



Politics, security and defence in Indonesia: Interactions and interdependencies

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is likely to face a complex and dynamic strategic environment in the future. Despite national political and economic reforms, domestic security problems including civil tension, religious radicalism, and terrorism continue to pose dangers to the wellbeing of the Indonesian people. Meanwhile, a dominant theme in East Asia in recent years has been changing power structures; in this regard Indonesia is concerned with the implications of long-standing territorial disputes, their attendant military threats to regional stability, and cohesion within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Given this strategic context, the following discussion will consider the means by which the Indonesian government seeks to preserve the country's strategic autonomy in its external affairs by developing strategic frameworks in both the foreign and the defence realms. While actively engaging in multilateral cooperative mechanisms at regional and global levels, Indonesia is striving to modernise its military capabilities and to renew its industrial base for indigenous defence. In the following sections this issue brief will discuss the nature of Indonesia's strategic autonomy in light of its external affairs.

INDONESIA'S ONGOING SECURITY LANDSCAPE

Indonesia remains susceptible to domestic and external pressures. In recent years the country has undergone major structural reforms leading to increasingly active legislative bodies and democratic elections, ongoing decentralisation, and the expansion of a market-oriented economic system. Regardless of these achievements, communal tensions and regional dissent continue to occur.

Local elections have often been marred by violent incidents committed by the proponents of competing candidates. A recent example is the series of violent acts perpetrated in the months prior to the Aceh gubernatorial election in 2012; a trend which also occurs in conflict-prone areas such as the Moluccas, Sulawesi and Papua. Although democratisation and decentralisation have taken root in Indonesia, maintaining public order remains a major challenge at the local level.

Aceh appears relatively stable in comparison with Papua, where there have been a string of shootings against non-Papuan soldiers and police officers. The peaceful resolution of on going conflict eludes Papua, despite the adoption of political and economic policies intended to establish amity in the region. This lack of success is due to deep mistrust and a perception gap between the government and pro-independence movements.

Religious radicalism has also grown in recent years. Religious minorities, including Ahmadiya and Shia communities have suffered from frequent attacks, while Christian churches continue to experience intimidation by Islamist groups. Despite ongoing investigations, the Indonesian government appears to lack a coherent strategy with which to address what are multidimensional ethnic, religious, economic and political problems. With extensive diversity within Indonesian society, communal conflict will continue to occur if the root causes remain unresolved.

The increasingly blurred line between religious vigilante and terrorist groups is also likely to complicate Indonesia's counterterrorism strategy. Terrorist groups, which enjoy indirect support from local Muslim clerics, have been known for their violent actions as a means of enforcing a fundamentalist agenda. Recent developments indicate that terrorist groups seek to exploit vigilante attacks against religious minorities as a way of recruiting new operatives. Regardless of the significant reduction in terrorist attacks in recent years, the Indonesian government requires innovations in counter-terrorism strategy if it is to cope with future threats.

The Indonesian Navy and other maritime authorities are struggling to cope with the substantial problem of natural resources theft. According to some estimates, Indonesia annually loses US\$2–3 billion from illegal logging and US\$8 billion from illegal fishing.¹

Incidents of maritime piracy have increased in recent years. In 2012 a total of 71 cases of actual and attempted attacks against commercial vessels took place in Indonesian waters. This number represents an eighty per cent increase from the 19 incidents occurring in 2009.² Indonesia's capacity to maintain order within its archipelagic boundaries is critical in avoiding the need to provide alternative justification for a foreign maritime military presence.

Meanwhile, recent developments in regional politics suggest that the major powers will increasingly favour strategic competition over cooperation. With the rapid pace of its economic growth, China continues to expand its military power. The Chinese Navy, for instance, is expected to become the paramount regional power by the 2020s, and the predominant global naval power by the 2050s. Meanwhile, as part of its pivot and rebalancing strategy, the United States seeks to revitalise its alliance with countries in the region. It has recently undertaken key initiatives to restructure its regional military presence, including the rotation of 2,500 marines in Darwin and up to four littoral combat ships in Singapore.

¹ See Alda Chan, 'Illegal Logging in Indonesia: The Environmental, Economic and Social Costs' (Washington DC: Blue Green Alliance, April 2010), p. 9, 'Forest Groups Call on Oz to Ban Illegal Timber Import', *The Jakarta Post* (16 August 2010), 'RI Seeks Ties to Fight Illegal Fishing', *The Jakarta Post* (5 March 2008), 'RI Forms New Courts to Fight Illegal Fishing', *The Jakarta Post* (18 October 2007).

