

# VISION OF THE WORLD MARITIME AXIS OF INDONESIA AS A MARITIME COUNTRY IN ALFRED THAYER MAHAN'S PERSPECTIVE

E.T. PUDJIASTUTI\*

I.N. PUTRA\*\*

A.K. SUSILO\*\*\*

\*Sekolah Tinggi Manajemen IMMI, Pejaten Tim.,  
Kec. Ps. Minggu, Jakarta Indonesia

\*\*Indonesia Defense University (IDU), Bogor,  
Jawa Barat 16810, Indonesia

\*\*\*Indonesia Naval Technology College, Surabaya 60178, Indonesia

*The economic development of Indonesia and the region has an impact on national maritime security. With these conditions, developments and challenges in the maritime aspect, Indonesia has outlined a policy on the vision of the World Maritime Axis. This vision is a consequence of being a maritime nation with an area that is mostly ocean, as is the policy of Alfred Thayer Mahan (A. T. Mahan). The purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of the relationship between the vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA) and the concept of maritime strategy from A.T. Mahan so that it can be seen the relevance of this strategy to the development of President Joko Widodo's World Maritime Axis (WMA) Vision. Based on the results of analysis, the development of the World Maritime Axis (WMA) Vision is relevant to Alfred Thayer Mahan's maritime strategy. The relevance, among others, is that Indonesia is between two continents in the world, namely the Asian continent and the Australian continent; Indonesia is also the largest archipelagic country in the world with a very wide maritime area; Demographic bonus is a condition where the productive age population is more than the non-productive age; History records that the Indonesian people have long controlled sea shipping lanes with a fairly formidable fleet; The vision and mission of the government of President Joko Widodo have the ambition to make Indonesia the world's maritime axis.*

**Key Words:** *Relevance analysis, Maritime State, A.T. Mahan, Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA).*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Asia Pacific is now a region in the world that is predicted to be part of the great history of world politics and economics in the 21st century (Rumley, 2005). This dynamic can be seen from the increasing number of New Emerging Countries (NEC) that have sprung up. The rise of the Asian economy is still being spearheaded by two countries, namely China and India (Valli & Saccone, 2015). Both countries have the largest human resources and have the potential to be the largest markets in the world. Coupled with developments in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia with the strength of its natural resources which are supported by the largest population. Connectivity in this area continues to increase and contributes to regional economic growth.

In the global trends report 2030 the map of the strength of the countries in the world will experience drastic changes in 2030 (Phillips, 2008). Asia will pass North America and Europe in terms of global power, mainly based on GDP, population size, military allocation, and technology investment (Espas, 2011). In this projection, Indonesia is seen as one of the countries that will have emerging power in 2030 (McKinsey, 2012).

The economic development of Indonesia and the region has an impact on national maritime security. Indonesia as one of the ASEAN

countries with the largest sea area makes this water area a very important role in the connectivity mode in the Asia Pacific (Heiduk, 2016). With its position on strategic sea trade and transportation routes, Indonesia has challenges in managing maritime security which includes various dimensions including the dimensions of defense and security. (Manurung, 2016).

In facing these developments and challenges in the marine aspect, Indonesia has outlined a policy on the vision of the World Maritime Axis. This vision is a consequence of being a maritime nation with an area that is mostly ocean, as the policy of A. T. Mahan. This study aims to provide an analysis of the relevance of Indonesia's world maritime axis vision from the strategic perspective of Alfred Thayer Mahan. This study uses a comparative analysis approach using expert opinion consisting of three doctoral-level people. This research is expected to provide benefits in analyzing the perspective of world maritime strategy. This research is also expected to explore the historical values of Alfred Thayer Mahan's strategy for the development of Indonesia's maritime aspects.

There are several studies as references, including research on Alfred Thayer Mahan's theory of Sea Power to analyze types of policies to actualize the idea of the world maritime axis. (Hudaya &

Putra, 2017). Research on evaluating the idea of Indonesia as a global maritime axis in restoring reputation in Southeast Asia (Ali & Sulistiyono, 2020). Research on Indonesia's implementation in improving its image as a maritime country among IORA member countries (Indrayani, et al., 2019). Exploration of the key components of the world maritime axis concept and the challenges facing each component (Sambhi, 2015). Alfred Thayer Mahan's ideas in building and developing maritime Japan (Bose, 2020).

