

# National Defense in the Resolution of Border Disputes: The Experience of Indonesia and Malaysia

## Defensa Nacional en la Resolución de Disputas Fronterizas: La Experiencia de Indonesia y Malasia

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### Abstract

The issue of national defense predominantly refers to the protection of the sovereignty of an independent state. This article addresses such aspect country's sovereignty as the inviolability of borders. The objective of this research is to investigate how the dimensions of national defense, including both military and non-military factors, contribute to the resolution of border disputes between Indonesia and Malaysia. Specifically, the study aims to explore the role of economic growth and infrastructure development in the borderlands as crucial elements in the broader context of national defense and territorial sovereignty. The methodological basis of the research constitutes a qualitative method, triangulation technique, and purposive techniques (interviews and focus group discussions). The research finds that institutions to handle problems at the border already exist, but there are still some obstacles at the technical level; for example, centers and regions have problems with their coordination. This research contributes to the field by highlighting the existence of institutions for border issue management, addressing technical obstacles, emphasizing the role of economic factors, and underscoring the importance of considering transnational crime threats. It is concluded that today when solving border issues, it is also necessary to pay attention to economic well-being and the threat of transnational crime, if the last is considered from a non-traditional security perspective.

**Keywords:** Boundaries; territorial rights; defence; economic growth; armed forces

### Resumen

La cuestión de la defensa nacional se refiere predominantemente a la protección de la soberanía de un Estado independiente. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar cómo las dimensiones de la defensa nacional, incluidos los factores militares y no militares, contribuyen a la resolución de las disputas fronterizas entre Indonesia y Malasia. En concreto, el estudio pretende explorar el papel del crecimiento económico y el desarrollo de infraestructuras en las zonas fronterizas como elementos cruciales en el contexto más amplio de la defensa nacional y la soberanía territorial. La base metodológica de la investigación se presenta desde el paradigma cualitativo, se emplea técnica de triangulación, y técnicas sociojurídicas (entrevistas y discusiones de grupos focales). La investigación concluye que, ya existen instituciones para manejar los problemas en la frontera, pero todavía hay algunos obstáculos a nivel técnico irresueltos; por ejemplo, los problemas de coordinación en centros y regiones. Esta investigación contribuye al campo destacando la existencia de instituciones para el manejo de los problemas fronterizos, abordando los obstáculos técnicos, enfatizando el papel de los factores económicos y subrayando la importancia de considerar las amenazas del crimen transnacional. Se concluye que hoy en día, a la hora de resolver cuestiones fronterizas, también es necesario prestar atención al bienestar económico y a la amenaza de la delincuencia transnacional, si se considera esta última desde una perspectiva de seguridad no tradicional.

**Palabras clave:** Frontera; derecho territorial; defensa; crecimiento económico; fuerzas armadas



## INTRODUCTION

One of the main and absolute conditions for the establishment of a country is the existence of an area whose boundaries have been clearly defined, the territory of a country is a place where national entities then live and work to achieve the shared goals they have set, therefore the territory of the state is the key core of national pride and state security. For example, the Indonesian, in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution (Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia [PPKI], 1945), have also set their goals within a sovereign state, namely inward ideals to promote general welfare and educate the nation's life.

Even though a state has been formed and has received international recognition, no one can guarantee that one day the state can lose power over some of the territory it claims. As was the case when Indonesia lost its rights to Sipadan and Ligitan island, the reason was Indonesia's defeat to Malaysia in the dispute resolution process at the International Court of Justice (Butcher, 2013; Lee, 2022). The experience of the loss of state territory is not only experienced by Indonesia, several other countries have also experienced the loss of part of their territory, for example the Palestinian state which is still fighting for the territorial integrity of their country from the annexation process by Israel (Poissonnier & David, 2017; Johnny, 2020), and the same is the case with Ukraine, which had to lose the Crimea region because it fell into the hands of Russia (Bebler, 2015; Belkin et al., 2022).

