

# The Role of Intelligence in Countering Radicalism Threats within the Ranks of the Indonesian National Army (TNI AD)

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## Abstract

Pancasila plays a role in maintaining national stability which can be achieved if the Indonesian people feel safe and peaceful and the integrity and sovereignty of the Indonesian state are protected from internal and external threats. Radicalism and terrorism are internal threats. Exposure to radicalism can cause a person to commit acts of terrorism. According to the data, it is known that the perpetrators of acts of radicalism and terrorism consist of the unemployed, unskilled workers, independent entrepreneurs, employees/employees, professionals, civil servants, public officials and the military. This research will examine how the role of intelligence in dealing with the threat of radicalism among Indonesian Army soldiers. The research method used is a qualitative approach. The results of the study show that the threat of radicalism among TNI AD soldiers is a real threat and there are 5 (five) TNI AD soldiers who are exposed to radicalism and are involved in criminal acts of terrorism. The exposure of TNI AD soldiers to radicalism is caused by internal and external factors, such as ideology and the economy. The role of intelligence to prevent this can be in the form of monitoring, close surveillance and profiling strategies for Indonesian Army soldiers. Apart from that, it was also carried out in the form of emphasis in the form of issuing a telegram from the TNI Commander regarding the prevention of radicalism and cooperation in preventing and overcoming radicalism with the BNPT and related agencies through the SKB 11 Ministers. The detection of TNI AD soldiers who were exposed to these radical views was through identifying symptoms of radicalism in TNI AD Soldiers by searching for evidence in the form of profiling them. Besides that, the internal situation of the institution was restored. After carrying out the detection, security is carried out in a preventive form by screening all TNI soldiers as well as security in a repressive form by efforts to develop mentality, deradicalization, and socialization of planting Pancasila ideological values.

## 1. Introduction

As the foundational philosophy of the Indonesian nation, Pancasila plays a critical role in maintaining national stability. Stability is achieved when Indonesian citizens feel secure and at peace, and when the integrity and sovereignty of the state are protected from both internal and external threats (Markum, 2020). One significant internal threat is radicalism and terrorism. Exposure to radical ideologies can lead an individual to engage in terrorist acts, as those who adopt radical views tend to use violence as a means of furthering their aims (Wicaksono, 2020). Radicalism and terrorism have long been present in Indonesia—beginning with the bombing of the Bursa Efek Jakarta (BEJ) in 2000 and escalating after the 2002 Bali bombings. According to data from the Center for Detention Studies (CDS), to date there have been 983

incidents of radicalism and terrorism in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the Institute for Economics & Peace's Global Terrorism Index (GTI) places Indonesia at rank 24 out of 163 countries.

Terrorist acts involving explosive attacks in Indonesia are perpetrated predominantly by individuals exposed to extremist viewpoints. The term "radical" is defined in the Indonesian language dictionary (KBBI) as a strong desire to demand change; in this context, those exposed to radical teachings often acquire new understandings which, when immediately internalised, lead to changes in thought and behaviour (Wicaksono, 2020). Perpetrators of radicalism and terrorism come from varied occupational backgrounds. The CDS data shows that they include the unemployed, manual labourers, independent entrepreneurs, salaried employees, professionals, civil servants, and public officials. While CDS does not specifically list personnel from the Tentara Nasional Indonesia – Angkatan Darat (TNI-AD), data from the Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) indicates that there are members of TNI who have been exposed to radical ideologies and even committed acts of terrorism (Prasetya, 2022). Among them are five TNI-AD soldiers:

1. Irwan bin Ilyas (Gultor Kopassus) – involved in the Buddha Tirta Temple bombing in Lhokseumawe, Aceh;
2. Ibrahim Hasan (Kostrad) – involved in the BEJ bombing in 2000;
3. Jonhen – affiliated with JAD Medan;
4. Sabar Subagyo (alias Daeng Koro) – affiliated with MIT, killed during apprehension by security forces;
5. Juli Karsono – involved in a police shooting case in 2009-2010, killed during apprehension.

