

## Total People's War: A Comparative Analysis of Revolutionary Wars

Ridwan Akhmad Nugraha<sup>1</sup> | Edy Sulistyadi<sup>1</sup> | Buddy Suseto<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Indonesia Defense University

Received 12-06-2024

Revised 13-06-2024

Accepted 01-07-2024

Published 02-07-2024



Copyright: ©2024 The Authors. Published by Publisher. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

### Abstract:

This article discusses the relevance of Total People's War in the context of the Revolutionary War, focusing on Indonesia's struggle for independence. From the Kalijati Agreement to the Proclamation of Independence, the research highlights how Total People's War influences physical warfare and diplomacy in the fight for independence. Through a comparative approach between global revolutionary wars and Indonesia, the role of civilian populations in strengthening resistance against colonizers is emphasized. By analyzing the history, outcomes, and implications of the Total People's War, the article underscores the importance of this concept in ensuring a nation's independence. Thus, the article provides deep insights into how the Total People's War plays a crucial role in revolutionary wars and the significance of engaging the entire population in defending national sovereignty.

**Keyword:** Total People's War, Revolutionary Wars, Civilian Participation

### Introduction:

The Kalijati Agreement began Japan's official presence in the Dutch East Indies. For approximately 3.5 years, Japan occupied the Dutch East Indies. The victory of the Japanese army against the Dutch colonizers was initially warmly welcomed and happy by all Indonesian people. They are proud because Japan's victory is the victory of the East against the West. The myth that the West is always superior to the East has disappeared from their minds.

But soon the true intentions of Japan began to be seen. Regulations that curb the freedom of the Indonesian people began to emerge. The sweet promises they once made to the Indonesian people began to be seen as lies (Permadi, 2015). The influence of exploitation and terror reaches the rural people. Romusha's work, Jugun Ianfu recruitment, military recruitment, youth political

movements, and propaganda are present in Japan's 3.5 years in Indonesia (Nurohmat, 2021). Until finally on August 17, 1945, Soekarno and Hatta proclaimed Indonesia's independence on Pegangsaan Timur St No. 56.

This proclamation cannot be separated from the condition of Japan which has been completely destroyed by the onslaught of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs sent by the United States. Japan's defeat of the Allies in the Great Asia-Pacific War made Japan have to surrender unconditionally to the Allies. Thus, the Allies automatically had rights to all Japanese colonies in the Asia-Pacific. (Limah et al., 2018). The devastating condition caused the Japanese emperor at that time, Emperor Hirohito, to withdraw all his armed forces, including in Indonesia. This is what causes the condition of the Indonesian government to become a *status quo* that is ultimately used by Indonesians.

Although *de facto* Indonesia has become independent, this condition does not guarantee socio-political stability and state government. Hearing of Japan's defeat in World War II by the United States made the Dutch again interested in occupying Indonesia. The Dutch continued to interfere in Indonesia's internal affairs in order to re-occupy Indonesian territories. Until finally the Linggarjati Agreement occurred on November 15, 1946. The Linggarjati Agreement is an agreement that emerged after the Dutch attacked after the declaration of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945. The Dutch, who did not recognize Indonesia's independence, tried to seize and enforce the territory in Indonesia through diplomacy. The result of this agreement finally resulted in the land of Java, Madura, Sumatra and the island of Bali which was recognized as an area of Indonesian territory. Which means, the area outside it is Dutch rule. However, the Netherlands is not quite satisfied with this result (Susilo & Wulansari, 2021)

It was proven by the Dutch Military Aggression 1 in 1947. The military aggression that occurred from July 21, 1947 to August 5, 1947 was the beginning of the Dutch's desire to control Indonesia through military channels. In a short time, the Dutch managed to break through the defense of the People's Security Army or TKR. Fierce resistance was given by TKR. This physical resistance is inevitable. The problem was that the Netherlands was favored by Britain as its ally to re-colonize Indonesia by jointly holding the mission of colonialism. Fighting against the military power of colonial countries certainly drains a lot of energy, casualties and logistics.

