



Maritime security in Indonesia: Towards a comprehensive agenda?



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A B S T R A C T

Against the backdrop of Indonesian President Widodo's expressed intention to turn his country in to a maritime nation again, this article examines the way in which the Indonesian state understands and utilises the concept of maritime security. The article achieves this aim by discussing the results of a Training Needs Analysis of key Indonesian state maritime security actors, conducted as part of the first phase of a multi-stakeholder project examining how Indonesia's maritime security capacity can be improved.

The article illustrates how key maritime actors within the Indonesian state demonstrate a diverse understanding of what maritime security is, and argues that there is a demonstrable willingness on their part to look beyond a narrow conceptualisation of security in the maritime domain, which is solely focused on military threats and the defence of the state, towards something more comprehensive. Here the Indonesian approach to maritime security mirrors in practice conceptual trends encapsulated in the emergence of maritime security studies. The article concludes that there is the potential for a more comprehensive maritime security agenda to take hold in Indonesia but that this will require continued strategic and policy focus on the maritime domain within the country, alongside an emphasis on partnership building both within the state and between the state and non-state actors.

Consistent dialogue around how maritime security is conceptualised would be helpful in supporting these two conditions the article posits, elaborating the value of the human security lens for those interested in a more comprehensive approach to maritime security.

'We have to work as hard as possible to turn Indonesia into a maritime nation once again. Oceans, seas, straits and bays are the future of our civilization. We've turned our back on the seas, oceans, straits and bays for far too long. It is time for us to realize '*jalesveva jayamahe*,' 'in the ocean we triumph,' a motto upheld by our ancestors in the past. We want to make that happen again' President Joko Widodo, Inauguration Speech, 2014 [19].

1. Introduction

Indonesian President Joko Widodo's strategic emphasis on turning his country in to a "...maritime nation once again" [19] has ensured that the security of the maritime domain, alongside those efforts to enhance it, have been given greater prominence within the country over the past two years. This focus has arguably been given added impetus by the work of organisations such as the International Organization for MigrationIndonesia (IOMIndonesia) who have helped to shed light on incidents of trafficking on foreign fishing boats

operating in Indonesian waters, and in doing so have highlighted the tragic consequences for human welfare when criminality at sea flourishes. In one incident for example, an IOMIndonesia assessment conducted in the sprawling port of Ambon, identified hundreds of Myanmar nationals as victims of trafficking on foreign fishing boats ([16]:1). In a second incident hundreds of foreign fishermen, who had been victims of trafficking in the fisheries sector, were found stranded on the remote eastern island of Benjina. Predominantly foreign nationals from Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand, the fishermen had experienced forced confinement and labour, non-payment of salaries despite their excessive working hours, and psychological and physical abuse amounting to torture ([16]:1).

Set against this backdrop a group of stakeholders – Indonesian state and non-state – came together in April 2015 to launch a project, ongoing today, titled 'The Consortium for Maritime Security in Indonesia'. The project's objective is to bring together varied stakeholders with an interest in security in the maritime domain, in order to build a community of practice ([3,6]:2) that can help contribute towards improving Indonesia's maritime security capacity. Its first phase, which ran between September 2015 and April 2016, recognised

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the need to better understand how the Indonesian state thinks about maritime security – threats and responses. With a base level of understanding in place, the assumption was made that it would be possible to more effectively map out the most appropriate ways in which capacity could be improved, shaping the project's subsequent phases. This knowledge was attained through the delivery of several focus groups held in Indonesia involving key stakeholders and through the commission of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) targeting key state maritime actors. It is this TNA that the paper focuses on, elaborating its development and results in order to provide an up to date case study of how the concept of maritime security is understood and utilised in practice today.

Whilst overall key maritime actors within the Indonesian state demonstrate a diverse understanding of what maritime security is, the paper argues that there is a demonstrable willingness on their part to look beyond a narrow conceptualisation of security in the maritime domain, which is solely focused on military threats and the defence of the state, towards something more comprehensive. Here the Indonesian approach to maritime security mirrors in practice conceptual trends encapsulated in the emergence of maritime security studies. More specifically, the TNA captures a general awareness of maritime security as a concept but lower awareness amongst state actors as to their specific mandate relating to maritime security. The paper also outlines the diversity of the perceived maritime security threats highlighted by state actors. Shifting to responses, the paper explores which actors are deemed to be of particular importance in relation to maritime security. It notes the continued prominence of the Navy, but notes a more complex governance situation where the role of multiple state actors and indeed non-state actors are recognised, arguing that this illustrates evidence of an acknowledgment of the relationship between insecurity at sea and on land. To conclude, the paper notes that there is the potential for a more comprehensive maritime security agenda to take hold in Indonesia but that this will require continued strategic and policy focus on the maritime domain within the country, alongside an emphasis on partnership building both within the state and between the state and non-state actors. Consistent dialogue around how maritime security is conceptualised would be particularly helpful in supporting these two conditions. Here the paper highlights the significant contribution the human security concept - with its recognition of multiple security sectors and its emphasis on core freedoms – has for those seeking a more comprehensive lens through which to approach security in the maritime domain.