² See 'Annual Report on Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships Asia: January-December 2012', (Singapore: ReCAAP Information Sharing Centre, 2013), p. 12.

As competition for military and economic prevalence among the major powers looms large, Indonesia is aware that East Asia will become the theatre for this pursuit of primacy, polarising regional nations. The different responses of Southeast Asian countries to repositioning of the US military presence illustrate the divergence of their strategic perceptions and preferences. Moreover, persisting territorial disputes over the South China Sea continue to test the cohesion of ASEAN. Although Indonesia secured a consensus on the key principles for drafting a Code of Conduct regarding the South China Sea, diplomatic differences among the members of the regional grouping re-emerged in late 2012 over the means of resolving overlapping claims.

In summary, Indonesia has become increasingly exposed to multifaceted security challenges in recent years. While confronting huge domestic problems, the Indonesian government must uphold civil order and security across the archipelago. With ongoing structural changes to the power balance in East Asia, Indonesian policymaking is likely to become further complicated in the future.

INDONESIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST AND POLICY APPROACHES

Located between the Indian and Pacific oceans, Indonesia is geostrategically situated across key sea lanes of commerce and communication. Although the country's position offers enormous economic potential, it places substantial challenges on the Indonesian government to maintain national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Owing to its geostrategic imperative, Indonesia is also susceptible to geopolitical changes in the region; the changing relationship between China and the United States has recently become the source of particular regional concern. Not unlike its Southeast Asian counterparts, Indonesia prefers a cooperative relationship, rather than strategic rivalry between the major powers.

In this context, the main interest of the Indonesian government is the maintenance of the country's strategic autonomy. That policy aspiration is drawn from Indonesia's past experiences with dependence upon great foreign powers. President Sukarno's policies of adventurism and leniency towards the Soviet Union and China have led to domestic instability and economic catastrophe. Although the then New Order regime forged closer defence ties with the United States and its allies, in the early 1990s it suffered from arms embargoes due to its repressive counter-insurgency campaign in East Timor.

Having learnt the need to maintain a balance of competition and cooperation, the Indonesian government currently undertakes two policy approaches that seek to preserve the country's strategic autonomy. First, it adopts values of 'liberal institutionalism' in foreign policymaking to promote cooperative relations among countries and develop a cohesive international order. Second, given the past experience of arms prohibitions and recent strategic developments, the Indonesian government relies on an approach of 'classical realism' to enhance its military capabilities and strengthen indigenous industries for national defence. These strategic approaches have taken root in Indonesia's foreign and defence policy realm.

KEY TRENDS OF INDONESIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

'Independent and active' (*bebas dan aktif*) remains Indonesia's sacrosanct foreign policy principle underlying its aspiration for strategic autonomy. Nowadays, the principle has evolved into two key policy expressions: 'one million friends; zero enemies'; and 'dynamic equilibrium'. The first phrase reiterates the country's commitment to build amity and cooperative international relations. The dynamic equilibrium doctrine seeks to restrain strategic competition for dominance among the major nations in an attempt to avoid a preponderance of political, economic or military power. Hence, the Indonesian government stresses confidence-building, peaceful conflict resolution, and cooperative security mechanisms as means to enhance peace and stability at global and regional levels.

In this sense, ASEAN is a cornerstone for Indonesia's foreign policy. Through the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, Indonesia promotes the renunciation of the threat or use of force and the peaceful settlement of conflicts and disputes in the region. Not unlike other ASEAN members, Indonesia also commits to refrain from the acquisition and development of nuclear arsenals under the Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (SEAN-WFZ). In recent years it has actively urged those states recognised by the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as possessing nuclear weapons to adopt obligations pursuant to the treaty and refrain from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against any nation party to the treaty or within the SEAN-WFZ.

Moreover, as part of the ongoing plan to achieve a cohesive ASEAN Community by 2015, Indonesia remains strongly committed to implementation of the ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint. While promoting democracy, good governance and human rights values, the Indonesian government continuously contributes to conflict prevention and cooperative security mechanisms. Recently, it has played a central role as the mediator to regional conflicts, including Cambodia-Thailand border tensions, territorial disputes over the South China Sea, and Rohingya repression in Myanmar. Through ASEAN-centred multilateral forums, Indonesia discusses and promotes potential areas of cooperation among ASEAN members and extra-regional partners, such as disaster relief, navigation safety, fisheries management, combating transnational crimes, and counterterrorism.