This Dutch aggression caused a great reaction from the world. On July 30, 1947, the Governments of India and Australia requested that the Indonesia-Netherlands issue be discussed by the United Nations (Wardhana, 2021). Seeing this chaos, the United Nations recommended re-conducting negotiations as a diplomatic step to reconcile the Netherlands and Indonesia. On January 17, 1948, negotiations were held aboard the USS Renville owned by the United States as a neutral party. The

Indonesian delegation was chaired by Prime Minister Amir Syarifudin with Alisastroamidjojo as vice chairman. The members of the delegation were Dr. Tjoa Sik Ien, H. Agus Salim, Mr. Moh. Roem, Mr. Nasrun, Ir. Djuanda, and Drs. Setiajit. One of the results of this agreement is the establishment of an agreement to demarcate Indonesia's territorial boundaries through the Van Mook Line. With this, Indonesia's territory becomes narrower. This treaty was named the Renville Agreement. This follow-up negotiation is a continuation of the Linggarjati Agreement carried out by the Sjahrir Cabinet (Ervani et al., 2019).

However, unfortunately this agreement did not last long, the Dutch reneged on the agreement that had been agreed upon with this event, it was clearly seen on December 19, 1948 suddenly the Dutch invaded the capital city at that time, namely Yogyakarta, and attacked areas in the Republic of Indonesia (RI) that had not yet been occupied by them (Toni, 2018). The Dutch Military Aggression occurred again for the second time. Battles occurred everywhere both from the military and by the warriors and assisted by the general people who hated the Dutch who always wanted to rule in the Republic of Indonesia (RI).

With the siege of Yogyakarta which was still the capital city at that time from December 19, 1948, to January 5, 1949, the state government temporarily moved to Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra as a form of the Emergency Government of the Republic of Indonesia (PDRI) with Syafruddin Prawiranegara as its president. Yogyakarta became a place of inevitable arms battles. The largest physical war after Indonesia's *de facto* independence in 1945. The Dutch Military Aggression 1 and 2, the Linggarjati Agreement, and the Renville Agreement prove that the Indonesian revolutionary war relies on physical war and "table" war efforts as a diplomatic step.

The Dutch Military Aggression 1 and 2 proved that the struggle against the colonizers was not only the responsibility of the TKR, because it was not only the TKR involved. However, civil society was also moved to help the struggle of the Indonesian

revolution. This condition is the same as the concept of *Total People's War*.

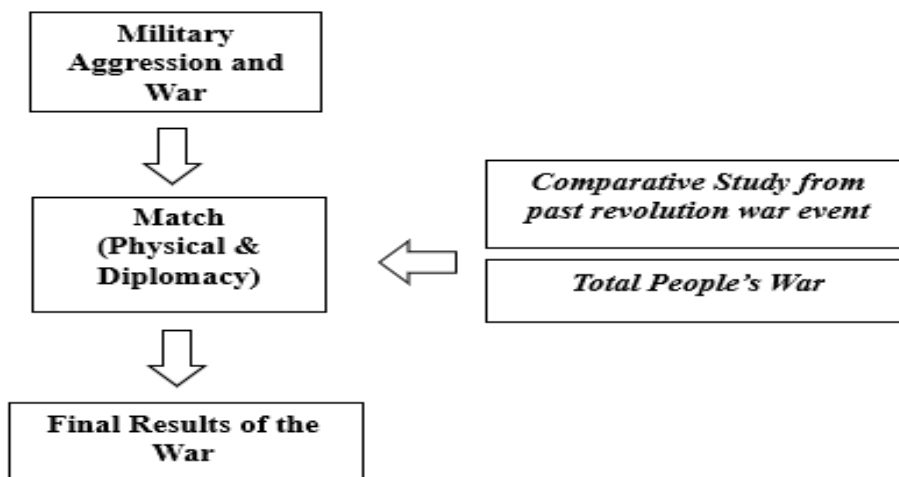
Total People's War, is a military strategy concept developed by Mao Zedong, the leader of the Chinese Revolution, during the struggle against the Japanese invasion and the Chinese Civil War. This concept carries the idea that in order to defeat a militarily stronger enemy, the people must be widely involved in the war, not just the official military forces. *Total People's War* relies on the mobility, flexibility, and resilience of the people to gain a strategic advantage in conflict. This includes the utilization of human resources and the active participation of all societies in the war, including civilians, peasants, and workers, both in direct combat and in supporting the war effort by providing logistics, intelligence, and moral support. In addition, the concept of *Total People's War* also has an effect on national resistance movements in various countries, where the people unite against foreign colonialism or authoritarian regimes, by adopting guerrilla warfare tactics and utilizing the support of the people at large to win their struggle. (Junbo, 2013) This journal seeks to reveal the course of history linked to the relevance

