

Defense Strategies in Safeguarding Maritime Security in Indonesia's Outermost Small Islands

Yunias Dao¹, Yusnaldi², Kusuma³

¹²³**Republic of Indonesia Defence University, Indonesia**

Correspondent: yuniasdao@gmail.com¹

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ABSTRACT: The outermost small islands of Indonesia play a critical role in maintaining national sovereignty and maritime security. However, these areas face significant challenges, including resource limitations, non-traditional threats, environmental vulnerabilities, and weak inter-agency coordination, which impede the effectiveness of current defense strategies. This study investigates how Indonesia's defense strategies address maritime security challenges and proposes actionable solutions to enhance their effectiveness. While previous research has broadly examined maritime security, few studies focus specifically on the strategic intricacies of the outermost small islands, highlighting the novelty of this paper. A qualitative research approach is employed, utilizing a systematic literature review to analyze data from scientific journal articles, policy reports, and government documents. The thematic analysis identifies key challenges, current strategies, and opportunities for improvement. The findings reveal that existing strategies—such as strengthening maritime policies, enhancing the capacity of the Indonesian Navy and the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla), and engaging in maritime diplomacy—are hampered by budgetary constraints, weak inter-agency coordination, and insufficient technological integration. The study recommends enhancing maritime infrastructure, adopting advanced surveillance technologies, empowering local communities, and fostering international collaboration to address transnational threats. This study concludes that an integrated and evidence-based defense strategy is essential to safeguard Indonesia's maritime borders. The findings underscore the need for policy reforms that adopt a multidimensional approach, reinforcing Indonesia's position as a resilient and sovereign maritime nation.

Keywords: Maritime Security, Small Islands, Defense Strategy



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INTRODUCTION

Maritime security is vital for safeguarding and maintaining a nation's maritime boundaries, particularly for an archipelagic state like Indonesia. With 17,480 islands, 111 of which are categorized as outermost, these areas hold strategic significance regarding economic, defense, and security perspectives.

The outermost small islands serve as the frontline in protecting Indonesia's sovereignty, functioning as the baseline and starting points for determining Indonesia's territorial waters, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and continental shelf boundaries that directly border several

neighboring countries. These islands are thus pivotal as national defense and security pillars, while housing resources are crucial for national resilience. However, these attributes make the outermost small islands vulnerable to maritime security threats.

Indonesia's outermost small islands are particularly prone to security risks. Maritime threats in these regions include border disputes, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, smuggling, human trafficking, the presence of boat people, transshipment, environmental pollution, piracy, and terrorism. These threats impact national defense because they occur within the country's sovereign areas and often involve bordering nations. Such conditions result in violations of Indonesia's sovereignty, particularly in the outermost island regions, causing potential inter-state conflicts and significant national losses.

Previous studies have addressed various aspects of defense strategies for maritime security in these regions, focusing on specific themes such as defense policies and the effectiveness of security measures for outermost small islands (Oping, 2018) the regulation and strategic importance of these islands for safeguarding territorial integrity (Kusuma & Kurnia, 2022) ; maritime defense strategies to secure Indonesia's territory (Asrul et al., 2023); and the utilization and development of these islands to enhance defense and security (Nugraha, 2024). While valuable, these studies remain segmented, emphasizing these islands' role or policy aspects in national and international contexts without sufficiently addressing the localized dynamics of the outermost small islands.

Given the increasing maritime security disruptions in these regions—often involving bordering nations—there is a pressing need for a more in-depth and comprehensive study. This research aims to provide significant findings that can contribute to developing more effective maritime defense strategies. Its outcomes are expected to serve as essential and actionable inputs for formulating maritime defense and security policies, particularly for the outermost small islands. Thus, this study aims to analyze the defense strategies employed to safeguard maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands and offer comprehensive, evidence-based recommendations for enhancing maritime security and national sovereignty.