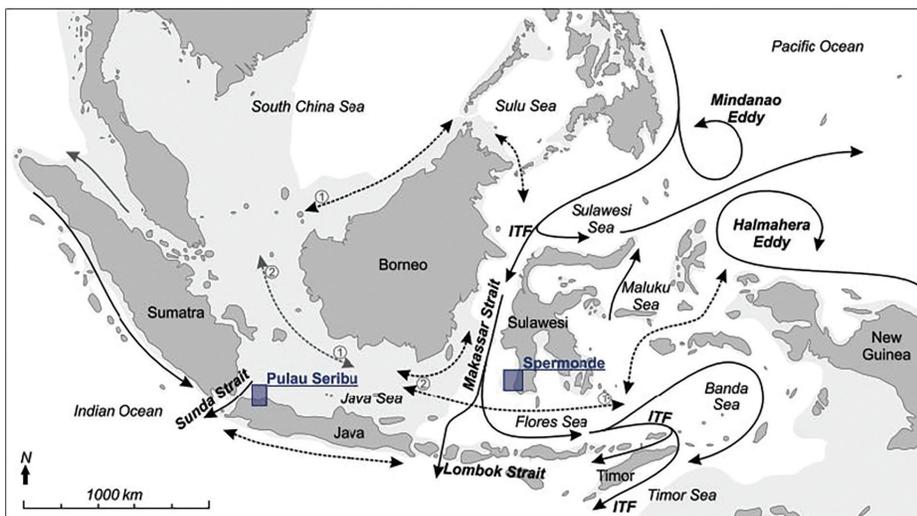
This research consists of several parts. The second part discusses the literature review consisting of the function of the sea, maritime security, the vision of the world maritime axis, Alfred Thayer Mahan's Theory. The third part describes the analysis of the world maritime axis and its relevance to the theoretical perspective of

Alfred Thayer Mahan. The fourth part describes the conclusion of the manuscript.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. The Function of the Sea for Indonesia

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world with a very wide maritime area with a coastline of about 81,000 km (Astor, et al., 2014). Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands and its sea area covers 5.8 million km<sup>2</sup> or about 70% of the total area of Indonesia (Akhira, et al., 2015). Indonesia's marine area consists of 3.1 million km<sup>2</sup> of sovereign sea area and 2.7 million km<sup>2</sup> of the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEEI). From these data, it can be calculated that Indonesia's marine area is 64.97% of the total area of Indonesia (Lasabuda, 2013).



**Fig. 1.** Map of Indonesia.  
(Rosa Maria van der Ven, et al., 2021)

The function of the sea for Indonesia can be divided into 2 parts, namely vital functions that affect the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia and non-vital functions. The sea in Indonesia has four vital functions that can affect the existence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, including: (1) the sea as an area of national sovereignty, (2) the sea as a resource and ecosystem, (3) the sea as a means of transportation, social and cultural contacts, (4) The sea as a means of defense and security (Hartono, 2009).

These four functions are existential functions for the existence of Indonesia, which is based as an archipelagic country within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, without the sea, the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia will never exist. These four vital functions need to be instilled in building a maritime state in regulating the interests of state administration in Indonesia.

## **2.2. Maritime Security**

Maritime security is strongly influenced by the actions and patterns of interaction of the actors who are members of it. These actors include not only states but also non-state actors, where the existence of these actors is currently increasing the intensity of maritime security.

The concept of maritime security lies between two different interactions of thought, namely between groups that use traditional frameworks of security and groups that use non-traditional frameworks (Setiawan, 2017). Traditional groups tend to limit the concept of security (de-securitization) while non-traditional groups tend to expand it (securitization).

Maritime security has also expanded not only the concept of sea defense against military threats from other countries but also includes defense against non-military threats, including protection of nature conservation, trade routes, eradication of illegal actions at sea, and others. Maritime security is not only concerned with law enforcement at sea, but maritime security in the broadest sense is also that the sea is an area that is safe for use by users and free from threats or disturbances to various marine use and utilization activities, namely 1) A sea that is free from the threat of violence; 2) Seas that are free from threats to navigation; 3) Sea that is free from pollution and destruction of ecosystems; 4) A sea that is free from the threat of lawlessness.

In identifying the concept of maritime security according to Christian Bueger three things must be considered, namely (1) the maritime security matrix, (2) a securitization' framework that provides a means to

understand how different threats are included in maritime security, and (3) theory of security practice which aims to understand what actions are taken in the name of maritime security (Bueger, 2015).