of the Total People's War and the concept of Total People's war in the revolutionary war that occurred in the world, including in Indonesia. Especially in terms of physical warfare and diplomacy that has been carried out so far, it is hoped that readers will be able to know the objectives, processes, similarities, differences and figures of great leaders in the revolutions that occurred in the world and especially in the revolutionary war of Indonesian independence.

**Method:**

In this journal, the researcher will use a comparative approach. This approach is considered to be able to explain the relevance of the world's great revolution to Indonesia's independence revolution by comparing its similarities and differences. The criteria for what revolutionary war is happening in the world that will be compared with the revolution in Indonesia is a revolution based on the same triggers and conditions as in Indonesia. The data sources used by the researcher are based on secondary sources (*Literature Review*). The conceptual framework that the researcher will use is as follows:

**Conceptual Framework**



**Results:**

Discussing the revolutionary war, it would be incomplete if we did not discuss the great revolution in the world. The French Revolution was one of them. The attack on the Bastille Castle by the proletariat marked the beginning of the

French Revolution. The French Revolution was a period of cultural change and change in the political system in France that had a major impact on Europe as a whole, which lasted from 1789 to 1814. The events of the French Revolution occurred with the

aim of abolishing absolutism that had occurred for centuries in France, as well as to fight for the rights of the people due to the arbitrariness of the French Empire at that time. The French Revolution is considered to occupy the dignity and dignity of human beings in its proper place (Christmas & Purwanti, 2020).

Shifting to America, British colonialism against America ignited great anger among its people until the outbreak of the Lexington and Concord wars as a sign of the beginning of the American Revolution. The American Revolution was the battle of the American nation to achieve its independence from Britain. This battle was caused by the high taxes imposed by Britain as a colonial country against the colonists in America who finally resisted against the British. It began with the famous Boston *Tea Party*, a form of protest against the British tax imposed on tea commodities, which then led to an armed battle (Arifin, 2012).

In Asia itself, China stands on a long series of wars that have occurred. The fight against Japan and the civil war were 2 events that led to the Chinese Revolution. The Chinese Revolution had an important role in saving China from the brink of collapse. At that time Feudalism, Imperialism and Militarism were problems that trapped them in various social injustices in the form of exploitation, conquest and poverty. This was the driving force for the Chinese Revolution because it was triggered by national pride and pride, so they instilled Chinese nationalism in themselves (Rustamana et al., 2023).

Based on the 3 major revolutionary events that occurred in the world, the American Revolution has quite a lot of relevance to what happened in the revolutionary war in Indonesia. This happened because the conditions and causes of the American Revolution and the Indonesian Revolution were both triggered by anger at the colonial countries that increasingly arbitrarily treated indigenous peoples with miserable policies. Based on the above data, the researcher decided to choose the American Revolution as a comparison with the Indonesian Revolution.

