

Spillover of COVID-19: Impact on National Defense



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ABSTRACT: The rapidly spreading impact of Covid-19 has potentially dire consequences for the Ministry of Defense's ability to protect national interests. The unprecedented effects of this pandemic are directly undermining the ability of the Ministry of Defense to carry out the National Defense Strategy. In particular, Covid-19 has harmed the readiness of the Armed Forces, their ability to project power globally, and their speed of modernization for future challenges.

This paper uses a descriptive qualitative approach as the main writing approach and uses the concept of impacts across key organizational pillars by Beth McGrath (2020), including (1) Workforce planning, (2) Training methods, (3) Reprioritizing spending, and (4) Policy.

The results of this study are: (1) The Ministry of Defense must be prepared with a complete set of strategies, (2) Distributed Virtual Reality training is a natural solution to the challenges posed by the current pandemic, (3) The military has no other choice but to make it a priority in spending on defense equipment and in carrying out military operations. The obvious choice is the big-budget items that cause problems, and (4) The defense equipment procurement program, military operations, and Research & Development (R&D) activities are expected to be hampered. As governments seek to prevent and mitigate the impact of this pandemic, the positive role played by military forces can be seen as an excuse to offset some of the expected defense budget cuts.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, National Defense, Policy, Reprioritizing spending, Training methods, Workforce planning

I. INTRODUCTION

It is known that the 2019-nCoV corona virus originated from the city of Wuhan in China. The virus attacks human respiration and spreads throughout the world, including Indonesia. According to most of the world's leading transmittable disease experts, the Wuhan coronavirus spreading from China is now likely to develop into a pandemic that circles the globe. Its prospect is overwhelming. A pandemic— a spreading outbreak on two or more continents (Osler, 2019).

Coronaviruses are a large virus family usually targeting the respiratory organ. The name is being derived from the Latin word corona, meaning crown, due to the spiky fringe which surrounds these viruses. Many species, such as bats, cats, and birds, get sick. Just seven are known to infect humans like Covid-19, SARS, and MERS.

Researchers are working to understand this new threat and warn current public health efforts, including the potential creation of a vaccine, including how the virus is evolving and moving from person to person. Infectious-disease specialists at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre, such as Dr. Trevor Bedford, are among the scientists at the front lines of that research effort. Bedford, a computational biologist who studies how viruses grow and spread, is gaining information about Covid-19 which he hopes will help save lives from this emerging respiratory virus disease.

Corona Virus Data Detail

Country	Deaths	Death rate*	Total Cases
US	915,255	278.8	77,215,428
Brazil	638,673	302.6	27,492,904
India	509,011	37.3	42,665,534
Russia	334,093	231.4	14,102,736
Mexico	312,697	245.1	5,283,852
Peru	208,381	641.0	3,445,680

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UK	159,518	238.7	18,266,015
Italy	151,015	250.5	12,105,675
Indonesia	145,176	53.6	4,807,778
Colombia	137,115	272.4	6,020,095

*Deaths per 100,000 people

Source: Johns Hopkins University and national public health agencies, BBC News, (2022). *Covid map: Coronavirus cases, deaths, vaccinations by country*, The Visual and Data Journalism Team

Figures last updated: 14 February 2022, 13:09 GMT

Indonesia is a developing country and the fourth most populous country in the world and thus is expected to suffer greatly and over a longer time. When the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 hit China most severely during the months December 2019 – February 2020. On January 27, 2020, Indonesia issued travel restrictions from Hubei province, which at the time was the epicenter of the global COVID-19, while at the same time evacuated 238 Indonesians from Wuhan. President Joko Widodo reported that he first found two cases of COVID-19 infection in Indonesia on March 2, 2020. (Djalante R, et al. (2020)). Patients who were confirmed to have COVID-19 in Indonesia started from an event in Jakarta where the patient was in contact with a foreign citizen from Japan who lives in Malaysia. After the meeting, the patient complained of fever, cough, and shortness of breath (WHO, 2020; Putri, 2020).

