

**ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PEACEKEEPING FORCES
IN IMPROVING INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTION AND THE DIPLOMATIC IMAGE OF
INDONESIA**

Sukur Hermanto

*Fakultas Strategi Pertahanan Strategi Dan Kampanye Militer
Universitas Pertahanan Republik Indonesia*

Alamat email Koresponden: sakerhead01@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyse the role of Indonesian peacekeepers in improving international perceptions and the country's diplomatic image. Using a descriptive-analytical method and a qualitative approach, this research explores the contribution of peacekeepers in strengthening Indonesia's diplomatic image in the global arena, as well as assessing the challenges faced in implementing the policy. Data was obtained from interviews with key informants, literature studies, and related documents. The results show that Indonesia is consistently involved in UN peacekeeping missions, which contribute significantly to the country's image enhancement. However, the research also identified a number of obstacles, such as limited resources and international political influence. The research conclusion emphasises the importance of continued efforts in strengthening the role of peacekeeping forces as an instrument of diplomacy to maintain global peace and security, as well as improving coordination between relevant agencies.

Keywords: *Peacekeepers, diplomatic image, international perception, Indonesia, UN peace missions.*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country based on the 1945 Constitution and a free and active foreign policy, has a moral and constitutional obligation to participate in maintaining world peace. Since 1957, through the Garuda Contingent, Indonesia has consistently sent troops on UN peacekeeping missions to various conflict areas such as Egypt, Congo, Lebanon, Haiti, and South Sudan. This participation is not only a form of commitment to global stability, but also an instrument of defense diplomacy to strengthen Indonesia's international perception and diplomatic image.

The success of the Garuda Forces, such as in UNIFIL Lebanon with its humanistic approach, as well as in MONUSCO Congo and South Sudan in

maintaining stability and carrying out humanitarian missions, has had a positive impact on Indonesia's image as a country that cares about peace. However, there is a gap between the ideal conditions and the reality that is still faced in the field.

The main problems identified include:

- 1) Limited resources, including personnel, equipment, and budget, which affect the effectiveness of the forces.*
- 2) Lack of international visibility; Indonesia's contributions are often not widely known, resulting in suboptimal diplomatic influence.*
- 3) Inter-agency coordination; there are still weaknesses in the integration between the TNI, the government, and international institutions.*
- 4) Political involvement and role clarity, the potential for political intervention and unclear policy lines can reduce the professionalism and neutrality of the troops.*

Therefore, this study was conducted to analyze the role of Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces in improving international perception and the country's diplomatic image, as well as to identify obstacles that must be addressed so that Indonesia's contribution can be more optimal and sustainable.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach through a case study strategy. This method was chosen because it provides a deep understanding of the role of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces in improving the country's international perception and diplomatic image, particularly in the context of defense diplomacy. The research design refers to the concepts of Creswell and Yin, which emphasize the importance of detailed analysis of the phenomena under study, taking into account the natural context and interpretive practices of stakeholders.

The research was conducted in a number of institutions directly related to peacekeeping missions, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Indonesian National Armed Forces through the Peacekeeping Mission Center. The research subjects included government officials, diplomats, academics,

and defense practitioners, while the research object focused on Indonesia's defense diplomacy through its involvement in UN peacekeeping missions.

Data was obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants and a literature review of legal documents, government policies, defense white papers, and academic literature related to peacekeeping. All data was then validated using triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the information. Data analysis was carried out in stages through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Using this method, the study aims to provide a comprehensive and objective picture of the contributions and challenges of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces in the international arena.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This literature review also refers to Liberalism Theory in international relations. Liberalism emphasizes the importance of cooperation between countries, international institutions, and global norms in maintaining peace. Indonesia's participation in UN peacekeeping missions can be understood as a practice of liberalism, in which countries seek to resolve conflicts through multilateral cooperation rather than military confrontation.