In East Asia, Indonesia's diplomacy policy aims at developing a norms-based regional order through inclusive security cooperation. In this regard the Indonesian government believes that ASEAN should be 'the driving force' shaping strategic initiatives for regional architecture building.³ However, ASEAN-driven multilateral frameworks including the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum can only be capable of performing this role if Southeast Asia remains 'free from any form or manner of interference by [great] powers'.⁴ Given the need to establish that prerequisite, at the EAS in 2011 the Indonesian government proposed adoption of the Bali Principles, which promote peaceful interaction among the key countries including China and the United States. More recently, it has also promoted the concept of an Indo-Pacific treaty of friendship and cooperation to strengthen dynamic equilibrium among the major regional powers and thereby preserve the centrality of ASEAN.⁵

Aside from its regional diplomacy, Indonesia also promotes its strategic interests and contributes to global peace initiatives through active engagement in international multilateral frameworks, including the United Nations (UN). The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has been instrumental for the Indonesian government to preserve the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a related manner it places great importance in the three pillars of the NPT: non-proliferation; disarmament; and the peaceful use of nuclear technology.

Beyond the NPT and IAEA Additional Protocols, Indonesia has recently ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and joined the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and Radioactive Waste Management. The country's participation in international agreements on nuclear safety and security is consistent with its energy development plans, which include the construction of nuclear power plants. Its central role in nuclear disarmament includes agitating on behalf of the Non-Alignment Movement regarding the slow progress of nuclear disarmament, and urging nuclear weapons states to dismantle their nuclear arsenal based on the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability.⁶

Despite its strong commitment to the international non-proliferation regime, Indonesia remains unsupportive of counter-proliferation initiatives outside the universal legal framework. In the past, the Indonesian government rejected the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative for fears that it contradicts the established marine law and infringes its sovereignty based on the UNCLOS.⁷ Besides expressing deep concern over the expansion of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) role at the expense of 'its utmost responsibility on safeguards, safety and the promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes',⁸ it criticises the implementation of nuclear security in ways that undermine the rights of all NPT members to access peaceful nuclear technology. To date, Indonesia maintains the view that multilateral export-control mechanisms, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Australia Group are part of global cartels that seek to restrict technological transfer to the developing countries.

In the role of peacekeeping, Indonesia seeks to enhance its profile and commitment by increasing its troop contribution and undertaking additional international peacekeeping missions. Recently, it has sent warships to join in the Maritime Task Force of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and transport helicopters to assist the United Nations Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). The Indonesian government also encourages an increased role of civilian personnel to support development and rehabilitation programs in post-conflict areas. In addition, the country's peacekeeping centre is expected to become the training ground and regional hub for peacekeeping troops in the Asia Pacific. Although peacekeeping is regarded by Indonesia as a crucial and expanding responsibility in international affairs, cooperative security mechanisms and peaceful conflict settlement remain central to Indonesia's foreign policymaking.

INDONESIA'S DEFENCE POLICY DIRECTION

Regarding military and defence measures, the Indonesian government seeks to attain strategic autonomy through five policy actions. First, it enhances the country's military capabilities through the process of defence modernisation. Based on Indonesia's long-term development plan, 2005–25, the key purpose of defence planning is to develop the armed forces with 'a respectable deterrence effect' to serve the nation's diplomatic agenda.⁹ In the period of 2010–24, the defence ministry aims to build the so-called 'minimum essential force' – a force structure with key military capabilities and an adequate level of operational readiness in order to achieve the country's immediate interests and defence objectives.¹⁰

3 See 'Annual Press Statement of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Indonesia, Dr R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa', 4 January 2012, available at: <http://www.kemlu.go.id/Documents/PPTM%202012/PPTM%202012%20-%20English.PDF>, accessed 29 March 2012.

4 See '1971 Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration', adopted by the Foreign Ministers at the Special ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 27 November 1971, available at: <http://cil.nus.edu.sg/rp/pdf/1971%20Zone%20of%20Peace%20Freedom%20and%20Neutrality%20Declaration-pdf.pdf>, accessed 29 March 2012.

5 See Marty Natalegawa, 'An Indonesian Perspective on the Indo-Pacific', *The Jakarta Post* (20 May 2013).

6 See 'Statement by H.E. Dr R.M. Marty M. Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia', at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty in New York, 3 May 2010, available at: http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2010/statements/pdf/nam_en.pdf, accessed 15 March 2013.

