



Enhancing Maritime Security Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region:

The Role and Contribution of Indonesian Navy¹

Prologue.

Republic of Indonesia is a country that situated in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Consisting of 17.499 islands, this world's biggest archipelago is strategically located between the Indian and Pacific Ocean Region. From all the seven strategic choke points in the IOR, three are placed in our waters, namely the Malacca Strait which we shared maritime boundary with Malaysia, Sunda Strait and Lombok Strait. Those strategic choke points connect vital Sea Lanes of Oil Trade (SLOT) and Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) between industrial East Asian countries with IOR as well as European countries. The globalization and regional economic growth along with the increase of shipping goods nowadays have consequently resulted in a growing maritime traffic in those straits.

In the Malacca Strait alone, it is estimated that 60,000 vessels have been transited per year. If the strait were blocked of any reasons, nearly half of the world's fleet would be required to reroute around the Indonesian archipelago through Lombok Strait, or the Sunda Strait.² The disruption on this body of water will not only directly affect the shipping company themselves, but also to the security and economic in the region and eventually globally, if the trouble takes a longer period.

¹ Paper submitted by TNI AL delegation to the panel discussion in the IONS Operational Seminar and Preparatory Workshop 2013, Mumbai, India.

² *World Oil Transit Chokepoints*, U.S. Energy Information Administration full report, August 22, 2012, p. 5.

History has shown us that most of the great nations are maritime in nature. For centuries the Indian Ocean has been becoming a great hub that connecting nations around it and in the vicinity, via trade, cultural exchange, pilgrimage and so on. From those early days until modern era, we have learned with the hard way that security at sea would bring safe feeling for all sea users and conducive to economic activities and will bring prosperity in the end. In that reason, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is a very relevant forum to discuss and eventually to overcome maritime security related issues in the region for the benefit of all countries in the IOR.

Indonesian Navy on Maritime Security.

Like other navies in the world, the role of Indonesian Navy (Tentara Nasional Indonesia Angkatan Laut/ TNI AL) is mainly consisting of Military, Constabulary and Diplomacy roles. On its heyday in the 1960's, in accordance with the liberation of West Papua from Dutch colonial power, TNI AL has reached a remarkable power and capabilities. At that time it was able to organize "Jayawijaya Operation" which was the largest amphibious operation in the history of Indonesian military operations. Not less than 100 warships and 16,000 marines prepared in the operation; forcing the Dutch back to the negotiating table.³ With such power, in the 1960's, ALRI was publicized as the greatest naval power in Asia.⁴ However, if we look at the reality nowadays, and with the absence of potential conflicts, navies' "Military Role" has been slowly diminishing, as the trend of developing strategic environment shifted toward to non-traditional maritime threats, for example piracy, sea robbery, transnational organized crime including people smuggling and illicit drug trafficking, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR). Therefore, other roles than military role become more important. And this cannot be dealt by navy alone, as its non-"military" nature typically have strong connection with other stakeholders.

To safeguard the vast water of Indonesian Archipelago, TNI AL has been closely working together with other element of Indonesian Maritime Institutions, such

³ Widjajanto, Andi, *Evolusi Doktrin Pertahanan Indonesia*, (Indonesia Defense Doctrine Evolution-in Indonesian), 2005, p. 6. At <http://www.scribd.com/doc/47222384/Evolusi-Doktrin-Pertahanan-Indonesia-Andi-Widjajanto>

⁴ Ibid.

as Marine Police, Coast Guard, Ministry of Maritime and Fisheries, Custom, Immigration and so on, with each respective area of responsibilities and authorities. That cooperation bonded under the Maritime Security Coordination Agency auspices, which then optimized assets and resources from each involving institution according to the situation and necessity. Apart from that, TNI AL Navy has been actively conducting civic mission throughout remote areas in Indonesia. The “Surya Baskara Jaya” Operations, conducted every year with aims to assist local governments in the framework of domestic development and improve the quality of health and well-being of local communities, especially communities in coastal and small islands.

Albeit recognized as the best equipped maritime Institution in the country, the navy faced severe impact by Asian financial crisis in the mid-1990s, making it become more difficult to fulfill its tasks because of budgetary constraint imposed by government. Continual overhaul of foreign-built ships was perceived as the primary method to retain an operational fleet.⁵ The only major additions to the TNI AL fleet in that period were 39 ships from the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) that modestly expanded naval capabilities, but introduced an additional logistic support and training problems for the Navy. Those years, along with economic difficulties in the region, saw the raising of maritime security issues such as sea robbery, hijacking and other illegal activities through the sea, especially in the maritime border area.

As the current political stability and economic growth become better, it has allowed the Indonesian government under Mr. Susilo Bambang Yudoyono’s administration to augment defense budget; targeting the modernization and replacement of aging and obsolete Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia/ TNI), including TNI AL, platforms and weapon systems.⁶ The program, known as Minimum Essential Force (MEF),⁷ is a calculated standardized minimum

⁵ Pike, J., *ALRI–Navy of the Republic of Indonesia–Modernization*, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/indonesia/alri-modernization.htm>

⁶ Widyasari, *Presiden: Alutsista TNI Perlu Diperkuat*, *Jurnas.com*, 9 August 2012, at http://www.jurnas.com/news/68496/Presiden:_Alutsista_TNI_Perlu_Diperkuat/1/Nasional/Keamanan.

