

## **DEFENSE DIPLOMACY IN THE PROTECTION OF LAND BORDER BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA AND MALAYSIA IN NORTH KALIMANTAN**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Penjagaan wilayah perbatasan yang merupakan suatu kesatuan dari konsep geografis (*geographics*) dan politik (*politics*), atau suatu kesatuan dari *frontier* dan *boundary*. Penelitian ini menganalisis peran diplomasi pertahanan dalam menjaga keamanan wilayah perbatasan darat antara Indonesia dengan Malaysia, khususnya di Kalimantan Utara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa diplomasi pertahanan memainkan peran krusial dalam menciptakan stabilitas dan keamanan di wilayah perbatasan melalui penguatan infrastruktur dan kerjasama antara Pemerintah dengan TNI, serta instansi terkait lainnya untuk mengatasi berbagai ancaman, seperti penyelundupan, perdagangan ilegal, dan pelanggaran batas wilayah.

Kata Kunci : Diplomasi Pertahanan, Keamanan, Perbatasan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kalimantan Utara.

### **ABSTRACT**

The protection of border areas is a unified concept that combines geographical (*geographics*) and political (*politics*) elements, or a combination of *frontier* and *boundary*. This research analyses the role of Defense Diplomacy in maintaining the security of the land border between Indonesia and Malaysia, specifically in North Kalimantan. The results of the study indicate that Defense Diplomacy plays a crucial role in creating stability and security in the border area through the strengthening of infrastructure and cooperation between the Government and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), as well as other related agencies, to address various threats such as smuggling, illegal trade, and border violations.

Keywords: Defense Diplomacy, Border Security, Indonesia, Malaysia, North Kalimantan

### **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia consists of approximately 17,508 large and small islands. Geographically, its location is highly strategic, as it lies at the intersection of the Asian and Australian continents, as well as between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The territory extends 5,110 km with a water area of around 5,877,879 km<sup>2</sup>. Indonesia shares borders with several neighboring countries, both by sea and land.

At sea, Indonesia borders ten neighboring countries: India, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, the Philippines, Palau Papua New Guinea, Australia, and Timor Leste. Although Indonesia's maritime boundaries with other countries are defined by

international law, they are often a source of conflict. The presence of direct borders with ten countries increases Indonesia's vulnerability to border disputes and security threats, which could lead to instability both domestically and in the surrounding region.

One of the land borders between Indonesia and Malaysia includes the border on the island of Kalimantan, which separates the two countries. This border stretches for approximately 2,019 from Tanjung Batu in northwest Kalimantan, passing through the highlands of interior Kalimantan to Sebatik Bay and the Sulawesi Sea in eastern Kalimantan (Faisal 2019). Indonesia's land border with these three countries exceeds 3,000 kilometers, equivalent to the distance from Jakarta to Bangkok, Thailand. Indonesia and Malaysia, two neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, have a long history of complex relations. Border disputes between Indonesia and Malaysia date back to the colonial era when the border between Indonesia and Malaysia was determined based on agreements between the colonial governments of the Netherlands and Britain. These agreements established boundaries that were later inherited by both countries after gaining independence. The 1824 London Treaty between the Netherlands and Britain divided territories in Southeast Asia along a line later known as the "Wallace Line" or "Wallacea Line." After Indonesia's independence in 1945 and Malaysia's in 1957, border disputes began to emerge. Despite cooperation efforts, border disputes continued, such as the Ambalat conflict in the early 2000s, which involved claims over both land and maritime territories.

One of the main points of contention is the status of small islands around the border, especially in the South China Sea. Both countries claim sovereignty over these islands, which has led to diplomatic tensions (Sulistiyono 2020). The most significant dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia related to islands in the South China Sea is the border conflict in the Kalimantan region. This conflict is connected to the dispute over Sipadan and Ligitan islands with Malaysia. Both Indonesia and Malaysia claim sovereignty over these islands.

Moreover, the land border area between Indonesia and Malaysia in East and North Kalimantan plays a very strategic role. Thus, any problems that arise, whether related to border issues or others, will have implications for national Defense and security

Kalimantan and other regions, have become part of the historical relations between the two countries.

The border disputes, as seen in the past, highlight the complexity and sensitivity of this issue. The national security of both countries is closely tied to the management of land borders. Threats from various potential conflicts and illegal activities necessitate joint efforts to maintain border security. The existence of a secure and controlled border can help maintain national security stability and prevent potential conflicts or violence escalation.

