Asymmetrical Threats Potential in the South China Sea: Malaysia's Policy and Mitigations Efforts

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Abstract— This study argues that currently the asymmetrical threat in the South China Sea area has become an actual threat that is likely to develop. With the increasing conflict in the South China Sea, Malaysia must be able to anticipate the existing asymmetric threats by implementing policies and mitigation efforts. This condition is further complicated by the increasing power of China both in terms of military and economy in the South China Sea region. The purpose of this study is to find out how the potential asymmetric threats in the South China Sea are, as well as how Malaysia's policies and mitigation efforts are in dealing with them. The theory used is the concept of policy and asymmetric as a library. In this study it was found that asymmetric threats in the South China Sea are still and continue to grow, where asymmetric attacks in the form of piracy, asymmetric attacks, the threat of regional conflict with China, are still rife. To deal with this problem, the Malaysian government carried out several policies and mitigation efforts with the concept of peace and "We are group" with China. The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that asymmetric threats in the South China Sea still occur and continue to grow, while to overcome these problems, the Malaysian government continues to carry out diplomatic and renegotiation efforts with China to gain advantages and minimize losses.

Keywords— Asymmetric Threat, China, Malaysia, Policy and Renegotiation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Currently, one of the focuses of the international community is on the conflict in the South China Sea area, which is a water with enormous potential, because it contains oil and natural gas. The South China Sea has a very important role as a world oil distribution channel, trade, and international shipping.

Various disputes and border conflicts that exist in the South China Sea area have the potential to threaten the stability of the Asian region, including Indonesia and Malaysia. The South China Sea area itself is an important route for world trade and a supply route for petroleum supplies to East Asia. This dispute involves many countries, either directly as actors who claim ownership of the territory, or indirectly as actors whose interests are disturbed.

Wiranto (2016), explained that the South China Sea area has an important meaning, namely its strategic position, in terms of economy and politics. Geographically, the South China Sea is surrounded by 10 (ten) coastal countries, namely China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam and the Philippines. The territorial waters of the South China Sea include the Gulf of Siam which is bordered by Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia and the Gulf of Tonkin which is bordered by Vietnam and China. The South China Sea area is an area that has economic, political and strategic value as a trade route (Sea Lines of Trade) and international communication lines (Sea Lines of Communication) that connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

However, as reported in Dharmawan (2020), most of the world's seas, maritime trade routes are inseparable from asymmetric security threats, such as acts of terror and piracy that have occurred to Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. The fact that Southeast Asia's geography consists of thousands of islands, narrow straits, and the existence of areas that are separated from the supervision of surrounding countries is one of the reasons why piracy in Southeast Asia, especially the South China Sea is rife.

Pirates such as the Abu Sayyaf group who are domiciled in the Philippines carry out hijackings by taking some of the ship's luggage and taking hostages and then asking for ransom, both from the families, companies, and the countries the hostage victims come from if they want to be released. In this case, the activities of the pirate group are the source of their group's funding. The greater the cost of hostages and the value of the ship's luggage, the more funds they use to meet their group's needs such as weapons.

For example, as reported by Santoso (2016), the Directorate of Water Police (Ditpolair) of the Jambi Regional Police arrested six members of the South China Sea pirates who acted in Jambi waters. The herd was secured after hijacking a container ship transporting raw rubber. From Malaysian territory, reported by Detik (2014), a group of pirates attacked a Malaysian-owned tanker in the waters of the South China Sea. There were

no casualties in this attack, but the pirates stole the cargo of oil gas on the ship.

In terms of cyber threats, the escalation of the South China Sea conflict also has the potential to increase existing cyber threats. Reporting from IndoTelko (2020), Malaysia's Computer Emergency Response Team (MyCERT) suspects that there was an organized cyber attack by a Chinese government-backed hacker group targeting computers owned by Malaysian officials. MyCERT explains that this Hacker group tends to target government sponsored projects and retrieve a large amount of information specific to those projects, including proposals, meetings, financial data, delivery information, plans and drawings, and raw data.