Furthermore, in recent years, there has been evidence of internalisation of ideologies that are inconsistent with Pancasila (such as the idea of a caliphate) within the military. One video circulating among TNI personnel depicts a soldier openly supporting the caliphate ideology while chanting "takbīr" (Siddik & Syauqillah, 2021). According to the Tridek Doctrine and Undang Undang Tentara Nasional Indonesia No. 34 Tahun 2004, the Oath of a TNI Soldier states:

By Allah, I swear/promise:

1. That I will be loyal to the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia which is based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution;
2. That I will submit to the law and uphold military discipline;
3. That I will obey my superior without questioning orders or decisions;
4. That I will carry out all duties with full responsibility to the military and the Indonesian State;
5. That I will keep military secrets as strictly as possible.

Likewise, the Sapta Marga doctrine emphasises loyalty to Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, and dedication to national defence and military honour. Thus, when a TNI member expresses support for an organisation not aligned with Pancasila, this constitutes a violation and poses a future threat to national security (Siddik, 2021).

Under Article 7(2)(b) of Law No. 34 / 2004, each TNI member has duties regulated further through OMP (Organisasi Militer Pokok) and OMSP (Organisasi Militer Satuan Perang) patterns, including preventing the internalisation of radical ideology. The fact that cases of radicalisation exist among TNI-AD personnel suggests that early-warning and detection measures during recruitment have not been fully effective. According to the Personnel Guidance Instructions (2008), the recruitment (penerimaan) of TNI soldiers involves ongoing research, evaluation, and assessment to ensure that Army units possess personnel strength aligned with the needs of the TNI-AD.

In terms of threat mitigation, Article 5 of Undang Undang Intelijen Negara No. 17 Tahun 2011 prescribes that the purpose of state intelligence is to detect, identify, analyse, evaluate and interpret early signals of threats to security and national interests. In the context of radicalism and terrorism, particularly when TNI personnel are involved, this becomes a critical threat to national interest, emphasising the importance of intelligence operations in prevention, handling, and eradication of radicalism and terrorism.

Despite the existence of several studies on radicalisation among TNI AD personnel—such as the article by Siddik and Syauqillah (2021) titled "Analysis of TNI Policy Implementation in Facing the Caliphate

Ideology”, which found that there are several effective policies and practices—there remains a gap regarding in-depth analysis of the role of intelligence in confronting radicalism within the TNI. Moreover, although early detection and early warning are pivotal for preventing rebellions and other threats, their execution demands a capable, professional, and collaborative state intelligence apparatus. Therefore, this research proposes to evaluate the role of intelligence in addressing radicalism among TNI AD personnel.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Role Theory**

Role Theory integrates perspectives from sociology, psychology, and organizational behavior. The concept of role originates from theater, referring to how an actor performs a part consistent with audience expectations. In social science, the term encompasses role-playing, prescribed roles, role conflict, role distance, role failure, role models, and role strain (Soekanto, 2014). Soekanto explains that roles reflect (1) norms describing an individual’s position or status, (2) the understanding one holds within a group, and (3) socially accepted behavioral patterns. Roles thus define not only expectations but also performance within social and institutional structures.

### **2.2. Intelligence Theory**

Intelligence encompasses knowledge, organization, and activity. According to Sherman Kent, intelligence is both an epistemic process and an organizational function that transforms information into actionable insight for decision-making (Sukarno, 2011). Similarly, David Kahn (2009) describes intelligence as an evolutionary capability enabling organisms—especially humans—to distinguish beneficial from harmful stimuli. Intelligence, therefore, serves as a means rather than an end, aimed at achieving strategic objectives such as national defense or competitive advantage. Lowenthal (2007) categorizes intelligence into three dimensions:

1. a process of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information;
2. a product resulting from analysis; and
3. an institutional structure managing these activities.

Shulsky and Schmitt (as cited in Wibisono, n.d.) further define four primary intelligence functions: information collection, analysis, counterintelligence, and covert operations.

