



Re-concept of Indonesian Maritime Security to Establish Indonesian Sea Power

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Abstract: Maritime security threats remain a tangible challenge for Indonesia, both in border areas and inland waters, with significant implications for the realization of national ideals and the President's vision. Law No. 32 of 2014 mandates Bakamla RI to conduct security and safety patrols in Indonesian territorial and jurisdictional waters. However, Bakamla RI has not successfully transformed into the Indonesian Coast Guard as initially expected, raising concerns about the effectiveness of Indonesia's maritime security system. This study employs a qualitative method using library research, collecting data from recent news and legal documents, then analyzing them through constitutional perspectives and expert theories. The findings highlight two key points: first, Bakamla RI has failed to function as a single multi-tasking agency due to limited fleet capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and the continued existence of overlapping institutions; second, Indonesia's maritime security concept should be restructured into a coordinated multi-agency, multi-task system aligned with national values, the total people's defense and security system, and the goal of establishing Indonesian Sea Power. In conclusion, this research underscores the urgency of re-conceptualizing maritime security through inter-agency coordination as a more realistic, constitutional, and strategic pathway to safeguard national sovereignty and strengthen Indonesia's role as a global maritime fulcrum.

Keywords: Indonesian Maritime Security, Indonesian National Ideals, Indonesian Sea Power, Maritime Security Threats, Multi Agencies Multi Tasks

1. Introduction

Recently, there are some tangible maritime security threats in Indonesia. Firstly, violation of Indonesian territorial boundaries that has been still threatening. China has been still claiming the South China Sea by ten dash line and some of its Fishing even Coast Guard Vessels sometimes are trespassing Indonesian border in Natuna. The latest incident has done by China Coast Guard Vessel numbered 5402 that trespassed Natuna border in 21st and 24th October 2024. The local Surveillance Station also reported that there were actually about 315 vessels trespassed Natuna every day (Arpandi, 2024). A report from Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (IOJI) reported that there were not only China Coast

Guard Vessel trespassed Natuna but also China Research Vessel even Fishing Vessel from the other country e.g. Vietnam (IOJI, 2024).

Secondly, Indonesian public has been surprised by present of 'sea fence' on Java Sea region in northern Tangerang. The 'sea fence' made from bamboos has stretched only 500 m from the beach (Ananta & Muhid, 2025), shows that it is still in territorial sea where Indonesia should have totally sovereignty, according to United Nation Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. But in reality, there is 'sea fence' stretched about 30,16 km indicated illegal reclamation project, without anyone knows who build the fence. Until this article written, the fence has been demolished about 15 km (Al-Farisi & Maulana, 2025).

Two examples above shown that Indonesia has still faced maritime security threat from every side, not only in border region even in inland waters. Although there is neither universally definition of maritime security (Bueger & Edmunds, 2024) nor in Indonesian regulations, those incidents have actually threatened public security among Indonesian people. It obstructs the Indonesian national ideals mentioned in Preamble of the Constitution of 1945 as "to protect the whole people and the whole nation". Moreover, it obstructs a point of the President's visions (called *Astacita*) "to stabilize nation's defense and security system". So, as mandate of the Law No. 59 of 2024 about national long term development plan of 2025-2045, national security is directed into national safety, sovereignty, and unity of Indonesian region that secure, peaceful, and actively keep the world peace, which implemented by main policy 'transformation of institution of security, safety, and law enforcement in Indonesian territorial and jurisdiction region'.

The Indonesian maritime security institution is based on the Law No. 32 of 2014 which gives mandate to Bakamla RI (acronym of *Badan Keamanan Laut Republik Indonesia*) to establish security and safety patrol operation in Indonesian territorial and jurisdiction region. It can't be denied that there have been some institutions of maritime security in Indonesia with its own regulations (legal basis) and Bakamla RI has been expected by the President at the time to be single agency with multi tasks by stated as 'embryo of Indonesia Coast Guard' (Kurnia, 2022). But until the age of 19, Bakamla RI hasn't become Indonesia Coast Guard, the single agency with multi tasks hasn't been realized (because the older institutions of maritime security are still being exist), and most of all, the maritime security as part of Indonesian national ideals hasn't been implemented. Starting

for those facts, this research has formulated two main questions are has Bakamla RI failed to transform into Indonesia Coast Guard and how the Indonesian maritime security is re-concepted to establish Indonesian Sea Power.

