

# The Use of Technology as the Indonesia's Strategy to Counter China's Gray Zone Operations in the North Natuna Sea

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## ABSTRACT

Ever since the end of World War II, the Republic of China (ROC), led by the Kuomintang Party and continued by the People's Republic of China (PRC) led by the Communist Party, with its Eleven Dash Line (EDL), has claimed almost 90% of the South China Sea (SCS) waters, including the Spratly Islands, Paracel Islands, and all sea structures in that area. In 1953, the EDL was renamed to the Nine Dash Line (NDL) because China gave the area of the Tonkin Gulf to North Vietnam, led by Ho Chi Minh, which was still at war against the French and South Vietnam. China's NDL claim has overlapped with Brunei's claim, specifically Louisa Reef located on its continental shelf, Malaysia's claim covering a portion of SCS in northern Kalimantan (Borneo), which includes at least 12 maritime structures in the Spratly Islands, among others, the coral reefs Swallow, Adraiser, and Marivelles. Additionally, the Philippines' claim includes the northernmost part of the Spratly Islands and Scarborough Shoal, known as Kalayaan in the Philippines. Vietnam's claim encompasses the Paracel and Spratly Islands, including 25 rock and sand formations and islands such as Spratly Island, Namyit Island, and Barque Canada Reef. The overlapping claims, which also occurred between Brunei and Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines, and Malaysia and Vietnam, have increased tension and incidents in the SCS, particularly between the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam against China due to China's actions forcefully imposing its claim. This has made the situation more complex and fragile, leading the international community to term the overlapping claims as the South China Sea (SCS) Dispute. Indonesia has no claim in the SCS, and no other country has a claim over Indonesia. However, in 2009, when China registered its new map of NDL claim with the United Nations (UN), it included part of Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the North Natuna Sea (NNS). The UN rejected this claim since it was not based on international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982). Indonesia firmly denied that claim as it goes against Indonesia's law and UNCLOS 1982. Due to increasing Chinese actions in imposing its claim on part of the IEEZ in the NNS, including Gray Zone Operations (GZO) maneuvers, Indonesia has risen to defend its sovereign rights in the NNS. According to UNCLOS 1982, in the IEEZ at the NNS, as a coastal state, Indonesia "has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living resources, of the waters superjacent to the sea-bed and off the sea bed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone such as the production of energy from water, currents, and winds" (Article 56; 1 a). To overcome any disturbance and threat toward Indonesia's sovereign rights in its EEZ in the NNS, Indonesia needs to convince China to nullify its IEEZ NNS' claim. Indonesia needs to launch total diplomacy toward China, including cultural diplomacy, economic diplomacy, and defense diplomacy combined with and supported by defense capability. In this regard, Indonesia should increase its defense capability, particularly in the NNS, to guard the works, personnel, and equipment of the activities of natural resources exploration and exploitation. The enlargement of defense capability, including the quality and quantity of equipment and weaponry such as patrol boats, troopships, warships, hunter jets, fighter jets, radar systems, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), should be done by optimizing the use of advanced technology. Determining the performance strategy, as well as the use of technology and interoperability systems in developing the defense equipment platform, information and communications technology such as Big Data and Data Links, can be a solution to increase and integrate the defense system, capability, and operational implementation. In this case, particularly by the Indonesia Navy and Air Force, by integrating various defense equipment owned and used. This study provides a comprehensive analysis of Indonesia's strategy to counter China's Gray Zone Operations in the North Natuna Sea.

**Keywords:** Sovereign Rights, Exclusive Economic Zone, North Natuna Sea, Gray Zone Operations, Use of Technology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On December 1, 2021, the press reported that the People's Republic of China (PRC or China) protested and demanded Indonesia to stop its oil and natural gas drilling in the North Natuna Sea. In line with its new map of the Nine Dash Line (NDL), China, for the first time, claimed Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Natuna Sea. This claim, registered in 2009 but denied by the United Nations (UN), asserted that the drilling site is within its territory, and Indonesia must halt it. Indonesia straightforwardly rejected China's protest and continued drilling because, for Indonesia, the oil and natural gas drilling site is in the Tuna Block, which is around 140 nautical miles from the Natuna baseline, falling inside its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) (Strangio, 2021).