Through the maritime security framework, an entity can be mapped on how to formulate maritime security in four dimensions, namely national security, economic security, human security, and the maritime environment. The dimension of national security rests on a traditional perspective that views national security as an effort to protect the sustainability of the country so that sea power, represented by naval forces, is the dominant force related to maritime affairs. Thus, in this dimension maritime security is identical or related to the use of naval power.

### **2.3. The Vision of the World Maritime Axis President Joko Widodo**

Indonesia is the largest archipelagic country in the world that has the potential to become the World Maritime Axis. The World Maritime Axis aims to make Indonesia a large, strong, and prosperous maritime country by restoring Indonesia's identity as a maritime nation, safeguarding maritime interests and security, empowering maritime potential to realize Indonesia's economic equality.

Enforcement of the sovereignty of the maritime territory of the Republic of Indonesia, revitalization of marine economic sectors, strengthening and development of maritime connectivity, rehabilitation of environmental damage and biodiversity conservation, as well as increasing the quality and quantity of marine human resources are the main programs in President Jokowi's administration to realize Indonesia as the world's maritime axis (Marsetio, 2015).

Indonesia, which is in the middle between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, must become the World Maritime Axis to bring prosperity to the Indonesian people through regional and international cooperation. To achieve this, President Joko Widodo issued five development agendas that will support Indonesia's process towards the World Maritime Axis. (1) Rebuilding maritime culture, (2) safeguarding and managing marine resources, (3) prioritizing infrastructure development and maritime connectivity, (4) maritime diplomacy, (5) building maritime defense forces (Marsetio, 2014).

As the largest archipelagic country in the world, Indonesia should have a good maritime strategy. This includes economic, social, cultural, political, security and defense aspects. To be able to guarantee national interests at sea,

control over the oceans (sea control) is an absolute prerequisite in the modern maritime era. Sea control is the ability to control the sea area and prevent opponents from using the area for their benefit. Control of the sea itself is closely related to the sea power owned by a nation. Seapower can be interpreted as a country that has extraordinary naval power. Seapower also means the ability of a country to use and control the sea (sea control) and prevent opponents from using it (sea denial) (Marsetio, 2014).

#### **2.4. Alfred Thayer Mahan's Maritime Strategy**

Alfred Thayer Mahan, a United States Naval Officer, in his book „The Influence of Sea Power upon History” put forward the theory that sea power is the most important element for the progress and glory of a country, which if these sea powers are empowered, it will improve the welfare and security of a country. On the other hand, if these sea powers are ignored, it will result in losses for a country or even bring down the country. Later on, Mahan's theory became the basis for the maritime strategy of the big countries to achieve the ideal maritime state. Mahan formulated six characters that are the conditions for a potential country to develop sea power. The six characters are (Mahan, 1890):.

a. Geographical position.

The geographical position is referred to as the most significant condition. There are two important aspects of geographic location. First, the location of a country facing many seas with good communication between the parts. Second, the location of a country in the form of an archipelago in front of a continent or mainland, so that it functions as a fortress on the mainland.

b. Physical conformation.

According to Mahan, the location of a country in the form of an archipelagic state with beaches that are easily accessible from the interior makes the population able to interact directly with the outside world. However, this ease of access makes it easier for the enemy to reach the interior of the islands.

c. The extent of territory.

Mahan explained that there is a relationship between the length of the coastline and the ability of a country to maintain territorial sovereignty in times of war. Each region has important points in determining strengths or weaknesses in the scope of defense. Long coastlines of a country tend to be more difficult in forming a defense strategy than countries with shorter coastlines.

d. The number of population.

In this case, the priority population is quantity, where an abundant population it will provide capital for human resources in the military field, especially in the navy.

e. National character.

Countries that have a high love for their homeland and pride in the greatness of their nation’s history can be a force in building a more advanced country.

f. Character of government.

Government policies of a country, utilization of population density, and attitudes towards neighboring countries. Countries that have strong governments and firm policies will provide benefits to become a force in the change from developing countries to developed countries.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Strategy Relevance of A.T. Mahan towards the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA).