- Collection involves obtaining raw data through espionage, technology, or open sources.
- Analysis evaluates the reliability, validity, and relevance of data for policymaking (Johnson, 2007).
- Counterintelligence protects state institutions from espionage and sabotage (Berger, 2010).
- Covert action influences events discreetly to achieve national policy objectives.

In operational contexts, intelligence also encompasses investigation, security, and mobilization—activities aimed at gathering information, maintaining organizational integrity, and shaping conditions favorable to national objectives (Djadmiko, 2021). The effectiveness of these functions depends on early detection, early warning, problem solving, and forecasting (Sugirman, 2009), allowing policymakers to anticipate threats and design preventive measures.

### **2.3. Radicalism Concept**

The term radicalism derives from the Latin *radix* (root), implying a demand for fundamental change. Kallen (as cited in Suharto, 2014) identifies three characteristics of radical movements: (1) reactive opposition to current conditions, (2) determination to replace existing systems with alternative values, and (3) absolute conviction in the truth of their ideology. Rosadi (2014) adds that radical groups seek to restructure society entirely in accordance with their belief system.

In the Indonesian context, post-Reformasi democratization opened avenues for free expression, but also enabled the diffusion of anti-Pancasila ideologies. The Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Terorisme (BNPT) defines radicalism as the spread of ideologies that contradict Pancasila and seek systemic

transformation through hatred narratives. BNPT identifies three phases of radicalization: indoctrination, militancy consolidation, and preparation for violent action (BNPT, 2021).

## **2.4. Radicalism Prevention**

Priyono (2016) distinguishes between hard and soft approaches to radicalism prevention. Preventive strategies should emphasize social empowerment rather than coercion. Riyanta (2015) highlights that intelligence agencies—such as BIN, BAIS, and POLRI—play a crucial role in early detection and information gathering to pre-empt radical threats.

Law No. 5 of 2018 on Counterterrorism mandates the state to implement preventive measures through three pillars: national preparedness, counter-radicalization, and deradicalization. Counter-radicalization involves systematic integration of anti-terror values within individuals and institutions, while deradicalization seeks to rehabilitate exposed individuals by reinstalling moral and ideological alignment with Pancasila (Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

## **2.5. Threat Concept**

The Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2021) defines threat as a potential source of harm or danger. Indonesian Law No. 3 of 2002 on State Defense and Law No. 17 of 2011 on State Intelligence classify threats as any domestic or foreign effort that endangers sovereignty, unity, or national safety. These threats are multidimensional—spanning military and non-military, tangible and intangible forms.

Radicalism represents a non-military ideological threat with real social consequences. It manifests through the erosion of Pancasila values and the rise of alternative ideological aspirations within society. The diffusion of radical thought among citizens, including state personnel, underscores the necessity of robust intelligence systems capable of early detection and ideological safeguarding (Ministry of Defense, 2021).

## **3. Methodology**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design, focusing on non-numerical data in the form of texts, documents, and visuals to capture in-depth meaning and context (Danim, 2022; Moleong, 2002). The qualitative approach seeks to understand underlying meanings and interpretive patterns through inductive reasoning, allowing researchers to derive analytical insights from detailed field findings (Creswell, 2016). Data sources consist of primary data obtained directly from interviews and observations, and secondary data gathered from literature, reports, and official documents. Data were collected through structured and unstructured interviews, document analysis, and literature review to explore the role of intelligence in countering radicalism within the Indonesian Army. The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's (as cited in Sugiyono, 2006) three-stage model: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification, conducted continuously until saturation. To ensure validity and reliability, the study applied triangulation techniques across methods, theories, and time, comparing data from multiple sources and perspectives to confirm consistency and credibility (Moleong, 2002).