In the field of insurgency threats, Malaysia has become a favorite place for several insurgent groups in the Southeast Asian region to hide. The insurgency group used the forests and communities in the Malaysian border area for shelter. For example, quoted from Sulistyawati (2013), Malaysian police and a local government official claim Malaysian security forces have rounded up about 100 men believed to be from the South Philippines separatist rebels. Conflict involving insurgency groups between Malaysia and the Philippines is not the first time. In 2000, a group of militants from the southern Philippines abducted 21 tourists from Sabah while diving at the Sipadan resort.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that acts of piracy by terror groups in the South China Sea are still an actual asymmetric threat that must be faced by Southeast Asian countries, especially Malaysia and Indonesia. Therefore, Malaysia must make a policy and a good mitigation strategy to deal with the threat of piracy terror in the South China Sea region. In addition, the threat of new wars such as cyber attacks is also one of the actual threats that must be faced by Malaysia. From the rebel side, Malaysia is often an ideal hiding place for insurgent groups and insurgents, some of which are hiding groups including the Philippines rebel group and the Abu Sayyaf group.

So based on the above background, two problem formulations are obtained, namely, how are the potential asymmetric threats related to the South China Sea that occur in Malaysia, and how are Malaysia's policies and mitigation efforts to deal with potential asymmetric threats in the South China Sea?

Based on the formulation of the problem, the objectives of this research are to find out the potential asymmetric threats related to the South China Sea that occur in Malaysia, and to find out how Malaysia's policies and mitigation efforts are to deal with potential asymmetric threats in the South China Sea.

II. METHODS

This study uses methods This research uses qualitative research methods with sources through interviews, literature review and documentation. According to Saryono (2010), qualitative research is a research that is used to investigate, find, describe, and explain the quality and features of social influences that cannot be explained, measured or described through a quantitative approach. According to Creswell (2018), literature review is a research approach that is based on non-numeric data, which can be in the form of text and images, and filtering of the data is carried out to make interpretations of the literature review. This research study was conducted through primary data sources through interviews, and secondary data sources through literature such as journals, books, theses, research reports, and scientific articles with valid and reliable sources. Meanwhile, the source of the informant we interviewed to obtain primary data was Dr. Norhazlina Fairuz Musa Kutty, who is a lecturer at the National Defense University of Malaysia.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Asymmetric Threats in Malaysia related to the South China Sea

According to Seskoad (2010), there are three types of asymmetric warfare, namely, Insurgency, New Internal War and Terrorism. Based on our findings, currently in Malaysia the threats of asymmetric attacks that are taking place in the South China Sea region are the threat of a New Internal War, insurgency and Terrorism.

1. New Internal War
a. Cyber Attack Threat

According to data from Dr. Norhazlina (2021), currently the cyber threat that threatens the South China Sea is a scam. It is known that there are some Chinese people who set up scam companies and attack Malaysians. The attacks are carried out in the form of messages either from email, sms, or chat that traps.

In line with that, as reported by Fuad (2021), the Chief Executive of Malaysia's National Cyber Safety Agency (NACSA), Ir Md Shah Nuri Md Zain, explained that there have been 4,194 malware attacks in Malaysia throughout 2020 yesterday, this case consisted of virus attacks. malicious attacks on computers and data breaches in 2,066 cases and 1,352 cases, respectively.

b. The Threat of China's Provocation in the South China Sea

The threat of territorial violations continues to occur in the South China Sea, this violation is carried out by the Chinese military which often passes through Malaysia's territory both from sea and air. Reporting from Arbar in CNBC (2021), Malaysia's foreign ministry said that China had carried out infiltration by 16 air force aircraft into Malaysian airspace. According to the Malaysian air force, China sent at least 16 military aircraft over the disputed South China Sea. The Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) said in a news release that it was a Xi'an Y-20 and Ilyushin Il-76 transport aircraft of the People's Liberation Army Air Force.

Correspondingly, Dr. Norhazlina (2021), explained that within the South China Sea, it is no longer a secret that China often violates its territory, either from the air or the sea. This is because China is trying to strengthen its position in the South China Sea region, and trying to provoke and assert its power in the region.

2. Threat of Terrorism and Piracy
Based on data from Dr. Norhazlina, currently terrorism and piracy in Malaysia are still linked to the Jamaah Islamyiah (JI) group and the Abu Sayyaf terror group. JI's role in promoting terrorism still requires continuous monitoring, although JI has now lost its leader, other members still continue to spread their views and recruit new members.

In addition, cases of piracy and piracy in the South China Sea also pose an asymmetric threat to Malaysia. Usually these terror groups hijack ships and demand a ransom in exchange for them.

Reporting from Detik (2014), the Malaysian Navy in a statement as reported by AFP, Wednesday (16/7/2014), said that the ship named MT Oriental Glory was hijacked by pirates on Tuesday (15/7) night. The piracy occurred in the waters of the South China Sea, southeast of Malaysia. The head of the International Maritime Bureau, based at the Piracy Reporting Center in Kuala Lumpur, Noel Choong warned of an increase in piracy activity in the South China Sea region.