The Indonesian revolution not only relied on physical battles to fight against the Dutch as a colonizer, but also made diplomatic efforts by producing various kinds of agreements. Two of the most crucial are the Linggarjati and Renville Agreements. It is the same with the American Revolution. Beginning with the outbreak of the Lexington and Concord wars on April 19, 1775, which was won by American troops, the series of revolutionary wars in America began. At first, resistance to the British was only aimed at resisting oppressive rules. But as the resistance progressed, the American nation wanted independence. A total of 34 battles took place in this series of revolutions. Washington forced Britain to lose by surrendering General Horatio Gates on October 17, 1777, at the great battle of Saratoga, New York. (Arifin, 2012).

Not only physical resistance, the United States also made diplomatic efforts in gathering help from allies. Through the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the United States and France in 1778, this became a cool breeze for America. France agreed to provide military, financial, and diplomatic support to the United States. This agreement is key in helping the United States deal with British military power. (Arifin, 2012).

Benjamin Franklin, who at that time was an important American diplomat, managed to become an excellent liaison with France. French nobleman Marquis de Lafayette was successfully convinced by Benjamin Franklin to always help America in its efforts to fight for its independence. The Yorktown War became the decisive war for the victory of American troops over Great Britain which led to the ratification of American independence through the Treaty of Paris in 1783. The success of American independence from Britain was not only the efforts of the soldiers, but also inseparable from the intervention of patriots. Patriots included a wide range of American society at the time, including farmers, traders, businessmen, and political figures. (Arifin, 2012). By the intervention of American civilians in fighting for independence for their country also proves that *the Total People's War* also occurred in the American Revolution.

There are similarities and differences between the Indonesian Revolution and the American Revolution. The first similarity between these two revolutionary wars is that they are both triggered by anger over colonialism. Indonesia, which has been *De Facto independent* since August 17, 1945, is still haunted by the Dutch who want to regain control of Indonesia. Meanwhile, policies that were felt to oppress the community triggered the resistance of the American nation against its colonial country, namely Britain. Second, there was a physical battle in the American Revolution and the Indonesian Revolution. With the surrender of Japan by the Americans, the Dutch again wanted to control Indonesia. It is proven by the occurrence of Dutch Military Aggression I and II as a physical effort by the Dutch to attack and conquer Indonesia. It's the same with what is happening in America. The battles of Lexington and Concord opened a series of American revolutions. This was followed by the great battle of Saratoga in New York won by George Washington over General Horatio Gates and his troops. Third, the United States and Indonesia both made diplomatic efforts in resisting their colonizers. The Linggarjati Agreement and the Renville Agreement were carried out by Indonesia. Although the result was slightly detrimental to Indonesia, the agreement became an initial capital and a valuable effort for Indonesia's steps to maintain its independence.

Meanwhile, in America, the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between the United States and France in 1778 became a diplomatic effort to get reinforcements from France. It was closed with the Treaty of Paris which affirmed American independence. Fourth, Indonesia and the United States both have excellent diplomats. Amir Syarifudin, who at that time served as the Prime Minister of Indonesia when RIS was the representative of Indonesia during the Renville Agreement. In America, Benjamin Franklin, who was a diplomat, managed to secure the help of France and the Marquis de Lafayette to be in the same line. Fifth, both Indonesia and the United States have great leaders who eventually become the first presidents of both countries. Soekarno with

his thoughts, opinions and abilities ignited the spirit of the freedom fighters before 1945 was finally crowned as the first President.

Likewise in America, George Washington, a charismatic, intelligent and highly dedicated British military who ultimately decided to support and fight for American independence, was appointed as the first President of the United States. Sixth, the Indonesian Revolution and the American Revolution are both inseparable from the *Total People's War* involving civil society. The involvement of the warrior soldiers and the help of the general public during the siege of Yogyakarta in the Second Military Aggression proves that there was a non-armed intervention that played a role against the Dutch. Similar to the Indonesian Revolution, the Patriots are also very worthy of reckoning as part of the form of anger of American civilians who played a role against the British. Patriots themselves are people from farmers, traders, businessmen, and political figures.

