thriftling) which disrupt national security. our country. The sea route is the main entry point for these goods, where the level of security is still very minimal and sometimes escapes the supervision of security forces. Maritime border areas are areas that must be given special attention by the government, by the long-term development mandate for 2005-2025, the implementation of the determination and confirmation of national territorial boundaries. As a maritime country, Indonesia must of course protect all existing marine resources from various threats. The Indonesian National Army (TNI) is one of the elements that protect Indonesia's maritime wealth, especially the Indonesian Navy (AL).

On August 17, 1945, the Indonesian people proclaimed their independence. The government of the newly-born Republic of Indonesia saw the need to form a military body tasked with defending independence. Therefore, on August 22, 1945, the Preparatory Committee for Indonesian Independence (PPKI) decided to form the People's Security Agency (BKR). The Government's announcement regarding the formation of the BKR was welcomed by young people who served in the marine and shipping sector, so on September 10 1945 the Central Marine BKR was formed under the leadership of M. Pardi and received approval from the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP). The birth of the Marine BKR is considered to be the forerunner to the birth of the TNI Navy organization, so September 10 1945 is celebrated as the Birthday of the TNI Navy (Dispenal, 2018). Current Era The Indonesian Navy has around 75,000 active personnel and 1,034 reserve personnel, including 18,500 marine personnel and 1,090 aviation/air personnel of the Navy. According to the researcher's subjective view, the number of Navy personnel currently owned by the TNI with the total area and population of Indonesia is still insufficient. Through the modernization of defense equipment, improving personnel skills, and international cooperation, the Indonesian Navy continues to strive to increase capacity and capabilities. Maintaining national sovereignty is the main objective of this strategic action, which also plays an active role in maintaining stability and peace throughout the world and in the region.

This article will discuss the various potential and important roles of the Indonesian Navy in guarding maritime boundaries, including the modernization of combat equipment, increasing the professionalism of personnel, and the strategies and policies used to face maritime security challenges. By understanding the potential and important role of the Navy, it is hoped that there will be awareness of the importance of supporting and improving the maritime industry for the progress and sovereignty of the nation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Mahan Theory, Alfred Thayer Mahan is known as an American maritime expert in the last half of the 19th century. This figure became famous through his work entitled *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* which was based on his research on the British maritime state. The translation of his book, the original title of which was "Mahan op den Indischen Lessenaar" in the *Ilmul Tijdschrift* into several languages, accelerated the diffusion of Mahan's thoughts. Later, Mahan's theory became the basis for maritime strategies for large countries to achieve an ideal maritime state. The spread of this idea once became a worry for Mahan himself that his thinking would trigger expansive countries, which was finally proven during the World War. Mahan formulated six characteristics that were the requirements for a potential country to develop sea power. These six characteristics include geographical position, land and coastline shape, area, number of people who go to sea, national character (population) and government character including national institutions. In his work, Mahan does not directly conclude that England is an ideal maritime country, but by making comparisons between countries that have maritime powers in western Europe, such as the

Netherlands and France. Van Leur's study seems to be a benchmark for how Mahan's thinking is so attention-grabbing. This fact is especially supported by the implementation of Mahan's thinking in the impressive development of American naval power. By positioning England as a symbol of superior maritime power, Mahan captivated the audiences of his time. Especially those who are so ambitious for world control or expansive interests. This opinion is reinforced by the main theme of Mahan's thinking, namely military strategy.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive analysis approach that focuses on the Potential of the Indonesian Navy: Measurement through Mahan's Theory. Researchers analyze the potential of the Indonesian Navy using one of Mahan's theories. The data collection technique in this research was carried out by searching secondary data obtained from books, articles, news, comments, and government publications. (Susilana, 2015)

## **RESEARCH RESULT**

Alfred Thayer Mahan is known as an American maritime expert in the last half of the 19th century. This figure became famous through his work entitled *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History* which was based on his research on the British maritime state. The translation of his books into several languages accelerated the diffusion of Mahan's thought. Later, Mahan's theory became the basis for maritime strategies for large countries to achieve the ideal maritime state. The spread of this idea once became a concern for Mahan himself that his ideas would trigger expansive countries, which was finally proven during the World War. Mahan formulated six characteristics that are the requirements for a potential country to develop sea power. The six characteristics include geographic position, land and coastline shape, area, number of people who go to sea, national character (population), and government character including national institutions (Mulya, 2013). These characteristics were crucial in determining a country's ability to dominate the seas and establish itself as a maritime power. Mahan believed that a nation with these six characteristics would have the potential to control trade routes, protect its own interests, and project power across the seas. By understanding and applying these principles, countries could leverage their geographical advantages and build a strong naval presence to secure their place in the global order. Mahan's ideas continue to shape naval strategies and maritime policies to this day, influencing how nations approach their maritime capabilities and security.

