

The Missing Puzzle Piece: Examining the Factors Underlying Indonesia's Stagnant Defense Budget in the Minimum Essential Forces Era

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Abstract

The efforts of Indonesian Government to accelerate the modernization of armaments through the Minimum Essential Forces (MEF) 2024 program is an inevitability. As a country that must ensure survivability on its own, Indonesia's defense power is far from ideal. Based on data submitted by the Ministry of Defense in 2005, the combat readiness rate of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) is below 40%. The low level of the combat readiness is due to the age of the majority of armaments that are over 20 years old. The urgency of developing a defense posture through MEF 2024 is increasingly high considering that Indonesia is faced with a dynamic strategic environment and the emergence of multidimensional threats. Until 2019, which indicates a decade of thr MEF 2024 program, the defense budget allocation has never reached the target of 1.5% of Indonesia's

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GDP. In fact, the existing empirical data shows that Indonesia's defense budget to GDP ratio has decreased since 2016. This condition occurs when Indonesia's economic strength is getting better in general which is characterized by consistent economic growth above 5% every year. The analysis in this article was carried out using an analysis framework built from various previous literature that discusses the determinants of a country's defense budget allocation. The analysis framework is then crossed with existing empirical data in the form of quantitative and qualitative data to produce the main findings. This article concludes that the stagnation of Indonesian defense budget allocation is a result of three things. First, the low perception of threat to the potential invasion by other countries from the Indonesian. Second, Indonesia's low ambition to launch expeditionary and expansionist operations. Third, the stagnation of the defense budget is also an impact of the implementation of the democratic system as a national political system. This article also concludes that post MEF 2024 arms modernization efforts is also not under promising conditions, as long as there are no changes to the factors mentioned earlier.

Keywords: Defense Budget; Military Modernization, Minimum Essential Forces 2024, Defense Economy, Indonesia

I. Introduction

The instinct for survival is one of the most vital and fundamental of living beings' instincts. All living things – humans and animals – have an instinct to sustain their lives, especially when they face threats. *Tetraodontidae* are known to inflate themselves when they feel threatened.¹ Man is also proven to have a selfish nature, especially when it comes to his salvation.² However, it turns out that the instinct for survival is not only possessed by humans and animals, but also by the state.

Waltz and Mearsheimer state that in an anarchic international system, the state as a unit in the system must rely on itself to ensure its survivability.³ As a consequence, the state will be driven to accumulate power as a means of self-defense.⁴ The states will strive to build a capable military force – if not the strongest. One form of building military power by the state is

¹ “Pufferfish.” National Geographic, accessed (November 1, 2022). [https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/fish/facts/pufferfish#:~:text=In lieu of escape%2C pufferfish,make them even less palatable.](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/fish/facts/pufferfish#:~:text=In%20lieu%20of%20escape,pufferfish,make%20them%20even%20less%20palatable.)

² Bruno S. Frey, David A. Savage, and Benno Torglerb. “Interaction of Natural Survival Instincts and Internalized Social Norms Exploring the Titanic and Lusitania Disasters,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107, no. 11, (2010): 4862–65. [https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0911303107.](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0911303107)

³ Kenneth N Waltz. *Man, the State, and War*. New York: Columbia University Press, (2001); John J Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, (2001).

⁴ Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*; Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*.

through the possession of state-of-the-art and reliable weapon technology in combat and providing optimal deterrence.⁵

As mentioned earlier, the state's efforts to have qualified military power are part of the natural instinct to defend itself, so it is also done by Indonesia. The Indonesian government in 2009 issued a defense posture development policy known as the Minimum Essential Forces (MEF) 2024 program.⁶ The Minimum Essential Force (MEF) was first conceptualized by the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia in the First Kabinet Indonesia Bersatu, Prof. Dr. Juwono Sudarsono, in 2005.⁷ The MEF was officially adopted into the national defense and security development plan through the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) in 2009. The position of the MEF as part of the national

⁵ Andrew Mack and Desmond Ball. "The Military Build-up in Asia-Pacific," *Pacific Review* 5, no. 3, (1992): 197–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512749208718982>; Derek Grossman. "Military Build Up in the South China Sea," in *The South China Sea From a Regional Maritime Dispute to Geo-Strategic Competition*, Leszek Buszynski and Do Thanh Hai, eds. London: Routledge, (2019); John J. Mearsheimer. "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 5–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981>; Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, (1979).

⁶ "Permenhan Nomor 19 / 2012 [Defense Minister Regulation Number 19 / 2012]." Kementerian Pertahanan RI, 2012; Ilman Dzikri. "Negara Dan Kapasitas Adopsi Inovasi: Studi Kasus Tranformasi Pertahanan Indonesia Periode 1998-2014 [Country and Capacity for Adopting Innovation: Case Study of Indonesian Defense Transformation for the Period 1998-2014]," *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional* 18, no. 2, (2016): 131–51. <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v18i2.305>.

⁷ Dzikri, "Negara Dan Kapasitas Adopsi Inovasi."

development process has been further strengthened since the issuance of the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) for 2010-2014.⁸

As the name implies, the MEF is aimed at achieving a minimum defense posture as part of its national development, specifically in the aspect of defense and security. The MEF is not intended to achieve an ideal defense posture for Indonesia. Therefore, the MEF can be seen as an initial step in the process of developing Indonesia's defense posture. Through the MEF program, the development of Indonesia's defense posture is not directed towards arms races or strategies for winning total wars. The MEF, as an effort to develop a minimum defense posture, is based on specific considerations. These considerations include capability-based planning, threat-based planning, taking into account economic capacity, and the presence of confidence-building measures (CBMs).⁹ Referring to the Minister of Defense Regulation No. 19 of 2012, the implementation of MEF is divided into three strategic plans (Renstra). The first Renstra was implemented from 2010 to 2014,

⁸ Kementerian Pertahanan RI, "Permenhan Nomor 19 / 2012."

⁹ Kementerian Pertahanan RI, "Permenhan Nomor 19 / 2012."

followed by the second Renstra until 2019. The third and final Renstra will commence from 2019 to 2024.¹⁰

The MEF 2024 program is very important given that the condition of Indonesia's defense posture is not ideal. Based on data submitted by the Ministry of Defense in 2005, the combat readiness rate of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) is below 40%.¹¹ The low level of the combat readiness is due to the age of the majority of armaments that are over 20 years old.¹² The urgency of developing a defense posture through MEF 2024 is increasingly high considering that Indonesia is faced with a

¹⁰ Koh Swee Lean Collin. "What next for the Indonesian Navy? Challenges and Prospects for Attaining the Minimum Essential Force by 2024," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 37, no. 3, (2015): 432–62.

<https://doi.org/10.1355/cs37-3e>; Kementerian Pertahanan RI, "Permenhan Nomor 19 / 2012."

¹¹ Ella Syafputri. "Kesiapan Alutsista TNI Tak Sampai 50 Persen." *Antara News*, June 1, 2011.

<https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/261155/kesiapan-alutsista-tni-tak-sampai-50-persen#mobile-src>; Agus Supriyanto. "Kesiapan Pesawat Tempur Hanya 40 Persen." *Tempo*, June 24, 2005.

<https://koran.tempo.co/read/nasional/43700/kesiapan-pesawat-tempur-hanya-40-persen?read=true>.

