

Strengthening National Defense Policy through Total Defense Readiness against Non-Military Threats

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Abstract

This study aims to develop and apply a three pillar analytical framework comprising institutional integration, technological innovation, and public participation to assess Indonesia's Total Defense System (Sishankamrata) as a strategic response to non military threats. Employing a qualitative literature review of peer reviewed articles, policy documents, and official TNI communiqués from 2018–2025, the research systematically codes and refines themes across civil military coordination, technological readiness, and community engagement. Findings reveal that while Sishankamrata is formally embedded in national defense policy, its implementation is constrained by limited public awareness, fragmented inter agency mechanisms, and underdeveloped cyber capabilities. To bridge these gaps, the study recommends enacting clear legal frameworks for inter agency coordination, establishing integrated funding streams for joint task forces, expanding cyber resilience training for both military and civilian stakeholders, and launching nationwide public outreach campaigns to foster shared ownership of national defense. This adaptive, inclusive model equips policymakers and practitioners with actionable pathways to strengthen Indonesia's resilience against cyberattacks, disinformation, pandemics, and economic disruption within a comprehensive Total Defense readiness paradigm.

Keywords: Total Defense System, Sishankamrata, National Defense Policy, Non-Military Threats, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly complex era of globalization, the concept of state defense is no longer limited to conventional military threats, but also includes non-military threats such as terrorism, cyberattacks, pandemics, climate change, and economic disruption. The development of this threat dynamic has a significant impact on defense policies and strategies that also require adjustments. In the face of this multidimensional threat, many countries have begun to adopt the Total Defense System (TDS) strategy as an approach that is considered more comprehensive and involves all elements of society, both military and civilian, in maintaining national sovereignty and stability (Wither, 2020). The concept of Total Defense according to (Stette et al., 2023) is that the government, military, and civil society must play a role in defending the country from complex threats. This definition illustrates the importance of cooperation in various aspects when dealing with threats, especially non-military threats. In the Indonesian context, TDS has been designed to be a state defense policy in the form of a general state defense policy (Jakumhanneg) which also discusses the universal people's defense strategy (sishankamrata). Defense policy is defined as a set of national strategies designed to protect countries from military threats, taking into account economic impacts, security complexities, organizational learnings, and decision-making biases.

In the face of contemporary threat dynamics, state defense policy should no longer focus only on conventional military threats, but must also include preparedness in the face of non-military threats. The TDS concept is the main framework in building comprehensive national resilience, involving all components of the nation, both military and civilian, in an effort to maintain state sovereignty and national stability. This approach is increasingly relevant in the modern era, where non-military threats such as disinformation, cyberattacks, pandemics, and climate change are increasingly affecting the stability of a country (Ericson et al., 2023).

Defense policies that focus on military spending must consider a balance between national security and economic growth, as too much budget allocation to the military can come at the expense of other development sectors (Saeed, 2023). Defense policy is often concerned with political decisions that affect military strategy. Military action not only serves to win battles, but also to achieve political goals (Valdés Guía, 2020).

Furthermore, Emma Bjornehed (2022) has defined defense policy as the use of the military in strategic challenges that require strategic decisions (Björnehed, 2022). Meanwhile, Milshtein et al (2024) define decision-making in defense policy as not always rational, because it can be influenced by cognitive bias (Milshtein et al., 2024). Defense policy should take this into account in training military leaders to be more aware of the potential for errors due to cognitive bias. Keenan et al. (2024) provide examples of defense policies implemented by NATO member states (Keenan et al., 2024). This policy aims to integrate a resilience system that connects the military and civilian domains. The focus is on ensuring military readiness to deal with a wide range of threats with adequate civilian resource support. Cooperation between the military and civilians is the key to the success of the defense system.

The TDS concept itself is not only being implemented by Nordic countries such as Sweden and Finland, but it is also beginning to become a strategic consideration for many developing countries facing complex security challenges. This system integrates military readiness with civilian resilience, so that communities can actively participate in national defense efforts (Ericson et al., 2023) In this scheme, the involvement of the public and private sectors is essential, given that non-military threats are increasingly operating in the economic, political, and technological realms.

The concept of TDS initially developed in European countries in response to changes in geopolitical dynamics after the Cold War. Countries such as Sweden, Norway, and Finland maintain this approach to deal with possible external threats, including hybrid warfare and unconventional attacks. For example, Finland has long adopted this system by combining a regular armed forces with a reserve force derived from civil society (Wither, 2020).

In the modern context, non-military threats can have a broader impact than conventional military threats. Some of the non-military threats faced by various countries today include: Cyber Attacks and Digital Security; Cyber threats are becoming increasingly prominent, especially with the increasing reliance on digital technology.

Cyberattacks can disrupt a country's financial system, critical infrastructure, and political stability (Rizal & Yani, 2016) Developed countries such as the United States and

the European Union have introduced various policies to increase their cyber resilience in the face of attacks from state and non-state actors.

Information and Disinformation Wars; Information warfare strategies are used by many actors to create social and political instability. The spread of hoaxes and political propaganda is the main tool in contemporary geopolitical conflicts. The TDS concept allows for early detection and mitigation mechanisms against disinformation threats, such as those implemented in the Nordic countries (Ljungkvist, 2024).

Biological and Global Health Threats; The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how vulnerable a country is to biological threats. Countries with strong total defense systems are able to respond more quickly and effectively in addressing global health crises. The TDS concept emphasizes the importance of civil society preparedness in the face of emergency situations, including the provision of backup medical personnel and cross-sector coordination for rapid response.

Economic Security and Financial Stability; The global economic crisis and economic attacks carried out by foreign actors are also part of the non-military threat. Countries with a strong TDS have better economic protection mechanisms, including strengthening the domestic industrial sector and economic resilience strategies to reduce dependence on other countries (Santoso & Perwita, 2017).