According to Sebastian Strangio, China has been protesting Indonesia's oil and natural gas drilling in the North Natuna Sea since the end of June 2021. The standoff started in late June when the Noble Clyde Boudreaux, a semi-submersible rig, arrived and started drilling two appraisal wells in Indonesia's Tuna Block, situated about 140 nautical miles north of Natuna (Strangio, Ibid). Strangio continued that China replied by dispatching patrol boats to approach the rig, while Indonesia promptly dispatched the Indonesian Coast Guard patrol boat Dana Island, the first of Indonesia's Coast Guard and Navy ships that have undertaken reconnaissance of Chinese ships in those seas from the outset.

Among several articles about overlapping claims in the South China Sea (SCS), the writings of Peter Cobus, Carol Guensburg, and Elizabeth Arrott, as reported by voanews.com in 2020, can clearly describe the situation. Right after gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1984, Brunei claimed Louisa Reef, part of the Spratly Islands, since Louisa Reef is located on Brunei's continental shelf. Although together with Louisa Reef, Bombay Castle, Owen Shoal, and Rifleman Bank are also located in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Brunei, it claims only Louisa Reef, which is also claimed by China and Vietnam. The Philippines claims the northeastern portion of the Spratly Islands, known as Kalayaan in the Philippines, Scarborough Shoal, Thifu Island, West York Island, Northeast Cay, Loaita Cay, Lankiam Cay, Flat Island, Nanshan Island, Second Thomas Shoal, and Commodore Reef.

Malaysia claims at least 12 maritime structures in the Spratly Islands, including Amboyna Cay, Barque Canada Reef, Commodore Reef, Rizal Reef, Swallow Reef, Ardasier Reef, Erica Reef, Mariveles Reef, and Investigator Reef. Vietnam claims at least 25 maritime structures in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, including Namyit Island, Sin Cowe

Island, Amboyna Island, Sand Cay, West Reef, Central Reef, East Reef, Bombay Castle, Barque Canada Reef, Pearson Reef, Alison Reef, Cornwallis South Reef, Tennent Reef, Lansdowne Reef, Collins Reef, Sin Cowe Island, Union Reefs, Discovery Great Reef, Petley Reef.

China has made the most claims, asserting jurisdiction over waters bordering the SCS and sovereignty over islands throughout the SCS (Darmawan, 2018), including the Spratly Islands (Nansha), Paracel Islands (Xisha), Pratas Islands (Dongsha), and Macclesfield Bank (Zhongsha Islands), as well as 85.7% of the SCS waters. In the Paracel Islands, the PRC controls Woody Island, Lincoln Island, Money Island, Pattle Island, and Triton Island (McBeth, 2019); in the Spratly Islands, Fiery Cross Reef, Subi Reef, Mischief Reef, Johnson South Reef, Gaven Reef, Hughes Reef, and Cuarteron Reef; and in 2012, China forcibly seized Scarborough Shoal. Additionally, overlapping claims in the South China Sea have also occurred between Brunei and Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines, and Malaysia and Vietnam.

The South China Sea (SCS) is the geopolitical and geo-economic heart of many countries, and any changes in international politics and the emergence of threats will affect ASEAN. The ability of military equipment and technology has become part of the strategic plan of each country in responding to global environmental changes. At a minimum, countries must equalize their military technology with neighboring countries that share a border with Indonesia (Sembiring et al., 2023). One example of the use of technology to support Indonesia's maritime defense in the SCS can be seen from the Indonesian Defense Minister's policy in August 2020, which allowed the Indonesian Coast Guard (BAKAMLA) to use firearms to secure the sea. The Coast Guard's ships have added weapon systems, where they were previously only using rubber bullets and are now allowed to use 12.7 mm, 5.56 mm, and 30 mm caliber guns (Sembiring et al., 2023).