This is in line with the opinion of Dr. Norhazlina (2021), which states that the South China Sea area is the Golden Triangle which is a strategic route for many cargo ships to pass through. This line is also used as a road for the transportation of the world's largest narcotics, which manufacturers are located in this region. The threat to drugs is one of the asymmetrical problems in Malaysia. Many terror groups and rebels carry out illegal transactions by selling drugs to meet their operational needs. The active involvement of rebel and terror groups in drug trafficking requires the full attention of countries

in the region. Drug smuggling has been identified as one of the main sources of income for insurgent and terrorist groups to fund their activities.

3. Insurgency Threats related to the South China Sea
Based on the explanation from Dr. Norhazlina (2021), currently the potential threat of insurgency comes from the Chinese community in Malaysia. Many cooperation projects with China require bringing in Chinese workers, especially from Hong Kong. These workers however freely can obtain id cards illegally and become part of Malaysia. This caused a problem, where the community began to meet and occupy Malaysia by having dual citizenship. There will be concern later if the majority of Malaysia's population is controlled by immigrants from China who continue to take residence illegally. Moreover, they have strong support, and a large community in Malaysia.

Dr. Norhazlina (2021), further explained that especially now Malaysia and China are collaborating on the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) mega project with China, in which this project brings in many workers from China.

B. Malaysia's Mitigation Policies and Efforts in Facing Asymmetric Threats in the South China Sea
Currently, every action related to preventing asymmetric threats in Malaysia is carried out in a centralized and focused manner. Dr.Norhazlina (2021), explained that Malaysia's National Defense Policy is a comprehensive model which is also known as HANRUH. The defense policy is the basis for all policies in limiting any problems at the domestic, regional and international levels. Other policies and mitigation efforts taken to prevent asymmetric threats that could potentially attack Malaysia related to the South China Sea include:

1. Mitigation Policies and Efforts in Facing New Internal War Threats.
a. CyberThreat
Dr. Norhazilana (2021), explained that currently Malaysia does not have a disaster management agency like Indonesia as a whole. However, for dealing with disasters or threats carried out by cyber, Malaysia has a National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA), which has a function to protect Malaysia from the threat of cyber attacks.

Besides NACSA, Malaysia also has a body called CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM). Both of these bodies are filled by the civilian side and the executive body as their filler. This agency also helps communicate with Malaysian society to avoid existing cyberattacks. Reporting from Karim (2021), Chief Executive Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM), Datuk Dr Amirudin

Abdul Wahab and cyber safety expert, Fong Choong Fook CSM through the Cyber999 help center have encountered nine categories of cyber attacks during the beginning of this year namely: spam, attempted infringement. denial, fraud, cyber intrusion, vulnerability reports, malicious code, related content and intrusions.

During the first four months of this year, there were 3,647 cybersecurity incident reports received, of which, if we summarize the attacks in the last four years, the total was 40,187. Cases in 2020 alone amounted to 10,790 cases (2020); 10,772 (2019); 10,699 (2018) and 6,926 (2017). Chief Executive Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM) in Karim (2021), explained that to deal with these cyber threats, CyberSecurity Malaysia has complete and world-class cyber security laboratory resources. Among them, the Digital Forensic Laboratory which is the only digital forensic laboratory in Asia Pacific that is recognized and accredited by the ANSI International Accreditation Board (ANAB) with ISO/IEC 17025 standards.

The Malaysian Security Testing Laboratory (MySEF) provides assessments licensed under the Malaysia General Criteria Assessment and Certification Scheme (MyCC) under MS ISO/IEC 17025 to perform ICT security testing and assessment services in order to create a secure and protected computer environment.

CSM Cryptography Laboratory (MyCEL) has obtained accreditation and certification from the United States National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP), is able to provide validation and evaluation services for cryptographic modules, as well as conduct research and development in various fields of cryptography which now includes research and development (R&D).) in the field of distributed ledger or blockchain (block chain) technology.

The Malaysian Vulnerability Assessment Center (MyVAC) was established to enhance the national information security ecosystem and increase the country's resilience to cyber threats and exploitation due to cybersecurity weaknesses in existing information technologies and systems. The services provided include Vulnerability Assessment Testing (VAPT), Industrial Control System (ICS) and Software Security Development Lifecycle (SSDLC).