The existence of a conflict that arose as a result of the problem of border disputes occurred between two countries in Southeast Asia, namely Indonesia and Malaysia. Although the conflict in terms of border disputes has not yet led to open conflict (war), but the phenomenon of encroachment on the territory by the Malaysian state marine patrol boat, the movement of national boundary markers in Kalimantan, as well as claims to sea and island areas often offend the feelings of Indonesian nationalism which later on led to protests and demonstrations against Malaysia (Rachmawati, 2017; Siregar et al., 2019).

For Indonesia, protecting the territory of the state is one of the important issues in the conversation about national defense, when the state loses even a small part of its territory, the reaction of nationalism then emerges.

The problem of border disputes between Indonesia and Malaysia has indeed given rise to a complex situation in which in the end the two countries often ended conflicts that immediately culminated in the *status quo*, but sometimes this status determination only provides a short-term solution, because a country can then suddenly arrived and unilaterally reclaimed the disputed territory. Leaving an area in a status quo situation without good communication between the two parties to resolve the problem will only lead to additional accumulation of problems that one day can damage relations between the two countries, as later when Indonesia had to be disappointed with the release of the islands of Sipadan and Ligitan into the hands of Malaysia. The impact of the release of the two islands has reduced Indonesia's territorial boundaries, which in turn has made the issue of border disputes between the two countries even more sensitive.

On the mainland, namely on the island of Kalimantan, there are more than 2000 km of land boundaries, of which 9 points have not been agreed upon by the two countries until 2019 (Hariyanto, 2019). The absence of an agreement between the two countries in making decisions on state border points has hampered border security operations, this condition also has the potential to cause conflict again. For Indonesia, efforts to secure border areas whose points have not been agreed upon also pose a problem, because the Indonesian government's lack of courage to take risks in building infrastructure in this region continues to make economic activities and traffic of local residents still dependent on neighboring countries. Malaysia's much better infrastructure and economic growth not only make local residents around the border prefer to work in Malaysia, but also contribute to reducing their sense of nationalism (Kuntjorowati & Prastyowati, 2017; Mansyah, 2017; Siregar et al., 2019).

In the situation above, national defense in the border areas of Indonesia and Malaysia is also determined by aspects of economic growth and infrastructure, the backwardness of the border areas and the dependence of the economic needs of the surrounding community on the economic activities of neighboring countries become a problem that can have an impact on decreasing the sense of nationalism. If this condition is ignored, with a situation where the sense of nationalism of local residents continues to diminish, it could have an impact on the release of territories that are still in the status quo. As has also been stated by [Westmoreland \(2015\)](#) that nationalism is something that is formed and fluctuates, because the sense of nationalism is fluctuating, this can affect changes in the location of national boundaries. For a group of people living in border areas with conditions that do not get the full attention of the government but instead they feel that there is one advantage to the economic life in a neighboring country, it is not impossible that the status quo position will shift in favor of the Malaysian state.

On the subject matter above, the issue of national defense in the national border dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia shows a complexity, the dimension of national defense is not only determined by the presence of military forces in guarding the disputed area, but is also determined by the presence of non-military forces with a non-military approach soft. A non-military approach is needed to build a sense of nationalism, because nationalism is something that is formed and fluctuates, a sense of nationalism can be present in the soul if there is awareness and a sense of belonging.

The dimension of national defense is not only determined by the presence of military forces in guarding the disputed area but is also determined by the presence of non-military forces with a soft approach. The concept of defense with a soft approach pays attention to how the strength of the state is not only seen in its military capabilities, but also on the strength of culture, political system, openness of information to the public, education, ideology, economic model, and economic competitiveness ([Wang & Lu, 2008](#)).

The ability of the state to survive is very necessary to be able to win the —war—, according to [Nye \(2008\)](#), national defense is largely determined by a *smart power* strategy that combines *hard power* and *soft power* sources, what is interesting from this concept is that soft power is carried out through Public diplomacy also requires civil society as a force.