This research presents a unique approach by focusing on outermost small islands as strategic elements in Indonesia's maritime defense, diverging from prior studies that primarily concentrate on macro or national-level issues. It integrates a multidimensional perspective encompassing geopolitical, socio-economic, and environmental aspects in formulating defense strategies. (Kristiyanti & Fauziningrum, 2022). Another novel aspect of this research is its combination of securitization theory, maritime diplomacy, and maritime-based defense paradigms to create a holistic framework for addressing security threats. This approach not only provides a deeper understanding of maritime security issues but also offers practical policy recommendations for implementation by the government and other stakeholders (Simorangkir et al., 2023).

This research justifies itself by highlighting the importance of safeguarding Indonesia's maritime sovereignty amid an increasingly complex global geopolitical landscape. By developing effective defense strategies for the outermost small islands, this study aims to contribute to regional stability and strengthen Indonesia's position as a sovereign and secure maritime nation.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a literature review design to analyze defense strategies in maintaining maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands. The qualitative approach is chosen for its ability to provide an in-depth understanding of complex issues involving geopolitical, socioeconomic, and diplomatic factors that influence Indonesia's defense policies. (Flick, 2009) Maritime security in the outermost small islands requires a holistic understanding due to the internal and external challenges related to border security threats and the dynamics of international relations.

The research design focuses on literature review as the primary method for collecting and analyzing secondary data from various relevant sources, including scholarly journal articles, books, policy reports, and official documents. A literature review enables the researcher to evaluate existing policies, analyze challenges in their implementation, and identify strategies applied to maintain maritime security (Bailey & Bailey, 2017) The selected sources must be credible and relevant to this study's context of maritime security in Indonesia, covering issues such as maritime diplomacy, border management, and national resilience.

Data collection is carried out through the careful selection of relevant literature. Key sources include international scholarly journals, books on maritime security, government policy reports, and documents issued by related institutions (Gerring, 2011). The collected data is then analyzed using a thematic approach, in which the researcher identifies key themes emerging from the literature. This analysis aims to explore the factors influencing Indonesia's maritime defense policies, such as socio-economic dynamics, geopolitical challenges, and the role of local communities in ensuring regional security.

The thematic analysis proceeds through several stages, starting with data organization, identification of main themes, and synthesis of information. This approach allows the researcher to understand the relationships between various variables shaping maritime security policies and produce more comprehensive findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The synthesis of information aims to provide a more holistic view of the challenges and strategies applied in maritime security management and to formulate evidence-based policy recommendations.

By employing a qualitative design based on a literature review, this study aims to significantly contribute to the development of defense policies for Indonesia's outermost small islands. This approach is academically relevant and expected to provide strategic insights that policymakers can use to develop more effective and sustainable policies. Through an in-depth synthesis of the literature, this research will present findings that can strengthen Indonesia's defense policies in addressing future maritime security challenges.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Maritime Security in Indonesia's Outermost Small Islands

Security fundamentally entails managing threat elements to create an environment—whether at the state or individual level—free from all forms of danger (Buzan & Hansen, 2009). The nature of

threats can vary depending on the perspective of the entity identifying them. Listiyono et al (2023) & Prasetyo et al (2023) defines threats as any potential or active activities that endanger sovereignty, territorial integrity, or the essence of a sovereign state, originating either externally or internally (Prasetyo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Buzan and Hansen (2009) view threats as anything that can disrupt or influence a referent object. With Wilde and Waever, Buzan (as cited in Buerger, 2014) argues that threats can be constructed as a series of claims to protect specific reference objects.

Such constructions are often accompanied by proposals to mitigate threats, sometimes involving military intervention that may infringe upon civil liberties. Lai (2013) emphasizes that threats, as identified by organizations, can influence their existence or operations, thus requiring careful management (Lai, 2013). Buerger (2015) reiterates that security is fundamentally about managing threats to create a threat-free environment. Using a maritime security matrix, threats can be mapped across four dimensions: national security, economic security, human security, and marine environmental security.