¹² Evan A. Laksmana. "Why Is Southeast Asia Rearming? An Empirical Assessment," in *U.S. Policy in Asia -- Perspectives for the Future*, ed. Rafiq Dossani and Scott W. Harold. California: RAND Corporation, (2018): 106–37, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3171126>; Andi Widjajanto, Edy Prasetyono, and Makmur Keliat. *Dinamika Persenjataan Dan Revitalisasi Industri Pertahanan*. Jakarta: UI Press, (2012).

dynamic strategic environment and the emergence of multidimensional threats.¹³

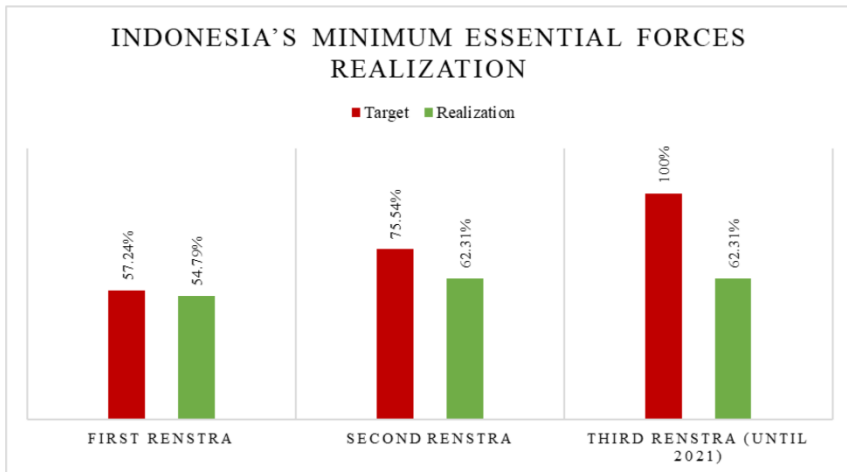


Figure 1. Indonesia's Minimum Essential Forces Realization.
Source: Author's own elaborations

However, despite the significance of the MEF 2024 program for Indonesia, the actual realization in each Renstra has never achieved the set targets. In the first Renstra, the MEF was targeted to be fulfilled up to 57.24%. However, the actual realization only reached 54.79%. In the second Renstra (2014-2019), the government aimed for the MEF to reach 75.54%, but the actual realization only reached 62.31%. As for the third Renstra (2019-2024), where the government targeted the MEF to reach

¹³ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia. *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2008* [Indonesia's 2008 Defense White Paper]. Jakarta: Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, (2008).

100%, there has been no change compared to the achievement in 2019 by 2021.

With regard to the achievement of the MEF 2024 target as mentioned earlier, the defense economic factor in this case defense budget support becomes very vital. Without budget availability, Indonesia – like other countries – will not be able to acquire new armaments.¹⁴ To achieve this target, Indonesia's defense budget is expected to be at least >1% of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Products (GDP).¹⁵ My previous work with others Indonesia Defense Scholars published by Laboratorium Indonesia 2045 argued that Indonesia defense budget should be >1.5% of Indonesia's GDP.¹⁶

However, even though the required defense budget target is clearly written, until the end of MEF 2024's second Renstra (2019) the budget target was never achieved. Until 2019 the proportion of defense budget never reached 1% of GDP. Based on author's

¹⁴ Iztok Prezelj et al. "Military Transformation as Perceived by Experts," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 28, no. 1, (2015): 23–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518046.2015.998120>; Andres Eduardo Fernandez-Osorio et al. "Dynamics of State Modernization in Colombia: The Virtuous Cycle of Military Transformation," *Democracy and Security* 15, no. 1, (2019): 75–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2018.1517332>.

¹⁵ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan 2015* [Indonesia's 2015 Defense White Paper]. Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, (2015).

¹⁶ Iis Gindarsah et al. "Dinamika Persenjataan Global Dan Proyeksi Pembangunan Pertahanan Indonesia 2045 [Global Arms Dynamics and Indonesia Defense Development Projection 2045]," *LAB 45 Research Report*, Jakarta, December 6, 2021.

data processed from IHS Jane’s, Indonesia’s defense budget since 2009 – 2019 has been in the range of 0.6 – 0.8% of GDP. Having reached the highest figure (0.89% of GDP) in 2015, the proportion of defense budget to Indonesia’s GDP tends to decrease until 2019. In 2016 Indonesia’s defense budget amounted to 0.79% of GDP, slightly increasing to 0.8% of GDP in 2017. The decrease in the defense budget allocation ratio again occurred in 2018 (0.73% of GDP) and 2019 (0.68% of GDP).

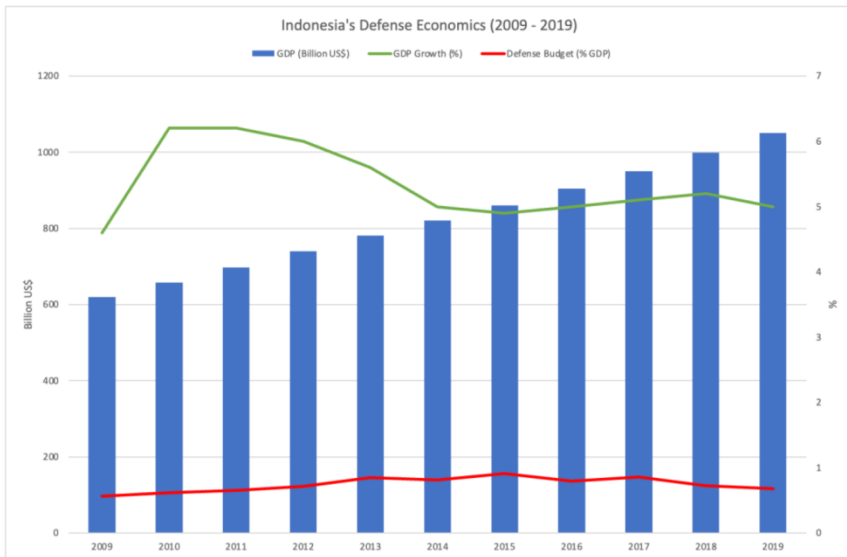


Figure 2. Indonesia’s Defense Economics Outlook 2009 – 2019.
Source: Author’s own elaborations

This condition occurs when Indonesia’s GDP increases every year. Indonesia’s GDP increase in the period 2009 – 2019 is consistent above 5% annually – except for 2014 which grew

4.9%.¹⁷ GDP growth annually signifies a better Indonesian economy. In addition, this condition also occurs when Indonesia has a target of achieving MEF 2024.¹⁸ This raises an anomaly because theoretically the stronger the economy, the greater the defense budget allocation to GDP.¹⁹

However, although research that aims to reveal the reasons for the stagnation of defense budget allocations to Indonesia's GDP is interesting to do, the authors of the previous literature have not specifically discussed this matter. It does not mean that there is no previous literature that discusses the issue of Indonesia's defense economy, especially related to the defense budget. Nevertheless, the previous literature that discussed Indonesia's defense budget focuses more on the negative impact

¹⁷ "GDP Growth (Annual %) – Indonesia." World Bank, accessed December 1, 2022.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2020&locations=ID&start=2009>.

¹⁸ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan 2015*.

¹⁹ Benjamin H. Friedman and Justin Logan. "Why the U.S. Military Budget Is 'Foolish and Sustainable,'" *Orbis* 56, no. 2, (2012): 177–91.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2012.01.003>; Richard A. Bitzinger. "China's Double Digit Defense Growth." *Foreign Affairs*, March 19, 2015.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-03-19/chinas-double-digit-defense-growth>; Muhammad Azfar Anwar and Zain Rafique. "Defense Spending and National Security of Pakistan: A Policy Perspective," *Democracy and Security* 8, no. 4, (2012): 374–99.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2012.739551>; Iskander Rehman. "India: The next Superpower? The Military Dimensions of India's Rise," *IDEAS Report*, May (2012). <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43444/>; Benjamin E. Goldsmith, "Bearing the Defense Burden, 1886-1989: Why Spend More?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47, no. 5, (2003): 551–73.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002703254297>.

of the limited defense budget on the efforts to modernize the TNI-owned armaments.²⁰

In addition, other literature states that most of Indonesia's defense budget is used for routine operational costs such as salaries, not for procurement of new armaments.²¹ The portion of the defense budget used to procure relatively minimal weapon technology is also not evenly distributed among the forces. Army weapon technology budget allocation tends to dominate the budget allocation for the purchase of weapon technology; this tendency even occurs amid the idea of the Global Maritime Fulcrum of President Joko Widodo.²²

Although there is no previous literature that specifically discusses the causes of the stagnation of the defense budget to GDP ratio which is always below 1%, the previous literature still gives an important point to this article. The important point is the similarity of views that Indonesia's defense budget is still far from

²⁰ Collin, "What next for the Indonesian Navy?"; Yuddy Chrisnandi and Leonard C. Sebastian. "Defence Budgeting in Indonesia: Some Policy Options," *RSIS Commentaries* 126/2007, November 21, (2007); Benjamin Schreer. *Moving beyond Ambitions? Indonesia's Military Modernisation*. Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, (2013); Gindarsah et al., "Dinamika Persenjataan Global Dan Proyeksi Pembangunan Pertahanan Indonesia 2045."

²¹ Laksmana, "Why Is Southeast Asia Rearming?"