The policies issued are required to reduce existing problems. At least efforts to eradicate epidemics and pandemics in Indonesia are carried out through actions, such as self-awareness, handling of sufferers, sources of disease must be destroyed, and socialization to the public. Systematic efforts that have been carried out include planning a national scale movement to eradicate disease and regional and international scale agreements (Sumampouw, 2017).

The Indonesian government attempted to implement a special set of rules: one that has isolated areas affected by the pandemic and enabled the deployment of military forces to deal with disaster-laden emergencies in those regions where transmission of the virus is difficult to control. Despite this, there is no alternative given the nature of national security threats (Power 2020; M. M. Alam et al. (2021)).

The rapidly spreading impact of COVID-19 has potentially dire consequences for the Ministry of Defense's ability to protect national interests. The unprecedented effects of this pandemic are directly undermining the ability of the Ministry of Defense to carry out the National Defense Strategy. In particular, COVID-19 has harmed the readiness of the Armed Forces, their ability to project power globally, and their speed of modernization for future challenges (Govini, 2021). The growing rate of COVID-19 infections is affecting medical facilities, contractors, defense supply chains, performance venues, and military installations. Companies in the Defense Industry are also very vulnerable to COVID-19.

One of the first national security and defense lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic has been that globalization's promises about the security of vertically integrated global supply chains appeared to crumble from the start of this global crisis (Deakin University 2020). After decades of allowing market forces to dictate the shape of just in time global supply chains, many a country was left with severely depleted national industrial capacity: especially, for manufacturing. In many cases, market forces had worked against the maintenance of a scalable industry base (Coyne, 2020).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. National defense

According to Victoria (2018), the national defense is one of the functions of state government which is an effort to realize a unified state defense to achieve national goals, namely to protect the entire nation and the entire homeland of Indonesia, promote public welfare, educate the nation's life and participate in implementing world order based on independence, eternal peace, and social justice.

National defense efforts are carried out by building, maintaining, developing, and using the power of state defense based on the principles of democracy, human rights, public welfare, the environment, provisions of national law, international law, and international custom, as well as the principle of peaceful coexistence.

To support the interests of national defense, human resources, natural resources, artificial resources, as well as national facilities and infrastructure that are within and/or outside the management of the department in charge of defense are utilized to the maximum extent possible, both as a reserve component and as a supporting component.

National defense efforts take into account the dynamics of the development of the global, regional and national strategic environment. The geographical constellation of Indonesia, which is at the crossroads of two continents and two oceans, makes

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Indonesian waters a very strategic communication route and sea transportation route for the international community, as well as a crossing of the national interests of various countries in the world (Presidential decree (PERPRES) Number 8 the Year 2021). This condition greatly affects the patterns and forms of threats that are increasingly complex and multidimensional, in the form of military threats, non-military threats, and hybrid threats that can be categorized into factual and potential threats. These threats include terrorism, natural disasters, piracy, theft of natural resources, border violations, disease outbreaks, cyber, espionage, narcotics, and open conflict or conventional war.

The Indonesian state defense system is a universal defense system that involves all citizens, territories, and other national resources, and is prepared early by the government and is carried out in a total, integrated, directed, and continuous manner to uphold state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the safety of the whole nation from all threats.

U.S. defense strategy defines the components of a good national defense: (1) operational, (2) future challenges, (3) force management, and (4) institutional risks.

National Defense agencies are working to maintain mission readiness, ensure public safety, and support government-wide efforts in a wide variety of areas. The uncertainty of the current dynamically changing environment makes achieving these goals challenging. This article discusses how organizations can continue to support core response efforts, the safe flow of goods and resources, and consistent communication with the public.

Defense, Security, and Justice agencies at all levels (federal/national, state/regional, local/municipal) can expect impacts across key organizational pillars, including (McGrath, 2020):

- **Workforce planning:** increased focus on enabling remote work and providing scalable, virtual support solutions requiring investments in digital, technology, and cyber services.
- **Training methods:** military and law enforcement training that is conducted in classrooms can pivot to remote methods; however, operational training requires experiential, team-based approaches.
- **Reprioritizing spending:** as government spending shifts toward economic recovery efforts, DS&J organizations may experience decreased budgets requiring them to review investments and operations.
- **Policy:** as organizations reflect on the response to this crisis, the focus will shift toward scenario planning and establishing new policies and procedures to increase performance, preparedness, and resiliency.