2. Method

This research used a qualitative method based on library research. Data and information were obtained from credible and up-to-date news sources as well as relevant legal instruments. The analysis was conducted through a normative constitutional approach combined with expert theories in maritime security. In addition, a comparative perspective was employed by examining the practices of coast guard institutions in other countries, providing broader insight and strengthening the conceptual framework of the study.

3. Discussion

As the answer of the two research questions, there are two main statements as results of the research. Firstly, it needs to be acknowledged that Bakamla RI has failed to transform itself into Indonesia Coast Guard. It's based on some evidences. Until its age of 19, Bakamla RI just has 10 patrol vessels divided into three maritime zones: west, center, and east that still so far from ideal (Mawangi, 2024). Beside that, the number of Bakamla's patrol vessel is the least among the other institutions. This seems to imply that Bakamla RI has been too premature to be prepared into Indonesia Coast Guard even on the verge of failure. Then, Bakamla RI hasn't had the headquarter (HQ) anymore after the fire at 29th September 2024 (Hutajulu, 2024). Then, capacity and capability of its surveillance equipment is questionable according to the 'sea fence' on only 500 meters from beach line (Mubarok, 2025) and the presence of Illegal Fishing Vessels in Natuna and. Instead, the traditional fisherman with simple equipment sometimes detects presence of the Illegal Fishing Vessels early at the time of Bakamla RI hasn't detected (Arpandi, 2024). Secondly, the single agency multi tasks has really failed to be realized. There are some maritime security institutions before the existing of Bakamla RI, shown by the following table:

Table 1. List of Maritime Security Institutions before the Existing of Bakamla RI

Institutions	Main Task	Legal Basis
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TNI AL	Maritime Defense, Maritime Security (Law Enforcement), Maritime Diplomacy (known as 'Naval Trident')	Law No. 3 of 2002 and Law No. 34 of 2004
POLAIR	Keeping public security, law enforcement, public protection	Law No. 2 of 2002
BEA CUKAI	Preventing customs violation	Law No. 17 of 2006
KPLP	Shipping regulations and maritime accident handling	Law No. 17 of 2008 And Law No. 66 of 2024
PSDKP	Preventing Illegal Fishing (IUU Fishing)	Law No. 45 of 2009

Source: (Kurnia, 2022) and modified by the researcher

The establishment of Bakamla RI in 2014 (by Law No. 32 of 2014) has been intended to unify all of those institutions into just an institution mentioned as single agency multi tasks, that is Bakamla RI which prepared into Indonesia Coast Guard. But in reality, until present single agency multi tasks hasn't been realized because those institutions (mentioned in Table 1) are still existing, and the existing of Bakamla RI exactly increase the complexity of maritime security enforcer. The complexity is usually complained by the shipowners that caused increase of shipping time and operational cost (Sari, 2019). Moreover, those institutions actually have already specific sector, for example TNI AL in defense sector, POLAIR in public security sector, BEA CUKAI in customs sector, KPLP in shipping sector, and PSDKP in fishing sector, meanwhile Bakamla RI has never been set in specific sector, even by its own legal basis (Law No. 32 of 2014) and its derivative regulations (Government Regulation No. 13 of 2022 and Presidential Decree No. 59 of 2023).

In fact, mechanism of the Indonesian maritime security can be running properly although without Bakamla RI or the effort to establish single agency multi tasks. Those institutions can be coordinated as multi agency multi tasks. It keeps the existing of each institution to do its own task in its own sector with coordination by lead institution, for example Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs (KEMENKO POLKAM). By the model, all of those institutions implement Indonesia Coast Guard tasks and functions in its own sector under coordination of Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs. It defines that Indonesia Coast Guard is actually neither a single institution nor a single agency but a complex coordinated form contains of some institutions in each maritime sector. It's visualized by the following scheme:



Figure 1. Sector Dividing of the Maritime Security Institutions

Source: (Priyanto et al., 2016) with Modification by the Researcher

Figure 1 above shows each sector of the Maritime Security Institutions. KPLP as shipping watcher operates along Sea Lane of Trade (*Alur Laut Kepulauan Indonesia/ALKI*) so that it responsible for each passenger ship; BEA CUKAI (Customs) operates around harbor (especially container harbor) so that it responsible for each cargo ship; PSDKP as fishing watcher operates around fishing zone so that it responsible for each fishing ships by watching the ship documents, the fishing gears, and the number of fish catch; POLAIR operates around public zone for example residential area and tourist area so that it responsible for each coastal communities and tourists; and TNI AL as main component of maritime defense operates around Exclusive Economic Zone (*Zona Ekonomi Eksklusif/ZEE*) and along maritime borders so that it responsible for each foreign vessels pass close to the Indonesian sea region. The system can be added with the other institutions, for example Ministry of Environment (KLHK) to watch sustainability of the environment, Ministry of Education to watch preservation of archaeological sites or

cultural heritages, even also National Research Agency (BRIN). Hence, the Indonesia Coast Guard beside not a single agency is also not a rigid institution.

The discussions are started about explanation of failure of the single agency multi tasks. The main reason is it contradicts with Indonesian own national ideals. In the Preamble of the Constitution of 1945, there are four core values of the Republic of Indonesia: freedom, unity, sovereignty, justice, and prosperous. After got its freedom, the nation must implement unity to establish sovereignty, so that justice and prosperous can be realized in the whole nation. In other words, unity is the main core value after freedom. Unity is exactly different with unification. Indonesia contains of many ethnics, many cultures, many languages, also many religions mentioned as *bhinneka*. But all of the people have awareness to unite into a complex nation to struggle against colonialism and imperialism. That means unity, mentioned as *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (MPR RI, 2014). It is exactly different with immigrant people in America that persecuted every tribe except white people or German people under Nazi regime that persecuted every ethnic except the Aryan. The unity is also Indonesian character that always 'absorb and grow' to direct the diversity into synthesis point (Latif, 2020). It also happened in maritime security sector. The many institutions are implementation of the diversity of Indonesia. As how Indonesia treats the diversity into the national unity, abolition of the other institutions to form the single agency of maritime security is clearly violates the national value.

The other reason relates to Indonesian defense and security system, mandated by the Constitution of 1945. The first section of the Article No. 30 of the Constitution of 1945 mentioned that every Indonesian citizen is entitled and obligated to participate in every effort of national defense and security. There isn't exception mentioned in this section, shows that order to participate in every effort of national defense and security is intended to all of Indonesian citizen without discrimination. So do in maritime security sector, efforts of national maritime security are rights and obligations of all of maritime security institutions without any policy to unite all into only single agency. It is strengthened with the second section mentioned that the efforts of national defense and security are implemented by total people defense and security system (*Sistem Pertahanan dan Keamanan Rakyat Semesta/Sishankamrata*). Total defense and security system is of course not an exclusive system. It implements defense and security by involving each component of the people.

The national defense and security system has strong relation with Indonesian Sea Power. Till explained that Sea Power covers military and civilian aspects (Till, 2021). In connection with its application in Indonesia (mentioned as Indonesian Sea Power), Marsetio explained that Indonesian Sea Power encompasses all national components related to sea (Marsetio, 2017). Based on those experts' explanations, Indonesian Sea Power can be realized only by involving all of national maritime components include all of maritime security institutions.

4. Conclusion

There are two main statements according to the research. First, Bakamla RI has failed to transform into the Indonesian Coast Guard, which indicates that the single-agency multi-task model cannot be effectively implemented in Indonesia's maritime security system. Second, the maritime security framework should be re-conceptualized into a coordinated multi-agency, multi-task arrangement to support the establishment of Indonesian Sea Power. This conclusion emphasizes that a coordination-based approach is more consistent with constitutional values, the total people's defense and security system, and Indonesia's institutional diversity. Therefore, strengthening regulations, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and optimizing the roles of existing maritime institutions are strategic measures to safeguard sovereignty, ensure maritime security, and reinforce Indonesia's position as a maritime power in the region and beyond.

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