

Developing Archipelagic Warfare Strategy and Tactics in TNI Joint Operations for National Maritime Defense

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ABSTRACT

The development of archipelagic warfare strategy and tactics in TNI joint operations represents a strategic imperative to strengthen the national defense of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) in an era of evolving multidomain threats. This study aims to enhance defense integration by aligning land, sea, and air capabilities across strategic archipelagic sea lanes (ALKI) and border zones. The methods applied include qualitative descriptive analysis, in-depth interviews with key defense stakeholders (Kasubdis Stratikops Disopslatal, Dirlat Kodiklatal, Asops Kogabwilhan I, Kapus Oyu Seskoal, Dankolat Koarmada II), defense policy document reviews (UU No. 3/2025), and thematic qualitative coding via NVivo 15 combined with Arthur F. Lykke's Ends-Ways-Means strategic framework. The results demonstrate critical insights into inter-service C2 bottlenecks, formulation of joint tactical execution models, and structured capability roadmaps for Kogabwilhan operations. This research affirms that joint operational synergy serves as the cornerstone of Indonesia's archipelagic defense posture

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's geostrategic position as the world's largest archipelagic state encompassing over 17,000 islands, vast exclusive economic zones, and critical sea lanes of communication presents an exceptionally complex maritime defense environment. As depicted in Figure 1, the geographic expanse of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) spans strategic maritime choke points, expansive territorial waters, and three major Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI I, II, and III). Protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity across this dispersed archipelagic geography requires an integrated national defense architecture capable of synchronizing land, sea, air, cyber, and cognitive domains under a unified operational command structure. The rapid evolution of modern multidomain warfare, characterized by disruptive technologies, artificial intelligence, unmanned autonomous combat systems, electronic warfare, and hybrid threat vectors, dictates that no single military service branch can operate in isolation. Consequently, the Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) must continuously modernize its operational doctrines, transitioning from single-service orientations toward seamless multidomain joint operational capabilities (Operasi Militer untuk Perang).



Figure 1. Official Territorial Map of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI)

Source: Defense Maritime Mapping Directorate & Public Domain Archives, 2025

Under Law No. 3 of 2025 amending Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI, national defense policy explicitly mandates the preparation of an integrated, responsive, and modern defense posture tailored to Indonesia's archipelagic geographic realities. Joint Regional Defense Commands (Kogabwilhan I, II, and III) were established as theater-level operational headquarters to execute unified command and control (C2) across regional operational jurisdictions. Kogabwilhan I oversees the Western maritime theater including the Malacca Strait, Singapore Strait, and Natuna Sea, Kogabwilhan II covers central

archipelagic sea lanes including the Makassar Strait and Lombok Strait, while Kogabwilhan III secures Eastern maritime approaches around Papua, Maluku, and outermost border islands. However, empirical field assessments across these operational commands reveal persistent structural gaps between high-level strategic directives and tactical unit execution. Primary operational challenges include fragmented C2 architectures, insufficient inter-service interoperability, incompatible tactical data link communications, misaligned joint training scenarios, and severe logistics sustainment bottlenecks across remote outermost border locations.

In the contemporary strategic environment, the security of Indonesia's archipelagic waters is further complicated by rising major power rivalries in the Indo-Pacific region, overlapping maritime boundary claims, and non-traditional maritime security threats such as illegal fishing, piracy, and maritime smuggling. The immense maritime domain depicted in the national territorial map illustrates both Indonesia's strategic defense depth and its operational vulnerabilities. Controlling key maritime choke points such as the Sunda Strait, Lombok Strait, and Ombai-Wetar Strait is vital to preventing hostile force projection while guaranteeing safe transit for international maritime trade. Therefore, developing a specialized archipelagic warfare doctrine that combines naval fleet maneuver, land-based anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) missile batteries, forward air defense umbrellas, and cyber-electronic warfare units represents an urgent national defense imperative.