Jokowi’s leadership era after being elected President of Indonesia brought a new spirit. With confidence that prioritizes progress and development in all fields, Jokowi continues to rekindle the spirit that Indonesia can compete internationally. Indonesia, which is at the crossroads of world trade, greatly benefits from the existence of

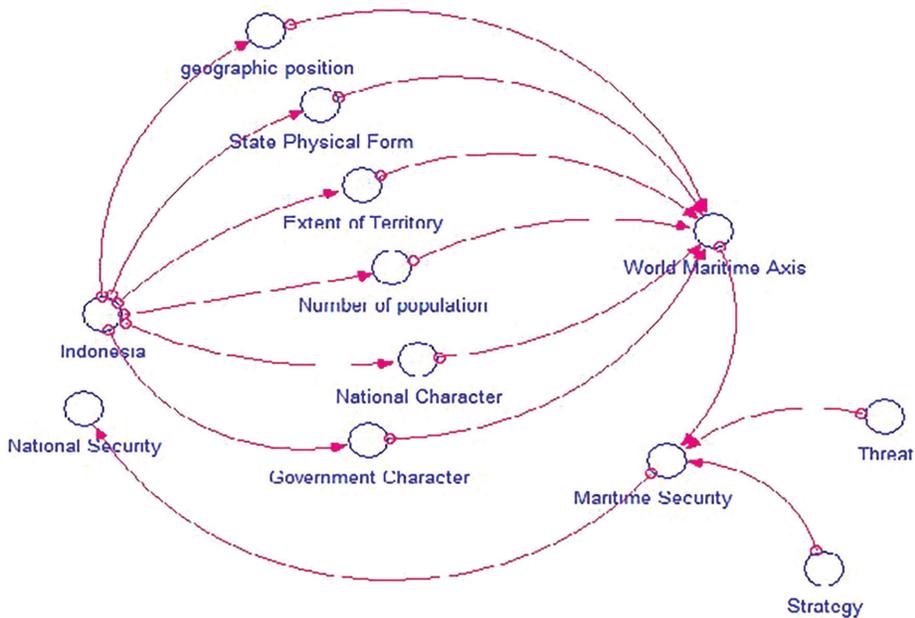


Fig. 2. Relevance of Analysis A.T. Mahan & World Maritim Axis (WMA).

industries that require access to the Indonesian seas. With Indonesia's strategic position, it is an advantage in international businesses that need Indonesian sea access. However, behind its potential, Indonesia faces many challenges including challenges from pirates at sea, security at sea, the flow of immigrants who use sea access. All of this relies on Jokowi's diplomatic steps as the president of the Republic of Indonesia who must take a smart and synergistic approach to development with the vision and mission of his government.

The government's mission to achieve this vision includes: (1) Realizing national security capable of maintaining territorial sovereignty, supporting economic independence by securing maritime resources, and reflecting Indonesia's personality as an archipelagic State; (2) Realizing an advanced, sustainable, and democratic society based on the rule of law; (3) Realizing a free-active foreign policy to strengthen identity as a maritime nation; (4) Realizing the quality of life of Indonesian people who are high, advanced, and prosperous; (5) Realizing a competitive nation (6) Realizing Indonesia as a maritime country that is independent, advanced, strong and based on national interests; and (7) Creating a society with personality in culture. Three of the seven missions are related to maritime affairs and Indonesia's position as an archipelagic country.

### **3.2. The Relevance of Geographical Position toward the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA)**

According to its geographical position, Indonesia is located between two continents in the world, namely the Asian continent and the Australian continent. Besides being flanked by two continents, Indonesia's geographical position is also flanked by the two largest oceans in Asia, namely the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. This position certainly benefits Indonesia in its cross position as a world trade transportation route where 40% passes through these waters. This gives a fairly high relevance of Mahan's strategy to the World Maritime Axis Vision (WMA). This condition also supports Indonesia's economic development, especially in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) which stretches as far as 200 miles from the Indonesian coastline.

Indonesia is influenced by various cultures and civilizations from foreign countries. The existence of sea lane traffic resulted in many foreign ships anchoring to Indonesia. This causes the process of mixing ethnic groups and cultures. In the social and political fields, Indonesia easily relates to other nations and can participate in world politics. The influence of the cross position also makes Indonesia a shipping and international trade route that is

traversed by many countries in the world. Due to its strategic location, Indonesia can establish good relations with surrounding countries. This is considered capable of increasing trade activities and increasing the country's foreign exchange sources.

### **3.3. The Relevance of the Physical Shape and Area of the Country toward the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA)**

Indonesia is also the largest archipelagic country in the world with a very wide maritime area. The coastline is about 81,000 km. Indonesia has more than 17,000 islands and its sea area covers 5.8 million km<sup>2</sup> or about 70% of the total area of Indonesia. Indonesia's marine area consists of 3.1 million km<sup>2</sup> of sovereign sea area and 2.7 million km<sup>2</sup> of the Indonesian Exclusive Economic Zone (ZEEI). This physical condition requires the state to manage defense, transportation, and communication at sea.