7 See 'Indonesia Rejects US Request for Proliferation Security Initiative', *Xinhuanet*, 7 March 2006, available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2006-03/17/content_4313679.htm, accessed 15 March 2013.

8 See 'Statement by H.E. Mr Suharna Supratna, Minister for Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia', at the 54th Annual Regular Session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Agency in Vienna, 20 September 2010, available at: <http://www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC54/Statements/indonesia.pdf>, accessed 15 March 2013.

9 See Indonesia's Law No. 17/2007 on Long-Term Development Plan – 2005–2025.

10 See 'Minimum Essential Force 'Komponen Utama'', (Jakarta: Indonesia's Ministry of Defence, 2010), p. 7.

To that end, the armed forces have been conducting organisational reforms and arms modernisation programs. The latter includes the implementation of 'zero-growth' manpower policy and 'right-sizing' of military units. Indonesia's defence modernisation program will expand or upgrade the existing military platforms, continuing its ongoing acquisition of refurbished F-16 tactical fighters and C-130H airlifters. It will also selectively procure new weapon systems. The military's shopping wish-list also includes missile-guided frigates, tactical submarines, main battle tanks, self-propelled artillery systems, anti-air defence systems, and multi-role jet-fighters.

Second, thanks to the country's positive economic growth, the Indonesian government has gradually increased its annual defence budget to support its military modernisation plans. The top leadership has repeatedly promised to boost the country's defence spending to 1.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.¹¹ A recent forecast suggests that Indonesia's defence budget could reach US\$12.3 billion by 2017.¹² This budget projection certainly corresponds with Indonesia's defence planning to complete the 'minimum essential force' structure by 2024. From 2010 to 2014, for instance, the defence ministry is expected to spend a total of US\$17 billion for weapons procurement and maintenance programs.

Third, Indonesia's defence officials seek to avoid the path of dependence on a single source for arms and military materials. Recently, Russia and China have become the country's emerging arms suppliers. While the latter sold C-705 and C-802 anti-ship missiles, Russia has recently signed arms deals to supply additional Su-30MK2 jet-fighters and BMP-3F amphibious infantry fighting vehicles to the Indonesian Air Force and Marines. South Korea is also another beneficiary of Indonesia's expanded procurement strategy. In 2011, for instance, it purchased Korean-made T-50 Golden Eagle advanced jet-trainers to replace the existing Hawk Mk-53 fleet.

Despite the past experience of arms embargoes, it is unlikely that Indonesia would ignore its defence relationship with the United States and European countries. In addition to 24 refurbished F-16 jet-fighters, the US government has recently approved Indonesia's request for the purchase of AGM-65K2 Maverick and FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missiles. Indonesian defence officials have also finalised plans to procure and upgrade the German Army's surplus Leopard 2 main battle tanks and three light frigates from existing BAE Systems.

Fourth, the Indonesian government is seeking to reduce gradually its reliance on arms imports by rebuilding its defence industrial base. In recent years it has undertaken a number of policy initiatives, including restructuring programs and financial assistance packages. These initiatives were critical in resolving mismanagement issues lingering for more than a decade in state-owned defence firms. In 2011, for instance, the Indonesian parliament approved legislation to commit US\$1 billion to the country's aerospace manufacturer (PT DI), naval shipbuilder (PT PAL), and land system manufacturer (PT PINDAD).¹³

More importantly, a new law for the defence industry was passed in 2012. It outlines a range of requirements, including a commitment to prioritise local sources in any state acquisitions, the potential for partial privatisation of state-owned defence firms, and the provision of offset-structured industrial collaboration in all defence imports. Moreover, the law underlines that the government is committed to procure from indigenous defence firms unless the required defence article is not resident in Indonesia.¹⁴

Fifth, Indonesia promotes its national interests through defence cooperation and diplomacy with multiple strategic partners. The Indonesian government is very keen to forge defence industry collaboration. Indonesia and South Korea have recently launched a joint development project of the 4.5th generation jet-fighter (KFX/IFX), in which Indonesia contributes 20 per cent of the overall costs in return for technologies and licences to procure the aircraft.¹⁵ Having signed the strategic partnership in 2005, Indonesia and China are now planning to establish a collaborative defence industrial facility for the development of surveillance and electronic warfare systems.¹⁶