²² Muhamad Arif and Yandry Kurniawan. "Strategic Culture and Indonesian Maritime Security," *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies* 5, no. 1, (2018): 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.203>; Gregory Vincent Raymond. "Naval Modernization in Southeast Asia: Under the Shadow of Army Dominance?," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 39, no. 1, (2017): 149–77. <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs39-1e>.

sufficient, including to meet the 2024 MEF target. In addition, the absence of previous literature further reinforces the urgency of writing this article. This article will fill the research gap by uncovering the reasons behind the stagnation of Indonesia's defense budget to GDP ratio.

II. Bringing together the Pieces of the Analytical Framework

The topic of defense budget allocation to a country's GDP has long attracted the attention of academics. The amount of interest of academics to discuss this is characterized by the existence of literature that discusses the allocation of defense budgets of various countries. From these literature it can be seen that the state in determining the amount of defense budget proportion to GDP each year is determined by several factors. These determinants consist of strategic and political determinants.

There are at least three factors determining defense budget allocation to a country's GDP that experts present. The first decisive factor is the perception of the threat in the country itself. According to Anwar & Rafique (2012), Shiffer (2007), Ritcher (2016), Rehman (2012) and Hauesntein et al. (2021), the state in deciding its defense budget allocation ratio will read on the perception of the state threat itself. When the threat perception of the country is higher, the country will have a higher ratio of

defense budget allocation to GDP.²³ In other words, there is a positive correlation between the perceived threat and the ratio of defense budget allocation to a country's GDP. The effect of this threat perception can even undermine the argument that democratic countries tend to have a lower defense budget to GDP ratio than authoritarian countries.²⁴

In addition to being determined by the perceived threat, the ratio of a country's defense budget allocation to GDP is also determined by the country's military ambitions. When a country has the ambition to conduct operations outside the borders of its country (expeditionary), it will have a greater ratio of defense budget to GDP. On the other hand, a country that is economically

²³ Anwar and Rafique, "Defense Spending and National Security of Pakistan"; Zalman F. Shiffer. "The Debate over the Defense Budget in Israel," *Israel Studies* 12, no. 1, (2007): 193–214. <https://doi.org/10.2979/ISR.2007.12.1.19>; Rehman, "India: The next Superpower?"; Andrew Richter, "Sharing the Burden? U.S. Allies, Defense Spending, and the Future of NATO," *Comparative Strategy* 35, no. 4, (2016): 298–314. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495933.2016.1222843>; Matthew Hauenstein, Matthew Smith, and Mark Souva. "Democracy, External Threat, and Military Spending," *Research and Politics* 8, no. 4, (2021): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20531680211049660>.

²⁴ Hauenstein, Smith, and Souva, "Democracy, External Threat, and Military Spending."

strong but does not have high military ambitions will have a relatively small defense budget to GDP ratio.²⁵

In addition to strategic determinants, the ratio of defense budget to a country's GDP is also determined by political factors. The decisive factor in question is the application of the democratic political system. Countries that implement democratic political systems are seen by many experts as likely to have low defense budget allocations, especially when compared to authoritarian countries. This is caused by a number of things. First, there is an influence from the tendency of the community or constituents in the democratic state to want the government to carry out the development of economic infrastructure and welfare.²⁶ Public perception – in a liberal-democratic state - has long been seen as influencing the policy-making process by the

²⁵ Friedman and Logan. "Why the U.S. Military Budget Is 'Foolish and Sustainable'"; Adam P. Liff. "Japan's Defense Policy: Abe the Evolutionary," *Washington Quarterly* 38, no. 2, (2015): 79–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0163660X.2015.1064711>; Bitzinger, "China's Double Digit Defense Growth."

²⁶ Harold Sprout and Margaret Sprout. "The Dilemma of Rising Demands and Insufficient Resources," *World Politics* 20, no. 4, (1968): 660–93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2009688>; Heidi Brockmann Demarest. *US Defense Budget Outcomes: Volatility and Predictability in Army Weapons Funding*. Cham: Springer Nature, (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-52301-9>; Richard C. Eichenberg and Richard Stoll. "Representing Defense: Democratic Control of the Defense Budget in the United States and Western Europe," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 47, no. 4, (2003): 399–422. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002703254477>.

government.²⁷ Second, domestic political competition that places constraints on the uncertainty of political tenure drives leaders to allocate relatively low defense budgets. Therefore, the country's leaders prefer to invest in economic development and welfare that has a faster electoral impact.²⁸ In addition, life experiences in authoritarian systems also cause democracies to tend to have low defense budgets.²⁹

The view is that the determination of the defense budget to GDP ratio of Indonesia is a complex policy-making process, so the analysis in this article will be based on these three determinants. This article assumes that the stagnation in the ratio of defense budget to Indonesian GDP for 1 decade of the MEF 2024 program is due to the perceived threat of Indonesia to the invasion of other countries, the absence of ambition of Indonesia

²⁷ Charles W. Ostrom and Robin F. Marra. "U.S. Defense Spending and the Soviet Estimate," *American Political Science Review* 80, no. 3 (1986): 819–42. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960540>; Benjamin I. Page, Robert Y. Shapiro, and Glenn R. Dempsey. "What Moves Public Opinion?," *American Political Science Review* 81, no. 1, (1987): 23–44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1960777>.

²⁸ Michelle R. Garfinkel. "Domestic Politics and International Conflict," *American Economic Review* 84, no. 5, (1994): 1294–1309; Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al. "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 4, (1999): 791–807. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586113>; Benjamin O. Fordham and Thomas C. Walker. "Kantian Liberalism, Regime Type, and Military Resource Allocation: Do Democracies Spend Less?" *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 1, (2005): 141–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0020-8833.2005.00338.x>.

²⁹ Bruce Russett and John O. Neal. *Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, (2001).

to carry out expeditionary operations and the effect of implementing a democratic system that wants more budget allocated to infrastructure development and welfare and the existence of life experiences in the authoritarian era.

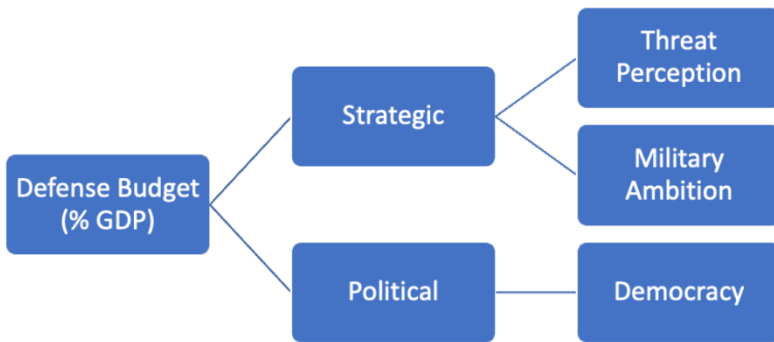


Figure 3. Defense Budget (% GDP) Determinants. Source: Author's own elaboration

III. Research Methods

This research is a qualitative study conducted using a case study approach. Referring to Christopher Lamont's explanation, qualitative research is based on data collection and analysis strategies using non-numerical data.³⁰ Through qualitative research, it is expected to provide understanding and rationalization related to a phenomenon occurring in the scope of international politics. In the context of international relations

³⁰ Christopher Lamont. *Research Methods in Politics and International Relations*. London: Sage Publications, (2015).

studies, the case study approach is widely used. This is because research in the field of international relations seeks to explain the reasons behind a specific phenomenon.³¹ The case study approach in qualitative research is defined as qualitative small-n research. According to Blatter and Haverland, the case study approach has a key feature, which is to demonstrate the relationship between concrete empirical observations and abstract theoretical concepts.³² Correspondingly, the case study approach is widely used in international relations as it seeks to explain the reasons for a specific phenomenon.³³

Researchers administered an internet-based research technique to collect the present study data by utilizing the internet to obtain information, for example, by accessing official government websites, online news agencies, online journals, and others. In the era of globalization complemented by the advancements of information and communication technology, many researchers prefer internet-based research because there are various accurate information and state official statements to be used as reference sources.³⁴

³¹ Lamont, *Research Methods*.

³² Joachim Blatter and Markus Haverland. *Designing Case Studies: Explanatory Approaches in Small-N Research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, (2012).

³³ Lamont, *Research Methods*.

³⁴ Lamont, *Research Methods*.

