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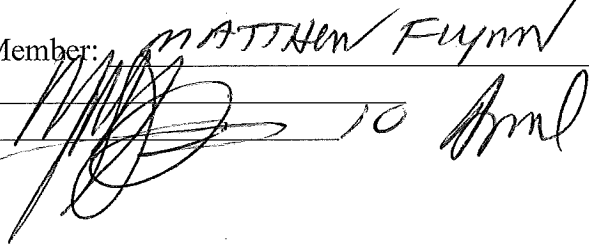
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Executive Summary

Title: Opening the Strategic Gateway: How an Australian-Indonesian Combined Amphibious Exercise Program Will Achieve Strategic Defense Objectives

Author: Major Samuel Colclough, Australian Army

Thesis: Although Australia and Indonesia have a checkered past the two nations share geographical and security challenges that make them natural strategic allies. Within the strategic military frameworks of both nations is the potential for a combined amphibious exercise program that would allow Australia greater strategic access to Asia and provide Indonesia with greater maritime capability.

Discussion: 2018 marked a high point in Australian-Indonesian relations with the signing of a Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). The CSP acknowledges that Australia and Indonesia share strategic objectives and, therefore, closer cooperation is in the best interests of both nations. From a purely defense perspective, the CSP creates a common purpose that is best supported through a combined amphibious exercise program that allows the ADF greater strategic access to Asia and the TNI enhanced maritime capability. However, there are lingering political, cultural, and historical obstacles that must be overcome before meaningful defense cooperation can be achieved. By exercising combined maritime force projection, the ADF will gain experience operating within the strategic gateway to Asia; while the TNI will benefit from better training and exercise opportunities. This will enhance ADF force projection and reduce the reliance on allies and partners to provide strategic access for ADF elements in multi-national missions. These exercises will modernize the TNI and allow Indonesia to take full advantage of its position between the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Conclusion: Despite the historic set-backs and cultural differences between Australia and Indonesia, the two countries are now more strategically aligned than ever before. The strength of shared strategic interests in the maritime domain means both nations have more to gain from closer defense ties and the best method for achieving this is a combined amphibious exercise program.

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Preface

In this paper I have deliberately looked at the issue of Australian-Indonesian cooperation from the viewpoint of the Australian Defense Force (ADF) as that is my area of expertise. While the arguments are made with reference to Indonesian strategic objectives to demonstrate the validity of the concept, this paper does not attempt to identify all the issues at play between the two countries. Such detailed analysis of Australian-Indonesian relations is beyond the scope of this paper. I am only illustrating the point that a combined amphibious exercise program can support both nations in their current strategic objectives and provide new capability.

This topic is important to the ADF as it nests inside two of Australia's core strategic interests; security in Southeast Asia and multilateral cooperation. I believe that the recommendations made in this paper will enhance the strategic capabilities of the ADF and Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). Thanks are owed to Dr. Eric Shibuya for his guidance in defining the scope and rationale for this paper and for his work throughout the drafting process.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will explore the viability of a combined amphibious exercise program between Australia and Indonesia and postulate that such a program is necessary and supported from the strategic standpoint of both nations. The phrase “exercise program” is used specifically to indicate an ongoing, evolving series of training events that will achieve strategic objectives in a cumulative sense.

To understand the basis of such a claim, the current security context will be established along with the broader history of Australia-Indonesia relations. From this, the strategic outlooks of each nations’ military will be analyzed to show how a combined amphibious exercise program is supported at the national strategic level. Next, the most significant obstacles to enhanced cooperation will be explored. This will be followed by a detailed look at the rationale for a combined amphibious exercise program, highlighting the changes in both nation’s strategic outlooks that make it a worthy endeavor. Finally, the details of how a combined amphibious exercise would be structured in terms of participants, locations and training outcomes will be covered to demonstrate how the exercise will achieve strategic objectives for Australia and Indonesia.

The Current Security Context

Most of Australia’s long-term security interests are in Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific. As articulated in the 2016 Australian Defense White Paper, the Korean Peninsula, South China Sea, and Philippines all represent sources of potential conflict that is likely to involve Australia.¹ For Indonesia the situation is slightly different, with the focus being on the bridge

¹ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 128-134.

between the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the development of enhanced maritime capability.²

These two strategic needs share many geographical and capability related tenets that can be exploited by both nations through joint, multilateral amphibious exercises.

At a time when anti-access, area denial (A2AD) systems are the primary threat to expeditionary forces a new concept has emerged. Summarized simply as “fight to get to the fight,” it is a concept that accepts strategic access to future operating environments will be highly contested.³ For forces like the United States Marine Corps this presents challenges, but for Australia this will mean a complete inability to force project in the future. The Australian Defense Force (ADF) lacks the maritime and amphibious force capability to both contest strategic access and conduct mid to high intensity warfare once access is achieved. In an Australian context the dilemma would more closely resemble “fight for theater access, then withdraw.” This is especially true given Australia’s reliance on strategic air lift as the primary method for projecting force elements.⁴ If an integrated air defense system were used to deny access to Asia, the ADF would become reliant on maritime force projection, an operational concept still in the early stages of development. Moreover, Australia lacks defense relationships within the region that would make strategic access easier.

This problem is also being felt by Indonesia, who lack an advanced maritime force to leverage their strategic position between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Under president Joko Widodo (Jokowi), Indonesia is shifting focus to solve this problem, but progress is slow.⁵ There

²Agoes Aufiya, “Indonesia’s Global Maritime Fulcrum: Contribution in the Indo-Pacific Region,” *Andalas Journal of International Studies* Vol 6 No 2 (November 2017), 144.

³Vincent Alcazar, “Crisis Management and the Anti-Access/Area Denial Problem”, *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2012), 43.

⁴Andrew Hoffmann, “The future of the ADF,” *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 196, (2015), 54.

⁵ Evan Laksmana, “Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration” *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 6.

are many challenges to overcome if the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI) is to refocus its attention into the maritime sphere successfully.

