

Strategic Defense Considerations in the Relocation of Indonesia's National Capital

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Abstract

This study examines the defense strategy associated with the relocation of Indonesia's National Capital (IKN) to East Kalimantan. The capital relocation decision is driven by the objective of realizing Vision 2045, which aims to transform Indonesia into a developed nation, establish a capital with a robust national identity, and transition the development focus from a Java-centric model to an Indonesia-centric approach. Employing a qualitative descriptive methodology, this research analyzes both traditional security risks arising from IKN's proximity to international borders and emerging non-traditional threats, particularly those in cyberspace. The findings reveal that in the context of Society 5.0, hybrid threats, including cyber warfare, pose significant vulnerabilities, underscoring the need for the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) to strengthen its defense capabilities. Moreover, the study emphasizes the necessity of establishing a specialized Military District Command (KODIM) Nusantara and implementing a multi-layered defense strategy to protect the new capital from both conventional and non-conventional threats. This research enhances the understanding of how the relocation of a capital city necessitates the development of a comprehensive security framework that integrates territorial defense with technological security, while prioritizing robust cybersecurity infrastructure, regional collaboration, and continuous investment in national defense to address evolving security challenges.

Keywords: Defense Strategy, National Security, IKN

Introduction

Indonesia is a vast country with significant development potential, not only in terms of human resources but also in its abundant natural resources. The nation possesses a wide range of biological and non-biological resources. With 13,466 islands, Indonesia holds the title of the country with the most islands in the world, covering a land area of 1,919,440 km² and a maritime area of 3,273,810 km². The vast, fertile land contributes to Indonesia's reputation as an agricultural nation, ideal for farming, where various plants grow abundantly. Additionally, Indonesia is home to one of the world's most renowned ecological areas, often referred to as the "lungs of the world." Beneath its land, Indonesia is also rich in natural treasures, including gold, diamonds, coal, petroleum, nickel, natural gas, and other valuable minerals.

National development refers to the collective efforts of all sectors of the nation to achieve the objective of establishing the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). The development path is guided by an ideological foundation rooted in the Proclamation of Independence, Pancasila, and the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution. These principles not only affirm Indonesia's identity and sovereignty but also provide the philosophical basis for the formulation of comprehensive defense strategies aimed at safeguarding the nation's diverse population and resources. This foundational framework becomes particularly relevant when considering the security implications of relocating the capital city, ensuring alignment with Indonesia's core values of unity and sovereignty.

The administration of the government cannot be the responsibility of a single entity but must involve multiple parties engaged in regional governance. These include state institutions across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of power. As such, effective coordination between governmental institutions is crucial to avoid miscommunication, which could lead to inefficiencies in governance and hinder the achievement of established objectives or compliance with mutually agreed-upon regulations. Coordination is a vital organizational activity that ensures members of an institution operate according to established rules, reducing the risk of miscommunication and ensuring that all activities are carried out in alignment with the organization's goals and agreements.

According to a study conducted by the Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas, Jakarta is no longer considered a sustainable location to maintain its status as the capital of the nation. Data indicates that Jakarta's population density is on the rise, positioning it as the ninth most populous city globally, and it faces numerous challenges, including vulnerability to flooding and severe air pollution. Several factors contribute to the decision to relocate the capital. In the data of Bappenas (2021), the rationale includes Jakarta's high population and extensive commuting times. The average commuting time of 2–3 hours per trip, or 4–5 hours for a round trip, is a significant factor. Additionally, congestion exacerbates air pollution levels. Another critical issue is flooding, with

approximately 50% of Jakarta's area being at risk, having a flood safety level of less than 10 years. Moreover, Jakarta is susceptible to volcanic hazards (e.g., Krakatau), as well as the potential for megathrust earthquakes and tsunamis in the West Java and Sunda Strait regions, in addition to seismic activity along the Baribis Fault, Lembang Fault, and Cimandiri Fault. Between 2007 and 2017, the city experienced a land subsidence of 35–50 cm.

The relocation of a capital city is often driven by three main factors: political, socioeconomic, and physical considerations (Rukmana, 2020). In such a decision-making process, it is also crucial to assess potential security risks or threats that could impact the new location. In this context, capital security typically refers to the strategic role of the capital as the central hub of a nation, which in turn requires a comprehensive security framework to ensure the protection of all its components.