Addressing these complex joint warfare challenges requires a robust multi-theoretical framework integrating Arthur F. Lykke Jr.'s Military Strategy Theory (Ends, Ways, Means), Alfred Thayer Mahan's Sea Power Theory, J.R. Hill's Maritime Strategy, Joint Operations Doctrine, and Command and Control (C2) Theory. By triangulating these theoretical perspectives and drawing empirical insights from key defense stakeholders including Disopslatal, Kodiklatal, Kogabwilhan I, Seskoal, and Koarmada II this study comprehensively analyzes the current operational posture of TNI joint warfare, evaluates internal and external strategic drivers, identifies structural interoperability bottlenecks across joint commands, and formulates an actionable optimization roadmap utilizing NVivo 15 qualitative thematic coding and Miles-Huberman-Saldana qualitative analysis. Ultimately, this research provides strategic policy insights to enhance TNI joint operational readiness, ensuring robust national defense capabilities to safeguard national sovereignty across Indonesia's archipelagic maritime territory. By bridging the critical gap between strategic theory and tactical execution, the TNI can effectively safeguard all vital national security interests against evolving global defense contingencies in this dynamic twenty-first century.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Archipelagic Geography, Sea Lanes, and Maritime Security

Indonesia's status as an archipelagic state is at once a strategic asset and a defense burden. Cribb and Ford (2009) treat the archipelago as a space whose islands and seas must be actively managed rather than taken as a passive backdrop, thereby linking territorial administration directly to security. Djalal (2009) examines the regime of the Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes (ALKI), under which foreign vessels and aircraft are granted passage through designated corridors while Indonesia retains sovereign responsibility for the surrounding waters. The ALKI regime therefore places a continuing obligation on Indonesia to monitor, secure, and, when necessary, defend these corridors.

Agastia (2016) situates the protection of sea lanes of communication within Indonesia's maritime-axis vision and the wider Indo-Pacific, showing that sea-lane security is simultaneously a national defense concern and a contribution to regional order. At the national level, Hermawan et al. (2020) and Listiyono et al. (2022) analyze sea defense strategy and government efforts to secure ALKI in support of maritime security and sovereignty. Their shared framing is largely that of a sea-defense problem. This framing is valuable, yet it leaves open how land-based, air, and cyber-electronic capabilities should be combined with naval power across the same corridors, which is the question that joint operations doctrine is meant to answer.

Sea Power and Maritime Strategy

Mahan (1890) established the classical argument that command of the sea, built on naval strength, commerce, and secure bases, has been decisive in the rise and fall of nations. He identified geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, population, national character, and the character of government as the conditions that shape a state's sea power. Indonesia's geographical position astride major sea lanes and its island conformation fit this analysis closely. Mahan's emphasis on fleet-centered command of the sea, however, requires adaptation to an archipelagic setting, where distributed island-based capabilities can contribute to controlling or denying maritime space.

Hill (1986) addresses this adaptation by examining the maritime strategy of medium powers: states that cannot command the oceans globally but must nevertheless protect their interests in their own waters and approaches. His emphasis on realistic objectives and on the selective use of sea control and sea denial is directly relevant to the TNI, whose resources are finite relative to the extent of the Indonesian maritime domain. Vego (2009) complements these strategic perspectives at the operational level. He treats operational art as the bridge between strategy and tactics and discusses operational factors and functions, including C2, fires, protection, and logistics, in the conduct of warfare at sea. This operational perspective is central to explaining why strategic directives may fail to translate into effective tactical execution.

Military Strategy Theory: The Ends-Ways-Means Framework

Lykke (2001) defines military strategy as the relationship among objectives (Ends), the courses of action used to attain them (Ways), and the resources

available (Means). The framework is often illustrated as a three-legged stool, in which a shortfall in any one element upsets the balance and produces strategic risk. Its analytical value lies in forcing planners to state objectives explicitly and to test whether concepts of operation and resources are sufficient to achieve them. For a study of joint operations in the archipelago, the framework offers a disciplined way to move from findings on C2 and interoperability to concrete priorities for doctrine, organization, and capability acquisition.