Diplomatic efforts cannot be separated from the role of the military, which holds a bargaining position in Defense diplomacy. Partially, a country's Defense diplomacy has a key characteristic, which is not only about building trust but also used to advance Defense capabilities and the Defense industry.

Defense diplomacy aims to serve national interests by utilizing military power as a tool or state resource in Defense matters, but without prioritizing violence as a means to achieve diplomatic objectives (Budyanto Putro Sudarsono 2018). This is carried out by the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) as a means of Defense diplomacy to support Indonesia's foreign policy. The TNI is a state apparatus tasked with maintaining national sovereignty through the execution of Military Operations for War (OMP) and Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP), one of which includes securing border areas. In its implementation, TNI units are deployed directly in land border areas for security through sea and air patrols, as well as aerial observation, to create a safe situation in the national border areas (TNI 2019). Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining and analyzing the implementation of Defense diplomacy in securing the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia, particularly by the Indonesian Army (TNI AD), which has deployed border security task forces in North Kalimantan. This research is titled: "Defense Diplomacy in the Protection of Land discussing security strategies and successful efforts in the border areas from several perspectives, including those of the Indonesian Army officers, both from the Border Security Operations Command (Koops Pamtas), the Border Security Operations Executor Command (Kolakops Pamtas), and the Land Border Security Task Force (Satgas Pamtas) between Indonesia and Malaysia.

**Research Question**

How does Defense diplomacy play a role in the protection of the land border area between the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia in North Kalimantan?

**Literature Review**

**Defense Diplomacy in the Resolution of Unresolved Segments on the Land Border Between Indonesia and the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste (RDTL) (Case Study of the Unresolved Segment of Dilumil-Memo)**

The findings of this research indicate that the process of affirming the land border between Indonesia and RDTL involves Defense diplomacy institutions. The aspect of Defense diplomacy used in resolving the unresolved Dilumil-Memo segment includes Confidence- Building Measures (CBMs), achieved by aligning perspectives through bilateral meetings between the two countries' leaders and political will through the President's mandate to Defense Diplomacy Institutions such as JMC, JBC, TSC-BDR, and SWG, which are committed to resolving border issues to maintain bilateral relations and achieve national interests, such as maintaining Defense and security.

**Defense Diplomacy in the Exchange of Information Cooperation Between Indonesia and the Philippines in Combating Terrorism in the Border Areas of Indonesia and the Philippines**

The findings of this research indicate that Defense diplomacy plays a very important role in the information exchange cooperation between the two countries, Indonesia and the Philippines. However, the implementation of this cooperation still faces challenges in the areas of communication and technology.

**Main Argument**

The researcher's analysis in this study refers to security actors, namely the Indonesian Army (TNI AD), which plays an important role in maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, particularly in border areas that are prone to conflict. A concrete implementation of this Defense diplomacy is the conduct of land border security operations between Indonesia and Malaysia in the Kalimantan region. With an integrated approach between military and diplomatic aspects, the

VI/Mulawarman Military Region Command can ensure that the border areas remain safe and secure.

**The Objective of the Article**

This research aims to analyse and evaluate the role and effectiveness of Defense diplomacy in securing the land border areas between the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia in North Kalimantan.

Focusing on bilateral dynamics and security strategies, this research seeks to provide in-depth insight into how Defense diplomacy can be used as a strategic tool to ensure national stability and security in the border region.

**Analytical Framework**

This study utilises two major theories, one of which is Neorealism. One reason that Neorealism has become a dominant perspective in International Relations is that its core concepts, such as "territorial integrity," "national power," "national interest," "national security," "regional security," "diplomacy," and so on, are frequently referred to by state leaders when formulating and implementing foreign policy (Hadiwinata, 2017).

Neorealism is often referred to as structural realism. The leading thinker of Neorealist or structural realist thought is Kenneth Waltz. Waltz's ideas on international relations are heavily influenced by the philosophy of science and microeconomic models. His work, *Theory of International Politics* (1979), is one of the best-known texts on Neorealism, based on rationalist assumptions.