The data collection technique used in this study is using a combination of literature studies and the utilization of datasets related to the budget and operations of the military that have been used for my previous works published by Laboratorium Indonesia 2045.³⁵ This study will also utilize the results of the assessment of three international institutions, namely the “Global Peace Index” issued by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), the “Fragile State Index” issued by the Fund for Peace (FFP) and the “Executive Opinion Survey: National Risk Perceptions” released by the World Economic Forum.³⁶ After collecting all the data, the researcher then analyzed the data and classified it in specific sections of this study. Next, the researcher will conduct an appropriate data analysis to answer the problem formulation using the framework and write conclusions.

IV. Results And Discussion

A. Low Threats Perception on Invasion and Interstate War

As already mentioned in the analytical framework, the state’s decision to allocate the defense budget is determined by the

³⁵ Widjajanto et al. “*Transformasi Perang Darat 2045: Studi dan Proyeksi Operasi TNI AD [2045 Land Warfare Transformation: Studies and Projections of TNI AD Operations]*”. Jakarta: Laboratorium Indonesia 2045, (2022).

³⁶ “Fragile State Index.” Fund for Peace, accessed December 1, 2022.

<https://fragilestatesindex.org/>; “Global Peace Index.” Institute for Economic and Peace, accessed December 1, 2022.

<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/>; World Economic Forum. *The Global Risks Report 2022*,. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2022.

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-report-2022>.

perception of threats. Countries that increasingly feel threatened by possible invasions from other countries will theoretically have a higher defense budget to GDP ratio.³⁷ Therefore, in conducting an analysis in the Indonesian context, this article will begin with an analysis of Indonesia's threat perception.

One of the easiest ways to deal with Indonesia's threat perception is through the Defense White Paper issued by the Ministry of Defense. In accordance with the context of this study, it will be very relevant for us to see the second (2008), third (2014) and fourth (2015) edition of the Indonesian Defense White Paper. Based on the three editions of the Indonesian Defense White Paper, there are two things that need to be underlined. First, the Government of Indonesia (GoI) recognizes that today the threats that must be faced are no longer just traditional threats in the form of invasions of other countries, but also non-traditional threats. Non-traditional threats that must be faced include climate change or environmental security, natural disasters, separatism, pandemics and the emergence of transnational crime such as terrorism.³⁸

³⁷ Hauenstein, Smith, and Souva, "Democracy, External Threat, and Military Spending"; Richter, "Sharing the Burden?"; Rehman, "India: The next Superpower"; Anwar and Rafique, "Defense Spending and National Security of Pakistan"; Shiffer, "The Debate over the Defense Budget."

³⁸ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2008*; Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2014* [Indonesia's 2014 Defense White Paper]. Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, (2014); Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan 2015*.

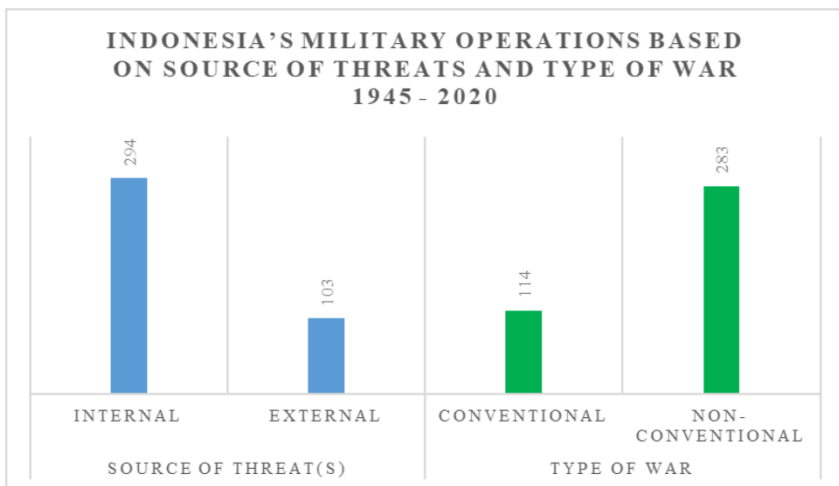
Second, the various non-traditional threats mentioned are seen as the most likely to be faced by Indonesia in the next few years. On the other hand, the GoI considers the potential for open conflict or invasion by other countries against Indonesia to be small. Citing the narratives used in the third and fourth editions of the Indonesian Defense White Paper, non-traditional threats are a real threat to Indonesia, while wars with other countries are not yet a real threat that is explicitly mentioned that currently and in the future there is still a small possibility of happening to Indonesia.³⁹

The decision of the Indonesian Government not to place the invasion of another country as a real threat cannot be separated from Indonesia's historical factors. Based on empirical data owned by the author shows that of the 397 military operations that Indonesia has carried out since the beginning of independence, only 103 (26%) of them are operations facing external threats. Even using the same dataset but the data taken were only military operations in the reform era (1998 – 2020), the dominance of internal threat sources was getting stronger. In the era of reform, Indonesia carried out 31 military operations and only 4 military operations (13%) were the source of threats from external parties.

In addition, if viewed based on the character of the military operations carried out, Indonesia performs more non-conventional

³⁹ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2014*; Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan 2015*.

military operations. This is not unusual given that the majority of threats faced are domestically sourced. Conventional operations carried out by one country when at war with another⁴⁰ amounted to only 114 operations (28%). On the other hand, non-conventional operations carried out to deal with non-state actors amounted to 283 operations (72%). These two findings based on empirical data are in line with Hill's (1978) argumentation that states that the state will allocate a larger defense budget if it has a long history of inter-state warfare.⁴¹



⁴⁰ John M. House. *Why War? Why an Army?* London: Praeger Security International, (2008); Dominic D.P. Johnson and Monica Duffy Toft. "Grounds for War: The Evolution of Territorial Conflict," *International Security* 38, no. 3, (2013): 7–38. <https://doi.org/10.1162/ISEC>.

⁴¹ Kim Quaile Hill. "Domestic Politics, International Linkages, and Military Expenditures," *Studies In Comparative International Development* 13, no. 1, (1978): 38–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02686435>.

Figure 4. Indonesia's Military Operations Based on Source of Threats and Type of War. Source: Author's own elaboration

The relative low perception of the threat of invasion or war with other countries demonstrated in the Indonesian Defense White Paper is in line with the assessment of Indonesia's risk index in the Fragile State Index. Based on the data of the Fragile State Index, it was found that from 2008 to 2019 the Indonesian risk index tended to decrease. If in 2008 Indonesia's overall risk index was expected to be 83.3 then in 2019 Indonesia's risk index dropped to 70.4. The decrease in Indonesia's overall risk index is equal to a decrease in the value of the sub-indicator of threats to security and intervention of other countries. The value of threats to Indonesian security in 2008 was recorded at 7.1 and in 2019 it dropped to 5.9. While the value of foreign intervention threats fell from 6.9 in 2008 to 4.6 in 2019.



Figure 5. Indonesia's Risk Index Source: Freedom For Peace's Global Risk Index

The relatively insignificant potential invasion from other countries against Indonesia is also in line with the Global Peace Index (GPI) data. Based on the Global Peace Index, although there were fluctuations in the period 2009 – 2019, in general the value of Indonesia has decreased. The decline in Indonesia's GPI value which is approaching 1.00 indicates that Indonesia is in an increasingly peaceful condition. Referring to the rating conducted by the IEP, the value of the Indonesian GPI indicates that Indonesia is in a peaceful condition. When viewed in more detail with the 2 GPI constituent indicators related to the perceived threat of invasion from other countries, namely Neighbouring Country Relations and Internal Conflicts Fought, Indonesia's position is also considered to be in a peaceful or even very peaceful condition.

The Neighbouring Country Relations indicator which is consistently given a value of 2 means that Indonesia's relationship with its neighbor is in a peaceful condition. The condition of peaceful relations between Indonesia and its neighbours certainly decreases the potential for Indonesia to be involved in armed conflicts from other countries. This is because, various literature states that the probability of war between countries is higher

between geographically adjacent countries.⁴² Meanwhile, the value of the Internal Conflicts Fought indicator which has decreased significantly to a value of 1 (best value) indicates that Indonesia is very peaceful or not involved in armed conflict, especially with other countries.