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1. General Overview**

Indonesia is a plural nation characterized by ethnic, cultural, religious, and ideological diversity. This diversity produces interaction across groups but also the potential for tension, especially when religious beliefs are interpreted rigidly and elevated as absolute truth. Under such conditions, religious claims can be weaponized to justify social conflict, delegitimize state ideology, and normalize violence. Radicalism in Indonesia has developed over time as an ideological current seeking fundamental and often revolutionary change to the political and social order. Although it frequently uses religious language—particularly Islamic vocabulary—to legitimize its claims, radicalism in practice is associated with intolerance, rejection of plurality, refusal to accept Pancasila as the state ideology, and willingness to adopt coercive methods. The distinction between “radical” as deep, foundational thinking and “radicalism” as militant ideological activism is important: in contemporary Indonesian discourse, “radicalism” is strongly linked to ideological

absolutism, hostility toward differing views, and the use or legitimization of violence. Radicalism in this form often portrays Pancasila as incompatible with “true” values and instead promotes alternative ideological systems, including calls for an Islamic state or caliphate. This process is driven by multiple factors. Internally, radical groups tend to promote exclusive interpretations of religious texts and frame the state as morally illegitimate. Externally, radicalization is reinforced by perceived political injustice, socio-economic grievances, cultural resistance to secularism and “Western influence,” and solidarity narratives built around global conflicts. As radical beliefs harden, they escalate toward violent extremism and terrorism. Indonesian law defines terrorism as the use or threat of violence intended to create widespread fear, cause mass casualties, or damage strategic assets for ideological, political, or security motives (Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Terrorism is thus seen as the operational expression of radicalism once it moves from doctrine to violent action (Hendropriyono, 2009). Because radicalism erodes loyalty to national ideology and encourages confrontation with state authority, it is considered a strategic threat to social stability and national security.

## **4.2. The Threat of Radicalism within Indonesian Army Personnel**

The Indonesian National Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) are mandated to defend sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security. Law No. 34/2004 defines two core missions: warfighting operations (Operasi Militer Perang, OMP) and non-war operations (Operasi Militer Selain Perang, OMSP). Within OMSP, the TNI—including the Indonesian Army (TNI Angkatan Darat, TNI AD)—is tasked with preventing and responding to terrorism, which is often rooted in radical ideology. Radicalization among army personnel is therefore treated as a critical vulnerability. Radical beliefs inside the military can undermine ideological discipline, weaken command cohesion, and generate insider threats, since soldiers are entrusted with the state’s monopoly on legitimate force. The institutional framework of the TNI emphasizes loyalty to Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Sapta Marga (the Soldier’s Creed), and the Oath of the Soldier, all of which position the military not only as a defense instrument but also as a guardian of national integrity. Any deviation from these commitments is treated as a potential security risk. At the same time, radicalization in military ranks does not always manifest as overt violence. It may begin cognitively: adopting narratives that delegitimize Pancasila, framing the state as morally corrupt or un-Islamic, or endorsing an alternative political order. Such ideological drift is dangerous because it weakens internal resilience against extremist recruitment. The risk is compounded by factors such as limited reinforcement of state ideology after basic training, exposure to radical discourse through informal religious networks, and social or economic grievances that can be exploited by extremist actors. For this reason, radicalism in the armed forces is considered both an internal discipline issue and a national defense concern (Republic of Indonesia, 2004).

## **4.3. The Role of Intelligence in Addressing Radicalism within the Indonesian Army**

Intelligence institutions are central to identifying, preventing, and mitigating radicalism in the Indonesian Army. In Indonesian national security doctrine, intelligence is responsible for detecting, assessing, and neutralizing threats that endanger state stability and national interests (Lowenthal, 2007; Republic of Indonesia, 2011). The role of military and state intelligence in this context operates across several functional layers. First, internal surveillance and monitoring seek early indicators of ideological deviation among personnel. This includes continuous observation of behavioral change, discourse, associations, and patterns of allegiance. Such early detection aligns with the preventive logic of counter-radicalization, which aims to intervene before radical beliefs escalate into operational support for extremist networks (Sugirman, 2009). Second, preventive warning (early warning) converts intelligence findings into actionable alerts for military leadership and policymakers. This process informs commanders of emerging risks and supports timely intervention in line with defense and security regulations (Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Third, intervention and problem solving rely on policy recommendations, including targeted ideological reinforcement, structured internal counseling, and, when necessary, disciplinary or legal measures. In practice, prevention uses both “soft approaches,” such as strengthening mental guidance, nationalism education, and religious moderation, and “hard approaches,” such as sanctioning personnel whose behavior crosses into criminality or terrorism (Priyono, 2016; Riyanta, 2015). Fourth, intelligence work in counter-radicalization is inherently collaborative. It requires coordination among defense intelligence elements, national intelligence services, and specialized counterterrorism bodies to harmonize early detection, deterrence, and neutralization efforts as matters of national resilience (Republic of Indonesia, 2011; Republic of Indonesia, 2018). In parallel, within the broader OMSP mandate, the TNI