Kenneth Waltz's Neorealism has three layers of explanatory factors that contribute to explaining state behaviour: (1) anarchy in the self-help system; (2) functional differentiation of units; and (3) changes in power distribution or changes in the polarity configuration. In other words, Neorealism explains different types of state behaviour, such as the balancing theory, bandwagoning theory, and the theory of relative or absolute gains (Bakry, 2017). This theory focuses on the assumption that states act based on their national interests, prioritising security and survival, and often competing for resources and influence. In the context of this study, the researcher addresses Defense diplomacy, and this theory can provide valuable insights or perspectives on how countries, including

Indonesia and Malaysia, carry out their roles in ensuring the security of land border areas.

### **The Concept of Diplomacy**

Diplomacy is the practice or effort made by a state to establish relationships, negotiate, and build connections with other countries. The primary goal of diplomacy is to reach agreements, promote national interests, and maintain harmonious relationships between countries.

Technological advancements in communication have transformed diplomatic practices, enabling countries to communicate quickly and effectively. However, the fundamental principles of diplomacy remain the foundation of international relations. Simply put, there are four (4) objectives of diplomacy (Bakry, 2017): Acquisition: Establishing relations with other countries (diplomatic relations); Preservation: Maintaining diplomatic relations; Augmentation: Expanding diplomatic relations; Proper Distribution: Ensuring peace and harmony. In terms of its function, diplomacy has been described as mediation to maintain peace, alleviate tensions, resolve disputes, and seek mutually beneficial solutions for all parties. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, the duties of diplomacy can be summarised into four key points (Bakry, 2017):

1. Diplomacy must establish objectives that are aligned with the actual power to achieve those objectives. This means that the diplomacy conducted by a country should have clear goals, whether it is aimed at achieving economic, political, or military cooperation, so that the actors conducting diplomacy can develop strategies to reach those goals.
2. Diplomacy must assess the objectives and power of other countries. Diplomats and ambassadors must understand the bargaining position of other countries, as this relates to the strategy that will be employed to achieve national interests.
3. Diplomacy must determine in which areas the differences in objectives can be reconciled. This is important to achieve a win-win solution as the end result of the diplomatic process itself.
4. Diplomacy must use appropriate and suitable means, such as compromise, persuasion, and sometimes the threat of force, to achieve its objectives.

According to Sir Harold Nicolson, as cited by Sarjito (2023: 312-113), diplomacy is defined as a form of managing international relations through negotiation, ambassadors, envoys, and other diplomatic affairs. However, in a broader sense, based on the diverse international actors, diplomacy is not only conducted by state actors but can also be carried out by non- state actors, such as international organisations, interest groups, activists, business actors, and even individuals. There are four aspects related to diplomacy, which include:

1. Communication/dialogue, which is the basic practice of communicating with other countries. Communication can be conducted through the exchange of messages or dialogue, either bilaterally or multilaterally.
2. Recognition. Generally, countries conduct diplomacy with recognised entities. Countries may also communicate with non-state actors because, indirectly, the country acknowledges the existence of those actors.
3. National interest. Diplomatic practices conducted by political elites are closely linked to national interests. This practice is an extension of national and foreign policies.
4. The international negotiation process. Diplomacy is closely tied to negotiations, whether at the bilateral, regional, or international level (Sarjito, 2023).

### **Theory of Defense Diplomacy**

Defense diplomacy relates to a country's Defense and security policies. Its core idea is to use military and Defense policies as tools to promote peace, stability, and international security.

According to Sarjito, as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Defense diplomacy has become an important "tool" for countries to maintain peace and security. Defense diplomacy can be defined as the use of military resources and expertise to achieve foreign policy goals during peacetime and crises (Sarjito, 2023). According to Patjinka (2017, as cited in Pedrason, 2021:17-18), the form of Defense diplomacy continues to evolve. Some forms of Defense diplomacy include:

1. Collecting and analysing information about the armed forces and security situations in specific foreign countries;

2. Promoting cooperation, communication, and reciprocal relations between a country's armed forces and those of its partner country;
3. Organising working visits for representatives from partner Defense authorities; supporting business contracts involving armed forces and military equipment between partner countries; and representing a country and its armed forces at official ceremonies and other events in the partner country.

There are three (3) characteristics of Defense diplomacy (Pedrason, 2021): According to Supriyatno (2014), citing Andrew Cottey's book *Reshaping Defense Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance* (Adelphi Paper), the activities or actions undertaken in Defense diplomacy can be identified from several key statements (Supriyatno, 2014): "...The use of Defense diplomacy as a tool for strategic engagement involves several conditional dilemmas. First, to the extent that Defense diplomacy involves making Defense policies and activities more transparent, how far should this depend on reciprocity." In this explanation, two things are highlighted about Defense diplomacy activities. First, Defense diplomacy is a tool for strategic engagement that is inherently dilemmatic. Second, Defense diplomacy activities and all related Defense activities should strive for transparency.