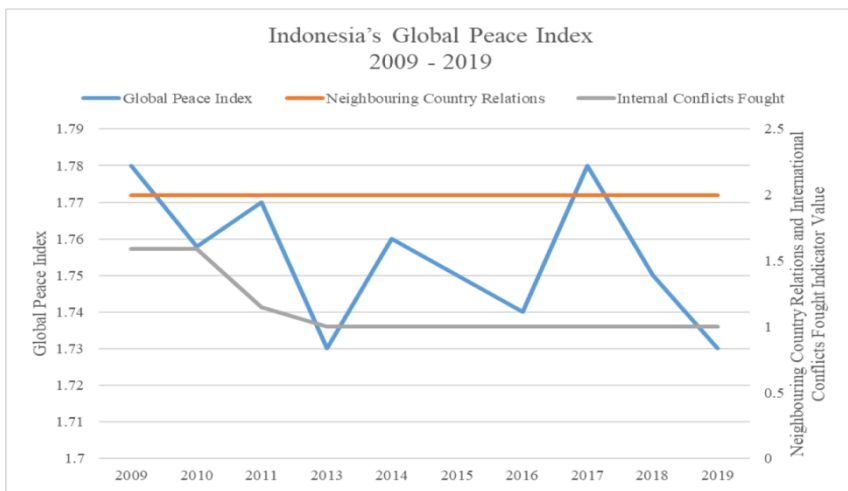


Figure 6. Indonesia's Global Peace Index by IEP. Source: Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Peace Index

⁴² Paul F. Diehl. "Contiguity and Military Escalation in Major Power Rivalries, 1816–1980," *The Journal of Politics* 47, no. 4, (1985): 1203–11. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2130814>; David Garnham. "Dyadic International War 1816-1965: The Role of Power Parity and Geographical Proximity," *The Western Political Quarterly* 29, no. 2, (1976): 231–42; Elias Götz. "Neorealism and Russia's Ukraine Policy, 1991–Present," *Contemporary Politics* 22, no. 3, (2016): 301–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2016.1201312>; Bruce Russett. *International Regions and the International System*. Chicago: Rand McNally, (1967); Harvey Starr and Benjamin A. Most. "The Substance and Study of Borders in International Relations Research," *International Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1976): 581–620. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600341>.

Evidence of the relatively low perception of the threat of invasion from other countries can also be obtained from the results of the Executive Opinion Survey: National Risk Perceptions released by the World Economic Forum. After conducting a survey by asking the biggest threats that each country will face in at least the next two years, it was found that the Indonesian elites who became respondents did not perceive the potential for invasion or war with other countries to be part of the 5 real threats for the next few years. The most likely threats facing Indonesia in the near future are economic and environmental development issues.⁴³

B. Absence of Ambition for Expeditionary Operations

In accordance with the analysis framework used in this article, after discussing Indonesia's perception of the potential war between countries, it is then necessary to discuss Indonesia's military ambitions or strategic ambitions. Analysis of Indonesia's military ambition variable will also begin by looking at the content of the Defense White Paper. In three editions of the Defense White Paper issued before and during the implementation of the MEF 2024 program explicitly and implicitly stated that Indonesia is a peaceful country and prioritizes diplomacy as a national defense strategy.

⁴³ World Economic Forum, The Global Risks Report 2022.

Referring to the second edition of the Defense White Paper, the GoI stated that in the face of threats – including the threat of aggression – Indonesia will prioritize nirmilitary defense efforts, namely diplomacy and unarmed people’s resistance.⁴⁴ Diplomacy is explicitly stated to be the first choice of defense strategy to prevent war. In addition to through diplomacy, the nirmilitary national defense efforts that are also prioritized are the layers of resistance of the unarmed people such as through demonstration actions. The use of violent or coercive elements using TNI’s force is the last layer of defense to face the threat of aggression from other countries.⁴⁵ Based on the same document, the GoI states explicitly that Indonesia is not an aggressor country and will prioritize diplomatic efforts to resolve disputes or conflicts with other countries.

Not much different narratives can be found in the next two editions of the Indonesian Defense White Paper. In the third (2014) and fourth (2015) editions of the Defense White Paper, the GoI reiterated that Indonesia is not an aggressive country. In the document even the attitude as a non-aggressor state is conveyed in more detail. The narratives written in the two national defense documents state that in the implementation of national defense, Indonesia places the principle of peaceful love, the dialogic process and the spirit of equality and brotherhood as basic

⁴⁴ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2008*.

⁴⁵ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2008*.

principles. In addition to the basic principles of national defense efforts that prioritize non-military efforts as mentioned, the two editions of the Defense White Paper also reaffirm the nature of active defense. The defense of the country to the outside is asserted to be active defense which is defined as the defense of the country that is not aggressive and not expansionary by prioritizing diplomacy as the front line of defense.⁴⁶

An active defense prioritizes non-military defense elements and is not aggressive and expansionist in line with the track record of Indonesian military operations. Based on the dataset also used in the book by the author along with other Indonesian defense academics shows that Indonesia rarely conducts military operations abroad (expeditionary missions). Indonesia throughout its history since independence has conducted only 73 military expeditionary operations. 73 The number of expeditionary military operations was only 18.3% of the overall 397 military operations in Indonesia. When viewed based on the period of the domestic political regime, expeditionary military operations were most often carried out during the Old Order era, namely 63 operations. Meanwhile, in the reform process that has taken place since 1998 to date, Indonesia is listed as having carried out only 2 expeditionary military operations. Both expeditionary military operations carried out during the reform era were Operation of

⁴⁶ Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan Indonesia 2014*; Kementerian Pertahanan Indonesia, *Buku Putih Pertahanan 2015*.

Liberation ABK MV Sinar Kudus and Operation of Liberation Hostage Abu Sayyaf which both fought against non-state actors.

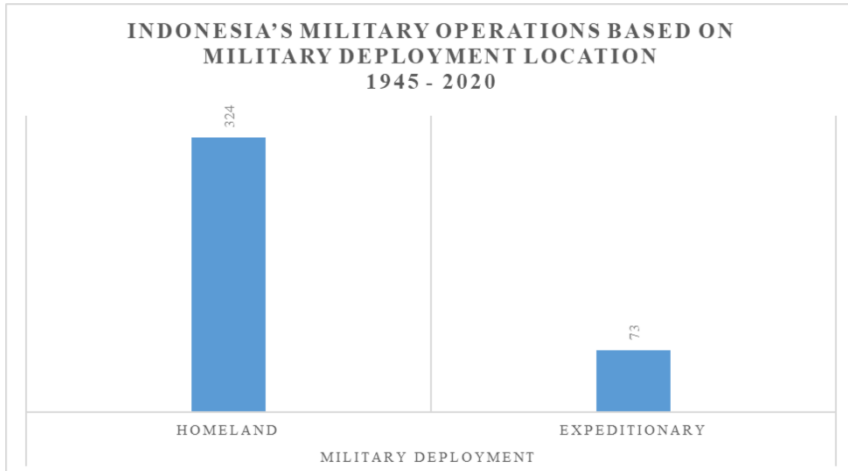


Figure 7. Indonesia's Military operations based on military deployment location. Source: Author's own elaboration

C. Populist Policy of The Democratic Regime: Infrastructure Development and Social Welfare

After analyzing the two determinants of the proportion of defense budget allocation to Indonesian GDP that have a strategic calculation, the analysis will focus on political determinants. As mentioned in the framework of the analysis of this article, the proportion of defense budget allocation to Indonesia's GDP will also be determined by political factors, namely the implementation of a democratic political system. Indonesia is a country that is currently running a democracy as the country's

political system. But even though Indonesia is currently a democratic country, historically the Indonesian has lived under an authoritarian regime.

Indonesia's first authoritarian regime occurred in the 1959-1965 period known as the "Guided Democracy" regime under President Sukarno. Although known as "Guided Democracy", in fact the political regime that was running at that time did not describe the democratic system. Power and political power are centered on the figure of President Sukarno. President Sukarno was even appointed President for life by members of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (MPRS) which he formed himself after dissolving the Constituent Assembly.⁴⁷ Sukarno's actions also signaled the killing of democratic values such as power restrictions and *trias politica*.⁴⁸

Although President Sukarno's authoritarian regime ended after the chaos of 1965 and was replaced by President Suharto's leadership, Indonesia still could not get out of the authoritarian

⁴⁷ Greg Barton, Ihsan Yilmaz, and Nicholas Morieson. "Authoritarianism, Democracy, Islamic Movements and Contestations of Islamic Religious Ideas in Indonesia," *Religions* 12, no. 8, (2021): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12080641>.