The apparent difference between these two revolutions is the first, the difference in the conditions before the war. If Indonesia's struggle from the beginning did want to expel the Dutch from Indonesia, it was different with the United States which initially only wanted to oppose its policy. Second, the purpose of diplomacy is different. If Indonesia had direct diplomacy with the Netherlands in resolving the issue of territorial boundaries and sovereignty, the United States actually carried out diplomacy to its allies in order to get reinforcements to be able to push Britain out of America. Third, the figure of a great leader who comes from a different background. Soekarno was a native son of Blitar and from the beginning wanted to participate in the struggle for his independence. However, George Washington, an *American Founding Father*, came from a British army background that then decided to turn against the British.

### **Discussion:**

The Total People's War played a role in the Indonesian Revolution and at least in the American Revolution. The involvement of civil society who

played a role in fighting the colonizers of their country, especially in Indonesia. The existence of Indonesian civil society struggle soldiers greatly helped the process of Indonesia's success at that time in an effort to maintain Indonesia's sovereignty and existence. This also proves that the Total People's War can have a big impact on the final outcome of the resistance.

In the Indonesian Revolution, the involvement of civil society was very significant. The community not only supports from the back, but also plays an active role on the front line. The people's soldiers, formed from various circles, ranging from farmers, workers, to students, became the backbone of the resistance to the colonizers. These movements are voluntary and based on a strong spirit of nationalism. For example, the Youth Laskar Pemuda, which consists of Indonesian youth, played a major role in various important battles such as the Battle of Surabaya in 1945.

According to research conducted by Anderson (1991), the active participation of civilians in the Indonesian Revolution provided a strategic advantage that the regular army did not have. The people directly involved in the war had in-depth knowledge of the terrain and effective guerrilla tactics, so they were able to face the more trained and well-armed colonial forces. Anderson also highlighted that the Indonesian people's spirit of struggle is rooted in strong local traditions and culture, making this resistance not only military, but also social and cultural.

From the American Revolution, a lesson can also be drawn that a great and advanced nation was born from the bloody struggle by the fighters in the past. Indirectly, the influence of the American Revolution had an impact on the Indonesian Revolution. This is because the American Revolution taught the idea of Nationalism which means love for the homeland. The American Revolution showed how the spirit of nationalism and the involvement of the people in the struggle against the colonizers could change the fate of a nation.

Research conducted by Fischer (1994) shows that civilian militias in the United States played an important role in various crucial battles during the American Revolution. This militia is made up of farmers and workers who fought for the independence of their country. Fischer noted that the direct involvement of the people in the war has a great psychological impact, both for the fighters and the enemy, because it shows that resistance is not only carried out by professional soldiers, but also by ordinary people who are ready to risk their lives for freedom.

What distinguishes a lot between Total People's War and Total War is the massive scale used for physical war. For example, Total War only existed during the French revolution in the Napoleonic period (Broers, 2008). Until then, it has been used in modern warfare to the present day with full force to carry out expansion and gray spots between the army and civil society (Chickering, 2000). Total war often has a huge impact on the post-war conditions of the warring countries. This gray side blurs the boundaries and results in more massive results.

Total War refers to the mobilization of all the resources of a country, including the civilian population, for war. This means that the line between fighters and non-fighters becomes blurred. Broers (2008) explained that Total War in the context of Napoleon involves the use of all aspects of society, including economy and industry, to support the war effort. Chickering (2000) adds that in World Wars I and II, the concept of Total War was fully implemented, resulting in major destruction and fundamental changes in the social and political structure of the countries involved.