Outermost small islands serve as geographic reference points for defining Indonesia's maritime boundaries under international and national law. Indonesia's strategic location as a maritime crossroads between two oceans, connecting East Asia to Africa and Europe, enhances its geopolitical and geostrategic importance. These outermost small islands also border several neighboring countries, including India, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Timor-Leste. The country's three Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI) and chokepoints like the Malacca Strait, Lombok Strait, and Sunda Strait further highlight Indonesia's crucial role in global trade and transportation (Listiyono et al., 2021). Consequently, these islands serve as the "front porch" of Indonesia's sovereignty and have significant security implications.

Indonesia faces two primary categories of maritime security challenges:

1. Latent Challenges: Persistent issues, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational maritime crimes, territorial violations, armed piracy, marine accidents, maritime terrorism, and foreign incursions via the sea.
2. Contemporary Challenges: Accelerating threats requiring immediate attention, such as territorial disputes in critical maritime zones.

Specific cases illustrate the severity of these challenges. For instance, Indonesia apprehended 18 foreign fishing vessels in 2022 and 17 in 2023 for IUU fishing activities. Other incidents include drug smuggling in Aceh, human trafficking in Riau, and the discovery of unmanned underwater drones near Selayar Island, suspected to belong to foreign entities. Border regions, such as the Sangihe and Talaud Islands, frequently experience illegal fishing, piracy, and smuggling activities. These islands are also reportedly used as logistical routes for terrorist organizations.

The North Natuna Sea represents one of Indonesia's critical maritime security hotspots. While

Indonesia is a non-claimant state in the South China Sea disputes, China's assertive activities in

Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) have drawn the country into the conflict (Zulhatta & Marsetio, 2023). Between 2014 and 2019, Chinese vessels repeatedly violated Indonesia's EEZ. China

bases its claims on the "nine-dash line," recently updated to the "ten-dash line" in 2023, while Indonesia adheres to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Malik et al., 2019).

Indonesia must revise and strengthen its defense strategies for the outermost small islands in response to these challenges. A comprehensive approach should integrate enhanced maritime surveillance, regional collaboration, diplomatic initiatives, and local economic development to bolster resilience and sovereignty. Through these efforts, Indonesia can effectively address maritime security threats while reinforcing its position as a sovereign maritime nation.

The maritime security framework proposed by Buerger (2015) demonstrates the relevance of theory in explaining the various dimensions of threats in border regions, including Indonesia's outermost small islands (Bueger, 2015). This theory emphasizes the need for a multidimensional approach that prioritizes military defense and addresses economic and social issues to create comprehensive security. It supports and expands the concept of nontraditional security theory within the field of international security studies.

In practical terms, identifying threats in the outermost small islands provides a solid foundation for the government to develop maritime security policies tailored to specific needs. For example, strengthening maritime surveillance in border areas such as North Natuna or Sangihe can leverage findings related to latent threats such as IUU fishing and violations of the EEZ. A more strategic maritime diplomacy approach is necessary to address aggressive claims in disputed areas such as the South China Sea. This analysis underscores the importance of a multi-dimensional maritime security strategy that focuses on military aspects and emphasizes regional collaboration and the empowerment of local communities. This approach supports national stability and strengthens Indonesia's strategic position in the Asia-Pacific region.

Defense Strategies for Safeguarding Maritime Security

National defense policies are inherently flexible and adaptive, guided by strategic objectives and goals. Establishing defense policies for Indonesia's outermost small islands is crucial in the context of Indonesia's recognition as the world's largest archipelagic state. With its vast maritime potential, Indonesia has the opportunity to position itself as a maritime powerhouse. However, similar to other nations, this strategic position also entails risks, underscoring the importance of the 1982 UNCLOS, which comprehensively regulates the rights and obligations of archipelagic states (Dao, 2023).

In alignment with UNCLOS 1982 Part IV Archipelagic State (Articles 46–54), Indonesia has enacted various national laws, including: Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense, Law No. 34 of 2004 on the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), Law No. 16 of 2012 on the Defense Industry, and Law No. 11 of 2020 on Job Creation (Omnibus Law). These regulations aim to manage all national resources and infrastructure for defense purposes. They also serve as a framework for the Ministry of Defense and TNI to establish a robust national defense system capable of deterring and mitigating threats. Key components include developing a national defense posture, establishing defense systems, securing border areas and outermost islands, enhancing defense-related technology and information systems, fostering international collaboration, and strengthening the defense industry and national character.