Ever since Indonesia refused China's Nine Dash Line (NDL) claim on Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the North Natuna Sea, guarded by its armed China Coast Guard (CCG), China has been increasing its illegal fishing and research activities in Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. In fact, during the last couple of years, it has been detected that China has several times maneuvered with its Gray Zone Operation (GZO) tactics in Indonesia's jurisdiction waters to impose its NDL claim on Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea, claiming that traditionally, the region has served as their fishermen's traditional fishing field. Because it is not recognized by international law, particularly the UNCLOS 1982, the UN disallowed China's registration of its updated NDL map in 2009, which included

Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNCLOS 1982, as a coastal state, in its exclusive economic zone, Indonesia has "sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring and exploiting, conserving and managing the natural resources, whether living or non-living, of the waters superjacent to the sea-bed and its subsoil, and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds" (Article 56, clause 1a). As a coastal state, in its EEZ, Indonesia also has "jurisdiction as provided for in the relevant provisions of this Convention with regard to: (i) the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations and structures; (ii) marine scientific research; (iii) the protection and preservation of the marine environment" (Article 56, clause a, b).

In addition, UNCLOS 1982 also determines that, in exercising their rights and performing their duties under this Convention in the exclusive economic zone, "States shall have due regard to the rights and duties of the coastal state and shall comply with the laws and regulations adopted by the coastal state in accordance with the provisions of this Convention and other rules of international law in so far as they are not incompatible with this Part" (Article 58, clause 3). While Indonesia has been trying to uphold its sovereign rights in its EEZ, including in the North Natuna Sea, China, on the other hand, keeps imposing its Nine Dash Line (NDL) claim on that area by continuously sending its fishing and research ships guarded by its China Coast Guard (CCG) and not rarely by PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) ships. This is a kind of Gray Zone Operation (GZO) maneuver, which, according to Yamaguchi Shinji (2003), involves Chinese fishing boats thought to be PLAN ships, CCG vessels, and maritime militia vessels, all participating in various activities in the South China Sea, particularly with the establishment of artificial islands in the Spratly Islands since the middle of 2010. Yamaguchi Shinji continued that the PLAN, CCG, and the maritime militia have been pressing their rights and interests to assert its maritime claims and interests in the South China Sea to highlight China's presence in the region and through CCG crackdowns and maritime militia intimidation to discourage neighboring nations from using resources in the EEZ (Yamaguchi Shinji, et al., 2023).

It is quite clear that China's GZO strategy encompasses forwarding its fishermen, most of whom are part of the maritime militia, guarded by armed CCG, while its PLAN stands by in its naval base, ready to act if needed. As written by Oliver A. Jeremy (2019), "China's maritime

militia is a gray zone force that operates below the threshold of war. Its activities thrive on ambiguity and, as a result, are an asymmetric force multiplier given the sheer volume of vessels that can be impressed into service" (Oliver A. Jeremy, 2019).

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Multiple conflicts, including armed ones, have occurred in the South China Sea, particularly between China and the Philippines; Malaysia and China; and between Vietnam and the China, which have increased in both quality and quantity to the point that the international community refers to the conflict as the South China Sea Dispute (SCS Dispute). For the purpose to settle the overlapping claims in the SCS, Brunei and Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines, and Vietnam and Malaysia have had bilateral conversations over the past few decades. The results of these discussions haven't shown many progresses but meeting and discussion among these fellow ASEAN member countries are still going on. On the other hand, these ASEAN claimant states which favor multilateral dialog among the SCS Dispute claimant states and are endeavoring to discuss the issue in the ASEAN-China regular meetings, which China opposes them because China PRC prefers bilateral discussions. It is not difficult to analyze that China believe that it has quite upper hand to certain ASEAN countries to include those who are SCS claimant state.