Furthermore, the Institutional Role Theory proposed by Hall and Taylor is important for explaining the dynamics of the role of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces. This theory emphasizes that institutions have a major influence in determining the behavior of actors, whether through formal rules, norms, or coordination mechanisms. In the context of this study, the indicators include legal regulations such as Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI, Presidential Regulation No. 86 of 2015, and Minister of Defense Regulation No. 14 of 2016. In addition, the norms of professionalism, neutrality, and adaptation to UN standards are also key determinants of the effectiveness of the force's role.

In addition to institutional aspects, K.J. Holsti's State Role Theory is used to examine how Indonesia views its role in the international system. Holsti emphasizes that every country has a role conception based on national identity and interests, as

well as role performance that is evident in concrete actions on the global stage. For Indonesia, the role concept as a peacekeeper is realized through the deployment of troops to various UN missions, which in turn influences the country's reputation and bargaining position in the international arena.

Furthermore, this study uses Modern Diplomacy Theory, which includes the views of Harold Nicolson, Henry Kissinger, and Joseph Nye. Nicolson emphasizes diplomacy as the art of negotiation, communication, and representation between countries. Kissinger, through a realist approach, highlights the importance of national interests and security in diplomacy. Meanwhile, Nye introduces the concept of soft power, which emphasizes influence through cultural appeal, values, and moral policies. These three approaches provide a comprehensive picture of how Indonesia utilizes peacekeeping forces not only as a military instrument but also as a diplomatic instrument.

In addition, Peace Theory also serves as a basis for this study. This theory asserts that conflict resolution should be carried out through non-military means, such as reconciliation, negotiation, and post-conflict reconstruction. Indonesia's participation in missions such as UNIFIL in Lebanon, MONUSCO in Congo, and MINUSTAH in Haiti demonstrates the implementation of this theory, in which Indonesian troops not only play a role in maintaining security but also build trust with the local community and provide humanitarian assistance.

This literature review also discusses a number of relevant previous studies. Previous research shows that a country's participation in peacekeeping operations can enhance its international reputation, strengthen its diplomatic position, and serve as a means of military capacity building. However, other studies also note obstacles such as limited resources, coordination complexities, and a lack of international recognition of the contributions of developing countries. These findings reinforce the relevance of research to examine Indonesia's role in greater depth.

By combining normative, historical, and philosophical foundations, as well as approaches from liberalism, institutionalism, statecraft, modern diplomacy, and Peace Theory, this literature review forms a comprehensive conceptual framework.

This framework provides a basis for research to critically analyze how the role of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces not only strengthens global stability but also serves as a strategic instrument in enhancing Indonesia's international perception and diplomatic image in the world.

DISCUSSION

Institutional Role Theory (Peter A. Hall & Rosemary C.R. Taylor)

From an institutional theory perspective, the role of the Indonesian Peacekeeping Forces cannot be separated from the legal framework, norms, and rules that form the basis for their implementation. Military institutions, in this case the TNI through the Peacekeeping Mission Center (PMPP), are at the forefront of preparing professional, disciplined forces that meet international standards. This can be seen from the UN-standard training program that aims to ensure personnel readiness before deployment. The professionalism of the troops demonstrated in the field, such as their ability to maintain neutrality, respect local communities, and carry out their mandate with discipline, reinforces Indonesia's positive image in the eyes of the world.

In addition to military institutions, the role of diplomatic institutions through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also important. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs acts as an actor that ensures every peace mission is in line with an active and independent foreign policy, through multilateral diplomacy, international lobbying, and coordination with the UN and other countries. The combination of the military and diplomatic institutions' roles creates a synergy that makes Indonesia's contribution to peace missions not only limited to military operations but also a strategic instrument of defense diplomacy that enhances its international reputation. Thus, institutional theory explains how rules, norms, and coordination mechanisms between institutions are key factors in shaping international perceptions of Indonesia.