B. Balance of Threat

Walt's threat balance theory emerged in the 1980s. The basic idea is that a country builds a military force as strong as any other country, regardless of whether that country acts aggressively or not. By maintaining the balance of power, no one country is drastically stronger than another, thus ensuring mutual security.

That is the balance of power theory. It was accepted for a long time until Stephen Walt started arguing that history doesn't support it. In contrast, Walt sees states accepting the rise of non-aggressive powers while working to balance a much weaker, but more aggressive threat. As a result, he argued that the state's ideas about security were determined by perceived threats, not the need to maintain a balance of power, and the threat balance theory was born (Muscato, 2017). According to Stephan Walt, states associate their security with perceived threats and seek to balance them through international relations. Four elements define perceived threat. The four elements of threat are aggregate strength, geographical proximity, offensive capability, and offensive intent. Those are the four criteria that countries use to evaluate threats posed by other countries.

According to Law Number 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense, threats consist of military threats and non-military threats. Military threats are the responsibility of the military as the main component to fight together with reserve components and supporting components. Meanwhile, non-military threats are the domain of the relevant ministries to counteract them.

The Indonesian military, like other government institutions, is very disturbed in carrying out its duties to maintain the territorial integrity of Indonesia during this Covid-19 pandemic. Several policies must be made to continue to carry out their duties even with very limited conditions. The most burdensome thing for the military is the dislocation of the military budget to other institutions that are considered more competent in dealing with the coronavirus outbreak. As a result, many military operations were postponed or canceled. Disruption of military operations will affect the security of the territory of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

C. Covid-19

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus (WHO, 2022), and was discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. It is highly contagious and quickly spread throughout the world.

Covid-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel like a cold, flu, or pneumonia. Covid-19 can attack more than the lungs and respiratory system. Other parts of the body may also be affected by this disease (NCIRD, 2021):

- Most people with Covid-19 have mild symptoms, but some people become seriously ill.

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- Some people including those with mild or no symptoms may be suffering from a post- Covid or “long-term” Covid-19 condition.
- Older adults and people with certain medical conditions have an increased risk of severe illness from Covid-19.
- Vaccines against Covid-19 are safe and effective. Vaccines teach our immune system to fight the virus that causes Covid-19.

The emergence of 2019-nCoV has attracted global attention, and on 30 January WHO declared Covid-19 a public health emergency of international concern (Dong Y, et al., 2020). The increase in the number of Covid-19 cases is happening quite quickly and has spread between countries. As of February 27, 2022, a total of 5.289.414 confirmed cases were reported with 4.593.185 deaths (CFR 86.8%) of which cases were reported in 192 countries/regions. Among these cases, several health workers have been reported to be infected (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) is a new type of disease that has never been previously identified in humans. The virus that causes Covid-19 is called Sars-CoV-2. Coronavirus is zoonotic (transmitted between animals and humans) (Putri, 2020). Meanwhile, the animal that is the source of the transmission of Covid-19 is still unknown. Based on scientific evidence, Covid-19 can be transmitted from human to human through coughing/sneezing droplets (droplets). Common signs and symptoms of Covid-19 infection include symptoms of acute respiratory distress such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The average incubation period is 5 - 6 days with an incubation period of fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In severe cases, Covid-19 can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and even death (Tosepu, R., et al., 2020).

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper is analyzed with an analysis of literature review related to the problem of how the Covid-19 pandemic affects the national defense. A literature study is a study whose object of research is in the form of literary works in the form of scientific journals, books, articles in the mass media, and statistical data. This literature review is used to find out the steps taken by the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic from the point of view of defense policy.

IV. DISCUSSION

Defense, Security, and Justice agencies at all levels (federal/national, state/regional, local/municipal) can expect impacts across key organizational pillars, including workforce planning, training methods, reprioritizing spending, and policy.