⁴⁸ Barton, Yilmaz, and Morieson, "Authoritarianism, Democracy, Islamic Movements"; William R. Liddle. "Indonesia: Suharto's Tightening Grip," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 4, (1996): 58–72; Syed Farid Alatas. "From Democracy to Authoritarianism: Tendencies and Transformations," in *Democracy and Authoritarianism in Indonesia and Malaysia: The Rise of the Post-Colonial State*, Syed Farid Alatas, eds. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, (1997), 126–49. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230378544_6.

regime. The various policies taken by President Suharto during his 32 years of leadership fully supported by the military, especially the Army, show a clearly authoritarian disposition. For example, the damming of media critical of the regime such as Tempo Magazine, Monitor and Sinar Harapan newspaper. Even during the 32 years of President Suharto's rule (1966 – 1998) there were 70 media outlets that were bullied for being critical of the national leadership at the time.⁴⁹

In addition to muttering the media, President Suharto's authoritarian regime also frequently utilizes the military, especially the Army, to dampen social and political turmoil. Through the dual-function doctrine, the military is permitted and even deliberately encouraged to occupy various political positions from the regional level such as Mayor, Regent and Governor to the central level by occupying positions of Minister and member

⁴⁹ Afkar Aristoteles Mukhaer. "Rentetan Praktik Pembredelan Pada Media Massa Oleh Orde Baru [The List of New Order's of Press Censorship Practices]." National Geographic Indonesia, June 23, 2021. <https://nationalgeographic.grid.id/read/132752315/rentetan-praktik-pembredelan-pada-media-massa-oleh-orde-baru?page=all>; "Kronologi Pembredelan Majalah Tempo, Editor Dan Detik 27 Tahun Silam [The Chronology of Tempo. Editor and Detik Magazine Censorship]." Tempo.co, June 21, 2021. <https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1474929/kronologi-pembredelan-majalah-tempo-editor-dan-detik-27-tahun-silam>; Ross Tapsell. "Old Tricks in a New Era: Self-Censorship in Indonesian Journalism," *Asian Studies Review* 36, no. 2, (2012): 227–45. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2012.685926>.

of parliament (MP).⁵⁰ Active military involvement in various affairs that have nothing to do with the defense of the country, not only strengthens President Suharto's grip on power, but also raises various Human Rights issues. Military personnel frequently carry out oppressive actions to civil society, especially groups considered to be opposed to President Suharto.⁵¹ The military is also believed to be involved in a range of bloody violent tragedies. The tragedy of bloody violence included the Tanjung Priok

⁵⁰ Evan A. Laksmana. "Reshuffling the Deck? Military Corporatism, Promotional Logjams and Post-Authoritarian Civil-Military Relations in Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 49, no. 5, (2019): 806–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2019.1613556>; Leonard C. Sebastian and Iis Gindarsah. "Assessing Military Reform in Indonesia," *Defense and Security Analysis* 29, no. 4, (2013): 293–307. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14751798.2013.842709>.

⁵¹ Jusmalia Oktaviani and Teguh Puja Pramadya. "Model Negara Kekuasaan: Orde Baru Dalam Tinjauan Pemikiran Hobbes Dan Niccolo Machiavelli [The Model of the State of Power: A New Order Political Regimes in the Thoughts of Hobbes and Niccolo Machiavelli]," *Indonesian Perspective* 4, no. 2, (2019): 175–90. <https://doi.org/10.14710/ip.v4i2.26701>; Edward Aspinall. "The Irony of Success," *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 2, (2010): 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.0.0157>; Sebastian and Gindarsah, "Assessing Military Reform in Indonesia."

incident (1984), the Talangsari incident (1989), and the kidnapping of pro-reform activists.⁵²

Indonesia's authoritarian era that occurred since the era of Guided Democracy until the New Order officially met the final point in 1998. Through a series of mass actions that even cost lives, President Suharto officially laid hold of the power he had held for 32 years. Since then, the Indonesian has entered the transition phase of democracy. The democratic system that began in 1998 is still in place today. Driven by the bad memory of suffering living in an authoritarian regime, Indonesian society in various surveys considers democracy to be the best political system. For example, based on a survey conducted by the Indonesian Center for Political Research – Institute of Science (P2Politik – LIPI), 73% of respondents stated that the democratic system is better than other forms of government and 78% of respondents viewed democracy as very suitable to be

⁵² Oktaviani and Pramadya, "Model Negara Kekuasaan"; Jun Honna. *Military Politics and Democratization in Indonesia*. New York: Routledge, (2013), 1–306. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203378861>; "Peristiwa Talangsari, Kasus Pelanggaran HAM Berat Pada 1989 [Talangsari Incident, Case of Serious Human Rights Violation in 1989]." CNN Indonesia, June 21, 2021. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20210616115743-31-655026/peristiwa-talangsari-kasus-pelanggaran-ham-berat-pada-1989>; Rindi Nuris Velarosdela. "Kilas Balik Peristiwa Tanjung Priok September 1984 [Flashback to the Tanjung Priok September 1984 Incident]." Kompas News, June 13, 2021. <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2021/09/13/09001111/kilas-balik-peristiwa-tanjung-priok-september-1984?page=all>.

implemented in Indonesia.⁵³ The results of surveys of various institutions in recent years consistently state that more than 70% of Indonesian view democracy as the best political system today.⁵⁴ Looking at the theoretical arguments presented by Russett and Neal (2001), the stagnation and low proportion of defense budget to Indonesian GDP can be understood as the impact of the memory of the Indonesian living under authoritarian era.⁵⁵

In addition to Indonesia's success factors in making the transition from the authoritarian system, the influence of democratic implementation factors on stagnation and low defense

⁵³ Wawan Ichwanuddin et al. "Database Pemetaan Kondisi Politik, Ekonomi, Sosial Budaya Dan Hankam Menjelang Pemilu Serentak 2019 Dalam Rangka Penguatan Kualitas Demokrasi [Database for Mapping Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural and Defense Conditions Ahead of the 2019 Elections]." Jakarta, 2018.

⁵⁴ Kemenko Polhukam. "86 Persen Masyarakat Menilai Demokrasi Merupakan Sistem Paling Cocok Untuk Indonesia [86 Percent of the People Think Democracy Is the Most Suitable Political System for Indonesia]." Berita Kemendikbud, September 19, 2019.

<https://polkam.go.id/86-persen-masyarakat-menilai-demokrasi-merupakan-sistem-paling/>; Widhoroso. "Sistem Demokrasi Di Indonesia Dinilai Sudah Berjalan Baik [The Democratic System in Indonesia Is Considered to Be Running Well]." Media Indonesia, November 5, 2020.

<https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/358675/sistem-demokrasi-di-indonesia-dinilai-sudah-berjalan-baik>; Budiarti Utami Putri. "Survei Indikator: Kepuasan Terhadap Kinerja Demokrasi Menurun [Indicator's Survey: Satisfaction with Democracy Performance Declines]." Tempo, February 9, 2021.

<https://nasional.tempo.co/read/1431024/survei-indikator-kepuasan-terhadap-kinerja-demokrasi-menurun>.

⁵⁵ Russett and Neal, *Triangulating Peace*.

budget to GDP ratio in Indonesia is also influenced by public preferences. As mentioned in the analytical framework, in a democratic system, public preferences influence the policy choices taken by the state.⁵⁶ Specifically, it states that the community wants the government to do Infrastructure development and welfare.⁵⁷ Therefore, civilian politicians will also tend to prioritize the budget in the sector to satisfy the constituents and increase the chances of re-election in the next General Election.⁵⁸

In the context of this study, it is necessary to analyze two different periods of national civic political leadership. First, the leadership of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono for the second period (2009 – 2014). Second, the leadership of President Joko Widodo in the first period (2014 – 2019). From the two eras of national leadership, the fact showed that economic agendas were still the main priorities. This is marked by the dominant narratives of economic development and public welfare in official government statements and in the list of the both President's priority program.

⁵⁶ Ostrom and Marra, "U.S. Defense Spending and the Soviet Estimate"; Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey, "What Moves Public Opinion?"

⁵⁷ Demarest, *US Defense Budget Outcomes*; Eichenberg and Stoll, "Representing Defense"; Sprout and Sprout, "The Dilemma of Rising Demands."