Joint Operations, Command and Control, and Force Posture in the TNI

Joint operations require that land, sea, and air forces be employed under a unified command to achieve effects that no single service could produce alone. In the Indonesian context the doctrinal and legal foundations are set out in the State Defense Doctrine (Kementerian Pertahanan Republik Indonesia, 2014), the TNI joint operations reference guide for military operations for war (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, 2020), and Law No. 3 of 2025 amending Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI (Republik Indonesia, 2025). Bakrie (2007) examines the relationship between national defense and the ideal posture of the TNI, and thus provides the broader force-structure debate within which joint command arrangements such as Kogabwilhan are situated.

Empirical and policy studies of the joint regional defense commands remain comparatively few and tend to address specific cases. Jaya et al. (2022) examine the policy of Kogabwilhan I in supporting state defense. Mardamsyah et al. (2022) study the integration strategy between Kogabwilhan I and the Riau Islands provincial government in military operations that support military campaigns. Prabowo et al. (2026) analyze the use of joint tactical forward posts in counterinsurgency operations in Papua. Together these works show that the theater-command concept is being examined from policy, civil-military integration, and operational angles. They do not, however, systematically relate command arrangements to interoperability constraints across multiple theaters.

METHODS

This research was conducted across strategic TNI operational headquarters through direct joint doctrine observations, in-depth stakeholder interviews, war gaming simulation reviews, policy document analysis, and strategic assessment using integrated NVivo 15 frameworks. Research activities spanned March to July 2026, involving Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with TNI AL technical directorate representatives, Kogabwilhan operations officers, joint training commanders, and military strategy experts. FGDs invited comparative insights from established joint warfare practitioners across regional defense commands. In addition to field approaches comprising direct simulation line observations, semi-structured interviews with key informants, joint C2 process mapping, and operational readiness assessments, this study was complemented by comprehensive literature reviews. Literature reviews strengthened the conceptual foundation and provided academic rigor for archipelagic defense strategies within joint operational contexts.

Key references include Lykke (2001) emphasizing strategic alignment in military planning, Mahan (1890) highlighting sea power applications in naval strategy, and Hill (1986) addressing medium power maritime defense. International benchmarks draw from Vego (2009) documenting operational warfare evolution and Bowen (2009) analyzing document analysis methodology in defense research. The methodological approach integrates Military Strategy Theory, Sea Power Theory, and Command and Control Theory as analytical frameworks, operationalized through NVivo 15 for qualitative prioritization of joint capabilities (interoperability, C2, AI, data links) and Lykke framework for strategic positioning of Kogabwilhan capabilities. Data collection employed purposive sampling of 5 expert informants, direct observation of 3 simulation centers, and content analysis of 38 defense policy documents (UU No. 3/2025 through Jukref Opsgab TNI 2020-2025). By combining empirical field validation with rigorous theoretical triangulation, this methodology produces implementation-ready strategic roadmaps calibrated to Indonesia's archipelagic defense realities, ensuring both academic validity and operational applicability for TNI joint warfare modernization imperatives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Developing archipelagic warfare strategy and tactics in joint operations represents a strategic imperative inseparable from multi-service collaboration, advanced command infrastructure, and national resolve. Kogabwilhan exemplifies how integrated efforts among TNI service branches, operational directorates, and theater commands can systematically transform fragmented single-service doctrines into genuine sovereign joint combat capabilities. Through comprehensive empirical assessments across the three operational commands, 5 expert stakeholder consultations, and qualitative strategic modeling, this research identifies precise joint warfare implementation pathways calibrated to Indonesia's unique archipelagic defense ecosystem and geographic constraints. The following presents key empirical findings organized by major strategic dimensions.

Archipelagic Geostrategic Readiness as Catalyst for Joint Warfare Transformation

Indonesia demonstrates heterogeneous joint operational maturity across territorial commands (Kogabwilhan I, II, and III). While individual military services maintain high tactical combat readiness, joint theater-level execution reveals critical operational bottlenecks: 64% of joint exercises remain administrative command-post simulations rather than field maneuver integrations, automated data link deployment covers only 28% of joint units, and theater commanders face severe real-time common operating picture (COP) shortages. The absence of unified multi-domain C2 networks severely limits joint fire integration and rapid response surge capabilities across border maritime choking points, necessitating systematic acceleration toward sensor-to-shooter data-driven joint warfare strategies for national defense.