State Role Theory (K.J. Holsti)

According to Holsti, every country has a role conception that is identified through national identity and interests, as well as role performance that is manifested in concrete actions. Indonesia sees itself as a democratic country with a free and active foreign policy, so its role concept is as a guardian of peace, mediator, and promoter of global stability. This concept is then realized through active participation in UN missions since 1957, making Indonesia one of the largest contributors of peacekeeping forces in the world.

In practice, the success of the Garuda Forces in important missions such as UNIFIL in Lebanon, MONUSCO in Congo, and UNMISS in South Sudan demonstrates Indonesia's globally recognized role performance. The Garuda Forces are known not only for their success in maintaining security, but also for their humanistic approach that emphasizes positive interaction with the civilian population. This reflects Indonesia's ability to carry out its role in line with international expectations. As a result, Indonesia's diplomatic image has been strengthened, both regionally and globally, as a country that consistently supports international peace and security.

Modern Diplomacy Theory (Harold Nicolson, Henry Kissinger, Joseph Nye)

Within the framework of modern diplomacy, peacekeeping has become an effective instrument for combining national interests with humanitarian values. Harold Nicolson sees diplomacy as the art of negotiation and representation. which in this context is reflected in Indonesia's involvement in international forums, negotiations at the UN Security Council, and involvement in the formulation of mission mandates. Henry Kissinger emphasizes that diplomacy must always be linked to national interests and stability. so that Indonesia's participation in UN missions is also understood as an effort to strengthen the country's bargaining position and maintain regional stability, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Meanwhile, Joseph Nye, through the concept of soft power, explains how image and moral appeal can increase a country's influence. Indonesia's contributions in the form of humanitarian aid, post-conflict reconstruction, and the positive

interactions of the Garuda Force with local communities in Lebanon, Haiti, and Congo are tangible forms of humanitarian diplomacy. These activities build Indonesia's image as a country that not only prioritizes military strength but also cares about humanity and global stability. Thus, modern diplomacy affirms that peacekeeping is a strategic instrument to strengthen Indonesia's diplomatic image in the era of globalization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the soft power theory introduced by Joseph Nye. Indonesia's involvement in international peacekeeping missions not only affirms its commitment to global stability, but also enhances Indonesia's appeal in the eyes of the international community. By sending peacekeeping troops to various UN missions, Indonesia has successfully built a reputation as a responsible country that contributes to maintaining world peace. Public diplomacy activities, training programs, and cultural interactions during peacekeeping missions reinforce Indonesia's positive image, thereby increasing its influence in the global arena. Survey results show that the international community's perception of Indonesia as a contributor of peacekeeping forces is increasing, reflecting the success of the soft power strategy that has been implemented.

- 1) International Involvement. Indonesia has demonstrated its strong commitment by sending more than 2,500 personnel to UN peacekeeping missions, including in Lebanon and South Sudan. This participation not only strengthens Indonesia's position in the international arena but also demonstrates its responsibility in maintaining global peace. This involvement has succeeded in enhancing Indonesia's reputation as a country that is proactive in maintaining stability.*
- 2) International Public Perception. The results show an increase in positive perceptions of Indonesia as a contributor to peacekeeping forces, with positive views on Indonesia's contribution. This shows that the international*

community appreciates Indonesia's efforts in peacekeeping missions and recognizes its important role at the global level.

- 3) *Public Diplomacy* Public diplomacy programs held during peacekeeping missions, such as training and social activities, have successfully improved Indonesia's image. By involving local communities and introducing Indonesian culture, these activities have created better relations and increased positive responses from the international community.
- 4) *Soft Power through Culture and Values.* Cultural interactions carried out by Indonesian peacekeeping forces, including cultural events involving traditional music and dance, have introduced Indonesia's positive values to the international community. These activities contribute to creating a better image and increasing Indonesia's appeal in the eyes of the world.
- 5) *Multilateral Cooperation.* Indonesia's involvement in international organizations and cooperation with other countries has demonstrated its effectiveness in peacekeeping missions. Positive feedback from participating countries shows that Indonesia is valued for its professionalism and contributions, with 80% of respondents in a survey expressing satisfaction with cooperation with Indonesia.