⁵⁸ de Mesquita et al. "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace"; Garfinkel, "Domestic Politics and International Conflict"; Fordham and Walker, "Kantian Liberalism"

When President Yudhoyono was inaugurated in front of MPR on October 20, 2009 for his second term, he stated explicitly that the economic development agenda was his priority. At that time President Yudhoyono in his inaugural address stated that programs to improve people's welfare and fair and equitable economic growth were his main priorities.⁵⁹ As a follow-up to his inauguration speech, President Yudhoyono in November 2009 delivered 15 government priority programs, e.g., revitalization of fertilizer and sugar factories, infrastructure development, increased distribution of people's business credits and mobilization of funding sources outside the State Budget and Regional Budget to finance development.⁶⁰

The entire priority program presented at the beginning of the second period of President Yudhoyono was reaffirmed through his statement at the 2012 cabinet meeting. In the cabinet meeting, President Yudhoyono stated that there were 6 priority programs

⁵⁹ "Program 100 Hari Dan 5 Tahun SBY-Boediono [SBY-Boediono's 100 Days and 5 Years Program]." Viva News, October 20, 2009.

<https://www.viva.co.id/berita/politik/98438-program-100-hari-dan-5-tahun-sby-boediono>.

⁶⁰ "Presiden SBY: Pemerintah Tetapkan 15 Program Pilihan Untuk 100 Hari [President SBY: Government Sets 15 Preferred Programs for 100 Days]."

Kementerian Desa Pembangunan Daerah Tertinggal dan Transmigrasi, November 6, 2009.

<https://kemendesa.go.id/berita/view/detil/946/presiden-sby-pemerintah-tetapkan-15-program-pilihan-untuk-100-hari>; Detik.com. "15 Program Prioritas 100 Hari Pertama KIB II [15 Priority Programs for the First 100 Days of KIB II]." Detiknews, November 5, 2009.

<https://news.detik.com/berita/d-1236134/15-program-prioritas-100-hari-pertama-kib-ii>.

for his government until 2014, which were entirely related to economic and welfare aspects. The six priority programmes are (1) Economic growth (2) job creation (3) price stability (4) poverty alleviation (5) food security and (6) energy security.⁶¹ The dominance of the economic agenda in President Yudhoyono's prioritization program is not surprising considering that during the campaign, the narrative of improving economic conditions and public welfare has also been repeatedly conveyed, for example the political speech during the grand campaign in Gelora Bung Karno:

*“The priorities that the government will be running are: First, economic growth must increase even more to reach a minimum of 7 percent. Second, poverty must be reduced again to the 8 to 10 percent mark, with increased agricultural development, rural development and pro-people programmes. Third, unemployment must decrease again towards 5 to 6 percent. And increase in venture capital through people's business credit.”*⁶²

⁶¹ Yudho Winarto. “Ini 6 Program Prioritas SBY Sampai 2014 [These Are President Yudhoyono's 6 Priority Programs Until 2014].” Kontan, August 24m, 2012.

<https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/ini-6-program-prioritas-sby-sampai-2014>.

⁶² Ayu Purwaningsih and Zaki Amrullah. “Kampanye Akbar SBY-Budiono [SBY-Budiono Campaigns].” DW News, July 4, 2009.

<https://www.dw.com/id/kampanye-akbar-sby-budiono/a-4456300>.

During the reign of President Yudhoyono there was an economic policy choice taken to maintain the purchasing power of the community and the value of inflation, namely energy subsidies. The energy subsidy policy taken by President Yudhoyono which on the one hand is intended to help the economy of the community, has a negative impact on the budgetary burden of the State Budget (APBN).⁶³ The value of energy subsidies by the government is very large, even beating the portion of the Education budget in the APBN which is one of the largest portions of the APBN budget every year. Nevertheless, President Yudhoyono's decision gave a very large subsidy of energy, receiving positive appreciation from several parties, including the senior economist of the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (INDEF), Bhima Yudhistira, because he

⁶³ Ezra Sihite. "Presiden SBY: Terlalu Dini Menghilangkan Subsidi BBM [President SBY: It's Too Early to Eliminate Fuel Subsidies]." *Berita Satu*, November 13, 2013.

<https://www.beritasatu.com/ekonomi/148257/presiden-sby-terlalu-dini-menghilangkan-subsidi-bbm>; Detik.com. "SBY: Negara Neolib Tidak Sukai Ada Subsidi BBM [SBY: Neolib Countries Doesn't like Fuel Subsidies]." *Detikfinance*, August 29, 2014.

<https://finance.detik.com/energi/d-2676493/sby-negara-neolib-tidak-sukai-ada-subsidi-bbm>; "Presiden SBY: Beban Rakyat Terlalu Berat, Kasihan Kalau Harga BBM Dinaikkan Lagi [President SBY: People's Burden Is Too Heavy, Pity If Fuel Prices Are Raised Again]." *Humas Sekretariat Kabinet*, September 9, 2014.

<https://setkab.go.id/presiden-sby-beban-rakyat-terlalu-berat-kasihannya-kalau-harga-bbm-dinaikkan-lagi/>.

was able to maintain the purchasing power of the community and maintain an economic growth rate above 5%.⁶⁴

President Joko Widodo in his leadership also made the issue of economic development and welfare his priority agenda. In the *nawacita* document which was initially a campaign promise and transformed into a priority development agenda through the 2015 – 2019 National Medium-Term Development Plan (*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional, RPJMN*), the narrative of economic development – especially infrastructure and investment – and public welfare is very dominant. In addition to the 2015-2019 *RPJMN* document, President Joko Widodo's priorities for building infrastructure can also be seen from various official statements and budget allocations. Through quality infrastructure, President Joko Widodo believes it will make it easier for people to do activities and increase Indonesia's

⁶⁴ BBC Indonesia. "Kebijakan Subsidi BBM Jokowi VS SBY [Jokowi VS SBY Fuel Subsidies Policy]." BBC News, 2016.
<https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/trensosial-44152093>.

competitiveness to spur economic growth.⁶⁵ Therefore, the infrastructure budget allocation experienced a very rapid increase in President Joko Widodo's era, by utilizing the existing fiscal space as a result of cutting the energy subsidy budget.⁶⁶

The focus on infrastructure development by President Joko Widodo during his leadership period turned out to have a positive response from various circles. Entrepreneurs, academics and the general public perceive President Joko Widodo's decision to have a direct positive impact. The positive impacts felt include

⁶⁵ Kementerian Investasi. "Jokowi Paparkan Pentingnya Pembangunan Infrastruktur [President Jokowi Explains the Importance of Infrastructure Development]." Publikasi, 2018.
<https://www.bkpm.go.id/id/publikasi/detail/berita/jokowi-paparkan-pentingnya-pembangunan-infrastruktur>; Erwin Hutapea. "Jokowi: Infrastruktur Indonesia Tertinggal Dari Negara Lain [Jokowi: Indonesia's Infrastructure Lags behind Other Countries]." Kompas, March 19, 2019.
<https://properti.kompas.com/read/2019/03/31/090000921/jokowi--infrastruktur-indonesia-tertinggal-dari-negara-lain>; Kementerian Keuangan. "Presiden Jokowi Minta Alokasi APBN Fokus Untuk Hal Yang Strategis [President Jokowi Asks for State Budget Allocation to Focus on Strategic Matters]." Publikasi, 2018,
<https://www.kemenkeu.go.id/publikasi/berita/presiden-jokowi-minta-alokasi-apbn-fokus-untuk-hal-yang-strategis/>.

⁶⁶ Kementerian Keuangan. "Selain Infrastruktur, Pengalihan Subsidi BBM Juga Untuk Perlindungan Sosial [In Addition to Infrastructure, the Transfer of Fuel Subsidies Is Also for Social Security System]." Publikasi, 2016.
<https://www.kemenkeu.go.id/publikasi/berita/selain-infrastruktur-pengalihan-subsidi-bbm-juga-untuk-perlindungan-sosial/>; Satria Kartika Yudha. "Ternyata Aliran Dana Subsidi BBM Untuk 'Pembangunan' Pedesaan [It Turns out That the Flow of Fuel Subsidy Funds for Rural Development]." Republika, November 21, 2014.
<https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nfdnpj/ternyata-aliran-dana-subsidi-bbm-untuk-pembangunan-pedesaan>; BBC Indonesia, "Kebijakan Subsidi BBM Jokowi VS SBY."

logistical efficiency, ease of access to interregional liaison, and promoting equitable development in the eastern region of Indonesia, which has been considered to be of little concern.⁶⁷ In addition, the positive impact that is also directly felt by the community is the opening of jobs and increasing people's access to electricity and clean water.⁶⁸

Public appreciation of infrastructure development during President Joko Widodo's leadership was confirmed through various survey results. Several survey institutions issued releases stating that the majority of people view infrastructure development by President Joko Widodo as very appropriate and

⁶⁷ Widhoroso. "Pembangunan Infrastruktur Jokowi Berhasil Tingkatkan Koneksi Antar Wilayah [Jokowi's Infrastructure Development Successfully Improves Connections Between Regions]." *Media Indonesia*, January 22, 2022. <https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/466178/pembangunan-infrastruktur-jokowi-berhasil-tingkatkan-koneksi-antarwilayah>; Rahmi Yati. "SCI: Pembangunan Infrastruktur Di Era Jokowi Tingkatkan Efisiensi Logistik [The Development of the Infrastructure in Jokowi's Era Increases Logistics Efficiency]." *Bisnis.com*, October 19, 2021. <https://ekonomi.bisnis.com/read/20211019/98/1455940/sci-pembangunan-infrastruktur-di-era-jokowi-tingkatkan-efisiensi-logistik>; BBC Indonesia, "Kebijakan Subsidi BBM Jokowi VS SBY."