Facing the context of evolving threats, of course, defense policy must always be dynamic. Raisio et al., (2020) interprets modern defense policies that must adapt to an increasingly complex security environment, where geopolitical changes and unforeseen threats require more flexible and adaptive policies (Raisio et al., 2020). Defense policy is also related to human resource management in the military context, namely using a survival analysis model to predict and manage the level of entry and exit of military personnel. This is important for countries facing labor competition with the civilian sector (Shabbar et al., 2024). Thus, this modern national defense policy requires dynamic analysis following the increasingly complex dynamics of security threats.

Dyson & Pashchuk (2022) on Military Organizational Learning in the Donbas War interprets that a successful defense policy must include an organizational learning process, the military actively reviews and adjusts strategies based on lessons learned from the conflict (Dyson & Pashchuk, 2022). This is important to maintain effective

adaptability in the face of adversity. The approach demonstrates the country's efforts to increase resilience in the face of more complex threats through cooperation between the military and civilian sectors (Keenan et al., 2024). In another context, Yildirim et al., (2006) mentioned that defense policy is often related to military spending and its impact on a country's economy (Yildirim et al., 2006).

Defense policy is often associated with large military spending, especially in countries that face significant security threats. However, as explained by Yildirim et al. (2005), military spending can have both positive and negative effects on the economy. Defense policy is highly dependent on the geographical conditions and characteristics of each country. A total preparedness-based defense policy also needs to take into account public preferences for defense policy options. A study conducted in Germany showed that there are variations in the level of public support for various defense policies, ranging from increasing the number of military personnel to the integration of European air defense systems (Qari et al., 2023).

In addition, defense policy is also closely related to the role of leadership. Strategic leaders according to Samimi et al. (2022) must be able to integrate various perspectives to develop policies that are responsive to external dynamics, including the threat of terrorism (Samimi et al., 2022). It was further emphasized about the important influence of strategic leadership on the formation and implementation of policies. In the journal Linebarger & Braithwaite (2020), it was stated that security policy leaders in several countries are considering the construction of border walls as a mitigation measure against the spread of militancy and terrorist activities (Linebarger & Braithwaite, 2020).

Valdés Guía (2020) states that defense policy cannot be separated from the political logic underlying war (Valdés Guía, 2020). This is an important part of the defense policy critique. Currently, the total defense system is a state defense strategy that is increasingly relevant in dealing with non-military threats in the modern era. By integrating military and civilian preparedness, countries can be more effective in dealing with challenges such as cyberattacks, information wars, pandemics, and economic crises. Various countries have adopted this model with a variety of approaches that suit their national needs.

Facing increasingly complex security challenges, the defense of the country is no longer only a military task, but also a shared responsibility of all elements of society. The

Total Defense System is not just a strategy, but a concept that instills awareness that every individual has a role in maintaining the nation's resilience. Collaboration between the government, academia, the business world, and civil society is an important foundation in building resilience that is not only physically strong, but also resilient in the face of non-military threats. With a research-based approach and social understanding, defense policy can continue to evolve adaptively, ensuring that any policy taken is not only effective, but also rooted in the real needs of society. In the end, a strong defense is not only a matter of weapons, but also a matter of mental toughness, collective awareness, and the spirit of togetherness in maintaining the sovereignty and future of the nation.

Building on the thematic review of non-military threats and existing Total Defense doctrines, this article introduces a comprehensive analytical framework for assessing Total Defense Readiness. Centered on three interdependent dimensions institutional integration, technological innovation, and public participation the framework offers a structured lens to diagnose implementation gaps, guide empirical inquiry, and inform policy design in Indonesia's Sishankamrata (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Domorenok & Trein, 2024). By operationalizing these pillars into measurable criteria, the framework not only clarifies the study's conceptual contribution but also provides practitioners with actionable pathways to strengthen national resilience against hybrid threats (table 1).

Table 1. Three-Pillar Framework for the Implementation of TDS against Non-Military Threats in Indonesia

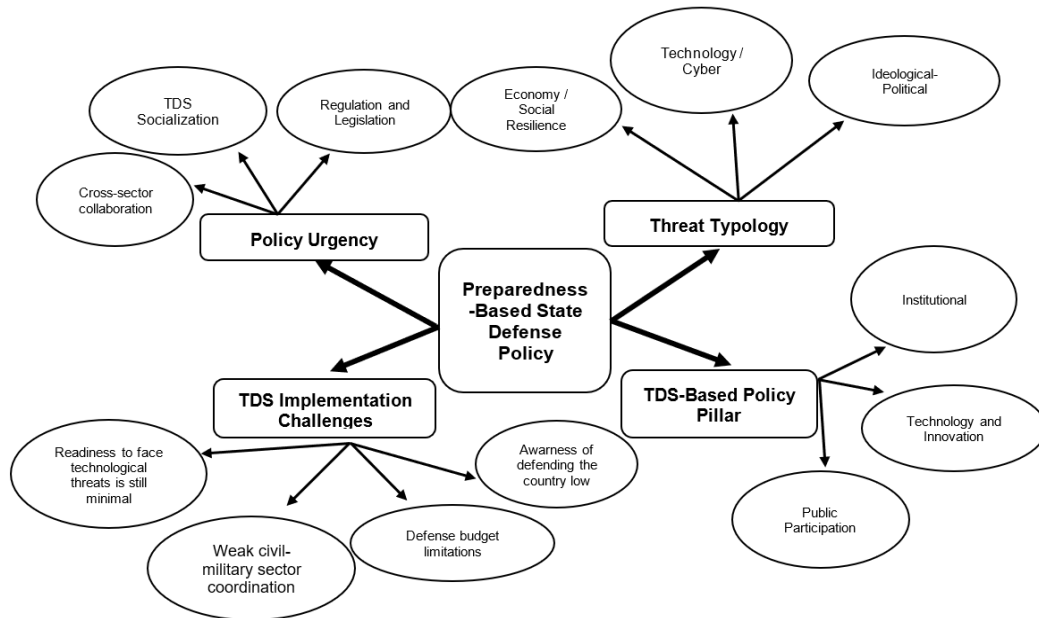
Pillar	Definition	Key Components	Exemplary References
Institutional Integration	The degree to which military and civilian agencies coordinate policy, resource allocation, and joint operations under a unified legal mandate.	1. Inter-agency task forces 2. Clear legal/institutional mandates 3. Communication channels	(Chia, 2025; Sarjito & Sutawidjaya, 2024)
Technological Innovation	Adoption and development of cutting-edge technologies (e.g., cyber defenses, surveillance drones) to anticipate, detect, and respond to non-military threats.	1. Cybersecurity R&D 2. Civil-military tech partnerships 3. Digital literacy programs	(Efthymiopoulos, 2019; Sury, 2023)

