

Construing Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the North Natuna Sea

by Darwis .

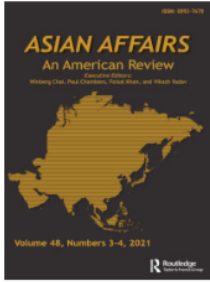
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Construing Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the North Natuna Sea

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ABSTRACT

The bilateral relations between Indonesia and Vietnam have long been problematic due to the unresolved maritime borders surrounding the North Natuna Sea. Despite having a long history of cooperation in multilateral forums such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), the increasing occurrence of IUUF (illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing) in the North Natuna Sea continues to raise concerns in Jakarta about vessels of different countries, including Vietnamese-flagged vessels. Taking an example, this study evaluates the maritime diplomatic strategies of the President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) administration against the encroachment of Vietnam fishing boats which entered Indonesian waters in the North Natuna Sea between 2020-2021 with reference to the response of 1) Indonesia's navy; (2) the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency, and (3) Indonesian Police or Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Although there have been hundreds of incidents, five analytical cases were evaluated in this paper based upon their maritime diplomatic properties to understand Indonesia's contemporary strategy toward such encroachments. Using Le Mière's five framework points, the study argues that Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's IUUF exhibited 1) a kinetic effect; 2) consistency; 3) message explicitness; 4) reactive diplomacy; and 5) lack of power balance among stakeholders.

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Introduction

Overlapping claims between Indonesia and Vietnam are continuously observed as an irritant to their bilateral relations in terms of the countries' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). This indicates that the continuous occurrence of contestations in the North Natuna Sea, where the maritime borders related to both countries' EEZ are found, are incomplete. In this condition, Vietnam commenced a single boundary for its EEZ and continental shelf, with Indonesia being persistent in placing its possession as separate entities.¹ Furthermore, the difficulty in completing these countries' maritime borders was not as complicated as other regional boundary tensions, leading to the signing of agreements allowing more extraordinary confidence-building measures in their bilateral relationships. Eventually there was an agreement on a comprehensive partnership in 2003, which was continuously observed with the implementation of a strategic relationship in 2013.² Regardless of the continuing tensions at sea, the commitment of these countries to the establishment of peace is still observed by the vast number of completed maritime-related agreements, leading to greater collaboration. Vietnam and Indonesia also met in twelve negotiation rounds from 2010 to 2021, toward addressing the growing concern on the EEZ delimitation, as well as the elevation of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF) in the North Natuna Sea.³ Nevertheless, in spite of the expressed desire to resolve the conflicting legal positions through confidence building measures, rounds of negotiations, and the establishment of a strategic partnership, Indonesia and Vietnam have yet to conclude the overlapping EEZ claims.

The incompleteness of a delimited maritime boundary of Indonesia and Vietnam has reportedly led to an increased and staggering encroachment of Vietnamese fishing vessels into Indonesian waters. Between 2014-2019 (Joko Widodo's (Jokowi) first presidential term), Indonesia had seized 488 illegal trespassing ships, with half of them being Vietnamese vessels, and the other majority being vessels originating from China.⁴ By 2020-2021, the interceptions of Vietnamese ships became a common occurrence for the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA), Police (POLRI), Navy, as well as the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fishery vessels (KKP). Jokowi also implemented a tough stance based on the country's maritime-related affairs.⁵ Therefore, this study aims to evaluate Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea. Indeed, it is argued in this article that Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's IUUF exhibited the following: (1) a heavily contained kinetic effect, (2) the maintenance of policy through time (consistent responses), (3) message explicitness accompanying the diplomatic action, (4) more reactive

diplomacy than preemptive strategy, and (5) lack of power balance between stakeholders.

Special reference is given to five cases of fishing boats illegally trespassing across Indonesia's sea boundaries between 2020-2021. These boats were caught by Indonesian authorities. The five selected cases had similar action patterns with the hundreds of Vietnam IUUF that occurred in the North Natuna Sea, including (1) the use of destructive fishing practices and overfishing, (2) lack of communication between Vietnam fishing vessels and Indonesian maritime security forces, (3) the VFRS (Vietnam Fisheries Resource Surveillance) guarding the fishing vessels, and (4) effectively responded by the KKP (Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries), BAKAMLA (Indonesian Maritime Security Agency), POLRI (Indonesian Police), or Indonesian Navy. This indicates that the selected cases are based on the response of the KKP, BAKAMLA, POLRI, or Indonesian Navy, which led to the depiction of the numerous occurrences of Vietnamese IUUF in the North Natuna Sea.

In constructing the maritime diplomatic strategies and policies, the five-point framework of Christian Le Mière (2014) was utilized in the assessment of events. Based on the specific characterization of each selected case to the conception of Le Mière, the trends of Indonesian diplomacy are subsequently gauged in the North Natuna Sea. This specifically emphasizes the correlation between Vietnam's IUUF and the involvement of its coastguards in several instances. After assessing these diplomatic strategies, an argument is also presented, based upon the criteria of kinetic effect, sustainment, reactivity, explicitness, and balance of power, as Indonesia opted to mildly implement coerced and sustained efforts toward compelling aggressors from Indonesian waters. The lack of studies on previous diplomatic strategies also contributes to the better trajectory assessment of future maritime events, especially in the North Natuna Sea. Therefore, the initial knowledge of Indonesia's contemporary stance is very important in terms of maritime affairs. In Joko Widodo's 2014 inaugural speech, the Indonesian grand strategy was outlined by the president toward the establishment of the Global Maritime Axis (GMA), which positioned the country as a strategic hub between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.⁶ This led to the implementation of internal and external foreign policies utilizing Indonesia's maritime geography to further advance the country's national interests. One of these internal highlights is the increase in connectivity among Indonesian islands, through the construction of a sea-based highway.⁷ Externally, Indonesia has shown its strict stance when it comes to violations of Indonesia's EEZ. An example of this was the policy of the former KKP minister, Susi Pudjiastuti, in the deliberate bombing and sinking of the illegal fishing ships captured in various operations.⁸ In this public exhibition,

most of the captured and sunk ships were found to originate from Malaysia, Vietnam, and China. [Figure 1](#) illustrates the overlapping Exclusive Economic Zone between Indonesia and Vietnam, as well as the regions of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