*"...Problems at hand but also contribute to wider confidence- building..."*

This sentence explicitly states that Defense diplomacy also makes a broad contribution to efforts aimed at "building mutual trust (CBMs)."

*"...Reshaping Defense diplomacy: New roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance... reluctance to provide detailed information about Defense policy or access to military installations or engage in bilateral or multilateral activities that involve a greater degree of openness..."*

This explains that Defense diplomacy requires a new role for military cooperation and assistance, which also entails "providing detailed information about Defense policy," access to military installations, or participation in more open bilateral and multilateral activities. Indonesia has yet to reach an agreement or settle outstanding boundary problems (OBP) with Malaysia regarding the delineation of sovereignty in the border areas of West Kalimantan–Sarawak and North Kalimantan–Sabah. The issue arises from

differences in the interpretation of the agreements written in documents from the British and Dutch borders, which refer to the principle of international law *uti possidetis juris* (Kompas.com, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Ramdhan (2021: 7), descriptive research using a qualitative approach is a method for describing research results. As the name suggests, description entails explanation and validation of the phenomenon being studied (Ramdhan, 2021). According to Kirk and Miller (1986: 9), as cited in Moleong, qualitative research is a specific tradition in social sciences that fundamentally relies on "observation" by humans, both in terms of the area and terminology.

This identifies relevant aspects of meaning in the diversity of the world, human diversity, varied actions, beliefs, and interests, focusing on the differences in forms that give rise to differences in meaning (Halim, 2021). In qualitative descriptive analysis, the researcher presents a detailed and systematic description of the characteristics, themes, and data patterns found. This method helps provide a clear picture of the data collected without making deep interpretations or generalisations at the time of the study. In line with the aim of this research, the researcher uses purposive sampling. In this method, the researcher selects participants based on certain relevant considerations, such as knowledge, experience, or perspectives needed to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

The data sources in this research are obtained from two sources: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refers to data collected directly by the researcher for a specific research purpose. In this qualitative research, primary data is collected from interviews and observations. By using primary data, the researcher actively participates in the data collection process and can control the questions or focus of the research. Secondary data refers to data that is already available and can be searched for and collected; while primary data must be obtained directly from the original or first source.

Secondary data can be accessed more easily and quickly, as it is already available in libraries, companies, trade organisations, central statistics offices, and government offices. Primary data, on the other hand, must be collected directly from the original

source, through appropriate informants who will be used as respondents in this research. Primary and secondary data will be processed, analysed, and presented in this research, ensuring they are accurate, reliable, and valid, ultimately supporting the entire thesis research. Several data collection techniques in qualitative research continue to evolve.

The data collection techniques used in this research include in-depth interviews. According to Elvinaro Ardianto (2010: 178), in-depth interviews are a technique for gathering data or information by conducting face-to-face interactions with informants to obtain comprehensive and detailed data (Wijaya, 2020).

The interview data obtained from informants will be processed by the researcher by evaluating the results. At the final stage of the research, the researcher will combine information from informants narrating their experiences with the researcher's views. Interviews are conducted with various individuals at Kodam VI/Mulawarman, starting with the Regional Military Commander (Pangdam), Deputy Commander (Kasdam), unit assistants involved in border security, and Territorial Task Force (Satgas) Commanders directly responsible for securing the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia. These interviews are conducted in a purposive and structured manner, with interviews arranged during free time or by appointment with policy stakeholders, ensuring that the information provided is accurate and valid.

The literature review serves as a conceptual framework or orientation for analysing and classifying the facts collected in the research (Harahap, 2019). The data collection technique involves referencing relevant journals, books, or previous research, which will be compared with the current research. A literature review is also very important in research activities, as it provides information about the substance of the research topic. Documentation refers to the analysis of written materials, films, or records.

The researcher uses documentation from various sources, including photos, archives, books, videos, and other materials from Kodam VI/Mulawarman and units involved in border security operations between Indonesia and Malaysia.