The Defense White Paper emphasizes monitoring strategic environmental developments when formulating state policies. The focus is on border issues specific to outermost small islands. These islands are prioritized as critical areas to safeguard Indonesia's sovereignty, particularly given the region's vulnerability to conflicts in the Asia-Pacific. Strengthening defense postures and engaging in maritime diplomacy are crucial to addressing these challenges and enhancing reputation as the world's largest archipelagic state.

Hermawan and Sutanto (2022) highlight three critical aspects of Indonesia's maritime defense strategy: (1) Deterrence Strategy: This involves naval diplomacy, maintaining a presence in border areas, and enhancing the Navy's (TNI-AL) capabilities to prevent threats to sovereignty and territorial integrity; (2) Layered Defense Strategy: Focuses on deploying naval and air forces across buffer zones, primary defense areas, and resistance zones during wartime; and (3) Sea Control Strategy: Aims to secure access to maritime resources while denying adversaries the same, achieved through daily maritime operations and readiness, supported by the Air Force (TNI-AU) in vulnerable waters (Hermawan & Sutanto, 2022).

Given the strategic importance of the outermost small islands, a comprehensive defense strategy is essential to address the region's vulnerabilities. The following steps are recommended:

1. *Strengthening Maritime Policies*: The government has incorporated outermost small islands as integral components of national defense strategies. Accurate data collection, resource protection, and law enforcement in border waters are prioritized. This policy aims to reinforce national sovereignty, mitigate illegal exploitation, and uphold Indonesia's maritime dignity.
2. *Enhancing Naval Capacity*: As the primary force safeguarding maritime security, the Navy (TNI-AL) continues to enhance its operational capacity. According to Sumadinata et al. (2022), priorities include acquiring modern defense equipment, personnel training, and strengthening intelligence capabilities. These efforts enable swift and effective responses to border threats.
3. *Maritime Diplomacy*: Maritime diplomacy strengthens relations with neighboring countries and reduces potential conflicts in border waters. Sanjiwani et al. (2022) and Dao (2024) emphasize that this includes negotiating maritime boundaries and cooperating to combat illegal activities like fishing and smuggling (Dao, 2024). Through active diplomacy, Indonesia reinforces its vision as a Global Maritime Fulcrum (Sanjiwani et al., 2022).
4. *Infrastructure and Logistics Development*: Adequate infrastructure underpins defense strategies. Trisnaputra (2023) highlights the importance of building small ports, logistical facilities, and maritime transport routes to improve troop mobility and surveillance efficiency (Trisnaputra, 2023). Well-developed infrastructure integrates defense efforts with law enforcement and logistics distribution in remote areas.
5. *International Cooperation*: International cooperation is vital in addressing transboundary threats. Indonesia engages in multilateral and bilateral partnerships, including joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and capacity-building initiatives. This strategy strengthens Indonesia's position in tackling global security challenges.
6. *Law Enforcement and Maritime Security*: Law enforcement is pivotal in maintaining maritime security.

Hartono and Bakharuddin (2023) note that integrated patrol operations involving TNI-AL, the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla), and the Marine Police (Polairud) target illegal activities such as drug trafficking and illegal fishing. Inter-agency collaboration enhances surveillance and law enforcement effectiveness in Indonesian waters (Hartono & Bakharuddin, 2023).

In this context, Indonesia's defense strategy for safeguarding maritime security in the outermost small islands encompasses strengthening policies, enhancing operational capacity, maritime diplomacy, infrastructure development, and inter-agency collaboration. Indonesia can effectively address complex maritime security challenges through a comprehensive and adaptive approach while protecting its sovereignty in these strategic regions. The involvement of local communities, integration of advanced technologies, and international cooperation are critical elements to ensure the success of these strategies.