The issue of IUUF is continuously conducted in these waters with every passing year, as China was found to continue its aggressive maneuvers in the North Natuna Sea. This involved the utilization of the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) and other nonmilitary vessels, for the normalization of claims on these sea boundaries. During these previous years, the Vietnamese fishing vessels have also been a major contributor to encroachment in Indonesian waters. In 2021, the number of IUUF cases from these vessels reached an all-time high of 296 and 100 intrusions, according to the detections by the Citra Satellite and Automatic Identification System ([Figure 2](#)). Despite this, Indonesia was only able to capture 38 illegally-trespassing Vietnam vessels, through BAKAMLA, KKP, POLRI, or the Navy ([Table 1](#)).

On these waters, a growing normalization pattern of Vietnam IUUF was observed, subsequently elevating a tremendous concern for policymakers in Indonesia. Despite this, some academics have not significantly invested in understanding the maritime dynamics in the North Natuna Sea. Meanwhile, others observed that these dynamics only included the minor tensions between Indonesia and China, due to the involvement of the CCG.⁹ Irrespective of the results obtained, less analysis was still performed to decipher the various maritime diplomatic events between Indonesia and Vietnam in the North Natuna Sea, which should not be lightly considered. In previous years, the number of IUUF had

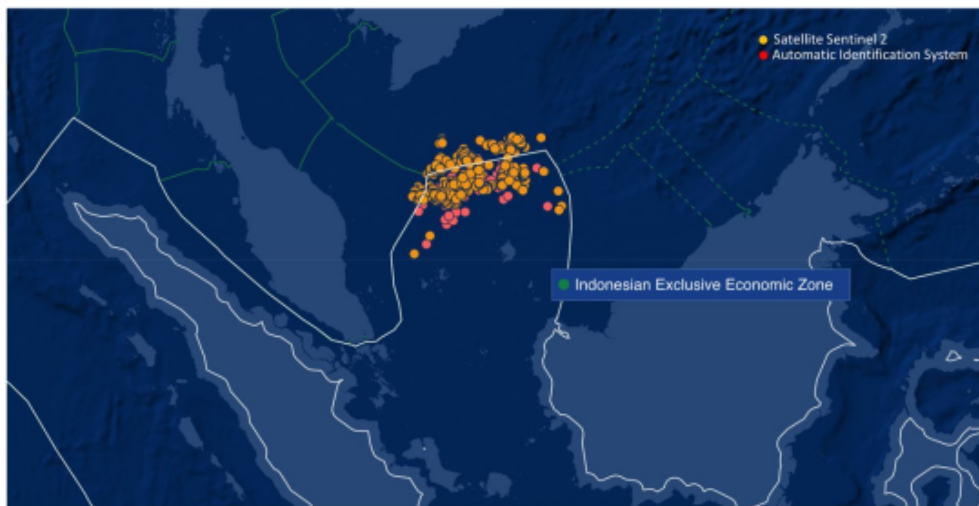


Figure 1. Location of the overlapping EEZ between Indonesia and Vietnam (White and Green border lines), as well as the region of the growing Vietnamese IUUF in Indonesian waters (2021).

Source: Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (2021)³⁸

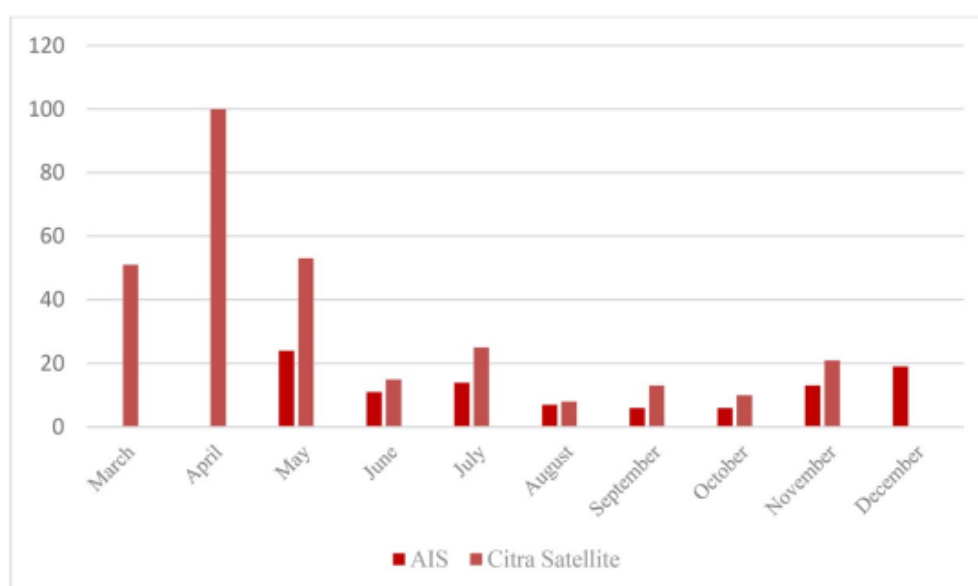


Figure 2. Illegal Vietnam fishing vessel intrusions detected in the North Natuna Sea in 2021 (AIS and Citra Satellite).