In qualitative research, the best data analysis is conducted from the beginning of the research (ongoing). According to Yusup (2017), qualitative data analysis is defined as the process of reviewing and examining data, synthesising and interpreting the

collected data to describe and explain the phenomenon or social situation being studied. In addition, according to Bogdan and Biklen, ongoing research suggests that data analysis is a systematic process of searching for materials and other sources to enhance the researcher's understanding of the data collected, ultimately concluding with summarisation and reporting.

The qualitative data analysis process, according to Moleong, includes the stages of data reduction to data categorisation, which the researcher believes are part of a single process known as data reduction (Sodik, 2015). In data analysis, several processes are carried out, including data reduction, data presentation, or display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The data analysis process is explained as follows: Reduction refers to summarising, which can be done by abstraction. Abstraction is the process of summarising key points, processes, and statements that need to be retained within the research data. In reducing data, the aim is to simplify it during the data collection process.

The data obtained from the field includes data related to observations, interviews, and documentation that are not yet well-organised. Therefore, the data related to the Role of Defense Diplomacy in Securing Indonesia's Land Border with Malaysia will be simplified and presented by selecting the relevant data, ensuring it is valid. According to Miles and Huberman, data presentation is a set of structured information that allows for conclusions to be drawn. The data is presented in a structured collection of information for the purpose of drawing conclusions.

Conclusion drawing or verification is the final stage in the data analysis process. Conclusions can be drawn by comparing the consistency of statements from research subjects with the meaning contained in the core concepts of the research. Therefore, the data can be accounted for in providing descriptive data as needed.

The research data can thus be verified. The data obtained is guaranteed to be trustworthy and can be accounted for. The researcher also tests the validity of the data to ensure that it is correct and can be used by multiple subjects or informants in the research. The techniques for ensuring the reliability of the data that has been carefully and clearly researched will be compared with the theories of experts.

As a result, the research is expected to present data that is credible, transferable, dependable, and certain, and it can be presented objectively and accounted for.

**Dynamics of Indonesia- Malaysia Bilateral Cooperation**

According to Thomas Umbu Pati, Director of the Region, Urban, and Border Management at the Directorate General of Regional Administration of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the implementation of bilateral cooperation related to border management is realised through the Socio-Economic Cooperation Committee (KK-JKK Sosek Malindo). This forum regularly discusses and agrees on various issues, including access to social, economic, and cultural aspects in the border areas. Additionally, it holds annual meetings to ensure that the border remains conducive (Kompas, 2021).

The governments of Indonesia and Malaysia held a Special Joint Indonesia-Malaysia Meeting (JIM) on 18-19 August 2022 in Bandung, West Java. The Joint Indonesia-Malaysia Boundary Committee on Demarcation and Survey of International Boundaries Between Malaysia (Sabah & Sarawak) and Indonesia (North & West Kalimantan) serves as a bilateral platform for conducting surveys and affirming the international boundary lines between the two countries. The main agenda discussed during the meeting was the joint survey activities aimed at accelerating the resolution of Outstanding Boundary Problems (OBP) on Sebatik Island, which had reached the stage of resolution (Liputan6, 2022).

This reflects Indonesia's continued efforts to foster cooperation with Malaysia, particularly during the administration of President Joko Widodo, which has increasingly enhanced Indonesia's image in the eyes of the world, especially with Malaysia. This is evidenced by the formation of the Joint Indonesia-Malaysia forum for surveying and affirming the international boundary line between the two countries, although it remains in the negotiation phase until an agreement is reached concerning the border issues. Moreover, President Joko Widodo and the Government of Indonesia have demonstrated a strong commitment to strengthening cooperation with Malaysia in addressing border issues.

During the administration of President Joko Widodo, efforts to improve the image of local communities in the border areas emphasised the importance of an outward-looking paradigm. Border areas were encouraged to become productive regions through the development of various physical infrastructure facilities, such as the grand National Border Post (PLBN) gateways, transportation facilities and infrastructure, docks and

ports, as well as social infrastructure, including markets and health centres. The government’s seriousness in developing the border areas has received positive feedback, given the significant socio-economic disparity between local communities and Malaysia. Through these improvements, it is hoped that the competitiveness and welfare of local communities can be enhanced (Humphrey, 2018).