This analysis supports the theories of strategic deterrence and layered defense, focusing on non-traditional threats such as illegal fishing, smuggling, and maritime boundary violations. Theoretically, the findings suggest that strengthening defense posture in border areas is crucial for safeguarding sovereignty and promoting regional stability. The practical implications of this are the need for policy integration with the development of defense technologies and the active involvement of local communities to sustain this strategy.

In conclusion, Indonesia's defense strategy for maintaining maritime security in the outermost small islands must be adaptive, collaborative, and technology-driven. With this comprehensive approach, Indonesia can reinforce its sovereignty, maintain regional stability, and enhance international recognition as a strategically positioned archipelagic state.

Challenges and Barriers in the Implementation of Strategies

Implementing defense strategies to safeguard maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands faces numerous challenges and barriers that highlight the complexity of maintaining stability in these strategic regions. As the frontline of national sovereignty, these islands present unique issues related to resources, infrastructure, bureaucracy, and socio-environmental dynamics. Overcoming these obstacles is critical to ensuring the effectiveness of defense strategies designed to protect these vital territories.

One of the most pressing challenges is the limited resources, including personnel, infrastructure, and funding. The outermost islands often suffer from a lack of specialized personnel trained to handle maritime security issues. Managing these islands effectively requires skilled labor with local knowledge, but the availability of such personnel remains minimal, reducing the effectiveness of surveillance and law enforcement activities. Compounding this problem is the inadequate infrastructure on many islands, which lack proper ports or logistical facilities to support troop mobility and the distribution of essential supplies. Without sufficient infrastructure, responses to threats are often delayed, and operational effectiveness is compromised. Limited funding further exacerbates the issue, hindering much-needed infrastructure development and the procurement of advanced defense equipment to address growing maritime security challenges.

Geographic factors add another layer of difficulty. The remote locations of the outermost islands make logistical operations challenging. Their distance from administrative centers and limited

transportation infrastructure complicates the delivery of supplies and the mobilization of security personnel. These access constraints slow down patrol operations and delay responses to emerging threats, increasing the risk of escalation.

The nature of maritime threats continues to evolve, becoming more diverse and complex. Traditional threats, such as border disputes, remain, but non-traditional threats, including illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and smuggling, now dominate the maritime security landscape. activities often involve organized international networks, which require advanced intelligence capabilities to detect and address effectively. However, intelligence capacity and coordination among agencies remain limited, further complicating the management of these threats.

Coordination between institutions is another significant challenge. Poor synergy among key stakeholders, such as the Navy (TNI-AL), the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla), and other government entities, often leads to inefficiencies. Overlapping authorities, delays in joint operations, and confusion in decision-making undermine the overall effectiveness of maritime security strategies. This issue is exacerbated by bureaucratic hurdles that slow the decision-making process, particularly in emergency situations requiring swift action.

Despite their potential to support maritime security efforts, local communities remain underutilized. A lack of awareness about the importance of maritime security limits their involvement in monitoring and reporting suspicious activities. As the primary inhabitants of the outermost islands, these communities possess invaluable local knowledge that could significantly aid in threat detection. However, this resource remains largely untapped.

Environmental vulnerabilities further complicate the situation. Climate change, with its associated effects such as rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, poses a significant risk to these islands' social and economic stability. Environmental degradation often leads to losing vital resources for local communities, weakening their resilience and reducing support for defense initiatives. This instability, combined with the increasing frequency of natural disasters, underscores the need for integrated environmental and security strategies.

Socio-economic conditions also play a critical role in shaping the success of defense strategies. Communities facing economic hardship may perceive defense initiatives as irrelevant to their immediate needs, reducing their willingness to support such efforts. However, integrating local resource-based economic activities, such as marine ecotourism, could enhance community engagement and foster collaboration in maintaining maritime security. Incorporating local wisdom into resource management practices can strengthen the relationship between local communities and government policies. Failure to address these socio-economic factors risks alienating the communities essential to the success of defense strategies.