Trying to find out a solution on the South China Sea Dispute, on November 2002, the governments of ASEAN countries and the PRC met in Phnom Penh and gave birth to the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (SCS DOC). The essence of which was to seek to peacefully resolve any disputes between ASEAN countries and the PRC to include SCS Dispute to produce peaceful and durable solutions through dialogue by affirming commitment to the UNCLOS, 1982 (UNCLOS, 1982), the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The SCS DOC also emphasized the commitment of the governments of ASEAN countries and the PRC to continue building mutual trust based on equality in the South China Sea (SCS), which will further promote regional peace and stability. Several years after the SCS DOC was signed, relations and cooperation between ASEAN countries and China have improved. In his article; Whither ASEAN-China COC in the South China Sea? in the book; Indonesian Maritime Geopolitics in The Indo-Pacific Region, Octavian, Amarulla writes; *A few years after the DOC signing, ASEAN and the China were able to develop their economic and political relations in a peaceful environment due to China's cooperative approach. Nevertheless, some experts did not share the same notion*

and believed during this period China immediately returned to its old bilateral ways. (Octavia A, 2022)

The presence of the SCS DOD helped promote cooperation between ASEAN nations and China, but in regards to the SCS Disputes it did not alleviate tensions, but rather escalated them. Since 2002, right after the Phnom Penh Meeting, ASEAN nations have tried to construct a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (SCS COC), as assigned by the SCS DOC. However, after more than 20 years the SCS COC has not yet been produced. It appears that the PRC is reluctant to give birth to a COC that will contain a detailed guideline for solving the SCS Dispute. China has opted for direct bilateral negotiations with a SCS claimant-state from the start and does not like the SCS Dispute being brought to a multilateral forum such as ASEAN for discussions and negotiations.

Indonesia is not a claimant state in the South China Sea Dispute, it has no any single claim on other state's area nor has other state on Indonesia's. China's claim on Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea is inextricable from the allure of the North Natuna Sea's natural riches. In her article, Potensi Besar Kekayaan Laut Natuna (The Great Potential Wealth of Natuna Sea), Angela D writes that data studied from 2011 on the identification of the potential for marine and fishery resources in the province of Riau Islands demonstrates,

*The fishery potential of the Natuna Sea reached 504,212,85 tons, according to researchers. This number represents nearly half the potential of the Republic of Indonesia's Fisheries Management Area, which is 1,143,343 tons per year. Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources data indicates that the East North Natuna Sea Block stores a volume of gas in place or Initial Gas in Place of 222 trillion cubic feet (tcf), proved gas reserves of 46 tcf, and a prospective oil content of 36 million barrels of oil.*" (Angela, D. 2021).

Since 2016, as long as it can be detected, China has been increasing its effort to impose its NDL claim on Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea by sending its fish ship, CCG and research ships entering Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea doing activities of fishing and research without Indonesian government permission or any international agreement with Indonesia. In 2016 China's ships entering Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea and catching fish without any permission from Indonesia's government. On March 19, 2016, Hui 11, a patrol ship of Indonesia's Marine and Fisheries Ministry, caught Hwai Fey, a China's fishing ship which was illegally catching fish in Indonesian EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. In May 2016, Gui Bei Yu 27088, a China's fishing ship, guarded by its coastguard entering Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna

Sea and catching fish without Indonesian permission. On June 17, 2016, these ships leaving the North Natuna Sea after being chased and shot by Indonesia's Navy ship, KRI Oswald Siahaan. On June 17<sup>th</sup>. 2016, a dozen of China's fishing ships which were illegally catching fish in the Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea, were outcast by an Indonesia's Navy ship KRI Imam Bonjol and three Indonesian coastguardships. (IGB Dharma Agastia, CSIS & JSTOR. 2022).