As a consequence of this favorable geographical location, Indonesia has three Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI) which become sea lanes for international shipping flows that pass through Indonesian waters. In addition, of the 39 straits that are spread over the territorial waters of Indonesia, 4 of them are choked points (out of 9 choke points in the world). The magnitude of the marine

economic potential and the vast area of the country that is very profitable should be the basic capital in building the shared vision of all stakeholders, to make the development of the Indonesian marine economy the main paradigm to accelerate the realization of national economic independence.

### **3.4. The Relevance of Population toward the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA)**

Demographic bonus is a condition where the productive age population is more than the non-productive age. Indonesia itself is predicted to experience the peak of the demographic bonus in 2030. Opportunities that can be exploited with the emergence of the Demographic Bonus period are the reduced number of unemployed, increased competitiveness of the nation, forming a creative and innovative golden generation, better economic growth, easing the burden of life, more productive and quality human resources, and more open opportunities for Indonesia to become a developed country.

The booming productive workforce is a golden opportunity for Indonesia in carrying out the recruitment of personnel forces to fill the limitations of the defense equipment crew. However, to realize the demographic bonus is not as easy as turning the palm, because there needs to be a high commitment

from the government in this case as a policy-holder. human capital (subject) and human resource (object) must be the central point in sustainable population development in Indonesia which covers the entire human life cycle (life cycle approach). What needs to be considered in discussing population integration and development is that residents are not only treated as beneficiaries of development outcomes but also as subjects who actively participate in development.

### **3.5. The Relevance of the Nation's Character to the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA)**

History records that the Indonesian people have long-controlled sea shipping lanes with a fairly formidable fleet. This is evidenced by the findings of prehistoric and historical sites. Since the 9th century AD, the Indonesian people have sailed across the seas to the west of the Indian Ocean to Madagascar and east to Easter Island. In the era of the Sriwijaya Kingdom, Majapahit to Demak, the archipelago emerged as a great power that was respected by countries in Asia and the world. As a strong maritime empire in Southeast Asia, Srivijaya (683-1030 AD) had based its royal politics on controlling shipping lanes and trade routes and controlling strategic areas that were used as naval power bases.

On the other hand, Indonesia is known as a nation with high militancy. The Dutch and Japanese occupations were not able to make the children of the nation shrivel in their efforts to repel the invaders. Until now, this condition is still embedded, where in looking for or forming the character of the state army there is no need to make a military service like some developed countries, in the opening of the registration of TNI AL soldiers both at the cadet level to the enlisted always exceeds the set quota.

### **3.6. The Relevance of the Character of Government to the Vision of the World Maritime Axis (WMA)**

During his tenure, President Joko Widodo had ambitions to make Indonesia the world's maritime axis. This vision was emphasized by the President in his speech at the 9th East Asia Summit (EAS) on November 13, 2014, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. President Jokowi explained five main pillars that will make Indonesia realize its dream as the world's maritime axis. Pillar (1) Rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture; (2) Committed to maintaining and managing marine resources with a focus on building seafood sovereignty through the development of the fishing industry by placing fishermen as the main pillar; (3) Commitment to encourage the development of maritime infrastructure and connectivity by

building sea highways, seaports, logistics, and shipping industries, as well as maritime tourism; (4) Maritime diplomacy that invites all Indonesian partners to cooperate in the maritime sector; (5) Building a maritime defense force.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The economic development of Indonesia and the region has an impact on national maritime security. In facing these developments and challenges in the marine aspect, Indonesia has outlined a policy on the vision of the World Maritime Axis. This vision is a consequence of being a maritime nation with an area that is mostly ocean, as the policy of A. T. Mahan. Based on the results of research analysis, the development of the World Maritime Axis Vision (WMA) is very relevant to the maritime strategy of Alfred Thayer Mahan. The relevance, among others, is that Indonesia is between two continents in the world, namely the Asian continent and the Australian continent; Indonesia is also the largest archipelagic country in the world with a very wide maritime area; Demographic bonus is a condition where the productive age population is more than the non-productive age; History records that the Indonesian people have long controlled sea shipping lanes with a fairly formidable fleet; The vision and mission of the government of President Joko Widodo have the ambition to make Indonesia the world's maritime axis.

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