Source: Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (2022)³⁹

Table 1. The number of Vietnamese fishing vessels captured by the Indonesian maritime security law enforcement agencies in 2021.

Institution	Number of illegal fishing ships caught
Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fishery (KKP)	25
Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (BAKAMLA)	3
Indonesian Police (POLRI)	8
Indonesian Navy	2
TOTAL	38

Source: Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (2022)⁴⁰

considerably increased in the North Natuna and Sulawesi Sea, as well as the Strait of Malacca.¹⁰ This indicated that the concerns of Jakarta were steadily growing with time, as Indonesia observed the IUUF occurrences as a sign to subsequently invest in patrols and secure its sovereignty at sea. In 2017, Jokowi announced that the name of this marine area would henceforth be called the 'North Natuna Sea,' to display a tougher stance on the issue of the South China Sea and the growing number of IUUF incidents in Indonesia's northern territorial waters. To solidify the EEZ rights of Indonesia, the policy of Jokowi was not baseless regarding the occurrence of concerning maneuvers in the Pacific Ocean. Furthermore, Indonesian vessels have not been hesitant to show their aggressiveness in the South China Sea, due to the gradually growing belligerence of Chinese strategies in expanding their sea boundaries, for example, through the creation of artificial lands. Chinese Coastguard Vessels (CCGs), which also accompanied Chinese fishing vessels.¹¹ This indicated that the act of IUUF was a case of preemptive maritime policy,

which is carefully constructed to normalize a specific regional claim. In all the selected study cases, the apprehended Vietnamese fishing vessels were accompanied by the VFRS, indicating a suspicious trend for Indonesian policymakers. Therefore, the analysis of the ongoing Vietnam IUUF cases in the North Natuna Sea is very important, based upon the investigation of maritime diplomatic characteristics embedded in each case.

Literature review

The review of literature leading up to this study involve two major topics, namely (1) maritime diplomacy and (2) the analysis of Indonesia and Vietnam maritime-related tensions. Alfred Thayer Mahan, in *'The Influence of Historical Sea Power (1660-1783)'* argued that sea power positioned the country to protecting its vital water interest.¹² Based on the increase of competition at sea over time, security and dominance were very critical for great powers, to achieve specific national interests.¹³ Besides these results, numerous critical reports were also continuously produced by Mahan on maritime diplomacy. Despite not directly referencing the terminology of this policy, the early works of this expert provided the argument on the developmental patterns of the sea's immense potential. They also provided the sea utilization patterns of the state actors, to achieve national interests.¹⁴

Gunboat diplomacy has been part of the literature of naval strategies. Gunboat diplomacy is itself the utilization of naval power to intimidate other states to grant concessions.¹⁵ Cable (1985), who contributed immensely to the discourse of maritime diplomacy in terms of 'gunboat diplomacy', explained that specific national agendas were achieved through coercive diplomacy, which involved the utilization of navies in this present study.¹⁶ In the 20th century, some previous reviews analyzed the impact of navies and other sea-based hard power assets to achieve national interests. Most of these reports specifically referenced the study cases from several locations,^{17,18} with Le Mière (2014) mostly emphasized. This introduced the terminology of 'maritime diplomacy' with the threefold typology continuously used by study experts, namely coercive, persuasive, and cooperative policies.¹⁹ It also explained that this typology aimed to capture the diversified forms of diplomatic events, which did not only contain coercive-based actions according to the stipulations of other previous GD (Gunboat Diplomacy) studies. Early works by Cable were then elaborated by Le Mière, as he attempted to expand the discourse of maritime diplomacy to also include non-coercive maritime conducts, and the inclusion of non-state actors in analyzing maritime diplomacy, which exceeds prior debates related to only GD.

The five-point framework was the ultimate contribution of Le Mière (2014), which acts as a guideline to assess the significance of maritime diplomatic events. This focused on the kinetic effect, message explicitness, event sustainability or abbreviation, reactive or preemptive conditions, as well as symmetrical or asymmetrical power balance among conflicting actors.²⁰ The kinetic effect is the utilization level of active forces and coercive maneuvers in conducting a maritime diplomatic event. Meanwhile, the message explicitness depends on the assessment or non-assessment patterns of the aggressor on the intentions of the diplomatic event. The sustainability of events also focuses on the performance length of a specific operation. It is also part of a more extensive operation sustained through a certain period. When conducted diplomatic actions are only in response or not spontaneous to specific encounters, they are considered reactive and preemptive events, respectively. Subsequently, maritime diplomatic events are often characterized as symmetrical or asymmetrical actions, depending on the power balance of the conflict actors in the conflict. When considerable differences and similarities are observed in the actors' power balance, these events are considered to be asymmetrical and symmetrical, respectively.