Public Participation	Mechanisms empowering civilians, private sector, and community organizations to engage in preparedness, early warning, and resilience-building activities.	1. Nation-wide training initiatives 2. Community early-warning networks 3. Public awareness campaigns	(Lou, 2024; White House, 2024)
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Source: by the author (2025)

While seminal works such as Wither (2020) and Ericson et al. (2023) have primarily conceptualized Total Defense doctrines within Nordic contexts focusing on theoretical gender mobilization and civil-military synergies this article breaks new ground by providing an empirically grounded, Indonesia-specific analysis. Unlike Stette et al. (2023), which outlines generic cooperation models without in-depth national case studies, our study operationalizes the three pillars into measurable criteria and traces their concrete implementation across inter-agency task forces, cyber defense reforms, and community resilience programs. Furthermore, by integrating political-bureaucratic dynamics into the framework, we offer a holistic perspective absent from prior literature, thereby equipping policymakers with actionable tools to diagnose and bridge readiness gaps in Sishankamrata (Ericson et al., 2023; Stette et al., 2023; Wither, 2020).

This paper will discuss Indonesia's implementation of national defense policies based on the Universal People's Defense System in the context of facing non-military threats. Various problems regarding forms of non-military threats will be explained from the perspective of national security, further the urgency of a state defense policy based on the total defense system which includes the pillars of implementation of Sishankamrata will also be an integral part of this discussion. In addition, this paper will also provide an overview of the challenges in implementing TDS in Indonesia. The use of the analysis method in this paper is very needed, thus the qualitative approach through literature review becomes the basis for the analysis used. Some references from relevant sources are used as data and information to be analyzed. This study aims to develop and apply a three-pillar analytical framework centered on institutional integration, technological innovation, and public participation to diagnose implementation gaps and guide policy design in Indonesia's Sishankamrata.

RESEARCH METHOD**Figure 1. Brainstorming****Source: by the author (2025)**

In this study, a qualitative literature review forms the core of our methodology, in line with Creswell & Creswell's guidance on non-numeric data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Types of data include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, theses, research reports, and government policy documents, as well as white papers and official communiqués from the TNI and related ministries. For data collection, we systematically searched Scopus, Google Scholar, and the official websites of the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, and TNI between 2018 and 2025, using keywords such as "Total Defense System," "Sishankamrata," "civil-military integration," "cyber resilience," and "non-military threats." Studies were included if they provided empirical case studies, policy analyses, or program evaluations relevant to Indonesia's TDS framework. For analysis, we applied a thematic framework approach, first coding extracted findings into the three predefined pillars institutional integration, technological innovation, and public participation then iteratively refining these themes to capture implementation gaps, political-bureaucratic dynamics, and comparative insights. The resulting analytical framework is visualized in Figure 1, which summarises the brainstorming and coding process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Total Defense policy is not only oriented to military power but also to the mobilization of civil society, including the role of gender in defense strategy. Relevant to Indonesia in the context of building a preparedness-based defense that is not only militaristic but also social and economic (Ericson et al., 2023). Salmon, J. D. (1988) shows that a combination of military and non-military defense can be an effective strategy in maintaining security (J. D. Salmon, 1988). This is in line with the principle of the total defense system, which relies not only on military power but also on the preparedness of the entire community in facing threats, especially non-military threats such as cyber warfare, disinformation, and economic threats. With the implementation of the right policies, this approach can strengthen the country's defense comprehensively. Through the combination of military and non-military strategies, it can increase the effectiveness of national defense in facing modern threats. This is also in line with the concept of a total defense system, which prioritizes the preparedness of all elements of the nation.

Neil A. Englehart (2016) explores how non-state armed groups (NSAGs) are a threat to global security (Englehart, 2016). Threats from non-state armed groups require a broader defense strategy, not only military-based but also human-security-based. Indonesia faces similar challenges to separatist groups, terrorists, and armed militias, which more often threaten social stability, economic and public security than direct military security. A defense policy based on total preparedness should include non-military approaches, such as law enforcement, diplomacy, economic development, and community approaches to addressing threats from NSAG.

The concept of the Total Defense System (TDS) is the answer in the face of non-military threats, this TDS requires coordination between the military and the civilian sector, similar to how the EU coordinates security policies between its member states. Success in dealing with non-military threats depends on cross-sectoral coordination and integration, not just a purely militaristic approach (Howorth, 2012). Bobrow & Hill (1991) point out that a defense policy based on total preparedness must consider domestic economic, diplomatic, and political factors, not just conventional military threats (Bobrow & Hill, 1991).