⁷ In reality, the MEF is developed to reflect the optimal power of empowering existing national resources and constructed in accordance with the ability of national economic resources. The MEF is a development strategy of defence major component towards the ideal posture. MEF is neither directed to the arms race concept nor as a development strategy to conquer total war, but it is as a form of essential strength that meets certain standards.

that dictates the essential strength of the TNI, which must be prepared, as the primary and fundamental prerequisite for the effective implementation of the duties and functions of the TNI with the allocated budget constraint permit. To further optimized the expenditure and lessening dependence from import, indigenous efforts are encouraged. From TNI AL point of view, with all of those measures, optimistically could perform its duties to safeguard our waters and ensure security of all sea users in the vital sea lanes. Thanks for that, TNI AL has been able to successfully conduct anti-piracy and rescue operation to release MV Sinar Kudus, an Indonesian flag cargo ship hijacked off Somali in 2011. Since 2009 TNI AL also has been actively participate in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon-Maritime Task Force (UNIFIL-MTF) by regularly sending its warship.

Apart from cooperation with own country's maritime institution, TNI AL also has been conducting various cooperation in maritime security issues with almost all neighboring navies which countries shared maritime boundaries with Republic of Indonesia. Those cooperation ranging from Coordinated Patrol; currently with India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, The Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Australia; Joint Exercises with regional navies, Education and Training, Personnel Exchange programs and Navy-to-Navy Talks. Because of Indonesia unique geographical location, TNI AL also becomes member of Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) and IONS too. Furthermore, TNI AL conducts cooperation with extra regional navies in the matters. And in the ASEAN fora, there is ongoing process of building the ASEAN Maritime Forum.⁸

Those cooperation, directly and indirectly lead to decline of law transgressions and illegal activities in our maritime boundaries as well as important sea lanes such as Strait of Malacca, as stated by latest International Maritime Bureau (IMB) annual report. On the other hand, the fact that the regions of the Indian Oceans as well as Pacific Ocean are prone to natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcano eruptions, tsunamis, cyclones, and landslides, which cause serious damages, are other challenges that we have to deal. Natural disaster mitigation preparedness is vital to prevent large numbers of casualties, nonetheless most of the assets and

⁸ ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), comprises of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. ASEAN Maritime Forum is part of Political-Security Community Blueprint, one of three agreed frameworks for ASEAN Community 2015.

infrastructures devoted to that purpose are often damaged after a disaster occurred. Therefore, assistance from other countries in the region is, indeed, indispensable. The global community is highly aware that the navy is among a nation's best instruments to overcome these issues. With its flexibility and mobility, a warship can carry out various duties and functions on a short notice or during a certain period of time, as shown by the speed and magnitude of aids that brought by navies in 2004 Tsunami in the IOR.

Way ahead.

Current trends would suggest the need to focus on furthering cooperation in the fields of capacity building and interoperability. These forms of cooperation will also be means to enhance operational capacity and presence at sea. Further engagement in discussions, personnel exchanges and multilateral naval exercises would be of particular interest of the TNI AL. The United Nation's request to TNI AL ships to join the UNIFIL MTF in Lebanon is evidence of our commitment in this form of cooperation. TNI AL believes that future naval cooperation on operations will expand further and creating opportunities for other multinational cooperation.

TNI AL is committed to expand maritime security cooperation with navies in the region, since Indonesia also dependence from both Indian and Pacific Oceans. Those cooperation will surely improve significant mutual trust and will benefit for all of us. Expanding cooperation on education through student officers and instructors exchanges will be among the TNI AL priority list of future cooperation. Today's marvelous technological advancements and fluid strategic situation developments have brought about significant implications on naval affairs, which will contribute in the transformation of naval doctrines and paradigm. To cope with such era, we need to have our future generations to be able to adapt with this challenges.

As an implementation of such spirit, TNI AL will host the International Maritime Security Symposium which will be held in December 2013 in Jakarta. We are looking forward to welcome participants from regional and extra regional navies as well as maritime experts, exchanging views with the theme on "*Cooperative Strategy And Global Partnership to Enhance Maritime Domain Awareness*". Representatives from

IONS, WPNS, Maritime Organization and prominent experts will join the event. Furthermore, in the end of March 2014, TNI AL will organize a Multilateral Exercise code named "*Komodo 2014*". There are three purposes of the exercise, to improve relationships between ASEAN members and extra regional states, to improve maritime security in the region, and to increase professionalism among participants. Komodo 2014 will be focused on Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Relief, and Search and Rescue (SAR) related on Disaster Relief Operations. We do hope this event could invite many navies with same maritime interests to participate.

Both initiatives, aside from being medias to exchange ideas, views and discuss necessary steps for resolving maritime security issues, are solely aimed to intensified the interactions amongst participants, with a goal to create and strengthen mutual relations, foster cooperations, mutual trust and friendship, personally and professionally, for the purpose of maintaining peace, security and realizing prosperity and welfare in the region. Such endeavour, is in line with one of the Indonesian foreign policies, "a million friends zero enemy".⁹

Conclusion.

Since maritime security is a common interest among countries in the region, naval cooperation has become a necessity. To cope with maritime security issues is indeed a herculean task that will be impossible to be dealt with one country only. That is why forum like IONS is very important to our region. As late Admiral Mahan points out, that event at sea will affect situation ashore, and vice versa, good order in IOR will bring conducive situation for all countries in the region. Strengthening fostered cooperation, mutual trust and friendship for the purpose of maintaining peace, security and realizing prosperity and welfare in the Indian Ocean Region is the key to our endeavor.

⁹ Statement of the President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, at the opening of the 2011 Asia Pacific Security and Defense Exhibition Forum (APSDEX) and at 2011 Jakarta International Defense Dialogue (JIDD).