There is only a smattering of literature focused on Indonesia and Vietnam's maritime-related tensions. This excludes studies regarding the bilateral relations of these countries and specifically emphasized the tensions in the North Natuna Sea. Some previous studies are found to have principally focused upon the IUUF issues in these waters. Amidst the elevation of tensions, numerous possible solutions have reportedly been assessed, such as the arrangement of a joint agreement on fishing events.^{21,22} Furthermore, the study of Arsyad (2020) was optimistic about the solution to this issue through effective mutual understanding between Vietnam and Indonesia.²³ Special attention was also provided to the label of the waters as the North Natuna Sea, with several neighboring countries such as Vietnam, clearly opposed to it.²⁴ Despite this assessment, the most relevant results were still observed in Sasmita (2021), where a solid analysis of Indonesian maritime diplomacy (MD) was provided due to the threefold typology of Le Mière, including coercive, persuasive, and cooperative MD. This stated that the coercive, cooperative, and persuasive maritime diplomacy against the trespassers was based on vessel sinking, bilateral collaborative formation, and naval presence, respectively.²⁵ Despite citing Le Mière (2014), the study still characterized the numerous positive cases of diplomatic events conducted between Indonesia and Vietnam in the North Natuna Sea.

Thus, as stated earlier above, the literature related to Indonesia and Vietnam's maritime diplomacy in the North Natuna Sea is scarce. However, a relevant and indirect discourse was observed on the dynamics

of Indonesia and China within these sea boundaries. Although encroachments were majorly conducted by Vietnamese fishing boats, China's claims in the North Natuna Sea were still a dominant academic discourse. In understanding the use of CCG and fishing vessels to illegally trespass these waters, the study of Ma'ruf, Legionosuko, and Risman analytically focused on Indonesia's calmness in confronting belligerent actors, such as China.²⁶ A geopolitical analysis of these events was also introduced by Tampi (2018), to subsequently comprehend China's unique stance in the North Natuna Sea.²⁷ Despite these results, the study of Rosana, Dewi, and Agustin was found to be highly relevant to the discourse, due to focusing on possible tension resolutions and China's IUUF strategy on the waters.²⁸ This indicated that maritime diplomacy was understudied, especially in understanding the North Natuna Sea's events. Therefore, this present article aims to address these gaps through Le Mière's five-point framework, to interpret the diplomatic events between Indonesia and Vietnam in the North Natuna Sea. This is expected to provide greater clarity to the trajectory of policies occurring between these countries. It is also expected to serve as an addition to the political dynamics which unfolded between Indonesia and China in these waters.

Methodology

In this analysis, five cases of Vietnam fishing encroachment were emphasized between 2020-2021. These involved the Indonesian Navy, KKP (Indonesia Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fishery vessels), and BAKAMLA, as well as their response patterns to the IUUF issues on the sea boundaries. They were also selected between 2020-2021, during Jokowi's second presidential term. This was because some reports had accurately interpreted the Indonesian diplomatic strategy through coercive media, considering Jokowi's previous decisions not to compromise IUUF and conduct public bombardments of the illegal vessels.²⁹ In 2020-2021, Jokowi gradually retreated from the coercive-based strategy, as well as implemented a more peaceful and decisive approach to the IUUF issue in the North Natuna Sea. With Le Mière's five-point framework, the following maritime diplomatic properties were assessed,

1. Kinetic Effect: By assessing the kinetic and non-kinetic levels of a maritime diplomatic event, the significance of the objective is often signaled to the adversaries. This indicates that the use of military forces and coercive actions is a significant kinetic effect, such as aggressive maneuvers, targeted violence, and warning shots across the bow.

2. Symmetry or Asymmetry Power Balance: Asymmetrical events often show that more potent powers enforce their abilities toward the establishment of changes to a specific policy, i.e., balance is unequal among the aggressors. Meanwhile, symmetrical indicates equality in the balance of power.
3. Explicit, Implicit, or Unspoken Messages: In maritime diplomatic events, the intention of a protagonist is often clarified through the provided messages. This explains that explicitness ensures a minimum space for miscommunication, indicating a resolution based on the preferences of the announcer. Implicit messages are found to be commonly dangerous, due to the adoption of miscalculation and misinterpretation. Meanwhile, unspoken messages are highly observed as a strategic medium, to ensure the availability of all options for future negotiations.
4. Preemptive or Reactive Events: A preemptive diplomatic event is often planned with specific targeted goals, while reactive occurrences are commonly impromptu without proper long-term organization.
5. Sustained or Abbreviated Events: This assesses the length by which specific maritime events have been conducted over time.

This article perceives that Le Mière's five-point framework provides a strong analysis based on the trajectory of future maritime policies. This was because the Indo-Pacific region is presently an area containing geo-strategic and geopolitical shifts, with rising tensions among regional hegemony. In previous decades, these tensions led to the misperception and miscalculation of policies among littoral and non-littoral states, leading to the necessity to possess a vivid analysis of regional actions. Using the five-point framework, policymakers were enlightened on several core domains, including the true intentions of initially perceived coercive maneuvers, to advance a state's adaptation ability toward future maritime policies. This assisted states in steering away from possible miscalculations and misperception of sea maneuvers, which is a critical element hindering the escalation of conflicts. In assessing the diplomatic properties of the selected cases, a radar chart was displayed to illustrate the extent of each subsequent characteristic. This qualitative study used the primary and secondary data related to Indonesia's MD strategies, in responding to Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea within 2020-2021. Additionally, the illustrations in the radar charts were exhibited based on the following,

1. Kinetic Effects: Points were provided based on the extent of active forces and utilized military equipment, with the initial interpreted intentions being observed as hostile.