Barry R. Posen (2006) reveals that defense based on total preparedness not only responds to direct threats, but also anticipates geopolitical uncertainties (Posen, 2006). Civil-military preparedness in the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) can be a model for Indonesia in dealing with non-military threats such as energy security, cyber threats, and disinformation. International cooperation and strengthening civil defense institutions are an important part of a security strategy based on total preparedness.

Typology of Non-Military Threats

In the modern era, threats to a country do not always come in the form of wars or armed attacks. Many countries now face invisible threats, but the impact can be enormous on national stability. This threat is often not seen directly, but can slowly weaken the nation's resilience. This is what is called a non-military threat an attack that does not use weapons but remains dangerous to the life of the nation and state.

Talking about defense and defense policy, the perspective used is the threats faced, in this context threats are divided into two types, namely military threats and non-military threats. In this paper, the threat perspective used is a discussion in the typology of non-military threats. According to (Gartika et al., 2023) non-military threats are a growing challenge in the country's defense system. In the educational environment, radicalism is an ideological threat that can damage social and national stability if not handled properly. Universities are one of the main targets for the spread of radical ideas because students have great potential in shaping public opinion and future policies. Therefore, student radicalization needs to receive serious attention through strategies that involve various elements of society, including the government, educational institutions, and community organizations.

Ideological and Political Threats Ideological-political threats are a concern in the Indonesian context, especially in the form of challenges to national sovereignty and political integrity. This threat can arise from within and outside the country, including political pressure from other countries and radical ideological movements that threaten domestic stability (Chow, 2021; Coticchia, 2021).

Benyamin et al., (2023) Grouping non-military threats that continue to grow, especially in the form of irregular warfare and hybrid warfare (Benyamin et al., 2023).

Irregular warfare involves conflicts between state and non-state actors, generally using guerrilla tactics and propaganda to undermine the legitimacy of the government. Meanwhile, hybrid warfare combines elements of conventional warfare, irregular tactics, terrorism, and cyberattacks. Hybrid Warfare is also a serious threat to Indonesia, especially in the era of information globalization. These threats involve disinformation, manipulation of energy issues, and provocations in gray areas aimed at creating continuous political and social instability in the absence of an open war. Total civil-military defense readiness is needed to deal with this kind of threat (Ljungkvist, 2024; Wither, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of irregular warfare has increasingly been seen in the form of information wars, disinformation, and political propaganda. The spread of negative narratives through social media and the manipulation of public opinion are part of the strategy to weaken the stability of the country. Other threats include cyberattacks, which have seen a significant increase and have the potential to disrupt critical national infrastructure.

Cyber threats are growing with rapid advances in information and communication technology, characterized by increasing attacks on vital infrastructure. This threat has the potential to disrupt the national energy system through data manipulation, such as False Data Injection Attacks, which can affect the stability of the energy system nationally (Chen et al., 2020). In Indonesia itself, cybersecurity policies have become a concern for the government because state and non-state actors can take advantage of weaknesses in information systems to weaken national integrity or sabotage critical infrastructure (Rizal & Yani, 2016).

In another context, Ismail & Priyanto (2023) mentioned that non-military threats in Indonesia are growing along with the advancement of science and technology (Ismail & Priyanto, 2023). These threats encompass various aspects, including cyber threats, disinformation, and economic threats. Today, the Economic-Political Threat of the Defense Industry The military's dominance of the defense industry has a major impact because it can affect economic and political transparency, increase the risk of corruption, and weaken civilian control over the defense sector. The government needs to pay serious attention to this aspect because non-transparent management of the defense industry can affect overall national resilience (Grimes, 2021). In its development, the

current concept of national security highlights the need for the state to protect its national interests through political, economic, and military power in the face of external and internal threats.

Furthermore, Karki (2024) explained that non-military threats are increasingly becoming the main focus in defense policy, considering their impact that can disrupt national stability (Karki, 2024). As global uncertainty increases, various forms of non-military threats such as economic crises, demographic changes, and the spread of misinformation through social media are also further complicating the country's security governance. Therefore, the security approach can no longer focus only on traditional military threats but must include aspects of human security and social resilience.

Threats to social resilience, including living standards, social welfare, and effective implementation of social policies, are an important part of Indonesia's total defense system. Imoptimal management of social policies can cause internal instability, weaken social solidarity, and weaken people's preparedness to face external and internal threats (Terziev, 2019). As mentioned in the research of Halkis & Ninda (2021), national stability is not only determined by military power, but also by economic capacity and information security (Halkis & Ninda, 2021). In addition, environmental factors such as natural disasters can also pose a serious threat to the stability of the country, which requires national preparedness in mitigation and rapid response (Efthymiopoulos, 2019). Within the framework of a preparedness-based national defense policy, non-military threats are of high complexity that require special attention due to their significant impact on national stability.

Thus, the typology of non-military threats in state defense includes various aspects such as economic, social, political, and cyber threats. This threat can come from economic instability, the spread of radical ideologies, as well as cyberattacks targeting the country's critical infrastructure. In order to deal with these various non-military threats, a comprehensive and integrative total defense system is urgently needed by Indonesia. The system aims not only to improve physical and technical readiness, but also to strengthen social, ideological-political, and economic resilience, in order to safeguard national integrity and sovereignty under a variety of complex threat conditions.

Non-military threats have just as serious impacts as military threats, and in some cases, they are even more difficult to anticipate because they are latent and multidimensional. Therefore, a state defense strategy based on the Total Defense System is needed, which involves all elements of the nation in dealing with this threat. National resilience must be strengthened through synergy between governments, the private sector, and civil society to develop policies that are adaptive and responsive to evolving non-military threats. Increasing digital literacy, maintaining unity, loving one's own culture, and caring for the environment and health are real steps in facing this threat. With togetherness, we can become a stronger nation and ready to face the challenges of the times.