A Lack of Access: Australia's Problem

Australia is a technologically advanced nation that is geographically isolated from the rest of the world. Australia is heavily reliant on export markets for primary industries in Southeast and East Asia. As such, it will enjoy the benefits of increasing economic growth in these regions, but only if a rules-based order persists. “[Australia’s] third Strategic Defense Interest is a stable Indo-Pacific region and rules-based global order which supports our interests [and] to provide meaningful contributions to global responses to address threats to the rules-based global order which threaten Australia and its interests.”⁶ In order to support this order and provide a credible military response to threats, the ADF must have the ability to strategically project forces into Asia and the Pacific.

Australia’s ability to force project into future operating environments will require strong partnerships that allow the ADF access to strategic gateways into Southeast and East Asia that reduce exposure to A2AD systems.⁷ Ideally, this will involve as many partner nations as possible, but at the outset, the most important partner is Indonesia. The archipelago of Indonesia encompasses all the maritime and air routes into Asia from Australia (see figure 1). Indonesia is, therefore, the best starting point and the most important partnership to develop.

⁶ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 70.

⁷ Vincent Alcazar, “Crisis Management and the Anti-Access/Area Denial Problem”, *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2012), 51.

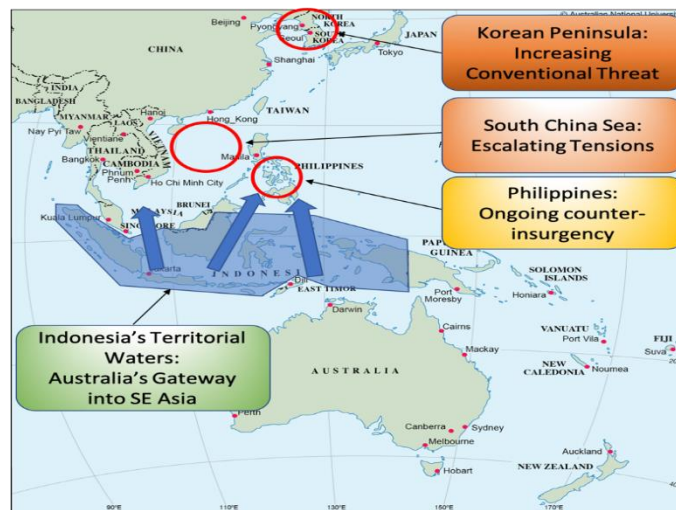


Figure 1. Security Concerns and Strategic Gateways for Australia⁸

A Lack of Maritime Capability: Indonesia's Problem

Indonesia suffers more from a lack of credible maritime capability than a lack of access to Asia. The Indonesian Navy (TNI-AL) has long been ignored in favor of the Army (TNI-AD) in terms of funding and modernization.⁹ This has created a capability gap that means Indonesia cannot leverage its geographic position to its fullest. While there is renewed focus on the development of the TNI-AL, the process is slow and will require external engagement to enhance its odds of success.¹⁰ Australia is the perfect security partner to help modernize the TNI-AL and has, historically speaking, been the strongest partner for capability development in the TNI.¹¹ This means that each nation is ideally situated to solve the other's problem.

Indonesia represents the solution to Australia's lack of strategic military access to Asia and

⁸ Source: Author creation from strategic objectives laid out in 2016 ADF White Paper, P 128-134.

⁹ Evan Laksmana, "Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration" *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

¹¹ Robert Lowry, "Australia-Indonesia Security Cooperation: For Better or Worse?", *Strategic and Defence Studies Working Paper*, no. 299, 1996.

Australia represents the best opportunity for TNI-AL capability development. Unfortunately, the turbulent history of the two nations stands in the way of future cooperation and it is necessary to look at past frictions to understand why greater security cooperation has not already occurred.

Turbulent History of Australia and Indonesia

Australian-Indonesian relations have ranged from friendly cooperation to near open hostilities. In 1999, after East Timor (Timor Leste) declared independence from Indonesia the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation prompted the UN to form International Force – East Timor (INTERFET).¹² Australia led this effort, with Indonesian consent, but the relationship between the ADF and TNI was tense. Several border skirmishes erupted between the forces and Indonesia resented the presence of foreign militaries interfering in what it considered to be a domestic problem.¹³ Despite all this, the relationship between the two nations was not damaged as the ADF and TNI both showed restraint and cooperation throughout eight years of intervention in East Timor.¹⁴ At the conclusion of INTERFET both governments focused on cooperation in an attempt to redefine their political relationship. The first major effort to enhance relations came in 2005 with the signing of the *Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Partnership Between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia*. This was followed, more substantially, by the 2006 *Agreement Between the Republic of Indonesia and Australia on the Framework for Security Cooperation (Lombok Treaty)*. However, the implementation of the Lombok Treaty was hampered in 2013 when it was revealed the Australian government had been intercepting the communications of the Indonesian Presidential

¹² Hugh White, “The Road to INTERFET: Reflections on Australian Strategic Decisions Concerning East Timor” *Security Challenges*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Autumn 2008), 70.

¹³ William Maley, “Australia and the East Timor Crisis: Some Critical Comments,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54 No. 2, (2000), 154.

¹⁴ Hugh White, “The Road to INTERFET: Reflections on Australian Strategic Decisions Concerning East Timor” *Security Challenges*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Autumn 2008), 78.

Staff.¹⁵ This incident led to a sudden halt in cooperation and the diplomatic scene again turned icy.

This situation was resolved by the signing of the *Joint Understanding in Implementation of the Lombok Treaty* in August of 2014. This agreement limited the use of national intelligence agencies for information gathering against each nation, a move designed to build trust. The relationship was then damaged again when a TNI soldier found inflammatory training material at an Australian Army Barracks in late 2016.¹⁶ Indonesian outrage was understandable and gave more evidence to the argument that Australia and Indonesia lack the trust required to sustain long-term defense cooperation.¹⁷ From diplomatic, economic, and defense perspectives Australia and Indonesia have viewed one another with ambivalence, if not apathy.¹⁸

Despite these setbacks, the Australia-Indonesia relationship is strengthening, especially regarding cooperation in the maritime domain. In August 2018 both nations signed a *Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)* based upon five pillars of cooperation.¹⁹ The CSP provides the basis for enhanced security cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in the future because it is the common link between each nation's current strategy. To fully understand this, it is important to look at both nations' strategies and how they can be united under the CSP.