Strong political will and good coordination between all related agencies, both at the central and regional government levels, are necessary to improve the welfare of border communities (Humphrey, 2018). Additionally, the policies and strategies are aimed at protecting and securing the country's border areas from excessive natural resource exploitation. By employing these strategies, economic activities can be carried out more effectively and optimally. Indonesia has a vision for border development, as stipulated by the government:

*“Based on various development scenarios and their consequences, while taking into account domestic and regional developments and after consulting with various stakeholders, the vision for the development of inter-country border areas is as follows: To make the inter-country border areas safe, orderly, become the gateway to the country, and serve as a centre for sustainable economic growth, thereby improving the welfare of the local communities and ensuring the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.”*

The cultural ties between Indonesia and Malaysia share many similarities due to their geographical proximity and historical relations. Both countries have significant Malay populations with a common language and culture. Indonesia, with its diverse cultural heritage and rich history, has long been a source of inspiration for neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. However, the relationship between Indonesia and Malaysia, two countries with intertwined cultural histories, has created minor controversies related to cultural claims, such as the Pendet Dance (Bali), Rendang (Minangkabau, West Sumatra), Batik and Wayang Kulit (Central Java), and the Rasa Sayange song (Maluku) (Zahra, 2023).

The Indonesia–Malaysia border includes land borders on the island of Kalimantan and maritime borders in the Malacca Strait, the South China Sea, and the Sulawesi Sea. The land border between the two countries stretches for 2,019 km from Tanjung

Batu in north-west Kalimantan, through the highlands of interior Kalimantan, to Sebatik Bay and the Sulawesi Sea in east Kalimantan.

Picture 4.1 Indonesia- Malaysia Border on Kalimantan



Source: US Dept. of State - Library of Congress

The maritime border in the Malacca Strait is generally established along the median line between the continental shelves of Malaysia and Indonesia, extending southwards from the Thailand-Malaysia boundary to the Malaysia- Singapore boundary. Several sea transport routes connect Malaysia with Indonesia, most of which operate between Sumatra and Peninsular Malaysia, while a smaller number operate between North Kalimantan and Sabah.

The maritime boundary between Indonesia and Malaysia extends across four main bodies of water: the Malacca Strait, the Singapore Strait, the South China Sea, and the Sulawesi Sea. Both countries, each claiming territorial waters extending 12 nautical miles (22 km), share direct borders in the Malacca and Singapore Straits. The maritime boundary continues from the endpoint of the land border on Kalimantan Island. For the continental shelf boundary, only the area in the South China Sea has been agreed upon by both countries, while the continental shelf boundary in the Sulawesi Sea has yet to be established.

Picture 4.3 Indonesia- Malaysia Maritime Boundary



Source: US Dept. of State - Library of Congress

From 1973 to 2000, Malaysia and Indonesia successfully mapped and agreed upon demarcations. Several impacts of the land border demarcation process between Indonesia and Malaysia from 1973 to 2000 include:

1. Improved legal clarity of territorial boundaries, meaning that through joint surveys and the signing of boundary maps, both countries successfully established clear and mutually agreed-upon land border lines. This reduces the potential for future territorial disputes and conflicts.
2. Increased security and border surveillance, meaning that clear demarcations help prevent territorial violations and illegal activities at the border.
3. Infrastructure development and border connectivity: The demarcation process allows for the planned and orderly development of infrastructure and facilities in border areas, supporting increased connectivity and integration between the border regions of the two countries
4. Enhanced bilateral cooperation: The intensive coordination and negotiations involved in the border demarcation process have fostered trust and cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia, opening up broader opportunities in other fields, such as the economy, society, and security.

The concept of geopolitics in this context refers to geopolitics as a discipline that provides an objective understanding of Indonesia's position as a nation that coexists and interacts with other countries in the global arena (Sulisworo, 2012).

The Kalimantan border region is part of the national border between Indonesia and Malaysia. With the formation of both Indonesia and Malaysia, the demarcation line between the two countries was automatically established, later known as the Indonesia Malaysia border. The Indonesia-Malaysia border, in physical terms, stretches across 2,004 kilometres on the island of Kalimantan and maritime boundaries in the Malacca Strait, South China Sea, and Sulawesi Sea. An inward-looking perspective refers to the attention given to territorial unity, while an outward-looking perspective refers to activities related to national interests in efforts to achieve global order and peace (Kristiyanto, 2023).

## The Role of TNI in Defense Diplomacy

Border areas often refer to regions adjacent to the boundaries of two countries or areas that border other regions. Border regions tend to have distinct and unique characteristics because they represent the convergence of two different cultures, languages, economies, political systems, and legal frameworks. Each border area has different conditions. For instance, the border area in Kalimantan, which borders Malaysia, is more prosperous. Universally, border areas have strategic importance in determining government policies, both for national interests and international relations.