The Urgency of the State's Defense Policy: Sishankamrata

Mandels & Eveleigh (2009) highlight the importance of a national defense system that does not only depend on conventional military aspects, but also the total preparedness of civilian society as well as the ability to face various non-military challenges and threats (Mandels & Eveleigh, 2009). Through historical reflection, Mandels emphasized the need for a defense system that is supported by moral integrity, management competence, and resilient civilian readiness in the face of various national challenges that are not solely military in nature. Further, Mandels identified that defense institutions, especially after World War II, underwent significant shifts in terms of managerial orientation, morality, and policy priorities. An increasingly bureaucratic, complex, and political-economic goal orientation, according to the authors, leads to a decline in the quality of research and inefficiencies that lead to unpreparedness to face various threats, including increasingly complex non-conventional threats.

Facing a growing threat, defense policy must always be dynamic. Modern defense policy, according to Raisio et al., (2020), must be able to adapt to an increasingly complex security environment with geopolitical changes and unforeseen threats (Raisio et al., 2020). This modern state defense policy requires dynamic analysis following the dynamics of increasingly complex security threats.

Karki, B. (2024) explained that the ideal defense system emphasizes the importance of the participation of all elements of society in maintaining state security (Karki, 2024). In

his article, Karki highlighted that the success of defense policy depends on a balance between civilian control over the military and public participation in security policy. A defense policy based on total preparedness requires strategic thinking involving various stakeholders, as happened in the process of forming ESDP policies in Europe (Howorth, 2004). Changes in defense policy in Europe are strongly influenced by epistemic ideas and communities, i.e. networks of professionals and academics that shape perceptions of security. Epistemic communities in security and defense policy can help improve preparedness in the face of non-military threats, such as disinformation, economic threats, and social crises.

The implementation of the Total Defense System is particularly relevant given the increasingly complex non-military threats. This concept encourages integration between the civilian and military components in the face of threats, as well as developing high readiness to create effective deterrence. Thus, a defense system that focuses not only on military aspects, but also social, economic, and political resilience is needed (Wither, 2020). From some of the opinions of these experts, we can see the urgency of a defense policy that accommodates the needs of military defense and non-military defense.

Indonesia designed a state defense policy in the form of a general policy of state defense (Jakumhanneg) every five years which was also adjusted to the policy of the government at that time, in Jakumhanneg it also discussed the universal people's defense strategy (sishankamrata). In the context of Sishankamrata, the implementation of defense policy must ensure that there is synergy between the government, military, and civil society to maintain national stability.

Sishankamrata as Indonesia's state defense system aims to protect territorial sovereignty and integrity from various threats, both military and non-military. The implementation of this defense policy requires the involvement of all elements of the nation, including civil society, the private sector, and the military. In its implementation, defense policy must be adjusted to the development of the global strategic environment as well as changes in the threat landscape (Ismail & Priyanto, 2023). The concept of Sishankamrata is rooted in the philosophy that national defense is a shared responsibility between the TNI, the National Police, the government, and all Indonesian people. This

system ensures that not only the armed forces are ready to defend the country, but also that all levels of society have awareness and readiness to face various threats.

Sishankamrata emphasized the involvement of all elements of society in the country's defense efforts. According to Halkis and Ninda (2021), the country's defense policy cannot only rely on military power, but must also involve the active participation of the community in various aspects of preparedness (Halkis & Ninda, 2021). The implementation of this concept also requires synergy between the civilian and military components, so that all elements of the nation can play a role in maintaining national sovereignty (Zatsepin, 2019). In its implementation, the government needs to ensure that defense policy is holistic and involves a multi-sectoral approach. So that synergy is formed between universities, the TNI/Polri, and the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) is very important in the case of handling the threat of radicalism (Gartika et al., 2023).

In the implementation of defense policy, according to Benyamin et al., (2023), the state must strengthen national defense awareness, increase community involvement in defense efforts, and develop a strong cybersecurity system (Benyamin et al., 2023). Collaboration between the government, the TNI, the National Police, and non-state actors is a key factor in defending state sovereignty amid the threat of hybrid war. Therefore, it can be concluded that the presence of the system and its applicability in civil-military cooperation is a necessity that is difficult to avoid, especially in the conditions of threats that continue to develop rapidly.

In the face of increasingly complex global challenges, Sishankamrata's policy is the main strategy in building a resilient national defense. By involving all elements of society, strengthening the military and non-military sectors, and increasing awareness of national defense, Indonesia can face various threats more preparedly. National defense is not only a military duty, but a shared responsibility to maintain the sovereignty and integrity of the nation.

Pillars of Preparedness-based State Defense Policy

The country's defense is not only about military power, but also the preparedness of all components of the nation in facing various threats. In an increasingly dynamic

global context, Indonesia needs a defense policy that is not only military-resilient, but also based on comprehensive preparedness. This policy emphasizes the active role of the government, the private sector, and society in creating a defense system that is adaptive and responsive to the various challenges of the times.

Domorenok & Trein (2024) explained that the concept of policy integration is not just administrative coordination but involves overall policy transformation, including the use of mutually reinforcing policy instruments (Domorenok & Trein, 2024). Overall, Domorenok & Trein research confirms that policy success depends on consistency, coherence, and suitability between policy objectives, instruments, and actors involved.

According to Lallerstedt, K. (2021) although the main focus of national defense is often on military strategy, total defense capacity depends not only on military assets but also on the resilience of communities in the face of non-military threats, such as cyberattacks, energy crises, and pandemics (Lallerstedt, 2021). The main challenges faced in rebuilding the system include a lack of structural readiness, the absence of reserve stocks in vital sectors, and weak coordination between the government and the private sector. A total defense approach should include a resilient economic strategy, better coordination between the government and the private sector, and an update of the legal framework governing the mobilization of resources in an emergency.