¹⁵ Andreas Ismar, "Indonesia to Halt Military Cooperation with Australia over Spy Row", *The Wall Street Journal*, 20 November 2013.

¹⁶ Jewel Topsfield, "Internal Cable Suggests Indonesia Never Intended to Fully Suspend Military Ties", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 2017.

¹⁷ Evan Laksmana, "Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration" *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 2.

¹⁸ Andrew Phillips and Eric Hiariej, "Beyond the 'Bandung Divide'? Assessing the Scope and Limits of Australia-Indonesia Security Cooperation", 423-424.

¹⁹ "Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Republic of Indonesia" August 31, 2018. *Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*. The five pillars are: (1) Enhancing economic and development partnership, (2) connecting people, (3) securing our and the region's shared interests, (4) maritime cooperation, and (5) contributing to Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity.

STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

The current security climate of Southeast Asia presents common threats to Australia and Indonesia that can form the basis for enhanced cooperation. This is only possible, however, if both nations recognize this opportunity at the national strategic level. If there is no guiding strategy that informs and supports wider defense cooperation between the ADF and TNI, engagement will not be sustainable. To determine the viability of this we must understand the ADF White Paper, Australia's military strategic policy; and the Global Maritime Fulcrum (GMF), Indonesia's holistic maritime strategy. Each of these policies provide specific guidance for closer defense ties between the ADF and TNI and are combined in the CSP as the mechanism by which greater cooperation can be achieved.

2016 Australian Defense White Paper

The Defense White Paper is Australia's national military strategy document and broadly details Australia's defense interests out to 2035.²⁰ As such, it is the primary source of strategic guidance and indicator of future ADF operating concepts. If a combined ADF-TNI amphibious exercise program is a plausible goal, it must be supported conceptually within the Defense White Paper. This requirement is two-fold; first, Australia must be willing to engage with Indonesia more frequently and second, this engagement must be supportive of a combined amphibious exercise program.

Support for these requirements can be found inside the White Paper. First, the White Paper acknowledges the need for greater security engagement with Indonesia stating "we must strengthen our defense engagement with regional countries with interests in the security of

²⁰ Australian Department of Defence, 2016 Defence White Paper (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 14.

maritime Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia.”²¹ Second, it includes support for combined exercises and regional capacity building by pledging to “increase the pattern of regular ADF deployments into the region, enhance the ADF’s program of international exercises, and support increased capacity building and the security architecture of the region.”²² These statements support greater ADF involvement with Indonesia for the purpose of increasing security in Southeast Asia, assisting in capability development, and increasing the number and scope of international exercises.

Finally, to ensure alignment with the White Paper, it is necessary to determine the ADF’s willingness to base future exercises and regional engagement on amphibious capability. This is a neglected area of ADF cooperation, especially with Indonesia, as both nations have a historically land combat-centric view of training.²³ This shift to amphibious training is supported in the White Paper as continued development and use of the *Canberra Class Landing Helicopter Dock* (LHD) (Australia’s amphibious ships) is identified as a key capability that will be enhanced from both a technological and training perspective.²⁴ This means there is strategic support for ADF amphibious capability to become the focal point of training and, therefore, a suitable basis for a combined exercise program with Indonesia.

There is strategic guidance to expand defense relations with Indonesia in the White Paper and a combined amphibious exercise program is a suitable mechanism to achieve this. But will the Indonesians be receptive to this idea? Is there a strategic basis to justify this program from

²¹ Australian Department of Defence, 2016 Defence White Paper (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 59.

²² Ibid, 56.

²³ White, Hugh. "The new Australia-Indonesia strategic relationship: A note of caution." In *Different societies, shared futures: Australia, Indonesia and the region*. (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS): 2006), 41.

²⁴ Australian Department of Defence, 2016 Defence White Paper (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 99.

the Indonesian Government? The answer to these questions lies in Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum.

Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum

At the 2014 East Asia Summit, then newly elected president of Indonesia, Jokowi, gave a speech in which he stated Indonesia's strategic vision for the future would rest on the GMF (Fulcrum refers to Indonesia's position between the Pacific and Indian Oceans).²⁵ This strategy sees a marked shift from Indonesia's traditional focus on land force to greater maritime capability as the basis for social, economic, and military growth. The GMF has seven pillars, two of which are directly applicable to a combined amphibious exercise program.²⁶ The GMF is a broad, low resolution idea but was further developed in 2017 by Presidential Decree 16/17 which established Indonesia's Ocean Policy (IOP), a more detailed look at the ways in which the GMF would be implemented.²⁷

The IOP provides an insight to Indonesia's changing strategic vision as it details the types of security and military goals the TNI will aspire to. The IOP states "Indonesia must play a leadership role in various maritime cooperation initiatives at the regional and multi-national levels" indicating not only a renewed focus on maritime capability, but also on meaningful engagement with other nations in the region.²⁸ While the concept of 'leadership role' is not fully explored, the message is a call to action for the TNI to shift focus to securing strategic, maritime

²⁵ Evan Laksmana, "Indonesian Sea Policy: Accelerating Jokowi's Global Maritime Fulcrum?" in *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 2017), 2.

²⁶ Mohd. Agoes Afiya, "Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum: Contribution in the Indo-Pacific Region," *Andalas Journal of International Studies* Vol 6 No 2 (November 2017), 146.

The five pillars are: (1) rebuilding Indonesia's maritime culture, (2) maintaining and managing maritime resources, (3) prioritizing maritime connectivity and infrastructure, (4) intensifying maritime diplomacy, and (5) strengthening Indonesia's maritime defense capability.

²⁷ Dewi Anwar, "The Emergence of Indonesia's Ocean Policy", in *RSIS Publications* (February 2018), 1-3.