Defense as an effort to protect the country from external threats can not only be implemented by building or strengthening military forces, on the other hand, non-military forces also need to be built, including involving civil society and local governments. The interesting side of this theory is that the ability of non-military groups in national defense can also be carried out by encouraging the capabilities of civil society in the sectors of diplomacy, science and technology, economics, social, and morals ([Bunga & Tukan, 2019](#)). What was then stated in the theory showed that the concept of national defense had undergone a significant change, no longer only seeing threats and military power as the only ones present in the defense dimension, but also seeing other dimensions outside of threats and military.

Studies on national defense in national border disputes are indeed more dominated by traditional perspectives, where the handling is based on the deployment of military force rather than non-military forces, this is because of the concern of a country about aggression from countries that border it ([Fravel, 2007](#); [Wiegand, 2011](#); [Munandar, 2020](#)). Another study on defense issues and border conflicts looks at how international law provides justification in the form of the right for states to defend themselves by using their armed forces in dealing with border issues, especially in areas that are still in conflict or dispute status ([Khdir, 2016](#)).

Because territory has become an important identity for the existence of a nation and state, every nation and state will continue to strive to defend every inch of the boundaries of the territory they claim, any attempts at annexation and disputes regarding state boundaries will always be offensive sense of nationalism which can then lead to conflict. The urge to defend the country's territory and

avoid threats to violations of state sovereignty can be done with two kinds of approaches, namely a soft approach (such as but not limited to the international political diplomacy process) and a violent (military) approach (Hagström & Pan, 2020). The use of the two approaches in practice is considered fundamental and needs to be connected to each other, the purpose of using the two powers is to be able to create a form of productive state power.

After the second world war, where there was a revolution in war, then national defense as an effort to ward off attacks and threats that came from outside (external threats) could no longer only be seen from military threats, as then economic threats from outside the country also became a threat something to be reckoned with, such as an embargo (Schiff, 2009). Although there are two different paradigms of defense, both traditional and non-traditional, basically defense is still perceived as a deterrent to withstand external attacks, and the purpose of defense itself is to protect the state and provide the community with a guarantee of freedom from fear (La Ode, 2006; Djuyand et al., 2018).

All in all, the research question focusing on the specific context of Indonesia and Malaysia. It highlights the multidimensional nature of national defense, incorporating both military and non-military elements, and emphasizes the role of economic growth and infrastructure in addressing border disputes. So, the study objective is exploration of the interplay between traditional defense measures and softer approaches, such as economic development and cultural factors, in the context of resolving territorial conflicts between Indonesia and Malaysia.

The authors' research is based on a qualitative approach with a descriptive orientation. The descriptive approach involves explaining and analyzing the state defense implemented in border areas that are still in dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia. The authors aims to provide a detailed account of the conditions, processes, and strategies related to national defense. Descriptive research in this context allows for a rich and comprehensive exploration of the subject matter, providing insights into the complexities of the social

and political aspects involved. The emphasis on understanding the intricacies of the issues, capturing diverse perspectives, and conducting a descriptive analysis supports the choice of a qualitative approach. Primary data were obtained from observations and interviews with a number of informants, determined using a purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method where the authors intentionally select participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The informants were chosen with purposive sampling, based on the following criteria:

1. Knowing and understanding about the national border security strategy in areas that are still a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia
2. Knowing and understanding the process or implementation of state border security in areas that are still a dispute between Indonesia and Malaysia.
3. Knowing the conditions of the area and the community around the border areas which are still a dispute between the two countries (Indonesia-Malaysia).