The global security landscape shows that future warfare will primarily manifest in types: counter-terror in irregular warfare (Koduvayur et al, nd), gray zone (Jensen, 2019), asymmetric and high intensity war with hybrid warfare (NATO, 2024). However, a critical concern is that conflict escalation in these domains could impact several points of global tension in proximity to Indonesia, particularly near the planned Indonesian Capital City (IKN) development. Given the capital city's vital role in maintaining national continuity, capital defense must be strengthened with capabilities designed to counter major threats in future conflicts.

The relocation of the capital to IKN should have taken into account various potential threats in order to develop an appropriate defense strategy to counter them. This paper aims to offer several ideas regarding the strategic measures that should be prioritized by the government in developing a defense system for IKN.

Research Methods

This qualitative research underscores specific methodological frameworks that facilitate the exploration and enhancement of understanding regarding the relationships between individuals or groups within the context of social or humanitarian issues. This approach advocates for the use of diverse media to collect and analyze research subjects, not only offering a comprehensive overview of relational patterns between relevant entities but also addressing research questions and critically assessing the significance of the research subjects in solving existing problems.

Moreover, research employing this qualitative methodology is characterized by its dynamic nature, as it incorporates open-ended inquiries and utilizes a variety of data collection techniques, including interviews, observations, document analysis, and audio-visual materials. The resulting data presentation, typically conveyed through written interpretations, reflects an in-depth analysis of specific relational patterns or thematic constructs. This rigorous qualitative data analysis

process ultimately ensures that the research effectively responds to the problem formulation posed in the study.

Results and Discussion

The establishment of the Nusantara as new Indonesian National Capital (IKN) in East Kalimantan, encompassing the North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara regencies, is being driven by direct policy directives from President Joko Widodo. The primary objectives behind the IKN relocation include realizing the Vision 2045 goal of positioning Indonesia as a developed nation, establishing a capital that reflects the nation's identity, and shifting the development focus from Java-centric to Indonesia-centric. Java has long been the focal point of economic development, owing largely to its proximity to Jakarta, the nation's capital. This centralization of development on Java has contributed to high population density, as people migrate to the island in search of employment and to take advantage of its infrastructure and facilities.

The relocation of IKN carries significant implications for the nation's strategic defense, particularly in relation to the concept of the "center of gravity" (Strange and Iron, 2004). Consequently, there is a need to formulate a comprehensive National Defense System, which integrates both systems and installations. The defense of IKN will be a crucial component of the broader national defense strategy, grounded in the total defense concept, which emphasizes an integrated approach encompassing deterrence, active defense, and multi-layered defense strategies.

The defense of IKN will be structured across three distinct defensive zones:

1. Buffer Zone: A region with the capability for offensive deterrence (covering areas such as the southern Philippines and the northern Natuna Sea).
2. Main Defense Zone: A region capable of conducting counter-offensive operations.
3. Resistance Zone: A designated area for protracted warfare, primarily focused on guerrilla tactics.

This layered defense strategy is inspired by the successful defense models of countries like Israel (Said, 2002) and Switzerland (Spillmann, 1986) which have implemented multi-tiered defense systems to secure their territories. The application of a similar defense structure for IKN would require extensive coordination between military branches and intelligence agencies to ensure seamless integration and efficacy across all defense zones. To support the layered defense strategy, several infrastructure development strategies are needed, particularly in anticipation of increasingly sophisticated defense systems in the future. Below are some ideas that can be considered for this purpose.

1. Formation of the Military District Command (KODIM) Nusantara

Given the complex risks of conflict escalation, the location of the future IKN (Indonesian National Capital) poses a potential risk of exacerbating regional conflicts. According to Strange & Iron (2004), "on the strategic level, centers of gravity might include a military force, an alliance, a set of critical capabilities or functions, or national strategy itself." For them, site selection is an essential element of ensuring security and maintaining territorial integrity, meaning the relocation of the capital must account for non-security issues that could be politicized and subsequently 'securitized' by external actors.