²⁸ Evan Laksmana, "Indonesian Sea Policy: Accelerating Jokowi's Global Maritime Fulcrum?" in *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 2017), 4.

interests through regional engagement. This is a positive sign that Indonesia will be receptive to a combined amphibious exercise program with Australia and other regional partners.

Just as the 2016 ADF White Paper provides the strategic rationale and guidance for Australia, the GMF/IOP articulates the maritime military objectives for Indonesia. Using these national strategic documents, we can now examine the context of Australian-Indonesian military cooperation through the unifying framework of the CSP.

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

The CSP includes a mixture of economic, social, and defense goals for Australia and Indonesia to pursue. Of the five pillars that form the basis of the CSP, three are directly related to defense. They are; securing our and the regions shared interests, maritime cooperation, and contributing to Indo-Pacific stability and prosperity.²⁹ These pillars reflect the shift to maritime security cooperation as the primary tenet of defense relations into the future, as agreed to by Australia and Indonesia. The CSP represents the closest alignment of Australian and Indonesian strategic interests and provides the foundation for future maritime defense cooperation. In this sense, the CSP is the common realization of both nations' strategic interests in the region and creates a commonality of purpose. However, there are obstacles to cooperation that must be understood and overcome if lasting defense engagement is to occur.

CURRENT ROADBLOCKS

The history of Australia and Indonesia is an important factor but does not fully explain the nature of defense relations between the two nations. To appreciate why defense engagement has yielded lackluster results, it is vital to understand the broader causes of Australian and

²⁹ “Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Republic of Indonesia” August 31, 2018. *Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*.

Indonesian defense politicization and sea blindness; the two most significant cultural factors limiting defense engagement.

‘Sawtooth’ Defense Relations Explained

Hugh White was the first to use the term ‘sawtooth’ to describe the highly politicized defense relationship between Australia and Indonesia.³⁰ As already covered, Australia and Indonesia have a turbulent defense relationship that is marred by periods of complete neglect, usually as the result of a separate political incident between the two nations. Why do political disagreements take precedence over shared security concerns? More importantly, does this tendency mean a combined amphibious exercise program is doomed to be ended by the next political incident and, therefore, an inefficient use of resources?

These questions strike at the heart of the sawtooth nature of Australia-Indonesia relations, a concept that needs to be explored before significant investment in training and development can be made. The thinking on these issues can be divided into two schools of thought; traditional analysis and over-politicization. Traditional analysis emphasizes the fundamental differences of each nation to determine if wider engagement is required to maintain overall balance in the relationship.³¹ However, over-politicization theory suggests that the traditional analysis is insufficient in explaining the sawtooth nature of Australia-Indonesia relations and focuses on the instances in which both nations have used their defense ties as bargaining chips in broader political games. As a result, both nations neglect the strategic benefits of defense cooperation and, in so doing, undermine their sustainability. Defense relations have been used in this fashion

³⁰ Hugh White, “The Australian-Indonesian New Strategic Relationship: A Note of Caution,” in *Different Societies, Shared Futures: Australia, Indonesia, and the Region*, ed John Monfries (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2006), 45.

³¹ Evan Laksmana, “Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration” *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 9.

for so long that the defense character has faded and been replaced by domestic political objectives.³² To overcome the politicization of defense relations, the strategic benefits of cooperation must become the guiding principle upon which future actions are based. As already shown, the first casualty of any politically controversial incident is defense cooperation (see figure 2). Evan Laksmana put it best, “we cannot politicize defense cooperation and then criticize the resulting relationship as insufficiently strong to withstand the political currents of the day.”³³

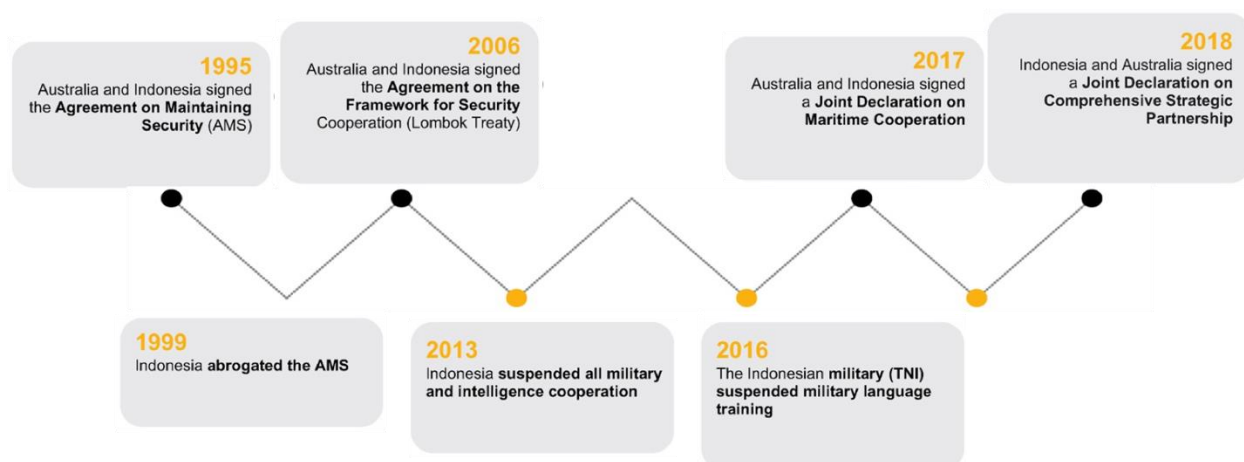


Figure 2: The ‘Sawtooth’ Trajectory of Australia-Indonesia Relations³⁴

The over-politicized nature of ADF-TNI relations is not something that can be directly influenced within the ADF. It calls for a wider government approach that is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, deeper ADF-TNI cooperation requires both nations to view defense relations from a strategic security perspective, not as bargaining chips for wider policy objectives. The best test of this will be the next political rift; if defense relations suffer

³² Evan Laksmana, “Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration” *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 8.