The need for preparedness-based state defense has become a discourse that continues to develop to this day, but the main interaction needed in forming the defense system still needs to be improved. The main pillars in the implementation of a total defense system include close coordination between military and civilian components, creating comprehensive preparedness in the face of various threats. The active involvement of civil society in supporting the country's defense policy is a key pillar in the total defense system. Technology transfer, domestic innovation, and the development of competent human resources are important keys in strengthening the country's defense capabilities. This pillar includes increasing the resilience of critical infrastructure against non-military threats such as cyberattacks.

The implementation of preparedness-based national defense policies must at least be supported by three main pillars, as will be explained next:

1. Institutional Pillars: The involvement of government, academia, and civil society is critical in designing effective national defense strategies (Coticchia, 2021). The institutional interaction of the three elements must be carried out so that effective communication is formed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia demonstrated the value of integrated civil-military operations. The government established a National COVID-19 Task Force that included representatives from both the TNI and civilian ministries. Sarjito and Sutawidjaya find that this “whole-of-government” approach was essential for coordinating logistics and reducing bureaucratic delays. However, they also note that “bureaucratic hurdles occasionally hindered efficiency” in these inter-agency efforts. These findings suggest that clear mandates and communication channels are needed to strengthen institutional integration under the TDS framework (Sarjito & Sutawidjaya, 2024).

A similar cross-sector integration is emerging in Indonesia’s cyber defense. In late 2024, President Widodo (and later President Prabowo Subianto) authorized the creation of a dedicated military Cyber Force. The TNI has actively recruited both service personnel and civilian cyber experts and is collaborating with the Defense Ministry, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, and other stakeholders to define roles and responsibilities (Chakravarti, 2024). At the policy level, the draft Cybersecurity and Resilience Bill explicitly mandates “inter-agency coordination” among government bodies for cyber defense (Chia, 2025). These examples indicate progress toward civil-military integration in key defense domains, though implementation on the ground remains a work in progress.

2. Technology and Innovation Pillar: Efthymiopoulos (2019) emphasized that the development of defense technology, especially in cybersecurity, is a crucial factor in building national preparedness to face modern threats (Efthymiopoulos, 2019). Indonesia has also begun leveraging new technologies to enhance its defense posture. During the pandemic, for example, the TNI deployed drones for surveillance and relied on digital health information systems to track infection hotspots (Sarjito & Sutawidjaya,

2024). These innovations demonstrated how unmanned platforms and secure data networks can improve situational awareness and crisis response. In parallel, the government and industry have launched large-scale cyber skills programs to build capacity. Notably, the telecom provider Indosat and Mastercard partnered with the Ministry of Communication to offer free cybersecurity training modules to the public, aiming to produce one million trained “digital talents” by 2029. As Mastercard stated, raising “cybersecurity awareness” through these programs is seen as central to building “national digital resilience” (K. Salmon, 2025).

Moreover, Indonesia is institutionalizing technological capacities. The newly formed Cyber Force is being integrated into the TNI’s structure (with cyber centers attached to each service branch) (Chakravarti, 2024), and military officials are coordinating with civilian agencies on its development. Experts also emphasize the importance of education and human capital: it is crucial to “streamline digital literacy” and intensify cybersecurity training from K-12 through university, to cultivate the skilled workforce needed for cyber defense (Sury, 2023). These measures show that technological innovation is being woven into the TDS paradigm, but their success will depend on continued policy support, resources, and interagency coordination.

3. Pillars of Public Participation: According to Lou (2024), people who have awareness and involvement in national defense can strengthen national resilience to threats both from within and outside the country (Lou, 2024). Indonesia itself has the concept of defending the country which is one of the efforts to involve the community in national defense. Defending the country itself is a right and obligation protected in the 1945 Constitution.

The TDS concept emphasizes that civilians, the private sector, and community organizations must also contribute to defense. Some concrete steps have been taken to mobilize public participation. For instance, the Indosat-Mastercard cyber training initiative mentioned above explicitly targets broad segments of society (including students, workers, and MSMEs) with basic cyber hygiene and digital literacy instruction. Such programs reflect a view that empowering individuals with technology skills is part of national resilience (K. Salmon, 2025). Civil society groups have likewise begun

receiving digital security training: one NGO network reports holding “digital resilience” workshops for activists, journalists, and women’s organizations to strengthen their online safety.

In other domains, authorities are expanding community-driven early warning and awareness efforts. A recent example is the expansion of Indonesia’s public health alert system: USAID helped grow an early-warning network for zoonotic and infectious diseases from just 2 provinces to 38 provinces between 2021 and 2024 (White House, 2024). This initiative involved training local health workers and integrating data from animal and human health sectors. Similarly, disaster preparedness campaigns (like tsunami drills and community radio alerts) engage local populations. These developments show that public and private stakeholders are being brought into the resilience framework, although public awareness of the TDS concept itself remains low. Continued outreach, education campaigns, and inclusive decision-making will be essential to fully realize the participatory pillar of TDS.

In its implementation, in addition to these pillars it is important for defense policy to also accommodate the crisis management system. This is emphasized in research by Stelmach, T (2022) which underlines the importance of planning, rapid response, and coordination skills between institutions in dealing with various crises, especially those related to non-military threats that will involve various sectors such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic (Stelmach, 2022). We can learn from several examples of countries that use total defense systems. The study of Caputo, D. A. (1975) emphasizes the importance of comparative public policy research to understand how countries design strategies in the face of global and domestic dynamics (Caputo, 1975).