CSM has also developed guidelines to provide guidance or methods on the safe use and application of technology, thereby protecting information for industry in Malaysia. With a combination of cybersecurity expertise, capabilities and guidelines, the country is always on the lookout for possible cyber threats and attacks.

Apart from the facility side, Chief Executive Officer of CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM) in Karim (2021), said that through the Capacity Development Department at CSM, CSM communicates a lot to the public through various training programs and capacity certification as well as knowledge sharing platforms offered to technology professionals. information and communication (ICT). CSM is also working with public and private higher education institutions (IPTs) to develop comprehensive cybersecurity modules in schools to attract more Malaysians to participate in the ICT security sector. The attitude built by this agency is also togetherness to maintain existing cyber defenses.

As of December 2020, Malaysia has 12,083 skilled and knowledgeable workers in cybersecurity and is targeting 600 workers to be created by the end of 2021.

The policies and mitigation efforts carried out by Malaysia are almost the same as those in Indonesia, where Indonesia has the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) and the Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (KOMINFO) which are wrongly collaborating to maintain cyber security in Indonesia from existing attacks.

b. The Threat of China's Provocation in the South China Sea

Regarding the threat of China's provocation in the South China Sea by deliberately violating territorial boundaries, or showing off strength, Malaysia responded with a silent and calm attitude. Dr. Norhazlina (2021), explained that as a small industrial country, Malaysia is more focused on strengthening its economy and status in the world. Especially now that the Covid-19 pandemic is attacking Malaysia. So that all the ministry's focus is on handling Covid-19 cases. Regarding territorial violations and Chinese provocations, Malaysia still holds the concept of "We are Group" with China, and has always positioned itself on the same side as China. Communication efforts against China's provocations and pressures are carried out through diplomacy and renegotiation if the agreement is deemed detrimental Malaysia.

Dr. Norhazlina (2021), explains that if we provoke them more, they will provoke back more. When we think of them as arrogant, they will be even more arrogant. But when we leave it alone, then they will just stay that way. So Malaysia took action to ignore the provocation. But we still responded by giving an official statement and

still summoning the Chinese ambassador as a response. In addition, Malaysia is also using resources through the Belt and Road Initiative as a strategy to limit China's movement in the South China Sea. The Malaysian government also carries out a hedging policy, with China, in which this policy seeks to make investments that are made specifically to reduce or eliminate risks in other investments. For handling this problem, the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Superem Ministry have the authority to deal with it. The bureaucracy is generally led by the Prime Minister.

This attitude is similar to Indonesia, which is in the same gray zone as Malaysia, where Indonesia continues to cooperate with China, but if there are other parties who want to cooperate, Indonesia still accepts it without taking sides. In addition, Indonesia also prioritizes diplomatic efforts and negotiations with the Chinese side first, before carrying out military efforts.

2. Malaysia's Mitigation Policies and Efforts in Facing the Threat of Terrorism and Piracy in the South China Sea

According to Dr. Norhazlina (2021), currently the party handling terrorism and insurgency in Malaysia is the Police through the Malaysian Counterterrorism Division. In addition, in 2015 the Malaysian government also passed the anti-terrorism bill (UU). Malaysia's stance on terrorism is firm to eradicate.

Reporting from Barak (2021), during the Covid-19 pandemic, cases of terrorism still occur. The head of the Counter-Terrorism Division of the Special Branch (the intelligence arm of the Royal Malaysian Police), revealed that seven terror suspects were arrested in 2020. Malaysia began an operation to arrest suspected and suspected ISIS-linked terrorists in 2013. At that time, authorities only found four people. That figure quickly jumped to 82 in 2015, and then 119 at its peak in 2016. Malaysia's Counter-Terrorism Unit subsequently arrested 106 people in 2017 and 85 in 2018. The bureaucracy in this handling is led by the Police using budgetary resources from the state. , police resources and other supporting resources such as facilities and infrastructure in the field.

This agency is the same as the anti-terror Detachment 88 which is owned by the Indonesian police, at this time Indonesia has also passed the anti-terrorism law in 2018. However, the agency that Malaysia does not yet have is the Counter-Terrorism Agency (BNPT) like Indonesia's.