2. Symmetry: Points were provided when the level of power was similar among the conflicting states, based on one's influence in global affairs.
3. Explicitness: Points were provided based on the presence of clear communications during the event, subsequently highlighting the intentions of the actions.
4. Preemption or Reactive: Points were provided when the event was planned and not an impromptu response.
5. Sustainment: Points were provided based on a policy's continuous level.

Illustrating the study cases of Indonesia's maritime diplomatic characteristics against Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea

In the initial presidential term of Jokowi, no compromises were carried out with regard to cases of IUUF in any parts of the maritime borders. Jokowi's first Minister of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Susi Pudjiasuti, Indonesia had successfully securitized any IUUF actions through public bombings of the captured illegal fishing vessels.³⁰ During Jokowi's second presidential term, the country then adopted a different approach to responding to sea-based encroachments. This was based on the capture and seizure of illegal fishing boats, which did not require a similar policy of public bombings. Special reference was also provided to the following study cases, to represent the various intrusion cases made by Vietnam in terms of IUUF,

1. The Indonesian Maritime Security Agency chased down Vietnam fishing boats (July 2020),
2. Indonesian Navy apprehended two Vietnam fishing boats (October 2020),
3. A Vietnamese vessel bearing the Indonesian flag was captured by the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency (December 2020),
4. Five Vietnamese fishing boats were seized by the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries (April 2021),
5. The Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries captured two Vietnam fishing boats (April 2021).

Due to many illegal trespasses on the North Natuna Sea, Vietnam appeared to be attempting to normalize its claims over their EEZ version, which collides with that of Indonesia over parts of the North Natuna Sea. With gradual adjustment from a coercion-based diplomatic reaction, a subsequent assessment was needed in investigating the contemporary

MD events between Indonesia and Vietnam in the North Natuna Sea. One of the cases of illegal trespassing conducted by Vietnamese fishing vessels on these sea boundaries include a case where BAKAMLA chased down a maneuvering boat in July 2020.³¹ In this condition, the sailors endeavored to avoid arrest by speeding away and discarding their fishing nets. Their desperation to escape led to the burning of tires to minimize vision and continuous performance of zig-zag maneuvers, which were dangerous for other vessels in the area. Furthermore, the BAKAMLA's patrol boat (KN Pulau Dana-323) initially communicated with the fishing vessel without obtaining a response. This led to the maneuver around the vessel with a subsequent alert through semaphore signals. With no response obtained, BAKAMLA decided to take warning shots into the air and the fishing boat, subsequently arresting the crew with 2 tons of illegally caught fish.³²

The second case involved the Indonesian Navy and their apprehension of two Vietnam fishing boats, which sailed along the North Natuna Sea in October 2020. These boats conducted illegal fishing on Indonesia's continental shelf and ignited the immediate response of the Navy. In this condition, the country's KRI John Lie-358 underwent a one-hour chase down against the trespassing vessels, BV0908TS and BV499TS. This occurred at midnight, as the trespassing vessels turned off their lights and released their fishing nets. The Indonesian Navy continuously provided stoppage alerts and fired warning shots, before conducting a visit board search and seizure. In an official statement, the Navy stated that the responses were part of the Operation Koarmada I Marine Combat Group, which embraced the commitment to protecting Indonesian waters despite encountering operational hardships during the pandemic.³³

In the third case, BAKAMLA was again involved against a Vietnam-flagged fishing vessel in December 2020. Once again, an encroaching Vietnamese vessel illegally maneuvered into the North Natuna Sea. This vessel contained two tons of fish and dried shark fins with no proper fishing documents.³⁴ It attempted to evade capture by displaying the Indonesian flag to avoid possible raids by the authorities.

The last two cases involved the KKP, especially the vessels under the supervision of the Directorate General of Marine and Fishery Resources. The first case occurred in April 2021, with KKP capturing five illegal Vietnam fishing boats at the same time.³⁵ These vessels had squid as their primary commodity target and decided to flee when approached by Indonesian officials. In this condition, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Maritime and Affairs and Fisheries, Antam Novambar, stated that capturing the five illegal boats was based on the government's commitment not to compromise with any illegitimate fishing groups on the sea boundaries.³⁶ Additionally, Indonesia strengthened its surveillance

capabilities in the North Natuna and Sulawesi Sea, as well as the Malacca Strait, due to the recent capture incidents. In April 2021, the second case involving the KKP was also observed, with the arrest of two Vietnam vessels poaching in the North Natuna Sea. This indicated that the patrol ship, Orca 03, managed to detain the KG 9307 TS and KNF 7727 vessels, after being caught tugging their pair trawl to catch fish.³⁷ After this event, the KKP continuously emphasized the importance of not conducting illegal fishing in Indonesian waters, with adequate and heavy punishments available for future poachers (Figure 3).