Based on these criteria, the informants in this study are:

1. Director General of Defense Strategy from the Ministry of Defense (Major General Rodon Pedrason).
2. Perwira Pembantu Utama V / SOPS TNI Headquarters (Colonel Askari).
3. Assistant Deputy for Cross-border Management, National Border Management Agency (Dr. Murtono).
4. Director of Legal and Territorial Agreements at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mr. Bebeb Djundjunan).
5. Malay and Dayak traditional leaders in Entikong District (Suyono and Abang Syamsumen).
6. Head of Entikong District (Mr. Yon).
7. Commander of the Western Region Border Task Force (Lieutenant Colonel Hendro).



8. Security Head of Cross-border Postal (Pos Lintas Batas Negara –PLBN–) in Entikong (Mr. Rudi).
9. Head of Cross-border Postal (PLBN) in Entikong (Mr. Victor).
10. 51 Air Squadron Commander.
11. Head of Regional Border Management Agency of West Kalimantan (Mr. Alexander).

Some of the secondary data used comes from the mass media and the results of previous research on the issue of border disputes between Indonesia and Malaysia, in addition to official documents issued by the central government and the TNI regarding national defense efforts in disputed areas. Before the data is used to analyze the phenomenon, the data obtained is validated by using the source triangulation technique. The use of source triangulation to validate the obtained data further supports the qualitative methodology. Triangulation involves cross-verifying information from multiple sources to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, a common practice in qualitative research.

Data processing involved reviewing information from diverse sources such as interviews, observations, and studies/documents. The first step was abstraction, which entailed creating a summary of essential elements, processes, and statements to ensure the retention of crucial information for refining data recording. The second step was categorization, where data was organized into specific categories based on choices, intuition, opinions, or predetermined criteria. Data processing and categorization were carried out manually.

## DISCUSSION

Analysis of national defense can not only be seen from the capabilities and military establishment possessed by the state, but also should be seen from its non-military strength (Wang & Lu, 2008; Bunga & Tukan, 2019). This combination of strengths shows the existence of smart power that provides the state with provisions and capabilities to ward off various potential threats that may come from outside the country.



### *Military Strength*

According to the informant ‘Director General of Defense Strategy - Ministry of Defense’ that in order to secure the border areas, the government has assigned the Border Security Forces (Pamtas) which routinely carry out field patrols. Based on the statements of two informants, the Director General of Defense Strategy – Kemhan and Perwira Pembantu Utama V (Paban V) TNI Headquarters, that Pamtas troops are tasked with securing Indonesian territory bordering Malaysia, especially securing national boundary markers.

Security by Pamtas officers at the border has limitations due to geographical environmental constraints (the hills and forests are quite extreme), so that not all areas can be monitored, as well as authority constraints. For matters relating to law violations, TNI members cannot take action and choose to hand them over to the police, but the number of police personnel is also very minimal. There are rarely any police officers in the border areas.

The current military threat is not felt, unlike when there was a confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia. In fact, Indonesia and Malaysia are currently conducting joint patrols with a legal basis called *Security Arrangements in the Border Regions between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia*, December 3, 1984 (Sudiar & Irawan, 2019). Indonesia and Malaysia have also developed the *General Border Committee –GBC–*. According to the Director General of Defense Strategy, GBC is a means to facilitate dialogue in border areas.

Border security must be taken seriously because it involves state sovereignty. The defense function to guard the border areas is carried out by the TNI by continuously improving border security by empowering its members and building monitoring posts. Patrols, joint military exercises, and procurement of defense equipment are also carried out to strengthen the defense of border areas. The use of technology in guarding the border has also been implemented.

To support security operations in border areas, Indonesian National Armed Forces personnel are also equipped with the ability to operationalize drone technology, with this capability TNI personnel in border areas are able to monitor suspicious or illegal activities (Anuar & Harun, 2019; Anuar & Raharjo, 2022). Some of the illegal activities which were then acted upon by the border security personnel were: illegal liquor trade, narcotics transactions, sending illegal migrant workers, illegal gas transactions, and illegal timber sales. If the military personnel find out about this activity, they will also coordinate with the local police.