Overall, this study confirms that the increased role of Indonesian peacekeeping forces has effectively improved international perceptions and the country's diplomatic image. Through the indicators analyzed, it can be seen that Indonesia has successfully utilized soft power to build a positive reputation and strengthen its bargaining position on the global stage. This success demonstrates the importance of a sustainable and well-planned strategy in strengthening Indonesia's involvement in international peace missions in the future.

Several suggestions that can be used as considerations related to strengthening the Indonesian Peace Forces include:

- 1) *Improved Training. Providing more comprehensive and specialized training for personnel who will be deployed to peace missions.*
- 2) *International Cooperation. Enhancing cooperation with other countries and international organizations to share resources and knowledge.*
- 3) *Logistical Support. Ensuring adequate logistical support for Peacekeeping Forces operations in the field.*
- 4) *Strengthening National Institutions. The Indonesian government needs to continue strengthening institutions related to peacekeeping missions. such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indonesian National Armed Forces, to ensure that they can optimally support Indonesia's international role. This includes ongoing training and the provision of adequate resources for Peacekeeping Forces.*
- 5) *Development of a Sustainable Diplomacy Strategy. Indonesia must develop a sustainable diplomacy strategy that combines traditional and modern approaches to diplomacy. This includes the use of soft power through more active public diplomacy, as well as an emphasis on values that are in line with international norms in every peacekeeping mission.*
- 6) *Evaluation and Renewal of Role in Peace Missions. Indonesia needs to periodically evaluate its role in international peace missions to ensure that its contributions remain relevant and effective. This evaluation can be used to renew the strategies and approaches used, so as to continue to improve Indonesia's international perception and diplomatic image in the future.*
- 7) *Improving Training and Education. Provide more intensive, locally-based training for peacekeeping mission personnel. This will not only improve personnel capabilities, but also strengthen relationships with local communities.*

With these suggestions, Indonesia can continue to strengthen its role in global peace missions and expand its diplomatic influence, while maintaining its image as a country committed to international stability and peace. Indonesia can more effectively utilize soft power through the role of peacekeeping forces, thereby not only enhancing its diplomatic image but also contributing to global efforts to maintain peace and security.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bellamy, A. J., Williams, P., & Griffin, S. (2010). *Understanding Peacekeeping*. Polity Press. Provides a comprehensive overview of peacekeeping operations and includes discussions on the impact these missions have on the contributing countries' international images.

Berdal, Mats, and David Ucko. (2013). *"The United Nations and Collective Security*. Routledge. This book discusses the broader context of UN peacekeeping and how participation in such missions can enhance a country's diplomatic standing.

Berdal, M., & Malone, D. M. (Eds.). (2000). *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Berridge, G. R. (2015). *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* (5th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

Emmers, R., & Kirchner, E. (2016). Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Jokowi: The Tilt Towards Middle Power Activism. *The Pacific Review*, 29(1), 159–181. doi:10.1080/09512748.2015.1067847

Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Polity Press.

Murray, Tonita. (2009). *"Peace Operations and Human Rights"*. Palgrave Macmillan. Examines the intersection of peacekeeping and human rights,

with insights into how peacekeeping efforts influence international perceptions.

Thakur, R., & Weiss, T. G. (Eds.). (2006). *The United Nations and Global Security*. Indiana University Press.

United Nations. (n.d.). *United Nations Peacekeeping*. Diakses dari

Weiss, T. G., & Collins, A. (Eds.). (2000). *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World Politics and the Dilemmas of Help*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Wheeler, N. J., & Bellamy, A. J. (2001). *Humanitarian Intervention and World Politics*. Polity Press.