³³ *Ibid*, 9.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 8.

unnecessarily it will be an indication the situation is still too volatile to pursue a combined amphibious exercise program. However, if the next political incident leaves defense relations relatively intact it will serve as a litmus test to show that both nations have become more sophisticated in their pursuit of common strategic objectives. There is ample reason to be optimistic in this regard, as the CSP has created an unprecedented unity of purpose for the ADF and TNI. The next challenge to overcome is the sea blindness that has limited ADF and TNI development of credible maritime and amphibious forces.

Australia's Sea Blindness

Sea blindness is a state of mind that sees Australia as a continent and creates a bias to view the ADF as a continental force, and the wider defense of Australia as a land-centric problem. The military history of Australia is largely responsible for this phenomena, as past conflicts have always involved forces levied in Australia on behalf of a wider coalition that took responsibility for theatre access and strategic lift. Starting in 1871 with the Sudan emergency and continuing through the Boer War, First and Second World Wars, and the Malayan Emergency, Australia relied on the British Royal Navy to secure the strategic gateways and provide adequate shipping to move large forces and their equipment.³⁵ After the Malayan Emergency, this role then fell to the United States, who provided this service during Korea, Vietnam, both Gulf Wars, and Afghanistan. While movement of forces has more recently been conducted with strategic air assets the overall effect is the same; reliance on a great power to guarantee movement of forces into theatre.

This paradigm is now less effective due to the proliferation and sophistication of A2AD systems. Today strategic access is a significant problem for all militaries, even those of the great

³⁵ Malcom Fraser, "Australia's Reliance on a Major Power Lies Deep in Our National Psyche," *The Guardian*, 28 Apr 2014.

powers.³⁶ The ADF needs to make its own considerations for strategic lift and holding open strategic gateways into future conflict areas. As such Australian sea blindness presents a barrier to future development of the necessary capability. Traditionally, the ADF was not an expeditionary force but a safeguard to Australia's territorial sovereignty. Since the INTERFET intervention in 1999, the ADF has provided regional stability and security, demonstrating the value of force projection over territorial defense.

Indonesia is the gateway for ADF involvement with wider Asia, both operationally and in training. It is vital that the scope of ADF thinking is widened to take advantage of these opportunities and guarantee the strategic relevance of the ADF.

Indonesia's Sea Blindness

Indonesia, like Australia, has suffered sea blindness in the past and, therefore, it also represents a significant barrier to the TNI. It seems counter intuitive that a nation consisting of over 3,000 islands and encompassing the largest area of internal waterways would have such a continental focus in defense. Indonesia's continental focus is much more nuanced than Australia's, but the result is the same, a traditional focus on joint land combat while largely ignoring maritime force projection.³⁷ The genesis of Indonesia's continental focus comes from the diverse cultural nature of Indonesian society that presents the constant danger of internal unrest. As a result, the TNI evolved with the goal of maintaining internal stability more than protecting Indonesian interests abroad.

Only now has a large-scale strategic shift begun to emerge, indicating the intention for the TNI to become the force that secures Indonesia's place as the bridge between the Pacific and

³⁶ Vincent Alcazar, "Crisis Management and the Anti-Access/Area Denial Problem", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2012), 68.

³⁷ Geoffrey Till, "Indonesia as a Growing Maritime Power: Possible Implications for Australia", *Soundings*, no. 4 (May 2015): 7-8.

Indian Oceans. This purpose is the driving force for continued change and represents the best mechanism for Indonesia to overcome a history of sea blindness.

Again, there is cause for optimism as the GMF and CSP both represent broad, top down changes in the way Indonesia will interact with the world. It is likely Jokowi will look to foster growth of maritime-centric thinking within the TNI to see the defense aspects of the GMF succeed. With so much at stake and so much potential for improving the fortunes of Indonesians, there have never been stronger driving forces for change.

The ADF and TNI must both overcome their politicized history and sea blindness to ensure the success of long-term defense cooperation. Under the framework of the CSP, with each nation's strategic outlook shifted to the maritime domain, there is evidence to suggest the sawtooth nature of the relationship will balance out and maritime and amphibious exercises could become the focus of defense engagement.

RATIONALE FOR CHANGE

Despite the turbulent history of defense relations between Australia and Indonesia, the current climate presents opportunities to increased military cooperation. With Indonesia pivoting to the GMF and Australia heavily invested in amphibious capability, there is a strong rationale for recalibrating defense relations between the ADF and TNI based around a combined amphibious exercise program. Currently the strategic objectives of both nations are aligned, and the ADF and TNI stand to gain experience and improve a relationship which has been inconsistent.

Shared Strategic Objectives

The new era of shared strategic objectives as laid out in the CSP present the strongest rationale for change for both Australia and Indonesia. The CSP marks a new high point in

political relations, especially for defense.³⁸ This alignment can now be used as the basis for evolving the nature and scope of how the TNI and ADF interact.

Australia Needs Experience

Australia is not only new to amphibious capability (having introduced the Canberra Class LHD into service in 2015) but also to operations in archipelagic regions.³⁹ Currently the ADF is rotating amphibious training on a yearly basis to a single infantry battlegroup in each combat brigade. This is considered the best method for ensuring there is a wide knowledge base in Army units, instead of developing overly specialized amphibious units.⁴⁰ However, amphibious exercises are not conducted with regional partners and are mostly limited to training areas in Australia.⁴¹ For these reasons, it is vital for the ADF to conduct combined amphibious exercises with the TNI. Such exercises will enhance trust, interoperability, and lead to the realization of strategic objectives for both Australia and Indonesia.

A major, combined amphibious exercise would become the final realization of the defense goals of the CSP. While the CSP is far broader in scope than defense, the defense element of Australia-Indonesia relations has always been the most volatile component.⁴² Ensuring the defense engagement is based on significant interoperability between the TNI and ADF and providing for real-world experience will fortify it against politicization. If the ADF-TNI relationship is achieving strategic objectives it will be less affected by wider political issues.

³⁸ “Joint Declaration on a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between the Commonwealth of Australia and the Republic of Indonesia” August 31, 2018. *Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade*.