A key security concern for Indonesia is the ongoing South China Sea conflict, which continues to intensify as China bolsters its defense posture. Simultaneously, the United States has augmented its presence in the region by constructing new military bases in Palawan, Negros, Luzon (Philippines), Okinawa, and Guam. Other points of tension, including Taiwan and the Pacific, are geographically close to Indonesia. If tensions escalate in these areas, both Indonesia and IKN will likely be significantly affected. As a central hub for regional shipping and logistics, IKN will likely become a key deployment route for conflicting parties, increasing its vulnerability during regional military escalations.

As a result of these factors, IKN's defense capabilities are viewed as particularly vulnerable to external threats. Historically, IKN's location was a key entry point for Japanese military infiltration during the Pacific War (World War II). Furthermore, the IKN region lies within the operational range of three U.S. military capabilities: strategic bombers, jet fighters, and Chinese bombers. Consequently, land defense in IKN must focus on repelling potential enemy attacks. The implementation of A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial) capabilities is crucial to strengthening IKN's defense against aggression, following strategies similar to those employed by Singapore and other nations with vulnerable geographic positions.

The need for a dedicated Military District Command for Nusantara (KODIM Nusantara) arises from the various security concerns linked to IKN's location in East Kalimantan. These concerns include proximity to the Malaysian border (approximately 200 kilometers), vulnerability along ALKI II (Indonesia Sea Lane of Communication II) through the Sulawesi Strait (Judhariksawan and Daud, 2023), potential ethnic and religious conflicts, terrorism threats, and natural disasters such as forest and land fires. If the existing Military Command VI/Mulawarman were to take on the responsibility of securing the new capital, it would be insufficient due to its already demanding scope of duties. Presently, Kodam VI/Mulawarman oversees a vast area, including East Kalimantan, South Kalimantan, and North Kalimantan, which covers 24,008,600 hectares, including a 1,038 km border with Malaysia, managed by 52 border posts. This command is

already tasked with year-round border security, protection of strategic national assets, forest fire mitigation, and addressing limited infrastructure challenges.

Given these considerations, the defense strategy for IKN should focus on assessing threats surrounding the territory, recognizing the challenges facing Kodam VI/Mulawarman, and drawing on lessons learned from Kodam Jaya as a framework for enhancing the Indonesian Army's defense capacity. The following strategic recommendations are proposed:

1. Formation of a Special Military Command for the Capital City;
2. Strengthening the IKN Buffer Units;
3. Relocation of Headquarters and Support Units to IKN.

In line with these strategies, the Indonesian Army's operational strength can be optimized through the establishment of specialized units for deployment in IKN, such as Mechanized Infantry (Yonif), Cavalry (Yonkav), Anti-Aircraft Artillery (Yonarhanud), Combat Engineers (Yonzipur), Type A Military District Command (Kodim), and Type A Military Sub-District Command (Koramin) (4 units). Once the Special Military Command for IKN is formed, two additional military commands (Kodam XII Tanjungpura – Central Kalimantan, and Kodam VI Mulawarman – covering South Kalimantan, East Kalimantan, and North Kalimantan) would function as buffer units, providing depth in defense against external military and armed threats to the IKN region.

2. Development of Cybersecurity Infrastructure

The development of IKN is currently progressing into the era of Society 5.0 (H-UTokyo Lab., 2018), which introduces new values and services that promise to enhance the quality of life for all. However, threats to national security are no longer limited to traditional military sources; they now include non-military and hybrid threats. One of the most significant non-military and hybrid threats is cyberspace (Thiele, 2020). Thus, it is critical for the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), as the frontline defense force in national security, to maintain control over cyberspace. Cybersecurity is vital for strengthening the flow of information, which is increasingly central to achieving strategic advantages in global competition, including information warfare. Both state and non-state actors are engaged in a fierce battle for control over information, which is processed and converted into power.

In an era where warfare extends beyond physical boundaries, the risk of cyberattacks presents a major threat to IKN. Ensuring the security of cyberspace must become a priority, with an integrated cyber defense infrastructure that combines technological, human, and policy-based measures to protect national security from both state and non-state actors.