Assessing the characteristics of Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy to Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea

Based on the previous section, Indonesia responded to Vietnam's IUUF cases through the Navy, BAKAMLA, and KKP, depending on the site of captured. However, these contemporary diplomatic strategies had shifted and were no longer oriented to the traditional coercive medium, which involved the public destruction of illegal boats. When assessed based on Le Mièrè's five-point framework, the MD strategy was found to contain a significant kinetic effect, policy sustenance through time (consistent responses), message explicitness, reactive features, as well as power balance absence between Vietnam and Indonesia. This allowed the oppressed

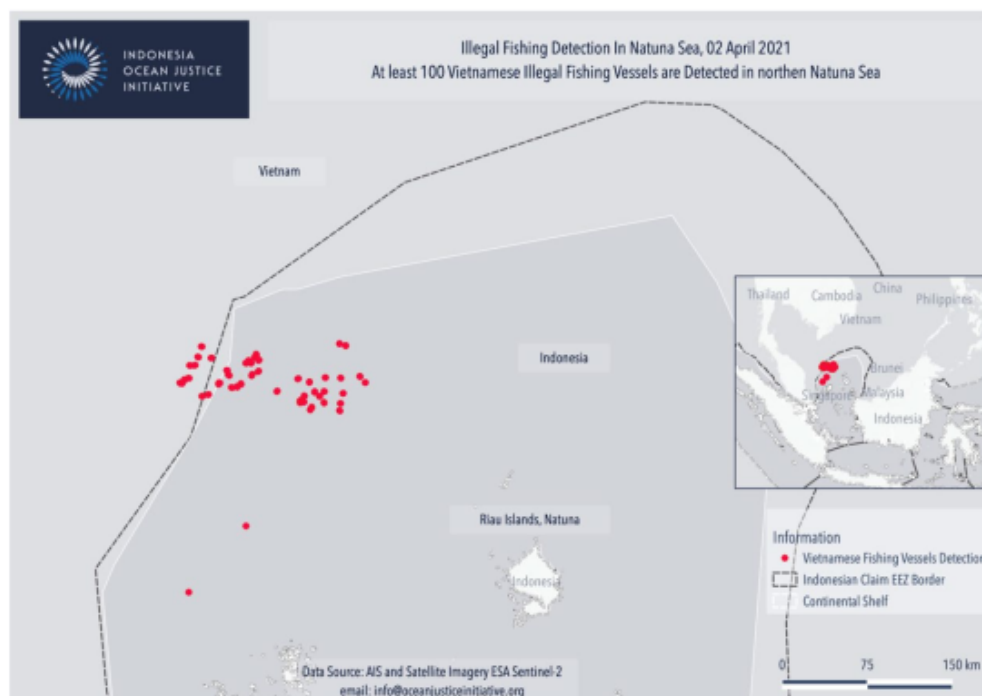


Figure 3. Location of the Vietnamese vessels in April 2022.
Source: Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative (2021)

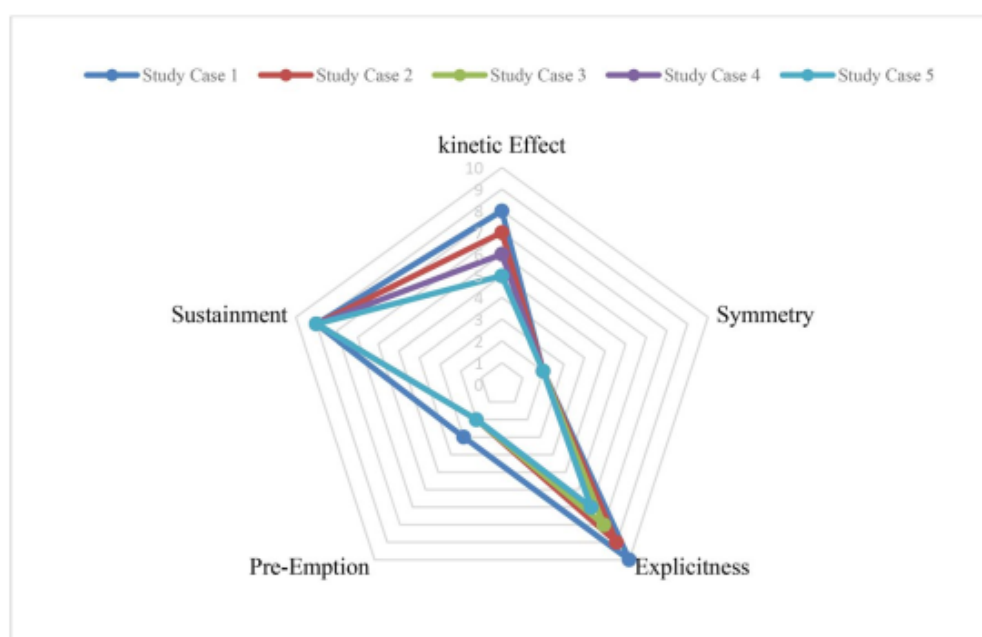


Figure 4. The characteristics of the five study cases related to Indonesia's maritime diplomacy against Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea.

country (Indonesia) to effectively compel its will during the response to trespassing vessels. Figure 4 shows the level of the MD properties across the five study cases.

Based on the kinetic effect, an average to a significant level was observed in the MD strategies against Vietnam's IUUF within the North Natuna Sea. This was in line with some previous studies, where a significant kinetic effect signaled the importance of the objective at stake to adversaries. Through the Navy, BAKAMLA, and KKP, Indonesia was willing to achieve an extensive extent in protecting its sovereignty at sea. According to the study cases, the involvement of the BAKAMLA and Navy represented the tough stance of the country through the strategical utilizations aimed to compel adversaries to alter their actions. This supported the warning shots to the air and the ship platforms, as well as other aggressive maneuvers to stop the actions of IUUF. The intentionality of striking the target solidified Indonesia's intentions of essentially protecting its sovereignty and the North Natuna Sea. However, the last two cases indicated a decline in the kinetic effect (KE) conducted by Indonesian officials. This proved that the aspects of KE were majorly suppressed and present through the KKP, compared to previous cases, which contained the active use of military forces with the conduct of coercive actions. This included blockage, adversary movement prevention, and warning shots. Meanwhile, the study cases involving the KKP lacked a similar form, due to the main action of blocking, capturing, and seizing illegal ships in this aspect. This confirmed that the KKP cases contained

insignificant kinetic effects to a specific extent, compared to the Indonesian Navy and BAKAMLA conditions. Therefore, the dominant kinetic effect in these strategies verified the intention of Indonesia to protect its claims in the North Natuna Sea, by upholding international law and its desire to avoid futile conflicts with the opposing stakeholder.