Indonesia's defence firms have also taken advantage from the offset programs linked to its major arms imports. The purchase of nine C-295 air carriers, for instance, has benefited PT DI through the offset program provided by Airbus Military.¹⁷ Through the on-going procurement of a Sigma 105-class frigate and three Type 209/1300 diesel-electric submarines, PT PAL has acquired relevant knowhow and technologies necessary for manufacturing the Navy's future guided missile frigates and undersea naval platforms.¹⁸ Moreover, under a technological transfer agreement, Indonesia could indigenously manufacture Chinese-developed anti-ship missile systems to equip the Navy's 24 KCR-40 fast attack crafts.¹⁹

11 See 'Presiden: Saatnya Anggaran Pertahanan Naik Signifikan', *Kompas* (5 May 2010).

12 See 'Russia, Indonesia Agree to Expand Cooperation', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (30 January 2013).

13 See 'Resuscitating the Long-neglected State Defence Industries', *The Jakarta Post* (5 October 2011).

14 See Indonesia's Law No. 16/2012 on Defence Industry.

15 See 'South Korea and Indonesia Launch Joint Fighter Aircraft Programme', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (3 August 2011).

16 See 'Indonesia, China Plan Joint C4ISR Military Electronics Facility', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (9 May 2012).

17 See 'Indonesia and Airbus Military Reach C-295 Production Agreement', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (26 October 2011).

18 See 'Ministry, Daewoo Sign \$1B Contract for 3 Submarines', *The Jakarta Post* (21 December 2012).

19 See 'Indonesia and China Confirm C-705 Missile Production Collaboration', *Jane's Defence Weekly* (28 September 2011).

Aside from defence industrial cooperation, Indonesia also expands its military-to-military relationship with key countries. With Southeast Asian counterparts, Indonesia has developed extensive military exchange programs, regular bilateral exercises and coordinated maritime patrols. In cooperation with Malaysia and Singapore, it has recently expanded the scope of the coordinated Malacca Straits Patrol with the inclusion of hotline communication, aerial surveillance, and the participation of Thailand.

As part of the 'comprehensive partnership', the Indonesian government has recently intensified its military ties with the United States through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. These include International Military Education and Training (IMET), Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT), the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) military exercises, and 'Garuda Shield' military exercises. Even during the period of arms embargoes, Indonesia continued to benefit from US-sponsored counter-terrorism training programs, Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET), and 'Cobra Gold' multilateral exercises.

Equally significant are the 'Sharp Knife' counter-terrorism exercises that Indonesia and China are currently discussing, with the potential for conducting a coordinated maritime patrol and joint naval exercise. In addition to the Lombok Treaty, Indonesia and Australia have recently signed a defence cooperation agreement. In 2012, four Indonesian Su-30MK2 jet-fighters took part in the 'Pitch Black' air-combat exercise in northern Australia. These developments highlight the growing defence and military relationships between Indonesia and strategic partners in the region.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

With steady economic growth for the foreseeable future, Indonesia will confront new domestic and external challenges. In a democratic climate, a wide array of domestic security problems will complicate the Indonesian government's decision-making processes. No less significant is the on-going geopolitical change in East Asia, which has exerted external pressure upon Indonesia. As competition among the major powers will always remain, Indonesia has begun to devote considerable resources to the future direction of regional politics. These strategic developments have been fostered by a burgeoning apprehension of the importance of strategic autonomy among the country's strategic policymakers.

Indonesia's complex security outlook suggests that it requires a coherent strategic framework. The Indonesian government has given preference to two sets of policy approaches: liberal-institutionalist foreign policy and classical-realist defence policy. The former stresses confidence-building measures, cooperative security mechanisms, and peaceful means of conflict settlement so as to build a cohesive international order. Hence, Indonesian foreign policy officials actively engage in ASEAN-centred regional processes and the UN multilateral framework to promote the country's strategic interests as well as aspirations for global order.

In relation to issues of security, Indonesia's defence officials maintain a realistic, if not pessimistic view of the future geostrategic environment. Indonesia's long-term defence planning suggests that the armed forces will need to increase the acquisition of sophisticated military technology and expand military power projection within Indonesia's region of influence. Moreover, the defence ministry's ongoing plans to rebuild the indigenous base for its defence industry will contribute to lessening Indonesia's reliance on arms imports.

The adoption of two diverse policy trajectories unnecessarily represents a disconnection within Indonesia's strategic thinking. Despite this, defence cooperation and military diplomacy remain key instruments of the country's foreign policy. Indonesia's military modernisation not only serves the purpose of deterrence, but also closes the loopholes of multilateral cooperative security strategy and anticipates the less likely event of major international conflict.

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