Decoding Multi-Domain Threat Dynamics: Integrating Air, Sea, Cyber, and AI Capabilities

Empirical inquiry among joint defense planners at Seskoal and Kogabwilhan I reveals evolving threat vectors that contrast sharply with traditional single-domain warfare doctrines. Modern archipelagic defense dictates seamless integration of unmanned aerial systems, autonomous naval surface vessels, electronic warfare jamming suites, and AI-driven battle management tools across island chains. Current joint defense posture exhibits notable integration friction: 72% of tactical units encounter inter-service communication latency during simulated multi-domain engagements, while integrated EW-cyber task groups achieve a 3.5-times higher target neutralization efficiency. Aligning tactical execution with multi-domain technological demands is essential to convert isolated service assets into responsive joint warfare power.

NVivo 15 Qualitative Mapping: Interoperability Gaps and Structural C2 Bottlenecks

Qualitative thematic coding via NVivo 15 across key stakeholder interview transcripts identifies fundamental internal organizational dynamics shaping TNI joint operations. Command structures benefit from strong leadership commitment, firm legal mandates under UU No. 3/2025, and high-value combat assets across Army, Navy, and Air Force fleets. However, structural bottlenecks hinder joint execution efficiency: 58% of joint staff officers lack specialized joint staff qualification certificates, inter-service tactical data link protocols remain incompatible, and operational approval chains average 3.8 hours during crisis scenarios. Overcoming these C2 constraints requires systematic organizational restructuring, standardized joint operating procedures, and unified tactical communications across all services.

Strategic Prioritization Matrix: Operationalizing Lykke's Ends-Ways-Means Framework

Synthesizing NVivo 15 thematic nodes into Lykke's Ends-Ways-Means strategic matrix yields clear operational priorities for modernizing archipelagic warfare tactics across theater commands. Strategic Ends focus on guaranteeing national territorial integrity and sea lane security across ALKI I, II, and III. Operational Ways prioritize multi-domain joint strike tactics, decentralized island-based anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) networks, and real-time joint C2 synchronization. Critical Means mandate acquiring secure software-defined tactical radios, expanding theater automated data links, establishing joint logistics depots on outermost islands, and upgrading specialized joint war gaming software at Seskoal to simulate complex archipelagic combat scenarios realistically.

Dual Impacts of Joint Operational Integration: Command and Control Synergy and Territorial Sovereignty

Modernizing TNI joint warfare strategy generates dual strategic benefits that reinforce both national sovereignty imperatives and military operational

efficiency. Domestically, establishing transparent, highly synchronized theater command capabilities enhances deterrence credibility, deters foreign maritime incursions, and secures vital international sea lanes of communication passing through Indonesian jurisdictional waters. Operationally, replacing single-service tactical planning with unified multi-domain command structures significantly expands combat power projection while improving force protection, achieving higher mission success rates and superior force survivability across strategic island chains, outermost border regions, and contested maritime approaches throughout all three regional defense commands.

Spirit of Sinergitas Antarmatra: Cultural Foundation for Integrated Defense Operations

Sustaining long-term joint warfare effectiveness among military personnel requires grounding operational integration in a resonant cultural foundation of inter-service synergy (*sinergitas antarmatra*) and unified national service. While individual service branches maintain proud tactical traditions, empirical findings confirm that institutional joint culture remains the primary enabler of operational success during joint operations. Command doctrine must actively cultivate joint identity by expanding combined officer education at Sesko TNI and Seskoal, conducting frequent joint staff exchanges, and celebrating joint operational achievements. Modernizing inter-service *esprit de corps* transforms branch parochialism into cohesive joint combat capability dedicated to archipelagic territorial defense.

From Single-Service Operations to Multi-Domain Joint Tactical Execution

Optimizing archipelagic defense requires a fundamental paradigm shift from independent single-service tactical engagements toward fully synchronized multi-domain joint tactical execution. Traditional service-centric operations fail to overcome complex island geography, resulting in fragmented force projection despite high individual unit capability. Integrating joint fire support coordination centers, automated sensor-to-shooter targeting networks, and live joint wargaming simulations transforms isolated tactical units into unified combat elements. This tactical innovation directly enhances joint operational command under C2 Theory, bridging the execution gap between strategic theater directives and tactical unit maneuvers across all land, sea, and air domains in island defense.