In recorded history, the ancestors of the Indonesian people were the Austronesians who came to the archipelago around 2000 BC. Undoubtedly, they reached the islands in the archipelago separated by vast seas by ship, and this shows that they already had knowledge of the sea and the stars for navigation. Many historical researchers believe that shipping technology in the archipelago was initially limited to rafts with very simple navigational knowledge. This is because shipping and trade are still carried out on short routes. As interactions with sailors and traders from various countries become wider, especially from India, Persia, and China, this has encouraged the people of the archipelago to

expand their shipping range, by developing ship design technology. They started building rather large ships, no longer the size of rafts. Here, people in the archipelago are familiar with the use of outriggers, both single and double outriggers, as a balance for ships when sailing on the high seas. (Dispenal, 2018)

If we relate it to Indonesia's conditions, of course, the potential of our country's Navy will be a great power in the international world if it can apply Alfred Thayer Mahan's concept and combine it with the strategy currently owned by the Navy. The Indonesian Navy as the main component of national defense at sea has the duty and obligation to safeguard and defend the country's sovereignty at sea. By the mandate of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Army. In line with the government's policy to realize Indonesia as the World Maritime Axis which places the maritime sector as the driving force in Indonesia's national development, the development of the Indonesian Navy's strength is not only aimed at defense aspects but also security aspects to ensure shipping safety and the dangers of transnational crime. (Dispenal, 2018).

Reported via [indonesiabaik.id](http://indonesiabaik.id) Currently, the Indonesian Navy has around 75,000 active personnel and 1,034 reserve personnel, including 18,500 marine personnel and 1,090 naval aviation/air personnel. The strength of the Indonesian Navy is broadly as follows:

#### 1. Warship

There are 168 Republic of Indonesia (KRI) ships, the KRI is divided into three strength groups:

- a. The Striking Force consists of 52 KRI which have strategic weapons
- b. The Patrol Force is 53 KRI.
- c. The Supporting Force totals 63 KRI, consisting of:

#### 2. Indonesian Navy Aircraft

There are 86 Indonesian Navy aircraft, consisting of 53 fixed-wing and 33 rotary-wing.

#### 3. Marine Corps

The Republic of Indonesia Marine Corps (KORMAR RI) is an inseparable part of the TNI-AL. It is the size of a military corps that functions as a Naval Infantry and the TNI's main amphibious warfare force. Some of the things that differentiate them from other TNI-AL members can be seen in their unique magenta qualification badges, emblems, and berets. Led by a two-star officer. The Marine Corps has three divisions, namely: Marine Troop I (PASMAR I) in Jakarta, Marine Troop II (PASMAR II) in Surabaya, and Marine Troop III (PASMAR III) in Sorong.

#### 4. KOPASKA

The Frog Troops (Kopaska) are the TNI-AL's frogman unit. There are three frogman units with detachments that specialize in elements of sabotage/anti-sabotage (terror), special operations, combat SAR, EOD, and naval mine disposal. KOPASKA, also known as the Frog Troops, are highly trained special forces within the TNI-AL. These elite units are expert in various specialized areas such as sabotage/anti-sabotage, special operations, combat SAR, EOD, and naval mine disposal. Their skills and expertise make them a crucial asset

in maritime operations and national defense. The members of KOPASKA are easily identifiable by their distinctive black qualification badges and emblems, as well as their signature black berets. Led by experienced two-star officers, KOPASKA plays a vital role in ensuring the security and protection of Indonesia's waters. For example, KOPASKA troops are often deployed to conduct underwater sabotage missions to neutralize threats to Indonesian naval vessels. In addition, they are also trained in combat search and rescue operations, allowing them to quickly respond to emergencies at sea and save lives.

#### 5. DENJAKA

The Jala Mangkara Detachment (Denjaka) is a special operation and counterterrorism force of the Indonesian Navy, to counter strategic maritime threats including terrorism and sabotage. (Nurhasinah, n.d.)

Based on Mahan's concept of Sea Control, the Indonesian Navy has several lines of strength from personnel to alusista who can support other elements as stated by Mahan. From the data presented previously, there will be areas of Indonesian waters that escape supervision. Currently, the number of alusista personnel owned by the Indonesian Navy is still insufficient if calculated strategically with the total area of Indonesia and the population. Then an explanation based on other important aspects, researchers found that there are at least 10 important roles for the Indonesian Navy in protecting maritime boundaries, namely:

##### 1. Enforcement of State Sovereignty at Sea

The Indonesian Navy is responsible for ensuring Indonesia's sovereignty in its territorial waters, including archipelagic waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This involves surveillance and patrols to prevent violations by foreign vessels, such as trespassing, fishing, and other illegal activities.

##### 2. National Defense and Security

Maritime Defense: The Indonesian Navy is ready to face military threats from other countries, whether direct attacks or non-conventional threats such as maritime terrorism. Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP): This includes rescue and humanitarian assistance operations, handling natural disasters, as well as other maritime security operations that are not combat in nature.