carries out (1) defense functions to deter and restore security in the face of terrorism and other threats to sovereignty, (2) support functions to assist law enforcement, particularly the national police, in disruption and response operations, and (3) intelligence functions involving investigation, security, and influence operations aimed at mapping and suppressing extremist structures. Intelligence products generated through these operations are recognized as preliminary leads for state action, underscoring the formal role of intelligence in counterterrorism and counter-radicalization (Republic of Indonesia, 2004; Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

#### **4.4. Intelligence Analysis**

##### **4.4.1. Early Detection**

Early detection is the first layer of protection against radicalization within the Indonesian Army. It focuses on identifying initial signs of ideological departure—changes in attitude, language, loyalty, or social networks—that indicate exposure to radical narratives. This stage requires continuous observation of personnel and their environments, including peer groups and informal religious circles, in order to recognize shifts before they escalate. From an intelligence perspective, early detection is not only about identifying individuals but also about mapping contexts in which radical ideas circulate, so that preventive intervention can be directed efficiently. Early detection allows the institution to anticipate potential internal threats to cohesion, discipline, and national security (Sugirman, 2009).

##### **4.4.2. Early Warning**

Early warning translates preliminary detection into timely alerts for decision-makers. The goal is to prevent the transformation of radical thought into operational behavior that could threaten unit integrity or national stability. Early warning requires contextual assessment of the individual and the motivating factors behind their radical exposure—whether ideological, social, economic, or political. The warning process is inseparable from state ideology: corrective measures must guide personnel back to alignment with Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, and the core values of military loyalty and discipline. This preventive signaling function is essential in maintaining internal control and ensuring that radicalization does not evolve into direct support for violent extremism (Republic of Indonesia, 2011; Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

##### **4.4.3. Problem Solving**

Problem solving concerns the formulation of concrete responses once indications of radicalization have been identified. Intelligence assessments inform leadership on appropriate courses of action, ranging from reinforcement of ideological education and mental development programs to disciplinary sanctions. This stage also emphasizes structured guidance in nationalism, constitutional values, religious moderation, and professional ethics. In security doctrine, problem solving balances two approaches: (1) containment and rehabilitation for those considered at risk, and (2) decisive legal or administrative action for violations that align with extremist or terrorist activity (Priyono, 2016; Riyanta, 2015). The objective is to prevent individual radicalization from spreading horizontally across units and to preserve institutional loyalty.

##### **4.4.4. Forecasting**

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## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that radicalism within the Indonesian Army (TNI AD) constitutes a real and ongoing security threat. Although only a limited number of personnel have been officially identified as radicalized, the potential for ideological exposure remains due to internal and external influences such as economic pressure and insufficient comprehension of national and religious values. Radicalism within the armed forces may begin cognitively—through exposure to extremist ideas—before manifesting in violent acts. The role of intelligence in countering this threat is fundamental, encompassing continuous monitoring, profiling, and early detection, as well as coordination with relevant institutions. Intelligence agencies implement preventive and repressive measures, including mental development programs, ideological reinforcement, deradicalization, and collaboration with bodies such as the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) through joint policies and directives. These integrated efforts aim to safeguard the ideological integrity of the armed forces and maintain national security.

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