The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) serve as the main component of the country's Defense and are at the forefront of securing national border areas. Border regions hold strategic value from a Defense and security perspective because they influence national sovereignty, international relations, and internal security stability. From an economic and social perspective, border regions are strategic for enhancing the welfare of local communities and regional economies (Ministry of Defense, 2023).

The main task of the TNI is to uphold national sovereignty, defend the territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and protect the entire Indonesian nation from threats and disturbances against the unity of the nation and state. In East, South, and North Kalimantan, one of the TNI's tasks in Military Operations Other Than War (OMSP), as mandated by Law No. 34 of 2004, is to secure the border areas. A concrete implementation of this Defense diplomacy is through the conduct of land border security operations between Indonesia and Malaysia in the Kalimantan region. The policies and strategies implemented by the Indonesian and Malaysian governments in safeguarding the border areas form an essential part of the security architecture in Southeast Asia. The protection of the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia in North and East Kalimantan has significant implications for the national security of both countries. Joint efforts to safeguard sovereignty and prevent potential conflicts are imperative for achieving regional security and stability.

The border between Indonesia and Malaysia in Kalimantan mostly consists of untouched swamps and forests, with small rivers that form the direct boundary between these two neighbouring countries. The uneven and unpaved road conditions mean that

transportation in the border posts relies heavily on air and river routes. As a result, the crucial role of military institutions, particularly the Indonesian Army (TNI-AD), under the command of Kodam VI/Mulawarman, which is responsible for the security of Indonesia's border with Malaysia, is highly essential.

The border areas in East and North Kalimantan are located within the administrative regions of Nunukan, Malinau, and Mahakam Ulu districts, directly adjacent to Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysia. The total length of the land border between East and North Kalimantan and Sabah and Sarawak is approximately 1,038 km, stretching from Simanggaris in Nunukan district to Long Apari in West Kutai district, which borders West Kalimantan Province.

### **The Implementation of Defense Diplomacy**

The Indonesia- Malaysia border under the responsibility of Kodam VI/Mulawarman spans approximately 1,038 km, with several gaps allowing for illegal activities. Among these are the presence of several "rat trails" or unofficial routes, as well as blank spots between Gunung Apobayan and Gunung Cemar. Currently, there are only two task force battalions stationed at the border. The length of the border without any posts reaches about 558 km, covering areas such as Kayan Mentarang National Park in North Kalimantan and Betung Karihun National Park in East Kalimantan. The Task Force is mainly stationed in Nunukan, Malinau, and Mahakam Ulu districts. Illegal activities are conducted for personal gain without official documents, such as smuggling, illegal mining, human trafficking, and illegal immigration. These activities significantly harm the country in terms of tax revenue and law enforcement.

Kodam VI/Mulawarman also plays a role in raising national vigilance against potential external threats, educating the public and security forces to work together in safeguarding national sovereignty, and building awareness of the importance of border security.

By carrying out these roles, Kodam VI/Mulawarman significantly contributes to maintaining the sovereignty of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia in the border areas with Malaysia, ensuring that security and order in the border areas are well-maintained.

The deployment of Task Force personnel along the Indonesia-Malaysia border by Kodam VI/Mulawarman is a strategic effort by the TNI to safeguard national security and sovereignty. Kodam VI/Mulawarman, with responsibility over East and North Kalimantan, plays an essential role in border security operations. One of the main activities at the Joint Coordination Posts is coordinated patrols conducted by both the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Malaysian Army (TDM). The execution of these coordinated patrols is crucial to maintain national sovereignty and ensure stability in the border areas. The patrols are carried out jointly by soldiers from both countries, moving together along pre-determined routes. The patrols thoroughly cover the entire length of the established border lines.

In addition to security duties, personnel from the Border Task Force also conduct strategic efforts to prevent national disintegration in the border areas. One of the methods used is territorial guidance (Binter), which includes various educational activities for local residents. Through these educational sessions, the Task Force provides information and education to local communities about the importance of maintaining national unity.

In addition to community outreach, the Task Force also carries out various community service or joint construction activities with local residents. These activities aim not only to improve the quality of life of the community through infrastructure development but also to strengthen the relationship between the TNI and the local population. The spirit of cooperation (gotong royong) is reflected in these community service activities, which is one of Indonesia's core values.