The challenges in implementing defense strategies in Indonesia's outermost small islands underscore the need for a multifaceted and collaborative approach. Addressing resource limitations, geographic constraints, evolving threats, and coordination weaknesses requires integrated efforts across various sectors. Strengthening inter-agency collaboration, actively involving local communities, and prioritizing environmental sustainability are crucial steps to ensuring the success of defense strategies in these strategically important regions.

From a theoretical perspective, this analysis supports the importance of the human security concept as a complement to traditional security approaches. The complexity of challenges involving resources, infrastructure, and communities highlights the need for a multi-dimensional security approach that considers social, economic, and environmental aspects. The practical implication of this analysis is the necessity for inter-agency synergy, local community empowerment, and infrastructure strengthening as the foundation for effectively implementing defense strategies.

In conclusion, a successful defense strategy in the outermost small islands requires a holistic approach that relies on military power, empowers communities, and strengthens institutional capacities through modern technology and international cooperation. By doing so, Indonesia can address complex challenges and sustainably safeguard its territorial sovereignty.

Recommended Strategies for Enhancing Maritime Security

To address increasingly complex maritime security challenges, a comprehensive and integrated approach is essential for safeguarding Indonesia's outermost small islands. These strategies encompass strengthening infrastructure, empowering local communities, leveraging modern technology, and fostering international cooperation. The following recommendations outline key measures to enhance the effectiveness of maritime defense.

1. Strengthening Maritime Infrastructure

Maritime infrastructure forms the foundation for effective border security. Small ports, sea transportation routes, and adequate logistical facilities support troop mobility and equipment distribution. Currently, many outermost islands lack sufficient infrastructure to support security operations. Investment in maritime infrastructure can accelerate response times to threats and improve the efficiency of security operations. Developing small ports with robust logistical facilities on strategic islands should be prioritized as part of the national maritime defense agenda.

2. Enhancing Institutional Capacity and Cooperation

The Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) and the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla) are critical in safeguarding maritime security and require operational capacity improvements. As maritime threats evolve, including non-traditional challenges such as illegal fishing and drug trafficking, modern equipment and well-trained personnel are necessary. Sumadinata (2022) emphasizes the importance of procuring advanced defense equipment and providing continuous training to personnel, which will strengthen maritime patrol and intelligence capabilities (Sumadinata et al., 2022). Enhanced institutional coordination is also crucial for successfully implementing maritime security strategies. Synergy between TNI-AL, Bakamla, and the National Police (Polri) can minimize duplication of efforts and optimize operational efficiency. Establishing a dedicated coordinating body for maritime security could unify the vision and policies of various related institutions.

3. Proactive Maritime Diplomacy and International Cooperation

Maritime diplomacy is vital in maintaining regional stability and preventing border conflicts. Through proactive diplomatic efforts, Indonesia can build strong relationships with neighboring

countries and promote collaboration in maritime law enforcement. Sanjiwani (2022) highlights the importance of intelligence sharing and joint training programs as part of diplomatic initiatives. Such cooperation can minimize conflict potential and ensure maritime stability. Tackling transnational maritime crimes requires robust international cooperation. Regional and international forums can serve as platforms for information sharing, joint exercises, and developing collaborative enforcement strategies. Prasetya & Estriani (2018) and Dao (2024) argue that these efforts can help Indonesia combat complex transnational crime networks, such as smuggling and drug trafficking (Prasetya & Estriani, 2018).

4. *Empowering Local Communities*

Local communities have significant potential to contribute to maritime security. They act as direct observers in territorial waters and support resource conservation through sustainable practices. Empowerment programs that include training and education can enhance community awareness about the importance of maritime security. Actively involving local communities enables the government to create a broader, more responsive surveillance network against threats. Raising public awareness about maritime security can be achieved through education programs focusing on environmental sustainability and biodiversity. Educated communities can play an integral role in preserving the environment and monitoring maritime activities. With better understanding, local communities can contribute to a robust security system.