In December 2019 a China's fishing ship which is guarded by a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), China's frigate, entering and catching fish in the North Natuna Sea without permission from Indonesian authority. In January 2020, 50 China's fishing ships which were guarded by its coast guard ships entering and illegally catching fish in the Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. Those ships only left the North Natuna Sea after Indonesian Navy and Air Force were prepared for possible escalation, and Indonesian Foreign Ministry protested the China's government. (Agastia, Dharma. CSIS & JSTOR. 2020). In January 2021, China's research ship- Xiang Yang Hong 03- sailed cross Indonesia's EEZ, territorial sea and islands waters along Sunda Strait up to the North Natuna Sea while turning off three times its Automatic Identification System (AIS). During August-October 2021, 50 CCG, patrol and research ships, illegally operated in the North Natuna Sea including Hai Yang Di Zhi, a research ship, which is doing research without any permission. Between January-October 2022, 105 patrol, research and law enforcer ships operated in Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea without permission. (CNN Indonesia. 2022).

In August 2022 guarded by two CCG, several fishing ships entering the North Natuna Sea and catching fish there without permission and at the same time outcast Indonesia's traditional fishermen by cutting their boats' bow. This was a brutal action and a tactic of Gray Zone Operations which was suspected has been done by China quite a number of times in Indonesia's water and jurisdiction area including in the North Natuna Sea before. (Marsetio, Kompas September, 2022). In January-February 2023. CCG 5901 and CCG 5302 had illegally entered and operated in the North Natuna Sea.

Indonesia should be ready to face and overcome all the violations in the EEZ of the NNS particularly China's ones which can develop to a real threat by increasing its defense capability particularly weaponry and equipment system which using the advanced technology, in the NNS. As written by Sumariyanto & Hutauruk, (2021) that to overcome military threat in the SCS and to protect National Vital Object (Obvitnas) in the area which is potentially threatened, the defense capability needs to be strengthened

by procuring Rocket Artillery Mortar (RAM), Anti-Radiation Missile, Cruise Missiles, Ballistic Missiles, Drones, Fighter Aircraft. based on Presidential Decree no. 63/2004. Sectors that can be categorized as a National Vital Object (Obvitnas) are telecommunications, transportation (land, sea and air), financial services and banking, electricity, oil and gas (oil & gas), water supply clean, emergency service units/ emergency services (such as home sick, police and fire fire), and activity offices government (including headquarters military). (Sumariyanto & Hutauruk, 2021).

Concerning the technology use, the military forces worldwide use 12.7 mm caliber firearms as anti-material and anti-personnel weapons. This firearm has tremendous destructive power, making it possible to quickly and effectively destroy vehicles and protection structures. Additionally, the 12.7 mm caliber firearm is also used for long-range shooting and penetrating construction materials.

However, due to the enormous destructive power of the 12.7 mm caliber firearm, its use must be carried out carefully and only on targets that require significant shooting force. This firearm also has a significant effect on the surrounding environment, as the sound and dust resulting from the bullet's explosion can cause hearing and health disturbances. The 30 mm gun can also be used as a ship defense weapon or anti-aircraft weapon to repel enemy attacks. A 30 mm gun on a ship is usually mounted on the deck and equipped with sophisticated shooting control systems, such as radar and automatic tracking systems. A 30 mm gun on a ship is usually used to fire tracer bullets (with visible light) and explosive bullets capable of penetrating the ship's hull or attacking airborne targets. This weapon is usually used to attack enemy ships, aircraft, and cruise missiles fired by enemy aircraft (Sembiring, et.al., 2023. opcit).

Moreover, the North Natuna Sea area is currently lacking facilities to accommodate a number of big plane. The Navy has sent seven warships to the Natuna waters of the month then to go around and "keep sovereignty", the Navy sent 14 warships to monitor the southern of South China Sea. Air defense sector too deployed radar in several parts of the island to carry out surveillance operations during 24 hours. In addition, Indonesia signed an agreement with Japan earlier this month to receive technology and military equipment, of which there is a large part sent for use on Natuna Island (Saragih, H.H., 2018). The exercise was carried out with the US in Batam which is 480 km from Natuna. This exercise including the use of surveillance and patrol aircraft, such as the use of aircraft P-3 Orion, which can detect ships in surface and submarine. Minister of Defense says it has spent US\$14.2 million (around Rp. 196

billion) for strengthening military bases on the Natuna Island area. However, the government denies that this reinforcement is the anticipation of increasing tensions in the SCS. Indonesian government more like to call it defense diplomacy.