##### 3. Marine Surveillance and Patrol

The Indonesian Navy carries out routine patrols in Indonesian territorial waters to monitor maritime activities and detect potential threats. This patrol covers territorial waters, archipelagic waters, and EEZ.

##### 4. Law Enforcement at Sea

##### 5. Together with the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla), the Indonesian Navy enforces laws and regulations at sea. This includes action against illegal fishing, smuggling, human trafficking, and other criminal activities.

6. **Maritime Security Operations**  
The Indonesian Navy carries out maritime security operations aimed at maintaining stability and order in the maritime area. These include anti-piracy operations, maritime anti-terrorism operations, and operations to protect maritime trade routes.
7. **International Cooperation**  
the Indonesian Navy is also involved in various international collaborations with other countries' navies and international maritime organizations. This cooperation includes joint exercises, exchange of information, and collaboration in combating transnational crime.
8. **Strength and Capacity Development**  
The Indonesian Navy continues to develop its strength and capacity through modernizing defense equipment (the main weapons system), increasing personnel capabilities, and developing maritime strategies that are adaptive to developments in the global situation.
9. **Maritime Community Services and Protection**  
The Indonesian Navy provides services and protection to communities in coastal areas and outer islands. This includes assistance in disaster management, health services, and coastal community development programs.
10. **Maritime Information Collection and Analysis**  
The Indonesian Navy collects and analyzes information related to security and maritime conditions. This information is used to formulate defense policies and strategies as well as maritime security operations.
11. **The Role of Defense Diplomacy**  
Through defense diplomacy, the Indonesian Navy plays a role in strengthening relations with other countries' navies and promoting regional and global maritime security. This diplomacy is often carried out through joint exercises, ship visits, and international forums.

Overall, the geostrategic position of Indonesia's maritime territories provides its advantages and challenges. Benefits in the form of economic potential, strategic role in trade routes, and abundant natural resources must be balanced with good environmental monitoring, defense, and conservation efforts. Indonesia's existence as a strong maritime country can influence regional stability and prosperity, as well as its role on the global geopolitical map. As a key player in the Indo-Pacific region, Indonesia has the opportunity to shape the discourse on maritime security and cooperation. By actively engaging with other nations through diplomatic channels and cooperative initiatives, Indonesia can help foster greater stability and mutual trust among maritime stakeholders. Additionally, Indonesia's commitment to sustainable maritime practices and environmental protection can set a positive example for other countries to follow, ensuring the long-term health and prosperity of the world's oceans. Ultimately, Indonesia's maritime prowess has the potential to not only benefit its own people but also contribute to the greater good of the international community. Through its leadership in promoting sustainable fishing practices and marine conservation efforts, Indonesia can play a crucial role in preserving the biodiversity of the

oceans and ensuring the livelihoods of millions of people who depend on them. By sharing its knowledge and resources with neighboring countries, Indonesia can strengthen regional cooperation and build a more resilient and interconnected maritime community. With its strategic location and vast maritime resources, Indonesia has the opportunity to become a beacon of maritime excellence and a model for responsible ocean governance on the global stage. By leading by example and implementing effective policies, Indonesia can inspire other nations to follow suit and prioritize the health of our oceans. Through collaboration and partnership with international organizations, Indonesia can also amplify its impact and work towards achieving global sustainability goals. As a leader in marine conservation, Indonesia has the potential to drive positive change and create a more sustainable future for our planet's oceans.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

If currently the Mahan concept of Sea Control is applied to the Indonesian Navy, the Indonesian Navy's potential can become a force to be reckoned with in the international world. Based on data on the military's military personnel, the TNI AL is sufficient, however, to make the Indonesian Navy a force to be reckoned with is still very insufficient. Through the lens of Mahan's theory, the potential of the Indonesian Navy in protecting maritime boundaries is very large but requires coordinated and sustainable efforts. By taking advantage of its strategic geographical position, strengthening physical characteristics and maritime resources, and improving the quality of personnel and technological capabilities, Indonesia can optimize its maritime power. Government support in the form of policies and investment is also a crucial factor in realizing this potential. Existing challenges, such as the vast territory and maritime security threats, can be overcome with the right strategy and international cooperation. The results of this research show that there are areas in Indonesian waters that are difficult to reach if something happens, such as a natural disaster or other things that threaten the security of our country.

The researchers consider that it is necessary to add adequate military equipment for the Indonesian Navy. Adequate military personnel will certainly have a positive impact on the security of our country, especially the territorial waters which are the responsibility of the Indonesian Navy. The government and related institutions must also participate in increasing the potential of the Indonesian Navy so that it becomes better than what it is currently. The existence of synergy between related institutions will support the process of accelerating the resources owned by the Indonesian Navy, whether it is human resources, which in this case are personnel or the military personnel it has so that the Indonesian Navy will become a major force in the future.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

Still conducting further research to find out more about the Potential of the Indonesian Navy in Protecting Maritime Border Areas: Measurement through Mahan's Theory

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