D. *Workforce planning*

The safety and welfare of civilian and military personnel is a top priority for the Ministry of Defense. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to look for new ways to acquire, develop, recruit, and retain various talents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic emphasizes the importance of comprehensive emergency planning, especially in terms of staffing. The supply of labor for the Ministry of Defense is one of the biggest barriers to recruitment.

High work volumes, personnel burnout from extra shifts and constant stress, and staff infections/exposures can quickly accelerate staff shortages to crisis levels. Three strategies have proven essential to avoid compromising surge capacity and patient care during new Covid-19 spikes and future virus outbreaks.

- a. Use “out-of-the-box” recruitment tactics to meet temporary and short-term needs (Williams, 2021).
- b. Create a planning strategy for personnel occupying key positions.
- c. Develop efficient plans implemented to meet needs with current or on-leave cross-departmental personnel.

Flexibility and planning go hand in hand to encourage greater staff resilience. The Ministry of Defense must be prepared with a complete set of strategies, starting from implementing advanced practice providers in non-traditional roles, returning staff, and hiring personnel from the Defense University of the Republic of Indonesia.

The ability to quickly and efficiently recruit new personnel, volunteers, and staff is also critical to scaling up quickly in an emergency. The process includes identifying valid competencies, determining fit for need areas, and identifying needs for training or refresher education.

During the pandemic, special consideration should be given to social distancing in the workplace via teleworking. Therefore, the Ministry of Defense's pandemic plan should include (Inspector General, U.S. Department of Defense (2021):

- Use of laptops, high-speed telecommunications links, and other systems that enable personnel to perform essential functions while working remotely.
- Remote work testing and training, as well as the impact of remote work, on the internal network. Testing, training, and practice should also cover the practice of social distancing techniques, including remote working skills, and assessing the impact of staff frameworks on facilities, essential functions, and services.

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E. Training methods

The coronavirus has a significant effect on daily military operations. And like other countries, the creeping threat of the virus has reached the pockets of many militaries. The best option for the military is to cancel or reduce many hands-on exercises. During an epidemic, training activities, such as basic military training can spread the virus and potentially on a large scale. Military drills requiring the movement of people, via planes, trains, and trucks, to specific locations will increase the spread of the virus. Naturally, this would lead to a military operation readiness dilemma.

This pandemic has an impact on military readiness. And no one can predict when this epidemic will end, thus raising fears within the armed forces for war. Therefore, defense organizations need to start planning for the long-term implications. The main concern for the military is the implications for recruits who must be provided with basic military training. If the military's basic training facilities were to close, it would stop the flow of personnel into the military.

Distributed Virtual Reality training is a natural solution to the challenges posed by the current pandemic. It can be used in times of need, allowing fighters in different locations, from the comfort of their living room couch to military bases or deployments, to practice individual and collective skills. Indeed, many virtual training solutions already exist or are under development (Jennifer McArdle, et al., 2020).

Indonesia's Military Armed Force should be able to adopt VR technology. This technology will be very supportive in national defense, especially in preparing defense human resources to face threats. The use of VR in military training and education will be very helpful, considering that VR technology can be a fully immersive system, where it gives users the closest to reality through the high quality of graphics and performance as well as complete stimuli. The soldier will be easier to understand the material and the surrounding environment because it is also balanced with practice. In addition, military education and training are most dangerous and threaten the safety of soldiers (Herdayatamma, K.L., 2021).

The reality, however, is that the current military cannot be formed by providing distributed VR training on a large scale. If the coronavirus causes the cancellation of long-term drills and the closure of training facilities, military readiness could be seriously disrupted.

F. Reprioritizing spending

The coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic has dramatically changed the world we live in. Not only has the human suffering unimaginable worldwide, but the necessary protective measures implemented by governments around the world have caused an economic downturn far worse than the 2008–2009 financial crisis and unprecedented since the Great Depression of 1929. This crisis will have an impact on the interpretation of the 2020 military spending data and should have an unexpected impact on its transparency (Tian, 2020).