Meanwhile, the Total People's War is characterized by populism, totality, and territoriality, which is carried out by mobilizing all national strength and resources to uphold sovereignty and territorial integrity. In Total People's War, the entire society is considered part of the war, either directly or indirectly. They play a role in logistics, intelligence, and moral support. This strategy emphasizes the importance of popular support in

winning the war, as seen in the Indonesian Revolution.

According to McClintock (1998), Total People's War involves a long-term strategy aimed at weakening the enemy through guerrilla warfare and civil society mobilization. This is in contrast to Total War which relies more on large military power and conventional combat. McClintock noted that this strategy has been implemented in different countries with mixed results, depending on the social and political context of each country.

### Conclusion:

The conclusion that can be drawn is that in addition to physical resistance and diplomacy carried out by a country in facing war, the concept of *Total People's War* has an impact on the success of the war, especially the Indonesian Revolution and the American Revolution. The involvement of civil society who both wanted independence for their country became an additional force for the armed forces to expel the invaders from their country. It is important to understand *the Total People's War* in today's modern world as a preventive measure to prepare and ensure that civil society can contribute to defending their homeland if there is aggression or war in Indonesia.

Further research can examine the role of civil society in various historical and geographical contexts, as well as how these strategies can be applied in modern situations. Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of the Total People's War can be obtained, providing valuable insights for future studies of revolutions and conflicts.

### References:

1. Anderson, B. R. O. G. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=4mmoZ FtCpuoC>
2. Arifin, F. (2012). Peranan George Washington Dalam Perang Kemerdekaan Amerika Serikat Pada Tahun 1775 - 1783. *Factum*, 1(1), 2.
3. Broers, M. (2008). The Concept of 'Total War' in the Revolutionary—Napoleonic Period. *War in History*, 15, 247–268. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0968344508091323>
4. Chickering, R. (2000). *Great War, Total War: World War I and the Theory of Total War*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139052528.003>
5. Christmas, S. K., & Purwanti, E. (2020). *Perkembangan Sistem Pemerintahan dan Konsep Kedaulatan Pasca Revolusi Perancis Terhadap Hukum Internasional*. 2.
6. Ervani, Sumiyatun, & Kuswono. (2019). *Politik Diplomasi Perdana Menteri Amir Syarifudin Dan Perjanjian Renville*.
7. Fischer, D. H. (1994). *Paul Revere's Ride*. Oxford University Press. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ZAvQfZFbL p4C>
8. Junbo, Z. (2013). Differences between traditional Chinese and Western military thinking and their philosophical roots. *Yao Yunzhu*.
9. Limah, H., Utomo, C. B., & Suryadi, A. (2018). *Poster Dan Upaya Mempertahankan Kemerdekaan Indonesia Di Yogyakarta Tahun 1945-1949*.
10. McClintock, C. (1998). *Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN and Peru's Shining Path*. United States Institute of Peace Press. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ZL5Y-kpmUHYC>
11. Nurohmat, A. (2021). Motif Jepang Sebelum Menginvansi Hindia Belanda Tahun 1942-1945. *JEJAK : Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah & Sejarah*, 1(2), 52–56. <https://doi.org/10.22437/jejak.v1i2.15749>
12. Permadi, E. G. (2015). *Politik Bahasa Pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang*. 3.
13. Rustamana, A., Khoiri, T. W., Hayati, N., & Alya, D. (2023). *Peranan Sun Yat Sen Dan Jalan Nya Revolusi China*. 1.
14. Susilo, A., & Wulansari, R. (2021). *Perjanjian Linggarjati (Diplomasi dan Perjuangan Bangsa Indonesia Tahun 1946- 1947)*. 10.
15. Toni, R. (2018). *Perlawanan Rakyat Terhadap Agresi Militer Belanda Ii ( 1948-1949) Di Kabupaten Rejang Lebong*.
16. Wardhana, M. R. (2021). *Peran dan pengaruh Jenderal Soedirman dalam menghadapi Agresi Militer Belanda (1948-1949)*.