The relocation of IKN offers a unique opportunity to design and implement cutting-edge cybersecurity infrastructure from the ground up. As Indonesia develops this 'smart capital city' in the era of Industry 4.0, the government must recognize that future security threats will increasingly materialize in cyberspace. For IKN, this necessitates the establishment of a dedicated Cyber Command Center to protect critical digital infrastructure, including government communication systems, smart city operations, and digital public services. This center should be integrated with the proposed three-layered physical defense strategy, creating a comprehensive security framework that addresses both conventional and digital threats.

Cybersecurity strategies for IKN must ensure the availability of data when needed, guarantee data integrity, and protect data confidentiality. These measures are crucial for supporting operational readiness (Ops OMP and OMSP - K4SIPP), addressing cyber warfare, and conducting cyber intelligence operations. The proposed topology for constructing an integrated, secure network for IKN's Kodam involves the revitalization of the Kodam Puskodal, the creation of the Indonesian National Data Link (INDL), and the integration of the TNI Pusdalop with the forces' Puskodal (Army, Navy, Air Force, Koopsudnas), alongside the Integrated Surveillance Monitoring System (ISMS - Natuna).

From a legal perspective, it is essential to approach these issues carefully, considering the importance of facts and evidence as guiding principles. Public decision-making must avoid hasty judgments. Thorough investigation and evidence-based analysis are essential to ensure informed decisions, avoiding repetition of past mistakes. Additionally, the law must evolve to align with emerging cybersecurity challenges, as its current substance may not be robust enough to address evolving threats.

Indonesia's cybersecurity must be bolstered to protect confidential state documents and data. This cannot be overlooked, as cyber threats pose a significant risk to national security. Cybercrime has become a global focal point, with criminal activities continuing to rise as technology develops (UNODC, 2013; Budhijanto, 2022; ITU, 2024)

Network security and network defense are closely intertwined, both aiming to preserve the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic information and systems. Network security is one form of network defense, which can be executed both actively and passively. Passive defense can fall under the scope of network security. Network security and defense, whether executed by individuals, organizations, or nations, are designed to protect vital information and systems, ensuring national security and the continuity of critical public services. Private entities also have a stake in securing their information and systems in accordance with their respective interests.

One of the primary challenges in safeguarding vital information and electronic systems is the risk of cyber warfare, which is often invisible. Cyberwarfare can be initiated by anonymous actors or groups, not necessarily

representing any single nation (Winterfeld and Andress, 2012). As such, governments must collaborate to develop a National Cybersecurity and Cyber Defense Strategy. A comprehensive plan, involving concrete actions to prevent, address, and respond to cyberattacks, should include:

1. Identification and assessment of threats and vulnerabilities in Indonesia's strategic electronic infrastructure.
2. Resource management (particularly personnel, technology, and research & development) to enhance cybersecurity and cyber defense capabilities.
3. Development and implementation of universal cybersecurity and cyber defense systems.
4. Prioritization of improvements to critical infrastructure systems.

The extensive adoption of internet-based communication has become a critical necessity for a large segment of the population in Indonesia. The swift progress in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has fundamentally transformed network structures, underscoring the imperative for resilient and forward-looking cybersecurity frameworks.

3. Capabilities of Natural Resources and Challenges

The relocation of the national capital cannot be dissociated from comprehensive development strategies designed to address social, economic, environmental conditions, and future development challenges. The establishment of a new governmental center necessitates consideration of environmental factors, such as land cover, biodiversity preservation, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. This development must align with the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and the Indonesia's Forestry and Other Land Use (FoLU) Net Sink 2030 plans (KLHK, 2022; Digest and Madani, nd).

East Kalimantan has committed to supporting the achievement of the national emission reduction targets as outlined in the NDC document. It is anticipated that the new capital will further bolster the province's efforts to meet these targets. However, constructing the new center of government must take into account socio-cultural and environmental repercussions. Key environmental issues requiring attention include alterations in water and climate management, disruptions to flora and fauna habitats and biodiversity, and escalating pollution and environmental degradation, such as forest and land fires, declining water quality in rivers and seas, and expanding mining activities.