Several of the maneuvers considered to be China's GZO tactics, have created incidents between China's CCG and PLAN ships and Indonesia's Coast Guard and Navy ships. With this tactic China confirms its determination in claiming Indonesian EEZ in the North Natuna Sea and shows that it is going to increase its effort to attain it, as China has been doing in threatening Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines and Brunei on their overlapping claims in the South China Sea. As Oliver, Jeremy A (2019) writes, "China's maritime militias are a gray zone force that operates below the threshold of war. Maritime Militias activities thrive on ambiguity and, as a result, are on asymmetric force multiplier given the sheer volume of vessels that can be impressed into service." (Oliver J.A.2019).

With Gray Zone Operations (GZO) strategy, China will try to get its target that is catching fish and doing research looking for natural sea resources, without launching an open warfare. With this tactic China will send fishing and research ships guarded by its Coast Guard into the Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea, while its Navy ships and Air Force fighter jets standby in their nearby bases, ready to help if needed. As has been detected by tools of Geospatial Intelligent System (GIS), China has developed Air Force and Navy bases in Woody Island and Fiery Cross Reef (used to be coral reefs) in Spratly Island, very close distance to the North Natuna Sea. As a combination of politics, economic and military strategy, the GZO strategy is decided by the highest level of China authority, as Dr. Peter Layton writes, Gray Zone Operations are implemented in a well-designed campaign plan, approved and controlled by the Communist Party of China and the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), the highest level of the PRC. (Layton P. 2021). This means that China will fight all out to reach its goal no matter what UNCLOS, 1982 and other international laws establish. The same author, Dr. Peter Layton continues that, "Chinese gray-zone activities use a variety of strategies from several fields in order to be successful. For instance, the so-called "cabbage strategy" in the South China Sea may involve oil rig platforms, commercial fishing boats, armed maritime militia, fisheries patrol boats, Coastguard ships, and various battleships of PLA Navy and PLA Air Force aircraft. These might all be used in tandem with a media campaign, radio rerouting, cyberwarfare tactics, and GPS interference." (Layton P. 2021. Ibid).

China's threat on the stability of the South China Sea

and its surrounding countries has even increased more with its decision to renew its Coast Guard Law which is already approved by its Parliament (National People's Congress=NPC), and now waiting to be issued by the President of the People's Republic of China (PRC). As reported by detik.com/f. June 22, 2022, the new China's Coast Guard Law will place the China's Coast Guard (CCG) under People's Liberation Army, PLA, the highest command of China's military. With the new law, the CCG will be given rights and authority to rummage, arrest, repel, and to shoot foreign ships which considered breaking its waters. Also, the CCG role will be increased in maritime security, enacting administrative law, crime investigation and international cooperation. According to the South China Morning Post as quoted by RMOL Lampung, the aim of giving the power and role to CCG has been, "by all means to empower the CCG for it to prevent any threat coming from foreignships on China's jurisdiction, and enable it to launch attack without any warning beforehand, and destroy any construction structure made by other country in the South China Sea waters which is claimed by China." (RMOL. Lampung. January 24, 2021). It is very clear that the empowerment of CCG, aiming to support China's Gray Zone Operations to include maneuvers in the Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea.

One other China's maneuver that meant to support its GZO is the development of ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone) on the South China Sea's airspace which is planned to be announced by China. After the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PAC), The Hague, on July 12, 2016 ruled to refuse China's claim on the Philippines' Scarborough Shoal and its waters, which is denied by China, the PRC Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Liu Zhen Min vowed, "China will develop ADIZ in the South China Sea if our security threatened." (BBC. July 13 2017).