All five cases reflected the country's message explicitness, based on its claims in the North Natuna Sea. This was due to the messages being directly stated by the Indonesian officials during the crisis and post-event, where the actions, aims, resolve, and the consequences of violating its territory were transmitted to the Vietnam vessels. Based on this condition, the utilization of the Navy, BAKAMLA, and KKP fishing vessels were a clear indication of the country's intent, based on the normalization of its North Natuna Sea claims. This indicated that the active presence of Indonesian officials was the message being transmitted. Based on the substantive message, the country's officials were straightforward in explaining the methods by which Vietnam vessels illegally trespassed the sea boundaries. Therefore, Indonesia consistently implemented a policy normalizing its claims in the overall waters of the North Natuna Sea, despite inconclusive meetings between both countries in resolving the issue of EEZ and continental shelf boundaries. Based on the message explicitness, the transmission was not misconstrued or misinterpreted in any possible form. This enabled the difficulties of other stakeholders to implement a stance and subsequently place Indonesia at an advantage, in avoiding unnecessary escalation of conflicts. The trajectory of this stance also signified the difficulty level of the country toward future flexibility in the negotiations related to the North Natuna Sea. Indonesia was also confident with its claims in the North Natuna Sea, as the displayed explicitness showed possible future resolution under the country's preference. Despite the varying intensity, all five study cases indicated a strong element of explicitness in the transmitted messages. Based on the involvement of KKP, the intensity of explicitness was less considered compared to those related to the Navy and BAKAMLA. Moreover, KKP strictly disseminated the message of fishing-related activities only, not the overall security of the North Natuna Sea, such as the rhetoric used by the Navy and BAKAMLA.

Among the countries involved in the IUUE, the assessment of power balance also determined the future possibilities of the countries' stability and motivations. To achieve peace, the countries' intention was ideal toward similar power, indicating the presence of the balance factor. Vietnam and Indonesia's power balance was also asymmetrical, subsequently showing that the power balance was unequal. This placed Indonesia at an advantage, as their interests were exerted toward agreement implementation during when negotiations. In Southeast Asia, this

country was also superior to Vietnam, as reflected by its GDP, military size, population, and ability to introduce international norms to regional organizations such as ASEAN. To a limited extent, Indonesia had been coercive in confronting illegal Vietnamese fishing ships in the North Natuna Sea, due to being unhesitant in displaying their water ownership, with the violating perpetrators of the international law being punished accordingly. Based on the Vietnam fishing vessels in all cases, the consequence of an unequal power balance showed great repercussions. According to Le Mière (2014), the presence of an asymmetrical balance led to a stronger power enforcing its policy references for the weaker country. This was feasible due to their relatively high power, compared to other groups. Due to being the stronger power perpetrating the water sovereignty protection through a limited coercive pathway, Indonesia reflected its willingness to completely claim the North Natuna Sea, while being rigid with future negotiations with Vietnam. Despite much optimism for the countries to compromise the issue of the EEZ and continental shelf, the asymmetrical power difference still enabled Indonesia to enforce intolerance within the delimitation of their sovereign waters.

In all five cases displayed, clear indications of the policy being sustained through time were adequately present. This indicated that the regular utilization of the Navy, BAKAMLA, and KKP was a common policy for Indonesia. Several recent occurrences were also due to the decrease of coerciveness toward IUUF cases. In Jokowi's first presidential term, the establishment of a deterrent effect was emphasized through the public bombings of illegal fishing vessels. However, the policy was no longer conducted due to the public backlash from neighboring countries in Southeast Asia. Despite this condition, the decrease in coerciveness did not verify that the present implemented policy was newly introduced. This contained strict patrols, aggressive maneuvers, warning shots, as well as capturing and seizing illegal ships. The contemporary actions by the Indonesian officials were still considered sustainable irrespective of these actions, due to being an extension of previous similar policies, to decrease IUUF in the country's sovereign waters. Therefore, this strategy was adequately sustained despite differing from the previous coercive levels conducted as an Indonesian maritime diplomatic strategy. This confirmed a clear attestation of the country's commitment to its North Natuna Sea policy. The final maritime diplomatic property to be assessed was the preemptive or reactive feature. Based on the preemptive condition, specific policies were planned to achieve a certain goal. This showed that the protagonist (Indonesia) was confident about its possible outcome when the policy was sustained and preemptively prepared, due to its unmoved stance. Meanwhile, the reactive feature was conducted based on an impromptu nature. Under this category, the events were

subjected to the possibilities of uncertainties, as reactive maritime diplomacy did not provide sufficient time to prepare and plan actions. This led to a lack of ability in mapping possible scenarios to a specific event outcome. According to Le Mière (2014), reactive diplomacy was found to open greater possibilities when events evolved to become more dangerous and escalatory. Based on the findings in the case at hand, all the study cases involved in this report were represented reactive diplomacy as such. Furthermore, Indonesia continuously conducted the policies of strict patrols, aggressive maneuvers, capturing and seizing illegal ships, as well as warning shots against Vietnam's IUUF, which were performed as sources of response toward trespassing fishing ships. This diplomacy established greater uncertainties based on the orientation of the study cases' situations, as officials often encountered fishing boats under the disguise of the Indonesian flag, turning off their lights at midnight, and using aggressive maneuvers. Le Mière (2014) also stated that reactive policies were more dangerous due to the uncertainties and possibility of unforeseen escalations. To a specific extent, the crisis in the North Natuna Sea increased due to the impromptu and instinctive responses of the Indonesian Navy, BAKAMLA, and KKP. However, there was a line not exceeded by Indonesian officials, despite their reactive actions. This was based on not exceeding their traditional coerciveness in handling illegal ship poaching in the North Natuna Sea.