Ljungkvist, K. (2024) explores the concept of hybrid warfare and grey zone conflicts to form a total defense strategy in Sweden (Ljungkvist, 2024). Since 2015, Sweden has overhauled its defense policy to return to a total defense strategy after decades of military budget cuts. In the face of threats that are not always in the form of conventional military attacks, such as cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns, Sweden applies an everyday total defense approach. This strategy requires civilians to be constantly alert to threats and ready to participate in defensive efforts, creating a situation in which daily life is increasingly militarized (martialisation). This approach risks threatening the principles of

democracy and civil liberties because of the demand for people to play an active role in the defense of the country on an ongoing basis. This concept reflects the global trend in the European Union and NATO that increasingly prioritizes resilience-based defense, where all aspects of social and economic life are mobilized to deal with increasingly complex threats.

After the annexation of Crimea and Russia's aggression against Ukraine, Lithuania undertook major reforms in its defense strategy by adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach (Bankauskaitė & Šlekys, 2023). In addition to building military capacity by purchasing advanced equipment and increasing the number of troops, Lithuania also emphasizes the importance of civil defense. The government is improving coordination with NATO, strengthening military infrastructure, and strengthening defense diplomacy with friendly countries, especially Poland, Germany, and the United States. Bankauskaitė, D., & Šlekys, D. also noted that the main challenge of the total defense approach is how to integrate all elements of society in a defense strategy, especially in the context of evolving hybrid threats.

Furthermore, Russia has adapted its military doctrine to deal with modern threats, including through asymmetric and hybrid warfare, as well as the important role of nuclear powers in its defense policy (Bartles, 2017). Meanwhile, Sakanaka, T. (1980) looked at the strategic factors that affected Japan's defense posture, including the country's hard-to-defend geography from invasion and its high dependence on foreign resources (Sakanaka, 1980).

What happened in Sweden and Lithuania seems to give an idea of the importance of a preparedness-based defense policy. However, we need to continue to evaluate so that the system is always developed and dynamic in accordance with the development of defense threats. Realmuto et al., (2020) evaluation underscores the challenges in measuring the long-term impact of multi-sectoral coalitions/total defense systems (Realmuto et al., 2020). Factors such as resource limitations, variability in the level of partner engagement, as well as the lack of baseline data before the program begins make quantitative assessments difficult. However, while systemic change takes a long time, these findings highlight the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing health inequalities and building more resilient community capacity.

Defense policy does not always depend on military leadership, but also on political support at home, including the relationship between the government and parliament (Meernik, 1993). The research shows that in the face of non-military threats, defense policy must consider political consensus and internal stability. To build total preparedness, cross-sectoral support is needed in defense policy, not just a militaristic approach.

In the face of increasingly complex threats, the country's defense cannot rely solely on military power. Comprehensive preparedness is needed that involves all elements of the nation, both in economic, social, technological, and active community aspects. By building strong and sustainable preparedness, Indonesia can become a resilient country and ready to face all challenges in the future.

Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of the Total Defense System in Indonesia

Total Defense System is a defense concept that integrates all components of the nation, both military and civilian, in maintaining state sovereignty. Indonesia, as an archipelagic country with social, economic, and geographical diversity, has unique challenges in implementing this system. Although this strategy is considered ideal for dealing with multidimensional threats, there are still various obstacles that hinder its effectiveness in Indonesia.

Alvinus & Hedlund (2024) explore the challenges of collaboration between civilians and the military in the Swedish Total Defense system (Alvinus & Hedlund, 2024). Identify three key challenges in Total Defense implementation: Incapability: Rigid structures and bureaucracy hinder the effectiveness of defense strategies. Unwillingness: Resistance from various actors in government and society to an integrated defense strategy. Lack of Synchronization: An imbalance in the coordination of the civilian and military sectors in the face of threats.

The implementation of a total defense system faces several key challenges, such as many societies do not yet understand their role in defense policy. According to Halkis and Ninda (2021), low public awareness of state defense can hinder the effectiveness of the implementation of preparedness-based defense policies (Halkis & Ninda, 2021).

Furthermore, limited financial support makes it difficult to implement the country's defense policy optimally (Zatsepin, 2019). In addition, the existence of differences in interests between institutions often causes defense policies to not be well integrated. According to Coticchia (2021), the lack of synergy between state institutions can hinder the effectiveness of a comprehensive defense system (Coticchia, 2021).

Despite these initiatives, significant political and bureaucratic hurdles remain. One major constraint is resources: Indonesian defense spending is modest (around 0.8% of GDP in 2025) and thus constrains new programs. Analysts warn that without sufficient funding, ambitious projects like the new Cyber Force may struggle to become fully operational (Chakravarti, 2024). Internal politics can also slow integration. Studies of recent crises emphasize that when agencies' roles or communication channels are unclear, delays and duplication occur (Sarjito & Sutawidjaya, 2024). Moreover, delays in enacting laws (for example, the long-pending cybersecurity bill) indicate that aligning policy with threat realities is a slow process. In practice, overcoming these challenges will require high-level leadership: clear legal frameworks, joint budgets or funding mechanisms, and trust-building between civilian and military institutions. Without such governance reforms, the TDS framework risks remaining a concept rather than an operational reality.

Trein, P., & Vagionaki, T. (2024) emphasized that policy failure is not the end of innovation, but rather a process that can encourage reform if policy learning can be carried out effectively (Trein & Vagionaki, 2024). To overcome this dilemma, the government needs to strengthen policy learning mechanisms and broader stakeholder engagement.

Meanwhile, from a threat perspective such as information warfare and cyberattacks are increasingly complex and require adaptive and responsive defense strategies. Wlezien, C., & Soroka, S. (2024) explores the relationship between mass media, public opinion, and government policy. The media not only influences public opinion and policy, but also reflects changes in public policy and preferences (Wlezien & Soroka, 2024). The article Wlezien, C., & Soroka, S emphasizes that the understanding of the role of the media needs to be adjusted: rather than as agents of change, the media functions more as a mirror of existing policy dynamics and public preferences.