In the context of the role of Kodam VI/Mulawarman using a soft power perspective in Defense diplomacy, Joseph Nye's concept refers to the ability of a state to achieve political goals through attraction and persuasion. Kodam VI/Mulawarman can build better trust and cooperation with the Malaysian military in maintaining border security. Furthermore, through educational and training programmes that are collaborative with the Royal Malaysian Army (TDM), the use of soft power in border security operations can be understood as an effort to foster constructive bilateral cooperation in securing the border between the two countries. During an interview with the Operations Assistant of Kodam VI/Mulawarman, Colonel Inf Mustakim, S.IP, Msi, as the Main Controller of Border Operations: Our TNI-AD personnel and TDM conduct joint patrols

to ensure security at the border, not only to monitor the boundary markers but also to enhance bilateral cooperation in security and Defense for the stability of both nations. Kodam VI/Mulawarman is capable of responding quickly to crises and taking preventive measures when necessary. According to the researcher, from the perspective of Defense diplomacy theory, the implementation of Kodam VI/Mulawarman's role in crisis management is essential for every military cooperation. Securing the Indonesia-Malaysia border in North Kalimantan requires early detection mechanisms to identify potential crises, as Indonesia has not yet reached an agreement or resolved the Outstanding Boundary Problems (OBP) with Malaysia concerning the sovereignty of the border areas between West Kalimantan-Sarawak and North Kalimantan-Sabah. Kodam VI/Mulawarman's ability to manage crises quickly by addressing issues, such as by improving cooperation with various related institutions, is crucial. Therefore, Defense diplomacy becomes an important option.

Based on the evaluation results, lessons learned from previous crises can help enhance the capacity for managing future crises or problems. From the perspective of Defense diplomacy theory, Kodam VI/Mulawarman can improve its readiness and responsiveness to handle crisis situations that may arise along the Indonesia-Malaysia border in North Kalimantan.

Coordination can be carried out with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Defense can further coordinate with the Directorate General of Defense Strategy. This relates to the task and function of formulating policies in the field of Defense strategy, implementing policies in Defense strategy, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on Defense strategies, which include strategic Defense policies, Defense cooperation, territorial Defense, and direction of Defense components, as well as the implementation of administration by the Directorate General of Defense Strategy. One of the most important aspects of addressing issues in the Indonesia-Malaysia border area is the Indonesian Government's efforts to ensure the security of border areas. The Indonesian Government has constructed National Border Posts (PLBN) and supporting infrastructure in border areas (BNPP, 2023). The function of the PLBN is not limited to customs, immigration, and quarantine, but also encompasses broader aspects, including Defense and security, economy, trade, and politics (DJBC, 2019).

In this research, the Yonarhanud 12/SBP Border Security Task Force uses various special strategies to address security issues in the border areas. When conducting Defense diplomacy towards Malaysia, Indonesia faces challenges and obstacles. The challenges that Indonesia encounters in Defense diplomacy with Malaysia include the complexity of security issues, such as border disputes, illegal crossing activities, and transnational crimes, political and geopolitical tensions, limited resources and infrastructure, suboptimal coordination and collaboration (inter-agency cooperation), and challenges in technology and cybersecurity. By building adequate infrastructure, it is hoped that the border areas will become more representative and provide a positive impression for both countries.

**CONCLUSION**

The development of land border areas concerning security and Defense has become a top priority for the local population in creating new economic opportunities. Sustainable economic development can also help prevent environmental degradation and ensure equitable economic benefits for the border populations. The development of land border areas, regulated by law, forms part of the policies, strategies, and mechanisms for governing border regions, with the aim of promoting cooperation, aspirations, and welfare.

Thus, the government plays a central role in managing the governance of these areas by fostering the empowerment of local communities. Community empowerment is carried out through training, education, and access to job markets, helping to nurture and sharpen the communities' capacity to respond to various potential external threats. The goal of border area governance is to promote cooperation, sustainability, and welfare in the region. This goal can strengthen the primary Defense and security functions, as well as all supporting forces in the border areas.

However, efforts to build border areas cannot focus solely on physical development. Building border areas through infrastructure development must be followed by the introduction of regulations and supporting facilities. Efforts to develop border areas must also involve the local community, as they are the frontline guardians of the nation's security. The concept of human security is an essential part of the state's effort

to create national security. Security issues will be alleviated if the local population is prosperous.

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