³⁹ See <http://www.navy.gov.au/fleet/ships-boats-craft/lhd>

⁴⁰ See <https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/units/1st-division/developing-the-australian-amphibious-force>

⁴¹ The ADF has participated in RIMPAC using amphibious forces but this exercise occurs in Hawaii and sees limited cooperation with the TNI.

⁴² Evan Laksmana, “Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration” *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 9.

Such an outcome would achieve the defense goals of the CSP and support the strategic objectives of the 2016 ADF White Paper (see figure 3).

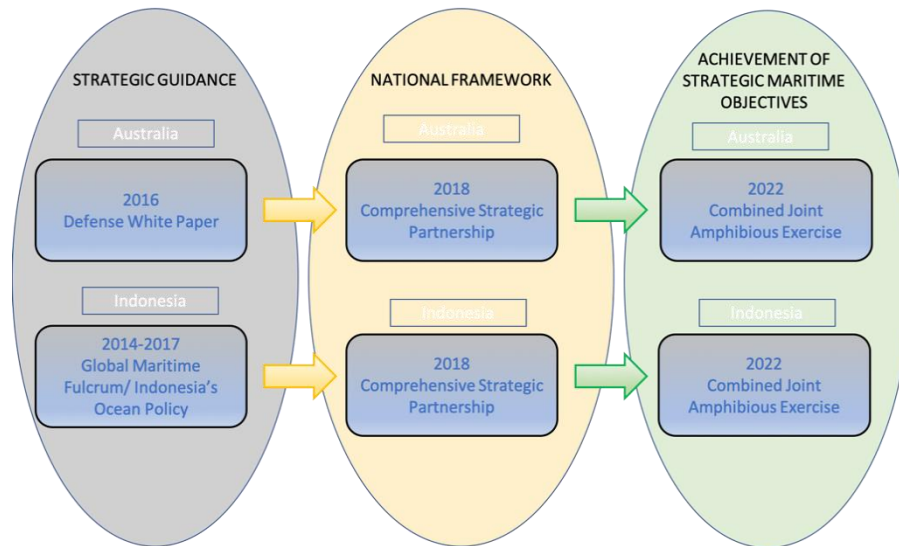


Figure 3. Linking Strategic Objectives to Exercise Outcomes⁴³

Indonesia Needs Maritime Capability

Indonesia has typically held other nations at arm's length, focusing internally to maintain harmony amongst one of the most diverse populations in the world.⁴⁴ Now that Jokowi has acknowledged Indonesia's place as the bridge between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, Indonesia is opening to the prospect of greater cooperation, especially in the security domain. Currently, Indonesia has Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships with three nations; China, the United States, and now Australia.⁴⁵ These are recent agreements, occurring in 2013, 2015, and 2018 respectfully; breaking a tradition of international ambivalence by Indonesia.⁴⁶ Indonesia now finds itself in a position where strong partnerships are vital to national strategic objectives.

⁴³ Source: Author creation from 2016 ADF White Paper, 2018 Indonesia-Australia CSP, and Evan Laksmana, "Indonesian Sea Policy: Accelerating Jokowi's Global Maritime Fulcrum?"

⁴⁴ Andrew Phillips & Eric Hiariej, "Beyond the 'Bandung divide'? Assessing the scope and limits of Australia-Indonesia security cooperation, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 70 No. 4, 2016, 423-427.

⁴⁵ Iis Gindarsah, and Adhi Priamarizki. "Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine and Security Concerns." *RSIS Policy Report* 9, no. 9 (2015).

⁴⁶ Evan Laksmana, "Reinforcing Australia-Indonesia Defence Relations: A Case for Maritime Recalibration" *Lowy Institute Analysis* (October 2018), 11.

Under Jokowi the pivot to international engagement is gaining significant momentum and looks set to continue. However, a lack of TNI-AL capability remains and addressing this is vital for Indonesia.⁴⁷

There are issues with TNI-AL systems, training, and operating concepts that stand in the way of realizing the objectives of the GMF.⁴⁸ To overcome this, Indonesia must engage regionally and leverage the advantages presented by the ADF. By committing to a combined amphibious exercise program, the TNI will be able to access ADF training and operational concepts that will enhance the use of amphibious forces. As the exercise program continues, opportunities for equipment procurement and modernization will become more tenable and TNI-AL capability will advance at a greater rate than would otherwise be possible.

ROLE OF COMBINED AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES

Now that the strategic context and rationale for a combined amphibious exercise program have been established, the phasing and training outcomes of this program can be articulated and validated. This would occur in three steps; first, an increase in the number and scope of combined amphibious exercises between the ADF and TNI to build trust. Second, alternating the location of these exercises between Australia and Indonesia to create a diverse range of operating environments and training outcomes. Finally, an alignment of amphibious doctrine and training standards for both the TNI and ADF. These stages would best operate sequentially to ensure that cooperation is meaningful and able to be sustained in the long term.

Step 1: Developing Trust

⁴⁷ Dewi Anwar, "The Emergence of Indonesia's Ocean Policy", in *RSIS Publications* (February 2018), 1-3.

⁴⁸ Iis Gindarsah, and Adhi Priamarizki. "Indonesia's Maritime Doctrine and Security Concerns." *RSIS Policy Report* 9, no. 9 (2015).

Given the turbulent nature of ADF-TNI cooperation it is vital to develop trust between the forces early to ensure a combined amphibious exercise is sustainable. The basis for this already exists for both forces as there are several exercises that have the ability to expand the scope of ADF-TNI cooperation. Exercise Hamel (Ex Hamel) is an annual ADF exercise that tests both the readiness of the deployable Australian Combat Brigade and the training standard of the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters.⁴⁹ A significant part of this is the certification of the Ready Battle Group, a combined arms battalion that must be capable of deploying as the ADF's amphibious force.⁵⁰ Ex Hamel is the ideal starting point for greater ADF-TNI combined amphibious training. It is scheduled in July each year and occurs in an Australian training area, usually in Queensland. This makes the exercise easy to forecast and geographically convenient for involvement by the TNI (see figure 4). The Indonesian Marine Corps (IMC) commitment to Ex Hamel could be scalable to meet readiness and staffing requirements but would ideally involve a battalion rotated from each of the three Indonesian Marine Forces (PASMAR). By inviting the IMC to participate in Ex Hamel each year, the ADF would be able to maintain the current training and certification goals while adding a combined amphibious exercise element that would enhance trust and interoperability between the ADF and TNI. This trust would then lead to the ability to alternate the exercise location between Australia and Indonesia to expose the units to more diverse operating environments.