The current corona crisis has a potentially devastating economic and non-economic impact on non-traditional security threats, particularly if they are not localized. The Covid-19 pandemic is putting pressure on military spending. The government prioritizes the health sector to deal with pandemics that are suffering from the community rather than supporting the development of military forces to deal with insignificant threats. However, military budget items that were deemed unimportant were diverted to the health sector. This of course will have an impact on military operations that are getting weaker. In addition to the reallocation of resources from the military to health institutions that are better able to deal with the threat of the coronavirus, there has been a reduction in economic activity after the coronavirus crisis.

Regarding a very significant reduction in the defense budget, the military has no other choice but to make it a priority in spending on defense equipment and in carrying out military operations. The obvious choice is the big-budget items (planes, ships, tanks...) that cause problems.

G. Policy

As organizations reflect on the response to this crisis, the focus will shift toward scenario planning and establishing new policies and procedures to increase performance, preparedness, and resiliency.

Since the start of the pandemic, all countries introduced measures to protect the health of their armed forces personnel reflecting national policies. These include the introduction of social distancing, a shift to work from home, and a substantial reduction in military training and field drills. As countries relax the measures of the 2020 health protocols, the armed forces are gradually rebuilding their military training programs while introducing quarantine measures for groups of personnel to minimize the risk of transmitting Covid-19 in large numbers of personnel. The Covid-19 outbreak among armed forces personnel has had a major impact on military capabilities. While not all outbreaks are reported in open sources, they do have a markedly communal life and are difficult to identify and isolate.

This pandemic has not had a uniform effect around the world in terms of the absolute number of infections and their trajectories. It is not easy to explain the reasons behind this discrepancy, although it appears to be a mix between the timeliness

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and effectiveness of government responses, community preparedness as a result of previous experience with communicable diseases, adherence, and risk sensitivity, community age profile, the influence of sanitary conditions on the immune system and climatic conditions affecting airborne transmission (Expert Workshop, 2020).

Different infection rates, varying government responses, and differing attitudes in society to viruses and other competitive risks may help explain why the impact of the pandemic on local peace and stability also varies. In general, the government will prioritize the health sector to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic by cutting the budget of non-health ministries, including the defense ministry.

However, in terms of the impact of the pandemic on defense spending, it should be noted that so far a policy of dislocation of the defense budget has been implemented to other ministries that have the authority to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the defense equipment procurement program, military operations, and Research & Development (R&D) activities are expected to be hampered (Meyer, et al. 2021). As governments seek to prevent and mitigate the impact of this pandemic, the positive role played by military forces can be seen as an excuse to offset some of the expected defense budget cuts.

The military has to make difficult decisions is rarely made, especially concerning large procurement projects. The Kagan law of defense economics applies here, which states that “When the military is asked if they want more troops or new planes and are told they have to choose one, it always chooses planes” (European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions, 2021).

V. CONCLUSIONS

Flexibility and planning go hand in hand to encourage greater staff resilience. The Ministry of Defense must be prepared with a complete set of strategies, starting from implementing advanced practice providers in non-traditional roles, returning staff, and hiring personnel from the Defense University of the Republic of Indonesia.

Distributed Virtual Reality training is a natural solution to the challenges posed by the current pandemic. It can be used in times of need, allowing fighters in different locations, from the comfort of their living room couch to military bases or deployments, to practice individual and collective skills. Indeed, many virtual training solutions already exist or are under development. Indonesia's Military Armed Force should be able to adopt VR technology. This technology will be very supportive in national defense, especially in preparing defense human resources to face threats. The fact, however, is that the current military cannot be formed by providing distributed VR training on a large scale. If the coronavirus causes the cancellation of long-term drills and the closure of training facilities, military readiness could be seriously disrupted.

Regarding a very significant reduction in the defense budget, the military has no other choice but to make it a priority in spending on defense equipment and in carrying out military operations. The obvious choice is the big-budget items (planes, ships, tanks...) that cause problems. The military has to make difficult decisions is rarely made, especially concerning large procurement projects.

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