Structurally the paper's next section sets out the broader context in which the Indonesia capacity-building project was established. Reiterating the emphasis placed on the maritime domain by Indonesia's President, the article positions this trajectory as an example of growing strategic thinking by those in government about the oceans and their security. This development, the paper notes, is underpinned by a broadening conceptualisation of security witnessed in recent decades, replicated in the maritime domain, where maritime security studies has emerged. With this complete the paper elaborates further on the membership of the Indonesia project's consortium, sets out the parameters of the TNA by outlining its objective and methodology, before attention turns to highlighting and discussing the main results of the TNA. It is then that conclusions are drawn.

2. New strategies and new thinking in the maritime domain

In his election manifesto in 2014 the then Indonesian Presidential candidate, Joko Widodo, promised to focus on maritime security ([29]:2–4). This commitment, encapsulated in a broad desire to transform Indonesia in to a 'global maritime axis', was subsequently affirmed in his October 2014 inauguration speech [19]. Since then the idea of Indonesia as a maritime axis has entered in to more regular parlance across government. As the General Secretary of the Ministry

of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Sjarief Widjaja, noted for example in 2015:

"...fighting transnational crime, including people smuggling and human trafficking, is key to Indonesia's maritime security and integral to the government's design to establish Indonesia as a Global Maritime Axis" ([16]: 2).

Indonesia's renewed focus on its maritime domain represents a further example of a trend witnessed in recent years for countries and regional blocs to reflect on the maritime dimension to their development and security. The United Kingdom (UK) for example published its 'National Strategy for Maritime Security' [33] in May 2014. This strategy was signed off by four government departments – the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Department of Transport – demonstrating significant cross-government engagement, and perhaps unsurprisingly in this context, the strategy embraced a multi-faceted definition of maritime security. More specifically, maritime security was defined as:

"...the advancement and protection of the UK's national interests, at home and abroad, through the active management of risks and opportunities in and from the maritime domain, in order to strengthen and extend the UK's prosperity, security and resilience and to help shape a stable world." ([33]: 15)

The UK laid out five maritime security objectives ([33]: 9–10). These focused on securing the international maritime domain, developing maritime governance capacity, protecting overseas territories, securing global trade and energy routes, and protecting the UK and its territories against "illegal and dangerous activity, including serious organised crime and terrorism" ([33]: 10–11).

Both the European Union [8] and the African Union [1] have also published maritime security strategies in recent years, and as with the UK they encapsulate a broadening of how maritime security is conceptualised. Each strategy firmly highlights the importance of the maritime domain economically, politically, environmentally, and culturally, and as such notes more diverse threats associated with that domain. Maritime security is now about tackling issues such as illegal fishing or smuggling by sea, alongside the inter-state naval operations and broader power politics associated with the Cold War. For a country such as Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic state, this more comprehensive agenda is relevant when, for example, tragic incidents of crime in the fishing industry are located in and around its waters.

The conceptual shift encapsulated in these maritime security strategies towards a widening and deepening of maritime security to encapsulate a growing emphasis on non-traditional threats, and the associated interest in the role of non-state actors [5], is perhaps unsurprising when we consider the broadening of the security agenda as a whole in the decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall [4,9]. It is also a shift that has been evident in academic research around maritime security where analytically rich work on the composition and deployment of 21st century navies [32], the role of the BRIC countries as emerging maritime powers [30], or on ongoing maritime territorial disputes such as those in the South China Sea [20], has been joined by an increasing array of studies looking at issues such as piracy [25,28], illegal fishing [26], how we can conceptualise port security [22] or the privatisation of maritime security [21].

There has also been a significant multi-disciplinary dimension to this expanding literature with insights from disciplines such as geography integrated in to thinking with reflections on the geopolitical dimension of maritime security [11,12] or critiques of the assumption that oceans are placeless [13]. Indeed, in recent years this proliferation of the issues under focus relating to security in the maritime domain has been met by increased efforts on a more macro-level to map out a 'maritime security studies' agenda, and establish associated academic infrastructure.¹ To date this has been a relatively organic and nascent attempt by a growing body of academics to make sense of and explore

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