### *Non-Military Force*

National defense can be seen in addition to its military strength, it must also be seen from non-military forces, and in the territory of Indonesia which borders Malaysia in West Kalimantan. The dimensions of non-military strength can be seen from indicators of the strength of the local community's culture, education, ideology, and economic competitiveness. These four things are the most prominent and can be analyzed from the conditions prevailing in the border areas of Indonesia and Malaysia in the Province of West Kalimantan.

### *The power of culture*

As stated by the Assistant Deputy for Transboundary Management, the Director of Legal and Territorial Agreements at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Director General of Defense Strategy at the Ministry of Defense that one of Indonesia's problems in the border area is the socio-cultural issue of the border. Communities around the border area of Indonesia and Malaysia are relatives, a family, and a traditional cultural ties. They existed before the two countries were founded (Indonesia and Malaysia).

Referring to these social and cultural conditions, the Assistant Deputy for Transboundary Management, Director of Legal and Territorial Agreements at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the defense and security perspective must prioritize a comprehensive approach, including social and cultural approaches.

Statement of the Traditional Leaders (Dayaks and Malays): Communities around the border both in Indonesia and Malaysia have strong kinship ties, they are family to each other, both Malays and Dayaks both have relatives in Tebedu/Serian (Malaysia) as well as those in Malaysia, we have family in Entikong or other areas in Indonesia.

In us (the people here) there is a string culture where there will be mutual visits by families from Malaysia to Indonesia and from Indonesia to Malaysia (Statement of the Traditional Leaders). Each has grandparents, uncles, cousins who live in one of the countries (Indonesia or Malaysia).

Border communities, especially Dayaks, still maintain family relations even though their residences have been separated in two countries. The family ties can be maintained because of the commitment to visit each other at certain moments. Cultural relations can be seen in the Gawai ceremony held both in Sarawak and in Sambas by inviting the indigenous community across the globe. Almost every month, indigenous peoples who live in 7 sub-districts of Kapuas Hulu go across the Malaysian border either through immigration or traditional routes ([Pamungkas, 2018](#)).

Even though we have cross-country kinship, we are Indonesian citizens. Our brothers in Tebedu and Serian also know that they are Malaysians, so we understand the boundaries. There are still cases where some people transact with Malaysian ringgit, but that is because of the need for transactions in border areas. Even in Tebedu, we can still transact with Rupiah.

The Indonesia-Malaysia border in West Kalimantan must be managed by emphasizing the culture of the people at the border. Management of border areas should not only focus on the development of state institutions that manage borders, but also strengthen the cultural perspective of border communities. This can be done by mapping the socio-cultural issues of border communities, which in turn can strengthen traditional and religious institutions that play an important role in maintaining the

cultural traditions of border communities. Border areas must be built so that the face of Indonesia is a cultured face, including the culture of indigenous peoples who live with nature and must be protected by the state so that they feel safe in carrying out their culture.

### *Education*

According to the Assistant Deputy for Transboundary Management, that there are still shortcomings in the development of educational facilities and infrastructure in border areas, this is due to connectivity constraints, but the government is committed to fulfilling basic services to the community, including education services. This is part of the government's commitment to achieve equity and development of border areas.

According to [Herawati and Sunyata \(2016\)](#), a perspective that does not seek strength from rising causes border communities to only think and demand what the state will provide and do not think about what can be contributed to the state. The way of thinking is very simple and does not reflect a strong personality and has a high value of struggle accompanied by a critical and innovative attitude from border communities. This condition is related to the low level of public education, people's way of thinking (mindset), limited experience, limited access to information that can open the horizons of people's thinking and environmental factors in general. With such capacity, in the end, border communities are unable to understand the challenges, find strategies to find solutions in the midst of living conditions that are actually full of challenges ([Herawati & Sunyata, 2016](#)).