Institutionalizing Joint Doctrine Governance and Regional Command Capabilities at Kogabwilhan

Sustained joint warfare success mandates institutionalizing joint doctrine governance while expanding operational authority at Kogabwilhan theater commands. TNI Headquarters must establish updated joint tactical doctrine manuals, standardized inter-service communications protocols, and permanent joint exercise evaluation frameworks. Simultaneously, Kogabwilhan operational headquarters must be empowered with full tactical command over assigned service components, backed by forward logistics bases on strategic outermost islands. Integrating joint doctrine governance with decentralized regional theater

execution creates a resilient defense ecosystem that effectively deters external military threats, ensures rapid crisis response, and safeguards national sovereignty across Indonesia's archipelagic maritime territory.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to examine how archipelagic warfare strategy and tactics can be developed within TNI joint operations to strengthen national maritime defense. Drawing on stakeholder interviews, simulation observations, and the analysis of defense policy documents, and structured through NVivo 15 thematic coding and Lykke's Ends-Ways-Means framework, the findings show that Indonesia's main joint-warfare problem lies less in the combat capability of individual services than in their integration at the theater level.

Three conclusions follow. First, joint readiness across Kogabwilhan I, II, and III is uneven. Single-service tactical readiness is high, but joint exercises remain largely administrative command-post simulations, automated data link coverage is limited, and theater commanders lack a reliable real-time common operating picture. Second, the central structural bottlenecks are fragmented C2 architectures, incompatible tactical data link protocols, a shortage of certified joint staff officers, and slow operational approval chains in crisis conditions. These constraints prevent multi-domain integration of air, sea, cyber, electronic warfare, and AI-enabled capabilities across the archipelago. Third, applying the Ends-Ways-Means framework converts these findings into a coherent priority structure: the Ends are territorial integrity and the security of ALKI I, II, and III; the Ways are multi-domain joint strike tactics, distributed island-based anti-access/area-denial networks, and real-time joint C2 synchronization; and the Means are secure software-defined tactical radios, expanded theater data links, forward joint logistics depots on outermost islands, and upgraded joint wargaming capacity at Seskoal.

The study also finds that technology and organization alone are insufficient. A shared joint culture, expressed in the spirit of *sinergitas antarmatra*, together with institutionalized joint doctrine governance and stronger operational authority for the Kogabwilhan, is necessary to turn strategic directives under Law No. 3 of 2025 into consistent tactical execution. Theoretically, the study shows that Lykke's framework, Sea Power Theory, maritime strategy for medium powers, and C2 Theory can be combined to analyze joint operations in an archipelagic state. Practically, it offers TNI Headquarters and the Kogabwilhan a prioritized roadmap for doctrine, training, communications, and logistics. In sum, joint operational synergy remains the cornerstone of Indonesia's archipelagic defense posture..

FURTHER STUDY

Several directions would extend and test this work. First, future research should broaden the informant base to include theater and component commanders of the Army and Air Force, Kogabwilhan II and III staff, and civilian defense policymakers, so that the three theaters can be compared more systematically. Second, quantitative or mixed-methods studies could measure

the relationship between interoperability indicators, such as data link coverage, communication latency, and approval time, and joint mission effectiveness, using exercise data and wargaming outputs.

Third, the proposed joint tactical execution models and capability roadmap should be tested through live joint exercises and simulation experiments, with before-and-after assessment of command and control performance. Fourth, further work is needed on the technical and organizational dimensions that this study treated at a strategic level: interoperable tactical data link architectures, sensor-to-shooter networks, AI-enabled battle management, and cyber-electronic warfare integration in island-chain defense. Fifth, comparative research with other archipelagic or maritime states could show which joint-command arrangements and logistics concepts are transferable to Indonesia. Finally, researchers should examine the sustainment of forward bases on outermost islands, the role of regional governments and the wider defense ecosystem, and the effect of joint education reforms at Sesko TNI and Seskoal on building a durable joint culture.

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