⁶⁸ Anggi Tondi Martaon. "Dampak Positif Pembangunan Infrastruktur Era Jokowi-JK [Positive Impact of Jokowi-JK Era Infrastructure Development]." *Medcom*, August 14, 2018. <https://www.medcom.id/ekonomi/mikro/0k8Zn5WN-dampak-positif-pembangunan-infrastruktur-era-jokowi-jk>; "Masyarakat Dinilai Rasakan Dampak Positif Pembangunan Infrastruktur Jokowi [People's Is Affected to the Positive Impact of Jokowi's Infrastructure Development]." *Media Indonesia*, May 6, 2022. <https://mediaindonesia.com/politik-dan-hukum/490737/masyarakat-dinilai-rasakan-dampak-positif-pembangunan-infrastruktur-jokowi>; Kementerian Investasi, "Jokowi Paparkan Pentingnya Pembangunan Infrastruktur [President Jokowi Explains the Importance of Infrastructure Development]."

useful. Several survey institutions in their publications then stated that there was a close link between satisfaction and the benefits felt by the public from mass infrastructure development to the level of satisfaction of the public in general and also the electability of President Joko Widodo ahead of the 2019 Presidential Election.⁶⁹

The findings and arguments mentioned in this section confirm that the stagnation of the proportion of defense budget to Indonesia's GDP during the 10 years of MEF 2024 implementation is influenced by political factors. In accordance with the analytical framework used in this study, the application of the democratic system is the reason behind the stagnation and low allocated defense budget. Other than the bad memory of military abuse by authoritarian regimes, governments in democratic regimes tend to take populist policies to preserve electability in the next general election.

⁶⁹ SMRC. "Dukungan Publik Pada Joko Widodo Menguat [Public Support for President Joko Widodo Going Strong]." October 5, 2017. <https://saifulmujani.com/dukungan-publik-pada-joko-widodo-menguat/>; "Hasil Survei: Masyarakat Puas Pembangunan Infrastruktur [Survey Results: Community Satisfied with Infrastructure Development]." JPNN.com, October 12, 2017. <https://www.jpnn.com/news/hasil-survei-masyarakat-puas-pembangunan-infrastruktur>; Dylan Aprialdo Rachman. "Survei Indo Barometer: 65,1 Persen Masyarakat Puas Dengan Kinerja Jokowi-JK [Indo Barometer Survey: 65.1 Percent of People Satisfied with Jokowi-JK Performance]." Kompas News, May 22, 2018. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/05/22/15101471/survei-indo-barometer-651-persen-masyarakat-puas-dengan-kinerja-jokowi-jk?page=all>.

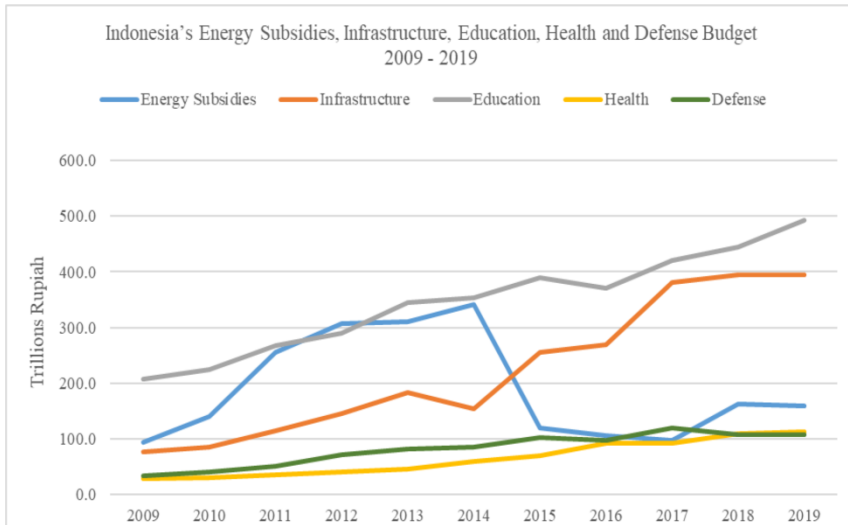


Figure 8. Indonesia's Budget Allocation for Energy Subsidies, Infrastructure, Education, Health and Defense Source: Author's own elaboration

V. CONCLUSION

The efforts of the GoI to accelerate the modernization of armaments through the MEF 2024 program is an inevitability. As a country that must ensure survivability on its own, Indonesia's defense power is far from ideal. The level of operational readiness of armament technology owned by Indonesia can be said to be very critical. Based on data submitted by the Indonesian Ministry of Defense in 2005, the number of operational readiness of the Indonesian National Armed Forces none touched the figure of 40%. This condition is exacerbated by the age of the majority of

armaments that are over 20 years old so that they are technologically behind.

To ensure the successful modernization of the Indonesian National Armed Forces' weapon technology through the MEF 2024 program, the government has targeted a defense budget allocation of 1.5% of GDP annually. However, in fact, until 2019 the defense budget allocation never reached the target, existing empirical data shows that Indonesia's defense budget to GDP ratio has decreased since 2016. This condition occurs when in general Indonesia's economic strength is getting better and according to some Indonesian experts is being faced with an escalation of competition in the South China Sea.

This article concludes that the determining factors for the allocation of a country's defense budget in relation to its GDP, as presented by previous experts, have been the reasons behind the stagnation and relatively low defense budget in Indonesia. The stagnation and relatively low ratio of defense budget allocation to Indonesia's GDP can be explained as a result of three things. First, Indonesia tends to feel that it is not being faced with the threat of invasion or war with other countries. This can be seen from the Indonesian Defense White Paper which applies during the MEF period of 2024 run as well as Indonesia which has historically been relatively rarely involved in conflicts between countries. Second, Indonesia also does not show high military ambition to carry out expeditionary operations or expansionist strategies. This

argumentation was again supported by the Indonesian Defense White Paper which was officially issued by the Ministry of Defense. In the Defense White Paper, Indonesia confirmed its choice to implement an active defense strategy that is not expansionary and layered defense that prioritizes diplomacy as the first layer of defense.

Third, the implementation of the democratic political system is also the cause of stagnation in Indonesia's defense budget allocation. The democratic political system has long been mentioned as the cause of the relative low defense budget allocation of a country. Indonesian are more likely to favour economic development and welfare programs than defense. Moreover, the Indonesian has a history as a nation that has lived under authoritarian regime that utilized the military. Community preferences then influence government decisions in determining state budget allocations, the government will tend to follow these public wishes due to electoral interest factors. Therefore, since the 2024 MEF program began running in 2009, the development priorities and budget allocations of the Indonesian government are in the economic sector and public welfare.

Departing from the results of the analysis and findings of the empirical data, this article also argues since the 2024 MEF Program is approaching its final year, the target will not be achievable. In fact, the future of Indonesia's arms modernization efforts is also not under promising conditions, as long as there are

no changes to the three factors mentioned earlier – especially in the perception of the threat of interstate war with other countries. In closing, the author understands that there are still gaps that can be exploited in further research. The authors felt a need for more in-depth data exploration, especially on aspects of public preference. The presence of primary data related to the proportion of defense budget to Indonesia's GDP can be an important indicator not only for academic interests but also at the level of policy formulation in the future government to be able to maximize existing resources in order to present a sovereign and respected Indonesia.

VI. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Avelita Fitrianni Rayasti for her invaluable assistance and unwavering support throughout the completion of this journal article.

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