5. *Developing Maritime Security Information and Technology Systems*

An integrated information system is an effective tool for detecting and responding to threats. Technologies such as satellites, drones, and marine sensors can be utilized to monitor maritime zone activities and mitigate transnational crime risks. A robust maritime security information system facilitates better coordination between security institutions (Rizkiyani et al., 2024). Modern technologies, including remote sensing, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI), can enhance the efficiency of maritime security operations. Nugraha (2024) highlights the importance of these advanced technologies in monitoring illegal activities and formulating data-driven strategies. The government can respond to threats more swiftly and effectively with integrated technology.

These proposed strategies reflect the holistic approach required to enhance maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands. Indonesia can safeguard its sovereignty and maritime stability by strengthening infrastructure, improving defense capacity, engaging local communities, and leveraging modern technology. Close collaboration between the government, local communities, and the international community is essential in addressing the evolving security challenges. If implemented effectively, these strategies will ensure that the outermost small islands remain the frontline guardians of Indonesia's national sovereignty.

The proposed strategy integrates comprehensive security, encompassing social, economic, and political dimensions in addressing maritime threats. This holistic approach also reflects the human security theory, emphasizing the participation of local communities as a crucial element in maintaining security. The practical implication is the importance of collaboration among relevant agencies, strengthening local capacities, and utilizing technology to respond to increasingly complex threats.

This comprehensive and integrated strategy offers a tangible solution for enhancing maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands. Indonesia can safeguard its sovereignty and maritime stability by strengthening infrastructure, improving defense capacities, involving local communities, and leveraging modern technology. Close collaboration between the government, local communities, and the international community will be key in addressing the evolving security challenges, ensuring that the outermost small islands remain the frontline in maintaining national sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the defense strategies implemented to maintain maritime security in Indonesia's outermost small islands. This research provides valuable insights into efforts to protect these strategic areas by identifying key challenges, strategies, and obstacles encountered during implementation. Additionally, strategic recommendations support enhancing the effectiveness of sustainable maritime security.

The findings of this study reveal that Indonesia's outermost small islands face a range of complex challenges that require serious attention. These challenges include limited resources and infrastructure, difficulties in accessing remote areas, non-traditional threats such as illegal fishing and smuggling, and the impacts of climate change that exacerbate the vulnerability of these regions. Weak inter-agency coordination and the limited involvement of local communities are also significant barriers to the successful implementation of defense strategies. The government's current strategies include strengthening maritime policies, enhancing the operational capacity of the Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) and the Maritime Security Agency (Bakamla), and maritime diplomacy aimed at fostering good relations with neighboring countries. Furthermore, infrastructure and logistics development has been prioritized to support troop mobility and equipment distribution. However, implementing these strategies is still hindered by budget constraints, suboptimal coordination, and the underutilization of technology in maritime surveillance.

Based on these findings, this study recommends several strategic actions to improve maritime security. Strengthening maritime infrastructure is a priority, focusing on constructing small ports in strategic islands and adequate logistics facilities to support security operations. Modern technologies such as remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS), and artificial intelligence should be integrated to enhance surveillance capabilities and response to emerging threats. Empowering local communities is also a key element in the security strategy. Through education and training programs, communities can be involved in monitoring activities at sea and the sustainable management of maritime resources. In addition, proactive maritime diplomacy should be further strengthened to encourage international cooperation in addressing cross-border threats such as illegal fishing and smuggling.

However, this study also has several limitations that should be noted. First, it largely relies on secondary data, which may be limited in capturing the most recent dynamics and specific on-the-ground conditions. Therefore, more primary data-based research that can explore local perspectives and field conditions in greater depth is needed. Second, the limited resources and

access to the outermost small islands restrict direct empirical data collection, which may affect a more comprehensive representation of the challenges and the effectiveness of the strategies implemented.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of technology implementation in maritime surveillance and its impact on improving the operational capacity of relevant agencies. Primary data-based studies in strategic locations can also provide richer insights into the local dynamics that influence the success of maritime security strategies. Indonesia can strengthen its sovereignty and maritime stability by implementing more integrated and innovative strategies. This effort is not only critical for maintaining national security but also for supporting Indonesia's ambition as a strong and influential maritime axis in the global arena.

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