Step 2: Alternating Exercise Areas

Building on the trust gained through greater TNI involvement in Ex Hamel, the combined amphibious exercise would then alternate each year between being hosted by Australia and Indonesia. The benefits of this are twofold. First, it will allow both the TNI and ADF to conduct

⁴⁹ See https://www.army.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1846/f/ex_hamel_backgrounder.pdf

⁵⁰ See <https://www.army.gov.au/our-people/units/1st-division/developing-the-australian-amphibious-force>

amphibious training in more diverse environments. Second, it will allow each nation equal scope to shape the exercise for their specific outcomes, thus ensuring equal control over training value.

The importance of alternating the location of the exercise cannot be overstated. It is the act of exercising the ADF amphibious capability in the archipelagic region of Indonesia that will fill the current capability gap in force projection (see figure 4). By exercising in the strategic gateway, the ADF will gain experience that is applicable to the current regional security context. This would also serve to enhance the ADF's understanding of conditions in the strategic gateway, allowing personnel to become familiar with the climate, terrain, oceanography, and people. This experience would mean future ADF missions into Asia will be easier to plan, as the conditions of the major routes and likely obstacles would be well understood. This knowledge will ensure future forces are more familiar with the environments, conditions, and challenges that are inherent with operating in Southeast Asia.

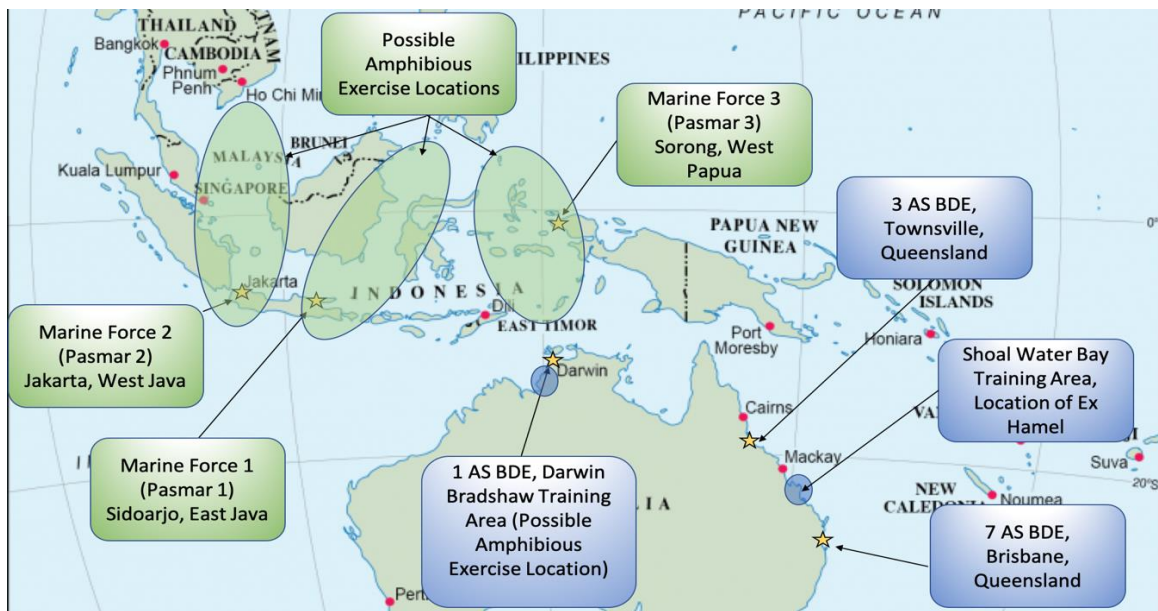


Figure 4: ADF/TNI Units and Possible Exercise Locations

Step 3: Common Training and Professional Military Education

The final step to completing the combined amphibious exercise program is creating common training courses and professional military education (PME) opportunities. Common training and concepts will enhance interoperability and gradually strengthen the ADF-TNI relationship. The ADF Warfare Training Centre conducts two Introduction to amphibious planning courses (IAPC) each year.⁵¹ By accepting IMC students onto this course the ADF can ensure interoperability and realize the last step of the combined amphibious exercise program. Alongside the IAPC, ADF-TNI exchanges on officer and senior non-commissioned officer PME courses would continue.⁵² The combination of PME and specific amphibious training will achieve a gradual strengthening of the ADF-TNI relationship that supports the longevity of the combined amphibious exercise program.

Exercise Objectives

The combined amphibious exercise should have a common set of training outcomes for both the ADF and TNI. That is not to say, however, that the exercise objectives must remain constant throughout all iterations. Also, as the relationship between the ADF and TNI becomes more habitual, the complexity and ambitiousness of the exercise can be increased to allow for an evolution of the training outcomes.

This means that rather than a list of definite training outcomes, the exercise concept is developed with principles to inform specific outcomes for each iteration. A good starting point is looking at the scalability of complexity to ensure the first exercise is not going to overreach and potentially embarrass or discourage participants. Following from this is a principle of contextual relevance in the outcomes, meaning high intensity warfare does not need to be the

⁵¹ See <http://www.defence.gov.au/ADFWC/default.asp>

⁵² The ADF and TNI currently exchange officers and SNCOs on a variety of career PME courses that are not directly related to amphibious operations but serve to enhance interoperability.

sole focus of training. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations, and anti-trafficking operations are all viable contexts for an exercise. So long as the regional security picture indicates that such operations are necessary, they are relevant training serials. Regardless of the specific training outcome, the combined amphibious exercise will always achieve the wider strategic objectives of multilateral cooperation and ADF experience in the strategic gateway to Asia. This flexibility will ensure that ongoing iterations of the exercise will be malleable enough to achieve specified, context driven outcomes but at the same time meet the wider strategic purpose of exercising with the TNI. This will lead to a series of changed strategic realities for both Australia and Indonesia that are mutually beneficial.