As stated by the sub-district head of entikong and traditional leaders that educational facilities in the border areas are still lack. There is no senior high school here, residents who want to continue their education to high school have to travel tens of kilometers to the next sub-district ([Yuldashev et al., 2022](#)). This situation causes some residents to ultimately not send their children to high school

level. If only the individuals from the border communities were willing to try to be critical and think intelligently, of course they would be able to find various opportunities that could gradually improve their quality of life so that they would not continue to fall behind.

To cover the shortage of educators in border areas, the Director General of Defense Strategy from the Ministry of Defense, reinforced by a statement from Perwira Pembantu Utama V (Paban V) TNI Headquarters, revealed the activities of TNI soldiers at the border in the context of Military Operations Other Than War –MOOTW–, which one of them is teaching in schools, both permanent and non-permanent schools.

The border area is the front porch of a country that can be directly assessed by neighboring countries. This should be an introspection of the Indonesian government because basically all citizens have the same right to education. The government's desire to advance human resources cannot be achieved if this unequal education system continues. People in border areas look forward to guaranteed education, and deserves as citizens who have the same rights.

Improving the quality and access of education in border areas is an important part of the national defense system. The defense system is actually not only a military force, but also a cultural force. The power of culture will emerge if humans are able to recognize, understand and feel the richness of the environment, which is supported by the learning process. Improving the quality of education at the border will also be one of the bulwarks to strengthen Indonesia's national defense system.

### *Ideology*

According to the Director General of Defense Strategy at the Ministry of Defense:

So far the ideological threat has not emerged, but it is not impossible that if the socio-economic conditions of the community are allowed to decline, it may have an impact on the weakening of the ideology of the community.

The traditional leaders from Dayak and Malay told us that regarding the case of nationalism in Indonesia, there are cases from two villages that are very close to Malaysia, but are further away from other villages in Indonesia. People in these two villages not only transact with Malaysian Ringgit, but also interact more often with people from Malaysia at the border. There is a child that we have met and he actually considers himself a Malaysian citizen. After that we explained that he was Indonesian. This condition is very unfortunate for us. The image of some people in the village is indeed very close to being Malaysians rather than Indonesian citizens.

The Head of the National and Political Unity of the Province in West Kalimantan stated that problems in the border area could have an impact on the nationalism of the people who live in the border area.

What people say that they have Indonesian nationalism can be different when seen in the real life. Our observations also show that interactions between communities on the border of Indonesia and Malaysia, especially with mixed social and cultural conditions, as well as economic conditions, have an impact on the fading of nationalism sense and identity.

Moreover, the limited infrastructure in the form of roads and other facilities in the form of schools and health facilities at the border greatly affects the level of nationalism of the people at the border. The development carried out by the Indonesian government in border areas is very necessary and can prove to the local community that the Indonesian government cares and pays attention to the condition of its people at the border.

The sense of nationalism towards Indonesia and Pancasila as the state ideology is expected to continue to be firmly held by the people at the border. The Indonesian government can carry out various activities related to the understanding of Pancasila as the state ideology and strengthening the sense of Nationalism, such as Bela Negara activities. With the aim of instilling the

values of Nationalism so that every citizen has awareness and is able to actualize it in the life of society, nation and state, in order to maintain state sovereignty, territorial integrity and anticipate the possibility of various parties from outside who want to influence the community at the border by spreading and teaching other ideologies. However, the Indonesian government must also show its presence by building various infrastructures needed by the people at the border.

### *Economic competitiveness*

According to informants, such as the Assistant Deputy for Cross-border Management and the Director General of Defense Strategy, that the socio-economic conditions of the Indonesian people at the border are still low. From the information provided by the Director of Legal and Territorial Agreements at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Assistant Deputy for Cross-border Management, and the Director General of Defense Strategy, it was stated that the government has been and continues to strive to strengthen the economic competitiveness of communities around the border.