From the side of piracy, Malaysia has deployed the Malaysian Navy to conduct patrols and surveillance of the Malaysian sea area, reported in Zainal (2018), the

Malaysian Navy (Maritim Malaysia) arrested 14 pirates from Indonesia, in waters near Mersing, Malacca Strait, Friday (1 /6/2018) morning. Malaysian Maritime Leader Datuk Seri Zulkifli Abu Bakar said the Malaysian Maritime Special Forces were flown in by helicopter AW139 from Kuantan, Pahang, to chase the pirates after taking action on a ship, at around 03.00 in the morning. The handling action is carried out firmly, where communication is carried out in an organized and commanded manner through the leadership of the Navy. For the resources used are related special human resources such as the military and special teams,

This is the same as Indonesia, which mobilizes its military, in this case the Navy, which is tasked with guarding Indonesian waters from pirate attacks, or foreign parties trying to enter.

3. Policies and Mitigation Efforts in Facing Malaysian Insurgency Threats related to the South China Sea

In preventing the threat of insurgency attacks in Malaysia related to the South China Sea, Dr. Norhazlina (2021), explained that the handling of these problems was handled by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). The MCMC is the governing body for the communication and multimedia industry in Malaysia whose main objective is to oversee the affairs of the telecommunications and multimedia industry under the powers granted under the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission Act (1998) and the Communication and Multimedia Act (1998). In line with these Acts, the role of the KKMM is to implement and foster the national objective of the Kingdom of Malaysia Government's national nationality for the telecommunications and multimedia sector. SKMM is also assigned to take care of the new management framework for the activities of the telecommunications industries, broadcasting and on-line are increasingly closely linked. So that the handling of communications related to insurgency will be carried out by the MCMC as the main body. The MCMC itself is led by a civilian executive.

In implementing its policies, MCMC will also be assisted by the Police through the Counterterrorism Division, especially now that many Chinese people illegally possess Malaysian citizenship id cards and passports. Malaysia takes a firm stance and takes action against all existing violators. The resources deployed in this case are human resources from both MCMC and the Police, facilities and infrastructure owned by MCMC and the Police such as networks, vehicles, and anti-terrorist and insurgency equipment, and other auxiliary equipment.

In contrast to Indonesia, which has a direct threat of insurgency from internal sources, the Indonesian government in dealing with the threat of insurgency involves the police and the military, in this case the TNI, to cooperate with each other in handling insurgency. In addition, the State Intelligence Agency also has an intelligence function that is used to obtain initial information related to insurgency.

IV. CONCLUSION

So it can be concluded from the above discussion that it can be concluded that currently the asymmetric threats that exist in Malaysia related to the South China Sea are terrorism, piracy, cyber attacks, and insurgency from the Mainland China community.

To deal with it, the Malaysian government has made policies and mitigation efforts to deal with this asymmetrical threat. In terms of cyber threats, the Malaysian government through NACSA and CyberSecurity Malaysia (CSM) has prepared both laboratory resource facilities and other facilities to deal with existing cyber threats. The communication carried out by the two agencies is mutually coordinated and takes a collective attitude in building a strong cybersecurity system. The bureaucracy in these two bodies is led by the executive civil society. In terms of the threat of Chinese provocations, the Malaysian government prefers to remain silent and remains focused on handling Covid-19 and improving the economy. The Malaysian government continues to use the concept of "We are Group" with China and uses Belt and Road Initiatives and hedging policies as strategies to deal with China. This problem is faced with diplomatic communication and negotiations, by mobilizing human resources, as well as existing ministry facilities. This issue is entirely led directly by the Prime Minister of Malaysia. In terms of handling terrorism and piracy, Malaysia has a Malaysian Counterterrorism Division and anti-terrorism law, as a mitigation effort to fight acts of terrorism. This activity is led by the Malaysian Police, with a firm stance against terrorism, using human resources, budget and other operational support facilities. As for dealing with piracy, Malaysia has deployed its navy to protect its territorial waters from pirates. In terms of the threat of insurgency, Malaysia, through the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) and the Malaysian Police, communicates and cooperates with each other to prevent potential insurgency from the Mainland China community. In addition, the Malaysian Police are also firm against individuals who illegally earn Malaysian ID cards and passports. MCMC also continues to try to communicate to the public to continue to obey and comply with Malaysian government regulations. communicate with each other and work together to prevent potential insurgency from the Mainland China community. In addition, the Malaysian Police are also firm against individuals who illegally earn Malaysian ID cards and passports. MCMC also continues to try to communicate to the public to continue to obey and comply with Malaysian government regulations. communicate with each other and work together to prevent potential insurgency from the Mainland China community. In addition, the Malaysian Police are also firm against individuals who illegally earn Malaysian ID cards and passports. MCMC also continues to try to communicate to the public to continue to obey and comply with Malaysian government regulations.

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