STRATEGIC PICTURE POST-CHANGE

Combined amphibious exercises between the TNI and ADF will support the strategic objectives of both nations and lead to measurable improvements in Australia's ability to access Asia and Indonesia's ability to train and modernize the TNI. Both nations will also benefit from stronger defense ties and have an opportunity to use defense cooperation as an anchor for enhanced relationships among other national objectives. Rather than being definite end-states, these strategic realities will evolve to ensure that changes in the future security context can be addressed.

Greater Strategic Access for Australia

As detailed earlier, the main strategic outcome of an annual combined amphibious exercise between the ADF and TNI from the Australian perspective is regional access into Asia. Given this is where Australia's security concerns will come from in the medium-term out to 2035, the issue of strategic access is vital.⁵³ The strategic picture for the ADF is much more

⁵³ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra, ACT: Office of the Minister of Defence, 2016), 14-17.

favorable once combined amphibious exercises with Indonesia are a common occurrence. The ADF will have a more capable force, experienced with the conditions present in the waters of the strategic gateway, that is more integrated with the TNI, and less likely to experience avoidable errors in transit into Asia during operations.

These strategic norms will be highly beneficial and provide enhanced credibility to the ADF in terms of strategic reach and contingency planning. If the ADF can freely and competently navigate the strategic gateway into Asia, then it can be readily deployed to the South China Sea, the Philippines, or the Korean Peninsula without assistance from the United States. Such freedom of action will allow Australia more relevance in the region and bolster the utility of Australia as a global security partner.

Greater Maritime Capability for Indonesia

The TNI will benefit from the annual combined amphibious exercise by the enhancement of their maritime capability. Multilateral defense ties will allow access to new equipment, technology, and practices that make the TNI-AL more strategically relevant. An invigorated TNI will be vital for Indonesia's GMF concept and ensure the legitimacy and rules-based nature of managing the link between the Pacific and Indian Oceans.⁵⁴ Indonesia will also benefit from increased legitimacy within the immediate region as they have historically not cooperated in multilateral engagements. These factors will allow Indonesia to reshape its strategic culture with an eye to future prosperity that is secured in the maritime domain.

Enhanced Multi-Lateral Defense Ties

Both the ADF and TNI will benefit from enhanced cooperation in terms of their relationship and those with other regional partners. The exercise can be the catalyst for stronger

⁵⁴ Mohd. Agoes Auiya, "Indonesia's Global Maritime Fulcrum: Contribution in the Indo-Pacific Region," *Andalas Journal of International Studies* Vol 6 No 2 (November 2017), 146.

defense ties in the region that limit the potential for security dilemmas. With continued effort, the scope of the combined ADF-TNI amphibious exercise can be increased to include other partners. The best place to start is the MALSINDO agreement between Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia that deals with piracy in the Malacca Strait.⁵⁵ Malaysia and Singapore stand to gain greater experience and capability alongside Indonesia by participating in the amphibious exercise. Their involvement would also lend weight to the argument that other nations should help take responsibility for the security of the Malacca Strait, thus reinforcing a key outcome of the GMF.⁵⁶ While it is ambitious to expect large-scale involvement from Malaysia and Singapore in the annual amphibious exercise, it is not unreasonable to believe that stronger defense ties between the ADF and TNI would have a stabilizing effect on the rest of the region. This coupled with a rules-based approach would ensure a positive regional reaction and likely create a bandwagoning effect, expanding future cooperation.

CONCLUSION

While the ADF and TNI have had a turbulent history and lack significant combined training experiences, they are now more closely aligned in strategic interests than ever before. Australia's focus on deployable, survivable joint forces and strategic military objectives in Asia has placed an added premium on the strategic gateway through Indonesia. The proliferation of A2AD systems make access by air untenable and places added pressure on the ADF to develop stronger maritime force projection capabilities.⁵⁷ Similarly, Indonesia is conducting a pivot

⁵⁵ Koh Swee Lean Colin, "The Malacca Strait Patrols: Finding Common Ground" in *RSIS Commentary*, No. 91 (Apr 2016).

⁵⁶ Laura Southgate, "Piracy in the Malacca Strait: Can ASEAN Respond?" in *The Diplomat*, 08 July 2015.

⁵⁷ Vincent Alcazar, "Crisis Management and the Anti-Access/Area Denial Problem", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 2012), 43.

towards the GMF as its national strategic framework.⁵⁸ The TNI must enhance maritime capability to support this significant endeavor.

Both Australia and Indonesia will be best served in achieving their common military strategic objectives by undertaking a combined amphibious exercise program. The exercise will initially be integrated into Ex Hamel but will then be alternated between Australia and Indonesia to provide a more diverse range of operating environments and provide equal scope for exercise design between the ADF and TNI. The program will also see the alignment of amphibious doctrine and procedures to enhance interoperability in the long-term. The ADF will also gain experience conducting maneuver, deployment, sustainment, and tactical actions in a real-world strategic gateway once the exercise is alternated between training areas. This will allow the ADF greater certainty in meeting strategic security concerns in Asia and demonstrate a legitimate force projection capability.

The alignment of both nations' strategic objectives has presented an opportunity for greater cooperation that is a stronger force than past grievances. Australia and Indonesia are both capable of, and willing to pursue, closer defense ties and a combined amphibious exercise program is a logical method to achieve this. A combined amphibious exercise program between the ADF and TNI represents the best method for both nations to achieve their military strategic objectives and will promote stability in the region.

⁵⁸ Evan Laksmna, "Indonesian Sea Policy: Accelerating Jokowi's Global Maritime Fulcrum?" in *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (March 2017), 2.

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