The Ministry of Defense through the Director General of Defense Strategy said that the socio-economic gap between the community and neighboring countries has the potential to cause social jealousy and reduce the spirit of nationalism/nationalism. According to the Assistant Deputy for State Border Management, the government has built and increased the capacity of PLBN whose purpose is not only for cross-border administrative matters, but there are still some areas that have not covered by the PLBN. Around the PLBN, centers for community economic activity were also built or New Economic Growth Centers were developed, with the aim that our people no longer need to buy or sell their needs in Malaysia. Even with the development of an economic center (market) our people can attract Malaysian citizens to transact in Indonesia.



In Entikong which is an —official gateway— between West Kalimantan and Sarawak connecting Pontianak and Kuching, the capital of Sarawak. Every day dozens of buses carry passengers back and forth between Pontianak and Kuching, with a travel time of about 9 hours. Apart from buses, private vehicles and trucks carrying goods between the two countries appear to have a high frequency, which makes customs and immigration offices in Entikong and Tebedu (on the Sarawak side) quite busy (Tirtosudarmo, 2014).

Although the government has built several PLBNs equipped with integrated economic zones, there are still quite a number of illegal border crossing points used by the public to enter and leave from Indonesia to Malaysia or vice versa. As happened in Jagoi Babang. Trucks carrying goods from Pontianak stop at Jagoi Babang, and transportation to Malaysia is continued by motorbike or bicycle, because the road that must be passed is a path through the forest. The journey through the path in the Sarawak area only takes 30 minutes by motorbike and will arrive at a village and market. It was in this village that illegal transactions of goods crossed the border line. From Indonesia the goods brought, according to one source, were cigarettes; while from Sarawak various snacks (biscuits) and various canned drinks (beer, soft drinks, etc.) (Tirtosudarmo, 2014; Komala & Firdaus, 2022). This situation is indeed difficult to be fully controlled by the government or border control forces, with many illegal border crossings, transactions carried out by people around the border are also illegal transactions, and they buy gas and daily necessities to Malaysia and sell agricultural products to Malaysia and all transactions are mostly done using Malaysian Ringgit –RM–.

In relation to border areas, the presence of neighboring countries, in this case Sarawak, Malaysia, should no longer be viewed only from the perspective of a ‘perceived threat’ in economic terms, but can also be seen as part of efforts to increase ‘economic advantages’ in border areas. The initiative to open land traffic routes between Pontianak and Kuching and the inauguration of the new National Border Post (PLBN) as ‘gate points’ between West Kalimantan and Sarawak can be understood from the strengthening of ‘perceived economic advantages’ for border areas.

## CONCLUSIONS

Efforts made by the Indonesian government in strengthening national defense, especially in the midst of the ongoing dispute over the border area with Malaysia, have shown progress, although there are still limitations or shortcomings. In strengthening national defense, the government has made every effort to pay close attention to the dimensions of military and non-military strength. From the dimension of non-military power, the government also pays attention to cultural and economic aspects in strengthening state sovereignty, the aim is to maintain social balance, considering that the people of the two countries in the border areas have cultural similarities and strong kinship ties. From the economic sector, development continues to be pursued in the midst of the dependence of the Indonesian people on economic conditions in neighboring countries.

Substantively, this study found several tentative conclusions, among others, regarding the complexity of coordination between ministries and institutions in handling problems at the Indonesia-Malaysia border in West Kalimantan. Even though institutions to handle and coordinate problems at the border already exist, at the technical level there are still some obstacles. In addition, the coordination between the center and the regions is still a problem.

Finally, handling border issues is also related to several larger issues such as economic welfare and the threat of transnational crime when viewed from a non-traditional security perspective. The Indonesia-Malaysia border in West Kalimantan must be managed by emphasizing the culture of the border community. Borders should not be exploited for political and economic interests, namely creating central government projects in the regions. Borders must be built so that the face of Indonesia is a cultured face, including the culture of indigenous peoples who live with nature and must be protected by the state. However, their access to resources and their need for transportation, education and health must also be considered in order to adapt to the fast-paced modernization process at the border

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