Policy implications

Amidst the geopolitical and geostrategic adjustments in the Indo-Pacific, state actors were wary of coercive sea maneuvers. This indicated that Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy in the North Natuna Sea contained pivotal policy implications for regional security. Unlike the Chinese sustained maneuvers in its claimed "dash lines" of the South China Sea or the US Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea or Pacific Oceans, Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy was reactive in confronting the Vietnamese IUUF. This confirmed that the strict patrols, aggressive maneuvers, and warning shots against the IUUF vessels were a form of response toward trespassers on the sea boundaries. Therefore, Indonesia needs to showcase greater coerciveness in protecting its sea territory in specific future intrusion cases. Nevertheless, despite the displaying of aggressiveness, future studies will need to address whether coercively responding to cases of illegal intrusions are effective in deterring future cases of IUUF or not. Despite this aggressiveness, the country had never violated existing international laws and regulations. As the five cases in Indonesia examined in this study have shown, the proactive policy taken by Indonesia in responding

to IUUF can affect marine encroachers. Exactly how that policy particularly affects Vietnam in the coming years will be seen in the coming years.

Another major characteristic of Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy is the lack of power balance between Vietnam and Indonesia. Indonesia displayed a more straightforward and coercive response toward the IUUF vessels versus the antagonist (Vietnam). Meanwhile, these actions were more reluctant in similarly responding to the Chinese fishing vessels. Indonesian forces were not reluctant in the conduct of their maritime diplomatic strategies, due to being in a position to exert their interests against Vietnam. This indicated that continuous hostility was a possibility when Vietnam and Indonesia failed to conclude the UNCLOS (1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) provisional agreement on their overlapping EEZ claims.¹¹

In the domains of kinetic effect, sustainment, and explicitness, Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy was considered consistent. This was because they are frequently explicit in coercing foreign trespassing ships through a military medium, to compel adversaries to alter their actions. They also conducted sustainable sea operations through the Indonesian law enforcement, including BAKAMLA, KKP, POLRI, and the Navy. Based on these results, all the Indonesian bodies need to synergize in countering IUUF cases, especially in Vietnam.

Conclusion

In the North Natuna Sea, Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategy has evolved with time, with Jokowi reorienting the country's policies to a more accommodative one for neighboring states, regarding the reduction of the sea coerciveness level. Differing from his predecessors, Jokowi decided to place a priority on maritime diplomacy as the cornerstone of his foreign policy, unlike the more neutral and non-alignment priority adopted in past years. From the outset, Jokowi's second presidential term accommodated critiques against the public display of destructions of ships which had entered Indonesian waters illegally. Contemporary adjustments ensured that the level of coerciveness displayed is mild and not meant to intimidate Indonesia's neighbors in Southeast Asia. Despite these adjustments, tensions remain between Indonesia and Vietnam at least partly because of the still unresolved ocean boundaries between the two countries in the North Natuna Sea. The unresolved border has led to a rising number of IUUF occurrences perpetrated by Vietnamese flagged-fishing vessels. These have increased concerns in Jakarta, irrespective of the long history of cooperation among Southeast Asian countries in multilateral forums such as ASEAN.

This study assessed the MD strategies of Indonesia's Jokowi administration against Vietnam's IUUF in the North Natuna Sea, utilizing five selected cases, evaluated for better understanding. These cases involved Indonesian governmental raids, captures, and seizures of illegal fishing boats infiltrating Indonesia's waters between 2020-2021. Each case also indicated that the responses of the Indonesian Navy, BAKAMLA, or KKP were adequate, confirming the country's intention to protect its claims in the North Natuna Sea, although it was willing to avoid needless water conflicts. Through Le Mièrè's five-point framework, Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's IUUF exhibited the following, (1) heavily contained kinetic effect, (2) maintenance of policy through time (consistent responses), (3) message explicitness accompanying the diplomatic action, (4) more reactive diplomacy than preemptive strategy, and (5) lack of power balance between stakeholders. Furthermore, this article further argues that the strategies reflected mildly coerced and sustained efforts to compel aggressors (in this case the Vietnamese) toward steering outside of Indonesia's sea boundaries, through raids, captures, and seizures of illegal fishing boats.

Notes

1. Indonesia and Vietnam are currently concluding a provisional agreement to regulate the overlapping EEZ claims in the North Natuna Sea. The unresolved claims have resulted in numerous incidents between the fishing vessels of both countries and have been shown to be a major point of irritation to the long-standing bilateral relations of Indonesia and Vietnam. Indonesia and Vietnam have sought to bilaterally resolve the issue through the establishment of a Technical Meeting on the Delimitation of the EEZ, which is currently entering the 12th round.

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Construing Indonesia's maritime diplomatic strategies against Vietnam's illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the North Natuna Sea

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