ADIZ is not an international law, it is a national regulation which declare that both military and civil aircraft which fly in the air space of a State has to identify itself to get permission from the State. In 2013, China declared East China Sea ADIZ, which is protested by many surrounded East China Sea countries, because this ADIZ to include Senkaku/Diayou Islands which still be claimed by China and Japan, and Iedo/Suyan Reef which is still in dispute between China and South Korea. If China really declared ADIZ in the South China Sea which will cover 85 % of the air space on the SCS and its Spratly and Paracel Islands which still under dispute between China and Brunei, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, it will certainly be protested by many countries including ones in the Asia Pacific region because the SCS air space is an important world air zone which so far is a free flying zone. Although many countries in Asia will

protest the enforcement of ADIZ in the South China Sea but for Octavian, Amarulla; "It will be easier for China to deal with "violators" since most Southeast Nations have a lesser military power and have allowed themselves to become economically dependent on China. This condition means countries will lose their freedom in much of the international space of the South China Sea, to both military and civilian aircraft. It also causes danger not only for aviation but also for ships sailing in the area, especially if nearby bases are equipped with electronic warfare facilities. (Octavian, Amarulla. 2022)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Indonesia must first attempt to engage China diplomatically to uphold its sovereign rights in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in the North Natuna Sea and resist China's Gray Zone Operations maneuver. Positive relations and cooperation between the two nations should be used by Indonesia to persuade China to renounce its Nine Dash Line (NDL) claim on Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea and recognize Indonesia's sovereign rights in accordance with UNCLOS, 1982, which China has also signed and ratified. The cultural connection between the two countries and their peoples is a valuable asset to remind China of the friendship between the two nations, which has been well maintained and need not be jeopardized. Economic cooperation, which is continuing to strengthen, can be used as a bargaining position to benefit Indonesia, not the other way around. Indonesia should offer China the opportunity to invest in the work of oil and gas drilling in Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. Cooperation between Indonesia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in defense, including military exercises, officer exchange visits, study programs, and high-level defense and military official meetings, should be utilized as defense diplomacy to dissuade China from exercising its NDL claim on Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. At the same time, Indonesia needs to ensure its fishermen are well-trained, so when they are threatened or disturbed while working in the North Natuna Sea, as has happened several times before, particularly by China's Coast Guard, they are ready to respond. Additionally, the government should provide subsidies to fishermen to improve their boats and fishing equipment, which are currently below normal standards. With this, any maneuver by China's Gray Zone Operations, which always targets fishermen first, can be spontaneously repelled by well-trained and well-equipped fishermen. The increase in Indonesia's defense capability should focus on the use of advanced technology. The existence of weapon systems, as the use of technology, also increases the confidence of personnel in facing potential threats in the

North Natuna Sea. The operational use of weapons is not as easy during maritime operations. The importance of engagement rules is also emphasized here. The ship commander plays a crucial role in deciding whether to use weapons or not when a threat is found during a patrol. Engagement rules can be implemented if the ship commander is unable to give commands. The way to do this is explained by the informant, specifically, all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for using weapons, including stages, when to use them, and what to do if the ship commander is unable to give commands, which are then posted in strategic locations on the ship so that the rules can be used by all personnel. Currently, four patrol ships are operating, three of which are 80 meters in size, and one is 110 meters. All four ships already have these weapons and are actively operating in the North Natuna Sea. Increasing its defense capability, particularly in the North Natuna Sea area, which is currently below standard but should be upgraded, will be useful to avert any potential or real threat and disturbance in Indonesia's effort to uphold its sovereign rights in its EEZ in the North Natuna Sea. In order to maintain the security of operations, personnel, and equipment in its waters and jurisdiction area, especially in Indonesia's EEZ in the North Natuna Sea and in the Riau Islands province, there is an urgent need to upgrade the intelligence system, radar and sonar systems, the Coast Guard and Navy ships, as well as the personnel and troops' capabilities, with the optimal use of sophisticated technology. Increasing its defense capability in the North Natuna Sea is even more important in dealing with and countering China's Gray Zone Operations in the North Natuna Sea.

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