Indonesia's rich diversity presents both opportunities and challenges. The country is home to the world's largest Muslim population, surpassing the total Muslim population of the Middle East. Additionally, Indonesia's Christian population exceeds that of Australia and New Zealand, and the Hindu population is

three times the size of the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Geographically, Indonesia consists of over 17,000 islands, with Kalimantan alone being twice the size of the entire United Kingdom. Linguistically, the country is characterized by a multitude of native languages, far exceeding the population of Belgium, which faces its own challenges in governance due to language-related disputes. Ethnically, Indonesia has a larger Chinese population than Singapore or Hong Kong, alongside the largest Melanesian population in the world. Economically, the nation displays a stark contrast between affluent groups with GDPs exceeding USD 10,000, comparable to Poland, and communities still engaged in traditional hunting and gathering, equivalent to the population of Timor Leste.

This diversity increases the potential for complex social conflicts. According to census data, Indonesia is home to approximately 1,340 tribes, 300 ethnicities, and 1,200 languages, with six officially recognized religions (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010). This heterogeneity can serve as a source of conflict, as demonstrated by the 525 social conflicts recorded in 2016, of which 94 were managed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2017).

Indonesia possesses significant natural resource capabilities that can support the relocation of the national capital; however, this potential must be carefully weighed against the challenges that must also be addressed to ensure sustainable development and stability. The construction of the IKN in East Kalimantan presents several challenges arising from Indonesia's unique and diverse characteristics. Reaching consensus on development plans and progress for the new capital is not a straightforward task. Geographically, the relocation of the capital to East Kalimantan offers a central position within the archipelago, which benefits the nation. However, from a security perspective, the region's proximity to Malaysia's land border and maritime boundaries with several countries introduces significant challenges, increasing the complexity of defense planning. Consequently, a strategic focus on strengthening the Nusantara Regional Military Command is deemed essential to safeguard the Republic of Indonesia's territory.

In terms of political will, post-President Jokowi, no single party is likely to dominate, leading to a more balanced distribution of power. The government, in this context, will be in a weaker position compared to the era under President Jokowi. The role and positioning of the military will therefore require reassessment. In this context, the establishment of a National Security Council, directly led by the President as Head of State, is recommended. This body would be tasked with formulating interagency strategies to address social conflicts and other threats.

The creation of the National Security Council, under the President's leadership, represents a critical step toward securing Indonesia's territorial integrity, particularly in relation to external threats such as terrorism and cybercrime. In particular, securing the IKN is crucial, given its proximity to two neighboring countries and its location near the South China Sea, a region marked by territorial disputes. In addition to external threats, there is a need to consider the potential for internal conflicts, especially considering the large-scale population

movement during the relocation of the capital, with people from various provinces and ethnicities seeking employment. The formation of the Security Council could collaborate with the TNI and POLRI (National Police), as well as other institutions, to ensure a coordinated response to these challenges.

Conclusion

The relocation of Indonesia's capital to East Kalimantan offers both strategic opportunities and significant challenges, particularly in terms of national defense and cybersecurity. The capital's location in North Penajam Paser and Kutai Kartanegara provides advantages for promoting more balanced national development. However, its proximity to international borders and crucial maritime routes necessitates comprehensive security planning. The proposed three-layered defense strategy must be adapted to East Kalimantan's unique geographical features, integrating physical and cyber defense capabilities to safeguard this critical national asset.

To address the risks associated with both conventional military threats and emerging hybrid threats, Indonesia must prioritize a multi-faceted defense strategy. This strategy should incorporate robust cybersecurity infrastructure, regional collaboration, and continuous investment in national defense. As hybrid threats, particularly in cyberspace, become increasingly prominent, the Indonesian government must enhance its defense capabilities to address the evolving nature of national security challenges.

The establishment of the new capital in East Kalimantan, as part of Indonesia's Vision 2045 to transition to a developed nation, represents a significant step in shifting the country's development focus from Java-centric to a more equitable Indonesia-centric approach. However, alongside these ambitions, the development of government infrastructure must account for socio-cultural and environmental considerations. Key issues include changes in water and climate management, disruptions to ecosystems, and environmental degradation, including deforestation, water pollution, and expanding mining activities, all of which must be carefully managed to ensure sustainable progress.***

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