Efthymiopoulos (2019) noted that the main challenge in cybersecurity is the rapid development of technology, so defense must always be updated and adapted to the dynamics of new threats (Efthymiopoulos, 2019). Karki, B. (2024) emphasizes that national security no longer depends only on military power, but also on the involvement of civil society in dealing with various non-military threats (Karki, 2024). For Indonesia, lessons from Nepal show that defense policy must be more inclusive, adaptive to new threats, and able to accommodate the role of all elements of the nation in maintaining state sovereignty.

Based on some of the conditions that have been described earlier, at least we can classify the challenges faced in the implementation of a preparedness-based defense policy, especially in *sishankamrata*, namely equality in welfare protection. Friedman, R. Z., & Iversen, T. (2024) highlights that social uncertainty and disparities can lead to political and social divisions if not managed properly (Friedman & Iversen, 2024). With the rise of populism and exclusive politics, the choice between probabilistic justice and status defense is becoming increasingly important. The researchers argue that in order to maintain social stability and democracy, countries must adopt welfare policies that strengthen solidarity and reduce social stratification.

Based on the concept of *Sishankamrata*, all elements of the nation have a responsibility to maintain the defense of the country. Spare components come from human, natural and artificial resources, which can be mobilized to strengthen key components in emergency situations. In the context of non-military threats, youth organizations can play a role in addressing social issues such as radicalism, crime, and drug abuse. Susilawati, et al. (2024) emphasized that youth organizations can become an integral part of the country's defense system if managed properly (Susilawati et al., 2024). With Indonesia's demographic bonus, youth can play a role in maintaining national stability both in peacetime and when facing threats. However, in order for this potential to be optimally utilized, clear regulations, increased awareness of national defense, and adequate infrastructure and training support are needed.

Susilawati, S. et al. (2024) group several challenges to the implementation of the defense system that are preparedness and universality, such as the lack of awareness of defending the country, especially among youth (Susilawati et al., 2024). They have not

fully understood their important role in national defense, so more massive socialization and education are needed. Synergy between the government, the TNI, and community organizations needs to be strengthened to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of universal defense policies.

The research of Glaeser et al., (2007) discusses the relationship between education and democracy, by highlighting how higher levels of education increase community participation (Glaeser et al., 2007). The study found that in various countries, there is a strong positive correlation between education levels and democratic political systems. Through education, the community will experience an increase in social skills, encouraging civic involvement. One possibility is that education can increase economic growth and military power.

Thus, although the total defense system is an ideal strategy to deal with multidimensional threats, its implementation in Indonesia still faces various obstacles. Therefore, stronger efforts are needed to build public awareness, improve inter-agency coordination, improve defense infrastructure, and strengthen cyber and economic resilience. With good synergy between the government, military, private sector, and society, Indonesia can have a more resilient defense system and be ready to face various challenges in the future.

CONCLUSION

In this era, facing increasingly complex global challenges, the country's defense policy is no longer only oriented towards conventional military threats, but must also be able to respond to non-military threats such as cyberattacks, disinformation, pandemics, and economic crises. For this reason, the Total Defense System (TDS) approach is a strategic solution in building an adaptive and comprehensive national defense. This system requires cooperation between civilians and the military.

The TDS concept emphasizes the integration between military power and the active role of civil society in defending state sovereignty. With this approach, defense policy not only focuses on strengthening the military sector, but also includes civil, economic, social, and political preparedness as part of the national defense strategy. In its implementation, Indonesia has adopted TDS through the general policy of national defense

(Jakumhanneg) which adjusts defense strategy to contemporary threat dynamics. In the Jakumhanneg, it is stated that Indonesia has a universal people's defense and security system. Through the defense system, all elements of the nation will be involved in dealing with the dynamics of defense threats, especially in dealing with non-military defense threats.

The typology of non-military threats faced by Indonesia is very diverse, ranging from ideological and political threats, cyber warfare, to economic crises and social resilience. Therefore, a defense policy based on total preparedness must be able to anticipate these multidimensional challenges through key pillars, namely institutional, technological and innovation, and public participation. The three pillars become a complete foundation that can harmonize the integration of all elements of the nation.

However, the implementation of TDS in Indonesia still faces various challenges, such as the lack of awareness of national defense among the public, limited defense budgets, weak coordination between the military and civilian sectors, and lack of readiness to face technology-based threats. To overcome these obstacles, stronger synergy is needed between governments, academia, business, and civil society in creating a more resilient and sustainable defense system.

In the end, a strong national defense does not depend only on military strength alone, but also on collective preparedness that reflects the spirit of togetherness in maintaining national stability. The Total Defense System is not just a strategy, but a new paradigm in defense policy that requires the active involvement of all elements of the nation in maintaining the country's sovereignty and resilience in the midst of the dynamics of evolving global threats.

In addition, in facing the challenges of TDS implementation, it is important for Indonesia to continue to strengthen its institutional and regulatory capacity for defense to be more flexible and adaptive to changes in the strategic environment. Defense policy reform should include improving inter-agency coordination, optimizing defense budgets, and improving the effectiveness of the national defense education and training system for the community. In this context, the establishment of rapid response mechanisms that integrate civilian and military resources is crucial in dealing with dynamic and asymmetric threats.

Furthermore, the approach to defense diplomacy also needs to be optimized to strengthen security cooperation with friendly countries and international organizations. In the face of transnational threats such as cybercrime, global terrorism, and information warfare, Indonesia needs to build strategic alliances and strengthen intelligence cooperation mechanisms to increase capacity for early threat detection and mitigation.

Thus, it can be concluded that the success of the implementation of Sishankamrata is not only determined by the policies made, but also by the collective awareness of all elements of the nation to contribute to maintaining the country's resilience. Building a resilience mentality oriented towards preparedness and active community participation is key in creating a defense system that is strong, sustainable, and able to respond to multidimensional challenges in the future.

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